From the Program Director, Eric Kellum

I have a common bond with inner city youth; when I was five years old my mother abandoned me. She boarded a Greyhound bus and I was left standing in that station without any sense of what has going to happen.

I thank God for Bill and Gail Littlejohn, foster parents who took me in at the age of twelve. Over time, they helped me change the image of myself, giving me hope of a better life.

My foster father would often look me in the eye and say, “you are a leader”. That’s a radical statement. How could I be a leader? Initially, I didn’t believe it. I was rejected and abandoned. But he never stopped saying it, and I began to stop doubting it. My leadership role today is founded on a foster father that overlooked the rejection, abandonment, and the consequences that came with it, and saw the potential of greatness buried inside of me that needed to be resurrected and released.

While some youth may not experience abandonment, others may have faced more severe situations that make my experience a fairy tale. The disheartening reality is that a large number are born into homes where their parent(s) are not mature enough to raise them with unconditional love and nourishment. They are rejected by a society that would rather respond by locking car doors and clinching their purses as opposed to embracing them, investing in them, and finding ways to show them a different reality.

As Program Director of The House, it is easy to become discouraged to the point that you don’t believe that things will improve for these kids; however, I see the need to follow my father’s advice. We tell our students that they are leaders and they have the capability to lead TODAY. Although some youth cannot fully or easily grasp that concept, many are beginning to get it. We must help these kids to release the potential of greatness from within.

The House staff is seeing signs of leadership and empowerment from a newly developed student led government, to our student-run recording studio. Seeds of the Gospel are being nurtured in our weekly Bible studies. Students are realizing that they do not have to be part of a negative statistic about murders, prisons or teen pregnancy.

The House programs offer love, encouragement, and a sense of family to a rejected and abandoned generation of inner city youth. Prayers and investments influence the youth we are working with now and it will impact the lives of children who have not even been born.

“Measurable Results

“The End.” Usually, those words are associated with the end of a story. But, for one House student, they represent a long-awaited and awesome beginning. One of our students, who came to us four years ago unable to read, has just independently read an entire storybook for the first time ever.

The students who come to The House face tremendous obstacles—spiritual, emotional, economic, as well as academic. Most of their schools are notoriously lacking in resources, resulting in situations where our students are passed on from one grade to the next, sometimes without having enough basic skills to survive in today’s world. The House is working with struggling students to help them achieve success in school, and in life.

The House is a place for youth.
Do we have to go back to the city?

Maybe it's the fresh country air, the scenic Cumberland valley view, or the deep, late-night silence that makes the fall retreat our most engaging event every semester. The retreat serves as one of the most critical vehicles in creating a moment for life change in the hearts of our students. It only takes a couple hours to leave DC, but it takes a few days for the noise of the city to dissipate and souls to be still enough to hear with their hearts. It is then we sow the seeds of the Kingdom.

While most students back in DC were touring haunted houses with ghosts and goblins Halloween weekend, The House had its own "haunted barn". Students heard the testimony of a young man who rejected righteousness and embraced a thug life of drugs and violence. They witnessed "demons" drag him to hell. The make-up and wardrobe of the House staff was frightfully convincing.

God's presence was real for students with Miracle at Midnight, as they stood arm-in-arm on the side of a mountain with heads tilted back staring into a starry endless sky. "It's beautiful!" one student said. "Do we have to go back to the city?" remarked another.

A "high" point of the weekend was a hike to the top of the mountain 1400 ft. above sea level. Surrounded by beautiful fall colors, Spiritual Life Director, Chris Chiles, leveraged the haunted barn experience and the struggle of conquering the mountain into a presentation of the Gospel that drew everyone to a new or redefined life in Christ!

Pregnancy Resource Center at The House

The House recently established a partnership with Capitol Hill Crisis Pregnancy Center (CHCPC) and Care Net to provide a pregnancy resource center to women in Southeast, DC.

All services to be offered are free and confidential and will include pregnancy tests, life options counseling, mentoring, teen parenting and childbirth classes, and post-abortion support. House President, Steve Fitzugh and Executive Director, La Wonda Harris joined representatives from CHCPC, McLean Bible Church, and Care Net to celebrate the opening of this satellite location. Jenny Dixon, Vice President of Ministry Programs says that, "Care Net is thrilled about this new partnership. Now on the second floor in a sun-filled room,

an oasis of peace exists, amid the violence on the streets outside. Pregnancy center volunteers are now available to offer a listening ear, gentle words, and life-affirming options to young women seeking help in a crisis."

