



# Advocate News

HOUSTON'S LEADING VOICE IN THE FIGHT AGAINST CHILD ABUSE

CHILD ADVOCATES, INC.

SPRING 2008

## The Howards: Bringing Home Elizabeth

*by adoptive parent and former court appointed advocate volunteer Kyle Howard*

Several years ago, I moved back home to Houston and decided to find a volunteer activity that would allow me to give back to the community. I read about Child Advocates and after attending an orientation session, I immediately knew that I had found the right opportunity. During my time as a court appointed advocate, I worked on two cases and was asked to speak on behalf of Child Advocates at several training classes and at corporate recruiting events. Being able to make a difference in the lives of the children involved gave me a feeling of accomplishment that is hard to put into words, but I didn't realize at the time how much Child Advocates would truly impact my life.

In 2006, my wife Barbara and I decided to adopt a child and we'd begun to explore our options and next steps. About that same time, I met an old friend for lunch to catch up. She told me that her niece had given birth to a little girl she wasn't able to take care of. CPS had gotten involved and, after initially trying to reunify the mother and child, placed the little girl in a foster home.

My friend and her husband have a wonderful home and five beautiful children of their own. Although they loved this little girl and were considering taking her in temporarily, they weren't sure that they would be able to provide a permanent home for her. I didn't mention that we were considering adoption until after I had a chance to call Barbara and explain the situation, but Barbara was thrilled with the possibility. I called my friend back and we set up a time to meet the little girl.

I vividly remember every moment of the first time that we met Elizabeth. The way she was dressed, the way she smiled at Barbara and sat on her lap. I remember the way her eyes blinked when she looked at me and the sound of her voice as she squealed at her cousin across the table. We were totally taken by her.

The details of the case were daunting. The mother's whereabouts were unknown, one paternity test was negative and a second candidate had been identified. There was another relative interested in caring for her as well, but due to background check issues, was not a likely candidate.

My background as a volunteer helped prepare me for the ups-and-downs of going through a case like this, but upon meeting Smitty Snodgrass, the court appointed advocate volunteer assigned to Elizabeth's case, as well as Smitty's advocacy coordinator Kay Anderson, I knew we were in especially good hands. It was immediately clear that Smitty knew all of the case details and each party involved. She was able to provide us with clear and honest information. I really respect her dedication to her work and genuinely appreciated her candor in explaining all of the possible

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**“I didn’t realize at the time how much Child Advocates would truly impact my life ... while the case may only last a year, the results last a lifetime.”**

*In Harris County alone, 4,800 children languish in foster care because of life threatening abuse or neglect. With our current resources, Child Advocates can provide a volunteer to less than half of them. If you would like to help us provide critical advocacy services for more children, please consider becoming a volunteer or making a financial donation online at [www.childadvocates.org](http://www.childadvocates.org).*

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## Elizabeth CONTINUED

outcomes as the case took new twists and turns. One of the most important parts of the process was our home study. Smitty and Kay were able to expedite things by performing the home study themselves and then submitting it to CPS for approval. This allowed us to have Elizabeth placed in our home months earlier than if we had to wait for another agency to perform the task. I can’t express how much that meant to us.

As the final hearing approached, the results of the paternity test had come in and the father was identified. He gave up his parental rights voluntarily and, because the mother had not been heard from for several months, her rights were terminated by the court due to abandonment. Elizabeth’s attorney asked that she be placed with us until the adoption could be finalized. It couldn’t have been a happier ending.

There are several moments of that day that stand out in my mind: hearing the judge agree to give us custody, listening to the caseworker testify that we would provide a good home for Elizabeth, seeing the smiles on Smitty and Kay’s faces and giving each of them a hug. I can never adequately thank them for what they’ve done for our family. But I know from my own experience as an advocate that the rewards you receive for your efforts go beyond the simple thanks that you get from the families. It’s the sense of satisfaction of knowing that you have made a positive impact in the life of someone who really needed it. The case may only last a year, but the results last a lifetime.

