

A Note from your Director

Dear WSP Volunteers and Sponsors,

As you will read, April was a very busy and exciting month. For those of you who were able to be at the picnic, wasn't that fun? For those who were unable to be there, you were missed.

I wanted to tell you a little about a powerful day at Plane Henley. The weather forecast was threatening; predictions of rain, wind and cold loomed ahead. When we arrived at the prison, it started to pour. Although check-in went very smoothly, umbrellas had to stay at the door and we walked to the G Building with big, blue plastic bags over our heads.

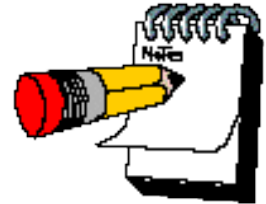
Other volunteer groups had canceled and it was assumed that WSP would also. The offenders were so disappointed, but when one offender saw us coming down the "path" with bags over our heads, the mood quickly changed. One mother said when she learned we were coming after all, "You made our day. You made our week and more than that, you made our month!"

During circle time, a mother said her daughter had been in ICU and relayed an incredible story you can read about in this issue's Making Connections.

Another came to the session in an angry mood. She was to have been released but the paper work was hung up somewhere. She said she had not wanted to come to Storybook, but she began to think of her child and the smile on his face when he received the book. She came. Tears rolled down her cheeks while she shared her story, and she ended by saying, "I'm so glad I came. Thank you all."

We are making a difference! Thank YOU all.

Judith



WSP Receives Governor's Criminal Justice Volunteer Service Award



Judith Dullnig received a Governor's Award on behalf of all of the WSP volunteers.

"The heart of a volunteer is not measured in size, but by the depth of the commitment to make a difference in the lives of others" - De Ann Hollis

The choice to do criminal justice volunteer work in a challenging environment was made by over 19,000 volunteers who logged in over 500,000 hours in Texas prisons in 2009. In honor of those volunteers who have made outstanding contributions to the mission of the Texas Department of Criminal Justice, the Governor's Criminal Justice Volunteer Service Awards were created in 1995.

On April 8, 2010, WSP was recognized at the 15th Annual Governor's Criminal Justice Volunteer Service Awards ceremony. During 2009, WSP mailed 3,208 books and tapes to the children of offenders. For our dedication and commitment to restoring families and reducing recidivism, WSP has been chosen to receive the prestigious "Susan Cranford" Award for Female Offender Program. Susan passed away in 2007 after a long and courageous battle with cancer. A former Windham School District and TDCJ employee for 28 years, Susan's innovative thinking and relentless desire to improve criminal justice programs for females gained her a well-deserved national reputation as an expert on women's issues in the field of corrections.

Every volunteer in WSP should feel proud to be the recipient of such a prestigious award!



Book Notes

The communications newsletter of
Women's Storybook Project of Texas

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**WSP
THANKS**

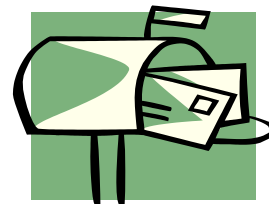
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c/o Austin Community Foundation
P.O. Box 5159 Austin, TX 78763
a 501(c)3 non-profit organization**

Making Connections



Judith Dullnig relates this incredible story as told to her by a mother in Plane Henley:

One mother said her daughter had been in ICU and the first thing she requested when awakening from a coma was the tape and the book her mother had sent to her through Storybook.

After talking with the mother further, she said her 10 year old daughter had a brain tumor. Although it was in remission, her daughter was having seizures. She had had a seizure at school and was rushed to the hospital. She was in a coma for three days. During this time, the father played the tape of her mother's voice.

Doctors said that the tape and the sound of her mother's voice helped her pull through. As the mother said, the first thing the girl asked for was the tape and the book.

Talk about making connections!!



Can you help?

HELP WANTED!

WSP Electronic Chairman

Willing and organized person to assist WSP by emailing schedules, occasional e-vites and quarterly Book Notes.
Contact Judith!

WSP Soars with an Eagle Scout

Young Greg Nicholls, Jr., age 17, a Boy Scout since age six, contacted his Scoutmaster with a creative request; for his Eagle Scout award, he wanted to help the children of incarcerated women.

