



# CHILD & FAMILY SERVICES' NEWSLETTER

## Helping the Youngest Victims of Violence

Child & Family Services' Caring Network helps youth between the ages of 4-14 living in New Bedford cope with and express their feelings after having witnessed violent situations. "Many of the children live in impoverished homes or neighborhoods and have witnessed either their parents, guardians, or other adult expressing physical or verbal abuse," said Cynthia Poyant, program coordinator for the Caring Network. "In some cases, children have been abused, have witnessed murders involving gangs or drugs, are being bullied at school, or have anger issues as a result of the violence they experience at home."

In addition, there is the ever prevalent array of violent media available to kids. Video games, movies, television shows, magazines; the list goes on. Whether kids are actively seeking out violent material, or happen upon it, their curiosity often gets the better of them, leaving them disturbed and unable to process what they have experienced.

Referrals into the Caring Network are typically made by a school adjustment counselor, who provides the necessary documents to the child's parent or guardian, who then acknowledges that their child will begin receiving school-based group therapy. Weekly phone contact with the family is routinely made thereafter to follow up with each child's progress at home.

The Caring Network's group sessions are held during lunch period in a private designated room at various elementary and middle schools in New Bedford. Each group consists of 4 to 8 children, two Caring Network staff, and a school adjustment counselor. "Right now we have two part-time staff: one master's level and one English/Spanish speaking bachelor's level care manager, and are currently seeking to hire a third," said Mrs. Poyant.

Each session lasts just under 45 minutes, during which different topics are covered related to each child's traumatic experiences. Worksheets on personal and



peer safety, open group discussions, and therapeutic games are all part of the group curriculum. Relaxation sessions, drawing and coloring, in addition to modeling clay are sometimes used to provide stress-free learning experiences. "These kids haven't had the chance to just be kids," said Mrs. Poyant of the children so subject to a violent or stressful home life that have not been given the attention or affection young children deserve.

"Something we have tried incorporating lately is Model Magic," said Mrs. Poyant. "It's less messy and time consuming than clay and we use it as an opportunity for the kids to learn peer cooperation and emotional expression. Model Magic and Legos are great additions for our groups, but due to our limited budget, are currently items on our 'wish list'." In the past, the Caring Network held a drop-in art therapy group at the Dennison Memorial Community Center, and is looking to include an after school group in the future to provide longer, more in depth therapeutic sessions. ■

Cynthia Poyant can be reached at:

CARING NETWORK

3057 ACUSHNET AVENUE, NEW BEDFORD

TEL: (508) 990-0894

*Caring Network is partially supported by the Massachusetts Office for Victim Assistance through a Victims of Crime Act of 1984 (VOCA) grant from the Office for Victims of Crime, Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice. These services are provided at no cost to all victims.*

# Giving Hope for the Holidays

Child & Family Services wishes to thank everyone who contributed to the 365 Days of Hope Gala and Holiday Hope Project. Once again, the great people of this community came together to help children and families have a brighter holiday season. Whether you purchased a ticket, sponsored our event, bought a gift for a child, shopped for an entire family, or volunteered your time, YOU MADE A DIFFERENCE! We are truly grateful for your kindness and support and wish you a Healthy, Happy, and Prosperous New Year!



Photo © Robert Hughes



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## Restaurants Providing Food

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Route 6 Diner  
Smoke & Pickles  
Texas Roadhouse  
Tia Maria's European Cafe  
Turk's Seafood  
Waterfront Grille  
Wicked Kickin' Savory Cheesecakes  
Wok Magic

## Gala Committee

Stephen Buckley | *Chair*  
Nick Petronelli | *Co-Chair*  
Anne Arsenault  
Julie Lariviere  
Fatima Simas  
Lenore Tavares



The following groups, along with many individuals and local families, contributed to helping children and families this holiday season:

