



2013 James A. Gwinn Volunteer of the Year, Eric Hodnefield with advocacy coordinator, Sherri Everett

Advocate News

HOUSTON'S LEADING VOICE IN THE FIGHT AGAINST CHILD ABUSE

CHILD ADVOCATES, INC.

FALL 2013

2013 Volunteer of the Year Awarded

A NIGHT OF CELEBRATION AND HONORS FOR OUR 2013 JAMES A. GWINN OUTSTANDING VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR, ERIC HODNEFIELD

Being a court appointed advocate is no easy task. Any advocate can tell you that. What they will also tell you is that knowing that you are helping a child in need outweighs any challenge or task that stands in their way.

Eric Hodnefield, Child Advocates' 2013 James A. Gwinn Outstanding Volunteer of the Year, is no exception. Accepting his award on November 7 at the Volunteer Appreciation Event, Eric said, "I think I always get more out of this [being an advocate] than they [the children served] do."

Eric has been a court appointed advocate for eight years, and in this time he has completed nine cases and served twelve children. He has purposefully chosen to work with challenging children – children who have behaviors that prevents them from being placed in traditional foster homes. According to his advocacy coordinator, Sherri Everett, he has never shied away from cases where siblings were in separate placements and he has been known to take on multiple cases at a time. Throughout his tenure with us, Eric has impacted many, including now 17-year-old, Chris.

In August of 2009, Chris and his then 16-year-old sister, Haley, were kicked out of their home and living with their maternal grandmother. Their parents had a history of drug and alcohol abuse and were physically violent with each other as well as with Chris and Haley. Their maternal grandmother, an active alcoholic, had Chris arrested after a altercation occurred. His grandmother filed for a protective order. During the court hearing where the protective order was heard, the Judge made a referral to CPS and Chris and Haley were immediately brought into foster care.

Chris' mother had been arrested three times for assault and she refused to complete her court ordered services in order to regain custody of her children. Their father was currently in jail for assaulting a family member, his 14th arrest since Haley was born. This family was no stranger to CPS, in fact, this was their 11th referral since 1996.

In less than two months of Eric working this case, Haley ran away and Chris had been moved four times and was living in a residential treatment center. To say that this was going to be a challenging case was an understatement. Luckily, Eric was there.

Not only did Eric find Haley when she ran away, but he helped her get into a substance abuse treatment center and supported her as she stabilized. He was also able to locate the children's oldest sibling. Through this connection, all three

(continued)

“His sacrifice of time and energy towards these kids has been inspiring – even for me.”

In Harris County alone, nearly 5,000 children languish in foster care because of life-threatening abuse & 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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2013 Volunteer of the Year

children began a healthy sibling relationship.

Eric saw that Chris still needed more. He was failing in school, aggressive, abusing drugs and refused to acknowledge how bad his home environment had been. He wanted to go home, but the court terminated parental rights and Chris and Haley were placed in the Permanent Managing Conservatorship of the state.

Four years into the case, Chris has been in nine different placements and Eric never missed a visit! He has followed Chris to Spring, Woodville, Tomball, Bryan, Cypress, Baytown, Oyster Creek and New Waverly.

Eric fights to have Chris present at every court hearing. He realizes that it is in Chris' best interest to understand how vital his role in the process and wants Chris to learn how to advocate for himself. Eric's efforts have not gone unnoticed in the 257th court and by Judge Judy Warne. When asked about Eric she had this to say, "This case was a difficult one because the parents simply didn't care very much. The children were accustomed to being let down by every adult they encountered. This meant that this young man was extremely hard to gain the trust of and get close to. [Eric] was not only able to do both, but he was able to get this young man in a posture of actually having goals in his life and a plan for a future that was doable. We don't have many success stories on this docket, but this is one of them and it is because of the Child Advocate."

County attorney, Richard Hipp went on to say this about Eric, "I believe he has been instrumental in showing these kids how to be an adult through being an excellent role model. His sacrifice of time and energy towards these kids has been inspiring – even for me. I've been handling CPS cases for over 10 years and this is the best match for a kid I have ever seen."

