CHILD ADVOCATES, INC. IS A MEMBER OF THE TEXAS COURT APPOINTED SPECIAL ADVOCATE ASSOCIATION AND THE NATIONAL COURT APPOINTED SPECIAL ADVOCATE ASSOCIATION.



HOUSTON, TEXAS 77098 713-529-1396 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

#### A MOTHER GIVES THANKS TO HER COURT APPOINTED ADVOCATE



Tessah was 3-years-old when the call was made to Child Protective Services regarding her mother's drug abuse and threats of suicide. In the difficult year that followed, her mother overcame addiction while her daughter was in CPS custody. Today, Tessah is a bright and inquisitive 5-year-old, who calls mommy and daddy her "bestest friends." Her mother recently shared the story of how Child Advocates made a difference in their lives.

"I was born into a very close knit family, but as I grew up I began to take my own path, which wasn't the safest journey. The path I took led me into a drug addiction and in that, my drug became my best friend. It was everything to me. I began to neglect my daughter, and shortly after, everything else in my life too.

Thankfully a call was made to Child Protective Services. My daughter was taken from my care and placed with my family. Court dates were scheduled and soon after, court appointed advocate Michelle Proffit was assigned to our case, along with Advocacy Coordinator Barbra Denniston. I had to reach down inside myself, put aside my pride, and tell someone I needed help. I was sent to a 90-day inpatient drug treatment program. In the process of learning how to stay clean and be a better person so that I could

be a better mother to Tessah, Child Advocates was right beside me, rooting me along! Michelle called weekly to check and see how I was doing and made sure I understood everything that was going on with our case, which eased the pain of Tessah being absent from my life.

From beginning to end Michelle and Barbra were there, and for that, I am forever grateful. I will never forget the Child Advocates that were assigned to my case. Soft spoken women, thick skinned, with very big hearts.

Today, I am 19 months clean, Tessah is back home, and she has more love, affection, and care than any child could ask for."

Michelle Proffit has been a court appointed advocate since 2011 and has served three children.

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### **Advocate** News HOUSTON'S LEADING VOICE IN THE FIGHT AGAINST CHILD ABUSE CHILD ADVOCATES, INC.

### Breaking the Cycle

### JUN WEI-BEHR SHARES HER HEART-FELT STORY AND HER DESIRE TO BREAK HER FAMILY'S CYCLE OF **ABUSE AT THE 2012 ANGELS OF HOPE LUNCHEON**

Over the past 29-years, Child Advocates has witnessed many heart-breaking stories turn inspiring. Perhaps the best testament to the work of our volunteers is when one of those children comes back to share the impact Child Advocates made on their lives.

This past December Dr. Jun Wei-Behr, now a happily married and successful physican in Seattle, joined us at the Angels of Hope Luncheon. She shared how her abusive childhood turned into a life with love, support and opportunities to thrive — ultimately giving her and her brother the opportunity to develop into successful adults. Here is an excerpt from Jun's speech.



Jun and Tao in 2002

in constant fear of setting him off. Any perceived misbehavior could be met with a beating, often using a belt or coat hanger. As a teenager, I would pack emergency bags for my mother, my brother and myself so that we could flee for our safety in case the abuse became too much to bear.

When I was fifteen years old, a particularly violent incident with a metal bar was the last straw. I finally confided in a friend and he was brave enough to report the abuse to Child Protective Services. That winter, my then





SPRING 2013



"It's difficult for me to talk about my childhood. I spent years building up walls of privacy, but if my story can help people to appreciate the amazing good Child Advocates does, then it's imperative that I open up about my own experience of child abuse. Thankfully, my story has a happy ending. Child Advocates helped to put an end to my family's cycle of abuse and against all odds, kept my family together.

Unfortunately, the cycle of child abuse is a very real thing. My father was often physically abusive, just as his own father had been. He grew up with violence being an acceptable form of discipline. My dad's temper was frightening and unpredictable. My mother, little brother and I lived

### "...they helped my brother & me to have a future & helped save our family."

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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## Breaking the Cycle CONTINUED



seven-year old brother and I were removed from our home and placed in a children's shelter. I was old enough to know that without help, my brother and I would likely end up separated in different foster homes and my mother would be left to face my father's abuse

on her own. Even as a child, I felt it was my responsibility to protect them and to keep us together.

