



# NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR CHILDREN OF ALCOHOLICS NETWORK

JANUARY/FEBRUARY, 2001 / VOLUME 17 NO. 1

## In Brief

**CELEBRATION OF RECOVERY** was held on Sunday, February 11, the start of COA WEEK 2001, for 300 children and parents in Dallas. The celebration featured a carnival, games, prizes, and a chance to work on a "recovery quilt." It was held for children who had participated in the Betty Ford Center Children's Program during the last two and a half years and their parents.

### REMEMBER

13<sup>th</sup> Annual Student Assistance Conference  
April 4-7, 2001  
Orlando, Florida  
Call 800.453.7733 for information.

**HOOVER ADGER, JR., M.D., M.P.H.** has been chosen to receive NACoA's *Ackerman/Black Award*. Established in 1998, the Award is given periodically to honor a person who unceasingly, and over many years, contributes to the



knowledge base about children of alcoholics through research, writing, teaching and advocacy and "whose life's work is a continuous gift to children of alcoholic and other drug dependent parents." The Award was given last year to Advisory Board member Jerry Moe.

**RECOVERY MONTH** kits will be available in May. The focus this year is on children and families.

## ONDCP COSA INITIATIVE REACHES YOUTH THROUGH MULTIPLE STRATEGIES

The Children of Substance Abusers Initiative in the Media Campaign of the Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP) is in full swing. Through posters and Web messages being carried to middle and high school youth [www.freevibe.com](http://www.freevibe.com) and supportive messages to their parents [www.theantidrug.com](http://www.theantidrug.com), children of alcohol and other drug-addicted parents are beginning to receive critical messages.

The campaign, which included a COA series on Channel One, the national television channel that brings educational programs into classrooms across the country, is now focusing on messages to help children of addicted parents through other media. In addition to the Web site messages, posters, and the Channel One series, magazine articles and informational "ads" with direct messages for teens will be published in magazines and school newspapers.

"NACoA is proud to be working with ONDCP in its efforts to broaden the reach of its anti-drug messages to young people. ONDCP recognizes that the one in four youth impacted by parental alcohol abuse or alcoholism, and the countless others hurt further by parental use of illegal drugs, are those most at risk for addiction and other life problems. We know that these targeted messages specifically for children with addicted parents can help to dispel the confusion and fear these vulnerable young people so often

experience in their families," said Sis Wenger, NACoA Executive Director.

Campaign messages will be designed to help COAs understand that their parents' drinking or drug use is not their fault, that they are not responsible for controlling or fixing it, that it's important to connect with adults they can trust for support and to talk about the impact of the drinking or drug use on them and to share their feelings about it.

Jerry Moe's classic article, *To Walk With One Child*, is currently featured on the campaign's Web site for parents and other concerned adults, [www.theantidrug.com](http://www.theantidrug.com). The Web site for youth, [www.freevibe.com](http://www.freevibe.com), is featuring a four-part series speaking to adolescent children of alcoholics and other drug addicted parents, offering insights and links to more information and helpful sites.

Jerry Moe, Claudia Black, Ph.D., and Jack Fahey are also assisting with message development for the posters which will be distributed to middle and high schools throughout the country.

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**NEW BOARD MEMBERS**

NACoA is pleased to announce the appointment of three outstanding individuals to the Board of Directors.

**Judge Arthur Louis Burnett, Sr.**

Arthur Louis Burnett, Sr., is a Senior Judge of the Superior Court of the District of Columbia. He is also an Adjunct Law Professor at Howard University School of Law and at Catholic University Columbus School of Law. He serves as Judge-in-Residence with the Black Community Crusade for Children, and the Children's Defense Fund. Judge Burnett has received many awards during his more than 40 years of distinguished service in his legal and judicial career, many of which recognize his judicial handling of parental rights and adoption issues.

**Jessica Hulsey**

Jessica Hulsey has been nationally recognized for her drug prevention and community service work, which has been featured in *USA Today* and *The Los Angeles Times*. At present she serves as a Policy Analyst for the Washington, DC-based Carnevale Associates.

