



## IN THE SPOTLIGHT

### Sixteen years and counting!

When Jerri McKinney retired, she wanted to find an activity that would get her out of the house and give her an opportunity to help the community. Fortunately for **Kids First**, Jerri saw an announcement in the *Journal and Courier* asking for people willing to be trained as puppeteers performing disability awareness shows for elementary age children. She turned up at the workshop and was hooked!



She says she never could memorize things easily, but the **Kids First** coordinator was patient and worked with her until she was comfortable - sure that she could remember her lines and operate the puppet at the same time. Jerri went on to perform four scripts; her favorite role is Ellen Jane Peterson, a teen who has Down Syndrome. (Jerri has a nephew who is developmentally delayed and so she understood the challenges Ellen Jane faced and the sweetness of her character.) Jerri says she loved having a way to express the "ham" in her.

Jerri not only performed the scripts, she became **Kids First's** biggest booster, recruiting others to help us in numerous ways.

Back in the 1990's our sound system was very temperamental and Jerri's husband, Donald, patiently repaired it again and again and again. Her daughter, Teresa, put together a scrap book of our "early years"; and a son-in-law, Jim, encouraged the Lafayette fire fighters local to purchase the puppet, scripts, and educational materials for the child who has been severely burned topic.

She has helped fund raising efforts and has served on the Kids First Steering Committee for more than ten years, offering insights from the performer's perspective. Jerri no longer performs, but her enthusiasm for **Kids First** has not diminished.

Jerri says becoming part of **Kids First** was one of the best things she ever did. We agree.

**Kids First** would like to give Jerri our thanks and a big round of applause!

### 2009 Performance Stats

We were busy !

- Scripts performed - 99
- Audience - mainly youngsters - 4,189
- Most requested script topics -
  - Teasing
  - Cerebral palsy
  - Bullying

Thanks to all the teachers, counselors, principals and group leaders who asked "The Kids" to present a show.

*A big round of applause  
for our volunteer puppeteers, too!*

## We make 'em laugh... and think

Each year Kids First puppeteers bring elementary age youngsters a little humor along with a serious message of understanding. As the song says, "A spoonful of sugar helps the medicine go down..." and with The Kids, a few laughs helps our audiences listen closely to what the puppets are talking about - bullying, teasing, using a wheel chair, learning in different ways or just more slowly. All these and more are topics that children need to ponder and to realize that kids with "differences" are more like them than they are different.



## Bullying - Revised to meet today's concerns

The Kids on the Block - the company we buy the puppets, scripts and educational curriculum from - has updated the scripts and educational materials dealing with bullying. Cyber bullying is now addressed directly and in detail with changes in the scripts and information for the puppeteers to use when answering children's questions.

Indiana elementary school curriculum includes the requirement that bullying be discussed in classrooms, and Kids First is pleased to be able to offer a show that reinforces what children have learned. Teachers and others who work with children are encouraged to call the Kids First coordinator and request a show that focuses on bullies and bullying.

## On The Road.... Again!

Due to consolidation of some spaces in Tippecanoe School Corporation **Kids First** has had to look for new quarters, leaving Battle Ground School. "The Kids" summered at Burnett Creek and are now settled into roomy quarters in Oakland Alternative High School. Our new home is the largest space ever! We are definitely enjoying the space for storing the puppets, props, sound equipment and voluminous files. We now have an area to rehearse scripts, train new puppeteers and have small meetings. Our room even has a window - pure luxury! Our thanks to John Pearl at Battle Ground, Mark Pearl at Burnett Creek, and Superintendent Ed Eiler and Clare McKinney, principal at Oakland for hosting **Kids First** and their help in finding space for our program. We are grateful to you all for your hospitality.

I would like to volunteer. Please call me!  
Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_

Enclosed is my tax deductible contribution:

\_\_\_ \$25    \_\_\_ \$50    \_\_\_ \$100  
\_\_\_ \$150    \_\_\_ \$250    \_\_\_ Other

I prefer that my contribution be used:  
\_\_\_\_\_ To purchase materials  
\_\_\_\_\_ To educate the public about Kids First  
\_\_\_\_\_ To help sponsor a performance  
\_\_\_\_\_ Where the need is greatest

Make checks payable to: The Arc of Tippecanoe County/Kids First

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address & Zip \_\_\_\_\_



Mail to: Kids First  
Hiatt Center  
2300 Cason Street  
Lafayette, IN 47904

# THANKS FROM THE KIDS

In 2009, Kids First could not have performed without the generous help of these individuals, organizations and businesses

## Contributions and Donations

### \$500+

Geist Elementary School PTO  
Knights of Pythias Lafayette Lodge #51

### \$200 - \$499

Harrison Kiwanis Club  
Dr. Kenneth and Jill Moder

### \$100 - \$199

Grand Lodge Knights of Pythias of  
Indiana  
Purdue University, Pete's Pals

### \$50 - \$99

Jennifer Andres in honor of Jean Andres  
Cassie Argoudelis in honor of Dr. and  
Mrs. Ron Andres  
Susan Cunningham in honor of Jean  
Andres and her family  
Glen and Ruth Lock  
Girtha Perkins in memory of Jack  
Martin

### \$1 - \$49

Keith Brown  
Sarah J. Lavignette in memory of Jack  
Martin  
Stan N. Miller, Attorney in memory of  
Jack Martin.

