

# Mockingbird Times

FOSTER CARE AND HOMELESS YOUTH SPEAK OUT ACROSS THE NATION



August 2010

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## The Mockingbird Society's 9th Year BY IAN GRANT



"The paper's operations are modest. Higuera, Shaman, and Wilson have to write most articles by hand and later type them on a computer at Real Change's Belltown office. Their one computer is due to arrive at the end of October." *Seattle Times, 2002.*

What a difference nine years make.

Julia Higuera, Amanda Shaman, and Eli Wilson were the first staff writers for the *Mockingbird Times*, which printed its first monthly edition Au-



The Mockingbird staff

gust 9, 2001. Nine years later, we have gone from **Jim Theofelis**, three youth, and a basement to a nationally recognized advocacy organization. We took a good idea Jim had and transformed it into the Mockingbird Family Model, which is now installed in some agencies worldwide, and provides some of the best outcomes of any foster care provision model. We took the core of youth around the *Mockingbird Times* and expanded it into the in-

famous Mockingbird Network, which now has a chapter (with staff advisor) in every DSHS region, and a war chest of legislative victories ranging from health care to HOPE beds. Where we once had four employees, we now have 22. Where we once had a \$70,000 budget, we now have an annual \$1 million operating budget.

**Ros Ghan**, our Deputy Director, has been here for nearly six years. She started off at a small desk in the hallway on the third floor of the 2100 building, back when we had just a few reporters and two full time staff. Now she's got her own office and runs the day-to-day operations of the Mockingbird Society. Over the last six years, she has been "inspired every day... [I] love working with people that are dedicated to the mission... I feel appreciative."

Jim, of course, has big plans. Building the Network is on the agenda, specifically around youth system reform power. Jim wants foster youth to have "a seat at every table." He wants more public education, more investment by private individuals, more of an attitude that "[foster youth] are all our kids." He wants the Mockingbird Family Model to be given the backing and scale that it deserves. He wants to expand the "marketplace for advocacy" that Mockingbird has helped create.

Nine years ago, Candy Hatcher wrote in the *Seattle PI*: "You have propelled yourselves from victims to advocates, and now are known as journalists and employees, not simply survivors of the system." That was the first and still the most important step. And, now, after nine years, the Mockingbird Society is proud to show you all of the things that foster youth can achieve when they are no longer "simply survivors."

I spoke to Hatcher when researching this article, and talked to her briefly about what Mockingbird



Jim with youth and community partners at the 2010 Foster Youth and Alumni Leadership Summit

has become in the last eight years. She wrote: "I'm thrilled to hear of the success of the *Mockingbird Times*. When I wrote in 2002 about the newspaper produced by foster kids, I was simply happy to see a forum for their passion and a tool for them to learn critical-thinking skills. It's clear the Mockingbird Society and its newspaper have become much more. Kids have been empowered to express

MOCKINGBIRD 9TH YEAR, CONTINUED ON PAGE 3

## Stopping Child Abuse & Neglect BY AMANDA BEVINGTON



Child Abuse and neglect harms more than one in 58 children in the United States. So, the odds are great that you may know someone who is being harmed. Knowing the signs of abuse could help make it stop. According to [www.indianchild.com](http://www.indianchild.com) child abuse can be defined as causing or permitting any harmful or offensive contact on a child's body; and, any communication or transaction of any kind which humiliates, shames, or frightens the child. Emotional abuse, neglect, physical abuse, and sexual abuse are all different forms of abuse.

It is helpful to increase public awareness, and if people know the warning signs it potentially could save a child. Warning signs include risk taking behavior, personal care or hygiene changes, poor school attendance and performance, changes in sleeping and eating, fear of going home, and unexplained injuries.

I was a victim of child abuse and neglect and it has been very hard for me to open up to an adult authority and to trust. Sometimes I am full of mixed emotions and afraid that people will judge me because of my past experiences. I know I am not responsible for the abuse, but my childhood experience was confusing and hurt me deeply. I have decided that keeping all those feelings buried inside just builds up anger that gets directed toward

myself and others. I used to watch members of my birth family fight each other over the most ridiculous things. It was always about money, power, and respect. Due to the abuse and neglect from my family, I have had to deal with a lot of emotional and behavior problems, as well as anxiety, depression, and post traumatic stress.

