



Peggy and Dave Cooney
with Advocacy Coordinator,
Monica Burleson.

Advocate News

HOUSTON'S LEADING VOICE IN THE FIGHT AGAINST CHILD ABUSE

CHILD ADVOCATES, INC.

FALL 2012

2012 Outstanding Volunteer of the Year

CHILD ADVOCATES AWARDS HIGHEST HONOR TO COURT APPOINTED ADVOCATE DAVE COONEY

During a time when most people would just want to coast through their retirement years, Dave Cooney decided he wanted to do more. And, more he did.

Dave gave amazing dedication and hard work to Child Advocates for nearly 12 years, helping 34 children on 14 cases find safer and more permanent homes.

"Dave never had any special requests," says Advocacy Coordinator Monica Burleson. "He just said put me where you need me." He took difficult cases including those with sibling groups as large as seven and others with special needs children.

To recognize Dave's exemplary service, Child Advocates awarded him its highest honor – the 2012 James A. Gwinn Award for Outstanding Advocacy. He received the award at this month's Volunteer Appreciation Event.

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.

Dave demonstrated all these qualities in serving Tatiana, a toddler with cerebral palsy. Dave went above and beyond to ensure her foster family had every resource and service she needed. He ordered books, attended local support group meetings and met with local experts so all parties could better understand Tatiana's needs. He provided a voice for her when she couldn't speak for herself. Thanks to Dave, Tatiana lives in a very loving and supportive home where her caregivers make sure that all of her medical needs are met.

Dave's first case involved Steven, a bright and artistic boy who unfortunately had no relatives or family friends who could take custody of him. As it became increasingly clear that Steven would end up in long-term foster care, Dave worked hard to make the transition as easy as possible for Steven. Dave asked his sister-in-law, a children's author, to dedicate a book to Steven and gave him an autographed copy. He also arranged for Steven to spend time with a business colleague, someone he thought Steven could look up to as a role model.

**“Do as much
as you can,
as often as
you can. And,
then do a little
more.”**

In Harris County alone, nearly 5,000 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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Volunteer of the Year **CONTINUED**

With Steven in mind, Dave enthusiastically agreed to participate in Child Advocates' Permanent Managing Conservatorship (PMC) Pilot Program, which seeks to find permanency for children in long-term foster care. Dave was one of the first to take a case in this pilot program. His case resulted in the adoption of a 5-year old girl just a few short weeks ago.

After receiving the award, Dave expressed his thanks and appreciation to all the volunteers who serve along with him.

"Do as much as you can, as often as you can. And, then do a little more," he said.

On behalf of our board, staff and the children you have served, Child Advocates is proud to say "Congratulations Dave!"

JAN MENDENHALL NAMED AS 2012 ROOKIE OF THE YEAR

In 2008, Child Advocates created the Rookie of the Year award to recognize a newer volunteer who shows excellent advocacy skills, understanding and dedication to our mission and possesses the desire and ability to work with all parties.

In only a year and a half, Jan Mendenhall has already served 13 children all over east Texas, ranging from Bryan to Humble to Baytown.

"Nothing is too much for her," says advocacy coordinator Barbra Denniston. "If she didn't know how to do something, she asked, learned, did it and did it well."

Jan is now serving eight siblings who were abused by their stepmother. CPS placed the children with their mother, but she is struggling to care for them and has said she doesn't want them to live with her.

Jan has done everything possible to help make this placement work. She has worked with the mother on assigning chores and implementing order in their home. She helped get beds for the children, she gets prescriptions filled for them and she has spent countless hours with the mother teaching her to keep track of the children's educational and medical

records. Since this case started a year ago, she has maintained relationships with school staff from one school year to the next and was such an asset that teachers reached out to her before school started this August to make sure that she was still their advocate this fall.

Her easygoing and honest nature have allowed her to form productive and pleasant relationships with everyone involved in the case, especially the mother. Judges listen to her as she presents her perspective on the case at every hearing.

She is a huge asset to Child Advocates, and most especially to the children and families she works with. Congratulations Jan, our 2012 Rookie of the Year!



Advocacy Coordinator Barbra Denniston with Jan Mendenhall and her husband, Oniel.

