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A HELPING HAND**
SAFEPath GETTING READY
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Marietta Daily Journal

Lifestyle

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From left, Hearing Children's Voices Award Recipient Lisa Olens and Hearing Children's Voices event chair Gannon Gingrey Manning pose outside of the SafePath Children's Advocacy Center in Marietta. The 10th annual event will be held on March 19 at the Cobb Energy Performing Arts Centre.

Gala to honor child advocate

Lisa Olens the recipient of SafePath's 2011 Hearing Children's Voices Award

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On March 19, celebrate the success of SafePath Children's Advocacy Center at the Hearing Children's Voices Gala at Cobb Energy Performing Arts Center.

Guests will join Gannon Gingrey Manning, chair, at the prestigious black-tie evening of dinner, entertainment and an auction.

Manning dedicates herself to children's charities. She said SafePath provides a non-threatening centralized location where members of the community provide support and services to the child victim and non-offending caregivers. She said that SafePath reduces the trauma to children and their families by offering a comprehensive, professional and child-friendly approach to allegations of child abuse.

"You can look at what they're doing and see their results right in your community," Manning said. "SafePath affects our community everyday."

Hearing Children's Voices Gala is a perfect way for the community to be involved in the well-being of children. The purpose of the gala is to raise funds for programs at SafePath, the Southeast premier child abuse center and to educate the community about child abuse.

"(Child abuse) is one of those issues that people don't want to discuss," said volunteer Lisa Olens, the wife of Attorney General Sam Olens. She became involved



Olens helped members of the Junior League of Cobb-Marietta to fill in the outlined mural lining the walls at the center in 2009.

at SafePath through her husband, a former board member, and has volunteered with the organization for years.

A tireless advocate and voice for all children, Lisa Olens will receive the 2011 Hearing Children's Voices Award at the gala.

"(Child abuse) is not a pretty issue, so a lot of people don't want to go there," she said. "It's hard to find advocates and champions for the cause. There's truly a need in the community."

According to Lisa Olens, most people will be touched by child abuse or know someone who has. SafePath's acute and chronic counseling is invaluable to the victims of these crimes and its assistance to the district attorney essential to the potential prosecution of these cases.

What really makes SafePath unique is their focus on the child. "(SafePath) brings all the necessary resources to one location to reduce the trauma to the child and to the family," she said. "They really serve as a safe haven to those most vulnerable and helpless in our society, the children."

"The real heroes are the staff at SafePath and the children and families who have to put their lives back together after going through something like this," Lisa Olens said.

For tickets to the gala and sponsorship opportunities, call (770) 801-3465 or visit www.supportsafepath.com. Standard tickets are \$150 per person. SafePath is located at 736 Whitlock Ave., Suite 600, Marietta in West Park Government Center.



10TH ANNUAL HEARING CHILDREN'S VOICES GALA



Photos provided by the MCH
SafePath Children's Advocacy Center presented its 10th annual Hearing Children's Voices Gala on March 19. Above: From left are Robert Snelson, SafePath board vice president, and his wife, Judy; first lady Sandra Deal and Gov. Nathan Deal; Jinger Robins, SafePath executive director; and Bonnie and Don Powell, SafePath Community Council.



Above left: From left are SafePath Board President Ed Lee, Robins, Attorney General Sam Olens, 2011 Hearing Children's Voices Award recipient Lisa Olens, and Gov. and first lady Deal. Above right: Lesa Hall, left, and 2011 Hearing Children's Voices Gala Master of Ceremonies Ted Hall from 11 Alive News.



Above left: Marietta residents Rachel and Earl Smith, chair of Friends of the Strand board of directors. Above center: City Councilman Van Pearlberg and his wife, Patti, both of Marietta. Above right: Nora and Ed Moulton of Marietta.



Above left: Shawn and Johnnica Blessingill of Canton. Above center: Sarah and Dan Styf of Marietta. Above right: David and Melanie Couchman of Sandy Springs.



Above left: Kamy and Little Molavi of Sandy Springs. Above center: From left are Marietta residents David and Brittany Bottoms and Brittany and Ben Lowery. Above right: Nancy and Richard Chambers of Atlanta.