

Wendt Center Today

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Benefit Speakers Share Stories of Healing

The beautiful tribute of the Wendt Center's 2006 benefit keynote speaker reflects what hundreds of friends and supporters have known for years: that the Wendt Center does help people of all ages cope with the death of a loved one and we have

for more than three decades. Because of the Center's continued dedication to the community, nearly 400 people gathered at our benefit to raise funds in support of the Center's important mission and hear from families, members of the media, Center volunteers, and former clients about their experiences with loss and grief. Proceeds from the benefit go toward all of the Center's programs, with a special emphasis on our services for children.

Last year's benefit was held November 9 at the Four Seasons Hotel in Georgetown. The Center welcomed Melanie Bloom as the keynote speaker. Melanie spoke movingly about her late husband,

"I'd like to thank the Wendt Center for the marvelous work they do each and every day, shining their beacon for those who are in need of a light during the darkest and most challenging moments of their lives" — MELANIE BLOOM, BENEFIT 2006 KEYNOTE SPEAKER

NBC news correspondent David Bloom, who died while covering the war in Iraq. Melanie shared insights into the process of grief and recovery that she

and her three young daughters have experienced since the death of her husband and their father.

ABC World News Tonight anchor Bob Woodruff served as master of ceremonies.

The Woodruff

and Bloom families are close friends, adding to the sense of family the Wendt Center's benefit exemplifies. Bob shared his family's experiences with grief following the serious injuries he sustained while reporting in Iraq. Bob offered personal reflections of his family's *(continued on page 2)*



Quanita Singletary and Bob Woodruff

Crisis Response Team Offers Compassion and Service

When family members learn that they've lost one of their own to an accident, homicide, or other traumatic death, the shock can be overwhelming. While it can be difficult to function normally at such a time, co-victims usually have many questions they need answered and arrangements they must make. Amid the confusion, grieving family members can turn to the Wendt Center's DC Crisis Response Team.

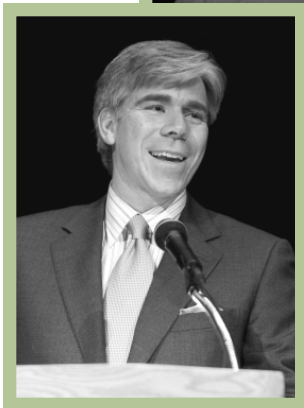
The DC Crisis Response Team provides comfort and assistance to individuals and families immediately following the sudden death of a loved one. The CRT includes more than 70 screened and trained volunteers representing diverse backgrounds and experiences. Members of the CRT *(continued on page 3)*

Benefit 2006

(continued from page 1)

responses to his injuries and their own healing journey.

NBC News correspondent David Gregory served as our guest auctioneer for the evening. David provided many of the evening's livelier moments as he auctioned off items to raise money for the Wendt Center. Popular prizes included a luxurious week in Provence, an Edith Kuhnle painting, and a weekend at the Amangani Resort located in Jackson Hole, Wyoming.



Guest auctioneer David Gregory



Keynote speaker Melanie Bloom

Long-time Center volunteer Steve Asher and former client Quanita Singletary also shared their stories with benefit attendees. For many years Steve has given his time to help the Center run our programs, particularly our support groups and Camp Forget-Me-Not. He is a

Center run our programs, particularly our support groups and Camp Forget-

Me-Not. He is a shining example of how healing can occur when you are giving back to others. Quanita, a teenager, is a former client of the Center who received a standing ovation when she shared how the Center's support groups and Camp Forget-Me-Not helped her cope with the death of her father and other loved ones she lost. Both Steve and Quanita are dear friends of the Center and we are grateful to them for sharing how the Wendt Center's programs have helped them.

The Center is indebted to the event co-chairs and the planning committee members who volunteered their time to make the evening a success. Led by co-chairs Diana Goldberg, Jill Hall, Ursula Quin and Vickie Wilson, and supported by more than 45 volunteers, the benefit is the culmination of a year's worth of meetings, coordination, and planning. We are also fortunate that several friends contributed to the benefit in other unique ways. Board member

SACHIEL'S STOCKING

Each December after Sachiel Kilpatrick passed away, his family—parents Lance and Judy, and siblings Aidan and Casey—struggled with what to do with the Christmas stocking that had belonged to their son and brother. It didn't seem right not to hang it, but it didn't seem right to leave it hanging empty, either. What follows is excerpted from a letter the Kilpatricks wrote to their friends and family last December when they figured out how to give meaning to Sachiel's stocking.

"...What does seem right is finding a way to help share the many gifts Sachiel's almost 16 months of life gave us. He gave us love so pure as to be, at times, palpable; patience we didn't know we had; confidence and strength in the face of new challenges; and insight into skills and abilities we had yet to discover on our own. He also helped us reorder our priorities as a family and forged a deep family bond that will help us weather any storm that comes our way.

Sachiel's everyday presence in our lives, and the universality and unending nature of his gifts, leads us to believe that the right thing to do is to use his stocking to extend to those in great need the

incredible love and caring he engendered.

So, instead of leaving his stocking packed away or removing it before Christmas morning arrives, we plan to place in Sachiel's Stocking a donation to the Wendt Center for Loss and Healing. The services we received there helped us learn to grieve together as a family and to accept each individual's unique grief process. This year, Sachiel's stocking will again be hung between his brother's and his younger sister's. But this year, with your help, Christmas morning will find Sachiel's Stocking filled with gifts to help to share his spirit with the world."

