

Cornerstone Quarterly

December 2009

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"A year ago our family was in turmoil; now we just have the 'normal' stress that other families have!"

Adoptive Mom

"What a kid really needs is someone who will listen, who really understands what they're feeling. I can't imagine what it would be like if I hadn't been able to talk about all of this."

Teenage Participant

Every Month is Adoption Month Through Cornerstone's Preservation Program

Ellen Rigor, MSW, LCSW

Since 1990, November has been known as "National Adoption Month." This time is set to honor the thousands of families who have provided a permanent home for a child. This year's theme, "You don't have to be perfect to be a perfect parent," is a reminder that being a parent is often a very tough job. And, adoptive parenting can be even more challenging!

What you may not know, however, is that every month is Adoption Month at Cornerstone! We recognize that families created through adoption may face challenges that are unique to the adoption experience. Whether families adopt privately, internationally, or through the foster care system, issues often arise that leave families struggling to cope.

Cornerstone's Adoption Preservation program is designed to be more intensive than most traditional approaches to helping individuals and families. Services are family-focused, and are often provided in-home. The goals of the program are to help parents feel better about their ability to effectively parent, understand the unique needs of their adopted child, and gain the skills needed to help their child.

Adopted children often have unresolved feelings about their separation from their birth family. Working individually, and with the presence of a supportive parent, children are helped to work through these issues.

Group activities are one component of the program because we understand the importance of peer support. Luncheons for adoptive mothers have been especially popular. These mothers often comment that they appreciate being treated to a special meal in the company of others who identify with their experiences.

Cornerstone's Adoption Preservation program is available at no cost to adoptive and subsidized guardianship families in Adams, Brown, Hancock, Pike, Schuyler, and northern Calhoun counties. For further information, please contact Cornerstone at 217-222-8254.



Lindsey, Jean, Robin and Crystal enjoy a Lunch & Learn support group meeting at Quincy Steamboat Co.

The Adoption Preservation program is funded in part by the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services.

Join us for a Night of Celebration

Cornerstone's Night of Celebration Dinner will be here soon. Mark your calendars for February 5 so you don't miss out on an evening of celebrating the work of our Humanitarian Award recipients (following pages) and the humor with local comedian Bobbe White and last year's entertainer Jim Wiggins.

The Night of Celebration will be at the Holiday Inn Quincy, 4821 Oak Street. Social hour begins at 6:30 p.m. with dinner at 7:00 p.m. and entertainment to follow. Tony's Too promises to prepare a delicious meal for everyone. Dennis Rischar, from Fun Times Entertainment, is set to provide dinner music.



*Jim Wiggins
Featured Entertainer*

Bobbe White sets the stage by taking a look at life's twists and turns, her flaws and faux pas, with a sense of humor and the gift of laughter; then lets you do the same! White is a well-known national speaker, author, and Certified Laughter Leader (seriously!). Bobbe will help us all bring laughter and real life together.

Comedian Jim Wiggins is returning this year. He was a big hit at last year's dinner so we decided to bring him back again. Wiggins, "the last hippie in America", was a semi-finalist on the NBC show *Last Comic Standing*.



*Bobbe White
Certified Laughter Leader*

For ticket information, call the office at 222-8254. Interested? Come join in...and let the laughter begin!

Employee(s) of the Year



Sarah Henry, Receptionist

Cornerstone's annual board and staff Christmas party was held on December 14 at Brix Wine and Cheese Shop. In addition to the usual holiday festivities and cheer, we take the opportunity to recognize outstanding performers with the Employee of the Year award. This year was unusual in that multiple staff members nominated Sarah Henry and Stephanie Prewitt jointly as Employees of the Year. Board members reviewed the nominations and made the final selections.

Receptionist Sarah Henry is the first point of contact for most people calling and visiting the office. Sarah joined the staff in January 2008.

Stephanie Prewitt, Administrative Assistant, handles all billing for our counseling and psychiatric services. In addition, she is the backup receptionist when Sarah needs a break or is not working. Stephanie has been employed at Cornerstone since April 2007.

Sarah and Stephanie's joint nomination was best captured with this statement "At a time of loss, uncertainty about the future, and the demands to adapt and adjust, both of these women did a remarkable job of joining together to meet the needs of our clients, staff and agency. Additional job responsibilities were undertaken with determination and teamwork."

Congratulations and thank you to Sarah and Stephanie for the terrific job!



*Stephanie Prewitt,
Administrative Asst.*

Tips for a Happy Home During the Holidays

Lindsey E. Davis, MS, LAMFT

This holiday season, many eagerly await spending extended time with loved ones; however, others approach this time of year with trepidation about drawing together as a family. Ironically, the season when we are supposed to feel close to loved ones is often the time when we acutely feel family discord and most isolated. Unfortunately, stress related to shopping as well as seasonal mood difficulties only renders our time together more challenging. Here are a few ideas to make going home for the holidays an enriching experience.



