



Montgomery County Family Justice Center

VOLUME 4, ISSUE 1

SPECIAL POINT OF INTEREST:

A CALL FROM THE WHITE HOUSE

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Contributors:

Resa Levy
Bruce Sherman
Melissa Tozier
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From the Desk of Sheriff Darren M. Popkin

It is difficult to believe that this May we will have reached the four-year mark since founding the Montgomery County Family Justice Center. In that short time, we have been recognized as a regional and even national leader in addressing domestic violence. We are pleased to begin our fifth year not only anticipating further acknowledgment of our accomplishments from the wider community, but also ready for growth.

We have served nearly 5000 families seeking a life without abuse for themselves and their children. Currently, new clients comprise one-third of those entering the doors, while the others two-thirds are clients returning for additional services. This mix of new and old clients is a hallmark of a Center that is meeting the diverse needs of its clients.

In meeting those needs, The House of Ruth Maryland and Montgomery College have been essential partners. At the start of 2013, we welcomed the expansion of counseling services through the House of Ruth to supplement the work of the Abused Persons Program. In a very short time, their schedules were filled. We also began collaborating with Montgomery College to help survivors move from safety to self-sufficiency by continuing

their education or seeking job training. The 4th Annual Choose Respect Montgomery, held at the College, surpassed our expectations in attendance and interest from the teens and parents there.

Our volunteer and intern program will be firmly established with the addition of a



The Montgomery County Family Justice Center is centrally located in the heart of Rockville, Maryland.

new position in the FY 2014 budget: Coordinator for Special Projects.

The Center has excited so much interest and participation in the community that we have outgrown our space. Later this year the FJC will occupy the entire 5th floor on Jefferson Plaza to provide space for our new partners, for the FJC Foundation, and for our volunteers and interns.

The most exciting event in the FJC's short history was the March 13 visit of Vice President Joe Biden and Attorney General Eric Holder. Recognizing the achievements of the

Family Justice Center, The White House selected Montgomery County as the site to announce a major initiative targeting domestic violence homicides. The new program will be implemented in twelve sites across the country using the Lethality Assessment Protocol and High Risk Team models to identify domestic violence victims in potentially lethal relationships in order to connect them with services. In Montgomery County we have had these models in place for several years: the LAP since 2008, and our high-risk Assessment, Lethality and Emergency Response Team since 2001.

I was honored to represent Montgomery County at the podium for Vice President Biden's announcement, speaking alongside Senator Ben Cardin and Governor Martin O'Malley.

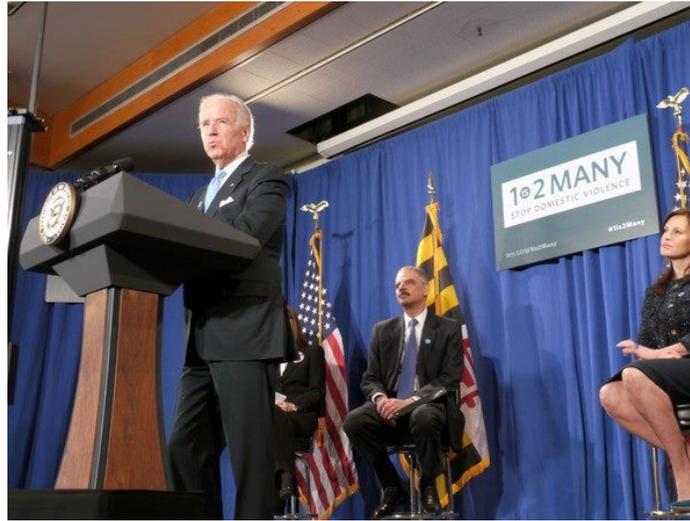
With the Family Justice Center, Montgomery County has made great strides in our work against domestic violence. It is gratifying, as our fifth year begins, to receive recognition from the highest officials in our nation's government. We hope to continue to serve as a model for other communities as we grow.