I should tell you that Elizabeth had her second birthday in October and it was spent surrounded by family and loved ones. She takes swimming lessons, speaks Spanish and English and is genuinely one of the happiest and most sociable little children that I’ve ever seen. She is the absolute joy of our lives.

## From the CEO

It is hard to believe this is my 19th year at Child Advocates and I am thrilled to be celebrating this anniversary! I can still remember my first day at Child Advocates and how special it was for me. It is difficult to say what has been most memorable, however, above all, the many people along the way have made each one of my years here so wonderful.

As I read through this edition of the newsletter, I realize that many of you have been a part of Child Advocates as long as I have or, in some cases, even longer. I recently learned that one of our volunteers, Barbara Neuhaus, a truly outstanding advocate who attended AU with me almost 19 years ago, passed away on Valentine’s Day this year. She was a wonderful woman and a strong advocate and will be truly missed for all that she has given to this community.

We hope you will join us in observing Child Abuse Prevention Month during April. As you reflect on the thousands of children we have served as well as all those who still need our help, make an effort to tell someone about Child Advocates. We have several Advocacy University sessions coming up between now and July and continue to focus on recruiting new court appointed advocate volunteers.

Thank you to all of our current court appointed advocate volunteers for your tireless dedication and to everyone who continues to support the organization in other ways. Although we may not see you every day, I know that you’re out there supporting our mission.

Warm regards,

*Sonya Gilman*

# 2007 Heroes Society

Heroes Society members are individuals who made an unrestricted gift to our annual campaign in any amount.

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# Focus on the Friends

## FRIENDS OF CHILD ADVOCATES

### Angels of Hope Luncheon

The 2007 Friends of Child Advocates' Angels of Hope Luncheon and Fashion Presentation by Neiman Marcus was held this year in the Grand Ballroom at the Westin Galleria Hotel on Tuesday, November 27. Event chair Mary (Mollie) Castaneda – whose family foundation has long supported Child Advocates – helped us honor fifteen-year Friends and Angels of Hope veteran, Mary Bratton.



**l to r: Jim and Honoree Mary Bratton, Chair Mollie Castaneda and VP/General Manager of Neiman Marcus Galleria Bob Devlin**

Houston's true fashionistas delighted in the sneak-preview of ESCADA's Resort and Spring 2008 lines, presented on the runway by Neiman Marcus. The event drew more than 600 members of the city's "who's who" crowd. An ESCADA trunk show immediately followed the event in the Neiman Marcus Couture Salon.

Neiman Marcus and Bob Devlin have been integral to the success of our annual Angels of Hope Luncheon, from securing top notch designers and producing exciting fashion presentations, to underwriting many of the costs associated with the production of the show.

The luncheon grossed over \$300,000 – an amount that will allow Child Advocates to provide critical advocacy for 180 child victims of life-threatening abuse, neglect and abandonment this year.

### Shop for Children Friends Social

The Shop for Children Friends Membership social – co-chaired by Caroline Finkelstein and Elisabeth McCabe – took place February 19 at the Village Place Shopping Center. Cova Wines provided the beverages and tapas with center retailers AREA, Charde, Abejas and Cova providing a portion of evening proceeds to benefit Child Advocates. Chipotle also provided beverages, chips and salsa.

## Snapshots



**Houston Girl Scout Troop 18104, made 300 stockings for children served by the Santa's Wish List Program in December.**



**An attendee of the CAI Holiday Party decorates a stocking in one of the festive party booths at the 2007 event.**



**Members of the Bellaire MEN's Club present CEO Sonya Galvan and Development Chair Lynda Transier with proceeds from their Battle of the Bands competition.**



# Voices

**Court appointed advocate volunteers tell us how making a difference in an abused child's life has made a difference in their own.**



## **HANK GARCIA**

Many times I have heard or read a story about abused children and how state and community systems somehow failed to protect them. Many times I have felt helpless – both angry and sad at being unable to do anything for those children. Child Advocates means many things to me, but most of all, it means that I can do something. Not much,

and not for too many, but I can do something. I still feel anger and sadness when I hear of an incident, but CAI means that I'm not helpless – I can do something. I can contribute to society's responsibilities to protect and nurture these precious children. I thank the organizers and administrators of CAI for giving me that opportunity.



