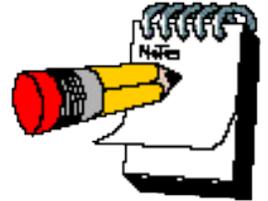


A Note from your Director

This issue of Book Notes is dedicated to our dear friend and avid Women's Storybook Project supporter, Warden Wilhelmenia Howard, who passed away last month.



Warden Howard learned about WSP while she was the warden at Lane Murray. She was then transferred to the Plane/Henley Unit in Dayton, Texas, which is the largest female facility in the state with a population of 2,900 offenders.

Warden Howard contacted me and asked if we could start the program in Dayton. After her recovery from cancer, we had many planning sessions. With the help of JoAn Martin, who gathered volunteers, and Ellie Chaikind, who readily agreed to be the Team Leader, WSP began at the Plane facility in 2009.

Following Warden Howard's request to provide the program at Henley, I met with her last summer to discuss the plans and to meet with the staff. With the help of Warden Flippo, WSP will begin at Henley in January.

I miss Warden Howard, but I'm comforted to know that she will be with us forever on the Storybook Documentary on our website.

Judith

Books! Books! and More Books!

The fall season is traditionally a time when WSP receives hefty donations of children's books from businesses and the public, and 2011 was no exception. But it's not just the donations that are remarkable; there are some touching stories to go with them.

At Barnes and Noble Arboretum and La Cantara, we only had one month of donations this year, but still received 2,782 books during the Holiday Drive. Dugie Graham, one of the many volunteers that encouraged shoppers to donate, tells this story: "I approached a shopper with our WSP handout, and she expressed interest in hearing about Storybook Project, so I explained

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Against All Odds

During December, both the Mt. View and the Hilltop units were on lockdown. This makes Storybook visits impossible... but thanks to the dedication of several volunteers and prison personnel, against all odds, the visits happened.

Pat Yeargain didn't want the children to miss the December books and tapes, so she made plans with the prison to reschedule. Although her Co-Team Leader, Betsy, was unable to go on the rescheduled day, Pat Yeargain persevered. Some of the volunteers who had signed up to go, could reschedule. Additional volunteers, however, were needed and Pat put out the call. There was a new volunteer and she jumped right in!

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Want to make a tax free contribution?
Go to: www.storybookproject.org
and click on the DONATE link

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4315 Guadalupe Suite 300 Austin, TX 78751
a 501(c)3 non-profit organization

Making Connections

A grandmother/mother
 expresses gratitude



Dear Ms. Dullnig,

My daughter, who is incarcerated in the Gatesville facility, and grandchildren, who live with me, have been blessed by your Storybook Project. We would all like to express our gratitude for your unique and meaningful program.

I know that when the children come home to one of the Storybook's envelopes with books and tapes they are thrilled and listen to their mother's voice over and over. It brings them a great deal of comfort and provides a great and kind service to their mother knowing that she is able to still be a part of their lives in a wholesome, private activity and to provide some unexpected joy for her children.

The bonding of nighttime stories and the comfort of hearing the voices of loved ones that have been removed from their lives is a priceless gift for the little ones left at home. The intimacy of reading together can be had whenever the child needs to feel closeness with the parent who is not there and provides much needed intimacy that helps maintain the parent/child bond.

So many mothers and fathers that have succumbed to the despot drug culture rampaging our country have left countless children in the care of extended family members or the child protective system. Children love their parents regardless of their failings and through whatever the circumstances, and your program helps bridge the gap between parent and child when that family unit has been jeopardized.

Again, thank you for this wonderful program.

WANTED:

Contact Judith Dullnig

- **Desktop Publisher** Storybook needs a volunteer **man or woman** who will share their **MS Publisher** skills to "package" our quarterly award quality **Book Notes**. Candidate should be experienced in composition and in producing a regular publication from a template and provided articles. **Compensation:** nada, but lots of praise and plaudits
- **News Gatherer:** A person willing to gather news and information for the quarterly Book Notes.
- **Volunteers willing to share their experiences** by writing short articles for Book Notes. We want to make this publication YOURS and reflect your stories and experiences.



