



Philadelphia Children's Alliance

Alliances

A publication of the Philadelphia Children's Alliance Summer 2008

From the Executive Director

I have to start by thanking everyone who had a role in making Bear Affair 2008 the most successful ever! Our heartfelt thanks to the planning committee volunteers, our staff and board of directors, our corporate and individual sponsors, everyone who donated an item or items for our auction, and of course everyone who attended the Bear Affair. Mother nature cooperated with a warm spring evening on April 24th, which allowed everyone to enjoy jazz music on the patio of Independence Visitor's Center while perusing more than 120 fabulous auction items.

We were honored to present team excellence awards to some outstanding individuals and one company as part of the festivities. Most importantly, we netted over \$70,000 for our work with sexually abused children! These funds are vitally important to us, as they represent almost 10% of our annual budget, and they provide much-needed unrestricted funding. Funds raised this year will support several staff positions, allowing us to serve as many as 60 children a month with a forensic interview and victim support services. And of course the teddy bears collected will allow us to

give a bear to every child we see in the coming year. Thanks to everyone who brought a bear this year!

Speaking of bears, we also want to thank the Philadelphia SOUL arena football team for collecting bears on our behalf at their home opener on March 2nd. Kohl's Department stores assisted in this effort by providing volunteers to collect the bears, and they also donated hundreds of "Kohl's Cares for Kids" bears. We welcome the support of the SOUL fans as well as Kohl's, and we hope to partner with them again next year!

As we finish our current fiscal year and prepare for the start of a new year on July 1, I encourage you to learn more about our important work at our website, www.philachildrensalliance.org, or consider visiting us for a tour and an in-depth look at the issue of child sexual abuse and Philadelphia's response to this problem. Just give me a call and I'll be happy to meet with you and schedule a tour.

Christina M. Kuchma

Executive Director

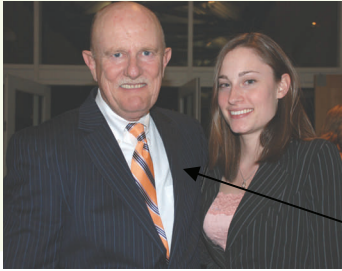
Could it have been any better?

Over 300 people attended the **Harmelin Media Eighth Annual Bear Affair** at the Independence Visitor's Center this year, enjoying the exquisite view of Independence Mall at twilight, delicious food by *Max and Me*, beverages donated by Absolut Vodka and Saranac Brewery, and music by a Jazz Band.

The month of April is Child Abuse Prevention Awareness month, and it is now an eight-year tradition that the Children's Alliance holds its annual gala Fundraiser, Silent Auction and Cocktail Party, known as the Bear Affair, on a Thursday evening at the end of the month. April is also the highlight of our teddy bear collection, although new stuffed bears are accepted at any time. Anticipating interviewing over 600 children over the next year, we know we will need a lot of bears, and that doesn't count the vic-

tims' sisters and brothers who come along to the Children's Alliance!

Tying together Child Abuse Prevention Awareness, teddy bear collections, and the tradition of the Bear Affair, helps create a bigger and better event every year, drawing more people and raising more funds for the work of the Children's Alliance and the multi-agency response team. Many of the Young Friends who planned the first Bear Affair are still part of the Planning Committee (since it may be a stretch to call some of us "young" friends), volunteers who, caring deeply about the issue of child sexual abuse, work tirelessly to secure exciting auction items, solicit volunteers and donors, and encourage friends and co-workers to attend. You'll find a taste of the event through photos, sponsors, and volunteers on the next pages.



His parent company's foundation has given thousands of dollars to the Children's Alliance.

Name that station ! KYW? Fox 29? CBS3? myph11? They all helped support the event.



Ran a Marathon to raise \$4,000 to for the Children's Alliance.



Brought in more auction items than any other volunteer.

Could anyone go hungry at this feast?



Eagles guests are always a hit.



Can't I just buy it all?



View from the balcony. What would Billy Penn and Ben Franklin say about this now!



2008 Team Excellence Awards

How do you tell some people how really special they are? . . . How hard working . . . How much of an advocate for victims of child sexual abuse . . . And how much you appreciate them. The Philadelphia Children's Alliance tells them in a public way by honoring them with the Team Excellence Award. By working as a team, together we make huge strides toward justice and healing for sexually abused children.



Leni Dow receives her Team Excellence Award from Children's Alliance Board president Kevin Junod.

This year's Team Excellence Award winners were chosen from hundreds of people who make a difference in the lives of children every day. Helene (Leni) Dow [left] has always been a strong advocate of a team approach to child sexual abuse investigations and inter-agency collaborations. Recently retired from DHS, Leni dedicated her career to sensitivity and team work in meeting the needs of sexually abused children.



Mary O'Leary [right] combined compassion for sexually abused children with a desire to do something more tangible for the Children's Alliance. A veteran of many fundraisers, Mary showed an incredible commitment this year when she ran the Philadelphia

Marathon and raised over \$4,000 for the Children's Alliance by sharing the story of its work with friends and co-workers, and running the 26 miles in just over 5 hours.

[Below] District Attorney Lynn Abraham has been a strong advocate for victims' rights, specifically supporting video recording of child interviews, the team process in sexual abuse investigations, and co-location of agencies involved in these investigations.

Leslie Gomez shows endless knowledge of the law, respect for victims and colleagues alike, real support for the team proc-

ess in child abuse investigations and ardent determination and skill in seeking victims' rights.

Regina Cade, DHS, is always prepared and determined to see cases handled in the best way possible, going above and beyond what is required to keep children safe. She is friendly, dedicated, and a joy to have as part of the team.