## **KATHLEEN BLANCHARD**

My adventures with Child Advocates began in 2006 with a wonderful young special needs girl. It has been a blessing to me to be able to work with her and with her foster mother, who cares for several other special needs children as well. I have been able to watch her grow as I visit her each month, and it fills me with joy to watch her smile. My coordinator, Ari, has been an awesome

inspiration to me, and is always there when I need a little extra help. I believe that my involvement as an Advocate has made me a better person in so many areas of my life. I had known for years that I wanted to be a Child Advocate, and have not regretted my decision to finally take that step.



## **MARSHALL BENDALIN**

When I signed my Commitment Statement and Agreement on September '04 I had no idea what effect this organization was going to have on my life. I hoped that I would be able to contribute something to help children in the system. Since that time, I have come to know 21 very special children.

Working with children who have needs that I can help is very rewarding. Working with the "system" can be frustrating at best, but that is exactly why we are so important. I hope that I have contributed something positive to my children. The truth is they have contributed more to my life than they have received from me.

# Donor Spotlight

## **Heroes Society Members**

Our 217-member Heroes Society list is a testament to the enormous success of this year's Annual Campaign. We exceeded our goals and donations are still being received. The effort was expanded this year to include mailing to our direct mail supports, who responded in large numbers. For the first time, we also sent an electronic communication regarding the campaign and sent email reminders to our constituents. Thirty-four donations were received online – up from only three in 2006. We are also proud to report that 100% of our staff and Board of Directors and 40% of our court appointed advocates joined the Heroes Society or made unrestricted donations during the year. Thanks to each of you who supported this mission-critical campaign.

## **Andrews Kurth LLP**

Since 1999, Child Advocates has received ongoing support from Andrews Kurth LLP – from the



firm's consistent and generous participation in the Pull for Kids Classic to employees involved on many levels of the organization. In 2005, employee Logan Shacklett became a court appointed advocate volunteer and a member of the Young Professionals for Children. Executive Director Bill Livesay has been a member of our Board of Directors since 1995, and served as Board Chair in 2003. Recently, he headed a Real Estate Task Force, gathering industry professionals and providing in-kind legal services, to renegotiate our lease. He also ensured CAI was technologically up-to-date with the donation of a 42" HD-capable plasma television and a high-tech conference phone. Bill's dedicated involvement with CAI continues to shape the future of our organization.

## **Yvonne and Ron Moran**



Covering every angle, the Morans set the bar high for all who support CAI. Yvonne has served on our Advisory Board and the Friends of Child Advocates since 2001, joining countless committees and providing tremendous support to the Houston Press Menu of Menus and Pull for Kids Classic events. As the founding member of the Direct

Mail Committee, Yvonne has utilized her expertise in the direct marketing industry to ensure that our mailings are targeted and powerful – the effort currently yields more than \$50,000 each year. The Morans personally donate on a consistent basis and are currently members of the Heroes Society. In addition, Yvonne and Ron promote Child Advocates through their company, Moran Direct, via a link to our website. Thank you both, we are inspired by your dedication.

# Thanks Donors

The donors listed below contributed to Child Advocates, Inc. between the months of October 2007 and January 2008, in an amount equal to or greater than the cost of serving one child for one month (\$130). Child Advocates also extends our sincerest appreciation to the 800+ individuals and companies that donated between \$1 and \$129 during this period (totalling more than \$47,000), whom we are unable to list due to space constraints.

