



Rachel's Voice

PUBLISHED BY THE RACHEL FOUNDATION FOR FAMILY REINTEGRATION

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Rachel's Mission

The Rachel Foundation rebuilds broken families, one at a time.

Our goal: to provide each child with the opportunity to have a loving relationship with both parents, where possible.

Residential and other programs to heal parent-child bonds shattered by alienation and abduction.

Programs tailored to the unique needs of each individual family.

Programs are practical, child-centered and goal-oriented, with safe and supportive care in a warm, home setting.

Serving U.S. and international courts, social services, law enforcement, child find agencies and individual families.

Striving for the highest levels of professional standards as a leader in the emerging field of family reintegration.

Bringing Children Home - to the Heart

*"Hatred is not an emotion that comes naturally to a child. It has to be taught."**

In an article dated April 25, 2007** in the Hendersonville News, staff writer Lindsay Lancaster wrote:

"Four children, 12 and under, no longer want to see their mom, despite a formerly loving and close relationship. The reasons they give? She's a lying, pill-popping, mental case, involved in a cult that worships crystals. To top it off, she's divorcing their father.

Truth is, she isn't a druggie, she's sane and she doesn't belong to a cult. She's a loving, lonely mom, alienated from her children by an ex-husband who has brainwashed them to hate and reject her.

As awful as that sounds, situations like these are occurring across the country...it's called Parental Alienation."

It must be what my husband Bob calls a "God-incidence" that I write this on Mother's Day 2007, the 18th Mother's Day spent without my oldest son. You see, I am the mom Lindsay described. While I spend every Mother's Day with a lump in my throat for my alienated child, I cherish the loving phone calls, e-mails and hugs from the three precious children who have come home— to my heart.

When the Court ordered my 2 younger children returned to me, in 1990, I had nowhere to go. They were so alienated, so hostile, so out of control that I could not bring them home. How I desperately needed a warm, supportive, home environment in which to rebuild our love! Such a place didn't exist back then. I muddled through somehow. But in my heart was born the idea of a warm, loving place to bring children home—to the heart.

Thanks to your support and encouragement, thanks to your faithful prayers and donations, that place exists. It's called Rachel House. Its mission? To bring children home— to the heart.

Blessings and thanks for your enduring love and support.

Pamela Hoch, Program Director

*Hon. Judge J. Gomery, Montreal Superior Court February 1990

**For the full article, go to www.rachelfoundation.org and click on "media" or <http://www.hendersonvillenews.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=2007704250310>

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Corresponding Organizations

National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC)
 United States Department of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention
 International Center for Missing and Exploited Children (ICMEC)
 Missing Children's Network / Réseau Enfants Retour (Canada)
 Polly Klaas Foundation
 Children's Rights Council (CRC)
 ...and church and community organizations around the country.

We gratefully acknowledge the contributions of individual donors, professionals and volunteers who generously donate money, time and skills to help us to provide programs and services.

The Rachel Foundation is proud to be a member of the Association of Missing and Exploited Children's Organi-

Bob Hoch Certified NPO Manager

The University of Texas at San Antonio (UTSA) recently awarded Rachel's Executive Director, Bob Hoch, its **Certificate in Nonprofit Management and Leadership**.

To earn this certification, Bob attended two UTSA courses. In 2006 he attended UTSA's Center for Policy Studies Summer Institute for Leadership and Stewardship. Topics included an overview of the nonprofit sector, management styles, keeping focus on the nonprofit's mission, non-profits as businesses and conflict management.

From September, 2006 through April, 2007 Bob attended seminars on 15 topics that included strategic planning, grant writing, risk management, ethics and law, human resources and budgeting, among others.

Representatives from more than

40 regional non-profits attended the course, which provided ample opportunities for networking with experts in the field and with peers. As is often the case, networking was a valuable aspect of the course.



Bob receives his certificate from UTSA Interim Program Coordinator Pam McCollum as administrator Theresa Peña looks on.

Bob holds a B.A. in International Relations from St. Mary's University, San Antonio, and a Master's Degree in Economics, also from St. Mary's. He is proud to add the UTSA Certificate in Nonprofit Management and Leadership to his professional qualifications.

Congratulations, Bob!

New Mower for Rachel House

The Men of First United Methodist Church in Kerrville, TX (FUMC) have donated a new lawn tractor to Rachel House. This gift is most welcome!

Rachel House is surrounded by five acres of land. Translation: That's a lot of grass for staff to cut with a push mower!

With the new lawn tractor, grounds maintenance becomes manageable. We are deeply



Bob and Kelly accept tractor from Rev. Bruce Bowen, FUMC

grateful to First United Methodist Men for their wonderful gift!

Dear Rachel: Should I Send the Card?

Parents often ask if they should send birthday cards and notes to their alienated children. We almost always respond "Yes."



