

Board of Child Care 
of the United Methodist Church

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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National *Ways to Work* Program Opens Baltimore City Branch to Help Families Reach Work and Opportunity

BALTIMORE – (February 29, 2008) – Ways to Work, a national car loan program that has provided affordable car loans to working families for more than 20 years, is now helping low-income families in Baltimore.

The Board of Child Care, a Baltimore-based nonprofit, multi-service agency serving children and families, is launching the first Ways to Work program in Maryland on March 4 during an open house and press conference at the new Ways to Work office in East Baltimore. The office will provide low-interest loans of as much as \$4,000 to qualifying working families to help them buy the reliable transportation they need to remain employed, take their children to daycare and access goods and services.

“Our vision is for the program to be a hand up to those parents in Baltimore who are looking to improve themselves and their families, but who are facing barriers to employment and sustaining a job due to a lack of reliable, affordable transportation,” says Thomas Curcio, President and CEO of the Board of Child Care. “The Ways to Work program is a natural fit for the Board of Child Care’s mission to serve children and families who require physical, emotional, behavioral and social support. We hope to eventually expand the program to the rest of Maryland, the District of Columbia and West Virginia, where the Board of Child Care has programs.”

The Board of Child Care is able to offer the Ways to Work program through private funding and support from the Annie E. Casey Foundation.

Since its founding in 1984, the Ways to Work program has loaned more than \$46 million to more than 26,000 families for the purchase of vehicles, vehicle repair or other work-related purposes.

To qualify for a Ways to Work loan, Baltimore residents must be employed and meet the low-income standards set for the community. All clients lack or have poor credit histories, and are ineligible for loans through banks and other mainstream financial institutions. The Ways to Work program helps them to avoid high-cost loans or predatory lenders, and requires them to take a financial education course as part of the loan process.

Ways to Work staff guide applicants through the loan application process, and provide financial counseling on budgeting, credit ratings and financial planning. They also help clients find reliable cars.

“Ways to Work operates differently than many low-income car programs,” says Jeff Faulkner, President of Ways to Work. “We believe strongly in our approach of making loans for cars, not in just giving cars away. The act of repaying a loan gives our clients sound financial habits, reinforces personal responsibility, and helps them to build a payment history and improve their credit rating. Owning an affordable car can make a tremendous difference in the job prospects, quality of life and future aspirations of a low-income family.”

A recent national evaluation of Ways to Work found that program participants achieved a 41 percent average increase in take-home pay, and most borrowers eventually accessed mainstream financial markets. More than 80 percent also reported owning a car helped them hold a job and reduce lateness.

EVENT: The Board of Child Care’s Ways to Work open house/press conference

WHEN: March 4, 3:00 – 5:00 pm

WHERE: Ways to Work office, 1212 N. Wolfe Street, Baltimore, 21213

SPEAKERS: Thomas Curcio, President and CEO of the Board of Child Care; Gordon Fronk, Chair of the Board of Child Care’s Board of Directors; Jeffrey Faulkner, President of the National Ways to Work program; and Silvana Rossi, Director of the Board of Child Care’s Ways to Work program.

The Board of Child Care is a faith-based, nonprofit human services organization serving more than 1,500 children and families each year in Maryland, West Virginia and the District of Columbia. BCC programs encompass a continuum of care and include residential care, on-campus schools, foster care, adoption, child and family counseling, an out-patient mental health clinic, and emergency shelters. The Board of Directors of the Conference of the United Methodist Church promotes and supports the organization. Learn more at www.boardofchildcare.org.

Ways to Work is a unique Community Development Financial Institution based in Milwaukee, WI. Through a network of loan offices across the country, Ways to Work provides small, short-term, low-interest loans to working poor families with challenging credit histories. The program provides an alternative to predatory lenders for people with a demonstrated commitment to achieving increased self-sufficiency and intent on pursuing a higher degree of success in mainstream financial markets. Learn more at www.waystowork.org.

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