The Kilpatricks' letter resulted in donations of over \$3,000 to the Wendt Center in honor and memory of Sachiel. The Wendt Center is grateful to Sachiel's family and friends for sharing their love of him. Sachiel's family finds continued healing in the knowledge that these gifts will help others.



Kathleen Golden and Carol Pensky (recipient of William Wendt Award and benefit committee member)

and former event co-chair Carol Pensky provided invaluable assistance to the co-chairs. Patty Abramson and Michele Berman, co-owners of FACETS, hosted a jewelry sale in which all proceeds

benefited the Wendt Center. Vickie Wilson hosted two days of note writing parties, and Elizabeth Galvin hosted the annual cocktail party that kicked off our benefit festivities. These acts of kindness and the generosity of our speakers and many supporters helped make our 2006 benefit one of our most memorable.



Benefit Chairs—left to right: Jill Hall, Vickie Wilson, Carol Pensky, Ursula Quin, Diana Goldberg

Crisis Response Team

(continued from page 1)

accompany Metropolitan Police Department officers and other emergency personnel to notify the next of kin of the death. In the days that follow, CRT members also serve the needs of the family, providing emotional support, comfort, and practical assistance to adults and children.

The Wendt Center's LaVerne Harley has managed the CRT since 2002, when the group was a collaboration between the East of the River Clergy Police Community Partnership and the Metropolitan Police Department. Formerly named the Clergy Response Team, the group was created in response to the high number of youth homicides occurring in DC neighborhoods east of the Anacostia river. This remained the team's focus until late 2006, when the Wendt Center joined the team and assumed

management responsibility. Under the Wendt Center's guidance, the team expanded its focus, became the DC Crisis Response Team and now serves all DC neighborhoods in response to all manner of death-related crises, not just homicides.

"We help the family understand what's available to them," explained Harley. "Like the crime victim compensation program, which takes care of burial expenses, counseling, and crime scene clean up. We help them find a funeral home and clergy members on the response team may participate in conducting funeral services. We can type up obituaries. We help coordinate memorial services or candlelight vigils. We ask what we can do. Ours is a ministry of presence."

The CRT reaches out to families within 24 hours of a death and provides a packet of resources for the family's refer-

Special Thanks

The Wendt Center would like to thank several generous contributors who donated tickets to special events last year for our clients to use.

- The Washington Nationals provided unlimited tickets for clients and staff.
- The Freddie Mac Foundation provided the use of its luxury boxes for the Wiggles Show at the Verizon Center.
- Other families donated Redskins tickets.

Enjoying everyday moments together with family and friends is an integral part of the healing process, and the Wendt Center expresses our heartfelt thanks to those organizations and individuals who made it possible for us to provide these moments to our clients.

ence even if the family doesn't request immediate assistance. Team members follow up two weeks later to ensure family members have received the assistance they asked for and see if they have additional requests.

Volunteers are able to spend time with family members that MPD officers aren't able to provide, as well as answer a variety of technical and procedural questions because of the volunteers' extensive training from MPD. Volunteers also receive training on grief and loss, cultural diversity, and dealing with the special needs of children. "The detective can focus on doing his job," Harley said, "and we're there to offer compassion, and a shoulder to cry on."

Wendt Center Increases Service and Involvement in Fiscal Year 2006

The number of individuals and families who the Wendt Center serves continued to increase last year. This wrap-up of the fiscal year ending September 2006 illustrates the importance of the Wendt Center's programs in our community.

We provided **individual counseling** to grieving people with the help of 12 full- and part-time therapists and 8 graduate interns who worked with 323 adults and 134 children for a total of 3,122 counseling sessions. **Support groups** proved invaluable to 55 adults, who individually participated in 254 sessions,

and 22 children, who participated in 196 sessions led by 10 therapists and 12 co-facilitator volunteers. In addition, we continued to provide two days a week of counseling services to individuals coping with HIV/AIDS at a local clinic.

Children also benefited from the healing experience of The Wendt Center's annual **Camp Forget-Me-Not** located in Millersville, MD, which welcomed 52 campers 7 to 16 years old who worked with 77 volunteers and staff members, including 14 grief therapists.

The Wendt Center worked in 59 charter, public and parochial schools to provide facilitation or training for **school-based grief groups**, serving 113 young people grieving 153 deaths, including 45 homicides, 20 traumas, 90 from illness, 2 from suicide, and 6 from other causes.

Our **RECOVER Program** at the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner (DC Morgue) supported 3,660 individuals making 1,188 identifications, of which 177 were specific to homicide.

The Wendt Center continued our involvement in local and national coalitions, including coordinating the DC Crisis Response Team and organizing the first DC Homicide Coalition. Staff participated in the Infant, Child, and Domestic Violence Fatality Review Committees, the 9/11 Survivors Fund Distribution Committee, the Nonprofit Roundtable of Greater Washington, the Nonprofit Emergency Preparedness Task Force, the National Child Traumatic Stress Network, and the Widowed Persons Service. We also manage the Bereavement Network Listserv for the DC Metro area.

For more information on the Wendt Center and its programs, please visit our website at www.wendtcenter.org.

WENDT CENTER
FOR LOSS AND HEALING

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*"No one
should have to
grieve
alone."*

— REVEREND WILLIAM A. WENDT