Local high school nurses have expressed a need for the pregnancy resource center and are delighted they can now refer students to The House for help. Steve Fitzugh remembers when he received a phone call in the middle of the night from a 14-year-old who was in labor. She had not told anyone she was pregnant and was pleading for a ride to the hospital. "The arms of Christ are reaching out through the pregnancy center volunteers at The House to embrace a lost and hurting generation and infuse hope into despairing pregnancy situations," Dixon said.
Changes of the Heart

Below are excerpts from a letter written by a House student who expressed his feelings and change in attitude—or what we, at The House, call a change of heart.

I love the House. It keeps me from getting in a lot of trouble... it stops people from doing bad things... The House loves children and parents and it helps a lot of teenagers... Let me tell you about my life three years ago before I knew about the House. I was nasty, disrespectful to my mom, I was always cursing, I had a smart mouth and I was breaking everything that I got...

Eric Kellum is a great person, I like when he tells me that... I got a lot of potential. John is like a big brother to everyone. He helps us, talks to us, inspires us to succeed. I love Chris he is like my father... always ask me to go with him to church, that is why I love the House and the staff.

This student concludes his letter by thanking the House staff for speaking encouraging things to him, inspiring him to succeed, taking him to new places, and helping him to learn to stop disrespecting himself and others. When we read this student's words, it encourages and reminds us that when we sow hope into the lives of youth they will experience a change of heart.

Keeping our Face in the Place at Anacostia High School

The light from even one small candle can pierce through darkness, but the light of Christ can transform the darkness into light. One visit to Anacostia High School’s cafeteria, located downstairs in an old, windowless basement and filled at lunchtime with students who are not only hungry for food, but are starving for attention, affection and a sense of direction, and you will quickly see why The House must continue to be a source of light for the students and staff at Anacostia High School.

Continued on page 5
When new students hear that The House has a recording studio, they can't wait to get a chance to grab the microphone and show their skills that, unfortunately, often mirror the foul messages espoused in much of the secular music. Imagine their surprise when they discover that, at The House, we "keep it real" but we keep it clean.

This past spring, House students produced their first ever double CD entitled, "The Saga Begins."

The special double set features a collection of positive songs and raps that chronicle the students' life situations, hopes and dreams. The project aims to help bridge the gap for young people looking to make the switch from secular to gospel music, which can be a tremendous and difficult leap.

The CD features an array of House students, but it predominantly highlights the musical, lyrical and technical talents of Sharday, Keith, Anthony, and Demetrius, whose likenesses are artistically represented on the CD cover. These four students have been working diligently as studio apprentices under the tutelage of The House's producer extraordinaire, JT Thompson. They have also learned how to help to instruct other House students in audio engineering and recording.

"A lot of incredible things happen in the studio," JT noted. "These were some of the shyest students in Anacostia high school, and now they are some of the most popular and the most confident—and it all began in The House studio," he added. Their talent, commitment and professionalism have all been fine-tuned through their work in the studio. Through the House's music program, these students have received a level of training and mentoring that they may not have received elsewhere.

As a result, they are more well-rounded and prepared to handle social and professional situations that might normally overwhelm them and cause them to miss out on vital opportunities.

"What these kids have learned, most people take for granted," JT said. "We are definitely opening doors that would have been beyond their reach."

The students' diligence inspired JT to launch a Music Entrepreneurship program to help them and other interested students advance to the next level in the recording and business world. "What was unofficially 17th and Q Records is now official," JT said. "17th and Q Records will be a full-fledged company run by the students, who will have to interview for positions," he explained. The CEO has already been selected by JT, who chose senior Sharday for the coveted spot.

The company will have its own website produced by the students, who will be responsible for all graphic arts ranging from the website to CD covers to advertisements. The students will also learn how to generate funds to support their company. In addition, the students will build relationships with music industry representatives and will visit professional recording studios and schools; they will also be registered in professional music associations. At the conclusion of the training, they will be fully equipped to run their own publishing companies.

On that note, we encourage you to stay tuned for more exciting news about 17th and Q Records. There is definitely more to come...
Big Changes for "Big John"

John Gibson, affectionately and respectfully known as "Big John" currently handles security and custodial services for The House. But, there was a time in his life when the last place you would find Big John would be working at or even hanging out at a place like The House. John was well-known in his community, but his notoriety was earned for things that were, shall we say, less than positive. John was not only caught up in the street game, he ran a good part of it. That is, until he ran into Steve Fitzhugh and Rickey Bolden in Anacostia High School's cafeteria one day in 1998.

