

## North Bakersfield Open House

On February 23rd, the Child Guidance Clinic celebrated the opening of its newest office at 2001 North Chester Avenue. Representatives from the North of the River Chamber of Commerce assisted with a Ribbon Cutting Ceremony. Guests from the schools and district offices, Kern County Mental Health Department and the Oildale community joined in the celebration and enjoyed hors d'oeuvres provided by Guild House. This office has been open since the beginning of the year and serves the schools and families that reside in the Oildale, Glennville, Woody and north Bakersfield communities.



Ribbon Cutting Ceremony was hosted by NOR Chamber of Commerce.



Paula Abbott, David Camara, Nancy Belton and Pat Edgerle stop for a photo at the Open House.

# Grief Counseling

Death is a part of everyone's life. Dealing with the loss of a loved one is not an easy process and something the Clinic has to deal with often. On numerous occasions, the Clinic has been asked to assist with grief counseling at school sites.

Most recently, when one school lost two mothers exactly one week apart, the school decided to call on the Clinic for help. What made this situation even more of a concern was when these mothers both had children in the same elementary class. The principal shared that the rest of the students were waiting and worrying about whose mother would be next.

Last Thanksgiving, when a young boy was injured in an automobile accident and eventually died from his injuries, the students at his own school and the school where his mother was a bus driver were asking questions about his death. The Child Guidance Clinic sent therapists to both schools in the small school district to assist these students in finding the answers that they were seeking surrounding the loss of such a young child.

A few years ago when several students in Delano were killed in a horrendous automobile accident, the Clinic sent staff from Bakersfield to not only help the Delano team work with students at the schools where the accident victims attended, but also to help their families and closest friends to deal with such a loss.

The important thing to remember is that children experience grief in many different ways. Their reactions will vary depending on their age and stage of development. Some may withdraw, have physical symptoms and cry easily. Other children may be angry and lash out at others. Very young children do not have the ability to understand the concept of

death and may ask repeatedly when the loved one will return. It is part of the normal developmental process for children to see themselves as the center of the world but, as a result, they may also feel that they have caused or are to blame for the death of someone else.

Children can come through the experience of grief and loss more easily if they have a strong understanding and support system. Unfortunately, this is often a time when the adults around them are experiencing their own feelings of grief and sadness, so they may not be as emotionally available to the child. It can be very helpful if there is someone available to talk to and listen to the child, especially during the early stages of the grieving process. This is why we encourage schools to take advantage of Clinic services.

Grief and loss are part of the normal cycle of life and do not need to be hidden from children. It is all right for children to see adults cry and express their feelings of sadness. However, it is important that children are given enough information to help them understand what is happening and to have the opportunity to ask questions. Brief information and simple explanations will allow children to feel safe as they and those around them move through the grief process.

It is important to remember that grief is the response to any kind of loss, whether through death, divorce, moving or even the loss of our feeling of safety in these uncertain times. As adults, we must

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## 6th Annual Public Symposium on Race & Diversity Issues



Paula Abbott and Robin Summerfruit at the Race and Diversity Conference.

As a country whose foundation consists of multiple cultures and races, it is imperative that our community's education system, businesses and service organizations strive to be culturally sensitive to better understand their employees and their customers. In Kern County, one of the only conferences available to address the issues of cultural and racial diversity is the Annual Public Symposium on Race & Diversity Issues.

This year's conference featured Kerry Kennedy, daughter of the late Robert F. Kennedy, as the keynote speaker. Kennedy began working in the field of human rights in 1981 when she investigated abuses committed by U.S. immigration officials against refugees from El Salvador. Since then, her life has been devoted to the vindication of equal justice, to the promotion and protection of basic rights and to the preservation of the rule of law. She has led over 49 human rights delegations to more than 30 countries. At a time of diminished idealism and growing cynicism about public service, her life and lectures are testament to the commitment to the basic values of human rights.

Sponsored by the Kern County Mental Health System of Care, this conference featured a variety of topics pertaining to racial, cultural and religious issues. Numerous speakers were slated for break-out sessions throughout the day with such topics as: *African-American Issues in Mental Health*, *Gang Violence*, *Medical Issues in the Latino Community*, *the Culture of Poverty* and *Females in Law Enforcement*.

This is the fourth year that the Clinic has been a major participant in the Race & Diversity Symposium. The Child Guidance Clinic is committed to the philosophy of cultural competency and is honored to support the work of the Kern County Mental Health Department in organizing the event.



## First 5 of Kern - Contractors Gathering

The Clinic's Early Intervention Program provides mental health services to children from birth through age 5 and their families. The Program focuses on improving the child's behavior by enhancing the parent-child relationship. Many of the services are funded through Proposition 10, the Tobacco Tax Initiative, administered by the First 5 Kern Commission.

Each quarter, the First 5 Kern Commission invites an agency to host the Quarterly Contractor Gathering which is an opportunity for grantees to network as well as learn about other programs. On March 18, 2005, by invitation of the First 5 Kern Commission, the Clinic's Early Intervention Team hosted the gathering.

The audience of over 50 contractors was one of the largest ever to attend a quarterly Contractor Gathering, which demonstrates that professionals who work with young children are very interested in learning about mental health services for preschoolers.

