



Voice

Summer 2004 Volume Five Issue Three

¡Celebrando Mi Cultura!

*National Puerto
Rican Day
Parade 2004*

*From Risk
to Opportunity*

*Youth + Chisel +
Glue = Music*



From the Executive Director's Desk



Voice

The spring and summer of 2004 have been filled with exciting new activities for Casey Family Services and our colleagues in child welfare.

In May, an especially successful, first-of-its-kind national Blue Ribbon Campaign marking National Foster Care Month brought tens of thousands of individuals together from coast to coast to honor foster parents.

In June, foster care alumni and youth joined experts from across the country in Washington, DC for the 15th annual release of the Annie E. Casey Foundation's KIDS COUNT Data Book. This year the event included a youth summit on the challenges faced by young people transitioning into adulthood. I know I speak for all Casey staff in expressing how proud we were of Casey youth Marta and Rob and all the young men and women for their courage in sharing their own experiences and insights.

In July, we launched an innovative and promising pilot program to improve therapeutic foster care for severely troubled children. This effort represents our first collaborative endeavor with the Yale Child Study Center, a relationship we hope to see grow in the years ahead.

A common thread throughout these and other developments has been the need to address the alarming lack of adequate services and supports for adolescents both in care and transitioning from care into adulthood. At the same time, the disproportionately high number of African-American and Hispanic children and youth represented in the most at-risk segment of this population is a matter of great concern to all of us.

As we enjoy the summer and its traditional picnics, outings, baseball games and parades – including the wonderful Puerto Rican Day festivities – it's important to remember the children who cannot share in the fun. We must encourage families, especially families of color, to provide a meaningful and lasting connection for these children. We must enlist caring adults as mentors, volunteers and community resources to help struggling youth successfully navigate their journey to adulthood.

There is something for everyone to do. No effort is too small, and every effort will make a difference.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Raymond L. Torres". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Raymond L. Torres

National Puerto Rican Day Parade

¡Que Viva Puerto Rico!



Children wearing traditional Puerto Rican dress, join Raymond Torres on the Casey Family Services float.

Actor and comedian John Leguizamo was one of many celebrities who participated in the parade. Here John and Carmen Burgos wait for the parade to begin.

The Casey float played a mixture of traditional Puerto Rican songs and dance music that kept everyone moving to the beat.

¡Que Viva Puerto Rico! That was the chant echoing through the streets of New York on Sunday, June 13, during the 9th annual National Puerto Rican Day Parade. More than a million people gathered to watch and participate in the lively, day-long celebration, including nearly 60 staff and family members from the Bridgeport, Hartford, New Haven, Baltimore and Providence Casey Family Services offices.

Casey Family Services Executive Director, Raymond Torres, set the wheels in motion for the agency's participation in the event when he met the National Puerto Rican Day Parade Chairman last fall. "Casey Family Services is deeply committed to diversity," he said. "We work with a significant number of Hispanic children and families, and I wanted to give them the opportunity to experience a sense of pride in their culture and heritage."

Last summer, families and staff members from the Bridgeport Division participated in their city's Puerto Rican Day Parade, winning first prize in the float competition. Bridgeport Division Director Linda Goldenberg said she was eager to participate in an event that is recognized at the national level this year, and to come together with families and staff from other Casey division offices.

"It is a day for people of all ethnic backgrounds to learn about and experience Hispanic and Puerto Rican culture."

"This parade is unique because of the sense of family and camaraderie between the spectators and participants," Goldenberg observed. "It is a joyful, festival atmosphere, with colorful floats, upbeat music, and everyone waving or wearing a Puerto Rican flag – whether they are Latino or not. It is

a day for people of all ethnic backgrounds to learn about and experience Hispanic and Puerto Rican culture."

Carmen Burgos, of the Casey Family Services communications department in New Haven, helped to organize the agency's participation in the event and worked with the designers who created the Casey float. Casey was able to secure a float position in the national parade by partnering with FLECHAS, Inc., a grassroots community group in New Haven.

