

## THE CHALLENGE:

### DRAWN BY ANGER...MOTIVATED BY HOPE

By Sis Wenger



Some of us grew up in families where adults knew intuitively that if children lived in the household, then consistency, predictability, honesty, love and support were a part of normal everyday life.

Some of us grew up in families where our parents were trapped by alcoholism, where these positive family traits were non-existent, and where fear, embarrassment and sadness were intrinsic parts of our everyday family lives.

Caring people from both groups have reached adulthood and have come to the work of NACoA with both a level of anger and a level of hope. For those of us who grew up in supportive families, the anger comes from a deep sense of injustice. We came to understand the nature of alcoholism and drug addiction and the tremendous negative impact it has on the family system, especially on the neurological development of children.

In the face of clear evidence that children with alcohol or drug-addicted parents are harmed emotionally and sometimes physically, we are stunned

that so many children are allowed to suffer in silence without any meaningful intervention or support from the adults they encounter in their everyday lives.

Our anger also comes from our awareness that many who could break that silence and potentially change the child's neurological development – even the child's life trajectory – too frequently do nothing. We know how it should be – we lived it during our growing up years and believe that all children should have adults who protect, love, nurture and support them – that this is a child's intrinsic right.

Those of us who lived in the confusion, sadness and fear of family alcoholism in our childhoods have come to NACoA's work with a powerful determination that the pain we endured must not continue to be passed on to the next generation.

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play in reducing the consequences of the chronic emotional stress of living with parental addiction.

Both groups share the same challenge – to motivate and teach doctors, nurses, clergy, teachers, and other caring adults about alcoholism and drug dependency and its destruction of whole families. Each has a role to

For 25 years, NACoA's challenge has been to spread the message that children of addicted parents deserve and need caring adults in their lives to help balance out the chaos and confusion at home. Until alcohol abuse and drug abuse are conquered, NACoA must be here to insure that the innocent victims of addiction in the family – the children – are seen, supported and find hope for the next 25 years.

#### A NEW CHALLENGE

Today, NACoA has a new and potentially exciting challenge – an anonymous donor has guaranteed a dollar-for-dollar match for all financial gifts to NACoA between May 1 and December 31, 2008, up to \$100,000.

#### You can help us meet this challenge.

Enclosed with this newsletter is a return envelope. Please be part of the solution, and give to your maximum ability, knowing that every dollar you give will generate another.

If you are employed with a company that matches employee charitable donations, your gift can pay fourfold dividends for children of alcoholics because your employer's gift will also be matched.

Please help us bring hope and support to today's hurting children. They live in a world that does not take care of them and where they have to find their own way. It is their right to be protected and nurtured. You can make the critical difference.

*Sis Wenger is NACoA's President and CEO.*