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Summer 2002

Bill Wilson Center News

COUNSELING • HOUSING • EDUCATION • ADVOCACY

Letter from Sparky



Opportunity is what Bill Wilson Center is all about. We offer people the opportunity to learn, to grow, and to change their lives. As an organization, we also learn, grow and develop, and change. We are exploring several new opportunities in the coming year.

We are in the planning stages of opening a charter school by September 2003. The Santa Clara County Office of Education is closing and consolidating several of its alternative schools, including Bill Wilson School. They have agreed to continue the school for another year until we can get our charter school up and running.

The new charter school, The Roberto Navarro Community School, will primarily serve homeless youth, including youth who have failed traditional schools. We will use a combination of classroom work, individual tutoring, and independent studies. Most of the youth in the school will not have had positive experiences in school—many have dropped out, attended school sporadically, or moved so often that there has been no continuity in their education. We expect to customize both the content and the methodology to individualize each youth's learning experience to meet their needs.

In the coming year, we hope to expand transitional housing into North County. For some youth, this expansion will allow them to be in transitional housing in the town they grew up in; for other youth, living farther away from past "friends" will be a positive factor; and for yet others, living in the northern part of the county will place them closer to De Anza College which has programs for youth with learning disabilities.

Transitional Housing currently has a six-month waiting list. Youth on a waiting list may be living in an unsafe situation, on the streets, or couch surfing with friends. Once they are in Transitional Housing, they can begin to work on employment preparedness, complete their educations, and learn the skills they'll need to be self-sufficient. This expansion would be

funded through two grants that we hope will be approved. Each year challenges us in a different way. We can get mired in the negatives—or we can focus on the opportunities offered. Opportunity is what we're all about.

Best regards,

Sparky Hurlan

Carol Finds Her Way Home

On a winter's night, a 13-year-old girl is abandoned on the empty streets of downtown San Jose. Six months earlier, the young girl's Aunt made a promise to her parents that she would be able to put a stop to the girl's reckless behavior. Abandoning her on a dark street corner was the Aunt's idea of appropriate punishment. With her parents more than 2,000 miles away, she found herself alone, scared and vulnerable.

That night would be the first of many nights when she would scramble for a place to sleep. From a distance, an older man stalked and eventually approached her. He promised her self-reliance through prostitution. She listened with a mixture of skepticism and a desire to be independent.

A 22 year-old veteran of the streets warned her that the man was offering anything but freedom. He told her that if she wanted to know freedom, then she should go with him to the Bill Wilson Drop-In Center.

"It is important that we reach youth at a young age, like we did with 'Carol,'" said Christine McNulty, Drop-In Center Coordinator. "When we can provide them with support, education and information, the result is a decrease in the length of time they are on the streets. That means we can lessen their exposure to predators, drugs, and other dangers."

Carol no longer has to search for a place to sleep. After counseling with staff members, she was able to reconcile with her parents and now is at home in Chicago attending high school. The Drop-In Center provides more than a meal for the day, a place to hang out or a blanket to keep warm. The Drop-In Center offers hope.

continued on page 4

Safe Place Community Outreach

When my co-worker asked me to help with an event during National Safe Place Week, I worried about getting behind in my work. Later, when I found out that I would have to wake up at 6 a.m., I was not as enthusiastic as I had originally been.

That morning, I dragged myself out of bed before picking up Trang, 14, who is a volunteer in the Safe Place Program. She came out of her house struggling to carry a yellow and black Safe Place sign, which symbolizes a safe haven to a child. I got out of the car to help her.

At the next house, I walked Trang to the front door, where her four girlfriends waited for her. All five wore black and yellow Safe Place T-shirts. As they giggled with one another, they seemed more ready for a slumber party than for a day of presentations at elementary and junior high schools, starting at Franklin Elementary School. They wanted to walk, and so I left to go pick up other kids.

Two hours later, I drove to Franklin and spotted the colors of bumblebees waiting out front. The group swarmed into my car. I asked them how it went. They spoke with enthusiasm.