## 31 - 62 children for one year

BP  
The Brown Foundation  
Child Advocates Endowment, Inc  
Texas CASA, Inc.  
Victims of Crime Act

## 15 - 30 children for one year

The Bob and Cathleen Davis Foundation  
Friedkin Business Services  
Harris County Community Development Department  
Reuhl Family Foundation  
The Lyons Foundation

## 6 - 14 children for one year

AIG American General  
Anonymous  
Mr. and Mrs. Dan Castaneda  
Charles B. and Jean G. Smith Family Foundation  
Cockrell Family Fund  
Mr. and Mrs. David Haines  
The Hoglund Foundation  
M.D. Anderson Foundation  
National CASA Association  
Plains Exploration & Production Company  
Mr. and Mrs. Michael J. Sonnier  
Spindletop International  
Mr. David Strobble  
Target  
Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts  
The Gregory Fund  
Vivian L. Smith Foundation

## 3 - 5 children for one year

Aaron's Sales & Lease  
Anheuser-Busch, Inc.  
Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston  
Mr. and Mrs. David Carter  
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D B Beakley Foundation  
Daniel Measurement and Control, Inc.  
Ray C. Fish Foundation  
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Albert & Ethel Herzstein Charitable Foundation  
Humana, Inc.  
The Junior League of Houston  
LyondellBasell  
Miller Brewing Company  
Paradigm Geophysical Corp.  
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Salners Family Foundation  
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Mr. and Mrs. Woody Scott  
Seyfarth Shaw LLP  
The Strake Foundation  
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The Newfield Foundation

## One child for 8 - 18 months

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Baker Alloy and Metal Inc.

The Bellaire MENS Club  
Ben E. Keith Company  
The Bill and Helen Crowder Foundation  
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Broderick & Company  
Brumley Guinan Gunter Foundation  
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CASA of Peoria County  
ChevronTexaco  
City of Houston (Combined Campaign)  
The Hubert E. Clift Foundation  
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Compass Bank  
Cornerbrook Development Company  
CRA International  
The Currie Fund  
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Mr. and Mrs. Douglas Dopjera  
Dynergy Inc.  
El Paso Corporation  
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EnRisk  
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The Freckles Foundation  
Mr. Robert Gray Gregory  
Gulf Coast Combined Federal Campaign  
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Honeywell Analytics  
Houston Press  
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World Oilman's Tennis Tournament Corp.

## One child for 4 - 8 months

Mrs. Lynn Alexander  
Alyson Jon Interiors  
American Express (Employee Giving Matching Gifts)  
Dr. and Mrs. Melvyn Anhalt  
Mr. and Mrs. Bruce Appelbaum  
Brodart  
Dr. and Mrs. Luis T. Campos  
Mr. and Mrs. Russell Capper  
CenterPoint Energy  
Chrysalis  
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Design At Work  
Ecclesia  
Mrs. Pepper M. Edens  
Mr. Jeff Kish and Ms. Karin Egge  
Mr. Benjamin D. Elliott  
Mr. and Mrs. Tom Farrell  
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United Way of Tri-State  
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# Doing Something

## HOTEL & LODGING ASSOCIATION OF GREATER HOUSTON

For the third year, the HLAGH organized a bicycle-building event at the George R. Brown Convention Center that provided 50 bikes to the children we serve. They also donated gift cards so the children could purchase safety helmets, arranged for on-site volunteers and coordinated 25 teams made up of Hotel and Lodging industry professionals to build the bikes. The smiles on the faces of the 50 lucky bike recipients proved that the day was a huge success.



**Child Advocates Board Member John Binick (second from left) with several other members of HLAGH at the December bike event.**

## FRIENDS GOVERNANCE COUNCIL MEMBERS

It's not unusual for Friends of Child Advocates members to support the children served by Child Advocates, but on one recent occasion, several of them truly went above and beyond the call of duty. CAI was assigned to the case of three boys who needed a positive outlet to release their teenage energy. Their advocate found a basketball camp at North Park Baptist Church, but unfortunately, the foster parents could not afford the fees. Friends staff liaison Marla Endieveri reached out to the Governance Council and, immediately, Friends members Joy Posoli, Caroline Finkelstein and Cherie Hassenflu offered to cover the costs – giving the three young men a terrific opportunity they won't soon forget.

## SANTA'S WISH LIST SUPPORTERS

Every year, we are amazed by the outpouring of support we receive from the hundreds of sponsors, volunteers, and donors that help make the holiday season bright for over 1,000 of Houston's most deserving children. This year, was no exception. We had 131 sponsors for our children and 34 organized toy drives. What speaks to the enormous depth of this program is that these sponsorships and toy drives were made up of 164 unique individuals, groups and corporations. We are touched that so many different people support the Santa's Wish List Program and see the value in our efforts to improve the quality of life for the children that we serve and their families.

