

**A PLEA FOR SURVIVAL
TO ALL NATIONAL & INTERNATIONAL ELECTRONIC AND PRINTED
MEDIA or to www.IDEALIST.org
December 29, 2011**

Please keep Mission of Love Charities in your prayers during this holiday season. A 20 year old non-profit, critical to the needs of Prince George's County and neighboring poverty stricken communities, will soon close due to a lack of funding. We need ideas on how to procure funding to keep it open. While the need for our services goes up, funding levels have gone down. Moreover, Mission of Love Charities is the only non-profit in the area with the capacity to offer the services we provide to the poorest-of-the-poor at no cost. That's one reason we have such a large volume of donors from around the state and the region. However, individual donations are not sufficient to fund our operations and critical services, so we are reaching out for help.

Can you assist? **Can you, or do you know of an organization/individual who can donate 1.2 million dollars or provide an endowment to help our organization stay open for one more year, and then help us develop a long-term funding strategy that will remove the constant threat of lay-offs and/or closure?**

Mission of Love Charities, an organization with a rich history and a strong track record of helping people and changing lives, was established in 1990 and officially opened its doors in 1991. Mission of Love Charities, Inc. (MOLC) is a 501 (c) (3) non-profit, multi-faceted health and human services organization. MOLC is dedicated to meeting the immediate, basic human needs of the underprivileged and impoverished throughout the region by providing free programs and services designed to provide them with both short-term and long-term stability. MOLC is committed to equipping individuals and families with the tools needed to survive and to grow, by providing services such as Life Skills and Work Readiness training, Youth Development and more.

Based in Prince George's County, Maryland, near the dividing line between DC and Maryland, approximately 70% of all clients come from Maryland, 25% from the District of Columbia and 5% from Northern Virginia. More than 90% of our funds are from Maryland in spite of 30% of our clients coming from neighboring jurisdictions. We do not turn anyone away who qualifies under Housing Urban Development income guidelines. As of June 30, 2011, MOLC had provided critically needed services to more than **306,743** underprivileged and impoverished individuals and families throughout the Washington metropolitan region. In a single year, MOLC assists an average of 6,000 first-time clients and 4,000 repeat clients, who receive over 17,000 units of service. Most clients are adults ranging in age from 18 to 50 who live in, or are homeless in, the Washington metropolitan region and who support themselves and their families with an income of under \$22,000 per year. Many are women with children who are unsupported and are transitioning from welfare to work. A diverse range of organizations supports us and 83% of funds go directly to service our clients, helping them become more responsible and involved citizens. We are true to our motto – we are “*Helping People, Changing Lives.*”

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Through the development and operation of its four core programs—*Basic Needs, Life Skills, Youth Development, and Seniors' Network*—MOLC provides free services to clients. All services are offered at no cost to qualified (under Housing Urban Development income guidelines) individuals shopping at the MOLC warehouse. The warehouse offers donated household items for no cost to qualified individuals.

Over 10,000 no and low-income members of our community benefit from our services each year, including those who now fall into the category of the “working poor.” These individuals and families have been displaced by job loss, home foreclosure, eviction or home abandonment resulting from an inability to pay their rent or mortgage and related causes.

The *Basic Needs Program* helps individuals and families stretch their limited incomes by providing basic needs such as food/clothing/shelter/furniture and household amenities as well as counseling and case management services. Donated household items are given away FREE to MOLC *Basic Needs Program* clients. These are key components of a program designed to meet clients where they are. Based on assessments and one-on-one counseling, clients are referred to other MOLC programs or to community services for needs not covered by MOLC.

The *Life Skills Program* helps individuals develop new personal and professional skills. Emphasizing training and case management, participants attend classes and work with MOLC to develop an Individual Responsibility Plan that includes job search and career advancement strategies. Activities include classes in self-esteem, self-image, emotional intelligence, mock interviews, community service projects and a graduation ceremony. Ultimately, our *Life Skills Program* is designed to help individuals enter the job market, secure higher paying jobs and improve their lives. After the completion of the *Life Skills Program*, students are accepted into the Alumni Association. The Alumni Association assists graduates in continued professional development, socialization, networking and peer support. The Alumni Association allows students to give back to the community through MOLC & other organizations, as well as give support and mentoring to current *Life Skills* students.

The *Youth Development Program* is designed for 10 to 16 year olds, to educate them on character development, getting results, conflict resolution, healthy relationships, communication arts & cultural development. Our goals include preparing youth and young adults to think critically and to develop productive solutions that make their lives and communities better. We want them to develop self-respect and to see that there's more to life than just where you are –what matters is where you're going. We offer seminars, workshops and trips to emphasize that, with knowledge comes power; add hard work and everything is possible!