Darren M. Popkin
Sheriff

A Call from the White House

The excitement began on the morning of February 26, when the FJC Director Hannah Sassoon received a call from Lynn Rosenthal, White House Advisor on Violence Against Women to say that the White House wanted to use the Montgomery County Family Justice Center as the backdrop for a major announcement by Vice President Joe Biden. Unfortunately our space could not accommodate the large group expected to participate with the Vice President and Attorney General Eric Holder. The Executive Office Building Auditorium was selected instead.

Sheriff Darren Popkin provided the opening remarks followed by Senator Ben Cardin and Governor Martin O'Malley. The Vice President spoke movingly about the devastation to



families caused by domestic violence.

The March 13 event was held to announce a major grant initiative to reduce domestic violence homicides. The initiative incorporates use of the Lethality Assessment Protocol along with a High

Risk Team model, both of which have been used in Montgomery County for several years. The Lethality Assessment Protocol has reduced the incidence of domestic violence homicides in Maryland by one third.

FJC Update:
 Since the Grand Opening 4800 domestic violence clients representing 100 different countries of origin have received services at the FJC.

FJC Staff Takes the Plunge

In January 2013, staff from the Montgomery County Sheriff's Office were thrilled to participate in the 17th annual Maryland State Police "Polar Bear Plunge" at Sandy Point Beach in Annapolis. The experience has become a tradition for thousands of warm-hearted Plungers who are daring enough to take a dip in the wintry waters of the Chesapeake Bay! Most importantly, the Plunge benefits Maryland's children and adults with intellectual disabilities who enjoy the benefits of competing in Special Olympics

Maryland. The organization currently serves 10,000 athletes statewide, and offers 28 sports, all at no cost to the athletes or their families.

Plunge participants from the Sheriff's Office Domestic Violence Unit (Family Justice Center) included Deputies Steve Austin and Shane Scott, Victim Assistants Melissa Tozier and Parisa Tabrizi, and Public Safety Telephone Reporting Supervisor Brandy Wilson. This year's Plunge garnered \$2,346,339 in total donations! Great job to

everyone who helped out with this wonderful cause!



Preparing for the plunge (and trying to spell FJC).

Move Beyond the Myths

A myth, simply defined, is a fictitious story or fable. Attendees of the 4th Annual Choose Respect Montgomery Teen Dating Conference were challenged to *Move Beyond The Myths* – the theme of this year’s workshops. The conference, which took place on Sunday, March 3rd at the Germantown Campus of Montgomery College, was sponsored by the Domestic Violence Coordinating Council (DVCC), Verizon Wireless, Montgomery College and numerous Montgomery County agencies. Organizers designed the event as a means to promote respect in dating relationships and to raise the community’s

awareness about the prevalence of teen dating violence. To believe that abuse is only physical, or that it’s “cute” when your partner keeps track of you through constant text messaging, is to perpetuate dangerous myths about dating. Donna Rismiller, Chair of the DVCC’s Education and Outreach Committee joined Dr. Sanjay Rai, Provost of MC Germantown in welcoming everyone. Attendance was at a record high this year as more than 400 students, parents, youth service providers, and public officials filled the auditorium and enjoyed live music from a local rock band, Ivy Rose, whose talented young musicians kicked off the half-day conference. Two enthusiastic emcees – DJ Toby

Knapp from Hot 99.5 and NBC News4 reporter Jackie Bensen – presented the top five Public Service Announcement videos created by student contestants in the 4th Annual Choose Respect PSA contest. The contest challenged teens in grades 6 - 12 to create a brief PSA on the topic of teen dating violence, creatively portraying an element of abuse, and offering viewers a resource (like a hotline or a website) that they can turn to for help.

