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# ABAG Member Spotlight: Ausherman Family Foundation

By Elisabeth L. Hyleck, Association of Baltimore Area Grantmakers

The Ausherman Family Foundation was established in 2006 by Marvin and Lisa Ausherman to fulfill their vision for Frederick County, Maryland. That vision is a dynamic society where committed individuals and institutions work together to ensure that the needs of all are met. The Foundation's mission to be a catalyst for change is both local and global.

Through discussions with a DC-based consultant and another family foundation, Marvin and Lisa determined their mission and decided to focus on what is important to them – Frederick County; children and young adults; cultural activities and experiences; safe and aesthetically-pleasing environments; and Christian missions.

“Our trustees care about how the community is fairing, especially in these economic times,” says Executive Director Norine Haas, “They are really encouraging institutions to meet needs in underserved areas and supporting the disadvantaged members of the community.”

The Ausherman Family Foundation has several grant programs including those for Capacity Building, Social Entrepreneurs, Challenge Grants, Global Contributions and General Grants. They also offer nonprofits grant-seeking resources and emergency cash flow loans.

While Foundation staff are surprised they've not seen an increase in emergency loan requests, the Foundation has been receiving more requests from individuals and from groups overseas. They've also recently made some new investments in capacity-building aimed at nonprofit organizations during these difficult economic times.

The Foundation, in conjunction with Volunteer Frederick and Frederick County Community Foundation,

hosted a full-day Nonprofit Summit on March 25<sup>th</sup>. The three-track Summit covered subjects such as board development, fundraising and resource development, volunteer management and recruitment. This local, low-cost event targeted board members, executives, volunteer managers, and development professionals and exceeded its anticipated attendance of 120 people.

The Foundation also recently hired Rebecca Southers as their first Grant Coordinator. Rebecca, who has good knowledge of Frederick-area nonprofits, will help those grantees that serve underserved populations conduct research, write grants, and monitor grant requirements. The Grant Coordinator will help these organizations diversify their funding sources and assist them in achieving new levels of effectiveness.

The Foundation's Capacity Building Grant Program is demonstrative of its interest in organizational effectiveness. The Foundation asks a healthy organization what the one thing is that would make them even more effective and looks for a well-defined response. After a thorough application and selection process, the Foundation supports a consultant to work with the grantee on a specific issue such as strategic planning, executive transition, fundraising, or organizational structure. They are currently working with eleven organizations and are pleased with the progress that is being made.

The Ausherman Family Foundation prides itself on its passion for kindness. “We don't ignore any request,” says Haas who encourages grantseekers to talk to her before submitting proposal, “We consider every proposal and provide a quick response. We try to be diplomatic when saying ‘no’ and suggest a resource to them.”

To learn more about the Ausherman Family Foundation, you may reach Norine at 301.620.4443 or visit [www.aushermanfamilyfoundation.org](http://www.aushermanfamilyfoundation.org).



Marvin Ausherman, Founder and Chairman



Lisa Ausherman, Co-founder