Cameron Childspree

More than 600 of the children we serve arrived in style on the first day of school thanks to the generous sponsors and volunteers behind the Cameron Childspree. Each child was paired with a volunteer personal shopper to select \$100 worth of clothing and shoes for the new school year. The children received a backpack full of school supplies as well.

Thank you to Cameron, The Junior League of Houston, Atwood Oceanics, Target and Spark Energy for your generous financial contributions and for encouraging your employees and members to volunteer. Thank you also to Shipley Do-Nuts for donating 50 dozen donuts for our hungry shoppers.



We received such heartwarming feedback from our volunteers. Here are a few of our favorite stories.

"The young lady that I had the pleasure of assisting was only nine years old. She truly touched my heart. ... She began to tell her life story, why she needed the items that we were shopping for, and how she did not have many things that she could call her own. She was truly grateful." — LaKeisha Melton

"The little girl I had was very excited to shop and knew what she likes. Very polite and cooperative. Mom said they didn't sleep the night before because she was so excited." — Kathleen Brown

"This year I was partnered with a beautiful 4-year-old girl... She was so excited to be headed into Pre-K and had such a happy and vibrant personality. We slowly made our way to the shoes and as we started picking them out I started to take off her shoes. When I did that I noticed that from about her ankles down she had been severely burned. I also noticed that her thighs had squares taken off of them which appeared to be from skin graphs. I truly think my heart skipped a beat when I put everything together in my head. No matter how her injuries were incurred she was an amazing, happy 4-year-old who didn't know any different and didn't think anything was wrong. Her injuries didn't appear to hold her back from anything... As adults we look at so many problems and can't see past them and this wonderful little girl embraced them and went with the flow. I wish I could embrace my own problems with such ease. She made me think about my own life and what is really important."

— Jessica Grundvig

From the CEO

As the year comes to a close, I am proud to say that we are getting so close to meeting our 2012 goals. As you can see on page 9 we've already exceeded our goal of training at least 225 new volunteers. Thank you all for your help meeting these goals.

Thank you also for supporting the 2012 Heroes Society campaign. We are extending the campaign for a bit, so I hope you will consider making a donation or creating a personal fundraising website if you haven't already. Please visit heroes.childadvocates.org for more information. Your gifts make such a difference in the lives of Houston's abused and neglected children.

We've been fortunate this year to hear from several young adults whose lives were changed by Child Advocates. You can read Brandi Bresset's inspirational story on the back cover. We are also excited to welcome Dr. Jun Wei-Behr as our guest speaker at the Angels of Hope Luncheon on December 11. We cannot wait to hear her share the impact her Child Advocates volunteer had on her life. I hope many of you can join us for what is sure to be an amazing afternoon.

The closing of 2012 means the beginning of 2013, with that, we have some changes to our board. I can't tell you How great it has been to work with this year's board chair, Suzie Thomas. She has played an integral role in this year's success and I am thankful for her commitment and support.

I am also pleased to introduce our 2013-14 Board Chair, James Brodnax. James has been a part of the Child Advocates family for many years and is a partner at McConnell, Jones, Lanier and Murphy, LLP. I am thrilled he has signed on to serve as board chair for two years. This two-year tenure for chair will play a key role in the continued success of Child Advocates.

Thank you for everything you do and I hope to see you soon!

Aranya Balvan

Focus on Friends

FRIENDS OF CHILD ADVOCATES

ANGELS OF HOPE

The Angels of Hope Luncheon is right around the corner, and there is still time to purchase your tickets to the most fashionable event of the holiday season.

Friends members and other fashion mavens gathered at co-chair Rosemary Schatzman's beautiful home last month for a party kicking off the luncheon festivities. The bash featured touching remarks by this year's honorees, Kimberly Cotner David and Dolly Dawson Thomas. Rosemary joined Friends Director-At-Large Vanessa Sendukas in lauding these remarkable volunteers for their many years of dedicated service to Child Advocates.

This year's luncheon will be held on December 11 at the Westin Galleria Hotel Grand Ballroom. Neiman Marcus will present a fashion show featuring the Brunello Cucinelli Spring 2013 Collection. We will also hear the powerful testimony of a woman who was served by Child Advocates more than 10 years ago.