Parents fear that a child will reject the card or note. They recall when their offspring behaved badly toward them upon receiving such loving messages.

Others know that an alienating parent is intercepting all such communications. Some give up, when all approaches have met with rejection in the past.

We recall the mother who had been

apart from her daughter for many years, yet faithfully sent cards for special occasions. She learned later that her alienating ex had indeed intercepted the cards before her daughter could see them.

One day her daughter got to the mail before Dad and found a card from her mom. She read the card and hid it carefully so her Dad wouldn't find it. Although confused and living in an environment where talk of her Mom was forbidden, she held onto it, in secret.

Years later, the daughter called her mother on the telephone, the first step towards rebuilding the broken mother-daughter relationship. Today

the two are as close as any mother and daughter can be.

This young woman states: "That card helped me understand that my mom loved me unconditionally, and that she was there for me, no matter what. It helped give me the courage to make that phone call."

Keep reaching out. Keep professing unconditional love for your child. Simple unconditional love, appreciation and parental pride in a child's accomplishments are a safe place to start. Avoid long-winded explanations. Never try to explain the past. Don't defend yourself. Don't try to change your child's mind about issues that to you are of overriding importance. "I love you, forever and always" is the message that counts.

E-mail Support Group Moderators Meet

In February, volunteer moderators of our e-mail support group, PASparents, met at Rachel House for a conference/retreat, to address issues of concern to this rapidly growing program that provides online support to more than 400 alienated parents.

They revised the group's Guidelines for Participation to emphasize ways PASparents members can best share their experiences by adhering to these guidelines. A copy of the new guidelines may be downloaded from the Files section of the PASparents web site: health.groups.yahoo.com/group/PASparents).

The moderators also decided to maintain the group's position of not engaging in political activism. Often, parents suffering from a child's

alienation feel a need to "get the word out" or to "change the system" through political, legal and social activism. The moderators state: "Our mission is to promote individual and family healing not institutional change. While institutional change may be a good thing in the big picture, the process of obtaining it comes with a price, and that price may not be conducive to individual or family healing." PASparents is a safe online haven for emotional shelter and help, not a platform for issues.

The e-mail support group PASparents started in 2001 with about 20 members. It has been growing in strength and size ever since. It provides a safe, anonymous cyber-space where grieving parents who are separated from their beloved children, through abduction and alienation, support and encourage each other.



Left to Right: Kelly, Pamela, Ginger, Evan, Bill.

Our moderators rotate duties 7 days a week, 365 days a year. These unseen hard-working volunteers make our e-mail support group one of Rachel's most successful programs. Thank you, for your dedication and service!

Dear Rachel: How can I cope with my child's rejection?

Members of our online support group PASParents, finding others that share their plight, share ways to bear the extreme daily pain of their alienated children's rejection and hatred.

One of our members shared recently what works for this particular individual when it comes to coping with alienation. This parent writes:

"[Parental alienation] is a marathon, not a sprint. I need to remember not to expend myself too early in the journey. Rather, I must maintain my physical and emotional reserves as I will need them down the line.

"When mud is thrown at me, I only dirty myself if I throw mud back.

"My children need a healthy parental role model each and every time they have any contact with me. When I am with them, I must focus on my children and not on my own pain.

"Flight attendants instruct passengers to put on their own oxygen masks before helping others to don theirs. I must remember to take care of my own physical and emotional well-being so that I will be in good shape to help my children and others.

"When I am without my children, I spend time working as a community service volunteer. I find that this commitment gives me a regular opportunity to be with caring volunteers who focus on something healthy and uplifting.

"I don't even try to explain parental alienation to 'outsiders.' Speaking about alienation with those who cannot conceive that it even would be possible [to teach a child to hate a parent] is like speaking in a language the other does not know.

"For me, nature hikes are a way to enjoy the ever changing beauty of nature and to tone muscles and to invigorate circulation.

"Singing in church soothes both my soul and my psyche."

In sum: an alienated parent's chances of coping are best when he or she maintains focus on other people, and when he or she takes the time to take care of him/herself. Thanks to this anonymous parent for these words of wisdom!

Why I Support the Rachel Foundation

By Rebecca Bridges

Pop culture, including the news media, seems to be enamored by lousy parents. It is particularly stunning to me that today's TV producers don't protect children any longer from the microscopes of scandal hungry reporters. Recent public custody fights are the most disheartening. You know which ones I'm talking about.

The fact that more than 50% of American children grow up in broken or blended homes is why the Rachel Foundation caught my ear. We all have loved ones who have

been through alienation of some form. Rachel Foundation provides help and healing for families who are facing the unthinkable. My hope is that Rachel Foundation can be a resource for counselors across our country and for families who face this crisis, but who have no help.

