



**CARING AND  
CONNECTING TO  
SUPPORT  
PEOPLE LIVING  
WITH  
HIV & AIDS**

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**A ministry of  
the Baltimore-  
Washington  
Conference of  
The United  
Methodist Church**

# Celebrate Life!

Volume 2, Issue 1—Spring-Summer 2016

## June retreat to be first of three in 2016

**W**ith the theme “Don’t Just Survive. Thrive!” our first 2016 retreat, June 9-12, at Mar-Lu Ridge in Jefferson, Md., will emphasize living an abundant life, not just getting by from day to day.

“Many folks with HIV are living longer with better health, thanks to their meds, but they need a healthier mind and spirit, too, a love of life” said the Rev. Nancy Green, retreat director. A pastor and schoolteacher, she has been working at our retreats for 18 years, the last six as a director.

A Walgreens pharmacist who specializes in HIV will come share new wisdom on medicines and being consistent in one’s self-care.

Other customary highlights will include: arts and crafts, small-group talks,



**These board members helped lead our December 2015 retreat: (from left) Rev. Terri Rae Chattin, Jo-sette Foster, Judith Travers and Raymond Shattuck.**

John Coleman photo

meals and fellowship together, secret prayer-buddy gift exchanges, Holy Communion, the always inspiring healing service, and the always zany talent show.

Our other 2016 retreats will be August 25-28 at

Manidokan Camp & Retreat Center in Knoxville, Md., and Dec. 5-8 at the Washington Retreat House in DC.

February’s retreat was canceled due to the loss of significant annual funding from UMCOR. (See article on page 3.)

## QLR raising funds to support its ministry

Quality of Life Retreats welcomed supporters to its April 30 fundraising event, “A Pre-Mother’s Day Magical Salute to Moms,” at the Beaver Creek Country Club, 9535 Mapleville Road, Hagerstown, MD.

Nearly 40 guests enjoyed a scrumptious brunch and a performance by profes-

sional magician **Michael T.** (right) The popular illusionist is also a motivational speaker and minister who performs “magic with a message” to delight and amaze children, youth and adults.

The event featured a silent auction of donated items and face-painting for kids.

**Continued on page 2**





### *1st time to lead*

**Walter Samuels**, who has co-directed several Quality of Life Retreats as a trainee and attended many more, will take the reins for the first time in August. Once again a veteran retreatant becomes a retreat director, shouldering a big responsibility.

Walter, who has attended retreats since the mid-1980s and even paid for others to attend, often mentors first-timers.

Congrats and best wishes to you and your team, Walter!

## Recent retreats reflect growing trends

**O**ur four retreats in 2015 succeeded in drawing 107 participants, most of them first and second-timers. Divided evenly between men and women, with four transgendered persons, most were African-American, over age 50, low-income, heterosexual and recently diagnosed.

The racial and age demographics represent an established trend for Quality of Life Retreats and our region.

### **Very few under 30**

"We serve very few people under 30 anymore," said QLR's grant writer and researcher Lance Hogue, "but mostly those in the 40-69 age range." He cites the popular use of PrEP (Pre-exposure Prophylaxis) and the drug Truvada by people under 30 with high-risk

behaviors trying to protect themselves from contracting the disease.

"Many in this age group don't know a world without HIV," said Hogue. "They have accepted it and the stigma is not an issue for them."

### **More Hepatitis C education added**

There are also more people with a triple diagnosis of HIV, Hepatitis C and substance abuse. So QLR has added HEP C education to its retreat agendas.

And there are also more people caring for friends and family with HIV or working or volunteering in non-profit HIV agencies, added Hogue. "They often need respite themselves, compared with folks in earlier days who were in hospice and very sick themselves."

### **Late 2015 Retreats**

The unthemed Dec. 7-10, 2015, retreat at the Washington Retreat House, led by Judith Travers with 10 volunteer staff, welcomed 27 retreatants.

The August 2015 retreat, led by Malcolm Coley, drew 40 retreatants and staff to enjoy Manidokan Camp & Retreat Center's beauty and serenity.

Registrar Angel Ortiz has upgraded the application and notification process, while the board continues to update its forms, bylaws, rules and procedures.

"We're trying to keep up with trends occurring in HIV-AIDS and among our participants," said board chair Raymond Shattuck, "including what they need and want in education and support at our retreats, and what we can offer."

## *Celebrate Life!*

**Published by Quality of Life Retreats.**

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## *QLR raising funds for its ministry* Continued from page 1

"We had people from ages 2 to 86, said the Rev. Nancy Green, lead organizer. "It was amazing how Michael T. weaved faith into magic in so many ways."

The event followed a sensational benefit concert Sept. 26, 2015, that



featured vocalist and music minister **Shirdi Hughes** (left) and her talented choral ensemble, Ovation. Along with the music, we heard a touching testimony by a recent first-time retreatant, and we raised more than \$3,000 in donations.