Individual tickets are available starting at \$300 and table sponsorships range from \$3,000 to \$15,000. We are also selling tickets for the luncheon's raffle and you do not need to be present to win. We have several amazing prizes, including a \$4,000 Brunello Cucinelli shopping spree at Neiman Marcus. Raffle tickets are available for \$20 or six for \$100.

For more information, please contact Marla at 713.529.1396 x234 or marla.endieveri@childadvocates.org.

"WHY I SERVE"

JESSICA WOOD FRIENDS GOVERNANCE COUNCIL MEMBER



"I first became involved with Child Advocates when I was pregnant with my second child. I was new to Houston and looking for a way to get involved in a good cause yet reluctant to commit time I wasn't sure I would have after my daughter's impending arrival. The Friends of Child Advocates was the perfect answer for me. I soon joined as a lifetime member and began serving on the Friends Governance Council. That

was almost six years ago. Since that time, I have been fortunate enough to meet many of the children that Child Advocates serves and see firsthand how our volunteers positively impact the lives of Houston's disadvantaged, abused and neglected youth. Whether helping with crafts at our annual Easter Egg Hunt, collecting costumes at Halloween, painting nails at our Christmas "spa", wrapping gifts for the foster children we serve or working on a fundraising event, there is a place for everyone at Child Advocates."

Voices

"WHAT MAKES A GOOD COURT APPOINTED ADVOCATE?"



What comes to mind off the top of my head when I think of Child Advocates is compassion, commitment, and a willingness to get involved for the children in our community that may not get a fair shake or a voice in the system when they are abused and/or neglected. A child advocate needs to have those same qualities, along with self-motivation and the resolve to help these children and keep the children's interest in mind amid many competing interests and challenges.

– Pete Kirsch,
Court Appointed Advocate Since 2011



A great advocate will show compassion and love, be brave enough to stand up with a different opinion, and above all have a genuine heart that they allow others to see.

– Jamie Taft,
Court Appointed Advocate Since 2010



Being an advocate to me means bringing hope to children by letting them know we care. Personally it provides me to be a small part of the solution to what many know to be a problem, yet do nothing about.

– Catherine Kellman,
Court Appointed Advocate Since 2007



To me, being an advocate for a child takes a person who has a caring heart and who is mad enough at what these children go through, from no fault of their own, to step up and do something and fight for that child who can't do it themselves.

– Teresa Saucier,
Court Appointed Advocate Since 2011

Snapshots



Volunteers and Child Advocates staff at the Knights of Columbus Council #8096 annual Tamale Sale.



Sephanie Perkins, XXXXX and XXXXX at the Tory Burch shopping event benefiting Child Advocates.



Advocacy Coordinator Joanne Nwaogu with volunteers Kathy Stewart, Shanell Tucker and Mimi Tadesse at the 2012 VAE.



A little superhero, shopping for a cause at Whole Foods Market Giving Day for Child Advocates.

Donor Spotlight

ATWOOD OCEANICS



AtwoodOceanics

We are so excited about our new partnership with Atwood Oceanics

and its extraordinary employee volunteers. The offshore oil and gas drilling company joined the Child Advocates family last year by sponsoring a store full of little back-to-school shoppers for the Cameron Childspre. Their employees served as personal shoppers for the children as they selected \$100 worth of clothing and shoes for the new school year. The company sponsored a store again this year and has agreed to co-sponsor our 2012 Holiday Party as well, where employees will help our children make crafts and play games as they get in the Christmas spirit. Atwood Oceanics has also generously agreed to underwrite our administrative costs for this year's Santa's Wish List program. We'd like to thank the entire Atwood Oceanics team for their generous support. Our children are lucky to have you in their corner!

