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NON PROFIT ORG  
U.S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
LAUREL, MD  
PERMIT NO. 647

## RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

LAUREL COMMUNITY DAY  
5K RUN & 1M WALK

SAT. MAY 20TH / 8am  
MCCULLOUGH FIELD / LAUREL, MD

\$30 BEFORE MAY 1 / \$35 AFTER MAY 1

REGISTER.CHRONOTRACK.COM/R/26089

This year, LARS is proud to be partnering with First Generation College Bound for a 5K to kick off Laurel High School's Community Day! The 5K run and 1 mile walk will take place at McCullough Field, starting at 8AM and following the same route as LARS' past 5Ks. We are excited to be sharing this fun day with FGCB, a great local organization making college access and success a reality for low-income students in Laurel. All proceeds from this joint fundraiser will be split between LARS and FGCB to help advance our shared vision for the Laurel community.

After the 5K, the fun continues just up the road at Laurel High School, including a car show, food trucks, a moon bounce, and more from 11-3PM.

## Pick-Up/Delivery Volunteers Needed!

Here at LARS we truly believe that volunteers are the backbone of our organization. Volunteers turn our ideas into reality and together we give those living in poverty a hand-up toward better and brighter futures.

We are currently looking for volunteers to pick up food donations from local grocery stores and deliver them to our food pantry on a weekly basis. Grocery stores often end up with bread and other baked goods that go to waste at the end of the day. Help reduce food

waste and feed families in need by rescuing these items before they are thrown away!

Food pick-up and delivery volunteers must have a driver's license, must be able to use their own vehicle for pick-ups, be at least 18 years of age, able to handle light to moderate lifting, and be available Monday, Wednesday, or Friday mornings.

Contact LARS' Volunteer Coordinator, Angelica Christian, for more information! (301) 776-0442 x32 / [achristian@laureladvocacy.org](mailto:achristian@laureladvocacy.org)



# LARS Letter

Spring 2017 | Volume 30, Issue 1



Wait, what's this? In our last newsletter we announced our plan to move to an electronic newsletter, but since we are still missing email addresses for many of our supporters, we want to make sure we're still reaching you! To opt-in to e-news and/or opt out of print news, email [lwellford@laureladvocacy.org](mailto:lwellford@laureladvocacy.org).

## Celebrating 30 Years of Service!



It all began in March of 1987, when local congregations took notice of a need in the Laurel community and decided to do something about it. With no dedicated social services organizations in Laurel, congregations were typically the first line of help for people in crisis. The problem was that there was no consistent protocol for responding to those calls for help, and congregations felt unequipped to meet the diverse needs of their communities. When a few caring individuals from several congregations came together to find a solution, an advocacy committee was born. Support for the cause grew quickly. By September of that year, the advocacy committee was able to hire a part-time social worker to meet with clients out of a small office at St. Philip's Episcopal Church on Main Street.

During that first year, the newly formed Laurel Advocacy & Referral Services was able to assist 361 Laurel residents with food and financial help. As the needs of our community grew, so too did the support from many generous donors and volunteers, allowing LARS to expand and introduce new programs to meet more diverse needs. 30 years later, LARS' staff of nine serves over 1,730 Laurel households each year!

We invite you all to celebrate with us at our 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration on **June 10th, 2017 from 10AM-1PM** at LARS as we take a look back at our organization's unique history and honor the many people who have helped us along the way. RSVP to our (free) celebration at <https://lars30th.eventbrite.com>.

## Who You've Helped...

Last month, a fiercely independent single mom named Kelly\* came to LARS for the first time. She held back tears as she asked for our help; she was behind on her rent because, faced with the choice of earning a week's pay at her job or taking care of her sick daughter, Maddie\*, she chose her daughter. When seven-year-old Maddie started to have seizures in school last year, it was nearly impossible for Kelly to maintain a steady income. After a short hospital stay, the doctor's appointments were so time-consuming that Kelly exhausted her sick leave and had to take off work without pay. After many visits to primary care doctors, specialists, and neurologists, Maddie was eventually diagnosed with epilepsy and began the process of finding the right medications to keep her seizures under control. Between

medical bills and time off without pay, Kelly's debt piled up quickly and soon she was greeted with an eviction notice taped to her door. With Maddie's health still unstable, uprooting their lives and finding another place to stay was out of the question. So Kelly looked for a lifeline. She then made the call for the help she thought she'd never need. With rental assistance from LARS, Kelly and Maddie were able to stay in their home and focus on Maddie's health. With stable housing, Kelly is now able to focus on building a plan for sustainability. She continues to work with LARS to find resources for reliable and affordable care for Maddie so that she can return to work and pay off her remaining debts.

\*Names changed to protect client's identity