To this day, I can barely recall what the CPS caseworkers looked like, but I vividly remember the Child Advocates' volunteer, Shirley McElroy. As an abused child, it can be hard to let someone in, but Shirley inspired trust. She had a kind face, a calm demeanor and a generous personality. She was one of the first people in my life to teach me to trust myself. She supported my decisions even when my own family doubted me.

I was convinced that the only way my brother and I could stay together was to reunify my family. The only way to make that happen was to ensure that my troubled father receive the counseling he needed to stop the violence. Even though my father was consistently remorseful after each act of abuse, he clearly needed professional help if he was ever going to break that cycle.

Many people may find it surprising that I would be willing to reconcile with such an abusive parent, but Shirley was thoughtful, understanding and supportive of rebuilding our family. She first helped temporarily place us with a family friend so that my brother and I could stay together. Then, Child Advocates arranged for much-needed family counseling, ultimately allowing my family to end the cycle of abuse and reunite as a family.

To this day, I am grateful for what Child Advocates has done for us. Without them I'm certain we would have been lost in the system. Instead, they helped my brother and I to have a future and helped save our family. Child Advocates gave my brother and I the



first Christmas gifts we had ever received. They gave me a summer job in high school. They sent me off to college with a scholarship and a dorm room full of supplies. They gave me hope. Because of their amazing generosity, I had the opportunity to become a successful physician and my brother had the chance to complete his master's degree in Applied Sociology.

It's often difficult to know if a charitable organization can legitimately make a difference, but I believe in Child Advocates because I experienced first-hand the good that they do. I am incredibly thankful to Shirley for really making a difference in my life and to Child Advocates for their constant support."

## Spotlight On ...

#### PULL FOR KIDS CLASSIC - AN EVENING AMONGST THE STARS

On May 11, 2013, we will be celebrating our 21st annual Pull for Kids Classic honoring Cameron in Hollywood style. The day will begin with our clay shoot at American Shooting Center and we will end the evening walking the red carpet at the Bayou City Event Center.

Taking the lead on this year's Pull are event chairs, Becky and David Davis. They have exceptional help from all of our amazing committee chairs and members, who have been working diligently to help us to raise over \$700,000.

We are thrilled to honor long-time supporter of Child Advocates, Cameron. As our leading Hollywood star for the evening, we will recognize this impressive company for their many years of outstanding support of Child Advocates and their unwavering partnership. Cameron not only provides significant financial support but also has many employees who dedicate time and energy to so many of our projects.

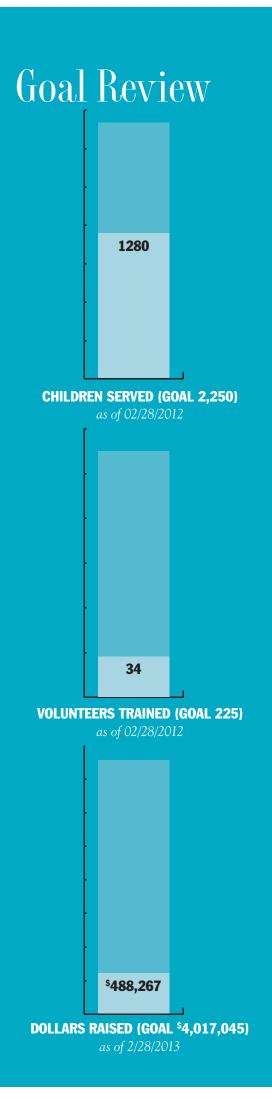
The Pull for Kids Classic is always a must-attend event and this year is no exception. All the events you have grown to love, like the big board and live auctions, will return, including the now famous Wine Pull area. It will be an evening you won't want to miss.

To purchase your tickets or get more information on the Pull, please contact kelly.goff@childadvocates.org.

Pull STARRING CAMERON A







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## **Board Voice**

#### FRANK RYND. BOARD MEMBER



#### WHY I AM INVOLVED WITH CHILD ADVOCATES...

While serving as a Judge and hearing CPS cases, I observed firsthand the difference a child advocate makes in obtaining better outcomes for children.

WHEN NOT BUSY AS A BOARD MEMBER. MY DAYS **ARE FILLED WITH...** I work as General Counsel for the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston.

