



December 2021 Newsletter



Message from the President, Pat Robitaille

Happy Holidays! As we close out our FOCUS year, we have much to be thankful for. While the pandemic precluded us from getting back to normal operations with monthly in-person meetings and our major fundraiser gala, we were very successful with our support to so many agencies. Next month, we will provide you with our annual recap. Thanks for being a part of our amazing organization!



Congratulations to Sharyn Blongiewicz!

What a job well done! Read Sharyn's report to see how successful the Holiday Boutique was this year. What she won't tell you is how this would not have happened without her incredible, tireless work. She personally worked to bring in a record number of vendors of which many were new to our event. The amount of communication with so many parties, coordination and setup prior to the event would be huge even for a large team. But she did so much of it single-handedly. Please send a big thank you her way when you see her.

Also, we must recognize the many FOCUS volunteers who worked the day of the Boutique. Once again, our members step up to make this a beautiful, successful event. Thank you all for coming out and offering all your support.





Meetings Report from Exec. VP, Lisa Storey

I am pleased to report that we will once again be hosting the Coronado Cays Holiday Boat Parade. This year it will take place on Saturday, December 11th. Visit www.parade21.givesmart.com to register your boat for participation or get tickets to attend. We hope to see you there for lots of fun and entertainment.

CCYC & FOCUS PRESENT

**ANNUAL BOAT PARADE
& CHILI DINNER**

5PM

Saturday, December 11

SAVE THE DATE

BRING YOUR CAMERAS

Boat Parade
Chili Dinner
Band & Dancing
Raffle

\$20 PP
NO BOAT REGISTRATION FEE
RSVP by 12/4

WWW.parade21.givesmart.com

INFORMATION:
info@focus-sdkids.org

FOCUS
FRIENDS OF CHILDREN UNITED SOCIETY



Financial Report from Treasurer, Sharon Shelton

FOCUS Financial Report for Oct 2021

Balance as of 1 Oct 2021

Available for Projects	\$ 22,862.78
Grant Allocation	\$ 47,500.00
Reserve	\$ 25,000.00

Income

Holiday Boutique	\$ 1,596.27
Donations	\$ 300.00
<u>Membership</u>	<u>\$ 75.00</u>
Total	\$ 1,971.27

Expenses

Projects	\$ 3,382.96
Insurance Premium	\$ 131.07
<u>Advertising/Marketing</u>	<u>\$ 198.85</u>
Total	\$ 3,712.88

Balance as of 31 Oct 2021

Available Projects	\$ 21,122.36
Grant Allocation	\$ 47,500.00
Reserve	\$ 25,000.00

As the end of the year is coming to a close, if you did not receive a written thank you letter from FOCUS confirming your financial DONATION during 2021, please send a request to treasurer@focus-sdkids.org. I will respond ASAP to provide you a receipt/confirmation letter for your tax purposes.

**Please keep FOCUS in mind when you are considering your
end-of-year charitable giving!**



Fundraising Report from 1st VP, Sharyn Blongiewicz

HOLIDAY BOUTIQUE

With more than 45 vendors and almost 300 attendees, the 2021 boutique was a resounding success. It was truly a team effort and I cannot begin to thank all the volunteers individually. CCYC and their staff did their usual outstanding job. Thank you all!!!

With a little money still coming in and going out, the net proceeds stand at over \$9,000. Additionally, to be a part of a silent auction at our next gala, we received very generous donations from each of the vendors.

Happy Holidays!

A personal note from me to FOCUS Members and Friends of FOCUS,

The past two years have been difficult ones in immeasurable ways...

FOCUS is no exception.

Meetings have gone dark, fundraisers have been canceled, and close connections have been lost. Throughout this time, led by President Pat Robitaille, FOCUS has continued its' 40 year history, without interruption, of making significant contributions to San Diego children in need.

Additionally and notably, Pat has also been responsible for our new and powerful website (at no cost to FOCUS), the impressive FOCUS banners along Orange Ave., our newly designed logo, the new medallion displayed at 4th and Orange Ave., in-house low cost printing, vastly improved record keeping methods, FOCUS merchandise and the introduction of Corporate Memberships to name a few.

