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**BILL WILSON CENTER NEWS**



FALL 2007

## Future Families Merges with Bill Wilson Center

Bill Wilson Center is pleased to announce that on August 13th Future Families became a part of the Bill Wilson Center family. For those who don't know, Future Families has been providing services for foster children and families for many years.

Here at Bill Wilson Center we are very excited as this merger expands our reach to younger children in foster care, and enhances our parenting work through several of the excellent programs provided by Future Families. We are also in the process of becoming licensed to provide adoption services, as Future Families' programs include foster-to-adopt services.

Check out our Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) on our website for information about how this merger occurred and the impact of the merger on the children and families we serve. If after reviewing the FAQ you have any questions, please contact us at 408-243-0222.



"Adopting" Future Families will improve our ability to achieve our vision of Preventing Poverty in Santa Clara County.

[See page 6 for a brief description of Future Families' programs. The FAQ can be found at [www.billwilsoncenter.org](http://www.billwilsoncenter.org)]

Three years ago, Bill Wilson Center was pleased to welcome two other organizations, The Centre for Living with Dying and Contact Cares, into our family. These mergers have strengthened the continuum of care we provide for the community.

## Letter from Sparky

Sometimes I think the words "change", "improve", "expand", "transition" and "new" were created to describe Bill Wilson Center.

On August 13th, Future Families, a non-profit agency serving children in foster care, foster families, abused children, and at-risk children, became a part of Bill Wilson Center. Future Families had 25 staff, 125 volunteers, and a \$2+ million



budget.

Over the next year, we will be going through a transition. Our newly expanded agency will have an over \$10 million budget, over 100 staff, 325 volunteers, and more than 40 interns – and, most important, will serve more children and families. There are two articles in this newsletter about the merger and about the services that have now become part of Bill Wilson Center. There is also an article about Parent Child Interactive Therapy, a very effective, best-practice program provided by Future Families, which is now a part of Bill Wilson Center.

Another big change here at Bill Wilson Center involves our becoming a Medi-Cal service provider. This will enable us to provide clients with a wider range of therapeutic counseling

## YOUth Revolution

With a summer full of time, there are many opportunities for youth to make the wrong choices. Kids need a healthy way to channel their sudden independence and lack of restrictions. YOUth Revolution, a five-day peer leadership training camp, creates an environment for youth to learn how to be positive role models in their schools and communities and has quickly grown to capacity.



YOUth Revolution is a Bill Wilson Center program, which is offered in partnership with the Santa Clara County Youth Task Force. San Jose City College was a very important collaborator this year as it provided the classrooms necessary for the program. Because SJCC hosts this as a class the kids also get college credit for attending, which we hope will encourage them to continue their education.

After last year's YOUth Revolution, the Peer Leadership Team took what they had learned and began to make plans for the coming year. Youth respond to real discussions about contemporary issues, and interesting activities that help them learn more about themselves. Facilitators were recruited who share similar backgrounds. We searched for a best-practice curriculum and decided to use the Amer-I-Can curriculum, a program created by the Amer-I-Can Foundation. Facilitators from Firehouse Community Development worked with the youth.

The youth were divided into three groups: The first was an all male/high risk group. This group was composed of young males who are involved in gangs, selling/doing drugs, drinking alcohol and participating in other extreme high-risk behaviors. The other two groups were based on age, 12-15 and 16-17 year olds.

The overall message to each youth is: You were built for success, not failure. We see the potential in these kids and know that with the right mentoring and support they can be successful. The curriculum targets sensitive topics such as gangs, drugs,

alcohol, abuse and family conflict. The kids are taught life skills management, communications skills, and learn how to avoid risky behaviors. Most of all, they learn that they have the capacity to redirect their lives.

The first step in this process is the establishment of positive relationships between the youth and the facilitators. The facilitators are chosen because they can empathize with the youth, having had similar experiences when they were young. Each youth is encouraged to decide what barriers hold them back from reaching their goals, and decide what they can do to overcome them.

"We let the kids figure out what their problems are. By telling kids what's wrong with them you are immediately making them feel bad about themselves," says Bill Wilson Center Program Director Deryk Clark. "Youth need positive encouragement to grow, not negative. Bill Wilson Center stood firmly behind its strengths based policy when creating this program."

