



STORYTELLER

CARING FOR OUR COMMUNITY'S CHILDREN

A HISTORIC MOMENT: STORYTELLER OPENS SECOND PRESCHOOL FOR HOMELESS CHILDREN

Announces Campaign to Raise Money to Operate New Center

Twenty years ago, volunteers pushed aside cots at Transition House to make room for a group of homeless children, and Storyteller Children's Center was founded. Since that time, Storyteller has gradually grown and expanded, moving locations and adding more children. Then last month, Storyteller made a dramatic announcement: it was opening an additional preschool for homeless children, and undertaking a \$3.2 million expansion campaign to raise money for the school.

On March 19, Storyteller held a ribbon-cutting ceremony to officially open its new school, located on De La Vina Street, just two blocks from its current location. Just a week earlier, Storyteller held a celebration to kick off the fundraising campaign, called *Campaign for the Future*, at the home of Nancy and Kevin O'Connor.

"This is a very special moment in the history of Storyteller," said Campaign Chair Yvette Giller, as she announced to the nearly 100 people gathered for the kick-off party that the fundraising campaign had raised nearly 50 percent of its goal. "The support we've received so far has been overwhelming." Giller also announced 100 percent participation in the campaign by the Storyteller Board of Directors.

For the past several years, Storyteller has consistently had a waiting list of 50 to 80 children at any one time. So the

board of directors decided it needed to do something to help those children, and started looking for a location for a new school. But with difficult zoning regulations and a high-priced real estate market, the task seemed nearly impossible.

Then last spring, a miracle happened: another preschool, permits and licenses already in place, came up for sale. More importantly, the Orfalea Fund made an exceptionally generous offer: it bought the property and is leasing it to Storyteller rent-free for a decade with options for additional five-year contracts.

"The site was too good to be true," said Giller. "It was meant to be."

In July, the Orfalea Fund, a foundation started by Kinko's founder Paul Orfalea and his wife Natalie to support high-quality educational programs that promote healthy development, closed on the purchase of the charming Craftsman-style house. The building had formerly housed the for-profit preschool called Transitions. Eight days later, Storyteller moved a small group of pre-kindergarten children to the school and hired one additional teacher.

"Storyteller is so thankful that the Orfalea Fund offered to provide the facility for us," said Jon Clark, president of the board of directors. "It's a dream come true."

Continued on following page



Photo: Roe Anne White

Jo Saxon, Jon Clark and Yvette Giller

MISSION STATEMENT

Storyteller Children's Center provides quality, tuition-free early childhood education for homeless and at-risk children, as well as comprehensive support services for their families.

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DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

Dear Friends,

As supporters of Storyteller, we know in our hearts that providing a safe place and quality preschool education for Santa Barbara's homeless children is the right thing to do.

Those of us who have been around Storyteller for awhile know that many of these children have had childhood experiences you wouldn't wish on anyone. We know our programs offer them, and their families, an excellent opportunity to make a significant difference in their lives.

Storyteller's \$3.2 million *Campaign for the Future* will allow us to establish a second school and meet the needs of the children and families on our waiting list, whom we are not currently able to serve.

Our heartfelt appreciation is extended to the Orfalea Fund and to our *Campaign for the Future* donors and volunteers. Your selfless gifts of time, expertise and financial support are helping to make our dream a reality.

Together, by supporting this vision for the future, we can change the life of a vulnerable child and, over time, have a dramatic impact on the community in which we live.

With gratitude,



Terri Allison
Executive Director



Photo: Roe Anne White

Executive Director Terri Allison

Continued from front page

With the kick-off party and official opening of the school past them, the *Campaign for the Future* team still has a lot of work ahead: raising the additional \$1.6 million needed to operate the school for the next ten years. As money is raised, more children and teachers can be added to the De La Vina school, and the wait list can be whittled down.

And in the meantime, Storyteller will be working with researchers from UCSB with help from the James S. Bower Foundation to develop a long-term study

of Storyteller graduates and their paths in life. "We know in our hearts that we are making a difference and we can see that difference in the time they are with us" said Clark. "But we want to have solid research to show that Storyteller is helping these children over the long term.

If you are interested in learning more about Storyteller's *Campaign for the Future*, please contact Executive Director Terri Allison or Director of Development Denise Hinkle at (805) 687-4530.



Photo: Roe Anne White

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OUR STAFF

DOMENICA TOFOLLA JOINS STORYTELLER AS A PRESCHOOL TEACHER

When Storyteller Children's Center opened its second school on De La Vina Street, Domenica Tofolla was the first new teacher to be hired for the school. She works primarily with preschool age children, and she especially enjoys lessons that focus on literacy. Every morning Domenica reads a book to the children while providing an interactive activity – and the children read, act and sing along happily.

"My favorite activities to do with kids revolve around reading. You can create a whole new world for them. Kids are learning – playing and reading are key," she says.

Domenica's ability to engage the children and spark their imagination is admired by everyone at Storyteller.

