



Sariyah with her "forever" mother, Jocelyn.

# Advocate News

HOUSTON'S LEADING VOICE IN THE FIGHT AGAINST CHILD ABUSE

CHILD ADVOCATES, INC.

SPRING 2012

## Saving Sariyah

### A BATTERED CHILD FINDS HOPE AND A "FOREVER" FAMILY

*Foster mother Jocelyn Hattenberger shares in her own words what it meant to have a court appointed advocate on Sariyah's side.*



When I became Sariyah's foster mother, she had 26 broken bones, a feeding tube and various scars over her entire body. She was 2½ months old, but she had already endured a lifetime of abuse. Yet she smiled and lit up the room. This child, who was broken and scarred, was the most beautiful baby with the most radiant smile I had ever seen. At her hospital follow-up appointment, I became physically sick looking at x-ray after x-ray of broken bones, listening to the doctor outline her injuries, and hearing that areas of her brain were dead from a lack of oxygen. I listened in disbelief as I was told that she would probably never walk, talk or eat on her own. Thankfully God had other plans, and my disbelief was justified as her feeding tube came out after only a month. Sariyah met every milestone on time and walked at only 10 months old. She is an amazing miracle.

This case that seemed open-and-shut became intensely confusing as blame was passed back and forth, and soon the criminal case was closed from lack of evidence. No one could figure out who had hurt this precious child. To further complicate things, Sariyah's mother was a child in need of support herself. I feared that justice and protection for this child would never come.

Then I received a call—the saving grace call—that would provide my princess with the protection she deserved and had never been given in her short life. She was receiving the gift of a Child Advocate; the gift of someone to stand up for her rights and advocate for her young life. She was given a voice in a young man named Iann. Iann and his advocacy coordinator showed up for Sariyah at every turn. They came to visitations, spoke up for her

(continued on next page)

**“...they saved  
her future  
and helped  
make her the  
incredible child  
she is today.”**

*In Harris County alone, over 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](http://www.childadvocates.org).*

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## Saving Sariah CONTINUED



**Sariah and her court appointed advocate, Iann, at her first birthday party.**

in court and helped with the communication between myself and the caseworker. Iann even joined the celebration of her first birthday.

Although Sariah's mother completed her service plan, she did not have stable housing or a steady source of income to support Sariah. There was a disagreement about whom she should live with on a permanent basis. Eventually, the case was referred to mediation to help

determine the best placement for Sariah. Iann and his advocacy coordinator championed Sariah's case for hours during mediation. In an unconventional move, it was decided that I should be given permanent legal custody of Sariah with her mother getting visitation rights.

Without a doubt, I can say that without Sariah's advocate heroes this would not have been the outcome. Without Iann fighting for her, Sariah's life and mine would have been drastically different. Instead, Sariah was given the opportunity to live permanently in the home she had known since she was 2½ months old. She now has stability and a family who loves her to the moon and back. Sariah also gets to have a relationship with her biological mother, whom she sees every other weekend and talks to during the week.

Sariah is now 4 years old. She has not only survived her horrific start in life but thrived. She is an amazingly joyful, caring, and funny little girl who brings so much happiness to our family. Child Advocates not only gave Sariah a voice but also saved her future and helped make her the incredible child she is today. And for that I will be forever grateful.



