Bunk Bed Drive a Huge Success by Jessica Garcia

On June 8th, the Mockingbird Society (MBS) distributed 70 bunk beds for kinship and foster families in King County. MCS Construction donated about 70 beds from a construction project they were doing at Fort Lewis. Red Arrow Supply Chain Solutions was generous enough to donate the "I enjoyed seeing families with happy faces when they received their beds and I was glad that Mockingbird Society was able to meet the needs of many families." ~ Lauren Frederick Executive Assistant, The Mockingbird Society

50 foot long truck that it took to transport the beds from Fort Lewis to Seattle, where dozens of families picked up the beds.

December 18, 2007

The first of May is a time for celebration, remembrance and solidarity. Historically, May 1st has always been a day to celebrate the international achievements and progressive movements of the working class, working poor, and impoverished in terms of civil, social and economic justice. The labor movement created this International Day of Worker Solidarity as a way of celebrating and commemorating the achievements of the working class. It also acts as a social tool to evoke, promote and activate solidarity among working peoples all over the world.

The 8-Hour Day Labor Movement, whose slogan was "8 HOURS LABOUR, 8 HOURS REST," initially began during the Industrial Revolution in Britain, in response to the country's increasing demand for factory workers. During that time in Europe, the working class people and children were being worked upwards of 16 hours a day, six days a week, for less than enough money to survive.

The first ever documented May Day parade in support of the 8 hour work day in the United States took place in 1886 in Chicago, Illinois, when the American Federation of Labor and Knights of Labor led a parade of 80,000 people to march for civil, human rights, reasonable hours and equal pay for equal work. Over the next three days, a general strike took place in Chicago, and the city was shut down by workers. Thousands of people came out to support the workers, and children were being worked upwards of 16 hours a day, six days a week, for less than enough money to survive.

The giveaway was smoother and more efficient than MBS had hoped and we were all so proud and happy to be able to coordinate the bunk bed distribution. We want to give a big thanks to MCS Construction and Red Arrow Supply Chain Solutions for helping to make sure that the distribution of beds to foster and kinship families went well!

Bunk Bed Drive a Huge Success by Misty Lou Cook

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May 1st in Seattle by Misty Lou Cook

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Dear Mockingbird Society,

My name is Jasmine Lee. I have recently turned 18 years old. I celebrated it with a very big birthday party. My mom suggested we make a donation to your society, I agreed. We had $3,200 dollars!!!! I hope this money goes to children in need to make them happy. Sincerely, Jama Lee

Become a Member of The Mockingbird Society

We welcome you to join us in making a difference in the lives of our nation’s most vulnerable children, youth, and families. As a supporter, you’ll receive a monthly edition of the Mockingbird Times. Thank you for your contribution.

NAME:

ADDRESS:

CITY STATE ZIP:

PHONE:

E-MAIL:

Enclosed, please find my check made payable to The Mockingbird Society in the amount of (please note amount on appropriate line):

$1,000 - $2,499 Protector:

$250 - $499 Supporter:

$25 Contributer:

My employer will match my gift; enclosed is my matching gift form.

I am interested in receiving information on the advantages of planned giving.

Please do not include my name on published donor lists.

Please mail this completed form and your check to: The Mockingbird Society, 2100 24th Ave South, Suite 240, Seattle, WA 98114. For questions or more information, call (206) 323-KIDS (5437) or visit www.mockingbirdsociety.org.

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 $8 and $31 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 50,000 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 ©2007, The Mockingbird Society.

Meet the Staff: Leon Henderson

Hello. My name is Leon Henderson. I’m 16 years old and I’m from Gary Indiana.

I attend Evergreen High School in Burien, WA. When I have spare time I like to work out, shoot hoops, and play video games with my friends.

Being the baby of five kids and having a single mother made us homeless because my mother had a job that couldn’t support all of us. So, we ended up in foster care when I turned about 9 years old. Lucky for us, my family wasn’t split up far away from each other like some other youth that are in foster care. I lived with my brother and my sisters were just a few blocks away, so we tried to make the situation work for the best.

I believe the financial portion of foster care is a big problem for youth in care because it doesn’t support the needs of the youth. It’s a new world and a new day and its almost impossible for the foster kids to get some Jordans or a new outfit from their foster parents because they aren’t provided with enough money to provide the foster kids with their needs AND wants. Having those “extras” is important so that foster kids can try to blend in with “normal” kids. This also ties into trust, respect and love. Treat your foster child like your child and promise you can change a life, because most foster kids need a lot of attention and love but most don’t get the love and attention they need.

I want to be a part of The Mockingbird Society because my loving big sister got me into this and some other great programs to support my future. I feel that the Youth LEAD program will help me reach some leadership goals I have for my future. My future hope is to buy and sell property to make money. In order to make this goal happen, I will need to attend college for a couple years.