This year, Chris' case was transferred to an intensive unit within CPS. His CPS caseworker visits him weekly. She said this about Eric, "Having an advocate like him working the case is invaluable. He has been on the case since the start so his information about Chris and his history is extraordinarily helpful. He is a great asset on this case and is always diligent about what is happening and what is going to happen next."

After countless hours of sorting through documents, Eric was able to locate Chris' paternal grandparents. He brought this information to the attention of CPS and Chris was able to reconcile a relationship with them.

Haley completed high school and is drug free. Eric helped her get into a fictive kinship placement* where she stayed until she successfully aged out of care. The oldest brother, is engaged to be married and he and his fiancé just welcomed a new baby boy. Eric continues to fight for Chris to have contact with his siblings and because of his work, hopefully Chris can spend Christmas this year with his brother and meet his nephew for the first time. Chris is currently in a structured and supervised placement where he is earning his GED and learning a trade. He recognizes that his life is drastically different because of his advocate. Chris would describe his advocate as "a cool dude" and someone with a "big heart". Chris has even said that Eric was the only person he could depend on.

Eric is an inspiration to all of us at Child Advocates. He is fully committed to the work that he does and is hopeful about the future of our children. On behalf of our board, advisory board, staff and the children you have served, thank you for investing the last eight years of your life fighting against child abuse.

*Fictive kinship placement refers to a placement with someone who is not blood related but has played a significant role in the child's life. **The children's names have been changed to protect their identity.

2013 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.



When James Frankowski completed training and took on his first case in February 2012, he knew he wanted to make a difference but he had no idea what he was in for. At his initial meeting with Brandon Drake, his advocacy coordinator, he was informed that one of the two boys on this case would probably not survive, but James didn't waiver and decided this was the case for him.

In just over a year and a half, James has spent over 800 hours working to help these two boys

have the best placement and lives possible – including sitting in on a three week jury trial. He has become the main point person on this case and goes above and beyond in making sure that anyone who is involved in the boys' lives are completely up to speed and that all doctors, teachers and therapists know exact details of their progress.

James has become such a constant in these boys' lives during this trying time. Not only does he frequently visit the boys at their placements, but you can even see him cheering on the side lines at their soccer games and sitting next them at doctor visits.

Today, we are happy to say that the little boy, who was initially thought to be terminal, is now healthy, happy and well on his way to enjoying his childhood – thanks in part to James' excellent communication and determination.

James' huge heart and commitment is invaluable to Child Advocates, and most importantly to the children he has served. Congratulations James, our 2013 Rookie of the Year! We can't wait to see the lives you touch in the upcoming years.

Thank You Bernie!

For over 22 years, Bernie Powell has been a champion for abused and neglected children. She has served more children as an advocate than any other volunteer in our history, totaling 182 children! This year marks Bernie's last case, and while she is retiring from the role as a court appointed advocate, we hope to see her and her husband, Ed, around at events from time to time.

Bernie will be forever ingrained into Child Advocates. She was the first winner of the James A. Gwinn Volunteer of the Year award, has been nominated and won several community volunteer awards, and is the namesake for our planned giving campaign, *The Bernie Powell Legacy Society*.

Bernie, we can't thank you enough for your commitment and passion to Child Advocates, you have left a mark in our hearts, thank you!



From the CEO

Hello everyone,

What an incredible fall! Not only did we send our kids back to school in style with the Cameron Childspeer, but we held our first ever Superhero Run and we celebrated you—our dedicated court appointed advocates. Plus, we had several other events scattered throughout. To say it has been busy would be an understatement.

The Superhero Run was an amazing success and you can read about it more in the coming pages, but I want to thank all of the sponsors, volunteers and runners. Seeing so many superheroes in one location was a sight that I won't forget and it has me looking forward to the next one.

