

Mockingbird Times

FOSTER CARE AND HOMELESS YOUTH SPEAK OUT ACROSS THE NATION



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SPOKANE BBQ SHOWS THE POWER OF THE MOCKINGBIRD YOUTH NETWORK

BY KRISTINA THOMASON AND DAVID BUCK

The Mockingbird Youth Network is growing and its voice is getting louder. And as the Mockingbird chapters become stronger, chances will arise for the chapters to reach legislators and members of the community who need to hear what it is the youth of the Mockingbird Network have to say. On August 10th, Tiffany Washington, Fred Kingston, Jon Brumbach and David Buck from Mockingbird Society headquarters visited our Spokane Chapter for a BBQ that looked like any other but would ultimately become

a powerful statement about collaboration. In the spirit of this collaboration, this article is co-authored by David Buck and Kristina Thomason, our Spokane Chapter Leader.

David: Upon arriving in Spokane, we were treated to a tour of our Spokane Chapter's host agency, Volunteers of America, which hosts a variety of different organizations including Crosswalk, a homeless shelter for youth under the age of 18. Sarah Mahaffy, Resource Specialist for our Spokane Chapter, along with Kristina were great tour guides as we were able to meet and talk with employees of many organizations doing inspiring work.

Kristina: Hours later the BBQ began with



The Mockingbird Youth Network Chapter with Representatives Kevin Parker and Andy Billig, and Senate Majority Leader Lisa Brown.

around 20 chapter members at Manito Park. And while the BBQ seemed like just a normal BBQ, it turned into something more as youth in the chapter made lasting impressions on legislators and reinforced the mission of *The Mockingbird Society* and the power of the Mockingbird Youth Network. This BBQ with Spokane Legislators was very important to the Spokane region because it was a chance to help legislators, as Jim Theofelis would say, "put a face on the issue." It was a chance for youth to talk to Legislators about serious issues in a laid back environment. I heard amazing conversations as I walked around.

David: Legislators on hand included: Representative Andy Billig, and Senate Majority

Leader Lisa Brown, from the 3rd Legislative District; and Representative Kevin Parker, along with staff from Senator Michael Baumgartner's & Representative John Ahern's offices, from the 6th Legislative District. Every youth at the BBQ who had something to say was heard willingly by legislators, who had a rare chance to actually sit down and get to know youth who are affected by the foster care system. I witnessed youth speaking with determination and knowledge.

Kristina: David and I took advantage of the opportunity to sit down with the legislators and ask them questions. All of the Legislators had heard about the Mockingbird Youth Network and really enjoyed the opportunity to meet with youth face to face in a relaxed environment. Representative Parker has been a follower of the Mockingbird Youth Network for three years and said, "When people ask me about MBS I tell them it's full of inspirational stories." Later Representative Billig said, "We need advocates... like Mockingbird and foster children to educate us legislators about how to get to that goal that we are all striving for." The Mockingbird Youth Network's voice is being heard and we

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A Struggle for Educational Perseverance

BY DEONATE CRUZ



As a student at Highline Community College, I have many classmates who, like me, have fought through adversity to pursue their education. Many of these youth come from backgrounds involving poverty, gang violence, divorce, and drug & alcohol abuse. What is even more interesting is that while this usually leads to involvement in the criminal justice system and economic instability, these hardships have given way to a change within these individuals; an epiphany if you will. These individuals now have ambition and motivation to be financially secure by pursuing a post-secondary education.

Too often, the life of a foster youth can be traumatic, stressful, and filled with countless struggles in and out of the system. For example, according to On the Move, a youth development organization, youth in foster care are 44 percent less likely to graduate from high school. After aging out, 40 to 50 percent never complete high school and less than half of former foster youth are employed four years after leaving foster care.

During my life in the foster care system, I have forged bonds with individuals that are greater to me than blood. I have seen many

of my family members incarcerated for gang violence, drugs, theft, and other crimes, just to make a little extra money to survive. More often than not, the money supported their kids, or younger family members, so they can eat and survive. Those who have experienced pov-

"I have already been poor, and experienced poverty; I can't anymore. My ambition won't let me no matter what. Plus the actions and experiences of my past will ensure that I stay legitimate and do more than survive."

I WILL THRIVE! THERE IS NO OTHER OPTION FOR ME! THIS IS MY ONLY ROUTE!!

