



Montgomery County Family Justice Center

VOLUME 1, ISSUE 2

WINTER 2010

SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- **MNADV Award**
- **Pro Bono Support for FJC clients**
- **MCFJC Foundation Appreciation Reception**
- **MCFJC Foundation Donors Speak Out**

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From the Desk of State's Attorney John McCarthy

In April 2009 the doors of the Family Justice Center opened with the stated goal of creating a one-stop-shop for victims of domestic violence. In just nine months, the Family Justice Center has made a difference in the lives of many Montgomery County families living in the shadow of domestic violence. More than 1,000 people, representing 97 different countries, have received services at the FJC. For many of them, coming to the FJC was the first step they had ever taken to end the violence in their lives.

As the State's Attorney for Montgomery County, I am charged with prosecuting crime and holding offenders accountable for their actions. The FJC plays a crucial role in assisting me with this job. By offering victims of domestic violence counseling, emergency assistance, help with obtaining protective orders, and other services, the FJC

removes barriers that so many times leave a victim feeling both helpless and hopeless. The empowerment of these victims has already resulted in more successful prosecutions.

This empowerment comes from the hard work of the staff of the FJC, which includes its on-site partners, Catholic Charities, the Abused



The Montgomery County Family Justice Center is centrally located in the heart of Rockville, Maryland.

Persons Program, the House of Ruth, the Domestic Violence Section of the Sheriff's Office, and the Family Violence Division of the State's Attorney's Office. Because of the FJC, victims receive more

immediate and comprehensive help and support for the myriad of issues they face in their lives. As a result, victims are stronger and better able to assist us in holding their abusers accountable, better able to protect themselves and their children, and better able to help make our community safer by keeping dangerous people off the streets.

Our ultimate goal is to eradicate domestic violence. Recognizing how daunting a task that is, I am cautiously optimistic that the work of the FJC will assist in ending the intergenerational cycle of violence. For every mother or father who stops the violence in their home, and consequently saves their child from experiencing violence on a daily basis, that parent is making it less likely that his or her child will grow up and continue in that cycle of violence. Every day at the FJC brings new hope to our community.

Sheriff's Office Receives Award from MNADV

The Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence conferred its annual law enforcement award on the Montgomery County Sheriff's Office this fall for its leadership in the creation of the Montgomery County Family Justice Center. The MNADV, now in its 29th year, is the state coalition of domestic violence providers and their allies. The

annual award honors law enforcement officers or



From L to R: Hannah Sassoon, Chief Deputy Popkin, Jo Ann Ricchiuti, Council President Andrews, Sheriff Kight and Councilmember Trachtenberg at the MNADV Awards Ceremony.

agencies that make significant contributions to victims. Sheriff Raymond M. Kight accepted the award from the Network at its annual meeting and luncheon on October 23, 2009. Governor Martin O'Malley and Lt. Governor Anthony Brown were in attendance and among those honored at the annual event. **(Cont. Page 8)**

Law Firms Provide Pro Bono Help to FJC Clients

Many times, domestic violence in the immigrant community is hidden because victims are hesitant to come forward due to their legal status. When they do come forward, however, lawyers from the law firms of Dickstein Shapiro LLP and Hunton & Williams are available to conduct intake and answer questions about immigration related legal options. Through a partnership with Catholic Charities, these firms are generously donating their time and expertise to staff an

office at the FJC four afternoons a week. (The law firm Sidley Austin provided a lawyer to help with the day-to-day set up in the opening weeks of the FJC.) Once clients have gone through intake at the FJC, Catholic Charities finds pro bono lawyers to represent them before the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services office and the immigration court.

Because of these firms' efforts, approximately sixty FJC clients have gotten top-notch legal assistance from the area's

top immigration experts. Volunteer lawyers from these firms are not only helping FJC clients untangle their immigration problems, but are also helping victims find legal pathways to citizenship through laws such as the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA), U and T Visas for victims of crime and trafficking, respectively. Some of these clients have already been granted citizenship and relief from deportation.



Above: Emcee Donna Rismiller, Esq. and Judge Marielsa Bernard accept Teen Dating Proclamation from Council President Phil Andrews.
Below: two cast members from City at Peace DC.

Choose Respect Montgomery: A Success!

