

## Annual Meeting Inspires the Barker Community

The Annual Meeting brought together a standing room only crowd in an evening designed to educate, inspire, and energize the Barker community. In his final term as Chair, John Duff called the May meeting to order and led the assembly through the business portion of the meeting, including election of new Board members, reports on the financial health of The Barker Foundation and Friends of Barker, and approval of the first revision of the Foundation's By-Laws since 2005.

Nominating Committee Chair, Becky Flitcroft, conducted the election, with the following results: Kathryn Bucher, Chair; Gary Rappaport, Vice-Chair; Cherrise Robinson, Second Vice-Chair; Gary

Diamond, Secretary; Veda Russ, Assistant Secretary; Eugenia Collis, Treasurer; and David Hudson, Assistant Treasurer.

Newly elected trustees are: Leslie Jacobs; Oliver "Tom" Johnson; Pascal Luck; and Monika Walters. In a separate election conducted by the Board, Megan Dennis was also elected to fill a vacancy created shortly after the meeting, thus completing the roster of dedicated board members. New Trustee, Les Jacobs, in speaking to motivations for service on the Board, observed: "There are many reasons why families come to Barker, and they often arise from difficult life circumstances that make the path forward for building a family seem fraught with challenges and uncertainty. Barker has illuminated

that path and our hearts with hope for the future, and ultimately, joy upon the arrival of our son. But even more than that is the recognition that someday the adoption process that gave rise to our joy may present challenges for him, and we know that Barker and its post-adoption services will be there to illuminate his own path forward."

Financial reports for Barker and for Friends of Barker were presented by Gina Collis and Rob DeLucia, respectively. Trustee Maxine Baker expeditiously led the group through important and much-needed by-law changes. Executive Director, Marilyn Regier, presented an overview of the past year, as well as some of the challenging strategic issues facing Barker in the coming months.

In an alternately poignant, humorous, insightful, and awe-inspiring fashion, a panel of Barker grandparents and birth grandparents took the rapt audience through the many emotions they experienced as their adult children adopted children and/or placed children for adoption. As they spoke, beautiful family photos streamed on the screen behind them. Susan and Dan Crowley's daughter and son-in-law adopted sons from Colombia and from Guatemala, and had a birth son in the middle. The Crowleys eloquently addressed the joys and challenges of their blended trio of grandsons and fielded questions about race and culture. Elizabeth and Bob Lambert drew tears from some listeners while sharing the story of their daughter's placement of an infant son with a

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### THE RICHARD B. BARKER AWARD Presented to Maxine B. Baker

*With deep respect for her uncommon gifts of leadership in the child welfare field. She challenged us to reach higher, embrace a broader community, and "wait no longer" on behalf of children in need of permanency.*



John Duff and Maxine B. Baker

### THE RICHARD B. BARKER AWARD Presented to John M. Duff, Jr.

*In gratitude for his wise, compassionate, and visionary leadership, his business acumen, his great gift of building consensus, and his unfailing dedication to the best interests of all children.*



John Duff and Bob Long



## FROM THE *Executive Director*

November is National Adoption Month, a time set aside each year by Presidential

Proclamation to raise awareness about the needs of children awaiting permanency, children who through no fault of their own become at-risk. At the same time, National Adoption Month celebrates the institution of adoption and underscores the affirming role that adoption can play in the lives of children and families.

At Barker, November is a month when our staff participates in special events to highlight adoption and to recruit families. It is also a time when many of our adoptive parents make special presentations at their children's schools. We

celebrate adoption; we speak openly about our place in the family of adoption; and we shun secrecy for advocacy.

This summer I read an obituary in the *Washington Post* about a man who was a lawyer, member of the U.S. House of Representatives, and a justice on the Supreme Court of Virginia. In the 1970's, he withdrew his name from consideration for the U.S. Supreme Court (reportedly his life's ambition), because he wanted to protect his 12-year-old son from learning his adoptive status, which would undoubtedly be revealed during the vetting process. The obituary framed the decision as a father's decision to put family ahead of career.

