

The Cashat Family accepting the
2011 James A. Gwinn Volunteer of the Year Award.

Advocate News

HOUSTON'S LEADING VOICE IN THE FIGHT AGAINST CHILD ABUSE

CHILD ADVOCATES, INC.

FALL 2011

Laughter and tears filled the 2011 Volunteer Appreciation Event

CHILD ADVOCATES AWARDS HIGHEST HONOR TO COURT APPOINTED ADVOCATE GENE CASHAT

Few court appointed advocates have the time or energy to tackle a complicated case involving 10 brothers and sisters.

But Gene Cashat wasn't just any volunteer.

"Gene took the case with open arms," says Advocacy Coordinator and Team Leader Maria Cano. "He didn't even give it a second thought."

His self-sacrificing service was made even more remarkable by the fact that he was battling end-stage cancer, which ultimately took his life on October 18th.

He died just days after being selected to receive Child Advocates' highest honor – the 2011 James A. Gwinn Award for Outstanding Advocacy. Four of the six Advocacy Coordinators who worked with Gene presented his family with the award at last month's Volunteer Appreciation Event.

"He was an amazing man," says Cano. "He loved the work he did and cared so much for every child who came into his life. It was a true example of selfless love."

Award recipients are selected by Child Advocates staff members based on their willingness to serve on difficult cases, thoroughness, diligence, integrity, professionalism, commitment to Child Advocates, ability to communicate and facilitate communication, consistency and dependability.

Gene embodied all those characteristics in his four years as a court appointed advocate – and then some.

These qualities were most evident in a case involving a pair of toddler brothers who had been removed from their home due to neglect. The boys' CPS caseworker had written their mother off as a lost cause after she tested positive for drugs twice at the beginning of the case.

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“He loved the work he did and cared so much for every child who came into his life. It was a true example of selfless love.”

In Harris County alone, over 5,500 children languish in foster care because of life-threatening abuse and 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.

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Gene Cashat **CONTINUED**

Although the case seemed headed toward a quick termination of parental rights, Gene stayed in contact with the boys' mother. After she checked in to a drug rehabilitation program, Gene monitored her progress with the help of her therapists and caseworkers. He persuaded the judge to give her a chance to rebuild her life and supervised her visits with her sons. Child Protective Services ended up dropping their case against the mother and the boys returned home.

Although he was in and out of the hospital, Gene often picked up cases when other volunteers had to quit due to work and family conflicts. It isn't easy to get up to speed on a case in progress, but Gene's illness never slowed him down.

“He told me that if it were not for the kids and volunteering for Child Advocates, he would not be able to make it through treatment,” says Brandon Drake, one of Gene's Advocacy Coordinators. “It was keeping his mind on helping the children that got him through his pain – it was his passion.”

While Gene will be missed by many, we take comfort in knowing that 37 children's lives were positively impacted by his service. His compassion and ability to earn the trust of families, attorneys, caseworkers and judges had an effect on all he touched. On behalf of all the children Gene served and the entire Child Advocates family, we would like to thank the Cashat family for sharing this wonderful man with us.

SERENA WALKES NAMED 2011 ROOKIE OF THE YEAR



Serena Walkes and her advocacy coordinator, Jessica Gottschalk.

In 2008, Child Advocates created the Rookie of the Year award, designed to recognize a volunteer who shows excellent advocacy skills while being relatively new to our program. Nominees have been court appointed advocates for less than 1.5 years and on two or fewer cases, yet demonstrate a thorough understanding of and dedication to our mission, show independence in their casework, possess the desire and ability to work with all parties and have made an instrumental difference on a case.

Serena Walkes was named the 2011 Rookie of the Year at our annual Volunteer Appreciation Event last month. Serena became a court appointed advocate in August 2010 and is already working on her second case.

Serena is serving a 17-year-old boy with Type 1 diabetes who had been hospitalized 14 times in two years because his parents refused to manage his illness.

Immediately after she took the case, Serena decided on her own to attend an all-day training at Texas Children's Hospital to learn everything about diabetes. She then began meeting with the child and his mother, going through their pantry and refrigerator explaining what foods he should and should not eat and why.

