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Remembering Deborah Strong, Former Executive Director of Children's Trust Fund



Deborah Strong, who served as executive director of the Michigan Children's Trust Fund (CTF) from 1996 to 2005, died on October 27, 2013. Strong is remembered as a passionate advocate for CTF, which promotes the health, safety and welfare of children by funding programs and services to prevent child abuse and neglect.

"Deborah was a friend and colleague who was a passionate advocate for the work and mission of the trust fund," said Michael Foley, current executive director of CTF. "For those of us who had the pleasure of working with her, she will always be remembered for her collaborative spirit, tireless advocacy, her ability to connect research and best practice to the mission, and a genuine, infectious laugh that made it such a pleasure to be in her presence. Deborah made a meaningful difference for the children and families in Michigan – especially our most vulnerable. She will truly be missed."

Articles remembering Deborah Strong can be accessed at the following links:

- MLive Obituary for Deborah Strong
<http://obits.mlive.com/obituaries/annarbor/obituary.aspx?n=deborah-strong&pid=167817586&fhid=21049>
- Ypsilanti Resident Deborah Strong Remembered for Selfless Spirit after 30 years
www.mlive.com/news/ann-arbor/index.ssf/2013/11/deborah_strong.html

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Snyder makes reappointments to Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Board

Gov. Rick Snyder announced six reappointments on December 18, 2013, to the Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Board, also known as the Children's Trust Fund. The 11-person board promotes the health, safety and welfare of Michigan's children and families by funding local programs and services that prevent child abuse and neglect.

"These have been valuable board members and I look forward to their continued contributions to this important board," Snyder said.

John Brown, of East Lansing, is vice president of government relations for Jackson National Life Insurance Co., where he oversees its government relations efforts at the local, state and federal levels. He previously served as an attorney at Varnum, as director of worldwide government affairs at Amway, and as president of the Grand Rapids Chamber of Commerce. Brown holds an associate degree from Grand Rapids Community College, a bachelor's degree in political science and economics from Hope College, and a degree from the University of Michigan Law School. He will continue to represent the business sector.

Shelly Kester, of Cedar, is the managing member of Wilson Kester PLLC. She previously worked for the law firm of Running, Wise, Wilson, Ford & Phillips, and as a Grand Traverse County defense contract attorney. Kester is the founding chair and board member of Traverse Bay Children's Advocacy Center and has years of volunteer experience helping with women and child-related issues. She previously served as mayor and city commissioner for Traverse City. Kester holds a bachelor's degree in political science from Michigan State University and a degree from the McGeorge School of Law. She will continue to represent volunteers.

Mark McDaniel, of East Lansing, is the president and CEO of Great Lakes Capital Fund, a nonprofit housing corporation with offices in Lansing, Detroit, Indiana, Wisconsin, and Illinois. He has more than 30 years of experience in the areas of affordable housing, community development, urban planning and market research. McDaniel holds a bachelor's degree in urban planning from Michigan State University. He will continue to represent parents.

"These have been valuable board members and I look forward to their continued contributions to this important board."

--Governor Rick Snyder

Vivek Sankaran, of Ann Arbor, is the founder and executive director of the Detroit Center for Family Advocacy and a clinical assistant professor of law with the Child Advocacy Law Clinic at the University of Michigan Law School, both of which are focused on the foster care system. Previously, he was the supervising attorney and Skadden Fellow at the Children's Law Center in Washington, DC. Sankaran holds a bachelor's degree in government from the College of William and Mary and a degree from the University of Michigan Law School. He will continue to represent the general public.

Deb Shaughnessy, of Charlotte, is a former member of the Michigan House of Representatives, and was mayor and city councilperson of Charlotte. She has also served in various roles with the state House and was a customer service representative for the Charlotte Insurance Agency. Shaughnessy holds a general associate degree with an emphasis on communications from Lansing Community College and was a Fellow of the Michigan Political Leadership Program. She will continue to represent the general public.

Lori Wortz, of Okemos, is a partner with WWP Strategies, an issue management and political consulting firm. She formerly served as chief of staff for a state Senate majority leader, and has worked on campaigns at every level, including statewide campaigns on gaming, eminent domain, conservation issues, right to work, and energy issues. She will continue to represent the religious community.

Members will serve three-year terms expiring Dec. 19, 2016, and their appointments are subject to the advice and consent of the state Senate.

Annual Training

This past October 28 and 29, Local Councils and Direct Services Grantees met in Plymouth, Michigan at the Inn at St. Johns for the CTF annual training which was partnered with the University of Michigan's Child Abuse and Neglect: Prevention, Assessment and Treatment Conference.