We will continue to devise new fundraising opportunities and write new grants, as we

seek more donations from partners to help us sustain this life-saving ministry.



## Generous partners donate to support HIV retreats ministry

Quality of Life Retreats and its retreatants are grateful for the support we have received from various sources in past years.

The United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) awarded us



Global Health

Grants annually since 2007, including \$10,000 in 2015. However, UMCOR informed us that they would fund only international programs, and not U.S., programs, to fight HIV-AIDS in 2016.

Peace  
with  
Justice  
Grants



But we are also grateful to the Baltimore-Washington Conference for yearly support from its **Peace with Justice Sunday offering**, as well as being one of a dozen **Conference Advance Specials**. Advance Specials are ministries approved by the annual conference for local church second-mile giving and “lifted up as outstanding examples of programs that help people become fully alive in Christ and make a difference in an ever-changing world.”

**To support us as an Advance Special** please write a check to “Conference Treasurer” and mail it to Baltimore-Washington Conference, 11711 E. Market Place, Fulton, Md. 20759. **Be sure to write “Quality of Life Retreats”** on the memo line of the check.

Meanwhile, we are glad to have

generous local church partners (as well as individual and group donors), including:

- Linden-Linthicum UMC, Clarksville, Md.
- Emmanuel UMC, Scaggsville, Md.
- Loch Raven UMC, Baltimore
- Magothy UMC, Pasadena, Md.
- Grace UM Church, Baltimore
- Glen Burnie UMC (who provide their church bus to transport retreatants)
- Randall Memorial UMC, Washington, DC (who provide their church van to transport retreatants to Baltimore)

We urgently need support from more local churches—both financial and in-kind, including availability of another church van (with a driver) in the Washington DC area to transport retreatants to Baltimore so they can board Glen Burnie UM Church’s bus for travel to our retreat sites in Western Maryland. We pay for mileage.



Finally, we are not only grateful but elated for the support we continue to receive from the DC Aquatics Club’s annual, exciting



**The Victoria Trio, led by Linden-Linthicum UMC music director Dave Foley, performed there in 2014, in one of several benefit concerts that aided Quality of Life Retreats.**

**Maryland Swim for Life** open-water swim competition. They blessed us with \$8,500 in 2015, raising funds to benefit DC-area HIV/AIDS nonprofit service organizations like ours.

The **2016 Maryland Swim for Life** event—their 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary!—will happen July 9 at Rolph’s Wharf on the Chester River, one of the Chesapeake Bay’s most beautiful tributaries. As always, we will be there with our display to cheer on the swimmers and help clock their times. Come join us! See the link on our BWC-QLR Webpage for access to more information.



## Quality of Life Retreats Board

- Raymond Shattuck,  
*Chairman*
- John W. Coleman,  
*Vice-Chairman*
- Angel Ortiz,  
*Secretary*
- Rev. Terri Rae Chatten  
*Treasurer*
- Loretta F. Anders
- Rev. Reg Barss
- Malcolm Coley
- Ella Curry, PhD, RN
- Josette Foster, RN
- Rev. Nancy Green
- Steve Green
- Lance Hogue Jr., RN
- Judith Travers

**A**t **Quality of Life Retreats** we offer a holistic, participant-centered approach to educate, support and empower people living with HIV and AIDS. Our four-day retreats offer wisdom for living and coping with the disease and related challenges, as well as opportunities to connect socially and emotionally with others in similar situations.

Participants can find renewal and relationships, while learning actions and attitudes that can be effective for long-term survival. Our objective is to provide a safe, supportive environment where participants can fully be themselves, free of fears and inhibitions, and share openly their personal journeys and deepest concerns. We also offer practical, educational and health resources to those whose lives have been or will be challenged by HIV or AIDS.

Through Quality of Life Retreats we have developed a viable model of how the religious community can respond compassionately and effectively to the HIV/AIDS crisis as partners with community volunteers and helping agencies. However, this program is ecumenical and interfaith, open to individuals of all faiths, religions and beliefs.

## Quality of Life Retreats thanks two faithful friends



(Left) Quality of Life Retreats Chairman Raymond Shattuck (left) awards long-time board member **Loretta Anders** a token of the board's appreciation for her years of faithful endeavors and leadership, as well as the generous support she inspires from her congregation at Linden-Linthicum United Methodist Church. Loretta chairs the board's By-Laws Committee and has also been vice-chairman.

(Right) **Sandy Ferguson** was celebrated at the 2015 Baltimore-Washington Annual Conference for her 29 years of leadership. She retired as Director of Connectional Ministries last June. Quality of Life Retreats also thanked her for years of generous funding support, wise counsel and friendship as our conference staff liaison, inspired by her deep commitment to aiding ministries of mercy and justice.

**Raymond Shattuck**  
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*Address correction requested*

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*Telephone:*