I never really understood why my birth family would hurt me. I always wondered what I did wrong. I continually asked myself why my family couldn't get it together and love me the way I need them to love me. Many times I felt worthless and ashamed of myself. When I was being abused I never told anyone what my birth family had done to me. Every time someone would ask me about how I got those bruises and cuts on my body I would lie in fear. I never wanted to make things more difficult than it already was at home.

A young lady that I interviewed, who would like to remain anonymous, explained that while she was living with her birth family it was her birth father that was the most hurtful to her. She said that after her father would physically abuse her, he would then start sexually molesting her. The physical and sexual abuse from her father continued for many years. She finally had the strength to tell her Grandma, and the father was placed in prison.

Even though it's hard to trust an adult and it can be very embarrassing, I would advise anyone that's in an abuse and neglect situation to get help by using your words. You must give voice to what has happened to you. It is not your fault. Remember a closed mouth won't get fed. We can't keep letting the abusers get away with their hurtful actions.

The earlier the abuse is caught the better the recovery for the child. You are worth it. Please, know that there are caring adults who will help. Be aware of the common warning signs found in [www.helpguide.org](http://www.helpguide.org):

Warning signs of emotional abuse in children:

- Excessively withdrawn, fearful, or anxious about doing something wrong.
- Shows extremes in behavior (extremely compliant or extremely demanding; extremely passive or extremely aggressive).
- Doesn't seem to be attached to the parent or caregiver.
- Acts either inappropriately adult (taking care of other children) or inappropriately infantile (rocking, thumb-sucking, throwing tantrums).

STOPPING CHILD ABUSE, CONTINUED ON PAGE 3

## Letter From the Editor BY JIM THEOFELIS



Dear Friends,

This month we celebrate nine years of working together to build a world-class foster care system. We have made clear progress in improving the lives of children, youth and families.

The Mockingbird Society, our community partners, and most of all youth and alumni of foster care have garnered support for Foster Care to 21, Healthcare to 21 and other key initiatives that provide support at a pivotal point in a young person's life.

These past successes came from a deep commitment and belief in the mission. But, mostly from the energy of each young person who joins the Mockingbird Network and finds themselves making it better for those who will come into the system.

We look forward to the work each day because of their collective spirit. Thank you!

Jim Theofelis  
jim@mockingbirdsociety.org

### Conserving Resources and Honoring Your Preferences

In an effort to increase awareness of the *Mockingbird Times*, and the voice of its contributing writers—youth and alumni of care, we plan to begin publishing a more robust online edition in 2010. This also will allow us to conserve resources and reduce costs. So, watch for regular updates on our progress. We'll be checking in with you, our loyal readers, in the near future to learn more about your preferences.

Thank you for your support.

### Submitting Letters

All incoming Letters to the Editor should be addressed to the *Mockingbird Times* and will be opened by editorial staff. All incoming correspondence to youth under 18 years of age will be opened first by *Mockingbird Times* Editorial Staff.

### We Welcome Your Work!

We welcome submissions of articles, poetry, artwork, and photography from our young readers who have experience in the foster care system and/or with homelessness. If you want to be published in the *Mockingbird Times*, visit [mockingbirdsociety.org](http://mockingbirdsociety.org) and select *Mockingbird Times* under *The Mockingbird Network* or contact us at 206-323-5437 or via email at [kara@mockingbirdsociety.org](mailto:kara@mockingbirdsociety.org). Note: If you have submitted something before that hasn't been published, we need your submission agreement in order to print it. Please submit again via the web location listed above. Because of space constraints, shorter poems have a higher chance of being published.

### The Mockingbird Society: The Story Behind the Name

The 1962 American classic *To Kill A Mockingbird* by Harper Lee is the inspiration for our name, The Mockingbird Society. Atticus, the widowed father of Jem and Scout, joins Miss Maudie in teaching his kids that it's a sin to kill a mockingbird because "...Mockingbirds don't do one thing but make music for us to enjoy. They don't do one thing but sing their hearts out for us."

What if we created an organization, a community, indeed a world, in which our most vulnerable children and youth were protected and valued with the same commitment that Atticus had for mockingbirds?

Join The Mockingbird Society today and help us give young people a safe place to nest and sing.