Generous supporters of the Children's Alliance and the community as a whole, myphl-17 television station has been a devoted Corporate Partner through its Communities Program and many hard working staff members, including General Manager Vince Giannini.



Officer Barbara Weldon, Special Victims Unit, is dedicated to bringing justice to victims of sexual abuse. That dedication plus her sense of humor and warm personality make her a valued team member to everyone involved in an investigation.

From left, Award Winners District Attorney Lynn Abraham; Leslie Gomez, Esq. (District Attorney's Office); Regina Cade DHS; Vince Giannini (General Manager, myphl-17); and Officer Barbara Weldon (Police Dept., Special Victims Unit)

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Above: Executive Director Chris Kirchner and Board Member Stephen Smith.



Left: Drs. Fred and Suzanne Stutman – Dr. Suzanne Stutman shares her writings on sexual abuse recovery with the Children's Alliance.

Pilot Prevention Program Serves Youth Organizations

It's always been the mission of the Children's Alliance to provide "justice and healing for sexually abused children" using a professional multi-disciplinary team model. But what if we could do just a little more to reduce the number of child sexual abuse cases in Philadelphia? Using a curriculum from "Darkness to Light," a national sexual abuse prevention and recovery network, the Children's Alliance has piloted a prevention program, "Stewards of Children: Adults Protecting Children From Sexual Abuse." This program holds adults responsible and educates them to prevent, recognize, and react responsibly to sexual abuse.

The program's free community workshops inform youth-serving adults about child sexual abuse statistics, the effects it has on the child, and its substantial impact on the family and the community at large. Workshops target youth-serving organizations and mentors like teachers in schools and day care centers, librarians, coaches, and leaders of community organizations and houses of worship. Each participant in a workshop receives an interactive workbook, a Quick Reference Guide, a Philadelphia Resource Directory, and views a DVD, in which sexual abuse survivors tell their stories of violation and healing, integrated with educational discussions by professionals who work with victims every day. The curriculum elicits discussion on issues in sexual abuse prevention and their relevance to the specific organizations in each workshop. Participants outline

their own individual plans of action for prevention and response in their organizations. The program also seeks to fully educate those individuals who are legally "mandated reporters" but often are not aware of their full responsibilities under the law.

The feedback from sessions already held in Philadelphia has been extremely positive, including participant commitments to further the program in the community. D2L's own research shows a 36% increase in knowledge and attitude change two months after a workshop (www.D2L.org). So far the Children's Alliance has held workshops for more than 350 leaders of children and youth, including parents and foster parents, in agencies like Choice,



Philadelphia DHS and the Support Center for Child Advocates.

If you know of an organization that

might benefit from these workshops, or just for more information, please contact Alicia Geroulo, Family Advocate and Prevention Coordinator at the Children's Alliance – alicia@philachildrensalliance.org or (215) 387-9500.

Mayor Michael Nutter Supports the Children's Alliance



Board Member Michael J. Rosen, Mayor Michael Nutter, and Chris Kirchner at their meeting in April.

Mayor Nutter heartily endorses Philadelphia's process for responding to allegations of child sexual abuse, and supports co-location of the Children's Alliance with its partner agencies. Executive Director Chris Kirchner and Board Member Michael Rosen conveyed their appreciation for the Mayor's endorsement of and support for the Children's Alliance model of responding to victims of child sexual abuse during an introductory lunch meeting at XIX at the Bellevue in April. In a short time Chris was able to brief Mayor Nutter on the nuances of a team child forensic interview process and follow-up victim services family support.

The Mayor and the restaurant additionally donated "Lunch with the Mayor at XIX" as a silent auction item for the Bear Affair. Giving even more of his limited time to the Children's Alliance, the Mayor raised \$920, the final bid for this very popular auction item.



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click "Donate Now"
www.justiceandhealing.org



Mission: The Philadelphia Children's Alliance acts to create a coordinated, multi-agency, interdisciplinary response that promotes healing and justice for victims of child sexual abuse in Philadelphia.

Interview with a Teddy Bear

Allie: (Crossing in front of Bear Mountain in the Children's Alliance building).
I'm sorry; did someone call me? Did someone say something?

Big Brown Bear (BBB): Pretty busy here today, huh?

Allie: That's a teddy bear! What did you say?

BBB: Real busy, people walking back and forth, and listen to those kids makin' all that noise in that playroom. Then trompin' past us bears and up the steps.

Allie: Well, yes, we are seeing more children now than ever before.

BBB: I know; I was at the bottom of the mountain, and all my buddies are gone now; they got picked; they go home with one of those kids, ya know.

Allie: Um, yes, you bears do bring a lot of comfort to the children.

BBB: Betcha I'll be picked next, seeing as how I'm big and all soft and cuddly.

Allie: Well, sorry I have to run, we have an interview to conduct.

BBB: Yea, some of these kids look pretty upset; but then when they pick one of us bears and leave, they're all smiles again. Their folks are too. I heard what you guys do here. Boy, must take a fortune to run this place, all these people and toys and fancy rooms and computers and stuff. Nice shoes goin' by, too.

Allie: It is - very expensive. But we have a lot of friends. We do an Annual Campaign in November, and of course the Bear Affair. That's where you came from.

BBB: I remember that - what a bash! Then that dark bag, and I got dumped on this pile - then a nice lady arranged us, heads up, little guys in front, all comfy.

Allie: Uh, yes, well we also get financial support from foundations, and corporations, and even the city gives us some money. And then we put little blue and white envelopes in things like this newsletter - sometimes people make a little extra donation, for a special project, or just to get the year off to a good start.

BBB: Okay, (yawn). . . mind if I take a little nap now. I think today's my lucky day, and my new family will be along soon.

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