

Book Notes



Our Mission: To connect children with their incarcerated moms through the joy of literature.

What's Happening?

San Saba Transfer Facility Launched in March WSP now serves seven facilities! San Saba is an easy, scenic drive through the Hill Country, just 90 minutes from Austin. We visit on 3rd Saturdays.

Two New Units Launching Soon This fall, WSP plans to start our program in the Lockhart Correctional Facility, only 40 miles south of Austin, and in the Riverside sub-unit of the Christina Melton Crain Unit in Gatesville. **Please contact Judith if you are interested in being a team leader for Riverside.**



AUSTIN CANYON CORPORATION
GENERAL CONTRACTOR
CONSTRUCTION MANAGEMENT

Corporate Sponsor Added **Austin Canyon Corporation** joined WSP as a new "Book"-level corporate sponsor with a donation of \$1K!

Director Recognized **Judith Dullnig** was runner-up in the humanitarian category of the 8th Annual International Women's Day Awards sponsored by Ten Thousand Villages Austin.

Grants Earned **The Shield-Ayres Foundation** awarded WSP a \$5K unrestricted grant for operating expenses. We also earned a \$2K grant from the **Austin Pi Beta Phi Foundation**.

WOMEN'S STORYBOOK PROJECT OF TEXAS



Amplify Austin Fundraiser Successful WSP hosted a fabulous party at our downtown Austin office and raised nearly \$9K in this annual city-wide fundraising campaign.

New Volunteer Coordinator Named **Cynthia Winer** is stepping up to serve as our new volunteer coordinator after many years as Lane Murray team leader. E-mail Cynthia at volunteer@storybookproject.org with questions about serving as a volunteer.

Program Evaluation Beginning WSP will conduct a research-based evaluation to assess how well we achieve our mission of connecting incarcerated mothers with their children. Results are expected to help demonstrate our impact to potential donors.

Holiday Book Drives Scheduled Our supporters at **Barnes & Noble** have again given us their coveted November/December book drive slots. We hope to recruit Boy/Girl Scout troops, school service organizations, book clubs, etc. to help us staff the drives. E-mail support@storybookproject.org if you can connect us with a group!

Media Moments

WSP has made the news many times in 2016! The **CBS Evening News with Scott Pelley** aired a segment in February. In honor of Mother's Day in May, **Madison Peace** with *The Federalist*, a widely-read online magazine, posted a lovely blog entry about WSP. Both pieces gave our program major national exposure, leading to financial support, and inquiries from people interested in implementing our program in other states.

Other recent coverage includes an article in the **San Antonio Express** newspaper and on-air interviews with Judith by **KPLE** and **KXAN**, two Central Texas television stations. Visit www.storybookproject.org for more information and links to the positive press.

Making Connections

This is just a sample of what we hear from our moms.

"Thank you so much for this life-changing opportunity."

"Storybook is the best thing that could've happened to me and my son at this time. I had my son while incarcerated. So, this ... is a great 'bonding' technique for mothers in my situation. I am hoping it'll help my son recognize my voice during our visits. Thank you so much for coming and doing this for us all."



"Thank you so much for the opportunity to share something special with my son since I can't be there to read to him personally. Thank you for your time and devotion."

"First, I just want to thank all of the volunteers. Words cannot express how much this program really means to me and my children. I haven't seen or talked to my kids in over a year so this is the only contact that I have with them. Just knowing that they are able to hear my voice every day touches my heart. So thank you once again."

"My daughter loves her books. Her father says when she gets a book from me she laughs and carries her book around with her. ... This is my only way of communicating with my daughter. Thank ya'll for everything."



Director's Message

Dear Volunteers and Supporters,

WSP is now in seven of nine female TDCJ prisons! Privately run units would like WSP, too. This means that four more units are awaiting our program!

But we must remember our financial needs for supplies and services, and, importantly, a salaried executive director.

