



DIDLAKE
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Unshakable belief and ninety days of hard work pay off big for a mother, her daughter and the entire community.

“Lord, if this is the life you’ve chosen for me, then I’ll take it”. Those words were part of Maria Ward’s prayers every day for years. Every once in awhile though, she would quietly add, “But will there ever be a time when I can do something more for myself”?

Maria is the single mother of Karena McDougle – an effervescent young woman who was born with severe developmental disabilities.

An outgoing young lady, unable to speak and full of more energy and enthusiasm than she could contain, Karena was thought to be a “behavior problem”. She moved from one service provider to another over the years in a struggle to gain the life, vocational and behavioral skills necessary to function on her own. Maria struggled too, often finding it hard to keep a job because of difficulties getting Karena accepted to, and retained in, any

rehabilitative program. To focus on building a life for her daughter, she put aside her own life and career ambition to become a nurse. Says Maria, “I just needed someone to believe in Karena”.

Then Karena and Maria came to Didlake, where they met Andrew Clarke – director of Didlake’s Community Inclusion Program. “I never had any doubt”, said Andrew, “that Karena could shine. You could just see the eagerness in her eyes and her smile. Karena

just needed to learn how to take that energy and put it to work for herself”.

These days, work is one of the things Karena does best. In cooperation with the Prince William Community Services Board, Didlake provided ninety days of one-on-one support from a specialist who worked with Karena to improve her vocational and social skills. The focused

attention revealed Karena’s true potential, and she thrived. Today, Karena is one of the most productive employees at Didlake’s Mail Center in Manassas. She has moved into a group home where she thoroughly enjoys her newfound independence.

As for Karena’s mother, Maria – she is putting herself through nursing school while working full time at an assisted living center, and will soon receive her RN degree.

This past summer, she took a vacation by herself for the first time in 29 years. “My daughter is

*“I thank God for
Didlake – they never
gave up on Karena.”
– Maria Ward*



One-on-one support gave Karena McDougle a fresh start and a new career -- while her mother found the opportunity to pursue her own dreams. Mother and daughter are both enjoying their independence. Pictured left to right: Andrew Clarke, Maria Ward, Karena McDougle.

my life”, says Maria, “and I miss her now that she’s living on her own. But I thank God for Didlake – they never gave up on Karena. Now she and I are both independent women, not to mention taxpayers. Look what the community got back from ninety days of support and a Didlake staff that was determined to make it work”. You only need to see the smiles on mother and daughter’s faces to understand the value of an investment in human potential. ❖





Rex Parr

Letter from the President & CEO

Laying the Cornerstone for Long-Term Health

The Prince William Health System Foundation's Cornerstone Contribution Endows a Long-Term Healthcare Fund

With the generous help of the Prince William Health System Foundation, a new milestone has been reached in the development of The Didlake Foundation's Personal Support Network. There were smiles all around as the PW Health System Foundation announced its decision to become a Cornerstone Contributor, granting \$10,000 to endow a fund for support of the long-term healthcare needs of Personal Support Network participants.

Kenneth Collins, Executive Director of the Prince William Health System Foundation, said "We're pleased to be a Cornerstone Contributor and hope others will join us in supporting this much-needed program. Didlake's long-term care program, specifically the

"The payoff is a stronger, healthier community".

– Kenneth Collins

medical services fund, is closely aligned with our mission to support the health care needs of the community. No one else in our area is addressing the long-term care needs of people with disabilities. We view our support of programs such as this as investments. The payoff is a stronger, healthier community."

The Didlake Foundation is happy to welcome the Prince William Health System Foundation as a Cornerstone Contributor. Didlake CEO Rex Parr said, "As our consumers age they face uncertainty about how to address their needs for long-term care. The coming years will see a dramatic increase in the need for long-term medical support for people with disabilities. Investments are needed now to provide at least a minimal safety net in the future. The PW Health System Foundation sees what we see – an opportunity to act today that will benefit the entire community for years to come. We are extremely grateful for their generous support."

In our last issue, I described efforts at Didlake and elsewhere to avert a disastrous reduction in funding for human services brought about by Virginia's budget crisis. Hard work and advocacy on the part of many of you, coupled with the quick actions of our local representatives helped to weather the storm - temporarily. Since then, the economy has continued to struggle, placing great fiscal stress on organizations of all kinds. Government deficits are forcing reductions in every aspect of public service, from roads to human services to education. Locally, United Way's most recent campaign was down 80%, putting additional stress on not-for-profits. The confluence of these economic currents threaten to wash away the social safety net for people who are disabled, disadvantaged, unemployed and/or homeless.