**Sariah is 4 years old now and is thriving in her new home.**

# 20<sup>th</sup> Annual Pull for Kids Classic



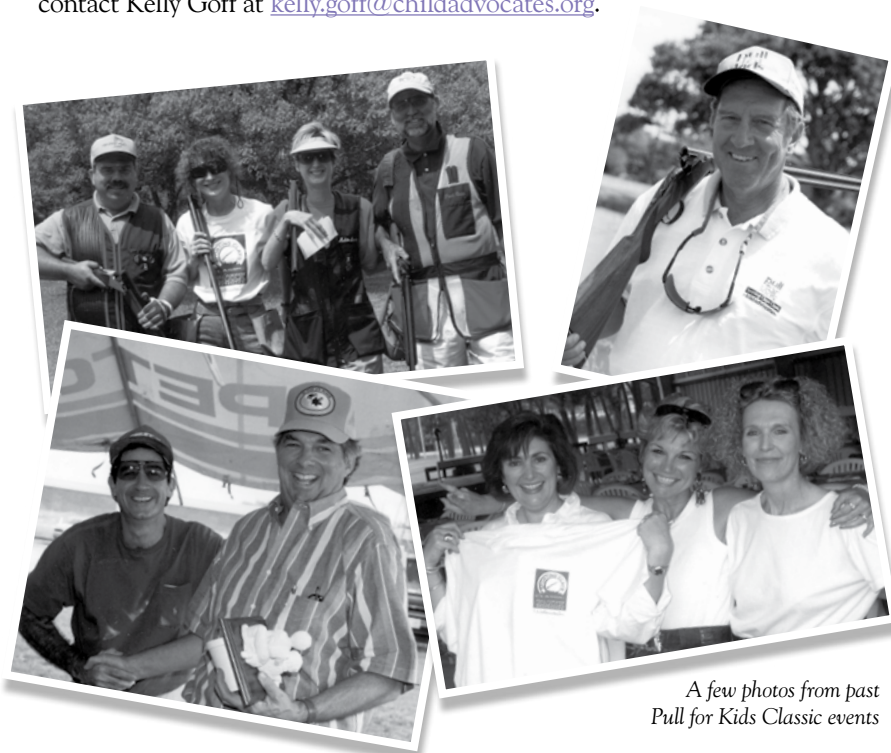
Join us on May 12 in 'The Emerald City' as we celebrate the 20<sup>th</sup> annual Pull for Kids Classic honoring Apache Corporation. Our largest annual fundraiser will begin with a daytime sporting clays tournament for individual and corporate teams at the American Shooting Centers. Then we'll follow the yellow brick road to the Bayou City Event Center for dinner, dancing and both a live and silent auction featuring hundreds of exciting items.

The Pull has grown and changed in many ways since its creation by David Rubenstein, husband of Child Advocates founder Marty Braniff.

The first event raised \$50,000 with a party at the Houston Polo Club and a sporting clays shoot the following day. Outback Steakhouse provided catering for several years, and the jalapeño-eating contest was always a highlight.

Since then, parties have been held in an airplane hangar, on the field at Reliant Stadium, and at the Methodist Training Center (aka the Texans' bubble) next door. We've partied like rock stars at the Verizon Wireless Theater and slipped down a giant slide at our Birthday Bash. There have been some hiccups, too, like the time it got hotter than a Louisiana swamp after the air conditioner failed right before our Cajun-themed event.

Over the years, we've raised nearly \$7 million for Harris County's most severely abused and neglected children. With your support, we hope to raise another \$650,000 this year—enough to provide advocates for 375 children. To learn more about participating in this fun-filled event, please visit our website or contact Kelly Goff at [kelly.goff@childadvocates.org](mailto:kelly.goff@childadvocates.org).



A few photos from past Pull for Kids Classic events

## From the CEO

Hi all,

It is hard to believe May is almost here. So far, 2012 has proven to be a very busy year.

On March 31 and April 1 we had an amazing time at the Houston Children's Festival. Every year the festival continues to grow. This year there were 10 family adventure areas and six stages of fun with over 300 activities. Over 47,000 people attended the festival. While we are still waiting on the final numbers regarding dollars raised, I am confident in saying that this event was a huge success.

On May 12, the Bayou City Event Center will be transformed into 'The Emerald City' for our 20<sup>th</sup> annual Pull for Kids Classic. The Pull for Kids committees have been hard at work and it is sure to be a magical night as we enjoy dinner, dancing and hundreds of live and silent auction items in a fun and casual atmosphere. We've had tremendous support at several pre-Pull events but there is still more work to be done. If you can't attend, we'd love to have your help filling the Wine Pull wall with over 600 bottles. For more information, visit our web site at [www.childadvocates.org](http://www.childadvocates.org).

I am pleased to report that we have trained over 100 new court appointed advocates during our first three classes of the year. That means we are nearly halfway to our goal for new volunteers and it's only the first quarter! Most of these volunteers have already been assigned to cases or will be in the next few months. We currently have over 500 active volunteers serving children.

Most importantly, we have served approximately 300 new children so far this year. This puts us at nearly 1,400 children served year-to-date and well on our way to reaching our 2012 goal of 2,200 children. We also launched a PMC pilot program for children who are in long-term foster care. More details on this program and what it means for many children in state custody can be found on page 11.

