

⊕ FROM THE CENTER ⊕

The Newsletter of The Center Foundation

Spring 2007

Our Mentors — Our Gems Mentor Appreciation Breakfast

Our annual **Mentor Appreciation Breakfast**, held recently at Brodeur's on State Street, offers us a special opportunity to thank our volunteer mentors who help women in the WomenCare program and teens in YPSN navigate difficult times and make positive changes in their lives and the lives of their children.

At the breakfast, the mentors who attended in the photo on the right, were recognized by TCF staff and supporters for their selfless commitment to their mentoring partnerships. Every year mentors who attend share their thoughts about what mentoring has meant to them. Read what partners say about *the unique and lasting differences that mentors have made in their lives*.



What does having a mentor mean to you?

I can voice my fears to my mentor. I feel comfortable and safe.

— Tori, a WomenCare partner

Have you been thinking about becoming a mentor? Our dedicated mentors are members of our community, just like you, who enjoy listening, sharing their ideas, being supportive, understanding and caring.

Want to learn more? Turn to page 7 to read how our mentors support women in making changes that they thought would only stay a part of their dreams.



Facepainting (*left photo*) is one of the most popular activities for kids of all ages at our Winter Carnival, a celebration held annually for WomenCare and YPSN participants and their families. This March over 135 mentoring program members and their children joined in the fun, playing carnival games, jumping in the colorful Moonbounce and often screaming with glee! Community volunteers and students from the Strath Haven

High School's Service Club staffed the food and game booths making this a day to remember for all.

The Winter Carnival was made possible by lead sponsors **Commerce Bank** and **Smurfit - Stone Containers, Inc.**, with the support of **Project ELECT**. We also extend our thanks to *Starbucks Coffee, Stroehmann Maier Bakery, Linvilla Orchards, Keystone-Mercy Health System, Earth and State* and *Burman's Health Foods* for their continuing support of special events.

What's Inside? Spring! ❖ Secondary Pregnancy Prevention ❖ YPSN Update — Meet Our Match ❖ Holiday from the Heart ❖ New Funding ❖ New Mentor Training ❖ Circle of Caring ❖ Womenomics

*A Note from the
Executive Director*



Dear Friends,

As the weather turns from cold to balmy (and back and forth, and back and forth, as it has this year!) I can't help but think about spring cleaning and the fresh start it symbolizes. Spring is the season that most embodies the change of seasons for me, as new green growth pokes up from the dark ground and crocuses sprout through still brown grass, even as new snow showers sprinkle a sugar coating over the top.

Early spring, with its back and forth with winter, reminds me of the fragility of new growth and the need to plan for and protect it through difficult times. It's like the patience and care needed and displayed by our mentors and partners/mentees at the start of their mentoring relationships as they get to know each other, establishing trust, and then moving on to goal-setting and work. The newness and change that building a relationship means, can be scary — but it is also exciting.

Organizationally we are also in a period of change. Recently, Cheryl Thomas and Maura O'Brien went on to other endeavors, although Maura continues her role as a YPSN mentor. With new staff we are launching exciting new programming and outreach initiatives, which are already bearing fruit. Our new support groups for WomenCare and YPSN participants have been enthusiastically received, facilitated by new Program Facilitator April DiMezza and social work intern Katie Falco. I look forward to the expansion, this summer, of our YPSN Book Exchange with a teen-led newsletter and new promotional materials for volunteer recruitment.

Our upcoming benefit gala at Concord Country Club – our first auction! – will hopefully generate new revenue and inspire dedicated mentors and other volunteers. We are moving ahead with our WomenCare reentry project and collaboration with Daemion Counseling Center to expand our service offerings. Collaboration with other organizations is at the heart of our work just as two people putting their heads *together* is key to mentoring.

I am optimistic and excited for the future as I explore ideas with other agencies and talk with mentors and partners/mentees about their experiences and see the strength and resiliency they have inside, growing as their matches grow. There may be changes ahead for them and for TCF, just as there have been in the past, but with building new relationships and new skills also comes new confidence and achievements. Karen Doyle, a former WomenCare mentor once pointed out that our programs are “not just mentors caring for partners, but actually women caring about women, and that's a win-win situation.” My hope for all the participants is that they have that kind of win-win experience.