# YPC Update

## YOUNG PROFESSIONALS FOR CHILDREN

The Young Professionals for Children organization has already been hard at work orchestrating a stellar line-up of Children's Events, socials and other activities for the upcoming year. We are excited to be led by incoming Chairperson Angie Lapp along with an all-star cast of YPC council members.

## CHILDREN'S EVENTS

YPC kicked off 2008 with a bang, holding our first Children's Event of the year in early January! We hosted more than 100 children served by Child Advocates and their foster families to celebrate mascot Chilly's birthday as the Houston Aero's hockey team dominated the Iowa Stars. Our special guests enjoyed taking in the game, being treated to lunch and were even invited to get in on the action with an exciting on-ice activity!



March brought rodeo fever to YPC and a beautiful day for the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo Parade. YPC volunteers accompanied 60 children served by Child Advocates and their foster families to the 2008 Rodeo Parade downtown in March. Event Chair Amanda Hall and her crew of volunteers were up bright-and-early in preparation for the big event. Everyone enjoyed breakfast treats, prime seating to view the parade and a tasty lunch. Special thanks go to the Rodeo Parade Committee for their hospitality.

Events on the horizon include a Roller Skating Party scheduled for Saturday, June 28 along with the annual Pumpkin Party slated for the fall.

## SOCIALS

Dark Horse Tavern was home to our first YPC social of 2008 and a true success it was. Some fifty plus YPCers and guests were on hand to mix, mingle, and get the scoop on upcoming YPC events. Socials are held every other month throughout the year and are a great way to connect with fellow YPC members or to learn more about what YPC has to offer. Keep an eye on the calendar at [www.childadvocates.org](http://www.childadvocates.org) for more information on upcoming YPC socials.

Interested in getting in on the fun? Become a new YPC member or renew your lapsed membership for only \$35. Go to [www.childadvocates.org/YPC.htm](http://www.childadvocates.org/YPC.htm) and click "join YPC" to print the necessary forms.



# Special Thanks

## ANGELS OF HOPE LUNCHEON

**Signature Media Solutions** for providing discounted printing services for the Luncheon invitations and programs. **Tejas Office Products** for the stock for the invitations. **Ellie Francisco / francisco + company** for underwriting the Raffle printing costs. **Jeweler Nancey Chapman, Four Seasons Punta Mita, Living Waters on Lake Travis, Omni Houston Hotel, and Neiman Marcus** for providing the raffle items. **Bevco International** for providing wine at a discounted price. **Kroger Food Stores** for providing the floral center pieces. **Shannon Ferguson** and **Page Parkes-Eveleth** of Page Parkes Corporation for raising the funds to underwrite a luncheon table for teenage girls who we had served. The girls had their hair styled by **Visible Changes**, make-up applied by **Sephora**, and they received hip new outfits from **Palais Royal/Beall's Stores**.

## CAR PROS FOR KIDS

**Clear Channel Outdoor** for underwriting 21 billboards. **GS Marketing** for underwriting the printing for the 2008 Car Pros for Kids post cards, counter mats, window clings, certificates, information cards and shop handbooks, as well as for providing packaging and delivery to each of the 31 shops. **RMS Auto Care, McGinnis & NAPA Auto** for underwriting the television commercial. **NAPA Auto** for graciously sponsoring all the filters for each shop after the program is done in March.