"At first, we were kind of nervous because this was our first time presenting the Safe Place Program," Trang said. "But the kids asked a lot of questions, and so I think they really listened. It was cool."

The girls did a skit where an adult was following a child who escapes into a Safe Place site and asks for help. The site contacts Bill Wilson Center, and someone comes to pick the child up. In San Jose there are 225 Safe Place sites, where more than 200 youth sought help last year. Safe Place sites include private and public facilities such as 7-Eleven, Round Table Pizza Restaurant, Valley Transportation Authority buses, San Jose School districts and City of San Jose Libraries. Safe Place signs are displayed at the facilities.

I realized that these teenagers could save the life of a child by educating them about how to use Safe Place.

Bill Wilson Center trains Safe Place site employees to respond to various types of emergency situations. A VTA bus driver in San Jose, for example, asked a teenager who was riding the bus for a long time if he needed help. The boy said that he was afraid to go home because his Dad hit him. VTA contacted Bill Wilson Center and a staff member brought the teenager back to its Runaway and Homeless Youth Shelter.

Trang is one of 50 San Jose teenagers in Safe Place Community Outreach (SPCO) who develop youth leadership skills through such activities as removing graffiti, cleaning up parks, and talking to local businesses and to youth one on one.

"The more resources we have available to youth, the more likely they will be to find the help they need," said Program Coordinator

Lyndsey Marks. "The members of SPCO help me to make that possible and, without them, Project Safe Place would not be as successful."

After a long day of driving, I was tired and ready to escape to my quiet home. The afternoon had turned hot and muggy. As I drove up to my 20th pick-up, a school, the temperature seemed to rise. Six SPCO volunteers waited for me. They rushed into the car and began to describe how nervous they had been, how many times they laughed as they performed their skits, and how overwhelmed they were when almost all of the kids had questions for them.

I realized that these teenagers could save the life of a child by educating them about how to use Safe Place. A sense of pride came over me as I realized that in some small way I was a part of that.

—Amy Purdum

* Safe Place is funded by the City of San Jose.



Welcome!



Chris Halliwell

Bill Wilson Center is pleased to announce the addition of a new member of the Board of Directors, Chris Halliwell.

Chris is an independent consultant providing business-to-business marketing services. Her experience in sales and marketing will help Bill Wilson

Center build stronger relationships in the community and bolster its finances.

"I have personally witnessed how important it is to have resources available to youth who are facing difficult times in their lives," said Chris. "My goal is to increase awareness of the services Bill Wilson Center offers and to expand the number of funding sources available to the agency."

Beyond her business obligations, Chris makes time to work with youth directly. She volunteers in a program which teaches 14 to 17-year-old girls how to write a business plan. The girls enter their work into a competition.

For recreation Chris loves running. Last year, she volunteered as the cross-country coach for a local high school.

Before starting her business as an independent consultant, Chris was a managing partner with Regis McKenna, Inc., where she led the networking and semiconductor partners and practice groups. In her consulting business, she mentors several new technology companies.

Chris is also an instructor for the executive learning programs of the Caltech Industrial Relations Center and the Caltech Entrepreneurial Fellowship program. Her degrees from the University of California, Los Angeles, include a Master's in Information Services, and an MBA in Marketing.

"We're very pleased that Chris has agreed to join our board," said Sparky Harlan, Executive Director for Bill Wilson Center. "The board is in the process of reshaping itself for the future, and Chris's business marketing background will help us reach into the community."

