



# Montgomery County Family Justice Center

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## SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- FJC Strategic Planning
- House of Ruth Maryland Services at MCFJC
- Onsite MCPD Officer
- MCFJC Foundation Benefit

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## From the Desk of County Executive, Isiah Leggett

This month, April 2010, marks the one year anniversary of the Montgomery County Family Justice Center (MCFJC). I am pleased to take this opportunity to acknowledge this significant milestone in our community's history and to recognize the hope that the MCFJC has brought to our County's most vulnerable citizens who seek support and safety to end the partner violence in their lives. The Family Justice Center has met important objectives, among them service to our diverse community, and the expansion of private public partnerships.

This past year, more than 1400 victims representing over 100 different countries of origin have received an array of domestic violence services at the MCFJC. Families are made safer by the opportunity to access the services they need and are welcomed in a safe and comfortable atmosphere. During a time of economic difficulties, the County remains committed to protecting families who have endured the destructiveness of violence in their homes and to the work of assisting them to heal.

When we planned the opening of the MCFJC, I asked everyone to "check your egos at the door." I

have been gratified by the extraordinary lengths our county employees and our partners have gone to make this a reality. To all involved, from early planning team, to the implementing committees, and to the staff who serve the clients on a daily basis, I extend my heartfelt



The Montgomery County Family Justice Center is centrally located in the heart of Rockville, Maryland.

thanks. All have generously and selflessly cooperated to create a Center with a strong victim focus.

The collaboration of our private partners in this effort has made a significant difference to the work of the Family Justice Center. They have worked with public agencies to provide what the survivors and their children identified as priorities. Whether it is the donations of food for hungry children from Women Who Care Ministries, federal Violence Against Women Act information from Catholic Charities, the counseling services provided by House of Ruth and Interfaith Community Against Domestic Vio-

lence to assist clients in the difficult choices ahead or the attorneys from the House of Ruth who make it possible for clients to go forward, confident that they have someone to represent them at a protective order hearing, clients feel safe and supported. The Center could not function without the volunteers who work with the children, answer the phones, and meet with the clients. The MCFJC Foundation, composed of a volunteer board of directors whose only mission is to support the work of the FJC, has reached out to the community and received generous donations of time, skill, talent and financial support.

My special thanks to Councilmember Duchy Trachtenberg and the late Council President Marilyn Praisner who brought me this proposal and helped make it a reality and especially to the team who effectively and compassionately operate the Center each day. The MCFJC is representative of the spirit that makes Montgomery County an exceptional place to live and work.

Sincerely,  
Isiah Leggett  
County Executive

# FJC Strategic Planning with the Experts



Peggy Bradley, Manager of APP reviews her work group's five-year plan.

In mid-March, the Montgomery County Family Justice Center (MCFJC) and its partners enthusiastically welcomed Casey Gwinn, President and Co-Founder of the National Family Justice Alliance and Judi Adams, Strategic Planner and Vice President of Adams & Adams Consulting and Training, Inc. to Montgomery County for the third and final MCFJC Strategic Planning Session. It was a wonderful three day event and an opportunity for all individuals involved in the creation of the MCFJC, for staff working on site and for newer partners to come



Casey Gwinn sharing an important message at the MCFJC Strategic Planning Session.

together under the guidance of Casey and Judi to focus on the collective vision of the MCFJC, reiterate values, discuss operational issues and set priorities for the future.

To kick off the meeting Casey reviewed promising practices that are emerging

Group of attendees representing various County agencies and Community Organizations at the MCFJC Strategic Planning Session.



around the globe with regard to FJCs and domestic violence in general. He reported that there are 56 FJCs in existence and several more in development, each uniquely its own with the common goal of provid-



Judi Adams, Strategic Planner instructs work groups on how to analyze their goals.

ing comprehensive services in one location to victims of domestic violence. He noted the progress of the MCFJC facility that has taken place since the initial Strategic Planning Session in September 2008 and was impressed with the overall design and flow of the Center.

Judi then organized the attendees and assigned work groups to review various goals from the original five-year plan. Each work group was asked to evaluate what has been accomplished and what remains on the "to do list." Upon final appraisal, attendees agreed that many goals have been accomplished and successfully implemented in just one year's time. Objec-

tives for the next few years were also reevaluated and clearly identified as a result of the planning session.

Casey and Judi scheduled an evening event to meet with members of the MCFJC Foundation and community supporters to discuss the progress and plans for the future of the MCFJC and the growth of the MCFJC Foundation. Friday morning was set aside to give neighboring jurisdictions the chance to meet with Casey and Judi to discuss starting an FJC in



Casey Gwinn addressing a group of representatives from other jurisdictions.

their community. Teams from several Maryland jurisdictions came to Montgomery County to take advantage of the special opportunity the MCFJC provided.