Serena has been so dedicated to this child's health that she purchased a device that allows her to remotely monitor his blood glucose levels. He has not been hospitalized a single time since she was appointed to the case.

This volunteer's dedication to her case and to the mission of Child Advocates is truly extraordinary and inspirational. On behalf of our board, staff and the children you have served, Child Advocates is proud to proud to congratulate Serena!

The 2011 Heroes Society

THANK YOU TO OUR 2011 HEROES SOCIETY DONORS!



For the past two months we have challenged you all to help us raise money and awareness of our mission through the

Heroes Society annual campaign. Through this campaign, our goal is to serve 150 children for a year. We are happy to report that to date we have raised enough money to serve 98 children. The fundraising and donation pages on our website are still active, and we hope that you will continue to share your passion for our mission with your friends, families and co-workers.

Your Heroes Society gift will make a difference for abused or neglected children like Sofia.



Fourteen-year-old Sofia was just 9 when her older brother began touching her inappropriately. Yet her mom brushed her aside when she told her what had happened. Sofia finally got the courage earlier this year to tell her aunt and uncle about the sexual abuse. She says she also saw her older brother inappropriately touching her younger brother, who has Down syndrome.

Sofia is now thriving at school and loves living with her aunt. Thanks to the generous support of Heroes Society contributors, Sofia's court appointed advocate has helped her get the therapy she needs to heal from the abuse she endured. Sofia is afraid her mother will lie to the judge to get her back. Her advocate is doing all she can to make sure Sofia's voice is heard in court.

THANK YOU TO OUR TOP FUNDRAISERS AND CORPORATE FUNDRAISERS!

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From the CEO

Hi all,

As we get closer to the end of the year, it becomes time to reflect on our challenges and successes. Typically, there are three ways that we measure our performance: number of children served, number of volunteers trained and dollars raised. While the year is not completely over, we are getting closer to meeting our 2011 goals. In fact, I am happy to say that we have already surpassed our goal for number of volunteers trained! Throughout the year, we experienced some staffing changes which impacted our ability to open as many cases as we had hoped. However we are still on track to serve more than 2,000 children by the end of the year. I so appreciate all your hard work and what you do to help the children we serve.

Last month, we held our annual Volunteer Appreciation Event. This event is always special, but this year the program touched all of us as we marked the passing of two great advocates, Gene and Smitty. One of the many gifts we receive from each of you is your time, compassion and your pure desire to help children. Each one of you deserves recognition and applause for the work you do.

This time every year we also pass the baton. A heartfelt thank you goes to David Quackenbush for serving as our 2011 Board of Directors chair. It was a pleasure working him this year, and I look forward to having him on the Board for years to come. David will be handing over 2012 chair responsibilities to Suzanne Thomas, who is no stranger to the Child Advocates family. Suzanne has been with Child Advocates for almost 10 years, served on various committees, assisted with the Pull for Kids and served as legal counsel. I know she will do an amazing job.

With the holidays upon us, I would like to again thank you for all you do for Child Advocates and our kids throughout the year. Never doubt what you are doing or giving – it has a tremendous impact.

Wishing you warm and happy holidays,

Focus on Friends

FRIENDS OF CHILD ADVOCATES

The Friends of Child Advocates kicked off the 2011 Angels of Hope Luncheon in September with an unforgettable night of fashion at the home of luncheon co-chair Lucinda Loya and her husband, Javier. Many of Houston's most notable fashionistas, including luncheon co-chair Stephanie Perkins, were among the 250 guests who packed the Loyas' home for the event sponsored by Vogue and Versace. Models showed off Versace's Fall and Winter 2011 collections, and many of the designer's amazing pieces were on display for purchase with a percentage of the proceeds being donated to Child Advocates!

Friends members and other Child Advocates supporters were treated to another exceptional fashion fete the following day, this time featuring ESCADA's Fall 2011 collection at Neiman Marcus. Lucinda co-hosted the lunch and runway fashion show with ESCADA Design Director Daniel Wingate, who flew in



ESCADA designer, Daniel Win with Angels of Hope co-chair Lucinda Loya and Houston Neiman Marcus' Bob Devlin at the ESCADA luncheon

from Munich to share his insight on this season's fashion trends. ESCADA also generously donated a percentage of that day's sales to Child Advocates.