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The *Seniors' Network Program* is designed for seniors (aged 60 and older) to provide them the opportunity to learn basic computer skills and to get information on wellness, health screenings, assistance with transportation and other topics of concern to seniors. Seniors are able to use what they learn in class to assist their grandchildren with school work, thereby becoming more than just babysitters. Senior graduates are also accepted into the MOLC Alumni Association.

Other services of MOLC include **THE RENEWED MIND PROGRAM (TRMP)** which is the Substance Abuse/Compulsive Behavior Program. This is a spiritually-based, not religiously-based, outpatient program. TRMP is based on the belief that a renewed mind translates into renewed behavior. Thus, we operate a program that is highly structured, confidential, spiritually and educationally-based that stresses admission, treatment, recovery, after-care and relapse avoidance/prevention. This is yet another way we are "*Helping People, Changing Lives.*"

In spite of all we do, very soon MOLC will be forced to lay off most, if not all, of its 14 member paid staff, and more than 15 volunteers from the ARC of Prince George's County, the Prince George's County Department of Corrections, community volunteers and students seeking community service credits for school. We'll be forced to cut hours and days for the warehouse and cut staff we depend on to pick up donated furniture and goods. We would have to operate primarily with a small group of volunteers, negatively impacting the number of clients we reach and services we provide. As founder/president/CEO and knowing the number of lives touched by our services, it is extremely difficult to watch MOLC join the for-profit sector and other small non-profits that have fallen under the weight of the current economy. When fully funded, MOLC is able to provide all these services on a budget of 1.2 million dollars per year –that equals \$120.00 per person/per year for the 10,000 people served. But sadly, without an immediate infusion of funds and an annual revenue stream, MOLC will no longer exist after April 2012.

Funding from regular supporters is down in every category. Before the downturn of the economy, one Board member, a developer, raised \$275,000 to \$350,000 annually for MOLC's budget during our annual Trotter Humanitarian Awards Ceremony, a ceremony named for the late Senator, Decatur "Bucky" Trotter, who was Chairman of the Board at the time of his death. The amount raised from our last Trotter event was down to between \$100,000 and \$125,000 per year. Foundation grants previously averaged between \$100,000 and \$150,000 per year; they are now down to \$25,000 to \$40,000 per year. Maryland State government funding remains, but due to decreased revenues coming into the county, the Prince George's County Council and County Executive funding has dropped considerably --from approximately \$80.00 per person in prior years to \$20.00 per person/per year in 2011. This is **a loss of two thirds of MOLC's prior years' funding** –funds lost for "*Helping People, Changing Lives.*"

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If Mission of Love Charities does not receive funding and shuts down in April 2012, it may be difficult or impossible to reopen and resume providing valuable services to the underprivileged in these communities. Efforts to re-open a non-profit once it closes for funding problems, no matter how legitimate the cause, are a sign of struggle. Therefore, foundation funding becomes more difficult to obtain. We would no longer be “*Helping People, Changing Lives.*”

As a retired veteran and federal government worker, I personally will experience little negative financial impact from the closure. However, I am concerned for our hard working, devoted staff as well as for the thousands who rely on MOLC. They will be devastated, as they have come to rely so heavily on our programs to supplement their small incomes, to purchase food and to learn skills that can help pull their families out of poverty. I worry about what will happen to them.

Equally important is the impact on the community. By aiding the disadvantaged and helping them develop the knowledge and skills to earn a better living, Mission of Love Charities is a deterrent to the criminal elements and activities that follow poverty. The effects of poverty put an added burden on our state and local governments in the form of incarceration costs, foster and social services care, welfare and more. In my humble opinion, it just makes good financial sense to fund MOLC. Again, MOLC is the ***only*** non-profit in the area with the capacity to offer these types of services to the poorest-of-the-poor, at no cost to them.

We need access to funds NOW to continue to serve people in poverty in this area. Won't you please help by joining me in raising enough funds to keep this great organization operational? Moreover, will you provide MOLC with an endowment in order to secure a regular funding stream? This will make it possible to train a successor who can continue and extend the valuable services MOLC provides. *Helping People, Changing Lives* is a worthy goal for the people of the MD/DC/Northern Virginia area. Mission of Love Charities needs your help to continue making it possible.

Contact Information:

Dr. Douglas E. Edwards
President and CEO
Mission of Love Charities, Inc.
6180 Old Central Avenue
Capitol Heights, MD 20743
301-333-4440
dedwards@molc-inc.org
www.molcinc.org