

A PUBLICATION FOR THE FRIENDS OF CHERISH OUR CHILDREN INC

# PURPOSE



## A New Name to Reflect Our New Focus

For a quarter century, we have been Cherish Our Children International and have supported children's programs all over the world.

This past year, though, we have transitioned away from supporting global programs to running one remarkable Houston program, *No More Victims* (NMV). NMV has an astonishing track record for empowering children who experience the trauma of having a parent incarcerated.

Since we are now focused on local children, we have dropped "International" and have changed our name to Cherish Our Children Inc.

***Inc***, as in:

- ***Inc***redible
- ***Inc***clusive
- ***Inc***omparable

We are at the ***Inc***eption of something great!

# Chairman's Message



## A simple one-word change can mean so much.

After 25 years as Cherish Our Children International, we are proud to now be Cherish Our Children Inc. So what does the change mean? It means that we are shifting our focus from supporting a number of small, impactful children's programs around the world to managing the expansion of one remarkable Houston-based program, No More Victims.

While we continue to be involved with the Little Blue Schools program, which is educating children in impoverished Reynosa, Mexico, roughly 95% of our funding now goes to support and grow No More Victims.

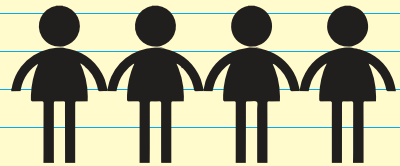
As a Board, our goal is to share the amazing success of this program in changing the lives of children of incarcerated parents in Houston throughout Texas and all through America. This is more than a name change; it is a transformation!

*Robert R. Wisner*

**Rob Wisner**

**Chairman of the Board**

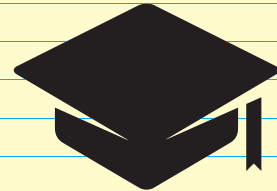
## Did You Know?



More than **five million** children in America have had a parent in prison or jail.

# \$10

It costs nearly **\$90** a day to keep an inmate in prison. *No More Victims* keeps teens out of prison for **\$10** a day.



Despite research that shows that children of incarcerated parents are only half as likely to graduate high school, nearly **100%** of NMV seniors graduate high school.



Creator Marilyn Gambrell was a parole officer who saw firsthand the devastating impact a parent's incarceration had on a child. Her goal, and No More Victim's motto, is simple:

## "Get educated, not incarcerated."



# COCI Luncheon Breaks Record



**On Friday, April 5, more than 330 Houstonians filled The Junior League to support the third annual Cherish Our Children International (COCI) luncheon benefiting the No More Victims Program.**

KPRC Channel 2 Anchor, Dominique Sachse, the event emcee and an avid supporter of COCI, welcomed guests, acknowledged the sponsors, and awarded the honorees. Attendees learned more about COCI's mission through a video featuring teenagers whose parents have been incarcerated who have gone through the No More Victims Program.

A highlight of the luncheon was an insightful panel who discussed the challenges facing our students. The panel featured No More Victims' Founder, Marilyn Gambrell; Worthing High School and HISD secondary principal of the year, Khalilah Campbell; Harris County Sheriff Ed Gonzalez; and Dr. Chris Greeley, Director, Child Abuse Pediatrics Program, Texas Children's Hospital.

## **COCI's Honorees were:**

**Benjamin Berg**, Spirit of Community Award

**St. John the Divine Episcopal Church**,

Spirit of Ministry Award

**Texas Bar Foundation**, Spirit of Advocacy Award

**Arlene Levy**, Heart of COCI Award

Chairman Franelle Rogers and Co-Chairmen Caren and Darrell Rosenthal along with Host Committee Chairman, Heidi Rockecharlie, worked tirelessly to sell out the luncheon, which raised more than \$210,000 for the No More Victims program.



# Expansion of No More Victims



Nearly two decades ago, Marilyn Gambrell sat down with students for the first time at Houston's Smiley High School. When she met with her first group of teens whose parents were incarcerated, she knew something most people didn't – these youths faced special challenges and it would take a special approach to overcome the trauma they were experiencing. Through long hours, trial and error, and a lot of sweat and tears, No More Victims developed as an incredibly effective program to meet the needs of this at-risk population of children.



## **Step One - Grow Our Staff**

This summer we welcomed Joe Rollins to COCI as No More Victims' new Assistant Director. Joe brings an extensive history of working with at-risk youth and, for the past 10 years, helping homeless students in the Houston school system. Our next step will be to hire a Program Coordinator to take on additional schools. Our goal is to expand from three to six schools in the next school year and more than double the students in our program.

## **Step Two - Build Our Infrastructure**

Over the next year we will formalize our training for new classroom personnel so that we can continue to consistently and effectively deliver incredible opportunities to our students.

## **Step Three - Scale Up**

Once we have our processes in place and have built up our network of support, we will be ready to grow throughout Houston, Texas, and the United States.

**There are five million children in American who have experienced the trauma of having a parent in prison. We need to reach them!**

## **The research is clear.**

- More than 125,000 children who live in Houston have a parent who is or has been incarcerated.
- One in five may attempt suicide.
- They are half as likely to graduate high school.
- They are trapped in a multi-generational cycle that puts them at high-risk of being incarcerated themselves.

**Yet, 20 years later and more than 1,600 graduates later, No More Victims students are beating the odds. Our students graduate. They stay out of prison.**

# **It's Time to Share Our Success!**



# Congratulations to Our 2019 Graduating Seniors!



## Twenty of our No More Victims students received their high school diplomas in June.

Once again, this represents **100%** of our seniors.

This is significant because failing to graduate high school and having an incarcerated parent are the two biggest risk factors for future incarceration. This milestone warrants its own celebration. In June, the students gathered at St. John the Divine church for a special ceremony to receive a special No More Victims cord to wear on their graduation gowns.

