



SAVE OUR CHILDREN COALITION



NEWSLETTER

WE DREAM OF A DAY WHEN ALL CHILDREN GROW UP IN FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES THAT NURTURE AND SUPPORT THEM, SO THEY CAN REACH THEIR FULL POTENTIAL AND MAKE THEIR UNIQUE CONTRIBUTION TO THE WORLD."

Lianna Taylor, Editor

FAITH COALITION ON FOSTER CARE MOVES FORWARD!

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Michigan Supreme Court Justice Maura Corrigan

The Faith Communities Coalition on Foster Care (FCCFC) has become a movement

that is spreading throughout the metropolitan communities! Regional meetings in Birmingham (First Presbyterian Church of Birmingham, host pastor the Rev. Dr. John Judson) and Grosse Pointe (Grosse Pointe Memorial Church, host pastor the Rev. Dr. Peter Henry), and Hartford Memorial Church in Detroit have brought together increasing numbers of people from faith communities and service organizations to partner on behalf of children in foster care. The FCCFC contact list is over 350 people!

September's meetings featured Michigan Supreme Court Justice Maura Corrigan, an advocate for children in foster care for many years. Justice Corrigan shared some current trends in foster care, including that there are fewer children in "the system" this year, adoptions have increased, and monies have been approved by lawmakers to extend support for some youths in foster care until age

20 years. On the other hand, the continuing economic decline in Michigan means funding reductions, including closings of residential centers--only 800 beds are now available.

Other speakers at the meetings included Ginelle Barry of Foster Hope in Genessee County, who is working to bring together organizations, faith communities and individuals for children in foster care, Kelly Ruffing from Vista Maria, who founded the Dolly Drive for young girls in foster care, and Marsialle Arbutkle of the Center for Urban Youth and Family Development at Hartford Memorial Church in Detroit. Margaret Warner, Director of Wayne County Department of Human Services has spoken passionately about the needs of children in foster care, along with Bobby Wade of The Children's Center. Mr. and Mrs. Aylsworth, who were honored this year for their many years of fostering

and adopting children, as well as two of their adopted children, have shared their experiences. From Child Help, Annamarie Reisterer and Chito Middleton shared their story of the support that Chito's faith community gave to her as a foster parent.

These dedicated individuals demonstrate how to "walk the talk" of helping children in foster care. As faith leaders, advocates, mentors, and service providers, they are joining together to improve the lives of our most vulnerable children and youth.

The Rev. Dr. Kate Thoresen, founder and coordinator of FCCFC, is documenting the meetings in words and pictures, which are sent out by email and on the SOCC website. The outpouring of response to needs expressed at these meetings, has made these events truly inspirational.

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Coming Soon.....

The New Save Our Children Coalition Website!!!!

Save Our Children Coalition is a broad-based coalition that mobilizes and fosters change in communities to meet the needs of children and families who are in, or in danger of entering, foster care in Southeast Michigan.

Save the date.....

****The Western Regional Meeting of FCCFC is scheduled for the Faith Community Presbyterian Church, 44400 W. 10 Mile Road located in Novi, on November 30, 2010 @ 7:00 p.m. The Program includes young adults who will share their experiences in the foster care system.****

Congratulations!

Two members of the SOCC Advisory Board were honored this month by the Michigan Supreme Court's Foster Care Review Board with the 2010 Child Welfare Awards.

Congratulations to Tracy Green, who was awarded the first ever Michigan Parent Attorney of the Year award. Tracy was recognized for her representation of the parents of abused and neglected children. Tracy is the Managing Attorney of the Detroit Center for

Family Advocacy, a multi-disciplinary law center of the University of Law School Child Advocacy Clinic. The Center delivers a range of legal and social welfare services to families who would otherwise find themselves and their children trapped in the foster care system.

We also applaud Viola King, who was awarded the Lawyer-Guardian Ad Litem of the Year Award. Viola is with the Juvenile Law Group, and she was

nominated by Wayne County Family Court Referee Ilene Weiss Fruitman, who described her as "the best and most professional advocate for children of all who have practiced before me in my thirteen years on the bench." Fruitman noted that Viola is highly respected by her child welfare colleagues, and stated that she has "the rare quality of truly listening to what (her clients) are saying, as well as being able to hear what they are not saying."

Girls' Night Out Launches Dolly Drive

The invitation said, "Grab your girlfriends and a doll for a little girlfriend in foster care!" This simple invitation motivated many women throughout the area to respond, and they came together for the event at the Black Finn Restaurant. Over 100 women attended, and they contributed almost 200 dolls to give comfort to girls when they are taken into foster care.

This event was the brainchild of Kelly Ruffing, Director of Community Programs at Vista Maria, who says, "the looks on the girls' faces when they are given a doll is truly heart-warming!"

Kelly Ruffing Leads the Doll Drive



Farewell Louretta Cunningham-Powell.....

Louretta Cunningham-Powell, the former Director of SOCC, left us in September to take a position with the Michigan Department of Education. Louretta's energy and passion for helping children are sorely missed. SOCC has initiated a search for a new Director, and hopes to have a new Director by the end of the year.

"If our American way of life fails the child it fails us all."

~ Pearl S. Buck

SOCC Advisory Board

The SOCC Advisory Committee, representing the many perspectives and “voices” of those who care about the welfare of Michigan’s children in foster care, utilizes the special expertise of many of our supporters in moving the Coalition forward.

The Advisory Committee is composed of the following members:

Gail Bagale, SOCC Consultant

Brenda Baker-Mbacké,
Michigan Foster Care Review
Board

David Benjamins, Detroit
Institute for Children

Lacea Curtis, The Guidance
Center

Paul Duford, Workforce Pro-
grams Manager: Youth,
Southeast Michigan Community
Alliance

Danita Echols, Wayne County
Department of Human Services

Jonnie Hill, Foster Care
Alumna

Nicole Hoshock, Michigan
Department of Human Services

Cameron D. Hosner, Vista
Maria

Annette Howard, Faith
Communities for Families

Gilda Jacobs, Senator, State of
Michigan

Viola King, Legal Aid and
Defender Association

Jack Kresnak, Michigan’s Chil-
dren

Shirley Mann-Gray, Children’s
Hospital of Michigan

Mona Perdue, Michigan Youth
Opportunities Initiative

Kelly Ramsey, 3rd Judicial

Circuit Court of Michigan

Trisha Stein, Child’s Hope

Deborah Strong, Great Start
Collaborative Wayne

Cynthia Swift, Plymouth-
Canton Community Schools

Veda D. Thompkins, Families
on the Move

Kate Thoresen, Faith
Communities Coalition on Foster
Care

Mary Trepanier-Street,
University of Michigan-Dearborn

Annemarie Valdez, Child’s
Hope

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If you would like to be removed from the Save Our Children Coalition mailing list, please e-mail SOCCProject@umd.umich.edu or call the office at 313.593.5052.