~ Deonate Cruz

erty in the ghettos know that it's "everyone for themselves," which makes it a rare sight to see an older individual care enough to provide for those who cannot provide for themselves. But seeing this kindness made seeing members of my family incarcerated or killed for trying to "survive" even more traumatic.

These traumatic events eventually opened my eyes, and at the age of 13, I made a conscious decision that I didn't want to fall victim to the methods of survival that I had been brought up

on. I wanted to do it legitimately. I wanted to be someone who can have a career that I enjoy and be financially stable, not for myself, but for the younger individuals within my life who have always looked up to me. I wanted to set an example for them, to show them that they can overcome adversity, just like I have. I wanted to be able to provide them with some sort of financial support because every bit helps.

It has definitely been quite a struggle to go from nothing to the top of my game. Every day I am reminded of my past and what could have been. But I know that I must keep moving forward on the legitimate path, for everyone else, and for those who said I couldn't and I wouldn't. While I still don't know exactly what I want to be, my ambition will keep me going.

The moral of my story is that many foster youth believe, once they age out of care, things will fall into place. The truth is nothing is ever that easy. I advise all youth in care to at least earn a high school diploma, and seriously consider a post-secondary education.

Letter From the Editor BY JIM THEOFELIS



Dear Friends,

September marks the beginning of another school year. And, as we enter the fall season, I am reminded of the obstacles too many youth in foster care face when pursuing an education. Success in school can be tough when a child or youth experiences multiple placements, an unsafe environment, or finds themselves street-dependent. The articles in this issue of The Mockingbird Times highlight some of these experiences, as well as resources to help youth move forward in their lives.

Over the past decade, The Mockingbird Society has consistently advocated for youth under and over the age of 18. We ask policy-makers to see youth voice as fundamental to ensuring a child welfare system that works. We ask the community to see these kids as their own, and provide them with the support, care and resources necessary not only to survive, but to thrive.

On Thursday, October 20th, I'd like to invite you to join us for our 10th Anniversary Benefit Luncheon. We are celebrating A Decade of Advocacy - A Lifetime of Change. I promise hearing their stories will inspire you, fill you with hope, and underscore the importance of having an organization such as The Mockingbird Society that is laser focused and mission driven toward meaningful system improvement and reform. With your ongoing support we will be able to continue as a lead advocate for foster care, built on youth-inspired solutions, powerful coalitions, and public support for every child's right to a safe home and a bright future.

We look forward to seeing you on October 20th at the Seattle Sheraton!

Thank you for your unwavering support, and best wishes to you and your families

Jim Theofelis
jim@mockingbirdsociety.org



Register online for our 10th Anniversary Luncheon
www.mockingbirdsociety.org

MEET OUR STAFF

Executive Director Jim Theofelis; **Deputy Director** Ros Ghan; **Youth Programs Director** Tiffany Washington; **Public Policy & Communications Director** Rose Berg; **Public Policy & Communications Coordinator** Jon Brumbach; **Development Coordinator** Kylie Palzer; **Development Director** Brian Lawrence; **Finance Director** Beth Vance; **Executive Assistant** Lauren Frederick; **Mockingbird Network Coordinator** Fredrick Kingston; **Administrative Coordinator** Aine Cowan-Kuist; **Evaluations and Database Coordinator** David Forte; **HR/Operations Manager** Diana Clark; **Mockingbird Network Program Assistant** Skeie Berg; **Resource Specialists** Jerry Bobo, Sarah Mahaffy, Graham Parrington, Georgina Ramirez, Tammy Soderberg, Samantha Valle; **Senior Network Representatives** David Buck; Diamonique Walker; **Network Representatives** Amanda Bevington, Asha Boucree; Brenda Ortega, Deonate Cruz; **Contributing Writers & Artists** Chris Bauer, Brandy Baxley, Rebecca Sara Bersek, Nickole Criteser, Sam Martin, Garrett Nadeau, Crystal Stacey, Janessa Thomas, Kristina Thomason; **Design & Layout** Highdive.com

Providing College Support for Alumni of Care

BY BRENDA CHÉRIE ORTEGA



Many people will tell you, go to college if not for the education, than at least for the experience. They don't tell you that that experience entails being broke, accumulating ever-growing debts and insurmountable stress. If you factor in being in the foster care system, college might seem impossible. Some have noticed the additional struggle that alumni of foster care have gone through and have founded organizations that can help. The College Success Foundation (CSF) and the College Success Program (CSP) are two prime examples.