### Thank You!

Peter Fewing, The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Makeba Greene, Jillian Gross, Dr. Wanda Hackett, Corina Hester, Lura Harrison, Jo Ann Herbert, Casey Family Programs, Vanitha Raman, Dae Shogren, Leslie Tregillus and Tom Jones, Sofie Vriends,

## A Reflection on Homelessness BY DAVID BUCK



It is a commonly held view that people are adaptable. The idea is that human beings will adapt, overtime, to both physical and social changes in the environment. Further, that we adapt more quickly if we are given the right opportunity and possess endurance.

This article is a reflection of my own experience both transitioning into and out of homelessness. I became so used to my daily living conditions that it was very hard to re-adjust to what would be considered more standard lifestyles such as living with a roof over your head. I was homeless for long enough that the idea of living under a roof, and sleeping on a bed, became uncomfortable and frightening. Homeless youth across the nation experience this as well, and it's nothing to be shocked about. It's human nature to adapt to our environment, even one that is very unhealthy.

According to The National Alliance to End Homelessness 50,000 youth across the nation who have been on the streets for more than 6 months will be sleeping on the streets tonight. These youth have been on the streets so long some become used to it. They know the pattern; they know where they can sleep at night, where to get food, and what to do to stay relatively safe under these conditions. Many youth who are homeless (but, not all) want to get off the streets. And, that is a lot more difficult than people seem to think. Being homeless tends to be a 24-hour a day job of trying to meet the basic needs that are taken for granted by most people. It requires survival skills. There is no real time to actually find a job, and if and when a person who is homeless is lucky enough to get an interview, they probably are dirty and not very healthy, so their chances of getting a job are very low. Let's not forget the violence, anxiety, and stigma that only those who have been homeless understand.

A lot of youth eventually find their way, but despite the help of homeless youth

agencies it comes down to pure determination. Homeless youth agencies can provide tools to help youth. But something any social worker can tell you is that the reality is much harder than providing shelter, food, and case management. When the time comes for them to get used to the very things those who have never experienced homeless take for granted, it can feel insurmountable. We are talking about a task that is much more than most can imagine.

When I first moved into the transitional living program ISIS house I had a very difficult time coping. I had much more difficulty transitioning into the house, than my transition into homelessness. For several months I didn't even sleep on my bed, I slept on the floor because I spent a very long time sleeping on concrete. I had a very difficult time waking up because the sun, or the police, was typically my alarm clock and the silence of the room drove me crazy. I literally had to relearn everything; from doing dishes to cleaning clothes and other socially acceptable behavior. I even had to get used to the idea of going to an actual bathroom. I still don't feel comfortable with my current situation, and every now and then I have the urge to become homeless again, an environment I feel far more comfortable in.

Many people tend to think that once a youth is no longer homeless that that is the end of their troubles. But for me once I was no longer homeless, the reality of knowing what it is I have learned on the streets cannot be unlearned, I realized that you can take the boy off the streets but you can't take the street out of the boy. Tonight I will sleep in my bed wishing I had my rain tarp, and a bridge, hoping to sleep on concrete!

References:

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.endhomelessness.org/section/issues/youth>

personal experience

<sup>1</sup> [http://www.ccf.pdx.edu/cwp/pdfs/Final%20Report%20Executive%20Summary%2005\\_16\\_09.pdf](http://www.ccf.pdx.edu/cwp/pdfs/Final%20Report%20Executive%20Summary%2005_16_09.pdf)

## MEET OUR STAFF

**Executive Director** Jim Theofelis; **Deputy Director** Ros Ghan; **Mockingbird Family Programs Director** Dr. Wanda Hackett; **Youth Programs Director** Tiffany Washington; **Public Policy Director** Rose Berg; **Development Coordinator** Kylie Palzer; **Development Director** Brian Lawrence **Executive Assistant** Lauren Frederick; **Finance Manager** Catherine Lanham; **Mockingbird Network Coordinator** Kara Sanders; **Administrative Coordinator** Aine Cowan-Kuist; **Administrative Assistant (AA)** Liliana Davies; **Mockingbird Network AA** Milissa Morgan; **Resource Specialists** Graham Parrington, Georgina Ramirez, Tammy Soderberg, Lauren McCormick, Samantha Valle; **Senior Network Representatives** Jerry Bobo; **Network Representatives** Amanda Bevington, David Buck, Giovanni English, Ian Grant, Diamonique Walker; **Contributing Writers & Artists** Brandy Baxley, Christina Koshney, James W, Noah Stiles, Rebecca Miranda, Sam Evans, Tameka Siplin; **Design & Layout** Highdive.com

