Teen Volunteers Excel in Teen Court

Teen Court has operated in Chatham County since 1999, but in July 2012 the N.C. Department of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention contracted CCT! for the first time to deliver this restorative justice program. Chatham County Teen Court is now joining two other Juvenile Crime Prevention Council programs, Family Advocacy and Community Service and Restitution.

Gwen Overturf, Community Service and Teen Court Coordinator, has witnessed exciting results from the current teen volunteers and eligible first-time teen offenders as they learn about each other, the Juvenile Court system itself, and adults in Teen Court leadership roles. Teen volunteers are trained and well prepared to serve as a juror, clerk, bailiff and can even train to become attorneys for the hearings. The professional adult judges are comprised of volunteer judges and local attorneys. Teen Court is held after hours in Siler City and Pittsboro once a month. After the hearings, judges present the seriousness of the defendants' situations to them and to their parents, contrasting it to an adult court setting.

"Each teen emerges more enlightened about how the judicial system works and the consequences of illegal activities," Overturf said.

"It’s important for the teens to see both male and female judges, and they are positively responding to them as human beings with law as an interest," Overturf added. "They were impressed that one bailiff has three educational degrees."

The first-time offenders are usually 10-17 year-olds who have come before a juvenile court counselor with involvement of a parent or guardian and an admission of a misdemeanor or similar charge. Examples are school violations, fighting with no serious injury, larceny, possession of stolen property, or possession of alcoholic beverages or drugs. Teen Court provides an opportunity for the charge(s) to be removed from the offender’s record, if there is successful completion of the sentence requirements and parental or guardian support.

There are different levels of sentencing according to the crime committed, and practical and insightful sanctions include community service, educational seminars (e.g., anger management, peer pressure, shoplifting, and underage drinking), Teen Court jury training and duty, and monetary restitution up to $200. Optional sanctions assigned are essays, visits to college campuses and military recruiters upon interest, letters of apology, Criminal Court observation, and curfew contracts.

Teen volunteer Brandon Johnson, an eighth-grader at Bonlee School, is especially enjoying his tenure. "This is fun for me, but at the same time it's really serious business," he said. "We dress up and are respectful of the courtroom. We have mock trials as part of our training." He was surprised to learn that most offenders don't really mean to commit a crime. "It is sometimes by accident or just ignorance," Johnson said.
He encourages other teens to consider this opportunity. "It’s a real learning experience and will look good on job and college applications. Time-wise, after training, the court sessions involve three hours at the most, usually beginning at 5:30 p.m.,” he said.

Ana Garcia, Jordan- Matthews freshman, is a juror and is training to be an attorney. "Teen Court is a leveling ground," she said. "We watch the process, listen to the defendant tell his or her story, and then we have the opportunity to choose the level of sentencing. It is a good experience, because it helps show that teens care about the community and helps us with our future education and job choices."

CCT needs more teen volunteers and takes pride in helping meet the goals of this statewide Teen Court Program. Teen Court has been proven to be a cost-effective way to reduce juvenile crime and strives to teach youth to be accountable for their actions, to develop responsible decision-making skills, to become educated about the justice system, to promote community collaboration, to strengthen the family and to promote long-term behavioral changes. After all, CCT has held most of these goals as its very own for over 24 years.
Letter from the Board Chair and Executive Director
– Vaughn Upshaw and Kim Caraganis

Greetings in this season.

Each year as we pause and reflect, we are reminded of all the good people who help make the good work happen at CCT. Staff, board, volunteers, families, friends and contributors work together to make sure that the children and youth of CCT get the support they need to stay in school and become healthy, productive citizens.

This year
• 64 children were matched with adult mentors
• Over 100 youth received tutoring, continuing education, and family advocacy services
• 45 children attended summer camp
• 79 youth completed community service hours
• 250 participants, including parents, were educated on how to communicate with their teens about risk taking behaviors and pregnancy prevention
• 30 youth have already benefitted from our 2 new programs, Teen Court and the Workforce Investment Act, which provide academic support, job training and skill building
• 246 caring adults volunteered 8636 hours to help CCT fulfill its mission!

This has also been a year of change at CCT. At its annual planning retreat, the CCT Board of Directors voted to explore an affiliation with Communities In Schools (CIS). Kim Caraganis, CCT’s Executive Director, members of the CCT Board of Directors, and leaders from CIS’s state office in Raleigh have begun a transition process that will occur over the next few years. The ultimate goal is to continue providing CCT’s outstanding community services, while adding school-based services. Chatham County School Superintendent, Robert Logan, and the county’s principals have endorsed CCT’s proposal to work within the schools. Starting second semester, CIS/CCT will conduct a pilot project at one of Chatham County’s schools. We look forward to sharing more information about the partnership between CCT and CIS in the new year.

