

# Community Builders

A Publication of the Maryland-National Capital Building Industry Association  
& the Home Builders Care Foundation

Giving Back to Our Community

Summer 2012

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## Let Your Fingers do the Walking—Join Our Online Virtual Walk for the Homeless



For 12 years running, the Home Builders Care Foundation has been selected as a beneficiary of **Fannie Mae's Help the Homeless Program**. The 2012 program is here!

This year, due to a number of reasons, there is no centralized walk on the National Mall. Instead, it's smaller community walks and Virtual Walks!

In total, the Home Builders Care Foundation needs to register 250 "walkers" to Help the Homeless in 2012. We are on our way with about 75 walkers, but we need your help to reach our goal.

How can you help? By simply joining our online "Virtual Walk". It's easy to participate.

Simply go to <http://www.hthwalks.org/goto/HBCF> and register yourself, your co-workers, your kids, and a few friends as walkers. All fees directly benefit our charitable construction program.

Just \$30 adults (\$20 for youth) for a great cause – and you've helped build for our neighbors in need. For more info, email [Patti Kane](mailto:Patti.Kane@hbcf.org) or call her at 301-445-5410.

## HBCF Ready to Begin Project at ABH Boys Home

*Renovations to Help Troubled Youth on the Road to Recovery*

The Boys Cottage in Rockville is a therapeutic group home for eight teenage boys struggling with mental health issues. All residents are referred to the Cottage following a stay in either a residential treatment facility or a psychiatric hospital. The home offers troubled teens a round-the-clock caring and supportive living environment in which they can address their psychological treatment issues while becoming reintegrated into the community.

There is a great need for the home's services, provided by Adventist Behavioral Health (ABH). According to 2010 Maryland statistics

provided by the US Substance Abuse & Mental Health Services Administration, for children ages 13-17, a total of 706 youth were served in state psychiatric hospitals or residential treatment facilities.

HBCF's planned renovations at the Cottage will greatly improve and make safe the home's two main common areas used primarily for program operations and social gatherings -- the frequently-used backyard and the kitchen/dining/group meeting areas. Both spaces are slowly falling apart. The entire kitchen will be gutted and replaced with new cabinets, countertops, flooring and appliances. The backyard will be landscaped and renovated to repair erosion. A deck will be expanded and an old pool deck will be overhauled into a striped basketball court.

Improvements will better accommodate daily one-on-one and group counseling sessions as well as provide the boys a safe refuge area to exercise, relax, and connect with staff, family members and each other. The Cottage is a detached single family home built in 1968. Work will commence this fall under the direction of **Ted Smart, MDC Services LLC**.



## St. Mary's has First Student-Built House in 10 years

by Jesse Yeatman, *The Washington Post*, June 20, 2012



Scott and Melanie Bateman are ready for the move into their new home, a two-story house that overlooks Breton Bay and that was built largely by St. Mary's County students.

The Batemans recently strolled around their home during an open house attended by the

students and the contractors and skilled trade workers who helped them learn the techniques to construct it.

“It’s beautiful,” Melanie Bateman said when asked how they thought the house turned out. The couple plan to move into the Leonardtown area home in early July.

Several building trade students from the Dr. James A. Forrest Career and Technology Center were at the June event, talking about their experience working with skilled contractors.

“In the beginning, everybody did whatever was needed,” Andy Sprouse said. As the house took shape, the students were able to delve into specialties, such as working on molding or banisters.

Sprouse said he felt proud to meet the owners and tell them he helped build their new home.

Student Kyle Burnes said he was surprised and impressed with how quickly the large house was constructed. He said he and others worked almost every school day and some weekends on the home.

“We wanted to be a part of it,” Burnes said.

The house is the first built by students from the Forrest center in 10 years. Participation had waned, and the program was put on hiatus until the Building Trades Foundation was formed last year to partner with the St. Mary’s school system and create a more streamlined experience.

“It was really a good project,” carpentry instructor Tony Cherry said.