In 1998, Jessica was appointed to the Presidential Commission on the Drug-Free Communities Act and is currently Co-Chair of the Commission. Jessica is a graduate of Princeton University, where she was awarded the Allen Macey Dulles Award for the student that best represents the idea of "Princeton in the Nation's Service."

**Iris Smith, Ph.D.**

Iris E. Smith returns to the NACoA board after several years. At present she is the National Director, Evaluation Services for the American Cancer Society. She previously served as

Deputy Commissioner for Programs of the Georgia Department of Juvenile Justice, where she administered a grant to develop a residential treatment program for addicted women and their children. She also speaks to national professional audiences on substance abuse prevention and treatment. She has served as professional consultant to national research groups including the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, and the National Institute on Drug Abuse. Her many publications include those that focus on the effects of prenatal alcohol exposure.



**ADVISORY BOARD HAS NEW MEMBER**

Frances L. Brisbane, Ph.D., joins our Board of Advisors, a distinguished

group of leaders in the field of addictions. She is Professor and Dean of the School of Social Welfare, State University of New York at Stony Brook. She is Dean of the Black Alcoholism and Addictions Institute and the founder of the National Black Alcoholism and Addiction Council in Washington, DC.

In addition to her other accomplishments, Dr. Brisbane has written four books and edited three others. Most of her written work is on substance abuse, cultural competency, children of alcoholics and working with African Americans. NACoA honored her with the Margaret Cork Award in 1993.

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## TV SHOWS FEATURE ALCOHOL USE

Prime-time, top-rated television shows popular with teenagers featured alcohol use, often humorously, in 119 of 168 episodes recently studied, according to an Office of National Drug Control Policy study. Of these episodes, only 23% showed any adverse consequences of alcohol use, and just 8% had anti-use messages. The information was distributed by Cesar Fax, a weekly fax from the Center for Substance Abuse Research at the University of Maryland.

The study, which comprised situation comedies and dramas, used four consecutive episodes of 42 top-rated shows as rated by Nielson Media Research, including the top 20 programs for five audience groups: African-American teens, Hispanic teens, white teens, all teens, and all adults (aged 25-54). Further details are available online at [www.mediascope.org](http://www.mediascope.org).

## DAUGHTERS OF TRADITION

White Bison, Inc. has a new prevention program that targets 9-12 year old Native American girls. The program's kit includes a workbook and a journal for young girls, other activity materials, and posters featuring the importance of Respect for elders, for the family, the community, spiritual life, parents, the earth, one's body, each other, for cultural traditions and for young women and young men. A facilitator's instruction video is included. For more information about *Daughters of Tradition* and White Bison, call 719-548-1000 or visit the web site at [www.whitebison.org](http://www.whitebison.org)

## JEWISH ALCOHOLICS HELP EACH OTHER

Jewish Alcoholics, Chemically Dependent Persons and Significant Others (JACS) was founded in 1979 as a mutual-help group dedicated to encouraging recovery in a nurturing Jewish community. The organization also acts as a resource center and information clearinghouse on the effects of alcoholism and drug dependency on Jewish family life. For more information, log onto their web site at [www.jacsweb.org](http://www.jacsweb.org)

## BOARD LEADERSHIP TRANSITIONS

The annual meeting of the NACoA Board of Directors, held in Palm Beach January 27-28, not only appointed three new members (see previous page), it also thanked departing members David Admire, J.D.; James Crowley, M.A.; Elaine Johnson, Ph.D.; H. Stephen Glenn, Ph.D.; and Leon West.