Meanwhile, I'm happy to welcome some part-time staff. Nancy Phillips, PhD, is coordinating the Texas Book Festival, holiday book drives, and a WSP strategic plan. Lisa Holleran, PhD candidate, supports development, grant applications and our program evaluation (see "What's Happening," p. 1). Lisa has TDCJ experience and a background in criminal justice.

Of course, Sun Connor, our administrative assistant, wears many WSP hats! She has greatly raised our social media presence and awareness—so important these days. Our media exposure has people all over the country seeking guidance on starting similar projects in their states.

But none of this would be possible without you, and I thank you. Have a wonderful summer, and please remember to tell all your friends about this unique program.

Warmest regards, *Judith*

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BOOK NOTES

WOMEN'S STORYBOOK PROJECT OF TEXAS

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Board of Directors

Judith Dullnig | President & Founder
Nancy Botkin | Vice President
Linda Cox, PhD | Secretary
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Leonard Chaikind | Advisor

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Ellen Balthazar for expert guidance in our strategic planning process.

Mona & David Carver for donating dozens of computer mice.

Emilie Crimmins (former St. Edward's student intern) and **Sun Connor** for organizing our first annual Amplify Austin event.

Dr. Andy & Judy Darnell for treating our Woodman volunteers to Dairy Queen after every visit.

Jennifer Fisher (grants applications assistant) for her excellent support in successfully applying for grants.

Judy Fox for her many years of service as our wonderful volunteer coordinator (see "Volunteer Spotlight," p. 3).

Bescher Garcia (pictured right) for collecting 226 books in his second annual personal book drive for WSP.

Rhoda Silverberg for serving as our first development committee chairperson and securing our first corporate sponsor, Yeti Coolers LLC.

Karen & Larry Turner for their generosity in providing funding for program evaluation and development support.

Connie Yargo for connecting WSP with our newest corporate sponsor, Austin Canyon Corporation.

Pat Yeargain for serving as interim San Saba team leader and launching our program so expertly there while continuing to serve as Mountain View team leader.



Our 2016 Amplify Austin In-Kind Sponsors Dani DeMarco and Taylor Wilson of the Glitter Tribe; DJ—Chris Nungary; Band—Roz Fiore and The Midnight Drive; Triple 8 Management for donating the silent auction items—Kevin Fowler, Chase Rice, and Pat Green bundles, all of which include a signed CD among other goodies; Steve Patterson with Live Oak Brewing Company; and 24 Diner.

Get Involved

Here are two creative ways friends of WSP recently showed their support:

➤ To recognize a "milestone" birthday, our treasurer **David Graham** e-mailed friends and family with an appeal to support WSP. He described our program and included links to our website, the video about our program, and quotes from mothers and caregivers. The result? Over \$3K raised!



➤ In lieu of wedding gifts, WSP volunteer **Ryn Cunningham** and her fiancé **Guy Hohmann** (pictured here) requested donations to WSP!

If you have a special celebration coming up—birthday, anniversary, or other occasion—and you're interested having any gifts directed to WSP, let us know and we'll help you set it up!

Volunteer Spotlight



Judy Fox, our wonderful volunteer coordinator, has just announced her “retirement” from this role, but she plans to continue to serve WSP. **Thank you, Judy, for your dedicated service!** Judy joined WSP in 2003, then recruited 16 friends from her congregation to join, introducing WSP to Austin’s Jewish community. In 2006, Judy became our volunteer coordinator, and has since shepherded hundreds of volunteers through the TDCJ volunteer process. “I hope my long-term dedication with Storybook speaks for itself. **I find volunteering with Storybook a life-changing and humbling experience.**”

Judy was born to help others, and born to be a Texan! “I recall as a child learning about Texas in geography class and thinking I would like to live there when I grew up,” she says. And she did. In 1964, she accepted a job offer from Methodist Hospital in Houston, and took a Greyhound bus to begin a career as an RN on a medical surgical wing. She later earned a bachelor’s degree in social work at St. Edward’s University and become an RN/social

worker, serving as a psychiatric nurse and volunteer supervisor at the Austin Rape Center. Judy also co-authored *Voices of Strength, Sons and Daughters of Suicide Speak Out* (recipient of the 2008 USA Book News National Best Book Award in the category of health, death, and dying). Judy currently volunteers with her synagogue, the Jewish Community Center of Austin, and WSP. She also travels, teaches her grandchildren Hebrew, and works on her family genealogy.