(Books Books Books - continued from page 1)

to her what we do during our visits with the moms and for their children. She was impressed by our project and recognized the incredible value it holds for the children and their entire families because she is a nurse for one of the prisons in Huntsville. She said she just might become a volunteer with us after she retires and moves to the area. Her daughter and son-in-law just had their first baby and she came to Austin to meet her new granddaughter. We both talked about our families and grandchildren and loving them through all things and how powerful it must be for a child whose mom is incarcerated to receive a book with his/her mom's handwritten note in the cover AND a tape recording of his/her mom's voice reading that book. What wonderful treasures we are giving to these children! Before she left the store, she reached out and hugged me goodbye. I think we'll see her again, don't you?"



Lisa and daughter, Lily Hobbs volunteer at Barnes and Noble.

Pat Roberts' grandchildren (ages 8 and 9), after helping greet shoppers at B&N, were offered money to purchase a book for themselves. They voluntarily spent the money on books to donate to WSP!



Christopher, grandson of Pat Roberts, donates a book to WSP and rings the bell! His sister, Katelin, did as well.

WSP Volunteer Wanda Stimson organized a book drive at Grace Episcopal Church, in Georgetown, to raise awareness of the Women's Storybook Project among parishioners. The book drive became a joint outreach effort for co-sponsors

Episcopal Church Women and Grace Preschool whose volunteers made the book drive a success with 196 storybooks donated during the month of October 2011. The retail value of the books totaled \$1,359.10. The book drive was scheduled to include the annual two-week Scholastic Book Fair that raises funds for Grace Preschool. The easy access to purchase storybooks at the Book Fair and then donate them to the

Storybook Project increased funding for both organizations. A rocking chair draped with a child's blanket was used as a focal point for collecting donated books in the church narthex and in the preschool hallway. A colorful box was used at the Grace Chapel location to collect donated storybooks from members who attend the Chapel regularly. Wanda reports that with a team of volunteers to assist with advertising, staging and collecting books, the book drive was a very rewarding experience.

And the giving doesn't stop there! Book People included Storybook Project on the Giving Tree during December and shoppers donated 80 board books for children under 5. Ann Marie Olson, DDS, and her team and her patients donated 130 books. They plan to do this again next year.



Anne Marie Olson, DDS, presents Judith with books donated for WSP.

What generosity from businesses and communities for this worthy organization! 🍷

What's Happening?



- **Baytown and Houston volunteers will begin to implement WSP at the Henley unit in Dayton in January.** Plane/Henley is the largest female facility in Texas.
- **Wanda Stimson and volunteers** will provide information regarding WSP at the February **Sun City Non-Profit Fair** in Georgetown.
- **The Book People Bookstore** will highlight Women's Storybook Project again in the Spring.
- The current **Book Notes team** met on Jan. 4 to discuss future plans for the newsletter. Check out the "WANTED" section for ways YOU can help.



Wanda and Ron Stimson, Pat Roberts, Angela Nunley, and Judith Dullnig discuss the future of Book Notes.



Volunteer Spotlight

Kelly Finkel

Co-leader

Woodman Jail

Kelly Finkel is an Austin resident where she resides with her husband, David. They have two sons, Ben (22) and Aaron (19). They arrived in Austin 22 years ago when David was offered a job at Dell, and they happily left the crazy LA life for the opportunity of raising their sons in a more opportunistic environment.

An educator at heart, Kelly has a BA in general studies, her Elementary Education teaching credentials, and MA in Elementary Education-specializing in Reading Improvement- and an MA in Jewish Studies, specializing in Jewish Education. She is the school director at Temple Beth Shalom and also an active member of Congregation Agudas Achim. She is also a member of NCJW, the National Council of Jewish Women.



Her family loves to travel and has been to every continent, except for Antarctica. She also enjoys baking, but says she needs to have a reason to bake these days.

Kelly's involvement with WSP began about 4 years ago when Jeri Saper introduced her to it. She goes to the prisons 2-4 times a year and currently co-leads Woodman with Judy Darnell.

Mostly, Kelly does the technological parts of that job: making mailing labels, communicating with the prison officials, etc.

