

CELEBRATING OUR COMMITMENT TO YOUTH

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

<i>Special Report: Working Together for Solano County's Youth</i>	2-4
<i>Donor Recognition</i>	5
<i>Incarcerated Parents Program</i>	6
<i>Upcoming Events</i>	7

CHILDREN'S NETWORK BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Mary Dickey

President
NorthBay Medical Center
Child Abuse Prevention Council

Cynthia Kay

Past President
Community Activist

Barrett Adams

Treasurer
Parent Member

Sal Alcalá

Dean of Special Services
Solano Community College
Solano Children's Alliance

Hon. Tony Intintoli

Mayor of Vallejo
Attorney at Law

Gail Jack

Solano County Dept. of
Health & Social Services
Child Care Planning Council

Liz Gibboney

Government Relations
Partnership HealthPlan of
California

Rozzana Verder-Aliga

Mental Health Services Manager,
Solano County Mental
Health Services

SOLANO COUNTY CHOSEN AMONG AMERICA'S 100 BEST COMMUNITIES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

On September 26, 2005, Solano County was named one of America's 100 best communities for young people by *America's Promise - The Alliance for Youth*, a broad-based alliance founded by General Colin Powell to ensure the well-being of children and youth in America.

Citing the reasons its judges chose Solano County among the 100 winners from more than 1,200 communities across the nation vying for the award, America's Promise praised the Children's Network for its work with children in the county, advising the Solano County Board of Supervisors on children's issues and producing the Solano Children's Report Card and the Solano Children's Budget.

In addition to the efforts of the Children's Network, America's Promise gave high praise to the Solano County Board of Supervisors, the Solano Coalition for Better Health, and the Solano County Department of Health and Human Services as crucial partners in improving life for Solano County youth. First 5 Solano, the County's program to administer voter-approved "Proposition 10" funding for children's services, is another critical component in the County's efforts.

Department of Health and Human Services Director Patrick Duterte credits this partnership with the fact that an estimated 96 percent of

Solano County's children now have health care coverage – another achievement that the America's Promise panel recognized in its selection.

A celebration event sponsored by the Children's Alliance, a partner of the Children's Network of Solano County, was held on October 5th at the Nelson Community Center in Suisun. Children's Network Executive Director Kim Thomas was a featured speaker at the event, discussing the history and accomplishments of the Children's Alliance, and the future of children's issues in the county.

"This was a celebration for everyone working on behalf of children in this county," said Kim Thomas. "This award shows what can happen when people pull together."

Robert C. Lawton, Deputy County



Administrator, and Kim Thomas during a presentation at the October celebration event.

THE CHILDREN'S NETWORK: WORKING TOGETHER, ACHIEVING MORE FOR SOLANO COUNTY YOUTH

The Children's Network continues to strive to improve the lives of children and families throughout Solano County, and we celebrate the dedication and determination of all those who are working to ensure the health, safety, and future of our youth. This special section of the *Children's Network News* is devoted to reporting the on-going and collaborative efforts of the Children's Network and its various partners within our community who, working together, have helped Solano County earn the esteemed recognition as one of America's 100 Best Communities for Youth.

The Family Support Services Initiative

The Family Support Services Initiative, a First 5 Solano funded collaborative, is a multidisciplinary, countywide effort to provide seamless family support services through home visits to isolated, at-risk families and their children ages 0-5. The collaborative, coordinated by the Children's Network, includes representatives from each of the Family Resource Centers, Child Protective Services, Public Health and 26 additional child serving agency and organizational partners throughout Solano County. Last year, over 4400 referrals were made to members of the collaborative.

In addition to the referral process and services currently offered, the Family Support Services Initiative is working toward incorporating new, First 5 Solano funded mental health components provided by Families First, Children's Nurturing Project and Child Start. Additional steps are being taken to adopt proposed First 5 Solano funded substance abuse services and collaborative participation in the Child Welfare Services Differential Response/Breakthrough Collaborative Team and Family to Family Planning, as well as coordination efforts with the Solano Pre-Natal Collaborative and SPAV/Kaiser Domestic Violence Project.

