

Minutes of GWWCA meeting November, 19. 2002

Presentation was made on the need for foster homes in our county.

Ted Morton presented the following items:

1. 703-691-2131 is the non-emergency telephone number for all Fairfax County. Discussed when to use this number as opposed to 911. 911 summons immediate help for police, fire, rescue and animal control. Lacking immediate danger call the non-emergency number. Answer time numbers were presented that contrasted 1998 with 2001. 911 answer times increased to 3.0 seconds from 1.3 and non-emergency to 30.0 seconds from 17.3. It was pointed out that the dispatch for a 911 calls begins immediately after an address and problem is stated. There may be quite a few questions and these answers are typed into the system and appear on the screens of the Dispatcher and assigned vehicles, whether police cruiser, ambulance, fire truck, or helicopter.
2. The Fairfax County K-9 corps includes 13 German Shepherd drug and chase dogs, 2 Bloodhounds that are currently undergoing training and 2 Labrador bomb sniffers. These Shepherds from the Czech Republic at \$3500 each are broader of chest, shorter of leg and not known to have any inter-breeding problems. A dog that does not work out is replaced free of charge. Their working life is age 2 to 9/10.
3. Our county has two helicopters one of which is always on call. Their GPS is matted with precise County address information. Thus when the crew inputs the address of the destination, i.e., 6214 Telegraph Road, a steering command and travel distance is displayed. There is a signal that specifies "arrival." All local jurisdictions helos are similar with common avionics. For more information, a summer issue of Aviation Week & Space Technology magazine carried a two page article on the Prince Georges County Maryland Helo fleet.

Deborah Halla thanked the members of GWWCA for their generous donation of \$1,000 to United Community Ministries (UCM). She stressed how much the donation helped during a difficult year. Specifically, with the economic downturn continuing after the events of 9/11 UCM saw an even greater increase in those seeking its help. As mentioned in the Washington Post, UCM used to see 25-30 people a day for emergency assistance. Since 9/11, UCM has been seeing 75-90 people a day for assistance.

Ms. Halla also described some of UCM's programs that the members might not be aware of including:

- a comprehensive childcare facility called the Bryant Early Learning (BEL) Center
- child abuse and neglect prevention programs
- a full-service employment center
- housing assistance for those transitioning from the homelessness to a stable home environment
- the Back Porch Thrift Shop where people can donate their used clothing, books and household items - clients who need an item such as work boots so they can get a job can go to the thrift shop with a voucher and get it for free and all of the proceed from the items that are sold go to support UCM's programs and services.

She stressed that UCM's goal is to lead people to self-sufficiency as

reflected in its mission statement and its comprehensive programs and services. In closing she remarked that because UCM is so frugal - using volunteers wherever possible and soliciting as many in kind contributions as possible - it is able to maintain an overhead rate of only 8 per cent (that includes all fundraising and administrative costs as well as the rent on its facility). She invited anyone who was interested in donating their time, talents or treasures to UCM to call her at (703) 768-7106 x 338 or (703) 317-3358 (home) to receive more information and/or a tour of UCM.