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'Gateway' to Independence

Florence Segal, a resident of Henrico County since 1946, has devoted 21 years to ensuring that Gateway Homes succeeds.

Gateway, a non-profit residential treatment program serving Central Virginia adults with bipolar disorder, schizophrenia or depression, consists of three phases of living that allow residents to become increasingly self-sufficient and ultimately return to live independently in the community.

The Virginia Department of Mental Health, Mental Retardation and Substance Abuse Services (MHMRAS) recently recognized the facility for its program.

"Since starting Gateway in
see **GATEWAY**, p. 7



Contributed photo

Gateway board members (left to right) John J. McGrath, Maxwell G. Cisne, E. Otto N. Williams, Jr., Alexander Hamilton, IV; Dr. James Reinhard, Commissioner of the Virginia DMHMRSAS; Florence Segal, Gateway's Co-Founder; Jane H. Woods, Secretary of Va. Health and Human Services; Linda Clark, Gateway's Finance Director; and David Prybock, Ph.D., Gateway's Clinical Director at the Governor's Conference Recognition Ceremony.

GATEWAY, from p. 1

1983 with another parent of someone with a mental illness, I have watched the organization grow from serving five in a house on Chamberlayne Avenue, to serving 39 at a time on its campus in Chesterfield County and many more who have graduated back into the community," Segal said. "Gateway sure has reached a milestone."

Gateway obtained licensure from the MHMRAS in June 2004. "Now," Segal said, "we hope to serve as a model for similar programs to develop in other communities."

Because the majority of its residents are impoverished, Gateway provides its services at costs well below private or state-run hospitals, by offsetting a portion of its program costs through voluntary contributions. Al-

most half of Gateway's total income is derived from tax-deductible contributions from the community.

One major challenge Gateway faces in raising funds is the stigma associated with mental illness. Many people still believe that someone with a mental illness can "snap out of" whatever condition they are in or simply "try harder" – both false assumptions.

According to the National Alliance for the Mentally Ill (NAMI), one in five people will experience a mental illness. The treatment of mental illness has a high success rate, however – 60 to 80 percent, according to Gateway officials.

For details about admission to Gateway, call 590-0828; for details about making a tax-deductible donation to Gateway's program, call 285-4389.