

An Evening to Remember

Imagine a program that features both the youngest speaker ever to address Barker stakeholders and also honors a Barker husband and wife whose philanthropy and passion for children's issues have been transformational. Such a remarkable and inspirational combination kept the large Annual Meeting crowd lingering long after Chair **Kathryn Bucher** declared the meeting adjourned.

In language that was at once gripping, candid, and amazingly reflective for one so young, 15-year-old **Frenice Rollins** gave a riveting presentation of her long journey from foster child to cherished daughter of Barker adoptive parents, **Michael and Sharon Rollins**.

Removed by public authorities from her biological family at the age of six, Frenice subsequently moved to fourteen different foster homes and

two group homes over the next six years until in 2009 she finally found her permanent home. Frenice's narrative of abuse, emotional distress, and resilience summarized what is reality for many of the 400,000 children in the U.S. foster care system.

Sensing the commitment of the crowd, Frenice concluded her speech with an impassioned challenge to the audience: *"Babies are cute, and they need homes, but we older children aren't as bad as many people make us out to be. We need and deserve a home just like a baby does. I thank you for supporting Project Wait No Longer and making my family possible."*

Her powerful remarks were referenced moments later by **Allan Holt**, as he and **Shelley** accepted the The Richard B. Barker Award to a standing ovation. Holt

emphasized the joy he and Shelley found in seeing others also know the gift of family. In presenting the award, Immediate Past Chair **John Duff** eloquently captured this remarkable couple's spirit: "They have a very close family which is the centerpiece of their lives. They both also have the gene called 'generosity of heart' and get great joy from helping others, particularly children. . . Their tremendous generosity to Barker is remarkable in many ways, but perhaps the most remarkable feature is how they have carefully, creatively, and strategically used their giving to challenge Barker to reach higher levels of attainment. And I think we have all seen Barker improve as a result of their challenges... We are very blessed to have in our Barker community a couple who so quietly *continued on page 2*



Shelley Holt and Frenice Rollins



Pictured, left to right:
John Duff, Immediate Past
Chair, Board of Trustees;
Kathryn Bucher, Chair,
Board of Trustees; Honorees
Shelley and Allan Holt;
Executive Director and CEO,
Marilyn Regier



FROM THE *Executive Director*

The calendar tells me it has been ten years since I came to Barker on November 1st. The decade has sped by for me, a sure sign that I love the work for which you brought me to Barker. Much has changed at Barker in this short span of time. It would be impossible to recount everything, but certain highlights come to mind: the creation of a Department of Family and Post-Adoption Services; the commitment to stronger Development and Finance offices; the addition of strong international programs like China and Korea; Barker-sponsored Homeland Tours to Colombia; the expansion of outreach to communities of color in domestic infant; the response to the national foster care crisis with *Project Wait No Longer*; Hague accreditation; the move to an expanded office; the record high placements of 123 children in our 65th

anniversary year; the upgrading of technology; and our new Strategic Plan.

And yet, if there is one thing we know for certain, it is that the world of adoption often shifts precipitously. We can never rest on our laurels or assume that we are "all set." We can't sit back and bask in "a good year." Not if we care about the needs of children who need homes.

Currently it is the internet with its cyberspace "resources" that present Barker and other ethical agencies with serious challenges. Many of you are learning about the exploitive practices of internet for-profit adoption "providers" who promise adoptive parents "instant children" and who transport pregnant women to facilities that are spa-like or advertised like a resort. Children are commodified rather than benefited, and prospective adoptive parents give oxygen to the dot com internet providers by paying large sums of money for a speedy adoption. Barker staff are

hearing from both birth mothers and adoptive parents who fell prey to the message of short-term "benefits" and are now suffering emotionally or have lost large sums of money. We are now working on all fronts, including legislative, marketing, and media, to establish best policies and practices.

So yes, it's been an amazing ten-year journey, and it has taken all of us working together to achieve the gains of the last decade. I look forward to working with each of you as we build on our strengths and take on new challenges. Our work on behalf of children and families is never done. Thank you so much for your support!

Marilyn Regier

An Evening to Remember

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and modestly sets the standard for generosity."

