



Katie Couric, guest speaker at Wendt Center's 33rd Anniversary Benefit.

"No one should have to grieve alone."

William Wendt

Winter/Spring 2009

WENDT CENTER FOR LOSS AND HEALING

Loss and Grief - Life's Great Equalizers

33rd Anniversary Benefit raises funds, forges connections

Katie Couric and Theresa Norville travelled strikingly different life paths before meeting at the Wendt Center's 33rd Anniversary Benefit on November 13th at the Four Seasons Hotel in Georgetown.

Everyone at the benefit knew ~ or knew of ~ Katie Couric and her successful rise to national prominence.

Only a few had ever heard of Theresa Norville.

Theresa Norville speaks at benefit about the loss of her son, Ali.

That November evening, these two women shared the same stage, and each forged with the audience of over 350 a powerful bond of empathy that only the profoundly human experience of emotional pain and suffering caused by the death of a loved one can create.

Katie spoke of the pain of losing first her husband, and soon thereafter, her sister



and sister-in-law. Theresa shared the story of her son Ali's struggle to cope with the traumatic loss of his father and of her own almost unimaginable pain when Ali himself became the fatal victim of an accidental shooting. The journeys of these two mothers through grief were different. However, neither could do it alone, and both spoke of how much they needed support to recover a sense of normalcy. They had vastly different life circumstances and different resources available to them.



Washingtonian Article Brings Bear Brigades to Wendt Center

This year, the Wendt Center was highlighted as one of "64 Ways to do Good" by Washingtonian Magazine. Selected based on several criteria, including wise and effective use of contributions, organizations were encouraged to submit a short "wish list."

The result? Bundles of cuddly stuffed teddy bears began to arrive at our doorstep, offered by children and adults who responded to our appeal for furry little creatures that could provide comfort to grieving children. Delighted Wendt Center staff began giving out the bears to even more delighted children.

Among the "Bear Brigades" were: Ruth Chris's Steak House, Structure Tone, Holy Cross Youth Group, Employees at Association of American Medical Colleges, and many others who responded with generosity to our appeal.

"I wish I had had a resource like the Wendt Center to help my children."

Katie Couric

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Benefit Committee Co-Chairs Nancy Carr, Carol Pensky, Karen Schneiderman, Kathryn Jones Hanley

continued . . . 33rd Anniversary Benefit

“I wish I had had a resource like the Wendt Center to help my children,” said Katie, as she described the impact of the death

of their father on

her young children. Theresa described how her son derived solace and critical support from the Wendt Center in dealing with his father’s murder.

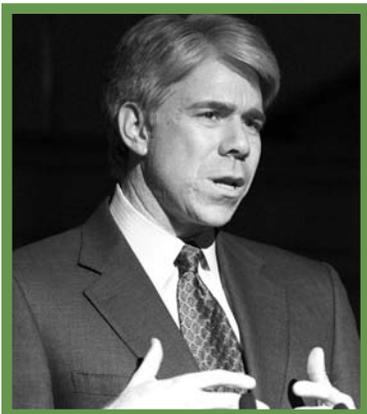
In sharing their stories, both women reminded us that loss and grief are universal. The reality of death is a great equalizing force that eventually impacts the lives of every human being ~ without exception. When that death is unexpected or traumatic, the impact on the lives of family members

can be devastating. The Wendt Center is here to serve as a critical resource for those in need, regardless of their ability to pay.

Each year, the benefit raises a significant portion of the Center’s annual revenue. We are deeply grateful to Katie Couric and Theresa Norville for sharing their stories, to David Gregory for once again serving as a delightful emcee, to the entire Benefit Committee for an elegant and thought-provoking evening that will be remembered for years to come, and to each and every guest who came to support our work. Your commitment will ensure that many children and families in the DC area will not have to struggle alone with their grief.

Mark your calendar for next year’s Benefit on November 12, 2009!

The Wendt Center is here to serve as a critical resource for those in need.



David Gregory, emcee

Wendt Center Staff Invited to Share Expertise in Israel

Pastoral Counseling A Growing Area of Interest

Debbie Schechter, Coordinator of Education, Training, and Crisis Response at the Wendt Center, is a pastoral counselor who recently travelled to Israel to get a first-hand look at the nascent movement of pastoral care.

In the past five years, Israel has begun to train and place increasing numbers of pastoral and spiritual care workers. Invited to meet with some of the movement’s pioneers, Debbie listened to the challenges they face and shared ways in which the education of pastoral counselors in the United States has evolved.

The Wendt Center has incorporated the tenants of pastoral counseling into its work with clients for many years. Recognized for its expertise in the area of loss and grief, graduate students from such programs as Loyola’s Pastoral Counseling Masters and Doctoral program seek highly competitive internship opportunities at the Wendt Center.

Pastoral counseling seeks to understand the human search for meaning and purpose in all its complexity and provides a holistic approach to exploring human behavior that

encompasses body, mind and spirit without making assumptions about the individual’s personal convictions and life orientation.

Upon returning from Israel, Debbie met with Dr. Nathan Cherny, oncologist, Chief of Cancer Pain and Palliative Medicine Service, and Norman Levan Chair of Humanistic Medicine at Shaare Zedek Hospital in Israel. Dr. Cherny is currently on sabbatical at NIH. “Traditionally, says Dr. Cherny, “the only spiritual presence had been the Rabbi’s, whose focus centered on observance of Jewish Law rather than ministering to the ill. Because of the religious diversity of the patients, from ultra orthodox to secular, and the lack of chaplaincy skills, in many instances, there was no common language and an absence of spiritual care.”



