

# the Sprout

News from Forty Carrots Family Center

SPRING 2008

## From an unplanned teen pregnancy to the challenges of autism, Forty Carrots helps one young mom navigate difficult life turns



Marcela Gomez and her son Santiago

Five years ago, we introduced you to Marcela Gomez, a soon-to-be high school graduate looking forward to adulthood and the freedom to make her own choices when it came to matters of heart and home.

Until an unplanned pregnancy brought Santiago into her life.

Fortunately, Forty Carrots Family Center's longstanding partnership with Cyesis (a public school for teen parents and pregnant students) helped Marcela cope with the challenges of becoming a teenage mom and provided her with the skills and encouragement she needed to understand and appreciate the joys of parenthood.

"At first, I was very nervous ... I didn't know how to take care of a baby," Marcela said, recalling that difficult first year. "But every week they came and taught me something new ... how to hold a baby, how to feed them, how to play with them ..."

But, given what was yet to come, perhaps the most important skills she learned was how to cope through the inevitable moments in parenting when things fall apart.

### A Lifeline For Young Moms

At Cyesis, Forty Carrots' parenting educators meet teen parents like Marcela every week. In any given year, there are as many as 125 students

enrolled in its educational programs for pregnant students and teen mothers.

They are some of our community's most challenged moms—teenage girls, some as young as 13 and 14, learning how to care for their newborn babies while juggling the demands of high school, child care, limited transportation and part-time jobs.

Even if Marcela had wanted to take a night off to attend Forty Carrots' free parenting workshops, her tight schedule, night job and responsibilities at home simply would not allow it.

"For most of the students at Cyesis, there is so much going on in their lives, it's a challenge for them just to find time to play with their children," said Diane Weiss, parenting education specialist and co-executive director of Forty Carrots.

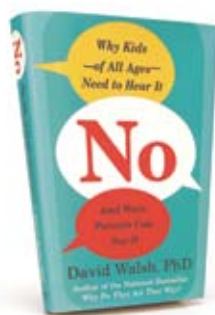
Forty Carrots facilitates onsite parenting sessions with the girls twice a week at Cyesis. Thanks to ongoing financial support from individual donors and public and private granting agencies, the classes are free to both participants and Cyesis.

Marcela will be the first to say those classes provided a lifeline to her during the most difficult time in her life. The parenting classes were woven right into her normal school day, so that not only did she complete her academic studies, she learned basic baby care skills and important parenting tools to

*Lifeline—continued on page 3*

## Forty Carrots Says "Yes" to "NO"

This fall, parents will get a lesson in how—and why—to say 'No'



**It's a book. It's a conversation. It's success for our kids.**

It's the grassroots "Say Yes to No" campaign igniting community conversations across the nation and abroad. This fall, Forty Carrots Family Center is bringing the conversation—and the psychologist and parenting expert who started it all—to Sarasota.

On October 7, the local non-profit organization will host its 6th annual Free Community Speaker Event. The event features noted psychologist and award-winning author Dr. David Walsh, whose latest book, *No: Why Kids—of All Ages—Need to Hear It and Ways Parents Can Say It*—has stirred community conversations and action groups in dozens of U.S. cities and prompted translations of his book in six foreign languages.



Dr. David Walsh

Dr. Walsh's message focuses on a deceptively simple, but difficult to say, two-letter word—No.

"It's such a little word, but so important to raising healthy, self-reliant kids," said Diane Weiss, co-executive director of Forty Carrots Family Center.

In his presentation this fall, Dr. Walsh will explain how the "Yes Culture" undermines our children's self discipline, a key ingredient for success and happiness later in life. He says there is an epidemic of Discipline Deficit Disorder sweeping the country. Symptoms include disrespect, impatience, a need for instant gratification, a sense of entitlement, self-centeredness, and out of control consumerism—much of it driven by a media culture promoting "MORE, EASY, FAST, and FUN."

A by-product of today's busy working parents' desire for harmony when they're home, he said, many parents simply don't know how and when to say "No."

But a parent's job, he says, is not to *always* make kids happy. If that was true, he elaborated, they should spend their days catering to their children's every need, removing all frustrations and bumps in the road, making sure that no one else in their lives

*Speaker Event—continued on page 3*

### LEARNING TO SAY NO

**In this presentation, you will learn how to:**

- Set and enforce limits that make sense (from toddlers to teens)
- Reverse DDD—Discipline Deficit Disorder
- Make NO a positive influence on your child's behavior and in your family's life

### FOR MORE INFORMATION

**What:** 6<sup>th</sup> annual Free **COMMUNITY SPEAKER EVENT, featuring David Walsh, Ph.D.**, nationally acclaimed psychologist, speaker and author on parenting and children's development.

