

## A New Partnership, a New Opportunity

SCAN has partnered with St. James's Children's Center to launch a pilot therapeutic preschool program. Three years ago, Executive Director Jeanine Harper and Mental Health Program Coordinator Lisa Wright began extensively researching the resources and skills needed to open a therapeutic program for at-risk preschool-aged children after identifying a need in the community. With help from our friends at Leadership Metro Richmond and our Therapeutic Preschool Task Group, SCAN made the decision to move forward with plans to help Richmond's at-risk preschool-aged children.

Based on best practices found through research and site visits, SCAN will prepare children who have social and emotional challenges for long-term educational success before they enter kindergarten. The program will help young children already involved in SCAN's programs, especially in our Child Advocacy Center, who have experienced trauma through abuse or neglect. The therapeutic program will also help children who are at-risk or have already been expelled from preschool due to behavioral issues stemming from abuse and neglect or other forms of trauma that prevent them from being successful in a school environment.



This program is possible through SCAN's partnership with St. James's Children's Center. The Children's Center is a culturally and academically diverse preschool that provides a nurturing environment for all children, including at-risk and special needs children. The Children's Center has been identified as a model for the Virginia Preschool Initiative.

The Children's Center will offer SCAN classroom space where our professionals will engage children 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. in high-quality early childhood education coupled with appropriate mental health services. We will involve the parents in all treatment, knowing from our other programs that by engaging parents we can truly set children up for future success. The therapeutic preschool will open February 1. We will keep you updated on our progress, our partners in the community and our new staff!

Read an article about increased preschool expulsion rates here: <http://tinyurl.com/2vtakn8>.

## CASA Volunteer Tiffany Jana



Tiffany Jana is one of SCAN's 72 CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocate) volunteers. She graduated in October from the 35-hour training and observation program. Tiffany said she became a volunteer because of her own experience with her children in the court system.

"The whole thing can be so confusing for children," she said. "They can feel so disempowered. As soon as I found out about CASA I knew I wanted to join to make a difference."

Because she is trilingual, Tiffany is a valuable asset and improves SCAN's ability to serve Spanish-speaking clients. With experience speaking and translating both Spanish and German, Tiffany is helping SCAN reach Hispanic families in the Juvenile and Domestic Relations Court system. Her first case is a family with five children. Their home life is very complex and their support network consists of many different family members from different ethnicities and cultures. Tiffany said her upbringing in El Paso, Texas has helped her breach the communication and cultural gaps for the family of the children she serves.

Like any CASA volunteer, she has gotten to know the family members, guidance counselors and teachers at the children's schools and the children themselves. With the expectation to visit with each child twice a month, Tiffany has dedicated a significant amount of hours to ensure she sees all five children. Her goal is to shorten the amount of time they spend in the court system and help them settle into safe and permanent homes. We thank Tiffany and all of our CASA volunteers for their dedication and service!

## How Do We Know We Make a Difference?

Through our Family Support Program, SCAN served 384 parents and 181 children during the 2009-2010 fiscal year. We currently offer 14 weekly psycho-educational groups for parents who have abused or are at risk of abusing their children.

Our work with parents is based on best practices, which we are constantly staying abreast of through research and training. Along with exit surveys and observations by our master's-level facilitators, one of the most important measures we use to gauge our success is the Adult-Adolescent Parenting Inventory, or AAPI.

The AAPI measures parents on their ability to set age-appropriate expectations for their children, their level of empathy, their beliefs in corporal punishment, their understanding of children's and parent's roles and their

concepts of their children's power and independence. Before they begin attending group sessions and after they have graduated, clients are given 40 statements about parenting in which they rate the statements in five different ways from "strongly agree," to "strongly disagree," to "uncertain."

Facilitators and parents are able to review the final scores of this nationally recognized test and evaluate problem areas parents have and in the end see how they've improved. By using this evidence-based approach, SCAN hopes to strategically change harmful family behavior and empower parents to protect their children. To learn more about AAPI, please visit <http://www.aapionline.com/>.

## Lisa Wright, Mental Health Program Coordinator

### **When did you first come to SCAN?**

I began in November 2004 as the part-time mental health therapist for the CAC. My initial role was to set up the mental health program, which included purchasing supplies, setting up play therapy rooms, establishing curriculum for therapy and providing therapy for children who had experienced sexual and/or severe physical abuse. My position grew to full-time within a year then developed into a coordinator position as we added mental health staff.

