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Concord, NC 28025
704.786.7918

Mecklenburg County
601 E. 5th St., Ste. 400
Charlotte, NC 28202
704.332.9034

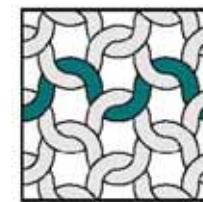
9601 Holly Point Dr., Suite 200
Huntersville, NC 28078
704.655.8745

Domestic Violence Court Services
720 E. 4th St., Ste. 204
Charlotte, NC 28202
704.336.4126

The Shelter for Battered Women
PO Box 220312
Charlotte, NC 28222
704.332.2513

Union County
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Monroe, NC 28112
704.226.1352

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Vol. 6 Issue 1

A Dark Side to Prince Charming

“If you see something out of kilter, go with your gut – ask questions, do something,” says Marilyn Young, mother of a domestic violence victim.

“Jessica was our free spirit, our oldest child of three,” began Marilyn Young, a small smile spreading across her pained expression. “She was a lot of fun to be with, always into something.”

“Jessica dreamed for years of finding her Prince Charming,” she continued. “She was certain Christian

was the one. I was never comfortable with him as I could feel he had a dark side, but I tried to be supportive and happy for her, for her sake.”

Christian and Jessica met at a computer training class and soon discovered other common interests. They dated for 18 months while Jessica studied to be a dental hygienist at Central Piedmont Community College. Christian, five years older, had already embarked on a career in computer technology. Prince Charming proposed and they were married by a justice of the peace. “All

seemed well as they began life together,” recalled Marilyn. “They seemed happy. We saw them often.”

But the dark side was real. “Jessica wanted everything to be good so she hid his abuse of her from us,” explained Young.

Christian isolated himself, displaying low social skills. He preferred spending time on his computer. Christian then began keeping Jessica isolated from family and friends. He was controlling, using threats and physical assaults to get his way. He was also compulsive about wanting a new home, nice furniture and a new car immediately. By age 25, Christian was \$200,000 in debt.

The couple experienced a prolonged flu their second winter together, preventing Christian from working for more than a month. Bills continued piling up. He became severely depressed. The physical abuse increased until Christian was out of control. Police investigators determined that what occurred on the first weekend in March was a murder/suicide.

“Nothing in life or faith can prepare you for the hideous damage done by a sawed-off shotgun fired at close range,” whispered Marilyn. “God gave me time to say goodbye. I stayed with Jessica for two days. She never woke up, but she would cry when we talked with her. I sang to her. I kissed every part of her body. The doctor, with tears in his eyes, said we

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Jessica’s story is told visually as a Silent Witness during domestic violence presentations



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President's Column: Our volunteers: priceless

Ask any nonprofit agency director about the value of volunteers to their agency and you will probably hear phrases such as "We couldn't accomplish what we do without them," or "absolutely integral to accomplishing our mission." These phrases pertain to the many volunteers who help United Family Services carry out our important programs and services.

United Family Services has all types of volunteers. Members of our Board of Directors volunteer to assure that the agency is fulfilling its mission and is a good steward of the resources contributed by the community. We have Rape Crisis volunteers in Mecklenburg, Cabarrus and Union counties who staff the rape crisis hotline and make visits to the hospital at all hours of the day and night to support someone who has been sexually abused. There are volunteers

who accompany women to court and help them through the protective order process so they can be free from abuse. There are many volunteers at The Shelter for Battered Women who do everything from providing child care, to preparing meals, to helping at the Holiday Store, painting rooms and speaking in the community about the effects of domestic violence.

Then there are the community groups who "adopt" the agency and help raise money to support our various programs. The Art with Heart committee organizes the annual art auction to support the domestic violence programs. The Men for Change group not only raises money for the agency, but also educates the community that domestic violence is not just a women's issue. Matchmaker Tennis organizes the annual Jingle Bell Ball, with the proceeds of more than \$9,800 going to the agency this fiscal year. All these activities take countless hours to coordinate.

One of the recent trends that has bene-

fited all nonprofits, including United Family Services, is companies' encouraging their employees to volunteer and even providing the time off from work to do it. These companies understand that their commitment to the community extends beyond contributing financial resources to their own employees. It's good business and builds team spirit, but also builds a culture of volunteerism in the community.

