

**Aviva Children's Services Volunteer and Visitation Programs
for Child Protective Services**

**KIDS AT HEART
SPRING 2009**

Be Someone's Hero



www.avivatucson.org

*Aviva
Children's
Services*

Mission Statement

The mission of Aviva is to enhance services that improve the quality of life for children who are victims of neglect, abuse, and poverty, and who are in the care of Child Protective Services.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Meet the New ED	2
Children need your help	2
Mentoring-An amazing way...	3
Where does the money go?	3
Team Tolero Update	3
Bright Spots	4-5
Sew-A-Thon and Craft Corner	6
Holiday Roundup	7
Calendar	8

by Cathy Tullgren
Visitation Program Coordinator

Last week I was watching the cable network show called Most Amazing Videos. They were showing a video of the recent Amtrak train wreck in California. Two commuter trains collided and the devastation was horrific. The "Most Amazing" feature of the video was not the crash itself, but the many people who arrived on scene to help rescue the commuters trapped inside the blazing wreckage! Passersby and firefighters were climbing into the mangled mess for days after the accident to rescue the people trapped in the remains of the wreckage, even though there were many dangers present.

While watching this video, I was reminded of the current budget crisis our country is experiencing, but more specifically of the recent budget cuts our state legislature has made that are already having a devastating impact, both immediate and ongoing, in the social work arena. Workers from many agencies in Tucson and around the state have been laid off from their jobs and consequently the families we serve have had essential services reduced or eliminated all together.

While the effects of the immediate reductions are analogous to the Amtrak train crash and its aftermath, the future rescue and recovery efforts resulting from the initial "wreck" will take many months

and years to complete and will necessitate the help of a multitude of "hero" professionals as well as "passersby" who are willing to take a risk and enter the "blazing wreckage" to deliver those who would otherwise perish. You may be one of the people called upon to step into the rescue effort and mitigate the resulting damages.

One significantly damaged



A visit supervisor observes family during visit.

service is child-parent visitation. We have known for over 30 years the crucial need for children and parents to have regular, frequent, ongoing contact while children are out of the home in foster care situations. Families engaged in visitation services have a greater likelihood of being reunified. Parents are more likely to be proactive in working and completing their case plans, thereby having their children returned.

CPS has recognized this need by increasing funding for visitation. Whereas, as recently as five years ago families were generally limited to one hour of visitation per week, the frequency, quality and scope of these essential services has gradually been expanded, so that just prior to the recent budget cuts the majority of families were receiving at least 2 two-hour

visits per week, a 300% gain! But now, after these wonderful advances, in February, suddenly and unexpectedly, children's family visits were cut back by 50%.

This is only the beginning of the budget reduction after-effects! Client families and foster families will be experiencing many difficulties in the coming months, as will the CPS system collectively.

Some of our client families will be impacted forever because these reductions will negatively affect the ability of children to reunify with their families.

The rescue and recovery efforts must involve the contributions of "hero" professionals and volunteers alike. If you would be interested in volunteering, please call Aviva Volunteer Services to apply. There are many vacancies that need to be filled in the CPS offices, at other agencies such as Aviva, and in your communities and churches where our clients live. You could enter the recovery effort at the beginning of the wreckage and offer service and support to the victims of this collision whose gratitude will be most rewarding to you. You could be someone's "Hero" today!

Aviva Children's Services Staff

•••••
Anne Sankey
Executive Director

Bonnie Demorotski
Volunteer and
Community Resource
Coordinator

Cindy Lingel
Life Book Project
Coordinator

Susan Kelly
Volunteer Coordinator

Cathy Tullgren
Visitation Program
Coordinator

Marnie Pollard
Bags for Kids
Project Coordinator

Ginny Caballero
Human Resources
Coordinator

Ron Olin
Administrative Assistant

Tamera Tiedge
Donations Coordinator

Pat Palmer
Special Projects
Coordinator

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If you have article
contributions or ideas
for our Fall 2009
issue, please
contact Bonnie at
327-6779 ext. 13.

