



POVERTY IN FAUQUIER COUNTY

A REPORT OF THE FAUQUIER COMMUNITY COALITION
February 2018

Compiled by Ed Jones with substantial assistance from Larry Stillwell and Laurie Schauss. Photographs provided by Merrill Worthington.



PREFACE

This project was not intended to produce a comprehensive study of poverty in Fauquier County. That would require an effort involving time and resources beyond the scope of the present document. Our purpose instead was to provide an overview of poverty in our community by exploring the needs of the poor in six particular areas: hunger, shelter and housing, health and medical needs, mental health, transportation, and the legal system; the services that exist to combat these needs; and some gaps between needs and services that may need further attention. We have also offered our recommendations about some actions which could be undertaken to address these issues.

The information and insights reported here were assembled over a nearly two-year period, primarily through interviews and small group discussions that our team conducted with a number of area service providers in various roles (see Acknowledgments section at the end of this report). During this period the landscape of poverty in Fauquier County constantly evolved and so did the services of the agencies and programs which exist to help the poor. As a result, there are sure to be errors and omissions in this report, and some statistics are likely to have changed. This document is thus not the best source of information on the accomplishments of any individual agency or program, but we hope that it provides food for thought to those who are interested in supporting present efforts and in creating new initiatives to help those in need.

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ABOUT THE FAUQUIER COMMUNITY COALITION

The Fauquier Community Coalition (FCC) combats poverty in Fauquier County by matching needs to resources. Established in 2013, the FCC is primarily a "hands-on" organization which recruits and mobilizes church groups and other volunteers to address local poverty-related issues like home repairs, heating deficiencies, and other unsatisfactory living conditions. We work with partner agencies to help homeless people achieve self-sufficiency and to address other challenges confronted by citizens in need. We do repair and building projects in support of helping organizations such as the Warrenton Community Shelter, Vint Hill Community Housing, Community Touch, and the Fauquier County Department of Social Services. Habitat for Humanity makes referrals to FCC for work requests that do not fit its parameters. From its beginning, FCC has steadily increased in both the volume and variety of its activities as well as the numbers of individuals and organizations involved. Since January 2014, the coalition has engaged in approximately 60 projects serving an estimated 180 county residents. In addition, the Coalition serves as a mechanism for sharing information and coordinating efforts among different agencies and individuals combating poverty in Fauquier County. FCC regularly communicates with churches and private and public agencies as well as with local high schools. The collective knowledge and communication shared among agencies is a strong force in aiding those in need.

INTRODUCTION

As its activity has increased, the Fauquier Community Coalition (FCC) has recognized the need to put its efforts into a context that can be shared with others and provide a basis for future planning. As a result, the current project adds a new dimension to the Coalition's work. The intent of this document is to paint a picture of poverty in Fauquier County in order to identify needs, current services, and gaps between needs and services which should be addressed in a systematic manner. Through this project, the FCC hopes to increase community awareness in a manner which will be helpful to churches, schools, and other non-profits in focusing their efforts to serve those in greatest financial distress.

Despite its high rating in terms of individual net worth according to recent census reports, there is no doubt that poverty is a serious problem in Fauquier County. This is easily documented by the numbers of people served by local food pantries, homeless and transitional housing facilities, the Fauquier Free Clinic and other community agencies that help the disadvantaged. Nonetheless, the overall picture is somewhat incoherent. There is relatively little communication and even less coordination among different agencies combating poverty. There is no central data base which documents individuals served and needs addressed by different agencies. When taken together, statistics reported by different organizations pertaining to numbers of clients served are often confusing with only a limited relationship to poverty figures and percentages provided by census reports.

Furthermore, the numbers tell us little about the nature of individuals served. How many are "career down and outers"? How many have dropped out of the middle class due to recession, loss of employment, and/or personal misfortunes? How did they fall into their present situations? Are these people simply working the system to their advantage? How many people who have been self-supporting are victimized by conditions which force them to seek assistance? How many use the help system infrequently and only as a last resort? What are their circumstances? What are their stories? What do they need besides giveaways? The present analysis cannot address all of these questions in depth, but we hope it provides some insights which may be helpful in working toward solutions.

This analysis has been compiled from data gathered from a variety of sources. Information and insights have been provided by staff and volunteers at agencies that combat poverty and by individuals and families in need. Statistics are derived from census data, agency reports, and other public documents. In no sense does this report present a comprehensive assessment of poverty in Fauquier County. It is offered as a point of departure in the Coalition's efforts to focus the challenge of poverty in our community on needs which, at present, are not being adequately addressed.



CHAPTER 1

OVERVIEW OF POVERTY IN FAUQUIER COUNTY

Fauquier County's population of approximately 67,000 residents is more than 85% white with relatively small minority components: approximately 8% black and 7% Hispanic. By conventional measures it is one of the richest counties in the nation, ranking from 8th to 14th in recent United States Census reports. According to the Community Assessment (2017) conducted by People Inc., median household income is approximately \$92,000 per year, which is considerably more than state and national averages. Based on the same report, Fauquier has an unemployment rate of 3.4% as compared to Virginia's average of approximately 4% -- well below the national average of 4.4%.

According to current census reports, 5.7% of Fauquier County citizens live in households with incomes below the federal poverty standard (individuals with incomes of less than \$11,770 for a person living alone with \$4,160 added for each additional person). This compares to 11.2% statewide (about double the Fauquier percentage) and 13.5% nationally. While these figures have dropped slightly in the last few years, they still require further examination.

Despite the fact that Fauquier is a comparatively prosperous county with the majority of its citizens living in relative comfort, it still has a substantial number of people who are severely disadvantaged. Based on interpolation from national statistics, many county residents are in danger of falling beneath federal poverty standards. Furthermore, a significant (but unknown) number of Fauquier's approximately 4000 residents living below the poverty line are in "deep poverty" with individual or family incomes of less than half the government defined thresholds.

In addition to federal statistics, there are alternative ways of defining poverty, which cause the numbers of people who are designated as poor to vary significantly. According to data provided by the Virginia Department of Education (Office of School Nutrition Programs), for example, nearly 21% of Fauquier County's more than 11,000 school children qualify for free lunches and another 4% percent for reduced-price lunches under the federally funded school nutrition program. Based on People Inc.'s 2017 Community Assessment, approximately 13% of the county's population is without health insurance. While both school lunch and health insurance figures for Fauquier County are below state and

national averages, these figures indicate that there are a lot of local residents in serious need who are not included in federal poverty statistics.

Poverty in Fauquier County, as in most places, occurs disproportionately in the same families and the same sectors of the population. To some extent, because we live in an area that is rich by conventional measures, the difficulties of poverty for these people are accentuated because the stigma of being poor has a greater impact than in communities where poverty is the norm.



CHAPTER 2

HUNGER IN FAUQUIER COUNTY

Although Fauquier is by most standards a rich county, it still has residents who do not have enough to eat, as is the case in many counties throughout the nation. This chapter explores the extent of the hunger problem in Fauquier County and describes the different programs and agencies involved in addressing this challenge.

The Need

According to current information provided by the Feeding America website (mapfeedingamerica.org) nearly 7% of the Fauquier County's population, more than 4,400 people, suffer from "food insecurity" as compared to state and national rates of approximately 12 and 14%. Food insecurity is a federal measure of "a household's ability to provide enough food for every person to have a healthy and active life" which has been operationally defined as "household level economic and social condition of uncertain access to adequate food" at some point during the report year. Feeding America indicates that the average cost of a meal in Fauquier County is an estimated \$3.50 as compared to \$3.01 in the state as a whole and \$2.89 nationally. While these figures, derived from a complicated analysis, may be falsely precise, they do suggest that food costs in Fauquier County are substantially higher than in many localities. This adds to the challenge for food insecure people, especially those with incomes below the federal poverty line.

As reported in the preceding section, other indices of food shortage in Fauquier County are the numbers of direct recipients of food assistance from two federal programs: the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and the Free School Lunch Program. In 2016, about 2,600 Fauquier families and individuals qualified for SNAP (food stamps), which is administered by the Fauquier County Department of Social Services. SNAP provides recipients with a debit card that can be used to purchase approved food items. The dollar amount loaded on the card each month depends on the recipient's income, family size, and basic expenses, such as rent and utilities. Another indicator of food vulnerability, as noted in a previous section, is the percentage of county school children eligible for free and reduced price lunches. While Fauquier's rate of just

under 25% is lower than those of surrounding counties, it still includes a significant number of area families.

While rough calculations suggest that the number of individuals with incomes below the poverty line in Fauquier County is somewhat comparable to the total number of people served by area food pantries on a monthly basis, these are not entirely the same groups of people. On the one hand, these programs serve some people whose incomes are (at least marginally) above the poverty line and others, including some transients and non-residents, with immediate needs regardless of income status. On the other, there are many poor people who lack the transportation to food pantries, are physically unable to get there, or whose pride does not allow them to use food distribution services. In order to address the transportation problem, Fauquier FISH and Fauquier Food Bank and Thrift Store recently combined to operate a mobile food pantry which visited isolated areas of the county where there is evidence of need, but this has now been discontinued because it was not being used. The reasons at this point are not entirely clear.

How do poor people who do not use food pantries acquire food? Often they are assisted by their families or by neighbors, some of whom are sharing their own allotments from food pantries but others, who may be isolated and/or handicapped by disabilities, must fend for themselves by whatever means they can. It is apparent that some of the food allocated to poverty-eligible recipients is shared with others who are in need but do not show up in food pantry records. In subsidized housing developments, for example, many people whose incomes are above the poverty line (though often not by much) are actually worse off financially than those whose incomes are below poverty standards because they have greater expenses (cars, more dependents, more expensive medical conditions, etc.).

Local Efforts to Combat Hunger

Food pantries and distribution centers in Fauquier County include the Fauquier Community Food Bank and Thrift Store (FCFBTS), FISH, and Community Touch. The Food Distribution Coalition organizes a monthly giveaway at the Methodist Church in Warrenton. The Salvation Army, and some local churches offer food assistance. There are also programs focused on senior nutrition: so-called Meals on Wheels for senior shut-ins, hot lunches Monday through

Thursday at the Senior Center, and low-priced senior dinners at the hospital bistro twice a week.

Fauquier Community Food Bank & Thrift Store

The Fauquier Community Food Bank & Thrift Store at 249 East Shirley Avenue in Warrenton operates a food pantry that qualifying Fauquier families can visit twice a month; families who meet somewhat tighter requirements are also eligible for USDA foods at one of their monthly visits. The food bank also works with the Department of Social Services (DSS) to provide food for families using the SNAP program since anyone meeting SNAP requirements also meets USDA and food bank criteria. It is widely supported by local grocery stores, schools, farmers, and such groups as Hunters for the Hungry which provides venison in season.

Including repeat customers, FCFBTS records show that 7,841 families visited the food bank for USDA and pantry foods in 2016, averaging about 650 families per month (either one or two visits each). This represented a decrease of about 400 families compared to the preceding year. Participants take home an average of about 125 pounds of food per visit, including four or five packages of meat, and a variety of other food choices as well. Thanksgiving meals were distributed to 502 families (including 225 seniors) and Christmas turkeys to 128 families in 2016.