Lindsey E. Davis

Handling the Ghosts of Christmases Past

- ◆ *Forgiveness may be the best gift you give yourself this year.* When we have been hurt in the past by family members – parents, spouses, grandparents, siblings, etc – we often carry resentment towards that person for years. Perhaps you’ve never forgiven your father for missing last year’s Christmas dinner when he promised to be there. When we carry resentments we unconsciously give the offender control; through bitterness they now have some degree of power over our emotional state. Those resentments haunt us – souring our relationships and embittering family gatherings. Many people mistakenly believe that forgiveness is something done only for the sake of the wrongdoer. In actuality, forgiving another person frees *us* from the burden of resentment and bitterness. It liberates us to have loving and satisfying relationships. As H. Norman Wright says in his book, *Making Peace with Your Past*, “If you forgive that significant person from your past, it means you will change your response from distrust and resentment to that of love.”
- ◆ *Don’t React. Respond.* Too often when adult children go home for gatherings they’re engaged in relational patterns with their parents and siblings that began when they were in childhood. Rivalries and expectations may not have disappeared when adult children left the home. As H. Norman Wright states, “Consequently, we may find old patterns of response emerging whenever we have contact with them.” Whether as parents or as adult children, the key to navigating emotional situations is to *respond* rather than *react*. Reacting is the automatic behavior that springs from our emotional response to a person or situation. In other words, we act on what we feel – be it anger, hurt, or fear. In contrast, *responding* is overcoming our emotions with thoughtful behavior. When we respond we experience emotion, but we think before we act. Thoughtful responses can change our attitude, and ultimately create a new pattern of healthy, positive interactions.

Avoiding the Ghost of Christmas Present

- ◆ Your interaction this year sets the stage for how future family gatherings will be. Consider incorporating a new tradition. Be flexible. Think ahead about how you can encourage someone, or what conversation topics to avoid.
- ◆ If you’re hosting a family gathering but are concerned about how people might get along, plan a game or activity during long periods of open time. This allows your guests to avoid lots of unstructured conversation when past hurts and unwelcome subjects could be raised. Also consider devoting a portion of your time together to a charitable activity - nothing unifies a family like working together towards a common goal.
- ◆ On a lighter note, discuss whether or not pets will be welcome at your family’s holiday get-together. While your beloved beagle may be an “honorary family member”, ask Grandma if he’s welcome and what rules she would like to be followed while there.
- ◆ Don’t overspend; too much debt accumulated now will become next year’s Ghost of Christmas Past.

The key to navigating emotional situations is to **respond** rather than **react**.
Responding is overcoming our emotions with thoughtful behavior.

Honoring the Contributions of 2009 Humanitarian Award

The Night of Celebration is our opportunity to honor amazing people in our community who have done great work for the benefit of others. This year we are delighted to recognize the late Jean K. Sorenson as the Individual Humanitarian Award recipient and the Quincy Service League as the Corporate Humanitarian Award recipient.



Jean K. Sorenson

Independent. Community-minded. Loyal. Family-oriented. These characteristics describe Jean K. Sorenson, who passed away on June 29, 2009. Jean is our Individual Humanitarian Award recipient this year.

Jean was a founding board member of Family Service Agency of Adams County in 1947, as our organization was known then. Her intensely independent nature, decades ahead of her time, is remarkably seen throughout her life and through the mark she left on Quincy.

Jean was born and raised in Estevan, Saskatchewan. She completed a bachelor's degree at the University of Manitoba. As a single young woman, Jean journeyed to Iowa State University to complete a master's degree in child development. Ahead of her time, Jean studied the importance of bonding and attachment on emotional and intellectual functioning. Her published master's thesis compared language development in children raised in orphanages to children raised in intact family homes.

Shortly after graduation and returning home to Saskatchewan, Jean received an employment offer in far away Quincy, Illinois. She accepted the offer, headed back to the Midwest, and became the director of Cheerful Home in 1947.

Jean met her future husband, Andrew Donald Sorenson, at Vermont Street United Methodist Church on her first Sunday in Quincy. They were married a year later in 1948, and had four children Ann, Marian, Donald and Allin.

From 1957 until her retirement in 1985, Jean taught kindergarten for Quincy Public Schools. During those 28 years, she taught at Madison, Highland-Riverside, Ellington and Monroe schools. It's hard to find Quincyans who do not fondly remember their dearly loved kindergarten teacher, Mrs. Sorenson.

Jean was busy raising four children while engaged in a professional career, but she was also an active and loyal member of the Quincy community. After her integral role in the founding of Cornerstone, Jean continued to serve on Cornerstone's board for two terms totaling eight years, from 1947 to 1950 and from 1953 to 1957. She was also a founder of the Adams County Mental Health Association (now Transitions of Western Illinois), and a volunteer for the American Heart Association.

