

### Ed Norris Commands Listeners To Support Warmathon *Event Increases Public Awareness of Fuel Fund*

Fans of Ed Norris radio show on 105.7 FM heard something new the morning of Monday, February 22nd. Norris, known for always fighting for the little guy, announced that the station was kicking off a Warmathon to benefit the Fuel Fund of Maryland. He would lead the event and the other Baltimore CBS radio stations would participate.

With back-to-back blizzards blanketing Central Maryland with record snowfalls and cold temperatures more common to Buffalo than Baltimore, the need for financial contributions is greater than ever. In addition to the brutal winter, the Fuel Fund anticipates the current jobless recovery from the recession will increase the number of individuals and families requesting support with their gas and utility bills. Also, the poor economy has resulted in more middle-income families who need help heating their homes.

Citing how this winter will increase the costs of utility bills, Norris appealed to his listeners to generously contribute to the Fuel Fund. "In my 24 years of policing, I've seen the pain caused by harsh winters, but I have never seen a winter like this."

Fuel Fund Executive Director Mary Ellen Vanni thanked Norris, 105.7 and the other Baltimore CBS radio stations. "The Warmathon could not have come at a better time. We helped 1772 families the first quarter of 2010, up from 945 from last year's first quarter. The weather in February kept the heat



Billboards help increase awareness of the Warmathon.



Ed Norris displays incentives for contributions, an autographed Ravens football.

and utilities on all day because of the snow and cold weather. We owe a debt of gratitude to Ed Norris and 105.7 for helping the Fuel Fund," Vanni said.

### INSIDE THIS ISSUE

#### Cover

- Ed Norris & 105.7 Broadcasts Boost Awareness of Fuel Fund

#### Page 2

- Light Strokes
- Citi Invites Fuel Fund to International Summit

#### Page 3

- Maryvale Lock In, Lights Off
- Fuel Fund Update

#### Back Cover

- Winter Takes Its Toll
- Mission
- Board of Directors

 **FUEL FUND**  
OF MARYLAND

305 W. Chesapeake Avenue  
Suite 115  
Baltimore, MD 21204-4435  
Phone: (410) 821-3022  
Fax: (410) 821-3026



## LIGHT STROKES

From the President



For more than 25 years, you have made the Fuel Fund of Maryland the last resort in energy assistance for residents of Maryland. While we continue to serve

the community by assisting more than 6000 families with more than 3 million dollars, we are advancing our efforts into education.

Your support and our partnership with CitiFinancial have allowed us to provide approximately 1000 Marylanders with education in energy conservation and financial literacy. With your help and the help of Fuel Fund of Maryland volunteers and our network of energy advocates, we are educating people, not only in Central Maryland, but in Western and Southern Maryland, as well.

The CitiFinancial partnership provides all of you interested in energy conservation and financial education another way for you to support the Fuel Fund. We are looking for volunteers with skills in training, organization and administration to help us, in the next six months, triple the number of Marylanders who successfully improve their knowledge of energy and finance.

You have made all of our dreams and achievements possible. We thank all of our supporters, especially those fans of the Ed Norris radio show who helped make the first annual Warmathon a success. Ed, Maynard and the staff at CBS Radio were great, not only in helping us raise money but also in communicating how important it is for all of us to continue to help our neighbors.

## Fuel Fund Presents at International Conference

Citi Taps Fuel Fund To Share Watt Watchers Lessons

Integrating Financial and Environmental Education was the theme of a Fuel Fund presentation at the Citi-FT Financial Education Summit held in Singapore in December given by Development Director, Mary Kaye DiUbaldo,

She also presented on Fuel Fund's experience in developing and implementing Watt Watchers.

For the past five years, Citi has sponsored a global Financial Education Summit that is an international *platform for financial education practitioners, advocates and policy-makers to share best practices on increasing financial literacy levels*. DiUbaldo discussed why the Fuel Fund created Watt Watchers three years ago. The goal was to provide knowledge to low income people about ways to conserve energy and use it more efficiently thereby helping them reduce the cost of heating and utility bills and utilize savings to put towards emergency funds and paying down debt. With a grant from the Citi Foundation, the program added financial education as an integral part of the program so participants could learn the importance of budgeting and using money wisely.

