



Montgomery County Family Justice Center

VOLUME 2, ISSUE 1

WINTER 2011

SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

SHERIFF KIGHT
RETIRES

VIDEO
CONFERENCING
SERVICES NOW
AT THE FJC

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From the Desk of Chief J. Thomas Manger, MCPD

As the Montgomery County Family Justice Center (FJC) approaches its two-year anniversary, it is gratifying to witness services to the County's domestic violence victims become unified around the victims' needs rather than around the convenience of the many providers or "the system" that is in place to help them.

No one office, department, or community program can provide all the answers or support for the County's domestic violence victims. Thus, the Family Justice Center sets a precedent in the County by operating as a true coalition of service providers, and the Montgomery County Police Department is proud to be an integral part of this team.

This collaborative effort has allowed law enforcement to offer victims an abundance of services through the Family Justice Center. Being able to give victims assistance, in addition to arresting the abuser, is an important step in meeting a victim's needs; and by offering choices to the victims on a case-by-case basis, we are offering them hope and an opportunity to make changes that can lead to an improved quality of life and a future without domestic violence.

As one of the Family Justice Center service providers, the Montgomery County Police Department has dedicated personnel and resources to victim services. In 2009, we started providing a full-time officer at the Family Justice Center to immedi-



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

ately help victims who go there for assistance. This officer coordinates with the other involved agencies in case development at the FJC and is available to take initial reports when a victim chooses to report to law enforcement; to assist the advocates from the Sheriff's Office and the Abused Persons Program in HHS to help victims obtain Protective Orders; to obtain arrest warrants when appropriate; to refer child witnesses to our Family Crimes Division for forensic interviewing; and to refer child victims directly to the *Safe Start* Program.

Akin to domestic violence is Elder Abuse. The Family

Justice Center addresses this segment of our community by supporting a multi-disciplinary task force, modeled after the Sheriff's Office multi-disciplinary ALERT team. Elder abuse overlaps domestic violence in much the same way as child abuse does. By bringing in some of our current Family Justice Center partners as well as new partners who are service providers to the elderly, we are broadening the scope of services that the County agencies can provide. The more partners we have at the table, the better services can be developed and delivered to all of our most vulnerable victims.

Coalition-building is often cited as a best practice for meeting the needs of the community, but it is not always put into practice. In this regard, the Family Justice Center sets an extraordinary precedent in Montgomery County. Despite difficult economic times, the FJC is a coalition that is unstoppable in helping victims make and carry out the right life choices for themselves.

J. Thomas Manger
Chief of Police

After Nearly 50 Years of Service to Montgomery County Sheriff Raymond M. Kight Retires



Sheriff Raymond M. Kight accepting a certificate from the Office of the State's Attorney at his retirement party in December.

Sheriff Raymond M. Kight first entered County service in 1963 and leaves the Sheriff's Office as the longest serving Sheriff in Montgomery County, Maryland. During his 24 years in office, Sheriff Kight transitioned the Sheriff's Office into a modern, professional law enforcement agency. Under his direction, the Sheriff's Office became the first nationally accredited Sheriff's Office in Maryland. He also standardized training so that all Deputy Sheriffs are trained at the Montgom-

ery County Public Safety Academy and are certified as police officers by the Maryland Police Training Commission. He established the Sheriff's Office Swat team, K-9 explosives detection teams, and hostage negotiators that are deployed throughout Montgomery County in cooperation with the Montgomery County Police Department.

Sheriff Kight has also led the fight against domestic violence in Montgomery County. He created innovative ways of addressing Domestic Violence, having developed a

well respected section that provides immediate law enforcement intervention with Protective Orders. Sheriff Kight also took the lead in establishing the Montgomery Family Justice Center, which has served over 2400 victims since it opened in spring, 2009.

Sheriff Raymond M. Kight's 50 years of public service and dedication will forever have positive impacts on the residents of Montgomery County, Maryland. We are all eternally grateful for his service to the community.

Video Conferencing Commences at the FJC

After many months of anticipation, the long awaited video conferencing of ex-parte temporary protective orders between the Montgomery County Family Justice Center and the District and Circuit Courts in Montgomery County began in December, 2010. "The Judiciary is offering video conferencing as a way to help protect victims of domestic violence and improve access to and safety in our courthouses for all Marylanders," said Chief Judge Ben C. Clyburn of the District Court of Maryland. "Victims no longer will have to leave the safety and security of the Family Justice Center to file petitions for protection. This will benefit victims, families and the general public we serve."

