

Caring Times

A publication of Caring About Kids, Inc. • 2009, Volume 2



'Tis the Season . . .

Economic calamities dominate the headlines and threaten not only the prosperity of individuals and families, but even our individual sense of financial security. Nowhere is the feeling of insecurity more acute than in those areas that rely on the publicly funded system of social support for many of our children. Caring About Kids' (CAK) mission is to provide for children who have been placed in foster care through no fault of their own. The State cannot afford to provide items that your generosity can help to supply.

Sound familiar? The message above was delivered to you last year by then President of Caring About Kids, Don Allen. Unfortunately, the message remains the same but with more intensity. Never have we had to do so much for so many. We all know that there is no worthy charitable organization that is not feeling the effects of this economic down-turn. You cannot read a paper or open your mail without being met with another plea for support from another worthy cause. The Publicdrum offers you myriad fundraisers on a daily basis that you can attend, send money to or support in one way or another.

Unfortunately, Caring About Kids is no different than all the rest--we too need your support, now more than ever. It was not just love of good jazz music that made the Jazz Night committee work as hard as they did or beat the drums (pardon the pun) as hard as they did for the event. It was because they knew, as our only fundraiser this year, they needed to make a lot of money for Caring About Kids. But they also did it for the love of the kids and our mission to provide unique and special things for children in foster care--like a birthday gift or a gift under the tree this Christmas. These may not seem like unique or special things to you, but they are to someone who has no hope otherwise of getting one. They are special to a child who has never had a birthday gift before. They are special to the children who never had a tree under which to put a gift before because mom or dad or both spent all the money on alcohol or drugs. This is the reason Caring About Kids exists. We give our kids something they never thought they had a right to expect, let alone receive--those special little "somethings" that most kids take for granted.

In order to keep this legacy alive, in order to continue giving a child a birthday gift, a Christmas gift, a pair of sneakers or a musical instrument, we must come to you, our supporters and donors and contributors. 'Tis the Season . . . again, and we ask that you please consider us . . . again. We know you may not be able to give as much as you did last year, but that is okay. Every little donation is added to another donation and another and another and by some miracle we meet the next request for that one special 'thing' for a foster child. It is not by chance that our newsletter is called "Caring Times." Thank you for sharing with Caring About Kids.

Rose A. Houk, President

And from all of us on the Board of Caring About Kids, we wish all of you a peaceful and joyous holiday!



Welcome to the Board Room!

In the next several editions of Caring Times we will profile members of the Board of Directors for Caring about Kids, Inc. In this column, you will meet each of the members of the Board and its officers, the people behind Caring about Kids, Inc..

David Russell

David Russell has been a member of the Caring About Kids (CAK) board of directors since 2007. He is an employee of the State of Michigan and works for the Department of Human Services. David has worked for the State for 21 years and since January 2009, has been managing the data analysis group.

Mr. Russell is a graduate of Michigan State University (1987), where he majored in Criminal Justice and Psychology. He lives in Holt, Michigan with his wife, Karen Conroy and their two daughters, ages 16 and 13. David was elected Treasurer of CAK 1 1/2 years ago and his primary responsibility is to receive donations and disburse financial grants awarded for a child. In addition, he is responsible for financial reporting to both the State and federal governments. He is an outstanding treasurer with a demonstrated commitment to excellence as indicated in enrolling and attending accounting classes at Lansing Community College.

Mr. Russell began his association with CAK over 5 years ago by working on the cash side of fundraisers like the auction at the DHS central office. When asked about what he likes about this association with CAK, David responded that he has been blessed in his life and sees his involvement with CAK as a way to give back by assisting those who have found themselves in the foster care system because of abuse and neglect. David stated that he would like to see more people volunteer their time and talent in helping the efforts of CAK.

Susan Mallory

Susan Mallory is a long serving board member of Caring About Kids (CAK) and has also served as the board's president. Ms. Mallory is a graduate of Michigan State University and a graduate of the Thomas Cooley Law School where she earned her Juris Doctorate. She practices law in Lansing, Michigan at the firm of Mallory, Cunningham, Lapka, Scott and Seilin PLLC. Susan spends most of her time concentrating on family law and does mediation and custody disputes.

Ms. Mallory became a member of CAK in 1992 and became president in 1994. She became involved when she learned about CAK in her practice before the Probate Court. Susan was approached and asked whether she could provide assistance in securing interview clothes from her son for a foster child. In her usual style, she decided that used clothes would not be appropriate and instead purchased new clothes for the young man.

When asked about what she likes about CAK, Susan responded: "The idea that we take care of the kids in our own neighborhoods in a sincere effort to try and make a difference in their lives. We do that by providing children with clothes and school supplies." She is examining ways to sustain CAK by creating personal endowments. Susan lives in Lansing with her husband Sam. They have four adult children and eleven grandchildren.