The two events raised more than \$17,000 for the Angels of Hope Luncheon, enough to provide court appointed advocates for 10 children for a year! Our most heartfelt thanks go to the

Loyas, Vogue, Versace, ESCADA and Neiman Marcus for their amazing support.

We hope you'll join us for the Angels of Hope Luncheon on December 6th as we recognize Linda J. Messner for her many years of support. For more information, contact Marla at marla.endieveri@childadvocates.org or 713-529-1396 x234.

PASSING THE TORCH

As the year winds to a close, we would like to thank Joy Posoli for her two years of service as president of the Friends. Joy's passion for enriching the lives of the children we serve is an inspiration. We were honored to have her work with us. We are fortunate that Caroline Finkelstein, another outstanding volunteer, is ready to accept the reins in January. Caroline currently serves on the Development Committee and has been a Friends member since 2006. Thank you Joy and welcome Caroline!

Snapshots



YPC held its first Cook Off for Kids on Oct 22. Pictured is crowd favorite and 1st place winner Jamie Zelko, from Zelko's Bistro.



A YPC member helps out some of our kids with their new costumes that were collected from the Whole Foods Costume Drive.



Frost Bank employees Gabriel Hernandez and Lori Shenker help a little Batman paint pumpkins at the Frost Bank Grand Opening.

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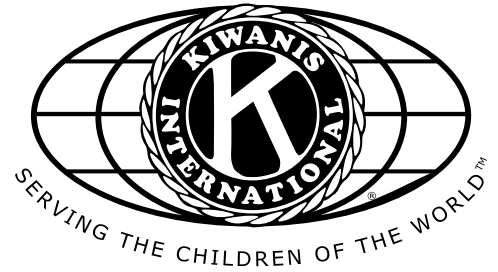
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Donor Spotlight

KIWANIS FOUNDATION OF HOUSTON

We are pleased to recognize The Kiwanis Foundation of Houston for a decade of generosity toward Houston's abused and neglected children. Through the foundation, The Kiwanis Club of Houston has provided lifesaving advocacy for more than 30 children since 2001. The

Kiwanis Club of Houston is a service organization devoted to the Houston community, especially the needs of children. We are humbled to know this group of outstanding community leaders shares our commitment to break the cycle of child abuse in Harris County.



APACHE CORPORATION

Apache Corporation is one of the world's top independent oil and gas exploration and production companies, and it remains committed to improving the quality of life in its home city of



Houston. Child Advocates is fortunate to enjoy Apache's support in a number of ways. Apache recently signed on as an anchor sponsor for the Houston Children's Festival, and the Apache Super Science World was a huge hit this spring. The company also matches employee gifts and has sponsored the Pull for Kids Classic since 2005. And this year, the company has purchased a table at the Angels of Hope Luncheon and Fashion Presentation for the first time. Thank you, Apache, for your generous support of our mission!

KATHLEEN AND MIKE FORDE

For superstar volunteer Kathleen Forde, doing a pretty good job just isn't in her vocabulary. In her 11 years with Child Advocates, she has taken every role to the next level and beyond. In addition to serving as a court appointed advocate, she has also been a member of our volunteer retention subcommittee and mentored new volunteers. After assisting with our Santa's Wish List program, she enlisted her women's club to



put together stockings each year for every child served. Thousands of children have woken up on Christmas morning to stockings stuffed with goodies thanks to her tireless work. Kathleen and her husband, Mike, also doubled their financial support by having their gifts matched by his former employer, Chevron. We are sad to say goodbye to Kathleen and Mike as they move to Arizona. Thank you both for all you have done for the children we serve!

Thanks Donors

The donors listed contributed to Child Advocates, Inc. between June 1, 2011 and September 30, 2011. Since we are not a United Way agency, we rely on gifts made by individuals and non-government groups for more than 75% of our budget each year. Thank you for your help, it is truly appreciated.

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Doing Something

TWO COMPANIES SUPPORT OUR CHILDREN FOR HALLOWEEN FUN

Our children had a spook-tacular Halloween thanks to the generosity of two great Houston supporters – Whole Foods Market and Frost Bank.



