

Mockingbird Times



Recipient of 2005 Congressional Angels in Adoption Award
Building a world class foster care system while serving our neighborhood youth.

July 2007

Foster Care and Homeless Youth Speak Out Across the Nation

Volume VII, Issue 7

Visit us online at www.mockingbirdsociety.org or call 206-323-KIDS (5437)

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On June 8th, The Mockingbird Society (MBS) distributed bunk beds for kinship and foster-families in King County. MCS Construction donated about 70 beds from a construction project they were doing at Fort Lewis. Red Arrow Supply Chain Solutions was generous enough to donate the "I enjoyed seeing families with happy faces when they received their beds and I was glad that Mockingbird Society was able to meet the needs of many families."

~ Lauren Frederick

Executive Assistant, The Mockingbird Society

50 foot long truck that it took to transport the beds from Fort Lewis to Seattle, where dozens of families picked up the beds.

Getting the word out to the community about the bunk beds took a lot of planning. There was a very small amount of time between when The Mockingbird Society found out we had received the beds to when they needed to be delivered and handed out. There had to be e-mails sent to the families and agencies in the Mockingbird Family Model, kinship parents in the King County Kinship



The first of May is a time for celebration, remembrance and solidarity. Historically, May 1st has always been a day to celebrate the international achievements and progressive movements of the working class, working poor, and impoverished in terms of civil, social and economic justice.¹ The labor movement created this International Day of Worker Solidarity as a way of celebrating and commemorating the achievements of the working class. It also acts as a social tool to evoke, promote and actualize solidarity among working peoples all over the world.

The 8-Hour Day Labor Movement, whose slogan was "8 HOURS LABOUR, 8 HOURS RECREATION, 8 HOURS REST," initially began during the Industrial Revolution in Britain, in response to the country's increasing demand for factory workers. During that time in Europe, the working class people and children were being worked upwards of 16 hours a day, six days a week, for less than enough money to survive.

The first ever documented May Day parade in support of the 8 hour work day in the United States took place in 1886 in Chicago, Illinois, when the head of the Chicago-based Knights of Labor led a parade of 80,000 people to march for civil rights, reasonable hours and equal pay for equal work.² Over the next three days this strike became national as other groups of workers all over the US joined in and created general strikes in over 1,200 different factories and with well over 350,000 workers. After the initial May 1st parade many people began celebrating May 1st as a way to promote working class unity and solidarity amongst people with common struggles. Similar sociopolitical progressive movements for an 8 hour work day were happening all over the world during and around the same time period, including New Zealand, Australia, South America, Central America, the Ca-

Bunk Bed Drive a Huge Success

BY JESSICA GARCIA

Collaboration as well as the King County Transitions Collaboration. From there, the word spread very fast about the donation that was taking place. Mockingbird Society received requests for almost 150 bunk beds, twice the number that were donated! However, we were still able to distribute about 70 beds to foster and kinship families in need.

Having the beds delivered for pick-up was a big task. The whole driveway in the back of the 2100 building had to be blocked off. The

"One Grandfather thanked me by stating that since his grandchildren have unexpectedly come to live with him and his wife the kids have been sleeping on the couch or floor. He was so appreciative of the beds for his family."

~ Jim Theofelis

Executive Director, The Mockingbird Society



Lawrence Buchanan of Red Arrow Supply Chain Solutions, Mockingbird staff and volunteers help load a bunk bed into a recipient's vehicle.

project was so big that many people had to all do their tasks to make sure everything fell in to place so that the families could get their beds as fast as possible. There were people to unload the beds, count pieces to make sure complete beds were being taken home, help load beds into all the various vehicles and keep track of who was

getting what. While all this had to happen in a three hour period, everyone had to be very careful that they were safe and that nobody got hurt by the hundreds of pieces that were being handled.

The giveaway was smoother and more successful than MBS had hoped and we were all so proud and happy to be able to coordinate the bunk bed distribution. We want to give a big thanks to MCS Construction and Red Arrow Supply Chain Solutions for helping to make sure that the distribution of beds to foster and kinship families went well!

