

# NECESSITY KNOWS NO SEASON.

## NEW BOARD MEMBERS

The Fuel Fund is excited to welcome the following community members to the **Fuel Fund Board of Directors**:

**Bill Stone**  
President  
Mobern Lighting

**Jody Costa**  
Director Of Marketing  
Barcoding, Inc.



The Fuel Fund serves vulnerable Marylanders in Baltimore City and Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Carroll, Harford, Howard, Prince Georges, Montgomery and the Southern Tri-Counties. The target population is families and individuals in Central Maryland who live at or below 200 percent of the Federal Poverty Guidelines. A representative Fuel Fund family has an income under \$13,000 for a family of three, or is a senior or individual with a disability living on a fixed income.

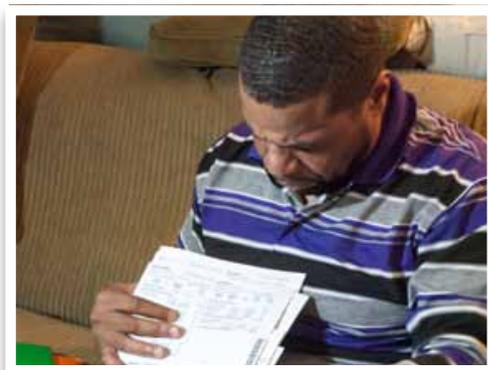
## WHEN THE SNOW MELTS, TERMINATIONS INCREASE

LONG, COLD WINTER WILL MEAN A POWERLESS SPRING FOR MANY MARYLANDERS

Were you cold this winter? Did you add the phrase ‘polar vortex’ to your vocabulary? Did you add snow shoveling to your workout repertoire? Did you find yourself turning up the heat a bit higher than usual just to keep your house reasonably warm?

Since this was an historically brutal winter for Maryland, the answer to each question is probably yes. The number of hours below freezing was 290% higher than last year from November through January. As you have likely seen from your own energy bills in recent months, colder outside temperatures are one of the biggest contributors to higher bills. Home heating typically accounts for ~45% of total energy usage in the household. When temperatures are as consistently cold as they were this past winter, heating units must work harder to stay at the set temperature.

For many Marylanders that have yet to see much of a recovery from the recession, such a winter can be the final straw. Households that managed to make it through unemployment, health emergencies, and other crises were dealt a tough hand this winter. Throughout the winter, many families paid what they could toward their balances, but the bills continued to grow and past due amounts reached threatening levels.



Winter's bills come due



Frost covers Druid Hill Park

Thankfully, utilities in Maryland may not terminate service when there is reason to believe it would endanger the health or life of an occupant. People with a medical condition that could be aggravated by a loss of power; the elderly; or the disabled may qualify to file for this certification to temporarily prevent a turn off. Maryland State law also prevents utility companies from turning off a household's gas and/or electric service when temperatures are forecasted to be below 32 or above 95 in the following 24 hour period. If a household's power is already off when extreme temperatures hit, it still will not be turned back on until the bill is resolved.

Being granted exemptions or avoiding a termination due to temperature, however, do not excuse a customer of paying the bill, nor does it relieve them of any portion of the unaffordable amount. In time, the bill must be paid. Even though the winter conditions did keep some households from being ‘turned off’, the full bill must be paid sooner or later.

All of this leads to a fact that surprises many people: The spring months are, in fact, the months with the highest number of service terminations.

Spring time should be a time of hope. For many Marylanders, it is a time of desperation. Thanks to your generous support, the Fuel Fund is there to help them pay down their energy bills and stay connected. ☘

## A MESSAGE FROM

### THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear Friends:

How much does it take to keep a family connected? The Fuel Fund recently made a \$6.85 grant. You read that correctly: \$6.85 in Fuel Fund cash was all that was needed to keep a family connected. When leveraged with customer payment and utility credits (see page 2), the result of a small contribution is profound.

The money needed by most applicants, however, has increased in recent months. The cold weather resulted in higher bills for us all. The full effect of these higher bills on limited-income households will be realized during the spring and early summer months when turn-off notices are distributed to customers with unpaid bills and service terminations increase.

The cumulative effect of higher-than-normal winter bills will be devastating for many families.

It may seem counterintuitive, as flowers poke through and robins peck about, that spring brings greater demand for the Fuel Fund. It is true, nonetheless. Right now, we are seeing more requests for higher amounts than any time in recent years.

Without the Fuel Fund, many 'turned off' this spring will still be disconnected as summer's sweltering heat arrives. This is why we say 'necessity knows no season'. Though winter has come to an end, the effects of the season will linger in the lives of limited-income Marylanders.

I thank you for your support and ask that you continue with us in the quest to keep families connected.

Warmest regards,

Mary Ellen  
Executive Director



## BECOME AN 'ENERGY ADVISOR'

### HELP MARYLANDERS BECOME ENERGY SELF-SUFFICIENT

Are you passionate about conservation and saving energy? Do you like to save money? Are you looking for an opportunity to help people make an important change in their lives?



