



Child and Family
Resource Council

The Council Commitment

Volume 19, Number 3

Winter 2005

One Year. Thousands Reached.

The year 2005 proved to be a very successful year of growth and change for the Child and Family Resource Council. Through sound leadership, strategic decisions, and the ongoing support of the community, thousands of children, families, and professionals were reached.

Some exciting highlights:

- We hosted our first large-scale fund raising event, entitled **Phantom Without the Opera**. Featuring headliner Byron Nease, the event was a great success, raising awareness of the Council as well as funds to support our mission.
- Through a partnership with Grand Rapids Public Schools, the Council launched two **Parent Resource Centers** in Grand Rapids. These innovative Centers, located at East Leonard Elementary and Southwest Community Campus, provide parents with information, materials, and programming on parenting, child development, job searching, and many other topics.
- The **Family Resource Guide Online** was launched, allowing everyone with access to the internet the ability to research programs and services in Kent County available to children and families. The site, www.familyresourceguide.info, features searches of over 900 programs and services in Kent County as well as a searchable community calendar.
- Over 14,000 **Family Resource Guides** were distributed throughout Kent County. In addition, the Guide was translated into Spanish.
- The AmeriCorps Team (at Cherry Street Health Services), Rosalynn Bliss, Lauren Kennedy, and Deb Zondervan were all honored at the 2005 **Service to Children Awards**.
- The fifth annual **Resource Bonanza**, our most successful to date, brought hundreds of professionals together to share information and resources.
- The **Blue Ribbon Campaign**, held during the month of April, brought child abuse and neglect to the forefront of many in our community. Trees in Rosa Parks Circle were decorated with blue ribbons to represent the 9,664 reports of suspected child abuse and neglect Kent County Child Protective Services received in 2004.
- Our **Community Education** service reached over 2,300 Kent County parents and professionals.
- The number of families participating in **Connections** continued to climb; we have served over 1,684 children in Kent County.
- **Encouraging Family Foundations** worked with 273 unmarried parents of infants.
- **Kent County Healthy Start** worked with 1,056 families and celebrated its tenth anniversary.
- Our **RAVE (Resources Against Violent Encounters)** program reached 581 teens.

*(Please note: all numbers are from January – October 2005.
Final numbers for all programs will be available in our 2005 annual report.)*



Our Mission: to shape a community that protects children from abuse and neglect.

The *Council Commitment* is a publication of the Child and Family Resource Council.

Established in 1985, the Council's mission is *to shape a community that protects children from abuse and neglect.*

The Council focuses on programs and services that protect children, support families and strengthen our community. Utilizing primary strategies of education, coordination and advocacy, the Council uses a variety of tools to accomplish its mission, including:

- Advocacy Training
- Community Education
- Connections
- Encouraging Family Foundations
- Family Resource Guide
- Kent County Healthy Start
- Mandated Reporter Training
- RAVE (Resources Against Violent Encounters)

The Child and Family Resource Council is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization funded through the Children's Trust Fund, Heart of West Michigan United Way, grants, and the support of individual donations.

The Council does not discriminate in employment opportunities or practices because of race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, national origin, age, income, citizenship, veteran status, marital status, parental status, membership in any labor organization, political affiliation, height, weight, disability, record of arrest without conviction, or any other characteristic protected by law.

Season's Greetings from the Council!

Believe it or not, 2005 is nearly gone, but not without making its mark on history. It has been a year of conflicting emotions--we have felt great joys and shared deep sorrows in our world, our nation, and our community. My hope is that we can all learn from the challenges and seize the opportunities as they arrive. I am happy to report to you that in Kent County, the Council has continued to protect children, support families, and strengthen our community through our programs, services, and collaborations.



So what's new for 2006? After a year where we have evolved, made new friends, learned new lessons, and grown significantly, my vision for next year is that our programs and services will continue to reach increasing numbers of children, families, and professionals in Kent County while meeting—and exceeding—the high standards of quality we have set for ourselves. I also believe the Council will have a higher profile in the community, and we will maintain our position as a local leader in the effort to prevent child abuse and neglect.

Of course, none of our success occurs in a vacuum; without our program partners, community friends, and financial supporters of the Council, we would not be able to accomplish half of what we do. Thank you for your continued commitment to Kent County's children and families.

— Something to RAVE About! —

We are happy to announce that RAVE (Resources Against Violent Encounters) received another \$10,000 from the Jury Foundation! The support will help RAVE reach additional students in Kent County.

This is the third gift of \$10,000 in as many years from the Jury Foundation for RAVE.

RAVE works with adolescents 13-18 in Kent County in order to reduce dating violence. For more information about RAVE services, contact Rosalynn Bliss at (616) 454-HOPE (4673).

The 18th annual Service to Children Awards is happening on Tuesday, May 2, 2006 at the Loosemore Auditorium, located on Grand Valley State University's downtown campus.

Nomination forms will be sent out shortly; we encourage you to consider nominating a colleague, friend, or professional you feel deserves to be recognized for their work with and for children.

If you have any questions, please contact Rosalynn Bliss at rbliss@childresource.cc or at (616) 454-HOPE (4673).



Wish List

Have you ever wondered how you could make a difference in the lives of Kent County's children and families? With the Council Wish List, you can! Simply purchase any of the following items listed below and drop them off at our office. All items will go directly to help a family in need.

