

8th Annual *Together We Can* Campaign

By Shirley Shaw

An hour before the early morning starting time, guests began arriving at the new venue for this year's Together We Can breakfast. The Scottish Rite Masonic Center members made its banquet hall available for the Justice Coalition's guests and supporters at this annual fundraising event hosted by area sheriffs.

JSO Sheriff John Rutherford spoke to more than 350 guests about the importance of the Justice Coalition and its partnership with law enforcement. Nassau County Sheriff Tommy Seagraves, Baker County Sheriff Joey Dobson, Clay County SO Major Craig Aldrich (for Sheriff Rick Beseler who was out of town), Bradford County SO Capt. Eddie Boatwright (for Sheriff Gordon Smith), FBI SAC James Casey, FDLE SA Kirk Veazey - and many other representatives of NE Florida law enforcement agencies - joined us for a delicious breakfast prepared by members of FOP Lodge 530.

Chief Judge Donald Moran, along with many other judges, took time before their workday began to join us, as did numerous other city officials, businessmen and women. Space will not allow mention of everyone who came - but we are so grateful for the support.

Following an opening prayer by Rev. Garry Wiggins (pastor of Evangel Temple Assembly of God), a song by Ann's granddaughter, Miranda Carr, a toast to the flag by Scottish Rite Gen. Sec. David Yarborough, and the Pledge of Allegiance led by three Junior JC volunteers, Emcee Kyle Meenan introduced Marie Griffis, who tearfully spoke about her granddaughter Haleigh Cummings. Many listeners were deeply touched as she told how difficult it is to live every day not knowing the whereabouts of the beautiful little girl. Darlene Briggs, who sat with other victims' families at a table of honor, knows very



Sheriffs and other attentive guests

well the pain of uncertainty; Mark Degner and Bryan Hayes have now been missing five years.

Somer Thompson's grandfather, Phillip Bowling, related his experience of learning about her disappearance while on a business trip to Detroit and how he agonized on the way home, wondering where she could be. He expressed appreciation for help from the JC and others during the ordeal of learning Somer's fate and her subsequent funeral. Stating that he is a logical thinker with an excellent memory, he didn't expect everything "to be a blur" as he was told it would be - but he says "blur" is an understatement. His wife at his side, he dropped his face in his hands and wept with her when he finished speaking.

Before a call to action by Rev. Larry McGinley (pastor of Old Plank Road Baptist Church), Alex Lemon told how his life has changed since coming to the JC to perform community service. Although he says he didn't realize he was a victim of domestic violence, he and his younger brother were abused by their mother, kept out of school and he even lived days at a time on the street. When Terri Johnson, Exec. Admin. Assistant, realized the extent of his situation, she took him into her home (the courts have now officially placed him there) to ensure he could attend school.

Mark Shiver once again sang the song he wrote for Justice Coalition events, and harpist Sue Carmichael from St. Mary's Mission provided beautiful music. Pastor Bryan Campbell

of Jerusalem Missionary Baptist Church closed the event with prayer.

Special thanks to the JSO supervisors who coordinated the parking: Asst. Chief Christopher Butler, Lt. Steve Gallagher and Sgt. Rusty Bonifacio. We thank the committee and all the volunteers who worked so diligently before, during and



after the event - there is no way it could have happened without you. God bless you, one and all. We'll see you next year.



Alex Lemon



Marie Griffis



Emcee Kyle Meenan flanked by Mr. and Mrs. Phillip Bowling (L), Marie Griffis and daughter (R) and Larry Ward (R)



Phillip Bowling



Chief Judge Donald Moran



Pastor Garry Wiggins



David Yarborough



Volunteers greet the guests



Cyndee and Brinee Johnson and Miranda Carr lead the pledge to the flag



Mark Shiver



Miranda Carr sings while harpist Sue Carmichael observes



Pastor Larry McGinley



Pastor Campbell praying at the closing

TWC Committee

Amy Boyson
Robert Bracewell
Andrea Cash
Judith Chappell
Jim Clemons
Kathy Cold
Ann Dugger
Monica Hentschel
Chip Patterson
Dan Powers
Jerry Powers
Carol Register
Michael Rutledge
Terry Tillman
Joey Vaughn
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Poole Management, Inc.

Publication Distribution Services
John Rowan Family
Safe Touch Security Systems
Scottish Rite Masonic Center
Solomon Lodge
Sonny's Real Pit Bar-B-Q
UPS

Volunteers

Gail Antoine
Janice Chambers
Lewis Duffey
Sheldon Forte
Fran Fruttrill
Mackenzie Judith Jackson
Cyndee Johnson
Brittnee Johnson
Alex Lemon
Clyde Mills
Judy Nicewonger
Amanda Nobles
Kathy Tillman
Melissa Tillman

Pete Trent
Joseph Wright
Betty Yarborough
David Yarborough
Gene Yarborough
Carlos Ziegler
Fraternal Order of Police Lodge 530
Hal Cox
Buddy Platt
Mike Posey
Tommy Powell
Mike Purvis
Robbie Roseiler

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