More than 125 children served by Child Advocates got to trick-or-treat in style this year thanks to Whole Foods Market and its generous customers. The organic grocery chain collected Halloween costumes for our children at all five area stores last month. The drive culminated on October 15th with Child Advocates volunteers manning booths at each store to collect donations and raise awareness about our mission. Whole Foods employees wore special shirts promoting our organization, and little shoppers got matching temporary tattoos. The costumes were distributed at the annual YPC Halloween party. We'd like to thank

Whole Foods and their employee Mary Langdon, a Junior League volunteer who brought this idea to us. Thanks also to all who volunteered to represent Child Advocates at the stores!



Frost Bank gave our children another reason to smile by donating pumpkins they got to paint at the Halloween party. The donation was part of the grand opening celebration for Frost's new branch on Westheimer Road near Kirby Drive. Customers were invited to bring their children in costume for pumpkin decorating and other Halloween fun. Frost donated one pumpkin to Child Advocates for each pumpkin painted at its party. Frost also donated \$5,000 toward the Angels of Hope Luncheon and Fashion Presentation. Thank you Frost for your generous and creative support!



Our volunteers collecting costume donations at the Whole Foods Market at the Kirby (top) and Woodway stores.

YPC Update

YOUNG PROFESSIONALS FOR CHILDREN



WHAT WE'VE BEEN UP TO...

Fall has proven to be a busy time for YPC.

On October 22nd, we held our first-ever Cook Off for Kids at Hughes Hangar. The weather was perfect as nine of Houston's best restaurants battled it out for top chili bragging rights. Zelko Bistro was the crowd favorite and the judges' top choice, with Community Bar and Haven coming in 2nd

and 3rd. It was a wonderful day filled with tons of unique chili and the best part is we raised over \$10,000 for our kids!

We cannot extend a big enough thanks to all of our sponsors: Hughes Hangar, Silver Eagle Distributors, AmerCable Incorporated, BR2 Process Solutions, Grant Thornton, Greer Herz & Adams, L.L.P., Saint Arnold Brewing Company, Way

Engineering Services, Ltd., ABC Home & Commercial Services, Tiny Boxwoods and Tony Chacheres. Thank you also to Beaver's, Community Bar, Eatsie Boys, Felix 55, Haven, Quattro in the Four Seasons, Sammy's Wild Game, Shade in the Heights and Zelko Bistro for cooking delicious chili creations for us.

Next up is the annual Holiday Party, where YPC members will help the kids make a calendar to count down the days until Christmas.

GET INVOLVED!

Know of a company, organization or group that is interested in hearing about YPC? Let us know by emailing kendall.pace@childadvocates.org. We'd love to get your friends involved!

Special Thanks

ANGELS OF HOPE LUNCHEON KICKOFF PARTY

Vogue for allowing Child Advocates to partner with and announce our Angels of Hope Luncheon Honoree Linda Messner at the Versace Vogue Party,

Versace for choosing Child Advocates to receive the proceeds from the Vogue Versace Party,

Lucinda and Javier Loya for opening their showcase home to us, ESCADA and Neiman Marcus for selecting us to benefit from the ESCADA 2012 Fall Launch and Luncheon.

CAMERON CHILDSPREE

Target for providing breakfast for our kids and volunteers,

Office Depot for donating 300 backpacks for our kids,

Junior League of Houston for donating school supplies and providing a back-to-school shopping experience for 100 children,

Atwood Oceanics for providing a back-to-school shopping experience for 100 children and breakfast for the volunteers,

Cameron for donating the backpacks, school supplies, dinner and drinks for the Backpack Stuffing Party, as well as giving a back-to-school shopping experience for 300 children.

VOLUNTEER APPRECIATION EVENT

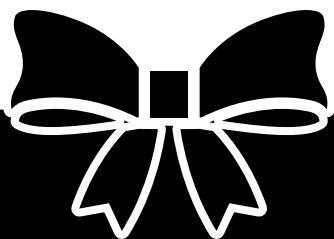
Who Made the Cake! for donating the delicious cakes,

Michael's Cookie Jar for providing a discounted cookie tower,

Joe Center for photographing the event for us.

