



newsletter

A Quarterly Update On Family Service Of The Piedmont, Inc.

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CCCS Addresses Housing, Credit Crisis



▲ Linda McKnight (center) and CCCS staff

People run into financial difficulties for a variety of different reasons. Even at the best of times, a lack of financial planning or understanding of the options can quickly lead to financial challenges. In the current economic climate, rising gas prices, layoffs and the recent mortgage crisis all conspire to make things even more difficult for many people.

Family Service's **Consumer Credit Counseling Service (CCCS)** offers free financial counseling, education and debt management programs designed to forestall financial difficulties before they arise, and to assist families in solving current money problems.

New CCCS Director **Linda McKnight**, who started with the agency in March, says the biggest challenge at the moment is the increase in foreclosures as homeowners find themselves unable to keep up with mortgage payments.

"We're working with a company right now that is about to lay off 1500 more people," McKnight said. "We're doing a lot of housing counseling –

partnering with lenders trying to reduce interest rates, or work out a new payment plan. We're working with people on trying to save their homes.

The rise in foreclosures is not only due to layoffs, McKnight explained: "A lot of people got in with variable interest rates, and now they can't make the rising payments. And sometimes people are keeping up with their mortgage, but then using their credit cards to make other payments, so their credit card bills are out of control"

The federal government has responded with a series of grants to fund housing counseling and foreclosure mitigation initiatives nationwide. CCCS received its first portion of the money earlier this year, and will use it to expand services including hiring two additional counselors. McKnight's staff currently consists of six counselors, a housing educator and a four-person support team.

As well as helping clients better understand and control their finances, counselors will often consult with lenders to establish a payment plan the client can afford. Once the counselor explains the situation and shows the client is interested in making their payments, McKnight said, the lenders are usually happy to help them make it work.

"Our counselors are very well trained," she said, "They have a lot of connections with the lenders where they can call and negotiate new interest rates, or maybe adjust the payments so that people are just paying what they owe and not accruing more interest."

Continued on back page.

New Family Service Guild Formed in High Point



▲ High Point Guild members Stephanie Beaver, Christi Morgan, Emilee Brigman and Gina Laney

Family Service is excited to announce the formation of a new volunteer group dedicated to supporting its activities in the High Point area.

The Guild of Family Service of High Point Foundation held its first meeting in February, with inaugural co-chairs **Emilee Brigman** and **Amanda Covington** presiding over a membership of about 30 High Point volunteers who have come together to raise funds and friends for Family Service in their community.

The concept was inspired by the existing Guild

of Family Service of Greensboro Foundation, which since 1995 has established a reputation for outstanding volunteer service in support of the agency in that city. The idea of starting a sister Guild in High Point has been floated before, but this year Family Service of High Point Foundation chair **Cindy Rice** got the ball rolling by recruiting two people well known in the High Point community, **Jeanné Dulion-Thorn** and **Candy Fenn**, who became the Guild's founding members and the driving force behind establishing the new group.

Their first step was to find willing co-chairs. "I knew Emilee was heading the Oyster Roast this year, and Amanda always does a party around Christmas to collect gifts for Family Service," Fenn recalled. "We got them involved and they were both real enthusiastic. They started getting more people together and we've had a fabulous response. We've had some people call and ask if they could join!"

Continued on page 4.

A Letter From The President & CEO



Our agency continues to change and evolve to meet the needs of individuals and families in the Piedmont Triad. We face challenges every day with increasing numbers of children and adults who are

experiencing violence and abuse, as well as continued discussions on the state level of changes in the service system for consumers of mental health and substance abuse services. A recent survey of consumers served by our agency indicated an overwhelming positive response to the services received, even as we continue to adjust to a state system that is in the throws of transition. Our mission of building safe and healthy families will remain steadfast despite this chaotic system, and our priority will remain in helping individuals and families who need assistance.

Through a generous grant from the **Moses Cone-Wesley Long Foundation** and the **United Way of Greater Greensboro**, Family Service of the Piedmont is coordinating Guilford County's Ten Year Plan to End Chronic Homelessness. Our agency is working with local public and private organizations

to ensure that this plan moves forward in a positive direction that will eliminate chronic homelessness in Guilford County.

