



Montgomery County Family Justice Center

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SUMMER 2011

SPECIAL POINT OF INTEREST:

2011 FJC
FOUNDATION
HONOREES

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From the Desk of Councilmember Phil Andrews

Perhaps more than any other crime, domestic violence crosses traditional boundaries of departments and agencies requiring unparalleled cooperation, collaboration, diligence, and partnerships among policy makers, emergency responders, and courthouse, corrections, and health and human service personnel.

The dedicated men and women up and down the line – from law enforcement who help shield and aid those assaulted, to the attorneys who prosecute domestic violence cases, to the victim advocates who assist the (primarily) women and children who are victims – are performing magnificently day in and day out, saving and improving the lives of victims and their families, and bringing abusers to justice.

Although there is no good place to be a victim of domestic violence, persons assaulted in Montgomery County get the help they need – not just because of the quality, expertise, and dedication of our public employees, but because the County's Family Justice Center provides a centrally-located one-stop-shop for victims of domestic violence. In just over two years, the Family

Justice Center has served more than 3,000 families from more than 100 countries of origin, providing not only excellent service to victims, but hope as well.

Two County Councilmembers, the late Marilyn Praisner and my former colleague Duchy Trachtenberg, were instrumental in the establishment of the Family Justice Center. Community, corporate, and grant support of the Center continues to grow, aided by the outstanding work of the Family Justice Center Foundation and its Executive Director, Resa Levy. Catherine Leggett has repeatedly devoted her talents to the cause as well. The Office of the Sheriff, which was given the responsibility of coordinating the County's domestic violence efforts in 2000, has done outstanding work throughout, led by former Sheriff Ray Kight and the current Sheriff Darren Popkin. Montgomery County State's Attorney, John McCarthy, has provided critical support throughout. The Domestic Violence Coordinating Council under the leadership of Judge Marielsa Bernard has initiated several outreach efforts including promoting healthy teen dating relation-

ships and public forums to inform residents about the County's many services.

During my eleven years as chair of the County Council's Public Safety Committee, one of my most critical responsibilities has been to help ensure adequate funding is appropriated to the agencies that are doing the work, 24/7, to protect and to serve victims of domestic violence, and to prosecute and punish their abusers. Securing sufficient funding for programs to reduce domestic violence has not been difficult, because all of my colleagues on the Council over the years have understood the seriousness of the issue and have strongly supported funding requests.

Improved County response to the crime of domestic violence has saved lives, and helps many victims recover. The Family Justice Center is critical to the success of this effort. But much work remains. We must continue to improve the County's ability to respond effectively – including reforming State laws because lives depend on it.

*Phil Andrews, Chair,
Public Safety Committee,
Montgomery County Council*



Montgomery County
Family Justice Center Foundation
2nd Annual Benefit
October 2, 2011
At the Rockville Hilton

Volunteers Gain Valuable Experience at the FJC



FJC Interns and Volunteers
Front Row L to R: Angie Rodriguez, Rose Albert, Lauren Levine
Back Row L to R: Louise Allentuck, Jessica Membrano, Taylor Penn, Anne Kasper, Sally Dorfmann and Melissa Zissman

The Family Justice Center staff would like to extend a very special congratulations to Sergeant Michael Stull who received a Special Award of Valor for his involvement in the Discovery Channel hostage crisis. He was recognized for his bravery on May 11, 2011 by the National Capital Chapter of the American Society for International Security, International. Congratulations to Deputy Norman Adams, recipient of the Citation for Bravery and Deputies Sammi Ibarra & Frank Pruitt, recipients of Distinguished Service Citations at the Rockville Public Safety Awards Ceremony.

The Family Justice Center initiated a summer intern program this year as an opportunity for young college students to learn more about law enforcement, social services and private-public partnerships in the County as well as to assist victims of domestic violence directly. Three interns reflect on their summer experiences.

Volunteering at the Family Justice Center (FJC) has provided us with many varying opportunities. Volunteering has made us aware of the prevalence of Domestic Violence in Montgomery County. Before starting the work with clients, we went through an intensive training. Not only did we learn

how to write a protective order, we also learned how to best assist our clients.

The training taught us how to look for warning signs of domestic violence, how to write protective orders, and how to work with clients at the FJC. Each day of training, we focused on another topic and learned interesting information that would really come into effect during our time here. Each day, we heard from someone different about the services that they provided. This includes the Abused Persons Program, the State's Attorney's Office, a victim assistant, Career Catchers, House of Ruth Maryland, and staff from the Domestic Violence Coordinating Council.

