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The Center's Wish List

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THE WALLER STREET JOURNAL

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Thanks to the St. Francis Yacht Club and the Blue Water Foundation, children from the Center took a summer sail on the Bay. This wonderful experience taught the kids about boat and water safety and the basics of sailing. Beautiful weather helped make this a memorable event for all.

The Center Provides a “SafeStart” for Children Exposed to Violence

For those fortunate enough to have grown up in a healthy, happy environment, it is difficult to imagine what it would be like for young children to grow up with violence in their homes, either directed at themselves or at others. How can children who are subjected to this grow up to lead normal lives?

The local statistics are frightening: analyses of crime data show that over 10,000 San Francisco children age six and under — or 15 to 20% of the city’s youngsters — are exposed to violence in their homes each year. These alarming figures translate to tremendous costs to the affected children and the broader community.

Children may react in different ways but all can carry the trauma with them throughout their lives. Research shows that prolonged exposure to violence can alter children’s brain development. And, society pays with costly programs for behavioral problems, child welfare, law enforcement, special education, juvenile delinquency, health issues and adult criminality. It is vital to address the source of violence and expand the availability of services to children at an early age.

Thanks to the SafeStart Initiative, San Francisco is addressing this issue. Created in 1999 by the U.S. Department of Justice, SafeStart was launched with the goal of preventing and reducing the impact of children’s exposure to violence in both the home and the community.

“Research shows that prolonged exposure to violence can alter children’s brain development.”

Locally, SafeStart is a collaborative of agencies under the umbrella of the San Francisco Child Abuse Prevention Center (the Center). Director Larry Yip, along with the staff of the SafeStart team, coordinates the efforts of 10 different agencies that form a service delivery team to support these youngsters.

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Report from the Executive Director

Economic Crisis Creates Greater Demand for Center's Services

For more than three decades, the San Francisco Child Abuse Prevention Center has been a steady anchor for struggling families. Whether calling our 24-hour TALK Line, accessing free and low cost counseling, utilizing emergency child care services or seeking parenting and safety education, our clients depend on the Center as they work to keep their lives on track amidst many challenges.

Today's difficult economic times have created an even greater demand for our services. In the past year, the Center has seen a four-fold increase in requests for emergency food, and three times as many parents as last year have asked us to feed their children because they can't afford to. We've also seen a significant increase in requests for emergency child care, job and housing assistance and mental health therapy. Most disturbingly, we have reported more instances of child abuse to Child Protective Services in the first six months of this year than we did in all of 2008.

At the same time that we have seen the demand for our services increase, we have seen a decline in revenue. California's budget crisis has meant cuts to our government funding. In an effort to maintain vital services, the Center has cut back on staff, salaries, benefits and administrative expenses. Despite these measures, the Center remains overstretched and underfunded.

Given this situation, I am especially grateful to our supporters who continue to donate their time, their skills and their dollars – people like Diane Davies, a retired nurse who volunteers with our Respite program once a week (read more about Diane on page four). The Center also recently benefited from tremendous in-kind support from a range of businesses including a local plumbing company and several San Francisco law firms. (Read more about the different types of in-kind support the Center receives on page four and see our Wish List on page eight to learn about the types of goods and services we currently need.)

As we move through the economic crisis together, I am continually inspired by the courage of our clients, the unwavering dedication of our staff and the boundless generosity of our supporters. **Please join us by donating to the Center today or by signing up to volunteer for one of our programs.** With your help, the Center will continue to provide San Francisco's most vulnerable children and families with the vital services they need.

Thank you,



Katie Albright
Executive Director



Katie Albright

continued from the cover

A “SafeStart” For Children

SafeStart endeavors to provide effective services, increase the awareness of the dangerous effects violence has on children, and promote a greater willingness on the part of families and the community to protect children.

In partnership with the San Francisco Police Department, SafeStart reaches out to all families in the city with at least one child under six in which there has been a domestic violence police report. Parents also reach out for help by calling the Center’s TALK Line, (415) 441-KIDS, or visiting the TALK Line Family Support Center or other SafeStart partner agency sites. Once a family learns about the program and is interested in participating, SafeStart connects the family to the most geographically and linguistically appropriate SafeStart service site. Families visit the Center or one of the partner organizations regularly for consultation, intensive case management and education on how violence affects their child. Other services include support groups for parents and children, assistance with food and shelter, counseling for both children and parents, and coordination with other agencies.

Claire is the six-year-old daughter of a battered woman who was receiving counseling as part of the SafeStart Initiative. Apprehensive and fearful, Claire cried frequently and could not bear to be apart from her mother for more than a minute. With the help of SafeStart, Claire enrolled in weekly play therapy sessions at the Center. After a year, she no longer looks around terrified, fearful of being hurt. She loves going to school, no longer a tearful event, and has received an award for scholastic achievement. Her now secure mother acknowledges, “I don’t know where my daughter and I would be without [SafeStart].”