With gratitude,

Sharyn Blongiewicz



Projects Report 2nd VPs, Barbara Donahue & Carin Cross



Giving Tree Success



The **GIVING TREE** at the **FOCUS BOUTIQUE** provided the opportunity to purchase gifts for the **Armed Services YMCA**. They are having a party for military families with children with special needs. We had an amazing response and have a huge batch of colorfully wrapped gifts to deliver. We thank you all, and Fred and Ethel Kallsen for assisting with the delivery.

Special Thanks: Carin and Barbara spent countless hours of organization, decorating a tree with custom made angels, and providing every shopper with a letter describing the wish list for the selected recipient. They then coordinated the receipt and delivery of gifts for nearly 80 kids. What an effort and what a difference this is making for so many kids. FOCUS magic at work! Thanks so much Carin and Barbara.



November Funded Projects

We had many offers for shoppers this month. Thanks to you all for volunteering and if we didn't call this month, we will ask you in the future. Sharon Sherman and Denise Donato-McConnell are shopping for the first time. It's a great way to appreciate what **FOCUS** does.

SECOND CHANCE

Youth program focuses on helping young people overcome barriers to self-sufficiency.

Request: Gardening supplies for the 8 week Youth Garden Program; Dehydrator, 10 Yards compost and several bundles of brown paper bags.

Amount: \$1,100

Shopper: Jeri Barsz

VOICES FOR CHILDREN:

Volunteer CASAS (Court Appointed Special Advocates)
advocate for the best interest of children in foster care.

Request: 10 booster seats

Amount: \$ 400

Shopper: Lorna Perez-Caster

CCSA

Provides emergency food, clothing and referrals to individuals and families in need.

Request: Childrens' socks, underwear, and sweatshirts

Amount: \$ 500

Shopper: Nanci Copley

READING LEGACIES

Facilitates supportive relationships for children through family and friends reading aloud to them.

Request: Childrens' classics for the implementation of Grandparent Storybook Program

Amount: \$ 2,500

Shopper: Sharon Sherman

ASELTINE SCHOOL

76.5% of the students qualify for free or reduced meals at Aseltine, so their main meals are provided during the school day.

Request: Participate in their "**Help Feed Our Families**" program, which distributes food packages to cover the students' nutritional needs over the holiday break.

Amount: \$ 800

Shopper: Denise Donato-McConnell



Membership Report from 3rd VP, Lorna Perez-Caster

We had a good start to our 2022 Membership Drive with a total of 37 renewals within the month of November.

Active: 21

Corporate: 3

Patron: 13

We had a few renewals from members who are not in your current directory. Please add the following names to your directory.

Ingrid Alwerud-Emmermann

Annie Brann

Dianna Durgin

Mike Durgin

Bob Jones

It's exciting to see some of our members renewing with a corporate membership. As a thank you to our corporate members we will include either their business card or a quarter page ad in our newsletter, as well as on our website for the full 2022 year.

For those of you who have not yet renewed, we hope you'll send in your dues soon. Our newly updated website makes it quick and easy. Please use the following link for online renewals.

<https://focus-sdkids.org/membership/>

We accept both credit and debit cards, as well as Paypal payments on our website.

If you prefer, renewals may also be made by mailing a check, payable to FOCUS, to:

FOCUS,

P.O. Box 180023,

Coronado, CA 92178.

If you have any questions, please feel free to reach out to Lorna Perez-Caster at lcaster@focus-sdkids.org or 760-470-4666.



Wishing a very happy birthday to all of our members
celebrating their birthday this month!

Carmel Fleck	12/01
Lisa Alves	12/03
Phyl Sarber	12/05
Gerry Gelfand	12/07
Brian Hull	12/07
Ingrid Alwerud-Emmermann	12/12
Mike Durgin	12/15
Bob Fleming	12/30



Bonnie Van Vugt

It is with great sadness that we have lost one of our most treasured FOCUS members. Bonnie served on the Board most recently in 2019 when she was VP of Projects. Bonnie and her husband Arie could be seen helping at so many FOCUS functions throughout the years.

Bonnie will be missed greatly by her husband, Arie, her family and her many friends.





