

GUARDIAN

You can be the one who makes a difference



by John Jenks, UMFS Admissions Coordinator

My name is John Jenks and I am the admissions coordinator here at UMFS. My job here is both wonderful and challenging. My office sees all the referrals from local Departments of Social Services for children requiring help from UMFS. We are able to help some; however, it is often the case that our organization is not able to help as many as we would like.

Since July 1, our organization has received more than 100 requests for children to be placed in Treatment Foster Care. Although we have been able to place many of them in homes, we have had to turn a greater percentage of them away due to the fact that we had no foster homes available. We continue to believe that children do better living in families, and it can be very painful for the children when they realize that there is no home available for them to grow up in.

As I sit here today, there are 12 children's files on my desk. All of these kids are looking for a place to live. The majority of these children are teenagers. All of them are victims of various types of abuse. They are hurt and angry about being neglected and abused by the very people who were supposed to love and protect them.

At UMFS we specialize in working with the children that no one else seems to be able to help.

We are all aware that the economic times are tough for everyone, including the commonwealth of Virginia. Resources to help those most in need are very limited. However, you and your family can provide the things these children need more than anything else. A home. Love. Compassion. Safety. All at no financial cost to you.

The beauty of foster care is that you not only help your foster child, but also their children and their children's children by breaking the cycle of abuse. The effects of your commitment and caring can last for generations.

UMFS will provide you with training, 24-hour support, financial compensation and the expertise on how to deal with children who have suffered so much. Our regional centers' telephone numbers are Richmond, 804-254-9695; Tidewater, 757-490-9791; Northern Virginia, 703-941-9008; South Central, 434-757-1065; and Fredericksburg, 540-898-1773.

Call today. The children are waiting.

Volunteer Highlight

Mitchell, Wiggins & Company LLP, in partnership with the Virginia Society of CPAs, had 39 volunteers assist with the beautification of the UMFS Richmond campus. Volunteers worked for six hours weeding, trimming, mowing, sawing, and mulching. This preparation of land was in support of the effort to renovate an existing structure on campus which will become additional classrooms for our Charterhouse School Day Program. Mitchell, Wiggins & Company even brought a donation of computers for our school. A very big thank you goes out to the wonderful volunteers who gave their time and energy to benefit the children and families we serve!



"When we become more fully aware that our success is due in large measure to the loyalty, helpfulness, and encouragement we have received from others, our desire grows to pass on similar gifts. Gratitude spurs us on to prove ourselves worthy of what others have done for us. The spirit of gratitude is a powerful energizer."

— Wilferd A. Peterson



Inside

- Thank You
- Serving
- Community Spotlight
- UMFS Offering
- The Inner Past
- Need a Speaker? Call UMFS!
- Coach Robbins
- Guidelines for Year-End Giving
- Back to Your Kansas
- Videos, Tweets and Fans!
- Tale of a Bequest
- I Had No Idea
- Upcoming Events
- Learning Institute

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Locations

- Richmond Campus & Regional Center**
3900 West Broad Street
Richmond, VA 23230
T: 804-353-4461
- Northern Virginia Regional Center**
6335 Little River Turnpike
Alexandria, VA 22312
T: 703-941-9008
- Fredericksburg Regional Center**
305 Charlotte Street
Fredericksburg, VA 22401
T: 540-898-1773
- Tidewater Regional Center**
815 Baker Road, Suite 201
Virginia Beach, VA 23462
T: 757-490-9791
- South Central Regional Center**
100 N. Carter St.
La Crosse, VA 23950
T: 434-757-1065
- Farmville Office**
212 High Street
Farmville, VA 23901
T: 434-391-9076
- Lynchburg Office**
1501 Rivermont Avenue
Lynchburg, VA 24503
T: 434-942-2604
- Leland House**
13525 Leland Road
Centerville, VA 20120
T: 703-222-3558
- Charlottesville Office**
806 East High Street
Charlottesville, VA 22902
T: 434-972-1718



Greg Peters
President & CEO, UMFS

Thank You A few words to our loyal supporters

We, like you, have been challenged by the economy. The needs of children, families, and communities are growing while resources are shrinking. During this climate we have been asked to do more while also having to be more inventive, efficient, and resourceful.

What have we done when staff and resources have been stretched thin and the needs of families have swelled?

We have tightened our belt.

We have reduced maintenance contracts and welcomed the skills and services of nearly 500 volunteers. This record setting increase in volunteer service provided painting, landscaping, childcare, tutoring, event hands and much more. Individuals, churches, corporations, youth and civic groups gifted their skills, energy, and time to further the impact and mission of UMFS.