In peace and gratitude,

⊕ THE CENTER FOUNDATION ⊕

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The Center Foundation is a 501(c)(3) organization founded in 1994. WomenCare®, a mentoring program for women going through difficult life transitions, has been a program of The Center Foundation since 1997. Young Parents Support Network (YPSN) is a mentoring program for teen parents begun in 2001.

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Science-Based Approaches to Secondary Pregnancy Prevention

One of the objectives of The Center Foundation's Young Parents Support Network is to encourage young moms to delay second pregnancies until after they have completed high school. In order to achieve this goal, we have invested in learning more about effective pregnancy prevention programming for young parents.

Since fall of 2006, TCF has participated in the Delaware County Coalition to Prevent Teen Pregnancy and staff attended the Annual Conference of the Pennsylvania Coalition to Prevent Teen Pregnancy at Penn State University, which

focused on Science-Based Approaches (SBAs) to secondary pregnancy prevention. SBAs are approaches that have been proven to have positive results in helping teen moms prevent second pregnancies.

Much like the rest of the country, Pennsylvania has made significant progress in decreasing the rates of teen pregnancies, while at the same time, the rates of second births to teens remain surprisingly high.

According to the latest research from the National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy, science-based programming for teens who are already moms is different from programming for teens who are not yet parents.

The effectiveness of programming for teen moms is dependant on close and sustained one-on-one

relationships with the young moms, instead of relying on group formats alone. Within these relationships, teens need to feel listened to and respected, while being encouraged to prevent secondary pregnancy and to stay in school.

At The Center Foundation, much of our approach is science-based, including offering free childcare at all workshops and events and helping our participants access additional resources available to them. TCF, with the help of our volunteer mentors, always advocates for young moms to stay in school. **But most importantly, we offer the single most effective method for assisting young parents in avoiding secondary pregnancy: the sustained attention, support, and friendship of a mentor.**

April DiMezza, L.S.W. Program Facilitator

April DiMezza, L.S.W. (top left photo) has joined the staff of The Center Foundation as the new Program Facilitator. She is facilitating support groups for WomenCare and YPSN participants and assisting in match support and intern supervision.

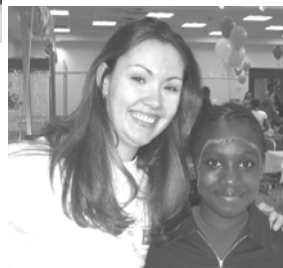
April is a Licensed Social Worker who earned a B.A. degree in Psychology from West Chester University and a Master of Social Work degree from Widener University. With ten years' experience, she has training in individual, family and group therapy and her areas of specialty include behavior modification, family communication and parenting.

As a social worker for Family and Community Service of Delaware County prior to coming to The Center Foundation, April conducted intakes, assessments and referrals, and ran peer drug and alcohol support and psychosocial and educational groups.



Aimee Arsenault Development and Events Associate

Aimee Arsenault (sharing smiles at the Carnival, right photo) has recently become Development and Events Associate at The Center Foundation, successfully coordinating the Winter Carnival. Besides assisting in development, recruitment, and event planning, she helps with mentor intake and program research.



Aimee graduated from Widener University in 2004 with a degree in Criminal Justice and a minor in Psychology. While at Widener, she completed a six month internship at the Lima Juvenile Detention Center, working closely with at-risk females.

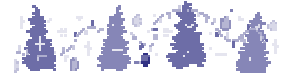
Katie Falco Social Work Intern

Katie Falco (bottom left photo) comes to TCF as an intern through the West Chester University Social Work Department. She is interested in Child Welfare and Domestic Abuse and is the co-founder of an organization which educates the public on teen dating violence. Katie, with four of her friends, presents programs to different organizations and schools in the tri-state area on the warning signs and patterns of dating abuse.

At The Center Foundation, she is working on producing the After Care program for graduate mentees, as well as finding resources for YPSN mentees who are waiting to be matched with a mentor.



