



Donor Observations

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April 2008

A Five Year Old's Tears

Just after Easter, five year old "Johnny" came in to SIRSS to see his counselor. When told that she was not here, he burst into tears, crying "I want to see my counselor". Shortly she arrived for the appointment, running just a little late from her last stop, and all was well. Many of us feel a little like Johnny, upset and wanting help from someone we trust, but only the very young haven't yet learned to cover up their feelings.

Capital Campaign Reaches Halfway Mark

February brought a generous donation of \$50,000 toward building the third floor children's wing of our new facility from the Poshard Foundation for Abused Children.

As Foundation Director Jo Poshard stated, "We know that in SIRSS present location, crowded conditions prevent the maximum assistance to abused children from being realized. One of the Poshard Foundation's missions is to help build adequate shelter and treatment facilities throughout southern Illinois. That is why we feel strongly about supporting the 3rd floor children's wing of the new SIRSS building."

The request to the Foundation made the relationship between child abuse and lifelong wellness clear. "Of the approximately 1500 children SIRSS sees annually, we estimate that a history of abuse or neglect contributed to the child or teenager's problems at least 40% of the time. This means that abuse and neglect issues must be addressed by SIRSS counselors for 600 children annually. Without help in healing, emotional wounds from abuse and neglect can last a lifetime," stated Karen Freitag, SIRSS Executive Director.

SIRSS counselors see the results of child abuse and neglect not only in children, but in adults who were abused as children, and who are now in treatment for mental health and substance abuse issues.

The generous commitment from the Poshard Foundation put the total amount raised toward the new SIRSS facility at more than half a million dollars. Efforts are ramping up to double this amount so that groundbreaking can occur.



Legacy Giving



Since the first of this year, SIRSS has been the beneficiary of its first two legacy gifts. The first is from Edith Calvert Spees and Emil Spees, who established a \$30,000 account for SIRSS with the Southern Illinois Community Foundation. The account is intended to grow over the years and help with maintenance of the new SIRSS facility. The second legacy gift is \$50,000 toward SIRSS per a prominent community member's will.

Emil Spees had an interesting way of thinking, saying he believes in "giving forward", not giving back. We are so grateful to these community leaders for their care and long-term commitment to helping people who need it.

Legacy giving through estate planning will form the foundation through which the fiscal health of Southern Illinois Regional Social Services and its ability to serve people without resources over time will be assured. Gifts like these will sustain current programming, maintain the facility and meet future program needs. Planning for the future is truly a gift that keeps on contributing to *Building Better Lives*.



May is Mental Health Month

To kick off the month and increase awareness of how mental health and physical health are inseparable and fundamental to overall health, Southern Illinois Regional Social Services is sponsoring **Walk the Blues Away on Friday, April 25 at the Carbondale Civic Center.**

The event will begin at 11:00AM with a few words from community leaders. Immediately following, people who believe that emotional health is important and that recovery is possible are invited to join SIRSS staff for a short walk south toward the University and then back to the Civic Center.

Following the walk, people who would like to see the 30-minute film *Building Better Lives Every Day* are welcome to bring a brown bag for lunch and watch the movie with us.

From a SIRSS Staff Member

Aunt Pat's Coins

Every three months or so, I travel a thousand miles to the southwest to see my mother who is 89, and her 97 year old sister, my Aunt Pat. On the last trip, Aunt Pat was more curious than usual about what it is we do where I work, and why a new building might be important. Making conversation from where she sat behind my mother, who was riding "shotgun" in the van, Aunt Pat wondered if I might accept some coins she had been saving as an anonymous donation to our project. And so it happened that the bag I carried on the flight back to St. Louis was heavier than usual. Following her instructions, I took the coins to a local dealer, who wrote a check for \$640.15 that has now been donated to the new SIRSS facility.

Anonymously – as she wished it.

Getting to Know SIRSS

Before anyone can support a cause, they have to know something about it. For many years, SIRSS and its services have flown under the radar, as privacy is of great concern and people who recover and live productively have been reluctant to speak out. This is changing. People who are recovering want to share their stories, which help others understand mental illness, substance abuse and youth and family problems. Thanks to the care and skill of volunteer Richard Kuenneke of Oakview Road Media, a 30-minute DVD entitled *Building Better Lives Every Day* tells some of these stories. This gripping presentation captures the bravery of real people who work hard to recover. If you belong to a civic, professional or faith-based group and would like to learn more, please contact Karen Freitag at 618-457-6703 Ext. 248 or Peg Falcone at 618-457-6703 Ext. 227 to schedule a time.

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Golf Scramble and Trivia Net Over \$20,000

Our heartfelt thanks to the many community individuals and businesses who participated in two annual fundraisers hosted by Friends of SIRSS since the August issue of Donor ObSIRSSvations. Both events were opportunities for the community to have fun, to learn a little more about SIRSS, and to help raise much needed funds. After expenses, the Golf Scramble netted \$15,332 and Trivia netted \$4,980. Thanks to all volunteers who helped, especially to Gordon Plumb, committee chair for both events.



The Aloha Table at Trivia Night

*Southern Illinois Regional Social Services, Inc.
Building Better Lives*

by fostering hope and supporting recovery through prevention, family support, mental health & substance abuse services.