Family Centers Volunteers Recognized at Darien Volunteer Day

Two of Family Centers’ most committed volunteers were honored for continually improving the lives of area families during The Community Fund of Darien’s annual Darien Volunteer Day Awards ceremony.

Bob Wells was presented the Obie Harrington-Howes Community Spirit Award. As a member of the Family Centers’ Board of Directors since 2000, Bob has left a mark on nearly every aspect of the organization. As a former advertising executive, Bob helped to solidify Family Centers’ communications plan and was a driving force behind the increased visibility the agency has enjoyed in recent years. He has also led numerous internal speaker trainings, and taught Family Centers’ staff how to “tell their stories” in the community. And as a member of The Blue Flames – a touring steel drum band – Wells has raised thousands of dollars to help families in need.

For the past nine years, Terri Walker has shown an unparalleled dedication to Family Centers and its clients as both a Board Member and volunteer. She has co-chaired several successful fundraisers for Family Centers, including the 2011 Silk Road Benefit.

This May, Terri was a driving force behind the success of the 2012 Center for HOPE Luncheon with Marie Tillman (see page 2). She has been involved with the agency’s Hope Lights Lives Luminary campaign, which raises upwards of $100,000 annually for the Center for HOPE and The Den for Grieving Kids.
Marie Tillman, Widow of Late Army Ranger and NFL Star, Speaks at CFH Luncheon

When Pat Tillman gave up a promising NFL career to become an Army Ranger following the Sept. 11 attacks, his wife, Marie, stood by his side. Despite the fact that they were newly married and looked forward to building a life together, Marie understood this was something Pat felt he needed to do.

But while Pat was serving his second tour of Afghanistan, Marie received the news that would change her life forever. Pat was killed by friendly fire in 2004, which created national headlines and left Marie to grieve the loss of her husband in the public eye.

Marie spoke about how she coped with the many emotions surrounding Pat’s death at the 2012 Center for HOPE Luncheon on May 8 at the Country Club of Darien. She said one of Pat’s final letters – in which he urged her to go on with life in the event he didn’t make it back – provided her with the biggest sense of comfort during the most difficult times.

“For me, it was coming to terms with the fact that this person who I’ve loved and has been in my life for a really long time is gone,” she told the audience of nearly than 250. “And the challenge is trying to find a way to pick up the pieces and put your life back together when it’s not turning out the way you thought it would.”

The Luncheon, co-chaired by Terri Walker, KK Lowther and Heathter Pech, raised more than $130,000 for the Center for HOPE and The Den for Grieving Kids – Family Centers’ critical illness and bereavement support programs.


George Reilly, partner at Siegel, Reilly and Conlon, LLC, was also honored with the Ray of HOPE Award. George currently sits on Family Centers’ Senior Advisory Board and was instrumental in the organization’s merger with the Center for HOPE in 2005.
Family Centers Honors Volunteers

In celebration of National Volunteer Week, Family Centers hosted a Volunteer Recognition Breakfast on April 19. Greenwich Selectman Dave Theis was on hand to present a special proclamation to honor Family Centers’ volunteers for their hard work over the past year.

With more than 1,500 volunteers lending their time and effort to its mission of empowering individuals, families and communities to reach their true potential, Family Centers owes much of its success to these dedicated individuals and families.

For more information on our volunteer opportunities, visit www.familycenters.org or contact Jennifer Flatow at jflatow@familycenters.org or 203-869-4848.

Greenwich Academy Students Put Finishing Touch on Playground

A group of Greenwich Academy students put the finishing touches on the newly renovated playground at the Arch Street Preschool.

Led by Phoebe Morrison, the students outfitted the three tepees located in the playground’s Native American Village with traditional motifs. The process took an entire weekend, as the students stenciled and painted the tepees.

Thanks to grants from the Town of Greenwich, First Presbyterian Church in Greenwich and the Leon Lowenstein Foundation, the playground underwent a major facelift late last year. The state-of-the-art playground features an open layout and includes a large bird’s nest, permanent musical instruments, a small amphitheater and rock and rope climbing stations.
With the generous support of our event sponsors and contributors, Family Centers raised $540,000!
"Dancin' in the Street"

