

Book Notes



PROGRAMS

Invisible String Volunteers



Junior League of Austin volunteer Catherine, her daughter and her daughter's friend were helpful in preparing crafts for the WSP activity the Texas Book Festival Children's Tent. Thanks so much!

Plane and Henley Volunteers



Volunteers going to the Plane and Henley Units in Dayton meet for lunch prior to visiting the jails. These dedicated women volunteer almost every month!

WSP launched our 10th program in January

On January 11, new team leaders Laura Dyer Campos and Stephanie Savage made their inaugural trip to the Ellen Halbert Unit in Burnet. After much planning and preparation, we were thrilled to launch in our tenth prison unit!



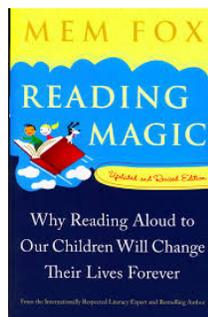
The Halbert Unit is unique to WSP in that it's a substance abuse treatment and in-prison

therapeutic community facility where offenders serve six-month sentences prior to being transferred to halfway houses for further rehabilitation. Warden Cynthia Moore and her staff have been welcoming and accommodating. We are thrilled to be partnering with them.



WSP volunteers were selected in 2019 for a second time as "STARS at the Trail" by the Trail of Lights Foundation. Last month, WSP volunteers, friends and family members came out to Zilker Park to enjoy this Austin holiday tradition. We'd like to extend our thanks to the foundation's Board of Directors and Austin Trail of Lights volunteers for making the evening possible.

Have You Read?



Reading Magic is not a children's book, but we recommend it nonetheless. The book's relevance to WSP's work is captured in its subtitle:

Why Reading Aloud to Our Children Will Change Their Lives Forever. In Reading Magic, author Mem Fox reveals the incredible emotional and intellectual impact reading aloud to children has on their ability to learn to read. This

book helps us understand why WSP's mission of connecting children to their incarcerated mothers through the reading aloud of books is so important.

MEDIA/AWARDS



On October 9, UT Austin's The Daily Texan featured an excellent article about WSP. [The article is available online at thedailytexanonline.com](http://thedailytexanonline.com) (search for "WSP" or "October 9").



Judith and Jill recently had the pleasure of being interviewed for KUT radio's Texas Standard. The interview will air in January. WSP will be featured as KUT's Get Involved spotlight organization during March or April. Stay tuned!

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT: Rhonda Chandler

Rhonda Chandler is a team leader from Baytown who has been involved with WSP for more than a decade. We are grateful for Rhonda's many years of service and pleased to feature her as the subject of this month's Volunteer Spotlight.



Rhonda Chandler

“Back in 2007 or 2008, Rev. Micki Rios came to our Sunday morning women’s Bible Study and told me, “This is something you need to do.” I said I didn’t want to do prison ministry, but she said try it three times and then if it isn’t your cup of tea, you can find something else.

My first impression of WSP was that it was such a simple but powerful program, just moms reading to their children; but what an impact on the

lives of the mothers and the lives of the children! I was hooked.

During my years with Storybook, I’ve been a team leader and a regular monthly volunteer. I recently stepped back into the role of team leader. I find it rewarding and sometimes

challenging. The most challenging part is having to create a way to get the mission accomplished in the face of what can seem like an ever-changing prison system. Being able to adapt in the moment is very important!

I have been most surprised during my work with how well the mothers read and how grateful they are for the opportunity to read to their children. My favorite thing about serving with WSP is absolutely being able to help women stay connected to their children.

“If I could help other people understand anything about the Women’s Storybook Project, it would be for them to know and hear the emotion in the women’s voices as they read the books to their children.”

DONATIONS / SPONSORS



WSP recently received a grant from the Austin Junior Forum. Members will also volunteer this year and we are thrilled to have them!

A heartfelt thanks to all of our 2019 donors, including our most recent ones:

- ECG Foundation
- Grant Me the Wisdom Foundation
- Westlake Methodist Church
- David and Dugie Graham
- Ellen and James Balthazar
- Lisa Holleran
- Marty Loeber
- St. Matthew’s Episcopal Church
- Richard Saldivar
- Karen and Warren Hayward

- Patsy Graham
- Ellie and Leonard Chaikind
- Betty Woods
- Women Helping Others of Georgetown

In-kind Donors:

- Jamie Dickens
- Nikki Loftin
- Chris Barton
- Divya Srinivasan
- Kat Kronenberg
- Literati
- Society for Children’s Books Writers and Illustrators of Austin
- The Woodlands Christian Academy



Gina Springer Shirley looks great in her WSP jacket! Thank you to everyone who supported our program by purchasing items from the WSP store!