"Domenica is a remarkable young woman," says Executive Director Terri Allison. "Her work reflects her compassion and empathy for the families we serve."

However, Domenica's story could have turned out differently. As a first generation Mexican-American from

a Spanish-speaking family, she struggled during the early years of her education in the Carpinteria public schools. Fortunately, Domenica had many mentors and teachers

committed to seeing her progress academically. "They pushed me to many limits so I could achieve," explains Domenica, "and once I realized my potential I knew I would succeed."

The first in her family to attend and graduate from college, Domenica began in the English as Second Language program at Santa Barbara City College. She earned her B.A. in Liberal Studies from Westmont, where she became interested in teaching and working as a volunteer with juvenile and at-risk youth. "I saw myself in their shoes," she said. "That could have been my path, and I came to understand the impact a teacher can have on a child."

Storyteller is lucky to have such a talented and committed teacher, who is now having a positive impact on her own students.



Photo: Roe Anne White

Domenica Tofolla

OUR PROGRAMS

MOBILE WATERFORD EARLY READING PROGRAM COMES TO STORYTELLER

In the winter of 2007, Storyteller partnered with the Mobile Waterford Early Reading Program (MWERP) to provide supplemental literacy instruction to Storyteller's eclectic curriculum.

The program is not conducted in a traditional classroom, but in a van specially equipped with eight computer stations that can provide distinct levels of full-year literacy instruction. Level One, for instance, targets emergent readers, while Level Three strives to develop fluency. Currently MWERP's focus is on Level One since its target population is preschool-age children.

"This is a great opportunity for children to have an equal opportunity to be successful and at par with the rest of their classmates when they begin kindergarten," explain tutors Eric Barajas and Soei Duran of MWERP. "The first day we give children an introduction to the computer and additional hardware," says Soei, "then we set them up with



Photo: Roe Anne White

Soei Duran and Storyteller students

the reading program and they advance at their own pace." The MWERP computer system generates a detailed report that charts each child's progress and is reviewed every month by tutors, teachers and parents to collaboratively identify areas for improvement.

MWERP comes to Storyteller everyday and works with fourteen preschoolers. Each child is allotted twenty minutes on the computer to work on letter

recognition, phonological skills and introduction to print concepts. "The kids are recognizing different letters and shapes with the integrated curriculum," explains preschool teacher Alicia Jimenez. In addition, MWERP builds English language skills through regular exposure to songs, rhymes, stories and directions presented in the interactive computer sessions. Students are also encouraged to practice speaking out loud. "The kids are developing new vocabulary and are learning to follow instructions in English," says Alicia.

OUR FAMILIES

MADELINE AND ANGELA CANNON

Several years ago Angela Cannon found herself at a crossroads: continue on her destructive path of alcohol and drug abuse or sober up, take responsibility and become the wonderful parent she knew she could be. "I didn't want to lose Madeline. I wanted her and fought for her."

Angela's daughter, Madeline (age 4), had been removed from their home by Child Protective Services (CPS) and sent to live with a foster family while Angela sought treatment for her addictions. Angela was treated at CASA Serena for several months and took part in their Graduate House program. The Graduate House facilitates a patient's transition to independent living through support groups and supervision.

In addition, she participated in the Oliver House and PIST CALM treatment programs. She was determined to successfully complete her treatment program and prove to CPS that Madeline belonged with her. Fortunately, her hard work and determination were rewarded.

Angela was overjoyed when Madeline was returned to her. This was not, however, the end of her struggles. It

was a challenge for her to pay her bills while spending over \$800 a month on child care. Angela's savings were soon depleted. She knew she needed to work full time in order to meet her family's obligations, but she also needed Madeline to be cared for in a safe and nurturing environment. Angela confided her dilemma to her Child Welfare Services case-worker who, in turn, referred her to Storyteller in May 2007.

"Madeline loves her teachers at Storyteller and wants to be one when she grows up!" exclaims Angela. She believes that the positive interaction and behavioral boundaries created by Storyteller for Madeline are crucial to her flourishing social and academic growth. The program has given Madeline stability and supports

Angela's efforts to be a better mom.

"It's always challenging to be a single parent, but to be a single parent with additional obstacles makes it more critical for the community to get involved," explains Angela. "I am grateful that Storyteller is a part of that community."



Angela and Madeline

YEAR-END STATISTICS

Children served: 103

Single parent households: 69

Parents served through hours of education classes, meetings and developmental assessments: 1,892 hours

Hours of on-site counseling provided: 726

Home visits/parent-teacher conferences: 181

Nutritious meals and snacks served: 22,935

Child health and education assessments: 645

Hours of intervention and disabilities services: 1,768 hours

Our belief is that all children are competent, capable, powerful, strong and full of wonder.

OUR BOARD

FORMER JOURNALIST LEADS STORYTELLER'S PUBLICITY EFFORT

Julia Rodgers, a former journalist, lawyer and university public relations director, joined Storyteller's board in early 2006. Since that time, she has written numerous articles about Storyteller, or helped place articles in various media outlets in Santa Barbara. She lives in Santa Barbara with her husband, JB, and two sons, Clay, 8, and Benjamin, 4.