Benji Hill, Mary Davidson

Peter Weinberg, Art Reimers, Jean Witmer, Lindsay Reimers

Robert Shapiro, Carl Goodnow, Wynne Shapiro, Anne Goodnow

Chris & Katy Gray and Steve Walko

Arlene & Reuben Mark, Kevin & Joni Kimberlin

Bob Steel, Suzanne & Tim Sennatt

Allison Bourke, Patti Fast
"Dancin' in the Street"
Rocks the Neighborhood

Amanda Venieri, Sam Asbeck, Nicole Weisenberger

Jessica Gufl, Leigh Carpenter, Gay Coe, Taylor Gray

Matthew Dripps, Sabrina Briefel, Britton Bollinger

Wayne Jervis, Perry Robinson

George Host, Jean and Stig Host

Julie Graham, Muffy Fox

Nancy Ireland, Gillian Steel

Laurie, Peter and Tori Grauer

Matthew Dripps, Sabrina Briefel, Britton Bollinger

George Host, Jean and Stig Host

Laurie, Peter and Tori Grauer

Nancy Ireland, Gillian Steel

Cliff & Susan Yonce

Amanda Venieri, Sam Asbeck, Nicole Weisenberger

Julie Graham, Muffy Fox

Henrik and Louise Vanderlip

Cliff & Susan Yonce
It’s been said that our greatest barrier to success is the fear of failure. **Nate Barnett** will tell you that a dose of confidence has made a world of difference in his life. Nate has grown up with learning disabilities, which sometime present challenges when he tries to communicate with others. Over the years of frustrating personal interactions, Nate’s self-esteem was at an all-time low.

Having recently graduated from high school, Nate was worried about his job prospects. Knowing that his learning disabilities sometimes made school difficult, Nate thought that he didn’t have the skill set to succeed in the working world.

After some failed attempts to land a job, a friend suggested that Nate contact Family Centers, which provides onsite vocational support and counseling at his housing complex in Stamford. Shortly after his first meeting with Family Centers, Nate mustered the courage to enroll in some job-readiness classes. With the support of Family Centers, he also wrote his first resume and practiced his interviewing techniques.

The support Nate received also helped him understand how to properly search for jobs using Internet tools and social media. More importantly, Nate’s self-confidence got the boost it desperately needed.

Today, Nate is riding the wave of his revitalized confidence. Currently employed with WorkPlace, Inc., Nate maintains and beautifies Stamford’s parks. He is confident, happy, and eager to continue improving his life.

“After all the trials I’ve had to go through, I finally found in Family Centers the help I needed to get a job,” Nate said. “Finding a job has been a huge boost, and it gives me confidence to keep trying new things.”

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**Family Centers’ Board Member and Employee Named “Family Champions”**

Family Centers’ board member **Carl Goodnow** and staff member **Katey Smith** were recognized as “Family Champions” by the **Connecticut Council of Family Service Agencies (CCFSA)** for their outstanding commitment to improving the lives of families.

At a ceremony held at the Trumbull Marriott on May 9, the CCFSA honored Carl, Katey and 30 other human services professionals and volunteers whose unselfish actions have strengthened families in Connecticut.

Since joining the Family Centers Board of Directors in 2002, Carl has worked tirelessly to ensure that children and families living in lower Fairfield County have access to the services they need to realize their potential. In addition to co-chairing the agency’s Fostering Independence and Facilities committees, he sits on Family Centers’ Governance Committee and co-chairs the Facilities Committee. In 2011, Carl also oversaw the design, construction and fundraising efforts associated with the creation of the Arch Street Preschool’s new state-of-the-art playground.

Katey has worked at Family Centers for six years. As the agency’s Reconnecting Families Coordinator, she goes above and beyond to reunite families torn apart because of abuse or neglect. Katey also coordinates Family Centers’ Trauma Response Team.
Head Start Preschool Sends Students Off to Kindergarten

On June 21, Greenwich Head Start Preschools and Dancing Dolphins School Readiness Classroom held a graduation ceremony to celebrate the 28 students moving onto kindergarten. Head Start teachers presented each graduate with a “diploma”, and all 51 students enrolled in the school performed a collection of their favorite songs. Afterward, the students and their families gathered for a congratulatory lunch.

As part of its Global Volunteer Month, Morgan Stanley Smith Barney Wealth Management in Greenwich generously agreed to underwrite the event. In addition to volunteering at the event, Morgan Stanley Smith Barney employees provided lunch for all graduates and their families. They also provided an ice cream truck, flowers, decorations and gifts for the teachers.

The Head Start Preschools and Dancing Dolphins School Readiness Class offer education programs for three, four and five-year-old children of families residing in Greenwich public and subsidized housing. The programs also emphasize parent involvement to encourage and support children’s educational and social development.