You may or may not be surprised to know that there are still Barker parents who have never

told their children the story of their adoption. You may or may not be dismayed to learn that we still have adoptees who learn of their adoption from a relative, or in a desk drawer or family Bible. Undeniably, parts of our personal narrative are precious and private. But adoption is also something to be acknowledged and affirmed as necessary in any humane society. What better time than November, then, to speak openly about the need for more adoptive homes? What better time to hug your child – young or old – and say, "I am so glad we adopted you!"

*Marilyn Regier*

## Did you answer the call? Phonathon 2011

The 2011 Barker phonathon took place September 20, 21 and 22 under the helm of current Chair **David Sherman**. A record 44 volunteers helped make calls to Barker parents and request their support of the Annual Giving Campaign. **Reznick Group** generously hosted the phonathon Tuesday and Wednesday nights at their new location in Bethesda; Thursday night was

much smaller and held at Barker. **Bradley Food & Beverage owners and Barker parents Tom and Charleen Merkel** donated delicious trays of sandwiches from the store so volunteers did not go hungry!

Volunteers reached more than 500 families and raised over \$88,000 in pledges. Special thanks to Board members and other volunteers who made calls:

- |                 |                      |                       |
|-----------------|----------------------|-----------------------|
| Joe Barloon     | Betty Pyles Harris   | Kathy Romedly         |
| Tim Beardsley   | Christine Intagliata | Veda Russ             |
| Meg Bender      | Les Jacobs           | Judy Sagall           |
| Debbie Boger    | Tom Johnson          | Betsy Biben Seligman  |
| Rick Brenner    | Susan Nelson Johnson | Rick Seligman         |
| Dennis Corbett  | Bob Long             | David Sherman         |
| Barbara DeClerk | Pascal Luck          | Lori Simon-Rusinowitz |
| Roger DeLucia   | Jason McCray         | Jim Taglieri          |
| Gary Diamond    | Sarah Mejac          | JoAnn Volk            |
| Debbie Drozen   | Howard Menditch      | Monika Walters        |
| Carmelina Evans | David O'Bryon        | Trish Warner          |
| Jelani Freeman  | Nancie Park          | Abigail Wiebenson     |
| John Freeman    | Priscilla Peterson   | George Wolohojian     |
| Anna Gillis     | Gary Rappaport       | Xan Young             |
| Linda Grodin    | Cherisse Robinson    |                       |

## Barker's Annual Family Picnic

*"Yum, can I have another burger?"*

*"Hey, will you please paint a butterfly on my arm too?"*

More than 200 moms, dads, and children of all ages attended this annual Barker event held at Cabin John Regional Park in Rockville. This year, a family even traveled from Calvert County with their 15 year old daughter to reconnect with Barker. Young children explored the playground, and staff, board members, families, shared

the latest news. Everyone enjoyed a delightful afternoon.

Our wonderful volunteers from Deloitte and Touche including Mark Formanek, Kelly Conlin and Drew Strong transformed from their jobs as strategic consultants to grill chefs for the afternoon. They flipped burgers and hot dogs while mingling with the families who attended. We are most grateful and thank them for all their help.

Watch for next year's flyer and join us. You won't want to miss it! ■



Newly elected Barker Trustee, Tom Johnson, his wife Susan, and daughter Carrie, enjoy mingling with the picnic crowd.

## Annual Meeting Inspires the Barker Community

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Barker family, and the joy of reunion many years later.

Representing *Project Wait No Longer*, Agnes and Samuel Brice held the crowd spellbound with their description of welcoming their granddaughter into their home after she had experienced nine previous placements by the age of 6, only to find her “forever home” with their daughter and son-in-law. Adoptive and Birth Grandparent perspectives are rarely heard, and the panelists were warmly greeted and thanked for their insights.

As the evening moved into the awards, outgoing board members, Maxine Baker, Becky Flitcroft, and Bob Long received awards for dedicated service. Barker staff member Kathleen Porter presented Jennifer Diamond with the Barker Staff Appreciation Award to acknowledge her many contributions to Barker. Jennifer’s beautiful plaque bore the inscription: “Presented to Jennifer Diamond in grateful recognition of her passionate adoption advocacy, willingness to share her creative talents, and her generous, gracious, and genuine spirit.”

