

Mockingbird Times

FOSTER CARE AND HOMELESS YOUTH SPEAK OUT ACROSS THE NATION



April 2010

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NewHolly Neighborhood Campus BY ASHLIE LANIER



On March 2nd 2010, a few of The Mockingbird Network Representatives, including myself, visited **NewHolly Community Center**. Our mission was to find resources available to youth immigrants and refugees and discover the characteristics of youth that can use these resources. When I first heard we were going to that area, I must admit I thought it was going to be, no offense meant at all, a ghetto. The NewHolly area has had a reputation of being a place where youth who do not attend school could go and hang out at neighborhood parks or just simply stand on street corners. It has even been said the area has a street gang reputation. However, in all actuality, once arriving there it looked more like a good neighborhood community instead of the ghetto I remember it as.

One of the groups on the campus is **East African Community Services (EACS)**, a community based organization located in the family services building. The purpose of EACS is "to provide youth and adult refugees the proper resources and support to have and maintain a successful life."¹ They serve up to 1000 different people from East Africa who are located in the NewHolly community and other areas of King County. The East African Community Services objective is to bridge the gap between successful refugee youth and refugee youth that aren't doing so well. They accomplish this objective through three pro-

grams: individual case management, family and children support, and community education.

At the center, refugees are able to receive individual face to face case management with a person who can help them with employment and housing. With help from the **Seattle Housing Authority**, refugees in the NewHolly community are able to have affordable and safe housing. Case

are doing it alone. EACS is important because the organization follows through with its mission statement and actually helps provide a success plan for refugee families.

Also located on the NewHolly campus is the **Youth Tutoring Program**, a "late afternoon and evening program for elementary, middle and high school students who receive help with homework, building language arts and math skills, as well as working with caring staff and volunteer tutors."² Although the program is not precisely for East African immigrants, 80-90 % of the youth participants are East African.³ Staffed tutors develop partnerships with the teachers of the youth to assure an increase in educational accomplishment.

The Youth Tutoring program is definitely an effective way of improving the success rate of education for youth immigrants. There is currently an eighty student two year waiting list full of students who are ready to take their education seriously. Some students come back after graduating from high school, to volunteer to help younger students accomplish what they have: a high school diploma or even college as many of them are.⁴

The **Atlantic Street Center**, also located on the NewHolly campus, is a drop in center and a place for youth to hang out. "[The] teen center is so cool and it's fun. I come to do homework and hang with my friends while being close to my house," said one youth participant. The Atlantic Street Center accepts all



The Mockingbird Network representatives toured the facility and met with service providers.

managers make sure that their clients have the resources to meet their needs. As far as community education, East African Community Services works with **Cleveland High School** refugee students to help provide tutoring for younger students who might have to take E.S.L. (English as a second language) classes. This gives youth refugees the opportunity to learn from students who they have something in common with. Being new to a country and trying to understand a different curriculum for education can be quite difficult for youth when they feel they

The NewHolly Neighborhood Campus provides essential social services to community residents.



NEWHOLLY, CONTINUED ON PAGE 3

Community Partners BY IAN GRANT



There is a small trophy sitting on the mantelpiece in **Passages**, one of the many transitional programs in the University District in Seattle. It is more-or-less unremarkable. It's small, and it's got a scratch on it. **Curtis Knopf**, the program manager, picked it up at Goodwill for ninety-nine cents. It is important because it is a sign of changing times at **YouthCare**, and an example of what can be achieved when service providers partner on both large and small scales.

The other reason the trophy is important is, well, because it's a trophy. Which means that there's an opportunity for somebody to win it. The somebodies, in this case, are participants in YouthCare's **Passages** and **Casa De Los Amigos**. The trophy may have been paid for with YouthCare money, but the soccer games that determine the owner of it are provided by **Street Soccer Seattle (SSS)**, a new program whose purpose is to bring homeless youth together through soccer. I spoke with **David Nibley**, one of the principals of SSS, about his program, and what it's like to coordinate with big agencies when you're both new and very small.

