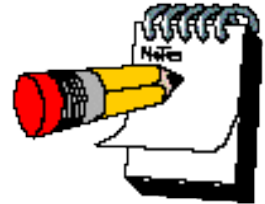


## A Note from your Director

It was a beautiful fall Saturday, and I was on my way to Lane Murray via the scenic route (told to me by Susanna Busico). I was so happy to have this chance for a pretty drive, as it had been a hectic few weeks with all our fall events; an opportunity for reflection rather than racing.



I would be meeting with two wonderful teams. There would be Nancy Wallace and Susanna Busico's team going to Lane Murray with Pat Yeargain and other volunteers from St. Matthew's, and there would be Pat Roberts and Lynne Riley's team with volunteers from the Georgetown area. Mike Bicknell, a grad student studying photojournalism, was going to interview and film us in action for his thesis. (We will be watching for that article, Mike!)

This Saturday there was also another team of volunteers working in Austin. They were at the Texas Book Festival, telling the community about WSP. On Sunday, there would be more volunteers, many of them interns from St. Ed's, to continue to tell the public about this special program.



Mike Bicknell, graduate photojournalism student, and Judith

And just the day before my trip to Gatesville, there had been 6 volunteers who had come to our new office to help sort and pack books (my garage is finally free of boxes of books!). The Global Women's Conference offered WSP as a hands-on opportunity for attendees to help with a community project. The volunteers were from Texas, Alabama, and St. Louis, MO, and they all were in awe of this program. They seemed spellbound while they watched the DVD. We talked about how they could take this idea to their communities and how they might participate in ours.

In the week to come, Kate Hurst would be scheduling volunteers for the Barnes and Noble Holiday Book Drive at the Austin Arboretum, and I would be sending invitations to Houston volunteers, including students and scouts. There was to be a "kick-off" party at the River Oaks, B & N in Houston for Storybook.

It made me very happy to reflect on this far-reaching program, knowing that we are helping a neglected population, children of incarcerated mothers, in Texas AND around the country. But in addition to this, there was a bonus for me. I felt very grateful and fortunate to have had a chance to meet and work with such fabulous, interesting volunteers and supporters.

Happy Holidays to all!

*Judith*

## Rice University Partnering with WSP

According to [Crime in America.Net](http://Crime in America.Net) which published an article in March of this year entitled "**Female Involvement in Crime Growing: Crime News,**" crime throughout the country is decreasing and prison populations are beginning

to level off, but it's disconcerting to see a rise in criminal activity among girls and women.

- Arrests for males increased 0.6 percent from 2004 to 2008. Arrests for females increased 5.1 percent from 2004 to 2008.

*(continued on page 3—Rice)*



**Book Notes**  
**The communications newsletter**  
**Women's Storybook Project**  
**of Texas**

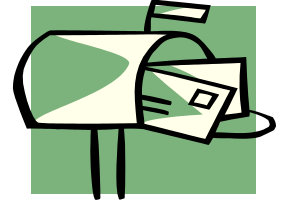
- Director and Publisher.....**Judith Dullnig**  
 jjdull@earthlink.net
- Volunteer Chair .....**Judy Fox**  
 jzfox@austin.rr.com
- Volunteer Chair, Plane/Henley...**Wynona Montgomery**  
 wynonamo@gmail.com
- Transportation and Arrangements Chair  
 .....**Felicia Kutchey**  
 ronkutchey@yahoo.com
- Supplies Chair .....**Sylvia Fitz**  
 sfitz22@austin.rr.com
- Supplies Chair, Plane/Henley.....**Brenda Dykes**  
 bldykes@esc4.com
- Communications Chair .....**Kathy Brothers**  
 kdbrothers1@yahoo.com
- e-Communications and Scheduling Chair  
 .....**Dugie Graham**  
 dugiegraham1950@gmail.com
- Newsletter Chair .....**Pat Roberts**  
 patsrob@swbell.net
- Electronic Newsletter Chair.....**Mona Carver**  
 mcarver@austin.rr.com
- Newsletter Production Chair .....**Angela Nunley**  
 angelanunley@gmail.com
- Lane Murray**  
 Team Leader .....**Nancy Wallace**  
 nweichertwallace@satx.rr.com
- Team Leader .....**Susanna Busico**  
 sbusico@sbcglobal.net
- Woodman**  
 Team Leader .....**Judy Darnell**  
 adarnell@austin.rr.com
- Team Leader .....**Liz Davis**  
 bbqliz@gmail.com
- Hilltop**  
 Team Leader .....**Pat Roberts**  
 patsrob@swbell.net
- Team Leader .....**Lynne Riley**  
 lriley15@austin.rr.com
- Mountain View**  
 Team Leader .....**Angela Nunley**  
 angelanunley@gmail.com
- Team Leader .....**Ruby Russo**  
 whoisrubyrusso@yahoo.com
- Plane/Henley**  
 Team Leader .....**Ellie Chaikind**  
 elliechaikind@aol.com
- Team Leader .....**JoAnn Innerarity**  
 mjinnerarity@comcast.net
- Team Leader .....**Rhonda Chandler**  
 rchandler@hwa.com