Volunteers have tremendous value. They are an integral part of what United Family Services is about. They enhance the services that we provide by adding additional value. They add that extra little smile or caring touch that makes a big difference in the impact that we have on someone's life.

The federal government estimates the value of a volunteer's time at \$15.95 an hour in the State of North Carolina. At United Family Services, we consider it priceless.

Mark Pierman
President and CEO

Donate Old Phones, Save Lives



United Family Services gives refurbished, donated cell phones to women leaving The Shelter for Battered Women to help keep them safe. The rest of the phones are recycled through the Shelter Alliance, a national program based in Florida.

In the four years United Family Services has been collecting phones, the agency has realized over \$20,000 in contributions which we use to help our clients who are victims of domestic violence and sexual assault.

So clear out those drawers, glove compartments and closets and dig up those cell phones you no longer use. If you can collect cell phones and cell phone equipment at your school or business, call Vernetta Rucker at 704.367.2708 for instructions. This is an easy, no-cost way to raise funds for people who need our help.



(l - r) Time Warner Cable employees Mike Hawood, Roberta Farman and Jessica Graham, Director of Public Affairs, proudly present United Family Services' Vernetta Rucker with five cartons of used cell phones.

- Patricia Stoy
- Kurt E. Stubenhofer
- Sarah C. Tabb
- Sharon J. Thacker
- Joan Underwood
- Jessica M. Vance
- Dr. and Mrs. David C. Voellinger
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- Andree White-Snow and James G. Snow
- Mr. and Mrs. Madison B. Wyche, IV

TRIBUTES

- Jay Leach & Melissa Mummert and Annie by Jeannette Manning
- Gene Burton by Virginia L. Martin

MEMORIALS

- Mrs. Terry Cutliff by AZDEL, Inc.
- Mrs. Terry Cutliff by Lauretta Chisolm



Mah Jongg Marathon at home of Audrey Herman held December 10, 2006. The group donated funds plus two carloads of items for The Shelter. Listed l to r from rows 1 to 4. Amanda Wilson, United Family Services victim advocate; Brenda Gayle, Phyllis Romaine, Regina Resnick, Barbara Acree, Audrey Herman, Fran Kaplan, Jeannie Cabillis, Evelyn Goodman, Ann Lyman, Shari Goldbery, Sharon Rubenstein, Helene Cullen, Zelma Fink, Eileen Cantor, Millie Corday, Marie Rock, Ella Miller, and Roz Hussney

- Robert Dub Swab by Cathy Chauncy

ORGANIZATIONS

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- Allstate Insurance Company
- Alston & Bird LLP
- Amity Presbyterian Church
- Anonymous
- Carmel Presbyterian Church
- Central Steele Creek Presbyterian Church
- Charlotte Friends Meeting
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- DiCi Services Inc.
- Duke Energy Corporation Foundation
- Foundation For The Carolinas
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- Helen Adams Realty
- The Junior League of North Carolina
- King's College
- National Children's Alliance
- PMECF
- Providence Day School
- Providence United Methodist Church
- Sally Beauty Company, Inc.
- Sharon Presbyterian Church
- SOAR, Inc.
- Town of Unionville
- UNC-Charlotte

(l - r) Jude Harding with Matchmaker Tennis poses with Sara Stebbins, chairman of the Jingle Bell Ball. The event attracted 400 celebrants and raised more than \$9,800 for The Shelter for Battered Women.



Connect



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Please send comments and questions to Gene Burton at gburton@ufscit.org or 704.367.2705

Thank You for Your Support

Gifts from individuals and organizations listed below were received during July, August and September of 2006. Despite our best efforts to be accurate, sometimes errors are made in our listing. If your name has been inadvertently omitted or your gift reported incorrectly, please accept our sincere apologies and notify us by calling the fund development office at 704.367.2705.

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 Mr. Jonathan W. Hoffman and Family
 Mr. Todd Horsfall



Sharon Thacker, UFS Vice President for Programs and Services, stands with Headmaster Arch McIntosh, Jr., among 159 Baskets of Hope generated by the 1,300 families of Charlotte Latin School to assist families leaving the Shelter for Battered Women as they set up new homes in escaping domestic violence.