David says that established agencies typically have "little time to deal with a new agency, to pass the word along and develop that relationship." Oftentimes David's SSS program

wasn't able to get a foothold: "About eighty percent of the time, the response we would get is a referral to somebody else at some other agency. Which just lead us on a wild goose

"...A big part of the problem is simply that the people best equipped to understand what youth need, the service providers that work with them on a day-to-day basis, have neither the time nor the authority to make connections with other agencies to set up things like soccer games."

chase, and made it almost impossible for us to really get any kind of footing, or any kind of ability to develop our own identity. The frustration is that every organization that we've talked to has the ability to create some sort of relationship with us... where we work with them in some way just as far as advertising or maybe just collaboratively, or even better where we could internally set up a program with them because most agencies like to do activities, and we're like an instant activity. We bring the coach, we bring the balls, we bring the shoes, we bring everything."

Curtis believes that a big part of the problem is simply that the people best equipped to understand what youth need, the service providers that work with them on a day-to-day basis, have neither the time nor the authority to make connections with other agencies to set up things like soccer games. "The frontline staff, the most important people in our agency, don't have float time. That means that they can't just leave. It's a complicated process to get [our staff] a week off so that they can go facilitate with **Michael Meade**... Send the people that will be inspired so that they can come back and inspire others." (Michael Meade is the head of the **Mosaic Multicultural Foundation**, an organization that puts on poetry/spoken word events for disadvantaged youth, among other things. Mosaic and YouthCare have collaborated to put on **Voices of Youth**, a poetry workshop and recital for disadvantaged youth, for the last several years.)

David believes that the lack of cooperation between different agencies in the community causes "the clients we serve to suffer." There are few youth who would disagree. Perhaps someday this sort of interagency collaboration will be the rule, not the exception. But for now, the little trophy on the mantelpiece shines on, testament to a good deed in a weary world.

Letter From the Editor BY JIM THEOFELIS



At the time of this writing, the Washington State Legislature is in day 23 of the 30 day Special Session called by Governor Gregoire. As most of you know, the 2010 session was scheduled to conclude March 11th but because there was no budget agreement between the House of Representatives and the Senate, Governor Gregoire called for a 30 day extension. As a result of the uncertainty regarding when the 2010 legislative session will actually end, we at The Mockingbird Society decided to cancel our Post-legislative Celebration.

However, the good news at this point in time is that all of the bills on our Advocacy Agenda were passed this session and have been signed into law by the governor. Given the economic and political climate, this really is a remarkable achievement for the youth and alumni in The Mockingbird Network and for our many wonderful partners across Washington State. We wait anxiously for lawmakers to finalize the budget because we have critical

housing services that we have worked to ensure are funded in this budget: most specifically, the HOPE Beds program and the Responsible Living Skills Programs. For a complete list of our legislative achievements regarding the 2010 legislative session, please visit www.mockingbirdsociety.org. I would like to give a very special "Thank-You" to all of you who wrote letters, sent emails and/or made phone calls to legislators!

Additionally, I want to take a moment to introduce *Mockingbird Times* readers to our newest employees. **Rose Berg** has joined our team as Director of Public Policy and Communications, and we have also hired **Brian Lawrence** as our Director of Development. Both come with outstanding professional experience and I want to welcome both Rose and Brian to The Mockingbird Society team!

Jim Theofelis
jim@mockingbirdsociety.org

Conserving Resources and Honoring Your Preferences

In an effort to increase awareness of the *Mockingbird Times*, and the voice of its contributing writers—youth and alumni of care, we plan to begin publishing a more robust online edition in 2010. This also will allow us to conserve resources and reduce costs. So, watch for regular updates on our progress. We hope to be "live" by mid-year. We'll be checking in with you, our loyal readers, in the near future to learn more about your preferences.

Thank you for your support.

Submitting Letters

All incoming Letters to the Editor should be addressed to the *Mockingbird Times* and will be opened by editorial staff. All incoming correspondence to youth under 18 years of age will be opened first by *Mockingbird Times* Editorial Staff.

Thank You!

Lura Harrison; Brian Hatcher; Ann Lokey; Parent Map; Pierce County Alliance; Alex Tarasar

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.

East African Culture BY DIAMONIQUE WALKER



Several Network Representatives including myself recently visited the **NewHolly Neighborhood Campus** to speak with people regarding issues that the residents of the NewHolly area face, especially people and youth of East African descent. I was able to speak with a few people from **East African Community Services** and ask them some questions about foster care, homelessness, and housing in the area.

