



Volume IV Issue 5
Fall 2002

SAFEchild SPEAKS

FOR THE FAMILIES AND CHILDREN OF WAKE COUNTY

SAFECHILD CELEBRATES!



Photo by Thomas Babb

Where do we find the vision that fills our lives with joy and celebration? How do we summon the energy to meet the ever increasing pace of change? How do we gain the courage to live our deepest values? These are just a few of the questions asked and answered by Dewitt Jones to almost 1,000 people, as SAFEchild celebrated its 10th anniversary in style by celebrating "What's Right with the World."

The evening was made possible through the generosity of Northwestern Mutual Financial Network, whose foundation asked Raleigh agency managing partner Mike Condry to "pick his favorite charity" for a free, fabulous and uplifting evening. He immediately thought of SAFEchild, as Northwestern Mutual and SAFEchild already had a very positive and fruitful partnership in Wake County.

"For the past two years,

Northwestern Mutual has partnered with SAFEchild to offer child identification services at community events," Condrey explained in his welcoming remarks on October 8. "We have provided DNA samples and Child ID passports that contain a digital photo and important emergency information for hundreds of children in our community."

Condrey added, "SAFEchild's focus and emphasis on creating nurturing environments helps produce brighter futures for the children and families of Wake County. It is a true treasure for this community," said Condrey.

Marjorie Menestres, executive director, said, "'Celebrate What's Right with the World,' gave us a chance to thank the community for 10 years of support with a truly positive and inspiring experience."

Celebrants filled the lobby of the Meymandi Concert Hall of the BTI



Photo by Thomas Babb

Center for the Performing Arts to enjoy hors d'oeuvres and cocktails. Then they were treated to an inspirational multimedia presentation by former *National Geographic* photographer Dewitt Jones.

After the presentation guests received a keepsake silver photo/calendar frame and lingered over coffee and dessert to



Photo by Thomas Babb

discuss the program, and reminisce about SAFEchild's early days.

Our heartfelt thanks go to the Northwestern Mutual Foundation; the Northwestern Mutual Financial Services Network; Millsport; our NMF liaison, SAFEchild board member Angela Jamison; the event committee headed by board members Lyn Maness, Lisa Duke and Gail Reid-Vestel; and to all those who attended SAFEchild's 10th anniversary celebration.

- Photos: 1. Marjorie Menestres, Executive Director
2. Annette Anderson, Mike Condry and Dewitt Jones,
3. Ellen Grissett, Development Director and Dr. and Mrs. Meymandi



Single Mom Learns Positive Parenting

by Katherine Messenger
Volunteer Newsletter Writer

Kristine has her work cut out for her - she's a single mom with a fourteen-year-old son and a two-year-old daughter. She and her son needed some guidance and she heard about SAFEchild through Wake Teen Medical Services and thought that SAFEchild's Parents of Pre-teens program could benefit her family.

Kristine learned some techniques to diffuse situations with children of any age. "Pick your battles," she says emphatically. "Give yourself a time-out - get away from the situation and reflect on it, then go back and talk rationally."

Kristine highly recommends the program to other parents. "It helped me remember what my son is going through as a teenager and helped me understand him better. The course taught me more positive ways to deal with situations."

The program has activities for parents and children. Role playing, discussions, written activities, family games and various interactions were just some of the many activities Kristine and her son participated in to learn more about each other.

As a result, Kristine says she and her son are communicating better. "I talk to my son in a more positive way," she explains. "He has opened up to me more and he is more motivated and his self-esteem has improved."

As many parents often learn, Kristine found several other programs at SAFEchild that could benefit her family. She and her two-year-old enjoyed the Motherread/Fatheread program. "Motherread/Fatheread taught us that "Every child is different and you can relate to your child in a special way through books."

Kristine has high praise for SAFEchild. "The programs showed my children and me a better way to communicate and as a result, we are all much happier."

Thank you Kristine for sharing your SAFEchild experiences!



From the Executive Director

HAPPY 10th ANNIVERSARY SAFEchild! Like all special occasions, anniversaries offer an opportunity to celebrate and a time to reflect. In 10 short years SAFEchild has grown to fill a critical need in our community. From a small grassroots agency with one staff member, 15 board members, one funding source (the Junior League of Raleigh) SAFEchild has expanded. We now have a 10-person professional staff, multiple funding sources an annual budget of \$700,000, a dynamic, 30-member board

of directors and – most important — the expertise to support and strengthen fragile families to prevent child abuse and neglect.