I am also delighted to announce a new group of community volunteers supporting Family Service of the Piedmont in High Point. **The Guild of Family Service of High Point Foundation** – modeled after our existing Greensboro Guild – was convened this year and its members have wasted no time in putting together their first “fundraising and friend-raising” event. My thanks to everyone involved in creating this exciting new volunteer initiative.

Finally, congratulations are in order to **Annia Cuebas**, the most recent winner of the agency's staff CARE award. Since coming to Family Service two years ago, Annia's devotion to her clients – and to advocating for the needs of the Latino/Hispanic community – has quickly earned her the admiration of her co-workers. I would like to thank Annia, and all Family Service staff members who work daily to empower individuals and families throughout the Piedmont Triad to make positive changes in their lives and strengthen our community.

Thomas R. Bonney

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High Point Youth Gather for Middle School Party

Youth from High Point and the surrounding communities danced the night away at the seventh annual **Middle School Party** on May 17th. More than 100 sixth, seventh and eighth graders attended the event. DJ **Brandon Baughman** provided the music, and drew prizes of merchandise donated by local merchants.

The event was organized by volunteers **Cathy Procton, Pam Green** and **Beth Breece**. “I thought it was absolutely one of the best yet,” Procton said, “thanks to the fine weather and beautiful venue of the pool at **High Point Country Club**.”

The Middle School Party was sponsored by 72 youth hosts, along with **Larry B. Brown Insurance, Cornerstone Health Care, McDonalds of High Point, Deborah Novak, D.S.S., Smart Choice, Spatial Data, Triad Eye Associates** and **Vann York Auto Group**.

The committee would also like to thank underwriters **Beth and David Breece, Martha and Charles Harris, Cathy and Brad Procton, Audrey and John Yowell** and **High Point Country Club at Emerywood**, as well as **Terry Aiken** for coordinating the chaperones.

This year's event raised more than \$7,800 for Family Service of High Point Foundation.



Guild Brings a Splash of Style to Greensboro

The Guild of Family Service of Greensboro Foundation teamed up with Indigo the Salon in April to present a new concept awareness and fundraising event called Greensboro Style to benefit Family Service of the Piedmont and Healthy Start.

"This was a high-fashion event featuring the latest in hairstyles, cosmetics, spa services and fashions in an up-scale extravaganza never before seen in Greensboro," said event chair **Carla Robinson**. "Our partner, Indigo the Salon, helped to make the event unique and exciting. Major sponsors **Tryon Distributing** and **NC Highland Brewery** donated wine and beer which they served in a tasting format, and **BRIXX Pizza** donated and served delicious appetizers, complete with a punch fountain."

The Guild initially conceived the event as an extension of the spring baby shower for Healthy Start they had presented in previous years. "It all just began from an idea – and it grew!" Robinson said, "More than any of us could have imagined."

Hosted by Mistress of Ceremonies **Rosemary Plybon** (WFMY News 2), the centerpiece of the event on April 25th was a fashion show featuring 28 volunteer and professional models adorned in the latest clothing, accessories and hairstyles from 14 participating area boutiques. Past Guild Presidents modeled jewelry from **Mark Holder Jeweller**. More than 200 enthralled attendees crowded around the runway or viewed the show on large video screens suspended from the ceiling.

Guests also enjoyed a fabulous raffle, with prizes including certificates and merchandise from local businesses, and top prizes of a spa package from Indigo and a custom-made pair of yellow gold sapphire and diamond earrings from Mark Holder Jeweller. A beautiful painting by local artist **Vicki Johnson**, commissioned for the event, was sold at auction.

As well as achieving its goal of making the work of Family Service known to a wider audience, the event raised more than \$20,000 for Family Service of Greensboro Foundation. In addition, the Healthy Start baby shower concept was still present as Guild members and Girl Scout Troop #546 (led by **Katie Kritzer**) collected gifts of baby products from their friends and neighbors, and attendees were given the option of donating a baby gift in lieu of the door price.

"We collected three car loads and one truck load of gifts for mommies who face high stress factors that make parenting an even tougher job," Robinson said.