Holiday From The Heart



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Our youngest donors

Susan K. Garrison (*right photo, center*) extends a special thank you to Teachers Andrea Linvill (*left*) and Heather McLoughlin (*far right*) and the pre-K students and their families at Media-Providence Friends School for sharing in the holiday spirit: Brianna Jaffee, Emilia Santianni, Daniel Panzo, Daniela Uribe, Paige Goldberg, Alana Burgess, Zachary Burgess, Kyre Crews, Casper Hoffman, Claire McHarg, Aalecia Davidson, Jonah Berrong, Joshua Blair, Alexis Calloway, Zain Pasquarella, Sloan Glover, Rowan Collazzo, James Moss, Tyonn Gilliams, Graham Maola, and Olivia Kinsley.



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YPSN Match: Lillian, Monica and Nadia

On September 6th, 2006, YPSN Program Coordinator Maura O'Brien introduced mentor **Monica Redd** (photo, left) to mentee **Lillian Abraham** (photo, right, holding baby Nadia). The match took place just weeks after Lillian gave birth to her baby girl, Nadia, and only two days before Lillian's sixteenth birthday, so Monica brought Lillian a birthday gift and a red rose.

Before meeting Monica, Lillian had said that she was interested in being matched with a mentor so that she would have someone to talk to and to support her as she leaves the charter school she had been attending in Philadelphia and begins working towards her diploma through the PA Cyber Charter School. *Even more importantly*, Lillian said, *she wanted someone to help her be a good parent.*

Monica recently moved to

Pennsylvania from Virginia and began volunteering at The Center Foundation. She said that she wanted to be part of YPSN because she was a teen mom herself and understands the kinds of challenges young moms face and knows the support that they need.

Since September Monica and Lillian have spent time at each other's homes and both say that what they really like to do together the most, is just hang out. They go out to eat, stroll through the mall, visit the library and go to the movies.

Nadia almost always comes along. "She's just a little angel," Monica says of Nadia, now six months old. Lillian has been doing great at the PA Cyber Charter School. She thinks about becoming an interior designer, architect or a carpenter in the future



because she loves creating things and is very artistic.

"My relationship with Lillian has helped me gain confidence in myself," says Monica. "She is so go-with-the-flow, she has taught me patience." Lillian smiled at the compliment and added: "We have a wonderful time together. I think we're a great match."

YPSN Book Exchange News

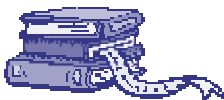
The Center Foundation would like to thank **Cynthia Jetter for her generous donation of 40 books to the YPSN Book**

Exchange: 20 copies of *The First Part Last* by Angela Johnson, and 20 copies of *Imani All Mine* by Connie Porter. Both of these two novels about teen parenthood have been hugely popular among the young women in YPSN.

The following is a review of Johnson's novel by YPSN mentee Sakina Nix (photo, right), who joined YPSN last October and was matched to her mentor in November. In December, she became the proud mom of a baby boy, Sakuan.



Our special thanks to both Cynthia and Sakina!



"It's Love at First Sight"

The First Part Last by Angela Johnson, touched my heart. When I reached page 96, I almost cried. I think it is the most beautiful thing in the world, the way Bobby (the main character) loves his baby Feather. I really enjoyed reading *The First Part Last*.

I was sad when I read the part where the teen parents were considering adoption. I can't imagine not having my son in my life. Just the way Bobby loves Feather, I love my baby more than anything and I didn't even know that was possible.

I love the way Bobby describes Feather throughout the book. He made her sound beautiful, heavenly, perfect and the best thing on earth. This book spoke the truth. I know exactly what Bobby is talking about because life with a baby is not easy, but I wouldn't trade it for the world.

You can't feel the magical feeling of parenting until you are a parent. From the time you have your child you get a natural feeling to want to love, comfort, protect and take care of this needy baby, just the way Bobby feels about Feather: *nothing in the world can or will separate us*. I think everyone should read this book.