Solano Parenting Partnership

Quality parenting education programs give parents the tools they need to care for their children with support, love, and appropriate discipline. The Solano Parenting Partnership utilizes research-based parenting programs and best practice approaches to help parents make safe homes and healthy environments in which their children can grow and thrive.

Because all families are different, the Parenting Partnership networks with practitioners from many fields. Membership is drawn from schools, the courts, probation, mental health, child welfare, substance abuse prevention and treatment, family resource centers, early childhood education, law enforcement,

city and county government and community based organizations.

The Solano Parenting Partnership fosters collaboration through:

- General meetings to network, increase appropriate referrals, and share best practices. According to a survey of Parenting Partnership members, 85% of providers learned about 6 or more parenting programs as a result of their participation in the Parenting Partnership; 61% of providers learned about 11 or more. Providers consistently reported that the Parenting Partnership helped them make new connections, increase collaboration opportunities, improved their ability to appropriately assess and refer families, and helped develop or adopt new ideas and practices for working with families.
- The creation and maintenance of an on-line, searchable Parenting Database, available at www.childnet.org. Children's Network maintains the database and provides training in its use; providers at agencies throughout the county enter and update their classes in the database; and practitioners and families county-wide utilize the database to match families to appropriate parenting classes. During fiscal year 2004-05, there were more than 108,000 hits to the parenting web site; it is estimated that over 4,700 of these were individual users. Analysis of hits reveals that the database is used primarily during the evening hours, indicating that parents and community members are the primary users of the site.
- Institutionalization of research-based parenting curricula. In October 2005, in partnership with Youth & Family Services and with funding from First 5 Solano Children & Families Commission, the Solano Parenting Partnership trained 30 local child-serving professionals to facilitate the evidence-based Nurturing Parenting Program.

The Parenting Partnership coordinated the process of institutionalizing this model parenting program in Solano County by sponsoring two local facilitators to become Nationally Recognized Trainer/Consultants for the Nurturing Program.

The Solano Parenting Partnership and the Family Support Services Initiative are made possible in part by a grant from First 5 Solano Children and Families Commission. For more information, contact Rosemary Kennedy and Nicole Bandy at (707) 421-7229.

Children's Alliance

When Solano County applied for recognition as one of The 100 Best Communities for Young People, the application noted that the Solano Board of Supervisors receives input from the county-wide Children's Alliance, "which bring(s) together policy leaders and practitioners to articulate the Board's vision in the form of services that are ever more integrated, collaborative, holistic and inclusive."

The Children's Alliance analyzes budgets and policies, makes recommendations to local and state leaders and apportions funds earmarked for Solano children and families. Working closely with the organizations that reach families and with government to set spending priorities, the Alliance identifies emerging and continuing areas of need for children's services. Alliance-directed funds created Solano's county-wide network of Family Resource Centers in 1995.

In 2000, the Alliance was responsible for developing a Master Plan for All Children Ready to Learn, and is presently in the process of reviewing that document, evaluating outcomes, and developing a new plan that builds synergistically on the planning efforts of community partners including First 5 Solano, SCBH and SKIP, MSA, MHSA, MCAH, CWS Redesign, Substance Abuse Redesign, the FRC Network and others.

Family Resource Center Network

Solano County offers one of the best examples of community collaboration around the priority of children and families — the Family Resource Center Network. There are now nine Family Resource Centers (FRCs) with at least one located in each of Solano's seven cities. They practice a set of Family Support Principles which make children and the

families that care for them their top priority. Culture, diversity, openness, fairness, dignity, accountability and teamwork are their core principles and the key to FRC Network's success. The FRCs' focus on community partnerships, cutting edge technology, and shared best practices is one reason Solano County is drawing national recognition.

FRCs served over 4,000 families last year. When asked to rate the outcome/impact of the service, for both the participant and the participant's family, 96% reported an excellent, very good, or good impact/outcome as opposed to a fair or poor result.