All Saints Catholic School  
Alphagraphics  
Bishop Stang High School  
Charlton Memorial Hospital  
Dartmouth High School  
East Fairhaven Elementary School  
First Bristol Corporation  
Friends Academy  
Full Gospel Christian Fellowship Pentecostal Church  
Gail & Roger Dahlberg  
Glaser Glass  
Holy Name Church  
Horizon Marine, Inc.  
Jack Conway Realtor  
John & Pat Kalisz  
Joseph DeMello Elementary School  
Lockheed Martin  
Lorraine Travers, CPA  
Marion Yacht Club  
Massachusetts State Police (*Dartmouth D-3*)  
Mattapoisett Laundromat, Nancy Duff  
Mayor Jon Mitchell  
Old Rochester Regional High School  
Panera Bread (*Dartmouth, MA*)  
Peter Nelson  
Premier Food  
Prince Henry Society  
RA Mitchell Co., Inc.  
Sara McKnight  
SouthCoast Young Professionals Network  
Springborn Smithers Laboratories  
Tabor Academy  
The Congregational Church of South Dartmouth  
The Yoga Studio (*Mattapoisett*)  
Unitarian Universalist Society of Fairhaven  
Women's Golf Association (*New Bedford Country Club*)

## Holiday Hope Project Committee

Ellen Dingwell | *Chair*  
Judy Bowen | *Co-Chair*  
Karen Almeida  
Maureen Harrington  
Nona Sbordone  
Lori Schaefer  
Fatima Simas

**MANY THANKS TO:**  
Douglas Wine & Spirits,  
Hawthorne Country Club,  
and Nellie's Phototainment.

Thank you to all the restaurants and businesses that provided gift certificates and silent auction items for the Gala.

# Meet Our Newest Board Member: John R. Jackson



**Why did you decide to join Child & Family's Board of Directors?** I have spent my entire professional career working on child welfare and mental health issues in both the public and private sector. The last 20 years were at Child & Family Services. I thought that joining the Board would give me an opportunity to continue to contribute and have an impact on the direction of the agency.

**What does being a Board Member mean to you?** I believe that people who serve on Boards have a unique opportunity to have a positive impact on the work of the agency in terms of programming, planning and fundraising. I am looking forward to assisting in this work. The agency has been in existence for over a hundred and seventy years. If the Board is doing its job Child & Family Services will still be a vital part of the community in another hundred years. I think that that is a challenge and an exciting piece of work to be involved in.

**How do you think Child & Family Services benefits the community?** Child & Family provides a comprehensive range of critical services that have an impact on the quality of life in the Greater New Bedford community and throughout the entire State. The agency has developed services to address a changing social landscape over the years and I expect that it will continue to be a vibrant and flexible organization. Because of its long history, it also offers a sense on continuity to the communities that it serves. The agency is part of the fabric that makes a community a community.

**Can you tell a little about yourself?** I am retired. Retirement has provided me with time that I can devote to my family which is a very positive thing. I also spend a good amount of time reading and walking my dog.

## Hometown Heroes

**The Greater New Bedford Community**  
for their continued support and generosity.

**The Carney Family**  
for providing much needed space for the Holiday Hope Project.

**Mattapoissett Laundromat**  
for donating winter coats, gloves, hats, and scarves for children and adults at Child & Family Services.

**Full Gospel Christian Fellowship Pentecostal Church, Holy Name Church, Massachusetts State Police & Lt. Jose C. Gonsalves, and The Prince Henry Society**  
for holding toy drives to benefit the Holiday Hope Project.



PHOTO (left to right):  
Janelle Guenette, Nancy Duff, Bruce Rocha, and Marc Boulanger

**Get Social.**



CHILD & FAMILY SERVICES

# BOWL FOR KIDS' SAKE

**March 2**  
1:00-3:00pm  
Wonder Bowl  
66 Hathaway Rd.  
New Bedford

Lanes are filling up fast. Register Now!

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Child & Family Services presents its 10<sup>th</sup> Annual Bowl For Kids' Sake!

This is a great event for family, friends, and coworkers to get together for a fun afternoon of bowling to benefit the children in our Big Brothers Big Sisters program.

### Not a bowler?

Pledge someone who is, or be a Lane Sponsor. There are many ways you can show your support!

Learn how you can get involved. Contact Deanna at:  
(508) 990-0894  
dbodeau@cfservices.org

**BOWL AND HAVE AN IMPACT. GET READY TO START GET STARTED SOMETHING! BOWL FOR KIDS' SAKE. EVERY GAME WILL BENEFIT BIG BROTHERS BIG SISTERS. YOU'LL HAVE A GREAT TIME AND HELP KIDS GET A CHANCE TO STRIKE IT BIG IN LIFE. START SOMETHING NOW!**



CHILD & FAMILY SERVICES

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*"...to heal and strengthen the lives of children and families."*

## Our Mission

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