BOB AND CATHLEEN DAVIS FOUNDATION



Cathleen & Bob on their farm in Chappell Hill with Gary & Billy Jean

Luck was on Child Advocates' side when Bob Davis began looking for a way to give back after building a successful investment management company. An ad for the Houston Children's Festival caught his eye and he decided to learn more about Child Advocates. In the 15 years that followed, Bob and his wife, Cathleen, have supported our cause so generously, both through financial contributions and the

gift of their time. Their gifts individually and through their family foundation have provided court appointed advocates for more than 180 children since 1997. They also have donated a weeklong stay at their gorgeous home in Hawaii to the Pull for Kids auction for the past eight years. It has remained a wildly popular auction item that people look forward to bidding on every year. Bob also serves on the Board of Directors and as a court appointed advocate. Thank you Bob and Cathleen for your incredible support!

CHRISTINE MCMILLAN

When Christine McMillan saw the life-changing impact her parents were having as court appointed advocates, she knew she wanted to support our fight against child abuse. But as a law student and then as a practicing attorney, she didn't have the time to volunteer. Instead, she has demonstrated her commitment to Child Advocates by establishing a monthly recurring gift to our organization. Recurring gifts like Christine's give us a steady, reliable source of income and enable us to plan for the future. They also allow people to make smaller donations grow larger over time, so they ultimately can play a key role in shaping an abused child's future. Thank you, Christine, for your faithful support of our mission.

Thanks Donors

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29-57 CHILDREN FOR A YEAR

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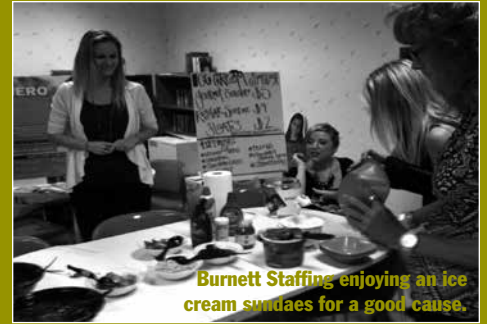
Halliburton 'Team Armageddon'

We are so grateful to Halliburton's top executives who picked Child Advocates as their charity of choice for the annual chili cook-off that marks the beginning of their employee giving campaign. Halliburton employees around the world pledged more than \$3.4 million last year through the company's "Giving Choices" campaign to help charities in their communities. Halliburton matches 10 percent of each contribution and covers the program's administrative fees. Each

team of employees participating in this year's cook-off decorated their booth and wore costumes from their favorite movie. Although "Team Armageddon" didn't win, they gave us a tremendous opportunity to introduce our mission to their generous employees. We also got to judge the chili cook-off at the company's Oak Park campus. Thank you to all who made these great events possible.

SWEET TREATS FOR A SWEET CAUSE

Employees at Burnett Staffing Specialists had a sweet idea to raise money for our 2012 Heroes Society campaign. They hosted an ice cream social for their co-workers, charging a nominal fee for sundaes and root beer floats. They also hosted a baked potato bar and held a raffle to raise money for our kids. All these efforts helped Burnett's team beat their goal of raising at least \$1,700, enough to provide a court appointed advocate for a child for one year. We are so grateful that



Burnett Staffing enjoying an ice cream sundaes for a good cause.

Burnett joined us as a corporate sponsor of this vital campaign.

HIGH SCHOOL ORCHESTRA GIVES BACK

Thank you to the Atascocita High School orchestra – especially to the 2012 senior class – for choosing Child Advocates to be the beneficiary of their annual giving concert. Through the generosity of the orchestra and their supporters, the concert brought donations totaling \$2,500. We couldn't be more thrilled to have the support from this community.

SAVE THE DATE! PULL FOR KIDS C L A S S I C

will be held on

MAY 11, 2013

at the

BAYOU CITY EVENT CENTER

For more information or to secure sponsorships and tables, please contact Kelly Goff at 713.529.1396 ext. 214 or kelly.goff@childadvocates.org.

Special Thanks

ANGELS OF HOPE LUNCHEON - Thank you to Rosemary Schatzman for opening your home for the Angels of Hope kick-off, to Carol Cox with Something Special in Flowers for the beautiful arrangements at the kick-off.

VOLUNTEER APPRECIATION EVENT - Thank you to The Bell Tower on 34th for your beautiful venue and to Who Made the Cake for the delicious cakes.