### **What mental health services do we offer at the CAC?**

We provide individual therapy for caregivers and children. Many caregivers have abuse history themselves and need additional support and guidance as they work through the abuse of their child. We provide joint and family sessions to help the family understand how to manage symptoms of the abuse and to assist with learning new and healthy coping strategies. In addition, we offer a weekly support group for all caregivers.

### **What is your average day like?**

My days vary at the CAC, but usually include afternoon sessions with children, supervision of staff and clinical interns, completing documents for case files, meeting with caregivers of new clients and attending meetings for our work at the CAC.

I usually have between 20 to 25 clients on my caseload.

### **Let's talk about our therapeutic preschool...**

We are very excited to be opening a new Therapeutic Preschool for children ages 3 to 5 who have social and emotional difficulties. We are very excited to provide a therapeutic classroom that will include individual therapy for children and their caregivers, highly trained staff to assist with learning healthy relationship skills. We are looking forward to providing more support and intervention because we will have them for several hours every day. We will provide a nurturing and supportive environment for children and their caregivers – many of whom have never been nurtured or taken care of themselves and we want to show them how wonderful it feels. We will have the children for at least a full year and possibly two.

Our goal is to get them to the point where they can do well in kindergarten and/or return to a typical preschool. The environment at St. James's Children's Center is very warm and welcoming.



## We are Going Green!

SCAN is going green. Instead of an annual newsletter in the mail, you can stay up-to-date with our monthly e-newsletter. This will save resources and enable us to reach our supporters with news, needs and perspectives more frequently. If you are not already receiving our e-newsletter and would like to, please visit [www.grscan.com](http://www.grscan.com).

## Forensic Interviewing at the Child Advocacy Center

At the Child Advocacy Center, our Multidisciplinary Teams consist of all service providers involved in cases of severe physical and sexual abuse, including law enforcement, child protective services, prosecution, mental health, medical services, and victim advocacy. Each are a part of a coordinated effort to help children and their parents recover from abuse and help prosecute their offenders. An integral part of success at the CAC lies in our forensic interviews.

Forensic interviewing is a first step at the CAC to find out if a child has been maltreated. The specialized interview process is designed to produce evidence that will stand up in court if a child's severe physical or sexual abuse leads to criminal prosecution. Successful forensic interviews are legally sound because the interviewers employ non-leading techniques and the CAC carefully documents the interviews. Recorded interviews can be used as evidence in court.

SCAN takes several measures to ensure the highest level of competency. SCAN trains MDT members, including several VCU Health System nurses and CAC staff members, to conduct forensic interviews. There is always someone available to perform this central part of our work at the CAC. Through peer reviews and offering other ongoing training, SCAN ensures our interviewers utilize the most current research and recommendations for child forensic interviews.

To learn more about forensic interviews and National Child Advocacy Center standards, please visit <http://nationalcac.org/>.

## Board Member Mindy Meredith

### **When did you first get involved?**

Eight years ago, I went to the Progressive Dinner and I thought it was a lot of fun. I didn't really know a lot about the organization, and then I learned what SCAN was all about. I eventually got involved with recruiting hosts for the SCAN Progressive Dinner. I served on this committee for six years and chaired it two years. Last year I co-chaired the Progressive Dinner with Sasha Hogan.

### **Why do you stay involved?**

I have an early childhood special education degree. I worked with social services, with the administration and created educational plans for the kids. I ended up leaving that field and got into high-tech sales, but missed it and SCAN was a really good fit for me. I was also impressed by Jeanine.

Also, when I was growing up we used to have foster children. My mother was a single mother with three girls and she always ingrained in us to give and to help.

### **Why should others get involved with SCAN?**

I think the big why is because there are so many innocent children who need our help. If we don't help them, then they won't get the help they need. When I taught, there was no SCAN or CAC or CASA. You all had to rely on the process of the government, and a lot of kids got lost. If you can get children while they are young, you can help them and their parents.



## In-Kind Needs:

Snacks,  
Art supplies,  
Craft supplies,  
Educational materials,  
Office supplies and  
Bus tickets



Thank you to all of our community partners. Below is a highlight of the support SCAN has received during our 10-11 fiscal year. For more information about our supporters and the services they help us provide or for ideas on how you can help stop child abuse now, please visit [www.grscan.com](http://www.grscan.com).

## 23rd Annual SCAN Christmas Party

Our 23<sup>rd</sup> Annual Christmas Party was full of fun and holiday cheer at the Science Museum of Virginia on December 3. To see all of the photos, please visit us on our Flickr account: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/52424144>



## Santa Shop 2010

We were able to create happy homes during the holidays for more than 150 families who received gifts for their children.