As volunteers, we do many different tasks. We conduct intakes and work

directly with clients, we draft Protective Order petitions, we oversee the reception desk, and we work hand-in-hand with the Victim Assistant on duty. We have been graciously integrated into the FJC team by the Victim Assistants, the director, and the rest of the staff.

These few weeks at the FJC have helped us gain a new perspective about domestic violence and the effect it has on victims and families. Domestic violence can happen to anyone, in any socioeconomic group, of any ethnicity and of either gender; domestic violence does not discriminate.

We are very excited to be a part of the FJC team this summer and look forward to the rest of our time here.

Written by: Rose Albert, Lauren Levine and Taylor Penn

The FJC Turns 2

It's hard to believe that May, 2011 marked the Second Anniversary for the Montgomery County Family Justice Center. Many would agree that it seems like only in the recent past we celebrated the grand opening. While the two year milestone did not necessitate a commemorative event, unquestionably there are many notable accomplishments for staff, volunteers, agency partners and the community to reflect upon.

It is extraordinary that in the past two years dedicated staff and volunteers have provided supportive services to nearly 3000 victims and their children seeking to end the devastating cycle of abuse in their relationships. The growth and enhancement of client services acquired through the addition of several new partnerships has made it possible to serve these families and undoubtedly contributed to the success of the MCFJC. The addition of video conferencing at the FJC, made possible through a grant from Verizon Wireless and collaboration from the Administrative Office of the Courts, has made a significant difference for clients filing for civil

protection, by allowing them the convenience to file in a safe and comfortable environment. The partnership with Career Catchers, Catholic Charities and the House of Ruth, Maryland and the Interfaith Coalition Against Domestic Violence have supported a victim's ability to become more self-reliant and self-assured as they take the difficult steps to leave an abusive relationship. The on-site placement of a Montgomery County Police Detective and Department of Correction and Rehabilitation staff has allowed FJC staff to work very directly to ensure offender accountability.

The MCFJC is also successful because of the outpouring of support by the community and community organizations that help to provide basic need items for families fleeing abuse, or toys and books that offer comfort to a traumatized child. In these very difficult economic times the FJC staff and partners wish to thank the County Executive and the County Council for their continued commitment to public safety and for funding the FJC. Together we all can work to provide excellent services to the most vulnerable victims in Montgomery County for many years to come.

Safe Start Kids Group: A Child's Perspective

Childhood should be full of fearlessness and fun, right? Working in the domestic violence field, one quickly learns that children in abusive homes are consumed instead with hopelessness and worry. They are the innocent bystanders who struggle to find a safe place to share their emotions and challenges. Safe Start Kids Group is a County program where licensed counselors help children deal with fears, conflicts, guilt, and self esteem issues. I've always thought that the program sounds fantastic, and I recommend it to most domestic violence victims who have children in the home. Recently I had the pleasure of speaking to a participant in the program, a 13-year-old 8th grader, who has been victimized for many years. For the purpose of this article, she will be identified as AY. She confirmed for me what I already thought to be true - that Safe Start Kids Group is an asset to the mental, physical, and emotional well being of our

County's youth.

AY has been attending weekly Safe Start sessions for four months. She admitted to being nervous the first time she went to therapy, but told me, "The people there are so nice. They take time to listen to you and understand you when you don't have anyone to talk to. They become like your closest friends and they get through to you even though they hardly know you." When asked if she has a favorite part of Safe Start, AY replied, "I think my favorite part is this paper we fill out each week. It asks us questions about our feelings and other topics that we can answer on a scale of 1-10, so I can express myself without having to say it out loud. Each week my therapist tracks my scores, so I can see how my self esteem changes over time. It doesn't make me nervous at all - it just makes me feel like they know me." I asked AY to list some adjectives to describe Safe Start, and she chose, "fun, exciting, educational, and caring."



Safe Start Therapists from L to R: Dr. Mindy Thiel, Jessica Colon and Jennifer Finn

My interview with AY enhanced my commitment to advocate the Safe Start Kids Group to parents living in a domestic violence situation. This delightful young teen has benefitted enormously from the interactions and self-discovery that the program promotes. Our conversation closed with a question about which parts, if any, AY does not like about therapy. With ease and confidence, she replied, "The only thing I don't like is when I have to leave."

Written by: Melissa Tozier, MCSO, Case Coordinator

Choose Respect Montgomery

CHOOSE RESPECT! That's the primary message that 1450 teens in local middle and high schools and Montgomery County community groups received when they participated in the Choose Respect Montgomery Healthy Teen Dating Presentation during the past year. Choose Respect Montgomery is a prevention initiative of the County's Domestic Violence Coordinating Council (DVCC) that focuses on raising teen awareness about unhealthy dating relationships and its destructive effects on a young person's life.