Bernadette B. Powell, Angie Sherrell, Johnny B. Walker, Paul Comstock Partners, John C. Binick
Tory Burch & Whole Foods Market
Houston Symphony
Houston Astros

Spotlight On ...

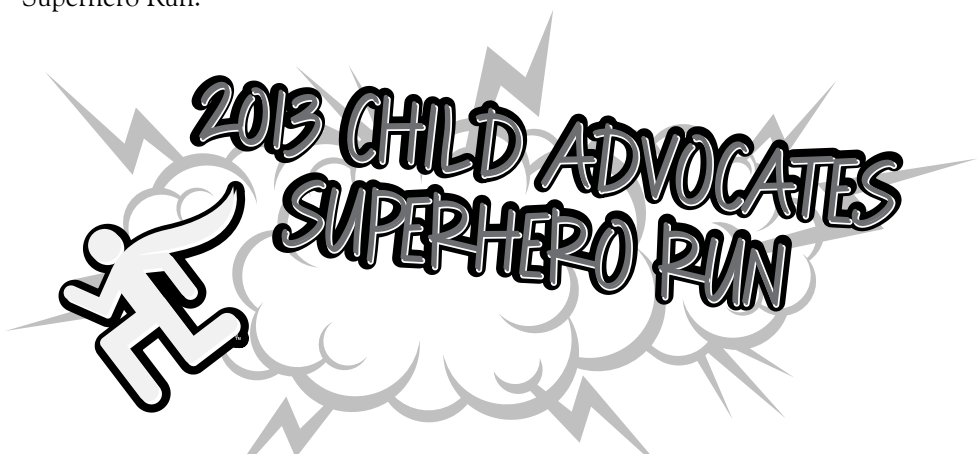
HOLIDAY GIVING CARDS

This holiday season, give a child the gift of hope by making a donation to Child Advocates in honor of your family, co-workers or clients. The lovely greeting cards shown below are available for you to share the news of your gift with the honoree. You may select from two styles of cards: a traditional folded card or small inserts like the ones seen here that may be put inside another card or package. We welcome donations large and small. Cards are available in bulk for companies wishing to make a contribution in lieu of buying client gifts. For more information or to make a gift, please contact Liz at 713-529-1396 x238 or liz.peterson@childadvocates.org.



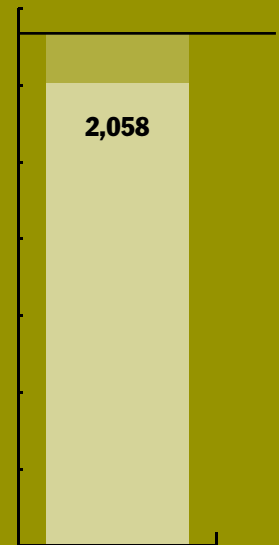
SUPERHERO FUN RUN

Every child needs a hero, but abused children need a superhero! So grab your capes and plan to join us on October 19, 2013 for the first annual Child Advocates Superhero Run.



This family friendly event will include 5K and 1K courses through CityCentre in west Houston. We'd love for everyone to dress as their favorite superhero as we run to raise awareness and funding for our mission to break the cycle of child abuse in Harris County. We are looking for a title sponsor and have many other sponsorship packages available as well. Runners will be able to further our cause by building personalized fundraising websites that they can share with friends and family. We are so excited about this new addition to our annual Heroes Society campaign. For more information, please contact Kelly at 713-529-1396 x214 or kelly.goff@childadvocates.org.

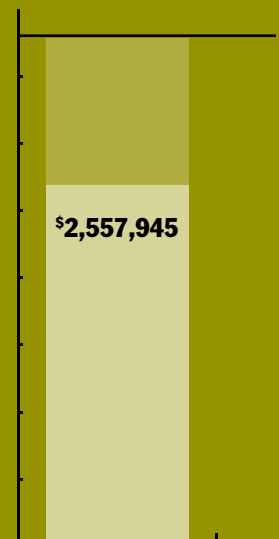
Goal Review



CHILDREN SERVED (GOAL 2,220)
as of 11/1/2012



VOLUNTEERS TRAINED (GOAL 225)
as of 11/1/2012



DOLLARS RAISED (GOAL \$3,779,460)
as of 9/30/2012

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Suzanne Thomas

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Sonya Galvan

Board Voice

JUNE LOHMAN, BOARD MEMBER & COURT APPOINTED ADVOCATE



I GOT INVOLVED WITH CHILD ADVOCATES...