*Dr. Hoover Adger, Jr. (left) turns over the NACoA Presidency to Richard M. Evans, Vice President of the Bon Secours New Jersey Health System at the annual meeting. Dr. Adger remains on the NACoA Board and Executive Committee as Immediate Past President and Board Development Chair.*



*The NACoA Board honored and thanked Jim Crowley for eight years of enormous dedication and his generous contributions of time and talent to build NACoA into a strong and viable voice for children of alcoholics. Jim is pictured here (left) with Dr. Hoover Adger, Jr., 1999-2000 Board President, at the NACoA annual meeting January 28.*

## WOODSIDE RECEIVES HUGHES AWARD

Migs Woodside, founder and former President and Chief Executive Officer of the New York-based Children of Alcoholics Foundation, was named the third recipient of the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism's annual Senator Harold Hughes Memorial Award. NIAAA Director Enoch Gordis, M.D., announced the award February 7 in Washington, DC, at the 2001 NADAAC Public Policy Conference on Alcohol and Other Drugs.

In 1982, Ms. Woodside established the foundation to educate and inform professionals and the public about children of alcoholics.

## ALCOHOLISM CHANGES BRAIN'S GENES

Out of more than 4,000 genes analyzed in brain tissue, about 4% differed by at least 40% between alcoholics and non-alcoholics, researchers report in the December 2000 issue of the journal *Alcoholism: Clinical and Experimental Research*.

Using the latest DNA technology, scientists in Texas have discovered that most of the altered genes are related to white matter in the brain called myelin, which forms a sheath around the brain's communication cells. According to the researchers, these genetic changes may help explain why alcoholics have a higher risk of diseases that destroy myelin.

"Just as a computer virus can change the programming of specific functions, our data show that chronic alcohol abuse can change the molecular programming and circuitry of the frontal cortex," commented Dr. R. Adron Harris, of the University of Texas at Austin, and lead author of the study.



# Comment

## WHY?

By Jeannette L. Johnson  
and Sis Wenger



Why should we pay attention to children of alcohol and other drug dependent parents? Haven't we paid enough attention to them already?

- For the past two decades, these children have been the focus of clinical and basic research – isn't this enough?
- The literature is replete with examples, as well as data, that describe the childhood and adult problems and disorders of children who have addicted parents.
- The scientific literature has shown us that parental alcoholism is linked to problems among their children, such as difficulties in school or more severe problems such as psychological dysfunction.
- Increasingly, a substantial segment of research shows that children of alcoholics are at risk for problems that include behavioral, psychological, and neuropsychological deficits. These difficulties place COAs at risk for future problems in adulthood, especially alcoholism.

It seems as if we know enough already. Or do we?

If the problems went away through time or intervention or if alcohol or other drug abuse no longer existed, we could walk away from these questions and feel that we have solved one of contemporary society's biggest and thorniest

problems. However, the problems that plague children of parents with addiction, whether biological, psychological, or emotional, have not gone away, despite our most intensive efforts. We may "fancy" the problems up by calling them risk factors and organizing them into conceptually coherent lists, but for children, a problem is a problem.

All children wake up in a world that is not of their own making, but children of alcoholics and other drug addicted parents wake up in a world that doesn't take care of them. No matter what we name their risk factors, they still have to make their own breakfast and find their own way.

We need to care for these children more than ever before for one fundamental reason: they are still here—one in every four.

- They are in our schools, where meeting their needs through educational support groups could not only bring them clarity and hope; it could help meet the President's learning objectives for our children.
- They are in our faith communities – in the suburbs, the cities and the countryside – where they wonder

in despair and silence why no one ever says anything even though Dad has stale alcohol on his breath at services and Mom has asked for help with a failing marriage.

- They are at home, confused and afraid, when their parents go

for treatment. They are asked to understand their parent's struggle, to be patient, to be helpful when they have tried these things for so long, and it hasn't made anything better. What they need are explanations, support and hope. They need someone to tell them they are beautiful and good, that it's not their fault and that they are not alone. And they need a little fun.

- They are on soccer teams and basketball teams. Most of the time, their coaches reinforce the rule of silence and say nothing.
- They go to the school nurse with headaches. They visit the family doctor and no one tells them that alcoholism and drug addiction are diseases and that it's okay for them to find adults they can trust and talk to them.