On November 7, we gathered at the Minute Maid Park for our annual Volunteer Appreciation Event. I loved getting to see so many of you and especially enjoyed celebrating your work and dedication to our organization. I hope you take a moment to read about this year's award winners, Eric Hodnefield and James Frankowski.

Every year we set three major goals for Child Advocates – children served, volunteers trained and dollars raised. While I wish I could say we have already met or exceeded these goals, that is not the case. We are still just shy of hitting them. No matter what you can do, whether it is taking one more case or giving a few dollars, please know that we truly appreciate your contributions.

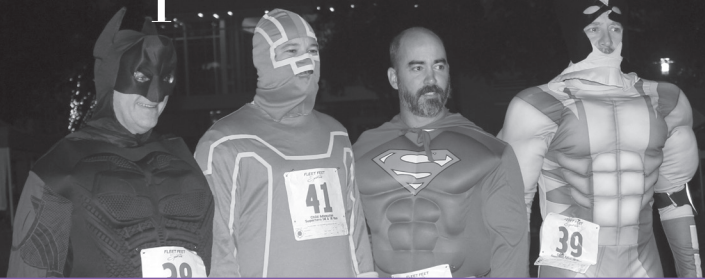
As we look ahead towards the end of the year and to 2014, let me remind you of all the things still to come. We have several events coming through the remainder of the year including the Angels of Hope Luncheon and Santa's Wishlist, just to name a couple, and we will be kicking off the new year with the Chevron Houston Marathon Run for a Reason Charity Program.

I am also excited to say that we will be celebrating our 30th anniversary in 2014! We will have several things in store to mark this occasion throughout the coming year.

Thank you again for all you do and happy holidays!

Angela Galvan

Snapshots



Costume contest winner at the First annual Superhero Run, held on October 19 at CityCentre Houston.



Rosie Flores, Millie Cerda, Monica Bernal and Lee Beckman at the 2013 Volunteer Appreciation Event.



Teresa Phillips, Hubert Phillips III, Martha Gremillion and Quana Smith at the 2013 Volunteer Appreciation Event.



Children enjoyed crafts at the YPC Halloween Party.

Voices

**"AS TENURED COURT APPOINTED ADVOCATE,
WHAT KEEPS YOU GOING?"**



Bertha Cabello,
Court Appointed
Advocate
Since 2007

"What keeps me going is knowing that my advocacy helps give the child a voice and provides them with some comfort during a very uncertain and sometimes scary period of time. By focusing on what's in the best interest of the child, I know I am helping them be the best they can be for the long-term. Whether it's for a few months, or a few years, I know I have made a positive difference in his or her life."



Adele Countryman
Court Appointed
Advocate
Since 2008

"My experience as a Child Advocate began in November of 2008. My first case was so interesting. The need for an advocate was very obvious. I felt that my contribution to helping the children was very gratifying. I have found this to be true with each subsequent case I have been assigned. The children have taught me that what they want and need is love, security and happy home. All efforts toward that goal furthers my commitment to working as a Child Advocate. The relationships I have developed and the love of the children have blessed me abundantly."



Patty Legler,
Court Appointed
Advocate
Since 2012

"When a child has been helped into a situation to live a fulfilling and productive life."

Focus on Friends

FRIENDS OF CHILD ADVOCATES

2013 ANGELS OF HOPE LUNCHEON KICK-OFF



Friends members, co-chairs Joy Posoli, Nancy Thorington and Lynda Lighthouse Transier (who attended in spirit), welcomed more than 40 of Houston's fashionistas to kick off the 2013 Angels of Hope Luncheon with an unforgettable night of food and drinks at Corner Table Restaurant. Thanks to help from board member, Sheryl Androphy, Darla Lexington and Chef Bruce Molzan agreed to generously underwrite this party that featured touching remarks by co-chairs Nancy and Joy, celebrating the remarkable years of dedicated service by honoree Hildegard Ballard.

It is not too late to buy tickets to this year's luncheon on December 3 at the Westin Galleria Hotel Grand Ballroom. Neiman Marcus will present a fashion show featuring the Roland Mouret Spring 2014 Collection. Individual tickets are available starting at \$300 and table sponsorships

range from \$3,000 to \$20,000. For more information, please contact Marla at 713-529-1396 x234 or marla.endieveri@childadvocates.org.

