

COMMUNITY CURRENTS

Macon/Bibb Citizen Advocacy
364 Cotton Avenue, Suite 100
Macon, Georgia 31201
(478) 743-1521

Summer 2007



30TH ANNIVERSARY OF CITIZEN ADVOCACY

The Macon Citizen Advocacy office opened in 1978. Citizen Advocacy was new, untried and there was no certainty that people in Bibb County, when asked, would respond to people with developmental disabilities in a “citizen advocate relationship.” Thirty years later we can answer that question with a resounding YES! Over 800 citizens have been involved in Citizen Advocacy and several relationships established in the 80’s still thrive today. We are profoundly grateful for all who have been a part of citizen advocacy in the past, as advocates, board members, friends of the office and financial contributors.

This newsletter is one of three this year that takes us back to our roots and will capture some stories and events from the past. Our first story is about a twenty-two year old relationship between two gentlemen, Al and Cecil. Citizen Advocate and Board Member, Lori Johnson, spent a morning visiting with Al and Cecil. Her reflections follow.....

“CAMARADERIE”

“Show her that picture,” Cecil says, as he gestures toward a picture of himself at 30 years old in a white suit with Elvis. “You mean this one?” Al, points to a German Shepherd. Cecil turns to me with mock frustration and says, “You see what I have to put up with?”

They tease and joke with each other like the old friends they are. Al Bond will have been a citizen advocate for Cecil Rawlins for 22 years in September. They’ve been through a lot together. As Cecil describes it, “I have a lot of respect for this man, he’s done a lot for me over the years.

Cecil was born in Macon on November 24, 1950 and had a twin brother who died of respiratory problems. A few years later the doctor told his parents that he had cerebral palsy. “My parents were always there for me,” Cecil says. Cecil once gave his mother a plaque that said “Greatest Mother in the World.”

Growing up, Cecil had a walker and he scooted all over the house and yard, playing football and softball with his older brother, Jim. He became a huge Elvis fan and the biggest night of his life was sitting in the 6th row of the Macon Coliseum while Elvis performed.

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It was soon after Cecil's father died that Al came into his life as his citizen advocate. Later his mother was having health problems and had to go into a nursing home. Cecil also had to go into the nursing home in Snellville near his brother. "I'm a fighter not a quitter," Cecil tells me. He and Al joined forces to get him out of the nursing home. He wanted to have an independent life in which he could pursue his interests in the music industry, professional wrestling and spend time with his friends. Together with Al, "I've learned how to fight back," Cecil recounts, by writing letters, making speeches, going to conferences and protesting decisions made by others about his life.

Al says he's learned a lot from Cecil about Elvis, many other musicians, wrestling and television. He has also learned a lot about "the system" - the seemingly endless levels of bureaucracy and paperwork that impact Cecil's daily life. Most importantly, though, Al has listened to Cecil and discovered who he is. Cecil is a man who wants to live a fulfilled life as each of us.

"I could beat Al up anytime, Cecil jokes as I am leaving. Their easy camaraderie is readily apparent and their relationship reflects the kind of mutual respect and commitment that is what Citizen Advocacy is all about.



Al & Cecil

*"CITIZEN ADVOCACY IS AMERICAN CULTURE AT ITS BEST. EMPOWERING CITIZENS TO BECOME ALL WE ARE MEANT TO BECOME."
by Dan Hamby*

*"CITIZEN ADVOCACY IS A STRAIGHT FORWARD WAY OF SAYING THAT EVERYONE MATTERS."
by Scott Hewit*

*"NEVER DOUBT THAT A SMALL GROUP OF THOUGHTFUL, COMMITTED CITIZENS CAN CHANGE THE WORLD, INDEED IT IS THE ONLY THING THAT EVER HAS."
by Margaret Mead*

Macon/Bibb Citizen Advocacy
Celebrates 30 Years
in Our Community
Come Join Us
September 7, 2007
6-9pm
304 Cotton Ave
Macon, Georgia
Good Food, Good Friends,
and Good Music
Featuring
Mark Brooker
and The Soul Proprietors

2007 ART AUCTION AT GEORGIA SPORTS HALL OF FAME

In 2001 Macon/Bibb Citizen Advocacy held their first art auction at Theatre Macon. The event has grown each year and over 150 guests enjoyed our gala event in February at The Georgia Sports Hall of Fame. Thirty talented artists participated this year. Music for the evening was provided by Andrew Tripp and the “Deacons of Disaster”. The evening culminated with the auctioning of a beautiful painting by Steve Penley, world renowned artist. Here are a few photos from the event.



John Saikas Alfred Green Jan Saikas



Chris Flair Irene Cook Jen Ka-

DID YOU KNOW THESE PEOPLE HAVE BEEN CITIZEN ADVOCATES?

Albert Abrams---Linda Bivins---Maryanne & David Drake---Marlin Gilbert---Roz Goudeau---Janet Swint---Emory Whitaker---Joe Hendricks---Samuella Humphrey---Eunice Richard---Reverend Perry Sandifer---Joni Woolf---Rabbi Irwin Cutler---Jimmie Samuel---Nancy Terrill---Tim Estes---Hetty Jardine---



Gloria McDaniel and Sandy Flatau
Federated Garden Club Dinner



Lori Johnson and Meredith Woodruff
Open House

PAST COMMUNITY EVENTS-GUEST SPEAKERS

Harry Boyte-author of the Backyard Revolution and Community is Possible
John McKnight-Northwestern University, author of “The Careless Society”
Judith Snow of Toronto talk titled “Community is for Everyone”
Song Fest at Christ Episcopal Church in 1992

Thank You

Citizen Advocacy is a community-strengthening endeavor that depends on the support of local citizens. All investments directly benefit the Macon/Bibb County community. Our thanks to these folks who have invested from July 1, 2006 thru July 31, 2007.

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Jenny Zimmerman
Zaxby's - Northside Drive

MACON/BIBB CITIZEN ADVOCACY, INC.
364 COTTON AVENUE
SUITE 100
MACON, GEORGIA 31201

*"Example is not the main thing in influencing others. It is the only thing."
-Albert Schweitzer*

A Community Organization

The mission of Macon/ Bibb Citizen Advocacy, Inc. is to promote the protection of, and advocacy for, people with developmental disabilities.

Citizen Advocacy happens when a valued citizen, unpaid and independent of human services, creates a relationship with a person with a disability at risk of social exclusion; the citizen advocate chooses one or several of many ways to understand, respond to and represent that person's interests as if they were the advocate's own.

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E-mail: mbcai@bellsouth.net