**ABOUT US:** *The Mockingbird Society* is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation developing innovative models for improving the outcomes of foster care, while advocating with decision makers for system reform. All contributions are tax deductible to the fullest extent of the law. Please consult your tax advisor regarding your specific tax situation. *The Mockingbird Times* is a monthly newspaper written and produced by youth who have experience in foster care and/or homelessness. All youth employees of *The Mockingbird Society* are paid between \$9.50 and \$12 an hour. Additionally, youth from across the country submit articles, art work, and poetry and are compensated up to \$25 per published piece. *The Mockingbird Times* has a monthly circulation of over 25,000 copies being distributed across Washington State and the USA, through a private distribution list and as an insert in *Real Change*, a Seattle-based community newspaper. Youth involvement is the key to the philosophy, values, and success of *The Mockingbird Society* and, as such, youth are involved in all aspects of organizational development and decision-making. Donations to *The Mockingbird Society* may be tax-deductible and are greatly appreciated. No part of the *Mockingbird Times* may be reproduced without the written permission of *The Mockingbird Society*. All contents copyright ©2009, *The Mockingbird Society*.

## Raise Your Voice in Support of our Youth!

Join The Mockingbird Society for the  
4th Annual Benefit Luncheon

October 6, 2010 | The Sheraton Seattle

Support The Mockingbird Society and help keep the *Mockingbird Times* a free publication that expresses the voice of youth and alumni of foster care. Join us at the 4th Annual Benefit Luncheon as a table captain or individual guest. There is no cost to attend. Suggested donation of \$150. All gifts are appreciated!

Thank you for making a difference on October 6!

Contact Brian Lawrence at 206.407.2136 or  
[Brian@mockingbirdsociety.org](mailto:Brian@mockingbirdsociety.org) for information.



## Qualities of a Mother BY JERRY BOBO



What qualities of a woman make them a good mother? Do qualities of the older generation conflict with qualities of the new generation? Are these the same qualities that youth in foster care look for in their foster mother? As I have grown into adulthood, and reflected on my own experience as a child raised in kinship care, these questions have come up for me. And, they have been answered with many examples about the power of unconditional love.

I was raised by a handful of different women who influenced me greatly. Along the way, I have noticed what it takes to be a good mother, and the positive and negative things that come with the responsibility of parenting.

According to [www.parenting.families.com/blog/characteristics-of-a-good-mother](http://www.parenting.families.com/blog/characteristics-of-a-good-mother) the number one action a mother can take to help her child learn and grow, is to respect and treat each child as an individual, in their own right. That was true for me. Even though I was raised by women, and was the only male in the household, I always was told to be my own person and never to allow myself to be taken advantage of. (At the time, I didn't fully understand the lesson, but I knew that if my mother was telling me that, then I needed to pay attention).

**Kara Sanders**, Mockingbird Society said it well: "... You should be able to trust that what your mother says is true. And, know that she will stand by you when things go wrong."

I am lucky enough to work with many strong friends and co-workers, but among us all mothers seem to possess the most strength. Without women none of us would exist right now.

**"The number one action a mother can take to help her child learn and grow, is to respect and treat each child as an individual, in their own right."**

They birth us, care for us, teach us, and help us grow up. "My mother —5 foot 2 — barley a hundred pounds — took care of 3 children, and attended college," said David Buck. I can relate to him, because my mother not only took care of me and my siblings, but also took care of many of my cousins, and grandchildren and only asked for minimal help. She knew when to be the bad guy and the good guy, but she never let us over step our boundaries. She showed everyone in her care unconditional love no matter what occurred. That is an important quality because every person wants to be loved, especially by their own mother.

The mother-child relationship is vital during development and into adulthood, but it's never too late for that relationship to be built upon. Youth that enter foster care have their own biological mother that they tend to love unconditionally, but many are missing key elements of a healthy relationship. In my case, my "mother" is actually my biological aunt that I've lived with through my life, and she has treated me like her own. My birth mother has had many hardships in life and was unable to care for me, but knew that her sister would do for me what she couldn't. Not every mother is perfect, but those that are able to step in and fill the role of "Mom" and provide - those missing elements are priceless. Every child needs a caring adult; it doesn't have to be the birth mom.