The first group to participate in Watt Watchers was the Caroline Center, a Baltimore-based nonprofit that trains unemployed low-income women for careers in health care and the food industry. After completing four hours of Watt Watcher training, the women at the Caroline Center credited the program with helping them save money on their utility bills, some said by as much as fifty percent.

The financial education component helped them create personal budgets and ultimately become more informed consumers.

Thanks to Citi and our donors, Watt Watchers is now reaching more people by developing a corps of volunteers to serve as instructors. With Citi's support and other funders, the Fuel Fund has expanded the program outside of Central Maryland to Montgomery and Prince George's Counties. Since November 2009, 250 families have become Watt Watchers.

In 2010, the Fuel Fund plans to take Watt Watchers to a new audience, employees of businesses and nonprofits. "We recognized that everyone can use information about making their homes more energy efficient. We have learned that income doesn't determine who knows how to conserve energy nor understand money management. We believe this information will be helpful for many people," DiUbaldo said.

Sheldon Caplis, Director of Community Relations of the South Atlantic for Citi, commented, "Watt Watchers innovatively combines energy efficiency and financial education which is why they are an important partner of Citi's. Providing financial education to students and adults that are tied to activities and opportunities to change behavior is a major priority for Citi, as is reducing the impact we all have on the environment. The program serves as an excellent example of how to save energy and money and it offers valuable lessons on sustainability and managing finances."



## Maryvale Lights Out Shines Light on Fuel Fund

Spending a Friday night in the school gym with no heat, electricity and cell phones is probably not the idea of a good time for most high school students. But more than 70 Maryvale Preparatory students did just that. Participating in an event called Lights Out Locked In, students forego the conveniences of home to raise awareness about the plight of people who are suddenly without the means to pay their utility bill.

Maryvale students created the event four years ago after listening to Danielle Phelps, an alumnae of the girls school, describe the services of the Fuel Fund. Phelps explained the critical need Fuel Fund provides a individuals and families unable to pay for their household energy.

Phelps remembered the school emphasizes community service.

"I knew that if I could pique student interest they would create a project on their own and run with it," she said.

During Lights Out Locked In students experience for one night what it's like for people who come to the Fuel Fund for assistance. They learn not to take the flick of a light switch for granted.

Students spend the night making fleece blankets for the Fuel Fund to provide to individuals and families that need them. Thanks to the support of our donors, more than 50 percent of those the Fuel Fund helps are households with children.

In addition to making fleece blankets, students hold a coat drive. To be certain all of their classmates bring in coats, students plaster the hallway walls with posters and pitch their peers at assemblies. This year, students became walking advertisements wearing signs around their neck saying, "BRING IN YOUR EXTRA COATS." Evidence of their success, collections bins in the main lobby overflowed with coats.

One of this year's organizers Senior Frankie Cerquetti participated in the event its first year when she was a freshman. Seniors Maggie McElroy and Michelle Bandell also served as organizers.

Cerquetti commented, "Lights Out Locked In is an easy event for young students to get involved in. It's infectious. When we graduate three or four members of the next class become organizers."

Fuel Fund Executive Director Mary Ellen Vanni, also an alumnae of Maryvale, adds that the event serves as another benefit.

"It's become a leadership program. Senior organizers have the responsibility to flesh out the program to deliver tough messages to their classmates. The seniors share some tough facts about energy, the cost of energy and how little things can waste energy," she said.

Vanni and Phelps hope that other area schools will replicate the program.

## FUEL FUND NEWS

### Mary Ellen Vanni Graduates From Maryland Leadership

Mary Ellen Vanni completed Maryland Leadership, an eight-month leadership development program. Vanni and members of the Leadership class examined critical issues, challenges and opportunities facing the State of Maryland. Maryland Leadership prepares executives from the private and public sectors to contribute their experience and expertise to solving problems confronting the State.