She states: "Participating in WSP is incredibly rewarding. I know I make a huge difference in the lives of the mothers and grandmothers in prison, but even more so for their children. They hear their mother's voice reading to them. This not only connects mother and child, it shows the child that their mother values reading and education."

Thank you, Kelly, for all you do to facilitate that connection between mother and child. 



- To **all who made our booth at the Texas Book Festival** such a success. We received the largest amount of financial donations ever for WSP at this event!
- To the **many people who volunteered at Barnes and Noble at Arboretum** during the Holiday Book Drive.
- **Charley, Caren and staff at the Barnes and Noble** stores for supporting and promoting WSP.
- **Nancy Wallace** who greeted shoppers at La Cantara in San Antonio.

- **Meghan at Book People** for her support.
- **Pat Yeargain and St. Matthew's Book Club** for book donations.
- **Pat Roberts and Good News United Methodist Church** for book donations.
- **Nancy Snyder and her book group** for book donations and financial contributions.
- **St. Mark's Episcopal Church Outreach Committee** for book donations.
- **Valerie Shaw** for book donations and helping with WSP Development.
- **Wynona Montgomery** for her organizing, scheduling, and coordinating of volunteers at the Plane/Henley Unit.
- **Wanda Stimson** for agreeing to join the Grant Application Committee.

(Against All Odds—continued from page 1)

Betsy was able to get the books and tapes in the mail. The children would receive their packages after all!

However, when the Hilltop lockdown happened, the option to reschedule wasn't available. It was with heavy heart that Pat Roberts canceled the Saturday scheduled visit on Thursday afternoon because the lockdown still had not been lifted.

But then, Friday morning, much to her amazement, a fax bearing the names and addresses of 62 children arrived in her home! After a quick call to the prison, she was informed the lockdown was going to be lifted that afternoon, and if Storybook could reassemble the team and make arrangements, the visit was on! One short hour later, after many frantic phone calls, seven angels (including a new volunteer) of Storybook had agreed to go.

Next problem: a van. The normal rental from Enterprise was no longer available. But another angel, Ron Stimson, allowed the use of

his van, and miraculously, Wanda's shoulder had healed enough for her to drive. Then, Pat received an email saying the Warden was out of town and their supplies were not approved. Judith, Warden Nancy Botkin, and Pat talked late that Friday night, and all that could be done was to call the prison in the morning. That call yielded

conflicting information: the volunteers were approved, but not the supplies.

Several calls later, Warden Black was finally located and a half an hour before arriving at the prison, the WSP visit was fully approved. Officer Fain met the team at the gate and facilitated the entry, making it one of the smoothest they've ever had. And 62 children

smiled during the holidays as they heard their mother's voices reading a book to them. Against all odds.

On that particular Saturday, WSP had 28 volunteers among three facilities in Gatesville and the Plane Unit in Dayton recording mothers making it possible for children to hear their mothers over the holidays. What a gift! 🍷



Sixteen volunteers at Gatesville on Dec. 17 serving three units: Mt. View, Lane Murray, and Hilltop.

Wilhelmenia Howard: 1957 – 2011



Wilhelmenia received a Bachelor's Degree in Psychology from the University of Mary Hardin Baylor and a Master's Degree in Counseling Psychology from the University of Central Texas. She was the recipient of the "Distinguished Outstanding Young Women of America Award" for her dedication to her career and her community. In 1997, she was presented the Mae Carvel Award by the Venture Club of the Americans South Central Region. She traveled throughout the state of Texas speaking on family violence. Warden Howard was presented the "Governor's 2011 Criminal Justice Volunteer Service Award."

She began her employment with the Texas Department of Criminal Justice-Institutional Division in September 1985 at the Gatesville Unit as an Associate Clinical Psychologist III. In July 1993, she applied for a Senior Warden position. She was the Assistant Warden at the Gatesville Unit. In 1994, she was named Senior Warden and opened the Nathaniel J. Neal Unit in Amarillo, Texas. She was Senior Warden at Lane Murray for a short time before becoming Senior Warden of the Plane State Jail and Henley Unit in Dayton.



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**Thumbs up to Women's Storybook Project of Texas...
a simple idea with a BIG impact!**