National Muzzle Loading Rifle Assoc.  
in memory of Jack Martin  
V. Ramdas  
Nancy and Dave Sattler in memory of  
Jack Martin  
Kris Sharp in memory of Jack Martin  
Joann Vorst in honor of Jean Andres,  
"Woman of Distinction"  
Paula R Woods in memory of Jack C.  
Martin

## In-Kind Donations

Area IV Agency on Aging &  
Community Services, Inc.  
Battle Ground Elementary School  
Community & Family Resource Center  
First Steps  
Greater Lafayette Area Special Services  
Jerri McKinney  
Lafayette Parks Department  
Lafayette School Corporation  
McAllister Recreation Center  
Murdock Elementary School  
The Arc of Tippecanoe County  
Tippecanoe County School Corporation  
Wabash Center  
Wabash Valley Education Center  
West Lafayette Community School Corp.

## 2009 Advisory Committee

Pat Boardman, Greater Lafayette  
Health Services, Inc.

Gail McCormick, Coordinator,  
Kids First  
Jerri McKinney, Volunteer, Kid First  
Angie Miller, Developmental Therapist,  
Peds. P.T.  
Gina Mundell, Executive Director,  
The Arc of Tippecanoe County  
James Sands, Director, Greater  
Lafayette Area Special Services  
Jill Vaught, Director of Development,  
The Arc of Indiana  
Cheryl Washburn, Specialist, Greater  
Lafayette Area Special Services

## 2009 Volunteers

Jean Andres\*  
Ron Andres\*  
Georgina Bone  
Aaron Cieslikowski  
Kim Chapman\*  
Leslie Conwell\*  
Willie Gerovac\*  
Karen Hearn\*  
Anne Jones\*  
Connor McCormick  
Scott McCormick  
Jerri McKinney  
Beata Ribeiro\*  
Jill Vaught

\* Denotes Puppeteer

## *Why Support the Kids?*

On behalf of the thousands of children who have participated in a Kids First puppet program, thank you to each of the individuals and organizations who have so generously donated to Kids First. We can't do this without your help.

Since it began in 1994, Kids First has been primarily funded through donations. This support is used to purchase puppets and scripts from the Kids On The Block organization, as well as, to provide resource material and information to each group that hosts a puppet program.

The importance of this program is evident in the thank you letters that we receive from parents. A recent letter stated, "Thank you so much for performing the Cerebral Palsy show in my son's classroom. It meant so much for his classmates to be able to learn about his disability. Now that they have been able to see the show and ask questions, I know that it will be a great year where my son is accepted as an equal instead of treated like he is different."

Without the generosity of this community, Kids First would not exist. Please consider making a donation to help support this program. Donations can be mailed to Kids First, Hiatt Center, 2300 Cason Street, Lafayette, IN 47904. If you have any questions, please call 765-765-474-0758 or 765-409-2148.

Together, we are able to touch the lives of countless children in this community. Thank you.

# HOW TO MEET THE KIDS

- The Kids on the Block scripts and materials are designed primarily for youngsters ages 5—12.
- **Kids First** puppeteers perform scripts on Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), Blindness, Deafness, Down Syndrome, Cerebral Palsy, Learning Disabilities, Recovery from Stroke, Prejudice, Teasing, Bullying and Burn Victims.
- Within Tippecanoe County, there is no charge for the puppet shows or the accompanying materials.
- Because of the interactive nature of the puppet shows, audience size is limited.
- A group of 25—50 is ideal, but **Kids First** puppeteers will perform for groups as large as 100.
- Should it be necessary, we are happy to schedule multiple performances at one site.
- Our coordinator is pleased to speak with adult groups about **Kids First**.
- To reach **Kids First**, call 765-474-0758 or 765-409-2148.

Kids First receives support from Greater Lafayette Area Special Services and

A United Way Participating Agency

**Kids First**  
GLASS at Hiatt Center  
2300 Cason Street  
Lafayette, IN 47904

Nonprofit Organization  
U.S. Postage  
**PAID**  
Lafayette, IN  
Permit ???