**When:** Tuesday, Oct. 7 • 7 p.m.

**Where:** Hyatt Sarasota

**What:** Special **PRESENTATION FOR BUSINESS/CIVIC LEADERS** – Dr. Walsh presents "**Promoting Work Ethic and Civility in the Workplace**" – a business breakfast co-presented by the Gulf Coast Community Foundation of Venice.

**When:** Tuesday, Oct. 7, 7:30 a.m.

**Where:** Hyatt Sarasota

**Reservations Required:** [www.fortycarrots.org](http://www.fortycarrots.org)



## Directors' Letter

Yes is a powerful word. Yes sends a strong message of vision and action. Yes connotes positive intentions and active engagement and is the driving force behind constructive futures. Yes has made this year a truly remarkable one for Forty Carrots.

We are grateful to our volunteers who said "yes" when asked to serve their community by creating special events that raised awareness and funds.

We are grateful to our donors who said "yes" when asked to support our events, our Annual Fund, our Capital Campaign and our *Heroes on Wheels* Program.

We are grateful to our staff who said "yes" when asked to share their expertise, their commitment to quality and their passion for the work they do everyday on behalf of children and families.

And while Yes has been a most remarkable word this year for Forty Carrots Family Center, we are reminded by Dr. David Walsh, the featured speaker for our 6th Annual Free Community Education Event, that when it comes to raising self-disciplined kids, No is a very important word too.



Thank you for saying Yes to Forty Carrots this year and for remaining involved in the year ahead. We hope you will join us on October 7, 2008 to learn more about saying No when it matters most ... with our kids.

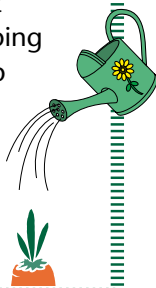
Warm wishes,

Betsy Kane-Hartnett  
Co-Executive Director

Diane Weiss  
Co-Executive Director

## DEADLINE FAST APPROACHING TO SECURE SELBY CAPPING GRANT

Our Capital Campaign is nearing its one-year mark ... and an important deadline we must meet if we are to "capitalize" on an important grant opportunity. Forty Carrots is eligible to receive a \$65,000 capping grant from The William G. Selby and Marie Selby Foundation to help purchase our building, but we need your support. The capping grant will be awarded only if we are successful in meeting our own financial goals for the Capital Campaign this year ... although we've come a long way, we still need to raise \$485,000 by May 1 to secure the grant. Please call 365-7716 to help us meet that goal.

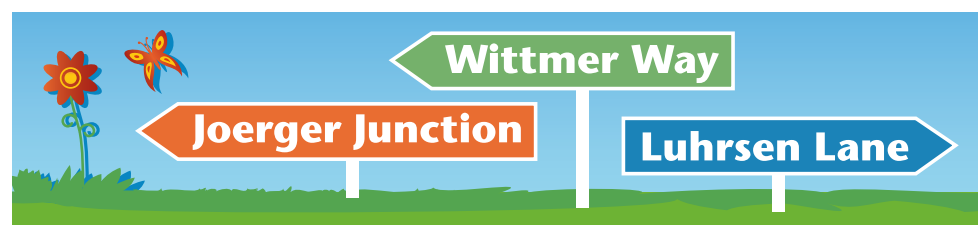


## Together We're Better

We are pleased to announce that one of our two playgrounds has been adopted by three families who have become a driving force behind-the-scenes at Forty Carrots Family Center. Since meeting on the playground more than six years ago, Pauline Joerger, Julie Luhrsen and Meg Wittmer have donated countless hours and service to Forty Carrots. Each family contributed \$25,000 to Forty Carrots' Capital Campaign to adopt the preschool playground.

"It was just good karma or simple serendipity that our three families came together in this way," said Julie. "The playground has been a place of fun, freedom and friendship for our families. We couldn't think of a better way to thank Forty Carrots for those fabulous memories and the wonderful support it has lent our families than by commemorating the spot where it all began." Today, Forty Carrots is fortunate to have all three mothers as members of its Board of Trustees.

We invite other families to join together to adopt a playground of their own.



