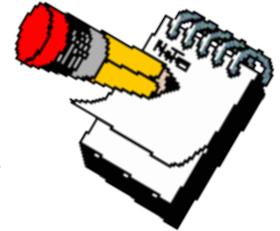


A Note from your Director

It's been so long since there's been an issue of Book Notes, and so much has happened! In order to have Book Notes continue on a regular basis, we'll need to form a committee for collecting news and reporting about WSP. Please jot down a special WSP memory or experience that you'd like to share, and send it to Pat Roberts, at patsrob@swbell.net.



Good news! Alas, we're planning to update our recording equipment! A proposal for CD recording has been submitted to the Texas Department of Criminal Justice. Once we receive approval from TDCJ, we'll test the procedure at one of the facilities before placing the equipment in all the prisons.

Have you heard about Storybook @ the Center? Perhaps some of you were contacted by Maria Pickett, a student from Rice University. She was interviewing volunteers for input about the Center. The idea for the Center came to me when I was invited to conduct a workshop at the American Jail Association Conference a few years ago. There was a lot of conversation about the transition of offenders into the community. That's when I first thought about the Center, and it seemed natural to somehow extend Women's Storybook Project into the community. Anne Mooney, MSW, who helped design Storybook Project, and I have been talking about how we could help the mothers and children when the mothers are released. We're still working out details, but it will be called Storybook @ the Center. The mother will be invited to participate; and if she accepts, new books will be sent to her and her child. In the future, the Center could perhaps provide tips on parenting and other information that could be helpful to her transition. This would be a perfect way to continue our program; and as plans progress, they'll be posted in Book Notes.

Thank you for all the work and support you've given to this special program!

THIRD Governor's Award!



TDCJ Executive Director Brad Livingston, Judith Dullnig, Texas Supreme Court Justice Don Willett, TBCJ Vice-Chair Tom Mechler

On April 5th, Judith Dullnig and Womens Storybook Project were once again presented the Governor's Criminal Justice Volunteer

(continued on page 3—Award)

TDCJ Training

Clarifying the Requirements

TDCJ is the second largest prison system in the US. There are over 150,000 offenders whose average sentence length is 17.6 years in the Texas prisons. Volunteers play a significant role in this criminal justice setting, providing a variety of services. Therefore, training must be broad based. Training sessions lasting four hours are conducted by TDCJ and required for all volunteers entering a prison.

(continued on page 5—Training)



Woman's Storybook Project of Texas

info@storybookproject.org

Director—Judith Dullnig

501(c)3 non-profit organization
Make your tax free donation payable to:

WSP

700 East 11th Street
Austin, TX 78701

Donate on line at
www.storybookproject.org

Book Notes Editor—Pat Roberts

A Special Day at Lane Murray by Mona Carver

As our team (Mona Carver, Linda Cox, Ilene Gray, and Alice Marsel) headed for Lane Murray in November, we expected a challenging day. We only had 4 volunteers, even though Lane Murray usually needs 6. Also, we had found out the day before that our wonderful team leader, Nancy Wallace, would not be able to join us due to a family emergency. None of us had ever been a team leader, but Judith Dullnig and Nancy ensured us that we had everything we needed before we left and helped us plan how to make the best use of our time so that every mother could read to at least one child.

Upon arriving at Lane Murray, we were all energized and ready to make things work. However, we soon found out there was no officer available for our building and we would have to wait. Also, the usual mentor at Lane Murray was unavailable that day. After starting an hour late and having to skip the opening circle, we went into high gear. With the help of the amazing Mrs. Walters, an officer on duty who went above and beyond her responsibilities, and Tanya helping as mentor, we were able to have all mothers read to at least one child and most mothers were able to read to all of their children.

The mothers were very understanding of our situation and helped us make it all

work. Through the teamwork of Mrs. Walters, Tanya, the mothers, and our spectacular volunteers, we made it happen! Our group of volunteers didn't let anything get in their way of making sure the children would get their books and tapes.

Storybook is always a special experience, but seeing everyone cooperate to that level was especially heart-warming. A special thanks is due to Mrs. Walters, Tanya, and the volunteers that day for making everyone at Storybook proud! 🍷

Making Connections

A letter from an appreciative mother
(see the back cover of this issue
for the letters from the children)



Dear Ms. Dullnig,

Wow! What a wonderful project you and all the dedicated volunteers are involved in. Imagine how many big smiles on children's faces and joyful excitement they have made happen in Texas because of this outstanding program.

D--- had written me about what she was doing on her end and approximately when the girls would receive the package. Well this past weekend was when the package was received and the excitement on their faces and the sparkle especially in E---'s eyes (she is the younger girl) was so thrilling for grandpa and myself to share with them. When they played the tapes and read along, you could hear a pin drop as they heard mom's voice. Even the older brother was amazed this was done for his sisters.