**Participating Car Pros for Kids Service Providers** for participating in the program: Adolf Hoepfl & Son Garage, A Mobile Car Doctor, Aldine Automotive Inc., Beckwith's Car Care, Champions Certified Car Care, Champions Certified Car Care Too, Chrisitan Brothers – Grand Parkway, Cornerstone Automotive – Dairy Ashford, Cornerstone Automotive – Wilcrest, Davis Chevrolet, Domestic Auto Experts (Atascocita), Domestic Auto Experts (Katy), Domestic Auto Experts (Tomball), Excel Automotive Technology, Freedom Automotive of North Hampton, Freedom Automotive Services, Itzy's Auto Service, Kacal's Auto and Truck, Kar Hospital, Mac Haik Dodge Chrysler Jeep, Mac Haik Ford, Mak Haik Chevrolet, Master Auto Service, Inc., McGinnis Cadillac/Hummer/Mitsubishi, Phillips Tire & Service Ctr., RMS Auto Care, Scott's Auto Repair & Collision Repair, Specialized Auto Repair, Sullivan's Advanced Auto Care, Village Automotive, Young's Automotive Center

## GENERAL

**Rick Orkin** for donating hundreds of shirts and socks for our children.

**EAP** for providing gift cards and a monetary donation for the children we serve.

**Littler Mendelson** and **Kate McCormick** for donating seven IBM Thinkpad laptop computers.

**Pulte Homes** for organizing the Bonus for Babies toy drive.

**United Access** for providing a lift to decorate the Santa's Wish List warehouse, **Western General** for donating the warehouse space and **Enaxis Consulting** for making deliveries during the Santa's Wish List program.

**Claudia Hallowell** for donating toys to Gilbert and Rachel's Closet.

# Happenings

FOR DETAILS ON THE THINGS LISTED HERE AND THE LATEST CALENDAR UPDATES, VISIT [WWW.CHILDADVOCATES.ORG/CALENDAR](http://WWW.CHILDADVOCATES.ORG/CALENDAR)

## APRIL

- 1 **Houston Press Menu of Menus** at the Houston Museum of Natural Science, 5:30-9:30 PM. Tickets are \$30 or \$75 for VIP passes (new this year, they allow entrance one hour before the general public and access to the VIP lounge). Tickets are limited and will not be sold at the door, so purchase yours now!

Email [menuofmenus@childadvocates.org](mailto:menuofmenus@childadvocates.org) for details.

- 5-6 **H-E-B Houston Children's Festival, presented by Baker Hughes.** This year marks the 20th Anniversary of this downtown family event, featuring eight big family adventure areas, six stages of music and fun, and over 350 activities.

Email [childrensfestival@childadvocates.org](mailto:childrensfestival@childadvocates.org) to volunteer, or visit [www.houstonchildrensfestival.com](http://www.houstonchildrensfestival.com) to sponsor.

## MAY

- 17 **16th Annual Pull for Kids Classic** will begin with a daytime sporting clay tournament at American Shooting Centers from 9:00-2:00 PM. The Saturday evening party and will be held in the Houston Texans Methodist Training Center at Reliant Park from 7:00 PM to midnight. This year's event, "Rhythm of the Night ... Change a Child's Life", will honor Arthur Gochman and Academy Sports & Outdoors.

Email [volunteer@childadvocates.org](mailto:volunteer@childadvocates.org) for information on how to volunteer, or visit [www.childadvocates.org/calendarpfk.htm](http://www.childadvocates.org/calendarpfk.htm)

# Special Thanks CONTINUED

**Nails Unique** for donating nail polish; **Katie Hopkins and Mary Kay** for donating make-up to Ginger's Spa at the Holiday Party.

**Chuck Codrington** and **Whataburger** for their donation of cookies and **Coby Crawford / Digital Grooves** for the donation of DJ services for the Holiday Party.

**Mr. and Mrs. Craig Dingler and Mr. and Mrs. David Baird** for donating tickets to the Shrine Circus for an evening of entertainment for the children we serve.

**HARCO Insurance Services** for organizing a furniture, clothing and household items drive, as well as for providing a monetary donation for the children we serve.

**Mr. Kevin Hamby** and **Portfolio Associates** for organizing a corporate event where each attendee brought a gift card to benefit the children served by Child Advocates.

**The Whatsoevers Group** for sponsoring a teddy bear drive.

All of the **attorneys, judges, county employees and tenured court appointed advocates** who gave their time during 2007 to contribute to the success of our Advocacy University training sessions.

# Board Voice



## LEE VELA

**Professional Life:** Director of Public Affairs for Clear Channel Outdoor—Houston Division. President, Outdoor Advertising Association of Texas.

