

Mockingbird Times

FOSTER CARE AND HOMELESS YOUTH SPEAK OUT ACROSS THE NATION



Volume XII, Issue XI

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Youth Leadership on Display at Our 10th Anniversary Benefit Luncheon

BY DAVID BUCK



Luncheon Emcee Diamonique Walker is joined on stage by Resource Specialist Jerry Bobo to urge the audience to support The Mockingbird Society.

TEN YEARS AGO THE MOCKINGBIRD SOCIETY WAS FOUNDED BY JIM THEOFELIS AND THREE STREET YOUTH REPORTERS.

TEN YEARS LATER, at the 10th Anniversary Benefit Luncheon, we reflected on how far The Mockingbird Society has come, while looking toward our goals for the next ten years. We are an organization that has grown into a state wide network of hundreds of youth, and we are champions for building a world-class foster care system. As our speakers stated throughout the luncheon, we LEAD, PARTNER, and EDUCATE. While ten years may sound like a long time, when measured against all that The Mockingbird Society has accomplished, it is a testament to our effectiveness that we have accomplished so much in a decade. And so, this year we celebrated the positive impact of The Mockingbird Society has had on youth, the community, and the system. We celebrated our history, we celebrated 17 major legislative reforms, and we celebrated the lives of youth who have made a tremendous impact not only within Mockingbird but also in their own lives.

The power of the youth was at the heart of the program. Our emcee for the event was Senior Network Representative Diamonique Walker, who anchored the event in the professional manner that we have come to expect from many of the youth and young adults who comprise the Mockingbird Youth Network. Diamonique's professionalism and candor reinforced the message to all of those present at our 10th Anniversary Benefit Luncheon that youth and alumni from care can become dynamic, eloquent leaders.

In addition, our very own Network Representatives Amanda Bevington and Deonate Cruz, along with Olympia Chapter member Chris Bauer, were featured in a video filmed at our last Youth Advocacy Day. This personal piece focused on their lives, and the power they have shown through their work at The Mockingbird Society.

Youth led the program, but adult's efforts were highlighted as well. Executive Director Jim Theofelis took the stage to share the founding of The Mockingbird Society and its humble beginnings in the basement of the Richard

Hugo house. He reflected upon the early challenges of the organization. There was a time a year after Mockingbird was founded, when he called his youth reporters together for a meeting. He explained at that



Mockingbird Executive Director Jim Theofelis with Deputy Director Ros Ghan and long-time Mockingbird Supporter Connie Ballmer.

meeting that Mockingbird was out of money, leaving the young staff members devastated. However, the next morning, Jim received a message from Senator Patty Murray, who explained that Mockingbird would receive a large grant to fund the Mockingbird Family Model. At this point, Jim introduced a video featuring Patty Murray thanking The Mockingbird Society for ten years of effective advocacy and endorsing The Mockingbird Family model. Afterwards, several Network youth came up to express their thanks to Jim for changing their lives in such a positive way and presented him with an award: a plaque featuring the very first issue of the Mockingbird Times published in 2001, as well as the 10th anniversary edition published in August 2011. The plaque was signed by staff members, Network youth, Board members, and many others who have been touched by Jim's compassion.

The climax of the event occurred when Georgina Ramirez, our Youth Development Specialist and also an alumna of care, took the stage to share her story as the Keynote Speaker. The audience heard a story about a girl who had experienced enough in her life to have every reason to be mad at the system. Being put in a bad placement led to being in Juvenile Detention, where, at least, Georgina felt safer than when she was with her foster mom. Although she faced many challenges, Georgina eventually found The Mockingbird Society, and felt empowered as a systems reform advocate. She told her story so that everyone in the room understood her strength and her inspiration for what she does at The Mockingbird Society, so that others would be inspired to do what they can to help future generations. Her story gripped us, and reminded us that even now as we celebrate 10 years, there's still a lot of work that needs to be done for the sake of children in care everywhere. I'm happy

to have an ally like Georgina Ramirez on our side to help pave the way for the future.



Youth Development Specialist Georgina Ramirez delivers her powerful Keynote Speech.

Over 500 guests, including sponsors, board members, staff, Mockingbird youth, and Mockingbird Family Model foster families, attended the luncheon, and made the event a tremendous success. On behalf of The Mockingbird Society, I thank all of our attendees, sponsors and table captains. Through the luncheon, we were able to raise over 210,000 dollars.



Mockingbird Champion Representative Mary Helen Roberts talks with Dr. Wanda Hackett.

