



TESTIMONY TO THE FAIRFAX COUNTY CONSOLIDATED COMMUNITY
ADVISORY COMMITTEE
NOVEMBER 13, 2012

Good evening, I am Barry Wickersham, Vice Chairman of the Shepherd's Center of Fairfax – Burke. I appreciate the opportunity to address this committee.

The Shepherd's Center of Fairfax – Burke (SCFB) provides educational, socialization and transportation services to help older adults in central Fairfax County to continue to live independently in their own homes. It is cost effective to invest in such programs that maintain seniors in their homes and postpone or avoid the need for assisted living or nursing care.

Fairfax County has excellent programs that address the needs of older adults but does not have the resources to meet all existing needs. The County has successfully partnered for many years with non-profits by assisting their work with CCFP grants. In fact, SCFB has received CCFP funds from 2010 to the present. This funding has provided a positive return on the county's investment and our Center has leveraged nearly 8 times the \$31,000 grant value through donations, in-kind gifts, and extensive volunteer hours by 125+ volunteers in our seven current programs, which provide socialization and a caring and attentive quality of life environment for the 600 residents of Fairfax County who are Shepherd's Center clients.

One of the human service needs with which SCFB is familiar is low cost, readily available, and reliable transportation that enables seniors, who no longer drive, to remain in their residence. The aging of Fairfax County citizens is apparent, and these citizens need transportation to medical, dental, rehab, etc. appointments, as well as rides to the grocery store, bank, etc., to satisfy basic life style necessities. SCFB has been a major respondent to and supplier of transportation services since 2007; in 2009 we completed 669 medical drives and in 2012 we anticipate we will

accomplish 920 rides, for over 240 clients. This is a 37% increase in drives in 3 years! SCFB serves all seniors in the Fairfax-Burke area, but nearly 80% of our transportation clients are low income citizens of the county! Without the Shepherd's Center programs many clients inform us they would forgo medical appointments.

Another acute human service need of seniors is a reasonable cost, physical exercise program to promote strength, flexibility and balance. This is evidenced by our experience in offering exercise classes in 2009 once a week for two six week sessions. Now, in response to the increased demand, we are offering twice weekly year-round exercise classes!

The CCFP has been extremely valuable and instrumental in enabling SCFB to expand and enhance our efforts in transportation, socialization and outreach to low income seniors to better serve more Fairfax County residents. Through our partnership with the CCFP we have touched and improved the lives of many senior citizens, who often are among the most forgotten in a very cost-effective manner.

Thank you.