

Advocates for Homeless Families Recognizes Avanti CEO and Others

Frederick, MD – Advocates for Homeless Families, Inc., celebrated the outstanding accomplishments of participants, volunteers and supporters at its annual Gala on August 22, 2007. Advocates honored the following: Board Emeritus status to recent past Board Chair Olivia White; Avanti Marble & Granite with the Award for Corporate Philanthropy; Beth Scott with the Volunteer Appreciation Award; and program participant Brenda Dwyer with the Award for Outstanding Achievement. The event also included live and silent art auctions.

Olivia White, a dean at Hood College, served on Advocates' board for six years, with two terms as Board Chair. She received Emeritus status for her dedication to the organization, giving of her time even at her busiest. She was called her "a treasure" and "an example of generosity for others." White received a token of appreciation in the form of a jasper necklace created by jewelry designer Melanie Fay.

Former Board Member Kevin Jackson introduced Bill Werder of Avanti Marble and Granite. Jackson said, "Several years ago, Bill and Angela [Werder] came to me and asked, 'Where can we make a contribution?' I suggested Advocates, they liked the idea, and within 24 hours, they had made a \$6,000 gift." Support from Avanti has continued even through this gala, where Avanti was the top sponsor at the "A Light in the Attic" level. Jackson described the Werders as philanthropic in their personal lives as well as professionally. Werder was pleased that Avanti earned the award, vowing that "Avanti's support for Advocates will continue."

Volunteer Beth Scott received the Volunteer Appreciation Award. Scott was the project leader for the team that refurbished a single family home for Advocates' Transitional Housing program. Scott coordinated the contractors and volunteers, marshaled financial support and material donations for the project, and oversaw the entire renovation through to the end, right down to planning the ribbon cutting ceremony. "This renovation was nothing short of a miracle," said Advocates Executive Director Greg Galaida, "and we owe a debt of gratitude to the miracle worker that made it happen."

Advocates participant Brenda Dwyer gave a moving speech about her time in the programs. Dwyer is a graduate of the Transitional Housing program but now lives in her own housing and participates in the Families Forward program. Before coming to Advocates, she lived in emergency shelter for over a year and was struggling to move on. She is now studying Accounting at Frederick Community College and will complete her Accounting certificate in a few months. She has overcome challenges in her health, finances and personal life. She also has two daughters. "I want to thank Advocates so, so much for all they've done for me," she said. "I'm so very grateful."