

****SAVE THE DATE****

**THE BEAT GOES ON!!!!
MUSIC OF THE BABY BOOMERS**

*Jack Everly, the BSO SuperPops
and special guest vocalists
bring you all the music that
raised America's most
notorious generation!*

CASABaltimore
"Here's to Helping Children"
CONCERT AND SILENT AUCTION
SUNDAY MARCH 18, 2007
3:00PM



Joseph Meyerhoff Symphony Hall
1212 Cathedral ST
Baltimore, MD 21201

*Ticket includes Concert, Silent Auction and
Great Food after the concert in the Meyerhoff Lounge*

**Proceeds from "Here's to Helping Kids" will benefit
CASABaltimore to help abused and neglected children in
Baltimore City.**

The Starfish is a publication of CASA Baltimore a 501C3 non-profit organization registered with the State of Maryland. It is printed six times a year. Any comments or submissions should be sent to our editor: Linda Koban @ lindarosek@aol.com or 410-244-1465. We reserve the right to accept, reject or edit any submissions to our publication. CASA Baltimore PO Box 13004, Baltimore, MD 21203.



The Starfish

Newsletter for CASA Volunteer Advocates

November/December 2006

Volume 05 Edition 1

"I think my CASA really loves me," told by a 13 year old girl to her therapist after a visit on December 23, 2006.

November/December Starfish Awardee - Marilyn Moses

For CASA Volunteer Marilyn Moses, advocacy doesn't take no for an answer. In June of 2005 when she took on the case of four siblings – placed in three different homes – she faced two major challenges: How to help them stay connected as a family and remain connected to their seriously ill mother.

When the children came into care in July of 2005, the two girls, 5 and 6, were placed with a paternal great aunt; a boy, 10, was placed with a paternal grandfather, and the youngest, a 2-year-old boy – who had ingested prescription medication and wound up in the hospital emergency room – was placed in therapeutic foster care in Prince George's County.

At first, the plan was to place the youngest with his father in North Carolina. But after some investigation, Marilyn and the DSS worker discovered that the father had a criminal history and had stolen his son's social security number.

Marilyn advocated for the boy's return to Baltimore so he could be near his siblings. In the interim, she helped arrange visits; at one point driving the boy up to see his brother and sisters.

"It didn't seem right that he should be the only one not living with relatives," Marilyn said. To help secure his placement, Marilyn worked with the child's maternal great aunt in Baltimore who lived in a large two-bedroom apartment housing two adults and five children.

Under DSS regulations, placement of a child in such a home would be impossible. But Marilyn was persistent in working with the DSS worker and arguing that the family was stable, the apartment was huge and that the boy would be better off with relatives than in foster care.

Everything was in place for him to move in before Christmas.

CASA work proved challenging even for

someone with Marilyn's background in related fields – as a criminologist in the Department of Justice and as the founder of a program that works with children and incarcerated mothers.

Because of her long-time work with mothers, Marilyn reached out to this mother of four, realizing, "She wasn't a bad person, but a person who had an unfortunate life and made bad choices. She also was in foster care and here was this generational cycle."

Marilyn also wanted to expand these children's view of the world, taking them on outings throughout the city, to the Science Center and to the Aquarium. On one such trip, she expected the 10-year-old boy to thrill to the excitement of the ESPN Zone but he kept staring out at the harbor. "Is this the water where the Patapsco comes from?" he asked over and over. Marilyn got to see Baltimore through his eyes.

(Continued on page 2)

Marilyn's advocacy for these children now is focused on one area: therapy for the mother and the children so that they can come together before the mother dies; she has been hospitalized three times in the past two months.

"I hope this mother has a chance to explain to her children why they went into foster care. It wasn't because the little boy took pills and ended up in the emergency room. It was because she was a drug addict and she was sick."

For Marilyn, who is also a Maryland CASA board member, "this is the best volunteer work I've ever done and the most rewarding. I feel that I've had an opportunity to have a real immediate impact on these children's lives."

For these four CASA children, the impact of her advocacy will be felt for a long time.

By Nora Frenkiel

CASA's Holiday Party

On December 19th, about 50 CASA volunteers, board members, and staff gathered at the amazingly beautiful Octagon Room at the Mount Washington Conference Center for a holiday party. Everyone enjoyed the delicious food, the beautiful surroundings and decorations, and spending time relaxing with each other. CASA volunteers who attended were able to pick up gifts for their CASA children that were generously donated and were displayed under a beautiful Christmas tree in the venue. Many thanks are extended to CASA Supervisor of

Volunteers, Phyllis Felton, for organizing the gift drive and bringing the gift of hope to our CASA children.



Volunteering...

When you were a child or young adult, maybe there was someone in your life, a teacher, neighbor, relative, coach, friend or boss, who encouraged you, showed you the ropes, and helped you become who you are today. That person was a mentor to you.

January is National Mentoring Month and January 25, 2007 has been designated as Thank Your Mentor Day and it may be a good day to contact your mentor to express your appreciation or to write a tribute to your mentor for posting on www.WhoMentoredYou.org.

