



GILLIS At A Glance

UPCOMING EVENTS

*26th Annual
Spirit Awards
Celebration*

April 30, 2008

*Downtown
Marriott*



*16th Annual
Golf Classic*

June 10, 2008

*Loch Lloyd
Country Club*



PRESIDENT'S LETTER

Dear Friends:

As we say goodbye to 2007 and welcome in the possibilities of a new year I have written numerous notes of thanks but the words have felt insufficient to express the deep gratitude we have for all of you who gave and give so generously of your time, talent, heart and financial support to Gillis. I came upon a quote that helped:

**“Thankfulness may consist merely of words.
Gratitude is shown in acts.” David O. McKay**

I do feel confident in assuring all of you that at Gillis our thanks and gratitude to you are acted out every day in service to the amazing children and families that come to us for help. It is the acts of our youth workers who by their patience and comforting words develop glimmers of trust in children whose hearts have been broken too many times from beatings and abandonment by adults. It is in the acts of our teachers who never give up and teach children to succeed after they have consistently failed in school due to behavior disruptions resulting from grief over violence in their homes or the loss of a parent to prison. And it is in the acts of our social workers who go into homes and help parents find ways to provide safety and nurturance for their children and keep them living at home while they struggle with poverty, drug addiction or mental illness.

So while words may never be enough to thank you for all you do for Gillis as donors, volunteers or advocates, I hope you will remember that every day with your help we will strive to show our gratitude by acts aimed at healing and strengthening the children, families and community we are here to serve.

*Mary Ellen Schaid
President/CEO*

FRIENDS OF GILLIS

Have you ever said to yourself, “I want to do something for Gillis but...?” Maybe it’s because you work during the day, or didn’t really see any Gillis volunteer opportunities that tugged at your heart, or you wanted to do something special.

We’d like you to consider becoming a member of *The Friends of Gillis*. Members will give of their time, money and talents in support of Gillis. They will build relationships throughout the community and establish a calendar of events that will be a balance of volunteer opportunities, social networking and fund raising.

This is an opportunity for you to have fun and do something meaningful and important at the same time. For more information contact George Robbins, Vice President of Development at (816) 508-3548 or george.robbins@gillis.org.



WE HAD AN IM**PACT**



The PACT (Parents and Children Together) program staff received a request to provide in-home therapy for John, a 10-year-old with behavioral problems. He would get angry and out of control and would not listen to his parents. He was having problems at school. The previous school year he had been suspended for fighting with peers, not listening to his teachers, and causing trouble on the school bus.

John's parents would discipline him, ground him, and take away his privileges. All to no avail. Staff learned that Dad was not very involved in this disciplining because he "worked all day and was tired at night." He would become involved when Mom became angry.

John appeared to be a bright, healthy male who enjoyed sports. In talking with him he said he didn't know why he got in so much trouble. He knew that he got frustrated when his mom and teachers told him what to do. He wanted to get along better with everyone.

Staff worked with the parents and helped them understand that John was having trouble understanding what he needed to do. He didn't have a lack of motivation. He was slow in developing certain skills and he had trouble using them when he needed them.

The family began using skills we taught them. Dad got involved again and he and mom had a plan they could both work. They were able to manage their lives in a helpful way.

About a month later, staff received a call from John's school. John's counselor wanted to find out what had changed. He was doing so much better in school. Mom had told the school staff about the skills the family had been taught. PACT staff talked with the counselor about the work they had done with the family. Everyone was excited about the change in John and his relationships with his family and teachers and classmates.

PLANNED GIVING

Many donors realize the advantages to themselves, their families and Gillis and start planned giving programs. These gifts and programs can be tailored to suit the needs of the donor. To find out if planned giving is right for you, please contact your professional estate planner.

The Ella C. Loose Heritage Society is Gillis' planned giving program. For information on becoming a member, please contact the Vice President of Development at 816-508-3548 or george.robbyns@gillis.org.

We regret the passing of two of the founding members of the Heritage Society, Frederick Shibley and Karl Hanzelius.