WE COULD NOT HAVE
DONE THIS WITHOUT YOU.

Letter From the Editor

BY JIM THEOFELIS



With Thanksgiving approaching, we at The Mockingbird Society have much for which to be thankful. On October 20th, over 500 of The Mockingbird Society's greatest supporters attended our 10th Anniversary Benefit Luncheon. This year's luncheon was another huge success, raising over \$210,000 to support our mission to build a world-class foster care system! This year's program proved to be the most powerful yet, with moving stories of adversity, hope and achievement. Our program participants, including emcee Diamonique Walker, keynote speaker Georgina Ramirez, and young adult speakers David Buck, Sam Martin, Jamica Henderson, and Jerry Bobo made this year's event one to remember. Thank you to everyone who helped make it happen.

I want to thank all of our supporters and sponsors for helping us exceed all of our goals this year, with special thanks to the Sessions Family Foundation, who for the second year in a row pledged to match all gifts \$200 and above for an up to \$30,000 matching gift! This generosity, in addition to the unwavering support of you, our

readers, our table captains, Hub Homes and foster families, legislative champions and many others, ensures that we can continue our important work on behalf of children, youth and families.

As we celebrate our successes, we must also prepare for tomorrow's challenges. The Governor has called on the Legislature to find \$2 billion worth of savings during a special session scheduled to begin November 28th. The Mockingbird Society will continue to work with our partners, allies and champions in Olympia to ensure crucial programs for youth in care are preserved. During these tough economic times, the importance of youth voice in the decision-making process cannot be understated, and neither can your support.

Thank you once again for your continued support of children, youth and families, and a Happy Thanksgiving to you and those you love.

Jim Theofelis
jim@mockingbirdsociety.org

Lawyers Fostering Independence Partners with Mockingbird to Help Youth

BY: BRENDA ORTEGA



Last month the Mockingbird Youth Network staff met with a great organization providing legal support for youth in care. The Center for Children & Youth Justice's (CCYJ) Lawyers Fostering Independence (LFI) program is dedicated to assisting and advocating for foster youth and alumni with non-criminal legal issues. LFI is creating a partnership with the MBS to be able to reach out and connect to more youth in need of legal representation.

The legal help and resources that LFI provides are free for current and former youth of care (ages 17-23). This means if you were in kinship care, group homes, or foster care in King County then they can assist you! The types of issues they deal with are civil issues, which include: sealing juvenile records, court fines, restitution, avoiding evictions, defending against illegal discrimination, dealing with property conversion, emancipation, public benefits, and many others.

Last month Cheryl Kleiman, who serves as LFI's Program Coordinator, in addition to teaching at the University of Washington Law School, sat down with the Youth Network to talk about what LFI was, and what role they play in helping youth in the child welfare system. What Cheryl said LFI wanted from Mockingbird, was to identify ways that they could improve their outreach to youth and to brainstorm ways how they could spread the word about

their program. Through the partnership with MBS, LFI wants to understand what it is that youth in care go through, and ways that they can help. The lawyers have experience and knowledge with the legal issues, but they want to know more about working with youth directly. Since the MYN is comprised of youth and young adults who have been impacted by the system, we are hoping to help bridge the gap and help spread the word about LFI's services.

Based on my own personal experience with Cheryl, and in addition to the experiences of other youth I have talked to, LFI is very accommodating to the often shifting circumstances youth face. They can give legal advice via telephone and e-mail, and even if they cannot help with your particular problem, they often are able to connect you with someone who can.

Like MBS, Cheryl and LFI strive to make positive changes for foster youth and alumni of care. Both organizations also strive to advocate based on the needs expressed by the youth themselves, which makes this an ideal partnership. With so many legal challenges facing youth in care, it is comforting to know that there are organizations like LFI for those who need support in dealing with legal issues. If you are a youth in care in need of LFI's services please email them at lfintake@ccyj.org or call them at (206) 696-7503.

Spokane Network Youth Educate, Engage Inland Northwest Community

BY COURTNEY CANOVA



Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASAs) Gain Window into Foster Care System through Youth's Perspectives

On a brisk morning in the first week of October, another youth and I spoke in front of a group of CASA volunteers at their annual statewide convention at the Northern Quest Casino. The presentation was by far the most emotional presentation I have ever done. At first the audience was calm and collected. However, by time stories started flowing out, the participants were visibly drawn in.