If we have time to realize one social responsibility, let it be for the future. We really have only one future. It is our children.

Have we done enough? No. Why? We know what to do. What we need is the will to do it.

*Jeannette L. Johnson, Ph.D., is Director, Center for Research on Children and Youth, University at Buffalo, SUNY.*

*Sis Wenger is Executive Director of NACoA.*

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**"WE NEED TO CARE FOR THESE CHILDREN..."**

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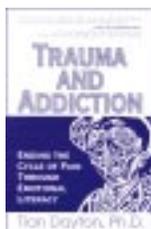
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**"...FOR CHILDREN, A PROBLEM IS A PROBLEM."**

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## BOOKSHELF

By Stephanie Abbott



### *Trauma and Addiction*

by Tian Dayton, Ph.D.

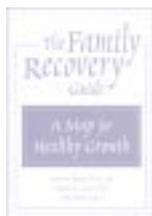
Tian Dayton certainly is one of the most qualified writers in the addiction field. She has a doctoral degree in clinical psychology and a master's degree in educational psychology.

Her thesis in this book is that addiction—to drugs, alcohol, food, sex or gambling—results from trauma. In this she deviates from the current thinking about alcoholism, (and possibly all addictions), which is that it has a genetic component, and is based in brain chemistry. We do know that the only thing most alcoholics have in common with each other is alcoholism in the family, rather than trauma that exceeds what every human being experiences in life.

Dr. Dayton has an accessible readable style as she tackles the task of explaining how we can learn the strengthening skills of emotional literacy. These skills are our best defense against self defeating behaviors that make us so miserable. Her approach is tender, using both her own and clients' stories to illustrate "telling the story and bearing witness to the pain."

## FOUNDER WALKING FOR NACoA

NACoA founder Julie Bowden will set off on March 15 from Springer Mountain, Georgia, on a six-month, 2,159 mile walking journey along the Appalachian Trail to Katahdin Mountain, Maine, to win support for NACoA. "I intend to use the generosity of friends, others who care about children, and NACoA's friends to keep me going," she declared.



### *The Family Recovery Guide: A Map for Healthy Growth*

By Stephanie Brown, Ph.D. and Virginia M. Lewis, Ph.D., with Andrew Liotta

The treatment field continues to rediscover with amazement what we have all known for at least 30 years: that the whole family is affected by one member's alcoholism and that it is to the alcoholic's advantage to have family groups in place in treatment centers. Meanwhile, a few talented writers and clinicians struggle to document and communicate the evidence that alcoholism is indeed a "family disease" and that happy recovery for all is a reachable goal.

One of these is Stephanie Brown, who has researched for years the normal processes of recovery. She and her colleagues took what they had discovered and created a guide book about the stages of recovery and the tasks and challenges of each. One of my favorite quotes, for both family members and the recovering person: "You can learn even if you don't understand what you are studying." She is a big supporter of Alcoholics Anonymous and Al-Anon for the empathy and practical knowledge the groups provide.

This guide is invaluable for all people in the field and all who work to understand "what they are studying."

Pledges per mile walked in any amount will be welcome. "Even a penny a mile (\$21.57) will make a difference," said Julie, "and a dollar a mile could significantly help to address the goals we established 18 years ago at NACoA's founding."

Julie promises to send e-mail reports every two weeks, and the office will forward them on to all contributors.



## WALK/RUN FOR THE CHILDREN

NACoA will sponsor a team in the Disney World Marathon

January 6, 2002, on the Disney World location in Orlando, FL. TEAM NACoA guarantees a hotel room near Disney World as well as registration for each team entrant. Participants can run the full marathon (26.2 miles) with the energetic NACoA Board members participating or walk/run the half marathon with those who prefer a little less strain. Help for "first timers" will also be available.

To take part in this first annual NACoA *Run for the Children*, participants must raise a minimum of \$1,500 in pledges to NACoA. The first \$100 will hold a place on TEAM NACoA and a one night hotel stay with other team members. Jerry Moe, Advisory Board member, is already a registered member of TEAM NACoA and encourages other NACoA supporters to join him.