Building Resources

We are grateful to acknowledge continued grant funding in the amount of \$8,000 from the **The Valentine Foundation** this past quarter in support of the YPSN program. Valentine Trustee, Alexandra Samuels participated in a focus group with some of our teen moms which elicited feedback leading to the successful launch recently of our new monthly mentee support group, *The Club*.

The **Patricia Kind Family Foundation** has given The Center Foundation the first year of a three-year grant totalling \$60,000 in support of both of our WomenCare and YPSN programs. Meeting with trustees of the Foundation helped TCF staff focus on clear goals and objectives for the course of the grant period.

The Chace Fund of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting has joined other funding in support of our new initiative to help women ex-offenders, as part of the WomenCare program. We are exploring collaborations with other local agencies, as well as the U.S. Department of Justice, in piloting reentry projects.



We are also grateful for the continued general support of **The Garrison Family Foundation** and the **John William Pope Foundation**.

Generous Sponsors

Our sincerest thanks to our sponsors who help make special events possible. **Smurfit - Stone, Commerce Bank, Project ELECT** and **Starbucks Coffee** supported our Winter Carnival.

First Keystone Bank, Brodeur's on State Street, Golden Impulse, Inc., and Kenny's Flower Shoppe, Inc. made our annual Mentor Appreciation Breakfast a success. *Thank you all for your continued commitment!*

A special thank you to our donors

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WomenCare partners and YPSN mentees share their thoughts:

What does having a mentor mean to you?

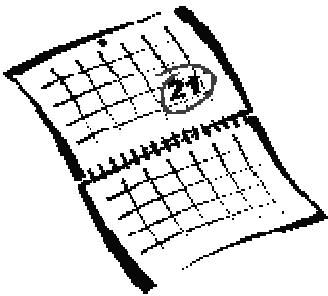
■ ■ **She made me believe.**

“My mentor was kind and encouraging. I could talk to my mentor about anything and she was a great listener. Whenever I was discouraged she always helped me focus on the light at the end of the tunnel. She made me believe.” — *Tamika*

■ ■ **I don't feel stuck.**

“My mentor has been so great at intuitively validating my feelings. I don't feel stuck anymore. I feel better about the direction my life is headed.” — *Lynda*

■ ■ **I feel like I have someone on my side.** — *Shamira*



► **Want to help another woman write her success story — by becoming a mentor today?**

Our next mentor training begins on Saturday, April 21, 2007 (9am –1pm). Why not call Aimee at The Center Foundation at 610-565-6171 to learn more about how you can become a mentor?

► **NEW! Online mentor training** — Can't make our training sessions? The Center Foundation is now offering mentor training over the Internet! Learn the basics of mentoring — from the comfort of your home — *according to your schedule.* **Call us at The Center Foundation to learn more about this flexible option.**

► **Did you know that 88% of your gift to The Center Foundation goes directly to program services?**



Thank you for your continuing support!

YES! I would like to join the Circle of Caring:

<i>Partnership Circle</i>	\$ 500
<i>Empowerment Circle</i>	\$ 250
<i>Advocate Circle</i>	\$ 100
<i>Encouragement Circle</i>	\$ 50
<i>Friendship Circle</i>	\$ 25

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- ☐ *Your donation is fully tax-deductible within IRS regulations.*

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Womenomics

Saturday, April 28, 2007

8am — 12noon

*Bringing working women together
for a conversation about:*

- Getting your piece of the pie — salary and pay equity
- Getting, keeping and repairing your credit
- Building and protecting your assets
- Work/Life balance

► **FOR MORE INFO:**

Marise Stillman 610-586-6152

Carol Goertzel 610-543-5022

COST: \$25 General Admission (\$20 Affiliated Partner Members, \$10 Students)

WHERE: Towne House — 117 Veterans Square
Media, PA 19063

We salute all our volunteer mentors!

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Carol Fanelli



Celebrating our mentors' commitment, Executive Director Susan Garrison (front center) with volunteer mentors (l to r): Kareem Smith, Robin Otto, Sandra Emmanouilides and Lynne DeGiosafatto at the Mentor Recognition Breakfast.

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