The audience asked many inspiring and interesting questions, which sparked conversations that will stay with us for the rest of our lives. After the "Removal from Home" activity, during which we collected the participants' personal belongings, put them in a garbage bag, and announced that they had "entered care," I could immediately tell that the activity had drawn out the "inner child" in the audience members. Soon after, I saw women with tissues in their hands and men with tears in their eyes. The hour and a half felt like a motivational speech as much as a training. For me, the reaction from the audience gave me inspiration that, yes, there are a lot of people in the world that actually care about foster youth and all of our struggles.

After all was said and done, many of the audience members came up to us and inquired about future presentations in their counties. Apparently, we had made an impact upon them and their views of "the system." The activities we presented and the stories we told definitely made the hard work and preparation worth it. Now, I know we will be even better prepared for presentations and speeches to come. Special thanks to Sarah Mahaffy, who helped us prepare to facilitate, to the CASA volunteers for their attention and interest, and to Northern Quest for hosting us.

Sharing Our Stories with Politicians, Musicians, Artists, and Journalists

The week of October 17-23 was another extremely exciting one for Spokane

Mockingbird youth. To start off with, some of us enjoyed a wonderful dinner with Representative Kevin Parker, who we met at our legislative BBQ in July. We talked about our hopes for our college careers, and what we plan to do with the rest of our lives. Getting to know Representative Parker, and connecting with the other youth more deeply was truly a great experience.

Speaking of "getting to know each other," 4 youth in our chapter, including myself, were asked to be featured in a music video for the group Level Ground. The song is about youth in care and their struggle with trying to stay in a stable placement in the system. The experience of appearing in the video was amazing, and it was really inspirational to know that there are people doing real life artistic things to make our voices of struggle and hurt heard.

Our monthly Mockingbird meeting was held on Tuesday October 18th, and we were honored to have an "art day" where we had two volunteers from the community plan our activities. We made crazy Rice Krispies treats and colorful artistic cement tiles. Along with all of our other activities this month, we also had five youth who were interviewed by the Spokane Inlander newspaper, who shared their stories about how growing up in foster care plays a role in our experiences with education. Mockingbird has definitely "gone to the next level" in Region 1. I look forward to see what is in store for us next!



Network Participant Katie Catelli and daughter Azha show off their creations at the Spokane Chapter's Art Therapy event.

We Welcome Your Work

We welcome submissions of articles, poetry, artwork, and photography from our young readers who have experience in the foster care system and/or homelessness. If you want to be published in the *Mockingbird Times* visit www.mockingbirdsociety.org, or contact us at (206) 407-2134 or via email at mbt@mockingbirdsociety.org. If you have submitted something before that hasn't been published, we may need your submission agreement in order to publish your work. Please submit materials and completed agreement again via the email address listed above.

Note: Any incoming letters to the editor and any correspondence to youth under 18 years of age should be addressed to the *Mockingbird Times* and will be opened first by adult editorial staff.

The Mockingbird Society: The Story Behind the Name

The 1962 American classic *To Kill A Mockingbird* by Harper Lee is the inspiration for our name, The Mockingbird Society. Atticus, the widowed father of Jem and Scout, joins Miss Maudie in teaching his kids that it's a sin to kill a mockingbird because "...Mockingbirds don't do one thing but make music for us to enjoy. They don't do one thing but sing their hearts out for us."

What if we created an organization, a community, indeed a world, in which our most vulnerable children and youth were protected and valued with the same commitment that Atticus had for mockingbirds? Join The Mockingbird Society today and help us give young people a safe place to nest and sing.

MEET OUR STAFF

Jim Theofelis, Executive Director

Ros Ghan, Deputy Director

Tiffany Washington, Youth Programs Director

Jon Brumbach, Public Policy & Communications Coordinator

Kylie Palzer, Development Coordinator

Brian Lawrence, Development Director

Beth Vance, Finance Director

Lauren Frederick, Executive Assistant

Fredrick Kingston, Network Coordinator

Aine Cowan-Kuist, Administrative Coordinator

David Forte, Evaluations and Database Coordinator

Bailey Buckingham, Mockingbird Network Program Assistant

Virginia Philbrook, Receptionist

Resource Specialists: Jerry Bobo,

Sarah Mahaffy, Georgina Ramirez,

Tammy Soderberg, Samantha Valle

Senior Network Representatives:

David Buck, Diamonique Walker

Network Representatives:

Amanda Bevington, Asha Bucrée,

Brenda Ortega, Deonate Cruz

Contributing Writers & Artists:

Courtney Canova and Diana Guizer

Photography: Jerry Davis, Dee Jones

Design & Layout: Poetica Design with Highfive.com

ABOUT US: *The Mockingbird Society* is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation leading advocacy for foster care reform built on youth-inspired solutions, powerful coalitions and public support for every child's right to a safe home and a bright future. All contributions are tax deductible to the fullest extent of the law. Please consult your tax advisor regarding your specific tax situation. *The Mockingbird Times* is a monthly newspaper written and produced by youth who have experience in foster care and/or homelessness. All youth employees of *The Mockingbird Society* are paid between \$9.50 and \$12 an hour. Additionally, youth from across the country submit articles, art work, and poetry and are compensated up to \$25 per published piece. *The Mockingbird Times* has a monthly circulation of over 25,000 copies being distributed across Washington State and the USA, through a private distribution list and as an insert in *Real Change*, a Seattle-based community newspaper. Youth involvement is the key to the philosophy, values, and success of *The Mockingbird Society* and, as such, youth are involved in all aspects of organizational development and decision-making. Donations can be made online at www.mockingbirdsociety.org or by calling our office at (206) 323-5437. Donations to *The Mockingbird Society* may be tax-deductible and are greatly appreciated. No part of the *Mockingbird Times* may be reproduced without the written permission of *The Mockingbird Society*. All contents copyright ©2009, *The Mockingbird Society*.

Representative Pettigrew Honored as a 2011 Angel in Adoption

By: DIAMONIQUE WALKER



Each year the Congressional Coalition on Adoption Institute provides all U.S. Congress members with the opportunity to honor people or organizations in their community that are doing extraordinary work to improve the lives of the at-risk children and families involved in the child welfare system by nominating them for The Angels in Adoption Award. This year one of Washington State's nominees hit close to home. Representative Eric Pettigrew, who is no stranger to The Mockingbird Society, has the honor of being nominated for this prestigious award by Congressman Jim McDermott.

Representative Pettigrew has done some phenomenal work in support of child welfare system reform. This includes sponsoring many bills that not only affect children and youth, but also those that have been in the foster care system and that have been adopted. He has been a co-sponsor



Representative Pettigrew joined the Mockingbird Youth Network for Mailing Day in the summer of 2009.

on some of Mockingbird's most significant advocacy priorities, including: Extended Foster Care, Independent Youth Housing Program (IYHP), Post-adoption Sibling Visits, and Healthcare to 21.

Representative Pettigrew has definitely made an impact on youth through his work. The Angels in Adoption Award is a nice reminder that his hard work isn't going

unnoticed by the community. Being a Legislator for one of the most diverse districts in Washington State is no easy job, and it's great to see him get the recognition we believe he deserves.

On behalf of The Mockingbird Society, I would like to congratulate Representative Eric Pettigrew on a well-earned award for his exemplary work within the child welfare system, and for all youth for that matter. Thank you for being a continuous supporter of Mockingbird, as well as recognizing, and listening to, the power of youth voice.

Eric Pettigrew is just one of our community partners who has been honored with this award over the last several years. The Center for Children and Youth Justice (CCYJ), founded by Justice Bobbe Bridge,

was also honored with The Angel in Adoption Award in 2010. This organization does exemplary work for youth in the foster care system as well as the juvenile justice system in an effort to create balance so that foster youth and kids in the juvenile justice system have the same opportunities and support as youth in intact homes. Their work definitely coincides with our mission and vision at Mockingbird, so we have and will continue to proudly partner with CCYJ.

The Mockingbird Society's very own Executive Director, Jim Theofelis, was also an honoree of The Angel in Adoption Award in 2005. It is no surprise that Jim was nominated for this award seeing as he has helped to inspire system reform on many occasions. So in the spirit of partnership and continued progress toward building a world class foster care system, we honor and thank Representative Pettigrew, as well as all our other "partner angels."

A DECADE OF ADVOCACY || || A LIFETIME OF CHANGE
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THANK YOU

THE MOCKINGBIRD SOCIETY would like to thank all of the extraordinary community members who made our 10th Anniversary Benefit Luncheon a tremendous success. **Together we raised more than \$210,000 to support our advocacy efforts and innovative programs.** We appreciate your passion, commitment and generosity towards building a world-class foster care system.

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New Kinship Center Bolsters Support for Caregivers and Children

By: AMANDA BEVINGTON



The Mockingbird Society helps advocate for youth that are in care, alumni of care, or in kinship care. We provide resources to youth to help them make a better transition into the adult world; we also collaborate with many different agencies that help provide youth and families with the right resources to become successful. At MBS, we believe that kinship care is a great option for some youth in the foster care system. Many times, birth parents are no longer able to provide for their kids due to their own challenges, but there are family members or friends who step in to support the youth. To do the best they can, these kinship caregivers need support too, and an exciting new program in Seattle is gearing up to provide that support.