To better understand this demographic, it's important to know some things about that part of the world. East Africa is considered to be Burundi, Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Somalia, Sudan, Tanzania, and Uganda.¹ Most of the people from or in these countries are a part of the East African Culture. As a part of their culture, they traditionally have Islamic religious beliefs. Muslim women often wear hijabs to cover their entire body except their face and hands. This way they feel they can be judged by character rather than by appearance.² In their culture, it is common for women to be homemakers and men to provide for their wives and children. Some common languages of East African people are Arabic (the language of the Qur'an), Somali, and Swahili.

There are many East African refugees living in the United States and there are still many fleeing their homes in Africa and coming to the United States because of an ongoing war in East Africa (mainly in Somalia). The war in Somalia began in 1991. Somalia currently has no government and other nations' governments are trying to help stabilize the country in hopes of ending their civil war.

"The way the East African Community members look out for one another makes their community that much stronger. They implement kinship care all the time without hesitation. [This keeps] youth out of foster care and safe with people they are comfortable with and can relate to."

Melody Warning, the Outreach Coordinator at East African Community Services, stated that in the East African community there are few to no foster homes, but there is a growing need for them. Because there are very few East African foster homes, there are still open Child Protection Services (CPS) cases where a child of the East African culture has been placed in a home that may have never experienced the culture, making the need for foster parents of their culture even more necessary. A foster care experience for a young child of East African culture can be particularly traumatic if they have no connections to their community in the foster home.

However, Melody says, "There are many East African youth who are not living with their own parents but are not registered with the State as being in foster care. It is very common in [the] Somali culture

for youth who need to be away from their own family for health, safety, or financial reasons to live with relatives or close friends." Along the same lines, the homeless rate is not as high in the East African community because in their culture they often take people in, whether they are related to them or not.

The way the East African Community members look out for one another makes their community that much stronger. They implement kinship care all the time without hesitation. Doing that alone saves the state thousands of dollars by keeping youth out of foster care and safe with people they are comfortable with and can relate to.

¹ africanhistory.about.com/od/countrieseast/History_By_Region_East_Africa.htm

² www.islamweb.net/ver2%20/archive/article.php?lang=E&id=109366



MOCKINGBIRD HUB HOME FAMILY NEEDED

Ryther Child Center, a long-term partner with The Mockingbird Society, has an opening south of Seattle for an experienced foster family to provide Hub Home support for a constellation of 8 foster homes.

Please visit both www.ryther.org and www.mockingbirdsociety.org and contact Heather Perry at (206) 517-0273 ext. 11 if interested. We look forward to hearing from you.

Support The Mockingbird Society!

We invite you to join us in building a world-class foster care system. In gratitude for your support, we would like to send you a monthly e-version of the *Mockingbird Times*.

NAME _____
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So that we may recognize you for your gift, please write how you would like to be listed:

- Please do not include my name on published donor lists (check box).
 Yes! I would like to receive a monthly issue of the *Mockingbird Times* (email address required above)

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 Account Number: _____
 Expiration Date: _____
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- Signature: _____
 Please charge my credit card: One time Monthly Quarterly
 My employer will match my gift. (Please enclose your matching gift form.) Company Name: _____

Please mail this completed form and your check to The Mockingbird Society, 2100 24th Avenue S, Suite 240, Seattle, WA 98144. For more information, call (206) 323-KIDS (5437) or visit www.mockingbirdsociety.org.

MEET OUR STAFF

Executive Director Jim Theofelis; **Operations Director** Ros Ghan; **Mockingbird Family Programs Director** Dr. Wanda Hackett; **Youth Programs Director** Tiffany Washington; **Development Director** Brian Lawrence; **Public Policy & Communications Director** Rose Berg; **Executive Assistant** Lauren Frederick; **Finance Manager** Catherine Lanham; **Mockingbird Network Coordinator** Kara Sanders; **Mockingbird Family Model Coordinator** Amy Converse; **Administrative Coordinator** Diana Clark; **Administrative Assistant (AA)** Liliana Davies; **Mockingbird Network AA** Milissa Morgan; **Resource Specialists** Graham Parrington, Georgina Ramirez, Tammy Soderberg, Lauren Steed, Samantha Valle; **Senior Network Representatives** Ashlie Lanier, Jerry Bobo; **Network Representatives** Amanda Bevington, David Buck, Ian Grant, Diamonique Walker; **Contributing Writers & Artists** Brandy Baxley, Sam Evans, Rashunda Johnson, DeMarea Kirk, Garrett Nadeau, Pedro, Onalee Stewart; **Volunteer** Chrissie Jackson; **Copy Editing and Layout** Kelly Hawkins

ABOUT US: *The Mockingbird Society* is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation developing innovative models for improving the outcomes of foster care, while advocating with decision makers for system reform. 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 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*.