The MCFJC family extends much appreciation to Casey Gwinn, Gael Strack and Judi Adams for sharing their vision and providing guidance during the creation and ongoing development of the MCFJC. We could not have done it without you!

## Volunteer Spotlight

The volunteer program continues to contribute to the success of the FJC. We would like to recognize our retiree volunteers who offer experience, wisdom, and compassion. Many have a background within the criminal justice system or social services. Some chose the FJC because they wanted to give back. Mary Paull commented, "Prior to retiring, I decided that I would volunteer three mornings a

week for worthy causes where I could help in some way in return for the many blessings and opportunities that were showered on me through my life." She retired from the federal government in January 2009 and also volunteers at the Commission for Women (CFW). Rachel Goldfarb also volunteers at the FJC and CFW. She said, "I love being part of what the Family Justice Center does and stands for. It's a

place worthy of the passion that those who work there demonstrate every day." Sheila Footer, a retired attorney, found that she became bored in her retirement and was "in need of making a contribution to society." She has had experience in the field and now hopes to be able to make a difference for others.



Pictured L to R: Mary Paull and the Honorable Lee Sislen, retired judge. Not pictured: Sheila Footer, Esq. and Rachel Goldfarb.

## House of Ruth Maryland Staff Provide Crucial Services at FJC

The Montgomery County FJC is fortunate to partner with The House of Ruth Maryland for the provision of legal advocacy and counseling services to our clients. The House of Ruth Maryland (HOR) opened Baltimore's first crisis shelter program in 1978 and has since become one of the nation's most comprehensive domestic violence prevention and intervention programs, providing shelter, transitional housing, legal representation, counseling, and other services to victims of domestic violence and their families, while also engaging in community education, outreach, and legislative advocacy.

Three experienced and dedicated attorneys from HOR are available on-site at the FJC to advise clients and to represent them at hearings for final protective or

Peace orders. Kathryn Deckert, Esq., brings a wealth of experience to the FJC, having worked for the D.C. Rape Crisis Center, the Asian and Pacific Islander Domestic Violence Resource Center, the Sexual Assault Legal Institute and the county's Victim Assistance and Sexual Assault Program before joining HOR in 2007. During her legal studies, Elaine Knowles, Esq., prosecuted perpetrators of domestic violence as a student attorney for the Montgomery County State's Attorney's Office. In 2008, Elaine joined HOR, bringing her valuable experience to bear on behalf of the victims. Ranju Shrestha, Esq., began her career with HOR in 2002, as an undergraduate intern. She then worked for HOR as a legal advocate which inspired her to earn a law degree,

and return to HOR as a staff attorney.

The FJC is also privileged to offer our clients short-term and long-term counseling services provided by two compassionate counselors from HOR. Jessica Martin, LGSW, interned with HOR during her graduate studies at the University of Maryland and stayed on with the organization as a bilingual counselor upon earning her credentials as a Licensed Graduate Social Worker. Andrea Creel is currently pursuing her graduate studies in social work, and is a counseling intern with HOR. Thanks to the contributions of the House of Ruth Maryland, the FJC has been able to make two of the most frequently requested services – counseling and legal representation – available to even more of our clients.

## The Gift of Courage



Duffy, the Courage Lion and book, "Courage Pockets".

Promoting healing for victims of family violence is one of the stated missions of the FJC. Thanks to a recent donation from Courage Unlimited Corporation and its supporting partners, traumatized child witnesses of domestic violence enrolled in counseling services have an adorable and cuddly lion named Duffy by their side to help them in their healing process and instill the message of hope and courage.

Duffy, the Courage Lion was created by John Ramming, President of Courage Unlimited Corporation and Johns Hop-

kins Children's Center, Child Life Department as a tool to help traumatized, critically ill or abused children receive the *Gift of Courage* and enhance their ability to communicate their fears. Each Courage Lion comes with a book titled "Courage Pockets" which tells the story of a young lion, Duffy, who faces the hardship of recovering from a broken leg and learning to walk again.

When reading about Duffy's experience, children have the chance to recognize and speak about their own feelings and circumstances.

Duffy also has long front legs and can easily be used as a prop, for example a child can position the paws over the eyes or ears of the lion if they want to communicate that they are frightened. Duffy also has a 'courage pocket' which is built into the lion and can be used to hold written lists of concerns or lists of the child's achievements.

The MCFJC wishes to thank Courage Unlimited Corporation for their generous donation and support.