The Guild and Family Service thanked 24 Trendsetter couples and individuals for their help in making the event such a success, as well as sponsors **Buchanan Printing and Graphics, JM Designs, Peggy and Marion Follin, Judy Frederick and Randy Kritzer, Ellen Kavanagh, Kohls, Becky and Bob Koonts, Sylvia and Jim Merritt, Moses Cone Health Systems, Osborne-Brumsey & Associates, Physicians for Women of Greensboro, Rebecca and Mike Schlosser, Stephen and Carla Robinson** and **Taylor Discount Tire & Automotive**.

Special thanks also go to the Indigo staff members and models who committed many hours in preparing for the show. Honorary Mother and Daughter Co-Chairs **Ellen Kavanagh** and **Mary Ellen Kavanagh-Lowry** were instrumental in making the event possible.

"We had a very good crowd," said Robinson, "And we're very pleased with that for a first-time event. We are continuing to hear positive comments: a new type of fundraiser; something never before seen; very upscale; fun and different. And many of the boutiques and businesses who participated in or heard about Greensboro Style want to be included if we do the project again."

Fashion Show



▲ MC Rosemary Plybon introduces the show



▲ Guild President Sylvia Merritt with Greensboro Style Chair Carla Robinson



▲ Mother and Daughter Co-Chairs Ellen Kavanagh and Mary Ellen Kavanagh-Lowry, with Elizabeth Kavanagh and Rebecca Schlosser



▲ Healthy Start staff pose with the donated baby items



▲ Maqz King, Carla Robinson, Hilary Wallace, Jody Susong, Cheryl Whalen and Melissa Wallace

New Family Service Guild Formed in High Point Continued from page 1.

Dulion-Thorn hosted an initial get-together at her home in January to discuss the purpose of the Guild, and work out first steps. "We decided to do it as a cocktail party, to have fun and get everyone interested," Fenn said. The party was well attended and included Greensboro Guild representatives **Magz King** and **Carlyn Myers**, who were able to offer advice on organization and possible projects.

In particular, the High Point volunteers were impressed with the baby showers for Healthy Start that the Greensboro Guild had conducted in the past. "We also knew **Furnitureland Rotary Club** did a charity golf tournament that last year benefited Family Service of High Point Foundation," Brigman said, "So we said, why not partner with them and have the baby shower and the golf tournament?"

"Then **Mary Keever** came up with the name – 'Divots & Diapers' – and everybody thought that was great!"

Guild members were each equipped with 30-50 paper grocery bags, graciously donated by **Harris Teeter**, which they delivered to neighborhood doorsteps along with a flyer describ-

ing the event and the Healthy Start program's needs. "We dropped them off on a Wednesday, the neighbors had a few days to come through with the supplies, and we picked them up again on Saturday," Brigman explained.

The donations came pouring in. "I've had people up until yesterday say, I've been out of town but I've got this and I want to give," Brigman said. "It's been fabulous!"

On June 12th, Guild members and Furnitureland Rotarians gathered at **Willow Creek Country Club** for the golf tournament. The Guild had assisted in signing up 27 hole sponsors and several teams of players. On the day, 36 golfers turned out to compete on a beautiful summer afternoon, and afterwards were rewarded with refreshments and dinner at an evening barbecue reception.

"We are loving it!" said event chair **Christi Morgan**. "It's a lot of fun."

Other Guild members agree. "It's been a wonderful day," Brigman said. "From the golf tournament to the diaper bags – it just shows

what a warm community we have. They really opened their hearts."

Brigman has described the new Guild as a group of "warm-hearted worker bees," and that description seems to be borne out in the level of involvement and dedication the members cheerfully display.

"This group of women have tremendous talents and a will to make a difference in other peoples lives," Dulion-Thorn said. "They know how fortunate they are and want to give back to a community that they call home."

"I think it's important for everyone to give back," echoed Covington. "I love to volunteer – and Family Service is a well-rounded agency that serves lots of needs in High Point."

"I think this will definitely make people more aware, and get people interested in helping partner with Family Service, both financially and through volunteering," Fenn concluded. "This group of girls – they are so enthusiastic and energetic. They have such great ideas. They are smart, smart girls. We're so lucky to have them!"