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All articles and photos
by Aviva Staff.
Volunteer Editor:
Kim Beck
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Many Children Need Your Help!



by Anne Sankey,
Executive Director

Economic failures and budget shortfalls are seriously affecting the children who need social service help to live safely. At a time when staff increases were needed, 30 Pima County CPS case workers and parent aides were laid off. And all remaining staff must take one or two furlough (no work/no pay) days per month; there will be no overtime allowed and jobs vacated in the future will not be filled.

There have been commensurate cutbacks in the agencies that support the work of CPS, and one seriously affected service is child-parent visitation. Aviva's visitation contract, under which 800-900 visits per month are supervised, has been reduced by approximately 30%. CPS paid staff, Aviva and other agencies who supervise visits can no longer support the need. Surprising to many, most formerly abused and neglected children languish without parental contact; regular visits are vital to their emotional well being and to determining whether or not they can ever go home. Loss of visits with their parents is bewildering, confusing and scary for children.

Volunteers are needed to help with transportation and visit supervision. There are also opportunities to provide other kinds of assistance to Case Managers in the CPS offices. Spurred by Pete Hershberger of the Arizona Center for the Study of Children and Families and by Dan Duncan of United Way, a group of concerned Pima County community leaders has come together with CPS and Juvenile Court staffs to address this void. They will be enlisting the media to get the word out to Tucson, requesting that volunteers fill the gaps until federal assistance can at least partially restore paid staff. They will ask for help from foster parents, child advocate groups and private social service agencies, but also from business and neighborhood groups, churches, police and fire fighters, professional associations, universities, service clubs, AAUW, AARP and retirement facility marketing directors.

Volunteers will work at the CPS offices or out in the community in groups. "Info Meetings" will be planned to help people explore the volunteer job choices and the requirements of each. People will be asked to make a commitment of 4 or more hours per week for 6-12 months, or more hours per week for fewer months. There is an application process and training is provided. Please seriously consider assisting. Please let your friends know about this opportunity to step up to serve our children.

*For More Information
Call: 327-6779 ext. 10
or email:
avivaadmin@avivatucson.org*

Meet New Executive Director!



Bob Heslinga

We are extremely pleased to announce that Robert (Bob) Heslinga has agreed to lead Aviva Children's Services! He has years of wonderful experience, his career beginning as a Director of Religious Education, the principal of an elementary school, and as a church business administrator in Illinois. Coming to Tucson in 1993, he served for seven years as the Executive Director of the Catholic Foundation for the diocese of Tucson and also simultaneously as its Chief Development Officer. Since 2000 he has worked with St. Gregory College Preparatory School as its Director of Advancement, with Project YES as Executive Director, with St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Catholic Church as its Ministry Coordinator and more recently, as a consultant for Project PEP. With a passion for helping the vulnerable and especially "the littlest", you can expect from Bob a wonderful contribution to CPS children and families.

Mentoring-An “Amazing” Way to Help!

“On your mark, get set, go!” On January 24, 2009, mentors and the children they serve participated in the *Amazing Race Comes to Old Tucson* event. Mentors and children were organized into teams such as the Hombres, the Outlaws, the Cowpokes, and the Haystack Gang. Each team had to follow clues to the different attractions where they completed an activity to get their next clue. After the dust settled, the mentors and children enjoyed a wonderful lunch together! This was the second *Mentor Get Together*. The first was last November when the mentors came to Aviva for dinner and the chance to socialize with other mentors. The *Mentor Get Together* events will be held every two months and will include a mini training session for the mentors and events for both the mentors and children.

A need for new people for the mentoring program continues. The goal is to double the size of the program this year. Children in CPS have so many changes in their lives and it is very important for them to have one person they can count on to be there throughout their journey in the CPS system. We encourage you to think about the difference you could make in a child's life and also talk to your friends and family about mentoring as there are so many children out there who need mentors of their own.

Call Susan Kelly at 327-6779 ext. 11 for more information.



Mentoring makes the world go round!



Antique cars help drive the day!

Donations-Where does the money go?

Two years ago, at the close of 2007, we reported after factoring out the holiday expenses, the largest percentages of the money from the Abused Children's Fund were spent on Food – 17%, Furniture – 15%, Transportation-12% and Clothing/Shoes/Diapers-11%.

In 2008, after the holiday expenses, the largest percentages were: Clothes/Shoes/Diapers – 15%, Food- 14%, Furniture – 13% and School Supplies/Education-11%.

