



January 2022 Newsletter



Message from the President, Pat Robitaille

Happy New Year! I am pleased to report that 2021 was a very good year for FOCUS. Our generous spirit has supported so many of San Diego's children most at risk. I have asked our 2021 board members to prepare an annual report for you. Please take some time to get familiar with our successful year. I would like to extend a great deal of gratitude to each and every one of our board members as well as Ethel Kallsen and Don Swanson who served us well with our newsletter and publicity.

2022 Board of Directors

This week, we kick off our 2022 year. This will be our 40th year of operation and we look forward to making it very special.

While we are still looking to staff the VP of Fundraising role, I would like to report the positive results of our voting on the 2022 slate of officers. Your 2022 board members will be:

President:	Pat Robitaille
Executive VP:	Denise Donato-McConnell
Treasurer:	Sharon Shelton & Kathy Tyner
1st VP Fundraising:	(Open)
2nd VP Projects:	Sharon Blongiewicz & Carin Cross
3rd VP Membership:	Barbara Donahue & Therese Pallares

Corporate Sponsors

This year, we added a new category of FOCUS Membership - Corporate Sponsor. In exchange for a higher membership fee, the Corporate Sponsor can advertise their business in our newsletter and on our website. Please check them out at the end of this newsletter. We appreciate our founding members: Sharon Sherman, Therese Pallares, and Aileen Oya. If you are interested in learning more or would like to refer a business to us, please contact membership@focus-sdkids.org.

Planning Meeting

We will be having two planning meetings during January to put ourselves in a great position for 2022.

1. 2022 Business Planning

This facilitated planning meeting will provide us with guidance for Fundraising, Projects, Membership, Financials and board meetings for 2022. All board members shall attend the planning session and we will share the outcome with all members.

DATE: January 6th

TIME: 10:00am - 1:00pm

LOCATION: Sharon Shelton Residence at 40 Catspaw Cape, Coronado

2. 40th Anniversary Celebrations

We would like to make all of our events this coming year special to commemorate our 40 years. We invite founding and long term members to bring historical reference and ideas for celebration. We also invite our other members to offer ideas for scheduling, locations, etc for each event. We would like to include our monthly membership meetings as well as any other special events, such as our annual gala. Please let me know if you will be joining our planning meeting. I will get the details out to you shortly following our planning meeting.



Meetings Report from Exec. VP, Lisa Storey

2021 was a challenging year to have meetings in person. We all appreciate personal contact but have rallied through the year and offered incredible support to FOCUS at every turn.

We had a great joint event with the Coronado Cays Yacht Club – the Annual Boat Parade and Chili Dinner. We had almost 190 people come out to attend and join in the fun of the evening. We would like to thank all the yacht club members who came out and helped make this such an enjoyable and successful event.

I will not be continuing on the FOCUS Board in 2022 but wanted to let you know how much I have enjoyed planning events and working with our great group of volunteers. I will continue to be involved and look forward to seeing you at FOCUS events in 2022.



Financial Report from Treasurer, Sharon Shelton

FOCUS Financial Report for January 1, 2021 thru December 31, 2021

INCOME

Amazon Smiles	\$113.18
Coronado City Grant	\$16,253.00
Membership Dues	\$17,475.00
Donations	\$62,107.70
Fundraisers	\$26,263.29
Meeting Income	\$1,188.79
Miscellaneous Income	\$1,039.80
TOTAL INCOME	\$124,440.76

EXPENSES

Projects & Grants	\$57,520.71
Bank Charges & Fees	\$729.90
Office Supplies	\$677.25
Licensing /Software Expense	\$2,384.44
Legal & Professional Fees	\$740.00
Insurance	\$1,176.10
Taxes & Licenses	\$714.90
Advertising & Marketing	\$2,334.22
Meeting Expenses	\$3,998.21
Uncategorized Expenses	\$681.00
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$70,956.73

CARRYOVER INCOME

Cash on Hand Jan 1, 2022	
Available for Projects	\$77,100.00
Balance in Reserves	\$50,015.03



Fundraising Report from 1st VP, Sharyn Blongiewicz

The past 2+ years have been more than challenging for fundraising but, as always, our generous FOCUS Members and Friends of FOCUS came through. We were able to conduct four fundraising events this year with financial income as follows:

After several important events were canceled due to Covid, we were able to hold our Rummage Sale in 2021. Headed up by Roger Clapp, we had a HUGE amount of merchandise and a record number of shoppers. This event is truly labor intensive, but with the greatly appreciated help of many FOCUS members, several non-members and to those of you who donated so many saleable items, the sale was very profitable.