Who uses the food bank? Families must have income below certain levels, depending on size, to qualify for assistance. An individual's income cannot exceed \$425 or per week, or \$20,422 a year (\$1,701 a month). A family of four can use the food bank if its weekly income is \$869 or less. This amounts to \$41,737 a year or \$3,478 a month. Food is provided for individuals making \$348 or less a week (18,090 a year) and for families of four with incomes of \$710 or less per week (\$36,900 per year).

Food bank distributions fluctuate with the seasons as landscape workers and others are more likely to be unemployed during winter months. Manager Sharon Ames believes that FCFBTS has the resources to serve an additional 50 more families per month than it does currently. A number of factors, however, keep families in need from benefitting. One important issue is transportation – money for gas, access to a vehicle and/or driver -- and the difficulty residents at the far end of the county have in getting to and from the pantry. Residents living in or near Marshall, Linden, and the southeastern reaches of Rt. 17 are all underserved by the Warrenton-located food pantries.

Fauquier FISH (For Immediate Sympathetic Help)

The next-largest food pantry in Fauquier County is operated by Fauquier FISH (For Immediate Sympathetic Help) located at 24 Pelham Street in Warrenton. Instead of taking donations of food from supermarkets, FISH raises cash to buy food and then distributes what they buy. Fauquier FISH qualifies clients on an “as needed” basis. There are no set criteria for emergency participation – if you say you need food, you get food. FISH does require proof of Fauquier residence.

FISH manages a Weekend Power Pack program that served 167 Fauquier students during the 2015-2016 school year, on average providing 140 backpacks of food each week. For weekends and vacations, FISH tries to send home enough food with students for breakfast, lunch, dinner, and a few snacks for a family of four for every day out of school (not true of summer break).

Through its Book Bag and School Supply program, FISH also provides new book bags and supplies to students in need at the start of the school year. Before the 2015-16 school year, 660 students were enrolled in the program. For the 2016-2017 school year FISH provided 836 students with a fresh start.

During the past several years, FISH has increased its budget by applying for more grant funding as opposed to relying exclusively on donations. As a result, it has become a more nutrition-focused program that provides nutritious food both in the pre-prepared meals that it distributes on site and with the food supplies that it sends home in backpacks.

In 2015 FISH served nearly 3,000 individuals and spent \$100,000 on food and services doing so, plus an estimated \$20,000-\$30,000 in donated food. In previous years, the FISH budget had varied between \$40,000 and \$60,000.

The Fauquier County Food Distribution Coalition

The Fauquier County Food Distribution Coalition, begun in 2003, is a nonprofit 501c3 collaboration among churches, government agencies, and other organizations that distributes food on the third Saturday morning of each month from the basement of the United Methodist Church at 341 Church Street in Warrenton. It distributes USDA food that it receives from the Blue Ridge Area Food bank, as well as food and other items received chiefly from Safeway and Giant Foods in Warrenton. The all-volunteer Coalition collects food donated by

supermarkets and other sources and allocates portions of meat, canned goods, produce, etc., to each household.

The Food Distribution Coalition's monthly food give-away in Warrenton has served about 300 people a month in recent years, down from approximately 550 a month some years back. The Coalition attributes this decline to the number of families now getting food from the Fauquier County Food Bank and Thrift Store. They say that the Coalition has the capacity to feed more families than currently participate.

Warrenton residents account for more than half of the Coalition's recipients, followed by Midland (about one-fourth), then Bealeton and Remington (about one-fourth, combined) and others. In addition to its food distribution, the Coalition identifies a "theme drive" each month to collect and pass out items such as soap and laundry detergent, winter clothes, children's summer clothes, toilet paper, pots and pans, sheets and towels, school supplies, etc.

Families and individuals who receive SNAP, TANF, Medicaid, or SSI benefits automatically qualify to receive food and other items at the monthly food distribution upon showing their qualification cards. Others must certify in writing that they meet the Coalition's income guidelines. (For example, income of \$342 or less per week/\$17,820 per year or less for an individual. For a family of four, income of \$701 or less per week/\$36,450 per year or less.)

Community Touch

Community Touch, Inc., at 10449 Jerico Road in Bealeton, operates a food pantry, along with their many other services for low-income families, including transitional housing and the Noah's Ark thrift store next to Food Lion in Bealeton. Clara's House Food Pantry is open on Saturday mornings and serves approximately 15-20 people each week. These numbers fluctuate and have been higher at times in the past. Individuals (or families) may be served twice a month and are eligible to receive USDA food on one of these visits. For the other monthly visit, they are limited to food donated from other sources.

Clara's receives food donations from Food Lion (including different kinds of meat three times per week) and other area grocery stores as well as food collected from drives by the Boy Scouts and other organizations. They also receive

eggs and vegetables from a local farm and deer meat and other food donated by local individuals.

Eligibility to receive food from Clara's is determined by federal poverty guidelines. Virginia residency is required. TANF, SSI, Medicaid, and Medicare recipients are automatically eligible. Applications are required but information provided is not verified.

Salvation Army

The Salvation Army, located in Warrenton at 62 Waterloo Street, distributes 12-15 boxes of food per month, a total of 168 during 2016. It also supplies grocery cards to its "angel tree clients," helping 427 people with Christmas last year.

St. Vincent De Paul Society (Local Chapter Serving Fauquier County through Saint John's Catholic Church) (SVDP)

SVDP operates a small food pantry which serves needy Fauquier residents by appointment, usually on Thursday morning. In the last fiscal year (October 2016 through September 2017) it distributed 1478 bags of food (estimated value: \$17,700) to 719 Fauquier residents including repeat visits. The pantry is supported by donations from the Saint John's congregation.

Other Area Churches

A number of additional area churches distribute food to the poor in Fauquier County. In addition to Saint John's Catholic Church (St. Vincent De Paul Society), these include Mt. Olive Baptist Church (2 Fishes Five Loaves of Bread) in Marshall, Broad Run Baptist Church in New Baltimore, Grace Episcopal Church in The Plains, Baha'I Faith (Blue Ridge Baha'I Cluster), and others.

The Heartwood Center: Meals for Hungry Children

During the school year two United Methodist Churches, Mt. Horeb and Morrisville (backed by The Heartwood Center sponsored by the Rappahannock River District of the United Methodist Church), provide weekend breakfast and lunch bags to the children at H. M. Pearson and Mary Walter Elementary Schools who participate in the federal free or reduced breakfast/lunch program during the week. Currently they provide 85 2-day bags per week for weekend meals. This is similar to the meal take-home service provided by FISH as described in an earlier section.

During the summer the Heartwood Center provides breakfasts and lunches for six days to all southern Fauquier County elementary and middle school children that participate in the federal free and reduced lunch program during the school year. Registration is required and distribution takes place every Saturday morning at Mary Walter Elementary School between 9:30 and 12 noon. At Saturday morning distributions, families are provided with bread and bakery products and fresh vegetables that are donated by the Fauquier Food Bank. (In addition to food distribution, Heartwood offers a broad selection of books from the Book Cellar from which children are free to make one or two selections each week.) Over the past four years this program has served over 100 children weekly.

Concluding Comments

How many hungry people are there in Fauquier County and how many of these are served by local food pantries and other food distribution services? This is difficult to determine. According to federal guidelines, an estimated 5.7% of the County's population of 67,000 County residents are living below the poverty line. It appears that approximately 1,500 of these are served on a monthly basis by the Fauquier Community Food Bank and Thrift Store and other food pantries (excluding churches). Some are receiving food only for themselves but others are provided with quantities to feed their entire households.

Despite the relative wealth of Fauquier County as compared to other areas in the state and in the nation, food shortage remains a serious problem for many people in our community. Clearly, existing food programs are doing a good job with those that they serve, but who else is out there? The fact, as reported earlier, that nearly 25% of Fauquier school children (a total of more than 11,000 students) are eligible for free and reduced price lunches suggests that there is a much greater number of people with some level of food insecurity than one would assume based on federal poverty statistics and the numbers of clients served by local food pantries and other hunger-related services.

CHAPTER 3

SHELTER AND HOUSING

The issue of shelter and housing has many components. At the most fundamental level, these include emergency and transitional housing, which are designed to help people contend temporarily with hardship situations as they work to position themselves for greater independence in the future. Other housing and shelter programs are subsidized rental assistance, utility assistance, furnishings, and home repairs, which will all be addressed in later sections of this report.

Those among the poor who own their own homes must often tolerate poor conditions which they are forced to deal with in make-shift ways: by placing a piece of plywood over a rotten patch in the floor, for example, or a plastic sheet over a leaky portion of the roof. Nonetheless, these houses are in high demand as poor people seek housing that they can afford. Volunteer groups working to restore dilapidated housing are often approached by individuals wanting to buy these properties. A recent work team sponsored by the Fauquier Community Coalition was approached three times in two days by prospective purchasers of a house which was not on the market.

There is also the issue of housing affordability for some groups of professionals (teachers, law enforcement officers, and other county employees) who for economic reasons are forced to live outside of the county and commute to work. Although affordable housing for professionals is a serious issue, for the most part it falls beyond the scope of this report, which will focus on the plight of individuals who are literally challenged to keep a roof (any roof) over their heads.

The Need

Shelter and housing needs for people living in Fauquier County are difficult to quantify. While it is relatively easy to acquire statistics for the numbers of county residents in various categories of housing (emergency, transitional, HUD supported rental units, etc.), it is much more difficult to tabulate those who suffer from inadequate housing but are unaccounted for in these numbers. We don't know how many people in Fauquier County are homeless, for example. There are different opinions on whether Fauquier County has a "homeless problem." Some community leaders are reputed to have said that because, in their view, Fauquier County does not provide adequate services for the homeless, homeless people go

to other localities which are better equipped (and perhaps more willing) to meet their needs.

Does Fauquier County have sufficient services for those needing emergency and transitional housing? At times facilities addressing these needs have operated at their limits, but at this writing they are below capacity. Some of this has to do with acceptance policies which prohibit some categories of perceived undesirables (those with certain types of felonies, illegal drug users, etc.) from enrolling in emergency and transitional housing programs. Fauquier Family Emergency Services, for example, has sacrificed its eligibility for federal funds by denying acceptance to those it considers a risk to the quality of living environment it is committed to maintaining for its residents.

Although it has an acknowledged lack of affordable housing for professional service providers (teachers, law enforcement officers, etc.), Fauquier County's shortage of housing alternatives for the poor may be less severe than in some neighboring communities because the county's poverty rate is lower than that in surrounding areas. According to data provided by the Virginia Housing Commission, 1.7% of 13,910 renters (5434 households) in Fauquier County have incomes below the federal poverty line. While these numbers are proportionately low in comparison with other localities, they are not a reliable indicator of those who struggle to maintain livable housing. Fauquier County residents include many homeowners who are under significant stress in trying to manage utilities and repairs in addition to their rents and mortgage payments.

Emergency Housing

Emergency housing focuses on people who literally have no other reasonable options, those who would be forced to live on the streets or in their cars if this housing were not provided. This alternative is offered to qualifying individuals (typically those with little or no incomes, who have not committed felonies, do not have a recent history of alcoholism or substance abuse, and do not suffer from mental illness judged to be dangerous to themselves or others). Typically, emergency housing is provided for periods not to exceed three months and often for periods which are much shorter.

