



BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Jay Espovich
President
Donna Briskin
Steve Fleming
Emily Loeb, PhD
Matthew Quint, JD

ADMINISTRATION

Stacey Katz, PsyD
Executive Director
April D. Fernando, PhD
Clinical Director
Cyndi Chiles, MBA
Chief Financial Officer
Jan Chambers, MD
Medical Director
Richard Coleman, MFT
STAT Program Director
Nancy Ewing, PhD
GSP Director
Barbara L. Mercer, PhD
Assessment Director
Margaret Nettles, PhD
Training Director
Michelle Alansalon, BA
STAT Program Administrator
Kelley Bryan Gin, PsyD
Clinical Service Administrator
Eric Kelly, MFT
Database Manager
Noemi Marin, BA
Operations Manager
Andrea Rosally, MPH
Director of Quality Assurance
Michael Schrecker
Network Manager
Frank Thompson
Controller

SUPERVISORS

Diane Ehrensaft, PhD
Auben Elliott, PhD
Andrew Haber, MD
Charmaine Hitchcox, PhD
Ben Kanne, MFT
Roberto Lazcano, PhD
Hasse Leonard-Pagel, PhD
Lenny Levis, PhD
Rick Maisel, PhD
Paul Moore, PhD
R. Kevin Moser, PhD
Caroline Purves, PhD
Audrey Rosenberg, PhD
Gay Searcy, PhD
Susan Sekler, PhD

Dear Supporter:

November 2006

As we settle into our new children's clinic in Fruitvale Village Oakland, we face one of those junctures where it seems natural to stop and reflect on the journey so far—the accomplishments and frustrations, as well as future directions. WestCoast has always inhabited sacred spaces, those attached to churches, mainly basement areas and add-ons. We have squeezed into buildings retrofitted to house small clinical rooms, administration and staff. A place of our own, designed for our specific needs has been out of reach, until now. Surrounded by boxes and infinite details in the aftermath of our move, it seems right to be writing the annual letter to you, as you have always been there as a community of support, defined maybe loosely but strong in your shared commitment to WestCoast.

The additional site in Fruitvale, and transformation of our potential space, brings with it great possibilities. First and foremost, it is more accessible to the majority of children and families that we serve. Between El Cerrito and Fruitvale clinics, we can meet the needs of our growing client population and have ample workspace for our staff. Last year close to 600 children came for services in our outpatient and mobile clinics, a 40% increase over the year before. In their first hours removed from home, over 1200 foster children were screened and transitioned in our STAT program. Westcoast's growth has taken place along side a continued commitment to the highest caliber of psychological service. In fact, we were honored on October 27th, by Contra Costa County, with the Bridging the Gap Award for our “immeasurable service to children and families.”

While we hold the hope that we have found our new home and can give it expression through our work and dedication, we hold more closely the daily realities and inner lives of our children. Ralph Waldo Emerson wrote, “What lies behind us and what lies before us are tiny matters, compared to what lies within us.” For children, home is also a state of mind carried forward into adulthood. As one eight year-old foster child wrote in a story:

The bunny is sad she doesn't sleep in no crib and doesn't live in no home. She doesn't got nobody to live with and live by herself...the bunny is thinking about having somebody to live with, otherwise she's gone run away.

Later she imagined all she would need for her dream house:

I say: will you put a bed in my room so I will have something to lay on, put a couch in the living room put in a dresser in my room a table in the kitchen and chair so I can sit on them I want to know if you can put two chairs in my living room put some blinds up too. Put a rug down and a flower and that's all I need.

Often beautiful outcomes and disaster are mixed up together for these children as they hope for real parents, and a bright future. Their struggle for survival though is very real. A nine year-old boy chronicles a girl's painful search for something better:

This is about a girl who ran away from home. She went away because she read a book. And the book said if you go far, far away you'll find the land of happiness because where she lived was bad, and the book said if you walk and walk you will find the Land of Happiness, so she is walking and walking and she did find it. No, she didn't find it so she is still walking and then she got hungry and starved and died. She was surprised because she thought she was going there but she didn't.

Our children's narratives remind us that the challenges we face are not about our philosophy or our clinical underpinnings, but in keeping pace with the unprecedented scope of child abuse and neglect, and with policy changes wrought by a political disposition toward those with less, as being less than worthy. We want to help our children find their home with a rug and a flower, a land with no starvation, where happiness is possible. How we engage these issues will reflect what is useful clinically, as well as the mission and evolution of WestCoast. Realizing this, we must continue to change, again and again. As a teaching and training community, we continue to grasp new ways to think, experiment and refine our work.

Despite and amidst the transformation of our physical space and administrative center, our services remain grounded in the same philosophy—that we are a community psychology clinic. Our clients will be helped whether in our offices, in their schools, or in their homes—in places that work for them, with highly trained and committed professionals.

Every day in our clinics, and in settings both accessible and familiar to clients, we make a difference. By highlighting some of the services we provide, as well as our clients, we hope to convey our relationship with the community we serve. Dickinson wrote, “Hope is a thing with feathers, that perches in the soul, and sings the tune without the words, and never stops at all.” Often our hope is without words and should remain so, but I believe it is implicit in the fact that we come to work each day with the hope that something better will happen for our children and families.

On behalf of our board, staff and communities of children and families, thank you for your ongoing help in making those hopes real.

Stacey Anne Katz, Psy.D.
Executive Director