Jean's keen interest in and commitment to early childhood and the importance of the family unit helped to forge our mission in that day.

In 2007 for Cornerstone's Celebration of Hope 60th anniversary, Jean and several former board members joined us for an evening of reminiscing. Jean's continued loyalty to the agency was evident as she was only member of our original board to able to attend the celebration. In her gracious style, Jean sent a note after the event that said in part, "I have wonderful memories of my days when involved with 'Family Service'. Like your Board, we were a working one and it is so rewarding to see how far that same group has come." After the 60th anniversary celebration, Jean visited Cornerstone on two occasions for luncheons for former board members. She was quick to share a story and a laugh about the early days of Cornerstone and to offer continued encouragement in our mission of helping people to know *You matter*.

Jean was a lovely, family-oriented, lady of vision and passion. She will be missed by her family and by her adopted community of Quincy. At Cornerstone, we feel particularly privileged and grateful to have had the opportunity to know, work with, and so greatly benefit from her caring, committed, pioneering spirit. She touched the lives of many in our community, and for that, we recognize Jean with our Humanitarian Award.

Recipients: Jean K. Sorenson and Quincy Service League

Quincy Service League is a not-for-profit corporation formed in January 1938. The organization was to pattern itself after the Junior League of America. However, prior to January 1938, the Junior League of America had voted not to accept applications from communities as small as Quincy. Nonetheless, the founding members of Quincy Service League were eager to create an organization to foster interest among members in the social, economic, educational, cultural and civic conditions of the community in order to provide efficient volunteer service.

Quincy Service League has supported a number of projects over the years. Projects included Children's Little Theater, Toy Hospital, Pre-Natal Clinic, Girl Scout Troop, Meals on Wheels, Junior Shoppe, to name a few. Some projects were replaced or changed in time.

Today, QSL supports six on-going projects of their own and numerous other projects through scholarships and grants. The six projects include: RIF, Junior Shoppe, Monotones, Chaddock, Retired Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP), YWCA, and Community Service. Through the RIF program, Quincy Service League provides students at Dewey, Washington, and Berrian Schools the opportunity to choose and receive a book three times a year. Members on RIF also present to present a story to entertain the children while they are selecting their books. The Junior Shoppe is located in Quincy Junior High and provides children, upon referral by a teacher, the opportunity to select clothing and personal items that have been purchased by Quincy Service League. This allows children the opportunity to acquire proper clothing, undergarments, and personal items such as deodorant and soap. The Monotones project allows

members the opportunity to entertain nursing home residents with song and dance routines. Members work with Chaddock students on arts and crafts projects, as well as participating in outings to recreational facilities. Current and former members of Quincy Service League, participate with the RSVP and the Meals on Wheels programs. The YWCA project allows league members to work with residents of the YWCA. Community Service project allows members to volunteer for other upcoming events organized by other local community organizations. In addition, the community service projects serve to help supplement and provide additional service hours to the existing projects in League.

Quincy Service League has only one fund raising event each year to support its projects, grants and scholarship programs. This event is the Quincy Service League Holiday Gift Show held at Quincy High School. QSL just celebrated its 42nd annual gift show. All League members are involved in the event as are some past members. It is the effort of all members that contributes to making the event a success.

Quincy Service League has approximately 90 members. All of the women range in age from 21 to 45 years. Each member serves as an active member for 10 years. New members are proposed by former or existing members and serve a provisional year to become acquainted with the organization. This year's provisional class includes 15 women of varying interests and occupations.

Each active Quincy Service League member must perform certain duties and tasks. Members must donate at least 15 hours of time towards her Quincy Service League project and 2 hours of community service to the general public. With 90 active members, 1,530 hours of volunteer service are performed each year for the community. This is in addition to the monies donated back to the community each year. Last year, Quincy Service League through its grant program distributed approximately \$20,000.00 to over 30 agencies. Quincy Service League also provides two high school scholarships to area high school seniors each year. The winning recipients receive a \$1,000.00 scholarship toward continuing their education.

Odds are you know a present or past member of Quincy Service League. One of the reasons for its success is its simple focus on recognizing the needs in the community and organizing a response to those needs.



QSL members (from left) Angie Slater, Lori Brenner and Julie Duke work at the Junior Shoppe.

You Are Making a Difference in People's Lives

Maybe you watched our Christmas video, Emily's Story. If so, you saw Emily talk about her experience with Cornerstone. She spoke with pride about her job in a group for mentally challenged women. She talked about how Cornerstone had helped her and now she was helping others, "it's a big cycle". Our donors are a key part of that "big cycle" and we are grateful for the generosity of the following individuals, businesses, and groups. We take this opportunity to express our heartfelt thanks to each of you for investing in people like Emily. You are making a difference in people's lives.

