

Mockingbird Times



Building a world class foster care system while serving our neighborhood youth

May 2004

Foster Care and Homeless Youth Speak out Across the Nation

Volume IV, Issue 4

Visit us online at www.mockingbirdsociety.org

Homeless Youth Illustrate Endurance

DARIUS REYNOLDS



Endure: To carry on through despite hardships.

Endurance: The act, quality or power of withstanding hardship or stress.

-dictionary.com

ON MARCH 30, 2004, the City of Seattle Office of Arts and Cultural Affairs held a forum called *Personal Story to Policy: Voices for Change/Addressing the Needs of the Homeless*, moderated by Lori Matsukawa and covered by King-5 News. Many community members, including young people currently and formerly homeless, were in attendance.

What impacted me the most about this forum was when PSKS (Peace for the Streets by Kids from the Streets) employee and formerly homeless person Mama Sara (CHHEW Program Director) told her story. It was so inspiring to hear from someone who went through so much and survived it all — who is now doing all she can to help the people who are in the same position she was in. Mama Sarah gives them strength. At the end of the forum anyone who had something to say on the subject

of what could be done to help homeless youth had a chance to speak. One young person talked about how it's hard to get a Washington state ID without an address. Elaine Simons, PSKS Executive Director, spoke about the importance of taking care of service providers who work with homeless youth. I thought it was great that this forum gave people a chance to get their opinions and suggestions heard because we need as many ideas as we can get to help end homelessness.

Work from the *Civic Endurance* exhibit, a collection of photographs and video that document homeless young people in Seattle, was shown at this event. Attendants were invited to see the exhibit after the forum.

The *Endurance* exhibit is a collaborative effort by artists Bradley McCallum and Jacqueline Tarry and participants and staff of PSKS. It took a lot of courage for the 13 young people who participated in the exhibit to allow strangers to videotape them spilling their guts and talking about their personal life for other strangers to see. The *Endurance* exhibit is an inspiring eye opener and a reminder of the things people have to go through to survive in this world.

The message that I got from watching those 13 people stand up for an hour and from listening to them tell their story was to never give up on yourself, no matter what obstacles get in your way; whether it is a drug addiction, homelessness, or constant ridicule from strangers.

Stand tall for what you believe in; whether it is your friends, your lifestyle, or your religion. Watching the film of the 13 young people talking about their experience was very intense. I almost started crying a couple times.

I would like to thank everyone who worked hard to put together the *Endurance* exhibit because it was beautiful, poetic, and artistic and that's what this world needs more of. As a former homeless youth, it really made me happy to see homeless young people getting together and speaking their minds, both at the forum and the exhibit. Now all people have to do is listen so they can get a better understanding of what they go through.

With more understanding, there is nothing to fear. People can help these young people help themselves or just be there for support. You never know what can happen; you could be in this position tomorrow. 

May is National Foster Care Month

According to Casey Family Programs, every year approximately 170,000 families care for over 500,000 children whose parents cannot take care of them. Foster care parents and workers deserve to be appreciated for the hard work and dedication they provide to ensure the care of so many children across the nation. To show your appreciation or to get involved as a foster parent, volunteer, mentor or employee, check out www.fostercaremonth.org.

INSIDE

| | |
|---|---|
| Letter from the Editor by Jim Theofelis | 2 |
| Positive Power Finding a Job by Bridgett Siroshon | 3 |
| Lillix Review by Bridgett Siroshon | 3 |
| Transitioning from Foster Care by Echo Speed | 3 |
| Poetry Corner Family Photo By Yasmina Damjan Ellis | 4 |
| History of Foster Care System by J.Eboh | 4 |
| Street Links Still Exists by Dennis Fisher | 4 |

Alumni Corner



RENEE PRATTE

WHEN I WAS ONLY 17, MY LIFE CHANGED COMPLETELY. In February 2001, I had a choice to make. I could run away or tell someone about what happened to me. I chose to save myself and tell. I had no idea what would happen to me, but I did know that I was never going to go back home to the unbearable abuse from my father.

I had known nothing about foster care except that it had a negative image. The general public also doesn't know much about the foster care system but they need to. There needs to be more awareness about this issue, about the kids in care and about the kids transitioning out of care.