Kinship caregivers, caseworkers and advocates come together to celebrate the official opening of the new Kinship Center in South Seattle.

On September 26th, the Kinship Center, located at the Central Area Senior Center in

Seattle, opened for business. The Kinship Center was created in response to the needs of kinship caregivers who are grandparents, aunts, uncles, and siblings caring for young family members. The project is a collaboration designed to provide kinship caregivers connection to resources, support, educational advocacy, and legal options. The vision for the center grew out of the King County Kinship Collaboration, with financial support from Casey Family Programs.

The Child Welfare League of America (www.cwla.org) defines kinship care as the full time care, nurturing and protection of children by relatives, members of their tribes or clans, godparents, stepparents, or any adult who has a kinship bond with a child. This definition is designed to be inclusive and respectful of cultural values

and ties of affection. It allows a child to grow to adulthood in a family environment.

The Kinship Center is a place for youth and caregivers to become aware of their rights and resources. The center encourages families to become a part of the community, as well as to learn and grow from each other's ideas and skills. The center eliminates barriers and empowers kinship caregivers in many different ways. It provides different workshops that educate caregivers on educational advocacy to help work effectively with teachers, administrators, and social workers within the school system. There are also legal workshops to help kinship caregivers become aware of their rights and

Creative Corner

Sometimes I Feel

BY DIANA GUIZER

Sometimes I feel like I am nothing in this world because all the bad things I've done....

Because of all the pain I put my mom through when I would run the streets at night.

Because I let drugs and the gang life style take over who I was and I let them change the person I was.

Sometimes I feel like crying....

Because I see what I put myself through and I keep doing it.

Because I want to stop but I just don't know how.

Because I miss the love and trust I had from my family but gave up it for a line, a bottle, or just a bit of a high.

Sometimes I feel like going away and never being seen again...

Because if I wasn't here my mom wouldn't be in pain anymore worrying

About what I am doing or if I am dead somewhere.

Because my sisters wouldn't be put in danger worrying about the gang life,

Walking out on the street and having the fear of getting shot,

Rushed, or even killed just because they are related to a known gang

Member.

Because I won't have to watch my back 24/7 as I walk down the street.

Sometimes I feel like there is still hope for me...

Because I want to change and am doing my best so I won't

Be a thug or a druggie—I want to be a normal teen girl.

Because a lot of people give up on themselves but never will I do that.

Because the only thing in life that I want is to be sober and gang free;

I just want to be as normal as I can.

KINSHIP, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

responsibilities around the issues of non-parental custody, guardianship and adoption.

The Kinship Center provides many different activities that are directed towards youth, as well as caregivers. These activities include:

- Support groups and tutoring
- Case management
- Educational, youth centered workshops
- Youth activities such as drill team and drum squad
- Outings, parties, and celebrations for Kinship Center youth and families

To get more information on this great new program, or if you would like to visit please feel free to stop in and say hi. The Kinship Center Program is located at the Central Area Senior Center on 500 30th Avenue S, Seattle, WA 98118. The contact number is 206-445-1360; direct emails to Kimberly at kimberlyw@seniorservice.org or find them online at www.centralareaseniorcenter.org/programandservices/kinshipcare.aspx. They are also on Facebook at www.facebook.com/The-Kinship-Center. The Kinship Center is open 8:30 am to 4:30 pm, Monday thru Friday, with extended hours of 10 am to 6 pm on Wednesday and Thursday. Drop-ins are welcomed.

Special thanks to D'Artagnan Caliman and Kimberly Walker for providing important information during the writing of this article.

CHAPTER

Region 1 North (Spokane) Chapter Update

BY WILLIAM MENDOZA

On October 19th, Sarah, Courtney and I had the opportunity to go to a DSHS Town Hall meeting led by Secretary Susan Dreyfus. The impact of the great recession and the further budget cuts in Washington was on the agenda. They informed us of Washington's plan to have to cut another 10% in DSHS services which would be \$573 million and would have to be cut before our biennium is up in 2013.