This year the in-person Holiday Boutique, with a lot of good help from CCYC, was a resounding success. We had 47 vendors - some familiar and many new to our event. All reports were that the vendors were pleased and our shoppers were happy. A big thank you for all the fabulous food that was donated ... everyone looks forward to and enjoys the complimentary treats!

The prized Chili Dinner / Boat Parade was well attended and was more profitable than in years past. Lisa Storey did a fantastic job. I missed it but heard it was fabulous, fun and festive.

The request for "End of Year Giving" was met with bigheartedness and charity. Over \$30,000 came into the FOCUS treasury via, website, mail and hand delivered checks. Thank you all!

In anticipation of scheduled fundraising events and galas, a great deal of work and planning was done. Unfortunately, some had to be canceled. My most sincere thank you to the committee volunteers who invested your time, efforts and creative thinking ... *The Godfather Gala and Yuletide Magic were going to be great!*

Happy New Year to all ... Let's hope 2022 is healthy and we can all get back to normal!!!

Fundraisers	\$26,263.29
Boat Parade	\$5,063.74
Holiday Boutique	\$9,757.80
Rummage Sale	\$9,866.75
Wine Tasting	\$1,575.00



Projects Report 2nd VPs, Barbara Donahue & Carin Cross

In spite of some agencies closing or reducing their services due to the pandemic, we were able to provide assistance to over 30 agencies this year. We are so thankful to our volunteer shoppers. We know it takes considerable time and energy to shop and organize delivery and we are very grateful to each one of you. \$57,174.21 was spent on Projects, leaving a reserve for next year.

Items donated ranged from compost and gardening supplies, food and clothing, to diapers, and cribs, to rocking chairs and gliders to help mothers bond with their babies. Literacy and connection through reading was encouraged through our support of agencies that work with military or incarcerated families, Juvenile Hall teens and teens reading with Seniors.

Back to “real” School was special this year and was recognized by 500 filled backpacks donated to various agencies along with new school shoes for Christie’s House kids.

The “Linda Dorn Grant”, funded by our former member, was used for the rocking chairs, NICU families at Balboa Hospital and cribs for San Diego MOM.

In addition to the projects which were funded by FOCUS, there were a number of drives, with all items donated by members. We had an overwhelming response to the Aseltine School-Food Pantry Drive and the Urban Street Angels Clothing Closet. The closet provides clothing and underwear for teens who are newly arrived at the Urban Street Angels shelter and is run by FOCUS member Nanci Copley.

The Giving Tree at our FOCUS Christmas Boutique was fully supported by FOCUS members and visitors. We had a wonderful response with 85 beautifully wrapped gifts for ASYMCA special needs families Christmas party on Dec. 6th.

We look forward to an even bigger 2022 as more agencies are able to return to offering their full services.



Membership Report from 3rd VP, Lorna Perez-Caster

Looking back at 2021 we did pretty well with membership, compared to the previous year, with our total being 132. But it's a brand new year and we're hoping to outdo that number by renewing all from last year, plus add some brand new members. Remember, FOCUS dues provide essential funds, allowing us to continue our goal of assisting children in need.

Having already received renewals from 44 members we are off to a fairly good start, but we have a long way to go. So for those of you who have yet to renew, please do so soon. Our 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 know of anyone who may be interested in learning more about FOCUS and how they may join, please either direct them to our website or send their name and mailing address to Barbara Donahue at membership@focus-sdkids.org and she will send them some information.



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

Karen Korcheck 01/17

Bernice Hunt 01/20

Rolf Yngve 01/23

Nanci Copley 01/31



Member Spotlight by Don Swanson

This month's spotlight is not a spotlight, but reflections of many spotlights. Being the end of 2021, I took a few moments to reflect back on some of the highlights I encountered with FOCUS.

Lorna Perez-Caster was president. The year was 2017, and I remember the occasion well. It was the Fourth of July Parade in Coronado. I drove to the location of the start of the parade by Betty and John Lepore's lovely F Street home. I snapped a few photos of the FOCUS entry, and then drove my car to the end of the parade. It took me a while to find a parking space. I neglected to remember all the parade entrees had vehicles parked at the conclusion of the parade. When I finally found a spot, I journeyed to a corner on Orange Avenue. I waited and snapped a few interesting photos in the meantime. Then the FOCUS banner came into view. Lorna was walking, along with her sister, holding the banner with a beaming smile.