Former Board Chair **John Harris** sent congratulations from a distance, noting that "for Barker, Allan and Shelley Holt are the definition

of the words 'Game Changers.' Their commitment to Barker is unmatched and reflects the type of people they are – generous, supportive, loving, and maybe simply wonderful. Amy and I are proud to be able to call them our friends."

The evening's events also included the election to the Board

of two new Trustees, **Cathy Card Sterling** and **Adrian Washington**. Cathy is Vice-President at Schultz & Williams, a consulting firm specializing in non-profit management and heads its Washington, DC office. Adrian is the Managing Principal of the Neighborhood Development Company, LLC, and

has spent several decades in urban real estate development, construction, and management. Cathy and Adrian are both Barker parents and bring expertise and commitment to the Board of Trustees. They were unanimously elected and heartily welcomed. ■



Frenice's proud parents, Michael and Sharon Rollins, congratulate their daughter after her award. "The Barker Student Appreciation Award, Presented to Frenice Sky Rollins, in grateful recognition of her passionate adoption advocacy, courage and honesty in sharing her personal experience, and inspirational example for others in our community."



At the May 15th Annual Meeting, John Duff presented the Holts with the highest honor Barker can bestow. The award reads: "The Richard B. Barker Award, Presented to Shelley and Allan Holt, in recognition of their enduring support and compassionate spirit. Their wise and strategic vision has inspired and challenged us; and their generosity of heart has transformed children's dreams of family into reality."

Beverly Clarke Chosen as 2012 Angel in Adoption

Maryland Congressman Chris Van Hollen has selected Beverly Clarke as a 2012 Angel in Adoption for her outstanding efforts on behalf of children in Maryland. Bev is Barker's Director of Project Wait No Longer, a program that partners with public social service agencies to find permanent homes for children in the foster care system

"As a social worker and clinician with an emphasis on children and families, Beverly Clarke has worked extensively in the fields of adoption and foster care. And as an adoptive parent herself, she brings both a personal understanding of the process as well as a passion for achieving permanency for at-risk children," **said Congressman Van Hollen.** "Project Wait No Longer's emphasis on lifelong support for all members of the adoptive family brings a unique level of support, and Beverly is on the front lines

helping to change the lives of children who might otherwise never have the love and support of a permanent family. I'm honored to join CCAI in recognizing her important work."

The Angels in Adoption program is the Congressional Coalition on Adoption Institute's (CCAI) signature public awareness campaign and provides an opportunity for all Members of Congress to honor the good work of those constituents who have enriched the lives of foster children and orphans in the United States and abroad.

Board Chair, Kathryn Bucher, congratulated Bev on behalf of the Board, saying that "We are exceedingly proud of you. It is because of your dedication to and passion for PWNL and Barker's mission that we on the Board are inspired to serve and why we have tremendous pride in being part of the Barker family. Thank you!" ■



Beverly Clarke Chosen as Van Hollen's Angel in Adoption

- With Sympathy -

We express our heartfelt sympathy to Barker families who mourn the loss of loved ones.

Donald H. Sekira, Sr., father of Barker parent Donald, Jr. and loving grandfather of Justin and Kayla, died on March 16, 2012. We are grateful for their designation of Barker as a recipient of memorial gifts.

Daniel H. Crowley, father of Barker parent Anne Crowley (Michael Hall), and loving grandfather of Isaiah, Samuel, and Eli Hall Crowley, died on August 1, 2012, at the age of 75. Survived by his wife and former Barker Board member, Susan, the Crowleys were active with Barker and had most recently participated in the Grandparents' Panel at the 2011 Annual Meeting.

Barker parent, Linda Holden, beloved wife of Jeff Holden and mother of Katie and Matt Holden, died on August 15, 2012, at the age of 67. Always active in her community, Linda was also very involved in Barker activities, including the Parents' Group, the auctions, and the post-adoption group. Thank you to the family for designating Barker as a recipient of memorial gifts.

Jean Spencer, daughter of our agency founders, Richard and Ruth Barker, died in Phoenix, Arizona, on June 15, 2012, at the age of 75. Her daughter, Carolyn Acuna, sent word of her mother's death.