Starting points for People Needing Immediate Shelter

The starting point for people seeking immediate emergency housing is usually the Fauquier Department of Social Services (DSS) which they may contact

directly or be referred by churches or other agencies, by the police or by individuals in the community. DSS processes them through its Adult Protective Services unit or, if there are children involved, through Child Protective Services. Individuals may then be placed in motels or other temporary quarters while they are screened by the Homeless Intervention Program in Culpeper. In the meantime, DSS contacts local shelters seeking vacancies. If none are available, clients may be referred to area warming and cooling shelters.

Emergency Housing Alternatives in Fauquier County

Fauquier Emergency Shelter (FES). The Fauquier Emergency Shelter sponsored by Fauquier Family Shelter Services, Inc., located at 95 Keith Street in Warrenton, typically houses 30-35 individuals, though its capacity is 53. This is the only emergency shelter in Fauquier County. The shelter has a limited number of spaces reserved for single women and single men. Its ground level is 100% accessible for individuals with physical disabilities and it has separate rooms for handicapped residents. Trained staff oversee operations 24 hours per day, seven days per week. The shelter's occupancy is not limited to residents of Fauquier County. The purpose of the shelter is to sustain people in temporary crisis situations including loss of employment; recovery from illness; evictions; and divorce, death, and other family transitions. Adults without disabilities are required to obtain jobs within two weeks of their admission to the shelter and upwards of 90% are able to do so. Residents who are employed or disabled may remain at the Shelter for 90 days before they "age out" because their eligibility has expired.

Residents who are not disabled are required to seek employment, remain free of drugs and alcohol, create and follow a budget, participate in a mandatory savings program for future rent, and meet regularly with a case manager. A variety of activities for children are also provided, and parents are required to discuss their children's needs with the case manager who assists with scheduling appropriate assessments and referrals. This person also assists residents in their efforts to locate and secure permanent housing. Because the Fauquier Emergency Shelter limits occupancy to those without criminal records or recent histories of drug and alcohol abuse, it is not eligible for state support and must be funded entirely by private donations (approximately 50%), program fees, local government, and fundraising events.

Area Motels. The Fauquier Department of Social Services has an arrangement with a local motel, where it can provide temporary housing for the

homeless on an emergency basis. People Helping People and various area churches also pay for motel rooms on a temporary emergency basis in crisis situations.

Shelters Outside of Fauquier County which Serve Fauquier Residents. Some Fauquier residents can be temporarily housed in emergency shelters outside of Fauquier County. This may occur when the Fauquier Emergency Shelter is full or when its occupants "age-out" (exceed their time limits). This happens most often with shelters in Culpeper and Manassas and occasionally in Loudoun County, but not in Fairfax County, which serves only its own residents

Culpeper Winter Heat Shelter. An important emergency program which serves Fauquier County and neighboring counties is the Culpeper Winter Heat Shelter supported by participating churches in Culpeper. This program, which operates from November to March at St. Luke's Church, can shelter up to 33 individuals overnight on a first-come first-served basis

Hope Center Warming Station in Fauquier County. Efforts are underway to create a warming station in southern Fauquier County at 11229 Brent Town Road in Catlett with the hope that it can open for the last six weeks of winter 2018. This undertaking is a joint project of three churches: Heart's Delight Baptist Church, Mt. Horeb Baptist Church, and Zoar Baptist Church.

Shelter for Battered and Abused Women. Area facilities which serve abused and battered women include Magnificent Oaks in Warrenton and SAFE in Culpeper, which also serves Fauquier residents. Magnificent Oaks is a faith-based nonprofit agency that provides "practical resources and restorative care to those suffering the trauma of domestic and sexual abuse and human trafficking." SAFE (Service to Abused Families, Inc.) has operated a Women's Abuse Center that serves a five-county area since 1980.

Transitional Housing

Transitional housing is designed as a bridge for people who are homeless or in unsustainable living situations as they work to get on their feet and become self-supporting. Individuals and families may be eligible for transitional housing for periods of a year or more depending on their particular circumstances as they take classes and/or receive training designed to better their situations. Residents may be required to pay rent (on a sliding scale) and to participate in various on-

site informational and educational programs designed to help them toward independence.

Starting Points for People Needing Transitional Housing

Some transitional housing residents are "graduates" from emergency housing who have "aged out" of their eligibility for the Fauquier Emergency Shelter or other emergency facilities, though this is not a "natural" progression for most emergency shelter occupants. Transitional programs often have eligibility requirements that shelter occupants may not meet (that they have access to a personal vehicle, for example). Admittance to transitional housing programs is not an immediate process, as is often the case with emergency shelters, but requires an application to a particular facility and a few days for review and for a vetting process.

Transitional Housing Alternatives in Fauquier County

Vint Hill Transitional Housing Program (VHTHP). In addition to its Emergency Shelter, Fauquier Family Shelter Services also sponsors The Vint Hill Transitional Housing Program. VHTHP "helps motivated families who are homeless make the transition to stability." Vint Hill has 24 3-bedroom townhouses which it makes available to qualifying families with children who pay 30% of their incomes in rent. Single parent head of households must be employed 30 hours per week. In two-parent households, one spouse must work at least 30 hours per week while the other must work at least 20. Eligibility is not restricted to residents of Fauquier County.

Residents may stay at Vint Hill for 1-2 years as they prepare themselves for independent living. This preparation involves full participation in extensive case management activities that include budgeting, debt management, and life skill classes. In addition, children are expected to participate in an after-school program focusing on academics and homework assistance. Staff assists residents with locating more permanent housing opportunities.

Victory Transitional Housing at Community Touch (VTH). Victory Transitional Housing, operated in Bealeton by Community Touch, serves as a bridge between homelessness and permanent housing. VTH houses single women, single women with children, single men with children and married couples. Victory has two transitional housing buildings. The larger facility houses 30 residents and the smaller facility houses 10 residents. Together they house 40 residents totaling 15 families.

In order to enter this program a family must have both a car and a job. Each individual or family must create a self-sufficiency program with their case worker, which may take 1-2 years to complete. As a condition for their temporary housing at VTH, clients attend life skills training, participate in workshops, pay off debt, and save money to help them toward independence

Community Touch also helps clients with security deposits and first month rents as well as rapidly relocating and rehousing homeless families in the community. The transitional housing program helps families identify barriers to independence and provides assistance in how to overcome them. Each family is also assigned a financial mentor who will help them create a budget, follow it, save money, and pay off debt. It also has some temporary funding to provide rental assistance to impoverished individuals seeking housing in the community.

Other Rental Housing for Low Income Populations (Section 8,etc.)

Data provided by the U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development reflects that in 2010 (the most recent figures available) Fauquier County had 88.67 HUD-assisted housing units per 10,000 units total. This compares to 308.59 units per 10,000 in Virginia and 377.87 per 10,000 in the nation as a whole. These figures include 154 "housing choice" voucher rental units and 68 project-based Section 8 rental units, numbers well below state averages. (In 2017 the Section 8 waiting list was closed until further notice.)

As noted earlier, fewer than 2% of the families who live in Fauquier County's more than 13,000 rental units, are technically "poor" according to federal poverty guidelines. It is readily apparent, however, that many others live in housing which is inadequate for their needs. According to data provided by People, Inc., for example, 241 housing units lack complete plumbing and kitchen facilities. In Fauquier County, in particular, subsidized housing tends to be clustered in particular communities, especially in the Bealeton area, for example, and needs to be more evenly distributed.

One program of particular note is the Windy Hills Foundation which has constructed 396 housing units in Fauquier and neighboring counties since 1981. Windy Hills has long had housing in the Plains and is now constructing 30 new townhouses in Marshall. Some of Windy Hills' units are subsidized by the federal government, but all rent for below HUD-average prices as compared to other housing in their respective areas.

Habitat for Humanity

Fauquier Habitat for Humanity (FHH) is an affiliate of Habitat for Humanity International that serves Fauquier and Rappahannock Counties. FHH partners with organizations, churches, volunteers, and families to address housing needs for low income families. Since 1991 FHH has built 52 homes and rehabilitated several others. Most years, including 2016, volunteers working alongside future occupants who have successfully qualified for FHH process complete two new houses, which are then sold to participating families through affordable mortgages. Since eligibility for Fauquier residents requires that successful applicants earn between 27% and 50% of the median family income for the county (minimum \$24,250 for a family of 4), this program does not serve families in deep poverty. It does, however, provide an upward path for some families who have lived in transitional housing and other temporary housing facilities.

Home Furnishings and Living Supplies

Noah's Ark Outreach, a subsidiary of Community Touch, is open the first, third and fourth Saturdays of the month from 10am to 2pm; it is closed on second Saturdays. Its goal is to distribute free household furnishings such as couches, chairs, beds, dining room sets and miscellaneous household items to low income families. When clients complete the Victory Transitional Housing program, they can furnish their future homes through Noah's Ark Outreach. The Noah's Ark Thrift Stores in Bealeton and Marshall sell gently used household items, antiques and uncommon items with all proceeds supporting the mission of Community Touch. Fauquier Community Food Bank and Thrift Store (FCFBTS) runs a similar operation where proceeds support its food bank. The thrift store also gives away some items, especially clothes, to people in need.

Utility and Home Repair Financial Assistance for Low Income People

Several Fauquier County agencies provide financial assistance to low income families to help with rent payments, utility bills, and home repairs. These include Social Services, People Helping People, FISH, the Salvation Army, United Way, and St. Vincent De Paul (the social outreach unit of Saint John's Catholic Church). Often these agencies collaborate, with two or more contributing to share a particular expense (a monthly heating bill, for example). Typically, assistance with utilities will not be provided without a "cut-off" notice. Particular agencies operate according to the following general guidelines (subject to change).

Fauquier Department of Social Services (DSS)

DSS provides a one-time \$500 per year allowance to families in need, which may be used for home repairs or utilities.

Salvation Army (SA)

The Salvation Army provides up to two \$150 allowances per year to help needy families with utility payments.

People Helping People (PHP)

PHP provides up to \$300 per year (up to \$500 for households with children and elderly persons) for assistance with rent/mortgages and utilities.

Community Touch (CT)

Community Touch is a partner in the Foothills Housing Network (FHN). Through FHN programs it provides rent and utility assistance to needy families on an individualized basis. CT (along with Culpeper Community Development which serves some Fauquier residents) has limited funding available on a fiscal year basis to provide some rental assistance in the community to individuals who qualify for this support. The initial point of contact for this assistance is the Central Entry Program coordinated by the Rappahannock Rapidan Regional Commission at 540-724-6630.

St. Vincent De Paul (SVDP) (Outreach program of Saint John's Catholic Church)

SVDP provides financial assistance with rent and utilities on an emergency basis after SVDP representatives visit the homes of applicants to assess their needs.

Fauquier FISH -- For Immediate Sympathetic Help

FISH has a defined policy which provides food to families who cannot pay their utility bills in order to free up funds for utility payments.

United Way

The United Way office in Culpeper provides utility assistance to needy residents in five counties including Fauquier.