▲ Sue Spidell, Candy Fenn, Jody Susong and Emilee Brigman display the baby items collected.



▲ Mary Keever and Caroline Culler (with daughter Libby) help set up for the golf tournament



▲ Marc DeLille and William Laney discuss golf strategy before play



▲ Furnitureland Rotary Club President Barbara Frye assists with registration



▲ Family Service team members Carroll Ann Miller, Tim Spurgeon, Linda McKnight and Michaelann Todt



▲ The tournament begins with a shotgun start



▲ Bill Dyson chops pork from the barbecue



▲ Terry Aiken chats with Jeff Morgan



▲ Golfers and Guild members assemble for dinner

Annia Cuebas: CARE Award Winner



Annia Cuebas
CARE Award Winner

Job Title: Community Support, Latino Initiative

Born: Carolina, Puerto Rico

Started with Family Service: May 2006

Favorite Part of the Job: Working directly with the client; being the voice for those who need the most and are afraid to ask for help.

In April, Family Service of the Piedmont presented the CARE Award to Community Support Specialist **Annia Cuebas** in recognition of the outstanding level of care she provides to her clients. The award is given twice each year to a Family Service staff member, selected by their peers, who serves as a shining example of the agency's core values in action: **C**ustomers, **c**o-workers and **c**ommunity **A**re always empowered, **R**espected and receive quality service **E**very time.

As one of the agency's bilingual staff, Cuebas is instrumental in seeing that the needs of Spanish-speaking clients are met. Presenting the award, Marketing and Development Officer **Jody Susong** described how Cuebas' commitment to care extends to all her clients, whatever their cultural background.

"Annia has held several positions in the Agency – each one allowing her to better serve the Spanish-speaking community," Susong said. "She is passionate about providing services and support to not only our Spanish speaking clients but to all clients. Just talk to her for a few minutes about the needs of Hispanic/Latino clients and this will be crystal clear. Annia has also worked hard to advocate for the needs of the agency's other bilingual staff, so they won't experience burn-out."

As part of last year's Strategic Planning Committee, Cuebas played a key role in developing one of the five Critical Goal Categories: Identify and serve emerging populations with an initial focus on the Hispanic/Latino population. "Annia's input was critical and she wowed board members with her presentation of this portion of the Strategic Plan," Susong said.

Cuebas was also instrumental in the formulation of the agency's Language Assistance Plan – an initial action step for the Critical Goal Category – and plays an active role on the Cultural Competency Committee. "She knew work (a lot of it) needed to be done to move forward and she took action without hesitation, motivating others along the way," Susong said. "Annia is the friendly, Spanish-speaking voice of Family Service of the Piedmont! Her dedication, expertise and customer service is invaluable to the Agency, our staff and our clients."

Accepting the award, Cuebas thanked her co-workers and reiterated her enthusiasm for her work at Family Service, and for the clients she serves. "This is my passion," she said. "I love doing what I do. I hope I keep doing it, and do it better every day."

Annual Campaign Donors

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Continued on page 7.

Record Turnout for Greensboro Oyster Roast

A beautiful spring evening at the spacious grounds of **Pearce and Anne Landry's** Irving Park home brought out a tremendous crowd of Greensboro partygoers for the fifth annual **Greensboro Oyster Roast** on April 18th. More than 520 people showed up to enjoy the oysters and other edibles provided by **Pepper Moon Catering** and the music of the **Mediocre Bad Guys**, as well as to meet old friends and make new ones while raising funds to support the work of Family Service of the Piedmont in Greensboro.

"It was a great success!" said event chair **Elizabeth Rankin**. "We were so pleased with the response from the community and thrilled with the amount of money we raised for such a worthy cause."

The event raised projected proceeds in excess of \$64,000.00 for Family Service

of Greensboro Foundation.

Rankin's volunteer committee members included **Missy Akin, Jeanne Blaisdell, Teddi Carr, Melissa Coker, Debbie Fennie, Beth Harrington, Sunny Lawson, Mary McGinley, Meredith Scott, Dallas Stanley, Heather Suire, Anna Wall and Jacalyn White**.