Barker's Annual Giving Phonathon

Once a year, a league of dedicated parent volunteers reaches out to other Barker parents to ask for support of the agency's services and programs that benefit adopted persons, birth parents and adoptive parents. Headed up by Barker Dad **Roger DeLucia**, this year's Phonathon was held on the evenings of September 18 & 19. **Nearly 200 Barker friends and families were reached and made pledges that helped us get closer to our 2012 Annual Giving goal of \$440,000!**

Again this year, Barker parents and owners of Bradley Food & Beverage, **Tom and Charleen Merkel**, donated a delicious sandwich tray, sides and cookies as refreshments for volunteer callers. Also again this year, **Reznick Group** generously provided their phones and office space at no charge for this event.

Barker relies on Annual Giving to provide high-quality adoption services, a sliding fee scale for applicants, and programs and counseling for families and adopted children at all stages of life.

Roger DeLucia noted, "The Phonathon is a time-honored tradition. Barker families have always been the financial bedrock of the agency and remain vital to its ongoing operation. If you have never made a gift before, please consider giving one this year; if you have given in the past, please consider an increase over previous gifts. Every gift makes a huge difference!"

If you prefer to make your gift on-line, Barker's secure website is available to you anytime by going to www.barkerfoundation.org and click Make a Donation. ■

Two Reflections in Remembrance of Mercedes Rosario de Martinez

In September 2008, my two sons, James & Ruben Stann, and I had the honor of accompanying Mercedes Rosario de Martinez and Flor Rojas on a tour of the Basilica of the Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Northeast Washington, DC. Mercedes was using a cane, but she walked steadily throughout the vast church. She was looking around and asking questions of the guide, like any tourist, until she came to

the Blessed Sacrament Chapel. It is just off the main sanctuary. She was so taken by this place that she went inside, knelt down, and prayed.

When she came out, she remarked that she thought it was so beautiful.

When Mercedes died this past May, Friends of FANA of Washington, DC wanted to have a memorial service. We arranged to have a mass in this chapel that was special to her. The mass was held on September 23, 2012, the day

before her birthday. In attendance were adoptees, parents, families, and former and present staff of the Barker Foundation. Fr. Alejandro Diaz of St. Martin of Tours in Gaithersburg said the mass. He had recently toured FANA while on a visit to his home in Colombia. He spoke movingly about the meaning of Mercedes's life and work. FANA adoptees who did the readings were Julie Olker-Montoya, twins Angela & Janine Moebius, and Nick

Kedges. His sister, Corinne Kedges, and their mother Diane Kedges were gift bearers. At the end of the mass, Marilyn Regier, the Executive Director and CEO of Barker, gave a moving eulogy. Afterwards, there was a lovely reception hosted by Barker in Memorial Hall in the lower church. It was a moving tribute to an extraordinary woman who has touched so many lives.

— *Geraldine Oliveto*

If we think of the people in our lives that have made the biggest impact or difference, we would probably be able to count them on one hand. They could be a parent, sibling a special teacher or coach who made a real, monumental difference. Mercedes will always be one of those people for me. The first time I met her was March 1997. She was holding our son Michael

in her arms. I remember how adorably he looked at her. Her smile was so warm and loving. We felt so special, and we became part of the FANA Family that day.

Over the years, as a result of our work with Friends of FANA, I had the privilege to spend time with Mercedes on many of her visits to the Washington area. We went shopping together, and I

thoroughly enjoyed our conversations and getting to know her. Her stamina to cover Tysons Mall was incredible! Seriously, I was most impressed and inspired by her faith. It sustained her through many years of illness and uncertainty when the Bienstar was not cooperating with her mission. Mercedes knew first-hand the pain of infertility and yet, her mission remained the same

throughout her lifetime: not a child to a family, but a family for a child. Her legacy lives on in our children and all of us. I am blessed to have known her, and while I will miss her, I will remember her lovingly and look forward to seeing her again someday in Heaven.