At first, John was not interested in hearing about Steve and Rickey’s plans to open a youth center in his neighborhood. But, his curiosity got the best of him, and when the center finally opened a year later, he went around to check it out. He had to admit that it looked like a nice place, it had a great recording studio, it seemed safe, plus there was good food to eat and even opportunities for travel. "One of the first times I ever went out of town in my whole life was with The House," John explained. As he continued to come around, he found himself spending less and less time on the street. "I finally found some brothers I knew I could trust...people that have good spirits...it was and still is really like a family." Then, he noticed that he actually began enjoying and looking forward to the discussions about God. "The House introduced me to God and I gave my life to Christ in 2000," John proudly recalled. He finally found a church home earlier this year, in 2005, and was baptized this past summer.

"The House really looked out for me when I really needed them," John said. "I'm real thankful that I don't have to be out on the street trying to get money...my mom knows where I am, what I'm doing, and what I'm not. Thanks to The House hiring me, I can pay bills, help my mother out...I love The House, I really do."

Big John, we thank you for all that you do and all that you have become. And, The House loves you, too, we really do.
Volunteer Spotlight on... Will Shaw

We're the few, the proud... no, not the Marines, The House staff. We are few in number, but we are so proud of and thankful for the volunteers who help serve as the extra pairs of hands, eyes, ears and feet that we need to carry out this awesome ministry on the front lines of the spiritual battlefield. House volunteer, Will Shaw truly exemplifies what it means to "love the Lord your God with all your heart, mind, soul and strength and your neighbor as yourself." He is a young man with a sincere passion for reaching those who have been marginalized and at risk of missing out on all that God has to offer.

"As Christians, God gives us a vision to make this a kingdom of God," Will said in explaining his basic philosophy about ministry. He believes that the challenge in accomplishing this is that, "we are all burdened by something. People of privilege are burdened by choices in life; while people of lower economic standing are burdened by circumstance. We have to work to raise the quality of life for those around us. That's part of being a team under the authority of God."

Will attends the Church of the Resurrection in Southwest, Washington, DC. He was drawn to The House ministry because he was seeking an opportunity to speak directly to young people, and to find a platform to be heard by the youth regarding the truth of Christ and the direction He provides for how we are to live our lives. "Anybody who's interested in learning how to reach urban youth should stop by The House," Will said. He also enjoys being part of an environment where he and others can model behavior for young people such as not using profanity, demonstrating respect between men and women, and other alternative approaches to handling life situations. On any given day, including weekends, you may find Will having breakfast or lunch with a student, taking them to special events, helping out in the House kitchen, or just hanging out with the students, building relationships and ministering to them one-on-one.

Ultimately Will wants to become an active Christian leader in the urban environment, working in areas such as prison ministry, addictions counseling, youth ministry, or education. He plans to pursue Seminary education to prepare him for his future endeavors.

We wish you much success, Will, and we thank you for taking time to bless The House while you are on your way to new heights in ministry.

Scholarship for Deserving Anacostia High School Student

We are excited to announce that we are in the planning stages with Anacostia High School administration to award an annual college or technical training scholarship in the name of The House to a deserving graduating senior. Proceeds will come from the first Planned Giving gift received earlier this year. The initial award is planned for the 2007 graduating class. Plans are to have a complete package with application instructions completed by fall 2006 when the award will be announced.

Receiving scholarships in high school may seem commonplace for some students. But, sadly, many of our brightest students are often overlooked or their family situations leave them ill-prepared to complete the application processes required to compete for scholarships. That is why The House scholarship effort is so critical. Many of our students would love to be the first in their families to attend college, but the financial obstacles are often just too daunting.

Through the planned giving program you are able to tailor a gift that fits your financial situation and desires for the way the money is used at The House. If you are interested in further consideration, please contact La Wonda Harris at 202.610.3100; she will direct you to the people who can work with you to move forward with your gift.
Is God Fair?

On Fridays, we have a time of discussion at The House, or what we call a Life Session. Life Sessions are actually “proverbial sessions”. They are not deep and detailed Bible studies like those held at The House on Thursdays. Life Sessions are just what they are titled, Sessions about Life. More specifically, they are Sessions about Life from God’s perspective. Our goal is to make them as provoking and stimulating as possible so that after the session is over and the students are long gone from The House, they are still pondering certain principles of God that were covered in the session.