If I hadn't been taken out of my home and placed in a safe environment, it's scary to think what circumstances I would be in right now. My whole childhood was full of verbal abuse and watching my mother being physically abused. My life was controlled and I hardly was given the opportunity to participate in social activities.

I was not sexually abused until my senior year of high school, and that's when I told the school counselor everything that had happened to me. I was placed in a teenage foster girl group home. My first foster parents, Harold and Nancy, were there for the start of my healing process. I remember that I didn't cry for a whole month and one day I just broke down and let the tears fall. Everyone in the house was supportive and helpful. I had a lot of good talks with them, and I gained a tremendous amount of patience and strength that I never had before. In foster care you have to take life day by day.

Months after I turned 18, I moved to my second foster home. My foster parents Sue and Steve helped me get a

car, a driver's license, and full-time employment. I also took my first college class while living there. I was able to experience a normal family setting that was very healthy for me. Sue and Steve helped me get through the trial I faced against my biological parents.

I testified at the trial with my parents in the room. It was probably one of the hardest things I had ever done. However, the jury found my father not guilty. I found out afterwards that even though the jury had believed me, it could not be proven beyond a reasonable doubt. Shortly after the trial, my parents tried to run me down while I was in my car. I had no choice but to get restraining orders against both of them. The restraining orders will be in effect until May 2005.

I have been in therapy for almost three years now; trying to get over everything that has happened to me. Two months after my 19th birthday, I transferred to (a new school). I have been here since June 2002 going to school year-round. I will have my Associate of Arts degree in May. I also work at Hagerty Insurance full-time. I am Vice President of the Let Our Voices Echo foster youth board, a group of youth who are part of the Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative, which advocates for foster youth transitioning out of the system.

In the fall of 2002, the Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative hired Lake Snell Perry & Associates (LSPA) to conduct a study exploring public knowledge of and about perceptions about the challenges facing young people leaving foster care. This study had two components: a nationwide telephone survey and five focus groups. This study shows little awareness — but a significant level of concern

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

Letter From the Editor

MAY IS NATIONAL FOSTER CARE MONTH and I encourage you to find some way to celebrate and honor the thousands of good folks who work tirelessly on behalf of the children and adolescents involved in foster/kinship care. Mockingbird's vision of "building a world class foster care system" demands that we not only change what is not working but that we acknowledge and support what is working well for kids.

Send a card, email or voice mail thanking a foster parent for their commitment and work, send a donation or volunteer at an organization that serves kids in foster care or find some other creative way to "take good care of the folks who take good care of kids."

Foster Care Alumni in Active Duty: Mockingbird is looking for individuals who were in foster/kinship care and are currently serving in the U.S. military. If you have any ideas on active duty personnel who would want to receive correspondence from a pen pal, including copies of the *Mockingbird Times* please let us know their name and contact information.

Youth Leadership at Mockingbird: I want to thank **Liz Gelinas** and **Joshua Kaplan-Lyman** for their great work on behalf of The Mockingbird Society. Liz and Josh are both seniors at Franklin High School in Seattle. To fulfill their graduation requirements Liz and Josh chose The Mockingbird Society for their Senior Project. The

focus of their project was a fundraiser on behalf of Mockingbird, which included organizing, coordinating, procuring and all of the innumerable tasks involved in orchestrating a major event. Nearly 200 folks attended and were treated to scrumptious desserts, beautiful music and great presentations from guest speakers. Washington state **Representative Eric Pettigrew** joined *Mockingbird Times* reporter **Jennifer Eboh** in sharing with the audience the hope and promise within The Mockingbird Society.

Nearly \$5,000 was collected, with an especially generous contribution made by the **Ken and Marleen Alhadeff Foundation**.

I want to express my appreciation to Liz and Josh for recognizing the work of The Mockingbird Society and sharing their energy and talents on our behalf. I also want to thank all of you who attended the event as well as the many family, friends and business owners who supported Liz and Josh and made the event so successful.