during my 19-year career as community relations manager for Time Warner Cable and Comcast. I was privileged to manage the philanthropic giving for these companies and was introduced to Child Advocates my first year. Throughout the years, I was able to coordinate a significant amount of production and in-kind airtime time for public service announcements aimed at recruiting volunteers and promoting the annual Houston Children's Festival. We also produced a 14-minute recruitment video through the generosity of my former employers. In addition,

sponsoring the Houston Children's Festival gave our cable employees the opportunity to volunteer their time and talents for two days each year and allowed the company to provide entertainment from our cable networks such as Discovery, Nickelodeon and Animal Planet.

Throughout my life, I've been at my best and happiest when volunteering. Child Advocates allowed me the opportunity to serve the needs of those who have few people on their side – the most needy children in our community. I feel blessed to be a part of Child Advocates Inc.

MY GREATEST EXPERIENCE WITH CHILD ADVOCATES HAS BEEN...

to be appointed a court appointed advocate. My heart is overwhelmed to officially serve the needs of children who have been abused and neglected. The responsibility is awesome and scary at times. The recommendations we give to the court are well received and respected by the judges – we must get it right!

While I've only worked two cases, I've learned so much and have the highest regard for the staff. Their guidance, patience, support and kindness is truly invaluable. I look forward to many more cases and years as an advocate.

WHEN NOT BUSY AS A COURT APPOINTED ADVOCATE OR BOARD MEMBER...

my days as filled with quality time with my husband, Jerry, daughter, Amy, and other family members and friends. In addition to serving on committees for other non-profits, I especially enjoy serving as a Big Sister to "my Little," Nancy, a 12-year-old 6th grader. Nancy and I have been "sisters" for the past four years and she has opened my eyes and heart to true love and happiness. She's taught me so much!

Serving on the Child Advocates' board has allowed me the opportunity to see and experience the inner-workings of the organization, its chairman and staff. My confidence in the organization has only increase since beginning my term three years ago. Contributors can feel confident that their monies are spent responsibly and with great care. The goal is serving more children each year and those goals are being accomplished.



There is still time to become a member of the 2012 Heroes Society!
Visit <http://heroes.childadvocates.org> to find out more.

YPC Update

YOUNG PROFESSIONALS FOR CHILDREN

WHAT WE'VE BEEN UP TO...

Fall has been a busy time for members of YPC. We kicked off the season with a social in late September at Blackfinn American Grille and then another at Sorrel Urban Bistro in October. YPC members enjoyed delicious appetizers and happy hour specials exclusively for them and their friends. Guests who attended the social at Sorrel also collected Halloween costumes for our kids. Thank you to both restaurants for providing wonderful evenings.



YPC also hosted a Halloween party for the kids. Over 100 children showed up for a spook-tacular time and enjoyed picking out costumes, playing Halloween games and creating fun crafts. They all left with a costume to use for trick-or-treating. It was a treat to see.

On November 10, we held our 2nd annual Cook-off for Kids at Hughes Hangar on Washington. Thank you to the several hundred supporters who came out and helped make it such a success. A special thanks to our sponsors Silver Eagle Distributors, RBC Capital Markets / RBC Richardson Bar, Grant Thornton, Saint Arnold Brewing Company, BR2 Process Solutions and to our many other individual sponsors.

It wouldn't be a cook-off unless we had some fierce competitors and some amazing judges. Patrons enjoyed chili samplings from BB's, Beaver's, Bernie's Burger Bus, Cyclone Anaya's Mexican Kitchen, Quattro, Sammy's Wild Game, Shade and Sorrel Urban Bistro. The judges had a difficult decision to make and while all were tasty, we could only have one grand prize winner. If you would like to see who the winner was and check out photos from the event, visit our Facebook page at www.facebook.com/caiypc.

LOOKING AHEAD...