The next few years will be crucial for Rachel Foundation. While we face planning for the next five, ten and 25 years, your input and continued support is more important than ever before.

We need you to tell others about this important work. Take some

time today to copy this newsletter and pass it along (1) to families you know who need encouragement, (2) to your pastor and (3) to counselors you know who might benefit from the stories you read. Make it your goal to introduce Rachel Foundation to five people this summer.

Together, we will play a part in helping more families in the future.

-Rebecca is the newest member of the Rachel Foundation board and has almost two decades of non-profit marketing and public relations experience.

PG-TYG

We keep a "Please God" and "Thank you God" list on Rachel House refrigerator. Here are some items on the list!

Thank you God:

For our individual donors, without whom Rachel would not exist.

For the tractor-mower donated by First United Methodist Church Men of Kerrville Texas!

For the generous donation from St. Peter's Episcopal Church, Kerrville. It came on the day our ancient printer broke! We purchased a new copier /fax printer/scanner and contributed to two much-needed computer monitors!

For the gift of 10 CDs and workbooks "Lemons2lemonade," which we use in our programs.

For the families you send to Rachel House and for the gifted professionals who provide services free and at reduced cost.

Please God:

Guide us as we negotiate to secure Rachel House for the long-term, and as we develop our strategic plans.

Protect and strengthen us in the face of frivolous legal and personal attacks.

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Kelly's Korner



I've been busy lately, taking care of guests at Rachel House.

I hosted a group of visitors who spoke a strange language that was definitely not Texan! They quickly learned my name; so when I heard "Kelly," I went to that person to get a pat. Well, to be honest, I didn't always wait to hear my name. Sometimes I leaned against someone's leg for a nuzzle, to help them feel at home. One judge wore a dark blue suit, and he was not amused when I rubbed against him. I can't imagine why.

I welcomed a friend of "my humans" who came with his mother to visit. At age 98, she's the oldest visitor yet to visit Rachel House. She had a warm smile and a twinkle in her eyes!



A nice couple came to deliver a tractor mower and I had to supervise that by barking and making sure they took a picture of me. (see page 2)

The visitors I like the best are "my" children who come here. It's my job to take good care of them! I wag my tail and lean against them to make them feel comfortable. Soon, they go outside with me to play ball. I like that best of all!



NCMEC to open in Austin, Texas

In April, Bob and Pamela attended a luncheon hosted by First Lady Laura Bush, when the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC) announced the opening of a new regional office in Austin, Texas. "Every year, 800,000 children are reported missing in our country. 60,000 of these are right here in

Texas," said Mrs. Bush.

"We have long hoped to have an office in the Southwest," said Ernie Allen, President and CEO of NCMEC. "We were thrilled when the people of Texas came to us with enough sponsors and donors to open and sustain an office in Austin."

The NCMEC refers



Pamela and others enjoy chatting with First Lady Laura Bush.

parents to the Rachel Foundation for assistance in rebuilding loving parent-child relationships with recovered abducted children.

“You Gave Us Hope”

Official Delegation of Spanish Family Court Judges Visits Texas Hill Country's Rachel Foundation for Family Reintegration

In February, at the recommendation of the U.S. State Department, a Spanish delegation of family court judges visited Rachel House to learn about our family reintegration programs.

Every day, the judges told us, they deal with difficult and heartbreaking situations with children caught up in “divorce wars.” One judge said **“These are the only cases that keep me awake at night.”**

After a day of in-depth discussions (and a delicious lunch of the best Texas Barbecue!) the judges left with the understanding that it is possible to rebuild broken parent-child bonds if appropriate safeguards are enforced by the courts and if specialized programs such as the Rachel Foundation's are available to assist the courts.

“(Rachel Foundation) gave us hope,” said Judge Maria Aranzazu Ortiz Gonzalez from Tarragona.

The delegation included Family Court Judge Javier Forcada Miranda of Zaragoza, Family Court Judge Jose Luis Utrera Gutierrez of Malaga, and Sra. Maria del Carmen Garcia Revuelta, who heads the Central Authority of Spain's Ministry of Justice and who oversees the return of children in international abductions.

The visit included Washington, D.C., New Orleans, Seattle, New York and San Antonio. The visit focused on ways U.S. family courts use mediation and dispute resolution, particularly in child custody cases, and on the role of non-government organizations in this arena. The State Department arranged for the judges to visit the Rachel Foundation because it is the only residential family reintegration program of its kind in the United States.



Left to Right: Judge Maria Aranzazu Ortiz Gonzalez; Ms. Maria del Carmen Revuelta, Ministry of Justice; Judge Jose Luis Utrera Gutierrez; Ms. Yarmila Aragon, Interpreter; Pamela and Bob Hoch and Kelly, Rachel Foundation; Judge Francisco Javier Forcada Miranda; Mr. Hernando Soto, Interpreter.

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