Jim Theofelis

jim@mockingbirdsociety.org

A Special Thank you to our April Donors

Ken Alhadeff, Roger and Christine Armstrong, Janis Avery, Linda Baldwin, Jonathan and Rose Betz-Zall, Marlon Buchanan, Laura and Leonard Bull, Larry Crim, Peter and Linda Dahl, Patricia Dawson, Frederick and Joserita Dean, Davidson Dodd, Valerie Douglas, Shawn and Elizabeth Ungar Mintek, Gary and Ann Snell McNeil, Jean Gorecki, Marjorie Hillson and Jon Kirch, Molly Thompson and Joseph Casalini, Joseph and Jill Morrison McKinstry, Leonard and Beth Kashner, Aleta Kennedy, Therese Kumasaka, Ann Lennartz, Beth Light, B. Lippit and Liz Van Volkenburgh, Patrice Lindquist, Ruth Maxwell, Marylou Metzger, Richard and Sandra Monroe, Betsy and Robert Murray, Douglas and Nancy Nelp Steers, John and Lee Neff, Norman Hollowell and Martha Kaplan Hollowell, William Lavelle and Patrice Claire Lavelle, Raleigh Bowden and Peter Morgan, Elizabeth Upton and Rayburn Lewis, Denise Redinger, Leslie and Chris Richardson, Belinda Butler-Bell and Samuel Bell, Victoria Ries and Samuel Saracino, David True and Sarah Hufbauer, Gloria Sailer, Alan Rothblatt and Sima Kahn, James and Jane Skrivan, Doug and Joan Stewart, Lisa Taylor, Harry Thomas, Cappy Thompson, Virginia Thompson, Charles Williams, Kathryn Wright, and Ann and Kenneth Zeman.

ALUMNI CORNER CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

– about the challenges facing young people transitioning from foster care to adulthood.

The foster care system and the issues facing its alumni are not top-of-mind issues for most Americans. A two-thirds majority say they know little or nothing about the system. Most people also agree that 18 is too young for anyone to be on their own. Yet the foster care system cuts us loose at 19, sometimes 18. Americans' feelings about the importance of assisting young people leaving foster care are captured well by this quote from a focus group participant:

Once the child reaches 18 he is grown physically but a lot of the time they are mentally unprepared because of the lack of experience of being independent and being a productive member of society. Instead of just throwing them out there, they need a couple of more years in some type of support system. The system may not be as intensive but something to give them a step up. Everyone will benefit, not only the child but also the community will benefit.

It seems that the media, mainly the news media, is where most people get their knowledge about foster care. Six in ten Americans (62%) say they have learned a lot or some of what they know from the news.

Our voices must be heard and people must listen. My story is just like thousands of others. I have already spoken at conferences and public events about my life experiences. I have also been published twice regarding my life.

The public must know what really goes on in the homes of so many children, and they must realize how desperately we need the system to be more productive. Every day in the newspaper there is an ad about needing more foster homes.

Somewhere out there is a child that needs to be saved. I have met several people who never were, and because of that, they didn't turn out okay. We have to stop the cycle of abuse and neglect. 

Meet Our Staff

Executive Director
Jim Theofelis

MFFCP Coordinator
Shannon Barello

Administrative Assistant
Anna Trombley

Staff Reporters
Dennis Fisher, Courtney Konietzko, Darius Reynolds, Bridgett Siroshton

Satellite Reporters
Shay Deney, J.Eboh, Rico Evans, Ashley Grant, Anthony Guess, Jamica Henderson, Princess Hollins, Echo Speed

Contributing Writers
Renee Pratte, Yasmina Damjan Ellis

Volunteers
Lori Ammons, Liz Gelinas, Josh Kaplan-Lyman

Thank-You's:
Seattle Post Intelligencer, Marianne Kogon and Marge Mueller of Grey Mouse Graphics.

The Mockingbird Times
2100 24th Ave South, Suite 350
Seattle, WA 98144
(206) 323-KIDS (5437); Fax (206) 323-1003

ABOUT US: The Mockingbird Society is a private non-profit organization dedicated to building a world class foster care system and improving the other systems that serve children and adolescents in foster care. 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 Mockingbird Society are paid between \$7.50 and \$8.50 an hour. Additionally, youth from across the country submit articles, art work, poetry and are compensated up to \$25 per published piece. The *Mockingbird Times* has a monthly circulation of 28,000 copies being distributed across Washington and the U.S.A. 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. All donations to The Mockingbird Society are tax-deductible and greatly appreciated. No part of the *Mockingbird Times* may be reproduced without the written permission of The Mockingbird Society. All contents copyright 2004 The Mockingbird Society.