The Domestic Violence Coordinating Council and its County partners hosted Choose Respect Montgomery Teen Dating Conference for local teens and their parents. Over 160 teens and parents attended the conference and participated in educational workshops throughout the day on topics related to healthy and unhealthy teen dating behaviors and misuse of technology.

In order to evoke teens' interest and obtain their perspective on the topic of teen dating abuse, the Domestic Violence Coordinating Council and the State's Attorney's Office sponsored a PSA contest for local teens. The students competed for a \$250.00 cash prize and the opportunity to have their PSA broadcast by a local television or radio station. The top three final-

The day opened with a welcome address from State's Attorney John McCarthy and the presentation of the Teen Dating Proclamation by County Council President Phil Andrews. Before breaking out to workshops, the participants were treated to an outstanding performance by City at Peace DC. Five young members of the youth development organization acted out a real life abusive teen dating sce-

nario. The performance was informative and offered the perfect balance between the reality of abusive teen relationships and comedic relief.

The afternoon began with three inspirational messages. Chief Deputy Darren Popkin kicked off the program and emphasized the importance of intervention through reporting incidents to **(Cont. page 8)**

Teen Dating Public Service Announcement Contest

ists of the contest were invited to the Choose Respect Montgomery Conference where the winner was announced.

Andrew Willey and Emma Burnett, both 11th graders from Poolesville High School took home the top prize for their production of Teen Abuse: A True Story. Their PSA focused on helping a friend in an abusive relationship. It was a very creative production and included original

music from a band formed by students at their school.

In addition to the cash prize, Andrew and Emma appeared along with Attorney General Douglas Gansler to discuss the contest and teen dating violence on the FOX 5 Morning News program. Their winning PSA was aired during this segment. To view their PSA go to: <http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/fjctmpl.asp?url=/content/fjc/index.asp>.

Adopt A Family for the Holidays

For many families, the holidays are a time of festive meals and the fulfillment of wishes. Yet, for some, it is a reminder of their many losses. Recognizing a need to help make this a time of happy memories, two donors came forward this winter and asked to adopt a family for the holidays. The Phipps Family in Montgomery

County and the Montgomery County Clarksburg Facility management team each adopted a family and provided gift certificates for groceries and shopping trips. Even in difficult economic times, the spirit and practice of sharing has made a difference in the lives of both the donors and the recipients. Many thanks to the Phipps

Family and to the MCCF team! Their generosity is the seed of the Montgomery County Family Justice Center Foundation's upcoming "Adopt A Family" campaign for the 2010 holidays.

MCCF Staff Fulfill Holiday Wishes

The Department of Correction and Rehabilitation came through as Santa for children at the FJC this year. With the delivery of over 50 new toys, generously donated by the staff at Montgomery County Correctional Facility (MCCF), the FJC was able to make holiday wishes come true with stuffed animals, dolls, sports equipment, art supplies, clothing and

books. The toys were distributed within two days to over a dozen families. Several children who accompanied their parents to the FJC on those days got a twinkle in their eye on seeing the colorful assortment of toys at the FJC intake desk, and got to pick out their favorites. For other clients who have received services at the FJC this year, FJC staff helped prepare packages of age-appropriate toys for par-

ents to take home. Thanks to the generosity of the MCCF staff, there was something for every holiday wish list.

Thomas Tyler, MCCF employee, delivers toys to the FJC.



Unique Thrift Store Partners with FJC to Benefit Families

With the severe winter season upon us, staff at the FJC were concerned that they would be unable to meet the needs clients have for warm clothing for themselves and their children. Help came unexpectedly from Unique Thrift Store's Unique Closet Pro-

gram. The FJC received \$4000 in gift certificates which clients can use at Unique Thrift's Hillandale or Wheaton stores to purchase clothing and household items. The FJC donation is only a part of the \$100,000 the Unique

Closet Program provides annually to Montgomery County's residents to help them obtain the items they need, free of charge, while maintaining their sense of dignity. The FJC is pleased to include Unique Thrift Store as a new off-site partner.