Luncheon raffle tickets are also on sale now and you need not be present to win. There are several amazing prizes, including a \$4,000 Roland Mouret shopping spree at Neiman Marcus. Raffle tickets are available for \$50 or six for \$250. Contact Marla to buy your ticket.

NEW FRIENDS OF CHILD ADVOCATES' PRESIDENT



Current Friends president,
Caroline Finkelstein with
President-elect, Tracy Eklund

We want to thank Caroline Finkelstein for her two years of service as President of the Friends of Child Advocates. Caroline's passion for enriching the lives of the children is an inspiration and we are honored to have had her enthusiastic leadership. Another outstanding volunteer, Tracy Eklund, is ready to accept the reins of Friends President in January 2014. Tracy currently serves on the Advisory Board, Development Committee and was the Chair of a very successful 2012 Pull for Kids.

IN OTHER NEWS...

Some exciting changes to our current Friends membership are coming, allowing us to evolve and grow. Our membership directory will be 'going green' and become completely accessible on a secure website by early 2014. For information on Friends membership, contact Marla at 713-529-1396 x234.

Donor Spotlight

CORNERBROOK DEVELOPMENT & GEORGE KALEH



Cornerbrook Development and George Kaleh have a long history of partnering with Child Advocates, generously supporting us since 1999. George first became involved with Child Advocates when he decided to donate a portion of the proceeds from every



townhome he sold. George now actively supports us through the Pull for Kids Classic, Santa's Wishlist, our annual Heroes Society campaign, and most recently, our successful Superhero Run. An Advisory Board Member, George says he continues to support Child Advocates, because "without us, they [the children] don't have a chance." George also supports us in other ways — George and members of his team from Cornerbrook Development get into the holiday spirit every year by helping us build bicycles and wraps presents for the children we serve. Thank you George for continuing to champion our fight against child abuse!

CHARLES AND MELISSA DAVIS FOUNDATION

The Charles and Melissa Davis Foundation has had a profound impact on improving the lives of Houston's neediest residents through their focused efforts on organizations serving abused children and women, health, and law enforcement. Founded in 1998 by Charles and Melissa Davis, Charles and Melissa pride themselves on being native Texans — Charles' father was a Texas Ranger and Charles later established Houston's successful Davis Chevrolet dealership in 1959. A philanthropic family, Charles and Melissa's son, Jay Davis (who currently operates Davis Chevrolet), served as a Child Advocates' court appointed advocate in the early 2000s. After hearing about the "hard work" it took to serve each child, Charles and Melissa have generously supported Child Advocates through their foundation since 2001, helping us to serve over 34 abused and neglected children.

Thanks Donors

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Coming February 2014!

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Doing Something

WEST UNIVERSITY ELEMENTARY SHARES JOY WITH KIDS IN NEED



We are so grateful to the students, teachers and parents at West University Elementary for their incredible donations.

When volunteer Laura Torgerson told us that Child Advocates was selected to be the school's service project for the month, we had no idea what that would really entail. The school children were

sent home with information about Child Advocates, stories of our children and with a plan to donate as many toys as they could.

When the drop-off day arrived, we were blown away! Thanks to West University Elementary, Rachel & Gilbert's Closet is over flowing with toys, diapers, clothing and more, all items that our court appointed advocates use for visits.

On top of the generous in-kind donations, West University also included several gift cards for our special needs program to use and over \$1000 in cash donations. This amazing service project is sure to help brighten the days of the children that we serve for many months to come. Thank you!

Special Thanks

CAMERON CHILDSPREE - Thank you to Shipley Donuts for the donation of donuts for breakfast and to Cameron, The Junior League of Houston and Sogeti, USA for donation of school supplies.