A Mockingbird Inside Your Mailbox:

Make a difference in the lives of our most vulnerable youth.

I want to support The Mockingbird Society

All donations are tax deductible and all donors receive the *Mockingbird Times*. Enclosed, please find my check made payable to Mockingbird Society in the amount of: \$

Donor Information

- # of copies per month: Annual Price:
- 50-120 \$200
- 15-45 \$150
- 5-10 \$100
- 1 \$50

- Please bill me for the amount indicated above.
- My employer will match my gift; enclosed is my matching gift form.

Enclosed is my additional gift of: \$ _____

- I am interested in receiving information on the advantages of planned giving.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

Day Phone _____ Evening Phone _____

Yes, you may use my name on published donor lists.

**Please fill out and mail this form with a check or money order payable to:
The Mockingbird Society, 2100 24th Ave South, Seattle WA 98144**



Positive Power: Finding a Job

BRIDGETT SIROSHTON



WHEN LOOKING FOR A NEW JOB you may say to yourself, why is this so hard? Why can I never get a hold of the managers to see where I'm at on the list? When looking for a job you might get exhausted, frustrated and even depressed, but you have to think positively or you will end up nowhere. If you have hope, you will get by. If you apply everywhere, you're bound to get a job somewhere!

Here is my story and what I learned in my own job search. I know I might sound picky but I originally only wanted to work at certain places like record stores. I had to expand my search to include Hot-Topic and places like Red Light and Metro (Seattle clothing stores) because I found out that all the places I called on my list of record shops weren't hiring. I said to myself, "Bridgett where else do you want to work?"

This last week I went into a couple of stores and asked to speak to their manager. Only one place said they were still hiring, and that was Metro on Capitol Hill (Seattle).

The manager said that she put my resume aside and that she would be calling for interviews next week. Hopefully I get called for the interview, because I think I would be a great employee. I have good attendance and I'm a team player.

Here is what I learned on my job search: when turning in your resume or application, ask to speak to the manager on duty. They will know if the company is hiring or not, and you can give a good impression. First impressions are important. Wear nice clothes to set that impression, keep your head up and be polite. If they say they are not hiring, still fill out an application so they can have it on file, and call back and tell them that you would make a great employee.

You have to set your sights high and have standards if you want to get a job you like, but expand your search if needed. Just remember, fill out applications everywhere you want to work and a few where you could at least see yourself working. Call back to see if they had time to look over your resume or application. And always ask to speak to the hiring manager. Make a good impression, and good luck!



Surviving the System

ECHO SPEED



WHEN I TURNED 18, I WAS FINALLY FREED FROM THE SYSTEM. I owned my life again. Things were going great now that I was home again with my family and friends, plus my workers had hooked up my case so I wouldn't even have to attend court for my release out of the Kansas State Care system. I didn't care that I wasn't finished with school, and that I had in reality very few useful skills in being independent, and neither did anybody else care for that matter.

I was just thankful to be out of a system that had caused a great deal of pain and heartache for me through years of excessive carelessness and avoidance, and although I could've chosen to remain in their clutches longer, I was much too sick and disgusted with THOSE people to, quite frankly, give a damn.

Now only 8 months later, I have two jobs to keep up with and I'm struggling to find another place to live. Although this should be my senior year, I'm not attending school. I don't even have a Drivers License yet because it would've been impossible for me to get while I was bouncing around back and forth between different group and foster homes. My situation is currently stable, but could get really bad from this point if I don't get off my "arsch" and start doing something that's more beneficial to my future. It's going

to be hard work, but never will I turn back to a system that I feel crippled me for any help at all.

