



# Todd Ouida Children's Foundation

591 Clarendon Court, River Edge, NJ 07661

www.mybuddytodd.org

Spring 2008

## Our Mission

The Todd Ouida Children's Foundation was established by Todd's family to create a meaningful legacy for Todd, whose life was tragically ended in the September 11<sup>th</sup> terrorist attack on the World Trade Center. Born out of Todd's own successful struggle with childhood anxiety, the mission of the foundation is:

- To financially support psychological services and other mental health initiatives for children of families in need
- To raise awareness and reduce the stigma of anxiety and depression disorders in children, recognizing the need for early intervention
- To provide contact information for those seeking help.

Anxiety and depression are often undiagnosed and untreated in children. Mild problems can escalate and lead to damage that cannot be undone. We are grateful to have you as our partners in providing help and hope to vulnerable children. And we thank you for keeping Todd's memory alive through each and every one of them.

Herb and Andrea Ouida  
Amy, Alex, Ashley, Andrew  
and Aidan Morik  
Jordan, Heather, Christopher  
and Nicholas Ouida

## Zippy's Friends

The reviews are in and Zippy is a great success! Last year we reported that our foundation had been instrumental in bringing Zippy's Friends, an international school-based program that helps kindergarten and first-grade children develop coping skills, to the United States.

Originally, teachers from four New Jersey schools were trained and introduced Zippy in their classrooms, and their feedback has been extremely enthusiastic. Recently, the program was chosen by the New Jersey Education Association to be featured in "Classroom Close-Up," a public television show. The video is available on our web site.

At the beginning of this school year, teachers from other districts were trained and more districts are signing up for training.

All 18 kindergarten teachers in the Hackensack School District have now implemented the Zippy curriculum in their classrooms. Director of Elementary Education Robert M. Gamper writes: *There has been a major movement in education towards accountability, by way of standardized testing. This has forced schools to spend more time on the "three R's" and less time dealing with the social and emotional aspects of learning. The teachers and administration in Hackensack are happy we made the commitment to the Zippy's Friends program. ... Teachers often comment that the lesson topics provide the basis for rich discussions they have at different times during the school year, with individual students or the whole class.*

One third of the proceeds from our birthday event this year will support training for school districts that would otherwise not be able to afford it. Youth Consultation Service (YCS), who provides the training, has applied for a grant from The Ohl Foundation to provide training and materials to additional low-income districts.



## You're Invited! Seventh Annual Birthday Event • May 18, 2008

See the enclosed invitation for this year's event at the Bergen Performing Arts Center (bergenPAC) in Englewood, NJ. Last year, Todd's seven-year-old goddaughter Ashley was very upset that a children's foundation should have an adults-only event. We're making up for it this year, Ashley! The celebrated Laurie Berkner Band will entertain young and old right on Todd's birthday.

Our deep appreciation to Hans Dekker and the Community Foundation of New Jersey for partnering with us on this year's event. Concert proceeds will be divided between Zippy's Friends, CASA of New Jersey duffle bags (see related articles) and the ongoing children's services supported by Todd's foundation.

## Sixth Annual Birthday Event

Todd's Night of Tunes  
May 17, 2007

We celebrated Todd in New York City where friends and family gathered at Crash Mansion and boogied down to the music of New Jersey's best-loved cover band, The Nerds. It was a fabulous evening of dance and sing-along music, meeting old friends, making new friends, and raising funds to help children in Todd's name.



## Creative Contributions

Family friend and artist Fran Kasturas graciously donated a portion of the proceeds from her one woman art show, "Our Grecian Summer."



The following note was received from Todd's good friend Jason Gorman:  
*On Saturday I'm getting married to my beautiful fiancé Ashley Pica in Philadelphia.*

*Although she never got to meet Todd she understands how important he is to me and all his friends. So in lieu of wedding favors we would like to make a donation on behalf of our guests.*

Gale Gardiner has donated proceeds from the sale of her CD "Love Will Always Find You."

Karen and Gary Rancourt continue to make generous monthly contributions as part of an IBM Community Outreach program.