Funding for this vital program initially came from the U.S. Department of Justice, but federal funding ended in 2005. Now, the city and private donors support this program. However, as with other government funding, SafeStart has suffered significant cutbacks caused by the current economic downturn.

“After a year, she no longer looks around terrified, fearful of being hurt. Moreover, she loves going to school, no longer a tearful event, and has received an award for scholastic achievement.”

SafeStart also works to address growing violence on the streets that adversely affects kids. The San Francisco Police Department reports one violent crime per month within three blocks of elementary schools and estimates that approximately 17,000 school children are exposed to 600 violent crimes each school year.

Despite that, the Center is committed to providing these vital services. Services are provided in neighborhoods across the City in five languages: English, Spanish, Cantonese, Mandarin and Tagalog.

To learn more about SafeStart, please contact Larry Yip at (415) 668-0494 or larry@sfcapc.org.

Would you give your time and heart to help our children?

There are many rewarding volunteer opportunities at the Center, including our TALK Line, Children’s Playroom and Respite Care. Please click on Volunteer at www.sfcapc.org.

Oodles of Noodles and Loads of Love

From the outside, the three-story blue Victorian looks like any other San Francisco home. But step inside and you know immediately that this is a very special place.

It is the San Francisco Child Abuse Prevention Center's Respite Center, a day care center for special needs and abused children who find a safe haven during the day and who are lovingly cared for by Respite Director Maria Eitz and Center volunteers and staff.

Since Eitz's home has served as a Respite Center, she estimates more than 5,000 children have come through this facility. With so much need, volunteers are critical to the services that Respite provides.

It is a gloomy day, yet the sun shines inside this toy-filled home. Native San Franciscan Diane Davies, her grey hair pulled back into a pony tail, sits on the floor in one of the playrooms, chatting with little Alice. Every Wednesday, and some Fridays, this retired nurse spends her entire day at the Center with the children. There can be as many as ten to eleven or as few as four or five children on any given day.

It is a time she loves. "I have gotten to know the youngsters and learn from them. In some cases, they have endured abuse yet they are resilient and bounce back."

Although a volunteer, Davies considers this a regular job. "What I do is very important to me. The kids need me and depend on me. When I was a nurse, I felt good about what I did and I feel the same here."

For many years, Diane was a

registered nurse at California Pacific Medical Center, working in the psychiatric department and dealing with mentally abused and drug addicted patients. She came to Respite over two years ago after retiring, to reconnect with her Mercy High School religion teacher, Eitz.

Her love for the children is evident. She chats with three-year-old Bobby, a tow-haired youngster who came to the Center with not one word in his vocabulary because of delayed speech. Thanks to the staff, he now has over 100 words and that number is growing daily.

Alice is almost two years old and when she first arrived, she just sat in the room without participating. Today, she is a very active youngster with a definite mind of her own.

Joseph came to the Respite Center two years ago, suffering from fetal alcohol syndrome. Disruptive in school, he just needed the protective shield that loving volunteers can provide, plus "an occasional hug," says Davies.

It is lunch time at the Respite Center and each child is marched into the bathroom to wash hands. Then, hand in hand with a volunteer, they troop into the cozy dining room filled with photos of youngsters, Asian bells collected by Eitz in her travels and the Center's pet fish, Charlie, in a glass bowl in the center of the table.

It is time for the famous "noodle lunch" that Eitz serves every day to the kids. It is a treat to watch them happily slurping noodles into their tiny mouths. It is a routine that goes on five days a week.

For children who have been neglected or mistreated or have special needs, this old Victorian is an oasis of love and calm, thanks to the tireless efforts of Maria Eitz and volunteers like Diane Davies.

"What I do is very important to me. When I was a nurse, I felt good about what I did and I feel the same here." - Diane Davies



Donations Beyond Dollars

Generous in-kind donations enable the Center to apply limited funds to the more important needs of abused children and their families.

John Sheehan is a perfect example of a small business owner's commitment to the Center. Sheehan is the owner and president of West Point Solutions, a plumbing company located in San Francisco. A friend told him about the Center and he called to offer help. That was more than two years ago and he is still on-call providing vital plumbing services.

Caroline Volk, a mother of three, posted a message on a network site inquiring about the donation of personal items and received an immediate response from Suzy Pak, a member of the Center's Board of Directors. A few times a year, Volk donates car loads of new hair care products, diapers, children's clothing and other personal items which she buys. She admits to cutting out a lot of coupons and not being able to resist a good sale.

In the corporate arena, the Center receives the majority of its legal services pro-bono from the law firms of Cooley, Godward, Kronish; Farella Braun + Martel and Reuben & Junius. Grace Won, a partner at Farella Braun + Martel says, "As a San Francisco

based firm, we believe in giving back to the community. We chose the Center because it provides direct, comprehensive services to children and families – not just one service or a one-time service – but a combination of services over a continuous period of time. It is unique in that way, plus it is well run."