The evening’s climax came with the presentation of The Richard B. Barker Award for “outstanding and exemplary service.” In presenting the award to Maxine B. Baker, John Duff noted that Ms. Baker first served on the Barker Foundation Board of Trustees in the 1990’s

and was called to serve again for 2007–2011. He cited her many contributions, particularly in the area of leadership and board governance, as well as her tremendous support for Barker’s older child adoption program, *Project Wait No Longer*. Duff recounted Ms. Baker’s many professional achievements, including a long tenure as President and CEO of the Freddie Mac Foundation and Vice-President of Community Relations, where she led one of the DC area’s largest corporate philanthropy programs. She is herself the proud parent of two daughters adopted through The Barker Foundation.

A very surprised John Duff was called back to the podium after outgoing Immediate Past President, Bob Long, revealed that there were **two** recipients of The Barker Award this year, with John receiving the second award. John was elected to the office of Chair of the Board of Trustees for the two-year terms from 2009–2011, after serving as a Trustee from 2007–2009. Under John’s leadership, the organization experienced growth and increased financial strength. During his tenure, initiatives around technology, development, and strategic planning began, and younger programs like *Project Wait No Longer* took hold and flourished. Bob described John as a steward for future generations, one who has given his time and



Jennifer Diamond (center), recipient of the Barker Staff Appreciation Award, celebrates with her proud parents, Gary and Jean Diamond.

resources to KIPP Charter Schools, the World Affairs Council, and colleges and law schools. John is a Managing Director of Duff Ackerman Goodrich LLC and DAG Ventures. John and his wife, Viki, are Barker parents of a son and a daughter.

Before adjourning the meeting, newly elected Chair, Kathy Bucher, noted the significance of the passing of new By-laws earlier in the evening. The Barker By-laws now invite any individual within the adoption circle (including for the first time, birth parents, adoptees, and grandparents) to become members of Barker. As Kathy

remarked, “We are truly blessed by many wonderful contributions from individuals in this extended family, and it is only fitting that we recognize all as members – not just adoptive parents.” Kathy then warmly welcomed as new members the grandparents who had so eloquently shared their stories, and Jennifer Diamond, a Barker adoptee and award recipient.

As the crowd lingered, several expressed the sentiment that the nomenclature “Annual Meeting” does not begin to capture the breadth and depth, the heart and soul of what the attendees had experienced. ■



A panel of Barker grandparents and birth grandparents shared their joys and challenges. Left to right: Samuel and Agnes Brice; Bob and Elizabeth Lambert; and Susan and Dan Crowley.

## - With Sympathy -

We express our heartfelt sympathy to the Regier, Sisen, Krivka and Fiorillo families as they mourn the loss of their loved ones.

Marion C. Meilaender, of Marshall, Michigan, mother of Barker Executive Director Marilyn Regier, died on July 28, 2011 at 96 years of age. She is survived by her five children, seventeen grandchildren and fifteen great-grandchildren.

Ann Sisen, mother of Barker parents, Patti Pukatch (Jeffrey) and Charles Sisen (Patricia) died on April 26, 2011. She is survived by her three children, nine grandchildren and one great-grandchild.

Herbert A. Krivka, of Rockville, MD, husband of the late Naomi Krivka and father of Patrice Gagnani (Peter) and Michael A. Krivka (Francine), died on August 23, 2011. He is also survived by four grandchildren.

It is with deep sadness and a sense of loss that we learned of the death of Cathy Fiorillo, one of Barker’s foster mothers. Cathy, her husband Joe and two children Tony and Anna, fostered 23 newborn babies awaiting placement. Cathy and her family touched many lives during their tenure with Barker, she will be remembered warmly.

The Barker Foundation is most grateful to the families and friends who donated to Barker in memory of Mrs. Meilaender, Mrs. Sisen and Mr. Krivka.