Graduation was a raucous celebration of their achievements during the week. The decibel ratings were high as the youth cheered for their teammates and provided encouragement. Each team selected a spokesperson to share their story and the accomplishments of their group. Each story reflected what was learned, and a commitment to next steps. We are appreciative of Santa Clara County Supervisor Ken Yeager and San Jose City College President Dr. Michael Burke for coming to speak to the youth. Each youth received a certificate marking their accomplishments, a t-shirt, and a key to the future.



*The youth listen intently as Pastor Rich Nichols demonstrates how he let go of gang life. Pastor Rich symbolized his departure by removing his gang related clothing throughout the presentation.*

YOUth Revolution is a success. With the one-week camp over, Bill Wilson Center will continue to work with the kids throughout the year. By keeping in touch through follow-up calls, trainings and events, we hope to keep these kids on the right track. As we continue to work with these youth, we will be able to see the changes each will make in their lives.

## Letter from Sparky

(continued from page 1)

and case management services to better meet the needs of each person. The downside is the enormous amount of paperwork required by Medi-Cal.

We've also contracted with a psychiatrist who will evaluate specific clients to determine if there is a need to prescribe medications. While we are philosophically opposed to medications as a quick fix, there are mental illnesses, such as bi-polar, where medications are an important part of achieving mental health.

What every change we make here at Bill Wilson Center has in common is the promise of providing better services to all the people we serve. That has always been and will always be our focus.

As always, we appreciate the support from our donors, volunteers, interns, and staff. If you are reading this letter, you are part of the team that makes everything possible.

Best Regards,



Sparky Harlan  
Executive Director



## Parent Child Interactive Therapy (PCIT)

Many times when children are abused and then shuffled through the Foster Care System, they begin to shut down, sometimes becoming defiant and throwing tantrums. For a new foster parent it can be extremely difficult to create a connection with their foster child because of the years of pain that have created barriers between the child and the rest of the world. Even simple things like playtime and snack time can lead to outbursts.

Future Families, which is now a part of Bill Wilson Center, has adopted a nationally recognized, evidence-based treatment called Parent Child Interactive Therapy (PCIT) to break down these barriers and teach parents how to use positive reinforcement to promote good behavior and also ignore tantrums and outbursts so to reduce bad behavior. Future Families has treated PCIT clients who are single parent families, foster families with multiple placements, birth families in reunification, adoptive families, and relative placements.

PCIT is different from other training programs in that the parent is in one room with their child and the coach (therapist) is behind a one-way mirror directing the parent how to interact with the child through an earpiece. PCIT is focused on both relationship building and behavior management. Training includes three teaching sessions alone with the parents without the child. The remaining sessions are coaching sessions with the therapist guiding the parents and giving feedback every step of the way.

A major goal of the first stage of PCIT is to establish a warm, loving, relationship between the parents and child. Parents are helped to recognize their child's many positive qualities, are taught to respond to their child in a sensitive and genuine fashion, and learn how to relate to their child at their developmental stage. Parents have to strike a few choice words from their vocabularies such as "no," "don't," "quit," "not" and "stop". Sound impossible?

The therapy was developed in the 1970's to deal with children who are considered "oppositional-defiant," a diagnosis applied to kids, ages 2 to 8, who don't or won't follow any directions. As they grow to appreciate their children more, parents tend to put fewer demands on them, and pay more attention to their positive characteristics; children become more eager to please and help. In the discipline stage parents learn how to give effective directions to their children and are instructed in how to provide consistent consequences for their behavior.

PCIT requires the parent and child to work together, learning and developing skills that make a healthy relationship. They practice to the point of mastery. Parents learn to use praise and positive reinforcement, avoid criticizing, ignore negative attention seeking behavior, and to use timeouts as a consequence.

The result of all this is families staying together. Foster parents and their children connect and create stability, hopefully leading to the adoption of the child. The aim is to make forever families just that.





## DIC Outreach Encourages Rapid Testing

According to a recent report issued by the Office of National AIDS Policy: The White House — Youth and HIV/AIDS 2000: A New American Agenda — young people continue to remain at significant risk for HIV infection:

1. Youth between the ages of 13 and 24 are contracting HIV at the rate of 2 per hour.
2. Half of all new infections are thought to occur in people under 25.
3. Twenty-five percent of U.S. high school students said that they were under the influence of alcohol or drugs when they last engaged in sexual activity.
4. In a recent survey, 87% of young Americans said they do not believe they are at risk for HIV infection.