We would also like to extend a special thank you to Chastiti Horne, Neil Rackers and the Texans All Community Team Program, Whole Foods Markets, Rice University Athletic Department, Johnny B. Walker, RB Products, Inc., Presbyterian Women Quilters of Heights Presbyterian Church, Kenneth M. Baldwin, Buffalo Specialties and Christopher Gardea for your special donations to Child Advocates, Inc.

Your gifts helped provide brighter days for our children!



This holiday season give the gift of hope to an abused or neglected child. Make a gift to Child Advocates in honor of your clients, coworkers, family or friends and they will receive a beautiful holiday greeting card. Visit www.childadvocates.org for more details.

Happenings

NOVEMBER - DECEMBER

now *Santa's Wish List* – Get in the spirit! Sponsor a child, donate or host a toy drive. The Santa's Wish List program makes the holiday season brighter for over 1,500 children who might otherwise be without gifts for Christmas. For more information please visit: www.childadvocates.org.

DECEMBER

6 *Angels of Hope Luncheon and Fashion Presentation by Neiman Marcus.* Join co-chairs Lucinda Loya & Stephanie Perkins as we honor longtime supporter Linda J. Messner with an afternoon of fashion featuring the Rena Lange 2012 Spring Collection. For information contact Marla at marla.endieveri@childadvocates.org.

JANUARY

15 *Chevron Houston Marathon* – Run for a Reason or support someone who is. For information contact Kelly at kelly.goff@childadvocates.org.

21 *Advocacy University Begins* – Sign up now for an orientation session to see how you can be the difference in the life of an abused child: www.childadvocates.org.

FEBRUARY

all month *Car Pros for Kids* – During the month of February, donate \$35 and receive two free oil changes. For more information please contact Kelly at kelly.goff@childadvocates.org.

FOR DETAILS ON THE DATES LISTED HERE AND
FOR ALL THE LATEST CALENDAR UPDATES, VISIT
WWW.CHILDADVOCATES.ORG

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Voices

JACKIE SHAW, VOLUNTEER SINCE 2010



"When I decided to make a positive contribution in the lives of others, I chose to become a court appointed volunteer through Child Advocates, Inc. I wanted to be a voice for abused

and neglected children. Our world today is full of social injustice. There are social ills that occur every day that remain completely oblivious to me. Becoming a court appointed volunteer has allowed me to gain a better understanding of what is important in the lives of abused and neglected children. It has also created a sense of personal fulfillment and accomplishments and offered many personal rewards.

I am extremely grateful to have had the opportunity to be a part of two children's lives this year. Children are precious gifts from God and should be cherished. Every child deserves to have the same chances in life and every child deserves to be treated with respect. I believe that an action taken by me, through volunteer efforts can empower and change a child's life for the better. Therefore, I volunteer because I know what I do makes a difference. Volunteering is probably the most beneficial way for me to help in my community. The youth of today are our future. If we do not make an effort to help them now, our generation will not have a future."

PAMELA FAZZONE, VOLUNTEER SINCE 2009



Court appointed advocate Pamela Fazzone is working with a troubled teenaged girl. She has been sexually abused and repeated that abuse on her own sister. She went missing for five months after running away from a shelter but stayed in contact with Pamela. Pamela wrote the following note to our CEO during a difficult time in the case. The girl later agreed to meet with Pamela