SAFEchild has become so well integrated into our community that it's hard to remember the agency didn't always exist. Every day I wonder: What did this community do before the Junior League of Raleigh established the agency in 1992? What did families do before SAFEchild became a resource? The answer is depressing and horribly simple. Families stayed stuck in abusive parenting patterns and children remained traumatized and at risk for two of life's greatest tragedies — child abuse and neglect.

Yes, SAFEchild has had enormous successes during the past 10 years. Those accomplishments have come from the hard work of dedicated people who consistently act upon their values, especially the value of protecting children. You may be one of those people ... or you may be thinking about taking action to make Wake County a safer place for children.

If you are new to our mission, you will be welcome as we enter our second decade of existence. If you are a SAFEchild friend, you already know that you are making a positive difference...a difference you can be proud of.

The need to prevent child abuse is as compelling now as it was 10 years ago. The impact of child abuse on our children, our families, our community, our schools and our businesses cannot be overstated. The shifting population demographics, challenging economic times for families, social isolation, and lack of child-rearing information and skills still leave many children at risk for abuse. SAFEchild can only be responsive to these needs when the entire community comes together on behalf of those among us who are most vulnerable: OUR CHILDREN.

Marjorie Menestres

"TEE TIME" SUCCESS



The annual golf tournament benefiting the Kiwanis Foundation and SAFEchild was held on Thursday, October 3 at the Neuse Golf Club in Clayton. This marked the fourth consecutive year that the Raleigh Kiwanis Club and SAFEchild had worked together to produce a fun event as well as funds for their respective projects.

Although the weather was unusually hot for an October afternoon, golfers still enjoyed time on the beautiful Neuse course as well as at a barbecue dinner later.

Thanks to Chip Winstead, Kiwanis Club

tournament organizer, and his fellow volunteers as well as the SAFEchild staff and board for their hard work and participation.

SAVE THE DATE

**Saturday
February 8, 2003
7:00 pm**

**Gregory's Restaurant
Waverly Place, Cary**

Valentine GALA

\$65/person

Dinner. Dancing. Silent/Live Auction

Annette Anderson + Fred Anderson Toyota +SAFEchild = A Great Team

by Katherine Messenger
Volunteer Newsletter Writer

"I knew SAFEchild would be a perfect fit for me," says Annette Anderson with an easy smile. "Lots of parents need help making choices and I knew the programs at SAFEchild were valuable. I also knew some of the board members and knew they were hard working and dedicated."

Annette joined the board in 1999 and is now its president. Through the years, she has made SAFEchild a family affair. Her children have helped with some projects and her husband, Fred, owner of Fred Anderson Toyota, makes substantial donations from the dealership each year, including corporate sponsorship of the 2002 Chair Auction and a generous five-year, \$25,000 pledge.

"Fred knew from the beginning that I would be passionate about this organization. He supports me and the causes I find important," Annette says. Fred Anderson Toyota not only contributes monetarily each year, but also educates its employees about SAFEchild and encourages them to be a part of volunteering. "Last year the dealership adopted two SAFEchild families for Christmas," Annette explains. "Everyone felt the joy of giving to bring joy to many lives."

This giving to and concern for others was instilled in Annette by her parents, and she has

passed this trait down to her own three children through example." From an early age, my children knew that their dad and I wanted to make a difference and be a positive influence in their lives and the lives of others. Now that they are older and leaving home, they have to

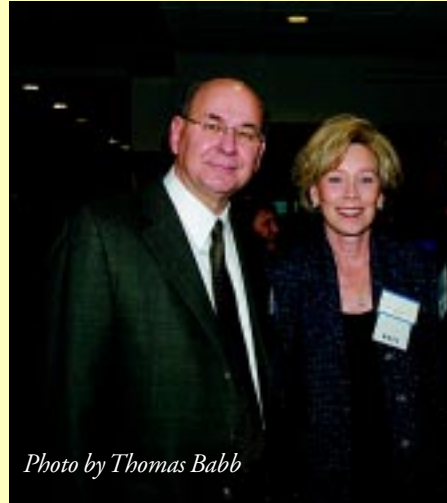


Photo by Thomas Babb

make their own choices based on what they have learned from Fred and me. I want other children to have the benefit of caring parents and I feel strongly that SAFEchild offers a way to achieve this."

Annette is proud of the work ethic of each

member on the 30-person SAFEchild board. "We are truly a working board - we continually identify where we are and what opportunities we have and set reachable goals," she says proudly. "It is exciting to be working with people who love seeing what is happening and are willing to go the extra mile to get things done." Annette says their meetings are informative and fun and that all board members have great ideas for the organization.

