

# The Volunteer Spotlight

for volunteers, supporters and friends of Family Tree

Winter 2007

*A note  
from  
the  
director:*

Where did this year go? It seems like just a week ago that I was introducing myself to all of you as the new Director of Volunteer Services ... and now ten months later, we're turning on the heaters to help keep warm, brushing off the snow shovels, and decorating our facilities for the holiday season.

2007 was an amazing year for Family Tree, and we couldn't have done it without the tireless energy and unwavering dedication of our incredible volunteers.

In this calendar year, we added 79 new volunteers into our programs. In our largest single group volunteer activity, National Renewable Energy Laboratories bought and installed two brand new playgrounds for Brookview Apartments and Karlis Family Center. Our two largest fundraising events of the year, Celebration of Achievement and Feast For Families, were big successes and our volunteers helped make them so.

Our mission at Family Tree is to help people overcome child abuse, domestic violence and homelessness to become safe, strong and self-reliant. The work we do is hard and demanding and emotionally draining at times. But you ... the remarkable volunteers ... have made it happen. You've rolled up your sleeves and gotten your hands dirty and done whatever it takes to get the job done. Not once have I heard a volunteer complain, and I can't count high enough to equal the times I've seen you go above and beyond what we've asked you to do to help our clients get to that next level of self-sufficiency.

The spirit of the holidays is all about giving of oneself to help make a difference in the life of someone less fortunate. No one embodies this spirit more than Family Tree's volunteers. And I couldn't be more proud of you ... or for being a small part in the work you all are doing. I'm blessed to know you and to witness the impact you're having on our clients and on your community.

Wishing you very Happy Holidays. I hope you experience half of the joy and smiles and blessings that you provide to Family Tree and our clients. And I can't wait to spend another exciting year with you!!

Happy Holidays!



Sean Wolfe  
Director of Volunteer Services



Sean Wolfe, Director of  
Volunteer Services

# Letter From Our CEO

The holidays are here and I'm definitely not ready. I'll be honest; this year, shivers went down my spine when the first of December arrived and I realized I could no longer avoid the holidays. In November, it seemed easy and natural to put off any planning and to wonder, yet again, if the ribbons and wreath decorations were going up even earlier than in prior years.

The commercialization of the season has always been somewhat problematic for me, but struggling against it has felt a bit futile. Please don't misunderstand: I'm not a scrooge, but I want to help raise my children to understand that the holiday season isn't, and shouldn't be, about how many gifts they receive. It's not about identifying dozens of toys from the retailers' flyers they're hoping will arrive on Christmas morning, or about seeing how many items can be squeezed into their letters to Santa.

This year, my family has visions of a tree with only a few gifts beneath it. Then Christmas morning, once those gifts have been opened, our entire family will get into the car and volunteer for a few short hours in an effort to make the day just a little brighter for some other families. We hope this marginal effort helps bring

some joy to other families, and brings our family a little closer to the true spirit of the season.

But I'm preaching to the choir. Those of you receiving this newsletter have already made the selfless commitment to helping Family Tree's clients overcome child abuse, domestic violence and homelessness to become safe, strong and self-reliant. You have already given your time and resources to help individuals and families during this holiday season so that their lives may have a little more joy and they will know there are people in our community who care about them. You already know, and embody, the true spirit of the season.

Family Tree is so grateful for your efforts year-round, but particularly we want to express our admiration and appreciation for everything you do for individuals and families in need during this, and every, holiday season.

Wishing you and your families safe and joyous holidays,



Scott Shields  
CEO, Family Tree



## Welcome to our New Volunteers, Interns and Board Committee Members

### New Volunteers

Mae Washum	Housing and Family Services
Valerie Dynes	Housing and Family Services
Siobhan Hastings	WIC
Carolyn Corbett	WIC
Marc Brady	House of Hope
Denise LaBeaux	Karlis - Supervised Visitation
Sara Greenwalt	Karlis - Supervised Visitation
Melodie Wantuch	Karlis - Supervised Visitation
Tiffany Derr	Karlis Family Center
Anne Thompson	Treasure Trunk
Mirianna Manzanares	Treasure Trunk
Jessica Yost	Gemini/Admin
Maggie Young	Gemini/Admin
Sarah Tenent	Gemini/Admin
Dominique Martinez	Gemini/Admin
Taylor Sander	TBD
Tina Ruiz	TBD
Teresa Kerrihard	TBD
Cheryl Lind	TBD
Jean Kaspari	TBD
Kelly Duffy	TBD
Michelle Chrastil	TBD
Erin Heath	TBD
Heidi Pilath	TBD
Sonya Ostrander	TBD
Karen Devine	TBD
Julie Saredich	TBD

### Congratulations to interns and volunteers recently hired as staff

Heidi Truscott      House of Hope



## New Year's Toast

Here's to the new year ...  
May it bring more joy and success  
And less grief and regret.

To our dreams ...  
May we never stop believing in them  
And taking the actions that will make them a reality.

To our friends, loved ones, colleagues ...  
May we take the time to let them know  
How much it means to us  
To have them in our lives.

Let us encourage more and criticize less,  
Give more and need less.  
And whenever we can,  
Let us create harmony and peace.

To new beginnings ...  
Let us start fresh, right now,  
To make this the very best year ever.

A very Happy New Year to all of us!

By Joanna Fuchs

A special thanks to Sundyne Corporation for  
printing this newsletter. We really appreciate it.