The forty-five minute PowerPoint presentation was approved by

Montgomery County's Citizens Advisory Council on School Health and Human Development and is conducted by attorneys from the State's Attorney's Office and the private sector upon request by teachers and community youth group organizers. It is a condensed blend of 3 nationally recognized teen dating curriculums: Break the Cycle; Liz Claiborne, Inc's. Love is Not Abuse; and the US Center for Disease Control's, Choose Respect. The format is instructional, interactive and includes several brief videos on the topic. The objectives of the program are to help teens recognize their

dating relationship, to be aware of characteristics and warning signs of an unhealthy relationship, to distinguish the roles of those involved, and to identify a trusted adult who they can turn to for assistance. Local and national help lines and resource information is provided to all participants as well as to staff and school personnel.

The DVCC hopes to continue to reach out to more teens with this important program in the upcoming year. If you are interested in hearing more about Choose Respect Montgomery please contact DVCC staff at 240 777-7121.

FJC Hosts International Visitors

This past year, the FJC hosted two groups of international visitors interested in learning more about the FJC concept and its implementation.

On February 16, a group of six professionals from Haiti visited the Montgomery County FJC as part of their research on "Gender-Based Violence" and best practices to address it. The visit was arranged by International Visitors Leadership Program in Maryland on behalf of the U.S. Department of State. The objective of the program is to connect international visitors with American professionals to share best practices in particular fields and to increase mutual understanding.

In addition, for two weeks in April and May, a group of journalists and photojournalists from Sweden chose to visit the MCFJC as part of their global project on violence against women. The Swedish delegation is visiting 10 countries to review different manifestations of violence against women such as honor violence, female genital mutilation, violence in war, rape and domestic violence. The group is sponsored by SIDA, the Swedish International Development Agency and Moggliiden AB, the Stieg Larsson Family Trust. Montgomery County was chosen because journalists wanted to show the world the efforts of an engaged community that would serve as an example. The project unveiling will take place, February 27- March 1, 2012 in Washington, DC at the 2nd Conference of Women's Shelters.



Family Justice Center Foundation News

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Duchy Trachtenberg

From the Desk of the Executive Director



*Resa Levy
FJC Foundation
Executive Director*

Congratulations to Tom DeGonia, MCFJC Foundation Board Member who was elected as our new President at the May 2011 Board Meeting! I have happily transitioned from the role of President to become the MCFJC Foundation's Executive Director.

This election is great news as it speaks to the growth, stability and strategic planning that our board has worked hard to achieve. Tom has been part of our team effort since very early on in our development. He has been an active Board Member and Chair of our Community Initiative.

Professionally and personally, Tom tirelessly advocates for the betterment and well-being of our entire community,

and in particular, vulnerable populations. Among his numerous accomplishments, Tom is the President of the Montgomery County Collaborative Advisory Board, Treasurer for the non-profit Foundation Schools and a member of several professional associations including the Federal, American, Maryland and Montgomery County Bar Associations.

We are indeed very lucky to have Tom as our new President. Together, along with our Board and the professional staff of the MCFJC – and with your wonderful help and support - we will continue to accomplish our life-changing and life-saving work.

I thank you all for your tremendous support and look forward to working together with you in the year ahead.

Resa Levy,
Executive Director

PANERA BREAD New Partnership!



As part of our Business Initiative, Chaired by Board Members Lewis

Selis and David Belkin, the MCFJC Foundation has formed a new partnership with Panera Bread through Panera's Day-End-Dough-Nation program, a component of their Operation Dough-Nation Program.

Panera Bread shares their unsold bakery products with non-profit groups that serve those in need in our community. These products are donated, and never

resold.

With special thanks to Co-Chair, Lewis Selis, who is arranging for the bakery goods to be picked up on a weekly basis, the MCFJC Foundation will be participating in this program. The MCFJC Foundation hopes that these freshly baked products will serve as one more gesture of warmth and welcome to the clients who come to the FJC for services.

2011 MCFJC Foundation Honorees and Criteria

Among the many, there are always the few – those who have given their extraordinary professional expertise and their personal time and support to helping to end the scourge of domestic violence.

On Sunday, October 2, 2011, four of these outstanding folks will be recognized at the MCFJC Foundation's 2nd Annual Benefit to be held at the Hilton Rockville – and you won't want to miss it!

A short description about each award is noted below. A copy of the full Press Release, giving additional details, can be seen on our website www.mcfjcfoundation.org.