Mothers are essential and important people in our lives. They treat us like individuals, show us unconditional love, and make sure that we have their trust. Key qualities that make up good mothers get passed down to the children through life teachings. I love my mother - she is not only the woman who raised me, she is the mother that made me who I am today. And, I will take what she taught me, and pass it on to my own children.

## STOPPING CHILD ABUSE, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Warning signs of physical abuse in children:

- Frequent injuries or unexplained bruises, welts, or cuts.
- Is always watchful and "on alert," as if waiting for something bad to happen.
- Injuries appear to have a pattern such as marks from a hand or belt.
- Shies away from touch, flinches at sudden movements, or seems afraid to go home.
- Wears inappropriate clothing to cover up injuries, such as long-sleeved shirts on hot days.

Warning signs of neglect in children:

- Hygiene is consistently bad (unbathed, matted and unwashed hair, noticeable body odor).
- Untreated illnesses and physical injuries.
- Is frequently unsupervised or left alone or allowed to play in unsafe situations and environments.
- Is frequently late or missing from school.

To find the support and resources or to help report child abuse and neglect call the **Child Help National Child hotline 1-800-4-A-Child (1-800-422-4453)**.

## Update on Legal Representation BY IAN GRANT



Washington's Supreme Court will decide, within the next year, whether youth in foster care are constitutionally entitled to legal representation at parental rights termination hearings. The case, *In re Termination A.R. D.R.*, involves two youth who were abused in foster care. They argue that they would have been better off with their birth parents. However, they were not represented by counsel at the hearing terminating their parents' rights, and so their perspective was not considered.

The Supreme Court appears to be considering only the question of whether youth in foster care are entitled to an attorney at paren-

tal rights termination hearings. Specifically, they are not deciding the question of whether youth are entitled to representation at dependency hearings. However, this is still a major victory for the legal representation movement: Washington State is the first and only state to have this question come before the high court. If successful, *In re A.R. D.R.* could become the model for attempts all over the country to secure the right to representation in these cases.

However, it is a slow process. The Supreme Court has not yet set a date to consider the merits of the case. We will keep you updated as this particular battle in the fight for legal representation continues.

## Welcome New Mockingbird Staff BY IAN GRANT



The Mockingbird Society recently welcomed several new people to the agency. One is **Rose Berg**, Director of Public Policy and Communications, who said that she was "truly jazzed about the power and the potential of youth and alumni of care to improve the system for kids who come after them. And, I know the integration of blogging; technology tools and social networks will resonate for youth and effectively reach across our community." Another, **Brian Lawrence**, came on as Director of Development, and had this to say: "I'm most excited to meet the incredible supporters who share in our passion to help improve the



The newest members of the Mockingbird staff; Rose Berg, Brian Lawrence, Aine Cowan-Kuist, Kylie Palzer

lives of the children, youth and families we serve. I can't wait to showcase how their support is enabling our programs to improve the foster care system in such powerful and lasting ways." **Aine Cowan-Kuist** is our new Administrative Coordinator, and she is "excited for the chance to be part of some successful advocacy for change! Everybody at MBS is so passionate about what they do, that it's really a pleasure to come into work every day." **Kylie Palzer**, our new Development Coordinator, said: "I'm most excited to be joining a team that I am truly inspired by. It is extremely gratifying to know that my efforts support the amazing work of The Mockingbird Society." I'm sure all our readers join us in welcoming the new additions to the Mockingbird Family.

## Welcome BY GIOVANNI ENGLISH

My mother had me at the age of 15 and was already a foster child herself. It was her decision to allow me to enter the child welfare system, even while having issues in it herself. Her decision affected where I am today. My interconnection to the Mockingbird Society and youth advocacy for youth in foster care and homeless teens reaches all the way back to before day one.

My entire life I have been in the child welfare system, and I have for the most part had a fairly pleasant experience. Growing up in foster care has given me an interesting view point on what family really means. To me my family are those that have always been there. And, I know they will always be there, no matter what. They are the ones that mean the most to me, and that I know I mean the most to them.