# Volunteer Spotlight

## Bonnie Britton

*Treasure Trunk Volunteer. . . A True Treasure!*

Bonnie Britton walked into Family Tree's offices one sunny day last summer with a mission. "I was just over at Treasure Trunk and I realized how busy they are," she said. "I thought to myself, 'I have some spare time ... I can help.'"

For anyone who has visited the Treasure Trunk, you know what a task Bonnie was signing on to. The thrift store is always busy and always overflowing with donations that need to be sorted, priced and placed on the floor for sale. The volunteers there are some of the hardest working and most dedicated in all of Family Tree's programs. That busy, hectic and chaotic environment is not for everyone, and it has intimidated more than a few new volunteers. But not Bonnie. She gladly filled out all of the paperwork, attended the volunteer orientation, and then got to work.

**"If you don't live it, you don't believe it."**

**~Bonnie Britton, Volunteer**

"There's so much to do," she said breathlessly during one of my recent visits to the store. During the fifteen minutes I was there, I saw Bonnie sorting some of the donated merchandise, pricing some other items, and then taking them out to put them on the shelves. And on her way back to the stock room she noticed that one of the employees needed some help at the register, so she stopped and helped bag

some of the purchases before bounding off to help another customer find that one item that would finish her Christmas shopping.

"My favorite part of volunteering at Treasure Trunk is having the opportunity to assist in raising funds for the many worthwhile projects that Family Tree operates."



*Family Tree Treasure Trunk Volunteer, Bonnie Britton.*

Bonnie is a no-nonsense kind of volunteer. When something needs to be done, she just does it, and then finds something else to do. "If you don't live it, you don't believe it," she says with that bright smile that lets you know that she might not say a whole lot, but that her actions say all that needs to be said about her.

Thank you, Bonnie, for your hard work and commitment to Treasure Trunk and to all of the programs at Family Tree. You're making such a difference in the lives of our clients, and are a great example of self-reliance.

*Article provided by Sean Wolfe, Director of Volunteer Services.*

## Keeping The Holidays Joyful!

We generally think of the holidays as a joyous, happy period. But the holidays are a period of time that is, for many, stressful at the least and for others, downright depressing. Consider the following:

1. The Thanksgiving to New Year's holiday season occurs during the time of year when there are the fewest number of hours of daylight. That affects many of us negatively and makes us a little depressed.
2. For most individuals, all of the activities of the holidays must be piled on top of all of their other responsibilities that, for most people, include both work and family. The 168 hours that there are in every week cannot be expanded. We become crunched for time.
3. Only about 25% of all individuals are living within what would be considered a traditional family at the present time. Death, separation, divorce, remarriage, and job-related separations cause many individuals to feel a dissonance with the traditional holiday-related values.
4. The majority of Americans spend 95% - 100% of each paycheck. The period of time between Thanksgiving and New Year's brings about special costs that often increase debt.

With these thoughts in mind, the following suggestions are offered to help keep the holidays a happy and joyous period of time:

1. Manage your time effectively during the holidays. Set reasonable goals about what can be accomplished during this period of time.
2. Set reasonable limits regarding the purchase of gifts. Unusual or unique gifts, handmade gifts, and gifts of time can create special meaning.
3. Set reasonable expectations about who you are going to visit and when.
4. Resolutions really do work. Consider having one that is work-related, one that is non-work-related, and one that is relationship or family-related.
5. Because the holidays are a time in which outdoor activity can be limited due to cold and darkness, manage your calorie intake as well as you can. Work out a schedule of meaningful exercise (even walking).
6. Remember the spirit of the holidays. However great or small, there are things to be celebrated. It is the season of profound love. The importance of giving to others and sharing and bringing joy to the world are central to our spiritual meanings in life.

# Domestic Violence Volunteer Workshops



Every quarter Family Tree offers a 5-class Domestic Violence Training for volunteers. This symposium is extremely educational, interactive and enlightening on myriad issues pertaining to our clients experiencing a domestic violence situation. The next series will be held throughout the month of January. See schedule below.

**Introduction to Domestic Violence**  
Saturday, January 12th, 9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

**Special Populations**  
Tuesday, January 15th, 6:00 p.m. - 9:30 p.m.

**DV & Children/Perpetrator Treatment**  
Saturday, January 19th, 9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

**De-escalation Skills/Vicarious Trauma**  
Tuesday, January 22nd, 6:00 p.m. - 9:30 p.m.

**Criminal Justice System's Response to DV**  
Tuesday, January 29th, 6:00 p.m. - 9:30 p.m.

All volunteers are required to attend the first and are highly encouraged to attend the remaining four classes which are required of all volunteers who are working in our Domestic Violence programs. If you have not attended any or all of these classes, and would like to register for the January series, please contact Sean Wolfe, Director of Volunteer Services, at (303) 422-2133 or at [swolfe@thefamilytree.org](mailto:swolfe@thefamilytree.org).



Volunteer  
Opportunities

Stories

Visit

[www.thefamilytree.org](http://www.thefamilytree.org)

safe, strong, self-reliant

Jobs

Photos



Visit us at  
[www.thefamilytree.org](http://www.thefamilytree.org)



The mission of FamilyTree is to help people overcome child abuse, domestic violence and homelessness to become safe, strong and self-reliant.

Address Service Requested

3805 Marshall St., Suite 100  
Wheat Ridge, CO 80033



Non-Profit  
Organization  
U.S. Postage  
PAID  
Wheat Ridge, CO  
Permit No. 79