"Of course our greatest asset is the staff of SAFEchild," Annette says, "and the wonderful leadership of Marjorie." At the last board meeting, Annette told the group "There are 11 staff members, 29 board members and 225 volunteers who serve 6576 children and parents. Those are very impressive numbers for any organization, but particularly one helping children."

Fred and Annette believe that the many programs at SAFEchild are worth their personal commitment and SAFEchild is fortunate to have such a wonderful team as the Andersons, working together to help children and their parents.

A Matter of Faith

by Katherine Messenger
Volunteer Newsletter Writer

People volunteer with SAFEchild for a variety of reasons. Vonda Caldwell's not-so-happy childhood and her strong religious beliefs brought her to the organization. "I was working through some painful memories and praying a lot," she remembers. "I happened to read an article in our local paper about SAFEchild and its wonderful programs to prevent child abuse. I felt I was called to contact this group and volunteer my services."

Because of her background, Vonda is a perfect match for SAFEchild's Funny Tummy Feelings program, which teaches first-grade students how to protect themselves from physical or sexual abuse.

"I feel that I am reaching out to kids and helping them, while in turn reaching back to help myself," she says.

A busy mother of four, Vonda homeschools and is very active in her church as well as helping out on a regular basis with SAFEchild. "Her creativity and energy are inspiring not only to the children she works

with, but to her teammates and to me," says Kate Howard Franch, coordinator of the Motherread/Fatheread and Funny Tummy feelings programs. "She goes above and beyond to find just the right music or books to make a program more special. Vonda is an invaluable

The kids laugh at my costume
and my puppet Mr. Trickster, but
they listen and learn from what I
say."

— Vonda Caldwell

source for SAFEchild."

Vonda has had extensive Funny Tummy Feelings training and uses a handbook in her presentation. Dressed in silly clothes, complete with a Hawaiian lei, Vonda has fun while imparting serious lessons. "I arrive dragging a wagon of fun things behind me," she explains. The kids laugh at my costume and my puppet Mr. Trickster, but they listen and learn from

what I say." Vonda says she can see some children having a light bulb come on or an "aha" moment. This is when she knows her work has made a difference.

"If I had had the Funny Tummy Feelings program when I was a child," she says wistfully, "things in my life may have been different." Now, as a dedicated volunteer for SAFEchild, she makes a difference every time she goes into a classroom, with her faith by her side.

SAFEchild thanks Vonda for her
dedication, time and hard work.

**SAFEchild's next
volunteer training
date:
January 11, 2003**



"...helping adults and children create nurturing environments free from abuse and neglect."

SAFEchild

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ANNUAL REPORT NOW AVAILABLE
If you'd like a copy of our annual report, listing our programs as well as donors to our annual and capital campaigns, please email us at SafeChild1@aol.com or call 231-5800.

A Four-Year- Old's Contribution



It was 100 degrees in the shade, yet no one seemed to be bothered by the heat. In fact, you could say it was downright heartwarming to be at Tori Baer's fourth birthday party on July 27. Thirty children, six and under, played in sandboxes, dug for "treasures," ran through sprinklers and created shell art. All were intent on having a ball at Tori's beach-themed birthday party. And Tori

was intent on sharing her birthday with *SAFEchild*. Instead of gifts, Tori and her mom asked all the guests to make a contribution to *SAFEchild*. More than \$410 was donated in honor of the birthday girl. Tori hand-delivered "her gifts" to *SAFEchild* and learned one of life's special lessons – that it is better to give than receive. Thank you to Tori and the entire Baer family and their guests.

SAFEchild's Green Thumb



It is easy to stop and smell the flowers at *SAFEchild* since the agency has what is the envy of all non profit agencies—a volunteer gardener, who much to our dismay, wishes to remain anonymous. (Dismay because we want to sing his praises far and wide). Thanks to him, his green thumb, and the hours he has spent digging, pruning, planting and mulching *SAFEchild's* garden blossomed all spring and summer to the delight of "our" families, staff, volunteers and neighbors. And, thanks to the generosity of Bill Wahlen of Falls Lake Nursery, *SAFEchild* will be even more colorful come spring 2003. Bill donated 80 day lilies to *SAFEchild*. We thank our skilled gardener and Bill Whalen for creating a beautiful garden for *SAFEchild*.

FIND US ON THE WEB AT: <http://members.aol.com/safechild1>
MARK YOUR CALENDARS FOR THE **VALENTINE GALA**, February 8, 2003

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