The Eagle Scout, the highest attainable rank by a Boy Scout, is awarded upon completion of a community service project designed and directed by the Scout, the acquisition of 21 merit badges, and service in a leadership position in the Scout Troop. The highly respected rank is considered to be a significant honor, and is looked upon as an achievement even much later in life. In the BSA, only two or three percent of Scouts attain it.

Jeri Saper told Greg's scout leader about Storybook who then told Greg and gave him the contact information for Judith Dullnig. From



there, after a great deal of effort, he formulated his proposal and it was approved by the Scoutmaster.

Then Greg began the challenging task of implementing his plan. A student at Stephen F. Austin High School, his goal was to collect supplies for WSP


by soliciting donations from the school's four band groups during a month-long competition. The group who collected the most was treated to an ice cream party donated by Amy's Ice Cream. One freshman girl in particular impressed Greg. Because her father was away in the Navy and had sent books which he read on tape for her, she related to this project and single handedly donated 24 books!

Greg shared that through this experience, he learned a lot about leadership, but most significantly, he learned to ask for help. During his 120 hours of creating flyers, communicating with



- **Linda Gise**, Windham Principal for Lane Murray and Mt. View, for nominating WSP to receive the Governor's Criminal Justice Volunteer Service Award
- **Greg Nicholls** for choosing WSP as his project to become an Eagle Scout, and for surpassing his goal.
- **Cassandra Perks** for all the help she has given Judith and WSP. She helped sort and pack the 3,232 books from the BN Holiday Book Drives. She also helped update the volunteer roster.
- **Kathie and Dick Hanson** for opening their home and ranch for the WSP picnic and for supplying the beverages
- **Sandy Hain** for producing our documentary and capturing the emotion of WSP
- **Joe Strouse**, our "musician in residence," for playing music at the picnic and on the video
- **Nancy Wallace** for representing WSP on the TLA panel; **Liz Davis and Judy Darnell** for greeting those inquiring about our program
- **Marty Barrick** for being our Scout contact to help troops interested in WSP

various people to solicit donations or to make arrangements for the competition, collecting/transporting/sorting donations, making trips to various state warehouses, making arrangements for the winning band's party, and preparing for the Eagle Scout Ceremony, he learned the power of reaching out to others for help. His hard work paid off: the supplies collected totaled 300 books, 200 cassettes and labels, 300 bubble mailers, and 100 CDs, and Greg earned the prestigious rank of Eagle Scout on March 23, 2010!

"The best part," he vehemently states, "was the very end...seeing the results of all the stress paying off. It was like a spider web woven together in beautiful harmony!" 



Volunteer Spotlight

**Susanna Busico,
Co-leader Lane Murray**

Austin resident Susanna Busico has been involved with Storybook for two years, recently accepting the co-leader position at Lane Murray. Susanna also organized the volunteers last year for the Texas Book Festival, where she originally heard about the project several years ago.

Susanna hasn't always lived in the Austin area. She and her late husband, Roger, moved frequently as he was a fighter pilot in the Air Force. In 1985, they made their final move prior to his retirement, from Germany to Austin. Roger became a pilot for Continental Airlines until he passed away in 1991.


Susanna received a B.A. in English and Journalism at Texas Tech University as well as Montessori training in Kansas City. When her children were younger, she was a Montessori teacher. She has recently retired after 23 years of teaching, primarily Language Arts and Journalism (including advising the yearbook and newspapers), in Round Rock ISD.

The mother of two grown daughters who have enriched her life with four beautiful grandchildren, Susanna enjoys the close knit family life which comes from living within ten minutes of one another. Her 89 year old mother has just moved here from New Mexico to be closer to family as well.

She and her significant other, Jack Graham, share a love of rowing on Town Lake, hiking and gardening. Susanna is a competitive rower and especially enjoys rowing in the team boats, quads and 8+. Other interests include yoga, gardening, hiking, reading and swimming. For the past year, she has been a CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocate) volunteer for children, which she thoroughly enjoys. For the past 10 years, she has been a member of a weekly



centering prayer/meditation group and has also sung in the Riverbend Chorale, both of which have been a source of spiritual growth and feed her soul. A favorite inspirational quote is, "We do not think ourselves into new ways of living, we live ourselves into new ways of thinking." With her busy lifestyle, that truly suits her! Yet in the midst of all of this, Susanna's goals are to find time for silence each day, to accept what is, to listen deeply, and to savor the moment.

