



# Foster Parents NEWSLETTER

## *Building Families & Strengthening Communities*

*"Teamwork is the ability to work together toward a common vision.- the ability to direct individual accomplishments toward organizational objectives. It is the fuel that allows common people to attain uncommon results."*

~~~Andrew Carnegie~~~

### Message from the CEO



2011! Can you believe that we are into a new year? As we move from 2010 to 2011 I want to take an opportunity to thank the staff, foster parents, and our youth for the manner in which we have all pulled together to get successfully through 2010. We have persevered and supported one another admirably. The Martin Pollak Project is now entering the 31<sup>st</sup> year of operation as a Licensed Child Placement Agency. MPP has weathered many storms over these many years since 1980. The current challenges are familiar and also different however the MPP leadership is confident of our success together. We all know no price can be set for the amazing and compassionate work that foster parents do everyday. Therefore we must push forward together with relentless political effort for the continued allocation of the necessary level of resources and funding to support the community

investment in successful futures for our children, youth and families. We must as citizens, professionals and advocates deliver the message to legislators that even during times of budgetary crisis our most vulnerable children, youth and families must be supported with adequate resources.

While I am certain that we all hope that one day foster care becomes a need of the past, today we must operate within the realm of enormous need for the skilled, passionate, flexible individuals and families who are willing to take on the responsibility of fostering children and empowering the biological families. MPP remains grateful for all those who over and over renew and demonstrate their commitment to children and families on a daily basis. We look forward to improved teaming, new partnerships and the inevitable successes of our work together in the year to come.

Happy New Year!

*Richard Norman, CE)*

### Families United



We had our last meeting of the year on December 18, 2010 and it was very informative. Richard Norman, CEO of MPP and Brenda Kess, Director of Treatment Foster Care met with us to discuss the role of Dr. Oseroff and the psychiatric treatment of our youth. It was explained that Dr. Oseroff does not use medication to control the behaviors of our youth. Brenda Kess (410-685-2525 ext. 1254) is available for contact to arrange meetings with parents and Dr. Oseroff to discuss specific cases. Our Holiday Party was a bit different from the previous ones however it truly catered to the children. In the years to come we will become more involved in the planning of the end of the year party to be certain we

continue the entertainment aspect for the children. Lastly we discussed the annual picnic and along with MPP have decided to use the date of July 16, 2011 @ Sandy Point to develop and have a fund raising Crab Feast to begin to build funds for events we would like to host. Stay tuned for the details of this event and please join us at our next meeting scheduled for Saturday, January 15, 2011 at 10am at 3701 Eastern Avenue. I need you all to turn out because we have some serious work ahead of us to start our year off right. Until then I would like to wish you all a very Happy and prosperous New Year!

*Joyce B. Davis, President, 410-466-5507*



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Visit us at [www.mppi.org](http://www.mppi.org)

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#### DC Office

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Office: 1-888-222-2396 Fax: 202-545-6630

### Parents Recertifying on time...

Thank you for your diligence and support!

*Kayla Battle*

*Sandra Carpenter*

*Josseline Grobly*

*Juaqinna Hall*

*Vivian Jefferies*

*Denise Murphy*

*Nadine Robinson*

*Gloria Carelock*

*Lucretia and David Fenwick*

*Deborah and Brian Haden*

*Janice High*

*Timothy Neal*

*Shirley Pettiford*


*Debra Williams*



# MPP Celebrates the Holidays

MPP rounded out the 2010 holiday season with lots of giving and some great fun. Take a look...

## Thanksgiving Baskets



Thank you to all staff, friends, the Police Vanguard Justice Society, the Ray Lewis Foundation, Denise Murphy, Pattie Blades and her husband, and everyone that participated in the giving and distribution of Thanksgiving baskets to **25 birth families**. The

**Ray Lewis Foundation** donated the baskets. The **Police Vanguard Justice Society** helped deliver the baskets. Staff, Denise Murphy (representing the foster parents), Pattie

Blades and her husband (who offered to help again when needed) delivered lots of baskets as well. Thank you, Christy, for coordinating the list. Thank you, **Wayne Jones of the Police Vanguard**, for donating funds for the purchase of additional turkeys. It was obvious that those involved enjoyed this experience. "THANK YOU" to everyone. This was one of the most fulfilling experiences that I have had at MPP.

*Brenda Kess, Director, Treatment Foster Care MD*


## Project Northstar Program Holiday Party

On December 15<sup>th</sup>, Project Northstar celebrated its annual holiday party. Guests included Project Northstar volunteers, students, staff, and families. All together this drew quite a crowd at the Josephine Butler Park Center, where weekly tutoring sessions are held. Activities for the night included a competitive dessert contest in which both parents and volunteers participated, personal recognition of the students and volunteers, as well as a massive gift donation sponsored by **Venn Strategies LLC**. Some of the gifts included a skateboard, an iPod shuffle, winter jackets, and the popular book series- Diary of a Wimpy Kid. It was a wonderful way for the community of students, tutors, parents, and staff to celebrate the holidays together. The party not only gave each