May 1st in Seattle

BY MISTY LOU COOK

ribbean, the United Kingdom and the majority of Europe.³

On May 1st, 2007, there was a large rally for social, political and systematic change in downtown Seattle at the Seattle Center. Thousands of people were gathering to express their discontent with Mexican-American and international border policies, immigration reform and labor rights. Seattle-based artists Gabriel Teodros (of the groups HipHop 101, Abyssinian Creole), Geologic (Blue Scholars and Good Medicine) and DJ Sabzi (Blue Scholars and Common Market) were among the thousands who represented a population demanding equal rights and fairness in regards to labor and immigration rights.

I interviewed Geologic briefly after the Blue Scholars performed before the massive crowd from the main stage, which signaled the beginning of the March through downtown Seattle. When I asked Geologic what inspired him to participate in the May 1st rally, he replied, "Well, May 1st, or May Day, has always been a day to celebrate our achievements as working class people all over the world, especially in regards to socio-political and international economic justice. My parents were immigrants from the Philippines, so I feel very passionate about immigrant rights and the social justice issues surrounding it."

Another reason that the May 1st rally was so incredible in size, quality and substance has to do with current legislation in progress in congress which would greatly affect immigrants living in the US. According to Democracy Now, "House Bill 4437 would, among other things, make every undocumented immigrant a felon and make it a crime for priests, nuns, health care workers and other social workers to offer help to undocumented immigrants."⁴ This bill is described by many as the most oppressive immigration legislation bill in over 70 years and is still going through congress waiting to become a law. This bill would also

create "700 miles of border fence ... in areas where illegal alien deaths are at their highest," "mandatory worker legal verification through electronic means for all employers" and prohibition against "grants to a federal, state, or local government agency that enact or have a sanctuary policy" for immigrants.⁵ For these and other reasons, House Bill 4437 has sparked legendary marches and "historic protests across the country ... including upwards of one million people taking to the streets in Los Angeles in what may have been California's largest demonstration in history as well as tens of thousands of students walking out of schools across the country."⁶ It was this same bill that made this and last year's May Day protests so memorable, amazing and inspiring, not to mention massive.

According to The Federation for American Immigration Reform (FAIR), the leading organization dealing with immigration reform issues, there are an estimated 1.1 million immigrants entering the United States, adding to the already-established 300 million people living in the US.⁷ Although immigrants and immigration have been a central, driving force behind America's melting-pot of culture, language and foundation, there is a lot of legislation right now going through congress that would make it extremely difficult to be an undocumented immigrant in the United States.

¹ en.wikipedia.org/wiki/May_Day
² en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eight_hour_day
³ www.democracynow.org/article.pl?sid=06/03/30/157219
⁴ www.govtrack.us/congress/bills.pl?tab=main&bill=h109-4437
⁵ www.democracynow.org/article.pl?sid=06/03/30/157219
⁶ www.fairus.org/site/PageServer

NEXT MONTH IS THE MOCKINGBIRD
SOCIETY'S 6TH ANNIVERSARY!

IN CELEBRATION, THE *MOCKINGBIRD TIMES* WILL
NOW BE IN FULL COLOR!



Letter From the Editor, Jim Theofelis

This issue of the *Mockingbird Times* gives the reader a tiny insight into all of the different initiatives we have going on at The Mockingbird Society. For example, in working with **Ron Knutson** from **MCS Construction**, **Liz Lasater** and **Lawrence Buchanan** from **Red Arrow Supply Chain Solutions**, and **Casey Family Programs**, we distributed over 70 sets of bunk beds to local foster and kinship families. On another busy day at Mockingbird Society we were all blessed when young **Jasmine Lee** and her beautiful family came into our office to donate the money she had raised at her birthday party.

During the month of July, youth and staff from The Mockingbird Society will travel to California to meet and learn from youth and staff at the **California Youth Connection (CYC)**. The idea is to exchange ideas regarding advocacy and youth leadership while developing a cross-state collaboration. This is very exciting and we are most appreciative to the **Stuart Foundation** for making this possible.