We welcomed creative partnerships and major gifts-in-kind. As we are seeking funds for a renovation

of a building for our Charterhouse School Day Program, a generous donor not only committed funds but he went one step further. As a developer, he volunteered his and his staff's time to complete a major stage of the construction. This gift, along with others, will lead youth to academic success and will enable them to learn independent living and occupational skills.

We also welcomed the artistic production skills of a friend who created several UMFS awareness videos. These video productions will help us recruit foster parents across Virginia — which in turn directly affects our ability to aid children and families.

These volunteers and donors assisted in cutting costs which allowed us to use additional resources for direct service needs. We are stretching every dollar. Every donation helps more than ever, whatever the size of the donation. We trust you will continue to stand by our children and families. We thank you again for your support.

Serving

Friends of UMFS have been serving up food, fun and friendly fellowship in their homes to benefit UMFS. *Serving*, A UMFS Dinner Party is used to bring in funds for the greatest needs of UMFS. The most recent dinner party took place at Bill and Nancy Kuehl's home. We thank our hosts for their generosity. If you would like to learn how you can help UMFS raise much needed funds to support our children and families, contact Bethanie Constant at bconstant@umfs.org or (804) 254-9674.



Community Spotlight

In this issue, the spotlight shines on volunteers from the **Principal Financial Group** of Richmond. One of their teams took a day and visited the UMFS campus and volunteered indoors and outdoors at Cottage Five. Inside, they organized the Gift in Kind Room which offers tangible items not only to our families, but also to families in the community. It is truly an organized place to visit now. Outside, they accomplished much needed bush trimming and yard work. Thank you, volunteers from the Principal Financial Group! For current volunteer opportunities, please contact Linda Ray, Community Ministries Coordinator, lray@umfs.org, 804-254-9692.

This year's UMFS Offering packets have been mailed to Virginia's United Methodist churches. Your gift of financial support is more important than ever, as the need for UMFS services have increased. UMFS does not receive apportionments, so your participation is vital to sustain our children and families.

A 2½ -minute UMFS overview video is available at www.umfs.org/support_umfs.xhtml. To receive a copy of the video on DVD, contact Bethanie Constant at (804) 254-9674 or bconstant@umfs.org.

To learn more about the UMFS Offering, visit www.umfs.org/umfs_offering.xhtml.



The Inner Past, by Jon A.

Many of our children and teens cope through writing. Jon is kind enough to share some of his work.

The life of one so why was I pretending, to understand the first time that my life was just beginning.

Because of you I can't live to have a second chance, the harm you threw at me in every open gap stuck in its stance.

Why I let everyone judge me, all it did was bring me down and assault me mentally.

The bush I jumped in full of guarding thorns, everyday I feel like a bull ready to sharpen its horns.

I run past the hurt without really knowing, that all the pain built up in me kept glowing.

So what I see my path so far ahead, and you will move on with actions that have no meaning to what you said.

I can't keep up with all the grudges I held in my possession, it's true I let them go but still I have that last second ready to go tension.

I have experienced too much to be underrated, didn't you say that you didn't want me, without me understanding I still waited.

I look for clues and little areas not present with me right now, of what great memories do I have to share without knowing how?

I cried because my heart has been hurt, and because of you I am forced to live my life with that extra time spent to be alert.

I am continuing to bleed out a little at a time, and I am throwing my past away with no definition.

I look ahead at what I am going to do, you can't doubt me when what I did is all mine.

Need a speaker? Contact the UMFS Speakers Network at www.umfs.org/speakers_network.xhtml.

Coach Robbins Shares Wisdom and Stories

Coach Dave Robbins, one of the premier college basketball coaches in the nation, came to speak to the youth of Charterhouse School on September 30.

While Coach Robbins officially retired from coaching the Virginia Union University men's basketball team in June 2008, he still had many valuable lessons to teach. Robbins talked about teamwork, studying, selflessness, attitude and character. The young men and women listened attentively as Coach Robbins told stories from the locker room and basketball court. He talked about overcoming obstacles and doing so with ethics and values.



Questions from the students ranged from "What skills will I need to make the team?" to "Were you good at basketball when you were young?" Coach Robbins entertained all questions and even signed autographs. Thank you, Coach Robbins, for generously giving of your time and wisdom!

Your Guidelines for Year-end Giving 2009

The UMFS Development offices will be open until 4:30 p.m. on Thursday, Dec. 31. After December 19, you may prefer to make your gift in person, online or by telephone to avoid mailing or shipping delays. If you wish to make your gift in the 2009 tax year, please use the following guidelines.