BOARD HIGHLIGHT

*During their orientation, new Board members are asked to give of themselves – both financially and personally. Never in our wildest dreams did we think that **David Belpedio** would give not only of himself, but also involve his family.*

David, his wife Jodi, and their son David have spearheaded the campaign to raise funds for the renovation of the common areas in our residential cottages. The younger David, who is a student at Rockhurst High School, and his friend, Carter Clause, visited campus last spring and were astonished at how the interior of the cottages looked. The décor was outdated, the upholstery was torn and the games were all damaged or missing parts. Worst of all the walls had little kid borders and the pictures were of flowers. The boys felt it wasn't "a good place for boys to be in."

David Sr., Jodi and the Clauses helped the boys undertake a community service project which not only raised almost all the money needed for the renovations, but brought many new friends to Gillis. David and Jodi held a joint birthday party and asked all of their guests to make a donation to Gillis in lieu of a gift to them.

*We can't say thanks enough to **David Belpedio** for all he's done for Gillis and all he continues to do.*

The Gillis Mission

To help at-risk children and their families become contributing members of the community through education, counseling and social services.

OUR FIRST STARS STUDENT

Gillis School has an incentive program for our students called STARS. Each day the students earn points for positive behavior and academic productivity. At the end of the week, if students have earned enough to meet their goal, they earn a STARS Award (it stands for Students that Achieve Responsibility and Success). They can then spend reward points in the school store. After earning enough STARS, the students can move up levels. The highest level attainable is Platinum Level. Students that are on Platinum Level have to earn 97% of their points each week!

Our first student to reach Platinum was Derik. Not only did he reach Platinum Level, **he remained there for 100 weeks!**

Derik came to Gillis because he was having difficulty at his home school. He didn't want to listen to anyone and didn't want to play with the other kids; sometimes he would hit and kick. He was sent to the Principal's office several times a week and his mom was called to pick him up from school often. He was diagnosed with a mood disorder. Gillis was recommended as a school which could help Derrick.

His first few months at Gillis were difficult. He didn't want to be here and he wasn't near home. But he bonded with some important people – his teachers, his therapist and the school principal - and things started to get better. His school team worked hard with his family and doctor to help Derik learn different ways to express his feelings. After the first year he wanted to come to school and would get upset when there were holidays or snow days and he couldn't attend.

When he came to Gillis he lived with his mother, Codie, and sister, Talysa. The family dynamic changed when his mother remarried. But, the family came to classes and with the help of Gillis staff, learned how to relate with one another. Derik was taught to use safe coping skills. His Mom learned how to work with Derik when situations arose.

Codie said that Sarah, his therapist, and the other Gillis staff who worked with Derik “are beyond wonderful. We wouldn't be where we are without them.”

Derik has left Gillis and is doing well in school. He and the family come back to visit once in a while, and keep in touch often. Codie said that she could not have done it by herself and she is very appreciative of the Gillis “village” which helped Derik become the typical 7th grader he is today.



BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Gillis is proud and grateful to have a talented, dedicated and energetic Board of Directors who provide guidance and support in helping us achieve our mission.

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Gillis Vision
**That all children will live
in emotionally stable,
safe and nurturing
families.**



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WE GAVE HER STRENGTHS

The staff of our Intensive In-home Services (IIS) program worked with Joan, a mother of 4, whose husband was accused of child abuse. He was court ordered to leave the home and have no contact with his child.



Staff worked with Joan helping her to understand how the abuse affected her child. We explained to her she needed to love and support her child. She learned better communication skills with her children. Even though she was still trying to grasp that her husband could do this she learned how to protect her children and keep them safe from this ever happening again. The child received counseling through MOCSA, and all of them when to family therapy sessions.

Given little time to begin to see how their lives had been impacted, Joan realized that life would now be different for all of them. She stepped up and is doing everything she can to keep her children safe.

Rachel Hodson, Assistant Coordinator of the IIS program, said, “We enjoyed working with this family and seeing the bond the children have with their mother and now we know they will get through this together.”