However, I know that I missed out on a lot while I held on in the system. There were plenty of opportunities I missed out on that would've helped my independent skills or maybe even my education. The one Independent Living Program my workers allowed me to try only lasted a few months because I got kicked out. And even though I rarely stayed in one school long enough to earn much credit, I should have definitely tried a lot harder to get my workers to let me take my GED or attend some sort of alternative schooling.



I now realize that the whole time I was feeling sorry for myself I should've been milking the system for all they were worth. I shouldn't have walked away empty handed...no one should.

In a way, leaving the system was the best thing I could've done for myself, but at the same time the worst. I enjoy life with a passion and look forward to being free enough to make good and bad decisions. But then again, no matter how miserable I'd be, I probably would be in school right now if I had chosen to stay in the system after I turned 18. I'm happier now than I've been in years, but in the long run that might not be true.

In next month's article, I plan on exploring what options youth in state care have before and after they turn 18. There were a lot of options I didn't even learn about until it was too late, and since knowledge is power, maybe a healthy dose of information will motivate some of you out there.

Lillix is a Super-Group!

BRIDGETT SIROSHTON

LILLIX IS A NEW ALL-GIRL BAND (i.e. the anti-Spice Girls) on the scene. How often does that come around? Lillix is from Cranbrook, British Columbia and started playing around with instruments at an early age. Like most new bands coming out of the pop-punk scene, Lillix members all take turns singing (except the drummer).

With their first single "Tomorrow", from their album *Falling Uphill*, they kick a**, singing, "Tomorrow's just another day another way to spend my day, all by myself. Staring at the TV screen flipping through my magazine, everything is unclear...and I wake up, put on my make-up, pick up the phone nobody's home...stand outside the crowd and scream that I'll be okay." I like this song because it's uplifting and motivating. Lillix has also worked with great producers like Linda Perry (who has pumped out hit after hit, working with artists like Pink and Christina Aguilera), The Matrix (a group of three producers who busted out the hit "Complicated" for Avril Lavigne), Philip Steir and Glen Ballard (both Steir and Ballard worked with No Doubt).

When Lillix sings, it's pure magic, and a great pop song usually is born. In "It's About Time," the single that first won Lillix recognition, they sing "think I sound crazy/ maybe whatever, what's it all about? It's about life, it's about fun, it's over before it's begun, and it's about time that I make up my mind!" Lillix is very lucky to have worked with famous producers like Perry and The Matrix—it's so rare for an unknown band to work with well-known producers!



Photo Courtesy of lillix.com

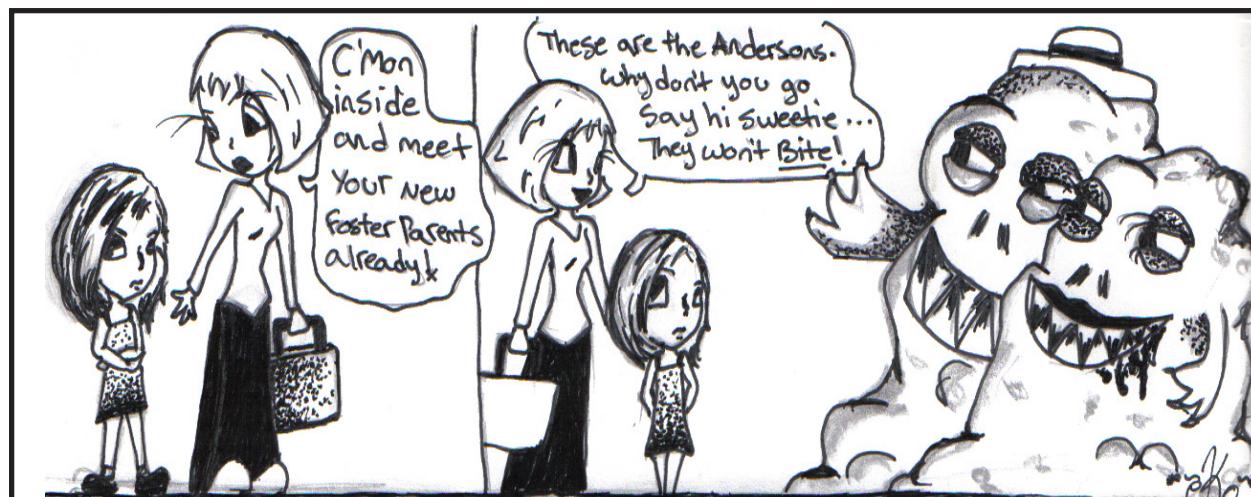
My favorite song on *Falling Uphill* is called "Dirty Sunshine." It's kind of a heavy rock sound with strumming clashing guitars. They sing, "What's that breeze upon my face, how did you invade my space, you hit me it all turns to sunshine, dirty sunshine, you walk in, it all turns to sunshine, dirty sunshine." It's a really good song and the melody has got to be the best on the entire album, because it just flows—it's not forced. These girls are very talented, and Madonna herself signed them personally to her label, Maverick Records.