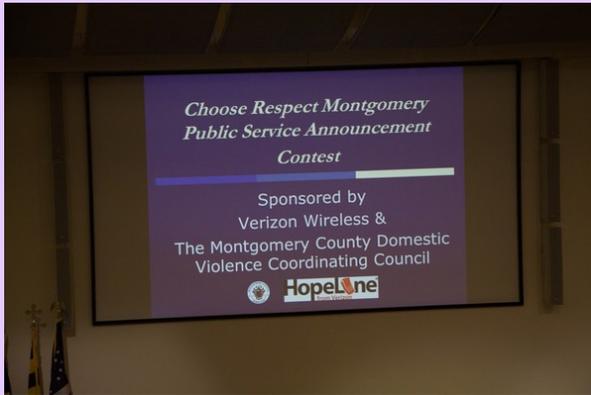
way star from The Lion King, Julian Ivey – rated each of the five finalists on several criteria. Winning production teams received their awards (cash prizes and plaques) from Melanie Ortel, Associate Director of Public Relations for Verizon Wireless. Taking home the top prize of \$1000.00 were four seniors from Richard Montgomery High School for their production of *Wake Up*. Congratulations are also extended to two production teams from Sherwood High School and their sponsoring teacher Ashley Barber-Strunk, as those students were awarded the 2nd and 3rd place plaques and cash prizes – \$750 and \$500 re-



Following the PSA premieres, all conference attendees participated in interactive workshops which culminated in an invitation to sign the Dating Bill of Rights (pictured above). While participants reflected on all they had learned, they returned to the auditorium and heard from State’s Attorney John McCarthy and Sheriff Darren Popkin who recognized the DVCC for its enduring commitment to promoting healthy dating practices among our youth. Declaring March as Teen Dating Abuse Awareness Month in Montgomery County, Councilmember Phil Andrews presented a Teen Dating Violence Proclamation. A panel of judges – including the emcees, Councilmember Andrews, Judge Karla Smith, and teen Broad

respectively. To view the wonderful productions from these talented students go to <http://youtu.be/7WxRqRKIKXQ> and <http://youtu.be/QXCN6bJ0oDs> and <http://youtu.be/rwLzjlazfeE>. For the third year in a row, funds for the Conference were secured by the Montgomery County Family Justice Center Foundation through a grant they received from Verizon Wireless. The DVCC wishes to thank Verizon Wireless and Montgomery College Germantown Campus for their sponsorship of the Choose Respect Montgomery Conference. We offer a special thank you to Ivy Rose, and to our community partners for their continued involvement in this event.

Choose Respect Montgomery 2013 Montgomery College Gaithersburg



Some of Our Generous Sponsors



Ivy Rose, from America's Got Talent, opens the conference



Students Fill the Impressive Montgomery College Auditorium



Assistant State's Attorney Steve Chaikin Leads a Workshop



Melissa Tozier, Montgomery County Sheriff's Office



Hosts Jackie Bensen, Toby Knapp and Donna Rismiller with daughters

The FJC in Photos





Family Justice Center Foundation News

FJC FOUNDATION BOARD MEMBERS

- Resa Levy
Executive Director
- Thomas M. DeGonia II
President
- Maura Lynch
Vice President and
Secretary
- Dorothy Fait
Treasurer
- Marilyn Bagel
- David Belkin
- Judith Clark
- Alicia Doherty
- Catherine Leggett
- Melanie Ortel
- Lewis Selis

FJC FOUNDATION ADVISORY BOARD MEMBERS

- The Honorable
Sharon Grosfeld
- The Honorable
Constance A. Morella
- Rabbi David Rose
- The Honorable
Ida G. Ruben
- The Honorable
Duchy Trachtenberg

From the Desk of the MCFJC Foundation Executive Director, Resa Levy

Education Alliance Initiative “From Survival – to Security – to Self-Sufficiency”



Resa Levy
MCFJC Foundation
Executive Director

While domestic violence impacts families from all financial levels, studies indicate that there is a direct correlation between the *opportunity* for self-sufficiency and a person’s level of education. Higher education = equals better opportunities = higher pay=greater options.

Since its founding in 2009, The MCFJC Foundation has utilized three key guideposts by which to conduct its work: The Lawyer’s Initiative, the Business Initiative and the Community Initiative. In September 2012, we launched a new dimension to our work - our Education Alliance Initiative.

