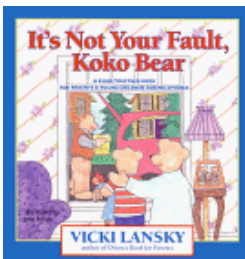


SDFLCC Newsletter

OUR MISSION

The Family Law Council for Children supports the physical and emotional welfare of children residing in San Diego County placed at risk because their care givers are involved in a custody dispute, marital dissolution action or ongoing domestic conflict. We make awareness presentations to the public and we offer specialized training for family law professionals. Beyond the specific information we present, our goal is to stimulate discussion on how to diminish the damage done to children involved in the family law process and promote continuous improvement in this area.

SDFLCC Announces Book Distribution Program!



How many times have you wanted a book that can help parents explain divorce and co-parenting to their children? The San Diego Family Law Council For Children is pleased to announce its "Books 4 Kids" program.

Our first "Book 4 Kids" is It's Not Your Fault Koko Bear: A Read-Together Book For Parents and Young Children During Divorce by Vicki Lansky. This book, which has earned 5 stars on Amazon.com is a must-read for parents and young children experiencing the breakup of the family. This book contains a story for children with accompanying notes for parents. SDFLCC is pleased to make this book available at a discount to attorneys, counselors, therapists and all professionals who work with divorcing children, parents and families at the discounted price of \$5.00 for distribution to clients. Members of SDFLCC have also purchased the book so that copies can be distributed at no cost to children/families who otherwise could not afford to purchase the book. To learn more, contact Susan Griffin at 619.294.9852 or e-mail us at info@sdcouncil4children.org



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Vice President:
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Dana Wynn, Esq.


Please Visit Our Website! www.sdcouncil4children.org

The SDFLCC website allows you to access resources and information whenever you wish. The goal of the SDFLCC website is to provide a resource for parents and professionals where information, advice and assistance regarding needs of dual-household children can be found.

Our website includes:

-Links to other websites providing local resources for Step-Parenting, Anger Management, Domestic Violence, Visitation Supervision, Counseling and Parenting Classes.

- A bibliography of helpful, current books and articles for children, parents and professionals.

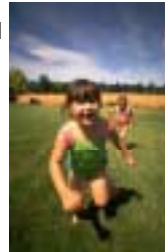
-Links to sites providing education and advice for dealing with family issues and assistance in helping children and parents adapt to living in a dual-household custody environment.

- Current and past issues of our newsletter.

SDFLCC & SDCBA Holds First MCLE Seminar

In September 2002, SDFLCC and the Family Law Section of the San Diego County Bar Association, held its first seminar, which offered both information on a diverse range of current topics in family law and MCLE continuing education credit. The Seminar, entitled "The Future of Child Custody Litigation" was attended by well over 150 members of the Bar. Judge H. Ronald Domnitz served as the moderator of the seminar. Keynote speaker, Presiding Judge James Millikan, provided an overview of the role of the family courts in child custody disputes. Attorney Tim Smith presented an infor-

mative overview of the role of minor's counsel in the family courts. Professor Janet Bowermaster of California Western School of Law addressed aspects of the relative strengths/weaknesses of confidential versus non-confidential family court mediation. Clinical Psychologist and child custody evaluator Robert A. Simon, Ph.D. provided the attendees with an introduction to briefer, focused child custody evaluations. Private mediator Penny An-



gel-Levy, MFT, discussed the role of extended mediation in resolving child custody disputes. Finally, we were honored to have a distinguished panel featuring Judges Jeffrey Bostwick, William Cannon, Christine Goldsmith Joan Halgren, and Commissioner Harry Powazek. This was a unique opportunity to hear discussion and ask questions of local jurists outside of an adversarial arena. Judge Domnitz served as moderator of this discussion. SDFLCC is currently working towards another seminar in 2004. Watch the newsletter for details!

AGENCY PROFILE: San Diego District Attorney's Office Child Abduction Unit

The San Diego District Attorney's Office started the Child Abduction Unit in 1981. It was established to fulfill the duties set forth in Family Code sections 3130 and 3131 which requires the DA's office to find parents who are hiding with children who are the subject of a child custody suit. Family Code section 3132 authorizes the DA's office to work on behalf of the Court and not for either party. This code section is important because it allows the DA's office expeditious access to the Family Court in order to resolve these time-sensitive cases. Each year, the Child Abduction Unit fields 1200-1500 telephonic reports. 300-350 of these turn into actual investigative cases. The Child Abduction Unit is headed by Garry Haehnle, Deputy District Attorney and is staffed by seven DA investigators, two paralegals and one clerical support person.

There are two services that the DA's office provides: (1) the location and service of process of child custody related filings upon parents whose location is unknown, and (2) the location and recovery of children who have been taken, de-

tained or concealed in violation of a custody and visitation order.

The investigators in the Child Abduction Unit have traversed the country to recover and bring children home. They are on call day and night and have to pack to travel at a moment's notice. Their travels have taken them from Maine to Hawaii and Alaska to Florida, from the smallest of towns to the largest of cities. The Child Abduction Unit, with the cooperation of some foreign governments, has successfully recovered children taken to foreign countries as well.