## Forty Carrot's Board of Trustees

Taber Chadwick III  
Dan DeLeo  
Kim Githler,  
*Trustee Emeritus*  
Pauline Joerger  
Stanley Kane,  
*Trustee Emeritus*

Betsy Kane-Hartnett,  
*(ex-officio)*  
Richard C. Lawrence  
Rodney Linford  
Julie Luhrsen, *Secretary*  
Lynn Morris  
Mark Perlman

Jan Pitchford  
Jeff Rubin  
Jeanne Smith, *Chair*  
Jeff Steinwachs  
Lisa A. Van Ullen  
Terri Vitale

Diane Weiss  
*(ex-officio)*  
Richard Williams III,  
*Treasurer*  
Meg Wittmer

## Buy a Brick ... Cement Your Memories

Since kicking off our Capital Campaign last fall, we have raised \$788,881—more than half way toward our goal of \$1.25 million to buy the building that has been Forty Carrots' home for the past 15 years and establish a fund dedicated to its preservation.

This month, we are highlighting our **Bell Tower Project** and inviting supporters to purchase a personalized brick for the tower that will be added to the east side of our building facing Tuttle Avenue. With a \$250 donation, you can leave a lasting message (up to 80 symbols and characters) honoring someone special or commemorating your family's memories of Forty Carrots.

In addition to the Bell Tower project, we are creating a custom-made Wall of Tiles. For more information about this, and all remaining naming opportunities, please visit our website at [fortycarrots.com](http://fortycarrots.com) or call our center at 365-7716.



## Buckle Up Baby

With ongoing support, Forty Carrots hopes to continue child safety effort

In national surveys, 96 percent of parents and caregivers said they believe their child safety seats are installed correctly, but research by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration reveals seven out of 10 children are improperly restrained.



Sarasota County Tax Collector, Barbara Ford-Coates, Diane Weiss, Stewart Sterns, President & CEO Sarasota Community Foundation

It was that alarming statistic that spurred Forty Carrots' commitment to provide child seat safety inspections throughout Sarasota County. Thanks to a community partnership, Buckle Up Baby was launched Nov. 7, 2007 in nine locations throughout the community. Forty Carrots hopes to find ongoing sponsors so the program does not end this summer.

"The health and well-being of all children is the heart of Forty Carrots' work," said Diane Weiss, Forty Carrots Family Center co-executive director and parenting education specialist. "During the 8 months that we have been offering this program, we have inspected 79 infant and child car seats, and corrected the installation on 100% of them."

Buckle Up Baby was made possible through a collaborative partnership between Forty Carrots, the Sarasota County Tax Collector's Office and the Community Foundation of Sarasota County. The Hilda Gold Fund for Children and Youth Services, the George W. and Ethel B. Hoefler Fund and the Dallas and Elizabeth Dort Charitable Fund of The Community Foundation of Sarasota County, Inc. awarded a \$13,307 grant to create mobile child safety seat inspection stations throughout Sarasota County.

The inspections are performed by Forty Carrots Family Center staff. Additional safety checks are scheduled through the summer. For a list of locations, visit Forty Carrots website at [www.fortycarrots.com](http://www.fortycarrots.com).

### HELP KEEP OUR BABIES SAFE

The Buckle Up Baby car seat safety inspections rely solely on grantor support. If you are interested in helping Forty Carrots continue this safety program in the fall, please call 365-7716 for tax-deductible sponsorship opportunities.



## Roots & Wings

Congratulations to the Forty Carrots Senior Class of 1995, most of whom are graduating this spring from high school. We're proud to add your names to Roots & Wings: The Forty Carrots Alumni Club.

Thomas Carter  
Rebecca Cohen  
Trent Cristiani  
Caitlin Curran  
D.J. Davis  
Kristen Davis  
John Edwards  
Zachary Floyd  
Lauren Garrison  
Katie Hamm  
Annah Hammersly

Winston Hegener  
Haley Hensey  
Roger Hill  
Liza Kane-Hartnett  
Katie Kennell  
Henry Mitchell  
Joshua Pechiney  
Marc Pierson  
Jeffrey Radek  
Molly Ring  
Chelsea Roberts

Avery Russell  
Justin Schmitz  
Katherine Shea  
Jacob Silver  
Morgan Slevin  
Michael Thomas  
Evan Ward  
Maxwell Wardlaw  
Nicholas Watts

**Please contact us if you know how we can reach these former Forty Carrots students:**  
Winston Hegener  
Katie Kennell  
Kevin Ward  
Roger Hill  
Evan Ward  
Katie Hamm



Forty Carrots Family Center embraces diversity and does not discriminate on any basis.