## Montgomery County Police Extend Services at the FJC

Montgomery County Police Officer, Katie Friz



Thanks to the Montgomery County Police Department, clients now have the opportunity to speak with Officer Katie Friz when they are seeking services at the Family Justice Center. Officer

Friz works in collaboration with the Montgomery County State's

Attorney's Office. When a client comes in with injuries or a complaint about a criminal incident that has occurred, an employee from the State's Attorney's Office is contacted to determine if Officer Friz will open an investigation.

Officer Friz is able to meet with clients during their time at the FJC and also assists the State's Attorney's Office with investigations of open criminal domestic violence cases.

"I really enjoy working

at the FJC because I have the opportunity to work closely with the victims of domestic violence. It is very rewarding to me to know I have been able to help someone," states Officer Friz about her experience working at the FJC.

We are very excited about having Officer Friz as a member of the FJC team and greatly appreciate the Montgomery County Police Department providing this new extension of services.

## Pastoral Care Services Now Offered at the FJC

The Family Justice Center model has always recognized the importance of faith to a victim's response to domestic abuse and to a victim's recovery and healing. In fact, one of the "standard" services provided by FJCs has been assistance with a victim's spiritual questions. Thanks to our partner, The Interfaith Community Against Domestic Violence (IFCADV), we are now offering this service to the domestic violence victims of Montgomery County. The IFCADV recruited and trained

their first graduating class of four clergy and laypeople who began working weekly shifts at the FJC in February. These volunteers help clients and their children feel comfortable at the Center and offer to engage clients in exploring the ways that their abuse has affected their faith or ways of making meaning in their lives. These first four Pastoral Care Volunteers include a rabbi, a minister, a seminary student, and a retired social worker. This mixture of backgrounds and perspectives

is optimum in meeting the spiritual needs of our diverse population.

The next training will be in June and will include two parts: five hours of pastoral care training led by Chaplains and four hours of training about the intersection of domestic violence and faith led by a Domestic Violence Specialist. For more information about this program, email Maud Clarke at [maud@ifcadv.org](mailto:maud@ifcadv.org).

### "Busy Bees"

## Knit for FJC Clients and Their Children

FJC clients and their children have angels in the form of a "knitting circle" at the Gardens of Traville, a senior residence in Rockville. The group of 16 women has produced boxes of colorful and warm hats, mittens and scarves, donations that were especially welcomed during the abnormally cold and snowy winter of 2010.

The group calls themselves "Busy Bees" because they live in

Building "B." Some of the women are new to knitting and some, such as Cynthia Farringer, have knitted for years. Ms. Farringer organized the knitting circle to take the emphasis off of the aches and pains of the residents and onto helping the larger community. It is truly a "win-win" situation and we are grateful to them for their wonderful gifts.

Photos of the "Busy Bees" from the Gardens of Traville.





# Family Justice Center Foundation News

## FJC FOUNDATION BOARD MEMBERS

- Resa Levy  
President
- Susan Mize  
Vice President
- Donna Rismiller  
Secretary
- Dorothy Fait  
Treasurer
- Marilyn Bagel
- Denise Bayerle
- David Belkin
- David P. Cohen
- Thomas M. DeGonia II
- Catherine Leggett
- Lewis Selis

## FJC FOUNDATION ADVISORY BOARD MEMBERS

- The Honorable  
Constance A. Morella
- Rabbi David Rose
- Senator Ida G. Ruben

## Foundation President's Welcome Strategies for 2010-2011

Happy Anniversary! It's exciting, yet almost impossible to believe that a year has passed since the MCFJC opened its doors. Congratulations to all!

With an understanding that our work has really just begun, the MCFJC Foundation board has determined its strategies for 2010-2011.

Our highly successful Lawyer's Initiative, chaired by Foundation Board Member Donna Rismiller, will continue its work to engage members of the legal community in an effort to further expand pro bono services to those seeking representation. The critical nature of this initiative is best described by the words of a client who received legal guidance, "I got very helpful information for immediate and long term ways of getting relief and help with court papers. I am not feeling so helpless now."

Our Community Initiative's goal is to advertise the availability of the FJC to as many victims as possible. In the first year 1400 people have received services.

As one client noted, "The Center is great for families in crisis. I'm glad it's now open. Thank you to ALL staff."

Board Members Lewis Selis and David Belkin, Co-Chair for our Business Initiative have already begun working on strategies to further engage our local business community. Businesses have long known the cost of domestic violence on the productivity of their workforce, and recognized that healthier, safer families benefit the entire community.

Our three initiatives provide the structure, but not the reason for "why" your support is critical. To do that, I leave you with this quote from a client who came for help to the FJC, "I feel loved. I'm excited to be here and hope it will build my confidence, and most especially feel safe."