— *Maria Van Wie, Chair, Friends of FANA DC*

Congratulations to Our New Adoptive Families

Matthew & Kristin welcomed Michael

Tim & Kelly welcomed Carson

Sanjeev & Mala welcomed Nirvaan

Erik & Emily welcomed Jackson

John & Christina welcomed John

Charul & Shalini welcomed Akash

Julie welcomed William

Brian & Christy welcomed Daniel

Bryan & Monica welcomed Jack

Luis & Jean welcomed Vincent

Mike & Starling welcomed Ellis

Dae Sung & Lale welcomed Jaeyoon

Michael & Jennifer welcomed Ethan

Douglas & Bambi welcomed Desta

Mike & Brenda welcomed Jacob

Jason & Amy welcomed Matthew

Brian & Raheleh welcomed Bahiyiyih

Butch & Nikki welcomed Niko

Mark & Beth welcomed Zane

Joe & Arika welcomed Vicky

Timothy & Michelle welcomed Jackson

Steve & Maura welcomed Miles

Steve & Kristen welcomed Ryan

Mike & Susan welcomed Jasper

Jon & Kelly welcomed Nathaniel

Michael & Kelly welcomed Daniel

Eric & Regina welcomed Ian

Larry & Casey welcomed Henry

Jeff & Erin welcomed Grayson

Dee Dee & John welcomed Jackson

Michelle & Garry welcomed Robert

Lisa welcomed Ellie

Anne & Ed welcomed Lena

Karen & Richard welcomed Natalie

Leora & Dave welcomed Colter

Leslie & John welcomed John

Melinda & Jared welcomed Dawes

Candy & Roberto welcomed Arabella

Camille welcomed Josephine

Jennifer & John welcomed Julia

Jennifer & Robert welcomed Hannah

Airi & John welcomed Juliet

Kari & Kevin welcomed Payton

Sonia & Niles welcomed Noomi

Nicole & Justin welcomed Savannah

Rhonda & Stewart welcomed Benjamin

Norma & Andrew welcomed Maria

Nicole & Andy welcomed Geneva

Jocelyn & Louis welcomed Mykal

James & Tammy welcomed Jamie

Roy & Linda welcomed Zeritu

Shannon & Craig welcomed

Stephanie & Tiffany

Scott & Quang welcomed Zachariah

Betty Jo welcomed Joshua

The Trip of a Lifetime

[The reflections below were written by a Colombia Homeland Tour participant. We encourage those who are considering such a trip to contact Director of Family & Post-Adoption Services, Abbe Levine, at alevine@barkerfoundation.org. The next trip is scheduled for June 22–29, 2013.]

My name is Lilly Trone. I am eighteen, a senior at Wakefield High School in Arlington, Virginia, and am fortunate enough to say that I was a part of the Colombia Homeland Tour 2011. In all honesty, it was the best thing that has ever happened to me. It changed my life.

I was not in the best place in my life. Among other things, I was dealing with the unavoidable growing pains that most of us endure while finding our identity. I knew who I was, I knew what I liked and didn't like, what I thought was okay and what I wouldn't tolerate; but the deeper emotional layers of being adopted had already begun to surface and were now at their peak. I have always been able to talk to my parents about my feelings when it comes to being adopted. I have been blessed to have parents that may not always totally understand, but always listen. They hear me, and I know they do because they told me all about the Homeland Tour. I had no idea what to think. This was such a wonderful sounding thing, but very scary too. I mean, I never had been back to Colombia, and it made everything I had always wondered about Colombia, FANA, my birth mother, and my culture all too real. So the option was on the table, and it sat there for three years. Finally, I was at the point in my life when I couldn't think of anything better for me. I was ready to go back home for the first time.

I had my plane ticket, and I was going back with my mom and dad. This was actually about to happen, and I couldn't wait. There were several meetings before the trip that gave me a chance to meet the other adoptees who would make up the Homeland Tour 2011 group. It gave my parents the opportunity to meet and get to know the other parents. Little did I know that these

strangers I was meeting for the first time would become family after just a few short weeks. At the orientation meetings, we were all together, talking about the trip and what it consists of. There were several activities that were all about getting

While on the tour, we went bowling and explored the mall, went to a gold museum, an emerald shop, and to one of the most beautiful views I have ever seen at the top of a mountain in Bogota. These activities not only allowed me to see my culture but also made the relations I was forming with those around me so much stronger. Those were the opportunities we had to laugh, get

theatre stage to the children and played with them. These moments of adoption focus absolutely made the trip for me.