Dr. Nathan Cherny, Debbie Schechter

Both recognized fertile ground for a mutual exchange of expertise and are exploring ways in which future collaboration can occur.

Remembering Victims of Homicide

"Thank you for doing this . . . for not forgetting about us . . ."
 This was the refrain heard again and again from



JC Hayward

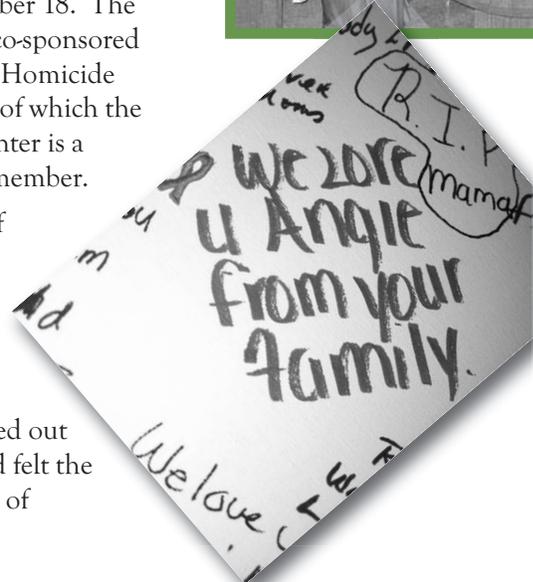
community members who attended the first annual Homicide Commemorative Event hosted by the Wendt Center at Matthew's Memorial Baptist Church on September 18. The event was co-sponsored by the DC Homicide Coalition, of which the Wendt Center is a founding member.



Over 300 were there to remember victims of homicide in the District. Eleanor Holmes Norton and Assistant Chief Robinson (MPD) offered remarks, while JC Hayward served as emcee, presiding over a moving ceremony during which family members and friends lit candles as they called out the names of their murdered loved ones and felt the support and relief provided by this moment of collective remembering.

The Wendt Center thanks its staff and Crisis Response Team (CRT) volunteers for all their help in planning and carrying out a successful and highly therapeutic event.

Check our website for upcoming information on this year's Commemorative Event to be held this fall.



What's Up at the Wendt Center

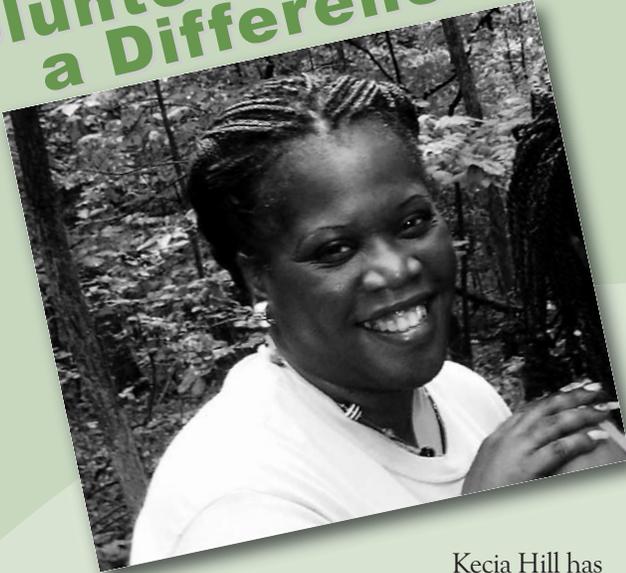
- February 7** Ethics Conference for Mental Health Professionals
- March 5** Volunteer Training
- April 1** Volunteer/Camper Recruitment
Launch for Camp Forget-Me-Not

Check our website for upcoming information on these exciting new initiatives:

-  Get regular, frequent updates via our upcoming Wendt Center e-newsletter.
-  Remember your loved one . . . participate in our May Memorial Butterfly Release. More to come!

www.wendtcenter.org

Volunteers Making a Difference



Kecia Hill has been a volunteer with the Wendt Center for Loss and Healing since 2006. She first heard of the Wendt Center through a colleague and became intrigued by what she felt was a great way to use and expand her work in pastoral counseling. Initially she volunteered with the Crisis Response Team (CRT) and has continually kept growing her commitment to the Center. Now Kecia serves in many capacities, as one of the Center's DC Crisis Response Team Members, as a Camp Forget-Me-

Not Volunteer, and as co-facilitator of the Adult Traumatic Loss Group at our SE office. Kecia has also volunteered a significant amount of time to planning and organizing CRT retreats and assisting with Camp Forget-Me-Not preparation.

The Wendt Center is thankful to have dedicated and motivated volunteers like Kecia on our team. Says Camp Forget-Me-Not Director and therapist Stephanie Handel: "Kecia has been a highly committed volunteer, recognizing that the success of camp requires volunteer support in all aspects - registering parents at orientation, being a buddy, recruiting campers and volunteers - the list goes on. Kecia has tremendous energy - she brings joy, passion, sincerity and seriousness to all of her interactions. I am incredibly thankful that she plays such an integral role in the success of Camp Forget Me Not." It is because of Kecia's ongoing commitment to the Adult Traumatic grief group that our SE Coordinator, Perry King, feels they have achieved a "high degree of cooperation" that allows them to work so well together supporting the groups members.

"Kecia has tremendous energy - she brings joy, passion, sincerity and seriousness to all of her interactions."

If you are interested in helping the Wendt Center, we need you! Please check our website (www.wendtcenter.org) and contact Sarah Berry at 202.204.5009.

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