# Susan Hollar Becomes Barker's Associate Director

Susan Hollar, LCSW-C, LICSW, is the new Associate Director of The Barker Foundation. Marilyn Regier, Executive Director & CEO, announced the creation of this new position after approval by the Board of Trustees at its September meeting. In making the announcement, Marilyn stated, "I am delighted that Sue has accepted this important new executive role, one which acknowledges the mounting needs of a growing agency. Sue brings all the right career experience and instincts to the position, and most of all, she is passionate about serving the

needs of children in an ethical and vibrant setting."

Sue has been an important part of Barker's management team since 2006, when she first served as Korea Program Director; in 2010 she assumed the role of Director of Professional Services. Prior to coming to Barker, Sue's work included six years of federal contracting experience, where she provided management consulting support to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Children's Bureau, as well as serving as Director of Foster Care and Independent Living Services for Catholic Charities

of DC; and a Project Associate with the Metropolitan Council of Governments.

In discussing her new role at Barker, Sue reflected: "As I begin the third decade of my social work career, I am incredibly honored to serve The Barker Foundation and its clients in a new capacity. My passion and commitment to providing outstanding child welfare and adoption services is perfectly matched to the goals of the agency, and I look forward to continuing to make positive and meaningful contributions toward Barker's future." ■



Susan Hollar, LCSW-C, LICSW

## Congratulations to Our New Adoptive Families

### Domestic Placements

James & Marie welcomed Terrence  
John & Patricia welcomed Ayden  
Adam & Marian welcomed Frances  
Richard & Kirsten welcomed Nathan  
Toby & Jennifer welcomed Eleanor  
Eric & Laura welcomed Molly  
Lucretia welcomed Jadyn  
Aaron & Amy welcomed Natalie  
Matthew & Colleen welcomed Audra  
Lea Ann & Stuart welcomed Malcolm  
Marquita welcomed Madison  
Obiara & Adrienne welcomed Dawn  
Bill & Julie welcomed Lianne

Peter & Monique welcomed Robin & Janey  
Alejandro & Silvina welcomed Natalia  
Jason & Eric welcomed Luke  
Steven & Christine welcomed William  
Dainian & Tiffany welcomed Aubrey  
David & Karen welcomed Madeline  
David & Martha welcomed Samuel  
Elizabeth (Beth) & James (Jim)  
welcomed Joseph  
Frederick & Lindsay welcomed Henry  
Joel & Judy welcomed Asha  
Salvatore & Elissa welcomed Joseph  
Amitava & Nicole welcomed Skyler  
Adam & Lorien welcomed Sebastien

Peter & Doron welcomed Ezra  
Stuart & Arohi welcomed Silas  
Tim & Loretta welcomed Kaitlyn  
Aleizha welcomed Jordan  
Ta'Shay welcomed Gregory  
Charles & Charity welcomed Kei  
Jewel & Andrea welcomed Latasha & Briona  
Sam welcomed DeWayne  
Kurt & Julie welcomed Brandon  
Laura welcomed Scott  
Rosalind & Paul welcomed Xzavion & Maylasia

### International Placements

Andrew & Mie welcomed Kenta  
Scott & Debra welcomed Kai  
Tracy & Amy welcomed Ronan  
William & Katherine welcomed Steven  
Matthew & Alissa welcomed Benjamin  
Nicholas & Jacqueline welcomed Matilda  
Stephen & Richelle welcomed Asher  
Anuragh & Sapna welcomed Sachin  
John & Holly welcomed Gregory  
Nikhil & Kathleen welcomed Anuja Angelie  
Christopher & Jennifer welcomed Laxmi  
Daniel & Elisabeth welcomed Annelise  
Robert & Susan welcomed Emerson  
Anne Marie welcomed Ritesh

Wrenn & Melissa welcomed Sabrina  
Mark & Stacey welcomed Leah  
John & Danielle welcomed Virginia  
Mary Helen welcomed Amarech  
Brian & Monica welcomed Zack  
Joseph & Ashley welcomed Gabriel  
Rodney & Dorothy welcomed Tristam  
Stephen & Catherine welcomed William  
Jon & Jessica welcomed Hannah  
Edward & Cynthia welcomed Layla  
Jolyon & Sarah welcomed Zac  
John & Charlotte welcomed Frida  
Steven & Janice welcomed Zahrah  
Cheryl welcomed Rachel  
Ajit & Arvina welcomed Ruth Anjali