In addition, children are not exposed to a parent's testimony and instead are able to play in a special children's room under the watch of trained volunteers. This double benefit helps to ease the stress on children and reduces the disruption often caused by children in the courtroom. While video conferencing gives the courts greater flexibility with scheduling cases, it is the comfort, con-

venience and sense of privacy that the clients find appealing.

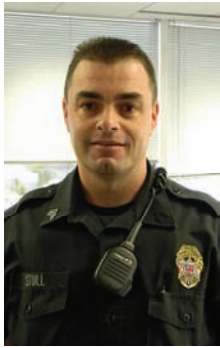
The video conferencing project was made possible through the support and cooperation of several Montgomery County judges. Judge Eugene Wolfe of the District Court and Judges Ann Harrington, John Debelius and Louise Scrivener of the Circuit Court participated in numerous meetings with Sheriff's Office, State's Attorney's Office and House of Ruth Maryland managers and staff, Clerk of the Court and court administration to create policies and procedures for the pilot project. The Administrative Office of the Courts continues to work closely with the University of Maryland to study the effects and benefits of the project, which may become a model program for Maryland and the rest of the United States.



The Tuscan Room is one of four client interview rooms at the MCFJC that has video conferencing equipment. Funds for the equipment were provided by a generous grant from Verizon Wireless Hope-line Foundation.

*In 2010
there were
NO
Domestic
Violence
related
homicides in
Montgomery
County.*

A Lending Hand in Law Enforcement



Sergeant
Michael Stull

The Montgomery County Sheriff's Office Domestic Violence Section is comprised of very skilled and talented deputies that are directly involved with many aspects of Domestic Violence.

These deputies come in contact with a vast variety of individuals on a daily basis. Through training and experience these deputies have learned outstanding skills on how to understand and provide support for the individual's needs.

In a career of law enforcement you mostly deal with the apprehension and prosecution of individuals. Although the deputies assigned to the Domestic Violence Section accomplish these tasks, they also get to experience the unique position of directly assisting in the forward progress with the victims of domestic violence. As with every domestic violence order, the deputies come in direct contact with the victim. This is usually the first contact the victim has with law enforcement where an interview is conducted. During this time it is very important to establish a trusting relationship

between the victim and the deputy. This helps to create an environment to make the interview go as smoothly as possible while having the victim be open enough to discuss the intimate details of the incident.

It is at this time you get to place a face with the victim. This may also include meeting the children, family members, friends or someone there for support. The deputy and their partner are able to recognize the needs of the family and the innocent faces of the young children that have accompanied their parent. You create a relationship with the children by introducing yourself to them by squatting down, looking to them at eye level and shaking their hand. And of course you put on your biggest smile. You protect them by separating them from their parent while they discuss the details of the incident with the deputy.

You find yourself becoming more than just a deputy conducting an interview. You become a friend, counselor, advocate and many other helpful titles. As the events unfold you discover that sometimes the little things you do can mean so much for someone else. You assist in so many aspects of the lives of others. No matter what the hour is, what shift you're working or what demands need

meeting, you have to be on your "A" game.

You lend a hand by giving attention to someone that has experienced a traumatic incident. This may include escorting the family back to the home and calming their fears that they will be safe for the night, taking them to an undisclosed location for shelter and reassuring them that all is OK; making a coordinated effort with resources and advocates to make sure that the victim's needs are met and also provide a safety plan. You provide follow up phone calls or in person visits with the victim and their family to make sure they are safe and answer any unanswered questions.

You give back as much as you can and hope that you have given enough to put a positive start in a victim's life. It's an overwhelming feeling to receive a phone call, letter, card or an in person visit from an individual that you have helped. They "Thank You" for all that you have positively done for them and usually also include how you have touched not only their lives but their children's lives as well. This is only accomplished through the dedication, hard work and team effort of all involved in making a positive difference in the community in which they respectively serve.

***FJC Update:
Since the Grand Opening 2400 domestic violence clients
representing 100 different countries of origin have received services
at the FJC.***

Avon and Career Catchers Seek to Empower FJC Clients



Ronnie Haber and Mana McNeill of Career Catchers conduct their first workshop, "The Job of Getting a Job" at the FJC.

Thanks to a generous grant from the Avon Foundation, the Montgomery County Family Justice Center has been able to partner with Career Catchers, a local non-profit organization, to offer victims of domestic violence support as they move forward to financial self-sufficiency and empowerment. The Montgomery County Sheriff's Office was one of 32 domestic violence organizations across the United States to receive funding from the Avon Empowerment Self-Sufficiency Program.