**Board Roles and Committee Involvement:** Member of the Marketing Committee.

**How did you get involved with CAI?** After observing the great work Child Advocates does, I was moved to become a part of it. I believe my 30+ years of public relations and marketing experience can be put to good use in promoting the organization. Marketing a non-profit organization is no different from marketing a for-profit company...the only difference is budget size. My primary goal is to help stretch marketing dollars to maximize the organization's exposure

**Favorite Pastimes (Besides Child Advocates!):** When not working on Clear Channel issues or volunteering on seven boards, I spend my time working with my special needs child in a home-based educational program. I also enjoy other activities with him such as the Challenger Baseball League for special needs kids.



## RON ORSINI

**Professional Life:** Managing Director and National Strategy Practice Leader at Alvarez & Marsal Business Consulting.

**Board Roles and Committee Involvement:** 2007 Advisory Board member; member of the Development Committee and Pull For Kids Team Sales Committee.

**How did you get involved with CAI?** I first learned about Child Advocates through the Children's Festival. Former board member, Bill Friebe, asked me to help him with the strategic planning process, which allowed me to learn even more about the good work the organization does. I feel that neglected and abused children are the most innocent victims in our society, but I also know the need to help them is currently far greater than the resources to do so. I want to do whatever I can to help Child Advocates bridge that gap.

**Favorite Pastimes (Besides Child Advocates!):** Spending time with my wife, Alice, and two daughters, Abby (12) and Kate (11). I'm an avid cyclist and participate each year in the BP MS150 ride from Houston to Austin. I'm a Sunday School teacher at Champion Forest Baptist Church.

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# Spotlight On ...

## H-E-B HOUSTON CHILDREN'S FESTIVAL

The H-E-B Houston Children's Festival, presented by Baker Hughes, is celebrating its 20th anniversary in grand style. This year's event will take place over the weekend of April 5 – 6 from 10:30am-6:30pm in downtown Houston with an estimated 60,000 in attendance.

Sponge Bob and Patrick plus Corbin Bleu, star of Disney Channel movies "High School Musical 1 & 2" and "Jump In" will make this year's event one to remember! Spend the day exploring the six stages of fun and entertainment and eight family adventure zones including McDonald's FAMILY FITNESS Zone, featuring Ronald McDonald, and TeamKid Town, featuring the singing act, pureNRG.

And don't forget to stop by the Child Advocates Kid's Kingdom – a favorite amongst kids and adults alike, as well as a great introduction to festival-goers interested in our mission.

## EASY WAYS TO GIVE

Check out these simple ways you can support Child Advocates just by doing some of the things you already do every day:

**GoodSearch.com** – a Yahoo-powered search engine that donates half its advertising revenue, about a penny per search, to the charities its users designate. Use it just as you would any search engine, get quality search results from Yahoo, and watch the donations add up! Be sure to enter Child Advocates as the charity you want to support.

**BuyforCharity.com** – buy virtually anything online and designate Child Advocates to receive a portion of the proceeds. Shop major retailers and service providers, and, as your charity of choice, CAI will receive a portion of the proceeds from your purchase at no additional cost to you!

## Kroger Share Card

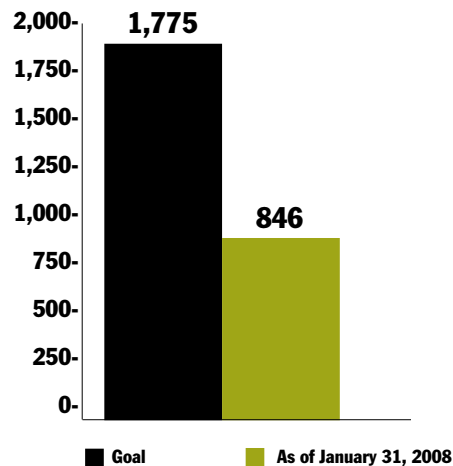
Ask the cashier to scan your Kroger Share Card and Child Advocates will benefit from your grocery shopping. The Share Card is unrelated to your Kroger Plus Card, so please contact us for a Kroger Share Card coded for Child Advocates.