Member Spotlight by Don Swanson



Meet FOCUS Member Sharon Shelton

Sharon Rupponer was born in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, the second youngest with three sisters; Dianne, Jan and Renee. Her parents, Joseph and Dorothy, were both teachers and taught at local high schools. Her father, Joseph taught special education with a Master's degree in that field while her mother loved teaching art, and art education.

One could say this family was your average American middle-class family. However, when Joseph and Dorothy reached their 40s, they got adventuresome and decided to see the world. So, when Sharon Rupponer, later to become the person you know as Sharon Shelton, was a sophomore in high school, they relocated to Medellin, Colombia. Both parents and her oldest sister taught English at a very prestigious private, international school in the city. By the way, this was in 1969-70, way before all the bad Pablo Escobar era. Medellin was a city of only 50,000 people with lovely green mountains and a temperate climate. This year in Colombia started her love of the Spanish language, different cultures and travel. It was a very unique opportunity for a 14 year old. She is conversational in Spanish, and keeps trying to improve her fluency.

After a year, the family moved to Athens, Greece, and lived there for six months before returning to Pompano Beach, Florida. After high school, Sharon attended the University of Central Florida in Orlando (at the time 1973 it was called Florida Technological University with a student body of only 13,000 students.

Sharon graduated from UCF with a degree in Medical Administration. She worked as medical administrator at a 1200 bed Veterans Administration hospital in Miami for a year. It wasn't long thereafter that she applied and was accepted to begin training as a Naval officer. Sharon cites that in 18 weeks, she enlisted, and finished Officer's Candidate School. Her first tour as an Ensign was spent at the Naval Air Station, Meridian, MS, where she was the Public Affairs Officer. She recounted one humorous story that occurred while serving in this position. The Navy Blue Angels were scheduled to perform their annual Air Show. This was a HUGE and highly anticipated annual event for the local community. To show his support of the Navy, a local Chevrolet dealership supplied seven blue Corvettes for each of the Blue Angel pilots to be used during the weekend of their stay. Everything went fine for six of the pilots, but the seventh pilot became inebriated on Saturday night, and

crashed the corvette he was driving, totaling it. Obviously there was no designated driver for this pilot. Nor positive publicity for the Navy.

Among some of her accomplishments during her 24 year naval career, Sharon Shelton was the first female Commanding Officer of Navy Recruiting District, San Diego in 1996. She had command of almost 300 people and over 35 recruiting stations. She achieved the rank of Captain in 1999 and served as the Executive Officer of SPAWAR Systems Center San Diego, a command of 3500 civilians, and 100 military with an annual operating budget of \$1 Billion dollars.

In 1994 Sharon married Rolf Yngve, while still serving in the Navy. Rolf is the author of *Dog Watches* by Saddle Road Press which is a collection of short stories based on his naval experiences. He holds an MFA from the Warren Wilson Program for writers, and his work has led to his recognition as a MacDowell Literary Fellow, a Bread Loaf Bakeless Camargo Arts Fellow, and a Tennessee Williams Sewanee Scholar. He retired as a Navy Captain after 35 years of service and served his last tour as the Defense Attache to US Embassy Rome. The whole family thoroughly enjoyed their three years living and working in "La Citta Eterna". Sharon was known for her "hand movements" and ability to bargain and argue over prices in Italian.

After a distinguished career in the navy, Sharon worked for two years for Booz, Allen Hamilton as a senior consultant and then moved into the nonprofit arena working for the local American Red Cross. She has volunteered for Catholic Community Services as an emergency services case manager as well as Executive Director of Birthline of San Diego, which is a non-denominational pregnancy support center. With FOCUS, Sharon has been a member of the Board of Directors for the past four years. She is the current treasurer, but has also served as VP for Projects for 2 years, VP of communications for one year, and is a frequent shopper.

In addition to FOCUS, she volunteers with the Navy and Marine Corps Relief Society, helping run their thrift store. She's also very active at her church, and is a member of Surfrider organization (because she likes to surf and Stand Up Paddle). Her son, Christopher Shelton is 34, lives in Los Angeles and like his grandparents is a teacher, bringing his love of English and literature to high school students.

We are blessed to have this Navy veteran, leader, and active community volunteer, as a FOCUS member. We are proud to shine the FOCUS spotlight on Sharon Shelton.



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