Apoorva & Ruchi welcomed Anisha  
Brian & Karen welcomed Jasmine  
Keyoor & Urvi welcomed Moksh  
Mark & Kimberly welcomed Yisak  
Susan welcomed Meskerem  
Don & Lisa welcomed Millie Mei  
Seth & Kathryn welcomed Landon  
Donald & Leah welcomed Ahri  
William & Elizabeth welcomed William  
Charles & Ellen welcomed Douglas  
Bradley & Courtney welcomed Silas  
Charles & Elise welcomed Avery  
Cory & April welcomed Sadie  
Michael & Nicole welcomed Isabella

# Four Superb Summer Interns Enrich Barker's Services

In recent years, student volunteers and interns have become an integral part of Barker's team. Throughout the academic year, both high school and college students come to help and to learn. Dr. Andrea Brenner, Barker Trustee and Sociology Professor at American University, has had a special interest in placing qualified and motivated college students in our agency. She and our staff provide supervision. Students also hear of Barker through our annual conference, our website, and staff speeches in the Metro area.

The summer of 2011 brought four rising college seniors to Barker for an intense time of learning and collaboration. In return, they brought fresh ideas, boundless energy, technological skills, and willing hands to the workload challenges at a small non-profit like Barker. In order to participate as intensively as they did, the interns signed a confidentiality statement, were extensively oriented to our professional code of ethics, worked in situations where clients agreed to their participation, and were supervised by our licensed social workers. Brief sketches provide a window into the experiences of these extraordinarily talented students.

**Isabel Cain** is a psychology major at Skidmore College and hopes within a few years to earn an MSW and a Psy.D. Adopted as a newborn in the United States, Isabel notes that "the adoption process really came to life for me during my internship at Barker. Reading files and meeting individuals who are involved in adoption helped me to truly understand how much love and care goes into every adoption. While each story is unique, what every story has in common is that there were birth parents, adoptive parents, and social workers that participated in a very emotional adoption process and worked together to create a better future for each child, out of the love that they *all* shared for that child." This summer Isabel worked most closely

with PWNL and participated in the matching process, which had special meaning for her, since she has a friend adopted from the foster care system. She also participated in a meeting with a birth mother and learned firsthand what pregnancy counselors do. During her work in our post-adoption center, she wrote some case summaries in consultation with Abbe Levine. "Being adopted myself, I had a sense of which pieces would be more meaningful" to those seeking history. One of her most precious takeaways from the summer experience is that "every adoption story is characterized by extraordinary strength, patience, and love from all individuals, which shows how beautiful the adoption process is."

**Zachary Evans**, a history major at Williams College, was himself adopted from Chile. He is considering earning an MBA and working in non-profit management. Being eager to work in a child welfare setting, he googled adoption agencies in Boston, New York, and Washington, DC. "I wanted an agency that had a *history*," he emphasized. When Zach read about Barker's comprehensive services online, and when he learned that Barker placed 123 children in 2010, he was surprised to arrive and find a relatively small staff. "I guess I assumed the agency would at least take up a couple floors," he said, and when he came to realize how much staff time and paper work is involved "to complete just one adoption," he was even more struck by how efficient and hard-working the staff was. Zach worked primarily in the Post-Adoption Department, but he also "got a taste and feel for all the other departments, including development." Like many of our interns, Zach had not previously worked in an office setting and noted Barker's warm and friendly office. "Out of everything I learned this summer," he summarized, "perhaps the most important lesson I gleaned from the experience is how essential a healthy office culture and community are to the continued success

of a non-profit like The Barker Foundation."