## Randall's Remarkable Card

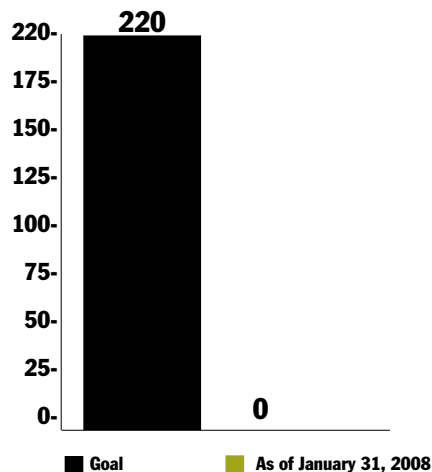
Link your card to the Good Neighbor Program and designate Child Advocates as your selected charity. If you already have a Remarkable Card, simply sign up for the program at any Randall's courtesy booth. If you do not, complete a Remarkable application, check off the Good Neighbor Program box and designate Child Advocates as your charity. Our Good Neighbor Program number is #2383.

# Goal Review

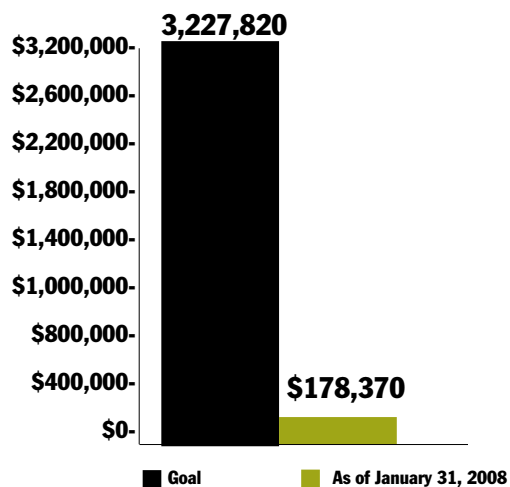
## CHILDREN SERVED



## VOLUNTEERS TRAINED



## ACCRUAL BASIS BUDGET RAISED



# Thrive

Roy and Tammie Gordon recount the story of adopting their son, Malik – with a happy ending due, in part, to the tireless efforts of court appointed advocate volunteer Carl Stutts:

*Having grown up on the street where Malik's birth mother's family lived, Tammie had known them for over thirty years. When the birth mother became pregnant, her family approached us about possibly adopting the child upon its birth. We accepted the offer and helped the birth mother with everything she needed throughout the pregnancy. Unfortunately, after delivering Malik, she changed her mind and said she wanted to keep the baby.*

*Our hopes to become Malik's parents were dashed until we were contacted by Child Protective Services. Malik was in their custody due to skull fractures he suffered at the hands of someone the mother had allowed to care for him. We were told he had been placed in a foster home and that Child Advocates was assigned to the case. Malik's court appointed advocate, Carl Stutts, was wonderful; he helped us understand the court procedures and when we had issues with CPS, he was there to support us every step of the way. With Carl's help, we met with Malik's doctors and were thrilled to hear that, although he suffered severe trauma, he would likely make a full recovery.*

*Malik was placed in our home at three months. As the case progressed, there was a possibility that the mother's parental rights would not be terminated, as she was cooperating with the courts and participating in some of her required services. Although we had mixed emotions and were unsure of the outcome, we continued to do what we believed best for Malik. It was during these months that Child Advocates and Carl were so beneficial; he was there every time we took Malik to family visits at the CPS offices, every court hearing, and he even came to visit us at our home several times to check on Malik's progress.*

*Eventually, the birth mother relinquished her parental rights and we were able to move forward with Malik's adoption. He has been in our home now for fifteen months and we just love him. It is so wonderful to see him so active and energetic and to see how quickly he learns. We are delighted by his progress and believe that his recovery is a success story in itself.*

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## OUR MISSION

*Child Advocates, Inc. mobilizes court appointed volunteers to break the vicious cycle of child abuse. We speak up for abused children who are lost in the system and guide them into safe environments where they can thrive.*