We have had a great 2012 and we couldn't have done it without the support of all our YPC members, thank you. We are still planning out our calendar for 2013 but we can assure you that it will be bigger and better than ever before. Watch our website and Facebook for great socials, networking opportunities, children's event and a special mixer in April with CultureMap.

GET INVOLVED WITH YPC!

Know of a company, organization or group that may be interested in hearing about YPC? Let us know, email stacy.senko@childadvocates.org. We'd love to get your friends involved!

Interested in getting in on the fun? Sign up on our website at www.childadvocates.org/ypc and 'like' us on our Facebook fan page: www.facebook.com/caiypc

Happenings

NOVEMBER

15-18 *Theta Charity Antiques Show benefiting Child Advocates* – Hunt for your treasures and know that you're supporting Child Advocates when you find them!

Child Advocates has been selected as a permanent beneficiary of this annual event. The show will take place at the George R. Brown Convention Center from 11 am to 7 pm on November 15, 16 and 17 and from 11 am to 5 pm on November 18.

18 *Rock for Child Advocates* – Enjoy great live rock and metal music at Numbers Night Club starting at 12 pm and going on throughout the day. Proceeds will benefit Child Advocates and the Santa's Wish List program.

DECEMBER

11 *Angels of Hope Luncheon & Fashion Presentation by Neiman Marcus* – Join the Friends of Child Advocates for the fashion event of the holiday season! We will be honoring longtime volunteers and supporters of Child Advocates – Kimberly C. David and Dolly Dawson Thomas.

Led by Luncheon Chairs Rosemary Schatzman and Phyllis Williams, the 2012 luncheon will feature a salute to the honorees, a fashion presentation featuring Brunello Cucinelli's Spring 2013 collection and a special speaker. For more information, please visit our website or contact marla.endieveri@childadvocates.org.

JANUARY

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

19 *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.

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

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www.childadvocates.org

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

SUBTITLE??? STRUGGLING WITH THIS ONE.

As the oldest child of two drug addicted parents, Brandi Bresset was forced to grow-up way too soon. Brandi was 13-years-old when she came into CPS custody but she had been raising her siblings for years. Their home was a wreck with dirty clothes and trashed piled up around the house, spoiled food in the fridge and black mold covering the toilet and tub. They often lived without electricity or water after their parents failed to pay the bills.

This was nearly 15 years ago. Today, Brandi is a wife, a mom and a full-time employee living happily in Oklahoma. She recently reached out to Child Advocates and wanted to thank her court appointed advocate, Barbara. We invited her to share her story at the 2012 Volunteer Appreciation Event and this is just some of what she had to say.

I had a very hard time believing that mom and dad would get sober, much less stay sober. I was scared that life would repeat itself over again. I had their constant drug abuse in the back of my mind. I didn't know how to be only a child, and they didn't know how to be parents. Barbara encouraged me to give them a chance. Once we were all placed back home, Barbara explained to me that I was a beautiful young lady, very head strong and could conquer anything I put my mind to. Her encouragement kept me going and allowed me to never give up. I used to write things down that she would say to me in a diary and read them when I was feeling down or lonely. There was a big part of me that didn't want to return home. I went through a lot of anger, depression and a loss of who I was supposed to be. My siblings didn't know who to obey or who to come to. I couldn't just push them away; I didn't have it in me. Barbara was much like a guardian angel to us.

We made it as a family over time, but I don't believe it could have been done without Barbara's support and dedication to our family. She helped us turn that house we were taken from back into a home. My parents finally were sober and continued to stay that way. They have been sober for over 13 years now. Thank you, Barbara, for standing beside me through it all. I didn't know the outcome and was losing hope but you had faith and kept in your heart that something was going to change. Your kind, soft words gave me so much encouragement then and I still use it to this day. It wasn't easy but I stayed strong, held my head high and kept pushing forward.

Child Advocates truly made a huge impact on me personally and to our family. I could never imagine where my life would be today if a Child Advocate volunteer wouldn't have chosen to be involved with our family. What you all are doing for children is absolutely amazing. You are the rock that gives these young children strength, hope and someone to confide in.

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Ashley Brockette, Editor*

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