As was noted in the last issue of the *Mockingbird Times*, youth from our Youth LEAD program were recently awarded a

grant from the **Seattle Foundation** to develop an advocacy tool that can be distributed to other youth at the training sessions we conduct at conferences and community events. Additionally, we are talking to a number of entities regarding further replication of the Mockingbird Family Model (MFM), which continues to demonstrate its promise in keeping kids safe, ensuring siblings are connected, reducing the multiple moves that so many foster youth experience, and supporting and retaining caregivers. We continue to receive inquiries regarding replication of the MFM both from Washington State and other jurisdictions.

August marks The Mockingbird Society's sixth anniversary, and to celebrate this remarkable achievement the August issue of the *Mockingbird Times* will be the first in which all pages are in color.

In closing, I want to encourage you to join us for our annual luncheon on October 2nd at Qwest Field. We need your support as we continue to build a world class foster care system.

 Jim Theofelis
jim@mockingbirdsociety.org



Meet the Staff: Leon Henderson

Hello. My name is Leon Henderson. I'm 16 years old and I'm from Gary Indiana. I attend Evergreen High School in Burien, WA. When I have spare time I like to work out, shoot hoops, and play video games with my friends.

Being the baby of five kids and having a single mother made us homeless because my mother had a job that couldn't support all of us. So, we ended up in foster care when I turned about 9 years old. Lucky for us, my family wasn't split up far away from each other like some other youth that are in foster care. I lived with my brother and my sisters were just a few blocks away, so we tried to make the situation work for the best.

I believe the financial portion of foster care is a big problem for youth in care because it doesn't support the needs of the youth. It's a new world and a new day and it's almost impossible for the foster kids to get some Jordan's or a new outfit from their foster parents because they aren't provided with enough money to provide the foster kids with their needs AND wants. Having those "extras" is important

so that foster kids can try to blend in with "normal" kids. This also ties into trust, respect and love. Treat your foster child like your child and I promise you can change a life, because most foster kids need a lot of attention and love but most don't get the love and attention they need.

I want to be a part of The Mockingbird Society because my loving big sister got me into this and some other great programs to support my future. I feel that the Youth LEAD program will help me reach some leadership goals I have for my future. My future hope is to buy and sell property to make money. In order to make this goal happen, I will need to attend college for a couple years.

What I plan to get out of working here at The Mockingbird Society is to meet people and learn skills that help me in my future. I want to be an advocate for myself and to grow as a person and learn something new. I think that working at The Mockingbird Society will give young male foster youths the opportunity to learn something about leadership and taking the opportunities that are in front of them so that they can grow into something more.

A Very Special Letter to the Editor

Dear Mockingbird Society,

My name is Jasmine Lee. I have recently turned 8 years old. I celebrated it with a great big pool party. My mom suggested to make a donation to your society, I agreed.

We raised 328.00 dollars!!!!!!

I hope this money goes to children in need, to make them feel happier.

Sincerely,
Jasmine Lee



Dr. Wanda Hackett receives a generous donation from The Mockingbird Society's youngest donor, Jasmine Lee.

UPDATE YOUR SUBSCRIPTION

If you have recently moved, need to change the number of issues you receive, or if the address we are mailing the *Mockingbird Times* to needs to be corrected, please complete and mail the subscription request form below so we can update our records.

Become a Member of The Mockingbird Society

We welcome you to join us in making a difference in the lives of our nation's most vulnerable children, youth, and families. As a supporter, you'll receive a monthly edition of the *Mockingbird Times*. Thank you for your contribution.

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

PHONE _____ E-MAIL _____

Enclosed, please find my check made payable to **The Mockingbird Society** in the amount of (please note amount on appropriate line):

\$1,000 +	Protector	\$
\$500 - \$900	Champion	\$
\$250 - \$500	Advocate	\$
\$50 - \$250	Supporter	\$
\$25	Contributor	\$

- My employer will match my gift; enclosed is my matching gift form.
- I am interested in receiving information on the advantages of planned giving.
- Please do not include my name on published donor lists.