**Hanna Schlang** is a rising senior at University of Virginia and has interned with Barker for two summers, an experience she terms "incredible." Adopted as an infant from Korea, she is majoring in psychology and hopes for a career in physical therapy. Her internships included rotations through the international department, finance and administration, and several stints at the front desk where she was a warm and capable receptionist. Hanna has also served as an excel-

University, is interested in a career in non-profit work. For her internship, she wanted a cause about which she is passionate, and adoption is such a cause, since her ten-year-old sister, Jane, was adopted from China. Notwithstanding her strong interest in international adoption, Andrea's internship provided real insights into U.S. adoption, as she worked primarily in our domestic department with the director and pregnancy counselors. She found the internship "fulfilling, not only because I was able to get a glimpse of what a career in adoption social



Summer interns pictured, left to right: Andrea Siwek; Isabel Cain; Hanna Schlang; and Zachary Evans.

lent and thoughtful panelist at several Barker Conferences. "I have the greatest respect for Barker's mission and message, and especially for the people there who carry it out," says Hanna. "Through my time at Barker, not only did I develop a strong understanding of the adoption process, but I also acquired unique insight into international cultural values and attitudes, knowledge that I – perhaps ignorantly – did not expect to gain from this experience. As a result, I now feel that I have a more comprehensive grasp of adoption, drawing on the perspectives of the countries placing their children, the dedicated social workers who mediate the process, and my own experience as an adoptee."

**Andrea Siwek**, majoring in applied anthropology at American

worker would look like, but also because I was able to improve upon my anthropological research skills through participant observation and direct access to social workers." For the academic component to her internship, she reviewed adoption applications to learn how families select race in domestic adoption. "Behind every check mark is a huge story," Andrea observed. Among her other discoveries? "I was surprised at how much work is done by a small staff; by how the fees are not covering anything other than basic operations; and by how tough fund-raising is."

Special thanks to the Barker staff who mentored the remarkable group of summer interns, and to Sue Hollar, who provided overall guidance. ■

# The Colombia Homeland Tour 2011

By Del Stover, Barker/FANA parent

Would you want to meet your birth mother? Are you happy with your lives? These were just a few of the questions that three young pregnant women nervously asked Barker youths who visited the Hogar Margarita, FANA's home for birth mothers, during this June's Colombia Homeland Tour.

Crowded together in a narrow room, with parents watching from the sidelines, the youths and birth mothers struggled to communicate – and sought to learn a bit more about one another's experiences. The youths – in their late teens and early 20s – wanted the birth mothers to know they were happy and grateful for the lives they had. And the birth mothers appeared reassured when told that

Spanish to some degree – with Lilly Trone often taking over as primary translator for the group – and the nervous birth mothers soon began to relax. By the end of the visit, there were smiles and hugs all around as everyone said their good-byes.

This visit was the emotional high point of the week-long tour, which included five families, accompanied by three Barker staff members.

Another special day for the families was a day-long visit to FANA, where families toured the facility, met FANA founder Mercedes Rosario Pineda de Martínez, and reviewed their adoption files with counselor Flor Angela Rojas. Perhaps most touching was an afternoon gathering with some of the children awaiting adoption

mountain with a spectacular view of the city. All of the tour arrangements were made by María Teresa de Pérez, with whom several of the families had worked with in their adoption process so many years ago, so reuniting with María Teresa was also like visiting a part of the Barker extended family.

Families also visited the city's famous Gold Museum, the Botero Art Gallery, the Salt Cathedral in the nearby city of Zipaquirá, and a coffee farm in the countryside. Near the end of the visit, everyone gathered at a downtown restaurant for a farewell dinner with Mercedes and her husband Arturo, Flor

Angela, and Mercedes' daughter and son-in-law, Elena and César.

Family members participating in the tour included Bill and Lisa Arbelaez, with sons, Chris and Gregg; Del and Carole Stover, with son Matthew; Margie and Mark Trone, with daughter Lilly; Charley and Denise Wilkinson, and their son Stefan; and Karen Yannello, with daughter Grace. Accompanying the families were Barker staff members Sue Hollar, Director of Professional Services; Carolina Kenrick, International Program Coordinator; and Abbe Levine, Director of Family and Post-Adoption Services. ■



The 2011 Tour group gathers on the steps of FANA.

none of the youth harbored any resentment at their birth parents because they were placed for adoption.