Bill Wilson Center outreach workers are urging street youth to get HIV rapid testing. An AIDS Coalition Silicon Valley grant enabled us to hire a Peer Educator to go out into the streets to find homeless youth and other at-risk youth and get them tested for HIV.

Many of these youth participate in prostitution and survival sex. They or their partners may be intravenous drug users. These are high-risk behaviors. Testing is important. Needless to say, we also work with youth on prevention through safer sex, help youth learn negotiating skills, and help them make better choices.

Trust is still the number one barrier when trying to help street youth. Our Peer Educator was a client of the Drop-In Center. He is familiar with our programs and had similar experiences to these youth. Youth can make a connection to someone who they feel understands their situation. Which means the Peer Educator has a good chance of quickly and successfully connecting with these youth.

After making a connection with the youth, the Peer Educator and other outreach workers, encourage the youth to be tested. To help motivate these youth, we offer gift cards to grocery stores and fast food restaurants as incentives.

If the youth agrees, they are taken to a nearby rapid testing facility where their results will be ready in less than an hour. During this “wait time” the youth are given a risk-assessment and discuss safer sex options with a counselor. Before rapid testing was available, results would take two weeks. Because we’re working with street youth, many would never know whether they had tested positive.

If the youth tests positive for HIV, the goal is to get that youth into treatment at the Ira Greene PACE Clinic, which provides health care for people who are HIV positive. A negative result will be celebrated as we encourage the youth to come to the Drop-In Center for a meal, help getting a job, housing referrals, and other support. The testing may just be the first step in helping this youth.

## BWC Welcomes New Board Members

**Johann Joseph** has a B.S. in Information Systems Management. He has created a successful career in Information Technology in large companies such as Symantec, Hitachi, Hewlett Packard, and most recently McAfee. For the past five years he has been a dedicated volunteer for the Safe Place Community Outreach program as a Coach. Johann believes that education and setting and achieving goals are the keys to success. He has a successful annual goal setting workshop that he leads for the youth of SPCO. Johann joined the Bill Wilson Center Board of Directors in June.

**Antonella Corno** has a degree in Electronic Engineering, and has worked in telecom/data communication equipment research and development. After several years of successful professional life in Europe, she and her husband took on the challenge of a new life and decided to move to USA. After moving to San Jose, she worked for Cisco in the creation of a new line of business. She is the proud mother of two children and as a result has an increased interest in the welfare of children. She is a former member of the Board of Directors of Future Families.

**Jessica Mattioli** began working as a caseworker and therapist for the foster care division of the Jewish Children's Bureau in Chicago. She was responsible for overseeing and ensuring the attainment of all placement, medical, educational and legal needs of her clients. In 2001, after the birth of her daughter, Jessica became a stay-at-home mom, and in 2003, Jessica and her husband and daughter moved to California. In late 2004 Jessica and her husband welcomed another daughter to the family. She is a former member of the Board of Directors of Future Families.

**Cindy O'Leary** has more than 30 years of experience as a marketing professional, and has her own consulting firm, CJO Consulting. Cindy has two sons, and two grandsons. In 2000, Cindy and her husband welcomed a foster/adopt daughter, Christina, age 11, to the household. Although the plan for adoption did not materialize, Cindy and her husband, Michael, continued to communicate with Christina and developed a long-term relationship with her. This relationship was the inspiration for "Connected for Life", a mentoring program for older foster youth that Michael has developed and hopes to fund for implementation with Bill Wilson Center. She is a former member of the Board of Directors of Future Families.

**Arthur V. Plank** is a retired lawyer in the Commercial Litigation Department of Hopkins & Carley. Art has extensive involvement in the community, having previously served on the Board of Directors for the Children's Discovery Museum and A.R.I.S (AIDS Resources, Information and Services). He also served on the Board of the Santa Clara County Chapter of the National Multiple Sclerosis Society. Art is engaged as a volunteer in various community groups including the I Have A Dream program in East Palo Alto. He is a former member of the Board of Directors of Future Families.