To Contact CAK:

You can call us at 517-485-2646. We have a voice mailbox system that we check twice weekly and a board member will return your call. Our web site at caringaboutkidsinc.org has e-mail capability. Feel free to leave us a message, and we will return your call or answer your e-mail as soon as possible.



Jazz Night - A Successful Night of Music Again

On October 23rd over one hundred Caring About Kids supporters attended Jazz Night at the BoarsHead Theatre to hear the MSU Jazz Combo and to show their continued commitment to Caring About Kids. The combo performed a variety of standard jazz pieces, concluding with a truly touching bass solo rendition of the Billie Holliday classic "God Bless the Child." The musicians, Alex Kreger, piano, Anthony Stanco, trumpet, Tomoyuki Okabe, drums and Rob Bickley on Bass, were an outstanding group of young musicians who showed their talents to an appreciative audience.

Hosts for the evening, Sharon and Jim Doerr, Jean Hoffman and Susan Mallory, saw that guests were welcomed and supplied with fruit and cheese, good beers, fine wines and great desserts.

All of this was made possible because of your committee's generous donation of time and talent for which we applaud them and say thank you for a job well done. A rousing thank you to Peter Houk, chair, Kate Butler, Shauna Dunning, Greg Crockett, Nancy Wonch, Peggy Thodis, Jean Hoffman, Fred Baker, Carol Siemon, Sharon Doerr, Susan Mallory, Annette Skinner and Melissa Demong Shafer.

The event raised over \$9,000 in ticket sales and contributions for Caring About Kids. To our *sponsors*: Peter Houk, Dennis Chichon, Sue London, Rose Houk, Fred Baker, Annette Skinner and Geri Caruso, Hon. Donald Allen Jr., Cooley Law School, Greg Crockett, Kate Butler, Carol Siemon and Tom Freutenicht, Norman Charles, Craig and Tina Peterson, Roger Marz, Fairchild Lebel & Rice PC, Dr. Kenneth Scarlett and Mrs. Hirut Mershu-Scarlett, Sam Shango, Target Stores; and to our *patrons*: Hon. Virg Bernero, Jean Hoffman, John and Fran Loose, Pat Harrington, Anthony and Kristin Sesti, Julie Horn Alexander and Bob Alexander, Susan and Sam Mallory, Lou and Mary Anne Sesti, Karen and Charlie Smith, David Russell and Karen Conroy, Phillip and Melissa Threadgould, Patricia Quinn, Margaret Grost, Robert and Catherine Lovell, Levine Law Group, Sandy and Bill Mason, Pat Lindeman, Carol Hause, and Dr. Joan Jackson Johnson. And to *each of you who purchased a ticket*, we extend a hearty round of applause for your continued support of Caring about Kids. Thank you for being there for us.

Younkens' Kids' Day

The Younkens of the Lansing Mall again came through for the Lansing area. Amy Wickstrom, a Floor Manager of multiple Younkens' departments approached Caring about Kids with outstretched arms, asking what Younkens could do to help foster children in this community. As you know, children grow and seasons change, making the wardrobe of any child hard to keep current. Younkens generously offered to give a 20% off coupon for each item donated to Caring About Kids at "The Kids' Day Event" on August 22, 2009. Twenty-four pieces of clothing were collected ranging from good quality hats to famous label denim jeans.

The atmosphere was light with a fire truck outside, a coloring contest, some pets to play with inside and a fashion show to wrap-up the day. As always, a special "Thank You" to the Caring About Kids volunteers, Kelly Gluszewski, Kristin Sesti, Marina and Melissa Threadgould. Our volunteers caught a Younkens' associate, Rick Engle, explaining the mission of Caring About Kids to many curious customers and drumming up more clothing donations through his stories. When such outreach from our community partners occurs, it allows Caring About Kids donations to be spent on other items and our funds touch a greater number of children. Bravo Younkens!

Did You Know . . . That Aquinas College gives two scholarships a year to foster children who want to attend college? The scholarship covers tuition, room, board and book costs for up to two prospective students each academic year. If you know a foster child who is considering college, send them to this website for more information: http://www.aquinas.edu/undergraduate/foster_scholarship.html



WE ARE SO SORRY . . .

In our last newsletter, we had *intended* to include all donors and sponsors up to and including April of 2009. *SOMEHOW* we managed to overlook a very special group of sponsors, those truly wonderful companies and individuals who sponsored our last golf outing. Please accept our sincere apologies for this oversight. We do truly appreciate and value you, all you have done and still do for Caring About Kids. So, please allow us to give you a belated THANK YOU and our standing ovation for your contributions:

THANKS YOU GOLF SPONSORS/DONORS

The following companies and individuals sponsored the 2008 golf event.