## Change Your Shoes ... Change A Life!

**Mark Your Calendar** for **Wine, Women & Shoes 2008**, a special 3-day fundraising event featuring fine wines and fashionable shoes. Always a Sarasota sell-out, WWS is an award-winning event that inspires women everywhere to think out of the box—shoebox, that is! It has raised more than \$2 million for women's and children's charities nationwide.

## Mark Your Calendar

**Wine 101: Nov. 6**

**Luncheon: Nov. 7**

**Patron Parties: Nov. 8**

Thank you to the **Community Foundation of Sarasota County** for renewing their Title Sponsorship of Wine, Women & Shoes 2008.

**NOW ACCEPTING SPONSOR RESERVATIONS ONLY**

Email [info@fortycarrots.org](mailto:info@fortycarrots.org) or call 365-7716 for information.

## Wine, Women & Shoes 2007



Special thanks to Terri Vitale-Sforzo and Kristen Williams, who chaired Wine, Women & Shoes 2007. The fun and festive fundraiser raised more than \$126,000.

All funds raised through Wine Women & Shoes support parenting education. The event ensures that families with young children—from one end of our community to the other—have access to free parenting education and support right in their neighborhoods. This year's proceeds will provide 350 free classes at nine different locations, including libraries, schools and in our center on Tuttle Avenue.



Stewart Sterns, President and CEO, Community Foundation of Sarasota, with Rich Williams, Merrill Lynch Private Banking, who along with Tervis Tumblers were title sponsors.

Thank you to the following granting agencies for supporting our 2007-2008 community outreach programs with combined funding totaling \$198,473.

**Sarasota County Government:**  
\$60,000 for On Wheels

**Florida Winefest & Auction (07-08):**  
\$50,000 for On Wheels

**Gulf Coast Community Foundation of Venice**  
\$43,166 for On Wheels –South County

**Community Foundation of Sarasota:**  
\$13,307 for Buckle Up Baby Car Seat Inspections

**Wilson-Wood Foundation:**  
\$15,000 for Parenting Basics

**All Star Children's Foundation:**  
\$10,000 for On Wheels

**Additional Donor Support Provided by Bank of America and St. Boniface Church**

### DONOR SPOTLIGHT

The **Wilson-Wood Foundation** has awarded Forty Carrots five grants since 1996 totaling more than \$66,000. The organization's longstanding support and commitment have helped fund parenting classes for some of the community's most at-risk mothers at Cyesis, First Step's Mothers & Infants Program, and Character House.

## LAST CALL!!

### For 2007-2008 Annual Fund

**Forty Carrot's annual fund campaign for the 2007-2008 school year wraps up May 31. Every dollar donated supports quality early childhood and parenting education for thousands of Sarasota's young families. Donate online at [www.fortycarrots.org](http://www.fortycarrots.org) or call 365-7716.**



## Lifeline — continued from page 1

help with the added challenges many teenage and single moms face.

"I remember being very scared in the beginning," Marcela said. "They definitely changed my life and gave me the confidence that helped me get through some very hard times."

## Beyond The First 5 Years

Over the years, she has never completely let go of that lifeline.

Today, Marcela continues to face greater challenges than most. Santiago is 5 and was recently diagnosed with autism. He attends a special kindergarten class with other special needs children and is undergoing regular occupational and speech therapy.

Santiago's condition prevents him from communicating and forming friendships with others. Marcela yearns for a connection other parents may take for granted ... spontaneous hugs and expressions of love and affection. With a good-natured laugh, she said she even craves the incessant childhood demands that annoy most parents. Though he rarely speaks of his own volition, he responds with an engaging grin and tentative words when prodded by his mother.

The mother-son bond is unmistakable ... and one Marcela credits in large part to the love, understanding and support she continues to receive from her mom and her Forty Carrots family.

"The hardest thing is trying to figure out what's going on in his mind and where to go to get the help he needs," Marcela said. "What's nice about Forty Carrots is that even when they couldn't answer all my questions, because of his autism, they helped find someone who could."

Although Forty Carrots' programs focus on a child's first five years of life, the ties that bind parents with Forty Carrots often remain for a lifetime. Indeed, some parents have undergone additional training and education to become program facilitators at the organization, while others are now veteran volunteers ... remaining long after their children have grown and left home.