The CSF is a program whose mission is: "To provide scholarships and mentoring to low income, high potential youth." Bob Craves and Ann Ramsay-Jenkins founded CSF in 2000. While they offer services geared toward all youth, what they offer for current and former foster youth are The Make Happen Program and several scholarships to college. The Make it Happen Program is for foster youth who are currently in their junior or senior year of high school. Participants are able to "live" the full college experience. They stay in dorm rooms, shadow classes, learn the steps it takes to get into college, find what money is available, and to hear from speakers about college, some who are alumni of care.

The scholarships that CSF offers are the Governors Scholarship, as well as being a supporter of the Passport to College Promise scholarship. The Governors Scholarship is available for current seniors in high school, with a minimum GPA (grade point average) of 2.0. This scholarship is \$2,000 to \$4,000 a year for up to five

years, towards earning a Bachelor's Degree. The Passport to College Promise is a scholarship that assists those who will be enrolled in college at least half time, with living expenses and tuition. In addition to the financial support, participants will also receive support in finding employment, housing, and financial and academic guidance counseling. For complete details/scholarship requirements, visit www.collegesuccessfoundation.org.

The mission of the College Success Program at Seattle Central Community College is: "To primarily help make the transition into college and complete the program they are trying to adhere". Brigid McDevitt, Mildred Ollee and Joan Ray founded this program in 2007 with initial funding granted by Casey Family Programs. The services CSP offers include advocating for students within the campus, referrals to other programs such as, Casey Family Programs and Treehouse, and help with housing. Every year in the fall, they have an orientation for new and returning participants. Every other week there is Drop-In Day in the afternoon. Students can come in and talk to other students like themselves, get help with their studies, or whatever they want to do while enjoying pizza and soda. During the weeks in between, they have pro-

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The Role of Children & Youth in Labor Day

BY DIAMONIQUE WALKER



When we think of Labor Day, which falls on the first Monday in September, we usually think of having a BBQ and just having a good time with people that we love. I really didn't know much

about the origins of the holiday before writing this article. Taking a closer look at the history and doing some research, I learned that Labor Day is meant to be more than just a little fun in the sun. Labor Day is a holiday to honor and remember the Labor Movement that this country went through so that labor workers would get treated fairly and humanely. This movement ensured fair pay, reasonable working hours and conditions, and even more importantly, stopped child labor to protect the wellbeing of children.

Since this is such a broad topic, I chose to research more specifically about child labor because of its link to the child welfare system. Before this movement, children that were a part of the industrial revolution worked long hours in terribly unsafe conditions such as factories and mines. They were very convenient because of their small size which made it really easy to fit into small spaces that average sized adults couldn't fit in. It's hard to believe that young children were prioritized to do some potentially life risking jobs, while their safety and education wasn't even considered. Children were often favored because they could be

easily managed, while being paid less than adults, and probably wouldn't go on strike.

Children that were a part of the rise of the industrial revolution were given very little pay, while they were almost always over-worked (12-18 hours per day), barely making a dollar per day. Many children were killed in the hazardous environments that they worked in due to breathing in toxins and scrambling under and around heavy and dangerous machinery.

Because of the labor movement in the United States, which began in the mid-19th century, children are not only safe from harsh work environments, but they are forbidden to work in most places under the age of sixteen now. Federal law says that youth under ages fourteen and fifteen may not be employed in any dangerous occupations such as manufacturing, mining, or processing. Others laws require that youth working not work more than 3 hours a day during the school week unless they are allowed breaks. If it had not been for the Labor Movement children could still be forced to work long hours in unsafe places. Now when you think of Labor Day, you can still have all of your fun and BBQ, but take a moment to think about how far our country has come and why the holiday is truly important.

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.

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.

Everett Mayor's Youth Achievement Award BY JANELLE BRAXTON

Growing up as a foster child, I lost many relationships that could have provided stability in my life. I noticed quickly that a few foster children gave all of youth in foster care a bad label. Once we become foster kids many people give us a label that defines us without first hearing our own story. Foster kids are being looked down upon as unsuccessful, unstable, undependable, and unpredictable because of their past. Many people believe that foster kids will turn out just like their parents. I am glad to say different and to show it.