Wood Ministry

Fauquier Community Coalition has developed a wood ministry by coordinating the efforts of several churches in Fauquier County including Grace Bible Church in Marshall, Leeds Episcopal Church in The Plains, and St. James Episcopal Church and Warrenton Baptist Church, both in Warrenton. Downed

trees, cut into sections, are donated and delivered to the places designated by the participating churches. Volunteers split the wood and deliver it to clients who have been recommended by the Department of Social Services or other community organizations. Currently, almost forty homes in Fauquier County are receiving regular firewood deliveries. Over 630 volunteer hours have been recorded since July 2017.

Home repairs (Financial and Hands-on)

Foothills Housing Corporation (FHC)

For the past 46 years Foothills Housing Corporation, based in Warrenton, has provided a variety of home-related services but specializes in "urgent" home repairs for residents of Fauquier and eight surrounding counties. Founded in 1970, FHC is a non-profit organization which provides plumbing and other home repairs for low to moderate income people with priority given to the elderly and disabled. These repairs are funded through a combination of grant funds and zero percent or low interest loans.

FHC is an umbrella organization that owns several housing complexes (Fauquier Housing Corporation, Rapidan Housing, Stuart Street Homes, Countryside Townhomes and the Oaks I and II). It also builds some houses and, through its access to the Virginia Individual Development Accounts (VIDA) program, helps create access to counseling and funding for those saving for down payments. In addition, FHC operates a handicap accessibility program in which it builds and repairs permanent house ramps and also lends portable aluminum ramps for up to twelve months at no cost to residents.

Fauquier Community Coalition (FCC)

FCC is an informal "hands-on" organization, established in 2013, which provides home repairs (also firewood and other services) to address unsatisfactory living conditions of low income families in need. FCC attempts to match resources to needs by drawing on the volunteer services of its 20 or so associated churches and other organizations. If, for example, a low-income family home developed a hole in its roof, FCC would try to implement the necessary repairs, either through the direct services of members of its board or by recruiting a church (or other organizational) group with the necessary expertise to help. Since January 2014, the agency has engaged in approximately 60 projects serving an estimated 180 county residents. FCC also does repair and building projects in conjunction with other helping organizations and serves as a mechanism for

coordination and sharing of information among different agencies and individuals combating poverty in Fauquier County.

Habitat for Humanity

Although they are primarily builders, Fauquier Habitat for Humanity does some home maintenance for qualified clients including repair of leaky roofs, installation of plumbing and heating, and restoration of other unsafe and sanitary conditions.

Regional Oversight: Foothills Housing Network

The Foothills Housing Network (FHN) of the Rappahannock Rapidan Regional Commission (not to be confused with the Foothills Housing Corporation described above) serves a five-county area which includes Culpeper, Madison, Orange, and Rappahannock Counties in addition to Fauquier. FHN administers several grants which support two housing programs: Rapid Rehousing, for those who are literally homeless, and the Virginia Homeless Solutions Program, whose purpose is intervention to prevent homelessness. These two programs provided support for 80 families between June 30, 2015 and the end of August 2016, approximately two-thirds of which were in the "prevention" category. A disproportionately low number of these reside in Fauquier County, thanks to assistance provided by the Fauquier Department of Social Services.

The Foothills Housing Network is supported by several grants which are funded primarily by the state's Department of Housing and Community Development's Virginia Homeless Solutions Program and by the federal government through the Department of Housing and Urban Affairs (HUD). With this funding FHN, in turn, provides support for several other housing programs, including Community Touch in Fauquier County, which previously applied directly for its own funding. Foothills Housing Network vets and qualifies applicants for Community Touch's transitional housing program and also for housing assistance provided by the Fauquier Department of Social Services. It also provides financial support and rental assistance to enable individuals and families, including single men, to live in the community. This is especially important since single men are not accepted by Fauquier transitional housing programs.

Because the Foothills Housing Network is a Community Network as designated by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) (technically a designation of FHN's parent agency, the Rappahannock Rapidan Regional Commission), FHN also serves as the lead agency for the Homeless

Continuum of Care within its five-county region, which includes Fauquier. Any agency receiving HUD funding for the homeless is required to participate in a Continuum of Care. As a lead agency FNN is charged with coordinating community services to the homeless by convening stakeholders and facilitating meetings in which regional priorities are established.

Concluding Comments

Because of its many facets, the need for adequate shelter and housing is perhaps the most complicated challenge faced by the poor in Fauquier County. It also involves the largest numbers of agencies and programs and requires the most coordination. While these groups make substantial contributions to the improvement of housing conditions for many people, the severity of this need continues and will not go away anytime soon. Furthermore, because people without suitable housing tend to be quite mobile, often not staying in one place for very long at a time, it is difficult to know how many Fauquier residents are affected.



CHAPTER 4

HEALTH CARE AND MEDICAL SERVICES

This chapter explores the numbers of people in Fauquier County who are unable to afford the health care and medical services that they need, the alternatives that they have, and the programs and services available to assist them. As reflected in the discussion below, specific numbers in these areas are difficult to pin down, but there is enough data from different sources to suggest that health care for the poor is a serious problem in our community, as it is in many areas in Virginia and throughout the nation.

The Need

How many Fauquier residents are medically disadvantaged because they live in poverty? According to the 2016 County Health Rankings Report, these include the estimated 7,000 adults and children in Fauquier County - about 13% of the population-- who lack health insurance (presumably because they can't afford it). This is consistent with census figures that suggest that nearly 4,000 Fauquier residents have incomes lower than federal poverty standards.

The new PATH Community Needs Assessment, completed in June 2017, is focused on the health needs of the community as a whole, not specifically on those of the poor. Nonetheless, the detailed process of this research, involving three focus groups, several surveys, and extensive data collection, provides some important insights about the relationship between health and financial needs. Consistent with government standards suggesting that nearly 6% percent of Fauquier residents live below the federal poverty line, the PATH report indicates that approximately 7% of the county's population use the Free Clinic (and other "low income" alternatives) as a first option for their health care. Of those who responded affirmatively to the public survey question, "Was there a time in the past 12 months when you needed to see a doctor and could not?", 45% indicated that the reason was lack of money or insurance. (For those needing dental and mental health services the numbers are 69% and 46% respectively.) According to 586 respondents, the four most significant health needs in Fauquier County are mental health, substance abuse (including alcohol and tobacco), food insecurity, and homelessness.

In a separate survey in the same study, health care providers identified affordable health insurance and affordable health care as two of the top four areas which "impact peoples' health." (The other two are mental/behavioral health services and substance abuse). All of these are significant issues among the poor and, as one focus group participant concluded, "There's a hole in the safety net" for the working poor and for people who don't qualify for Medicaid and other services for the economically disadvantaged.

There are few good options available to poor people without health insurance. They can stay home and not seek help. They can go to the doctor and either pay cash or ask for a free consult. Even if a doctor does not charge them, however, they usually must pay for lab fees and x-rays, etc. Or, as many do, they can go to the hospital emergency room. The hospital is required by law to see anyone, but a poor person's decision to use the ER may have more drawbacks than are readily apparent. The individual will be charged ER rates, normally much higher than regular office visits, so the patient stands to owe a lot of money. In addition, the ER is only required to make sure that a patient is medically stable, so in many cases actual conditions may not be treated.

Poor people with disabilities--or people who have become poor because of disabilities--face particular challenges. It often takes two years or more to qualify for government disability payments. And even for those with documented disabilities, 29% fall below federal poverty guidelines, many more than in the population as a whole.

Any combination of the above can lead to a vicious cycle for families with limited resources, even for those who aren't dirt poor, where illness and poverty reinforce each other. The financial cost of illness deepens poverty, which leads to more untreated sickness and health conditions, creating debt and bankruptcy and more poverty, all of which limits a family's ability to get credit and to improve their living conditions, either financially or medically.

Primary Health Care and Medical Services Available to the Poor

The three Fauquier County agencies and services described below provide medical assistance to those who either don't have health insurance or can't afford the high costs of health care not covered by insurance. For those families without

insurance or ample income, they can mean the fragile but crucial difference between healthy lives and medical catastrophe.

Fauquier Free Clinic

The only local facility that offers free medical services exclusively to the poor is the Fauquier Free Clinic, located at 35 Rock Pointe Lane in Warrenton. It offers medical, dental and, as of last year, mental health services to residents of Fauquier and Rappahannock Counties with limited resources. Clinic services, including prescriptions, are free to those who qualify: in brief, patients must have no health insurance, limited savings, and income under 200% of the federal poverty level. Typically, patients have jobs and are between the ages of 18-64 since children and those with disabilities qualify for Medicaid and those over 64 qualify for Medicare.

In 2016 the Free Clinic received approximately 7,500 visits for a combination of primary care (4,000), dental treatment (3,000), and mental health services (500), the vast majority from Fauquier County residents. For most of these clients the clinic is the only realistic medical alternative for the services it provides. During the past several years, the number of primary care patients served (2160 in 2016) has leveled off while the new dental and mental health programs have grown significantly. Mental health services provided by the clinic are discussed in detail in a later section of this report.

The clinic sees patients by appointment three days a week and on a walk-in basis on Thursday evenings. It has two family practice physicians and one physician's assistant on staff. Twice a week, two dentists, plus hygienists, provide dental care. The clinic, which has a pharmacist on staff, provides prescription medicines at no cost to patients and/or pays when patients use the Walmart pharmacy for prescriptions.

The clinic's paid medical and dental staff are supported by a large number of professional volunteers. (Most of the doctors who volunteer at the free clinic are primary care physicians.) In addition, the clinic has a relationship with many specialists and can refer clients to them, with at least the first specialist visit at no cost to the patient. Many doctors and dentists in Fauquier County support the clinic either by volunteering their services or by providing free care. Generally, patients can get an appointment to see a medical doctor within a couple weeks of when they call; a dentist appointment can take four to eight weeks, and an

appointment with a mental health professional can usually be scheduled in one to two weeks.

On their first visits, patients provide proof of residency (Fauquier or Rappahannock counties) and are screened for income eligibility. They are given a month of services if they don't have all required documentation, or six months if they do. Eligibility screenings are done every six months thereafter. The screening process is careful and specific; only qualified applicants become patients.

The scrutiny is particularly important in qualifying the clinic to receive millions of dollars in subsidized medicines from pharmaceutical companies. Each year, the clinic gives away thousands of dollars' worth of free medicine, most of it to Fauquier residents.

Fauquier Health (including Fauquier Hospital)

Like other hospitals, Fauquier Hospital has a financial assistance program that is available to families with limited resources. It is the policy of the hospital that no one should be denied medical care – but this applies only to services provided by the hospital and does not cover physician's fees, radiology fees, etc. (Physicians are not employees of the hospital and so they bill separately.) The current amount of financial assistance provided by Fauquier Health is more than \$1,000,000 per month.

The hospital's financial assistance application process is accessible through the hospital's website, and financial counselors are available by phone and in person during normal business hours. The program is open to anyone using the hospital whose income is less than 200% of the federal poverty level - not only local residents and not only those without insurance. An individual must fill out an application, which is used to determine his/her eligibility and, if eligible, the amount of assistance for which the patient qualifies. This is determined by a sliding scale based on the number of dependents and household income – sometimes 100% of the hospital bill is forgiven and sometimes 80%, 70%, or 60%.