Theo Cramer, principal at the Forrest center, even gave the students a lesson on drywall installation, a skill he used to help get through college.

“The only way we can do this is with the foundation,” Cramer said. “Without the foundation, there’s no way we could do this annually.”

Many contractors chipped in, offering discounts or donating materials and labor for the project. In turn, they are hoping to see a stronger cadre of trade students in the pipeline for careers.

“These are jobs that need to be filled for the next 30, 40, 50 years,” said **Jim Bacot**, Building Trades Foundation chairman.

Bacot, who also is president of Brooks Run Builders, said the house sold for \$440,000, slightly less than the appraised price.

The Building Trades Foundation is a private nonprofit organization separate from St. Mary’s public schools that was created to help revive the Forrest center’s dormant student home construction program. It does not use public funds for the home-building projects.

Bacot said the Batemans contacted him as construction was getting under way and offered to sign a contract to buy the home. He acknowledged that the foundation could have taken a chance on selling the home for more on the open market, but “a bird in the hand is worth more than two in the bush.”

The foundation will be able to put more than \$25,000 in profit from the sale of its first house back into a fund to help with future home-building projects, Bacot said. He said that future projects could be sold on the open market but that the foundation does not rule out building a home with a contract in hand again.

Bacot and other foundation members are searching for new plots of land on which to build houses during the next school year and beyond.

“There is land available,” he said, adding that they need the houses to be somewhat close to the Forrest center in Leonardtown.

The Batemans’ new 2,857-square-foot home is on five acres with a view of Breton Bay. Melanie Bateman said the house will be great for the couple’s two children, Lacey and Jack.

She said she and her husband had chances to look over the original plans for the home and make changes or suggestions. The biggest change was to add a second bathroom on the top floor.

“I grew up here, on this farm,” Scott Bateman said.

His mother still lives in a neighboring home, and the land for the new Bateman home was purchased by the Building Trades Foundation from his aunt.

Bateman said he was delighted to be able to buy a house to raise his children where he grew up.

## This Real Estate Firm is looking for Veterans who can keep their Cool under Pressure

by Thomas Heath, *The Washington Post*, May 26, 2012

**Tom Bozzuto** is the 65-year-old chairman of the Bozzuto Group, the Greenbelt-based real estate company that employs 1,200 people, many of them veterans.



Bozzuto, a Vietnam veteran, hires fellow service veterans for two reasons: first, they make great employees; second, he has an idea of what they have gone through and wants to help. But Bozzuto, whose company owns or manages tens of thousands of apartments between Boston and Virginia, didn’t call me looking for publicity. I found him.

I am humbled when in the presence of veterans, especially those men and women who have experienced combat and horrors that the rest of us cannot imagine. At 56 and having never served, I have a pretty good idea how easy I’ve had it.

Bozzuto is the son of a factory worker and was drafted into the Army in 1968 while in graduate school at Syracuse University’s Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs.

While he wasn't a front-line soldier, Bozzuto called his years as a combat correspondent in Vietnam "an out-of-body experience. Really strange." His brother, who flew F-4 Phantom fighter jets for the Air Force died of cancer, which Bozzuto said was brought on by exposure to the Agent Orange, the herbicide used in Vietnam to defoliate jungle cover.

Foremost in his memory are the two months he spent in basic training, where he learned that he wasn't all that special, and he'd better show up on time and get along with people, qualities he finds particularly valuable.

"Those nine weeks of basic training still stand out in my mind as some of the toughest weeks of my life," he said. "You spend four or five hours crawling on your stomach because some [officer] has gotten angry at you, it teaches you discipline. And so much of what we see is people needing the discipline of showing up [to work] on time."

I love this stuff. After nearly 30 years, I find myself still learning these lessons.

When Bozzuto was discharged, the first thing he did was take off his uniform. Those post-Vietnam days, "when we were all considered baby killers and were made to feel embarrassed," gnaw at him. So Bozzuto and his business partner, John Slidell, who also saw combat in Vietnam, feel that "anything we can do to create opportunities to use the skills of these fellows getting out of the service, and give them opportunities, is something we want to do."