**Want to make a tax free contribution?**  
**Send it to:**

**Women's Storybook Project of Texas**  
**c/o Austin Community Foundation**  
**P.O. Box 5159 Austin, TX 78763**  
*a 501(c)3 non-profit organization*

**Making Connections**

A letter of gratitude  
 from a grandmother of  
 two recipient children



*To whom it may concern:*

*I am G's mother and am caring for her two boys, ages 6 and 8, and I would like to express how much these books and tapes have meant to them.*

*They come running and screaming whenever the package comes in the mail. I have to stop what I am doing and get the tape player, and we all pile up on the bed and listen to Mommy read the stories.*

*Their eyes are glued to the tape player as if she is right there. Not a word is spoken among us until it is over. Their eyes are opened wide as they take in every word that is spoken, and I can tell they are temporarily comforted by the mommy they love so dearly. For just a little while, they can pretend she is with them.*

*Although this does not take the place of mommy sitting in bed with them reading these stories, it is certainly the next best thing.*

*I truly hope this program continues for the sake of her boys. I thank you and the boys thank you.*

*GOD BLESS YOU for giving my daughter and the other mothers such a gift!*

*Regards,*

*K*



**Volunteers**  
**desperately**  
**needed in all**  
**Gatesville**  
**facilities in**  
**January.**  
**Contact**  
**Dugie Graham**

(continued from page 1—Rice)

- An estimated 207,700 women were held in prison or jails at midyear 2008, up 33 percent since midyear 2000.

Consider the following statistics (Source: *Bureau of Justice Statistics Bulletin, October 2005 and May 2006*):

- 2 million children have a parent in prison
- Women in state prisons have an average of 2.38 children under 18
- That leaves approximately 1 in 359 children with a mother in prison
- Half of the women in prison are incarcerated more than 100 miles from home
- 2 out of 3 women in state prison have at least one family member who has been incarcerated
- For 20% of them, that person was one of their parents
- 4% have had both parents serve time
- 12% (nearly 10,000) of the women in state prisons have a child who is also incarcerated

One of the long term goals of WSP is to reduce recidivism or re-incarceration. Another goal is to determine the impact on children and



the prevention of incarceration. Incarceration is very high among children whose parents have been imprisoned.

Rice University in Houston has partnered with Storybook to track Storybook's impact on recidivism. Professor Brian Riedel at the Center for Study of Women, Gender, and Sexuality has agreed to undertake this cutting edge study of incarcerated women and their children. Senior student Loris Simon Salum will present the proposal to interview offenders and gather data. This will be a lengthy process and over the upcoming years, it is hoped that future Rice students will continue the research.