As a result of the incredible participation and follow through from our initial meeting in September 2012, with Dr. Stewart Edelstein, Executive Director, Universities at Shady Grove and Bill Schlossenberg, Director Development and Community Partnerships at the Universities, we were able to engage the outstanding leadership and support of David Sears, Senior Vice President Advancement and Community Engagement, Montgomery College.

Mr. Sears followed up our subsequent meeting by: sending FJC Brochures in English and Spanish to the Student Development Offices at each of the campuses for distribution to their advisors, counselors and students to make them aware of the services of the FJC; he offered that on a case-by-case basis some scholarship funds may be available; he outreached to senior staff who then assigned staff to assist with the Choose Respect Teen Conference; he offered to either eliminate or reduce specific facilities fees should we choose to use any of the campus facilities; he is working with MCFJC staff to develop an internship program at the FJC; he has outreach to other potential community foundations and sponsors on behalf of the work of the MCFJC and the MCFJC Foundation.

It truly does “take a village” and we are so grateful to our “community of educators” who have been so willing and forthcoming to help survivors of domestic violence gain greater opportunities for higher education, and therefore greater opportunities for self-sufficiency.

Resa Levy
Executive Director

From the Desk of MCFJC Foundation President, Tom DeGonia II



Thomas DeGonia
MCFJC
Foundation
President

I'd like to thank you personally

May 19th marks the 4th Anniversary of the MCFJC. Since its opening in 2009 almost 4,800 clients have come through the doors seeking a multitude of services.

Staff members serving these clients provide everything from pro bono legal support and law enforcement to emergency services, counseling and help with Temporary Protective Orders. The MCFJC has become one of the most vital resources for families in crisis in Montgomery County.

To share with you some important updates about the work the MCFJC and the MCFJC Foundation are doing

together, to toast the retirement of the FJC's 1st Executive Director, Hannah Sassoon, to celebrate our 4th Birthday this year, and to thank you - our wonderful donors and supporters for helping to change - and even save - the lives of some of our most vulnerable populations, you are cordially invited to attend our **4th Annual Birthday Party to be held on Thursday evening, May 9th at the Montgomery County Family Justice Center, 600 Jefferson Plaza from 6:30 - 8:00 pm.**

I hope to see you at the Birthday Party on May 9th. We will have light refreshments with our birthday cake!

Many thanks,
Tom
Tom DeGonia II, President
MCFJC Foundation

Please tell us of your acceptance to attend and

R.S.V.P. to:

mcfjcfoundation.org@gmail.com

P.S. And don't forget to mark your calendars for Sunday, October 13, 2013, for our 4th Annual Benefit, at HYATT Regency Bethesda, from 5:00 - 9:00 pm.

Sponsorships available by contacting us at the email noted above.

Meet the Team



Marilyn Bagel
MCFJC
Board Member

Marilyn Bagel, a versatile scriptwriter for major national events and multimedia, has been putting words in the mouths of high profile people for years. She began her writing career as an award-winning advertising copywriter for print and broadcast.

From creating dramatic highpoints to comedic moments, Marilyn has the innate ability to get into others' minds, hearts, and speaking styles and has had the privilege of writing for many notable show hosts, narrators and participants, among them David Hyde Pierce, Candy Crowley, Jean Smart, Joan Cusack, Richard Roundtree, Linda Ellerbee, Lamman Rucker, Kathleen Turner, Chris Matthews, and Willard Scott. One of her personal highlights was writing a speech

for James Earl Jones and hearing him deliver it before a huge audience - which she calls an "electric experience." Marilyn writes scripts and speeches for award shows, special events and conferences and works closely with key executives, corporate communications departments and event co-chairs. She brings her same up-close-and-personal creativity and passion to scripting corporate, association, and tribute videos and multimedia and has received several awards for her work, including three First Place 2008 Telly Awards for the Alzheimer's Association's "LifePrints: First Lady Laura Bush," a Second Place 2006 Telly Award for "LifePrints: A Montage" and two 2005 Telly Awards for "Remembering a Friend: A Tribute to Ronald Reagan" featuring Michael Deaver, former Reagan deputy chief of staff, advisor and longtime Reagan family friend. Montgomery County Business and Professional Women named Marilyn one of their