SUPERHERO RUN - Thank you to 104 KRBE, Beck's Prime, Bob Lilly Promotions, Mr. Jeff Cotner, D-Bat Houston, Mrs. Judy Farrell, Fleet Feet, Grub Burger, Ms. Angie Henderson, Jersey Mike's Subs, Kendra Scott, Limitless Race Productions, Midway Companies, MRE Consulting, My Fit Foods, Red Mango Soliant Health and Whole Foods Market for your contributions to our event.

YPC EVENTS - Thank you to Tenaris for sponsoring and supporting Water Day, to Blackfinn for donating food to Water Day and for hosting College Game Night.

Thank you to **Mr. David Baird** for turning on the lights at the Volunteer Appreciation Event.

Thanks to **Jeff Ballew, Buffalo Specialties, Mark and Angela Smith and Carrie Tollar** for the Dynamo tickets. In addition, we would like to thank **Kate McCormick and Alison Malkashian**. You made this day such a special outing for our children.

We would also like to extend a special thank you to **Heather Beliveaux, Colleen Dunlap, Harit Ghelani, Houston Dynamo, Houston Texans, Robert Krenzelo, National Air Traffic Controllers Association, Presbyterian Women Quilters of Heights Presbyterian Church, Gretchen Umbeck and West Side Drywall, Inc.** *Your donations help make the days brighter for our kids!*

2014 Advocacy University schedule is now online!

Visit: www.childadvocates.org/au for the entire class schedule.

Help us serve more children in 2014 by sharing with a friend.



YPC Update

YOUNG PROFESSIONALS FOR CHILDREN

FALL HAPPENINGS

October was off to a busy start for YPC when we held a College Game Day Social at Blackfinn American Grille. BCS football trivia kept everyone on their toes while we enjoyed watching a Thursday night football game. Thank you to Blackfinn for not only hosting, but for donating the delicious appetizers and drink specials as well.



Photos from the Children's Halloween Party

Next stop for the young professionals was the children's Halloween Party at Pumpkin Park. Thanks to the costume drive that Whole Foods Market ran, each child was able to go home with a brand new costume! The children had so much fun picking out and trying on costumes. Everyone also enjoyed pumpkin bowling, face painting and the 'gross out' table. The weather was amazing and it was the perfect fall festival.



THIRD ANNUAL CHILI COOK-OFF FOR KIDS

On November 9, we hit the ground running with our main fundraiser, the Third annual Chili Cook-Off for Kids. As expected, the event was lots of fun and a huge success! A big thank you goes to Hughes Hangar for hosting the cook-off for the third year now and very special thanks to our amazing sponsors and participating restaurants for making the event happen.

The crowd was able to sample hand-crafted and exotic chilis from Houston's top restaurants. They ranged from your standard spicy chili to boar's meat chili to a seven meat chili. Every single one was delicious, but the judge's favorite went to Max's Wine Dive and the fan favorite was Pistolero's. We are pleased to say that this year's cook-off raised over \$16,500 for Child Advocates' Young Professionals for Children. Once again, thank you to everyone who came out and supported this event. We are already looking forward to next's year, so if you are interested in participating or sponsoring, please contact stacy.senko@childadvocates.org.



Photos from the Third annual Chili Cook-off for Kids at Hughes Hangar

GET INVOLVED WITH YPC!

Know of a company, organization or group that may be interested in hearing about YPC? Let us know by emailing stacy.senko@childadvocates.org. We'd love to get your friends involved! Sign up on our website at www.childadvocates.org/ypc and 'Like' us on our Facebook fan page: www.facebook.com/caiypc

Find us on Facebook
www.facebook.com/ChildAdvocatesInc



Follow us on Twitter
[@CAIHouston](https://twitter.com/CAIHouston)



Happenings

DECEMBER

3 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 volunteer and supporter of Child Advocates – Hildegarde Ballard.

3 Houston Tweet Drive – Let's brighten this holiday season for Houston's kids once again: Join us for the Fourth annual Houston Tweet Drive! Bring a NEW toy or book that will add joy to a child-in-need's holiday season and as a thanks enjoy free food, libations and fun. Follow @HouTweetDrive on Twitter for updates and spread the word by using the official hashtag, #HouTweetDrive.