All too often victims of domestic violence who come to the MCFJC express feel-

ings of being trapped in an abusive relationship because their children depend on the abusive partner for economic survival. Additionally, a victim's lack of economic stability may increase the likelihood of a return to the abuser or lead to homelessness. The Avon Empowerment Self-Sufficiency Program will address these issues and will also provide advocacy and safety planning to victims.

Career Catchers, under the leadership of two experienced specialists, Ronnie Haber and Mana McNeill, launched the program at the FJC in January, 2011. They will provide FJC clients with a full spectrum of employment and education advancement services through both individual counseling and group workshops. Counseling services will involve evalua-

tion of skills and experience, setting employment goals, resume preparation, cover letter assistance, job search skills, interview training and much more. Career Catchers' monthly workshops will include such topics as, "The Job of Getting a Job," "Creating a Cover Letter," "Resume Building" and "Employment Application Skills," to name a few.

Career Catcher's counselors will be located at the FJC Tuesday through Thursday and all their services are free. Through the FJC's partnership with Career Catchers and Avon's Empowerment Self-Sufficiency Program, more clients will be empowered to realize their employment and educational potential and make their career dreams come true.

Santa Arrived at the FJC



Members of the Bar Association for Montgomery County, pictured from L to R: Donna Rismiller, Esq, Julie Peterson, Executive Director and Maria Delgado, Office Manager.

Thanks to the generous gifts of toys, books, games, and gift cards from the Bar Association of Montgomery County, Verizon, The Reverend David Bristow and his youth group at St. Joseph Catholic Church in Herndon, Virginia, families who have been served by the FJC were able to have a joyous holiday season this year. Clients and their families who came to the FJC in December were able to select items to take home. In addition, outreach was made to past clients to invite them in to pick out

gifts and cards for their families. The children who came to the FJC were delighted when they were given the opportunity to select a gift and their expressions of joy were apparent.

The spirit of the holidays and giving was also very obvious on the faces of the generous donors who came to the FJC donning smiles and carrying packages. Briana Gowing, Assistant Vice President from Verizon stated, "It is so nice to be able to help restock the book shelves and bring toys. I felt like one of Santa's elves bringing the stuff down to my car."

Julie Peterson and Maria Delgado coordinated the Bar Association's Holiday Toy

and Gift Drive. Their remarkable efforts and hard work yielded more than one hundred toys and more than \$800.00 in gift card and monetary donations for the FJC.

All the donations will go a long way to help families facing life changing situations. We can only imagine the joy that was shared among families as they celebrated at home with gifts and celebratory meals made possible with donated gift cards. The FJC extends a tremendous thank you to our donors for giving families impacted by domestic violence a sense of celebration and joy this holiday season.

ADT Aware Alarm Program Offers Peace of Mind

With the generous participation of ADT Security Services, the Family Justice Center through the Sheriff's Office, offers an additional line of defense to survivors of domestic violence who obtain a final protective order. Through the Aware Alarm Program, ADT can install a pendant-type home alarm system at the survivor's home, using a land-line telephone. The pendant alarm permits the survivor to alert ADT with the touch of a button in the event the abuser is spotted near the home, or attempts to

enter the home. ADT relays the alarm to Montgomery County law enforcement agencies, which as part of this collaborative program maintain a CAD (computer assisted dispatch) alert for each Aware Alarm user, enabling officers and deputies to respond rapidly to an alarm. The Aware Alarm program can provide greater peace of mind to a survivor of domestic violence who faces a high risk of experiencing a violation of protective orders, due to the abuser's demonstrated ten-

dency to violate the court's no-contact order. Survivors of domestic violence and stalking can also derive comfort from the ability of the Aware Alarm technology to summon law enforcement at a distance as great as 100 feet from the home, in the event a survivor comes home, and finds a familiar, unwelcome car waiting out front. The Aware Alarm is an important tool in the "toolbox" of options offered by the FJC to increase survivors' security and independence.

Registration Opens for Choose Respect Montgomery

Did you know that nationally one in eleven youth reports being a victim of physical dating violence and one in four adolescents reports verbal, physical, emotional or sexual abuse from a dating partner each year? Still, only one in three teens who were in an abusive relationship ever told anyone about the abuse. Dating abuse is a pattern of physically, emotionally or sexually controlling behavior that someone uses against a girlfriend or boyfriend. Dating violence can devastate a young person's life and become a pattern that lasts a lifetime.