I grew up in a foster home that cared for children with medical needs, so we always had kids coming and going. Some were long term stays and others were short term. I have grown up with kids that had sicknesses of all types. We also had kids that were not sick either. Some of my greatest memories are of the many kids that have come and gone. For the most part the intake was of younger children such as toddlers and infants. This has given me an amazing ability to never really "grow up" - while maturing at the same time. In other words, being around little ones has allowed me to grow up healthy. Everything I have done in life has had so much to do with children and helping them develop as they help me develop. This understanding of remaining young, while growing up has enabled me to further develop the skills I need necessary

to become a young adult and still be myself. I would not trade my experience in the child welfare system for any other.

For myself, I am 17 years old and attending high school, and next year hoping to attend community college to work on an international business degree. I love athletics and hanging out with friends. Up until very recently my passion was wrestling, when I developed a heart condition that has prevented me from competing. This has given me time to focus more on work and school, it also brought me to the Mockingbird Society.

I hope to be able to bring my extensive knowledge and experiences from the child welfare system to the Mockingbird Network. My experiences as a youth in the child welfare system give me many aspects and view points that I think a lot of other people don't have. Living in it my entire life I have seen many different parts. I have seen kids come and go long term and short term. I have seen some kids come and transform from scared young individuals into young confident happy children. The one thing I have experienced the most and enjoyed the most is the smiles on many of the kids as they leave ready for the next stage of their life. The smiles of hundreds of parents and their families as their kid steps out of our door and back into their own. Some kids never make it back from where they started, but with enough fight from both ends they almost always emerge stronger. This knowledge and these experiences are what I have to offer and much more the Mockingbird Society. I am very happy to be on board and very ecstatic to join.

## MOCKINGBIRD 9TH YEAR, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

themselves, to question authority and become experts in foster care and children's services. As a result, lawmakers, policy wonks and the general public are better informed. I love that foster kids have found success in this project, and I hope that, having made Washington a better state for their peers, they will have the confidence to go out and change the world."

We've come a long way, with your help, but we have a long way to go. The next nine years are sure to be as grueling and amazing and different as these last ones. In the meantime, I hope that you'll join me in wishing Mockingbird many happy returns, and celebrating nine years of creating change (and hope) in the foster system.

## Society

By Amina Chinnell-Mateen

Society, Society, Society  
It whispers in my ear  
Leaves it stings  
And never fails  
Using me as its target

Its destructive but elusive magazines  
Its "Oh You Can Be Her" attitude  
Seducing you with the images of  
naturally skinny girls  
Destroying our already beautiful bodies. Gross.

Oh Society whispers, in fact it yells  
Republicans verse Democrats  
The House failed to pass another bill  
And Obama is just black. What does he know? The whole shebang.

Abortions don't sacrifice a human life.  
And to be gay, well you're just born that way. In God we trust, well that's not what we want.  
So let's just take it away.  
Oh how it hollers.  
This society.

To be fat is disgusting.  
To be too thin makes you anorexic.  
Oh society can you tone it down a bit?

It's buzzing, it's hurting, I can no longer hear.  
Talks so much, I can't shed a tear.  
Oh stupid society.  
Don't you see what you've done?

No Smoking  
By James W

Smoking is bad.  
Really, really bad.  
People dying of its cancer,  
Is really, really sad

I know what they think when they try out  
that stuff.  
They think it's really cool  
But their idea makes them fools.

Smoking takes your life away  
a little every day,  
If you actually die,  
so many are going to cry.

The more you smoke  
The more you choke  
Waste your money  
And you end up broke.

## Community Events

## Region 1

**August 14th:** Kids Day in the Park - All day. FREE. (509) 242-2400  
**August 21st:** Unity in the Community - All day. FREE.  
Site Link: [www.NWunity.org](http://www.NWunity.org)

## Region 2

**Free Movies In The Park** - Movies start at dusk  
**August 13th:** "Cloudy with a chance of meatballs" - Randall park  
**August 15th:** "The Muppets take Manhattan" - Gilbert Park

## Region 3

**August 8th-11th:** Skagit County Fair  
**August 10th-11th:** Rodeo - 6:30 pm  
Fair hours, 10 am -10 pm

## Region 4

**August 25th:** Art Merchant International - 2-4 pm  
17161 Beaton Road S.E., Monroe,  
360-794-7844 or [www.art-merchant-intl.com](http://www.art-merchant-intl.com)

## Region 5

**August 13th:** Culture of Foster Care - 1130 am-1 pm  
Pierce County Juvenile Court  
Sylvan Learning Center - Free Tutoring  
Email [s.valle@mockingbirdsociety.org](mailto:s.valle@mockingbirdsociety.org) for more Info.