After the first \$500 in pledges are received, a TEAM NACoA tee shirt will be sent to entrants. Those who gather \$5,000 or more will also have their airfare covered.

Those who prefer to support NACoA's *Run for the Children* from the comfort of home will be given the opportunity to pick a "designated runner" from the list of registered participants.

It is important to sign up through NACoA to guarantee participation on the team. Rick Evans, NACoA President is already in training and getting pledges. Other board members are also planning to participate. Call NACoA (1-888-554-2627) for more information.



# Affiliate News



'Slam Dunk' is an alternative activity for high school students and families held in March at the end of the high school basketball season. The best female shooters and male shooters and dunkers from all high schools in Oakland County, MI will compete for the title of best shooter or dunker in the county. This is the first year for the girl's shooting contest. The event will use banners surrounding the gym to display drug-free messages. Prevention messages will also be announced at various times during the contest. The Detroit Pistons will be involved in this year's event and about 1000 people are expected to attend. 'Slam Dunk' raises awareness, helps fund the Coalition and provides a drug-free community activity.



Faith Partners believes that congregations can address substance abuse in helpful and effective ways for members and those served by the congregation.

Currently Faith Partners is involved in a demonstration project at multiple sites in two metropolitan areas (Austin, TX and Minneapolis/St. Paul, MN). Over 20 Baptist, Catholic, Episcopal, Lutheran, and United Methodist congregations and Jewish Family Services of Austin are involved in the Faith Partners.

To learn more about congregations in faith communities participating in the demonstration or about the planned expansion of the program to other cities, contact Trish Merrill, Executive Director of Faith Partners, at 512-

451-9504 or Lawrence Vaults, Austin Site Coordinator, at 512-236-6421.



NACoA's newest affiliate expanded the reach of the National Children of Alcoholics Week Poster Contest throughout seven school districts. Family Services of Western Pennsylvania partnered with Comprehensive Substance Abuse Services of Southwestern Pennsylvania on community education efforts for COA Week. They targeted seven elementary and middle school districts, several parochial schools in the local area and consumers in the local treatment provider service area to submit posters for NACoA's Children of Alcoholics Week Poster Contest. Local recognition will be given for submissions to the national contest by displaying submissions in the organizations' sites and local libraries.



The program specifically targets 7<sup>th</sup> grade students, with follow up in the 8<sup>th</sup> grade. The expansion grant allows work with the faith community to train and assist youth leaders from any church, synagogue, temple or faith assembly to implement the ALL STARS curriculum with their young adolescents. The unique part of this effort is the flexibility of the curriculum which allows it to be incorporated into the youth work of a broad range of faith organizations.

Volunteers of America of Alaska, Inc. has received an expansion grant for its existing ALL STARS program, now serving three middle schools in Anchorage.

As many as 20 different faith youth leaders will be identified and invited to

participate in training as early as Spring 2001 and then receive technical assistance to implement the program.



For the second consecutive year, ECCPASA has used the occasion of COA WEEK to send a February mailing to all school health officers in Buffalo and Erie County, NY. The mailing was designed to bring attention to informational materials on NACoA's Web site, strategies for helping COAs, a list of Alateen meetings in the area, and services available to children and families through ECCPASA.



NASAP is co-sponsoring the 13<sup>th</sup> Annual National Student Assistance Conference, April 4-7, 2001 in Orlando, Florida. (Call 800-453-7733 for more information.)

In November, NASAP celebrated National Student Assistance Month. Begun in 1998, the celebrations of the past three years have produced multiple awareness activities at the state and local levels.

For information on the November 2001 campaign, please contact the NASAP office at 800-257-6310.