Family Justice Center Foundation News

FJC FOUNDATION BOARD MEMBERS

- Resa Levy
President
- Susan Mize
Vice President
- Donna Rismiller
Secretary
- Dorothy Fait
Treasurer
- Marilyn Bagel
- Denise Bayerle
- David Belkin
- David P. Cohen
- Thomas M. DeGonia II
- Catherine Leggett

FJC ADVISORY BOARD MEMBERS

- The Honorable
Constance A. Morella
- Senator Ida G. Ruben

Foundation President's Welcome Going Forward in 2010...

Several weeks ago I received two requests from one of our donors: he asked, "If you had one single wish for the MCFJC Foundation in 2010, what would that be?"

In our world of instant Q & A through email, chat, twitter, Facebook or tweet, we live perched to give knee-jerk responses to a question. Yet, this time, I didn't have a fast answer.

Yes, I had a list: additional funds for more extensive psychological services to help women and children re-build shattered lives; help to support on-going education and training for staff and volunteers; purchase and installation of computer stations for the clients to use while at the Center in order to help them find job opportunities; a new toy or book for every child who comes to the FJC to take with them when they leave; additional electronic equipment for client interviews; an ever-growing list of pro bono lawyers for our Lawyer's Initiative; and increased partnerships with our business community, to name a few.

"So, you see," I told the donor, "I can't give you only one. There have been more than 1,000 people from

almost 100 different countries of origin who have come to the FJC since the doors opened in April 2009. There's so much to wish for – not one thing."

"Alright then," he said, "and what was the best thing that happened to the MCFJC Foundation in 2009?" That, I did have a fast answer for, "The unbelievable support of an entire community! The dedication of the Foundation Board Members, the volunteers, the staff, and all the individuals, families, agencies, companies and foundations who offered their financial support for this incredible effort."

"Well, then," he said, "It seems to me that you know exactly what you need to wish for in 2010 - exactly what the MCFJC Foundation got in 2009– the fantastic support of an entire community. If you continue to have that, the rest will happen."

The gentleman was 100% correct—and I thank everyone in advance for their continued support in 2010. You are the ones who make wishes come true. You truly do "*Make a Difference.*"

Resa Levy, President
MCFJC Foundation

HOLD THE DATE!

Sunday, October 3, 2010

**MCFJC Foundation's 1st Annual Benefit
Watch for Details in Future Newsletters!!**

“YOU MADE THE DIFFERENCE”

Montgomery County Family Justice Center Foundation, Inc. Appreciation Reception

On October 29, 2009, almost 150 people attended the MCFJC Foundation’s “Sponsor Appreciation Reception” which was held on-site at the Family Justice Center. Titled “You Made the Difference!” the event gave Foundation leadership the opportunity to thank the more than 250 donor Angels, Community Builders, Partners, Advocates, Friends, Patrons, artists, designers, craftsman, attorneys and volunteers, for their financial and volunteer support.



The evening began in the lobby of the FJC building. After refreshments and networking, Montgomery County Executive Ike Leggett welcomed everyone, mentioned the importance of the work of the FJC, thanked the attendees for their support, and, referring to the Donor Sponsorship Board nearby with the list of almost 250 names, noted that the project was a true partnership effort of the County, corporations, families and individuals in our community. Then County Council President Phil Andrews spoke and offered his congratulations and recognition of the important work of the MCFJC Foundation.

Foundation President Resa Levy offered her thanks to both Council-member Duchy Trachtenberg, a driving force and continual supporter of the FJC and FJC Foundation and the Honorable Connie Morrella, Foundation Advisory Board Member who was in attendance at

the event.

President Levy asked the Foundation Board Members to come forward, thanked them for their tireless efforts and complimented them on an amazing first year effort. Ms. Levy also thanked major donors Verizon Wireless Hopeline Foundation, Kaiser Permanente of the Mid-Atlantic States, Geico Philanthropic Foundation, Women who Care Ministries and Montgomery Alliance for their financial commitment to the MCFJC Foundation.

She thanked Sheriff Raymond Kight and Chief Deputy Darren Popkin of the Sheriff’s Office, for their unbelievable leadership, support and partnership during the past year.

Chief Deputy Darren Popkin then offered his remarks, noting his gratitude to everyone who helped support the work of the MCFJC Foundation. He cited some specific ways in which the FJC had been able to help the women, children and families who have been scarred by domestic and relationship abuse.