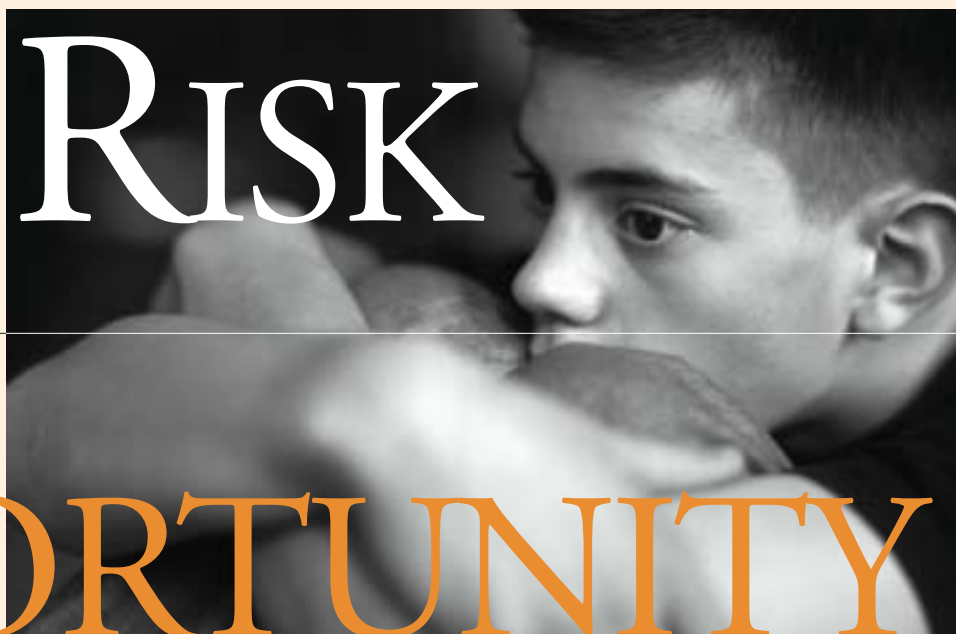
For Torres, participating in the national event with hundreds of other people of Puerto Rican and Hispanic heritage gave him a tremendous sense of pride. "I realized how powerful it is to join together and celebrate our cultural roots and the diversity of the United States," he said. "It was a once-in-a-lifetime experience."

MOVING YOUTH

FROM RISK

TO

OPPORTUNITY



For the first time since the *KIDS COUNT Data Book* was launched 15 years ago, the release of the annual state-by-state report card on the well being of children and youth this year included a youth summit – a dynamic exchange of experience and ideas held at George Washington University’s Marvin Center in the heart of Washington, DC Moderated by CNN News Anchor Judy Woodruff, the summit provided a platform for experts and youth alike to voice their concerns, suggestions and hopes for the future.

Casey Family Services foster care alumni, Robertson Odilon of Massachusetts and Marta Acevedo of Connecticut joined 15 other young people from across the country for a frank and provocative discussion of the struggle facing an alarmingly high number of our nation’s youth as they work their way toward adulthood. Rob and Marta in turn were joined by experts in the field, including Shay Bilchek, president of the Child Welfare League of America, Judge Delores Briones of El Paso, Texas, Geoffrey Canada, president of the Harlem Children’s Zone, Douglas Nelson, president of the Annie E. Casey Foundation, and Victoria Rowell,



actress and founder of the Rowell Foster Children’s Positive Plan.

“Hopefully, *KIDS COUNT* will make a lot of difference not just for foster children, but for the whole community,” Marta, now a sophomore at Livingston College in North Carolina, said. “There are foster kids out there who are doing things for themselves. People should know how intelligent we can be and what we can do.

“I enjoyed the *KIDS COUNT* panel very much. It was good to hear what people had

to say,” Marta recounted. “And if I was going to give a message to foster children it would be two things:

- Get as much education as you can, because if you don’t, you’re not going to get anywhere.
- Keep your head high because people will want to knock you down. But if you believe in something, you can make it happen, so keep your head high.”

“Arguably, these kids, probably numbering more than 2 million, are the most at-risk young people in America. Despite the natural talent that most possess, they are the least likely of all of our kids to succeed to adulthood.”



Youth from the National Association of Service and Conservation Corps in New Jersey arrive at the KIDS COUNT event.

Unlike Marta, nearly 4 million young men and women between the ages of 18 and 24 are adrift in society, without homes, jobs or education, according to UPS Chairman and C.E.O. Mike Eskew, who is the Annie E. Casey Foundation Board Vice-Chair.