This year, I was given the Everett Mayor's Youth Achievement Award. This award emphasizes the young people in the City of Everett, who distinguish themselves in a number of ways, including: community service, arts, athletics, entertainment, academics, politics, citizenship and/or overcoming obstacles to accomplish their goals.

I was nominated by my English teacher

from Mariner High School, Mr. Brouillard. He told me that I was an outstanding student, friend, and sister; he's seen what I've gone through and believed that I should be recognized. I didn't hear about the award until I was called down to the college and career center. I was thoroughly surprised and really excited. I did a lot this year at Mariner and in the Everett community. In the community, I dedicated my Mondays after school to clean a little apartment for a senior citizen at Bethany's Building, I attended monthly meetings for The Mockingbird Society and discovered a passion to make a change and then decided to become Chapter Leader while also attending the Passion to Action meetings, sharing my story of growing up in the foster care system to potential foster parents when I could. At school, I was a successful President of two clubs at Mariner: ASL (American Sign Language) and Orchestra, I was involved in sports like Cross Country, I dedicated my time in school to do M&M connections at Mariner High School

(M&M is a program to assist and a mentor for the incoming freshmen), tutoring peers in English and math. All while handling my biological & foster families, friends, boyfriends, and Type 1 Diabetes. This award was bestowed to me because I am a foster child that has stood outside of the realm of being characterized as a menace, a failure. I've come to realize that school is of utmost importance and that it's the only key to my ideal future.

We are foster kids, we are human beings, and we are the children of tomorrow. We are no different from other children, we breathe what everyone else breathes, and we have the same needs to eat, sleep and strive like anyone else. Don't let anyone tell you different, because in the end we still need each other to raise ourselves to success. If I can win an award for being who I am and being a foster child, there are no limits to what you as an individual can do for yourself and for those around you!

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have a very important role in changing the system. It was amazing to see how much these "people in command" really do care. They showed us that it's not just a job to them. They showed concern for the foster care system. We were not just another face or another problem. We became friends with these legislators, friends that are willing to help us make change.

After dinner, the entire Chapter took pictures with legislators later said their goodbyes knowing that connections had been created and reinforced. Collaboration plays a key role in our strategy to create change and the BBQ in Spokane showed us all the potential the Mockingbird Youth Network has to offer.

Pay it Forward: Baby & Co. Steps Up to Help Youth in Need by Diamonique Walker



From left: Deonate Cruz, volunteer Perry Ortiz-Williams, Diamonique Walker, and Baby & Co. owner Jill Brandmarker-Donnelly.

Baby & Co., a women's designer clothing boutique located in the Belltown neighborhood of downtown Seattle hosted its highly anticipated annual Closet Sale August 11th through 14th. The sale was co-hosted by Baby & Co. owner and long-standing Mockingbird supporter, Jill Brandmarker-Donnelly, and Mary Bridget Gleason. For the third consecutive year, The Mockingbird Society was honored to be a primary recipient of a portion of the proceeds.

The sale has become well known by women across Seattle for its extensive selection of new and gently used clothing, shoes and accessories from some of the "best closets in Seattle." In support of Jill and the sale, Mockingbird Youth Network Representative Deonate Cruz and I spent an afternoon on site greeting customers and spreading word of the sale around the neighborhood.

This was a great opportunity for some of the MBS staff to see and be a part of the hard work that goes into fundraising and donating to organizations. It was the first time we participated in an event where some of the proceeds would be donated to help our organization. We were able to really execute our "community engagement" objective by spreading the word about our organization and explaining to customers that their purchases would benefit the foster care community.

The sale had a great turn out and was a smashing success! In addition to helping The Mockingbird Society, a portion of the proceeds will support juvenile diabetes research. Remaining clothing is being donated to YouthCare and Dress for Success. A special thanks to Baby & Co., as well as Mary Bridget Gleason and the designers and community members who donated clothing for the sale.

Healing at the Coffee Oasis BY JANESSA THOMAS

I recently had an experience at the Coffee Oasis in Bremerton that impacted me on a deep and emotional level. I interviewed Angelica Gawron and Daniel Frederick, employees of the Coffee Oasis. Daniel is the Program Director of Street Hope. His job is to help provide opportunities to children who are homeless. Daniel's vision is to move forward and have more organizations like Street Hope. He plans on growing internationally one day.