I hope you'll take a few moments to read through this spring edition of *Advocate News*. It is a great opportunity to learn about the heartfelt determination of our volunteers and the many ways in which you and others can get involved.

Thank you for your continued support!

*Araya Galvan*



# Focus on Friends

FRIENDS OF CHILD ADVOCATES

## 2011 ANGELS OF HOPE LUNCHEON



More than 600 of Houston's heavenly ladies – and quite a few stellar gentlemen – joined Chairs Lucinda Loya and Stephanie Perkins at the 2011 Angels of Hope Luncheon and Fashion Presentation. This event, sponsored and hosted by Neiman Marcus, raised more than \$350,000 for Child Advocates! At the event, German luxury designer Rena Lange showcased their 2012 Spring Collection. We also honored Linda Messner for supporting Child Advocates

for nearly 10 years. Kyle Howard spoke about his experiences as a court appointed advocate and how, with the help of another court appointed advocate, he adopted a child who was in foster care. The next luncheon is on December 11, 2012. Save the date as you won't want to miss it!

## FRIENDS MEMBERSHIP DRIVE

The Friends of Child Advocates are always looking for new members. "Friends" play an important role in improving the lives of Houston's abused and neglected children. Members are invited to volunteer at children's events and fundraisers throughout the year. Volunteer opportunities are available at times that can accommodate any busy schedule. We'd like to thank Friends President Caroline Finkelstein for opening her lovely home and hosting a lunchtime membership social on March 1. At the social, Chanda Cashen shared a moving testimony about her work as a court appointed

advocate. Welcome to all new members who joined that day!

For information on Friends membership, contact Marla at 713.529.1396 x234 or [marla.endieveri@childadvocates.org](mailto:marla.endieveri@childadvocates.org).

# Snapshots



More than 45 volunteers graduated from Advocacy University and were sworn in as court appointed advocates in January



Members of St. Martin's Episcopal Church decorating stockings for our Santa's Wish List Program



Nolan Lehmann, Bill Livesay, David Baird and Jeff Thomas at the Pull for Kids kickoff in February



Cheering on our runners at our Chevron Houston Marathon Hoopla Station

# Voices



## MARCUS CHERY VOLUNTEER SINCE 2009

Marcus' commitment to Child Advocates started in 2001, when he was in high school and was too young to become a court appointed advocate. He raised money for

Child Advocates by selling wristbands at school during Child Abuse Prevention month. He kept in touch with our CEO through letters for many years, always explaining his passion for our mission.

December 22, 2004

Dear Sonya Galvan  
Greetings! I know that this letter may reach you after the holidays, but I would like to take the time to say congratulations for 20 years of being the voice for abused children. It gives me the greatest pleasure of knowing that the donations that I send are making a difference in speaking up for abused children who might otherwise be lost in the system and guiding them into safe environments where they can thrive.

My wish for the upcoming new year for Child Advocates is that you all can be blessed financially, with more than enough trained volunteers, and most of all to continue to create a legacy for the future. ... On a personal note, I would like to know more of what I can do to support Child Advocates.

Sonya, keep up the legacy you are making with Child Advocates.

Today, his passion to help children have a better outcome in life continues to be seen in his volunteerism. We recently asked him to tell us more about why he volunteers at Child Advocates.

*"As a Court Appointed volunteer, I must say that it is a true pleasure to volunteer with Child Advocates. Volunteering here ensures that I am making a difference in a child's life while I am serving as guardian ad litem (GAL).*

*From researching to going out to visit a child I am making a big impact. My favorite moment as a GAL is when I worked a case, and each time my little one would have something for me to mail out for her, for example, a letter to her staff pen pal at her former residential treatment center that took up extra time with her and shared positive things with her. The level of trust and respect that the children extend to a total stranger is amazing. I am truly blessed to say that I am a volunteer with Child Advocates. This is one organization that while volunteering you are really making a difference, and you are able to see it every day!"*

# Donor Spotlight

## JACOB GREEN CELEBRITY GOLF CLASSIC



Jacob Green is a lot of things. An Aggie. An all-American. A first-round pick in the NFL draft. He's also a hero to the abused and neglected children we serve. Through his annual Celebrity Golf Classic, the former Seattle Seahawk raises thousands of dollars a year to provide court appointed advocates for children who might otherwise fall through the cracks in the child welfare system. Child Advocates is proud to be the beneficiary of this amazing event, which also features a gala on the eve of the golf tournament.