Many thanks once again for your interest and support. You are helping make a difference for children, families, and our Chatham County community. Best wishes for the coming year!

AGENCY TRANSITIONS

STAFF - Sandra Forrester and Vicky Tobar have been hired as Promotoras with the Hablando Claro project; Gloria Moriarity is helping with clerical tasks through the SCSEP Senior Community Service Employment Program; Wren Davison, UNC Masters Intern, is assisting with communications and CIS exploration; Travis Patterson is full time youth case manager for Workforce Investment Youth Services; Gwen Overturf is coordinating Teen Court in addition to Community Service and Restitution Services; Miguel Olvera is assisting with Teen Court; Roy Barnes, Youth Advocate is no longer with the agency - we thank him for his years of service to mentors, youth and families and wish him well.

BOARD - Thank you to Virginia Chambers, outgoing Board Chair, who initiated and guided the agency’s Strategic Planning process; to Nicole Byrne, who gave birth to two children while on the board plus mentored, and to Judy Wurster, JoAnn Robb and Rosemary McCloskey for their service to CCT! Judy Wurster remains at CCT! as co-chair for Tapas 2013.

CCT! Adds Workforce Investment Act

CCT adds Workforce Investment Act (WIA) Youth Services to its service offerings

WIA Youth Services connect young people ages 14-21 with quality educational and employment opportunities. The program brings together local workforce training providers, schools, community organizations and offers traditional employment, mentoring, training activities, community service and leadership opportunities for eligible youth.

Travis Patterson,
WIA Youth Services Case Manager
Email him at travis@chathamcountytogether.org or call him at 919-663-0116
“Come on, Miss Ann, don’t be scared,” comforted my 7-year-old friend Vernon. “I won’t let you get lost.”

And off he ran through Miss Ruth’s Corn Maze with best friend Fred (fictitious name) close on his heels and then me, lagging behind with my 61-year-old achy brakey knees and a big smile. Watching, encouraging, enjoying, supporting, and teaching these two little guys brings me a lot of happiness along with interesting challenges.

Fred’s birthday one week before Halloween was the cause célèbre, and the location was a sweet find down Highway 751 where fantasy flirts with reality and kids can safely go wild. Pumpkins, witches on bikes, dancing goblins, and woods aflame with autumn color framed our hayride to the 5-acre maze that led to a kids’ paradise replete with more games and rides than you could shake a broom at. I lost to the boys in a rubber horse race and nudged cars trying to make the car race at least close to a tie. I teased, prodded, and marveled as my two Energizer bunnies bounced endlessly in the bouncy house, played king-on-the-mountain atop huge haystacks, and broke the speed limit for 3 hours, slowing only when the seatbelts buckled and their lip-wagging replaced the frenetic motion of their bodies.

As I drove in silence and exhaustion while the boys relived the day, Vernon finally whispered, “Miss Ann, are you sleeping?”

Vernon and I have enjoyed many afternoons with his best friend and with other mentors and their mentees, adding to the fun for all of us. “Tandem mentoring” adds new ideas, adult conversation and additional role modeling, plus another child’s energy level compatible with my little fella’s. We have bowled with CCT!; visited malls, movie theaters, and restaurants; played at parks, my house, and at the homes of other mentors, friends, and family members; fished, swam, and canoed; cheered for the Durham Bulls and their fireworks; enjoyed street fairs and hikes; and learned to drum with my son-in-law. One of my goals is to provide Vernon with experiences that he might not otherwise access and to teach him the requisite social skills. We cannot assume that children understand the importance of social niceties such as manners, kind behavior, recycling, not littering, and showing appreciation.

My second goal for Vernon – spending one-on-one time together enjoying simple pleasures -- was influenced by a dear friend’s experience as she and her husband mentored a brother/sister pair. My friend did not feel like she had done much for her mentees other than bringing them home weekly to join in whatever activities she and her family were doing. But when her mentee was asked about the experience, she said to her mentor, “You showed me what it feels like to have a productive, normal life with a caring husband who loves you and enjoys with you the day-to-day activities of happy, peaceful living. My Wednesdays with you have changed the entire direction of my life.”