Thank You

A special thanks to these corporations and foundations for their support of the services provided by Bill Wilson Center to the community:

ADC
Altos Foundation
AMD
AT&T
Cisco Foundation
Federated Department Stores Foundation
Greater Bay Bancorp Foundation
The Health Trust
Hispanic Foundation of Silicon Valley
John S. and James L. Knight Foundation
KITS-FM Live 105 from their 2001 BFD concert
Lucile Packard Foundation for Children
Macy's West
Sharks Foundation
Skoll Community Fund
Robert N. and Florence Slinger Fund
Wells Fargo Foundation

Our appreciation also goes to the organizations and religious groups who have given generously to Bill Wilson Center:

Center for Spiritual Living
Corvette Leisure and Social Society
Gay Pride Committee
Junior Achievement, Santa Teresa
Kiwanis Club of San Jose
Stone Presbyterian Church
Union Church of Cupertino

Volunteer Opportunities

There are a number of ways you can donate your time and energy to our agency. See page 7 and 8 for more information.



Macy's passport 20 in store

SHOP for Bill Wilson Center

Macy's Passport combines fashion and compassion to raise money for HIV/AIDS programs. This year, the event is taking place on Saturday, September 21st at Macy's stores in Valley Fair Shopping Mall in Santa Clara, and Union Square in San Francisco.

Walking into the store on the day of the Passport event, music greets the shopper who can indulge in free food

and drink. Products are demonstrated and samples are given away. Shoppers attend star-studded fashion shows that take place throughout the day.

A \$10 passport ticket is like buying a special license. It entitles a buyer to travel into a special day of shopping. On the day of the event, almost all Macy's merchandise is on sale. A ticket provides an additional discount, up to 20%, on items such as furniture, jewelry and clothing.

Every time Bill Wilson Center sells a \$10 ticket, we keep 100% of the proceeds to use towards our HIV/AIDS Prevention Programs. If the agency sells 100 or more tickets, we qualify to receive a share of the monies that are collected by Macy's from ticket sales on the day of the event. Last year, the agency raised almost \$5,000 for the HIV/AIDS Prevention Programs.

Purchasing a \$10 Macy's Passport will entitle you to:

- 20% off women's, men's and kids apparel, shoes and accessories
- 15% off domestics, housewares and tabletop
- 10% off furniture, rugs, mattresses and fine jewelry

**Exclusions include cosmetics/fragrances, Lladro and Waterford*

Don't want to deal with the crowds? Macy's allows you to pre-shop. Go to Macy's as early as two weeks before the event to select your merchandise. Macy's will put your selections aside for you to purchase on the day of the event or up to a week after the event takes place.

Get tickets now and help support Bill Wilson Center's HIV/AIDS programs. Here's how:

1. Visit Bill Wilson Center and purchase tickets from the front desk. Bill Wilson Center is located at 3490 The Alameda, Santa Clara, 95050
2. Send a check to Bill Wilson Center. Please indicate the number of tickets and an address to mail the

tickets to. Send checks to:
Bill Wilson Center, Attn:
Macy's Passport, 3490 The Alameda,
Santa Clara, CA 95050.

3. Contact Amy Purdum at (408) 850-6156 or email apurdum@bwcmail.org to make special arrangements for ticket transactions.



Carol Finds Her Way Home, cont.

from page 1

Findings from the 1999 Santa Clara County Homeless Survey, reports that 20,000 people experienced an episode of homelessness, of whom 25% were under the age of 18. Children and teenagers leave home for many reasons. Sometimes they are beaten, they are neglected, or they and their families haven't found a way to talk and listen to each other. The Drop-In Center opened its doors to these young homeless people in 1998.

There is a lot of talking and listening going on at the Drop-In Center. Visiting there feels like visiting the home of a friend who has a lot of brothers and sisters. Entering through the courtyard, two teenagers relaxed at a picnic table. Inside the Drop-In Center, a Victorian house, Liz Santana, one of two outreach workers who takes to the streets to talk to homeless youth, sat with two girls on comfy sofas, talking over a blaring television as a volunteer warmed up food.

Yet, there is more than food to nourish Drop-In Center youth. On the second floor, there is a room with computers, one with E-mail access, and a telephone so that homeless youth stay connected. Here is where they can get help with their resumes for job applications. They can use the Drop-In Center mailing address as their own, which solves the dilemma of the homeless, who need an address to apply for a job, but need a job to get an address. Near the computers is a row of lockers where personal belongings can be stored safely.