Beverage Cart (\$1,000)

Compuware Corporation

Lunch (\$1,000)

Accident Fund Insurance Company of America

Putting Green Sponsor (\$800)

Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan

Diamond Sponsors (\$500)

Bruce Augenstein

The Centennial Group

David Chapman Agency

Paterson Group, LLC

Mike Ryder



Golf Team Sponsor (\$320)

Glenn Buege Buick Pontiac GMC

Tom Fruechtenicht & Carol Siemon

Rose & Peter Houk

Maloney Carpet One

Dr. Sam & Susan Mallory

Sign of the Pineapple

Tatra Corporation - Formula 3

Two Men & A Truck International, Inc.

Bronze Sponsors (\$100)

Deltavision Optical

David Russell & Karen Conroy

Fairchild, Lebel & Rice, PC

Pondscapes, Inc.

Virg's Community Fund

Special Thanks to Donors

Allegra Print & Imaging, Okemos-Dave Muhleck

Thank you one and all for your special relationship with Caring About Kids.



A Special Lady with a Special Challenge

Some of you have had the pleasure of meeting Sandy Cain. Sandy has been a Caring About Kids supporter for many years. She has been involved in the Caring About Kids Auction at DHS Central Office since it began. She also puts together this Caring Times newsletter. When asked to assist, Sandy has stepped up to the plate time and time again to help Ingham County foster kids.

Currently Sandy spends all of her time meeting some very special challenges of her own. On August 16 she was in a car accident which left her unable to use her arms and legs. She was air lifted to Sparrow Hospital after being trapped in a crushed vehicle for about 11 hours. After leaving Sparrow Hospital she was transported to Mary FreeBed in Grand Rapids.

Today, Sandy is probably working harder than she ever has (and those of you who know her know she is a very hard worker) in order to regain use of her limbs and go back to leading a life of independence.

Sandy has a very positive outlook and is receiving much support from family and friends. If you would like to pass on your well wishes, she would be pleased to hear from you.

Her cell phone number is 517-331-0274. Please call her between the hours of 4:00 pm and 7:00 pm, and know that she is often undergoing therapy throughout the day, or busy with visitors and medical personnel.

You can keep current on Sandy's progress and/or leave her a message by viewing her website which is updated on a regular basis: <http://www.caringbridge.org/visit/sandycain>

Wendy Campau is Leaving Caring About Kids

The Board of Directors wants to give special recognition to a member of our Board. Wendy Campau is leaving us due to family and work commitments that do not permit her to continue in her role with us. Wendy has been with our Board for over 5 years and has been an absolutely essential part of what we do. Wendy, prior to her present position in central office DHS, was the Foster Care Supervisor for Ingham County DHS and provided insight into the needs of foster children in Ingham County.

Wendy, we will miss you and the energy you have given this Board over the years. We wish you all the best.

The CAK Board of Directors

HOLIDAY PARTY: The annual Ingham County Department of Human Services Holiday Party is scheduled for Wednesday, December 9th from 6:00-8:00 at Hawk Hollow. This event is sponsored yearly by Caring About Kids. Our thanks and appreciation goes to Melissa Winkel, at Hawk Hollow, who is working with DHS again this year to secure a location for the party. Hawk Hollow provides the banquet room at a discounted rate and works very hard to make this a wonderful event for Ingham County foster families. Our thanks also go to Montessori School of Lansing and Okemos. They are donating gifts again this year for the party. Each child will get a gift when they sit on Santa's lap. As in the past, there will be activities for the children, as well as dinner and gifts. The Ingham County child attorneys, Amy Dua, Annette Skinner, Antoinette Fraho and Robin Eagleson will be there to do crafts and cookie decorating with the kids. A special treat is offered this year with the appearance of local DJ, Dawn Steele, who will provide music and all the latest dances for the kids and their parents.

While the Holiday party is always a special time for the foster parents and children so it is too for the caseworkers, supervisors and all those connected with these kids throughout the year. To all of you, who participate in organizing and helping at the party, thank you, on behalf of the kids and on behalf of Caring About Kids.



What kinds of needs can be met with Your donation?

Many of you may wonder what happens to the money donated for foster children. The Board tells you that we give gifts to foster children, but we thought you might like to know what kinds of "things" they ask for and that "you" give.

Z is 10 years old and wanted to attend the Wrangler camp at Mystic Lake. A scholarship was awarded for part, but not all of the camp. CAK sent Z to Wrangler Camp this past July.

C, 14 years old, wanted to attend Leadership in Training camp at Mystic Lake. CAK paid for most of the tuition for the camp.

T, age 15, asked to attend band camp at Everett High School. The youth is very musically talented and plays several instruments and wanted very much to attend. CAK approved the entire amount.