It's also a good time to talk about your work as a CASA volunteer and think about who you know that might want to make a difference in a child's life like you do. We are constantly looking for people to become CASA volunteers and you can help by letting people you know learn about what you do and how you have an impact on a child's life. Read about our volunteer recruitment contest and help us to serve more children by recruiting and training more volunteers!

THE CASA VOLUNTEER RECRUITMENT CONTEST!! BEGINNING JANUARY 1ST, 2007!!!

Every 5 names of prospective volunteers you provide can win you a prize!

- The volunteer that provides the most names of prospective volunteers by March 1st wins a GRAND PRIZE!!
- The names you provide do not necessarily need to be people who have made any promises to become a CASA volunteer but should be people you have spoken to about the work you do and have an interest in learning more about it.
- All you need to do is provide names and contact information and the rest is up to us.
- It's as easy as talking about the work you do as a CASA volunteer and completing the form!!
Send the form to the CASA office and you will receive a surprise gift in the mail.

~Thank you for helping us to help
more abused and neglected children in Baltimore!

THE CASA VOLUNTEER RECRUITMENT CONTEST!!

**Presented by The Maryland Mentoring Partnership
2007 National Mentoring Month Happenings
CASA volunteers and CASA children
are invited to participate...**

Mentoring at the National Aquarium in Baltimore
501 E. Pratt Street
Spend an evening visiting the aquatic wonders of the National Aquarium
January 12
5-8pm

Mentoring Day at the B&O Railroad Museum
901 W. Pratt Street
Visit the B&O Railroad Museum where America's most historic train
collection tells the railroading story
January 13 & 20
10am-5pm

Mentoring Day at the Reginald Lewis Museum
830 E. Pratt Street
Maryland's youth are invited to embrace their past and consider their fu-
ture by spending a day at the Reginald Lewis Museum of African-American
History & Culture
Saturday, January 27
10am-5pm

Contact Maryland Mentoring Partnership at 410-685-8316 or
info@marylandmentors.org for registration and additional information.

(The staff at CASA of Baltimore, Inc loves to hear about the activities
that CASA volunteers engage in with their CASA children. Please share
your experiences with your supervisor!!)

CASA's HOLIDAY PARTY con't

We had donations of gifts from many indi-
viduals and businesses in our community.
Please help to thank the donors who provided
gifts by encouraging the children to write
thank you notes!!

Gifts donations were provided by:

- Paddy Morton, Esq. and her extended family
- Mark Parr and employees of Courthouse Copy Services, Inc.
- John Lessner, Esq. and his colleagues at Ober/Kaler Attorneys at Law
- Kathy Garity and her co-workers at Landmark Parking
- The Maryland Hospital Association
- MeetIn Baltimore-NSCSA (America) Inc. with special thanks to Francesca and Alice
- Ellen McLaughlin and her co-workers at Asher & Simons, PA
- Cathy Morgan-Dendrinios and family

Many, many others donated cash gifts that were used to purchase toys
and gift certificates and will be recognized in our general newsletter.



Upcoming Training Classes & Volunteer Orientations

2007

TRAINING and ORIENTATION

ORIENTATION SESSIONS

*ALL ORIENTATIONS ARE HELD AT
CASABALTIMORE
6:30 - 8PM*

Thursday, January 11, 2007
Thursday, February 22, 2007

Thursday, May 31, 2007
Thursday, June 21, 2007

Thursday, March 15, 2007
Tuesday, April 10, 2007

Thursday, August 9, 2007
Tuesday, Sept 11, 2007

TRAINING SCHEDULE

2007

January 2007

TUESDAYS AND THURSDAY EVENINGS 6-9PM
Tuesday January 23 thru Thursday February 22, 2007

March 2007

**MONDAY, TUESDAY AND WEDNESDAY EVENINGS
6-9PM** Monday March 5, thru Monday March 26, 2007

SPRING 2007

April-May 2007

MONDAY AND TUESDAY EVINGS 6-9PM
Monday April 16 thru Tuesday May 15, 2007

June 2007

MONDAY, TUESDAY, AND WEDNESDAY EVENINGS 6-9PM
Monday June 11 thru Wednesday June 28, 2007

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

A Baltimore Sun column written by Jean Marbella, (12/1/06) and titled "City's Foster Children Should Not be Forgotten," promotes the idea of separate charter schools for a "generation of lost kids" removed from their homes due to abuse and neglect. The two groups proposing separate educational environments for middle and elementary schoolers cite the fact that 21 people younger than 18 were charged with murder in the first eleven months of the year. These youth are described as "generally not from intact families," and two of the eighteen are identified as previously living in foster or group homes.

In addition, the article refers to research that foster children as a group do poorly academically—they are more likely to be held back or not graduate at all, they score lower on standardized tests and have higher rates of absenteeism and truancy.

But Charles Harris, a CASA volunteer strongly disagrees with the concept of segregating foster children in special schools and he wrote columnist Marbella to tell her why, stating that the anti-social acts of a few should not "stigmatize all foster children... of course they score lower on standardized tests, because most of them have been bounced around from home to home, and from school to school and have never received the proper education." Mr. Harris protests "putting them together in one place... is treating them like animals or just warehousing them so society doesn't have to deal with them."

What do you think?

Write the Starfish c/o Lindarosek@aol.com, or write a letter to the editor the next time you feel strongly about issues involving our kids.