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Tree House Child Advocacy Center Earns National Accreditation

United Family Services' Tree House Child Advocacy Center (CAC) in Monroe has been accepted as an accredited member of the National Children's Alliance, joining over 375 other members across the United States in meeting national standards for treating children and teenage sexual assault victims and their non-offending family members. The Tree House opened in 2005 and earned accreditation less than nine months later.

"The relatively short time it took for the Tree

House to become operational and now accredited is a true example of community collaboration in caring for children throughout Union County," stated Brandy Redmile, Tree House Coordinator, pictured to the right.

The Tree House staff assists child victims of sexual assault and their families, making sure they receive all the appropriate services to give them the best chance at surviving their trauma and restoring normal lives.

These services include crisis intervention, counseling,

support groups, medical evaluations and forensic interviews. The CAC is a child-friendly place for investigative team interviews, case coordination, medical examinations, advocacy and court education/ accompaniment for children victims of sexual assault and their non-offending caregivers. Services are also offered in Spanish.

Located in the United Way building in downtown Monroe, The Tree House meets a critical need in Union County. The concept for the Tree House originated with Union County's Sexual Assault Response Team (SART). SART participants include the Union County

Health Department, the 20th Prosecutorial District Attorney's Office, Union County Sheriff's Office, Monroe Police Department, Union County Department of Social Services, South Piedmont Community College, Carolinas Medical Center-Union and United Family Services.



More Than 80 Families Served at UFS' 2006 Holiday Store

More than 80 families participated in this year's Holiday Store held for those served by The Shelter for Battered Women throughout the year. Hundreds of community volunteers contributed items, food and time.

Below, Santa meets the Holiday Store guests where they are.



Above: Members of Bank of America's Charlotte LEAD raised \$5,500 in contributions and two carts full of some 200 toys for the residents of the Shelter for Battered Women's Holiday Store. Pictured here are members of LEAD and staff from United Family Services. Row 1: (l-r) Venessa Beatty, UFS; Tamia McDonald, B of A; Bronwyn Bell, B of A; Jolaine Blankenship, B of A; Mona Basset, B of A and event organizer; Karen Capalad, B of A; Tracy DeLux, UFS Holiday Store organizer; Jane Taylor, UFS Shelter Coordinator; Monika Cambric, UFS; Mark Pierman, UFS CEO; Gene Burton, UFS; Eva Tai, B of A and event organizer; Katrina Teague, B of A; and Karen Parker Thompson, UFS Director of Domestic Violence Programs.

needed to tell Jessica it was time for her to let go.”

“I told her to take the hand of Jesus,” she continued. “The life support machines were shut off and she was gone in minutes. As we went through the next days, it seemed like a bad dream that I would wake up from and she would be there.”

No more can I laugh with her or just hang out with her. My beautiful daughter was dead.”

Looking back, Marilyn Young recognized there were signs of something wrong. Jessica wore long sleeves all the time. There were holes in the walls of their home.

“If you see something out of kilter, go with your gut – ask questions, do something,” Young now advises her audiences as a volunteer speaker against domestic violence.

The surviving members of the Young family found the murder and suicide difficult to talk about. Eventually Marilyn suffered an emotional breakdown.

“I came to realize I had

two choices – stay in a depressed stupor or gain strength by helping others,” said Young, who credits counseling for helping her recover. “I choose to be strong because Jessica would want it that way. When I came full circle, my other children were able to move forward.”

Marilyn Young now tells Jessica’s story to judges, prosecutors, court advocates, youth, school and church groups on behalf of United Family Services’ Domestic Violence Speaker’s Bureau and for the North Carolina Coalition Against Domestic Violence.

“I don’t know if what I say has any effect, but I feel it does,” said Marilyn. “I feel Jessica with me when I am speaking.”

Marilyn Young is one of many volunteers who speak on behalf of domestic violence victims through our Speakers Bureau. Each year, approximately 10,000 students and adults benefit from United Family Services’ domestic violence prevention education.

Seek Help for Domestic Violence

Each year more than 10,000 victims of domestic violence and their children seek assistance from United Family Services. Chances are you know someone living in a violent situation – someone who isn’t sure where to turn for help.

If you are being hurt by your intimate partner, help is available. United Family Services can help you explore your options and assist you with safety planning, legal advocacy, shelter, emotional support, counseling and other services. We can help you and your children begin to heal from the emotional scars left by domestic abuse.