A is a 12 year old with special needs. His caregiver wanted to purchase a tricycle like the one at school which he uses and loves. CAK purchased the special tricycle for A to use at home.

B, age 17, is attending Western Michigan University and needed a laptop computer. CAK approved the request and B now has her computer.

Most of these "things" will educate or provide some guidance in these youths' lives. A tricycle, computer or even car insurance provides the recipients with independence as they continue to strive for that normal life like other children. Kudos to each of you! Your contributions gave each of these children a unique gift that made a real difference in their lives. That is what we do. This is our mission.

Share the Music

Share the Music is a local program sponsored by Caring About Kids, Inc. and Marshall Music of Lansing. The program provides musical instruments to children in foster care. The Share the Music program relies on the donation of new and used instruments from the community. Marshall Music collects the instruments and makes any needed repairs to the instrument to ensure it is working and ready to give to a foster child. The government provides only for the essentials for foster children, and the schools cutting their music programs. The Share the Music program opens the door for children in foster care to participate in a music program, or take music lessons they may not have had the opportunity to do otherwise.

To be eligible to receive an instrument, a child must be placed in the Ingham County Area, regardless of court jurisdiction. Caring About Kids Inc. must receive a request from the child's foster care caseworker. If there is an instrument available, the instrument will be assigned to the child and will remain with the foster child as long as the child continues to use the instrument. If you are interested in obtaining an instrument for a foster child, please call the Caring About Kids office at 517-485-2646.

We currently have over 100 instruments available. We have trumpets, violins, clarinets, flutes, saxophones, trombones, bell kits and more. For a complete list of the types of instruments available please contact Caring about Kids.

If you are interested in donating an instrument, just take it to the Marshall Music Company located at 3240 E. Saginaw, in the Frandor Shopping Center. Marshall Music will appraise the instrument and provide you with a tax donation receipt equal to the value of your donated instrument. A gift of music is something all children should have the opportunity to experience. Maybe the child that receives your donation will be inspired to become a concert violinist or a rock star!



Shop 'Til You Drop Program

Caring About Kids Inc. and Ingham County Department of Human Services partnered again this year with the Junior League for the "Shop 'Til You Drop Program." Kathryn Quinn, from the Junior League, graciously organized this event. DHS Foster Care Caseworkers provided the Junior League with a Christmas wish list for all the foster children on their case loads and the Junior League completed the shopping and wrapping of the gifts. The Junior League dropped the gifts off at DHS on Monday, November 30th. Without the financial support of Caring About Kids and the Junior League's assistance, many of the foster children in Ingham County would not have gifts to open on Christmas day.

or eyes glistening with anticipation when the children receive their gifts, but from all reports each year, the gleeful response you imagined is not overstated.

Our appreciation goes to all who help make these smiles, anticipation and gleeful squeals of delight happen. To our donors who make the contributions that buy the gifts, to the caseworkers who compile the lists so each child has a special gift, to the Junior League who does all the shopping and wrapping, to the supervisors who help distribute all the gifts to the right worker who delivers the gifts, to the families and to Jeni Jaques and Jennifer Montague, our CAK Shop 'Til You Drop Committee chairs who organize all these things, we say thank you and have a wonderful holiday!

Each of us who contribute to Caring About Kids will never get to see the smiles

Fundraiser

A very special thank you goes to Jenny Roman from Party Lites Candles. On May 6, 2009 she hosted a fundraiser for Caring About Kids at Ingham County Department of Human Services. Half of her proceeds were donated to Caring About Kids. Her generosity of time and enthusiasm toward a good cause are greatly appreciated!

Your Donations are Appreciated!

Name: _____ Address: _____
 Phone: _____

Enclosed is my tax-deductible donation of \$_____ to be used as indicated below:

General Donation In Honor of: _____
 Camp Experience In Memory of: _____

I would like to donate \$100 a year for the next 10 years. My first year (2009) donation is enclosed.

Notify: _____

Make Checks Payable to: Caring About Kids, Inc. Mail to: CAK, PO Box 27014, Lansing, MI 48909-7014



We Welcome Volunteers

Caring About Kids often needs volunteers for its various committees such as Finance/fundraising, Adventures, Newsletter and Publicity, Development and Share the Music. If you have special talents in any of these areas, which you would like to offer, please contact us by phone at 517-485-2646 or send a note to our P.O. Box 27014, Lansing, MI 48909-7014.

Caring About Kids, Inc. 2009 Board of Directors

Rose Houk (President)
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Wendy Campau
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Ingham County foster kids need YOUR help!
Use the form on page seven and send your tax-deductible donation to
CAK, P.O. Box 27014, Lansing, MI 48909-7014



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