#### **MY GREATEST EXPERIENCE WITH CHILD ADVOCATES**

**HAS BEEN...** Seeing children being treated with respect and genuine love; not as another statistic or case file.

I GOT INVOLVED WITH CHILD ADVOCATES BECAUSE... I was able to witness the positive outcomes they could help achieve for children who, prior to Child Advocates involvement, often had no one really committed to their best interests.

#### THE PERSON WHO MOST INFLUENCED ME TO BECOME INVOLVED WITH CHILD

**ADVOCATES WAS...** I don't think it was just one person; it was the numerous volunteers who appeared before me in court. Although if I had to single out one person, it would be Ellie Sweeney. Her dedication truly saved a child's life.

### **Special Thanks**

- ANGELS OF HOPE LUNCHEON Thank you to the Westin Galleria and Neiman Marcus Houston for hosting the luncheon and fashion presentation: **Brunswick Press** for printing the invitations and programs: The Barfield Collection, Brunello Cucinelli, Hilton Anatole Dallas, Hilton Dallas Lincoln Centre, Miles Insurance Agency, Neiman Marcus Houston, RéVive Skincare and Sheraton Dallas Hotel 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 **Urban Meridian Group, Inc.** for donating the warehouse.
- CHILDREN'S HOLIDAY PARTY Thank you to Atwood Oceanics and Enterprise Holdings for sponsoring the 2012 party; and to Chuck Codrington and Whataburger for donating cookies.
- **CAR PROS FOR KIDS Thank you to gs Marketing** for donating marketing materials; and to Adolf Hoepfl Garage, Beckwith's Car Care, Christian Bros Automotive - Grand Parkway, Cornerstone Automotive - S. Dairy Ashford St., Cornerstone Automotive - Wilcrest Dr., Freedom Automotive Services, Itzy's Auto Repair Services, Kacal's Auto And Truck Service, Mac Haik Dodge Chrysler Jeep Ram, Mac Haik Ford, Mac Haik Chevrolet, Master Car Care LLC, RMS Auto Care, Russell & Smith Ford, Russell & Smith Honda, Russell & Smith Mazda, Scott's Auto Repair, Specialized Auto Repair and Yale Automotive for participating in this year's program.
- Thank you to Mr. John Binick and the Hilton Post Oak for donating conference space for our strategic planning meeting and to Hughes Hangar for hosting the 2012 YPC Cook-Off for Kids.
- We would also like to extend a special thank you to Emanu El, Holly M. Garner, Harit Ghelani, Parkway Place, Presbyterian Women Quilters of Heights, Safeway Driving Centers, Inc., Target, Theatre Under the Stars, Jon Weeks and the Houston Texans. Your special donations provided brighter days for our children!

### Happy 25<sup>th</sup> Birthday Houston Children's Festival

It all began in 1988 in front of the George R. Brown Convention Center where Discovery Green is now located. Originally tagged the "Children for Children" Festival, the Houston Children's Festival has now grown to become the Largest Children's Festival in the United States. Celebrating its twenty-fifth birthday this year, the Festival was recently named "One of the World's 300 Unmissable Events" by Frommer's Travel Guides.



The Festival was initially developed to educate the community about child abuse and the mission of Child Advocates, Inc. Over the years, both the event and its mission have grown. Quickly outgrowing its first home, the Festival moved to the Greenway Plaza area and occupied two then-vacant lots next to what is now Lakewood Church. After a two year stint at Hermann Park, the Festival found its current home in downtown Houston in 1999, where Mayor Bob Lanier saw the exceptional value in the event and designated it "Houston's Official Celebration of Children."

In 1988 the Houston Children's Festival featured one stage and a variety of fun activities. This year, the Festival offers guests five stages, eight Family Adventure Zones and over three hundred exciting activities. Entertainment

has also covered a wide range of celebrities and activities. Sesame Street characters kicked things off in 1988 and were followed by Bozo, the Clown and Captain Kangaroo. Over the years, festival fun has included Donny Osmond, Ralph, the Swimming Pig, Animal Planet's Jeff Corwin, as well as popular Disney and Nickelodeon stars. This year's event features Laura Marano from Disney Channel's Austin and Ally, as well as Victoria Justice, star of Nickelodeon's Victorious. Preschoolers are in for a treat with visits from Dora the Explorer and Sid the Science Kid.