Bringing stability to families is a crucial aspect of ensuring the safety of children. Through tracking and sharing research data, the FRCs have identified the extent to which the issue of poverty affects the stability and functioning of the families they serve.

Two programs are now in place to assist families who struggle with poverty -- the "Earn It! Keep It! Save It!" program and the Investing in Families program.

This year, two FRCs participated in the "Earn It! Keep It! Save It!" project with the United Way of the Bay Area and Wells Fargo, resulting in over \$117,700 in aide for Solano County's low-income working families. The Investing in Families program is designed so FRCs can better assist low income families in accessing economic resources, achieving self-sufficiency, and building assets which in turn will ultimately promote the economic vitality of our local communities. Through networking, the FRCs will continue to respond to urgent symptoms of poverty, and use programs like these to develop systems of prevention and policy change.

Child Abuse Prevention Council

The Child Abuse Prevention Council informs, trains and advises the community on keeping children safe from harm. The council's purpose is to:

- Provide a forum for interagency cooperation and coordination in the prevention, detection, treatment, and legal processing of child abuse cases;
- Promote public awareness of the abuse and neglect of children and the resources available for intervention and treatment;
- Encourage and facilitate training of professionals in the detection, treatment, and prevention of child abuse and neglect;



- Recommend improvements in services, and encourage and facilitate community support for child abuse and neglect programs.

As a result of a recent Strategic Planning Session, the Council will create a positive, workable, collaborative plan of action and membership commitment for 2005-2006, facilitate better integration of child abuse services within Solano County, and provide advice and recommendations to the Board of Supervisors regarding the adoption and implementation of policies and actions.

Affordable Buildings for Children's Development (ABCD) Constructing Connections Program of Solano County

“Constructing Connections” is a local effort led by the Children’s Network to strengthen the child care facilities infrastructure. The Solano County Child Care Planning Council formed the Constructing Connections Subcommittee in February of 2005 for the purpose of creating more efficient and cost-effective strategies for the development of quality child care spaces. Working in collaboration with the child care community and other key stakeholders, Constructing Connections consists of representatives from transportation, affordable housing, the Small Business Development Center, Solano Community College, city planning and economic development departments, Solano County Health and Social Services, real estate developers, funders, a variety of child care groups, and others.

The Child Care Facilities Development and Financing Resource Guide is the most recent product of the collaborative and is available at the Children’s Network website, www.childnet.org. This guide was created to inform interested parties about the facilities development process and to provide useful reference material.

Children’s Network staff recently presented a project overview and recommendations at the City and County Planning Directors meeting and will attend future meetings to determine best strategies for each community.

The Constructing Connections program of Solano County is made possible by ABCD Constructing Connections, a program of the Low Income Investment Fund with major funding from First 5 CA, and by a grant from First 5 Solano Children and Families Commission, and contributions from Solano Family and Children’s Services, the California Department of Education (CDE), and the Children’s Network. For more information, contact Kim Johnson, Child Care Programs Director, (707) 421-7229.

Solano Comprehensive Approaches to Raising Educational Standards (CARES)

The Solano CARES Initiative, a project of the Child Care Planning Council and administered by the Children’s Network, is gearing up for its fifth program year. Over the past four years, more than 1,372 stipends have been issued to 650 members, totaling twenty-five percent of the licensed child care and development workforce. The stipend provides an incentive to increase educational levels as well as remain in the field, thereby improving the quality of child care and development services available to children and families throughout Solano County. Retention rates under the CARES program are high; the current turnover rate of providers participating in CARES is just 12%, as compared to a 2001 pre-CARES total workforce turnover rate of 27% for family child care providers and 25% for teachers working in centers.



First 5 California recently redesigned CARES as part of a move toward their goal of Preschool for All. The more prescriptive program design includes a list of supports that CARES programs must offer participants, such as tutoring, translation services, assistance with Child Development Permit applications, developing professional growth plans, links to financial aid and scholarships, more accessible training and education, and more.