5 Houstonia & HEB present the First Annual Tailgate & Gumbo Smackdown – Join us at the ultimate Thursday night tailgate viewing party as celebrated chefs from some of Houston's most popular restaurants compete in a Gumbo Smackdown. Who will be the winner? Taste them all and vote for your favorite!

JANUARY

11 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.

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

FEBRUARY

all Car Pros for Kids – Make a donation to the Car Pros for Kids program and receive two free oil changes to use at one of the participating shops around the Houston-area. For more information on this program, please contact Kelly at kelly.goff@childadvocates.org.

1 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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Sonya Galvan

Board Voice

DAVID BAIRD, BOARD MEMBER



WHEN NOT BUSY AS A BOARD MEMBER, MY DAYS ARE FILLED WITH...

"retirement." After 30+ years with ExxonMobil, I retired in 2002 as their Upstream Public Affairs Manager. By trade, I am a lawyer and I have held various positions in the Law, Public Affairs and Government Relations groups, including General Counsel of the Asia Pacific Region and Corporate Secretary for ExxonMobil. I moved around a lot with my job transfers, living in Texas (Dallas and Houston) several times, as well as Washington D.C., Connecticut and Hong Kong. Shortly after my retirement from

ExxonMobil, my wife, Stephanie and I, in a delusional moment, started a wine import/distribution company (BevCo International) that is headquartered in Houston. Now, over 10 years later, I'm trying to figure out how to retire again.

MY INVOLVEMENT WITH CHILD ADVOCATES INCLUDES... being an active member on the Board of Directors since 1997. In the past, I have served as co-chair of the Strategic Planning Committee and as a member of the Nominating Committee. I currently serve as chair of the Finance Committee.

I GOT INVOLVED WITH CHILD ADVOCATES BECAUSE... I love kids. Wherever I have lived I have always gravitated toward being involved with and supporting organizations and causes that benefit children. Child Advocates and its mission and efforts in breaking the child abuse cycle were a clear fit for my involvement and support. My first awareness and involvement with a CASA organization was in the Dallas area while I was working there for ExxonMobil in 1995. A few company employees there were involved in the local program and I liked what they were trying to accomplish. When I transferred to Houston the next year, I looked for an opportunity to get involved with Child Advocates. In my position as Public Affairs Manager I quickly became aware of the large number of ExxonMobil employees that were volunteering for various activities for Child Advocates. I particularly focused on the volunteering and providing company support for the annual Holiday Party. I absolutely loved the experience and was hooked on Child Advocates. Joining the board only enhanced my commitment. It has been my privilege and pleasure over the years to witness and participate in the dramatic growth of Child Advocates and the number of children served. I am constantly amazed at the dedication of our wonderful volunteers and staff.

WHEN I AM NOT VOLUNTEERING WITH CHILD ADVOCATES, I AM... enjoying jogging, golf, mountain climbing, flying lessons (that never seem to get me to a pilot's license). I also travel and enjoy playing with my first grandchild, although it is not nearly as much as I would like. You can often find me mending fences and playing with the donkeys, longhorns and horses at our ranch in Hempstead. I also serve on the board of directors of the Christus Healthcare Foundation, the advisory board of The Executive Service Corps of Houston and assist in a number of activities for Houston Children's Charities.

**MARK YOUR CALENDARS
THE HOUSTON CHILDREN'S FESTIVAL IS
MARCH 29 & 30, 2014**

Spotlight On ...

SUPERHEROES OF ALL SIZES TAKE OVER CITYCENTRE HOUSTON

It was crisp, cool morning on October 19, the perfect weather for our first ever Superhero Run. With over 600 superhero runners and over 100 volunteers, CityCentre Houston was over flowing with support for Child Advocates. It was an amazing sight!

CityCentre's Plaza was filled with super activities for the children to do while they waited to take the start line.