Hand-delivered gifts: Your hand delivered gift of cash, check, or securities is effective on the date received by UMFS. Deadline is 4:30 p.m. on Thursday, December 31, 2009.

Telephone: Deadline is 4:30 p.m. on Thursday, December 31, 2009.

USPS Mail: Latest postmark on all mailed materials including checks must be on or before December 31, 2009.

Shipping Services (FedEx, UPS, or other shipping service): Because of unclear IRS guidelines, UMFS considers your gift sent by a private shipping company such as FedEx or UPS to be effective when received at UMFS.

Credit/Debit Cards: The gift date is recorded as the date on which the charge is made to your credit card. Visit our secure online giving page.

Your Gift of Securities (stocks, bonds, and mutual funds): Gifts of securities require planning. The effective date of your gift for tax purposes depends upon how you deliver the gift. For more detailed instructions, please contact David Baker at dbaker@umfs.org or (804) 254-9663.

Mailed (USPS) gift of securities: Are effective as of the postmark date. If you mail stock certificates in two envelopes (see below) the later of the two postmarks is used. It is safest to send unendorsed stock certificates, along with a letter of instruction. Instead of signing your stock certificate on the back, please sign a stock or bond power and send it in an envelope separate from the actual certificate. Your gift will be effective as of the later of the two postmark dates.

Electronic Securities Transfer: Your electronic transfer of securities from a brokerage account is complete when the securities have been received by an account owned by UMFS. *Important: These gifts are not considered complete upon giving instructions to a broker. Your electronic transfer gift is counted for tax purposes only when it is complete.* Initiate your transfer early. It is wise to allow several weeks. While some transfers may be received within days of your instructions, longer delays are possible, especially at year-end. Your electronic transfer must be received by 11:59 p.m. on Thursday, December 31, 2009.

If you're at least 70½: The tax law for 2009 allows you to give UMFS, and/or other qualified charities, up to \$100,000 directly from your IRA without triggering federal income taxes.

For more information or to make your gift, please contact the Development Office staff: David Baker, Vice President, dbaker@umfs.org, (804) 254-9663; Bethanie Constant, Development Manager, bconstant@umfs.org, (804) 254-9674; Brenda Foster, Office Manager, bfoster@umfs.org, (804) 254-9450; Sharon Probasco, Administrative Assistant, sprobasco@umfs.org, (804) 353-4461, ext. 1732.

Tale of a Bequest: Several times each year, UMFS receives a check from an attorney in settlement of an estate. Someone we never knew has left us a bequest.... [Read more at www.umfs.org/why_we_give.xhtml](http://www.umfs.org/why_we_give.xhtml).

Back to Your Kansas

A poem by Stefanie Hughes

*You came to me like Dorothy.
A little girl
tossed and turned by the tempest;
a foundling who had
lost her home in the storm
and didn't know why.*

*You landed here.
In what must have seemed like Oz;
filled with little people who loved you
from the moment you dropped in
to this strange place.
But, I, a poor fairy godmother,
had no ruby slippers to give.*

*So we walked...
You came with us.
To the beach, and to parks, and to church
part of the package.
Down a road you didn't know
and a path you could not always tell
was paved with golden bricks.*

*You became part of us.
A daughter not of my womb
family not of our flesh;
but spirit of our spirits
and heart of our hearts.
Yet your home was always calling
from some far off place
that was not a part of our world.*

*Now
we have walked to the end of our golden
path...*

*And the wizard behind the curtain says it
is time for you to leave us
to return to your Kansas.*

*This time
you'll fly home away from us...*

*From the Scarecrow
and your little Cowardly Lion
and your confidant the Good Witch.
For I was not your fairy godmother,
but a tin man without a piece of my heart
before you landed here.*

*But we will be here waiting
wishing, praying
on a path that doesn't seem as golden
without you,
to watch your journey
as your path leaves the ground
and you learn how to fly.*

*This is a poem written by one of our
UMFS resource parents, Stefanie Hughes,
after her foster daughter returned home
to the kinship family. This Stafford
County family has been with UMFS for 21
months. Stefanie and Craig Hughes have
three biological children. They are a TFC
as well as a TFC to adopt home.*

Videos, Tweets and Fans!

View our videos on YouTube at www.youtube.com/user/UMFS1900. Currently, you can watch seven different videos varying from general overviews, foster care recruitment, and news coverage of our events. We thank Danny Woodruff of Insight Graphics and Promotions for his creation of the Each Story series. Follow UMFS's tweets at twitter.com/UMFS and become a fan of UMFS at our Facebook site: www.facebook.com/pages/UMFS/137734386044.



Serving families with our hearts and our expertise.

