

projectAVARY

Annual Report 2004

Project Avary's mission is to cultivate a community of support for children whose parents are imprisoned or otherwise involved with the criminal justice system. Avary targets the neglected population of pre-adolescent children who have not yet entered the cycles of violence and incarceration, and we work with them through young adulthood.

Year-round programming provides ongoing opportunities to work and play cooperatively within a consistent community of peers and adults; to learn how to manage anger and resolve conflict; and to discover and develop personal strengths. Avary offers a network of positive relationships, and experiences that promote the resiliency children need to thrive in life.

*Breaking the Cycles of Violence and Incarceration
— One Child at a Time*

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*project***AVARY**

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

2004 was a great year for Project Avary and we are very pleased with our programmatic and organizational development.

2004 saw the expansion of the breadth and depth of Avary's program. In the past year Avary:

- Conducted its first weekend of Family Camp for 40 children and family members
- Initiated a Mentoring Program
- Added a fourth week-long session of Summer Camp, providing opportunity for 44 new children to join the program, and bringing the total number of available spaces to 132
- Increased the number of Adventure Day spaces from 24 to 30
- Welcomed our first Avary participant onto the Avary Staff as a Junior Counselor
- Received the Kids Who Care Award from Northern California Grantmakers for a second time

As the above milestones indicate, Avary is providing more services to more children and their families through the growth we achieved in 2004. While we are quite proud of this, we know that in order to support this and even greater levels of service, we must have very solid organizational grounding.

In 2004 Avary continued to solidify itself as an organization in several ways. During 2004 Avary:

- Completed an evaluation of the effectiveness of Camp Avary in achieving its goals, in collaboration with LaFrance Associates (available for review upon request)
- Received an organizational diagnostic from Management Assistance Group
- Developed a set of medical protocols for camp

Additionally, our Board of Directors grew with the addition of two valuable new members: Stephanie MacColl and Barbara Saunders. Stephanie has served on the boards of many San Francisco cultural, educational and philanthropic institutions, while Barbara has a background in counseling and teaching children and adults. They both bring unique skills and a wealth of experience, and we are indeed fortunate to have them on the Board.

In November, the Board of Directors decided to focus future energy and attention on the areas of sustainability and replication of the Avary program. We are committed to making Avary a self-sustaining organization able to provide its unique constellation of services without being dependant on any single leader or source of funding. We are also seeking to engage with others to replicate our programs in other communities.

FOUND ON THE GROUND

"I am having a great time at Camp Avary. The people are wonderful they care for you and they teach you how to dance. I love this place I want to come back again."

As Avary grows programmatically and organizationally, so too does my understanding of the truly unique role Avary plays in our clients' lives – particularly as regards learning from conflict or inappropriate behavior. Despite more than 30 years experience working with children and direct experience raising two children as a single parent, I have frequently been challenged by requests from counselors for guidance on appropriate consequences for inappropriate behavior or non-participation. I did not want to equate consequences with punishment but wanted instead to establish meaningful ways to help children understand the results of negative behavior, while offering reasons/motivations for changing their behaviors to achieve positive outcomes; in essence, feeling good about themselves and wanting to make a positive contribution to the Avary community.



In dealing with situations of conflict within the Avary community, I have learned over the years, sometimes painfully, that the best way of dealing with conflict is to embrace it quickly and openly, and have come to the fundamental realization that the effective consequence of anti-social behavior in Avary comes down to being treated as an equal, and invited to share the responsibility for cultivating a community that is sensitive to the needs of all of its members. What more does any of us want than to have our dignity validated and be treated with respect? For many of our clients, Avary is the only place they get this kind of respect, validation and guidance.

Thank you for your trust and support, *Dan-*



PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

While the Avary community flourished across all of Avary's program components this year, we'd like to take a moment to describe in a bit more detail some of the year's highlights.