## IMPORTANT REMINDERS

- Judy Fox is the Austin Volunteer Chairman. Please contact her with names of prospective volunteers. Also, if you have applied to TDCJ, contact Judy once you have received your letter of approval.
- Wynona Montgomery contacts and schedules volunteers for Dayton.
- Dugie Graham sends the Austin schedule and receives requests in addition to sending other emails.
- Felicia Kutchev notifies Austin volunteers about transportation and reminds them of their assignments the week of their visit.
- Volunteer applications should be mailed to:  
Attention: Connie McMurrey  
Windham School District  
PO Box 40  
Huntsville, TX 77342
- Once a volunteer has received her approval letter, she may go to a prison 4 times before taking the required training.
- Dress code and rules when going to the prison:
  - ⇒ tennis shoes and jeans ARE allowed
  - ⇒ no open toe shoes
  - ⇒ no sleeveless tops
  - ⇒ no cell phones
  - ⇒ avoid wearing all white
- Now, retraining may be done on-line; when you receive a letter advising you it is time to retrain, contact Judy Fox.
- Volunteers should sign up to record offenders at least two or three times every six months.
- Although we are recording and seeing the mother, remember that the **child** is the focus of our program.





## Volunteer Spotlight

**Mona Carver**  
**Electronic Newsletter**  
**Chair**

Native Austinite Mona Carver has made this area her home most of her life. She and her husband, David, will celebrate their 30<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary in a few weeks.


After earning her Bachelor's Degree in Computer Science from the University of Texas, Mona spent 12 years as a Software Development manager at IBM. The past 17 years, she has been at Volt Services, a staffing company, in a variety of positions including Branch Manager, Training Manager, and currently as a consultant.

An avid reader, Mona carries a book with her



wherever she goes. She also enjoys traveling, hiking, and movies. Volunteering in worthwhile organizations such as Mobile Loaves and Fishes, Knitzvah, and other activities related to Temple Beth Shalom has kept her busy for several

years. As she moves closer to retirement, she hopes to do even more volunteer work.

She learned about WSP through the National Council of Jewish Women, and has been an active volunteer for three years. Mona's passion for the program is evidenced in this quote: "Every time I go to Gatesville, I am blown away by the experience. To have an immediate impact on people's lives, both the children's and the mother's, is amazing. I am so impressed with the courage the mothers have to reach out to their children at a time in their lives when it isn't easy." 



## What's Happening?

- **The Holiday Book Drive** is going strong at three locations: Barnes and Noble Arboretum, San Antonio, and Houston. Remind friends and relatives to stop by and donate a book to WSP this holiday season.
- We are developing a program with **Rice University** to track Storybook's impact on recidivism; see story in this issue of Book Notes.
- A **Grant Writing Committee** is being developed. Currently, Pat Yeargain, Kate Cronkite, Hessie Brawley, and Judith Dullnig are assisting with this crucial task.
- WSP has once again received a generous **grant from the Heineman Foundation** in NY, NY. We are grateful for their continued support.
- **Special training especially for WSP volunteers** will be given either January 29<sup>th</sup> or February 26<sup>th</sup> by retired Warden Nancy Botkin and Major Hinson for new volunteers who have received approval letters. Contact Judy Fox for final date and place.



## Can you help?

- **Correspondence Chairman:** willing to write Thank You notes and other written communications as needed.
- **Co Team Leader:** for Woodman Jail to assist Judy Darnell.



- **Linda Cox**, a Rice University Alumna, for making the connection with Rice University.
- **Jesse Dominquez** at Texas Motor Transportation Association for donating a filing cabinet for the new office.
- **St. Edward's University students: Jessica Cottrell, Lyla Bear, Samone Hamilton, Monica Cazares, and Patrick Desso** for all the assistance you have provided. From working the table at the Texas Book Festival, sorting and packing books, and greeting B&N shoppers, to developing our Face Book Page and getting us up to speed on Twitter, your dedication to WSP is appreciated. We hope to continue seeing you around even after your obligations are ended.