What I plan to get out of working here at The Mockingbird Society is to meet people and learn skills that help me in my future. I want to be an advocate for myself and to grow as a person and learn something new. I think that working at The Mockingbird Society will give young male foster youths the opportunity to learn something about leadership and taking the opportunities that are given to them so that they can grow into something more.
Meet the Staff: Jessica Martin

Hello. I'm Jessica. I'm 22 and I'm from Seattle. I love BMX bikes: riding, watching, fixing, and building them. Eventually, I want to either open up a BMX specific shop in Seattle or Portland, or write or photograph for a BMX magazine. I have not always had my head on straight, knowing what I want to do with my life. I knew what I didn't want to do: live the life set up for me by society of going to high school, going to college, starting a career, marriage, a family, etc. It just seemed so pre-defined to me and I wanted to live a life of my own. That's how I ended up homeless in the first place.

I had hung out with street kids before. I'd found myself there with them, so it wasn't an entirely new walk of life for me. I actually liked how they didn't care what other people thought of them and how they felt free to speak their mind. Despite popular belief, many of these kids are quite intelligent even though many of them have not yet finished high school.

I got into transitional housing and got a job, but the new life I was living was one of selling and selling drugs and was once again homeless. I squatted in the woods and abandoned houses and couch hopped for a few years until I began to realize I was losing my mind from all the drug use. I had to get out of the situation I was in, so I left for California for a month and came back to work.

I stayed at a nightly youth shelter while I filled out transitional housing applications and got a job with YWCA's Working Zone as a 'zine project intern. I started up a BMX 'zine and knew I wanted to get more involved in my community and wanted to feel as if I had a voice out there.

I've got first hand experience with issues that need to be addressed involving street youth. Through this experience, I've formed opinions and I want my opinions to matter to more than just me.

For example, I don't understand why job training programs like the Barista Training Program are being cut. It is programs like these that I believe to be most needed. They give kids the experience, references, and knowledge they need to get started in life as well as the self reassurance that they have what it takes to make it in life. I know, personally, have definitely benefited from these types of programs. So why are they being cut back, when instead more should be created?

Currently, I have just recently graduated from the 'zine project and am over seven months clean from drugs. I will be turning 23 in just a few weeks which means that I will be aging out of many resources. I'll be okay, though, because I am living at the Elizabeth Gregory Home, a transitional housing program for women over 18 in the University District in Seattle. I am waiting to hear from Job Corps which I hope to go to soon in Astoria, OR, to study business. I'm excited to be here at The Mockingbird Society.

Meet the Staff: Leona Bill

My name is Leona. I'm 21 years old. I have yet to graduate from high school. Therefore I am attending Shoreline Community College. I always try to keep myself busy leaving myself not a lot of fun time. The reason why I do this is I get paid to help kids get to their goal self to return to my old street habits. This is what I'm trying to stay away from. So not only am I attending a summer class at Shoreline but working two jobs, one with The Mockingbird Society and the other with the White River Amphitheatre as a ticket scanner and usher.

I've got a lot of things that I find it a bit hard to believe that I've actually been attending college and progressing and being able to work at both jobs. Sometimes I can't believe that I've made it this far in accomplishing my goals. I never thought that I'd be working on getting a degree. One of the main reasons that I find it hard to believe in my accomplishments is because I grew up in and out of foster care ever since I was born and was always constantly moving from one home to the next. About 2001 is when I started living on and off the streets of Seattle. This was interesting because I was only 15, maybe 16.

I have a lot of thanks for Youth Care. The staff there have helped me and my sisters out a lot. I'm sure they've helped out many youth, but I clearly know that my two sisters and I miss those days. 2001 was when I and my two sisters where placed in the Youth Care Shelter and that's where I learned about everything—the Orion Center, Westlake, and of course, the streets.

I've always been worried about my younger siblings following in my footsteps, but I see now that has done no good because I see my sisters getting their GED's, skipping school and drinking, and their DSFS workers like shrugging their shoulders like there isn't anything wrong. Therefore I am attending some case workerers doing in trying to help the younger generation and I find this really bad and sad. I worry about whether the younger generation will be able to get the help that they need and whether or not they will be well prepared.

I know that I was boosted out of the foster care system when I became of age and I'm hoping to see some changes in the system that this doesn't happen the way it does now. I actually believe that I was only 15 because I could never get a hold of either of my case workers and neither could the staff at the group homes where I lived. The reason I say either case worker is because I'm Native. I have a tribal caseworker and a state DSFS case worker, but that didn't make things even more difficult. Both case workers were passing my sisters and me back and forth. So I think that they'd be better working in a team instead of working as one case worker. This went on for quite some time until, finally, after this was brought to both caseworkers' attention many times, they basically decided that they would only make decisions on certain things and whatever else was left for deciding the other caseworker would handle. This was OK at first, but it just didn't work. So, after a while, I started running away and this is one of the ways that I got familiar with the streets and jail.