Please mail this completed form and your check to: The Mockingbird Society, 2100 24th Ave South, Suite 240, Seattle, WA 98144. For questions or more information, call (206) 323-KIDS (5437) or visit www.mockingbirdsociety.org.

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 \$8 and \$11 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 50,000 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 ©2007, *The Mockingbird Society*.

THANK YOU!

MJ Ashby; Lawrence Buchanan, Liz Lasater, and Red Arrow Supply Chain Solutions; Carey & Lillevik, PLLC; Casey Family Programs; Karen Cowgill; Jim and Laura Donald; Ron Knutson and MCS Construction; John Reinke; Treehouse

MEET OUR STAFF

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Kelly Hawkins



Meet the Staff: Jessica Martin

Hello. I'm Jessica. I'm 22 and I'm from Seattle. I love BMX bikes: riding, watching, fixing, and building them. Eventually, I want to either open up a BMX specific shop in Seattle or Portland, or write or photograph for a BMX magazine. But, I have not always had my head on so straight, knowing what I want to do with my life. I knew what I didn't want to do: live the life set up for me by society of graduating high school, going to college, starting a career, marriage, a family, etc. It just seemed so pre-defined to me and I wanted to live a life of my own. That's how I ended up homeless in the first place.

I had hung out with street kids before. I'd found myself there with them, so it wasn't a completely new walk of life for me. I actually liked how they didn't care what other people thought of them and how they felt free to speak their mind. Despite popular belief, many of these kids are quite intelligent even though many of them have not yet finished high school.

I got into transitional housing and got a job, but the next thing I knew I was doing and selling drugs and was once again homeless. I squatted in the woods and abandoned houses and couch hopped for a few years until I began to realize I was losing my mind from all the drug use. I had to get out of the situation I was in, so I left for California for a month and came back clean.

I stayed at a nightly youth shelter while I filled out transitional housing applica-

tions and got a job with YWCA's Working Zone as a 'zine project intern. I started up a BMX 'zine and knew I wanted to get more into writing, but had no experience getting that type of a job. I also wanted to get more involved in my community and wanted to feel as if I had a voice out there.

I've got first hand experience with issues that need to be addressed involving street youth. Through this experience, I've formed opinions and I want my opinions to matter to more than just me.

For example, I don't understand why job training programs like the Barista Training Program are being cut. It is programs like these that I believe to be most needed. They give kids the experience, references, and knowledge they need to get started in life as well as the self reassurance that they have what it takes to make it in life. I know I, personally, have definitely benefited from these types of programs. So why are they being cut back, when instead more should be created?

Currently, I have just recently graduated from the 'zine project and am over seven months clean from drugs. I will be turning 23 in just a few weeks which means that I will be aging out of many resources. I'll be okay, though, because I am living at the Elizabeth Gregory Home, a transitional housing program for women over 18 in the University District in Seattle. I am waiting to hear from Job Corps which I hope to go to soon in Astoria, OR, to study business. I'm excited to be here at The Mockingbird Society.



Meet the Staff: Leona Bill

My name is Leona. I'm 21 years old. I have yet to graduate from high school, but currently I am attending Shoreline Community College. I always try to keep myself busy leaving myself not a lot of fun time. The reason why I do this is I get afraid that I'd start allowing myself to return to my old street habits. This is what I'm trying to stay away from. So not only am I attending a summer class at Shoreline but working two jobs, one with The Mockingbird Society and the other with the White River Amphitheatre as a ticket scanner and usher.

There have been a lot of times that I find it a bit hard to believe that I've actually been attending college and progressing and being able to work at both jobs. Sometimes I can't believe that I've made it this far in accomplishing my goals. I never thought that I'd be working on getting a degree. One of the main reasons that I find it hard to believe in my accomplishments is because I grew up in and out of foster care ever since I was born and was always constantly moving from one town to the next. About 2001 is when I started living on and off the streets of Seattle. This was interesting because I was only 15, maybe 16.