- **Linda Gise**, principal of Windam ISD, for nominating WSP for the Governor's Volunteer Service Award: the Judy Burd Volunteer of the Year Award.
- **All WSP Volunteers:** from Brian Cox (Windham School District's volunteer coordinator): *"Thanks so much for sending us the DVD, letter, and newsletter about the Women's Storybook Project. We very much enjoyed watching the DVD and reading about your group's wonderful work. We look forward to continuing to work together with your group to rehabilitate offenders and to improve the lives of their families. Thanks so much for all that you do."*
- **Liz Davis** for your several years of service as a team leader. We wish you success with your new full time job; you will be missed.
- **Sylvia Fitz** for five years as a top notch Supply Chairman. We'll look forward to seeing you on future treks to Gatesville!
- **Lydia Hewett** for accepting the position as Supply Chairman.
- **Craig Saper, Joe Strouse, Jeri Saper, and Judith Dullnig** for meeting and brainstorming about making the transition from tapes to CDs.
- **Susanna Busico** for so successfully filling the shoes of "event coordinator" for the Texas Book Festival, and the many volunteers who helped with this event. Your efforts generated numerous inquiries.
- **Judy Cuchna and the members of the SOS group in Sun City** for their generous contribution of books and their understanding attitudes.
- **WSP volunteers** who have donated their time during this busy holiday season to assist with the Holiday Book Drives. In particular, these volunteers who helped at B&N Arboretum:

*(Continued on page 7—Thank You)*



*Jessica Cottrell, Samone Hamilton, Monica Cazares, Lyla Bear are about to experience WSP in action at the Lane Murray Unit in Gatesville.*

- **Jon Dullnig** for painting the new office.
- **Volunteers from Global Women's Conference** for selecting WSP for your community service project and for helping with sorting and packing donated books.

## A Day with WSP Volunteers

*WSP is a volunteer program that aims to improve the relationship between mothers in prison and their children. Trained volunteers meet regularly with offenders who are mothers of children age twelve and under, and record them reading books to their children on tape. Each child receives an audiotope of their mother reading the book along with the book once a month for four months, the length of each program cycle. The following story, written by volunteer Pat Yeargain, is her reflection on a day spent volunteering for WSP.*

Pulling into St. Matthew's parking lot at 9:00 a.m. on Saturday morning ended my quiet, contemplative drive. All of the WSP volunteers were there and ready to go. Convivial chatter filled my Suburban aka "The Gatesville Bus" as we headed to Chez Shell for lunch. For those in the know, Chez Shell is Pruitt's Shell Gas Station in Gatesville. They serve wonderful salads and are the official meeting spot for an early lunch for all Storybook volunteers going to the four Gatesville women's prison units.

As always there was much visiting over lunch before heading to the Lane Murray Unit, the women's prison unit we had volunteered for this Saturday. An officer was on hand at the check point to look at all of our drivers' licenses and clear us for entry. That chore completed, we proceeded to the visitors' building to sign in. After giving most of our vital statistics, we were escorted through the gates to the chapel where we would meet the mothers serving sentences who had qualified for this session.

If you have never walked through a prison's gates, there is nothing quite like hearing the electronic click when the gate is opened and realizing that the women you will be working with won't be going home at the end of the day as you will.

The women were waiting for us when we got to the chapel, as always. We greeted them as we entered the circle where we all sit for introduc-

tions. They briefly gave their names and told us the ages of their children. We did the same and quickly got started, the volunteers setting up their recording stations and the offenders picking a book for each of their children.

Our volunteer job was, technically, to hold the tape recorder, push the tape recorder's record and stop buttons, and to write the inmate and child's names and book title on each tape. Then we gave the book, tape and an envelope to each inmate, sent them off to the leader who writes the children's addresses and mails the envelopes. We repeated with the next mother to come to our station. Most Saturdays each of the five volunteers are able to tape 4-6 stories.

Our true volunteer job was to be the human connection between a mother and their deeply suffering child. We listened, encouraged, whispered words that were hard for the mother to pronounce, and tried our very best to be present to these women in a non-judgmental way. If our volunteer day was the first time the mother participated in the program, we often did an extra amount of listening, encouraging and Kleenex-offering. We were often gifted with a heartfelt thank-you.

