



Calvert County NEWS

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Calvert County Hosts Maryland Association of Social Services Boards Annual Conference

Efforts to Address Poverty Receive State-level Recognition

PRINCE FREDERICK, Md. – Dec. 12, 2019 – Poverty is tough and the cold winter months make it even tougher – a challenge the Maryland Association of Social Services Boards (MASSB) explored during its two-day annual conference held in Solomons in late October.

Calvert County experiences its share of poverty: 32% of Calvert’s families live at or below the minimum income level necessary to live self-sufficiently, known as the ALICE (Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed) threshold. Females and adults without higher education are disproportionately impacted.

During the conference, members of local boards from across the state participated in a poverty simulation led by Susan Coppage, MAASB liaison to the local boards. The exercise illustrated the kinds of tough choices people in poverty face every day.

A 2015 U.S. Department of Energy study found that 25 million American households reported skipping food and medicine to pay for energy, with 7 million reporting that they did so every month.

Nonprofit partners are essential for bridging the gap between residents’ needs and government assistance programs so residents won’t have to choose between heating their house or a having a warm meal.

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Calvert County Efforts to Address Poverty Receive State-level Recognition

Dec. 12, 2019

Page 2

“Finding lasting solutions to poverty is challenging and complex work,” Board of County Commissioners President Thomas E. “Tim” Hutchins said in his welcome address. “It will take strategic collaboration across the public and private sector.”

Karen Lane, board chair for Calvert Family Advocates, discussed best practices in working with social service partners and gaining support from local businesses that are willing and wanting to tackle some of the issues experienced by the working poor in our community.

“Our government does not have programs to meet every need, so we are grateful for the local companies that support our programs that fill the gaps,” said Lane. “The companies know that some of their own employees are facing challenges with transportation, housing and healthcare. We have seen that collaboration across the public, private and nonprofit sectors can begin to address these issues.”

One such business, based in Calvert County, was presented with the MASSB Community Partner of the Year award. PATRIOT, a commercial construction company headquartered in Dunkirk, received state-level recognition for its role in supporting Calvert Family Advocates, the non-profit fundraising arm to Calvert’s Social Services Board that addresses self-sufficiency needs for participants of Department of Social Services programs.

MASSB Foundation Chair and Calvert County resident Chris Cummings said financial support from PATRIOT has helped address barriers that can lift someone from vulnerability to independence.

As a result of \$340,000 donated to date, according to Cummings, “more than 100 families have been saved from eviction or were assisted with funding needed to move from shelter into stable housing,” and “barriers to self-sufficiency such as job training, transportation or childcare were eliminated for more than 60 individuals, including veterans.”

Calvert County Government’s Department of Community Resources serves as the government liaison to the Calvert County Social Services Advisory Board, and responds to inquiries from citizens needing assistance. Individuals struggling to make ends meet are encouraged to visit www.OurCalvert.org to learn about local programs and resources to address their needs, and contact Calvert County Department of Social Services at 443-550-6900 to get screened for their eligibility for Social Services programs.

Find information on Calvert County Government services online at www.CalvertCountyMd.gov. Stay up to date with Calvert County Government on Facebook at www.facebook.com/CalvertCountyMd.

Calvert County Efforts to Address Poverty Receive State-level Recognition

Dec. 12, 2019

Page 3



Dunkirk-based business PATRIOT receives state recognition as Maryland Association of Social Services Boards (MASSB) Community Partner of the Year. Pictured from left is PATRIOT Owner John Gilmore, Calvert Family Advocates Board Chair Karen Lane, MASSB Chair Chris Cummings, PATRIOT Owner Matt Timbario and Calvert Department of Social Services Director Amye Scrivener.



Greg James, Deputy Secretary for Operations at Maryland Department of Human Services, delivers the keynote address on generational poverty.