Marcela graduated high school in 2003, and now 24, works as a teller in a local bank. At the time of this interview, she was happily preparing to wed her high school sweetheart, Santiago's father. The couple plans to live with her mother for the next year while saving a down payment for a home of their own.

She's also hoping life will bless her with a second child ... and a second chance to take advantage of all Forty Carrots has to offer growing families.

## Speaker Event — continued from page 1

caused them any frustration, and of course buying them whatever they want.

"Our job as parents is to give our kids the skills to not only enjoy the happy times, but how to recognize what happiness really is," he explains. "To do this our kids need to experience unhappiness, frustration and all the normal bumps in the road. If they never feel disappointed, they will never learn to resolve disappointment and move themselves to a happier state."

The most important part of that job, Walsh says, is to help children safely experience a full range of life's experiences—those that thrill and excite and make them happy, as well as those that are difficult, stressful, and yes, make them unhappy. By saying No when they need to and allowing children to experience life's challenges and disappointments, parents help children develop self-discipline, patience, respect and a host of other important character traits. Research, he points out, now shows that self-discipline is twice as strong a predictor of school—and life—success as intelligence.

While it may seem a novel message, it is one that has remained ingrained in nearly every class and educational program Forty Carrots provides at its center and in more than a dozen community library and outreach locations each year.

"We've always tried to teach parents that saying "No" isn't the end of an argument ... it's an important life lesson for children," said Betsy Kane-Hartnett, co-executive director of Forty Carrots Family Center. "By using the words "No," "not now," "wait a while," "you have a choice," "later, you can..." or "first we will, then..." our children learn self-discipline and patience—critically important character traits they will need in school and throughout life."

Once again, Forty Carrots' community speaker event is free thanks to support from our community sponsors. Endorsed by the Sarasota County School System, the event also provides valuable continuing education opportunities for qualified professionals.



Celebrating 15 years  
of strengthening  
the community  
one family at a time

**Our Mission**  
Forty Carrots Family Center is a not-for-profit charitable organization dedicated to strengthening families through educational programs for parents, their children, and professionals in the field.

Forty Carrots Family Center  
1500 South Tuttle Avenue  
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941-365-7716  
Fax 941-952-1711  
www.fortycarrots.org

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## Inaugural Club Forty Lites Up the Party Scene

Club Forty took off on March 1, thanks to co-chairs Chantal Freedman and Haven Beech. Guests left their cars with valets on the runway to enter the sleek Rectrix private jet-hangar transformed into a sexy nightclub. A hip DJ kept the dance floor busy while ice bars served up champagne and martinis. An incredible silent auction, gaming tables and Forty Carrots' own version of "Deal or No Deal" helped fill the coffers.

Club Forty is Forty Carrots' only event benefiting all four branches of the non-profit agency: the free outreach parenting education program, the in-house parenting center, the preschool, and professional development. The proceeds provide important funding for items such as wages and benefits for teachers and staff and capital improvements to the building and grounds usually not covered by grants. Tuition and fees associated with the preschool and parenting center do not cover the costs of these programs.

Thank you to all of the sponsors and supporters of this very important event that helps sustain Forty Carrots Family Center.

**Titanium Sponsors:**



**Platinum Sponsors:**



**Gold Sponsors:**



**Special Thanks to:**

AbellBand, Haven & Tim Beach, Broadway Bar & Restaurant, Cat Hospital of Sarasota, Creative Aesthetics, DMS Interiors, Doctor's Choice Home Care, Gecko's Grill & Pubs, Kathy & Heino Hazelhoff, Home Resource, Insignia Bank, Nancy DeLong & David Jemison, Luhrsen Law Group, New Balance Sarasota, Peterbrooke Chocolatier, Sarasota News & Books, The Sleep Center of Sarasota, Vineyard Brands, and Wired Whisk.



## Spend a Sensational Summer at Camp Carrots

Wondering where all your Forty Carrots friends are spending their summer this year? You don't have to look far. Many will be attending Camp Carrots 2008 and its slate of sensational summer programs. Call 365-7716 and sign up today for one of three exciting sessions:

- SESSION 1: Book Cooks (June 9-26)**
- SESSION 2: Wild West (June 30-July 17)**
- SESSION 3: Island Luau (July 21-Aug. 7)**