I have a lot of thanks for Youth Care. The staff there have helped me and my sisters out a lot. I'm sure they've helped out numerous youth, but I know that my two sisters and I miss those days. 2001 was when I and my two sisters were placed in the Youth Care Shelter and that's where I learned about everything—the Orion Center, Westlake, and of course, the streets.

I've always been worried about my younger siblings following in my footsteps, but I see now that has done no good because I see my sisters getting their

GED's, skipping school and drinking, and their DSHS workers like shrugging their shoulders like there isn't anything wrong. There isn't much that I see the case workers doing in trying to help the younger generation and I find this really bad and sad. I worry about whether the younger generation knows what's ahead of them, and whether or not they will be well prepared.

I know that I was booted out of the foster care system when I became of age and I'm hoping to see some changes in the system that this doesn't happen the way it does now. I actually believe that I technically got dropped before I was 18 because I could never get a hold of either of my case workers and neither could the staff at the group homes where I lived. The reason I say either case worker is because I'm Native. I have a tribal caseworker and a state DSHS case worker, but that didn't make things any easier for me. It just made things even more difficult. Both case workers were passing my sisters and me back and forth. If we had a question they'd tell us we had to take it up with our other case worker. This went on for quite some time until, finally, after this was brought to both caseworkers' attention many times, they finally decided that one caseworker would only make decisions on certain things and whatever else was left for deciding the other caseworker would handle. This was OK at first, but it still didn't work. So, after a while, I started running away and this is one of the ways that I got familiar with the streets and jail.

One of the main reasons that I wanted to return to The Mockingbird Society is so I can publish stories that will help the younger generation. I'm looking forward to my time here.

SUMMER EVENTS CALENDAR

Summer Food Service Program, June 27 - August 24

www.seattle.gov/humanservices/fys/Health/SummerSackLunch.htm

Free breakfasts, lunches and snacks served at approximately 100 sites across the city.

Seafair Events 2007

For a comprehensive Seafair events calendar, visit www.seafair.com/events/community.

22nd Annual Seafair Indian Days Pow Wow, July 20-22

Daybreak Star Indian Cultural Center in Discovery Park

www.unitedindians.com, (206) 829-2221

Competitive dancing and singing, food booths, salmon bake, arts & crafts booths, and other special entertainment. For Indian and non-Indian communities.

Seattle Bon Odori, our 75th celebration, July 21-22, Free

Seattle Buddhist Church, 1427 S Main Street

www.seattlebetsuin.com, (206) 329-0800

Folk dancing, Ikebana flower arrangements, Taiko demonstrations, food, music.

White Center Jubilee Days, July 21-22, Free

17th AVE SW & Roxbury

www.jubileedays.org, (206) 947-3885

Live music, food booths, carnival, parade, street fair, and street dance.

Chinatown Seafair Parade, July 22, 7 PM, Free

Seattle Chinatown/International District

www.chinesechamber.net, (206) 949-4868

Multicultural parade featuring 100-foot Chinese Dragon and over 80 additional parade units.

IKEA Renton River Days, July 25, 27-29, Free

Liberty Park in Renton

www.rentonriverdays.org, (425) 228-5646

Parade, arts & crafts, recreation, food, and stage entertainment.

LakeFest, August 11, Noon-10 PM

TOPS Seward School, 2500 Eastlake AVE E. (Between Roanoke & Louisa)

www.lake-fest.com

Music, kickball tournament, pet parade, beer garden, food, family activities, local artists, yoga, tennis, and rock-paper-scissors tournament.

Central Area Community Festival & Parade, August 18-19, 12 PM-8 PM, Free

2323 E. Cherry Street, Seattle

www.cacf.com, (206) 999-3482

Art and cultural exhibits, games, crafts, merchandise, food, entertainment. Theme is "Valuing Our Differences" with a large educational and informative component.