Fauquier Health also works with the Fauquier Free Clinic to subsidize the cost of lab work, x-rays and mammograms for Free Clinic patients. For patients with any of these "certified" hospital discounts, physicians often provide discounts as well. Paperwork (W-2, proof of income, the application form) has to

be submitted and verified. The hospital's financial assistance office will also check on patients' Medicaid eligibility/availability. In addition, Fauquier Health reduces the bills of all self-pay patients by 38%, but this is probably of little value to patients without sufficient resources to afford health insurance.

Fauquier Health Department (FHD)

The county's health department provides many services, primarily to women and children. To qualify for services, one must be a Virginia resident, but proof is not required. An individual may have insurance, including Medicaid, or not. Proof of income is required and charges for many services are based on a sliding scale. The Fauquier Health Department (FHD) shares clinicians and doctors with the health departments in Rappahannock, Madison, Culpeper and Orange Counties, which limits the hours that services are available in Fauquier County. All providers hold paid positions. County health departments receive funding from state and local governments and from grants. Although the dental portion of the FHD has closed and been assumed by the Fauquier Free Clinic, the Health Department hopes to provide dental varnish for small children through the WIC program - see below. FHD has translators and documents available in Spanish. They also have immediate access to a tele-interpreter for almost any language.

Programs and services include:

- Family planning clinic: supports those trying to prevent pregnancy (birth control) or those trying to become pregnant. Program is income-based and proof of income is required.
- Vaccines: for adults, charged on a sliding scale (although the state sometimes provides free vaccines); for children, all school-mandated vaccines are provided free of charge.
- WIC program (Women-Infants-Children): provides mothers with supplies such as formula, supplemental milk, fruits/vegetables, etc. Program is income based.
- Clinic for communicable sexually transmitted diseases (STD): free of charge, unless the medicine provided ends up being for something other than an STD.
- Nursing home screening: coordinates with DSS for in-home visits to determine eligibility for assistance.

- TB testing/screening: flat fee charged; no proof of income required.
- School physicals (except sport physicals) provided free of charge.
- Car seats provided to those without insurance or Medicaid. Parents must attend a child safety class and then are given a car seat at no charge.

Other Health and Medical Services for the Poor

In addition to the primary services described above there are a number of specialized services provided by smaller organizations. Some of these are described below.

Fauquier Lions Clubs

Like other Lions Clubs around the country, the three Fauquier Lions Clubs provide free vision/hearing screenings and free eyewear and hearing aids to those who need them. Fauquier Lions Clubs host the screenings, provide printouts of the results and make referrals if further services are required. They give away used eyeglasses at no cost and will help financially if examinations or new eyeglasses are needed. Those needing these services apply through the Fauquier Health Department, and their applications are then forwarded to the Lions Club closest to where the individual lives. At the end of the year the Lions Clubs also make a donation for diabetes supplies to the Fauquier Health Department.

CareNet Pregnancy Resource Center.

Although the Warrenton office closed recently, CareNet has two nearby offices in Manassas and Woodbridge that accept patients from anywhere. Their target audience is women with unplanned pregnancies. Their goal is to educate and support individuals or families with unplanned pregnancies.

They provide supplies, including free cribs, to pregnant women and to families with children less than one year of age who attend and complete parenting classes. They offer support groups for women after abortion, but do not refer to abortion clinics. They also offer classes for general and sexual health.

American Cancer Society/Road to Recovery

The American Cancer Society has several assistance programs which serve cancer patients in Fauquier County, including free volunteer-driven transportation

to medical appointments (Road to Recovery), workshops for women undergoing cancer treatment, temporary lodging, and other services.

Blue Ridge Orthopedic Foundation

The nonprofit Blue Ridge Orthopedic Foundation (BROF) was established in 2012 to serve Fauquier and Prince William charities that provide medical relief, food, shelter, and/or children's services to improve quality of life for the neediest in the community. In recent years, they have donated more than \$117,000 to a dozen charities, including the Fauquier Free Clinic, Community Touch, the Boys & Girls Club of Fauquier, the Mental Health Association of Fauquier County, Fauquier FISH, and others. The foundation organizes annual fundraisers and food drives, including its signature event, the Bodies in Motion 5K & 10K run.

Concluding Comments

Despite Fauquier County's status as one of the richest counties in the nation, it has many citizens in need of medical and health care services. As reflected in this chapter, these services are provided by a number of helping agencies and caring individuals, but the need continues to grow. In the present political climate where financial assistance for the poor is increasingly uncertain, adequate support for the health and medical needs for this segment of the population will continue to be a challenge for the Fauquier community and especially for those residents who are poor and unable to afford health insurance and preventative medical care.



CHAPTER 5

POVERTY AND MENTAL HEALTH

While we know that there is a strong connection between poverty and mental health, the specific relationship is difficult to quantify, especially when the latter term is taken to include mental and emotional states which have not been formally diagnosed and treated. Mental and emotional health for all of us, whether or not we have documented conditions, can be profoundly influenced by life circumstances. Downturns in mental health are often connected with increases in life stresses and poverty is certainly a magnifier of other stressful conditions.

In some respects, the relationship between poverty and mental health is circular. Poverty can lead to or exacerbate depression and other mental illnesses which, in turn, can deepen poverty by compromising an individual's ability to work and to contribute effectively to his or her own support and well-being. In some cases, these circumstances can also lead directly or indirectly to drug abuse (not only a problem faced by the poor, to be sure) and other behaviors which lead to medical treatments and/or incarceration, further draining an individual's (and a family's) financial resources. As stresses increase, the situation worsens, leading to further destabilization of work and living conditions and the quality of relationships, all of which can make it increasingly difficult for poor people to function effectively. For poor families in particular, this cycle is often perpetuated in future generations.

The Need

It is difficult to estimate how many Fauquier residents who live in poverty have mental health conditions and how these numbers compare with the incidence of such conditions in the county's population as a whole. One indication of this comparison is suggested by the result of an "inventory" administered to prospective clients when they seek services at the Free Clinic. According to the results obtained from use of this instrument, about 40% of this group "score" as depressed. In the general population, these numbers are typically in the 10-15% range. Since all of those served by the Free Clinic are poor by definition (below 200% of the poverty line and without any form of health insurance), this would suggest, not surprisingly, that there is a much higher

proportion of poor people who suffer from depression than is found in the population as a whole.

Mental Health Services for the Poor in Fauquier County

Fauquier County, as a whole, has a scarcity of mental health services for all of its residents. With a much smaller proportion of psychologists and counselors than needed (many fewer than other comparably prosperous communities), it is challenging for anyone to get mental health care in our area, especially those who are poor. For all practical purposes, poor adults in Fauquier County have two options for direct mental health services: the Free Clinic and the Community Services Board, both of which have significant waiting lists for many services. Although it does not serve clients directly, the Fauquier County Mental Health Association is a strong advocate for mental health services for the poor as evidenced by several initiatives discussed below. Another resource, which is available to families with children who have serious emotional and behavioral problems, is the Family Assessment and Planning Team.

The Fauquier Free Clinic

The Fauquier Free Clinic, located at 35 Rock Pointe Lane in Warrenton, provides free services to residents of Fauquier (primarily) and Rappahannock Counties whose incomes are below 200% of the federal poverty standard and who have no insurance of any kind, including Medicare and Medicaid. The clinic, which has four mental health counselors but no psychiatrists on staff, began providing mental health services in 2014. In 2016, the clinic received 500 visits, and 150 different clients saw a mental health professional. While some patients come to the clinic directly seeking mental health services, all are screened for these issues since behavioral health problems can negatively affect the management of physical illnesses and health outcomes. About half of the patients receiving mental health services are referred from these screenings.

Due to the shortage of local psychiatrists and other mental health professionals and with the help of a \$370,000 grant from PATH, as of October 2016 the clinic provides appointments for mental health patients with psychiatrists outside of the area. These remote mental health professionals have access to clients' medical records and, in turn, can add to the records based on their interventions. Clients are scheduled for remote tele-psychiatrist appointments that allow them to interact one-to-one with a psychiatrist who appears on a television screen. This "collaborative care" approach to mental

health services is working well not only for patients, but also for local physicians, who can now refer their patients directly to a mental health specialist. This leads to better overall care. As stated in the announcement of the grant funding for tele-psychiatry and counseling services on the PATH website:

This collaborative care model goes beyond mental health – with medical, dental and mental health services under one roof, patients can be referred across specialties to address their overall health needs. In an October 2012 Cochrane Review article, 79 randomized controlled trials showed that collaborative care models – like those at the Fauquier Free Clinic – are the best approach to treating depression.

Dr. Carole Hertz, a long-time counseling psychologist who has a practice in Warrenton and also volunteers at the Free Clinic, has some interesting observations regarding poverty and mental health, which she refers to as "fraternal twins." According to Dr. Hertz, for people who need mental health care, but are not able (and have never been able) to afford it, problems multiply "as the hole grows deeper." As a result, their perspective becomes increasingly narrow and their perception more and more limited, rendering them progressively more difficult to treat. Dr. Hertz believes that nearly all of her free clinic patients suffer from a form of post traumatic stress disorder; their lives lived in poverty have battered them with a myriad of stressful conditions, the effects of which are lasting and difficult to reverse. Her role as a therapist is not really to try to cure her patients but to validate and legitimize their illnesses and to help them learn coping skills, to "find their passions," and to identify and evaluate alternatives for their lives going forward.

Rappahannock Rapidan Community Services (RRCS).

RRCS offers a range of rehabilitative and other critical need services to residents of Planning District 9 (Culpeper, Fauquier, Madison, Orange and Rappahannock Counties). RRCS has two offices which serve Fauquier County residents; its main facility is at 15671 Bradford Road in Culpeper and it has a satellite office at 340 Hospital Drive in Warrenton.

In the area of mental health, RRCS provides individual and group counseling, psychiatry services, evaluations, and treatment of moderate to severe mental illness in children and adults at outpatient community centers as well as urgent care and crisis intervention services in a variety of settings. This year RRCS has instituted a rapid access program to its mental health and substance abuse services. Instead of scheduling clients by individual appointment for intake at particular times, RRCS encourages them to come to the clinic at set times when

their needs are assessed and referrals can be made. According to its projected outcomes for fiscal 2018, RRCS will serve 1037 Fauquier residents with moderate to severe behavioral health issues and an additional 189 with substance use disorders. The agency will also provide intervention services to another estimated 468 Fauquier children and adults "experiencing a mental health crisis" and 102 with substance abuse crises. Patients without insurance are charged on a sliding "ability to pay" scale where everyone pays something (minimum \$15).

Mental Health Association of Fauquier County (MHAFC)

While MHAFC deals with the entire county population, not just the poor, it has conducted a variety of activities of particular relevance and importance for those in poverty. Its primary focus in this area for the last few years has been to support the work of the Fauquier Free Clinic. In 2014-15, MHAFC contributed \$50,000 to help the clinic expand its scope to include mental health services. The Association helped the Free Clinic evaluate and address the challenge of delivering counseling and other services to the poor in a county with few counselors and no psychiatrists. This led to the tele-psychiatry initiative which was implemented at the clinic nearly a year ago. As indicated above, this project has proven to be an effective model that is now being studied for replication in other communities.

