



# Network News

Volume # 12 Issue 1    A newsletter for our families, friends, and volunteers    Spring, 2008

## FSN Receives Western Security Bank's Hands of Hope Campaign

Recently, Family Support Network (FSN) was honored to receive \$10,000 from Western Security Bank's Hands of Hope Campaign. These funds plus a matching gift from an anonymous donor will allow FSN to purchase newer model vehicles with high safety ratings as well as extended warranty protection through a local car dealership.

Family Support Network has experienced a 23% increase in families whose children have been removed



from the home for abuse and neglect. Removal of children often involves issues stemming from substance abuse especially methamphetamine. This increase has necessitated a greater reliance on staff vehicles to transport the children for visits with their families. The high number of miles our staff place on their vehicles often necessitates car repairs. The repair downtime can

result in visits being canceled. With the generous award from Western Security Bank, FSN will be able to ensure that visits are not canceled because of vehicle repairs.

These visits are critical to negating the issues of powerlessness, fear, anger and abandonment felt by children being removed from the only home they have known. Studies show that successful reunification efforts hinge on keeping family relationships viable through frequent visits and providing strong programs such as the programs conducted by FSN to teach parents the necessary skills and parenting techniques that help provide a safe nurturing environment for their children.

Jim Walker, President of Western Security Bank said, "As a caring corporate citizen, Western Security Bank recognizes its responsibility to respond to the needs of the communities we serve. As part of our "Hands of Hope Campaign" the management and staff of Western Security Bank are proud to assist in the important work of the Family Support Network. In addition to the financial contribution, individual members of the Western Security Bank team will be focusing their volunteer efforts on the local charity."

Thanks to Western Security Bank and community donors, Family Support Network will obtain safe, well-kept vehicles to allow for uninterrupted service for our families and their children.

## A Year With Family Support Network By Megan Meyer, a Former Jesuit Volunteer

When, in the summer of 2006, I began telling my friends and family that I was moving from Ohio to Montana, I surprised pretty much all of them. They were even more surprised when I said I was not getting a normal job, but was volunteering for a year with a group called the Jesuit Volunteer Corps. I would spend the year at Family Support Network, working with families at risk for abuse and neglect and

families with a child with mental illness.

Before I began working with FSN I had many preconceived notions about the families I would be working with. I wondered how anyone could mistreat a child like that. I suspected that there must be something different, something terrible, about the people we worked with. I wondered if the parents could really love their children the way I thought parents (cont. page 2)

## Legislative Summit

In February, Nancy Farrar observed the budget planning process for both children and adult mental health at the Mental Health Legislative Focus Summit hosted by the Mental Health Oversight Advisory Council (MHOAC). The panel included representatives from MHOAC, the regional Service Area Authorities (SAA), judicial and law enforcement, Children's Mental Health Bureau, Kid's (cont. page 2)

### Meyer cont.

were supposed to. However, as I began working with clients and seeing first hand, the interactions between parents and children, I realized my clients were people I could imagine hanging out with if their lives or mine had gone just a little differently. In the face of all my suspicions, my clients continually showed me that the things they had done to lose their children were not the defining points of their character, as I had assumed.

I began the year by dismissing FSN's clients as people who were different from me, who did things that I would never consider doing. Once I grew to know them, however, I realized that I could not condemn them out of hand the way I had when I began the year. Despite significant differences in our upbringing and lifestyles, my clients were people similar to me, with many of the same thoughts and emotions. Now that my year is completed, I miss my clients, but I am so grateful that even for a year I was able to get to know

### Legislative cont.

Montana hospitals, Consumer organizations including CALM4US, NAMI-MT and the Mental Health Association of MT, Dept. of Corrections, Legislators and County representatives.

The summit's purpose was to establish an early consensus on mental health funding priorities that will be presented to the Department of Public Health & Human Services (DPHHS) budget process. The panel listed the following funding priorities for both the children and adult sector: locally based secure treatment beds, transportation, crisis intervention programs and training, workforce development,

increase state capacity in areas of tele-psychiatry, number of professionals and para-professionals working in the state, transition services youth to adult system, follow-up aftercare including medication follow-up, and flexible funding. Additional areas of concern for the children's sector included early identification, family and peer supports and mental health services to all who need it.