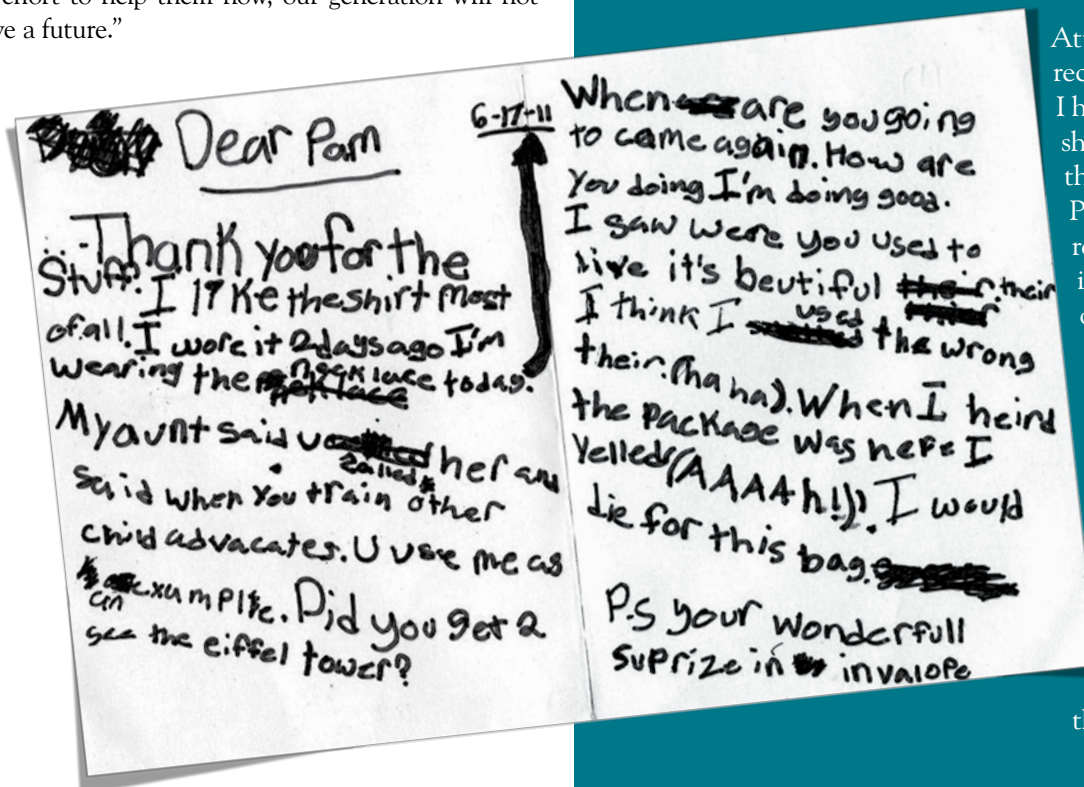
and return to Child Protective Services custody. Pamela continues to fight to get her the therapy and educational services she needs to overcome her traumatic childhood.

"Yesterday I was so disappointed to learn that CPS is looking to close the case on our 16 year old runaway at our Permanency Hearing next month. I will continue to do all I can to persuade her to surface before then, and will see if I can find any case law to support keeping her case active since she has continued to keep in touch with me.

I have to admit I felt pretty deflated last night – so sad for this young teenager. Then I opened my mail at the house and found such a lovely surprise. I recently talked with Ms. Perez, the great aunt who is in the process of adopting a 9-year old girl from a prior case. I let her know that I had mailed a package to Josette with a collection of goodies that I'd picked up during recent travels – nothing big, just fun things from various places – Paris, Exuma, and New York. I also told Ms. Perez that when I recently spoke with a small group that is training to become advocates, I mentioned Josette as an example of how strong a little girl can be, how supportive family members do exist, and what a true happy ending looks like.

Attached is the thank you note I received from Josette yesterday, I hope you can read it. The bag she mentions is a tote bag from the patisserie I love so much in Paris. The back of the card reads, 'I miss u. By.' She also included a drawing she made of the Eiffel Tower.

What a day yesterday was: terribly disappointing news about one child, and further confirmation that an advocate can help secure a safe 'forever family' for another child. It was the kind of day that makes being a CASA worth all the effort and gets one through the disappointments."



Spotlight On ...

IDA "SMITTY" SNODGRASS

Child Advocates lost a dear friend and Harris County lost a tireless champion for children this fall with the passing of Ida "Smitty" Snodgrass. In her 20 years as a court appointed advocate, Smitty changed the lives of 53 children while serving on 25 cases.

Behind Smitty's small stature was the heart of a lion when it came to the safety and well-being of the abused and neglected children she served, or "her children" as she always called them. She was unfailingly polite to caseworkers, foster parents and relatives, yet she was relentless when she believed a child needed therapy or a placement was inappropriate.

Smitty's exemplary service to Child Advocates earned her the James A. Gwinn Outstanding Volunteer of the Year Award in 1999. At that time, she said her casework was guided by the adage "the squeaky wheel gets the oil."

"The most gratifying aspect of an advocate's job is to see children change in a positive manner because the advocate has squeaked long enough to get the help the children needed," she said.