The reason for the jump in the clothing line item was due to Aviva having to purchase large quantities of diapers since giving was down at the Community Diaper Bank. Also the same line item was high because of the record number of Payless Shoe gift cards we purchased in order for the children to get new shoes. Food and furniture requests stayed consistently high and this year we spent more on school supplies, classes and camps than we did bus passes.

Specifically, in 2008, we distributed over 15,000 diapers, 5800 pairs of undies and socks, 5800 articles of clothing, 2100 cans of formula and non-perishable food items, 222 beds/cribs and 151 other items of furniture, plus over 600 backpacks stuffed with donated school supplies.

So that is how the funds donated in 2008 were spent. There is never money taken away from the Abused Children's Fund for overhead.

Thanks so much to everyone who donates money and all of the tangible goods we receive. **We truly wouldn't be able to help the children without you!!!**

Team Tolero Update

Team Tolero, a bicycle racing team that has chosen to help support the children in CPS' care, filled the wish list of a family last Christmas. Team Tolero purchased a treadmill and four beautiful mountain bikes for a very grateful family!

In addition, Team Tolero purchased two exercise bikes in order for youth in two group homes to do their own version of the charity ride that the team completed in December. The children had to ride as many miles as the team and the winning group home was awarded a Wii game system. Both group homes came to Reid Park on December 16th to welcome the team home from their charity ride that started in San Diego and finished in Tucson!!!





Bright Spots



**We know that all of you are *Bright Spots* and we welcome the opportunity to highlight you or your group in upcoming newsletters. Call us if you want to see your Bright Spot here!
Thank you for all you do to make the lives of children brighter!**

Voyager Quilters and Nimble Fingers Sewing Group — have been long time supporters of CPS children. Along with the beautiful quilts and cute Bags for Kids bags these folks have made and donated, they participate in the Undies drive as well.

Life Book writer Laura Markowitz — takes on some of the more difficult requests for Life Books. Her researching and organization skills are traits of hers that shine through in each book she creates.

Marsha Holmberg — is an all around Aviva volunteer. She makes adorable quilts, bags, and finger puppet sets for CPS children and she graciously took on the position of Line Leader for the Bags for Kids project. Her energy and enthusiasm are contagious!

Julie Stephens — was once a Social Worker Assistant who wanted to help children in a different capacity so she became a Mentor. Julie has been matched with a teen girl and they have developed an incredible relationship. She is also a case aide with CPS.

Roger and Mary Baglien — came to Aviva to help children in the role of Community Advisors. Mary and Roger attended both the AYAP Thanksgiving festival as well as the Christmas party to meet and spend time with some of the teens in the Young Adult Program. Mary volunteered at the Baby Fair to provide child care and Roger donated a ride in his airplane to a teen for his 16th Birthday!



An aerial treat given with love!



Department of Correction's Winchester unit provided over \$4000 to purchase Christmas toys. Delivery by Administration Assistant III Danielle Hallahan and Correctional Officer III Eric Douglass



The inmates at the Arizona Department of Corrections Tucson Complex Winchester Unit — have been so generous with their time by folding the Aviva newsletters and with raising funds to purchase undies and socks and Christmas toys. **The Catalina Unit** has been equally as generous with their fundraising efforts to provide the money used to purchase bunkbeds, cribs, twin beds and food vouchers.

Barry Mosman — has the Santa spirit all year long. He helps with deliveries of donated goods throughout the year. At Christmas Barry is Santa Claus, literally, and his wife becomes Mrs. Santa for Aviva events. His goodwill inspires us all.

Joe & Vicky's Place — Holiday sponsors for more than 14 years, Jo and Vicky's Place has always found the time and resources to help needy families. Over the years, their efforts have helped close to 50 families.

Pat Gutierrez — This Agua Caliente teacher involves her students each year in giving back to the community by collecting backpacks, school supplies, clothing, and toys for needy children. Pat also asks her student's parents to send something to Aviva in lieu of giving her a teacher thank you gift at the end of the school year.

St. Alban's Youth Group — The Youth Group, along with Jessica Swift, have been sponsoring children and families for the holidays since 2003. Their generosity has helped so many families have a wonderful Christmas. These young people are a fine example of community service.