**Ron Ricci** is Vice President, Corporate Positioning at Cisco Systems, Inc. He is responsible for communicating and driving the alignment around Cisco's 3-5 year goals, strategies and annual initiatives. He manages Cisco's executive communications and executive thought leadership teams. During his personal time, Ron enjoys coaching and watching his children's sports activities, reading books about American and world history, gardening, golfing and hosting holiday "events" like annual Halloween Haunted Houses and Fourth of July talent show barbecues. He is a former member of the Board of Directors of Future Families.

## Housing Project Update

Thanks to the City of Santa Clara, Bill Wilson Center was able to purchase a 28-unit apartment complex for youth and staff mentors. We're calling the complex The Commons. This is the beginning of a project that will take several years of work before we can offer this housing with support programming to youth.

We are in the process of raising the funds we'll need to totally renovate the buildings, and to add an additional building, providing central, shared space where residents can gather for potlucks – or learn computer skills. Our first step is to apply for housing funding which is available as a result of Prop 1C – keep your fingers crossed for us! We are also seeking funding from other government sources, corporations, and foundations. We expect that next spring will be the start of our individual campaign.

As the youth will share apartments, we will be able to provide housing for 44 youth and six low-income staff. Staff will serve as mentors and role models for the youth. As this is permanent housing, the youth will not be forced to move based on an artificial timeline, but will leave when their situation is stable and their income allows them to rent elsewhere.

At The Commons, Bill Wilson Center will be able to provide a wide range of support services, such as counseling, case management, and independent living skills. Each youth will have personal goals for education, employment, skill building, and self-improvement. We'll be there to help.

We expect that it will take about a year to raise the funds we need, and the renovations should be completed in the following year. We'll keep you up to date as we create a detailed plan for the services we'll offer to the residents and complete the complex for our new residents to move in.



### **Recruitment, Intake, Training & Retention (RITR)— “Kids Coming Home”**

RITR staff find caring families in our community, and then teach them specialized parenting skills. This is a winning strategy to secure stable and loving foster and adoptive homes for abused children who have developed special needs. Each year, Kids Coming Home opens doors for over 40 children waiting for a family.

The Kids Coming Home activities consist of:

- Advertising and outreach to potential families
- Telephone screenings of interested parents or parents-to-be
- 2-hour Orientation Sessions conducted on a monthly basis to help prospective foster or adoptive parents understand what to expect (including pictures and stories of children who are waiting for families)
- Twenty three (23) hours of Family Preparation Training
- Securing documents including fingerprint clearance, health and TB clearance, and references
- Family Studies consisting of 8 hours of interviews in four visits by an experienced social worker to assess their readiness
- After placement, ongoing support with at least twelve (12) hours of training per year. (Trainings are conducted during evenings and on weekends)

### **Foster Care and Adoption**

Future Families has been licensed by the State of California as a Foster Family and Adoption Agency since 1984. Through these programs stable homes for abused and neglected children are provided. Staff work closely with County social workers and the highly trained families to ensure that the an abused and neglected child’s needs can be met. The types of homes offered include:

- Emergency Placement Homes
- Concurrent Homes (Foster Care that may become Adoption)
- Long-Term Foster Care
- Intensive Therapeutic Foster Care
- Adoption

Once a child is placed in a home, FFI’s social workers deal directly with the child and family to make certain that all services and support needed by the child and family are provided.

Adoption services are primarily foster-to-adopt. Foster families may bring a foster child who is eligible for adoption into their home with the intention of adopting the child, or the child may just become so much a part of the family that they turn to us to initiate the adoption process.

### **Therapy Services**

Children and youth who have experienced abuse and neglect need to have access to comprehensive, coordinated mental health. Licensed therapists and interns assess each child’s needs carefully and then create an appropriate treatment plan tailored to meet that child’s individual needs and situation. The therapeutic activities offered may include:

- Attachment Therapy
- Parent Child Interaction Therapy
- Play Therapy
- Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy
- Social Learning Therapy

### **Support Counseling and Life Coaching**

Support Counseling services are offered to those children and youth who have been identified by the County as high-need and high-risk. Support counselors work with the team of professionals involved in a foster child’s life, including social workers and therapist. The support counselor will provide whatever service is needed to make the placement stable and the child succeed in their world, including mentoring, homework assistance, transportation, crisis support, etc.



## Volunteer Profile – Carole McKee

For over a year, Carole McKee has volunteered with Bill Wilson Center's Centre for Living with Dying program, helping people cope with grief, assisting with Centre events, and providing administrative support.