Informed Families dedicated a full page of its February newsletter to Children of Alcoholics Week 2001, important facts about COAs, and tips for various professionals to help them. Visit Informed Families at [www.informedfamilies.org](http://www.informedfamilies.org)

# 2000 HONOR ROLL OF DONORS

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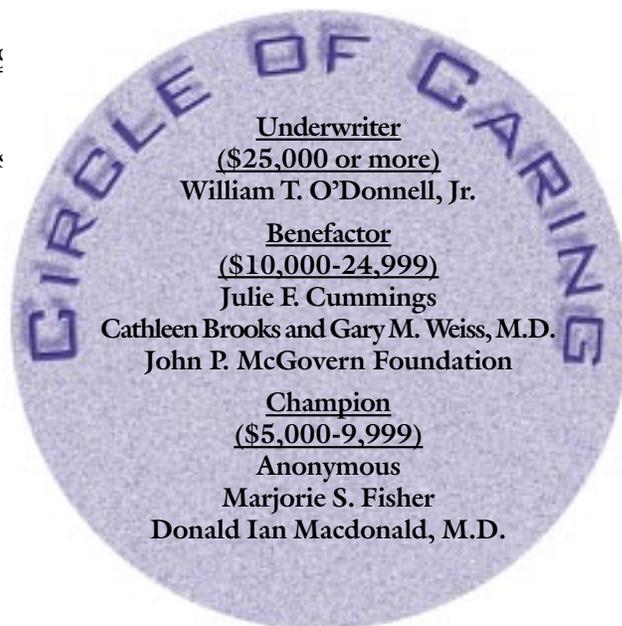
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## Return Service Requested



**APRIL IS  
 ALCOHOL  
 AWARENESS  
 MONTH AND  
 CHILD ABUSE  
 AWARENESS  
 MONTH**

Please remember:

- Those hurt most by alcohol abuse are the children of alcoholic parents.
- Those most at risk for child abuse and neglect are the children of alcoholic or other drug dependent parents.



[www.nacoa.org](http://www.nacoa.org)

“...children at risk are not at fault. Abandonment and abuse are not acts of God, they are failures of love.” -George W. Bush, Inaugural Address, January 21, 2001

## WHAT IS NACoA?

*The National Association for Children of Alcoholics (NACoA) was founded in 1983, and is the national nonprofit membership organization working on behalf of children of alcoholics. NACoA defines children of alcoholics as those people who have been impacted by the alcoholism or other drug dependence of a parent or another adult filling the parental role. NACoA believes that no child of an alcoholic should grow up in isolation and without support.*

### OUR MISSION

*To advocate for all children and families affected by alcoholism and other drug dependencies.*

### OUR GOALS

- To raise public awareness.
- To provide leadership in public policy at the national, state and local level.
- To inform and educate academic and other community systems.
- To advocate for appropriate education and prevention services.
- To facilitate the exchange of information and resources.

- To initiate and advance professional knowledge and understanding.
- To advocate for accessible programs and services.

*NACoA's programs are designed to impact systems that affect children. NACoA supports its mission by seeking private and public funding through corporations, individuals, members, donations, grants and foundations.*

*To accomplish this mission we are:*

- A membership organization which includes affiliate groups and cooperative relationships with other organizations.
- A national center for information, education and advocacy for COAs of all ages, including:
  - the latest research information
  - culturally and linguistically sensitive materials.
- A policy development center that obtains input from expert scientists, opinion leaders, policy makers and practitioners.
- A central point of input for children's health and welfare advocates and service providers who address populations of COAs.

## PBS VIDEO ON COAs AVAILABLE

*Straight Talk On Addiction*, produced by WETA, Washington, DC, at the request of Bill Moyers, is being distributed by PBS Home Video. Entertainer Suzanne Somers joins host Derek McGinty to discuss the devastating consequences of addiction. The interview with Somers, the daughter of an alcoholic, is followed with a discussion by Sis Wenger, NACoA Executive Director, about what people can do to help children of alcoholics, and Jeff Jay of the McGovern Foundation who focused on the importance of intervention to bring the alcoholic or drug addicted person to treatment. (30 minutes) To order a copy, please call 1-800-424-7963. Cost: \$19.98, plus \$4.75 shipping.