To all of our partners, friends and supporters ...**thank you!**

Resa Levy, President  
MCFJC Foundation

## What People are Saying about the FJC

It's a really good resource to have everything in one place. They had a counselor there that helped me a lot. The Family Justice Center is a beautiful facility and is a family-friendly environment. Every time that I went to the Family Justice Center, I was asked if I or my kids wanted juice or food. They

know that people will come when they are in crisis and they may not have thought about food before they had to leave their homes. Having people from the Abused Person's Program, the attorneys, the Sheriff's Office and the counselors in one place was very helpful. I'm so glad the Family Justice Center is there for us.

Montgomery County Resident,  
Mother of Two

# MCFJC Foundation's 1<sup>st</sup> Annual Benefit

## October 3, 2010

***“Keeping them safe, giving them hope, and a new start”*** is the theme for the MCFJC Foundation's 1<sup>st</sup> Annual Benefit, to be held on Sunday evening October 3, 2010, at the Hilton Hotel on Rockville Pike.

MCFJC Foundation Board Member and Event Chair, Catherine Leggett and her commit-

tee are busy planning for an evening of fun, as well as one that will inform and excite you about the great things being accomplished by the Montgomery County Family Justice Center.

Information about the event will be posted on our website at [www.mcfjcfoundation.org](http://www.mcfjcfoundation.org), in-

vitations will be mailed, and you will be able to register online. Sponsorships are available and welcomed. Please email us at [mcfjcfoundation@yahoo.com](mailto:mcfjcfoundation@yahoo.com) if you have any questions, and someone will get back to you promptly.

## The Montgomery County Family Justice Center Foundation...

### Cordially Invites You To:

Please visit our website at [www.mcfjcfoundation.org](http://www.mcfjcfoundation.org).

Email us at [mcfjcfoundation@yahoo.com](mailto:mcfjcfoundation@yahoo.com).

Be sure we have your email address and contact information.

Become a partner in our Business, Community or Lawyer's Initiative.

Join us on October 3, 2010 for our 1<sup>st</sup> Annual MCFJC Foundation Benefit.

### Here's why!

#### **When you visit our website:**

You will learn more about the events, programs and people in our own community who are making a difference in helping to build a better, safer Montgomery County.

You can also make a donation on line to support our work, read about and register for upcoming events, learn how you can become a part of our effort.

#### **When you email us:**

You can send us any current contact information, ask a question and get a quick response, find out how you can volunteer to help.

You can also learn more about how your business, law firm, club or group can become a partner in helping us have happier, healthier, safer women, children and families in our community.

#### **When you attend our October 3, 2010 event:**

You will be a part of something very special – an evening that promises to be fun, poignant and important to us all.

***You are, most cordially, invited to be a part of it all!***

## Special Thanks to the Following New and Continuing MCFJC Foundation Sponsors

***Thank you to our wonderful donors!  
It is through your gifts that we are able to provide the social, legal, psychological and protective services necessary to rebuild the lives of the women, children and families who have survived domestic and relationship abuse.***

*Marilyn Bagel*

*Comcast*

*Mid-Atlantic Federal Credit Union*

*Sheriff Raymond M. Kight*

*Women Who Care Ministries*

**We're on the Web:**

[www.montgomerycountymd.gov/fjc](http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/fjc) & [www.mcfjcfoundation.org](http://www.mcfjcfoundation.org)

## MCFJC Foundation Event with Casey Gwinn and Judi Adams

During the evening of March 11th, FJC Foundation Board Members and Sponsors had the rare opportunity to meet with Casey Gwinn, President and Co-Founder of the National Family Justice Alliance and Judi Adams, Strategic Planner. Casey and

Judi shared their experiences from other meetings with FJC staff around the world and reviewed promising best practices with regard to domestic violence. They also discussed the developments from the earlier Strategic Planning Sessions and made

note of the significant accomplishments by the Family Justice Center Partners and the Family Justice Center Foundation in the first year. The evening ended with supporters looking forward to the year ahead.



The Honorable Constance Morella, Sherri Cunningham of Verizon Wireless, Councilmember Duchy Trachtenberg, Susan Butta of Verizon Wireless and Casey Gwinn, President of the National Family Justice Alliance.



Chief Deputy Darren Popkin and Councilmember Duchy Trachtenberg express appreciation to Judi Adams for their support.



Clare Cumberland and Casey Gwinn share thoughts during the MCFJC Foundation Event.



Judith Clark from Women Who Care Ministries and Judi Adams, Strategic Planner at the MCFJC Foundation Event.

***FJC Update:  
Since the Grand Opening 1,400 domestic violence clients representing 100 different countries of origin have received services at the FJC.***