“Despite some important gains for many low-income families, our child poverty rate remains among the highest in the developed world,” he told the audience of more than 200. “Simply put” he continued, “the *KIDS COUNT Data Book* illustrates that while millions of America’s children are doing better, far too many kids remain exposed to challenges and risks that compromise their chance of achieving their full potential as adults.

“This year we are focusing on a group of young people who, despite overall progress, remain at great risk,” he added. “Too many of our youth are finding the road to successful adult transition particularly tough, especially those young people who have dropped out of school, spent time in the criminal justice system, been placed in foster care or become teen parents. Our country can ill afford to see so many of these youth fail.”

Annie E. Casey President Douglas Nelson observed that without strong relationships, experiences and opportunities, young people risk becoming “disconnected” from the guidance, practical help, role models and financial resources they need to successfully navigate the transition from adolescence to adulthood.

Research suggests that the 3.8 million young people between the ages of 18-24 who fall into this category are going to experience a lifetime of challenges, including chronic underemployment, persistent poverty, weak family formations, a higher probability of health and substance abuse problems, as well as an increased likelihood of incarceration.

“Hopefully, KIDS COUNT will make a lot of difference not just for foster children, but for the whole community.”

A group even more at risk than others is that made up of former foster youth, who have been detained or incarcerated in our juvenile facilities, or have parented children while in their teens. And they include youth who have left high school without any degree.

“Arguably, these kids, probably numbering more than 2 million, are the most at-risk young people in America. Despite the natural talent that most possess, they are the least likely of all of our kids to succeed to adulthood,” Nelson said. “For these and other reasons, we believe that these young adults are the people who deserve our most

urgent attention. Hundreds of millions of intervention dollars have been invested by public systems and private entities on behalf of these kids, yet their chances for success still remain remote.”

What that says, he added, is that “we are spending a fortune to do badly.”



Actress and former foster child Victoria Rowell was a panelist at KIDS COUNT Youth Summit.

Panelist Veasna Rin Hover, 22, who was accompanied by his wife, Daniela, also 22 and a former foster child, and their 2-year-old son, told of his arrival in this country alone, a refugee from Cambodia. He was adopted at the age of 6. But, a scarce six years later, after problems arose in the adoptive home, he found himself in a foster care group facility. His story of struggle is inseparable from that of his wife, who was placed in a series of foster homes along with their son. When they were “emancipated” from foster care, they decided to move to Connecticut, where Daniela applied for and won a scholarship to Trinity College. Veasna interrupted his own college education to get a job; he pointed out that there was no one to support him. “My wife was my support system,” he said. “She still is.”

MOVING YOUTH FROM RISK TO OPPORTUNITY

KIDS COUNT



More than 20,000 foster youth age out of the foster care system each year.

Former foster youth Earl Sampson, 27, is a production coordinator with Sony Pictures in Los Angeles. He credits Victoria Rowell, herself a former foster child, for helping to turn his life around.

Earl had been placed in foster care with his two sisters at age 13. He says the state's intervention was fairly predictable; there had been trouble at home for a long time. Earl's father was in and out of prison. His mother was caught up in drugs. Both were involved with gangs. The state removed Earl and his two younger sisters, and placed them with a grandmother, Rosetta Sampson.

But in 1998, when Rosetta Sampson died – a victim of the cancer she had tried to hide from the children – Earl and one sister were on their own. Their younger sister – then 10 years old – was placed in another foster home.

After emancipating from care, Earl started attending a program at a community center where he later met Victoria. She spoke with him and subsequently arranged for an inter-

view for him with a top executive at Viacom. Earl impressed everyone with his sincerity and willingness to work hard.

Four years later, Earl is a full-time employee on an established show, *One on One*. For him the opportunity to take part in the summit and share his challenges and achievements was both meaningful and exhilarating. "This has been a wonderful experience," he said. "I want to do everything I can to help make things better for kids in the system and coming out of it." A highlight of the event, he adds, was the opportunity to meet Paul and Maureen Casey, nephew and grand niece of the founder of the Annie E. Casey Foundation, Casey Family Services and UPS, Jim Casey.