Thank you, Jacob, for your generous support of our organization!

## JACK AND ELLIE SWEENEY AND THE HOUSTON CHRONICLE



After raising two children with her husband, Jack, Ellie Sweeney knew she still had plenty of love to give. She found a way to share that love by helping those who need it most: abused and neglected children. In her 14 years as a court appointed advocate, Ellie has committed

more than 1,400 hours to ensuring 21 children had a voice before the courts and hope for a future free from abuse.

She has contributed countless additional hours in her 13 years as a member and former chair of our Board of Directors. She is also a longtime member of our Program and Development Committees and the Friends of Child Advocates, and she previously chaired the Friends' Angels of Hope Luncheon and Fashion Presentation and the annual children's Holiday Party.



Jack and Ellie's generous contributions to Child Advocates have provided court appointed advocates for more than 50 children since 1996.

Their impact has been

magnified by the financial support of the Houston Chronicle, where Jack recently became chairman after 11 years as president and publisher. The newspaper's support of the Angels of Hope Luncheon and the Pull for Kids Classic has allowed us to serve approximately 75 children over the past 20 years. Thank you Jack and Ellie for all you have done for us!



# Thanks Donors



**THANK YOU TO ALL THE DONORS WHO CONTRIBUTED TO  
THE 2011 HEROES SOCIETY ANNUAL CAMPAIGN.  
YOUR DONATIONS SERVED MORE THAN 125 CHILDREN.**

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# Doing Something

## CROCHETING FOR KIDS

Julie Dillon was introduced to Child Advocates through her employer, Spark Energy. After hearing about our mission, she knew that she wanted to do something special for our kids.

Julie used her crocheting talents (with some support from her little helper pictured with her) to help deck out some of our littlest kids in one-of-a-kind, hand-made caps. We know these crocheted caps

will become a hit with our caregivers and the children we serve.

Thank you Julie for giving such a beautiful and unique gift to our kids!





# YPC Update

YOUNG PROFESSIONALS FOR CHILDREN

## WHAT WE'VE BEEN UP TO...

YPC kicked off the year on February 9 with a three-course Valentine's dinner at Felix 55. We mixed and mingled while sharing our ideas and excitement about the year to come. Special thanks to Felix 55 for letting us host the social at the restaurant and for serving amazing food! On March 24, we hosted a roller skating party for our kids, including a DJ, races, glow bracelets, and other activities. It was a great "wheels on" experience for members to interact with the kids. YPC members also volunteered at Child Advocates' Kids Korral section at the Houston Children's Festival. We put on our western gear and went out for a boot scootin' good time.

On April 11, Painting with a Twist hosted a "Painting with a Purpose" social for YPC members and their friends. We are so grateful for the studio's generous donation of 75% of the night's proceeds.

## GET INVOLVED WITH YPC!

Know of a company, organization or group that may be interested in hearing about YPC? Let us know by e-mailing [stacy.senko@childadvocates.org](mailto: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](http://www.childadvocates.org/ypc) and 'Like' us on our **NEW** Facebook fan page: [www.facebook.com/caiypc](http://www.facebook.com/caiypc)



# Happenings

## MAY

- 12** *20<sup>th</sup> annual Pull for Kids Classic* – Meet us at 'The Emerald City' for what is sure to be our most spectacular Pull for Kids to date. For information visit: [www.childadvocates.org/pull-for-kids-classic](http://www.childadvocates.org/pull-for-kids-classic).

## JUNE

- 16** *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](http://www.childadvocates.org).

## AUGUST

- 11** *Cameron Childspree* – Save the date for this year's Childspree as we head back to Target to help over 600 children get ready to go back to school. For more information, please contact [specialprojects@childadvocates.org](mailto:specialprojects@childadvocates.org).

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

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HELP US FILL THE WINE PULL WALL  
AT THE 2012 PULL FOR KIDS CLASSIC.

## DONATE A BOTTLE OF WINE!

Minimum value of \$25, please. For more information visit [www.childadvocates.org](http://www.childadvocates.org) and click on the pull for kids button.

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## JANE DABNEY, BOARD MEMBER



**IN MY PROFESSIONAL LIFE...** I'm an Executive Director with UBS Investment Banking. We offer capital raising and financial advisory services globally to oil and gas companies.