Judy will celebrate her 49th wedding anniversary this October with her husband, Jack. She enjoys time with her daughters, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren... as well as with Missy, a precious Japanese Chin rescue (pictured happily here with Judy and Jack).



Strategic Planning Update

In late 2015 our board of directors, with the guidance of Ellen Balthazar (former executive director of Any Baby Can and a huge fan of our program), began the process of creating a long-range strategic plan for WSP. The plan will guide our leadership and staff in decision-making and action. It will also help



potential donors understand our intentions. Many of you contributed valuable input and feedback through focus groups and online surveys—**thank you!!** Here is a summary

of the plan. The board will soon finalize strategies and corresponding tactics to accomplish each goal. Stay tuned for more information!

Women’s Storybook Project of Texas Strategic Plan 2016–2020

Vision: To become the national model for Storybook-type programs across the U.S.

Mission: To connect children with their incarcerated mothers through the joy of literature.

Strategic Objective: To expand the WSP program to all applicable women’s prisons in Texas by 2020.

Goals for Achieving Strategic Objective

1. Develop a growth plan to implement our program in additional units.
2. Build our organizational capacity to sustain high quality services and support growth.
3. Demonstrate measurable impact of our services for key audiences.
4. Generate sustainable revenue streams.

Staff Changes

Volunteer Coordinator **Judy Fox** is turning over this role to **Cynthia Winer**, former Lane Murray team leader.

Debra Taylor and **Linda Carey** will serve as San Saba team leaders.

Development Committee Chairperson **Rhoda Silverberg** is stepping down from this role due to work commitments. If you are interested in helping with our fundraising and development efforts, please let us know!

Grant Applications Assistant **Jennifer Fisher** is leaving this role, where she helped WSP secure thousands of dollars of funding.

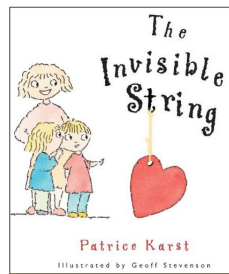
Evaluation & Development Assistant **Lisa Bell Holleran** has been hired to help with program evaluation, development, and grant applications.

**Remember to like/follow us
on Facebook and Twitter!**

Closing Circle

Signature Book Adopted

The Invisible String (Patrice Karst, author; Geoff Stevenson, illustrator) has been adopted as WSP's "signature book" because it so eloquently captures our mission of connection. As the story's mother explains to her children, "People who love each other are always connected by a very special string, made of love. Even though you can't see it with your eyes, you can feel it deep in your heart, and know that **you are always connected to the ones you love.**"



"Sometimes words are meaningless, which in this case, they truly are. Having the ability and the opportunity to send books out to my children was amazing.... **Storybook has been the invisible string that reconnects me to my handsome boys.** I thank every individual who is part of The Storybook Project. Love always comes from strange places. Sincerely, Aguilar"

WSP team leaders now read this book during the first opening circle of each cycle. Here is what one mom wrote during closing circle after hearing the book that day:

Our goal is to offer each mom the opportunity to record and send this book to her child(ren) upon program completion!

The "Red Badge of Courage"

(As told by Dugie Graham) On Saturday during our closing circle at Lane Murray, one of the moms told us how thrilled she was that she brought her tube of lipstick with her for her reading visit, and then **she placed a kiss in each of her children's books.** This is a picture of one of them.

It was especially meaningful for me because my recently deceased and favorite aunt, Margie, who taught first grade for over 30 years, planted what she called her "Red Badge of Courage" on many faces young and old through the years. It was her way of giving love and encouragement to her recipient. I believe **that is just what this young mom sent through Storybook to her children.**

