



**Community  
Coalition for Children**

*It Takes the Effort of a Community to Raise a Child*

*FALL 2007*

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## *COMMUNITY COALITION FOR CHILDREN NEWS*

*The Community Coalition for Children is a true community of partners sharing remarkably diverse skills, talents and gifts to enrich the lives of children in foster care. The depth of their involvement is extraordinary. Since the program was founded by Kim Githler in 1999, our partners have contributed countless gifts of funds and time to children in foster care.*

### *PARTNERSHIP EXPERIENCES*



**Character House Babies Rock.....In their Brand New Nursery!**

Our *Character House* babies are so fortunate to have a wonderfully comfortable place to spend their days in day care and sleep at night. Many thanks to an anonymous member of the *Community Coalition for Children*, the *Lew Kern Foundation* and the general fund of the *Community Coalition* who made it possible for us to turn a covered outdoor area into this tremendous space. This much needed addition has relieved crowded conditions for the girls and for their babies. Our smallest residents are rocked here and read to during the day, and they sleep soundly in their cribs here at night.

The members of the *Babe Weiller Branch Board* have been fantastic partners to the residents of the *Youth Shelter* and the *Transitional Living Program (TLP)*. The partnership, which began last Easter, made it possible for these young people to go to Pirates Cove, go roller skating, attend Circus Sarasota and many other special events.

*Babe Weiller Board Members* made all of these children and young adult's lives truly special with a dolphin watching tour on LeBarge. Some of the children had never been on a boat. They were thrilled to see the dolphin that came to the side and jumped and played in the wake. There was a lot of noise and excitement and one young man, who had not spoken at all, asked everyone to be quiet because, "you need to be quiet to respect wildlife". A profound moment on a perfect day including gifts and lunch aboard the boat.

The board made two important decisions on behalf of the children they are mentoring. First, they voted to add a resident of *TLP* to the Board of Directors and decided to add a new element to their trips and outings. *Dan Dannheisser* pointed out that they could help these children a great deal if, when possible, their events included an educational or vocational theme. *Roy LaLone*, owner of the *Philippi Creek Oyster Bar* brought all of this together by hosting a very special lunch. *Roy* shared his own, very personal story of hardship, struggle and triumph...with a strong emphasis on the need to work hard and move beyond what might seem like insurmountable odds. Everyone listened intently. Lunch was great and there was a sense that important words were spoken and lessons learned that day.

*Chloe Lee*, of *Chloe's Bead Shop* has expanded the mission of the *Community Coalition for Children* to include a special kind of entrepreneurship. Her innovative program has made it possible for the girls of *Bowman Ranch* to start their own jewelry business. What started as fun afternoons making beaded jewelry for themselves is now a viable business enterprise. A business plan for *Goddess Beads*, the business name chosen by the girls, was presented to a room full of potential investors. It was so successful that the girls raised more than \$2,000. "They just did an amazing job", *Lee* said, "I was so proud of them."

All of the investor's money will be used to buy supplies to create product in the form of earrings, necklaces, bracelets and key chains. And every piece that sells is a tremendous boost in the self esteem of these young women. The girls and *Chloe Lee* plan to market the jewelry at small retail boutiques, art shows and other outlets.

To learn more about *Goddess Beads*, call *Bowman Ranch* at 322-2801.

The *Church of the Palms Presbyterian* and the *Kalish House Boys* have been *everywhere* in our Community! Church members have made it possible for the boys to visit the Big Cat Habitat, and the Planetarium, The semi annual basketball tournament was held at the Evalyn Sadlier Jones Branch last March. It was a hard fought game and *Kalish House* won 68-52! Pizza followed along with stories of the game. The boys and their long-time friends toured the Southeastern Guide dogs and played with the

puppies...there is nothing like watching a teenage boy on the floor hugging a large puppy! They played miniature golf and went to Siesta Key to the beach in May. That trip, complete with running and swimming and volleyball wore the boys out! They went bowling in July and had a fabulous tour of Mote Marine in August, complete with field sampling in Sarasota Bay. Last month everyone enjoyed a trip to Steak and Shake (especially the chocolate shakes) and roller skating after that.



We have started talking to *Hyatt Sarasota* about the annual Christmas party....a big favorite. Many thanks to the *Hyatt* for their many donations of goods and services throughout the year. Everyone at the *Hyatt* is constantly thinking of ways to help our children!

This e-mail just came to us from our InterShow liaison, Daphne...

"It's Halloween already and time for our annual "treat gathering" for our little people at Grammy's! Halloween is such an exciting time for the very special children at the house. They get SO excited at the sight of the pumpkins filled with fun little goodies!! They LOVE the little dollar store toys, simple games and of course a little candy...it wouldn't be Halloween without a few pieces!"

The "Sales Department" is getting costumes for all 5 of the children! THANK YOU ALL!! They did this last year and the kids were thrilled!