In 2015, the Pride Survey pertaining to drug use in the schools was expanded by the MHAFC to include questions about mental health. While the survey was administered to the total school population, it is known that approximately 25% of Fauquier children qualify for free or reduced price lunches, indicating wide spread poverty in the county. As a result of the findings in this study, MHAFC has increased its Mental Health First Aid training, which has now been made available to all school personnel and to law enforcement and other agencies involved with youth. MHAFC also convenes the School Mental Health Coalition which focuses on the needs of all students but has perhaps its greatest impact on those who come from lower income families because they are least able to afford private counseling services. There have also been increased efforts to collaborate and foster the development of opioid awareness and prevention programs. The most innovative of these initiatives has been the work with the neo-natal unit of the Fauquier hospital to provide services to mothers and babies, often from poor families, who have drug addiction issues.

In the past MHAFC has also supported housing grants for low income adults served by the Community Services Board and may do so again in the future.

Family Assessment and Planning Team (FAPT)

FAPT provides counseling and other services to families with children with serious emotional or behavioral problems. This program is implemented by the Department of Social Services in collaboration with Healthy Community Services, the courts, the public schools, and several private agencies. It develops treatment plans to address the needs of entire families and services are provided in the home on a sliding scale or in some cases for Medicaid clients without charge.



Concluding Comments

Despite the significant contributions of several agencies, the mental health of Fauquier residents in poverty remains a substantial challenge. It is unknown how many poor people in Fauquier County suffer from mental health problems and in what magnitude, but it is apparent that many do not seek treatment who need it. Even for those that do, resources are stretched very thin.

CHAPTER 5

TRANSPORTATION AND POVERTY

Unlike hunger, shelter, medical care and other challenges confronted by the poor, transportation needs, for the most part, are not documented by income levels. As a result, it is difficult to know precisely how many Fauquier residents are handicapped by transportation problems caused or complicated by their lack of financial resources. There is clear evidence, however, much of it indirect and anecdotal, that this is an issue that affects a substantial number of people. Furthermore, as much as in any poverty-related area, transportation challenges create a vicious cycle. If one cannot get to work, his/her financial situation worsens. If one cannot get to medical appointments, health conditions become more severe. These situations contribute to a downward spiral where quality of life continues to deteriorate.

The Need

In terms of its 647 square miles, Fauquier is the 8th largest county in Virginia. Because it's population is spread over a wide area, many people live in locations that are significantly removed from their places of employment and the services that they need. Especially in a county which is lacking in public transportation, this is especially difficult for the 10 percent of Fauquier County's households who make less than \$25,000 per year. If these people have cars at all, they are often unreliable. As a result, they are often dependent on friends and relatives with different schedules whose vehicles may also be suspect, creating a very unsettling and often undependable situation.

This is complicated by the fact that most Fauquier County residents, including many who are poor, work outside of the county in areas where, generally speaking, wages are considerably higher. Access to Metro in Vienna or the VRE (The Virginia Railway Express) in Manassas requires a driver to get to these locations. Many people use car pools or van pools. There are parking lots in the area where drivers and riders meet to pair up for rides, and there is a service that in some cases will match people with busses going to certain locations such as the Metro, the Pentagon, or other high demand destinations. Even if this can be arranged, however, there is no public transportation to these ride-sharing sites. Often those who need rides must also share the cost with the drivers. For many Fauquier residents, especially those who are poor, these

"solutions" just aren't viable and, as a result, working outside the county as well as many jobs within the county, without reliable cars, is simply an impossibility.

For many of the poor, however, buying and maintaining their own cars is a challenge that is financially unmanageable. Older models, though purchasable at a lower cost, are expensive to register and insure, even for minimal amounts. Gas is expensive and maintenance is an ongoing and unpredictable issue. The need for unaffordable repairs to vehicles, especially trucks, frequently occurs without warning and often "grounds" individuals who need their vehicles not only to get to work but in many cases on the job as well. Without steady incomes, "the hole deepens," as they are caught in a vicious cycle: without income, no vehicle repairs; without vehicle repairs, no transportation; without transportation, no work; without work, no income.

Vehicle maintenance and its impact on employment is a problem to which I (Ed Jones) can attest from personal experience. Several years ago, I was a part of a small volunteer group which made short-term interest free loans to help people with limited resources deal with emergency situations. A substantial majority of the circumstances we dealt with involved people who needed vehicle repair, which they could not afford, in order to pursue their livelihoods.

In addition to employment-related needs, the poor often lack transportation to medical appointments and also to helping agencies such as the Department of Social Services, the Fauquier Free Clinic, and area food pantries. In the latter case, food recipients must often share food with others (who may or may not be eligible for food pantry service themselves) in exchange for transportation.

Appropriately, transportation is a topic that frequently draws attention in the media. The county and the state are often looking at transportation needs of various kinds (improved roads, bikes, sidewalks, etc.) Seldom, however, do these concerns focus on the needs of the poor.

Transportation Services and Assistance Available to the Poor

For Fauquier residents without cars, there are few resources beyond taxi cabs and Uber, which is now active in the county. For those with low incomes and health problems, assistance can sometimes be provided to pay for transportation

services through the Fauquier Department of Social Services (DSS) and Medicaid. In other cases, rides are provided by volunteers.

There are two volunteer-based driving programs which serve Fauquier County. Road to Recovery sponsored by the American Cancer Society will take patients directly to and from medical appointments for cancer treatments, with no stops in route except to pick up prescribed medications. Voltran, a non-profit group, provides rides for the elderly and infirm to medical and other urgent appointments including, for example, pharmacy visits, grocery shopping, visits to the Department of Social Services, etc. An individual needing a ride must call the transportation one-call center (see next paragraph) several days in advance so a volunteer driver can be located and scheduled to meet that person's special needs. The challenges faced by Voltran are a limited number of drivers and the lack of capacity to transport people in wheelchairs. Voltran does not provide rides to and from employment or, for insurance reasons, to and from dialysis.

An important service available to Fauquier residents is the One-Call Transportation Center, a service of the Foothills Area Mobility System (FAMS), head-quartered in Culpeper, which serves the five counties (Fauquier, Culpeper, Orange, Madison, and Rappahannock) in Planning District 9. The one-call center (540-829-5300) provides information "on all travel modes" and assists with travel arrangements and training for those who need it. The training is designed to help individuals make best use of the transportation resources available to them. Perhaps the most important service that the one-call center provides for Fauquier residents is to match those needing transportation (primarily for medical services) with volunteer drivers through VOLTRAN or Road to Recovery.

Sometimes the one-call center can also arrange for transportation by a wheelchair accessible bus. The fee is usually \$1.00 and arrangements must be made in advance. The disadvantage that this service presents is that one bus covers the entire county so drivers may spend a lot of time serving passengers in a variety of locations. As a result, users may need to be picked up many hours before their appointments and will often experience delays in return transportation. The center can also arrange bus transportation from Culpeper to the University of Virginia Medical Center several days per week. This service requires that individuals secure their own rides to Culpeper, which can be difficult because of the lack of public transportation.

Another transportation alternative for all residents of Warrenton is the Circuit Rider bus, which travels a designated route every hour and can accommodate wheelchairs. Riders can take the Circuit Rider for any purpose. The county is exploring ways of making this program more efficient, which could be especially helpful to those with limited resources.

There is also a program through the Department of Social Services whereby low income families can purchase used cars at reduced cost through Vehicles for Change based in Richmond. This is a worthwhile initiative, but in 2017 no Fauquier families took advantage of it.



Concluding Comments

It is clear that the transportation alternatives available to the poor in Fauquier County are far less than ideal. The consequences of these gaps are especially serious because their impacts are geometric. Without adequate transportation, other challenges including hunger and medical issues are compounded.

CHAPTER 7

POVERTY AND THE LEGAL SYSTEM

We know that all men are not created equal in the sense that some people would have us believe--some people are smarter than others, some people have more opportunity because they are born with it, some men make more money than others, some ladies make better cakes than others--some people are born gifted beyond the normal scope of most men.

But there is one way in this country in which all men are created equal--there is one human institution that makes a pauper the equal of a Rockefeller, the stupid man the equal if an Einstein, and an ignorant man the equal of any college president. That institution, gentlemen is a court. It can be the Supreme Court of the United States or the humblest J.P. court in the land, or this honorable court which you serve. Our courts have their faults, as does any human institution, but in this country our courts are the great levelers, and in our courts, all men are created equal. (Harper Lee, **To Kill a Mockingbird**)

This is a portion of the closing statement of Atticus Finch, attorney for Tom Robinson, a black man accused of raping a white woman, in Harper Lee's acclaimed novel, **To Kill a Mockingbird**, which expresses a long-held ideal of the American court system. Despite the best intentions of those who designed our justice system, however, there are severe limits to how much "leveling" the courts can accomplish. In general, low income people are at a considerable disadvantage in the courts, as they are in most aspects of our society, and there are many factors which contribute to this predicament.

The Need

How much court activity in Fauquier County involves defendants who are poor? We don't know exactly because court cases are not tabulated by income level. There are various indirect indications, however, that this number is substantial. In FY 2016 Legal Aid Works (LAW) closed 34 cases in which they helped 79 individuals in Fauquier County whose income levels were less than 125% of the poverty line. LAW was forced to decline an estimated 68 additional cases due to the lack of program resources. Presumably, the vast majority of people in the latter category were forced to take their chances in court without representation. Of the 445 cases involving Fauquier residents addressed through the Piedmont Dispute Resolution Center in FY2016, the vast majority were referred by the courts, and of these, 330 were classified as low income. These numbers suggest that the Fauquier County legal system deals with a significant number of people with very limited financial resources.

Civil and Criminal Courts

In civil court a defendant is accused of violating society's "do's and don'ts," but typically not of a crime that results in harm or intended harm to another person. The distinction between criminal and civil cases is particularly important as it relates to people who lack the resources to defend themselves. In criminal cases, a defendant has the right to an attorney and the court must provide one for people who cannot afford to do so on their own. This is not the case in civil proceedings, where a defendant must provide his/her own attorney or go it alone unless he or she is one of the fortunate few who receives free legal services from Legal Aid Works or a similar service - see discussion below. Civil cases include family law, such as custody, visitation, and child/spousal support; landlord/tenant law, including maintenance, evictions, etc.; and consumer issues such as bankruptcy, utility shut-off, harassment from creditors, etc. They may also involve public benefits, including unemployment and SNAP/Medicare/ Medicaid appeals, and a variety of other areas including job discrimination, access to health care, foreclosures, power of attorney and nursing home issues, etc.