Dave Frederick, Daniel's father, served as an inspiration to Daniel. He was a pastor and volunteered as a police chaplain while providing foster care placement in Bremerton, Washington in the 1990s. Dave and his wife, Cindy, both began to see a part of Bremerton they had never noticed before. His father and mother came face to face with youth whose lives were spiraling toward a life of incarceration, addiction, or death. They felt they needed to do something. Together, they both began Hope in Christ Ministries, a non-profit corporation, in November 1996 as a first step toward making a difference in the lives of hurt youth.

On July 1, 1997 they purchased The Coffee Oasis, located on 622 Warren Avenue in Bremerton. The Coffee Oasis offers a variety of job opportunities. They also offer vocational skills and barista trainings which run for about five weeks.

Right now as we speak, the Coffee Oasis is in a renovation plan to be a better place for the youth by making a shelter for them above the coffee shop itself. If that isn't compassion then what is?

Daniel Frederick talked a lot about the influence his parents have had on homeless and foster youth, and on his life. Daniel said, "The lack of community, made me realize the community needed healing." He also stressed how his family showed him the difference stable relationships can make in the lives of children and youth.

Coffee Oasis has a magazine, or "Street Zine" called *A Voice*. Angelica is in charge of writing editorials for the Zine. While interviewing her, I noticed her life was similar to mine. She has channeled her anger through writing and is fighting back. *A Voice*'s audience is directed toward adults who currently don't know what is going on with youth who are living on the streets in their hometown. Currently, *A Voice* is distributing their fourth edition. This magazine gives the youth the privilege to voice their concerns and express themselves by writing. *A Voice* consists of poetry, photography, and writings on homeless issues.

Daniel, his parents, and Angelica are amazing people who are ready to commit to youth by providing opportunities for stable relationships

and through writing. They started by caring, being supportive, and showing compassion to the youth. They have helped many youth through providing love and shelter. When I say shelter I mean that it gives the youth a feeling of being secure and safe. They have supported youth and made them believe that worst part is over. Daniel and Angelica both believe: "Your time is now, and you must not give up because they believe in us." While coming to an end of the interview Angelica said, "*A Voice* is a megaphone for the street and homeless youth in the community."

If you are interested in helping out, volunteering, or you yourself just simply need any type of resources, please don't hesitate to contact Daniel Fredrick; he is the Program Director. Please call at 1 (360)377-5560. Or email, avoicezine@gmail.com. Their main website is: www.thecoffeeoasis.com.

¹ <http://www.thecoffeeoasis.com/>

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grams such as "Money Management" and how to find services.

The College Success Program is important to Seattle Central, and their students, because, as Program Director Dale Oberlander states, "students of care have challenges that other students don't have. The enrollment rate of those is only 3-5 percent, while they have identified over 200 students at Seattle Central who were in the foster care system. CSP fills the role that parents have at the school, someone that advocates for, and believes in them." For more information on the College Success Program at Seattle Central, contact Dale Oberlander 206.934.3168

I was inspired to write this article because once I was out of care, my educational goals were on the back burner because I was struggling to survive. By chance, I walked into the first orientation of CSP. They fed me and told me about the drastic changes that this program was going to make for alumni of care. I no longer had to worry about food, transportation costs, medicine, making new friends, or getting help with homework. CSP became the familiar support that I was lacking during the onset of my new "adult" life. Everyone should have an opportunity to succeed; CSF and CSP are doing what they can so alumni of care will.

¹ <http://www.collegesuccessfoundation.org>

Thank You!

All the YMCA Center for Young Adults staff, Samantha Valle, Georgina Ramirez, Graham Parrington, Community Youth Services, Dae Shogren, Amy Pearson, Casey Family Programs, Catholic Family and Child Services, Pierce County Alliance, Representative Andy Billig, Senator Lisa Brown, Representative Kevin Parker and Legislative Aides to Senator Michael Baumgartner & Representative John Ahern, Karen Cowgill, Miriam & William Epstein-Stiles, Linda Foley, Goldman Sachs, Deanna Grace, Makeba and Aaron Greene, Jillian Gross, Lura Harrison, Jo Ann Herbert, Joshua Isaac, Lyman Legters, Margaret-Ann Leroy, Carol Lucas, James Maki, Perkins Coie, Poetica Graphic Design, Cecilia Porto, Alicia Tonasket, Anne Tuttle, Peggy & Bob Wilkerson, Helen & Robert Bailey, Phil & Cindy Parsons