A special thanks to our supporters who gave individual scholarships to our graduates.

Through the generosity of the Houston City Breakfast Club, the National Afro-American Corvette Club-Houston Chapter, the family of Devon Wade, and Cari Hawthorne, six of our graduates will receive scholarships toward their college education.



## HELP THE NO MORE VICTIMS STUDENTS AS THEY HEAD BACK TO SCHOOL

For our No More Victims students, this time of year brings a different set of worries other than what to wear on the first day back to school. Our students face fears, such as how they will get their next meal, if they will have clean clothes, and whether or not they will have transportation to make it to school. As we approach the 2019 – 2020 school year, our students are faced with the stress of acquiring the resources needed to succeed.

With limited to non-existent resources at home, they desperately rely on the generosity of supporters like you to give them a chance. **Please make a donation to our No More Victims program so our students can focus on doing their best at school, rather than the stress of their everyday lives. You can make a one time contribution or join our list of monthly sponsors. The past doesn't need to be their prison.**

## SUPPORT AN NMV STUDENT

Your generous contribution can go a long way.

**\$3,000** supports one student in the program for an entire year

**\$1,000** covers the cost of the No More Victims Graduation in May

**\$500** funds a field trip for one class of students

**\$300** provides a student with a year's worth of personal supplies

**\$150** supplies one student with a nutrition program for six months

# President's Report



May marked the anniversary of my first year as COCI's President. Under the leadership of an outstanding Board, we have made tremendous progress with a program that changes lives. We have grown our budget to allow us to create an infrastructure that can sustain the quality of No More Victims.

The need is great. The potential is great. One of the most gratifying things about this year has been the recognition by officials, educators, supporters and Foundations that we are doing important work, and that No More Victims has the potential to help hundreds, perhaps thousands, of at-risk children as we grow.



Ken Wells, President and CEO, Marilyn Gambrell, Executive Director and Creator of No More Victims, and Joe Rollins, Assistant Director

We could never have achieved our success this year without the help of our generous supporters. We have seen a significant increase in grants from Foundations. In particular, we would like to thank the Albert and Ethel Herzstein Charitable Foundation, the Charity Guild of Catholic Women, Fondren Foundation, LUSH Cosmetics, the Mitchell Family Foundation, Ray C. Fish Foundation, the Texas Bar Foundation and Vivian L. Smith Foundation. We look forward to another wonderful year helping COCI and No More Victims change lives and create opportunity for the children who need us most.

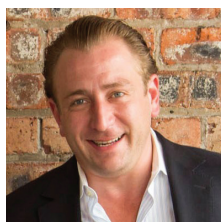
Regards,

**Ken Wells**

**President/CEO**

## COCI Board Welcomes Four New Board Members

In July, the COCI Board of Directors approved four new Board members. Please join us in welcoming them!



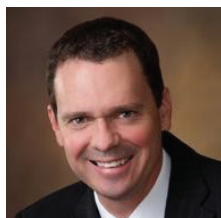
**Benjamin Berg**  
Principal  
Berg Hospitality



**Jennifer McSorley**  
President Energy Trading  
Macquarie Group



**Stuart Ford**  
Senior Vice President  
Allegiance Bank



**Jamie Ballard**  
Senior Vice President  
Executive  
Veritex Bank

## COCI Board of Directors:

Robert R. Wisner, *Chairman*

Juli Hall, *Founder*

Chaille Hutcheson, *First Vice Chair*

Darrell Rosenthal, *Treasurer*

Arlene Levy, *Lifetime Director*

Jackie Grant, *Director*

Miriam Kosgei, *Director*

Tim Mai, *Director*

Sydney Scott, *Director*



## Columbia University Conference Features No More Victims

*No More Victims* Founder Marilyn Gambrell was a featured speaker at Columbia University's conference, *Punishing Trauma*, in April. The conference paid special attention to *No More Victims* graduate, Devon Wade, who earned his PhD posthumously from Columbia after his tragic death in 2017. Ms. Gambrell was joined at the conference by Devon's brother, Stefon, and *No More Victims* graduate, Jade Osby.



## TPC Group announces COCI as one of 14 organizations benefiting from their 14th annual Charity Golf Tournament

TPC Group announced on June 25 that it has selected COCI as one of the non-profit organizations that will be the beneficiaries of the 14th Annual Charity Golf Tournament. Since 2006, more than \$1,000,000 has been donated from TPC Group's Annual Golf Tournament to local non-profit organizations across southeast Texas. COCI was chosen as a beneficiary for the first-time last year, and we are honored to be selected again this year.



## COCI's Work With Houston Schools

The Houston Independent School District has awarded COCI a contract that allows its *No More Victims* program to provide enrichment services in local schools. This is a significant step in the expansion of *No More Victims* that allows it to grow within the district and serve more students in Houston.

## Beating The Odds

Congratulations to Kenneth Woods on earning his master's degree from Case Western University. Kenneth is a graduate of *No More Victims* and has worked with the program, assisting with classes and logistics. He joins the growing ranks of program graduates who have gone on to achieve post-secondary degrees.



## Resale With A Purpose

On July 8, the wonderful staff at Resale With A Purpose in Tomball presented COCI with a grant of \$12,500. The shop gives 100% of its profits back to the community!







Indicia

CHERISH OUR CHILDREN INC

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[CherishOurChildren.org](http://CherishOurChildren.org)



SAVE THE DATE  
FOR THE



LUNCHEON

Friday, April 17, 2020  
River Oaks Country Club

For more information please contact Marissa at [marissa@cherishourchildren.org](mailto:marissa@cherishourchildren.org)