The Summit also identified several legislative issues that need to be addressed in the '09 legislature. These include: uniform diagnoses between children and adult systems, revision to commitment law, Medicaid Waiver, family of one status as is the case for physical and developmental disabilities, and legislative incentives for work force capacity building.

Time was allotted for public comment and interested observers were allowed to circulate among the panelists and engage them in discussions during breaks. The summit was successful in securing a broad array of voices, involvement and understanding in the beginning stages of the '09 legislative planning process.

### **Thank you Billings...**

*We would like to express our gratitude for the outpouring of cash donations and your support of our Adopt a Family Program. These contributions are critical to FSN and allow us to help families and break the cycle of abuse and neglect.*

**Marlene & Thomas Agnew  
Deborah Anspach  
John Hanson  
Libby Artley  
Adela Awner  
Lynda & Dave Ballard  
Shirlee Bitney  
Brett & Suzanne Boedecker  
Roy & Kim Brown**

### Thank you cont...

**Susan Brown  
Ron & Judy Burnam  
Ralph & Sheryl Costanzo  
Dick & Cheri Cox  
Bruce & Mary Daughton  
Karen & Curt Durfey  
Wayne & Carol Eisenman  
Ardys Ewald  
Paul & Cynthia Foster  
John & Bess Fredlund  
Stuart & Shawna Goodman  
Earl Guss  
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Charles Hingle  
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Mark Lenneman  
Annabel Lombard  
Mary & Joe Maheras  
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Scott, Melanie & Ben McCullough  
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James McMeekin  
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Dr. Scott & Tamra Millikan  
Mark and Lauri Miron  
Douglas & Leslie Modrow  
Mrs. Charles Morledge  
John and Peggy Munis  
Janice Munsell  
David & Nancy Myers  
Suzie & Matt Mylet  
Margaret Norsworthy  
Keith and Kate Novakovich  
Susan Ogden  
Nick & Mary Okon  
Connie Oser  
William Oser  
Donald & Patsy Perretti  
Bonnie Peter  
Mark & Chris Randak  
Dr. Scott & Vickie Ross  
(cont. page 3)**

Thank you cont...

**Kathleen Ryan**  
**Michael and Barbara Sample**  
**Miriam & Joseph Sample**  
**Denise Scherer**  
**Kathie & Steve Shandera**  
**Doug, Deb & Kelsey Speer**  
**Mr. & Mrs. Ralph Spence**  
**Laurie Stergar**  
**Adam Sutcliffe**  
**Michael & Joan Tuss**  
**Kathy Walton**  
**Liz & Bob Wilmouth**  
**William & Joan Wilson**  
**AF & Jayne Winegardner**  
**Ron & Amy Yates**  
**Michael & Stephanie Young**  
**Bob & Pat Zellar**  
**ADK – Zeta Chapter**  
**American Lutheran Church**  
**Arrowhead Psychological & Behavioral Sciences**  
**Billings Central High School**  
**Billings Clinic Occupational Health**  
**Billings Exchange Club CAP Foundation**  
**Curves For Women**  
**Dovetail Designs and Millwork**  
**Exxon Mobil Billings Refinery**  
**First English Lutheran Church**  
**First Interstate Bank**  
**Lonesome Dove Petroleum, Inc**  
**Rocky Mountain Health Network**  
**Sample Foundation**  
**Scheels**  
**Schwab Charitable Fund**  
**St. Thomas the Apostle Church**  
**The Woods Charitable Foundation, Inc.**  
**Underriner Motors**  
**United Way**  
**Western Office Equipment**  
**Women of the Moose #877**

## **A Special Tribute**

*To the following businesses, groups, and individuals who helped our families acquire basic necessities such as food, furniture linens, household items, and clothing. Because of your generosity, the children in our*

*program were able to celebrate their birthdays or engage in sporting activities through your donation of toys, athletic footwear, clothing and gear.*