Todd's U-M friend Meghan Murray has inspired many of her colleagues at Morgan Stanley to join her in making regular contributions to the foundation.

Through the efforts of Barbara Bar-Nissim, the children of Temple Emanu-El Religious School learned about Todd's foundation as part of the school Tzedakah curriculum and sent a generous contribution from their Keren Ami donations.

On behalf of Todd's foundation, Roy Wandelmaier has been instrumental in having Scholastic Books send a large donation of children's materials to the County of Bergen Department of Human Services for their Family Fun Festival. Low-income families attend and the children have fun selecting a free item.

Cathleen Conway-Perrin, Director of Academic Standards and Academic Opportunities at U-M, encouraged her coworkers to donate to Todd's foundation in memory of her mother, Norma Conway.

Heather's aunt and uncle, Ellen and John Franks, honored us by designating Todd's foundation for memorial donations in memory of John's sister, Patricia Franks Craven.

Other memorial gifts: Celia Mendelsohn in memory of Margaret Clemens, the mother of a friend. Susan and Jeff Sawyer in memory of Sophie Zemaites, the grandmother of Todd's classmate and football teammate, Michael Kelly. Marci Webber in memory of Lurene Puzo, the mother of Todd's football teammate Tommy Puzo.

The best way to surprise someone on his 40th birthday is to have his party when he's 39! That's what Amy did for Alex, and we thank the many guests who honored Alex with donations to Todd's foundation.



## Todd Ouida Annual Lecture and Clinical Scholar Award at the University of Michigan

The fifth annual lecture – *Treatment of Anxiety Disorders in Children: Update on the Child/Adolescent Anxiety Multimodal Study (CAMS)* – was presented by Dr. John T. Walkup of the Johns Hopkins Medical Institutions. In addition to the presentation, the visiting lecturer allocates time for the present and past clinical scholars to discuss their work and perspectives with a leader in their field.

The 2007 clinical scholar award was presented to Dr. Cynthia Ewell Foster for her project "Depression Awareness and Stigma Reduction in African American Youth" and her continuing research focused on community-based depression awareness and suicide prevention interventions for vulnerable youth.

A special thank you to Karen Crawford at the U-M Depression Center for all the work she does every year to make these events extremely rewarding and enjoyable for everyone in attendance. No matter the challenges, she handles them with aplomb.



Dr. John T. Walkup and Dr. Cynthia Ewell Foster with Dr. John Greden (right), Executive Director of the U-M Depression Center

## New Initiatives

In addition to the programs and services we regularly fund, occasionally we will learn about a program that fits our mission so perfectly we are inspired to support it as well. This past year, we were honored to provide first-time grants to the following:

**PEI Kids**, for their program Trauma, Loss and Depression: Intervention for Young Children. Through workshops for parents, educators and caregivers, adults are helped to identify the symptoms of anxiety and depression in children. One-on-one counseling is provided to these children at no cost.

**Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA)** duffle bags program. The 6,000 abused and neglected children who go through the New Jersey foster care program every year have traditionally carried their belongings in heavy-duty garbage bags. With a duffle bag of their own, children can travel with a little more dignity and feel less stigmatized. One third of the proceeds from this year's birthday event will buy duffle bags for children in foster care.

**Mentoring Moms**, a program of the Volunteer Center of Bergen County (VCBC) under a contract with DYFS. Women volunteers are trained to teach mothering skills to young women and girls who have been reported for abusing or neglecting their children. VCBC Executive Director Janet Sharma said: *They need help learning how to discipline their children, how to go about looking for jobs, even how to keep food in the house. These are things no one ever taught them how to do.*

**Thank you ...** Because of your caring and generosity, Todd's foundation was able to give grants totaling \$102,000 last year. We are grateful for your year-round contributions through mybuddytodd.org (where a list of charities is available) or checks mailed to the Todd Ouida Children's Foundation, 591 Clarendon Court, River Edge, NJ 07661.

Please contact us by mail or e-mail if you would like your name removed from our mailing list. ■ Newsletter design warmly donated by E. Fitz Art.