Guests were then invited to tour the FJC facility where Tour Guides led them through the volunteer area, family area, play room and several client meeting rooms. The evening closed with a dessert reception in the Conference room with each guest being offered a personal “Thank You” gift of a FJC coffee mug with logo, as well as a copy of the first edition of our joint MCFJC/MCFJC Foundation Newsletter.

Attendees greatly appreciated being thanked in such a lovely way, and offered their continued support of the MCFJC and MCFJC Foundation.



County Executive Ike Leggett welcomes guests to the FJC Appreciation Reception and thanks everyone for their support. Council-member Duchy Trachtenberg pictured at left by the Donor Sponsorship Board.



Pictured L to R: Judge Louise Scrivener, Chief Judge Ben C. Clyburn and Dorothy Lennig, Esq.



Pictured L to R: Designers responsible for the creation of the inviting FJC Lobby, Kevin Wales, Homer Matrikus, Mary Bilenkoff, Wendy Danziger of Danziger Design and Stephen Bour-nias.

Our Donors Speak Out!

The MCFJC Foundation is the fundraising arm of the MCFJC. Through the support of our foundation funders, lives can be changed forever. In talking with our donors, we asked a simple question: "Why did you choose to give to the MCFJC Foundation?"

Here are some responses:

Amy Shaw Palumbo of the William J. Shaw Family Foundation stated, *"Every year my family looks for organizations that provide essential services to our community. I became aware of the work of the FJC through a friend. I had taken graduate studies on violence against women and children, so this was already a cause about which I felt strongly."*

Ending this type of violence is so important, especially for our child-

ren. I can only imagine how terrifying it would be to try and get out of that situation, to fear for my safety and survival after years of being beaten down and dependent on the abuser. The FJC provides the services that someone needs to make it easier for them to leave and start a new, safe and happier life. I am delighted to support the Foundation!"

Alicia Doherty stated, *"I donated to the MCFJC Foundation after hearing Darren Popkin (Chief Deputy of the Montgomery County Sheriff's Office) speak at a Potomac Rotary event about the work of the FJC. I donated in the name of my four nephews as one of their Christmas presents to bring awareness about the victims of domestic violence and our County's response to their plight. As a County resident and*

business owner, I am proud to support such initiatives that streamline the response and benefit those who have suffered from domestic violence."

One of our most generous donors, The Aris & Marianne Medirossian Charitable Foundation recently stated: *"Our family foundation supports causes and issues that are relevant to the well being of children. We believe as Secretary of State Hilary Clinton stated, 'It takes a village to raise and protect a child.' Everyone has a responsibility that every child has a chance to have a healthy family and community life with pursuit of a higher education. Children are the future of our world. I hope that you and the Foundation will have a wonderful 2010."*

Commission for Women Donates Books to FJC Children's Library

Individuals, family foundations and businesses support the work of the MCFJC Foundation – and so do other service organizations and groups.

The fifteen Commissioners and staff who serve on The Montgom-

ery County Commission for Women (MCCFW) spoke out in support of the MCFJC Foundation by selecting as one of their Montgomery County Service Day activities, the donation of hundreds of children's books to the

Children's Library at the FJC. Books selected were written in English, Spanish and French, as well as some that were for preschool children with artwork only, in order to reach out to as broad a community of children as possible.

Does My Support Make a Difference?

Any offer of support goes a long way to a woman or child in need at the Family Justice Center. As a supporter of the FJC, I've had the opportunity to meet and help many families in our community. Recently, I worked with a County resident and mother of two elementary school children to obtain a protective order and to begin divorce and custody proceedings after her husband threatened to kill her and their children. This threat followed many years of violence and intimidation in the family home. The FJC referred her to me for representation in legal proceedings but also provided her and the children with mental health

counseling from qualified professionals, assistance and education about the criminal process from the State's Attorney's Office and, most importantly, a safe and welcoming place for her and her children to go in their time of desperate need. Here is what she had to say about her experience at the FJC:

It's a really good resource to have everything in one place. They had a counselor there that helped me a lot. It's a beautiful facility. The FJC is much more family friendly than another place we went to. Every time that I went to the FJC, I was asked if I or my kids wanted juice or food. They know that people

will come when they are in crisis and they may not have thought about food before they had to leave their homes. Having people from the Abused Persons Program, the attorneys, the sheriffs and the counselors in one place was very helpful. I'm so glad the FJC is there for us.