Creative Corner

Fred:	Veteran Foster Youth
George:	New Foster Youth
Krista:	Girl Next Door
Raul:	Foster Dad Foster
Marsha:	Mom
Posse:	Posse
Mr. Frank:	The Teacher
Mr. Snow	The Principal
Casey:	The Lunch Lady

By:
Deonate Cruz

**News From****The Mockingbird Network****Your Needs, Your Voice****Westside Regions Joint Update** BY Xoe Dozier, Garrett Nadeau, Chris Bauer, Max Ream and Jessica Mayer

The Mockingbird Youth Network's Western Washington's inter-regional BBQ was a huge success! It was a great opportunity to get together for a collaborative event in which every chapter brought something to create a fun and powerful day. Jerry, Seattle Resource Specialist, was our cook, preparing and cooking various foods. After everyone ate, we participated in a great scavenger hunt that the Tacoma chapter created for us. It was full of laughs and gave us an opportunity to get to know the other regions' chapter members and work together on a team activity. LaShay from Everett brought a great activity involving digging for gummy bears in a pie full of whip cream! This pie contest inevitably turned into a whip cream fight. Graham, the Olympia Resource Specialist lost this whipped cream battle, but was a great sport.

After everyone calmed down, we all came back together to focus on a part of what Mockingbird is about: community service. Georgina, one of our amazing Resource Specialists from Everett, baked 120 cupcakes for the homeless communities in Seattle and Olympia. Every-

one helped decorate them, and while it was very hard not to eat those delicious baked goods, we all managed for the sake of the families.

The Olympia and Seattle chapters both ended the day by distributing the cupcakes all the regions worked together to decorate. Seattle's chapter distributed a portion of the cupcakes to the homeless people downtown in Seattle. They gave out at least 40 of the cupcakes to the homeless community and had a great time doing it. Olympia's chapter took a portion of the cupcakes to the Family Support Center of South Sound's shelter for families. They also took the left over fruits and vegetables from the BBQ to the shelter and hope to keep this relationship growing by setting up future opportunities to volunteer at the family shelter.

This day was a true display of what the Mockingbird Youth Network is about, creating connections with one another, collaborating to have a great day of teamwork, and staying dedicated to creating change in our communities. Go Mockingbird!!



Network youth decorate cupcakes for the homeless.

Region I North (Spokane) Chapter Update by Kristina Thomason

Hello from Region One North! The Spokane Region once again has had a pretty busy month. On August 10th we had a BBQ with local Spokane Legislators. It went great and was laid back but an important event for our chapter. Sr. Network Representative David Buck and I also got to co-write an article about the experience and success of the BBQ. Also, our chapter was invited to a Spokane Indians baseball game, which is very exciting! We will be having Marcus Riccelli, Senior Policy Advisor for Senate Majority Lisa Brown—who we met at the BBQ—speak at our next meeting. Coming up next month we are doing our Rights Training so keep your eyes out for those results and feedback! Region 1 North UNITE!!

Region I South (Yakima) Chapter Update by Brandy Baxley

Hello Mockingbird Society, Region One South hopes everyone's summer is going great! Our region has been busy lately. We went to the Union Gospel Mission to serve lunch and had a great time helping and volunteering. We served about 70 families and individuals. At our August chapter meeting, we discussed the roles and responsibilities for Chapter Leaders. After decided group discussion, Stevie Atkins and I, Brandy Baxley, were chosen as the Yakima Chapter Leaders. We are going to finish off our summer with a BBQ at a lake in Ellensburg. We will be swimming, eating, hanging out and having a great time!



Spokane chapter leader Kristina Thomason with Representative Andy Billig.

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 www.mockingbirdsociety.org, or contact us at (206) 407-2134 or via email at mbt@mockingbirdsociety.org. If you have submitted something before that hasn't been published, we may need your submission agreement in order to publish your work. Please submit materials and completed agreement again via the email address listed above.

Note: Any incoming letters to the editor and any correspondence to youth under 18 years of age should be addressed to the Mockingbird Times and will be opened first by adult editorial staff.