

Letters

Letters: December 14, 2007

Golden oldies for the troops

Thanks for [Michael Olesker](#)'s Dec. 12 column, "Would you like fries with your oldies?"

I have had the pleasure of hearing "the singing stockbroker," and in fact our quartet, Stardust Memories, shared the stage with him on a couple of occasions. I am delighted to know that [Gary Richman](#), along with the [McDonald's](#) in [Pikesville](#), is raising awareness of the program begun by A Taste of [Home Inc.](#) to send calling cards to members of the [Maryland National Guard](#) who are in harm's way. WCBM has done a tremendous job in helping to publicize this. This is a very worthwhile effort: 100 percent of every dollar goes to supporting our sons and daughters who are serving in dangerous and distant lands.

As a veteran Army nurse, I know the importance of keeping our soldiers mission-focused. Hearing the voice of a loved one can help lift the enormous weight of long periods of deployment. You may wish to let your readers know that they can buy calling cards for our troops by visiting atasteofhome.org.

[Eleanor M. Henry](#)

Secretary, A Taste of Home Inc.

[Baltimore](#)

It is a widely accepted concept that all structures that stand the test of time need a strong foundation. That same concept can be applied to the structure of the Baltimore City child welfare system and its improved relationship with foster parents.

This recognition is a rather recent occurrence and goes a long way in improving foster care in our community. There was a time in the not-too-distant past when foster parents were treated as temporary baby sitters. Interaction between the foster parents and the child welfare managers was minimal. Fortunately for the Baltimore community, the new Department of Human Resources, led by [Secretary Brenda Donald](#), and the [Baltimore City Department of Social Services](#), headed by [Director Samuel Chambers](#), have discarded the outdated baby sitter concept and moved to strengthen the foster parent foundation needed to support our most at-risk children.

Foster parents now receive comprehensive child welfare training from the [University of Maryland's Child Welfare Training Academy](#); specialized training from the Baltimore City Department of Social Services; and additional training from local and national conferences. Foster parents also serve on high-level city and state committees charged with improving outcomes for foster children in the area of education, mental health, the legal process, training, and recruitment and retention. They are also co-trainers and members of review teams that monitor Baltimore City Department of Social Services processes.

The evolution of foster parents from "baby sitters" to professional volunteer team members received a boost under the guidance of Secretary Donald. She and Director Chambers are developing an army of well-trained community members who will be the a strong foundational support for our children and Baltimore City.

Sam Macer
Foster parent
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