A small fraction of your pay or just a few hours a month can make the difference to a family in need by providing food, juice, books and an array of professional services at the FJC. Please contact the FJC Foundation today to learn how you can help.

Donna Rismiller
Attorney

Safeway Awards Grant to FJC Foundation

The Safeway Foundation recently hosted an awards ceremony to distribute approximately \$100,000 in grants to 30 local charities. The Foundation is funded through the generous contributions of Safeway employees throughout its Eastern Division, which operates 140 stores in Northern Virginia, Maryland, Delaware and Washington, DC. The Foundation distributes more than \$200,000 annually with special emphasis on organizations in the areas of hunger relief, education, health and human services and special needs.

Among the groups receiving funding was Montgomery County Family Justice Center, which was awarded \$2,500.

"The employees of Safeway are proud to be able to support local organizations like this that touch the lives of our customers," said Gregory Ten Eyck, chairman of Safeway Foundation for the Eastern Division.

He said the decisions on grants are made by a committee comprised of a diverse group of Safeway employees from throughout its local operating area.

Pictured: Gregory A. Ten Eyck, Director of Public Affairs and Government Relations for Safeway Foundation and Susan Mize, MC FJC Foundation Vice President.



Special Thanks to the Following New MCFJC Foundation Donors

*Thank you to our wonderful donors!
It is through your gifts that we are able to provide the social, legal, psychological and protective services necessary to rebuild the lives of the women, children and families who have survived domestic and relationship abuse.*

Community Builder

Aris and Marianne Mardirossian
Charitable Foundation

Community Partner

The William J. Shaw Family Foundation
Venable Foundation, Inc.

Community Advocate

Montgomery County Community Foundation
Alicia Doherty
Fait, Wise & DiLima LLP
Kaiser Foundation Health Plan of
The Mid-Atlantic States
Potomac Rotary Club
Safeway Employees Foundation

Community Friend

Marilyn Bagel
Denise Bayerle
Community Partnership Fund –
Adventist Health Care
Raymond M. Kight
Chief Deputy Darren M. Popkin
Bruce and Martha Sherman

Community Supporter

Laura Chase Barnett and Daniel Barnett
Cheryl R. Kravitz
Louise H. Preble-Schwartz
Marianne and Gaby Such-Baer
Patricia M. Weaver

We're on the Web:

www.montgomerycountymd.gov/fjc & www.mcfjcfoundation.org

(Conference Cont.) law enforcement. Bill Mitchell, President of the Kristin Mitchell Foundation showed a touching video of his daughter Kristin and spoke of his daughter's abusive relationship that ended in her murder, just after her college graduation. A youth survivor also spoke of her experience in an abusive relationship and the courage it took for her to leave.

The day ended on an exciting note with Attorney General Douglas Gansler announcing the winners of the Teen Dating Public Service Announcement Contest and a raffle. Parents and teens alike expressed appreciation for the conference and requested it become an annual event in Montgomery County.

(MNADV Cont.) In presenting the award to the Sheriff's Office, Eugene Morris, President of the MNADV described the Montgomery County FJC as a model of the coordinated community response that advocates see as the key to ending partner abuse. He commended the Sheriff's Office for the way it has fostered respectful cooperation among victim advocates, service providers and law enforcement agencies while creating a beautiful, warm, user-friendly site to receive services for families suffering from domestic violence. Sheriff Kight affirmed the import-

ance of treating victims with respect and making available whatever services are needed to help them become free from domestic violence. He also acknowledged the contributions of Chief Deputy Darren Popkin and partner agencies including the Office of the State's Attorney, the Department of Health and Human Services (including the Abused Persons Program), House of Ruth Maryland, Catholic Charities Immigration Legal Services and non-profit agencies in the development and subsequent successful launching of the new Center.

***FJC Update:
Since the Grand Opening
over 1,000 domestic violence
clients representing
100 different countries of
origin have received services
at the FJC.***



Pictured L to R: FJC staff, Jo Ann Ricchiuti, Barbara Wallace and Vivian Levi decorate the family area for the holiday.