A Day With Ron Sims BY SAMUEL MARTIN

"It is better to be great at many things but master of nothing."

That is the advice that King County Executive Ron

Sims gave me. I noticed after he said that how much that actually applied to me. He gave me very specific examples of how he knows enough about managing that he could hire a great manager. I looked at my life and all its aspects and that I may not always be the winner, but I never come without a fight. This is a great aspect of my growing and developing leadership. As you can see, Ron Sims has several different sub-groups with people heading a bunch of different things which will equip him with the ability to understand.

Ron Sims was born in Spokane, WA. He was the son of parents who were political activists striving for racial equality in the world. He graduated from Central Washington University. He worked on consumer protection issues in the Attorney General's office. Soon after, he was the head of the juvenile offender program in Seattle. After that he became a legislative aide in the State Senate. Then his true work began in 1985 when Sims was elected to the King County Council. He served there and developed a name for himself as a tireless legislator. In 1996, he was appointed King County Executive by then-Governor of Washington State Gary Locke. From then on, he has run for higher office twice and has been King County Executive for three consecutive terms.

This brings me to my recent job shadowing of Ron Sims. I had an entire day which also gave me an opportunity to see some of what I aspire to be. He took me under his wing and showed me his wisdom which is great because it is not often that you see an

inspirational African American politician who gives back the way Mr. Sims does. He is very passionate about what he does. He was very open and appreciative.

When I got there, everyone was welcoming and fun. The second I stepped into his office he was making jokes. Going in to meet the King County Executive could be very intimidating, but not with this man. We went off to see the new White Center Heights Park that was built in seven days. It is an amazing park that is great for children and even though it was pouring down rain, everyone was excited, even Mr. Sims. He was almost as excited as the children. After that, we went to his office and continued to do his daily duties.

Ron Sims has brought up some great legislation (some of which I agree with). I want to become a politician myself. It is good for people to pay attention to the type of legislation that he brings across. For example, he was expressing to me that he has new biodiesel buses and that King County has the cleanest buses in the nation. He has been fighting against global warming and you see it all through the community. He is also concerned with the White Center area which is the poorest area in King County. With his hard work, he is turning that area around and making it into something much better than what it was known for before. I applaud and thank him for all of his efforts.

FREE MONEY FOR FOSTER YOUTH!

YMCA Independent Living has a program that matches your savings two to one! For more information contact Kyle Castronovo 206-749-7596 or KCastronovo@seattleyymca.org.

La'Tasha**THOMAS DARDEN**

I remember when homes were,
 Made of brick and
 cement
 When service was on Sunday
 And La'Tasha would
 always sing,

As I Reminiscence over the
 times,
 La'Tasha sang at Church
 Service
 I marveled the day I moved
 away

It was many days before I had
 a home again,
 Six daylight savings and
 a leap year had passed I would
 say;
 When I made it back to service
 To hear La'Tasha sing

Oh how she could sing
 The mothers in the front
 rows would bellow
 With their handkerchiefs
 Waving Amen.
 La'Tasha had a gift to
 Sing
 Amen and Amen
 Everyone agreed
 La'Tasha
 Could Sing

Scared to love**CRYSTAL PAIGE**

I wish I could love but I am too scared to.
 I wish I could have the easy way but I'm too scared.
 I have lived life through many scary times.
 I have parents that don't love me and I am scared to
 love them.
 I have many issues.
 People hate me...Why?
 Why can't I have friends that care?
 Why does life have to be so hard?
 I have lived life the hard way and
 I think others have life going great for them.
 Why me?

**Nature's Beauty**

BY NADINE WISNIEWSKI

Your Beauty**KATIE HARMON**

Your beauty is my desire,
 the one to inspire.
 I'm always thinking of you,
 imagining, sensing you.
 As if you're right there in front of me,
 trying to give or tell me something.
 Your beauty is my desire,
 the one to inspire.
 When I look out at you,
 I get this feeling.
 The kind of feeling you get when you
 feel safe,
 even when you're just nature.
 Your beauty is my desire,
 the one to inspire.