A cornerstone of the Houston Children's Festival

is its strong sponsorship base. Baker Hughes is the longtime Presenting Sponsor of the Festival and the popular Baker Hughes Circustown and Apache will be back with the Apache Energy Zone. H-E-B will be there with the H-E-B Healthy Kids Stage, as well as Green Mountain Energy, SABIC, EP Energy and dozens of other sponsors and supporters.



The last twenty-five years the Houston Children's Festival has grown from 5,000 to over 50,000 attendees and countless people are now more aware of Child Advocates and its mission. the Festival has also raised over \$4.5 million for Child Advocates. Now, that's something to celebrate.

### From the CEO

Hi all.

It has been an amazing and busy 2013 and there is no slowing down from here.

First, April is Child Abuse Prevention month. Look for information, stories and facts on our Facebook page throughout the month of April. Please feel free to share these with your friends and encourage them to attend an orientation.

On April 6 and 7, we will head out to Sam Houston Park in downtown Houston for the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Houston Children's Festival. Back by popular demand, is the Kid's Korral. We are thrilled that we can provide a little fun to the city of Houston and its children. A big thank you to all of you who have already signed up to volunteer and to all the sponsors who are involved!

On May 11, we will be hosting the 21<sup>st</sup> annual Pull for Kids Classic honoring longtime supporter, Cameron. The Pull committees have been hard at work and it will be a memorable night as we walk the red carpet, 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 with over 600 bottles. For more information on the Pull for Kids, please contact Kelly (kelly.goff@childadvocates.org) or visit our website.

Keep a look-out in the coming months for all the summer events, including YPC's Water Day and the Cameron Childspree. We will also be opening up registration starting in June for our first annual SuperHero Fun Run. We are excited to bring another event to the community that allows us to continue to raise awareness of our mission and raise funds too.

Lastly, I hope you'll take a few moments to read through this edition of Advocate News. We have an inspiring story about Dr. Jun Wei-Behr, a child we helped during her time in CPS custody. While I know not all children will end up with an outcome just like Jun's, her story is an amazing testament to the work and support her advocate gave to her and her family.

Thank you all for continued support!

Sonya Galvan



**Christine Gabriel and Bernadette Pavne at the 2013 Friends Membership Lunched** 



Melanie Morgan, Michelle Neal, Tracy Eklund, Lisa Erwin and Michelle Williams at the Pull for Kids kick-off at Tootsies



Cheering on our runners at our **Chevron Houston Marathon Hoopla Statio** 



Employees from CARBO dropping off toy donation to the Santa's Wish List Warehouse

### Voices "WHEN DID YOU KNOW YOU WERE MAKING A DIFFERENCE IN A CHILD'S LIFE?"

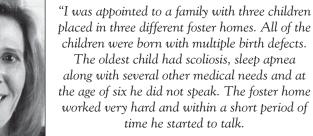


Serena Ross, Court Appointed Advocate Since 2010

"I first knew that I was making a difference as a court appointed advocate the first time I testified in court during a status hearing. My testimony was well-supported by the first-hand knowledge that I obtained from visiting the children at their aunt's home, she was serving as their foster parent. Because of my testimony and understanding of the family structure, the kids were allowed to stay in the home with their aunt. They thrived, and ultimately, that same aunt wanted to adopt all four kids."

"The moment in my current case happened when I was visiting the 16-year old in November. I asked what she wanted for Christmas. She said all she wanted was to be reunited with her brother and her mother again. It made me feel like what we're doing is life

changing for these kids."



Beth Sams, Court Appointed Advocate Since 2008

placed in three different foster homes. All of the children were born with multiple birth defects. The oldest child had scoliosis, sleep apnea along with several other medical needs and at the age of six he did not speak. The foster home worked very hard and within a short period of time he started to talk.

One day, I was attending a supervised family visit. The oldest child saw me walking down the hall to join us. He ran to me, said 'I love you' with a big smile on his face and continued skipping. That is a moment I will never forget!'