Earl's champion is very proud of his accomplishments. "Earl is a remarkable young man with a remarkable story," Victoria said. "I'm proud of him and I'm proud to be part of a community that cares about our nation's youth," she said. "And I'm proud of the work that we've been able to do through the Rowell Foster Children's Positive Plan. Not only have we been able to start this intern program with Viacom, Sony and CBS, we're also continuing a program in fine arts, and we've started an education fund for transitioning foster youth." The Casey Foundation and Casey Family Services have helped to make this work possible, she added. She also announced the launch of a new foster care storyline in her daytime CBS television drama "The Young and the Restless."

Douglas Nelson cited the work of Casey Family Services and Casey Family Programs, a foster care agency based in Seattle, as models of programs that work.



He also cited a recent Casey Family Services alumni study that found that about 75 percent of alumni had completed high school, almost half went on to college, and almost 70 percent were gainfully employed. The overwhelming majority had avoided the pitfalls of substance abuse, unplanned pregnancy, homelessness or trouble with the law, outcomes that snare too many of their less well served peers in foster care, he observed.

"We will spend more than \$223 billion at the federal level alone to help the nation's needy kids and families – the amount it currently costs to support programs addressing substance abuse, violence, teen pregnancy, nutrition, school failure and workforce preparation.

"We must make the futures of these at-risk kids a paramount community, state and national priority," Nelson said. "And we must connect a priority on these kids with a hard-headed commitment to data-driven policy and measurable results."

IT'S MY LIFE

National Transition Conference

Once again, Casey Family Services will co-sponsor the second "It's My Life" conference, under the leadership of Casey Family Programs and in cooperation with the Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative.

Following the success of the first such conference, in October 2003, in Austin, Texas, this year's version will occur Oct. 12 – 14th in Sacramento, California. As in 2003, over 400 child welfare and related professionals, including both current youth in care and foster care alumni, will participate in plenary sessions and workshops focused on life skills and transitions for foster youth heading out into the world.

As in 2003, the foundation for the conference comes from Casey Family Programs' "It's My Life" transition services framework, with special emphasis this year on "youth

October 12-14, 2004

Save the date for the second annual

It's My Life Conference

economic success" – with employment, education, and housing seen as the keys to a healthy future. The conference will showcase best and promising practices in policy, implementation, and research on life skills, transitional living, and interdependent living. Attention will also be given to services that enhance youth's chances of being successful once they leave educational, child welfare, juvenile justice, and other systems.

This is not a "youth conference," or a "professional conference," but a conference where youth, alumni and professionals, caregivers, and others learn together from each other. Keynote speakers will be former youth in care – for example, Victoria

Rowell will be the opening keynote speaker – and most workshops will include youth and alumni, along with professionals. Other participants will include social workers, policy makers, teachers and administrators, psychologists, researchers, and parents.

Staff from Casey Family Services will present several workshops on such subjects as transitional housing, transition planning, permanency, youth entrepreneurship, school-to-career, and real world fairs.

For more information, contact David Johnston in New Haven (203-401-6920). Detailed information, including registration details, can be found on Casey Family Programs' website, at www.casey.org.

Casey Family Services Earns High Marks from Accrediting Body

Casey Family Services recently received re-accreditation by the Council on Accreditation (COA). "We are honored to earn this endorsement," Executive Director Raymond Torres said. "COA accreditation attests that an organization meets the highest national standards and is delivering the best quality services to the community it serves." The recognition, effective through 2008, includes family-centered casework, foster and kinship care services, volunteer friendship/mentoring services and prevention and support services.

COA is an international, independent, not-for-profit accrediting body for social and behavioral healthcare services. Its mission is to promote best-practice standards, champion quality services for children, youth and families, and advocate for the value of accreditation.

The COA accreditation process involves an in-depth examination of the organization's compliance with best practice standards. The process includes a review of organizational standards including human resources, financial and risk management and continuous quality improvement as well as 39 ser-

vice standards. The service standards address a full array of child, family, and behavioral healthcare services including financial and debt management, employee assistance program, mental health counseling, substance abuse treatment, foster care, health service areas and a host of other service areas. More than 1,000 private and public organizations serving 6 million children, individuals, and families in the United States and Canada have received accreditation.

LEARNING TO MAKE MUSIC

AT THE YOUTH BUSINESS CENTER

Casey foster youth are participating in a unique program in Bridgeport, Connecticut through a Youth Business Center that houses three enterprises: a guitar-building business, a music studio and a boat-building operation.