Down the hall, evening workshops addressing HIV and Sexually Transmitted Infections prevention, pregnancy prevention and independent living skills development take place in a living room with a bay window and a large couch and chairs. One of many tiles on the wall showed a bubble gum machine and "Life—Get Out What You Put In."

Marcus Reposar, the second outreach worker, said: "Once they have decided they are ready to get off the streets, we will be there to show them the way."

CIRQUE DU SOLEIL

VAREKAI

Varekai is the latest Cirque du Soleil show scheduled to come to San Jose in January, 2003. Cirque du Soleil will once again donate tickets to Bill Wilson Center to sell to its friends—you! Bill Wilson Center's evening at Cirque du Soleil will be Friday, January 24, at 9:00.

Cirque du Soleil is a unique organization. Started by street performers, it hasn't lost its connection with youth. The statement of Cirque du Soleil's organizational values includes, "to encourage and promote the potential of youth." One of the ways that Cirque du Soleil supports this statement is their generosity towards non-profit organizations—primarily those serving homeless youth.

Varekai is the story of the universal wanderer. It is the tale of a young man whose journey into a magical forest inhabited by colourful creatures of astonishing talent is at once extraordinary, seductive and exhilarating. In this place at the edge of time begins life rediscovered.

Varekai features an international cast of more than 50 artists, each of whom give their all in this explosive fusion of drama and acrobatics. *Varekai* has already astounded hundreds of thousands of spectators with its mix of ancient circus traditions and daring new acrobatic feats, many of which have never before been performed on the Cirque du Soleil stage.

Join us in this wonderful opportunity to see *Varekai* and to support Bill Wilson Center. Tickets are \$100 each and are the best seats in the house.

Call Judy Whittier at (408) 650-6132 to purchase tickets by phone (Mastercard and Visa only) or send a check to:

Bill Wilson Center
3490 The Alameda
Santa Clara, CA 95050
ATTN: *Varekai*.

PROFILE : *Alex Ponce*

If anyone knows about the many successes of Bill Wilson Center, it's Alexandra Ponce who works for Bill Wilson Center on prevention/education. She teaches students how to channel their anger, how to cope with peer pressure and how to make good decisions.

"I have been involved with Bill Wilson Center on and off for nearly 10 years," said 24 year-old Alexandra, who goes by her nickname, Alex. "The agency has remained a remarkable place even though my role has changed over the years."

Peer Education

Alex's desire to help her classmates cope with their problems brought her to Bill Wilson Center as a senior attending Santa Clara High School. "One day, my teacher announced that Bill Wilson Center was accepting applications for their Peer Education Training Program starting in the spring," said Alex. "I knew that if I went through the training, I could become a peer educator at school. So I jumped at the chance to participate."

Bill Wilson Center's Peer Education Training Program consists of five all-day training sessions. The training covers topics such as media and culture, public speaking, and sexual health. Role-playing allows students to put their newly developed skills into practice.

"Youth learn to reach out to each other," said Michelle Jurjavic, who staffed the youth committee that developed the spring peer-training curriculum. "They develop skills such as crisis intervention, grief counseling and suicide prevention. The media covers violent events in schools, like the Columbine tragedy. Programs like Peer Education Training are a small step toward preventing these tragic events."

In 1995, Alex became a certified peer educator. Not only did she become a certified peer educator at Santa Clara high school, she took her participation to the next level by serving as a board officer for the school's peer-counseling club. "Unfortunately, I was a senior when I joined the club at my school," said Alex. "I had just started to become super involved when I graduated."

After graduation, Alex went on to obtain her bachelor's degree. Striving again to help others, she became a case manager for a non-profit assisting low-income families with subsidized childcare services.

continued on next page

"I enjoyed my job, but I wanted to work with children and teens. My job focused on adults," said Alex. "I remembered Bill Wilson Center from high school and decided to volunteer."