Then it happened. A lady standing next to me asked her husband, "What is FOCUS?" Her husband stated that "FOCUS was a bunch of millionaires who gave money to organizations that helped needy kids in San Diego." My first reaction was to clarify his statement, and let him know FOCUS does not give money away, but supplies the needed items that organizations request. But I contained my emotions, and then thought to myself, and wanted to say, "For seventy-five dollars a year, you too can be a millionaire."

Was I wrong for not explaining the purpose of FOCUS to these unknown parade watchers? Probably so, but the photos are why I was there, and not stopping and correcting the gentleman was not on my agenda. I remember meeting Lorna's sister, as well as her husband Gary, two people you need to chat with. I took photos of Lorna when she visited Casa De Amparo delivering needed supplies to teenage mother's living in the many casas at their facility. It was an emotional experience for Lorna I know because it is an organization dear to her heart.

Helen Krupa has many acclamations. She is past president of the Coronado Cays HOA, currently chair of the Coronado Cultural Arts Commission, and past treasurer of FOCUS. It seems like every year I capture a photo of Helen walking out of the annual boutique with both hands in the air holding purchased gifts, with a radiating smile knowing she has supported the boutique, as well as collected a few treasures for herself and others. Sig is her husband who is occasionally seen at many of the FOCUS events.

In December of 2018 I was asked to write some New Year resolutions for the Coronado Cays Living magazine. Yes, there were the usual lose weight, exercise, spend more time with the grandkids and family, but Helen had an unusual undertaking, "Re-learn Debussy's Arabesque No. 1 and No. 2 on the piano."

In college I had taken a course in music appreciation, but Debussy's Arabesque was not one of the piano compositions that I remembered. Claude Debussy was French, born in 1862, and a composer of classical music, regarded as the founder of musical impressionism. I had to know more. Thank goodness for YouTube, as it provided me with the satisfaction of hearing Debussy's Arabesque No. 1 and No. 2. I saw visions of softly flowing streams, and then butterflies fluttering. Take the time to listen to these, and appreciate why Helen yearned to re-learn DeBussy's No. 1 and No. 2 of Arabesque.

When I wrote butterflies on this FOCUS article paper, it too reminded me of two other FOCUS members, Sharyn and Bob Blongiewicz. They have milkweed growing in front of their house on Port of Spain, as well as on their back patio. Planting Milkweed (*Asclepias*) is essential to creating a habitat for the Monarch butterfly's survival, as they are the only plants on which the Monarch caterpillars will feed. Needless to say hundreds of Monarch butterflies populate annually at their house. I think Sharyn has done it all for FOCUS. She is a past president on two different terms, president in 2009-2010, then again in 2015 along with Suzanne Manuel, Ethel Kallsen and Leslie Granger.

I recall when Sharyn, and Bob were part of the team that visited the bayside residence of Gail and Robert Bardin. The Bardins' offered to host the winning bid for "Cocktail Party on the Bay," from the Evening with Elvis dinner. It was chance for twelve people to not only enjoy the sunset from the beautiful home of the Bardens, but to also be served dinner by a team of FOCUS members, including Wayne Strickland and his wife Nancy, along with the Blongiewicz, Suzanne Manuel, Jeri and Bill Barsz, Jean and Gene Bauer, Vicki and Ed Morris, Jane DeYoung, and Fred Gilman, Bob and Sandy Shugert, as well as Judy and Barry Thomas.

Do you know Carla Bacon? She lives in Port Royale in the Cays. I met her while she was walking her delightful Bernedoodle dog named Kenzie. A Bernedoodle dog is a mix of Bernese Mountain dog and a Poodle. We had quite a good conversation. She has been a FOCUS member for quite a long time. Her mother, Ruby Zabel was one of the founding members of FOCUS and lived in Blue Anchor Village. After college, Clara moved into her residence in Port Royale. Kenzie is quite a friendly dog, and we connected immediately.

I encourage all FOCUS members to take the time to meet one another. Attend as many 2022 FOCUS events as possible, and you too will collect as many wonderful memories as I have. We all have the mission of FOCUS in common, and getting to know one another is also a wonderful experience.

Corporate Sponsors

We thank you!



THERESE PALLARES
REALTOR®, GRI

"I am very proud to be a part of FOCUS as it has consistently benefited so many children and persons in need for decades.

Wishing much success, health and happiness for a wonderful 2022."



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