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Photo by Sharon Brooks

Marie Babin, Annie Stewart, Sarah Wilson and Jesse Doiron help build Bridges to Life in Texas.

Photographer builds 'Bridges to Life'

By Sharon Brooks
Staff Writer

Photographer Sarah Wilson joined Bridges to Life at Lamar University Wednesday to photograph victims of violent crime for a photo essay that is scheduled to appear in Texas Monthly in the summer of 2007.

Wilson's photo essay will bring the work of Bridges to Life founder John Sage (see related story, page 1 B) to life in a 12-page color spread in the monthly publication. Sage's vision of a prison reintegration program involving both prison inmates and victims of crimes similar to those the inmates committed themselves took shape seven years ago with the beginning of the Bridges to Life rehabilitation program in the LeBlanc Unit in Beaumont. Sage's idea was designed to create a "bridge" between crime victims and offenders by bringing the victims into prisons to give testimonials about how they have suffered due to offenders similar to the ones in the program. Wilson's work will "juxtapose" portraits of victims with portraits of offenders of similar crimes.

Wilson said Sage became aware of her work when he saw her photo exhibit, "Jasper, Texas: The Healing of a Com-

munity in Crisis." The exhibit featured pictures of the Jasper community in the aftermath of the James Byrd dragging murder that devastated the town years ago. Wilson's photos appeared in Ricardo Ainslie's 2004 book, "Long Dark Road."

"I have photographed three prisons so far," Wilson said. "Two men's prisons, and one women's prison."

Wilson said the crimes committed by offenders in the program have a wide range.

"One man had robbed 40 convenient stores," Wilson remembered. "Another was in for a murder he committed when he was 16. He is in his late 40s now."

Bridges to Life Regional Coordinator for the Southeast Texas Region Marie Babin was at the reception center on the eighth floor of the Mary and John Gray Library for the portrait session.

"The program gives offenders a face and a family to associate with their crimes," Babin said. "It can create a cleansing effect for the victims."

"So many people never get to tell their story," Wilson agreed. "These men and women are getting a chance to confront their fears."

Annie Stewart, a victim-volunteer, also agreed.

"At first, it was very scary,"

Stewart said. "Every time I do it, it heals a part of me that I was hiding. It helps me deal with what happened to me. I never know what I am going to do or how it will affect me, but it helps. When I joined Bridges to Life, that was the first time anyone ever told me they were sorry. The prisoners did that."

Stewart remembers the "cycle of abuse" she came to expect. It started for her during childhood. Stewart was forced to clean up blood from the floor of her home after her parents' fights while being repeatedly kicked by her mother. Stewart said that after her father left, her mother's boyfriend molested her. After being abused as a child, Stewart expected the abuse she received as an adult. Stewart said she was kidnapped, raped and locked in an attic for 3 1/2 years.

"I thought abuse was the norm," Stewart said.

She said she wants the offenders to know it is not normal to abuse others.

"If I am able to affect the thinking of these offenders so they remember my face and know that I am a real person, then that's what I want to do," Stewart said.

Babin said the program does not work with sex

See BUILD on page 19 A

BUILD

from page 18 A

offenders in prison for sexual crimes, but many of the offenders themselves have experienced sexual abuse and some participants may have committed sex crimes in the past. She said by week four of the program most participants exhibit signs of change. Although the program does not shorten the length of the inmate's prison term, the behavior change produced by the group can lead to positive results by improving the attitude of the participant. She also pointed out the percentage of the program's participants who come back to jail was significantly lower than average. Babin said 50 percent to 60 percent of prisoners not involved in Bridges end up back in prison for the same crimes they were in for initially. Out of the all Bridges participants, only 13 percent come back, and only 1 percent for the same crime.

Bridges to Life victim-volunteer and LU professor Jesse Doiron said that of the 13 percent many are parole violators.

"The fact that only 1 percent of these are violent reoffenders says a lot about the program," Doiron said. "I want to thank Sarah Wilson and Texas Monthly. They have been very beneficial to the program. This story can't be told in words alone."