Frank and Vickie Arnold
Eleanor B. Barnstead
Rod and Cathy Becks
Mike and Kristine Bickhaus
Mary Bissell
Darren and Karen Brinkman
Michael and Jean Buckley
Joe and Janet Conover
Bob and Fran Cook
John and Helen Cornell
Beth Deters
Steve and Glori Duesterhaus
Mrs. Elizabeth Eby
Coach Mike Elbe and John Wood Community
College Men's Basketball Team
Lawson and Jan Faler
Craig and KC Freeman
Gardner Denver Company
Chad and Joyce Gronewold
Justin Hale
Todd Haverstock
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John and Joanne Ortwerth
Delores Paley
Bill and Pattie Paxton
David Penn
Gary and Melissa Penn
Mrs. Connie Phillips
Darin and Ariel Prost
Marvin Purdy

Quincy University Dance Team
Dr. and Mrs. Louis Quintero
Kevin and Sheri Reller
Dr. Demir and Vicky Saka
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Melissa Sorrill
Barbara Strieker
Mark and Lyn Strieker
Tom and Kim Strieker
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Mr. and Mrs. Michael Zanger

In honor of Ann Titus
John and Lani Schnieder

In Honor of Mary Shaw
Dr. John and Candee Scott

In honor of Mr. and Mrs. Tony Dickerman
Alan and Mary Ellen Stiegemeier

In memory of Ferd Niemann
Rita M. Niemann

In memory of Jean K. Sorenson
Ann Titus
John and Catherine Hirner

In memory of Mr. and Mrs. Owen Mays
Anonymous

In memory of R. Shawn Foster
Richard and Dee Foster

In memory of Tom Awerkamp
Mary Jo Viau

David Penn Elected President; Strieker Rejoins Board



*David Penn,
Board President*

David Penn was elected President of the Cornerstone's Board of Directors on November 18. David has served as a member of the board since 2005. He has served on the Personnel Committee and previously served as 1st Vice President.

David is an attorney with Schmiedeskamp, Robertson, Neu & Mitchell. A native of Lexington Kentucky, he is an honors graduate of Boston College with degrees in Political Science and Law. David's areas of practice include defense of personal injury claims, professional malpractice, product liability, commercial litigation, insurance, employment, education law and appellate litigation. David has four children, Jacob, Jonah, Hannah and Molly. He enjoys coaching youth sports, reading historical biographies and watching any funny movie or television show.

Other officer positions for the current year are Kathy Fauble, 1st Vice President; Darla Rischar, 2nd Vice President; Mary Jo Viau, Secretary; and Mark Strieker, Treasurer.



Mark Strieker

Mark Strieker was re-elected to the Board after a two year absence. Mark is Vice President of Finance and Administration for Continental Cement Company in Hannibal. He is a Certified Public Accountant and a member of the Institute of Certified Public Accountants. Mark is married to Lyn Strieker and they have three daughters, Kailyn, Ashley and Sydney. They are members of St. Peter's Church. Mark's interests include time with his family, running and reading.

Some of the Nicest People...

John W. Hirner, MSW

Steve and Glori Duesterhaus realize the need for social service organizations is great right now. And they believe in supporting local organizations.

Both Steve and Glori support local organizations through volunteer service. Steve is a Trustee for the Quincy Public Library. Glori volunteers her free time at the Quincy Humane Society. There she found three canines to add to the Duesterhaus household. They are parents of two married children, Megan and Eric. During their daughter's senior year, the Duesterhaus family hosted a foreign exchange student from Columbia.

Steve works in the power plant at the Illinois Veteran's Home and is the 2nd ward alderman on the Quincy City Council. In his role as alderman, constituents occasionally contact him when they don't know where to turn for help with a specific problem. Glori, learning disabilities coordinator at Quincy High School, works with students every day who must overcome many types of challenges to be successful in school. As a result, she knows first-hand the importance of Cornerstone's school-based services.



*Glori and Steve Duesterhaus
during a recent visit to Cornerstone.*

It's not all about work for Steve and Glori. They enjoy attending Quincy Gems baseball games and riding Steve's Harley on the lesser traveled roads around Quincy. Glori's favorite ride is along Bonansinga Drive. They also like to travel to Orlando to visit daughter Megan and relax on Florida's beaches.

Support Cornerstone.



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Happy Holidays!
You matter.

*Our Mission:
Helping people meet life's
challenges by providing the skills,
support and hope needed for
effective fulfilling lives.*

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Kathy Fauble, 1st Vice President
Darla Rischar, 2nd Vice President
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Department of Children and Family Services and the United Way of Adams County.*