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, to sing, to fly.

*What you leave behind is not what is engraved in stone monuments,
 but what is woven into the lives of others.*

~ Pericles

**The Mystery of Autism part 1, BY VANESSA HUTT**

Autism occurs more often than Down Syndrome, childhood cancer and Cystic Fibrosis.¹ One in 150 children are diagnosed with it,² but I think the question is, "Why is it such a mystery?" Most health professionals don't even recognize the signs of autism until the children are three to four years of age when the ideal time for intervention of this disease has passed. Some say that a child is more likely to have autism when the father of the child is older. Others say that when a mother gives birth to a child with autism, there is a 1 in 20 chance she will have another one with autism.³

Bernard Rimland, one of the pioneers of autism research, said that even the most intense psychotherapy will not help autism.⁴ Rimland had a child who was autistic which caused his interest in the study of the disease. He had many theories that actually helped get much more research started.

One of the diseases related to Autism is Einstein Syndrome. This is when there is a delayed development in speech which is combined with signs of high intelligence in other areas such as music, numeracy, and problem-solving.⁵ It is named after Albert Einstein who had this disease as well. Children who have this disease can be misdiagnosed with autism or Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). This disease currently does not have an official diagnosis status, meaning doctors can't diagnosis this specific disease as the only issue.

The primary treatment option for autism is still intense one-on-one therapy,⁶ but even that isn't a guarantee. How could this disease be around for many, many years and yet there has been no cure found yet? I find it very odd and frustrating.

Seattle was one of two places in the country that did federally funded research on an experimental treatment for autism using a hormone called secretin.⁷ Secretin is a type of hormone used for digestion that is believed to help with autism. Testing was done to see how effective the hormone would be for that type of disease, and it was shown to be ineffective for autism. It is no more effective than a placebo.⁸

Hans Asperger, an Austrian psychiatrist, called his young autistic patients his "little professors." He spent many years studying groups of people. One group, though, was particularly special. They were very clever and had amazing memories. They were often very loving and had great demeanors. They would get interested in one thing and get very involved with it for a long period of time, almost obsessing with it. Asperger spent years with these people of all ages. They all had Asperger's Syndrome.

Asperger's Syndrome is similar and related to autism. People with Asperger's Syndrome don't lack in verbal skills. They do lack in social environments and settings, and in communication and imagination; however, they are usually average or above average in intelligence. The people with the disease can usually be put in mainstream school and, with the right support

and encouragement, can succeed in higher education and good employment.⁹

These diseases are not necessarily crippling. They can be just road blocks. The children and adults who have this disorder often are very intelligent and amazing people.

The fight against autism isn't over, not by a long shot. It's taken almost a century to get this far. We may never get a cure or answers to justify what these parents and children go through daily. All I know is

that I would love to see research prosper. I want a change for these people.

This is part one of my series on autism. Next month my article will be on lawsuits, theories on what causes autism, and support groups for families.

¹ www.utahparentcenter.org/autism.html

² www.autismspeaks.org

³ autism.meetup.com/281/about

⁴ *Health Counselor Magazine*, Vol. 3 No. 6; June/July 1994

⁵ www.jewishworldreview.com/cols/sowell083001.asp

⁶ www.healthscout.com/ency/68/317/main.html#TreatmentofAutism

⁷ uicnews.org/article.asp?articleid=1600

⁸ www.medscape.com/viewarticle/404252_2

⁹ www.webmd.com/mental-health/tc/Aspergers-Syndrome-Symptoms

SAVE THE DATE

The Mockingbird Society's
First Annual Luncheon

is

Tuesday October 2, 2007.

If you are interested in attending, being a table captain or an event sponsor, or would like to volunteer, please contact Darcie at (206) 323-5437 or by e-mail at darcie@mockingbird-society.org.

We believe that building a world-class foster care system through collaboration, advocacy and innovation is possible! With the help of caring community members like you, we can make it happen.