We also thank Google, the world's largest search engine, which selected the Center as a beneficiary of a three year grant of online services to nonprofit agencies. In one year alone, the Center's website at www.sfcapc.org received 14,000 visitors as a result of key words on Google. Google's in-kind support is valued at approximately \$44,000 annually, but it is invaluable to the Center for the outreach it provides to the community.

The community is not only helping on our website, but in our kitchen. Peet's Coffee and Starbucks provide regular donations of coffee, tea and pastries for the enjoyment of the parents in our Parent Drop-In Center. The simple act of providing a warm cup of coffee goes a long way to support the Center's efforts to make the families that come to the Center feel relaxed, at home and appreciated.

Please consider making an in-kind donation of products or services to the Center. See our Wish List on page eight or contact Jennifer Milley at (415) 668-0494, or jen@sfcapc.org for more information.

Blue Ribbon Luncheon Raises Funds and Awareness

She may have been the first woman to hold the title of United States Secretary of State and one of the most powerful women in the world, but when she spoke at the Center's annual Blue Ribbon Luncheon, she spoke as a loving mother who understands that parenting is not easy but greatly rewarding.

Dr. Madeleine K. Albright was the keynote speaker at the San Francisco Child Abuse Prevention Center's annual fundraising event on April 17 at the Ritz-Carlton, an event that raised over \$315,000 for the Center. It was the largest event in Center history with 570 attendees.

In an address sprinkled with references to raising three daughters, she joked that settling disputes among her children was good training for trying to settle differences among world powers. She also commended her daughter, the Center's Executive Director, Katie Albright, for focusing her career on helping children. "She has finally found her perfect place," said the proud mother.

Katie's introduction of her mom included a story about her young daughter not understanding the fuss about "Grandma Maddie." Katie's daughter had grown up with only female Secretaries of State. But as her older brother pointed out, "Grandma Maddie was the first."

Juanita Alvarado, a member of the Center's Parent Advisory Committee, also spoke, giving an emotional testimonial during which she credited the Center for giving her hope and new life after escaping an abusive relationship and drug and alcohol addiction. Supported at the podium by her 15-year-old son, she praised the Center for helping her survive and gain confidence and independence.

Luncheon co-chairs Robert Callan, Jr. and Anne Symon welcomed the guests to the luncheon and Chris Keane, president of the Center's Board of Directors, closed the event with a plea for continued support for the most vulnerable among us, our children. On behalf of everyone at the Center, thank you to all of our generous supporters.



(right) Jennifer Siebel Newsom, Secretary of State
Madeleine K. Albright

(below) Anne Symon,
Robert Callan, Jr.
Luncheon Co-Chairs



(right) Executive Director
Katie Albright, Lynn Bunim,
Catherine Dodd



(above) Judge Pat
McElroy, Rick Levine,
Alisa Baker



(right) Ray Brown, Linda Cannon, Kathy Baxter

(below) Frank and Karen Caufield,
Elaine McKeon,
Cathy Topham



(left) Ayako Nagamine,
Rahela Abbas,
Patricia Calfee



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Thank you to everyone who has generously contributed to the Center.

We apologize for any omissions or mistakes in our listings. Please contact Jennifer Milley at jen@sfcapc.org with any corrections.

New Ways to Support the Center

Your support means so much to the San Francisco Child Abuse Prevention Center. In these challenging economic times, we are seeing an increased need from the families we serve. Financial donations are the lifeblood for supporting the Center's many essential programs and a donation envelope is enclosed, but donations in the form of products and services are also appreciated!

Following is a list of ongoing needs for the Center.

- Kid-friendly dry/canned food pantry items (for families to take home)
- Gift cards for parents/families (Safeway, Costco, Smart & Final, Old Navy, MUNI passes, long-distance phone cards, movie tickets, zoo passes, circus/special event tickets)
- Holiday and seasonal needs (Halloween costumes, Mother's Day gifts, back to school backpacks and supplies)
- Teen items (DVDs, computer games, books, portable video games)
- Children's clothing and shoes
- Art supplies (construction paper, stickers, glitter, yarn)
- Coloring books
- Playroom items (diapers, infant formula, dress-up clothes, play therapy toys, children's snacks)
- Respite Care items (sand box, wagons, strollers, garden furniture)
- Health items (Desitin, first-aid kits, bath soap, toothpaste)
- Children's books



- Board Games (Sorry, Jenga, Perfection, Guess Who?, Battleship, Hungry Hungry Hippos)
- Children's Puzzles (25-60 pieces)
- Massage Chair
- Furniture (for Center's counseling rooms and hallways) and appliances (freezer, vacuum cleaner)
- Meeting space/rooms (events for 20/50/100 guests)
- Gardening/landscaping services/maintenance
- Thank you treats/gifts for volunteers

If you are interested in donating products and services, please contact Jennifer Milley at (415) 668-0494 or jen@sfcapc.org.



San Francisco Child Abuse Prevention Center

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