Addiction BY DAVID BUCK



On Thursday, March 4th, the **Recovery Café** put on an event at Town Hall in Seattle where **David Sheff** and his son, **Nic Sheff**, spoke about addiction and their books *Beautiful Boy*

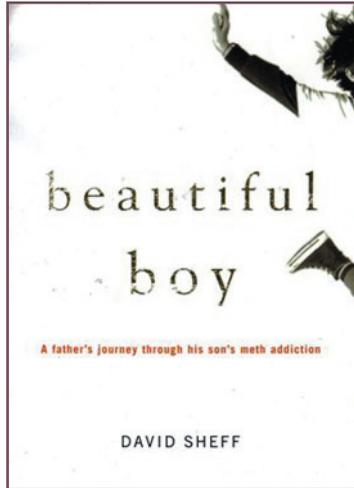
and *Tweak: Growing Up on Methamphetamines*. They spoke about their passages to recovery and the dangers of drugs, and how these nearly tore the two apart.

In the United States, drug addiction accounts for nearly 20,000 deaths related to overdose annually according to the **National Center for Health Statistics**.¹ In the United States there is an estimated 20.1 million daily users of illicit drugs.² Youth are hit hardest by addiction and drug abuse. 81% of street youth use alcohol regularly and 50% regularly use other drugs, including 26% who have been or are addicted to crack. Many of these street youth are runaways from home and foster care. Only two percent of youth in stable homes use hard drugs like crack, heroin, or meth.³ Nic Sheff, author of the acclaimed book *Tweak: Growing up on Methamphetamines* said that his father and his family's constant support was why he was able to overcome his incredible addiction.

I have lost a few friends to addiction and it seems like I can't go a few months without hearing about another one of my friends from the streets or the road who have overdosed or gone to jail due to drug use. My circle of friends tended to use heroin and methamphetamines. For a while, I was a user of both, but heroin was my drug of choice. Nic Sheff in speaking about meth said that it was "like I had found what I had been missing my whole life." I felt the same way about heroin. Although I had a family who loved and supported me, I hid my addiction from them. Many of my friends didn't have that support and I intensely admire the ones who got clean with me despite that, because even though

my family didn't know, their presence and love was what gave me courage.

But some of my friends didn't make it. Some of them died. And after researching this article, I wonder how things might have changed if their situation was more like Nic Sheff's—if



they had a family and a father to turn to when things got rough.

Thanks to the **Recovery Café**, those who don't have a support system can get one if they ask for it. The **Recovery Café** opened its doors in 2004 and since then has helped many men and women of all ages who do not have the support they need

to overcome addiction. "Recovery Café was founded on the belief that every human being is precious and beloved regardless of past trauma, mental and emotional anguish and addictive behaviors. Recovery Café seeks to embrace everyone who enters; to help each individual come to know him/herself as one who is loved, with gifts and love to share with our community."⁴

Places like the **Recovery Café** have made an incredible impact on all those who battle with addiction but don't have the support they need and for that, the **Recovery Café** deserves our gratitude. Addiction is a powerful thing. Talk to anyone who is a recovering addict and you will find a battle that had to wage on for far too long. Nic Sheff is a hero in the war against addiction just like anyone else in the world who has had the power to overcome his or her addiction. The hardest hit are those in need and those that are young. But places like the **Recovery Café** are giving them a fighting chance. Both Nic Sheff's and his fa-

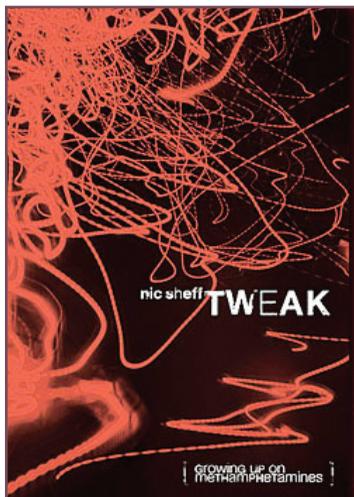
ther, David Sheff's books are remarkable testaments to this truth.