**Sharol Acheson**  
**Russell & Karen Barmmer**  
**Denise Battat**  
**Georgia Bednarek**  
**Bernadette Blaylock**  
**Caryl Bowers**  
**Valorie Brinkman**  
**Barbara Sessions**  
**Mary Kay Brought**  
**Steven & Cindy Butler**  
**Anne Carney**  
**Demaz Baker**  
**Vicki and Brent Carstens**  
**Marcy Coughlin**  
**Rebecca Dillon**  
**Mrs. Diteman**  
**Lindsay & Graham Ernst**  
**Bob & Ailene Ettinger**  
**Kathryn Fiander**  
**Lynn Findon**  
**Julie Fritz**  
**Mary Kay Gartland**  
**Calvin & Jessica Gorman**  
**Bunny Hansen**  
**Carol Henning**  
**Mrs. Strand Hilleboe**  
**Susan Holbrook**  
**Karen Huff**  
**Mary James**  
**Derals & Ila Jesme**  
**Jennifer Jessen**  
**Roberta Johansen**  
**Darrell Kapptie**  
**Delores Koch**  
**Gene Ledeker**  
**Kate Locke**  
**Cari Martin**  
**Nancy Meyers**  
**Chad & Kendra Miller**  
**Lynne Montague**  
**Sarah Moon**  
**Gail Moorhouse**  
**Paula Murray**  
**Bill & Sally Murray**  
**Catherine O'Connor**  
**Amanda O'Donnell**  
**Michelle Olson**  
**Robert and Joy Oostermyer**  
**Ellen O'Shaughnessy**  
**Jean Pietz**  
**Rich & Karen Rogers**

Thank you cont...

**Michael Royston**  
**Cora Schmitz**  
**Pat Schneider**  
**Sara Schwebel**  
**Charlotte Sharp**  
**Michael Siciliano**  
**Kelly Smith**  
**Gary & Rhonda Steubs**  
**Harry & Kay Swain**  
**Amy Tria**  
**Maile Urbaska**  
**Ellen Ward**  
**Dee Woolston**  
**Academy of Skin, Hair, Nails**  
**ADK Zeta Chapter**  
**Barnes & Noble**  
**Billings Clinic Surgery**  
**Binky Patrol**  
**Costco**  
**Econo Print**  
**Food Services of America**  
**Jr. League of Billings**  
**Master Lube**  
**Meadow Gold Dairies**  
**Moonwatchers**  
**Pam Lowe Enterprises**  
**Prudential Financial**  
**St. Luke's ECW**  
**St. Thomas the Apostle Youth Group**  
**Yellowstone Valley Quilters Guild**

Thank you Pam  
Lowe Enterprises  
and your customers,  
Georgia Bednarek  
Valerie Brinkman  
Barbara Sessions  
Mary Kay Brought  
Commack Family  
Mrs. Diteman  
Mrs. Strand Hilleboe  
Gene Ledeker  
Harry & Kay Swain  
Bert Ward  
for providing  
essential home  
furnishings for our  
families.



~January 2008~

I would like to take the opportunity to express appreciation & gratitude to your family on behalf of our family. My children & I are so happy to have received all of those thoughtful presents. It was so wonderful to have gifts under our Christmas tree & to share our excitement with each other as we opened them.

I hope you understand what an unbelievable difference your family has made in the lives of our family. We thank God that you decided to help others less fortunate this Christmas. By opening your hearts to us, you not only made our Christmas better, but allowed

us to realize that there are still people that care about others. And for you to do this anonymously for a family whom you do not know makes it all the more special.

Please remember that your unselfishness does not go unrecognized & you really do make a positive & lasting impression on others.

Again, thank you for all your support, generosity, & selflessness you have shown this holiday season. Your family will be in our thoughts, hearts, & prayers.



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*WITH JUST A LITTLE SUPPORT EACH OF US CAN DISCOVER THE SOURCES OF STRENGTH IN OUR LIVES*

The FSN board has designated first meeting of the calendar year as the annual meeting, which is open to the public

- YES!** I WANT TO JOIN WITH FAMILY SUPPORT NETWORK IN THEIR EFFORTS TO STRENGTHEN AND PRESERVE THE FAMILY THROUGH SOCIAL AND EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES. I UNDERSTAND MY DONATION WILL SUPPORT LOCAL EFFORTS.