26.2 FOR FAMILY CENTERS

Some people run marathons for fitness reasons. Others do it to check an item off their “bucket list.” But Family Centers’ Communications Director Bill Brucker recently ran the New Jersey Marathon to raise funds for children and families in need living in lower Fairfield County.

Leading up to his first full marathon, Bill collected more than $2,250 in donations for Family Centers. The money will be used to help fund the agency’s human service, health and counseling programs that assist more than 18,000 people each year.

Bill completed the marathon’s 26.2 mile course in 3:41:56 – placing 496 out of a field of 2,317 runners. The New Jersey Marathon is one of the tri-state area’s premier running events. The scenic course starts at the historic Monmouth Park Racetrack and takes runners through the oceanfront towns of Oceanport, Long Branch, Deal, Ocean Grove, Loch Arbour, Allenhurst and Asbury Park.
IN MEMORY OF Cory Donnalley

We fondly remember Cory Donnalley, a dedicated Board member who recently passed away following a long battle with cancer. For 18 years, Cory poured her heart into her volunteer work with Family Centers. As a result, she enriched the organization and positively impacted the lives of thousands of children and families.

Cory served on Family Centers’ Board of Directors since 1994. During that time, she was an active member of several planning groups including the Social Policy & Advocacy Committee. Cory had a particular interest in the welfare of local children, and chaired Family Centers’ Bright Beginnings Committee to strengthen the agency’s programs that serve children. She also chaired successful benefit events, and was the 2003 recipient of the Family Centers’ Helen Gratz Rockefeller Outstanding Volunteerism Award.

At the request of Cory’s family, those wishing to memorialize Cory’s life may do so through a gift to Family Centers. Donations may be made online at www.familycenters.org or mailed to:

Family Centers, 40 Arch Street, Greenwich, CT 06830

For information on setting up a remainder trust for you or a loved one to benefit Family Centers, contact Jim Vivier at jvivier@familycenters.org or 203-869-4848.

www.familycenters.org’s New Look

Regular visitors to Family Centers’ website may have noticed the site has undergone a bit of a facelift. In addition to its fresh look, the new site operates on a more user-friendly navigation configuration and includes several exciting new features.

We hope you enjoy the improvements to www.familycenters.org and use it as a useful tool to find important information about our programs and services.

Family Centers’ President Bob Arnold Honored by Greenwich Chamber

Named “Community Leader” at Chamber’s Annual Awards Luncheon

At the Greenwich Chamber of Commerce’s Annual Awards Luncheon on April 24, Family Centers’ President Bob Arnold was recognized for his organization’s work with children and families in need.

During the ceremony, which was held at the Millbrook Club in Greenwich, Bob was presented with the Community Leader Award. The award honors an individual or an organization in Greenwich that has worked to make a difference in the betterment of the community through their efforts.

This year marks Bob’s 30th anniversary as Family Centers’ president.
Family Centers recently welcomed John Straus to the Board of Directors

John brings a wealth of financial expertise to the Board. For many years, he held senior leadership positions at some of the world's most renowned banking institutions including Salomon Brothers, Morgan Stanley, JP Morgan and UBS. He is currently a founding partner with Fallline Strategic Advisors, a wealth management consulting firm founded in 2010.

John also has an extensive philanthropic background. He has served as Board President of the Community Fund of Darien, and chaired the Holderness School’s Investment Committee.

John lives in New Canaan with his wife, Diane.
On June 2, Family Centers kicked off summer with a street festival like none other! Great tunes, delicious food and a little “Dancin’ in the Street” were just a few of the things on tap at the agency’s 2012 benefit.

Held at the historic Greenwich Armory, the event brought an authentic “street fair” vibe to Greenwich that thrilled the more than 350 people in attendance.

With gourmet food trucks, 3-D chalk art, a giant Ferris Wheel, jaw-dropping break dancers and many other surprises, co-chairs Allison Bourke, Abby Bowers, Pam Caffray, Patti Fast and Nonie Sullivan planned a once-in-a-lifetime party that was truly a multi-sensory experience. Guests were also treated to an acoustic performance by Fairfield County band, Finster, in a beer garden sponsored by Coalhouse Pizza and Harpoon Brewery.

Like most of Family Centers’ benefits, this year’s event was purposely designed to be casual. In fact, to quote the famous song, “It doesn’t matter what you wear just as long as you are there!”

“Dancin’ in the Street” was Family Centers’ largest fundraiser of the year. The event raised $540,000 for the agency’s human service, health and education programs.

(More photos on page 4)