

## 2008 Lives In Bloom Gala To Honor Jack and Marci Williams

As this issue of *Walker Talk* goes to press, the final preparations are underway for the 2008 *Lives in Bloom* Gala. On May 3rd, we will gather to celebrate the work and accomplishments of many in the Walker community. This year Walker is proud to honor two very special friends.

Jack and Marci Williams will be recognized for their decades of support, both through the award-winning television program, "Wednesday's Child" and through their foundation, The Jack Williams Endowment for Wednesday's Child. The television program has directly helped several children at Walker find adoptive homes, and the foundation has awarded thousands in grant money to Walker to help improve the lives of struggling children, adolescents and families.

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"It was more than 25 years ago when Jack and his broadcast team first visited our Needham campus and told the story of a young boy who was living here at Walker. Through 'Wednesday's Child' that boy found an adoptive home," recalls Walker executive director Dr. Richard W. Small. "We are especially grateful for the support that 'Wednesday's Child' and the foundation have given to some of our neediest kids over the years."

Since 1981, WBZ-TV News anchor Jack Williams has presented "Wednesday's Child," a weekly segment about a child with special needs in search of a permanent home.



*Jack Williams and his wife Marci will be honored for their nearly three decades of support of Walker, and of children with special needs throughout the region.*

Over the years the segment has helped more than 630 special-needs children find loving families. Mr. Williams has been honored at the White House by President Bill Clinton with the first Adoption 2002 Excellence Award, and also received a Presidential Citation from President Ronald Reagan for "Wednesday's Child" in June 1986. He has received eight honorary doctorates from Massachusetts colleges.

In 2000, the Williams' founded an endowment to ensure long-term funding for special needs adoptions. The project originally began when the couple set out to raise enough funds to help the Massachusetts Adoption Resource Exchange (MARE) to buy a computer. Today, The Jack Williams Endowment for Wednesday's Child helps many local charities, including Walker, with grants totaling \$250,000 annually.

"Marci and I have always believed that every child deserves a chance," says Mr. Williams.

While Mr. Williams is the public face of Wednesday's Child, he is quick to credit his wife as "the heart and soul of the operation." The charity operates out of the Williams' home without employees. Mrs. Williams manages all aspects of the fundraising efforts, from handling the donations to thanking each contributor personally for his or her gift.

"The people who work with these special children are very dedicated and hard working. They and the loving, adoptive families are really the ones doing the hard work. Jack and I really admire them," she says.

The admiration is mutual, says Dr. Small. "Walker is very fortunate to have Jack and Marci Williams as friends."

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*Left: Jack Williams turns the microphone over to a Walker student on a recent installment of Wednesday's Child.*