### MY CHILD ADVOCATES BOARD ROLES ARE...

I currently serve on the Board of Directors and the Nominating and Governance Committee. I served on the Advisory Board prior to joining the Board of Directors, and I love being a part the Pull for Kids

Auction Committee each year. I have been involved with Child Advocates since 2007, when I first became a court appointed advocate.

**I AM INVOLVED WITH CHILD ADVOCATES, INC. BECAUSE...** I first learned about Child Advocates when my husband and I were invited by Chris Champion, then an Advisory Board member, to attend the Pull for Kids evening party in 2006 as guests at his table. I was very moved by everything I heard and read that night, and I attended an information meeting soon afterward to learn more. I later joined the Friends of Child Advocates and even though my work schedule was frenetic, I decided to attend Advocacy University. Over multiple sessions, I finally became a court appointed advocate.

Today, I am even more passionate about Child Advocates, though my work schedule seems even more frenetic. I now focus on raising awareness, fundraising and volunteering for special events. I am proud to have persuaded many people each year to either become court appointed advocates or support our goal by volunteering or donating in different ways. I continue to be inspired by all the people who help to make this such a fantastic organization.

**WHEN I AM NOT VOLUNTEERING FOR CHILD ADVOCATES...** I enjoy spending time with my husband, Stephen, and our two children – Ethan (13) and Emma (6). My favorite activities usually involve my immediate and extended family and close friends, all of whom I love dearly.

# Special Thanks

**ANGELS OF HOPE LUNCHEON** - Thank you to the Westin Galleria for hosting the luncheon; Neiman Marcus Houston for hosting the luncheon and fashion presentation; Brunswick Press for printing the invitations and programs; Anthony Luciano Custom Handbags, The Barfield Collection, Deville Fine Jewelry, Neiman Marcus Houston/Rena Lange, Omega Watches and RéVive Skincare for donating raffle items.

**SANTA'S WISH LIST** - Many, many thanks to the 500+ individuals and corporations who sponsored children or held toy drives. Thank you also to Mr. Steve Gibson for donating the warehouse space.

**CHILDREN'S HOLIDAY PARTY** - Thank you to Enterprise Holdings and Spark Energy for sponsoring the 2011 party; and to Chuck Codrington and Whataburger for donating cookies.

We would also like to extend a special thank you to Mr. and Mrs. Kenny Baldwin, Barnes & Noble Booksellers, Buffalo Specialties, Mr. & Mrs. David Hankinson, the Houston Dynamo and Spark Energy. Your special donations provided brighter days for our children!



# Spotlight On ...

## PMC PILOT PROGRAM

Approximately 100 children in long-term foster care will be assigned court appointed advocates over the next two years through a pilot program we launched this January. Generously underwritten by the Houston Endowment and the Baxter Trust, the pilot will study the best way to serve these vulnerable children.

We have traditionally focused on serving children in the early stages of the child welfare system with the hope that our intervention would prevent them from ending up in permanent managing conservatorship, also known as PMC or long-term foster care. Helping children in the early stages of their cases will still be our primary focus, but we also know there are children in long-term foster care who need our help.

Volunteers on PMC cases will advocate for each child's educational, medical and psychological needs just as they would for any other child we serve. They will also search for adults who have played a significant role in the child's life and will help renew that relationship if appropriate. We believe this will give some children the chance for a lifelong relationship with an adult, while other children will find permanent homes. We will also be studying a new roundtable model for hearing PMC cases in the three participating courts that we hope will improve outcomes for the children served.

The pilot will run through the fall of 2013. The results will be analyzed to determine whether and how we should expand this program.

Thank you to the funders, volunteers and Program Committee members who have made this pilot possible! And thank you to Judges Judy Warne, Sheri Dean and Mike Schneider for allowing us to launch the pilot in your courts. We are excited to see so many lives changed as a result of this effort.

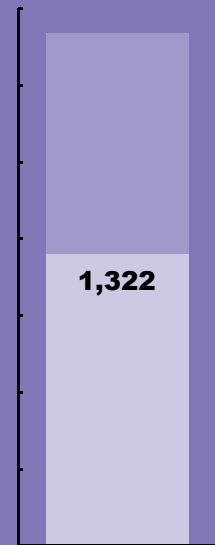
## HOUSTON CHILDREN'S FESTIVAL

On March 31 and April 1 we gathered downtown for the Houston Children's Festival, presented by Baker Hughes. This year we had a great time in the 'Kids Korral.' With our amazing volunteers on hand, little visitors got to make cowboy vests, have their faces painted, ride a 'bucking bull' and of course walk away with balloons. We loved getting to see the smiles on all the faces that came our way.

