



# Focus On Families

Published by Family Services of Greater Houston

Dedicated to Strengthening Families Since 1904

## \$.7 Million for Priceless Healthy Marriages

For more than 70 years **Family Services of Greater Houston** has successfully provided counseling services in our community. Thanks to more than \$700,000 in grants awarded to Family Services and the **Greater Houston Healthy Marriage Coalition** by the **U. S. Department of Health and Human Services** and the **Texas Health and Human Services Commission**, Family Services will continue expanding the marriage education services it recently began providing through its counseling program.

Family Services is the lead agency of the 35-member Greater Houston Healthy Marriage Coalition. The mission of the coalition is to promote and sustain healthy marriages and strengthen family relationships through collaboration and education.

Recent trends show that delayed marriage, cohabitation and single parenting are threatening the institution of marriage. Many low-income couples enter into primary relationships without the benefit of healthy family role models.

Studies indicate that when marriages fail, children suffer. They suffer not only from the loss of support that frequently results from marital separation, but also from the emotional void that is left when one parent leaves the home. A sense of insecurity invades families unable to plan for future housing, employment, education and even nutrition.

The issue of single parenting hits home in Harris County, which has the largest number of single-parent households in Texas. As of the 2000 U.S. Census, nearly 80,000 Anglo and African-American mothers of children under the age of 18 in Harris County did not have husbands. In addition, the Texas Department of State Health Services reported more than 15,000 divorces occurred in Harris County during 2003.

Until now, there has been little attention paid to providing couples with the skills to develop and maintain healthy marriages. One main emphasis of the new grants is to teach married or engaged couples communication skills that will provide a solid foundation for successful marriage.

Family Services held its free couples workshops in October and January.

Upcoming workshops will be presented



by other Greater Houston Healthy Marriage Coalition members.

A unique aspect of the coalition's program is the use of a "mentoring" approach that encourages couples who take the workshops

to sign up as "mentors" for subsequent workshops.

"This innovative approach provides a way for couples to pass along their excitement to other couples as well as boost their mastery of the materials by repeating the training," explains **Tim Louis**, Family Services' Senior Vice President of Behavioral Health Services.

Another bonus is that mentors help recruit their peers into a program in which they now have a personal



investment. Other components of the program include a media campaign, promoting the use of pre-marital inventories for couples considering marriage, educating teens about healthy relationships and conducting weekend-long marriage enrichment

retreats. For additional information or to sign up for workshops call 713-802-7852. ♥

### Couples Communication Workshops

#### English-Speaking Couples

February 10 and 17  
April 21 and 28

#### African-American Couples

March 3 and 10

#### Spanish-Speaking Couples

(en Español)

March 24 and 31  
May 19 and 20

For the above workshops,  
call 713-802-7852.

#### Asian Couples

(Available in Chinese or Vietnamese)

April, 7, 14, 21 and 28

For Asian workshops,  
call 713-339-3688.

## Celebrate Our 2007 Family of the Year

The **2007 Celebration of Families Luncheon** will be held on March 6<sup>th</sup> at **River Oaks Country Club**. This year, Family Services will recognize **Ginni and Richard Mithoff and their Family** as the **2007 Family of the Year**. The Mithoffs have a true commitment to Houston's families and children. They are involved in countless educational and philanthropic endeavors throughout our community.



Ginni and Richard Mithoff

Ginni and Richard have passed on their legacy of community service to children **Michael** and **Caroline**, their spouses **Melissa** and **Scott**, and grandchildren **Mia**, **Matthew** and **Maxwell**, who will also be recognized.

**Vanessa Sendukas** is serving as Luncheon Chair with **Carolyn and Steve Mafrige** as Honorary Chairs. Special guest **The Honorable Mayor Bill White** will introduce the family and **The Honorable Eric Andell** will serve as emcee.

Proceeds will support Family Services' programs, which touch the lives of thousands in need throughout our community. For reservations, e-mail [snair@familyservices.org](mailto:snair@familyservices.org) or call 713-802-7857. ♥

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## President's Corner

The new year is upon us and I'm pleased to say that 2006 was another successful year for Family Services.

Our Board of Directors was led by **Jim Jennings**, who worked diligently throughout the year. He and wife, **Mary**, are very generous supporters of our programs, as well. We're excited he has agreed to serve another year on the Executive Committee.