Given that some questions – and answers – could be misinterpreted as judgmental or insensitive, the Barker youth had been counseled in advance about how to handle this conversation, and the youths did an outstanding job. At all times, they made clear their support and appreciation for their birth parents – and the women to whom they were speaking. Several youth spoke

or participating in FANA's day-care program. Some Barker youth set up a puppet stage that they'd brought as a gift for the children, while parent Denise Wilkinson became very popular by pulling out a face-painting set and decorating the faces and arms of a quickly formed line of eager children.

Other highlights of the visit included a walking tour of La Candelaria, the oldest neighborhood of Bogotá, and a cable car ride to the Santuario de Monserrate, a church located on a nearby

*The Barker parents and children who attended Barker Family Arts Night at Imagination Stage on June 24th found Tessa Hersh's lovely letter of welcome in the program.*

## Welcome!

I am so delighted to welcome you this evening; tonight The Barker Foundation invites family and friends to enjoy one of Imagination Stage's most exciting productions, *The Wind in the Willows*. This is an especially magical evening for me, as I am both a proud Barker baby and Imagination Stage baby. I am the 4th child in my family, and 3 of us were adopted through Barker. Marilyn Regier and many others at Barker helped build and support my beautiful family. Everyone in my family has enjoyed the programming and support Barker provides their adoptive families. We love Barker, and I am proud to be a part of the Barker community.

Beyond the family that raised me, I have another home and family here at Imagination Stage. I began taking classes and performing at Imagination Stage when I was 5 years old. The amazing arts center that Bonnie Fogel created housed me almost every day after school from kindergarten through high school. It was here at Imagination Stage that I met some of the most important teachers and mentors of my life. Some of these teachers are still close friends and mentors and have continued to support me.

Imagination Stage has been deeply influential in my experience of the world. There is a saying, "Everything I need to know about the world, I learned in Kindergarten"... Well, for me I would change it to "Everything I need to know about the world, I learned at Imagination Stage".

In *Wind in the Willows* the characters celebrate the joy and importance of play, as they travel down the river. Imagination Stage was my playground growing up and I have used the skills I was taught in joy, creativity and play in all my endeavors since.

Congratulations on this wonderful collaboration between The Barker Foundation and Imagination Stage. I hope this is just the beginning!

Enjoy the Show!

Tessa Hersh



Tessa Hersh

# Compass Offering Direction in Strategic Planning

Out of more than 50 applicants, The Barker Foundation was selected as one of the 27 clients of Compass DC. Compass provides pro bono consulting services to nonprofits whose work benefits the Greater Washington community. Compass recruits, trains and supports teams of volunteers, mainly MBAs from top business schools, who provide the free consulting services. These services save Barker an estimated \$10,000 in consulting fees.

Compass will be offering guidance to Barker with the strategic planning process. The Compass team will be working with Barker Board members **Cherisse Robinson**, **Abigail Wiebenson**, and Chair **Kathy Bucher**, as well as Executive Director **Marilyn Regier** and the Barker staff.

"Barker is well-positioned to undertake a strategic plan which

will help up navigate the changing world of adoption. The agency is in sound financial shape with a strong board and staff. With the help of Compass volunteers, we will confidently make a 3-year plan for the future of Barker," said Abigail Wiebenson.



Strategic Guidance. Stronger Nonprofits.

The strategic planning process examines who we are, the adoption field, where do we go next, how we get there, and leads to the design of an implementation plan. Compass has committed to provide consulting services for two years to help Barker strengthen its capacity and effectiveness as the agency continues to build and sustain families through adoption. ■

## Worth the Wait

By Gloria Succi

Our adoption journey began about four years ago. Albert and I attended an adoption convention and grabbed some information about Barker's adoption programs. With several failed IVF attempts behind us, we thought we would look at adoption as an opportunity to build our family.