There is grudging agreement that Virginia's tax structure is woefully out of date and no longer adequate for our present-day realities. At the same time, it has become popular for those seeking elected office to pledge that they will not raise taxes for any reason, under any circumstances.

Against this backdrop, Virginia will hold elections for state and local offices in November 2003. Individual citizens will shape the future at the ballot box. They will elect those candidates whose stated priorities reflect the hopes and dreams of a majority of voters.

I urge you to learn about the issues and how each candidate proposes to address them. Do not be swayed by simplistic slogans or ideological sound bites. Important questions demand well-reasoned answers. Remember, if it sounds too good to be true....

Finally, I hope you will go to the polls in November. Your vote is important. Together, we can elect representatives who will do the right thing. ❖

Rex Parr
President & CEO

Ways to Give

Should You Consider a Planned Gift?

Cathy and Joe have a son – Steven, age 42 – with a developmental disability, who will one day inherit their estate. Comfortable but not wealthy, they worry about how Steven’s inheritance will impact his SSI and Medicaid benefits. Mary and Dave, long time advocates for the mentally disabled, own property that has significantly increased in value over the years. They don’t want their children to be forced to sell it to pay taxes on their estate. Roberta Johnson is a widow with no children who hopes to be remembered for her life’s work helping people with mental illness.

Though their circumstances differ, these three families have several things in common: the desire to preserve their assets for the future benefit of others, a strong commitment to helping people with disabilities, and worry about whether the wealth they’ve worked to accumulate will eventually benefit the tax authorities more than the people and causes they care about.

“People fret because they don’t have answers”, says Meade Gwinn - a Didlake Board member, and President of Gwinn & Associates, Inc., a financial advisory firm in Manassas. “Recent legislation, which gradually reduces the estate tax burden until 2010 – then restores it at rates as high as 50% or more – adds to the confusion. A good estate plan can help to eliminate the anxiety not to mention the tax bite. When an individual has a strong commitment to a charitable cause, a Planned Gift can be of enormous benefit for the donor family as well as the cause they support”.

“...a Planned Gift can be of enormous benefit for the donor family as well as the cause they support”.
– Meade Gwinn

The term Planned Giving encompasses a variety of financial vehicles through which a donor may designate a charitable institution as a beneficiary to his or her estate. The options range from a simple bequest in a will to more complex arrangements such as insurance policies, annuities or Charitable Trusts. There are several forms of Charitable Trusts, and some can

be used to designate that income from an asset goes to one beneficiary (such as a child), while the asset itself passes to a charity. When a child has a disability that requires long-term care, a Special Needs Trust can protect the child’s eligibility for certain benefits – and may

also designate that certain assets pass to charity in the future.

Says Mr. Gwinn, “As a financial advisor, I tend to focus on the tax advantages of Planned Giving – and they can be significant. But as a Didlake Board member and someone who cares deeply about finding meaningful ways to help some of our most disadvantaged citizens, I see a planned gift to an organization that shares one’s values as an investment where the return is quite literally, a better world”.

To learn more about Planned Giving, consult your financial advisor, or contact Didlake at (703) 361-4195. ❖



Meade Gwinn

Didlake Joins New United Way Advisory Board

New management team kicks off Annual Campaign

The United Way of the National Capital Area (UWNCA) has kicked off its annual campaign, amidst challenging times. A struggling economy and state budget deficits mean many agencies are facing cutbacks just when their services are needed most.

Simultaneously, the UWNCA is working to regain public trust after uncovering accounting irregularities that led to a major restructuring of its leadership staff and management practices.

As a United Way agency, Didlake understands the importance of United Way’s service to our community –

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Didlake Joins New United Way Advisory Board

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and we have joined in the effort to re-make and re-shape the UWNCA. Our President, Rex Parr, now serves on a special Advisory Board to assist the UWNCA's new Executive Director and Board of Directors. With the new Advisory Board and management team, and new standards of accountability in place, the UWNCA has renewed and strengthened its commitment to serving the people and agencies of the area. Your support is vital to their mission, and to ours.

You can designate your United Way pledge to Didlake by entering number 8084 on your pledge card. Make your pledge today, and put your dollars to work alongside those of your co-workers to multiply the impact of your support. ❖



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