The MCFJC Foundation's Forerunner Award given to "an individual who has been instrumental in combating domestic violence and working for the protection of

its survivors." This year's honoree is the outstanding Judge Katie O'Malley. Read more on our website!

Our Inspiring Leader Award is given to "an individual whose inspiring leadership has helped reduce the scourge of domestic violence and furthered the ideals of the Family Justice Center in keeping families safe, giving them hope, and a new start." The incomparable Judge Marielsa Bernard was a clear choice for this year. Read more on our website!

Our Marilyn J. Praisner Award goes to "an individual who has shown active commitment to furthering the mission of the Family Justice Center and furthering its mission of raising awareness of domestic violence and encourag-

ing others to reach out in volunteer efforts." Judith Clark, Founder and Executive Director of Women Who Care Ministries, has helped stock the FJC's kitchen pantry even before the doors of the facility opened! Read more on our website!

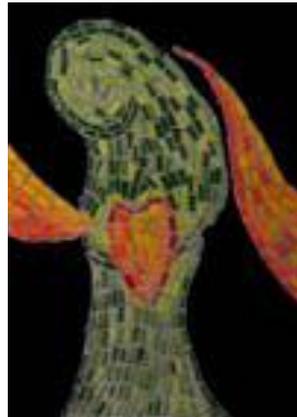
The Corporate Legacy Award goes to "a business leader who has engaged in philanthropic contributions and support to the FJC and furthering its mission of raising awareness of domestic violence and encouraging others to reach out in volunteer efforts." GEICO Philanthropic continues to support our efforts and to respond to the needs of the FJC in a generous and on-going manner.

Read more on our website!
Come to this great event on October 2, 2011. Become a supporter!

2nd Annual Benefit for the MCFJC

On Sunday October 2, 2011, the Montgomery County Family Justice Center Foundation celebrates its 2nd Annual Benefit at the Hilton Rockville, Rockville, Maryland. The event, Chaired by Board Member and First Lady of Montgomery County, Catherine Leggett, supports the Montgomery County Family Justice Center. The FJC, part of an international network of more than 60 family-friendly centers, provides victims of domestic violence and their children essential services under one roof.

Last year's event was a major success, and you won't be disappointed this year! During the Reception and Silent and Live Auctions you will have an opportunity to bid on a fantastic Winter ski vacation, get-away weekends, theater and show tickets, dinner at fantastic four-star restaurants, and so much more!



Join with us as we celebrate this year's four honorees, First Lady of Maryland, Judge Katie O'Malley, The Forerunner Award; Judge Marielsa Bernard, Inspiring Leader Award; Judith Clark, Executive Director of the Women Who Care Ministries, the Marilyn J. Praisner Award; and GEICO Philanthropic Foundation our Corporate Legacy Award.

Also taking place that evening, Chair Catherine Leggett will announce the naming of the Family Room at the FJC as a tribute to the late Judge James Stephen McAuliffe, Jr.

Invitations will be mailed during mid-August. Our website will also provide information on how you, your family or corporate foundation, or law firm may become a sponsor of the event. Check out our website at www.mcfjcfoundation.org, email us at mcfjcfoundation@yahoo.org, or contact Executive Director, Resa Levy at 301 509-6832.

Watch the mail for your invitation! If you're not sure if we have your correct mailing address, please send the information to mcfjcfoundation@yahoo.com.

Our Special Thanks to the Following New and Continuing MCFJC Foundation Sponsors

Thank You to our Wonderful Donors!

It is through your gifts that we are able to provide the social, legal, psychological, and protective services necessary to rebuild the lives of families who have survived domestic and relationship abuse.

Community Supporters

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Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence

The MCFJC Foundation extends its sincere appreciation to the following donors who gave in Memory of The Honorable James S. McAuliffe Jr., Retired Circuit Court Judge for Montgomery County

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What your Gift Accomplishes!

The MCFJC Foundation seeks your individual, family and corporate foundation, company or law firm's support because your gift helps change and save lives.

Your gift, no matter how large or small, leveraged with other gifts:

- Helps meet the need to provide transportation for survivors to get to safety, to doctor's appointments, hospitals or other critical services.
- Provides for additional psychological services for children and clients after allocated funds have been

used.

- Supports an awareness campaign, including printed materials and brochures.
- Helps provide for "safe haven" emergency accommodations for victims and their families.
- Provides fresh food and diapers and other basic human needs.

AND SO MUCH MORE!! You can help. Purchase your ticket to the Benefit or become a Sponsor today. See our website at www.mcfjcfoundation.org and go online to make a safe and secure gift, or contact us at mcfjcfoundation@yahoo.com, Thank you!