St. Francis in the Valley Church — Records dating back to 2001 speak of the kindness and generosity of this church's Outreach Committee. From quilts, baby items, socks and undies, scrapbooking supplies, and funds, all were donated to help children in the foster care system. Their long time service to these children is commendable.

Trinity Presbyterian Church — Trinity graciously shares their space with Aviva when an event needs a "home". Their staff members always make each of our staff as well as our guests feel welcome.



Linda Wetterlind with her birth sisters and her girlfriend "sisters" — have put together 10 teen bags for Christmas for over ten years. The "sisters" put things into the bags all year long, like hair dryers, special perfumes, bath soaps, scarves or whatever they find when they are out and about. In addition to these great stuffed bags, Linda also makes sure the VFW Post 10008 Women's Auxiliary collects toys and clothes at Christmas and during the year.

Kristine Catterton is one of those rare volunteers who come along once every couple of years. She is a Social Worker Assistant who after being laid off from her job decided now was the time to help children. She works almost full time in an investigation unit and is really a valued member of the staff. Kristine is always willing to do what is needed and then go beyond that.

Bright Spots



Ken Wickert and MISYS crew Annual Barbecue raised money for the holidays and they also contributed a lot of toys.



Holidays Made Brighter Because...



LDS Camino Principal Men's Group picked up donated toys from the Aviva office and unloaded them at the gym we used for wrapping days.



Pantano Christian Church volunteers wrapped presents for children in CPS care.



CSM Director of Operations, Francisco Ortega, brought his "My First Bike" event to Tucson. He and his wife, who made bags of goodies for each child, and his staff who cooked, set up tents with tables and chairs, matched each child with their first bike, and passed out their bags of goodies and helmet and then also had games for them to play. The Balloon Man was there to make balloon animals and crazy hats and just in case that wasn't enough, they also had jumping castles there!!



Santa giving lucky girl her first new bike!

Long time holiday sponsors, **Fennemore Craig Attorneys,** made many Christmas wishes come true for children in CPS care. They collect undies and socks in the spring and gift cards and other donations all year long. They also provide very generous cash assistance at the holiday times.

This year they sponsored the first AYAP Thanksgiving dinner. Thirty-five teens in independent living along with staff shared favorite recipes, cooked all day, made table decorations, played volleyball and other games, ate their scrumptious meal and then teens packed up the leftovers in order to savor the meal again on Thanksgiving day.

Mary Baglien looking over appetizers while AYAP Teens and Staff stuff one of the turkeys.



Francisco, his staff plus Anne Sankey in front of registration tent at My First Bike event.



Sewing for Love

2009 Sew-A-Thon Wrap-Up

For children in need, Valentine's Day 2009 was about more than candy and flowers, it really was a day of showing love through the 10th Annual Bags for Kids Sew-A-Thon. Approximately 165 volunteers worked tirelessly to complete 1,168 duffel bags! In return for their generosity, we hope these diligent volunteers enjoyed a day filled with beautiful weather, festive music, and the warmth of community fellowship. After ten years of hard work and dedication, clearly, Bags for Kids volunteers remain steadfast on their mission to eliminate the use of garbage bags as luggage and to provide Tucson's foster children with beautiful, handmade duffel bags! On behalf of Tucson's foster children we sincerely appreciate the generous contributions of our volunteers and community sponsors.

2009 Bags for Kids Sew-A-Thon Community and Corporate Sponsors

Praxair	Mariachi Tesoro de Tucson
Nadine's Bakery	Southwest Energy LLC
Safeway	Eegees
Cathey's Vac & Sew	El Charro Cafe
Frys Food Store	Gospel Rescue Mission
Arizona Vac/Sew Center	
The American Sewing Guild, Tucson, AZ Chapter	
Mama's Famous Pizza & Heros	
In My Shoes & The Foster Care Alumni Association of America (FCAA)	



Sew-A-Thon room full of busy volunteers



Sew-A-Thon lunch and Mariachi youth entertaining volunteers

The Bags for Kids Sew-A-Thon is sponsored collaboratively by the Community Partnership of Southern Arizona, the Division of Developmental Disabilities, Child Protective Services and Aviva Children's Services.



Peggy Lucas and Cindy Lingel, pictured at right, holding up Neptune's Sea Adventure



Linda Scheel and her mother Peggy and a few of their blanket creations!