For more information on substance abuse and youth visit www.teendrugabuse.us/teen_drug_use.html.

^{1,2} www.oas.samhsa.gov/nsduh/2k7nsduh/2k7Results.pdf

³ *American Journal of Public Health*, 1997

⁴ www.recoverycafe.org



NEWHOLLY, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

youth nine to eighteen years old to come in by choice, not force. They have homework help sessions, yoga classes, health and fitness groups, and volunteer opportunities. The staff at the teen center offers youth support and encouragement through every aspect of life. They establish relationships with youth through weekly girl and boy groups. Youth are able to talk about issues in their communities and school and life in general with people they know and trust.

There are other resources and services offered on the NewHolly campus includ-

ing child development, the **Seattle Housing Authority**, the **Center for Career Alternatives**, the **Seattle Public Library**, counseling, resources for translation and multicultural needs, and resources for health. The **NewHolly Neighborhood Campus** is much better than I thought it was. It's a community full of resources that are available to the neighborhood people who live there. For more information about NewHolly Campus and these resources visit www.newhollycampus.org.

¹⁻⁴ 2007 Annual Report Summer 2008- East African Community Center

Segregation BY AMANDA BEVINGTON



Segregation is everywhere I go. Segregation means the separation of different racial groups in daily life. We still see segregation happening in our neighborhoods, churches, and in schools. It is important for cultures to come together, so we can learn from each other and explore what we each have in common because we are probably more alike than we think.

Looking at a national map of the US that shows the racial/ethnic segregation in the United States from the 2006 Census, it is clear that the US is still segregated. In some states, segregation is more extreme, but segregation does still exist. We are always seeing cultures being segregated throughout the US. We are surrounded by stereotypes

which can be positive, but mostly they have negative impacts on people. As people from all cultures we can learn and relate to other cultures. Multiple individuals were interviewed in the 2100 Building in Seattle about segregation. And I received a lot of feedback that explained that segregation still happens because people are familiar and comfortable with their own culture and government policies. They also felt that segregation seems to be one of the effects of stereotyping and prejudice. They felt it is important that we start by understanding our own differences and stop stereo-

typing one another. Instead we need to find common ground between many cultures that promote compassion, empathy, and overall respect for people from different racial backgrounds. As we do this, we will learn from one another and develop open minds and acceptance.

Recently **Mockingbird Network Representatives** went to the **NewHolly Community Center** to interview some of the adult and youth that participate in the **NewHolly** program. Just like a lot of places in Seattle, I found that, for good or bad, segregation

took place in this facility as well. There were programs for East Africans, Vietnamese, etc. However, one of the programs that stood out the most to me was the gardening club in the **NewHolly** building. The club focused on reaching out to mul-

multiple groups. They felt that the gardening club should be a way to meet new people from different ethnic backgrounds that share the same interest. It should be a time to come together as one and a way to meet new people inside the community.

The **Gardening Club** is just one example of ways organizations can capitalize on stopping segregation and focusing on sharing our values with each other. By partnering and working together, we will be able to start engaging in a variety of cultures and become open to new ideas and different experiences. We need to put our differences aside and unify.

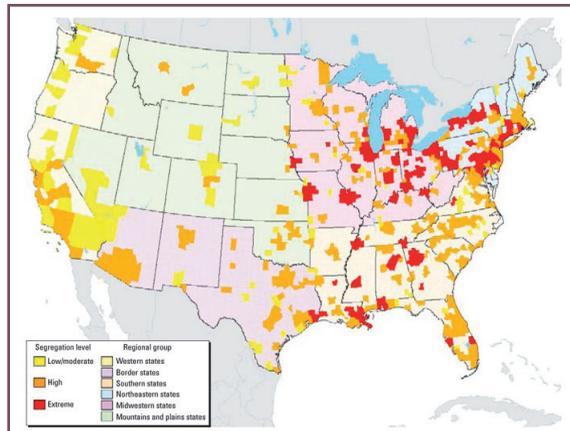


Figure 1. National map of multigroup racial/ethnic segregation in the United States (1990 Census; U.S. Census Bureau 1991, 1993).