At November's annual meeting, Jim passed the gavel to **Cathy Garcia-Prats**. Cathy is a proven leader whose energy and enthusiasm are seemingly endless. The mother of 10 boys, Cathy has a true understanding of families and the importance of Family Services' programs.

We bid farewell to two longtime board members - **Zeb Nash** and **Rosemary Schatzman**. The time, effort, commitment and passion they have shared with Family Services over the years is awe-inspiring.

Zeb joined the Board in 1997. It was immediately obvious that Zeb was a man who made things happen. His

determination and dedication resulted in donated computers for one of the high schools where we provide services. His support and commitment helped us secure funding for programs time and time again.



Nyla K. Woods  
President & CEO

Likewise, Rosemary added her definitive style to everything she touched. Joining the Board in 1998, she introduced us to many people in the community who have become good friends of the agency. Her expertise in fundraising started a legacy of special events that currently raise more than \$400,000 annually for our programs.

Our current and past Board members help us in so many ways. They share their leadership and talents by chairing committees, writing letters of support for grant proposals and keeping the agency informed about current trends in business and fund development.

We look forward to another great year in 2007. With the continued involvement of so many devoted individuals, Family Services will continue to impact the lives of thousands of families throughout the greater Houston community. ♥

## Annual Giving Donors

Thanks to our donors who helped raise over \$53,000.00 for Family Services.

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Nyla & Dan Woods\* ♥

\*Staff participated in our Employee Giving Campaign

## Welcome Aboard

Family Services is pleased to welcome three new members to its Board of Directors.

**Delesicca Brooks** is currently the Mechanical Manager for **ExxonMobil Chemicals**

**Baytown Olefins Plant**. She has held positions in operations support and business coordination as well as supervisory assignments in mechanical and process operations. Delesicca is a **2001 Leadership Texas Graduate** and her affiliations include the **National Society of Black Engineers**, **Texas Alliance for Minorities in Engineering**, **Global Leadership Development Program**, **Inclusion and Diversity Initiatives**, **Texas A&M Engineering Case Study**, **National Black MBA Association** and the **ExxonMobil Volunteer Involvement Program**. Delesicca and her husband, Kermit, have two daughters and she also serves on the Board of **Post Oak School**.



Delesicca Brooks

**David Pitts** has been a partner with **Ernst & Young LLP** since May of 2002 and is a member of Ernst & Young's energy, chemicals, and utilities industry group. His energy industry experience includes oil and gas exploration and production, refining and marketing and pipeline transportation. David is active with the company's **University of Houston** recruiting efforts and is a **United Way** team leader. David is a certified public accountant in Texas and Kansas, a member of the **Texas Society of Certified Public Accountants**, and a member of the **American Institute of Certified Public Accountants**. He resides in Missouri City with his teenage daughter.

**David Wuthrich** is a lifelong resident of the Houston area and a wealth strategist for **Northern Trust's** River Oaks location. Prior to joining Northern Trust, he was with **Chubb Insurance Company** for many years. David is actively involved in the Houston community and currently serves on the Boards of the **Houston Symphony**, the **March of Dimes** and the **Crohn's & Colitis Foundation of America**. He is an avid golfer, enjoys participating in many charity tournaments and leads the planning effort for the March of Dimes annual tournament. David and his wife, Tara, live in the West University area with their two sons, ages seven and three.



David Pitts



David Wuthrich

## A Night to Remember

Six hundred guests attended "Una Notte in Italia" (A Night in Italy), presented by **Festari for Men** November 10<sup>th</sup>. Months of hard work by event chairmen **Ericka Bagwell** and **Amy Lee** culminated in a night that raised \$270,000 for Family Services. Honorary chairmen **Rudy and Debbie Festari** continued their tradition of presenting a style show *par excellence*.

"Celebrity" male models, including **Jeff Bagwell, Craig Biggio, Dan Boone, Kris Brown, Patrick Burk, Bob Cavnar, Scott Cone, Robert Del Grande, Tony Gracely, Darryl Hamilton, Bo Hopson, George Lancaster, Jim Lee, Steve Mach, Roy Marsh, Marek Menger, Mike Mayell, William Perkins, Michael Plank, Michael Poujol, Chris Reed, Shafik Rifaat, John Schiller, Dr. Juan Stern and Jonathan Zadok**, took to the runway in support of Family Services.