Susanna has been a wonderful addition to the WSP family. Her realization of this organization's ultimate goal - the children - is evidenced in this quote from her: "I am amazed at the warm reception we receive from the offenders and how much they appreciate not only choosing the books and reading to their children, but the chance to be with us in a group, talking and focusing on their children. I come away each time I visit with feelings of awe at their grace, their desire for growth, and their love for their children." 



What's Happening?

- Our annual grant application for the 2011 Mission Opportunity Catalog has been submitted to the Episcopal Diocese of Texas. This yearly grant has supported WSP's growth since the first year of its inception.
- We have begun the process of establishing our own 501 c3 for non-profit status. This is a lengthy process which can take up to a year to complete.
- The search is on! We need office space in the Austin area - at least 1,000 square feet. If you have any ideas of locations which are very reasonably priced, please let Judith know.
- The Black Student Alliance at San Antonio College has offered a \$250 donation and will be meeting a WSP representative at the Scholastic Warehouse to select books.

Sixth WSP Picnic a Hit!

April 24th was the perfect day for a picnic and the Lazy H Ranch in Austin was the perfect location for one. Thanks to the generous hospitality of Dick and Kathie Hanson, over fifty WSP volunteers,



Volunteers, supports and friends enjoyed a lovely picnic lunch.

supporters, and friends enjoyed a scrumptious lunch provided by an admiring supporter of Storybook. Joe Strouse, who donated his talents to the musical background for the Storybook documentary, entertained us with background music as we enjoyed camaraderie with one another.

The highlight of the picnic came as the participants eagerly crowded into the living room for the debut of the documentary, generously produced by Sandy Hain. For the next twenty minutes, every set of eyes was glued to the screen where a superb amalgamation of



Everyone enjoyed the presentation of the documentary which was received with hearty applause and appreciation.

many aspects of Storybook - the warden, the mothers, the children, the caregivers, and the volunteers - was woven together to expertly show just what this program is all about. Following the viewing, a phone call was made to Sandy Hain and the volunteer's applause and cheers of appreciation left no room for doubt how we felt about the production. If you missed this opportunity to see the film, contact Judith to find out how you can see it, because it truly warms the soul, especially to see the children we all work so hard to reach.

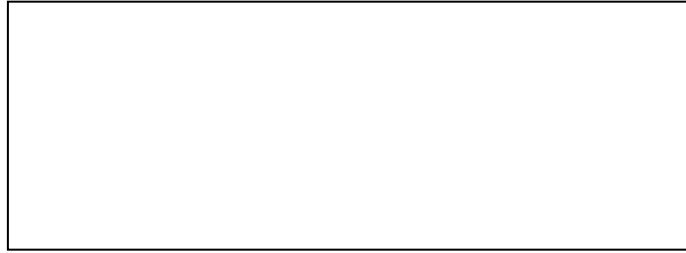
Storybook Hits the "Big Time" at Texas Library Association

In the past, Storybook has had a booth at the Texas Library Association Conference. This year, however, we not only had a booth, but were invited to participate in a panel discussion entitled "Literacy in Action: Working With Underserved Populations." There were three other "experts" on the panel with us, each telling the audience about their particular program.

Judith and Nancy Wallace were able to speak for 15 - 20 minutes about the nuts and bolts of Storybook and then shared some letters from the recipients of the books and their caregivers. Judith also mentioned that Storybook was a wonderful service project for schools, scout troops, etc. Librarians came up after the presentation and wanted to know more about the program and how they could get involved. There was considerable interest generated from their presentation, which was very rewarding.

The Storybook booth drew many inquisitive souls and positive comments. At the end of the Conference, one of the other exhibitors approached Judith and donated some books to Storybook. She was so moved by what this amazing program does that she also handed Judith a check for \$100!

Next year TLA will have their Conference in Austin, April 12 - 15. Mark your calendars now and plan to volunteer to help staff the Storybook booth. You'll have a blast and will play a part in helping to enlighten the world of librarians to the incredible things that happen because of Storybook!



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

 **Women's
Storybook
Project of Texas**

**2010 GOVERNOR'S CRIMINAL JUSTICE
VOLUNTEER SERVICE AWARD**
Women's Storybook Project of Texas



Left to right: TBCJ Chairman Oliver Bell; Judith Dullnig, Former TBCJ Chairman Carol S. Vance; TDCJ Executive Director Brad Livingston



Several volunteers were able to join Judith in celebrating this special award. See inside this issue for more information.