The funding the government has worked to protect included programs to help children in care achieve permanency, and programs which encourage independence for clients with functional and developmental disabilities. The government is thinking of reducing/eliminating programs that support children in out of home placement. There is also reduction in state funding for vocational rehabilitation services. Another big hit could affect benefits for immigrant and undocumented children. Since July of 2009, DSHS has experienced \$2.2 billion in cuts, with 90% of those cuts impacting programs and services. (Department of Social and Health Services, September 2011)

Region 1 South (Yakima) Chapter Update

BY BRANDY BAXLEY

A big accomplishment for us in October was creating a planning and leadership committee for planning our big events and facilitating the Network Leadership trainings. Thank you Stevie, Brenda, Jacob, and Luis for committing to be a part of this committee! On October 29th we will be having our Harvest Party at the Schell Produce Corn Maze in Union Gap. We had a planning committee meeting on October 15th to prepare and plan out the event. For the Harvest Party we will be renting a fire pit and roasting hotdogs and s'mores, and we are going to take a trip on the hay ride! Additionally, a new activity this year is that we will be breaking up into teams for a race through the Corn Maze. The first whole team to come out will be getting a fabulous prize. Lastly, we will be raffling off an iPod! Hopefully, this will be just the first of a lot of successful events we'll plan together as a team.



Our Voice. Our Future.

Region 2 South (Seattle) Chapter Update

BY LAKEISHA SCHRINER

The YMCA's Member Advisory Committee (MAC) and Mockingbird Society's Region 2 (Stay True) Have Been Partnering together since September 2011 to empower young adults to take on leadership roles, advocate for positive change, and build community. In the months to come we have a few different events coming up, which are The Boo Bash, The Annual Young Adult Services Thanksgiving Feast, and The Culture of Foster Care training. In November we will be partaking in two events. The first is on November 10th which will be the Culture of Foster Care Training. The purpose of this training is to put the audience in the shoes of foster youth and see what it is like to experience feelings associated with care. The Second event is on November 17th which will be our annual Young Adults Services Thanksgiving Feast. This event invites Center Members to come and enjoy great food and people as we honor Thanksgiving Days that are celebrated throughout the world.

Region 2 North (Everett) Chapter Update

BY JANELLE BRAXTON

This month I represented HEYMAC at a Youth in Leadership and the Arts event hosted by Seattle Art Museum. There were six exceptional youth panel speakers discussing how art has become incorporated with their life and how it changed them for the better. They all represented art in all its forms, including acting, music, painting/drawing, and poetry. Their interactive personalities made the entire room recognize the importance of art being a part of everyone's life. As one panelist said, "Art allows you to individualize and express yourself."

This session looked at the critical role of youth voice and mentorship in the arts. At the end of this session I personally felt a great connection to them, people that were strangers and now are friends, I felt how art had helped me through foster care and how art affects everyone around. My younger brother also attended and said, "It was an experience to be able to be a part of this event, and for once, the adults noticed that the youth actually care about art and music and that it has a profound

UPDATES

effect on our lives." This week HEYMAC will host our chapter meeting in Mount Vernon on October 27th, with some very special guests. Go HEYMAC!

Region 3 North (Tacoma) Chapter Update

BY TIANNA OLIVER

This month's chapter meeting was Halloween themed. Our Resource Specialist surprised us with decorations all over the walls with Franksteins and ghosts, as well as pumpkins and little creepy crawlers. Though it was all fun and games in the beginning, we got down to business and brain stormed some new topics for next year's Youth Advocacy Day and Leadership Summit. And we also decided what we wanted to do for our next Community Service, which was to give people in our community goodie bags filled with personal hygiene items.

Our next chapter meeting will be November 9th at PCA from 3:30-5. Hope to see all of you there.

Region 3 South (Olympia) Chapter Update

BY MANDY URWILER

Greetings from Region 3 South Olympia! On October 4th, we had fun at a Life Advocacy 101 (LA101) training at our host agency, Community Youth Services. At the LA101 training, Fred Kingston, the Mockingbird Youth Network Coordinator, and Tiffany Washington, the Director of Youth Programs, taught us how we can advocate for ourselves in our daily lives as youth in foster care. They showed us that something as simple as asking our foster parent to let us go to a party is advocacy, if you do it in the right way. When you tell your teacher what you need to succeed in a challenging class, that is advocacy too. The training taught us to use communication tools like body language, confidence, respect, and a positive and determined attitude to make it easier to advocate for ourselves in everyday life. Remember: Advocacy is speaking up for what you believe in!

Sadly, that evening we also said goodbye to our Resource Specialist, Graham Parrington. In November, we will be hiring a new person to take his place. This will be a slight transition, but I know we can do it!



Region 2 North MYN participants gather in Mount Vernon, near host agency YouthNet, before their October 27th chapter meeting.