CRAFT CORNER

Aviva distributed 1,276 quilts to children in CPS care in 2008.

Aviva distributed 3,059 Bags For Kids bags in 2008.

We have received many requests for fabric this Spring and our cupboards are BARE. If you clean out your fabric stash and donate it to Aviva, we will distribute that fabric to individuals and groups who will craft it into quilts and other items for children 0-21 years old who are in CPS care. If you prefer, gift cards to JoAnns, Hancocks, or any other fabric source, or a monetary donation, would be appreciated.

WHAT WE NEED:

- 100% cotton fabric
- Flannel
- Quilt batting (crib size to king size)
- Other mid-weight to heavy-weight woven fabrics
- Yarn
- Sewing supplies

Thank you for your contributions!
Aviva Children's Services is happy to provide you a tax receipt for your donations.

THANKS TO EVERYONE WHO MADE A CHILD'S HOLIDAY BRIGHTER!

Excerpts from families whose lives Aviva and its Staff and Volunteers have touched.

There are no words we could ever use to adequately thank you folks for the kindness you have bestowed on our family this Christmas season.

We thank you for buying us all gifts, even though we are complete strangers. It's as if you already knew us.

Aviva is truly a blessing in many lives and in ours!

Thank you for all the special thoughts that went in the gifts.

I don't know how many times I can say it, but
THANK YOU!

To Aviva- Thank you for making my holiday better and for kids "who are in hard times." You're the real heroes.



In spite of the rain, several hundred loyal supporters turned out for the 27th Annual **Sunriders Motorcycle Club** Holiday Toy Parade benefitting Aviva!!



**Sunriders
Motorcycle
Club Members**

Christmas by the Numbers

In spite of all of the economic pressure felt by everyone this holiday season this year the community came through by providing Christmas family sponsorships for 151 families with 847 adults and children. Pantano Christian Church members adopted 31 of the families and sent in hundreds of dollars plus toys and gifts to help other families with no sponsors. Aviva's own Pat Palmer and her friends and family adopted 16 families, Joe and Vickie's Place raised enough money to adopt eight families, Casa Niños Montessori School families adopted three families in CPS care, Pima County Sheriffs Auxiliary Volunteers adopted three families and there were many of you who adopted two or one family.

In addition to all of the families who were sponsored over 2200 children were also given handmade stockings filled with toys, stuffed animals and toys including balls, games and books for the family to share. This was all made possible because of the generosity of Aviva donors like: Accurate Products, Davis Monthan, St Odilia's Youth Group, Harley Davidson of Tucson, Cord Blood, Tucson Quilters Guild, U of A Lunar Lab, Desert Wood Crafters, Seniors for Kids, Latrikunda Transport Services, Sunquest, Pima Community College Campus Police, and Grace Quilting Group.

Your donations made so many Christmas wishes come true. Thank you on behalf of the children in CPS and all of us at Aviva. We couldn't do it without you.

Other Ways to Help

If you donate to the community through **United Way** and want to designate Aviva please use our number: **1113** or if you are a city or county worker our **ECAP number is 9797**. Aviva also qualifies for the working poor tax credit (if it is available this year). All donations made directly to Aviva are tax deductible and will be put in the Abused Children's Fund (unless otherwise directed) without any overhead or administrative charges taken out.



1735 E. Ft. Lowell Road
Suite 4

Tucson, AZ 85719

Phone: 520-327-6779

Fax: 520-327-6052

Email: avivaadmin@avivatucson.org

Web site: www.avivatucson.org

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SPRING/SUMMER CALENDAR

April

Child Abuse Prevention Month
National Volunteer Appreciation Month
Aviva Volunteer Appreciation Month

May

Undies Sundays or "Fundays"
Foster Care Awareness Month
Foster Parent Appreciation Month
May 2nd Blue Ribbon Heart Gallery Celebration
4:00 - 7:00 PM
Thoroughbred Nissan
5163 E 22nd Street

July/August

Back to School Supply Drive

If you want information about any of these events,
please contact the office at 327-6779.

NEWSLETTER PRINTING DONE IN-HOUSE; EDITING DONE BY VOLUNTEERS.

THANKS FOR RECYCLING THIS NEWSLETTER!

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