Because of the distance from the unit D--- is at and our home and our age and health issues we have not been able to visit often. Your program brought a family together in a special way and I saw the hope for a great future with their mom come to life for the children. Thank you for making this happen.

Unexpected Blessings by Sandy Carey

One of the women at Mountain View shared that she had not heard from the father of her four children in the three years she has been incarcerated. When the man operated the tape recorder so the children could listen to their books, he heard the mother's voice for the first time in three years! He then wrote her a 19 page letter telling her all about the children, their reactions to the books, and how much he missed her. That mother said today, "Storybook is healing our family!" 🍷

(Award- continued from page 1)

Service Award in recognition of her dedication to helping offenders incarcerated within the Texas Department of Criminal Justice.

WSP has been recognized numerous times in the past four years for its outstanding work inside Texas prisons. It has received the Governor's Criminal Justice Volunteer Service Award in 2010, 2011, and 2013. In 2010, the Governor's Criminal Justice Volunteer Service Award for Susan Cranford Female Offender Program Award was presented. In 2011 and again this year, the Governor's Criminal Justice Volunteer Service Award, the Judy Burd Award (from Windham School District) for outstanding work in education was presented.



Oliver Bell, the Texas Board of Criminal Justice Chairman, and Brad Livingston, Department of Criminal Justice Executive Director, presented this year's award. Judith was one of 22 recipients (out of 20,000 volunteers) recognized for their efforts to make a difference in the lives of offenders. As Director of Storybook, Judith, with the help of Dugie Graham (E-chairman), Judy Fox (Gatesville volunteer chairman), and Wynona Montgomery (Dayton Volunteer Chairman), facilitate 150 volunteers who make 68 annual visits to 6 female units in Texas donating over 204 hours of service inside the walls of the prisons each year. And that doesn't count the hours OUTSIDE the walls of the prison that many volunteers give while traveling and engaging in the "behind the scenes" roles necessary to keep this organization running smoothly!

"Each of this year's award recipients personify a selfless dedication to helping offenders succeed both while incarcerated, and once they're released," said Livingston.

Those of us involved with Storybook know how well deserved this honor is! 🍷

Time for Celebrations!



On February 10, Dugie and David Graham graciously hosted a lovely Valentine's Party in their home for all WSP volunteers and their guests. It was a day of celebrating the incredible growth of WSP as the total number of volunteers now exceeds 150.



On April 12, the leadership team and board members of Storybook celebrated the presentation of the Governor's Award with a lovely luncheon at Carmelo's Ristorante Italiano in Austin.



There are SO many people to thank for all the extra things that have been done for WSP! Since there is limited space in Book Notes, thank you, each and everyone of you (you know who you are), for assisting when extra help was needed. It's the spirit and support that makes us an award winning program!



Volunteer Spotlight Cynthia Winer

*"May wisdom be reflected in all that I do. May kindness, compassion, and love be my lot."
(Conservative Judaism daily prayer book)*

Cynthia Winer is Co-Team Leader for the Lane Murray Unit in Gatesville, serving at the facility with Hollie Harris. Cynthia lives with her husband, Joe, along with their cat, Butch, who allows them to live in his Austin home!

Cynthia was born on Guam and grew up in the area around Norfolk, Virginia. She was a Girl Scout from elementary into high school. She graduated from Virginia Tech with a degree in Education. For five years, she worked for the US Army as a civilian in Sembach, Germany. In 1989, she moved to Austin and worked for Texas Monthly magazine for nearly 20 years retiring as the Technology Director. Although she has retired, she is now a full time volunteer within her community.

Very active in her synagogue, Congregation Agudas Achim, she reads twice a week from the Torah scroll, chairs an Archive Committee at the synagogue preparing for their 100th anniversary, and serves on the Shomrim committee sitting at a funeral home with a deceased member of the community until their internment. On Monday evenings, she leads a daily service and coordinates the service leaders for the remainder of the week. Cynthia obviously has more hours in her



week than most, because on top of all those responsibilities, she is also the co-director of operations and chair of the marketing committee for the Austin Jewish Film Festival. She is a member of an inter-faith organization and has been a care giver for a disabled client for the past 13 years.

Despite all her busyness, Cynthia's most valued obligation is being bubbe (grandmother) to a "smart, wonderful and gorgeous" three-year-old girl who lives two streets away from her. Her zeyde (grandfather) and bubbe love spending time with her and introducing her to all their favorite things to do and eat. Being a constant presence in her life is one of Cynthia's goals.

In her free time, Cynthia enjoys her book club, her synagogue's family group (havarah), playing Mah Jong, studying Hebrew and Yiddish, and experimenting (not always successfully) with her garden. She and Joe also enjoy traveling as often as possible.

