

Community News

On their own, not alone

Founder of center for single parents to be honored.

By JAY WAITKUS
SPECIAL TO THE SUN-SENTINEL

A Boca Raton woman is being honored in Washington D.C. for her work helping single parents.

Judy Romanoff will be given the Phoenix Award by Parenting Coalition International, Inc., at the group's annual Parenting Awards at the National Press Club on March 25.

Belinda Rollins, founder and president of the organization, said the prize "honors and supports the work of professionals in the field who use creative ways of promoting parenting."

Romanoff established the Boused National Single Parent Resource Center, Inc., in 1994, after winning a custody battle for her daughter.

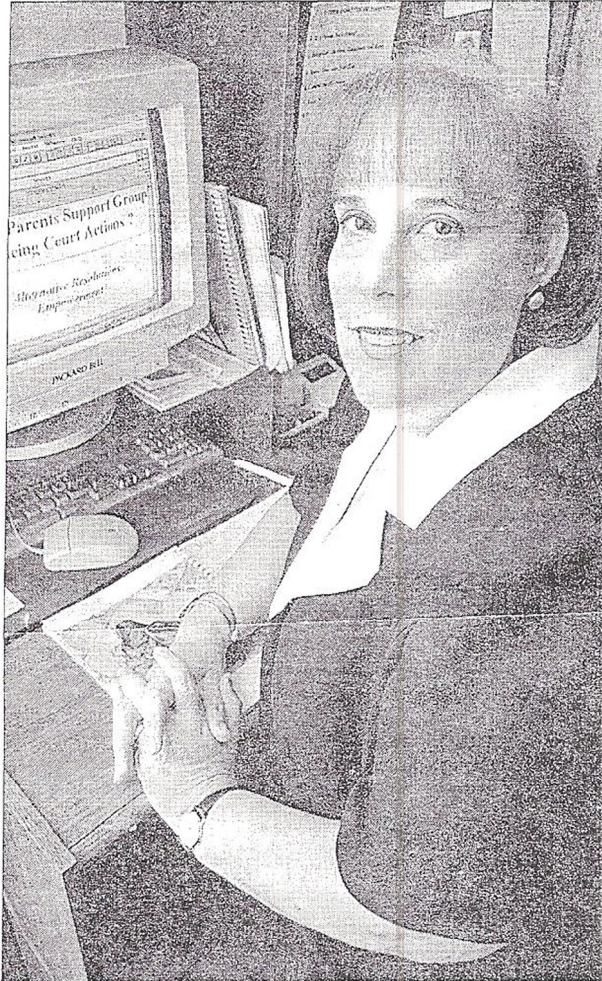
The group provides a six-week program that assists parents with difficulties stemming from divorce. Individual counseling is also offered.

Romanoff said she was "ecstatic" to receive the honor.

"I was shocked, taken aback and very excited to be recognized for my work in creating effective programs on single-parent issues," she said.

Rollins' group, formerly known as the Parents' Day Coalition, was founded five years ago.

"The purpose of the group is simply to promote awareness and resources for parenting," Rollins said, adding that the group sponsors media campaigns, hosts an annual satellite broadcast and produces literature to help meet its objectives.



Judy Romanoff of Boca Raton. Staff photo/ROBERT AZMITIA

Rollins said the coalition's first award ceremony, which was held in 1994, featured a tribute to famous parents from the world of television.

Barbara Billingsley and Florence Henderson attended, and Bill Cosby and Harriet Nelson sent their regards.

The awards ceremony includes categories for students, educators and experts in parenting-related issues.

Past winners have included

former U.S. Sen. Dale Bumpers, D-Ark., pediatrician and author T. Berry Brazelton and Michael Jordan's mother, Deloris Jordan.

Rollins said the keynote speaker at the March 25 event will be Kids House founder Kent Amos, who has adopted 86 children.

The latest Phoenix winner has her share of credentials, too.

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Romanoff is a former guardian ad litem for Palm Beach County and has served as a consultant with the Boca Raton chapter of Colin Powell's group, America's Promise: the Alliance for Youth.

She has also appeared on Maury Povich's television show, been featured on radio programs, written articles for several parenting magazines and founded National Single Parents Family Day, an event formally recognized by the Florida House of Representatives.

Members meet at 7 p.m. Tuesdays in the conference room at 370 W. Camino Gardens.

The nonprofit group is partially subsidized by a trust fund a family member set up for Romanoff 25 years ago.

Romanoff said the group is seeking volunteers, additional meeting sites and financial support through grants and benefactors.

She has also introduced a Web site with a resource directory and information about her group and established an advisory council that includes attorneys, psychologists and guid-

ance counselors.

Rollins said Romanoff is "very serious" about her cause.

"She's a real hard go-getter in trying to address single parent needs in her community," Rollins said.

Laurie Kuber, a pharmacy technician who lives in Lake Worth, said Romanoff's organization has proven to be "a tremendous help" to her.

Kuber, who has a son, 4, and a daughter, 2, said she moved to South Florida from Tampa Bay when her husband left her. Kuber said Romanoff's group taught her how to prepare for divorce proceedings. She now has sole custody of her children.

Theresa Stanislaw, a service contract administrator from Boca Raton, said Romanoff's group provides help in coping with anger and stress.

Like Kuber, Stanislaw, who has a 2-year-old son, said Romanoff deserves the award.

"I hope for the organization's sake that this helps her to reach more parents than it already has, because it's a good organization," Stanislaw said.

For information on the National Single Parent Resource Center, Inc., call 561-395-5512 or visit www.single-parents.net on the Web.

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BELINDA ROLLINS, FOUNDER OF PARENTING COALITION INTERNATIONAL, INC.