Located in the city's downtown Innovation Center, the Youth Business Center helps adolescents who are in foster care, or on probation or parole, to develop life skills as they learn trades. These skills and pre-employment training are essential to help young men and women make a successful transition into adulthood and independent living.

Youth participating in these programs work in 12-week cycles (except for the summer five-week cycle). During each cycle, they work two or three days a week for two hours in the guitar-building, music-production or boat-building business. After each cycle, they can reapply to work in the same business or switch to another one. Each participant earns a salary and receives points for good behavior, such as consistent attendance. The trainees also receive demerits and deductions are taken from their pay for bad behavior.

"We prefer to say this is a job, not a program," says Mitchell dePino, director of Our Piece of the Pie, which oversees the Youth Business Center. "The kids get bonuses if they participate, perform well and have a good attendance record. But they'll also get deductions taken out of their paycheck if they're late for work or don't participate. It's just like a real job."



Richard Vaczek, owner of RLV Instruments in Derby, Connecticut, teaches at-risk youth the art of guitar building as part of a life skills workshop in Bridgeport.

"If one of them doesn't show up, or shows up late, he's not getting paid for that time," says Richard Vaczek, one of the craftsmen who volunteers his time to teach the young people. "We look at this as a job for them. They need to learn how things are handled on a real job. If this were a real job, they wouldn't get paid or they would get fired for not showing up on time."

"The idea is to have them experience new things. We're trying to get them to reach a little bit, to broaden their horizons and give them a bit of a challenge," says Ted Littlejohn a boat-builder who manages this project for Our Piece of the Pie. "Working in these environments teaches the youth how to work as a team and how to conduct themselves on the job. They also learn interviewing and interpersonal skills."

Park City Guitars

Five youth, between the ages of 14 and 16, currently work for Park City Guitars, the guitar-building business. Originally, youth released from juvenile detention were primarily involved, but today the majority of Park City employees are from foster care. "We thought guitar-building would be interesting to offer," says de Pino. "It's a unique opportunity for the kids."

Vaczek, owner of RLV Instruments, a guitar-repair shop in Derby, has taught dozens of youth to build guitars. The instruments they build sell for \$450. "The guitars are selling like hotcakes!" he says. In fact, many of them are already sold even before they are finished.

"I like seeing it when it's finished," says 14-year-old Roberto, who has been building guitars since the program began two years ago. "We do everything: sanding, chiseling, gluing. It's really hard because if you do one thing wrong, nobody's going to buy it." Ramone, 14, says he wants to learn how to play the guitar now that he's helped to build several over the past six months.

"I really enjoy working with this group on developing their level of patience and concentration," says Vaczek. "I try to find each individual's ability and assign tasks accordingly. Some of them just can't focus enough to build certain parts of the instruments."

"So many of these kids have trust issues," says dePino. "We try to give them a sense of security so they'll want to come back and continue working during the next cycle."

National Blue Ribbon Campaign Sounds Call for Families!



Raymond Torres, Victoria Rowell and New York ACS Commissioner William Bell.

From Sharon Stone to Willard Scott, the *New York Times* to *Parade Magazine*, Los Angeles to New York, voices rang out across the country in May, celebrating Foster Care Month and the first national Blue Ribbon Campaign honoring foster parents and appealing for the involvement of more resource families and mentors. Three marquee events, in New York, Los Angeles and Boston, headlined hundreds of additional state and local events that utilized thousands of blue ribbons to symbolize the 542,000 children in America's foster care system.

"All across the country this month, millions of people are wearing this ribbon," said Victoria Rowell, keynote speaker at the May



Casey Family Services spokeswoman Victoria Rowell welcomes Los Angeles foster youth to her annual fundraiser.



Dominick Freeman, 17, a former foster child who was adopted in 2003, speaks at the Golden Heart Gala in New York.

13th Golden Heart Gala in New York, referring to her blue ribbon pin. "It's our effort to symbolize and honor the dedication and commitment that foster parents like you are making every day in the lives of foster children." A star on *The Young and the Restless* for the past 13 years, Ms. Rowell is a former foster child and serves as Casey Family Services' national spokesperson.

Three days later, Ms. Rowell hosted a "Tea at High Noon" at the Beverly Hilton hotel

in Beverly Hills. The event raised money to provide scholarships and employment opportunities in the arts for children in foster care through the Rowell Foster Children's Positive Plan (RFCPP). Ms. Rowell expressed her love and appreciation to her six foster moms, who she said nurtured her and gave her the confidence to achieve her dreams.