Volunteer Program

Alex contacted the volunteer coordinator for Bill Wilson Center, about opportunities there. "I have all potential volunteers come in for a face-to-face meeting," said Michelle. "As soon as I met Alex, I knew she would be a great volunteer."

Alex commented, "The volunteer training process was very extensive, which was reassuring since we would be working directly with youth. I felt prepared to handle any situation that I might face. We received our placements six weeks later at the volunteer graduation. I was thrilled to find out that I was placed in the Independent Living Skills Program."

Foster youth rely on the Independent Living Skills Program to help them prepare for living on their own, once they leave the foster care system at the age of 18. According to the National Foster Care System Coalition, between 25 percent to 40 percent of foster children become homeless within 12 months of leaving the system. Many don't know how to live on their own and when they fail, they can't go back home.

Independent Living Skills Program changes those odds by teaching foster youth how to find a job, shop for food and take care of themselves. Bill Wilson Center volunteers are key to the success of the program.

For example, Alex worked with one of her clients, 'Joseph', to improve his grades at school. By teaching him time management, he was able to plan his study time and complete his assignments by their due date.

"I recently attended Joseph's high school graduation," said Alex. "I was very proud of the fact that this particular youth, who had struggled with school, was graduating with his high school class of 2002."

According to Deryk Clark, Director of Foster Care and Prevention Services, "Alex excelled as a volunteer in the Independent Living Skills Program. When we were looking for an individual to work in Bill Wilson Center's Education/Prevention Program, I thought of her right away."

Education/Prevention Program

"My most rewarding experiences with the prevention program was working with a group of 4th grade boys who were referred to my program due to their behavioral problems inside and outside the classroom," said Alex. "I worked on life

skills with these boys, emphasizing the importance of working towards peaceful resolution with conflicts they faced and maintaining a respectful character. I had the boys role model this behavior by having them write and perform in a 20 minute presentation to a second grade class."

Alex was amazed at their creativity. They preformed a "rap" song, wrote two skits, and had the second grade class create a project with construction paper. "I felt the lesson was a success because it was using the method of students teaching students," said Alex. "Plus the fourth grade boys were able to be seen as not only role models, but leaders by their second grade peers."

"Actually, the topics that I cover are similar to those that I was taught in the Peer Education Training Program," said Alex. "My experience with Bill Wilson Center has truly come full circle. The Center has helped me to grow personally and professionally. I am grateful to be a part of an agency that gives so much—not only to its clients—but to its volunteers and employees."

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS



Compassionate Friends is a support group that meets at Bill Wilson Center every fourth Wednesday of the month at 7:30 p.m. When a child dies, family members experience many different feelings—disbelief, sadness, loneliness, fear, anger, regret, guilt and despair. Holding these feelings inside can be harmful.

One of The Compassionate Friends principles states, "We know that expressing thoughts and feelings is part of the healing process." The meetings offer a caring and supportive environment where families can talk about their grief.

There is no requirement to share at the meetings. Those who attend are welcome to sit and listen. There is no fee to attend the group, and all family members are welcome.

Those who wish to obtain more information about the group can call (408) 241-1090 or send an email to TCFSantaClara@aol.com. For more information about The Compassionate Friends, visit their national website, www.compassionatefriends.org.

Wish List

We need your help!

If you'd like to donate any item on this list, please give Jeanne-Ann Pine a call at 408-850-6155. Items should be new or nearly new.

Clothing: Shoes, T-shirts, sweatshirts, sweaters, jeans, waterproof jackets, warm jackets, umbrellas, gloves, baseball caps, wool beanies, thermal underwear, tights, stockings, shoelaces, and ponchos. Youth also need new underwear and new socks.

Miscellaneous: Toiletries (deodorant, soap, shampoo, conditioner, hand cream, hair gel, toothbrushes, toothpaste, mouthwash, shaving cream, razors, nail clippers), laundry detergent and bleach, sewing kits, water bottles, backpacks, blankets, sleeping bags, tarps, items to cook with, tools (especially bike repair kits), portable alarm clocks, watches, batteries, nonperishable food, supermarket gift certificates, and fast food gift certificates.