The Domestic Violence Coordinating Council along with County agencies and organizations is invested in changing those statistics on dating violence by giving local teens the opportunity to Choose Respect in their relationships, as it hosts the 2nd Annual Choose Respect Montgomery Teen Dating Conference. Promoting awareness



about teen dating violence among youth and their parents will have a significant impact in the lives of our youth.

The conference will take place on **Saturday April 9, 2011** at the Takoma Park Campus of Montgomery College in the Cultural Arts Center. Workshops for teens in 7th thru 12th grades and their parents will be held in Spanish and English. Workshops will focus on topics related to teen dat-

ing violence, healthy relationship behaviors and abuse through technology.

City at Peace DC will open the program with a follow-up performance from last year. Bill Mitchell, President of the Kristin Mitchell Foundation will return as a Keynote speaker. Complimentary lunch and raffles prizes will also be available during the event.

The teen dating public service announcement (PSA) contest will be held in conjunction with the conference again this year with the winning PSA revealed during the day's events. For contest rules go to <http://bit.ly/o8j01>.

To register for the conference online go to www.chooserespectmontgomery.eventbrite.com or in Spanish register at www.eligeelrespetomontgomery.eventbrite.com.

Also stay current on all the conference details at Choose Respect Montgomery on Facebook.



Family Justice Center Foundation News

FJC FOUNDATION BOARD MEMBERS

- Resa Levy
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- Donna Rismiller
Vice President &
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- Dorothy Fait
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- David Belkin
- David P. Cohen
- Thomas M. DeGonia II
- Catherine Leggett
- Lewis Selis

FJC FOUNDATION ADVISORY BOARD MEMBERS

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

Foundation President's Welcome "The Stories Behind the Numbers"



Resa Levy
FJC Foundation
President

It's hard to believe that we are entering the second year since the establishment of the FJC and the FJC Foundation. We are pleased with the success of our first year accomplishments, but as the need for the support of the services that the FJC provides to the community continues to grow, so in equal part does the work of the FJC Foundation.

The number of clients who have sought services from the FJC has nearly doubled during this past year. More than 2400 clients from more than 100 countries have sought the services of the FJC.

But it's one thing to read a number – totally another to hear the real life stories behind those numbers. Here's an inside peek at just two incidents that occurred

last week! A mother came to the Center with her three children. Her four year old son had a black eye due to domestic violence. The staff at the Center contacted the detective in the Family Crimes Division of the Police Department - protection was provided for both the mother and children; A woman came to the Center because while she was holding her baby, her husband had strangled her and threatened her with a knife. In each case, the Center's one-stop approach, led by a team of highly trained professionals quickly coordinated with each other, and provided the safety measures necessary to help save the lives of both of these women and their children.

With these stories, as well as many others in mind, our Foundation launches its 2011 **LIFELINE CAMPAIGN**. Please see the article in this newsletter to find out how you can become a "Lifeline!"

Thank you!

Resa Levy, President
MCFJC Foundation

2nd Annual FJC Foundation Benefit

Please mark your calendars! The 2nd Annual MCFJC Foundation Benefit, chaired once again by our incomparable Board Member Catherine Leggett, will be held on Sunday evening, October 2, 2011 (October is domestic violence awareness month). The event will be held at the Hilton Hotel located on Rockville Pike, and run from 5:00-9:00 pm.

The mission of the MCFJC Foundation is to raise awareness and funds in support of the work of the Montgomery County Family

Justice Center. Last year's benefit – our first – was extremely successful. We expect to have an equally poignant, exciting and fun-filled evening this year, so you won't want to miss out on this important community event.

Individual tickets as well as various levels of sponsorship will be available. To watch the video from last year's Benefit as well as keep current on information about the Benefit and Foundation activities, please see our website at www.mcfjcfoundation.org. If you'd like to contact us, please send an email to mcfjcfoundation@yahoo.com.

MCFJC Foundation Launches LIFELINE CAMPAIGN

On January 1, 2011 The MCFJC Foundation launched our **LIFELINE CAMPAIGN** with a generous gift from an anonymous donor. Designed to be an ongoing giving opportunity, the **LIFELINE CAMPAIGN** helps to fund the lifeline of services provided through the FJC. Funds contributed to the "Lifeline Campaign" support the everyday needs of both the Foundation and the FJC.