Julia Rodgers

How are you involved with the expansion campaign for the new school?

I'm the chair of the communications committee. Almost a year ago, our committee started work on a campaign brochure for potential donors to inform them about Storyteller and the need for an additional school. Although I did a good part of the writing and editing, I had a lot of talented people helping me, especially former board member Roe Anne White, a professional photographer, and Molly Green, a graphic designer. The end result is a 12-page color booklet filled with beautiful photographs of the Storyteller children. I think their faces tell our story best.

What other projects have you worked on for Storyteller?

I'm the one you see at the annual fundraising gala running around like a crazy person with a photographer, trying to get photos of our volunteers, gala chairs and donors. For the past three years, I've spent the Sunday after the gala choosing photos and writing stories about the event for local media outlets, like the Montecito Journal and an online news source called Noozhawk. Although I'm usually pretty tired the morning after the gala, it is all worth it when Storyteller gets good publicity from the stories.

How did you get involved in Storyteller?

My college roommate called and told me I needed to look up a friend of hers from New Orleans named Lizzie Peus, because "Lizzie knows everyone!" It turned out to be true, and Lizzie was the chair of the Storyteller gala that year (the Biker Ball in 2005). After going out to lunch with Lizzie, she invited me to join the gala committee to help with publicity, and I've been involved ever since.

Why do you spend so much time working on behalf of Storyteller?

The children of Storyteller motivate me. Every time I visit the children, I know that we owe it to them to try to make their lives better. I desperately want them to have a chance in life: a chance for a good education and a happy family life. I truly believe Storyteller can change their lives, and that the best chance – maybe the only chance – we have to help them is to influence them at an early age.

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Vision Screening

Dental Screening

Nutrition Services

Field Trips

COMMUNITY SUPPORT

Photo: Roe Anne White



Val Rice, Suzanne Deardorff, Kyle Irwin, and Tiffany Foster

SNOW A GO GO

With thirty tons of snow, go-go dancers, an ice bar and dramatic white draping, Earl Warren Showgrounds was transformed into a hip 60's winter wonderland on Nov. 10, 2007, for Storyteller's "Snow A Go Go" gala. But clearly the snowy theme didn't freeze any wallets: a record-breaking **\$280,000** was raised to help the homeless and at-risk children who attend Storyteller's preschool.

Event co-chairs Valerie Rice, Suzanne Deardorff and Tiffany Foster, along with event planner Kyle Irwin, worked tirelessly to plan the event, turning Earl Warren into the festive party atmosphere that fueled the generous giving by donors. "We really wanted to shake things up and raise the bar this year," said Rice. "It's such a compelling cause."

Top sponsors of the event included: an anonymous benefactor, Deckers Outdoor Corporation, Valerie and A.J. Rice, Elizabeth and Kenny Slaughter of INVESTEC, and STW Fixed Income Management. The ten live auction items raised double the amount of last year's auction items, and sponsorship increased by 15 percent.

WITH SPECIAL APPRECIATION TO...

Our Campaign for the Future Roll of Honor

As of March 2008: the Storyteller Board of Directors, Orfalea Fund, Ann Jackson Family Foundation, James S. Bower Foundation, Women's Fund of Santa Barbara, Tim & Louis Casey, Lojo Foundation, William E. Weiss Foundation, Crawford Idema Family Foundation, Nancy & Kevin O'Connor, Rita & Doug Otto, Barry & Jean Schuyler, Hutton Foundation, Sue & Ed Birch, Patricia & John MacFarlane, The Arnesen Family, Suzanne & Tom Deardorff, Santa Barbara Bank & Trust.

K-LITE

K-LITE's morning show hosts Gary & Catherine held a 12-hour Valentine's Day Radio-thon, which raised more than \$8,000 for Storyteller programs.



Gary & Catherine with
Storyteller Executive Director
Terri Allison

Contributions to support Storyteller's Annual Fund or Campaign for the Future may be made by check, Visa or MasterCard, gifts of securities or planned gifts. Please contact our development office at 805.687.4530; mail your gift to Storyteller Children's Center, 2115 State Street, Santa Barbara, CA 93105; or make your gift via the web at www.storytellercenter.org.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT

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We appreciate the opportunity to correct our records.

Storyteller Children's Center Presents



Featuring local children's book authors:

Marni McGee, Barbarba Jean Hicks, Bruce Hale, Carol Heyer, Alexis O'Neil and Illusrator Joe Cepeda

Sunday, May 18 from 2 - 5 p.m.

All Saints By-The-Sea Episcopal Church
83 Eucalyptus Lane

Bring the whole family! Fun activities for children.
Storytelling, book signings, arts and crafts,
refreshments and more!

THIS EVENT IS FREE AND OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

For more information, please contact Victoria at 805.687.4530 or victoria@storytellercenter.org



STORYTELLER

CARING FOR OUR COMMUNITY'S CHILDREN

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