One of the main reasons that I wanted to return to The Mockingbird Society is so I can publish stories that will help the younger generation. I'm looking forward to my time here.
La'Tasha
THOMAS DARSON
I remember when homes were, of brick and cement. Made of brick and cement when service was on Sunday. And La'Tasha would always sing, as I reminisce over the times, La'Tasha sang at Church Service. I marveled the day I moved away. It was many days before I had a home again. Six daylight savings and a leap year had passed I would say; When I made it back to service To hear La'Tasha sing.

Oh how she could sing. The mothers in the front rows would bellow: With their handkerchiefs Waving Amen. La’Tasha had a gift to sing. Amen and Amen. Everyone agreed. La’Tasha Could Sing.

La’Tasha had a gift to sing. Amen and Amen. Everyone agreed. La’Tasha Could Sing.

Nature’s Beauty
BY NAHINNE WISNIEWSKI

Scared to love
CRYSTAL PAGE
I wish I could love but I am too scared to. I wish I could have the easy way but I’m too scared. I have lived life through many scary times. I have parents that don’t love me and I am scared to love them. I have many issues. People hate me. Why? Why can’t I have friends that care? Why does life have to be so hard? I have lived life the hard way and I think others have life going great for them. Why me?

What you leave behind is not what is engraved in stone monuments, but what is woven into the lives of others.

~ Pericles

The Mystery of Autism part 1, BY VANESSA HUTT

Autism occurs more often than Down Syndrome, childhood cancer and Cystic Fibrosis.1 One in 150 children are diagnosed with it;2 but I think the question is, “Why is it such a mystery?” Most health professionals don’t even recognize the signs of autism until the children are three to four years of age when the ideal time for intervention of this disease has passed. Some say that a child is more likely to have autism when the father of the child is older. Others say that when a mother gives birth to a child with autism, there is a 1 in 20 chance she will have another one with autism.3

Bernard Rimland, one of the pioneers of autism research, said that even though the most intense psychotherapy will not help autism,4 even that isn’t a guarantee. How could this disease be around for many, many years and yet there has been no cure found yet? I find it very odd and frustrating.

Being one of two places in the country that did federally funded research on an experimental treatment for autism using a hormone called secretin.5 Secretin is a type of hormone used for digestion that is believed to help with autism. Testing was done to see how effective the hormone would be for that type of disease, and it was shown to be ineffective for autism. It is no more effective than a placebo.6

Hans Asperger, an Austrian psychiatrist, called his young autistic patients his “little professors.”7 He spent many years studying groups of people. One group, though, was particularly special. They were very clever and had amazing memories. They were often very loving and had great deamons. They would get interested in one thing and get very involved with it for a long period of time, almost obsessing with it. Asperger spent years with these people of all ages. They all had Asperger’s Syndrome.

Asperger’s Syndrome is similar and related to autism. People with Asperger’s Syndrome don’t lack in verbal skills. They do lack in social environments and settings; however, they are usually average or above average in intelligence. The people with the disease can usually be put in mainstream school and, with the right support and encouragement, can succeed in higher education and good employment.8

The primary treatment option for autism is still intense one-on-one therapy, but that isn’t a guarantee. How could this disease be around for many, many years and yet there has been no cure found yet? I find it very odd and frustrating.

I have lived life through many scary times. I have parents that don’t love me and I am scared to love them. I have many issues. People hate me. Why? Why can’t I have friends that care? Why does life have to be so hard? I have lived life the hard way and I think others have life going great for them. Why me?

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, to sing, to fly.

SAVE THE DATE
The Mockingbird Society’s First Annual Luncheon is Tuesday, October 2, 2007.

If you are interested in attending, being a table captain or an event sponsor, or would like to volunteer, please contact Darcie at (206) 323-5437 or by e-mail at darcie@mockingbird-society.org.

We believe that building a world-class foster care system through collaboration, advocacy and innovation is possible! With the help of caring community members like you, we can make it happen.

Mockingbird Times, July 2007

Your Beauty
KATIEE HARMON
Your beauty is my desire, the one to inspire. I’m always thinking of you, imagining, sensing you. As if you’re right there in front of me, trying to give or tell me something. Your beauty is my desire, the one to inspire. When I look out at you, I get this feeling. The kind of feeling you get when you feel safe, even when you’re just nature. Your beauty is my desire, the one to inspire.

Creative Corner

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