In a recent Life Session, we talked about how life can seem unfair. Many of our young people find it easy to question the fairness or unfairness of God. They grow up in environments that are so horrific that they may ask God, “Why is this happening to me?”

We were sure to explain that though life seems unfair, God is very just. We also looked at what really might be going on in the midst of an unfair experience. We talked about how sometimes you are taken through something that makes you stronger.

We then discussed how sometimes we bring bad consequences on ourselves by the actions we take, but then we want to call foul on God and say he is unjust.

Finally, the students concluded that when it was all said and done, God is in charge and he knows what’s best for all of us, no matter what the conditions. Life Sessions like this one trigger many questions from students about God, and that is the key to their effectiveness.

Golf Tournament

The sixth annual golf tournament to benefit The House was held September 21 at Whiskey Creek Golf Club in Jansville, Maryland. In addition to a great day on the golf course, along with an enjoyable dinner and silent auction, we are pleased that the 2005 tournament was an excellent fundraising success. Through patron sponsorships, golf registration and contest fees, and silent auction proceeds, we were able to raise over $45,000 that will go directly into programs for The House.

“The House ministry is a long-term effort and we are continually in need of financial support to meet the growing needs of our students,” House Executive Director, La Wonda Harris said. The golf tournament is one of our major annual fundraisers and helps to generate a significant amount—though only a portion—of the funds this kind of ministry requires.

A dedicated group of volunteers from the Washington, D.C. financial community once again provided outstanding leadership for this event. At the awards presentation George Dunn of Smith Barney and John Yetman and Adam Goddard of UBS were given special recognition for being 2005 tournament sponsors and providing significant help in past years.

This year, House President Steve Fitzhugh decided to give his golf clubs a rest and spent the day meeting and mingling with participants. Other House staff members were also present and handled the registration table, a putting contest and silent auction administration. Through all of this we had a good opportunity to tell The House story for the 100 people in attendance. Many of the sponsors and players are repeat attendees and always look forward to the tournament. Several House tours have already been set up with first-time participants.

This year we were blessed with another beautiful day. The golf course was in great shape and provided a good challenge for most of us. However, no matter how superb the golf experience was, it is safe to say that most participants were happiest with the opportunity to share in transforming the lives of Anacostia youth.

The 2006 tournament will be held September 20 again at Whiskey Creek Golf Club. Put it on your calendar and plan to join us.
Bristol-Meyers Squibb Sponsors A Thanksgiving Dinner at Anacostia High School

For the third year in a row, Richard Thompson of Bristol-Meyers Squibb Company sponsored a Thanksgiving Dinner hosted by The House for Anacostia High School students and staff. Around 3:00 pm, the smell of turkey, stuffing and other delectable delights began to fill the corridor outside of the school’s new wing where the dinner was held, beckoning empty bellies to come and be filled.

For many of the students, The House’s Thanksgiving meal is the highlight of their holiday. The meal also provides an opportunity for The House to meet and encourage the teachers and staff at Anacostia, along with a number of the parents who truly look forward to this annual event. Parent and teacher support are critical to the success of our overall programming, and this event provides the perfect opportunity for The House staff to build and strengthen relationships with both groups.

During the dinner, participants were invited to reflect on their lives and share why they were thankful.

Many students expressed thanks to God and to The House staff for the significant changes in their lives. The students were also challenged to find something encouraging to say about at least one other person in the room as a specific show of appreciation and thanks. As always, our faithful volunteers truly rose to the occasion to make the event a truly blessed success. Much thanks to Beverly and Smitty Durham and Southeast Christian Fellowship Church for the fabulous meal, and thanks to all of our volunteers who worked behind the scenes to help make the dinner enjoyable and memorable.

How Can I Help?

Below is a needs list for our new building, located right next to us at 1600 17th Street. The new building will not only expand the ministry programs we offer our current students, it will allow us to offer our program to even more students.

Our students deserve to experience the best—new furnishings and new state-of-the-art equipment to challenge and inspire them even more. Perhaps you can help with one of the following:

- 2-Chair Hair Salon: $5,000
- Studio/Sound Room: $25,000
- Furnishings (4 offices): $1,800
- Commercial Kitchen (refrigerator, tables, etc.): $7,200
- Game Rooms: $1,550
- Dance Studio: $3,300
- Other—Computers, Printers, Copiers, Telephones & Misc.: $12,100

Thank you for caring and sharing your time, prayers and resources to help us change lives and communities.