I'm not going to sugar coat it; it's an emotional trip. There are highs and lows, smiles and tears, and sometimes tears that bring smiles. It's such an amazing adventure, and I really don't know how else to put it. I came back after the trip with new understandings, some of my



The 2011 Homeland Tour is pictured on the steps of FANA. Mercedes Rosario de Martinez is pictured far left in the second row from the front. The writer of the first-person essay, Lilly Trone, is front row, far right.

in touch with and exploring our heritage, and several that focused on the adoption aspect. Another big part of the meetings were the discussions that offered understanding and the reassurance that whatever we were going to feel or think was okay, and that we could count on support from everyone participating. This was so important to me because it eased the fears I had and took the loneliness away that I had felt.

to know each other, and embrace the Colombian within. Then there were the days that were adoption-based. We went to FANA and got to walk around the orphanage and see what it's like. We visited the hogar (the birth mother home) and met some expectant mothers that are following their adoption plans through FANA. Finally we were able to see our adoption files for the first time. While at the orphanage, we presented puppets and a puppet

questions answered, and a more complete understanding of who I really am. I loved every second of it, and if I could relive that experience again, I would every single day. I embarked on this journey with people whose names I knew and came back with family that I love. This is so great, and if you go on this journey, I wish you all nothing but the best time and best wishes. ■

Our Foster Family Experience

by Maria Olsen

For the past four years, our family has been honored to serve as a foster family for the Barker Foundation. My husband and I have felt very blessed in our lives and wanted to find a way to give back to our community in a personal, hands-on way. We learned of the Barker Foundation through a friend from our church who was a Barker foster mother and quickly began the clearance process.

Our two children, Caroline and Christopher, ages 17 and 14, have pitched in from the start. We all

have treasured this experience. The hardest part, of course, is when the babies leave our home. My daughter and I frequently cry. "Even though I am sad when the babies have to go, I love to see how happy the adoptive families are when they see their babies," Caroline says. Our family has remained close to several of the adoptive families. We have attended their birthday parties and exchange photographs.

Being a foster parent is an awesome experience, in the true sense of the word. The babies often have low birth weights when we bring them home from the hospital. They are so tiny and needy and must be held so gently. We take them to their pediatrician appointments, feed them, bathe them, hold them, play with them, and keep notes on their progress. We love dressing them in cute outfits. We take turns temporarily naming them, so that we have a name we can use that will maintain their anonymity.

One of our babies, Asha, was less than three pounds when she came into our care. She was in the intensive care unit when she was adopted, so I only got to visit her at the hospital. She had enormous eyes and a big fighting spirit. I will never forget how hard she clutched my finger despite her diminutive size. The nurses let me hold her



Foster mother, Maria Olsen, with one of the babies she has given a loving start.

outside of the incubator, talk to her, rock her and rub her tiny head. How rewarding to see her thrive, and how happy her family is as she grows into a young lady!

Our daughter says she wants to adopt children when she grows up. She also wants to pursue a teaching career. Her experience as

a foster sister has influenced her in profound ways.

We have a treasured photo album of our foster babies. We feel so fortunate to be part of these children's lives. They may not remember us, but they will forever be in our hearts. ■



Maria's daughter, Caroline, gladly lends a hand. Fostering is a family affair!

Barker's Annual Family Picnic 2012

"Cookies, cupcakes and fruit, Coh my" was the frequent chant heard during the annual Barker picnic, held June 3 at Cabin John Regional Park in Rockville. More than 200 moms, dads, and children of all ages came from near and far to visit with old friends, make new ones, and connect with Barker Board members and staff who came to join the fun.

Young children explored the playground and especially enjoyed riding the train. Attendees were treated to a family photo session

thanks to Barker mom and experienced photographer, Maureen Minehan. After capturing happy smiles and a few ketchup-stained-faces, Maureen sent all participants a beautiful final photo as a memory piece. Everyone enjoyed a delightful afternoon.

Special thanks goes out to our picnic coordinator, Beth Kirby, and to our grill masters, Matthew Caster, Mark Formanek and Bob Kirby. Watch for next year's flyer. It's a tradition you won't want to miss. ■



Mateo Short and Sam Jaffe enjoy every moment and every bite!