The committee and Family Service would like to extend special thanks to the **148 host couples and individuals** whose sponsorship made the event such a great success. Special thanks also to Platinum level sponsors **Kathryn and Bobby Long** and **The Whitener Foundation** for their outstanding generosity, and to Gold sponsors **AIG United Guaranty, The Ellison Company** and **I.H. Caffey Distributing**. Sponsors at the Silver level were **Anonymous (2), Frank Auman,**

Buchanan Printing and Graphics, Carolina Bank, Cellular Sales, Double Door Collections, General Casualty Insurance, Jen and Jay Haldeman, The Law Offices of Jeffrey K. Peraldo, Lincoln Financial Group, Senn Dunn Insurance, Systems Contractors, The Trust Company of the South and Wachovia Bank. Bronze Sponsors were **The Barber Center for Plastic Surgery, The Bell Foundation, Allison and Bobby Ellington, Genuity Concepts, Margaret Ann and Cam Hall, Leapfrog Marketing, Molly and Chris Lindsey, Rebekah and Mike Mango, Regions Bank, Dallas and Chris Stanley and Terminix.**

At the end of the evening, a fabulous rope of pearls and matching earrings were given away in the raffle.



▲ Home Hosts Pearce and Anne Landry



▲ Members of the Oyster Roast Committee



▲ Missy and Bobby Akin with Senator Kay and Chip Hagan



▲ Judge Polly Sizemore with Denise Turner and Chip Roth



▲ Sue Spidell, Magz King, Susan and R.E. Rose



▲ Ellen Kavanagh with Linda Carr



▲ Last year's hosts, Pam and Steve Hassenfelt



▲ Lynn Black, Judge Michelle Fletcher Free, Lynne Gladstone, Amy Stern and Ken Free



▲ Carlyn Myers, Jennifer Cox and raffle winner Carla Robinson

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Continued from page 5

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CCCS Addresses Housing, Credit Crisis

Continued from page 1.

When helping people who would otherwise not have been able to pay off their debt, the agency receives a small portion of the money collected back from the lenders, McKnight explained. This revenue funds the program and allows it to operate without cost to the client.

Because of the increased need for counseling and debt management, CCCS is currently experiencing long wait times as more clients are coming in. "Already this year we have counseled more than 2000 people," McKnight said, "And it's growing. We have a four week waiting time right now - we are scheduling for next month already. That's why we are taking on two more counselors."

Another problem is that people calling in to CCCS may have specific questions that need to be addressed - and the person answering

the phone or scheduling the appointment may not necessarily have the answers. McKnight is working on a system where counselors will be available to talk to callers immediately by phone, before setting up a full in-person visit.

In addition to offering counseling to those already struggling with their finances, other programs at CCCS are more proactive, aimed at preventing problems before they arise. These include pre-purchase and post-purchase education for first-time homebuyers, reverse mortgage counseling, and monthly workshops on financial literacy. All CCCS programs are free of charge and available to all, McKnight said.

"This can be for anybody," she emphasized. "It's not just people who are in poverty. If you have any kind of debt - or even prior to debt, if you want some counseling on how to stay out of debt - come early and try to get help. Don't wait until it's a major problem. The lenders are so willing to help you if they know - before you're six months behind on your house payment. While your record's still good, come and get the help you need."

Please Join Us For **Wine on Wednesday**

Fleming's Steakhouse
The Shops at Friendly Center,
Greensboro

Wednesday, July 30th
5:00 - 8:00 p.m.

Sample wine by the glass at a
discounted price
and light hors d'oeuvres.

*All proceeds go to Family
Service of the Piedmont.*

SAVE THE DATE

Family Service of the Piedmont's Annual Meeting 2008

"Star Quality Service"

Thursday, October 9th, 11:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.

Sedgefield Country Club

Purchase tickets online at www.safeandhealthyfamilies.com/give

Our Vision

Building Safe and Healthy Families

Our Mission

Family Service of the Piedmont empowers individuals and families to restore hope, achieve stability and thrive through quality support services, advocacy and education.



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