At a meeting for the National Council of Jewish Women (NCJW), Cynthia was introduced to Storybook. For the past 18 months, she has been volunteering and recently agreed to her leadership role at Lane Murray. She has been very moved by this project, and recalls one of the women telling her, "In my daily life there is no opportunity to be a mother. Storybook reminds me and gives me a chance to be a mom." It is experiences like these that feed her resolve to volunteer for WSP.

Thank you, Cynthia, for finding time in your busy life and for sharing your passion for Storybook! 🍷

New Co-Team Leader



Dugie Graham and Cynthia Winer welcome Hollie Harris as the newest co-leader for the Lane Murray Unit in Gatesville.

Judy Fox, Gatesville volunteer chair, and Wynona Montgomery, Dayton volunteer chair, working with Dugie Graham on the WSP data base at the office.



Data Base Keepers

(Training - continued from page 1)

Every new volunteer who wishes to enter a TDCJ unit with Storybook must first agree to a background check. Once that is cleared, she will receive a letter of approval. On-site training (at an approved facility listed in the letter) must be completed within 6 months from the date on the letter. Meanwhile, the approved volunteer may enter a unit a maximum of four times prior to receiving training, allowing her to go through the Storybook experience and see if it is a good fit.

After volunteers complete their initial training, they must volunteer a minimum of once in 12 months to keep their status current. In two years, the volunteer should receive a letter from TDCJ informing her that refresher training is required. (It would be prudent to keep an eye on this timeline yourself.) Online training is provided for those who must complete the two year refresher course. The NEXT time training is required (two years later), on-site training will once again be mandatory.

REFRESHER ON A FEW IMPORTANT RULES:

- White shirt and white pants may not be worn together.
- Dress conservatively avoiding any extremes.
- No sandals with the top portion consisting only of a strap that divides the toes
- Volunteers who change names or contact information (address, phone) must contact volunteer services; failure to do so can be reason for removal from the system. (To make this easy, WSP volunteers, simply notify Judy Fox or Wynona Montgomery.)
- **ALLOWED ITEMS:** glasses/sunglasses, feminine hygiene products, UNOPENED beverages (up to 32 oz) in clear plastic, a clear purse or bag
- Set boundaries; avoid forming relationships with offenders; never promise favors (Always be mindful of WSP's focus: the child. Since our time is

limited, it is necessary to primarily focus on recording the mother.)

While training isn't always fun or convenient, it is necessary and serves a purpose. Be sure to keep yours current! 📖

KUDO KORNER



Wynona Montgomery, Rhonda Chandler, Frances Bradford, JoAn Martin, Susan Hunter, Jorene Williams, Sally Capetillo, Janet Abbey and Ann Broussard should all receive an “Adaptation Award”.

In May, they had fewer volunteers, a large number of reading mothers, and they encountered MANY situations that were very different from what they “usually” experience. Not only did they meet in a new place, but other programs were being held in the same place. With disruptions and difficulties, they still managed to record all the mothers. In order to achieve that goal, they stayed at the facility until 4 PM and mailed a record number of 98 tapes and books the following week.



Ellen Loeb volunteered in a special way. She collected book donations from senior citizens at the Summit.



Brenda Rickert, Dwyce Ratliff, and their committee from The Hills of Lakeway Country Club worked very hard to help Storybook, their chosen 2012 non-profit charity. They collected over 600 children’s books and many financial donations. What a wonderful way for this organization to increase awareness of WSP in the Lakeway community.

"When You Build a Box of Books"

In any organization, there are those who work "behind the scenes" completing tasks that keep the inner structure of that organization functioning. For Storybook, one of those particularly tedious tasks is the sorting and packing of books. Often this tiresome task is completed by St. Ed students who volunteer for a civic project as part of their coursework. One such student, Kelsey Peters, recently completed a paper for her class and had this to say about the book sorting process:

Knowing that it isn't always easy for volunteers to receive training, Katie and I wanted to make becoming acclimated with the project and the process of packing boxes easier on future volunteers. Jointly, we created a handbook that details everything we needed to know when packing a box. This includes how to select



St. Ed's student interns, Katie Jackson and Kelsey Peters, co-authored "When you Build a Box of Books"

an age group (under 5, 5-10, 10-12) as well as stipulations about what kind of books can be accepted, and what kinds of books we must put aside. For example, those with writing inside, religious themes or undertones, and anything not in perfect condition cannot be taken to prison. When packing a box, volunteers must ensure that none of the books have stickers on the cover or on any of the pages. Many of the books that come to WSP have been donated via book drives and they have gift receipts tucked between the pages. While things like stickers and gift receipts might seem insignificant, they are considered contraband in prison. The handbook we wrote

[at the request of Kim Weidemann, their WSP intern coordinator] also explains the importance of writing the intended



St. Ed 's Student Intern Dan Becks sorts and moves a mountain of donated books.

age group on the exterior of the box and including the number of books inside. Because there are many rules and regulations tied to correctly packing a box, Katie and I wanted to make it fun to read.