Lillix has many influences, ranging from Radiohead and the Beatles to Weezer. This influence shows with every song. The song "24/7" was produced by the genius Glen Ballard. My favorite part in the song is when they sing "but right now 24/7 I wait 24/7...is there someone here, but I feel it in the air, don't know the feeling so please give me a sign, I know you don't care...just get out of my mind". Lillix has only made one album but they have been around for a long time. They are a success story, and I'm sure they will be around for the long haul if they can keep together. Buy this album if you love pop-punk, because Lillix is a great band.

Falling Uphill



Lillix



History of Foster Care

J. EBOH



"[America's Foster Care system is a] quagmire that is spawning a generation of forgotten and forsaken children. Thousands are being neglected, abused, even murdered under what is ostensibly government protection." - *TIME magazine, November 13, 2000.*

MAY IS NATIONAL FOSTER CARE MONTH. The foster care system has existed in the United States in both structured and unstructured forms for over a century. This system affects the lives of over half a million children and families daily. The intention of today's foster care system is to provide children with a safe home on a temporary basis until family reconciliation or permanent care can be established.

In the past, the safety of our children has not always been seen as a societal priority. Children with no one to take care of them were often exploited for labor, sold into indentured servitude, beaten and abused because the children were considered property. As time went on, new methods were found to deal with children who were sometimes viewed as being "depraved" or "vicious". Children were often sent to live in dehumanizing conditions in orphanages. Native children, believed to be savages, were forcefully taken from their families and placed in institutional boarding schools. Once there they were often abused—physically, sexually, spiritually and emotionally. The goal of these schools was to force these children to assimilate into the dominant American culture.

The Nineteenth Century brought about some positive changes for youth. After the child abuse case of Mary Allen Wilson, a young girl in New York who was abused by her foster mother, the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children was founded. Around the same time, foster homes started to be formally established for children.

The Twentieth Century brought about many changes, particularly in the form of legislation for foster youth. In 1912, under the Roosevelt Administration, the U.S. Children's Bureau was created. The bureau's responsibilities included topics pertaining to the welfare of children; which included legislation, oversight of children's institutions and statistics on birth rates and infant mortality.

In 1959, the Child Welfare League of America conducted a national study on foster care and found an uneven and discriminatory method of social service delivery. This report found that children were being removed from their homes without reason, and that there were more children of color and children from low income backgrounds in the system. The study also established that children were placed in foster care settings that were unstable and undesirable. Biological parents were largely ignored, and few attempts at reunification occurred, while adoption was typically reserved for white children.

In 1974, The Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act provided model legislation for states to pass mandatory child-abuse-reporting laws and set up procedures for investigating abuse and neglect reports. In 1993, the Family Preservation and Support Initiative was passed in order to fund state family preservation and support programs. In 1997, The

Adoption and Safe Families Act was passed. This act required social workers to make a reasonable effort to reunite children with their biological parents within a year. Social workers were also required to start developing permanency plans while attempting to reunite children with their parents. For children under the age of three, the family reunification timeline was lowered to six months.

The foster care system has seen many changes over the years. Many individuals may see this month as a time to reflect on the history of foster care, their own experiences with the system and changes that may be made in the future. 