The Early Intervention team provided refreshments and presented information about mental health services in Kern County, symptoms and behaviors in young children, services available through the Clinic's Early Intervention Program and the referral process. The Team led the participants in music and play activities



(Top) Cathy Monsibais, Early Intervention Program Manager; Sam Aunai, First 5; Kimberly Fulton, First 5 and Linda Hoyle, Clinical Director. Over 50 participants attended the First 5 Contractor's Meeting hosted by the Clinic.

ties that are actually used in the Program's treatment groups. The audience responded with laughter, enthusiasm and requests for more.

According to the First 5 Commission, the evaluations for the event were excellent. The goal was to provide information in a welcoming, positive and fun environment so the attendees would feel comfortable and open to new ideas. It is the same philosophy that the Early Intervention Team uses in working with families so they, too, feel comfortable and open to learning new ideas.



## Celebrity Reader

The Clinic's very own Greg McCall was selected as a Celebrity Reader to help celebrate Dr. Seuss' birthday at Stine Elementary School. Greg is a case manager who was invited to read Dr. Seuss' *Green Eggs and Ham* to a group of six and seven year olds. Measuring in at 6 feet and 7 inches in height (minus the Dr. Seuss hat), Greg was a "huge" success in the eyes of first graders!

## In Memory - Dr. John and Dorothy Almklov

The Clinic recently lost dear friends when John and Dorothy Almklov passed away just months apart. Dorothy Almklov passed away on February 28, 2005, and her beloved husband, John, followed her in death on May 30, 2005, after battling a lengthy illness.

Both were longtime supporters of the Clinic. Dorothy was one of the founding members of Guild House which has pro-

vided financial assistance to the Clinic since 1958. As a well-respected pediatrician, John was a valuable asset to the Child Guidance Clinic Board of Directors. He also supported Dorothy in all of her work at Guild House and occasionally participated in Guild House events.

The Clinic is honored to have been a part of the Almklov's lives and will miss them both.

# Board of Directors

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Bakersfield, CA 93309  
(661) 322-1021

200 N. Chester  
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(661) 393-5836

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Delano, CA 93215  
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[www.hwmcgc.org](http://www.hwmcgc.org)

## Mission Statement

The Henrietta Weill Memorial Child Guidance Clinic provides the services and resources necessary to prevent and treat emotional and behavioral problems for Kern County children and their families.

## Service Awards Fifteen Years and Above



(Left to right) Carol Crocker — 15 years;  
David Camara — 35 years; Linda Linsea — 30 years;  
Doris Hewes — 25 years.

## Five Year Service Award Recipients



(Left to right): Octavio Magana, Colleen Sullivan, JoAnn Fletcher, Cathy Monsibais, Michelle Whipple, Jeff Cheney, Karen Moniz.



Brian Flynn and Toni Ross

## Presidents Awards



Tammy Padilla and Cathy Monsibais received the President's Award for January.



Linda Linsea and Brenda Weston receive the President's Award for April from Board President, Blake Smith.



## Grief Counseling

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pay careful attention to their words and behavior to understand what they may be feeling. Children have a great deal of resilience and can usually cope with feelings of grief and sadness in a normal process. With time, children will accept the loss and move through feelings of grief to a place of acceptance and peace. However, if they are experiencing difficulty in that process, they may benefit from professional help.

The Child Guidance Clinic staff has worked with many children struggling with grief and loss issues. This type of assistance does not just limit itself to the

boundaries of Kern County, or even California, for the Clinic to get involved. Tragedies that hit at the national level, such as the Columbine High School shootings and the 9-11 crisis affected local teachers, parents and children alike. The Clinic provided several groups to address the questions, to assist in calming the fears and to address the concerns that so many people felt after these tragedies. Whatever the issue, the experienced and caring staff of the Clinic is available to help children and their families move from grief to peace.



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## THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT

The following individuals, corporations, foundations and community organizations have generously made donations to the Clinic from December 1, 2004 through May 31, 2005. On behalf of the children we serve, thank you for your support.



### LEADING HANDS

\$40,000 and above  
Guild House  
Blanche and Irma Weill Foundation

### GUIDING HANDS

\$10,000 - \$39,999  
Kaiser Permanente Community Service Fund

### HELPING HANDS

\$1,000 - \$9,999  
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*June Stiern Memorial Library*  
Diane S. Lake  
In-N-Out Burger Foundation  
Joan Pracy  
The Lake Family Foundation, Cynthia Lake

### CARING HANDS

Albertsons  
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*In Memory of Alyce Willis*  
Shawn Canaday  
Mary Choy  
*In Memory of Dorothy Almklov*  
Lucille Christensen  
*In Memory of Virginia Church*  
Audrey Demirjian  
*In Memory of Jim Fiorini and Josbua*  
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Dorothy and Dick Robison  
*In Memory of Dorothy Almklov*  
Dr. and Mrs. Guy Shaw, III  
*In Memory of Norman and Bernadine Klein*  
Tina Smith  
Helen Solomon  
*In Memory of Frank Sill*  
John Stephenson

Jerry and Mildred Sudarsky  
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Elizabeth and Ira Ali Yaussy  
*In Memory of Dorothy Almklov*  
***In Tribute to Blake and Denise Smith's Nuptials***  
Deborah Tyler

### IN KIND DONATIONS

Bakersfield Police Department  
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Carol Crocker  
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The Scrap Yard, Joe and Stacey Bruce  
Society for Disabled Children

### 2004 HOLIDAY FAMILIES PROGRAM

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Tina & Frank Cantelmi  
Teresa Ford and family  
Guild House Volunteers:  
— 1-3-5 Fridays  
— 2-4 Thursdays  
— 1-3-5 Tuesdays  
— 1-3-5 Thursdays  
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