Sinan Demirel BY ASHLIE LANIER



On February 24th 2010, I had the opportunity to interview **Sinan Demirel**, former Executive Director of **Roots (Rising Out Of The Shadows)**, a young adult shelter. Sinan is getting ready for a new and bigger chal-

lenge. He is taking on the Executive Director role at the **Elizabeth Gregory Home (EGH)**. I asked Sinan a variety of questions about his upcoming transition. He explained to me that the **Elizabeth Gregory Home** consists of two programs: a transitional housing program for harder to place women and a day center.



Senior Network Representative Ashlie Lanier met with Sinan Demirel, the new Executive Director of the Elizabeth Gregory Home.

The transitional housing program helps single women aged 18 and older with affordable housing so they can have some stability. Sinan said that there are income and other requirements in order to be eligible for the program. The second program, the day center, serves homeless women five days a week and provides access to face to face case management. Sinan explained that the day center is a place where women can feel comfortable and safe during the day while also using the resources available to them.

Sinan Demirel seemed very excited and confident about his transition. I could really tell he was anxious to get things started at the **Elizabeth Gregory Home**. I asked him, "What are some of the tactics you will use to make EGH another success story like **Roots**?" He replied, "It is extremely important for lots of partnerships and collaboration with other agencies. Right now **Roots** has financial stability and will remain stable; right now is perfect for a transition."

I believe that **Sinan Demirel** will do an awesome job at the **Elizabeth Gregory Home** and I cannot wait to see the organization prosper into a great success.

Update Your Subscription

If you have recently moved, need to change the number of issues you receive, or if the address we are mailing the *Mockingbird Times* to needs to be corrected, please complete and mail the subscription request form found on page 2 or go online and complete the subscription form there so we can update our records.



TEENLINK CAN HELP



Teen Link is a confidential, anonymous, and non-judgmental help line answered by teens from 6-10 PM, 365 days a year. Teen volunteers are trained to listen to callers' concerns and talk to them about whatever is on their mind. No issue is too big or too small. Call (866) TEENLINK.

Complex Puzzle Art

PEDRO



Complex Puzzle

PEDRO

I'm going crazy
I'm losing my mind
I set out on a journey of self-discovery
And what did I find?

Think my mind is a complex puzzle
I don't know which way is up or down
I'm living inside out or upside down.

I got to find a way to put the pieces
back together again.
But I can't do that alone
I need someone to hold my hand
On my way there
I need you my friend.

Community Events

Region 1

All month: Child Abuse Prevention Month: Our Kids, Our Business, events throughout city.

Apr. 14: *Get Lit* teen poetry slam, Empyrean Coffee House.

Region 2

Fridays: Midnight Madness, YMCA, 9PM-12:30AM; (509) 248-1202, FREE.

Apr. 24: March for Babies, Yakima Greenway, Sarg Hubbard Park; (509) 453-8280.

Region 3

Apr. 23: *The Magic of Cinema*, New Life Center, 8PM; (800) 595-4849 or everettsymphony.org.

Apr. 29: April Job Fair, Everett Community College, 10AM-3PM; (425) 388-9278.

Region 4

Apr. 16-18: Seattle Cherry Blossom & Japanese Cultural Festival, Seattle Center House; www.seattlecenter.com/events/festivals/festal/detail.asp?EV_EventNum=4.

Region 5

Apr. 14: Mockingbird Network Chapter meeting & advocacy presentation, Pierce County Alliance, 4PM-5PM, Free food.

Region 6

Thursdays: Postpartum Adjustment Support Group, Heart of Wellness, Heart Room, 10AM-11AM; (360) 349-2346, FREE.

M & W Apr 5-28: Money Smart financial literacy Class for women 18-24, The Olympia Center, 3:30-5:30PM; \$50 stipend after meeting attendance requirements!

Careless Tornado

DE'MAREA KIRK

Love is like a careless tornado, it can tear up your house, life, and the way you progress in life. Then the debris left by its deadly attack is like a junk yard, Messy, stinky and hard to clean. The best way to get better results in this test is to just sit and let the mess cover up if you don't want another deadly careless tornado attacking you again.

We Need Your Work!