The Child Care Planning Council and the CARES Advisory Committee work to improve policies and procedures and determine how to best implement the new program design. The Advisory Committee is composed of center directors, teachers, family child care providers, representatives from Solano Community College and the Early Childhood Education Advisory Committee, child care resource and referral staff, and others. Together, this collaborative has been successful in making the transition as smooth as possible for members of the workforce. Over 320 center staff and family child care providers have indicated an interest in participating in the program this year.

Solano CARES is made possible by grants from the First 5 Solano Children and Families Commission, First 5 California, and the California Department of Education. For more information, contact Kim Johnson, Child Care Programs Director, (707) 421-7229.

DONOR RECOGNITION

Thank you for your support in 2005.

Individuals

Barrett Adams
 C. B. Antonio
 Livier Avila
 Ronaldo Bancod
 Keith Brown
 Patrick Carmichael
 Martha Carter
 Gerald F. Correa
 Michelle Davanzo
 Jonathan Davis
 Linden Defreese
 Kris A. Derdzinski
 Mary Dickey
 Maureen Doria
 Lisa Fink
 Bruce Fisher
 Ruth Forney
 C. A. Gaspar
 Philmore Graham
 Dontrel W. Hairston
 Michael T. Head
 Robert Hickman
 Brenda Holmes
 Avelino G. Lopez
 Yvonne Martin
 T. McNeal
 Gregory Morrison
 Sonja New

Martin Panchula
 Scott A. Phillips
 S. E. Romabiles
 Willie L. Salazar
 L. J. Sanchez
 John C. Sanga
 J. L. Sisneros
 Eugene Spala
 C. E. Summers
 Kim Thomas
 Mary G. Thomas
 Pasang Tsering
 Tamie Tvrdik
 Rolando A. Vibat
 Jennifer Wang
 Leilani J. Wiseman
 Stephanie Wolf
 DeAnn Wright

Businesses, Corporations and Organizations

ChevronTexaco
 Costco
 Johnson & Johnson
 Levi Strauss Foundation
 Local 1280 SEIU
 Northbay Healthcare
 Foundation
 Northbay Medical Center

Pepsico Beverages
 Solano Community
 Foundation
 Starbucks
 Unity Church of the Valley
 Vallejo City Floral Company
 West Coast Contractors

The Children's Network gratefully acknowledges those who generously support our work. Several programs are made possible by a grant from First 5 Solano Children and Families Commission, as well as contributions from The California Endowment, First 5 California Children & Families Commission, S.H. Cowell Foundation, Solano County Board of Supervisors, California Department of Education, Corporation for National & Community Service, and The United Way.



Please help us in our continued efforts to serve Solano County's children by completing and returning the donation form, below. You may also visit us online at www.childnet.org, or call 707-421-7229.

YES! I want to support the work of the Children's Network of Solano County.

____ I'd like to make a tax deductible contribution to the Children's Network.

____ \$25 ____ \$50 ____ \$100 ____ \$250 ____ (other, please specify : \$ _____)

Please make checks payable to the Children's Network, or make contributions by credit card:

____ Visa ____ MasterCard Credit Card # _____ Exp. Date _____

____ I'd like to support the Children's Network in other ways. Please call me to discuss ways I can help.

Name: _____ Signature: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____ Phone: _____

Please return this form to:
 Children's Network
 2320 Courage Drive, Suite 107
 Fairfield, CA 94533

The Children's Network is a 501(c) 3 non-profit organization.

NEW!**Help for Children
Recovering From
DOMESTIC
VIOLENCE**

The Fairfield Soroptimist Group and SafeQuest Solano invite all children ages 6 to 12 years, who have witnessed domestic violence to participate in a children's life skills recovery group on Thursday evenings from 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m..

The focus of the group is to provide a safe environment where children will learn to talk about feelings and express themselves through art.

The goal of the group is to help prevent the cycle of violence.

There is **no cost** for these sessions.