Jefferson County Grand Jury

January Term, 2007

Criminal District Court

Cases indicted by the grand jury on March 29, 2007

Indict.	Defendant	Birthdate	Charge	Indict.	Defendant	Birthdate	Charge
07-00372	Rodney Steven McGuire	6-13-78	Injury To A Child	07-00339	Sarah Louise Seno	6-6-66	Credit Card Abuse
07-00306	Gregory Tom Holland		Felony Theft	07-00340	Dena Marie Johnson	4-4-89	UUMV
07-00307	Tatanisha Lesean Hood	5-28-72	Sex Offender Registration	07-00341	Darrell Lynn Miller	10-31-59	UUMV
07-00308	Odell Dyson Jr.	11-9-68	Evade/Use Of Mtr Veh/Prior	07-00342	Martin Jackson Minyard	7-9-63	UUMV
07-00309	Odell Dyson	1-29-68	Poss C/S (Cocaine)	07-00343	Derrick Dewayne Jarvis	2-19-80	Evade Det W/Mtr Veh
07-00310	Adrain Gemal Hollis	7-19-87	Poss C/S (Cocaine)	07-00344	Carlos Acosta Herrera	7-10-64	Evade Det W/Mtr Veh
07-00311	Dewey Haven II	1-27-78	Poss C/S (Cocaine)	07-00345	Donald David Redeau	11-2-61	DWI 3rd
07-00312	Donald James Wallace	9-13-86	Poss C/S (Cocaine)	07-00346	Felipe Parra Cardenas	9-16-89	Intoxicated Manslaughter
07-00313	Joaney Lee Malone	1-4-77	Poss C/S (Meth.)	07-00347	Diana Boudreaux	1-20-60	Prostitution
07-00314	Kenneth Ray Newton	7-2-62	Poss C/S (Cocaine)	07-00348	Aimee Lynn Cormier	11-22-76	Injury To A Child
07-00315	Glenn Allen Price	10-29-82	Poss C/S (Cocaine)	07-00349	Aaron Rashad Parker	7-8-88	Robbery
07-00316	Bobby Boyd Oneal	7-24-51	Poss (Meth.)	07-00350	Bryan David Williamson	10-28-58	DWI/Child Passenger
07-00317	Jordan Vaughn Neveaux	5-26-89	Poss C/S (Cocaine)	07-00351	Kourtney Duncan	8-21-86	Retaliation
07-00318	Ivan Gonzalez-Rodriguez	10-12-81	Poss C/S (Cocaine)	07-00352	Jonathon Russell Staggs	1-2-80	Assault/FV
07-00319	Wayne Watson	1-6-64	Felony Theft	07-00353	Roland Joseph Angelle	9-16-34	Theft
07-00320	Melvin Howard	7-24-73	Felony Theft	07-00354	Jerome Ray Goodman	12-5-87	Agg Assault
07-00321	Wayne Watson	10-6-64	UUMV	07-00355	Reginald Dawn Eaglin	3-20-88	Deadly Conduct
07-00322	Steve Bowman Jr.	12-7-70	Burglary Building	07-00356	Andrew David Reed	5-6-85	Burglary Habitation
07-00323	Noel Richard Casper	11-10-56	Felony Theft (Enhanced)	07-00357	Brian Keith Williams, Jr.	6-27-88	Agg Robbery
07-00324	Noel Richard Casper	11-10-56	Felony Theft (Enhanced)	07-00358	Remus Texada III	4-6-88	Agg Robbery
07-00325	David Andrew Edwards	1-16-58	Poss C/S (Cocaine)	07-00359	April Dawn Drum	10-8-75	Forgery
07-00326	Archie Lee Wilson	10-6-61	Poss C/S (Cocaine)	07-00360	Kemon Kentay Hollins	6-12-87	Evade Det W/Mtr Veh
07-00327	Jerry Patrick Wagner	11-13-70	Aggravated Assault	07-00361	Michael Jeriod Spikes	7-8-7	DWI 3rd
07-00328	Leroy Gipson, Jr.	9-14-64	Sex Offender Registration	07-00362	Jason Kendell Broussard	1-25-82	Poss C/S (Cocaine)
07-00329	Robin Boris Claridy	10-26-65	Evade Det W/Mtr Veh	07-00363	Patricia Renee Alexander	10-27-82	Poss C/S (Cocaine)
07-00330	Donald Ray Darby Jr.	2-8-81	UUMV	07-00364	Jeremy Kelley Williamson	8-5-79	Deliv C/S (Alprazolam)
07-00331	Shahlum Macliharue Kemp	9-30-73	Debit Card Abuse	07-00365	Jeremy Kelley Williamson	8-5-79	Deliv C/S
07-00332	Eric Dwayne Tarver	6-29-78	Assault/Fv Enhanced	07-00366	Michael Ray Ball	1-28-59	Poss C/S (Cocaine)
07-00333	Raymond Fontenot	9-2-55	Injury To Disabled Indiv.	07-00367	Floyd Ramond Sims	12-6-81	Deliv C/S (Cocaine)
07-00334	Sydney Denise Eubanks	6-3-76	Forgery	07-00368	Michael Ray White	5-4-56	Deliv C/S (Cocaine)
07-00335	Louis Joseph Goodeaux	6-3-76	Forgery	07-00369	Chester Lewis Brazier	1-29-73	Poss C/S (Cocaine)
07-00336	Jay Burks	3-27-89	Forgery	07-00370	Bobby Wilson	3-19-79	Poss C/S (Cocaine)
07-00337	Deatra Renell Jackson	5-29-88	UUMV	07-00371	Valencia Lou Cruz	6-20-80	Poss C/S (Cocaine)
07-00338	Don Dynnerrell Lewis	9-1-81	UUMV				

An indictment is not an indication of guilt or innocence; it's only a step in the criminal justice process that allows a case to go forward to trial.

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