## Region 6

**August 24th:** "Your Rights, Your Life" Training - 3-5pm Shelton Library in the Meeting Room  
**Every Wednesday:** New Hours for Youth Drop-in Clinic at CYS! - 1-5 pm  
2nd Floor Lobby of Community Youth Services. Check-in from 12:30-4:30pm

*"Do not follow where the path may lead. Go instead where there is no path and leave a trail."*

*~Harold R. McAlindon*

## Region 1 (Spokane) by Noah Stiles

Our July meeting was filled with conversations of how great the summit was and what we found helpful and motivating. When it was time to vote on the topic that we would like to see on the legislative agenda, our chapter discussed the pros and cons and everyone came to an agreement. We mapped out the plans for the rest of this year, filled with trainings, fun events, legislative visits, and two community service projects, all while eating taco bell and ice cream. I am excited to see our chapter working together as a team and look forward to giving back to the community.



## Region 2 (Yakima) by Brandy Baxley

On July 15th, ACT FIRST drove two cars full of youth, alumni, and their pets to a park in Ellensburg. It was great having a BBQ and swimming in the lake! We all made sure that we put on sunscreen, so we would not get roasted! On July 31st, we are going to have our chapter meeting, where we will figure out our 6 month plan and we will be debriefing on the Summit.



## Region 3 (Everett) by Tameka Siplin

We went to I-Hop for our meeting and enjoyed dinner. We had some new faces, so we did an ice breaker. The ice breaker started with a person telling their name, and a fact about themselves. Garret led the group in a discussion about the Leadership Summit; we recapped the activities provided and our issue that we brought to the Commission. We also talked about the about other things that could help reform the foster care system. Garrett spoke about voting for a new chapter leader. Brittany was up to the task to be leader and will help set up our community Blood Drive.



## News From

## The Mockingbird Network

Your Needs, Your Voice

## Region 4 (Seattle) by Christina Koshney

Region 4 For Change has been hard at work all summer and after this year's Annual Leadership Summit it's been nothing but good vibes!! Region 4 took our concern about youth not being properly notified about every single dependency hearing --- from the first to the last-- and brought it to life. We had the opportunity to bring our issue in front of a panel full of great people who have the power to enact change on the second day of the Summit. Our region was well represented and our voices were felt and heard. Even better, we have heard work already is being done to address the issue of improving the dependency hearing process to allow youth to be involved. Now Region 4 is on to our next big moves, planning a community spring clean-up and getting ready for the upcoming inter-region BBQ get down this weekend!! Looking forward to more awesome work in our communities and in the foster care system, go R-4!!



## Region 5 (Tacoma) by Rebecca Miranda

This month our region combined with regions 3, 4, and 6 for some fun in the sun in Federal Way at Steele Lake Park. We barbecued, played games, and ended the day with a friendly game of dodge ball with water balloons. As leaders, we also came together to discuss what we would like the next year to look like. We are working on setting up trainings and community service events. This coming month we will be having a Culture of Foster Care Training for the CASA's in Pierce County.



## Region 6 (Olympia) by Sam Evans

This month at our regular chapter meeting (which have moved from Centralia to Community Youth Services in Olympia; 4-6pm in the Marina View Room, 3rd Floor) we discussed what happened at the Foster Youth and Alumni Leadership Summit. Our region brought up the issue of foster youth receiving an allowance and appointed Chris Bauer as our new rotating chapter leader. We also continued to talk about raising money for "Camp to Belong" for our community service project. We had a great time at the inter-regional hoopla where four of the regions got together to hang out and build unity between the Network Chapters. Coming up in August, we are holding a "Your Rights, Your Life" training at Mason County's Independent Living Skills Group in Shelton - see the event listings for more details! We will be collaborating with a youth advocate for homelessness in Mason County to do outreach and to co-facilitate the training.