The Inability of the Poor to Protect their own Interests in Court

In general, the poor are ill-equipped to protect their own best interests in court. In addition to their likely financial inability to hire legal representation in civil cases, many poor clients are unfamiliar with the rules and processes of legal proceedings, not sure of their rights, unfamiliar with how to testify, unaware of when they can object, etc. As observed by Lawrie Parker, Executive Director of the Piedmont Dispute Resolution Center (in Warrenton), this is like trying "to dance when you don't know the steps." It is, in fact, common knowledge in the legal community that even for a defendant with the facts on his or her side, a person who self-represents is much less likely to get a favorable outcome. As reported in a VBS Council presentation in 2015, for example, 65% of tenants who were represented by attorneys in eviction cases retained their homes while this occurred for only 35% of those who were not represented. Similar figures exist for other types of landlord-tenant cases. Another study indicates that 70% of child immigrants represented by legal counsel successfully avoided deportation as compared to only 10 % of those who were not represented.

Many who are poor also confront language and cultural barriers and other obstacles that hinder their interactions with the legal system and their abilities to obtain support and assistance from resources which might otherwise be available to them. This has led to an increasing need for information and education

sessions and other means of orienting the poor about legal processes and their rights and responsibilities under the law. Thus far, however, this is a service which is lacking in Fauquier County and elsewhere. One state which seems to have fared better than most in this area is Minnesota. The website *lawhelpmn.org* provides an overview of areas where prospective clients with low incomes need information.

According to Ann Kloeckner, Executive Director at Legal Aid Works, an organization which provides free legal services to those in poverty, there is one attorney per 346 citizens in the Commonwealth of Virginia, a figure she characterizes as "a pretty deep saturation level." By contrast, the number of attorneys available through Legal Aid Works and similar organizations to provide volunteer (pro bono) services to clients who are unable to pay is approximately one per 7000 citizens. Legal Aid Works, the primary provider of free legal services to the indigent population in our area, serves 17 counties including Fauquier through offices in Fredericksburg, Culpeper, and Tappahannock with a total of only eight attorneys. In 2016, these eight attorneys obtained over a million dollars in court orders for their clients and also helped them avoid more than \$300,000 in wrongly charged debt, fees, rent, and other liabilities. At the same time, LAW was forced to decline the majority of the cases which had been screened as eligible for its services (nationally this figure is about two out of three) due to lack of resources. While some pro bono work may be provided by other attorneys in the area (figures are unavailable though existing evidence suggests not much), this leaves the poor in an extremely vulnerable position.

The different predicaments of those with resources and those without in dealing with the legal system has often been referred to as the "justice gap." We tend to stress how deeply we cherish the "Rule of Law" and "Equality and Justice" under the Law at the same time that we ignore substantial injustice in the civil court system.

Two recent personal experiences have expanded my (Ed Jones') understanding of the "justice gap." The first of these occurred several years ago when I received a traffic ticket as a result of a confusing interaction with a school bus. I had friends who understood the court process and knew how the system worked. One friend recommended an attorney familiar with my type of case. I was able to hire this individual who successfully negotiated a much-reduced charge which resulted in a minimum fine and no points on my license. My reflection on this experience has increased my awareness of the resources,

including money and knowledgeable associates, whom I was able to rely upon in dealing with the legal system, that would not be available to the many residents of Fauquier County who lack resources that I and most middle class residents take for granted.

My experience in the Fauquier County court system contrasts significantly with that of a homeless friend of mine who lives in his car. Recently my friend was charged with a serious traffic violation which required a court appearance. When he appeared in court a month later, the judge asked if he had legal representation. When he said that he did not, the judge continued his case for a month to allow him more time to engage an attorney. Subsequently, the judge granted two additional continuances, but when my friend still had not acquired an attorney, the judge rendered a stiff penalty. It became apparent later that my friend had no idea how to obtain legal help without the money to pay for it. He did not know about Legal Aid Works or anyone at the time that could help with this matter. As a result, faced with more immediate survival needs, he just let this matter ride, eventually causing the judge to lose patience, resulting almost certainly in a stiffer penalty than he otherwise would have received. Various factors played in this situation. My friend's predicament was primarily the result of his own bad decisions, but it is highly likely that the legal consequences of his actions were affected directly and indirectly by his impoverished condition. He lacked not only money, but also knowledge and contacts, which could have led to a better result in court.

Concluding Comments

As members of middle-class society, many of us are privileged in ways that we do not fully appreciate. This has to do not only with the obvious things that sustain us on a daily basis--adequate food, shelter, medical care, transportation, etc. -- but also with the resources that we have to deal with unanticipated events and circumstances that may arise. This is especially true in regard to legal situations where those who are poor may not only lack the funds to pay for suitable representation but also do not know the "dance steps" required to function in their own best interests within the court and legal systems, often leading to unfortunate outcomes.

CHAPTER 8

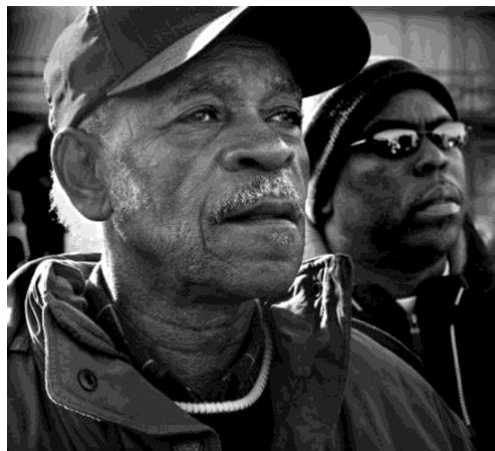
RECENT HISTORICAL TRENDS AND GEOGRAPHICAL PATTERNS OF POVERTY IN FAUQUIER COUNTY

According to census reports, the percentage of Fauquier County's population with incomes below federal poverty guidelines has decreased slightly in recent years to 5.7% from a high of approximately 7.5% , after gradually increasing during the preceding decade. Since government thresholds are revised frequently, there is probably a false precision to these figures but, taken literally, they suggest that more than 1200 Fauquier citizens have escaped the poverty rolls, at least according to federal standards. This, however, raises a number of questions for which we don't have clear answers. How much of this is due to increased effectiveness of Social Services and other programs designed to help citizens in need? How much of it has to do with changes in federal poverty standards designated by the federal government? Are the majority of people in need today the same individuals and families who were in distress five or ten years ago? How many of these people have worked their way out of poverty only to be replaced by others? While we don't know the answers to these questions, there seems little likelihood that poverty in our area will be eliminated anytime soon.

Poverty is distributed throughout Fauquier County; it is not restricted to a particular region. Two indications of poverty "concentrations" in the county are enrollments in two federally sponsored programs: the SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) and the Free and Reduced Price Lunch Program implemented by the public schools. According to information provided by the Fauquier County Department of Social Services in 2016, recent SNAP data reflect substantially more enrollments in the middle and southern portions of the County (approximately 41% and 43 % of the total) than in the northern portion (only about 14%). The free and reduced price lunch data, on the other hand, suggests that there is more poverty in the southern and northern portions of the county and less in the middle section.

The two elementary schools in Fauquier County with the largest percentages of students eligible for free and reduced price lunches are Mary Walter (54.25%) and Claude Thompson (53.59%). Mary Walker, located in

Bealeton, is the southernmost elementary school in the county while Claude Thompson, located in Marshall, is the northernmost. Other elementary schools with high percentages of students eligible for free and reduced price lunches in the southern part of the Fauquier County are Margaret M. Pierce (36.79%) in Remington and Grace Miller (34.26%) in Bealeton. Two schools in the northern sector with similar eligibility percentages are H. M. Pearson in (37.15%) in Catlett and W.G. Coleman (36.16%) in Marshall. Fauquier's five remaining elementary schools, which have much lower free and reduced price lunch eligibility percentages, are located closer to the middle of the county. Of these schools, James G. Brumfield (31.17%) has the highest eligibility rate, with the others ranging from less than 10% to approximately 23%. Although free lunch data suggest a somewhat different geographical picture of where poverty is concentrated in Fauquier County as compared to SNAP data, these indicators together provide ample evidence that it is widely distributed.



Concluding Comments

What do we make of this information? What does it really tell us about the poor in the relative prosperity of Fauquier County? It is hard to get beyond broad generalizations. At best poverty has declined modestly over the past decade or so, but with variable definitions and different standards of measurement, it is difficult to be sure. We know that poverty still exists throughout the county with, by some indicators, less in the central (Warrenton and vicinity) area than in the northern and southern sections. And we know that those who are poor in Fauquier County and elsewhere face an increasingly uncertain future in the current political climate which threatens the already meager resources devoted to combating poverty.

CHAPTER 9

WHO ARE THE POOR IN FAUQUIER COUNTY? SOME OBSERVATIONS BEYOND THE NUMBERS

What do the statistics mean? Who are the people behind the numbers? Poverty is an elusive concept which can be defined and tabulated in different ways. Statistical categories provided by government and other sources are arbitrarily determined and falsely precise. Income thresholds are often misleading since individuals and families differ broadly in their financial obligations and responsibilities. A family without a car, for example, who meets the poverty guidelines may actually be in better shape financially than one who has a somewhat larger income but owns a vehicle and must support that expense in addition perhaps to higher medical expenses (even with government assistance), personal debts, and other obligations which are not considered under the guidelines. In recognition of this fact, local food pantries and other service providers often stretch their eligibility standards to include some people whose incomes exceed official poverty standards because they are in genuine need.

Poverty is not just lack of money to meet immediate necessities. People who lack financial resources are often uninformed about services and benefits to which they are entitled. They may lack the knowledge and the skills to communicate effectively with Social Services and other helping agencies or, in some cases, the literacy skills to deal effectively with application procedures. In general, those who are economically disadvantaged don't have the luxury of delayed gratification. Those who are poor typically lack the luxury of preventative medical and dental care which they cannot afford, leading to more serious and costly conditions later. As discussed earlier in this report, a much greater proportion of people in poverty suffer from depression and other mental and emotional disorders than is true in the general population. As in the case of any group, the poor are comprised of individuals who are quite diverse. Some may be stereotypical down-and-outers who constantly work the system to their own best advantage. But, as a whole, this is not a fair description of those who lack the resources to provide fully for their own needs.

According to *These are our People* (Jones and Lowe, 2012), a collection of 24 life stories of clients of the Fauquier Community Food Bank, many FCFB

recipients have been self-supporting their entire lives (though sometimes by small margins) until some combination of physical ailments, job loss and economic conditions has rendered them without sufficient resources to meet their basic needs. Often they rely on the Food Bank only for brief periods until they can get their heads above water again. They do not want to be there and leave as soon as they are able despite the fact that their circumstances continue to be challenging. Jones and Lowe comment:

In recent times all of these individuals have confronted growing challenges. For many, life has become increasingly episodic as they struggle to deal with one crisis after another-- serious medical problems, unaffordable car repairs, inability to pay rent and utility costs, etc. If one crisis is averted, another strikes . . . They often feel as though they are trying to dodge a series of boulders rolling downhill.

For the most part, however, these people are not complainers. They cope with difficult problems but maintain a steady resolve and a cautious, almost defiant sense of optimism (p. xv).

While these passages do not describe all Fauquier County residents who live in poverty, they are far more representative than might be supposed.



CHAPTER 10

GAPS AND AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT IN POVERTY-RELATED SERVICES: RECOMMENDATIONS

This project has identified a number of gaps in the network of services for the poor in Fauquier County. These differ greatly in their levels of specificity and in the efforts which would be required to address them. Some reflect general needs and others focus on particular areas of poverty such as hunger and shelter.