Resources for data: Pecora, P.J., Whittaker, J.K., Maluccio, A.N., BARTH, R.P.(2000) The Child Welfare Challenge: Policy, Practice and Research. New York: Aldine De Gruyter; WA State Legislature website, Revised Code of Washington from www.leg.wa.gov/rcw/index.htm; Kremkau, K. (2002) Historical Perspective (Instructor Presentation for SW 536 YD) A History of Social Services (2002) from www.wa.gov/dshs; Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Program fro <http://www.cole.state.la.us/jjdp.htm>.

For J. Eboh's detailed timeline of the foster care system, visit our website online at www.mockingbirdsociety.org!

JOB OPPORTUNITY!

The King County Kinship Care Gathering Planning Committee is looking for 8 young people to help plan an event for Kinship Care families. This is a paid position where you could earn up to \$100/month from May to September.

To apply you must:

- Be between the ages of 12 and 18.
- Have experience living in a kinship care arrangement (being raised by a relative other than a parent).
- Live in King County, WA.

Check out the full job description at www.mockingbirdsociety.org, or call Anna at 206-323-5437 x2132

Street Links Still Exists

DENNIS FISHER



ON MARCH 12, THE STREETLINKS VAN MADE ITS LAST RUN, "providing some of Seattle's estimated 1,000 homeless youth with food, hygiene supplies, warm clothes and blankets, friendly smiles and listening ears. (www.seattlechildrenshome.org - 2001)" Seattle Children's Home (SCH), the operator of the StreetLinks and SafeLinks vans, gave them to YouthCare (a non-profit agency serving homeless youth) as a part of a partnership, with YouthCare taking on the outreach program, and SCH hiring a mental health professional to be part of the outreach team "to expedite mental health assessments and referrals from the street. (www.seattlechildrenshome.org)" SCH chose to form this partnership with YouthCare because SCH decided that its focus should be on mental health.

Previously, YouthCare had one van that served the University District, Capitol Hill, Aurora Avenue, and downtown Seattle. The newly transferred StreetLinks van will operate at least at the level of the current YouthCare outreach van, and will allow for better coverage of the existing areas. One significant difference between the services of StreetLinks and YouthCare outreach is that, although YouthCare gives out blankets and sandwiches just as StreetLinks did, they do not give out hot food (StreetLinks provided hot tomato soup and hot chocolate). Instead, they provide transport to other places that serve hot food—places which usually close well before StreetLinks' 1AM stopping time.

"The integration of the street outreach teams will increase services for youth served by both programs to transition them from street life," said Debra Boyer, Ph.D. of YouthCare. "More youth will be provided comprehensive services and a full continuum of care to assist them in leaving the street including basic needs, meals at YouthCare's Orion Center, transportation to medical services, stable housing and improved access to mental health services." (www.seattlechildrenshome.org)

As of an interview in late March with Debra Boyer, Associate Director at YouthCare, YouthCare was still exploring possible ways to utilize the SafeLinks van.

It's sad to know that such a wonderful program has been cut, but it is comforting to know that some of the resources from it have gone to good use. 

Poetry Corner

Family Photo
YASMINA DAMJAN ELLIS

I remember the afternoon
My mother put me up for adoption-
I was 13,
maybe 12,
I don't remember for certain.
She said:
"Let's get in the car-
Let's drive real far..."
"Let's go get ice cream"
and also, "Isn't it a lovely day?"
How strange.
I looked toward my father,
who was not looking at me.
He would not offer an answer.
In the car, we did drive far.
The day was lovely, the wind was in my hair.
We turned into the police station,
there was no ice cream there.
She turned to me then,
Eyes streaming,
Cries filled with knives-
"You ungrateful thing!
You go live with someone else now."
Someone else? There was no one else.
There were only the overstuffed chairs
in the station's waiting room.
And the yellow line
Painted on the curb.

Mockingbird Fundraiser



Mockingbird Staff Jim Theofelis, J. Eboh with Representative Pettigrew and Liz Gelinas. Photo by MBT Staff

A Special Thanks to JoshKaplan-Lyman, Liz Gelinas, Rep. Pettigrew and the following who made this spectacular event possible: Joan Stewart, Molly Thompson, Bothways Cafe, Le Fournil French Bakery, Rusty Pelican Cafe, North Hill Bakery, Cafe Solstice, Cafe Flora, Simply Desserts, Tuttabella.