

2004 Good Neighbor Award Recipients

The Good Neighbor Award was developed in 1996 when D.C. Delegate Eleanor Holmes Norton challenged the Fannie Mae Foundation to create a program that would acknowledge the “good neighbors” in our communities that support the work of homeless service programs and contribute to ending and preventing homelessness. Each year, when the Foundation kicks off the Help the Homeless Program, the Good Neighbor Award nomination form is distributed to all of the Help the Homeless beneficiary organizations requesting nominations for this award. A review committee, consisting of representatives from all three jurisdictions, nonprofit agencies, and Foundation staff, review and recommend an awardee from each jurisdiction (D.C., Maryland, and Virginia).

In 2004, nine nominations were submitted, three nominations each from D.C., Maryland, and Virginia. The following three individuals as the 2004 Good Neighbor Awardees.

Gary Mummert – nominated by For Love of Children (FLOC) and A Hope and A Home (Washington, D.C.)

Gary Mummert is a certified member of the American Society of Home Inspectors and an active volunteer for For Love of Children (FLOC). He uses his skills and expertise in the building industry to help FLOC maintain and improve its 18 units of affordable transitional housing, which in turn helps to prevent homelessness through the provision of affordable housing. FLOC maintains transitional apartments in eight different properties in the Columbia Heights neighborhood. While this scattered site strategy works well for FLOC and the families it serves, there are eight separate properties which include eight roofs, 18 furnaces, and numerous appliances that must be maintained. As a volunteer with FLOC, Mummert conducts complete property inspections for all 18 apartments, provides annual furnace inspections to ensure the safety of the units, and uses his skills to troubleshoot maintenance problems. He forged a relationship between FLOC and the Universalist Unitarian Affordable Housing Corporation, which has resulted in both funding and volunteers. In addition, Mummert has recruited skilled carpenters to assist with special projects (such as installing new kitchen countertops) and he initiated a monthly volunteer work day to enroll and train volunteers on minor home repairs and to help maintain the eight properties. Not only does Mummert provide his expert advice to FLOC, he also mobilizes other volunteers and pitches in to get the work done. His volunteer contributions have helped to shape and strengthen FLOC’s property management program and he is now helping FLOC to develop a long-term plan for capital improvements to sustain its properties well into the future.

Mansfield “Kasey” Kaseman – nominated by Community Ministries of Rockville (CMR) (Maryland)

Mansfield Kaseman is the pastor of the Rockville United Church and also serves as the unpaid executive director of Community Ministries of Rockville (CMR). He has been a leading proponent of social justice and welfare and works to improve the quality of life for everyone in the greater Rockville and Montgomery County communities. Under his leadership as executive director of CMR, he has assisted with the development of

numerous programs, including: Manna Food Center, Rockville Meals on Wheels, Montgomery Habitat for Humanity, and shelters for men and women. He also created and maintains the Caregiver's Coalition in Rockville, a voluntary association of private and public human service program directors working together to identify and meet community needs.

Kaseman has been the catalyst to identify and develop solutions to community needs including: creating an emergency assistance program, which assists thousands of families in avoiding eviction; establishing Jefferson House, a subsidized residence for six working homeless men; and putting together a county and nonprofit partnership to develop Sophia House, which serves homeless women. In addition, Kaseman expanded CMR's elderly ministries program to provide home health care for the elderly and added a home repair program, which partners with other congregations and uses community block grants to prevent seniors from becoming homeless. Kaseman also has successfully involved the community through an active volunteer program, which last year accounted for nearly \$450,000 in in-kind gifts and services, more than 26,000 donated meals, and more than 4,000 volunteer hours for the benefit of both the community and CMR.

John Brothers – nominated by Good Shepherd Alliance (Virginia)

John Brothers is no stranger to poverty and how homelessness can strike anyone. He grew up in Minneapolis - the son of working parents. An injury disabled his father, who was a furniture mover, and his mother worked as a cashier at a convenience store to make ends meet. One day, their home caught fire and their financial picture collapsed. For a while, they stayed in their condemned home. When they were forced to move, they moved to another condemned house and even lived in their car for a period of time. This bout with poverty and homelessness left a deep impression on Brothers and led him to a career as an advocate for the homeless.

Brothers previously worked for the District of Columbia Public School (DCPS) system, and he was instrumental in helping the Foundation execute the DCPS/Help the Homeless partnership. His contribution to that partnership helped the Foundation to inform the schools in the system about the issue of homelessness and helped encourage students and nonprofit agencies to work together to develop a volunteer relationship through participation in mini-walks and service projects with the agencies.

Approximately two years ago, Brothers left DCPS to become the executive director of Good Shepherd Alliance in Loudoun County, Virginia. Loudoun County has been named the fastest growing county in the United States, which has contributed to an unprecedented increase in the number of homeless people throughout the county. Developing effective programs and solutions to homelessness requires vision and leadership. Brothers demonstrated those qualities when he and Good Shepherd Alliance formed a partnership with a local coalition to initiate the Loudoun Dialogue on Poverty. This effort brought together 93 organizations to discuss the issues of the causes of and solutions to poverty. Two noteworthy results include: Good Shepherd's creation of a Crisis Center and Street Outreach Program where more than 315 individuals received

services and the development of the Community Action Agency designation for Loudoun County. With the high visibility of the Crisis Center and the need to maintain and expand and/or develop new programs for the homeless, Brothers and Good Shepherd Alliance embarked on a process that has not been done in more than 20 years. Ninety-six percent of the United States receives funding for poverty through a Community Action Center. Loudoun County has not benefited from this funding for more than 40 years. Working with a local coalition and the County Board of Supervisors, Brothers and others at Good Shepherd Alliance began to establish the Community Action Agency. The work is currently in its final stages and it is anticipated that Loudoun County will receive funding to assist the community in alleviating poverty, help combat homelessness, and create self-sufficiency. Brothers not only manages the day-to-day work of Good Shepherd Alliance but he also has shown leadership and vision by going beyond his work to develop community-wide dialogue and solutions to poverty and homelessness in Loudoun County.