For the Infants and Toddlers of Teen Parents: disposable diapers, baby equipment (high chairs, playpens, car seats), crib sheets, blankets, towels.

For Youth Who Are Moving into Housing: Tables, chairs, kitchen equipment (dishes, pots and pans, glasses, utensils), linens, lamps, beds.

For All Bill Wilson Center Programs: Bicycle rack, art supplies, books, event or movie tickets, computers (Pentium IV or higher), printers, videos, Playstation and Nintendo games, tickets to museums and amusement parks, gift certificates to music stores, playing cards, games, bus/light rail passes, certificates for haircuts—just about any gift certificate can be used in some way.

Please bear with us if you call with furniture to donate. As we don't have storage space, we can only use furniture when we have someone moving out of transitional housing.

More Than a Place to Help Others

"I started as a Safe Place Community Outreach volunteer at Bill Wilson Center last September. I was searching for a place where I could help others and feel that I was a part of something special. What I found at Bill Wilson Center is respect, courage and determination. I learned to never give up on my dreams.



Safe Place Community Outreach members taught me to work as a team. They taught me that people can work together, regardless of gender or race. It's

fascinating to see how much enthusiasm youth have about helping the community.

These teenagers fill me with lots of energy to continue helping others. I am supposed to be a mentor to these teenagers, but in reality they are my mentors. They have become my heroes and I want to thank them for guiding me."

—Nora Galvez

Volunteer Now!

How do I become a Bill Wilson Center Volunteer?

1. Call our Volunteer Coordinator, Michelle Jurjavcic at (408) 850-6156.
2. Attend our volunteer orientation.
3. Come in for a personal interview.
4. Complete a volunteer application, including finger print check.
5. Participate in a six week volunteer training.

Join Us! Walk for AIDS!

Join the Bill Wilson Center team of Staff and Volunteers for the 2002 Walk for AIDS on October 20th! For further information about our team, or if you would like to register for the walk, please contact Michelle Jurjavcic at (408) 850-6138 or email mj4bwc@yahoo.com.

WALK for AIDS



Silicon Valley
Educate. Support. Join the Fight.

Volunteer Information

At Bill Wilson Center, volunteers become our partners. Together we make a change in the lives of the youth we serve. The more people we have working in our programs, the more youth we can help. We accept both youth and adult volunteers.

If you are interested in contributing your time, Bill Wilson Center has the following volunteer opportunities available:

Safe Place Coaches: Be a mentor for youth community volunteers. Must be available weekends and evenings.

Bill Wilson School Tutor: Must be available at least one day a week Monday – Friday, 9:00 am - 11:00 am.

Street Youth Advocate: Work in our Drop-In Center for street youth by helping out with food preparation, linking youth with available resources and building positive bonds. Weekday shifts and Saturday afternoons needed.

Administrative Support*: Morning hours. Must be familiar with Microsoft Word, Access and/or Excel.

Walk for AIDS Outreach Team*: Outreach at events such as fairs, public events, etc. for the Walk for AIDS Silicon Valley.

Macy's Passport Sales Rep*: Help our agency raise money by selling Macy's Passports that provide discounts on purchases.

Safe Place Community Outreach: Meet new people, earn community service hours, and make a difference with SPCO. Applications due September 21, 2002.

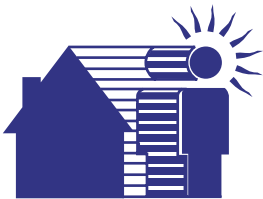
Mentors for THP: Work with older youth as a mentor in our Transitional Housing Program.

Peer Education Training: Train for five Saturdays to develop such skills as communication, crisis intervention, and other topics to help your peers. The Fall 2002 Peer Education Training starts October 5, 2002. Applications available now.

Contact Volunteer Coordinator, Michelle Jurjavic, at (408) 850-6138

Please note youth volunteers complete a separate training.

** These opportunities require only the orientation and not the training.*



Bill Wilson Center

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