**MEMBERSHIP FORM:**

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Donations are tax deductible and can be sent directly to our office

**P.O Box 21366  
Billings, MT 59104**

- I want to do more. Contact me to be a volunteer

- I cannot join now but my contribution is enclosed for

## **Defensive Driving Course**

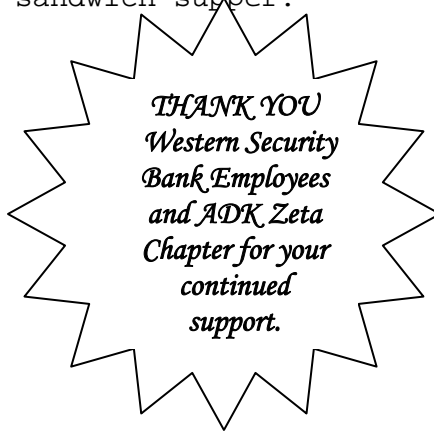
FSN employees participated in the Montana Dept. of Administration Risk Management Defensive Driving Course in March. The coursework involved lecture, visual aids and class participation. The course stressed the dangers of the distracted driver. In Montana 17,000 crashes resulting in 476 million dollars in damage is attributable to distracted drivers. Some of the most common distractions include drowsiness, cell phone usage, other riders, inattentiveness, and secondary tasks.

The response by the staff was overwhelmingly positive. As one staff member stated, "The course was a good reminder of our responsibility to pay attention to our driving to protect the children we are transporting and ourselves. The reminder to have at least a three second following distance in the city and a minimum of five seconds following distance for highway distance helped make me more aware of just what it takes to stop a car at different driving speeds."

FSN plans to make this course an annual requirement for staff training and encourages anyone who drives as part of their job to attend a defensive driving course. A yearly reminder of the dangers of distracted driving, along with tools to help reduce distractions and stay focused on one's responsibility to drive safely will help promote year long good driving practices.

## **Light of Hope Event**

On Saturday April 19, 2008 the 5<sup>th</sup> annual Light of Hope event will host a carnival on the west side of Rose Park from 3:00 pm to 5:00 pm. Because April is Child Abuse Month, this event plans to focus community awareness on the many prevention and intervention services working to prevent abuse and neglect in Yellowstone County. "To Shine the Light of Hope" for abused and neglected children, the event will end with a short program, guest speaker, candle lighting ceremony and a sandwich supper.



## **THE MISSION OF FAMILY SUPPORT NETWORK**

FSN recognizes that children are the foundation of the future and the family, as a basic unit of society, is the natural environment for the growth and development of all of its members. Realizing the enormous difficulties and responsibilities facing parents in today's society, Family Support Network seeks to provide intervention, support and assistance to children diagnosed

with a mental illness and their families and to those children and their families at risk for abuse or neglect.

Family Support Network recognizes the importance of parents in the lives of their children and seeks to help them access appropriate support and services and educate them in appropriate and nurturing parenting techniques.

Created in 1989, Family Support Network (FSN) provides services to 200 families in Yellowstone, Big Horn, Musselshell, Carbon and Stillwater counties. Services include assisting parents to access community based services, help develop parenting and life skills, to provide a safe and stable home for their children. Families are referred to the program by Department of Public Health and Human Services child protection staff, Maternal Child Health, Early Childhood Intervention, local physicians, and area schools. Referrals are based on suspected or known risk factors such as mental illness, poverty, inadequate housing, social isolation, education level, domestic violence, substance, physical or sexual abuse, serious emotional problems, poor parenting, and prenatal risk factors.

## **WISH LIST FOR FSN**

**SAFETY CAR KITS  
HAIR CARE PRODUCTS  
NAIL CARE FOR TEENS  
ANTI BACTERIAL WIPES  
WOMEN'S DEODORANT  
LAUNDRY SOAP  
PAPER TOWELS  
LOTIONS**