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In more than a century since our founding, UMFS has learned what it takes to bring a troubled teen back from the brink, to fill a void for a caring family and a child without a home, and to provide comfort and security for those facing the complications of advancing age. "Touch a life. Create a future." It's the guiding principle of the treatment and services we provide across much of the commonwealth of Virginia and across a broad spectrum of needs. UMFS - serving families with our hearts and our expertise.

Services

- FamilyCARE Services
- Treatment Foster Care
- Adoption Services
- Intensive Treatment
- School-Based Services
- Project LIFE

Affiliate

- Guardian Place

Call us toll-free at
866-558-3533 or
visit us online at
www.umfs.org

Questions? Comments?
Contact

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The corporation, the United Methodist Family Services of Virginia, is related through faith to the United Methodist Church. However, it operates separately from and is not an agency of the United Methodist Church. The corporation alone is responsible for obligations it incurs. The United Methodist Church does not assume liability for any debts or obligations of the corporation.

UMFS is an Equal Opportunity Agency. No one is denied care, assistance, or employment on the basis of race, religion, color, sex, age, disability, national origin, veteran/military status, sexual orientation, ancestry, marital status, and retaliation. Any person who believes he or she has been discriminated against in any USDA-related activity should write to the Secretary of Agriculture, Washington, DC 20250.

Upcoming Events at UMFS

Fredericksburg

UMFS offers a nine-week PRIDE (Parent Resources for Information, Development and Education) training program for all families interested in becoming foster and adoptive parents. The next training program begins January 6 and continues every Wednesday, 6-9 p.m., through March 3. Participants must register in advance. To register, contact Terry Martin, 540-898-1773, ext. 13, or tmartin@umfs.org.

Northern Virginia

Training for foster/adoptive parents will be held January 5-March 2; participants must attend an orientation session prior to training. To register, contact Adrienne Tucker, 703-941-9008 or atucker@umfs.org.

Richmond

PRIDE training begins January 12 and continues through March 9. Participants must register in advance. To register, contact Erica Mann at 804-254-9695 or emann@umfs.org. Future training sessions: March 30-May 25, June 15-August 10 and September 7-November 11.

South Central

PRIDE training will be held on Tuesday evenings, 6-9 p.m., from January 5 through March 9. Participants must register in advance. To register, contact Melinda Elliott at 434-757-1065 or melliott@umfs.org. Future training sessions: March 30-June 1 and August 31-November 2.

Tidewater

PRIDE training begins January 11 and continues through February 8. To register, contact Sheryll Bleil, 757-490-9791 or sbleil@umfs.org. Future training sessions: March 29-April 26, May 31-June 28 and September 13-October 11.

Visit the News & Events page at www.umfs.org for more information!

I don't know about you, but I had no idea

by Connie Dye, UMFS Recruitment and Marketing Manager

I'd never given foster care much thought. I knew there were children who had suffered abuse and neglect who were in foster care. I knew it took a special kind of person to be a foster parent. I also thought that foster care is supposed to be temporary. Boy, was I wrong.

I had no idea that children in foster care could potentially be bounced around for months or even years from foster home to foster home without any long-term plan.

Thousands of teenagers have literally "grown up" in the foster care system. Most never end up achieving permanence—long-term, meaningful connections between a child and a caring adult.

It's no wonder. There are 500,000 children in the U.S. in foster care and only 150,000 foster homes. One of my first questions when I came to UMFS was "So what happens to the other 350,000?" A lot of them end up in group homes or institutions. They languish in the system until they turn 18 when they "age out." While technically adults, a majority of these teens have never been taught the life skills they need to live on their own. Nearly 45 percent will end up homeless.

Did you know?

- There are nearly 7,000 children in Virginia's foster care system.
- For 2,635 of them, the goal set forth in their foster care plan does not lead to a permanent family.
- Virginia ranks first among the states in the percent of youth who age out of foster care.
- Virginia's average wait time of 20.9 months means that children who have lost their parents average more time in foster care than their peers in other states.
- 20% of all children and youth in foster care live in group homes and institutions.
- 270,000 prisoners in the USA were once children in foster care.

I had no idea.

Teens need a place to call home, a loving adult to teach them, a shoulder to lean on, but most of all they need love. With an open mind and an open heart, you can be their champion. Consider becoming a foster parent to an adolescent or teenager. No one outgrows their need for a family. Their future depends on you.

UMFS' Learning Institute offers powerful learning opportunities for adults who work with children, youth, and families. Programs are also open to people and organizations interested in expanding their horizons. To learn more, visit the UMFS Learning Institute online at www.umfs.org/training.xhtml.