Carole McKee

McKee, an early retirement high school teacher who taught history and English, often acted as a counselor to her students. After retiring, McKee sought out meaningful

volunteer work. Her goal was to make a connection with people in an intimate setting to support them through their toughest and most vulnerable times. "I wanted to work one-on-one with people", says McKee.

After seeing an ad seeking volunteers for Bill Wilson Center's Centre for Living with Dying program, she attended an orientation and was accepted into the Centre's training program. Under the guidance of the Centre's staff, she prepared for her grief support role.

Since beginning her work as a grief counselor, she has supported six clients. McKee says that her main job is to listen. Many times people who are grieving are not sure how to express their grief. By allowing the client to express themselves without interruption, true feelings emerge.

"Often the truth is that the grief they might be dealing with right now isn't what is grieving them the most. There might be a lot of past pain or loss that affected the client at a much

*"Carole is a very dedicated volunteer who always goes out of her way to help out the program in any way that she can. She has a warm and caring presence and always has a smile on her face. We are very fortunate to have her on our team."*

*- Connie Chrysoglou, Director of Counseling Services.*

### Volunteer!!

There are always new opportunities to volunteer with Bill Wilson Center. Contact Volunteer Manager Erica Werpetinski to find out more details.

(408) 850 6138 or [Volunteers@bwcmail.org](mailto:Volunteers@bwcmail.org)

earlier age," says McKee. "It's quite possible that the client never allowed themselves to freely grieve past losses which have affected their deep communication with family members and close friends."

McKee goes on to say that allowing people the opportunity to open up at their own pace helps them deal with this web of loss. There are many important words spoken, long moments of silence and often tears, but when the session is over, the client is one step closer to feeling and understanding the complex dimensions of their grief.



## SAVE THE DATE: Walk for AIDS

OCTOBER 21, 2007 (Registration now open)

Mark your calendars and join Bill Wilson Center's team at the 18th Annual Walk for AIDS on Sunday, October 21, 2007. Check-in starts at 9:00 and we'll start walking at 10:00. You can register now by going to [www.walkforaids.org](http://www.walkforaids.org) - be sure to indicate that you want to be part of our team.

New this year is the route – after gathering at Discovery Meadow, we'll be walking the Guadalupe River Trail. You'll receive more information after you sign up. As always, there are terrific prizes for those of you who raise lots of money!

Funds raised from the Walk for AIDS provide prevention and direct services right in Santa Clara County. Bill Wilson Center receives funding for prevention work with youth, especially at the Drop-In Center, and provides direct services such as the AIDS Quarterly retreats provided through our Centre for Living with Dying program, and Centre Cares, a 24/7 line for people who are infected or affected by HIV/AIDS.

Join us! Get some exercise, raise needed funds, enjoy the company of other Bill Wilson Center friends.

## Board of Directors

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## SAVE THE DATE: Cirque du Soleil

On Friday, February 1, 2008 Bill Wilson Center will be the beneficiary at KOOZA, a brand new Cirque du Soleil production. This fun and exciting evening for guests will directly benefit Bill Wilson Center. Performances will be held under the Big Top located near the Taylor Street Bridge in San Jose. Bill Wilson Center has been selected to receive tickets to KOOZA, as we provide services that are in accord with Cirque du Soleil's philanthropic mission of helping youth at risk.

Cirque du Soleil was created in the early 1980s by a group of young street performers, dreamers and self-taught entrepreneurs who had the vision and drive needed to succeed. Before they created Cirque du Soleil, the artists performed their shows in the street. If their dream came true, it was partly because there were older people who believed in them, regardless of their age, image or status as street performers.

Cirque du Soleil has chosen to commit itself to helping youth in difficulty, especially street kids. They focus on helping these young people by allocating funds to outreach programs targeting youth in difficulty – such as Bill Wilson Center.

Corporations have the opportunity to become partners or sponsors of this event. Partners and Sponsors will support services for street youth while gaining visibility for their company. Of course, a major benefit of partnership and sponsorship is the opportunity to invite clients and employees to join you at the event.

Individual tickets are available at \$125 for Category I tickets, and \$300 for VIP tickets. To purchase tickets or for information about becoming a Partner or Sponsor contact Judy Whittier at Bill Wilson Center, 408-850-6132 or jwhittier@billwilsoncenter.org.



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