A Family Visit to SWS

by Laura Berol

Three and a half years after my husband and I brought our youngest child home from Seoul, we traveled back to Korea with all three of our boys, ages four, five and seven. Preparing for the trip was exciting for each of us in a



David and Laura Berol, Mark and Nathaniel, visit with Mark's foster mother

different way. Our seven-year-old, having been through a year of Korean School, planned to use his language skills to make new friends. Our five-year-old, a kimchi addict, looked forward to a nonstop diet of hot pepper paste. My husband and I lived in growing dread of the 14-hour plane flight.

But four-year-old Mark, who was returning to his birthplace, was the one with the highest expectations for the trip. "I was born in Korea, and now we're going back!" he told everyone he met for months before we traveled. He announced to us, his parents, that he was going to visit his foster mother, leaving us to hope and pray we'd be able to arrange the reunion.

Happily for us all, Social Welfare Society (SWS) more than fulfilled our hopes when Barker contacted them on our behalf. We were able to meet with Mark's foster mother and his pre-adoption caseworker, whom he remembered from baby photos we'd shown him. Mark toured them through his picture

album, delightedly explaining everything that had happened to him since he'd seen them last. Afterward, Mark's post-adoption caseworker took us to the Baby Reception Home where Mark had spent his first months of life. A staff member who remembered him showed him the room where he'd slept, while our older boys entertained the babies so well that one cried when they left.

We're grateful to SWS and Barker for making these visits possible because they've helped Mark gain confidence that he knows his own past. The first time he heard he was born in Korea, he denied it. Then he began inventing memories, such as, "My real Korean name is Passion Flower. My foster mother told me." But now our whole family can remember and talk together about people and places Mark knew as a baby. This feels important because family is, among other things, a place for sharing memories. Even though Mark's infancy occurred far from the rest of us, our trip has given us all a way to relate to it. ■



Mark was so happy to return to Korea for a visit. Here he shows his enthusiasm while visiting the baby reception home where he stayed after birth. The social worker pictured actually remembered caring for Mark when he was a baby.

AGENCY News & Notes

We warmly welcome two new foster families to our roster. **Viki and John Duff** will provide foster care in the District, and **Holly and Jeff Stull** will bolster our resources in Maryland. **Beth Kirby** coordinates our foster parent program and is delighted to announce the addition of these two wonderful families.

We bid farewell to **Angela Willmore** who served as Barker's Korea Coordinator and, for many years before that, was a contract social worker working with Barker families. We also said good-bye to International Program Assistant **Allie Fish**, who began a graduate degree in speech pathology at Ithaca College in Upstate New York. Both Angela and Allie made

many significant contributions to Barker during their respective tenures and we wish them well. In September we welcomed **Stephanie Sicard** as Barker's International Program Manager. Stephanie comes to Barker with more than a decade of experience in adoption and foster care and has primary responsibility for managing the Korea cases and for all clinical matters.

It's not too soon to mark your calendars for Barker's **Annual Adoption and Foster Care Conference** to be held April 13, 2013. Please note that the site of the conference has changed this year and will be the **National 4H Center** in Chevy Chase, MD.



Mark enjoyed spending time with his post-adoption social worker, Mrs. Hei Jung Park.



Mark's foster mother, Mrs. Meekyung Jee, shares generous gifts with Mark while social worker, Mrs. Park, looks on with delight.

Save the Date

Annual Adoption & Foster Care Conference – Saturday, April 13, 2013,
National 4H Center, Chevy Chase, MD.

Colombia Homeland Tour – June 22–29, 2013. For information, contact
Abbe Levine at alevine@barkerfoundation.org.

Parents of Teens – 2nd Tuesday of month, 7 PM

Older Child Adoption Support Group – 2nd Wednesday of month, 6:30 to 8:30 PM

Birth Parent Support Group – 2nd Thursday of month, 7 PM

Adopted Persons' Discussion Group – 3rd Thursday of month, 7 PM

Barker accepts donations made through CFC (38308) and United Way (8806). Please send a copy of your completed pledge form to Barker's MD office, so that we can recognize your gift. Thank you!

THE
BARKER
FOUNDATION since 1945

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