What we do for children as mentors is more important than it may seem on any given day. What we receive personally from the relationship, along with the persistent challenges, is pure joy. Thank you to every mentor for not giving up on our children, our future.

A Mentoring Story
– Ann Stewart, mentor

MARK YOUR CALENDARS NOW FOR THE 2013 RETURN OF TAPAS & TUNES!!!

We can hardly believe it’ll be the 10th year for our annual fundraiser...wow! The date is Sunday, March 10th and the location once again is Briar Chapel. Last year we sold out the event and were able to raise $15,000. So please save the date and make plans to join us for all the festivities. We hope to see you there!

a delicious dessert of stuffed apricots by Terri McClernon, personal chef of the Food Fairy at the 2012 Tapas & Tunes

www.chathamcountytogether.org
Contributions since last newsletter - THANK YOU!

James & Gay Adams
Libba Adams
Sam & Zoann Adams
Andy Krumwiede & Mary Alexion
Mary Louise Anderson
Angelina’s Kitchen
Avis & Larry Autry
Libba Adams
Tom & Elaine Baldasare
Georgia Baransky
Elizabeth Barber
Bean & Barrel
Belk Yates Dept. Store
Evelyn Bland
Julian Bland
Blue Heaven Art
Mr. and Mrs. Fred Bonahue
Sally Boyd
Mary & Denis Brichford
Broadway Marketing Works LLC
Browns Chapel United Methodist Church
Kathleen Brumley
BSA Troop 93
Phyllis & Barry Burns
Donna Campbell
Captain John’s Dockside Fish and Crab House
Carolina Brewery
Carolina Living Realty, Inc.
Carolina Meadows, Inc.
Carolina Tiger Rescue
Joanne Caye
Myles Friedman & Virginia Chambers
Jean Chapman
Crook’s Corner
Gail Curry
CW Performance Inc.
DANREE, Inc. DBA Flynthill Farm
Anne Geer & David Scott
Mr. Don Davidson
Davis Electronic Solutions DBA Radioshack
Ted Deal
Bill Doyle
Ereneida Duarte
Nita Dukes
Roxanne Dukes
Gwen Overturf & Edwin White
Betsy Elliott
En Ord River Chapter of Thrivent Financial
ESC Consulting of NC LLC
Betsy Flanagan
Food Lion
Jack Fowle
Thomas & Sharon Franks
Full of Life Nursery
Bob & Sandy Gabor
Galaxy Cinema
Frank & Jeanne Galick
Mango Gallegos
Frances Gengross
Glasshalfull
Golden Real Estate LLC
Blanche Goldston
James & Christine Grace
Harrison & Nancy Hall
Harris Teeter
Hart Furniture Company
Julia Hobbie-Low & John Hobbie
Holmes Oil Company
Janice & Richard Horton
John & Valerie Iason
Jay Walden Realty
Jessie’s Coffee & Bar
Courtney Johnson
JPH Associates
Juju
Kerr Drug
Jim & Sharron Kirkman
Leonard & Ruth Kreisman
Bill & Ann Lackey
Sarah Lapinski
Shirille Lee
Carol Licht
Rossi Lindsey
Lowes Foods
Margaret Macdonald
Mariakakis Fine Food & Wine
Bobby Massengale
Dianne Mattingly
Ann & Jim McCutchan
McDonalds
William & Joyce Mebane
Murphy Milholen
David Misenheim
Michelle & Guy Morency
Pamela & Charles Mowry
NC Zoo
Oakmont Nursery
Miguel Olivera
Sarah Packer
Russell & Sharon Padgett
Suyama Dukumak & Padnam Kumar
Randy & Pearl Page
Page & Otto Marx, Jr. Foundation
John Parker
Lee Parker
Tina Patterson
Lucia Peck
Neil & Deborah Pedersen
Stanley & Carolyn Peele
Nina & Ted Piatt
Piedmont Biofuels
Pittsboro Auto Care
Pittsboro Dental Associates
Helaine Plaut
Playmakers Repertory Company
Pleasant Hill United Methodist Church Women’s Group
Mr. and Mrs. Farrel Potts
James & Meridyth Prouty
PRP Wine International
Charles & Lucy Rausch
Edward & Joan Reid Jr.
Judy & Rita Richards
Rafael Rodriguez
David & Jeanne Rosendahl
Saffron
Sara Donaldson Insurance Agency, Inc.
State Farm Insurance Companies
Sharborough-Hart Fund of Triangle Community Foundation
Jim & Ann Schwankl
David & Carol Sclove
Shakori Hills
Phoebe Shih
Side to Side/Donna The Buffalo Herd Charity
Kenny & Kellie Sigmon
Silk Hope Nursery
Marcia Austin & Donald Simonet
Sonic
Fabian Sparrow
Irvings Sternschein
Thomas Storrie
Susan Strozier - Bantam Designs
Nancy Tanguay
The Food Fairy
The Preserve Ladies’ Golf Association
The Splinter Group
The Tradition Golf Club at The Preserve
Vinson & Patsy Thompson
Town of Siler City
Twig Vaughn & Andy Upshaw
Charles Waldren & Diane Vannias
Vespertime
Barry & Bernice Vogel
W. M. Hewitt Pottery
Sally Walker
Wal-Mart
Charles & Alice Ward
Benny & Jan Waugh
Dwight & Sharon Weaver
Wells Fargo
Whole Foods-Cary
Whole Foods-Chapel Hill
Jim & Bev Wiggins
Raymond & Yasbel Williams
Marilyn Worth
Judith Wurster
Mark & Chloe Young
Mostafa & Rosanna Zibaie