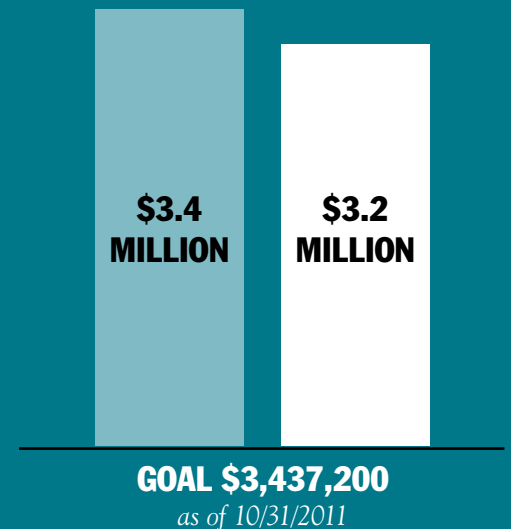
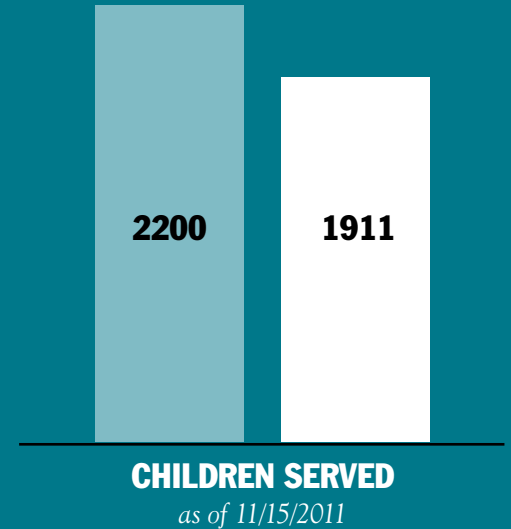
Smitty's love for the children led her to help Child Advocates in many other ways as well. She helped us establish our now-longstanding relationship with her place of worship – Memorial Drive Presbyterian Church. And she and her husband, Tom, were a regular at the annual children's Holiday Party, often serving as Santa's special assistants.

This year's Holiday Party will feature a booth where the children will make "Apple Santas" just like the ones Smitty made each year with the children she served.

The entire Child Advocates family extends our deepest condolences to Tom and her family and thank you for supporting her volunteer work for 20 years.



Goal Review



20TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE
PULL FOR KIDS CLASSIC
SAVE THE DATE

MAY 12, 2012

MORE INFORMATION COMING IN JANUARY



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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.

Thrive

AN AUNT SHARES HER STORY IN HER OWN WORDS

I will always recall the Thursday afternoon in November 2009 when a Child Protective Services representative called to tell me she was in possession of my 7-year-old niece named Brianna.

My brother (Brianna's father) had pleaded guilty to molestation of a 12-year-old girl unrelated to our family. His wife (Brianna's mother) at age 37 had 10 children and two miscarriages. Six of her children had gone through the CPS system where most were adopted or aged out of the system. The other three were raised by other family members.

The courts assigned Child Advocates named Jessica Gottschalk and Erin Boer to our case. They were so attentive to listening to all the information about the case. Brianna was a child who was very withdrawn and not very trusting to speak to other adults. Brianna felt very comfortable in speaking to both Child Advocates and in time showed the trust she had in them by sharing her emotions with them.

I described Jessica and Erin as "Brianna's Angels" sent specifically to help Brianna during a most pivotal time in her precious life. They made such a wonderful team who communicated very well with CPS, Brianna's attorneys, and Brianna's therapist.

Jessica went way beyond her call of duty by spending time investigating hearsay statements to determine facts. Erin was always ready to explain court procedures and spent much time playing on the floor with Brianna. Most importantly, it was obvious that they truly cared about Brianna's well being.

Our trial is over and both parental rights were terminated. Brianna will soon officially become my daughter. Every time I think about Brianna's Angels (Jessica and Erin) I want to shed tears of gratitude for their constant support. Thank you Jessica and Erin and to the entire Child Advocate program.

Sincerely, Debbie Mendez

Erin Boer has been court appointed advocate volunteer since 2008. Jessica Gottschalk served as Erin's advocacy coordinator on this case.



Brianna is thriving in her new home.

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