Initially, we were interested in international adoption, but after attending Barker's information meeting, we decided against it. We were getting a little older and thought that having a baby would be more demanding than we anticipated. So, we signed up for *Project Wait No Longer's* PRIDE training, to see if it was something we really wanted to pursue. I have to admit it was all a little scary at first. We were not prepared for the list of behaviors or disabilities that children in foster care often have. At first we weren't sure if it was

something we could handle. Over time, our feelings changed. **We became more open-minded, and with an open mind came an open heart.**

We looked at countless profiles but met our first real match in January 2010. She was a beautiful 13 year old girl with a challenging past, who had made great progress in overcoming some of her issues and was doing well. Visits commenced, but just prior to a scheduled week-long visit at our home, she changed her mind about being adopted. She simply wasn't ready. It was a major set-back for all of us.

At this point, we had all but given up on the program working for us. We were so disappointed and felt we would never find a match. We had no child... again. It was a miserable time and sort of difficult to get things back to normal, but eventually things did.

## AGENCY News & Notes

Barker's Virginia satellite office in Falls Church is being significantly upgraded, thanks to **John Freeman**, Barker parent and Trustee. Starting November 28, the office will be fully staffed. Please watch for further announcements!

A warm welcome to **Susan Baker**, Director of Finance & Administration. Susan, a CPA, brings a strong background in finance and accounting and was chosen by the Board's Finance Committee, headed by **Eugenia Collis**. We also welcome **Angela Willmore**, MSW, as our new Korea Program Director. Angela, well-known to many Barker families because of her previous contractual home study role, recently returned from a trip to Korea and is enthusiastic about her new role. **Jana Lee**, MSW, is our new PWNL Coordinator, working to strengthen and expand the older child adoption program. Welcome to all!

Sincere apologies to **Klaus Krietsch** and **Heidi Lehman**, who were inadvertently omitted from Barker's list of generous donors in the 2010 Annual Report.

**Georjean** and **Rick Rossow** asked that guests to son Alex's 1st birthday party bring checks designated for infant and birth parent needs, in lieu of presents. The Rossows, who adopted through our domestic program, were gratified to know that \$1,000 was sent to a Barker family whose infant daughter was experiencing a grave medical condition.

Please send your current email addresses to Development Director, **Mary Reyner**, at [mreyner@barkerfoundation.org](mailto:mreyner@barkerfoundation.org). You will help us go green and save postage on certain communications. Thank you!



The Succi Family

Barker was working hard at searching for us, and so we continued to wait.

Then one day I received a call about two little boys – ages five and one. I didn't know how to react. I had been thinking of older children at this point. I checked my e-mail for pictures and profile information as soon as I got home,

and as I looked at their faces, my heart melted. We were one of four couples chosen as potential matches. Waiting for a decision was brutal; we didn't want to be let down again, but in the end we were selected. I guess that everything happens for a reason.

We heard about Antonio and Luis in May, and they came home in June. Seven months later, on January 31, 2011, we finalized our adoption... I look at the boys in complete amazement every day. We thank God for allowing us to parent two beautiful children. How truly wonderful to hear their laughter and feel their love. They fill our lives with a sense of purpose. It has been one long journey, but in the end it's been so worth the wait! ■

[For more information on *Project Wait No Longer*, please email Beverly Clarke at [bclarke@barkerfoundation.org](mailto:bclarke@barkerfoundation.org).]

# Save the Date

**“Telling the Adoption Story” workshop**, led by Susan Alvarado, LPC, PLLC – Saturday, January 28, 2012. Morning workshop, time TBA. MD Office. For more information, contact Abbe Levine at [alevine@barkerfoundation.org](mailto:alevine@barkerfoundation.org).

**Barker Benefit** – Saturday, March 3, Arena Stage Mead Center. Washington, DC. Volunteers welcome!  
Contact Mary Reyner at [mreyner@barkerfoundation.org](mailto:mreyner@barkerfoundation.org).

**The 18th Annual Conference** – Saturday, April 28, 2012, 9 AM to 4:30 PM. The Universities at Shady Grove Conference Center, Rockville MD. Watch our website for future information.

**Parents of Teens** – 2nd Tuesday of month, 7 PM, MD Office

**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

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