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|---|--|-----------------------|
| 2 Brain Models
<i>(please contact the Council to purchase)</i> | Diaper Bags | Pacifiers |
| Baby Bottles | Gas Cards | Rattles (choke-proof) |
| Baby Lotions | Gift Certificates/cards
<i>(these help the Council recognize volunteer efforts and provide incentives for families to participate in our programs.)</i> | Soft-bite Spoons |
| Baby Wipes | | Stuffed Animals |
| Bibs | | Thermometers |
| Crib Blankets | Gloves | Towels |
| Diapers | Hats | Toys |
| | Onesies | Trainer Cups |

For more information, please contact Rosalynn Bliss at (616) 454-HOPE (4673).
Thank you for your support of the Council's programs and services!



Valentine's Day.

What to do? Have her serenaded in a romantic setting? Take him to dinner? Buy her jewelry?

Next year, you can do all three at once.

Tuesday, February 14, 2006 is the date of the Council's annual fundraising event, entitled *The Phantom Returns... and Gets the Girl*. Musical theatre star Byron Nease, soprano Suzanne Ishee, and pianist Phil Hall will be performing songs of love and devotion for you and your special one.

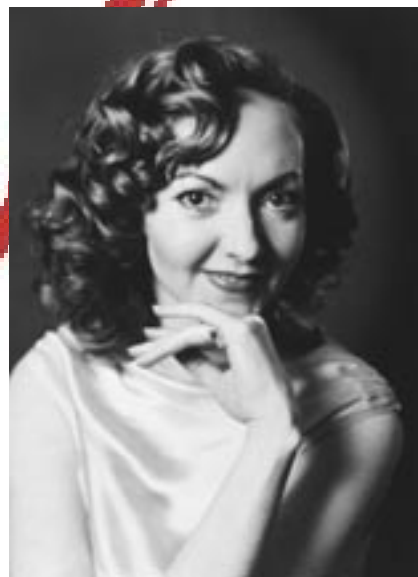
The event will take place at the Ambassador Ballroom, located in the Amway Grand Plaza Hotel in downtown Grand Rapids. Festivities begin at 6:00 p.m., including drinks, dinner, the performance, and a raffle for a unique piece of jewelry designed just for this event (valued at \$5,000).

Tickets are only \$200.00 each, and all proceeds will support the Council's programs and services.

We hope you will join us at this once-in-a-lifetime celebration of romance. For more information, contact Beschelle Lockhart at blockhart@childresource.cc or at (616) 454-HOPE (4673).



Byron Nease



Suzanne Ishee



Annie Funke is the new RAVE Student Assistant at the Council. She will be working to deliver RAVE services to youth-serving agencies in Kent County. She is currently working on dual degrees in Sociology and Public Administration at Grand Valley State University.



Beschelle Lockhart is the new Development Director at the Council. Her duties include building relationships with donors and businesses in Kent County. Before coming to the Council, she spent five years at Habitat for Humanity and owned her own small business.



Erin Niece is the new Receptionist. She is the first face many visitors see when they come to the Council, and is also responsible for answering phones, scheduling meetings, and general office duties. Erin received her Bachelor's degree in Communications from Aquinas College.



Elizabeth Patterson is the Council's new Parent Education Coordinator; she will be spending most of her time working with families at our Parent Resource Centers. Elizabeth received her Bachelor's degree in Spanish from Grand Valley State University.

Special Thanks

Our most heartfelt thanks and appreciation to the following community partners who have worked with the Council on its programs and services. These organizations have provided staff, space, and additional resources so that the lives of thousands in Kent County are better, happier, and safer. Simply put, we could not do what we do without you. **Thank you.**

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| Arbor Circle | Grand Rapids Police Department | Oakdale Park CRC |
| Baxter Community Center | Grand Rapids Public Schools | Pine Rest Family Institute |
| Bethany Christian Services | Heart of West Michigan United Way | Planned Parenthood of West Michigan |
| Catholic Diocese of Grand Rapids | Kent County Department of Human Services | Saint Mary's Health Care |
| Catholic Social Services | Kent County Early On | South End Community Outreach Ministries |
| Children's Assessment Center | Kent County Health Department | Southwest Community Campus |
| D.A. Blodgett Services for Children and Families | Kent Regional Community Coordinated Child Care | Spectrum Health |
| DeVos Children's Hospital | Metro Health | Spectrum Health--Healthier Communities |
| East Leonard Elementary School | Michigan Family Resources | United Methodist Community House |
| Fifth Third Bank | Michigan State University Extension | <i>(List is based on 2005 formal partnerships.)</i> |
| Fountain Hill Center | Network 180 | |



The Season of Giving

Last year in Kent County, **9,664** cases of suspected child abuse and neglect were reported—the second highest number in all of Michigan. As adults, abused and neglected children are more likely to suffer from depression, use illegal substances, have physical ailments, and be imprisoned.

Thousands of children and families in Kent County need our programs and services throughout the year, so please don't put off your support until tomorrow—we *need your support today*. For your convenience, a remittance envelope is included in this newsletter, and remember you can always give online safely and easily at **www.childresource.cc**.

As a reminder, the Katrina Emergency Tax Relief Act of 2005 (KETRA) suspends deductibility limitations on all qualifying gifts made between August 29 and December 31, 2005, regardless of who the recipient is. Please consult your tax advisor for more information.

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our community
and strengthening
supporting families,
protecting children,



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