Thanks are in order to the many dedicated volunteers who helped

make this event a success, including event committee members **Jeneé Bobbora, Ursaline Hamilton, Lucinda Loya, Jessica Meyer, Beth Muecke, Stephanie Perkins, Megan Sutton-Reed and Yvonne Stern**.



Chairmen  
Amy Lee & Ericka Bagwell

Thanks also to **Arturo Boado and Bill Sadler** of **Arturo's Uptown Italiano** for hosting an Underwriters Reception for top sponsors and **Jerry and Becky Allen**

of **Patrón Spirit Co.** for providing refreshments at that fun-filled event.

Thanks, also, to **Liz Glanville** of **Bvlgari** for providing underwriter gifts and table favors.



Honorary Chairmen  
Rudy & Debbie Festari

A special thanks to **Rudy** and Board member **Debbie Festari** for making Family Services the beneficiary of this event for the past two years. Their support and dedication in making this occasion a festive fundraiser has been remarkable. For more Celebrity Style Show pictures, log onto [www.familyservices.org/news-center.html](http://www.familyservices.org/news-center.html). ❤️



Bill Perkins, Jim Lee, Darryl Hamilton & Jeff Bagwell



Tony Gracely



Steve Mach



Patty & Craig Biggio



Karen & Mike Mayell

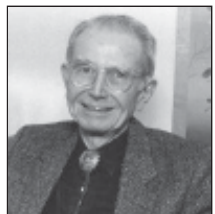


Greggory & Patrick Burk

## In Memoriam

**Paul Russell Cherney**, former Executive Director of Family Services (1956-1962), recently passed away at the age of 96. His years of service and leadership touched the lives of many.

A stalwart contributor in the social services field, Paul was born in the Sichuan Province of China to missionary parents. As a tireless supporter of the less fortunate, Paul lent his expertise to numerous charitable



Paul Cherney

organizations, including **Mobile County Community Chest and Council, the U.S. Children's Bureau, the Community Chest of Washington, International Social Services in New York, the United Way of America and the United Way of Mobile**.

Paul is survived by his wife of 69 years, **Muriel**; four children, **Chris, Penny Painter, Julia Grace, and Alain**; six grandchildren; and five great-grandchildren. ❤️

## Many Thanks to...

### Couture Supporters

Tony Gracely Family, Ericka & Jeff Bagwell - Bagwell Foundation / Amy & Jim Lee - John H. Lee Foundation, Michael Maggi

### Atelier Supporters

AIM Investments, Patty & Craig Biggio, Scott & Dru Cone / Michael & Susan Plank, The Evolution of Fitness Houston, Inc. - "EVO", Mach Family Fund, Roy Marsh, Karen & Michael Mayell, Christiana & Luke McConnell, Cynthia McKernan & James Hughes, Sherry & Marek Menger, NEOS Trading, LLC, Sutton Foundation

### Designer Supporters

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### In-Kind Donations

Arturo's Uptown Italiano, Bvlgari, Darryl Murchison Designs, DJ: Gino "G", Fashionable Events, Festari for Men, Houston Flowerly / Village Flowerly, Momentum Jaguar, Patrón Spirits Co., Republic Beverage

### Auction Donors

Abejas Boutique, Alyson Jon Interiors, Avalon Laser Dentistry - Edwin Simpson, DDS, Jeff & Ericka Bagwell, Belleami at Tranquility Spa, BICE Ristorante & Lounge, Craig & Patty Biggio, Bocados Restaurant & Bar, Billy Bush, Darlene's Flower & Gift Shop, Donald J Pliner, Escalante's Fine Tex-Mex & Tequila - Highland Village, Evolution of Fitness Houston - "EVO", Festari for Men, Fleming's Prime Steakhouse & Wine Bar, Gittings, Gucci, Tim Hamrock, Haute Baby, Houston Astros, Houston Flowerly, Houston Rockets, Houston Texans Foundation, Kevin Howard, InterContinental Miami, José Eber / Ceron, La Posada de Santa Fe Resort & Spa, Laurier Café & Wine, Momentum Jaguar, More Than You Can Imagine, Neiman Marcus, Persona Day Spa - Houston's Unique Medical Day Spa, Megan Sutton-Reed & Chris Reed, River Oaks Dental Arts - Dr. Palmira Testa, Sabor, Saks Fifth Avenue, Smart Meals and The Institute of Eating Management, Smith Cosmetic Surgery Center, Starwood Hotels & Resorts, Timberline Fitness Studio, TOOTSIES, Urban Retreat Skin Center - Maggie Boyle, Verkin Properties, Zadok Jewelers