Are you afraid of your partner?

- Does your partner:
- Keep track of your time/mileage?
- Discourage relationships with family and friends?
- Criticize or humiliate you?
- Hit, slap or punch you or your children?
- Force you to have sex against your will?

If you answered “yes” to any of these questions or if you feel you are in danger, please get help. If in immediate danger, call 911.

Other places to find help include:

- Shelter for Battered Women**
704-332-2513
24-hour crisis line, counseling, referrals and housing
- North Mecklenburg/Lake Norman**
704-655-8745
Counseling, victim assistance, referrals

- Victim Assistance**
704-336-4126
Court assistance and counseling (Monday-Friday)

- Mecklenburg County Women’s Commission**
704-336-3210
Counseling, support groups and referrals

- National Domestic Violence Hotline**
1-800-799-SAFE (7233)
TTY telephone 1-800-787-3224

UFS Counselor’s Documentary *Perversion of Justice* Debuts at the Light Factory on February 9

Thousands of women are serving excessive federal prison sentences in the United States for their minor roles in drug conspiracies. *Perversion of Justice*, a documentary by Melissa Mummert, an ordained Unitarian Universalist minister



and a United Family Services domestic violence educator at the Mecklenburg County Jail, focuses on one of these women.

Hamedah Hasan fled a physically abusive relationship to live with her cousin who was selling crack cocaine. Hamedah did favors for the cousin, including wiring money which linked her to the drug ring. Prosecutors wanted information from Hamedah about her cousin in exchange for immunity. Hamedah refused and was found guilty at trial. Mandatory federal sentencing guidelines gave her judge no choice but to sentence her to two life sentences.

Hamedah has been fighting for over 11 years for release so that she can rejoin her three young daughters, Kasaundra, Kamyra and Ayesha. Filmed over the course of four years, *Perversion of Justice* follows Hamedah on an emotional roller coaster as she navigates her many appeals. The film captures the hurt that her daughters experience in growing up the best they can hundreds of miles from their incarcerated mother. The 30-minute documentary weaves Hamedah’s and the girls’ stories along with context from criminal justice experts about the misguided government War on

Drugs. While the film details an American tragedy, it is ultimately hopeful and calls the audience to action and to believe in the possibility of social change.

Perversion of Justice will be shown at 7 pm and 8:30 pm in the Knight Gallery at Spirit Square on Friday, February 9. A panel discussion takes place after the first showing with filmmaker Melissa Mummert; Eric Sterling, President of the Criminal Justice Policy Foundation that works for sentencing reform; and Federal Judge Graham Mullen.

Admission is \$7 at the door.

Art with Heart Moves to CenterStage@NoDa

The eighth annual *Art With Heart Art Auction* is headed to the spacious, art deco-inspired CenterStage@NoDa on Saturday, February 10, 2007.

Started in 2000, *Art With Heart* benefits United Family Services’ domestic violence programs including The Shelter for Battered Women and Victim Assistance Court Services. These programs provide safety planning and shelter, counseling and support groups, children’s services, substance abuse services, court and legal advocacy, services for incarcerated women, on-site emergency room re-

sponse to patients, training to medical professionals and dating violence prevention education.

The featured artists are a sister trio from Georgia, each with growing regional and national reputations. Kim Schuessler, Amy Cole and Christy Kinard-Davenport exhibit distinctly different painting styles. Over 200 paintings, photographs and studio craft representing 175 artists will be up for bid.

“This year’s donated artwork is at the highest level since starting the auction,” stated Susan King of Englishman’s Antiques and Fine

Furnishings. Susan chaired the first auction and has been a guiding hand with every auction since.

“There is tremendous enthusiasm for the sisters’ work here in Charlotte,” added Gabrielle Shain-Bryson, owner of Shain Gallery which represents Schuessler and Kinard-Davenport. “I literally can’t keep their paintings very long in the gallery.”

Tickets are \$50 in advance, \$60 at the door and can be purchased by calling 704.367.2708 or online at www.unitedfamilyservices.org.



Bouquet of Flowers by Kim Schuessler (24”x48”)



Make your reservations today for United Family Services’ **2007 Art With Heart** art auction. All proceeds benefit UFS’ domestic violence programs.

For details and ticket purchases:
704.367.2708
www.unitedfamilyservices.org