1. Need for a Central Data Base. Efforts to combat poverty in Fauquier County are hindered by the lack of a central data base of the kind that exists in some other communities. This type of resource would provide an easily accessible record of the assistance provided to individuals by different agencies and allow for better coordination of services. Perhaps a particular agency or organization could develop this project with the help of funding from PATH or other community grant sources.

2. Need for a Mentoring Program. Many people in our community lack the resources to afford basic necessities on a sustained basis. Just as importantly, however, they may lack awareness of the resources available to them and the ability to navigate the help system. Often, for example, people who are poor don't understand the range of services provided by the free clinic or that in many cases they can be referred to specialists without charge. Some have not had eye exams for many years because they are convinced that they cannot afford them. The Fauquier Community Food Bank and Thrift Store frequently encounters visually impaired individuals who were unaware of the Lions Club and/or other free services which are available to them. This is a problem which goes beyond health issues. Often people sign leases and other agreements in order to help them cope with emergency situations without fully understanding the obligations to which they are committing themselves. These situations disproportionately affect the poor.

Many individuals with limited resources could be helped by a one-to-one mentoring program coordinated by the Fauquier Community Coalition (FCC) or by another agency which could also develop and implement mentor training. The mentor's purpose would not be to provide money or other direct services but to help individuals navigate to best advantage the resources available to them and

to understand and implement decisions that they need to make. Local churches could be recruiting grounds for mentors who could be matched with prospective clients by the Department of Social Services, Community Touch, FISH, People Helping People, or other agencies focused on assisting the poor.

3. More Coordinated Involvement of Faith Communities. Many of Fauquier County's nearly one hundred churches and other faith communities are involved in efforts to help the poor. Saint John's (Catholic), Warrenton Baptist, Bethel Warrenton Methodist, and Saint James (Episcopal), and Leeds (Episcopal) are several which come immediately to mind; some with hunger initiatives, in particular, are referenced in a previous chapter, and it is certain that there are others which are unknown to those who prepared this report. The difficulty is that there is little coordination between faith communities, and many helping initiatives are isolated activities where one group doesn't know what others are doing.

The Northern Piedmont Chapter of the Virginia Interfaith Center for Public Policy, based in Warrenton, is a group which emphasizes interfaith collaboration. Although VICPP does not focus on poverty exclusively, it raises consciousness and attempts to influence legislation on various poverty-related issues. In the past few months, VICPP (NPC) has sponsored two forums on the costs, availability, and quality of health care with particular implications for the poor. More community efforts which involve collaboration among faith communities are needed.

Perhaps some of the needs identified in this chapter provide opportunities for different churches and other religious organizations to join forces to create a mentoring program, for example, or a winter heat shelter such as exists in Culpeper (see # 7 below), or address any number of other community needs. Social action committees from different congregations could combine forces and resources in order to accomplish more than any could do alone. A poverty committee comprised of representatives of different faith communities could be formed to coordinate these activities.

4. More Involvement of Schools and Students. Students in Fauquier schools have become increasingly involved in poverty initiatives in recent years by engaging in food collections, service learning projects, and other activities to support the poor, and there is the potential for considerable expansion of these efforts. At least two high schools, Fauquier and Kettle Run, are in the process of developing poverty clubs to focus on the needs of the poor. Highland School has a course in

social justice which is designed to raise consciousness about economic inequality and related issues. Some seniors at Fauquier High School are doing poverty research in the community through their advanced placement government classes; this involves them in interviewing professionals (and in some cases clients) at various agencies in the county who serve the poor. These activities are promising but limited in scope and, for the most part, not well known. They should be held up to the light and expanded by more teachers and students.

5. Community Forum. The Fauquier Community Coalition and/or other groups focused on poverty could sponsor a day-long forum focused on the needs of the poor in Fauquier County and the services and activities which have been designed to address these needs. A combination of speakers and break-out discussion groups would address these issues using this report and other relevant documents as conversation starters. Participants and presenters would include not only service providers, but clients using these services, students who have been involved in school projects relating to poverty in the community, representatives of local churches and businesses, and others. Ongoing work groups would be formed which would commit to addressing particular problems and challenges in specific areas. This forum could become an annual event which would be used to publicize particular initiatives and begin the planning of new activities for the following year.

6. Developmental Programs for the Poor. How can the cycles of poverty be broken? How can the poor be helped to climb out of poverty rather than to remain trapped in the circumstances that placed them there in the first place? These patterns tend to recur in families in both the short term and across generations. What can be done to disrupt these cycles?

When Helping Hurts is the title of a 2009 book by Steve Corbett and Brian Fikkert (Subtitle: **How to Alleviate Poverty Without Hurting the Poor or Yourself**), which focuses primarily on short mission trips but nonetheless offers a useful framework for analyzing help. The authors classify helping efforts into three basic categories: rescue, rehabilitation, and development. Clearly, most programs designed specifically for the poor are rescue oriented.

Food pantries, emergency shelters, and many free clinic services are provided for people needing immediate assistance. These programs are necessary and will continue, but they run the risk that repeated rescue increases dependence and discourages personal responsibility. How can rescue operations

be combined with other initiatives that are more developmental in nature? A developmental program is one which provides the opportunity for growth and/or increasing movement toward independence and self-sustainability.

The emergency and transitional housing facilities in Fauquier County (the Emergency Shelter and the Vint Hill transitional housing program sponsored by Fauquier Family Services and Community Touch in Bealeton) all require educational and training programs for those occupying their facilities as does Habitat for Humanity. Residents (working with staff) are required to develop and implement individual plans designed to help them move toward greater independence. Elements include systematic and monitored saving, education and training as needed and appropriate, and regular progress meetings with staff. These programs operate on limited resources, however, and could benefit from grant funding which would provide support for expansion and further development based on research evidence of what has worked best in housing programs in other areas.

Other initiatives could be developed to educate clients of Fauquier County's programs to help the poor. Food pantries and other food distribution services could put more emphasis not only in providing nutritious food but on educating consumers about nutrition, an area in which FISH has already made considerable progress. Health services could expand their initiatives in self-help preventive medicine. More could be done to educate the poor and immigrant populations about their protections under the law and the manner in which the legal and court systems operate. Progress in all of these areas, of course, would require careful planning in addition to the availability of the necessary resources.

7. Transportation to Local Food Pantries and to Medical Appointments. Many county residents in need of food and medical care live in remote areas and/or do not have access to the transportation they need to get to food pantries and medical facilities. Churches and other organizations could organize transportation for these purposes to supplement the efforts of VolTran and Road to Recovery, the volunteer organizations that currently address this need.

8. Summer Meals for School Children. Just under 25% of Fauquier school children receive free or reduced-price lunches (approximately 21% free). For some in this group, FISH sends home backpacks which provide weekend meals for families. With exception of the Heartwood Center in Fredericksburg which provides breakfasts and lunches during the summer to elementary school children

in southern Fauquier County who qualify for the free and reduced lunches, these programs don't exist during the summer when children are not in school. This gap needs to be closed.

9. Emergency Housing for Individual Adults and Families. Although the Emergency Shelter has not been consistently full in recent months, it does not equally accommodate all categories of people needing shelter. The Emergency Shelter primarily serves families and has only limited space for single men and women. It does not admit those with drug addictions or recent felonies. The Department of Social Services, local churches, and occasionally other organizations and individuals often pay for short-term motel stays for these individuals, but this is not a lasting solution.

10. Warming Shelter. At present, homeless Fauquier residents who need protection from winter cold (November to March) can use the Culpeper Winter Heat Shelter, which is supported by local churches and operates overnight on a first-come first-served basis. A similar program is needed in Warrenton and/or at other locations in Fauquier County. The proposed Hope Warming Station which is under development in Catlett may alleviate some of this need.

11. Gap in Services for Emergency Shelter "Graduates" who are not eligible for Transitional Housing Programs. In many ways, transitional housing would appear to be the next logical step for those who "age out" (stay until the end of the time for which they are eligible: up to three months if employed) of the Emergency Shelter. Some of these people, however, don't meet the admission requirements for transitional housing programs in Fauquier County, which do not accept single men and require, among other conditions, that applicants have their own cars. More housing options are needed for those who do not meet the requirements for local transitional housing programs.

12. Transitional Housing for Single Men. Neither Vint Hill nor Community Touch, the two transitional housing facilities in Fauquier County, accepts single men. Community Touch admits some single women. Vint Hill accepts only families with children. Limited federal and/or state funding is available through Community Touch and also Culpeper Community Development (which serves some Fauquier residents) to provide rental assistance for some single men or women in the community although these funds often run out late in the fiscal year. Single men in particular, who are not eligible for (or have "graduated" from) the Emergency Shelter have few if any other options.

13. Awards Program. The FCC or another poverty-focused group could institute an awards program to recognize leading efforts to combat poverty from different categories of organizations which might include non-profits, churches, schools, businesses, etc. Awards would then be widely publicized in a manner which would bring recognition not only to the recipients and but also to the needs of the poor as a whole.

14. Research on Hunger and Shelter Issues in Fauquier County. Several food pantries are serving fewer clients than they have in the past. Even the Fauquier Food Bank and Thrift Store, the county's largest distributor of food to the poor, is down slightly in clients served during the past year. Collaborative efforts by FISH and FFBTS to start a mobile food pantry have been discontinued because in several "trial runs," it was not used. What do these developments tell us when there are clear indications of poverty in Fauquier County? Is there now less hunger than in previous years or have client numbers decreased for other reasons? These factors need to be investigated to determine what (if any) changes need to be made in food distribution services.

Despite widespread reports that there is not enough emergency housing in Fauquier County, the Emergency Shelter often operates at 60-70% capacity. What factors explain this apparent inconsistency?

Concluding Comments

This chapter has offered a starter list of initiatives that could improve opportunities and services for the poor in Fauquier County. Certainly there are others. There are also much larger questions such as, for example, "Why is there is so much poverty in an area like Fauquier County that is so prosperous?" What can/should be done to address this and other issues of this magnitude which are beyond the scope of this report?



CLOSING STATEMENT

We knew from the beginning that any attempt to study the impacts of poverty, given its many facets and implications, is a complicated undertaking. In the process of this effort, we learned that this challenge is even greater than we had realized. For those who are poor, poverty affects every aspect of their lives and its consequences are interactive and far-reaching. Those who lack food often lack adequate shelter and medical care and other basic necessities as well. The effects on mental and physical health are profound. We also learned that it is much easier to gather information about services than to understand the range and impacts of challenges confronted by the poor, let alone how best to address them. Efforts in these areas must continue. In the meantime, we hope that this document, despite its limitations, helps to provide context for the work of the Fauquier Community Coalition and other organizations and individuals working to help those in need.

SOURCES

Most of the information and insights presented in this document were gathered from individual and group conversations conducted by members of our project team with managers, volunteers, clients, and others associated with programs designed to help those in need Fauquier County.

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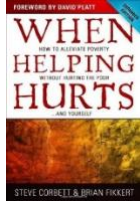
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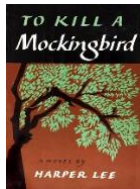
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