At the moment they have 2 girls and 3 boys but may have an extra child join them this week so any extra items will be welcome. I would like to have everything here by Monday October 29th so that we can deliver it a day early. So while you are out picking up your own Trick or Treat stuff please open your hearts and grab a few small toys for our "other" kids at *Grammys!*

Our heartfelt thanks to *InterShow* for another special Halloween and all of the donations of toys and two big screen televisions. Everything donated to these children that are truly in need is greatly appreciated.

*Kellogg and Kimsey* and the Girls from *Bowman Ranch* are looking forward to their annual Thanksgiving dinner. A yearly favorite complete with turkey and all of the trimmings, a bonfire and marshmallow roast and of course.....lots of hayrides! *Kellogg and Kimsey* recently held their annual golf tournament and presented *Bowman Ranch* with a check for over \$8,700! These funds are used to for things that the budget would not ordinarily pay for. A portion of last years golf tournament proceeds were used to buy a large magnolia tree. The girls asked to be able to buy a tree to pay tribute to a staff member. It is to be planted in his honor from them.



In this month alone the *Libertore Fund for Children* was used to help families remain stable and avoid crises that prevent them from staying together. In one case the W. children were put in shelter, away from their mother due to a long history of alcoholism and violence in the home. Eventually the three young siblings were placed with their biological father. The mother did not visit the children. They require counseling, and lots of patience. Their father has responded to their every need and provided much needed stability in their lives. This has been a struggle for a single dad who had never been a primary caregiver. The emphasis of the *Safe Children Coalition* has now been to support this family arrangement and stabilize the placement with dad, and the necessary bonding process. Dad recently lost his job due to multiple court hearings and appointments for his children. He has obtained new employment but needed help with rent to maintain a home for the kids. The *Libertore Fund for Children* was used to pay a month's rent to help him move forward.

The F. children have been living in Foster Care since April 2006. The children were sheltered from their parents due to substance abuse, criminal activity and domestic violence. The father is currently in prison on felony charges, but their mother has been working diligently to restart her life. To her credit, she has enrolled in parenting classes, substance abuse counseling and domestic violence services. She has taken great strides to change her life. She is receiving positive reports from counselors and has earned unsupervised visits with the kids. This mother has worked very hard and managed to save \$600 towards the \$965 due for her rent. *The Libertore Fund for Children* was used pay the remaining amount.

*Donna Simmons* made it possible for the girls at *Bowman Ranch* to fully appreciate Homecoming this year. Each girl going received a Desoto Square Mall gift certificate to have their hair or nails done or to buy something to wear. *Debbie Dannheisser* joined *Donna* and the girls Friday just before the Lakewood Ranch High School Homecoming Football game to see their nails and dresses, share pizza and drinks and laugh. What perfect gifts for the girls....especially the time spent sharing.

*Stonewood Grill* continues to partner with us on a regular basis ....this summer they hosted a large group of foster parents and for luncheon which was a resounding success and this winter we will be working with them on a Christmas party for volunteers.

*Wachovia Bank*, a long standing member of the *Community Coalition* has awarded *Character House* a \$5,000 grant to license PLATO, a software system to provide a high school curriculum and engage students and help classroom instructors manage their progress. Girls of all ages and educational levels come to *Character House*. Their educational levels and needs vary greatly. Many are seeking their GED certification. The course material is costly. The necessary computer programs are expensive as well. These funds will be used to maintain the PLATO software that is necessary to ensure the standards of education that are necessary to reintegrate these young women as successful and educated young women.

The *YEA Foundation*, working through *The Ringling School of Art and Design*, will be placing *Ringling* school students in our residential facilities. One young woman, Dawn Rivers is busy working with the *Kalish House Boys*. Dawn has also introduced them to the Ringling campus and the "Gaming Club". The boys are thrilled with the state of the art games and love visiting the campus. *John and Robin Sullivan* will be back in town soon and the residential program directors will choose the theatre performances that their residents will attend courtesy of the *YEA Foundation and the Van Wezel*. Each of these evenings is always a special event!

## *UPCOMING EVENTS*

### WALL STREET LIVE

*Coalition* members and their friends are encouraged to participate in *Wall Street Live*, a unique educational event at the *Hyatt* on Friday, November 30. Patrons of the event will be special guests of *Kim and Charles Githler* on the 29<sup>th</sup> for a reception at Villa Solstice, their beautiful home on Sarasota Bay.

Sponsorships are available at the Platinum and Gold level and individual tickets can be purchased by calling 800-970-4355. Please be sure to mention you are a *Community Coalition for Children* member. Let's get behind this fun and informative event because it will benefit the *Community Coalition for Children!*

*If you have any questions about this newsletter or about the Community Coalition, please contact Caroline Chambliss at 951-1336, or E-mail Caroline at:*  
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