

## A Message from Michelle

To our dear friends,

As our board and staff put the final touches on a 5-year strategic plan that maps out an exciting vision for our future, I wanted to let *you* know some things that you may not realize about the Wendt Center *today* ...

**We are growing.** Yes, and this is a *good* thing! We *want* to reach more, to *serve* more, to use our very unique skills and passion where we can apply them effectively so that people in pain from the loss of a loved one or from exposure to devastating traumas can heal and feel safe and joyful once again. This year, we are well on our way to serving over 1,400 people through our individual and group counseling program alone. People from all over the District. They represent all the different faces of our community and come from all the diverse neighborhoods and backgrounds that make this region so vibrant and rich. I view this as one of our greatest successes. Among them are 800 children (up from 633 last year, up from 486 just three years ago). We are at over 25 locations throughout the city, providing counseling where those who need it can access it. We are on the move, and we are making a difference.

**We are evolving. We are staying the same.** By evolving, we are staying true to our roots. We are continuing to fulfill the promise we have always made -- to understand and meet the changing needs of the community we serve. We are reaching out and making our specialized skills available to "new" populations who desperately need us. You will hear me, hear *us*, talk about our services for survivors of domestic violence or sexual assault, about the needs of veterans, of children and families from immigrant communities, about girls who have been victimized by human trafficking. And you may think... this is the *Wendt Center*? Yes. It *is* the Wendt Center. They have always been there among our clients. Only now we are serving them in a more intentional and formalized way. New, in a sense, but really the same. And whether rich or poor, from Northwest or Southeast, young or old, EVERYONE gets the same level of excellence, the same state-of-the-art, effective services.



Michelle Palmer, Executive Director

**We are here for you.** We are very excited about the future. We have big dreams for what we can accomplish with your help and support. Our reputation in the region is well-established, and it is my intention to lead the Wendt Center, with the help of our Board, our incredible staff, and our wonderful friends and supporters, to a new, even higher level of excellence and impact. And all the while, we will firmly and insistently continue to be here for *you* and for all the members of this community who need us.

Our Wendt Center grew out of a need deeply felt in this community and beautifully articulated by William Wendt. I know he would be extremely proud of what we are doing and the "new" directions we are taking in order to maximize our healing work.

*Michelle*

## 2014 Camp Forget-Me-Not/Camp Erin DC



58 campers (of which 40 were boys!) attended camp this year. They ranged in age from 6-16. 18 of them were grieving the loss of their mothers, 24 lost their fathers. 14 of the deaths were homicides. 8 of the children came from military

73 volunteers served as buddies and fulfilled many other critical roles to make Camp the smoothly executed and incredibly meaningful experience it is. They also raised an

Each year, campers are treated to a seamless program of activities that help them explore, express, and share their feelings of loss with others who have had similar experiences. Through team-building challenges, music, drama, poetry, painting, and structured exchanges in

families. Our fantastic volunteers and staff provided them with an unforgettable camp experience, including comforting gifts and supplies (cuddly blankets, pillowcases, etc.).

unprecedented \$36,572 to keep Camp free for all the kids who need it. 13 earned a "Golden Ticket" to this year's benefit by raising \$1,000 or more.

small group settings, they build their trust and confidence, they connect, and they learn that they are not alone. Most importantly, they have fun!

## Support

**DC Department of Behavioral Health** awarded the Center a two-year grant to support our work with veterans and members of the military.

**CareFirst BlueCross Blue Shield** awarded the Center a second grant supporting the continuing development and implementation of a robust evaluation program.

Thank you to **Rotary Club** for supporting our work with veterans and to **John Edward Fowler Memorial Foundation** for supporting our **C.H.I.L.D.** program.

## Recognition

The Center was honored last month by the **Department of the Navy** for its role in providing crisis intervention services in the aftermath of the Navy Yard shootings.

Congratulations to our 13 "Golden Ticket" winners (see Camp, above). They are:

Sandra Barnes  
Jackie Bottash  
Brandon Breaux  
Tremayne Bunaugh  
Candace Evans  
Jerry Martin  
Craig Meklir  
Mick Neustadt  
Cate Riihimaki  
Steve Riihimaki  
Yvonne Stewart  
Donna Tish  
Andrew Wone

## In the Community

Our **Voices of Now** ensemble has taken its dramatic work ("Answer Key") out into the community. Since presenting it as part of the annual Voices of Now Festival at **Arena Stage** in May, they have performed their play at **Covenant House** and at **Gallaudet University**.

Additionally, the **Catalogue for Philanthropy** has invited us to share this performance at their annual gala in November.

Therapist Ivonne Miranda was interviewed by **Voice of America** about the nature of public grief in the wake of the downing of Malaysian Airlines #17. To see the article, [click here](#).

Stay tuned for more information on the 39th Annual Benefit!

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