## **Doing Something**

#### AN UNFORGETABLE CHRISTMAS WITH HOUSTON TEXANS' JON WEEKS

Houston Texans football player, Jon Weeks, made this Christmas extra special for five teens served by Child Advocates. Our teenaged Texans fans were ecstatic when they had the opportunity not

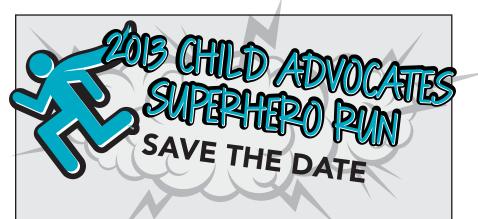
only to meet a professional football player, but to have their Christmas wish lists fulfilled by him. In addition to iPods, tennis shoes, art supplies and more, each child was given an official Texans jersey and a football signed by the entire team. Thank you Jon for making this a Christmas our children will never forget!





We are incredibly grateful to Court Appointed Advocate, Kathi Davis, who secured a \$1,000 grant for Child Advocates through United Airlines' Volunteer Impact Grant Program. While serving on her third case, Kathi went above and beyond in her support of Child Advocates by applying for this grant, which recognizes United employees who actively volunteer their time to address critical social issues

in the community. Kathi has served as the advocate to nine children on three cases, putting in over 875 hours since she began volunteering in 2009. Thank you to United Airlines for recognizing Kathi's incredible commitment in such a generous way.



### **OCTOBER 19, 2013 AT CITYCENTRE**

This run is designed as a family fun event and includes 5K and 1K courses to participate in. Everyone can become a superhero for the day by wearing their favorite superhero costume to the run. Our goal is to raise funds and awareness so that we can continue our work as heroes for some of Houston's littlest victims.

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





## Happenings



- 4 Wine Pull Collection Party Meet us at French Country Wines for an evening of wine tasting from 6 - 8 PM. Wine donations will be collected for the Pull for Kids Classic. For more information, contact kelly.goff@childadvocates.org.
- 5 Blow-out Bootcamp at Therapy Hair **Studio** – We are thrilled to be the charity of choice at Therapy's Blow-out Bootcamp. If you would like to reserve your spot at the bootcamp, please contact 713-355-HAIR. Each spot is \$100 and 100% of the proceeds will come back to Child Advocates.
- 6 & 7 Houston Children's Festival This year marks the  $25^{th}$  birthday of the festival and is sure to be the biggest and best celebration in its history. Join us downtown for a weekend of fun for the kids and family - all benefiting Child Advocates!
  - Dryden Kreps Grand Opening in CityCentre – We will be at the grand opening of Dryden Kreps' new store in CityCentre. Child Advocates is excited to be the beneficiary of this day-long celebration. Enjoy drinks and hors d'oeuvres from 5 - 9 PM.
  - Wine Pull Collection Party Join us at the home of Cherie Hassenflu for a private wine tasting by Kagan Cellars from 6 - 8 PM. We will be collecting wine & donations for the Pull for Kids Classic. For more information, contact kelly.goff@ childadvocates.org.
  - Advocacy University Begins (\*daytime session) – 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.

#### MAY

21st Annual Pull for Kids Classic – Save the date for this year's Pull for Kids Classic honoring Cameron. Join us during the day for a sporting clays tournament & in the evening for a not-to-be-missed party. For information visit: www.childadvocates.org.

#### JUNE

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.

### **Thanks Donors**

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### **Focus on Friends** S OF CHILD ADVOCATES

#### **2012 ANGELS OF HOPE LUNCHEON**



More than 630 of Houston's fashionistas joined Chairs Rosemary Schatzman and Phyllis Williams to help the 2012 Angels of Hope Luncheon and Fashion Presentation by Neiman Marcus raise more than \$350,000 for Child Advocates. The event featured fashions from Brunello Cucinelli 's 2013 Spring Collection and honored board members, Kimberly C. David and Dolly Dawson Thomas, for their many

years of support to Child Advocates. Guests also heard an unforgettable speech by a former foster child who is now a doctor in Seattle, Dr. Jun Wei-Behr. Jun shared how her court appointed advocate made reunification back to her mom and dad possible for her and her younger brother.

Save the Date for the 2013 Angels of Hope Luncheon on Tuesday, December 3, where we will honor longtime board member and supporter Hildegarde Ballard.