LEADERSHIP & ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

A new trail was blazed this year when 11 of the senior campers and four counselors set off on Camp Avary's first week-long backpacking trip along California's Lost Coast. For the vast majority of the campers, as first time backpackers, it was a challenging exploration in a new environment. At the same time, however, as the campers soon discovered, it was a capstone experience that inspired them to actualize the new skills and team work that have been an essential part of their Avary experience over the past several years. As one camper enthusiastically put it, "the Lost Coast trip was the biggest, longest, funnest, toughest Adventure Day ever!"

The first day on the trail was the most challenging. The sandy nature of the trail made the hiking difficult at first, but after some initial moans and groans, the group found a pace to their liking. After a mile and a half, someone spotted something off in the distance in an area of tide pools. Lying in the tidepool was a fifteen-foot long male sea lion. It was the largest animal that anyone in the group had ever seen in the wild. As they examined the carcass, a discussion ensued of life, death and the continuum of transition that exists all around. This discussion gave campers an opportunity for expressing insights gained from their own lives. Counselors noted that in this unique physical and social environment, campers expressed themselves differently and with new openness.

On their last day, the group met with members of the Mattole Salmon Support Group who are working to increase the numbers of native salmon in the Mattole watershed. Campers learned about the unique life

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

cycle and habitat of the salmon, as well as threats to their numbers and measures of conservation currently being employed. With the assistance of Salmon Group workers, campers learned to identify willow, cut small branches, and weave mats. To the delight and surprise of the Salmon Group folks, campers broke into gathering and weaving teams and had constructed three large mats within an hour. The floating mats provide shade, cover, habitat complexity and potential food sources for the fish.

For the participants of this backpacking trip, the experience went well beyond their five days on the trail. It was evident once they returned to camp that they took their responsibility as Counselors-In-Training more seriously as they had a newfound awareness of personal responsibility and group success.

This summer one of the C-I-Ts, Vicky M., became our very first paid Junior Counselor. Vicky, who is now 16, has been a member of the Avary community since our first year of camp. She has attended all of our Leadership Retreats over the years and has been a C-I-T for the past two years. This year, upon returning from the C-I-T camping trip, Vicky was assigned to Willow, the youngest girls' cabin, along with two other counselors. She received high praise from her co-counselors for her work with the children.

DEEPENING THE CONNECTION

FAMILY CAMP

Project Avary's first Family Camp took place on October 3rd and 4th, 2004. Children, counselors, caregivers, and adult facilitators spent the weekend at the Mendocino campsite, sharing meals, activities, and fellowship. It was a pleasure to see the children and caregivers enjoying each other, free from the cares of their daily lives, while Avary staff led them through a fun and relaxing camp session. The caregivers were excited to experience firsthand what their children had been telling them about – the swimming hole, the campfire, the familiar songs and classes, and the counselors they've come to love and trust.

We arrived at camp late Saturday morning and, after lunch, relaxed by the swimming hole. Art instructor Vanessa had people choose "a rock shaped like a house" for the art class. Afterwards, adults joined children in hip-hop, drama, drumming, and art classes

led by summer counselors. People who chose the art class painted their "dream homes" on the rocks they had gathered.

A Sunday morning adult circle offered caregivers – including some formerly incarcerated parents – the opportunity to share their hopes, fears, and struggles. Their emphasis was on the emotional strain they face. Caregivers whose relatives are still inmates spoke of needing to "live a double life" to protect their children and themselves from being stigmatized. Mothers talked about how much they depend upon Avary and other community supports to provide male role models for their sons. Those group members who had been incarcerated expressed their fears about resuming the job of parenting, and described their difficulties in being accepted by employers, their communities, and even their churches.

The need for supporting the entire family during the re-entry phase came into stark relief: one woman's husband came home recently for the first time since she was pregnant with their now 13 year old daughter. Life as a family is entirely new for all three of them; they need support to learn basic male-female and parent-child communication skills.

The circle participants offered each other tears, laughter, hugs, and tips for survival. I feel confident that even this brief opportunity to open up in a safe environment may bear fruit in their lives.