## Family Friends

More than 600 students and parents attended Family Services' **11th Annual School Days and Community Health Fair**, part of *Ensueños del Futuro* (Family Services' drug abuse prevention and education program), at **Deady Middle School**. Thanks to all of the healthcare providers and social service agencies that provided free school supplies, health information, screenings and immunizations, including **American Diabetes Association, American Cancer Society, City of Houston Health and Human Services, The Living Bank, Social Security Administration, and Texas Children's Health Plan**. Special thanks to **Texas Children's Hospital – SuperKids Mobile Pediatric Clinic** for providing free immunizations to 80 children. Thanks also to volunteers from **ExxonMobil** who entertained children with balloon animals and face painting and **H-E-B** for making a generous contribution toward school supplies and providing snacks.

Volunteers from **ExxonMobil** organized a BINGO party and arts and crafts projects for seniors at **South Houston Community Center**. A wonderful time was had by all.

Volunteers from the **Boston Consulting Group** did a little sprucing up at Family Services' Central Houston office. The painting and landscaping really made a difference.

A very warm thank you to intern **Anita Tsai**, a **Rice University** MBA student. As part of her internship, Anita worked on a project to demonstrate the social return on investment of Family Services' programs. While the project work is ongoing, early estimates put the cost-savings to society at more than \$3 for every \$1 invested for *Ensueños* and

more than \$2 for every dollar invested in both **School-Based** and **Individual and Family Counseling** programs.

**Cathy Garcia-Prats** did a great job organizing the **3rd Annual Pools for Schools Program**, raising money for



Students received school supplies

Family Services with a swim-a-thon held by the **Marilyn Estates Swim Team**.

**Masiel Nuñez** and **Leigha Woods**, two Hurricane Katrina students at **Challenge Early College High School**, were recently awarded \$4,000 scholarships from the **French-American Scholarship Fund**. Thanks to Fund Board member, **Patrick Krause**, who alerted Family Services about the opportunity.

Family Services was thrilled to receive books for clients from two different sources. Almost 200 books were gathered during **The Houston Bar Association's Annual Book Drive** and the **School-Based Program** received 300 children's books through **Marie Fartain's Girl Scout** service project.

In conjunction with **National Family Week**, November 19-25, Family Services was designated as *Charity of the Month* by **Katz's Deli**. Family Services received 10% of proceeds when customers used a coupon.



Seniors enjoyed bingo

A heartfelt thank you to the **Houston Aeros** for donating over 2,300 tickets to the students in Family Services' *Ensueños* and *School-Based* programs. Tickets to sporting events are great incentives and we know students and their family members had a great time!

Finally, we gratefully acknowledge the generosity of **Doctors Orchestra of Houston** for selecting Family Services as the beneficiary of its November 19<sup>th</sup> concert and for providing entertainment at the agency's Annual Meeting. ♥

## Holiday Cheer

Many thanks to **Houston Heights Rotary Club** for once again delivering holiday food baskets on December 13<sup>th</sup> to 50 families in Family Services' *Ensueños del Futuro* program. Our clients really appreciated receiving these baskets enabling them to prepare a special holiday meal for their families.

### Metroplex Control Systems'

Houston office graciously provided Christmas presents for five of our families in the **School-Based** and *Ensueños* programs.



Kara Johnson & Jose Covarrubias with Becerra Family

Several other families received holiday gifts thanks to Family Services' **Stocking Stuffers** program. Generous donors included **SCF Partners, Origin Design, Lynna and Brad Densen**, along with some anonymous Santa's helpers. Gift cards, presents and assistance with utilities and rent were among the many generous donations.

Thanks to all for making the holiday season brighter for our client families and their children who were excited to receive the special gifts and treats. ♥

**Focus on Families** is published by Family Services of Greater Houston. Family Services is accredited by the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations. Family Services is a member of The Alliance for Children and Families and an affiliate of the United Way of the Texas Gulf Coast.

Nyla K. Woods  
President and Chief Executive Officer

Shunney H.C. Nair  
Senior Vice President,  
Communications & Development



### MISSION STATEMENT

Family Services of Greater Houston's mission is to strengthen individuals, families and communities through the provision of preventive, supportive and therapeutic services.

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