Outside the 'Korral' were six stages filled with great entertainment and learning experiences for the entire family. It was a wonderful weekend. Thank you again to all our sponsors and volunteers. We couldn't do it without you!

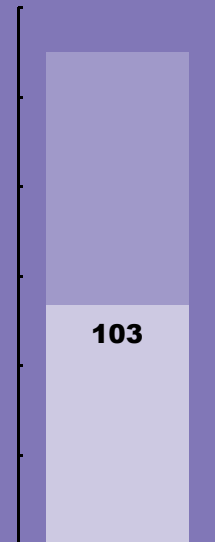


# Goal Review



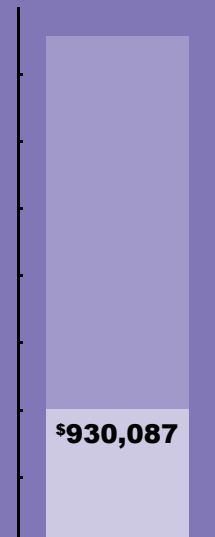
**CHILDREN SERVED (GOAL 2,220)**

*as of 03/31/2012*



**VOLUNTEERS TRAINED (GOAL 225)**

*as of 03/31/2012*



**DOLLARS RAISED (GOAL \$3,779,460)**

*as of 3/31/2012*



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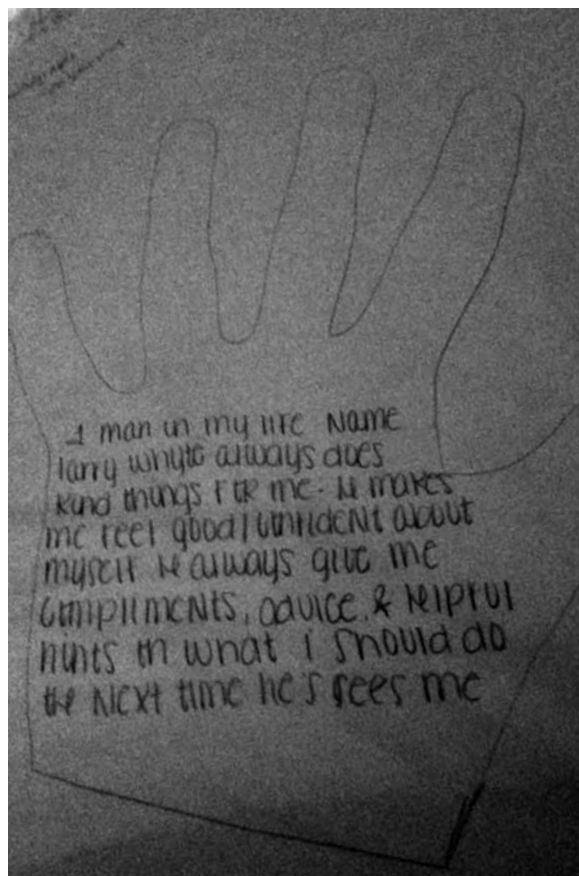
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## OUR MISSION

*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

## A TEENAGER DEDICATES HER SCHOOL PROJECT TO HER COURT APPOINTED ADVOCATE



Anna was 12 years old when she came into CPS custody. In the past several years, she has been in six different foster homes and seen caseworkers come and go. But one thing that has always remained constant is her court appointed advocate, Larry Whyte.

Recently, Anna was given a class assignment where she had the opportunity to write about Larry.

*A man in my life name Larry Whyte always does kind things for me. He makes me feel good/confident about myself. He always give me compliments, advice & helpful hints on what I should do the next time he's sees me.*

Anna is about to turn 16 and still requires extensive therapy for her emotional well-being. Her case is anything but simple, yet even though Larry has a busy work schedule he never misses a visit with her. His constant support and words of wisdom have helped Anna grow as person and think about her future – a future that is remarkably brighter thanks to her court appointed advocate.

*Larry Whyte has been a court appointed advocate since 2005 and served 18 children. The child's name has been changed to protect her identity.*

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