Family Camp was successful beyond my expectations.

MENTORING PROGRAM

With a grant from the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, Project Avary has initiated a mentoring program for our participants.

With technical assistance from Big Brothers Big Sisters of Marin & Napa, we have begun developing a process for recruiting, screening and orienting volunteer mentors from the community. After being oriented and trained, these mentors will be matched with qualifying children, already in the Avary program. We have identified 62 Avary participants currently eligible within the grant guidelines that specify that a child's parent must be currently incarcerated.

We are very excited about this new and major addition to the weave of Avary services, and expect



this to result in closer relations with Avary participants and their families, and a higher rate of participant retention over time.

LIFE SKILLS

During the Summer Session, Avary held its first carpentry workshop. Children learned the fundamentals of tool handling and project planning. Participants built shoe racks and benches to go outside their cabins so muddy shoes and clothes could be neatly and safely kept outside. Aside from getting an introduction to a valuable life skill, children were able to contribute to Avary in a very tangible way.

ARTS & EXPRESSION

Building on our already rich mix of arts activities, there were several new offerings of note this past year.

We were very fortunate to receive a donation of a pottery kiln that has allowed us to introduce a variety of ceramic arts.

A digital camera and printer provided the basis for photography classes and greeting card making. Campers took photos of themselves and friends and produced high quality prints on the spot. The photos were then incorporated into artistically decorated card stock on which the children wrote letters and poems to family and friends. This resulted in beautiful self-

16 LINE

BY DESHAWN

*My name is lil Dee Im from the Frisco City
 People ask me what I claim
 I say Camp Avary
 Everybody is like family I would advise
 All the brothers and sisters to love instead of
 poisoning our minds
 With drugs give each other hugs
 The police ain't all good comin thru trying to poi-
 son our hood
 Kids on the streets wantin to be a blood or crip
 Killing people that ain't how kings are
 The movie blow was wack people in the movie
 selling crack
 Are you mad cause we black people
 Out on the streets thinking they thugs
 Really they all just need a hug.*

expressions as well as the largest volume of outgoing correspondence we have ever had at camp. When appropriate, we encourage the children to correspond with their incarcerated parents. We feel that in most cases, it is beneficial for the child and her family to maintain contact in whichever ways possible during the period of separation.

Bursting into full bloom this summer was the HipHop Word writing workshops. As described by the youth, "HipHop is: Feeling what you say. Having fun. Words coming from the soul. Teaching others. A form of expression. Dancing & Helping others. Everyone. The people. People rapping about life. Music (all kinds). Getting a message out. Explaining how you feel in rhythm. Hardcore poetry. Letting your mind free. Rhythm."

It's interesting how each year, different activities resonate for different children, perhaps due to a confluence of cultural trends, the mastery of the teacher, the developmental stage of the child and magic in the air. This year, HipHop Word engaged many children who previously had shown no inclination to express themselves in writing. They brainstormed, wrote, polished and performed their creations. Revealing truth, they inspired, delighted and touched our hearts, embracing the role of the artist in society.



ADVENTURE DAYS

Each of our ten Adventure Days was a resounding success. On an Adventure Day visit to the Palace of the Legion of Honor, we had the rare opportunity to view and learn about the Courtly Art of the Ancient Maya, a collection of over 130 masterworks brought together from around the world. Art resource specialist, Vickisa, prepared a treasure hunt to guide us through the exhibit. It was gratifying to introduce our children to this Native American civilization through its artistic expression.