The training gave all attendees the opportunity to attend workshops on a number of topics, including those relating to primary prevention such as Safe Sleep Initiatives, Strengthening Families/Protective Factors, the Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) Study, and the Adults and Children Together (ACT) Program.

The Local Councils ended the first day's activities with a collaborative session. The objectives of the session were focused on the resiliency and Safe Sleep. First councils, working in their respective tiers, brainstormed ideas of how to enhance resiliency of those they serve. The councils then brainstormed ways in which councils can nurture their own resiliency, whether from administrative or personal perspectives.

Secondly, a portion of the session was devoted to Safe Sleep. Each year Michigan is losing close to 150 infants due to unsafe sleep practices. These deaths—which are 100 percent preventable—are increasingly becoming a major focus of Local Council work. Councils broke up into three groups: those who are not currently conducting any Safe Sleep activities, those who are conducting prevention work with infants but are not specifically doing Safe Sleep work, and those who are already engaged in Safe Sleep work. Each group brainstormed ideas for advancing their councils' Safe Sleep endeavors. During both segments, rich discussions and ideas emerged.

After the session, all were invited to a hospitality suite for conversation and a bite to eat. It was a pleasure to have an informal way to gather and talk with those we don't often get to see during the year. The CTF 2013 training experience was informative, inspirational, energizing and fun. I had a great time and I heard a lot positive things about the training from attendees. Each year at the annual training I am reminded of what an honor it is for me to work with such a wonderful group of dedicated and committed prevention specialists, and how grateful I am to be part of the CTF "family."

Safe Sleep

In late November, CTF finalized a collaborative agreement with the Department of Human Services for Local Council Safe Sleep programming. The agreement will enable CTF to fund Safe Sleep efforts throughout Michigan. Although close to 20 councils are already engaged in Safe Sleep programming, the remaining 53 councils, which in total represent all Michigan counties, will all be planning and administering Safe Sleep programming. In response to this opportunity, CTF provided two technical assistance sessions to Local Councils for their planning needs. During December and January 2014, Emily will be meeting with every council via phone to review and/or modify work plans as needed, to assure that Safe Sleep programming is incorporated. The Local Councils' Safe Sleep work will add significantly to statewide efforts to eliminate infant deaths due to unsafe sleep environments.

Here's wishing you all a most joyous holiday season and only good things for the coming New Year!

CTF Art Auction a Success

The Children's Trust Fund's first Southeast Michigan Fall Event—Help Kids. Buy Art!—was a great success—raising close to \$14,000 for the prevention of child abuse and neglect in Michigan. CTF partnered with Chamberlain's Auction gallery in Clarkston, Michigan to host an auction on October 26, 2013. The evening featured something for everyone including art, antiques, collectables and gem properties for auction while guests enjoyed appetizers provided by Clarkston-based Rudy's Market while listening to the melodies of renowned harpist, Christa Grix. Featured auction pieces included European cut crystal, oil paintings, indoor/outdoor bronze sculptures, Persian rugs, hand-carved furniture and graphics by some of the masters including Picasso, Chagall, and Dali. To learn more about Chamberlain's Auction Gallery and to view the exquisite items they have available for purchase, please visit www.chamberlainsgallery.com.

The event is destined to grow and to become an event not to be missed! CTF is deeply grateful to Gallery owners, and longtime supporters, Ron and Gwen Chamberlain for their time, energy and continued commitment to Michigan's children and families. It was through their efforts that a lovely evening was had by all.



Pictured (Left to Right): Gwen Chamberlain, Patricia Headley, Ron Chamberlain, Lori Wertz, Michael Foley

Kids Count in Michigan 2013

The Kids Count in Michigan Report for 2013 was released on December 17, 2013. Its findings include:

“The child poverty rate increased 34 percent between 2005 and 2011. Nearly 560,000 children, about one in every four, lived in poverty in 2011. Another troubling Kids Count finding was the 41 percent increase in children living in families investigated for abuse or neglect between 2005 and 2012. A total of nearly 207,000 children – the highest number in 22 years – were living in families investigated for abuse and neglect.”

A full report of the Kids Count in Michigan data is available at www.mlpp.org/kids-count/michigan-2/mi-data-book-2013.

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Isis Hung Completes CTF Internship

Isis Hung served as an intern for the Children’s Trust Fund this past academic semester. She worked extensively with CTF’s social media and helped promote the new CTF fall event in Southeast Michigan, Help Kids. Buy Art! She also developed CTF’s first Crowdsourcing campaign. She will continue to work with CTF as a member of the Marketing Committee for the Pam Posthumus Signature Auction Event on May 14, 2014. Isis will graduate from Michigan State University in May with her master’s degree in Advertising. CTF wishes Isis Hung the best in her future endeavors!

CTF Social Media Pages