Thank you so much to title sponsor—MRE Consulting, Ltd., to our corporate and family sponsors and, of course, to our runners—because of your support, we are excited to announce that we have exceeded our initial fundraising goal for this event for a total of \$90,000! Again, none of this is possible without your continued support. Thank you and we look forward to seeing you next year!

All the results for the 5K and the 1K and additional photos can be found online at: www.childadvocates.org/hero.

THIRTY YEARS OF HELPING HOUSTON'S LITTLEST VICTIMS

In 1984, Child Advocates, Inc. opened its doors with three volunteer staff members, an organizational budget of \$5,000 and a vision of providing one of the most powerful tools for children who were victims of horrific child abuse, neglect and abandonment — a voice. Twenty-nine years later, we have over 750 active court appointed advocate volunteers, a staff of 50 and we plan to serve 2,250 children in 2013 alone.

As we move into our 30th year, we are excited to announce the creation of a new advertising campaign. This campaign will go across multiple forms of media and is meant to last us well beyond 2014. While we do not have all the details finalized yet, we can tell you that we are very excited about it. We also know we are great hands with Freed Advertising on board to help us produce exceptional work.

Along with new advertising campaign, we will be celebrating throughout the year and what we can tell you is that there will be something for everyone. Look for a new look for this publication, *Advocate News*, special events in April for Child Abuse Prevention month and many other awareness opportunities.

Watch for sneak peaks and event details in your email over the next several months. For more information or questions regarding the new campaign or the 30th anniversary, please contact Ashley at ashley.brockette@childadvocates.org.



Goal Review

2052

CHILDREN SERVED (GOAL 2,250)

as of 11/11/2013

200

VOLUNTEERS TRAINED (GOAL 225)

as of 11/11/2013

\$2,958,844

DOLLARS RAISED (GOAL \$4,017,045)

as of 10/31/2013



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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

COURT APPOINTED ADVOCATE, BRIDGET MATTHES, SHARES A PERSONAL STORY OF HOPE

Since July 2012, I have gotten to know an adorable, smart, and witty sibling group who was rescued from an adoptive home after six years of systematic and severe physical and sexual abuse. Even after almost nine months, I am still learning shocking abuse details that leave me without words, but never without absolute resolve to hold up these children. These children lost their mother to a drug overdose while they were between the ages of one and six, and not one of their biological fathers' identities is known. A child-less couple adopted the siblings shortly before their mother's passing, and from then on, all three kids were abused.

The eldest and youngest siblings are experiencing a promising recovery and have landed in healthy, nurturing foster homes. However, the middle sibling is trapped in an emotional storm, prone to anger and acting out. While in his third foster home placement, he was admitted to a mental health hospital because of an extended anger episode that he could not find his way out of. His foster parent had already put in a request for his removal at that point and declined to visit him or accept his phone calls from the hospital. CPS did not inform me of his hospital admission until he had been in the hospital for four days, and his foster parent did not bother to notify me. As soon as I learned of his admission, I was at the hospital within a few hours.

After being buzzed through security and stowing my personal belongings in a locker (together with the huge teddy bear I had brought but was restricted from bringing in), I was escorted through a secure hallway that smelled like a detention center and into a key-controlled elevator. My heart pounded during the short ride as I was overwhelmed by the thought of this child being committed to a mental hospital for any length of time without my knowledge, but worse, without my presence by his side. When the doors opened, there he stood waiting for me.

I smiled my biggest, brightest grin and hugged him with all I had in me. He was happy, relieved and so comforted to see me. I knew at that moment, there was no other place in the world I was supposed to be other than right there, with him. He had no family – biological, adopted, or even foster there, to let him know that someone cares about him and cares about what happens to him. In that moment, I knew that because of Child Advocates, I was making a difference in his life.

I am so thankful Child Advocates made it possible for me to be there for him and to continue to be there for him. It is humbling and grand to be a part of something so extraordinary and powerful. Simple logic tells me that the sum effect of thousands of impact moments like this will immeasurably improve our world, *one child at a time.*

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