2004 ADVENTURE DAYS

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|--------------|--|
| January 17 | Oakland Museum and Ice Skating |
| February 21 | Art Studio and Indoor Swimming |
| March 27 | Bike, Nature Hike and Art with TripsForKids |
| April 24 | Slide Ranch Environmental Education Center |
| May 15 | Avary Family Picnic and Barbeque |
| June 4,5,6 | Leadership Retreat and River Rafting Trip |
| September 11 | Nature Hike and Swim at Lake Anza, Tilden Park |
| October 23 | Fort Miley Ropes Course |
| November 20 | Palace of the Legion of Honor and Bowling |
| December 18 | Camp Reunion and Winter Holiday Party. |

THANK YOU

We are grateful to the following foundations, which have contributed a total of \$108,330:

The Forrest C. Lattner Foundation, Inc., The Further Foundation, Grace Family Vineyards Foundation, Joseph A. Jolson Philanthropic Fund, Kalliopeia Foundation, The Kurz Family Foundation, The Mary Ann Cobb & Peter Wilson Fund, Mental Insight Foundation, Northern California Grantmakers, Rex Foundation, VanLoben Sels/Rembe Rock Foundation, Zellerbach Family Foundation.

In 2004 the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services – Administration for Children and Families granted \$90,000 for a Mentoring Program.

The following individuals and businesses contributed a total of \$27,820. We are very grateful for their support.

Roy Benson, Patricia Bradford, Owen S. Brown, Mary G. Burke, Barry & Angela Caplan, Data Base Architects Inc., James & Cecelia Donahue, First Republic Bank, Greg Glassco, Nancy Halloran, Julie B. Harkins, Mary Hinton, Dr. Lydia Kalsner-Silver, Allan Jai Lakshman, Paul & Annette Marcus, Miami Beach Storm Protection, PCM Construction, Michelle Pepitone, PG&E Corporation Campaign for the Community, Ralph Pinghera, Anne Rogers, Barry & Lizanne Rosenstein, Gillian Saunders, Danny Scher, Schulte Roth & Zabel LLP, Bari Scott, A. Lois Scully, Cameron & Cassidy Sears, Jan Simmons, Sue Stallcup, William M. Terrell, Michael Ungerleider, Thomas & Amy Valens.

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AcroSports, Arizmendi Bakery, Bolinas Store, Cameron Sears, Center for the Contemplative Mind in Society, Ken Friedman, Grateful Graphics, Jonathan Marks, Management Assistance Group, Marin Community Foodbank, Marin Mac Shop, Cory Morgan, Pechner Electric, Peets Coffees & Teas, Perry's Delicatessen, Russell Pickett, SRA Networks, Sue Stallcup, Star Route Farms, Youth in Arts, Tom Zito.



FINANCIAL SUMMARY

Fund Balance 1/1/04.....	\$ 412,128
Income.....	508,257
Expense.....	(412,641)
Change in temporary net assets.....	<u>(282,031)</u>
Fund balance 12/31/04.....	\$ 225,713

INCOME

Contributions.....	27,896
Grants.....	107,500
Net assets released from restrictions.....	\$ <u>372,861</u>
Total Income.....	\$ 508,257

EXPENSES

Program

Adventure Days.....	\$ 10,983
Camp 2004.....	60,551
Family Camp.....	1,240
Mentoring Program.....	6,444
Leadership Retreat.....	656
Salaries.....	147,851
Payroll Tax.....	16,358
Workers' Compensation Insurance.....	27,463
Employee Benefits.....	3,186
Insurance.....	5,234
Staff Training.....	1,272
Supplies.....	3,146
Telephone.....	<u>1,003</u>
	\$ 285,388

Administrative

Salaries.....	\$ 65,000
Payroll Tax.....	5,404
Workers' Compensation Insurance.....	185
Conferences/Meetings.....	260
Employee Benefits.....	3,600
Camp Evaluation.....	12,413
Fundraising.....	5,533
Insurance.....	2,815
Newsletter/Annual Report.....	4,043
Office Rent.....	7,100
Postage/Delivery.....	2,100
Professional Fees.....	11,548
Supplies (Office & Misc.).....	2,599
Telephone.....	2,203
Other Expense.....	<u>2,449</u>
	127,253
Total Expense.....	\$ 412,641

OVERHEARD

"Ylan is so lucky because he has two parents."

"You know why Camp Avary is different from other camps? Everyone here is nice."