These trips take great deal of planning and preparation, requiring coordination with the courts and law enforcement in jurisdictions where the child and parent have been located. The investigators are also required to make appearances in courts in the various jurisdictions, often having to educate judges on the intricacies of the Uniform Child Custody Jurisdiction and Enforcement Act. The investigators work very closely with the paralegals on each case, making the Child Abduction Unit a true team effort. The Child

"Our Child Abudction Unit has been looked at by local, state and national law enforcement as a model of success. I am very proud of our office and our work."

—Garry Haehnle, Director

Abduction Unit has developed a great working relationship with the Family Court, Family Court Services and the Family Law Facilitators, social services and county counsel. These relationships have proven to be very effective in making sure children are with the appropriate parent or agency and that the children are returned with the least amount of trauma possible. Member of the Child Abduction Unit have played roles in various child abduction prevention programs and activities. The Child Abduction units around the State of California work very closely together to ensure that these cases are handles uniformly throughout the state. Additionally, relationships have been established around the country that make the recovery of children as effective

Board Member Profile: The Honorable H. Ronald Domnitz

Judge Ronald Domnitz was appointed to the Bench in 1983 and handled a spectrum of assignments including Family Law (4 years), Civil Litigation (3 years), Municipal Court Presiding Judge (4 years) and 9 years as a Criminal Trial Judge. Recently, Judge Domnitz was the judicial officer that presided over the preliminary hearing regarding the abduction and murder of Danielle VanDam. In addition to his judicial duties, Judge Domnitz has spent 10 years teaching Ethics, Family Law and Community Property at the California Western School of Law and the Thomas Jefferson School of Law.

Respected nationally as well as internationally, Judge Domnitz was selected by

the American Bar Association to conduct judicial trial seminars in Bosnia and the Ukraine. He is also active in various pro-

“There are millions of dollars expended to rehabilitate children who have committed crimes, but almost no funds are directed to the kids who are suffering the trauma of family breakup. These children deserve our attention”
The Hon. H. Ronald Domnitz

grams designed to serve the international judicial community. He is a frequent and sought after public speaker and was twice elected as “Judge Of The Year” by

the Trial Lawyers Association.

The concept of the San Diego Family Law Council was proposed by Judge Domnitz in 2000; and with the assistance of the Board of Directors, he was instrumental in bringing it into being on January 1st, 2001. This Council is the only one of its kind serving the needs of dual household children. He has devoted many hours to this effort despite the fact that he is not serving on the Family Court bench.



Here’s An Interesting Website:

<http://divorcesupport.about.com>



We Need Your Involvement!

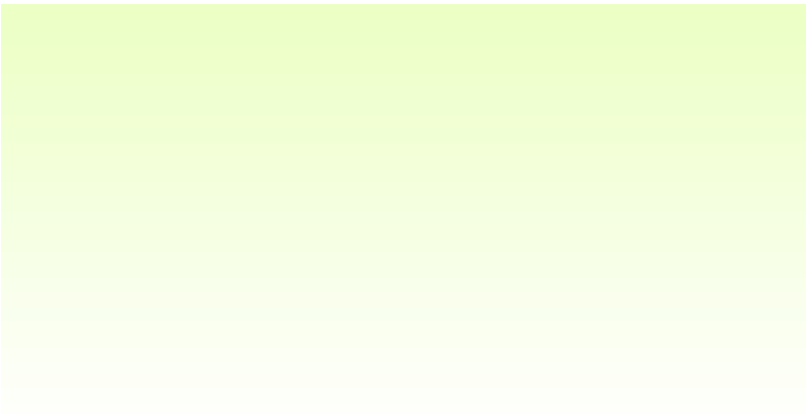
The San Diego Family Law Council For Children is a one-of-a-kind group of concerned professionals who recognize the urgent need to shine the light on the needs of children experiencing the breakup of the family. These children are at increased risk for depression, anxiety, acting out behavior, drug and alcohol abuse and sexual acting out to name but a few of the potential tragic outcomes. The SDFLCC is dedicated to serving as a resource for information and as a gateway to services in our community to help make a positive impact on the lives of children impacted by the breakup of the family. We hold informal, open monthly meetings where we discuss current topics in family law and direct the Counsel’s activities. Your ideas, your talents, your efforts, your financial support and your involvement in the council will contribute to the fulfillment of the mission. Our email is info@sdCouncil4children.org

A membership application is on the next page.



**The San Diego Family Law
Council For Children**

1286 University Avenue, Suite 309
San Diego, CA 92103
Info@sdCouncil4children.org



Please Join the San Diego Family Law Council for Children. Membership is \$50 per year. All dues go towards supporting SDFLCC programs that support children. There are no paid staff...all of the work for the council is done on a volunteer basis. SDFLCC is a 501(c)3 organization.

Form of Address (Dr., Judge, etc.) _____

First Name _____

Last Name _____

Title _____

Organization _____

Street Address _____

Address (cont.) _____

City _____

State/Province _____

Zip/Postal Code _____

Country _____

Work Phone _____

Cell Phone _____

Pager _____

Home Phone _____

Other Phone _____

FAX _____

E-mail _____

URL _____

Date of Membership _____

Dues Paid to Date _____

Dues Current _____

Current Position _____

Positions Held _____

Availability for Presentations _____

Resource Contributions _____

Other _____