#### FRIENDS MEMBERSHIP DRIVE

The Friends of Child Advocates membership drive is well under way! On March 5, lifetime member, Elisabeth McCabe opened her home for our annual Membership Social. Over 55

attendees enjoyed a catered lunch of Local Foods and learned more about the children we serve, thanks to guest speaker and Court Appointed Advocate, Pamela Fazzone.

members fulfill is volunteering at children's events like the annual Easter

egg hunt, recently held on March 23. The membership social helped us recruit volunteers so fifty of our young foster children could experience a traditional Easter egg hunt, egg dyeing, a picnic lunch thanks to Chick-fil-A and a moonwalk.

#### JULIE AXELRAD. FRIENDS GOVERNANCE COUNCIL MEMBER

Julie Axelrad, a trained social worker, first learned of Child Advocates while working at Texas Children's Hospital in 2005. She attended an orientation but decided that having a young child of her own would prohibit her advocacy work. Not to be deterred, she became a YPC member and then joined the Friends where she chaired the Children's Events Committee working specifically on the Back-to-School Childspree. We are so thankful for Julie's continued service over the years which has also included chairing the Holiday Party's Beauty Parlor, Gilbert & Rachel's Closet as well as helping on the Pull for Kids Auction Committee each year. This year Julie is chairing the Friends Wrapping Party at Santa's Wish List Warehouse which has become her all-time favorite event. Our kids are so fortunate to have Julie working so hard on their behalf!

For information on Friends membership, contact Marla at 713.529.1396 x234 or marla.endieveri@childadvocates.org.

### **YPC** Update YOUNG PROFESSIONALS FOR CHILDREN

#### WHEN I GROW UP CHILDREN'S EVENT

from the Houston area, ranging from doctors Sorrel Urban Bistro on April 29. The cost is member and want to get more friends to to aerospace engineers, to inspire the \$35 a person. Sorrel will donate \$5 for every join the fun? Participate in our membership children we serve on ideas about what they ticket purchased back to Child Advocates. drive during the month of April. Fabulous can be 'When I Grow Up'. Special thanks to Price includes an elaborate three-course meal prizes will be awarded for the most referrals Whole Foods Market for hosting us and to and a complimentary glass of wine. Extended brought in. Contact Stacy at stacy.senko@ all professionals that participated in such a happy hours throughout the night will ensure a childadvocates.org for more details. successful new event. You are helping build a great time for a great cause. Visit our calendar world of possibilities for our kids.

#### **DINNER AT SORREL URBAN BISTRO**

YPC gathered on March 16 with professionals Come join YPC for a fundraising dinner at Interested in being a member? Already a listing on our website to purchase tickets.

#### **GET INVOLVED WITH YPC!**

Like us on Facebook: www.facebook.com/caiypc An important need that the Friends



### **Donor Spotlight** VITOL

One of the world's largest independent energy trading companies, Vitol Inc. helps meet the

energy needs of the world. Child Advocates is so fortunate that the Vitol Houston employees have chosen to support our kids in so many ways since 2005. In addition to supporting special events and making general donations that go to our core mission of serving abused and neglected children, Vitol Houston employees have consistently provided volunteer and financial resources for our Santa's Wish List program. Last December alone, their support allowed 210 children to receive everything on their holiday wish list. Vitol also was able to provide our children with back to school supplies this past August. We are so grateful for the continuing support of Vitol!

#### **KIMBERLY AND MICHAEL WEILL**

Kim Weill's involvement with Child Advocates started in 2003 when she joined the Friends Guild. She and Mike believe in the mission of Child Advocates and know that the great work being done is of most importance to so many children in need of a Court Appointed



Advocate. Over the last decade. Kim and Mike been have generous to Child Advocates supporting by of two our signature annual – the events

Angels of Hope Luncheon and the Pull for Kids Classic. At the December 2012 Angels of Hope Luncheon, Kim served on the Host Committee where her dear friend Dolly Dawson Thomas was honored. Thank you Kim and Michael for your continued support!

#### **THE GORDON A. CAIN FOUNDATION**

Since 1993, the Gordon and Mary Cain Foundation, now the Gordon A. Cain Foundation, has provided the necessary financial resources to offer life changing services to over 100 abused and neglected children. Child Advocates deeply values this 20 year partnership that has helped stop the vicious cycle of child abuse for children in Harris County. The Gordon A. Cain Foundation has a profound impact on improving the lives of children in our community through their focused efforts on supporting education, health and social services.

### **Thanks Donors**



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