If you answered 'yes' to any of these questions, the Fuel Fund encourages you to become a Watt Watchers of Maryland Energy Advisor.

As an Energy Advisor, you will be trained to work with limited income individuals who graduated from the Watt Watchers onsite, online and neighborhood-based programs. Energy Advisors will follow-up by phone with graduates and provide personalized energy-related guidance and counseling services.

Becoming an Energy Advisor is easy. The Fuel Fund will train you (a two-hour commitment) and the volunteer hours are flexible. Coaching can be done working from home and completed outside of working hours.

Watt Watchers of Maryland is focused on helping limited-income households save energy and save money, so that they can afford their bills and avoid termination of service. Our volunteer Energy Advisors are a vital component of achieving this goal.

If you have an ability to communicate complex information in a clear and concise manner, a strong interest in behavior change and energy efficiency, and willingness to learn and apply community based social marketing principles and tools, become an Energy Advisor today. Ability to converse in Spanish is a plus.

If you are ready to be an Energy Advisor, please contact the Fuel Fund's Danielle Phelps at 410-235-9080 x 106. 📞

## THANK YOU FOR YOUR DONATION!

### YOU'VE MADE A HUGE IMPACT



Your dollar



BGE matching credits



Client payments



**3x the Impact!**

The Fuel Fund is able to triple the impact of every dollar received through BGE matching credits and client payments. **This means that your \$100 donation is actually able to resolve a \$300 bill.** Your dollar has gone a long way! Thank you for being a Fuel Friend. 📞

## MARYVALE STUDENTS 'SHARE THE POWER'



On February 28th, students from Maryvale Prep continued their tradition of turning off the heat and lights and spending the night in the school's gym.

Sound crazy?

Maybe just a little bit, but the "Lights Out" event aims to increase awareness about the Fuel Fund and foster understanding about the challenges Fuel Fund clients face.

This student-run event is part of the Fuel Fund's grassroots Share the Power campaign. Thousands of Marylanders live in homes that are dark and cold because their service has been terminated. As a result of living without power, these individuals and families are at an increased risk for home fires, homelessness, truancy, and illness. A single home without power in a community endangers the entire community. The Fuel Fund of Maryland strives to make sure all homes are connected to the life-sustaining energy too often taken for granted. Events like "Lights Out" help raise awareness of what it is like to be disconnected.

Are you interested in helping establish new Share the Power campaigns in local schools? Please contact the Fuel Fund's Danielle Phelps at 410-235-9080 x 106. 📧

## CORPORATE SUPPORT

The Fuel Fund of Maryland relies on the generosity of corporate partners to fulfill our mission. Corporate relationships significantly aid the Fuel Fund in helping Marylanders stay safe and warm in their homes.



By partnering with the Fuel Fund, businesses help Marylanders keep their power on while building their business as well. This fall, the Fuel Fund received generous support from M&T Bank, T Rowe Price and Venable Foundation.

The Fuel Fund of Maryland has also partnered with CQI Associates to support their work and help reduce your energy bills. Visit [www.cqienergy.com](http://www.cqienergy.com) to learn about the competitive rates in their Residential Energy Co-op Program. For each enrollment, CQI Associates will make a donation to the Maryland Fuel Fund. Indicate the Fuel Fund of Maryland as your affiliation when you sign up.

These strong corporate relations allow the Fuel Fund to continue to help thousands of families in need across Maryland. If you know a corporation or business that may like to partner with us, please call Mary Kay Page at 410-235-9080 ext.111. 📧

## FUEL FUND BOARD

### OFFICERS

James B. Smith,  
*President*

Jack Ramey,  
*1st Vice President*

Michael Erdek,  
*2nd Vice President*

Michael Schmeckpeper,  
*Treasurer*

Manette Frese,  
*Secretary*

### DIRECTORS

Ben Ballard

Jennifer Busse

David Carrera

David Conn

Bob Frazee

Jody Costa

Lindsay McCrory

David Plasse

David Saunders

Bill Stone

Terry Slade Young

James K. Wilhelm, Jr.

### STAFF LEADERSHIP

Mary Ellen Vanni,  
*Executive Director*

Dick Doran,  
*Program Director*

Bill Freeman,  
*Development Director*

## Save the Date

### 2nd Annual Summer Kickoff

June 26th • 5:30 - 8:00 PM

Like BBQ? Like music? The Fuel Fund invites you to celebrate summer's arrival. There is no cost to attend this event in the courtyard of the Union Mill building in Hampden/Woodberry, 1500 Union Avenue Baltimore, MD 21211

RSVP: [dphelps@fuelfundmaryland.org](mailto:dphelps@fuelfundmaryland.org)



1500 Union Avenue  
Suite 2400  
Baltimore, MD 21211

P: 410.235.9080  
fuelfundmaryland.org

NON PROFIT ORG  
U.S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
Baltimore, MD  
Permit No. 7689



# NECESSITY KNOWS NO SEASON.

SPRING 2014 NEWSLETTER

## INSIDE:

- Spring brings darkness for many families
- Become an Energy Advisor today!
- Students 'Share the Power'

WWW.FUELFUNDMARYLAND.ORG