Soon it was time to say good-bye and walk back through the prison yard, feeling fortunate for the opportunity to be present that day. Back through the gates, we were rewarded with the return of our drivers' licenses, and then we signed out prior to leaving.



L to R: Shirley Dyer, Margaret Carpenter, Judith Dullnig, Pat Yeargain, Betsy McCraine, Lisa Hobbs, Christine Joannidi

*(Continued on page 7—A Day)*

(Continued from page 5—Thank You)



- ⇒ **Kate Moss** who schedules greeters
- ⇒ **Debbie Holly and Valerie Shaw** who helped gather volunteers from NCL.
- ⇒ **Kimbie Marston** who organized greeters from Anderson High School as a community service project.
- ⇒ **Boy Scout Troop #1**
- ⇒ **Rebecca Bruce sixth grade class** from Round Rock.
- ⇒ **Liberty Girls**

- ⇒ **Manager Jacques Oppinger and Community Relationship Manager Rea Demand** for organizing the kick off drive, which generated 60 books donated in one hour!
- ⇒ **Kathleen O'Donnell** greeted customers.
- ⇒ **Judith Dullnig** delivered a short presentation and, the DVD was played.
- ⇒ **Warden Howard** spoke of the success of this program.

Thanks to all who helped!



Christopher and Katelin Molina, 7 and 8 year old grandchildren of volunteer Pat Roberts, discovered the joy of helping others as they greeted shoppers at the Arboretum. One shopper, emotionally moved by Storybook's purpose, donated \$50.

(Continued from page 6—A Day)

We stopped at the Gatesville Dairy Queen to debrief our day and meet up with the volunteers who were present at the Hilltop unit. The consensus was that we received much more than we gave. We also silently lifted up in prayer the children who would receive the tapes and books and their caregivers.

Soon we were on our way back to St. Matthew's, the visiting only stopping when we said our good-byes in the parking lot around 5 p.m. "See you next time," were the words on everyone's lips.



*I read the book Mommy's Best Kisses to my five year old daughter. In my message at the front of the book, I traced my hand and wrote: "Whenever you feel down, just put your hand here and you'll feel Momma." Her Nana said when she received the book, she put her hand inside the tracing and said, "I don't feel anything!" Her grandmother suggested that she wait and listen to Mommy read the story.*

*After she had finished listening to the story, she once again placed her hand inside the tracing of her mother's hand. She began to giggle, and when her grandmother asked her why she was giggling, she replied, "Now I can feel Mommy tickling me!"*

*Alicia*

• **Thanks to these volunteers for their help at B&N River Oaks in Houston:**

- ⇒ **Karen and Bill Donovan** who picked up the donated books throughout the drive.



Austin Community Foundation  
P.O. Box 5159  
Austin, TX 78763



## SAVE SOME OF THESE DATES....PLEASE!!!



**January**

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

**February**

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			1	2	3	4
			5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30						

**March**

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			1	2	3	4
			5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

**April**

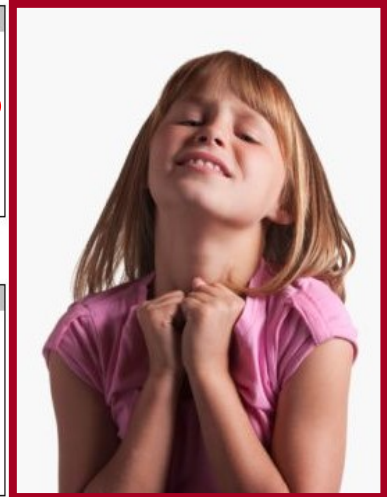
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
						1
						2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

**May**

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			1	2	3	4
			5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

**June**

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
				1	2	3
				4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			



Put a smile on these faces; e-mail Dugie Graham to request your dates for volunteering.

*“Do you have time to help me?  
I need to hear my mommy’s voice...”*