The Foundation's work includes helping to raise awareness about domestic violence, as well as providing information about the ser-

vices offered by the FJC to individuals, agencies, businesses, and community groups. This includes helping to fund psychological services for both the victims of domestic violence as well as their children, programs around teen dating violence, palm cards for law enforcement officers to give to victims, printed materials to help engage community groups, and more.

The MCFJC, serving the Washington Metropolitan area, is one of only 60 in the world. Our MCFJC serves as a model for the entire mid-Atlantic region for comprehen-

sive services and support, in which all services are located under one roof.

We hope you will support the **LIFELINE CAMPAIGN** with your gift of \$25, \$50, \$100 or more. Please mail your gift to MCFJC Foundation, PO Box 10692, Rockville, Maryland 20849 or go on-line to our website at

www.mcfjcfoundation.org. Should you have any questions, please contact Resa Levy at mcfjcfoundation@yahoo.com
Thank You!

What Do Verizon, Verizon Wireless, Liz Claiborne and TJ Maxx Have in Common?

They are all companies that know that domestic violence is a critical issue that adversely affects both personnel and productivity. According to Kathryn C. Brown, Verizon senior vice president of public policy development and corporate responsibility, "Verizon is committed to using its technology and its human and financial resources to raise awareness of the issue [domestic violence] and aid in its prevention.

We are most grateful to both Verizon and Verizon Wireless for their tireless support of our Family Justice Center.

Board members David Belkin and Lewis Selis are Co-chairs of the Business Initiative Committee. Belkin recognizes that, "Businesses are a part of our community and we believe that the FJC can increase the

overall health of the community by reaching out to businesses to inform them about our work." Eight committed team members from various businesses in the County agree. They have met, and set this year's agenda into two major categories: 1) The Human Resource Project: A Business Initiative team member will help provide materials and information to the human resource professional in a particular business or company and 2) A media campaign – both print and television – to get the word out!

If you're interested in learning more, please see our website at www.mcfjcfoundation.org and then email us at mcfjcfoundation@yahoo.org and tell us of your interest.

The Community Initiative- We're Number One!

Forget about the traffic! Montgomery County is A-number-1 when it comes to how our community supports each other, and in particular, how we take care of our vulnerable populations.

Tom DeGonia, Chair of the MCFJC Foundation's Community Initiative says, "Our Initiative has two goals: 1) To raise public awareness of the Family Justice Center and 2) To ensure that those most at risk have the information they need to access the services of the FJC."

Since the FJC first opened its doors in the Spring of 2009, dozens of individuals and community groups have donated artworks, knitted gloves, scarves and mittens for children, gift cards to grocery stores, toys, and more. Most recently, the Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission's office of Communications and Community Relations organized their "Give the Gift of Warmth Campaign" to benefit, in part, the MCFJC.

New MCFJC Foundation sponsored community initiatives are

in the planning stages. We will participate in a nationwide project called "Cut-It-Out" in which we will engage local salons to "get the word out" about the FJC and its services. Please see our website at www.mcfjcfoundation.org to learn more, and contact Tom at mcfjcfoundation@yahoo.com to see how you can become involved.

Our 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.

Community Partner

GEICO Philanthropic Foundation

Community Advocate- Gold

Safeway Philanthropic Foundation, Eastern Division

Community Advocate – Silver

Georgetown Paper Stock Company

Raymond M. Kight

Robert S. Selzer

Community Friend

Mid-Atlantic Federal Credit Union

Darren M. Popkin

Community Supporter

David and Ellen Belkin

Wendy Danziger

Susan Elwell

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Innertrac

Toba S. Penny

Kelly M. Price

Michael L. Subin, Esq.

We're on the Web:

www.montgomerycountymd.gov/fjc & www.mcfjcfoundation.org

LIFELINE CAMPAIGN

Your gift helps provide a lifeline....

Without the MCFJC's "one-stop-shop" lifeline of services, domestic violence victims would have to visit as many as 20 separate agencies. Your gift to the MCFJC Foundation truly is a lifeline!

Please print and tear out this form and send it with your gift to: The MCFJC Foundation
PO Box 10692 Rockville, MD 20849 or go on-line
to make your secure donation at
www.mcfjcfoundation.org. Thank you!

Yes! I'm happy to help give a "Lifeline" Please find my gift enclosed.

___\$25 ___\$50 ___\$75 ___\$100 ___\$250 ___Other

Name _____

Address _____

Address _____

Email _____ Cell (opt) _____