child a chance to celebrate the holidays, but it also emphasized the important community Project Northstar is building one child at a time. In the future we hope to expand this community to another tutoring night and include the Martin Pollak children. If you are interested in hearing more about the program to volunteer, enroll a child, make a donation, or observe a tutoring session, please contact Stephanie Grimes at 202-288-5332.



## Birth Family Holiday Party



On Saturday, December 18, 2010 the Treatment Foster Care Team of the Martin Pollak Project (MPP), under the direction of Brenda Kess, Program Director, and spearheaded by Jacqueline Redmond, MPP

Therapist, hosted a holiday celebration and meal for over 70 Foster Children and their Biological Families. MPP provided the **Southeast Community Development**

**Corporation (SCDC)** with **26 families** and their holiday gift requests. Kate of SCDC marshaled all of her energies to make it happen. Gifts for all the children and families poured in via the extraordinarily generous SCDC network. The result was a wonderful holiday event for these children and families combining family togetherness, food and gifts. This is the recipe we all recognize for making special family holiday memories that can be savored over and over.

## MPP Holiday Party for Foster Families

Although not our typical party, MPP foster families enjoyed an afternoon of pictures with Santa, caroling with a local songstress and the great storytelling of Maria Broom. As we transition to focusing more intently on the programming next year, we ask for your suggestions and participation in the planning process.



# Forever Families!

As the festivities, food, and fun come to a close, we want to take a moment to salute those families who have given some very special youth the priceless gift of “Forever Families.”

## ***Adoption Announcements:***

**Kim and Thomas Waite:** Foster Parents often share that the most difficult part of the fostering experience is to let go and send “your” babies home to their biological families. Kim and Thomas Waite have loved and nurtured two young boys through the trauma of placement in foster care, to the joys of reunification, and back through the struggles of a second replacement in foster care. The Waite’s have managed to combine their love for the boys with their commitment to maintaining strong relationships with birth families. Through all of the difficult days, Mr. and Mrs. Waite never lost sight of what was best for the boys. Today they are proud to announce the finalized adoption of two precious boys, ages 4 and 6. MPP salutes this family for showing us all how important and powerful birth family work can be in the support of children and families involved in the foster care system.

**Shannon and Videl Winston** Forever Families come in all shapes and sizes. For the young lady who recently became a “legal” member of the Winston family, a “Forever Family” has not always held up to it’s meaning. This young lady, who is only days away from her 18<sup>th</sup> birthday, has shown a great deal of courage and character to open herself up, for the second time, to adoption. Her openness has come as a result of the strong bond built between herself and the Winston family. When observed for the purposes of adoption only a few months ago, it was reported that it was difficult to determine which children were foster children in the home and which children were biological children. The Winston’s excel at helping every youth placed in their care to feel like a loved member of the family. We salute the Winston’s for the willingness to adopt a 17 year old and there commitment to showing her the true meaning of a “Forever Family”.

## ***Guardianship Announcements:***

**Ms. Jenene Simms** has been a committed adult figure in her Godson’s life since his birth. She has remained committed to his safety and well being and was excited about the opportunity to step in and become the primary caregiver for this young man- a young man who has been foster care for so much of his young life. She has been a stabilizing factor in his life- and is proud to be his formal legal guardian. This young man is 18 years old and now has a permanent guardian in his Godmother. MPP salutes Ms. Simms for her longstanding commitment to this great young man.

## Training Corner

### January Training Calendar

#### Baltimore Office

- 8<sup>th</sup> - Foster Parent Perspective 10am-3pm
- 15<sup>th</sup> - Families United 10am-12pm
- 20<sup>th</sup> - Loving a Traumatized Child 6-9pm
- 24<sup>th</sup> - CPR/First Aid Refresher 6-9

#### DC Office

- 8<sup>th</sup> - Foster Parent Perspective 10am-3pm
- 11<sup>th</sup> - CPR/First Aid Refresher 6-9
- 27<sup>th</sup> - Loving a Traumatized Child 6-9pm

Martin Pollak will accept community foster parent trainings for credit towards your re-licensing requirements of 28 hours per year. The **Resource Parent Training Coalition website**- <http://www.dcrptc.org> is a quick and easy way to access foster parent trainings throughout DC and Maryland. Please forward certificates to Tiffany Harvey at [tharvey@mppi.org](mailto:tharvey@mppi.org) or by fax at 410-385-1997 receive training credits.

## STAFF STARS

### Please Welcome:

*Remi Esan, DC Records Coordinator  
Ahmun Williams, MD Social Worker  
Kate McGrain, Independent Living Associate*

*MPP sends well wishes to Eric Fluker, Carol Daly, and Charlene Scott as they move on beyond MPP.*

## 2011 Life Skills Classes

*Tanya Brice is the MPP Life Skills Coordinator in the TFC Program.*

*Please look for her call in the upcoming months to participate in small group trainings in your local community. Tanya has identified local libraries and community centers for training and looks forward to sharing important information on teaching life skills in the home.*

**Our Mission: The Martin Pollak Project Inc. is dedicated to enhancing the lives of families and children by building on their unique strengths and by developing community to help establish fulfilling and production lives.**

### MPP Board of Directors

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*Denise Murphy*