Bozzuto is no evangelist. His priority is to find good employees. So he hired Kristen Reese in January 2011 to fill the no-nonsense title of "director of talent acquisition." Her mission is to address the growing demand for reliable employees.

As Reese sifted through the labor market, she eventually had an epiphany: go after veterans.

In short order, the company started an initiative to hire more veterans and their spouses.

"We're not looking for a pat on the back," Reese said. "This is a great demographic for us. We can train people on the technical skills they need, but we can't train somebody to have high integrity or to smile and say 'please' and 'thank you.'"

Veterans also are a good match for Bozzuto's blue-collar workforce of maintenance engineers and lobby concierges: People who must learn to interact with apartment residents on a daily basis without losing their cool.

Reese said she hires everyone from hot-shot officers to unsung grunts who can fix anything. Of the 171 employees Bozzuto has hired since January, seven percent — or 12 new employees — are veterans.

Take the Army veteran whose mission was to use air defense missiles to shoot down low-flying enemy aircraft. His job with Bozzuto is as a maintenance technician in one of the company's older apartment buildings, which requires more frequent attention to repairs.

“It’s one of the more demanding communities,” Reese said. “But if he can shoot down enemy aircraft, he is probably well-equipped to handle upset residents.”

The new hires aren’t just men. Bozzuto Construction’s head of business development is an Annapolis graduate who commanded a team that hunted enemy submarines.

“She is aggressive, bright and persistent,” Bozzuto said. “Is she the way she is because she went to the Naval Academy? I don’t know. All I can tell you is you can see in her focus on getting the job done that she has had military training.”

Then there’s the other Annapolis graduate who was planning missions for Navy SEAL teams and now is going to be hunting for choice land where Bozzuto can build its next project.

“He analyzed data in the military and made decisions, and we’re looking for him to analyze potential deals.”

Reese recently hired a former Navy rescue swimmer to oversee apartment construction. He received commendations for his efforts fishing bodies and rescuing survivors out of the western Pacific.

“In the interview, it came across there was nothing you could throw at this kid that he hadn’t overcome in terms of obstacles,” Reese said. “You look at a tsunami situation, you are pulling bodies out of the water. To go back and do that day after day, I could tell this guy to do anything, and it’s nothing he hasn’t seen already.”

Then she recalled that during her interview with the rescue swimmer, he said he was drawn to Bozzuto because it was owned by veterans.

“It meant a lot to him,” Reese recalled. “He said that a veteran would know what he had been through.”

## Stepping Stones Shelter to Receive Upgrades



According to the 2012 Count of Homeless Persons conducted by the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments, a total of 381 persons in families (152 adults, 229 children) are homeless on any given night in Montgomery County. One of the welcoming places these families may go is Stepping Stones Shelter.

Stepping Stones has been providing emergency shelter services for homeless families since 1979. Located in a historic farmhouse built 100 years ago in 1912,

the shelter houses up to six homeless families with children at a time (29 bed capacity). In 2011, the shelter served 33 families and 113 individuals.

The average stay is 65 days. During their time at Stepping Stones, these families move from crisis to a stable home environment. The Shelter provides food, clothing, shelter, support services, and educational programming.

With so many families moving through the grand farmhouse, it is no surprise that the routine maintenance, repairs, and replacements of the necessary elements in the home are frequent. The primary areas of construction work needed involve extensive porch roof repairs to address water issues, replacing well-worn flooring throughout the first level, plus a full kitchen renovation.



Last week, thanks to **Michael Harris Homes**, work began on the porch roof. Having visited the home a few months ago, **Leslie Boisvert of Michael Harris** was hopeful her company could help. “To be able to assist in bringing this beautiful historic home back to life brings us great pleasure. It is rewarding to know so many families will get support here and be able to move forward in life.”

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