We are in **great need** of articles, poetry, artwork, and photography from our young readers who have experience in the foster care system and/or with homelessness. If you want to be published in the *Mockingbird Times*, visit mockingbirdsociety.org and select *Mockingbird Times* under The Mockingbird Network or contact us at 206-323-5437 or via email at kara@mockingbirdsociety.org. Note: If you have submitted something before that hasn't been published, we need your submission agreement in order to print it. Please submit again via the web location listed above. Because of space constraints, shorter poems have a higher chance of being published.

"I love winning but I hate losing, because when you hate to lose you will do anything to win."

~ Michael Hunter

Region 1: UNITE! Chapter in Spokane County by Onalee Stewart

We had a huge St. Patrick's Day party for our Chapter meeting and we said our good-byes to our beloved **Katrina** (we will miss you) who will be moving across the state at the end of this month. We also worked on our Leadership Summit applications and nominated two new Chapter leaders. **Noah** and **Jocey** were both voted in for a six month term. Jocey will be facilitating a Life Advocacy Training for youth at **Excelsior Youth Center** with **Lauren** on March 26th, 2010.

Region 2: A.C.T. F.I.R.S.T. Chapter in Yakima County by Brandy Baxley

This month ACT FIRST went to **Catholic Family Independent Skills** to give the Your Rights, Your Life Training. It was very successful and 10 youth and alumni came. They really liked the health and safety section of the training, especially when they learned that after 18 they are able to apply for health care! At the end of the training, we had a raffle with prizes. ACT FIRST was able to add two new members! We also had a Chapter meeting where we all filled out the summit applications and we watched the inspiring Summit video. Twelve of us also participated in a huge job fair where we filled out job applications, went through interviews, and went to a job readiness class. Two of us were able to get our food handlers permit there. Three of us went to a HUB meeting and we talked to the youth and alumni about the Summit and about our Chapter. We added four new people from that meeting, too!



Region 3: Hey Mac Chapter in Skagit County by Garret Nadeau

For this month's meeting, H.E.Y.M.A.C. had an Italian themed meeting. So we had lasagna, garlic bread, and salad for dinner. We went over what we thought of Youth Advocacy Day and what we felt should be changed to make it a better and more productive event next year. We also talked about what we liked from Advocacy Day, and how we felt talking to senators and representatives. We watched the recruiting video for the Leadership Summit and discussed what interested us in attending. The last item on our agenda was to talk about our tips to present to foster parents and staff at the Culture of Foster Care training that we will be holding the last Thursday in March. All in all it was a very productive meeting and everyone had a good time.

News From

The Mockingbird Network

Your Needs, Your Voice

Region 4: For Change Chapter in King County by Rashunda Johnson

This month we shared our experiences on **Youth Advocacy Day**. Looking forward to next year's event, we discussed ways we can improve. We looked at ways to find transportation which will help members to attend meetings over the year. We can achieve our full potential by strengthening our networking and leadership skills. Each member of our region was assigned a work role for our chapter. The minutes taker and newspaper article writer will take notes then our journalist will write a paragraph for the *Mockingbird Times* on what was discussed in our meetings. Creative design writes poetry and does art related to our region. The Leadership Committee gives ideas to the chapter leaders on ways to help and motivate our members so that we can run more smoothly. **Rhonda Smith** will be at a community forum, speaking about youth transitioning out of foster care and the supports youth need. The training team is getting ready for their next Your Life, Your Rights training for youth in foster care.

Region 5: Cour'Ige Chapter in Pierce County by DeMarea Kirk

This month we discussed events and activities to do this coming summer. We also discussed who will be going to the Leadership Summit and how we are going to meet and prepare for it. We also talked about how our chapter is going to give back more to the community to make it a better and safer place. We also filled out our applications for the summit. Lastly, we are now learning new trainings to facilitate for our peers in our region so they can have more info about their rights in care and to help them make their lives a better.



Region 6: VRAEC-TAFFY Chapter in Thurston County by Sam Evans

This month started with another Transformation Design Committee meeting. We also had **Tiffany**, The Mockingbird Network Director, down to Olympia for lunch. We started regular Chapter meetings down in Centralia and had a strong turnout. Our meetings are every 3rd Thursday from 4 to 5:30 PM at the Teen Building at Centralia College. We also named our chapter **Voices Rising Amongst Each Other Creating Truth and Action for Foster Youth** (VRAEC-TAFFY). We might end up revisiting that name at the next chapter meeting, though!