A huge thank you to the Page Otto Marx Foundation, Rolander Foundation, Wells Fargo Bank of Siler City, Women of Fearrington, and the Preserve.

Honor Roll - Congratulations!!

Rodrigo M.
Elijah D.
Nicole C.
Jade D.
Aaliyah W.
Odalis V.
Phonencia E.
Jesse D.

The Preserve Senior Invitational golf tournament presenting a check to Kim Caraganis, Executive Director and Fabian Sparrow, Board Secretary

www.chathamcountytogether.org
WELCOME NEW MATCHES

Justin V. & Joanne Pogue
Ka’juan S. & Charles Eliason
Noah H. & Bruce Gillooly
Rolando J. & Cindy Ware
Steven J. & Kent Pfledderer

“Be the change you want to see in the world.” – Ghandi

In memory

Bill Doyle

Bill Doyle was a unique CCT Volunteer. We are indebted to people like Bill, and his family that inspired him to lead, to take action by making sure that Chatham County children were able to get eye glasses when they needed to.

Kevin Davis

May 29, 1987-October 27, 2012

Different ways YOU can help provide support to children and youth in Chatham County - Thanks!

MAIL A CHECK
Fill out the form below and send it to us in the enclosed envelope with your check.

DONATE ONLINE
Go to our website, www.chathamcountytogether.org and click on the Donate Now button

OTHER GREAT OPTIONS
Become a sustainer and donate to CCT! monthly or MAKE YOUR DONATION A HOLIDAY GIFT! Donate in recognition of someone you love.

YES, I WANT TO CONTRIBUTE TO CHATHAM COUNTY TOGETHER! AND HELP MEET THE GOAL OF $56,000 FOR THE FISCAL YEAR!

Name

Address

Email

Chatham County Together! is a private non-profit organization. Your contribution is tax deductible.

My donation is in honor/memory of

Amount

include address for us to send acknowledgement

☐ Please send me a Volunteer Application.

Miriam’s Story

“If I had not had Ruth in my life I would not have had the opportunity to go as far as I have because I never had anyone to push me to go to college. I honestly didn’t even know what college was.”

When Miriam was paired with her Chatham Together! mentor Ruth in 1997, going to college had never even occurred to her. This year Miriam graduated with a Master’s of Science Degree in Mental Health Counseling from North Carolina Agriculture and Technical State University. She is now pursuing a PhD in Counseling at Old Dominion University in Norfolk, Virginia. It’s because of your generous donations and the dedication of our wonderful volunteers that we are able to change lives like Miriam’s. Thank you for your support!
Chatham County Together! is a private non-profit agency that encourages young people ages 6 to 17 to remain in school, stay out of court and make better choices through advocacy, counseling and mentoring. When possible, CCT! provides a caring adult volunteer for each child. We carefully monitor school attendance and performance, and provide tutoring, counseling, and advocacy to improve specific skills.

Join us for the 5th annual Pre-Posada

Friday, December 14 - 4:30-8:00 PM
Jordan-Matthews High School cafeteria

SANTA CLAUS will be in attendance with presents for children
WE'RE selling delicious **Mexican food to dine in or to go**
AWESOME DOOR & RAFFLE PRIZES, thanks to local businesses

**Food tickets** now on sale ($6/plate) at CCT!
JOIN US and BRING THE WHOLE FAMILY
Call 919-663-0116 for more information.

Former CCT board chair with youth at PrePosada 2011