The groups are held at: SafeQuest Solano, 1745 Enterprise, Suite 2D, Fairfield, CA 94533.

For more information, call 707-422-7273.

**GRANT AWARDED FOR PROGRAM AIMED AT
MEETING NEEDS OF CHILDREN WITH
INCARCERATED PARENTS**

As one of the nation's 100 Best Communities for Youth, Solano County residents demonstrate a continual commitment to collaborate efforts aimed at helping every child receive the essentials to success:

- Caring adults who are actively involved in their lives,
- Safe places in which to learn and grow, and
- A healthy start toward adulthood.

One such example is the Children of Incarcerated Parents Subcommittee (ChIPS) of the Child Abuse Prevention Council, which recently received a \$3,000 Community Grant from the Insurance Industry Charitable Foundation, Inc. for Phase 2 of a project entitled "*Voices of Children of Incarcerated Parents: Bringing Incarcerated Parents and Children Together...Through Book Writing.*" The grant application proposed a project designed to bring communities, social services agencies, educators, caretakers, and the criminal justice system together to better identify and meet the needs of children of incarcerated parents.

There are 603 inmates currently detained at the Solano County Claybank and the downtown detention facilities in Fairfield. Less than half of the inmates have contact with their children. Considering that there are 1053 children related to this incarcerated population (897 who are minors and 38% who are age 5 years or younger), a program designed to bring families together in an educational and therapeutic manner is desperately needed.

The project seeks to address the disruption of the parent-child relationship and the impact of parental-child separation and loss when one or both parents are incarcerated.

The basic principle guiding us in this project is that children and parents should be active participants in each other's lives. To accomplish this, Phase I of the project assisted inmates in learning about the developmental and emotional effects that a parent's incarceration can have on children. Using this knowledge, the inmates worked with an instructor to write a children's book that addresses some of these issues. In March 2005, two books were published—one written by male inmates entitled Home Free and the other written by female inmates entitled Mommy's Big Mistake.

The next step of the project will be to utilize the books written by the parents in jail to assist groups of children throughout Solano County in embarking on a similar process that will focus on eliciting their feelings about being separated from their parent. The project will seek to address the impact of parental-child separation due to incarceration through therapeutic groups and expressive arts. The project goals will rely on a collaborative partnership between Solano Community College's Early Childhood Education Program, Youth & Family Services' jail-based Outreach Program, Solano County Sheriff's Department and Jails, Solano County Child Protective Services, The Children's Network and the Child Abuse Prevention Council.

CHILDREN'S NETWORK STAFF DIRECTORY

Kim Thomas, M.S.W., Executive Director
advokat@childnet.org

Nicole Bandy
Parenting Education Coordinator
nicole@childnet.org

Becky Billing
CARES Program Coordinator
cares@childnet.org

Maria Cedeño
AmeriCorps Coordinator
mcedeno@childnet.org

Darren DeRose
I.T. Administrator
darren@childnet.org

ChaQuitta Hutchison
Computer Support Specialist
chutchison@childnet.org

Kimberley Johnson
Child Care Programs Director
ccc@childnet.org

Rosemary Kennedy
Child Abuse Prevention Coordinator
capc@childnet.org

Ronda Kogler
Fiscal Director
fiscal@childnet.org

Paola Latorre-Rey
CARES Outreach Specialist
outreach@childnet.org

YunAe Mello
Accounting Specialist
ymello@childnet.org

Diane Patterson
CARES Eligibility Specialist
diane@childnet.org

Gerry Raycraft
Facilities Development Coordinator
facilities@childnet.org

Michael Saeltzer
Community Programs Manager
Michael@childnet.org

Kathy Salling
Executive Assistant
ksalling@childnet.org

Tamsen Stevenson, Ph.D.
Family Support Programs Director
analyst@childnet.org

Upcoming Events:

Solano Children's Alliance
Monthly General Meetings
(1st Wednesday of each month):

January 4, 2006

February 1, 2006

March 7, 2006

Noon—2pm at the
Joe Nelson Community
Center, Suisun

Child Abuse Prevention Council
Monthly General Meetings:

January 30, 2006

February 27, 2006

March 20, 2006

Noon—1:30 p.m. at the
County Administrative
Center, Fairfield

Child Care Planning Council
Monthly General Meetings
(4th Monday of each month):

January 23, 2006

February 27, 2006

March 27, 2006

1 p.m.—3 p.m. at the
Children's Network,
Fairfield

Family Support Services Initiative
Quarterly Meeting:

January 9, 2006

9 a.m. to Noon at the
County Administrative
Center, Fairfield

Constructing Connections
General Meeting:

January 20, 2006

10 a.m. to Noon at
Solano Youth and
Family Services, Suisun

In Memoriam...

The Children's Network recently lost one of its dedicated staff members. Valerie A. Ansley was employed by the Children's Network as the Program Director for the Solano Asthma Coalition. She was a strong advocate for local government measures that would help reduce air pollutants and thereby assist asthma sufferers.

Valerie grew up in San Francisco, earning a Bachelor Degree in History from UC Berkeley and a second Bachelor Degree in Health Science. It was this second degree in the health care field that fueled Valerie's passion. She later obtained an MBA at Golden Gate University in San Francisco in order to increase her impact from a leadership position. She enjoyed a long career in health care education and worked with many health care organizations before joining the Asthma Coalition.

She was a breast cancer survivor and suffered from a systemic form of scleroderma. Despite her own serious health problems, Valerie worked tirelessly for others. Her passion was to advocate for under-represented individuals in need of health care education and services. Valerie will be missed by her family, colleagues and the community.

Children's Network

A united voice for the children of Solano County

2320 Courage Drive
Suite 107
Fairfield, CA 94533

Tel: 707-421-7229
Fax: 707-421-6495
info@childnet.org

www.childnet.org

COUNCIL MEMBERS

COUNCIL OFFICERS

Children's Alliance

Sal Alcalá, President
Jeff Knight, First VP
Michael Jereb, Second VP

Child Abuse Prevention Council

Dottie Fair, Chair
Susan Dolan, Vice Chair
Louise Harris, Secretary

Child Care Planning Council

Gail Jack, Chair
Leatrice Knox, Vice Chair

CHILDREN'S NETWORK

Kim Thomas, Executive Director

NEWSLETTER

Mary LeCompte, Editor

Solano Children's Alliance

(formerly known as The Children's Network Council)

Sal Alcalá	Michael Jereb	Sam Peterson
Dorothy Bryant Steel	Jeffrey Knight	Gayla Reiter
Kay Bosick	Leatrice Knox	Rosalind Reid
Nancy Calvo	Kathy Lago	Bruce Sanders
Debbi Davis	Bruce Lillis	Charlie Spruill III
Ana Dineen	Irene Lopez-Tauriac	Pelton Stewart
Lissette Estrella-Henderson	Jacque McLaughlin	Michael Stover*
Wanda Farnsworth	Sonja New	
Rachel Ford	David Paulson	*Participating with Membership Appointment Pending
Phyllis Harrison	Pam Posehn*	

Solano County Child Abuse Prevention Council

Linda Ashcraft*	Chris Erbe*	Denise McBride-Delgado
Rey Bernardes	Dottie Fair	Maria Moses
Dorothy Bryant Steel	Marie Fortier	Pat Nicodemus
Lori Cohee*	Rev. Willie Graham	Linda Orrante*
Debbi Davis	Bill Haden	JoAnn Parker
Mary Dickey	Louise Harris	David Paulson
Kathy Dineen	William Hausler*	
Pamela Dixon*	Gene Horst	*Participating with Membership Appointment Pending
Susan Dolan	Phillip Martin*	

Solano County Child Care Planning Council

April Adams	Eloisa Mercado
Suzanne Greene	Valerie Powell
Gail Jack	Karen Sanchez
Karime Jacobo	Ken Scarberry
Leatrice Knox	Alan Tornay
Kathy Lago	
Gail Lyon	