We could not have done it without F.W. Sullivan's, who hosted a Toy Drive Happy Hour. We also could not have done it without our Board of Young Professionals and donations from board members Dana Garland, Marsha Hawkins, Trisha Krause, Margaret Keightley, Mindy Meredith, Leslie Parpart, Ashley Reyher, Martha Speight and Heather Swinson. We'd also like to thank Anne Jarboe, Erin Fratkin, Mrs. Miller's first-grade class at Betty Weaver Elementary School, The Junior League, and The Brink's Company.



### FIRST QUARTER CONTRIBUTORS

#### Champion (\$10,000+)

- Verizon
- Mary Anderson Harrison Foundation
- Commonwealth of Virginia Department of Social Services Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Program
- Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services
  - West Charitable Trust

#### Become a CASA Volunteer!

If you would like to become a Court Appointed Special Advocate, we are hosting "CASA 101 - Intro to CASA" on February 1 and March 1 at noon in the Oliver Hill Courts building. A light lunch will be provided at no charge. If you are interested in attending these information sessions, please contact Volunteer Coordinator Jana Blue at [jana.blue@richmondgov.com](mailto:jana.blue@richmondgov.com) or 804-646-0519. Spring training will begin on March 15.

### Protector's Circle Members Change Lives

Our Protector's Circle members are a select group of individuals who support SCAN by making an annual gift of \$1,000 or more to our child abuse prevention and treatment services. During the annual event on Nov. 17 to celebrate their commitment to SCAN, members were able to hear first-hand stories from two CASA volunteers and two young women SCAN helped through our Family Support Program at New Life for Youth.

Last year SCAN began an important partnership with New Life to help the people who come to them in the worst circumstances. Many of the men and women face challenges such as drug and alcohol addiction. Through their faith-based program, New Life teaches these clients how to change their lives and after the year-long program New Life hopes clients can return to their families and gain meaningful employment.

SCAN works with the mothers and expectant mothers who live in the Women's Mercy House at New Life. Claudia Perez, Family Support Program facilitator, leads a 20-week nurturing parenting group for these mothers. We have graduated six mothers and will begin a new class in January. Many of the mothers in the group have lost custody of their children.

Leanne was one of these mothers. She came to New Life as an alternative to spending time in jail. She told Protector's Circle Members that she had been

battling a heroin addiction and been convicted of several misdemeanors, mostly related to stealing. Her child had been removed from her home by Child Protective Services.

The program at Mercy House empowered Leanne to become sober and to find new meaning in her life. SCAN helped Leanne find meaning and understanding for being a good parent. After graduating from our parenting group, Leanne is on her way to gaining custody of her daughter. We thank Leanne for sharing her story with our Protector's Circle members.

We plan to expand our work at New Life and offer parenting groups for fathers in the Men's Ranch. To learn more about New Life for Youth, please visit: [www.newlifeforyouth.com/](http://www.newlifeforyouth.com/).





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**SCAN's Protector's Circle for major donors**

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**Coming Events**

**SCAN 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary**

In 2011, SCAN will bring back the Icebreaker event early in the year to kick off our 20th Anniversary. We are planning several other events throughout the year. Friend us on Facebook, follow us on Twitter and visit us at [www.grscan.com](http://www.grscan.com) to stay up to date and learn how you can help us celebrate! Contact Bethany Leighton to get involved at [bleighton@grscan.com](mailto:bleighton@grscan.com).



**Heartbeat of Hope – February 17, 2011**

Heartbeat of Hope will be hosting a benefit for SCAN and Anna Julia Cooper Episcopal School 7 p.m. to 11 p.m. at the Tuckahoe Women's Club. Ike Stubblefield will perform with other guests throughout the night. Learn more at [www.grscan.com](http://www.grscan.com).

**SCAN 5K – February 26, 2011**

Run! Jog! Walk! – It doesn't matter just as long as you come out and support SCAN's work to help Richmond's most vulnerable children. Join us in the Race to Protect Children. Register at [www.grscan.com/news](http://www.grscan.com/news).

**Bourbon Street in Shockoe Bottom – March 5, 2011**

You won't want to miss the fourth annual Bourbon Street in Shockoe Bottom hosted by SCAN's Board of Young Professionals. This event will be held at the Main Street train station. Check back at [www.grscan.com/news](http://www.grscan.com/news) for more information and to purchase tickets.