We are grateful for our sponsors/partners this year:



- JLA
- Austin Junior Forum
- HEB
- Randall’s Good Neighbor Program

When you shop at Randall’s, please use your Randall’s card to help Women’s Storybook Project. Go to the service desk and ask them to designate WSP as your charity of choice. We are #14089. Each time you shop and use your card, a percentage will be donated to WSP. Thank you!

*Please note – you need to choose your beneficiary every January.

UPCOMING EVENTS/VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

SAY THANKS AUSTIN!

Help raise awareness for the good work being done Women's Storybook Project of Texas and say Thank you to Beshar Garcia during the "Say Thanks Austin!" Campaign.



The Say Thanks, Austin campaign works like this. Anyone in the world may say thanks to Beshar (or any other 2019 RecognizeGood Legend award winner) every day from January 6th through January 31st, once per day per voting method.

That means one person maxing out their Thank You votes could cast as many as 182 votes singlehandedly (7 votes per day for 26 days). The voting methods are:

EVERY DAY IN EVERY WAY

Anyone in the world may say thanks to one Legend (or more) once per day, per voting method listed below from Jan 6 - Jan 31, 2020. Vote every day, every way!

CLICK Any Legend's name at the "Vote Say Thanks, Austin" link on RecognizeGood.org
TEXT Legend's last name to (512) 456-9244
MESSAGE Legend's last name to our Facebook page at facebook.com/recognizegood or to our Instagram page @RecognizeGood
TWEET Legend's last name to @recognizegood with the hashtag #SayThanksAustin
EMAIL Legend's last name (in the subject line) to saythanks@recognizegood.org
WRITE IN your name, then sign and date where indicated on a Say Thanks form

All Say Thanks Forms must be received by 5:00 p.m. on January 31, 2020. For more information on all RecognizeGood Legends and to view "Say Thanks, Austin" rules and regulations, please visit [recognizegood.org](https://www.recognizegood.org).



We're looking for 10 volunteers to host a fundraising page for WSP. We can do this – who's in? If you are a social media maven or a technology leader, contact Sun right away, even in you're not and you've got a generous heart and a bunch of friends or followers – let's go! Reach out – let us know you're interested at admin@storybookproject.org, and thanks!



During the Holiday Book Drive, WSP was gifted over 1,300 books! We would like to extend our thanks to Emilie Crimmins, our volunteers and all the shoppers at Barnes and Noble! You helped stock our shelves with the newest in chapter books, graphic novels and board books for the children we serve. Thank you so very much!

COMPUTER TRAINING

Computer trainings are still being held at the WSP office. Email admin@storybookproject.org to reserve your spot.

- 2/1/2020 Sat 9:00 - 10:00 a.m.
- 2/4/2020 Tue 6:30 - 7:30 p.m.
- 3/4/2020 Wed 6:30 - 7:30 p.m.

TDCJ Volunteer Training - IMPORTANT - PLEASE READ

Please do not let your volunteer training expire. Plan to retrain BEFORE it does. If you're not sure when you need to renew your training, call or email the office.

If your training does expire, you will have to reapply to volunteer and complete the in-person training again regardless of when you completed your initial training. (you will be allowed to enter prison as a special visitor two times.)

The new TDCJ training schedule is available online (simply search for "TDCJ volunteer training" on the Internet).

We plan to offer a volunteer training at the WSP office in June. Trainings are available in Austin on the following dates: 2/2/20, 4/18/20, 7/18/20, and 10/17/20. Additional trainings will take place in Baytown, Dallas, Fort Worth, Houston, Georgetown, Kyle, and Lockhart.

Thanks from Mom

"I am extremely grateful to have been given this opportunity. Thank you for creating an opportunity for me to connect with my children, especially from a place like prison. It means more to me than words could ever describe."

**Castin
December 2019**

Reminder: No leggings or tight fitting clothes allowed in the units

Prison volunteers, remember to sign up through our website so we can add you to our database and give you correct info on TDCJ trainings.



“I have had the wonderful opportunity to receive two of your books recordings at my home. Unfortunately, my daughter is incarcerated, and her 5-year-old daughter is with my husband and I until this crisis is over.

It was absolutely wonderful to insert a CD and listen to my daughter’s voice when she was reading to our granddaughter. It was very emotional for me as well as her daughter, K---. This is a wonderful idea and I hope you continue to provide a thoughtful and much needed service.

*GOD Bless You,
A Caregiver
September 2019*