Commenting on the purpose of the organization, Leadership Maryland Board Chair Stephen A. Horvath said, "To be informed about statewide and regional issues, and having the opportunity to engage and interact with leaders who put themselves on the front line everyday, has prepared these individuals to be the catalyst for positive change in Maryland."

### Fuel Fund Receives \$149,000 Grant from the Maryland Energy Administration

The Fuel Fund created Watt Watchers in 2007 and since then staff and volunteers have taught the energy conservation and financial education program to as many as 2,000 people in Baltimore City. Now, with a grant from the Maryland Energy Administration the program has expanded statewide.

The grant has enabled the Fuel Fund to add Ellen Falk and Dick Doran to Watt Watchers staff. Falk says that this spring, she will conduct more than 14 presentations in Montgomery and Prince George's Counties. In addition, she is recruiting more volunteers to teach the program in those counties boosting the number of classes that can be offered.

Each graduate of the program receives a toolkit. The toolkit's contents include: insulation/weatherization stripping, low-flow shower heads, compact fluorescent light bulbs and other materials and energy reducing devices.

Fuel Fund Executive Director Mary Ellen Vanni notes another benefit to offering the program statewide.

"Awareness is a key to overall change: we believe this program influences people because it demonstrates how to save money. That provides an incentive to conserve resources. Neighbors tell neighbors about it, increasing the level of awareness and knowledge about conserving energy."

## Fuel Fund Gives Website a New Look

If you have been to the Fuel Fund website in the past [www.fuefundmaryland.org](http://www.fuefundmaryland.org) and visit today you will find it's been given a face lift. The site now has some of the following features and improvements:

- Shows video, go to the resources tab at the top of the page, click on video and watch a compelling story about the history of the Fuel Fund and its services
- Tells the stories of families that have received assistance from the Fuel Fund, click on the resources tab and then Family Stories
- Provides easier navigation to find highlights and important information

## How to Support the Fuel Fund

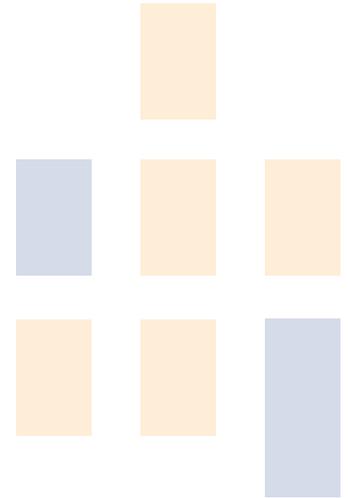
— All of the Fuel Fund success is due to donors like you!

- Go to [www.fuefundmaryland.org](http://www.fuefundmaryland.org), click on the donate button on the right side of the website, complete the required credit card information.
- Mail your check or money order to: Fuel Fund of Maryland, P.O. Box 6226, Baltimore, MD 21264-2266.
- Remember the Fuel Fund in your will.
- Contribute through workplace giving opportunities.
- Give through the electronic funds transfer (EFT) program (on-line contributions made from your bank account), for more information, contact Patryc Barnes, 410-821-3022, ext 4, or [pbarnes@fuefundmaryland.org](mailto:pbarnes@fuefundmaryland.org)



305 W. Chesapeake Avenue  
 Suite 115  
 Baltimore, MD 21204-4435  
 Phone: (410) 821-3022  
 Fax: (410) 821-3026

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Spring 2010 Newsletter



The Fuel Fund anticipates increases in requests for services because of the harsh winter of 2010.

The Fuel Fund of Maryland does not share, sell, lease, or otherwise provide contributor information to any other organization or business. The Fuel Fund of Maryland, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization – donations to which are tax deductible to the fullest extent allowed by law. Financial report is available upon request from Fuel Fund of MD, 305 W. Chesapeake Ave., Suite 115, Baltimore, MD 21204-4435. Telephone number (410) 821-3022. Documents and information filed in accordance with the Maryland Charitable Solicitations Act available upon request from the Secretary of State, State House, Annapolis, MD 21401 for the cost of printing and postage.

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The mission of the Fuel Fund of Maryland is to supplement the resources of those experiencing hardship with their home energy needs.