Our handbook is called "When You Build a Box of Books" and it is written in the style of a children's book."

After books are sorted into boxes, the labeled boxes must be sorted and stacked in the storage area ready for shipment to a prison. Clearly, the sorting, packing, stacking and moving of boxes is a daunting task, and we appreciate those who make it happen! 🍷

A Youth Gets Involved in WSP

Taylor Still is a 16 year old student from Lake Travis High School who started Robin Hood Reads. She collects new and gently used books for those who have limited access to books. She collected and donated boxes of new books to WSP. What a special way to help children of incarcerated women. Great job, Taylor!





What's Been Happening

- We welcomed a new board member, Leonard Chaikind.
- Progress is being made in the formulation of a plan for Storybook at the Center. Stay tuned for more information about this exciting program for released mothers and their children.
- Hollie Harris agreed to be the co-team leader, with Cynthia Winer, at Lane Murray.



- The St. Ed students (above) Kelsey Peters, Katie Jackson, Luke Velazquez, and Stepanie Garza under the tutelage of Kim Weidman and guided by Anne Mooney, toured Hilltop and interviewed some offenders who have been involved in Storybook to seek their reactions to the program. The visit was enlightening and rewarding for the students.



(l to r): Karen Donovan, JoAn Martin, Wynona Montgomery, Warden Black, Jorene Williams, Brenda Dykes, Jan Abbey, Susan Hunter, and Eleanor Albon.

- Dayton WSP volunteers were honored at a Volunteer Appreciation Dinner given for Plane Henley volunteers by the staff.

Stepping Down

Nancy Wallace

Being a team leader is never an easy job, but when you travel between 335 miles and 360 miles round trip to do it, you deserve extra kudos, for sure! Nancy, a resident of San Antonio, has completed that trip numerous times on her way to Lane Murray where she has co-lead with Paula Jameson, Susanna Busico, and Cynthia Winer in what has been known as the "Dynamic Duos of Lane Murray"! Now, the time to step down has come, and although Nancy will leave her role as co-team leader, she assures us that, "The report of my death is WAY too premature! I'm so proud of the time I've had with Storybook and plan to be driving to Gatesville for many, many years to come! It's such an amazing program that really speaks to my heart! I have been so blessed to have been able to find Judith Dullnig and Storybook. They were the answer to prayer. I have met so many fantastic women, both volunteers and offenders, since I've been working with Storybook. They have enriched my life to no end!"

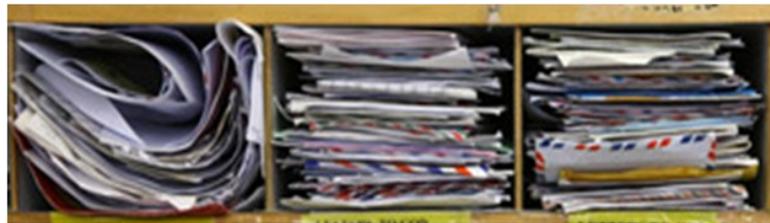
Although co-team leader is the only "official" position she's held, unofficially, she's had the privilege of representing Storybook and explaining what the program is all about to various groups in South Texas, like the Sun City Kiwanis Club, the Catholic Archdiocese of South Texas, the Women of St. Luke's, Delta Kappa Gamma Honorary Educational Sorority, the Austin Women's Club, and several other groups. These presentations have resulted in enlightening people to the wonderment of Storybook and also raising much-needed funds. Every group she's talked with has been blown away by Storybook and the simple concept of connecting offenders and their children through literature. It's a story that can never be told too often!

Ron Stimson

In 2007, the need for a newsletter was recognized and Book Notes was born. Ron served as the format designer, editor, proofreader, and packager for this publication until 2012, when he decided it was time to step down. THANK YOU, Ron, for all the time, expertise, and effort you gave this publication! You will be missed!



700 East 11th Street
Austin, TX 78701



Hi! The Giving Tree was a great story. My mom reading it to me made me very happy. I am looking forward to my mom coming home soon. Thank you,

Dear Ms. Dilling and Volunteers:
I really was happy to receive the tape and book. It was wonderful to share this with my mom. And I felt very close to her hearing her voice. Thank you for making this possible. Hug

**Two little girls
show their appreciation
for Storybook volunteers in letters.**

Read Making Connections inside for the letter from their grandmother.