Women of Achievement in 2007. As a writer who married a "Bagel," it was only a matter of time before she wrote books about her namesake. Marilyn is the author of *The Bagel Bible: For Bagel Lovers, the Complete Guide to Great Noshing*, (The Globe Pequot Press 3rd edition, 1998; second edition 1995; first edition 1992). She previously served on the Board of Directors of Imagination Stage, The Musical Theatre Center, and Temple Emanuel. She has been a member of the steering committee of the Montgomery County Executive's Ball for the Arts and Humanities, chaired by Catherine Leggett, since 2006. She is especially inspired in her role as a Board Member of the Montgomery County Family Justice Center Foundation. She feels privileged and honored to help this one-stop Center for victims of domestic violence any way she can.

Donations from the Heart

Starting in the holiday season, and continuing throughout January, February and March, a wide variety of charitable donations flowed through the FJC much to the delight of the clients and their children. Folks living in a domestic violence situation live under a great deal of stress and safety and finances have been jeopardized by the situation.

Due to their on-going partnership with the MCFJC Foundation, and their knowledge of the fantastic work of the MCFJC, Kaiser Permanente sponsored an "Adopt a Family" program, where their staff was paired with 25 FJC clients – parents who struggle to provide the basics for their families and may not have otherwise been able to give them holiday gifts like toys, electronics, and clothing. Kaiser Permanente associates delivered an abundance of gifts to each member of each family, and they expressing much fulfillment from helping those less fortunate in our community.

For children of FJC clients, some of whom have been displaced for their

homes, it is important to feel loved and to begin the healing process as soon as possible. Zeta Phi Beta, a local sorority, donated approximately 150 stuffed animals so that children who pass through the FJC may leave the Center with a smile and a "new friend." This is the third year in a row that the sorority has selected the MCFJC as the recipient of their generosity. The Argyle Middle School 4Cing the Future after school program, operated by Crittenton Services of Greater Washington, coordinated a similar collection. Eighth grade girls delivered 55 teddy bears in an effort to provide comfort to children at the FJC, particularly those who are fleeing a violent situation and had to leave their personal belongings behind. The Argyle students were able to tour the FJC and gained insight into the valuable resources the Center provides.

Many thanks to the American Sewing Guild, whose members donated a large assortment of beautiful hand-made blankets and quilts, offering

warmth and comfort during the cold winter months. OLBN, an architectural and engineering services company in Rockville, contributed over 100 brand new toys! OLBN staff members were thrilled to give back to the community, helping to bring a smile to children in need. The Montgomery County Bar Association showed their generosity as well, delivering toys and gift cards to make the holiday season a special, joyful time. We are grateful for ongoing children's book donations from the Homemaker's Club. We also thank the Town of Chevy Chase residents who generously provided hundreds of dollars in gift cards, offering clients the opportunity to shop for essentials like food and winter clothing.

Community partnerships have always been, and continue to be, an essential component to the success of the FJC and the MCFJC Foundation. We wish to express our deepest gratitude to the many agencies, businesses, and individuals who selflessly continue to support the work of the MCFJC.

Our Special Thanks to New MCFJC Foundation Sponsors and Supporters

American Sewing Guild
BLH Technologies, Inc.
Christ Episcopal Church
Crittenton Argyle Middle School
Enterprise Holdings, Inc.
The Homemaker's Club
Kaiser Permanente

Lydia and Lyndon Pritchard
Montgomery College
Montgomery County Bar
John and Betty Smith
OLBN
Scholastic Books, Inc.
Town of Chevy Chase
Zeta Phi Beta

A Great Idea

Suzanne Popkin will host a Touchstone Crystal Party at her home this Spring. Proceeds from the sale of this gorgeous line of jewelry will benefit the MCFJC Foundation. If you or someone you know is an Avon representative or other home based company and wish to have the Foundation benefit, please email us at mcfjefoundation.org@gmail.com