That heartfelt gratitude was also evident at Boston's historic State House. With blue ribbons adorning the balcony in the Great Hall, over 200 guests – state officials, including Lieutenant Governor Kerry Healey and Department of Social Services (DSS) Commissioner Harry Spence, foster families, legislators, and child welfare professionals – gathered to pay homage to the foster parents who care for the more than

8,000 foster kids in the Commonwealth. Joining dignitaries on the podium was Raymond Torres, executive director of Casey Family Services, who noted the importance of many organizations and professionals coming together in the common purpose of improving life for foster children. DSS, Massachusetts Adoption Resource Exchange (MARE) Kids Net, the Massachusetts Alliance for Families and the Foster Care Network of the Children's League co-sponsored the celebration.

In total, 36 states participated in events. "The Campaign exceeded our wildest expectations," said Karen Jorgenson, President of the National Foster Parent Association.

The National Foster Care Month Partnership has fundraising plans already underway for next May's campaign, according to Ms. Jorgenson. "Our goal is to have the blue ribbons visible in some way all year round to remind us that every foster child deserves our care and our commitment."

Mother's Day Every Day

When Imogene Moore Peterson teaches a young mother about parenting, she gains a "daughter."

*Linell Smith, The Baltimore Sun Staff
Excerpted from The Baltimore Sun
Originally published May 9, 2004*

Armed with potato salad, making the annual Mother's Day trek to her mother's home with her grown children, Imogene Moore Peterson expects she'll start worrying about the rest of her "kids."

Are they treating themselves to something special today? Will someone watch their babies so they can get their hair done? Will they acknowledge their own motherhood with satisfaction? With pride?

She's thinking about the children her career has brought her. As a caseworker for Casey Family Services in East Baltimore, Peterson shows young mothers – most of them teenagers, most of them single – how to be better parents. She believes motherhood is one of life's most challenging roles, but one that everyone can learn.

In the process of demonstrating that principle, this mother of two sons has gained scores of daughters. Some of her young mothers have finished high school, gone to college, bought cars, found rewarding work as nursing assistants. Others must contend with drug-addicted relatives as well as fussing babies.

"No matter what the situation, I try to look at the person, to think, 'How did she get



Imogene Peterson, a caseworker at the Casey Family Services Baltimore Division office, helps young mothers learn to become better parents through workshops and play groups.



where she is?' " Peterson says. "I think the people you meet are all lessons in your life."...

Twenty-year-old Tunishia Jackson loves giving "Miss Peterson" detailed updates about Ji-shea, her 10-month-old daughter. The social worker began visiting Jackson when she was pregnant, came to the hospital while she was recuperating from a prema-

ture delivery, then drove her to the neonatal intensive care unit every day so she could get to know her tiny child. Peterson provided her with books and pamphlets about preemies. ...

"Miss Peterson's more like a friend than a worker," Jackson says. "She's taught me that no matter if the father is there, she's still my child and I've got to take the time with her and teach her stuff that will affect her life."...

Peterson, who is 56, has now spent close to 40 years in social work and community service. ... As the oldest of 13 children, you might say Peterson was born to her profession. She grew up in East Baltimore in a two-bedroom apartment watching her mother cook three meals a day on a potbelly stove and scrub diapers on a washboard. ... Peterson's father was a World War II veteran, a postman and a part-time cab driver.

“Success is knowing she has helped someone understand that the first years of life are irreplaceable.”

Imogene remembers her family as poor — there was no gas or electricity, no telephone when she was little — and there wasn't much room to spare; a new baby might sleep in a bureau drawer. But somehow, everything worked the way it was supposed to, thanks to the steady hands of her parents.

After graduating from Dunbar High School, she found full-time work at the Community Action Agency Neighborhood Family Planning Center, a program born from the federal War on Poverty campaign. She stayed on until the Reagan era, when budget cuts spelled an end to the program but not her efforts. Dedicated to the dream of improving her community, she continued to work in East Baltimore at low-profile family-support jobs that struggled for funding.

Meanwhile, she was raising two sons and taking care of her first husband, Terry Moore, who worked for the Congress of Racial Equality and later ran a dress shop while he battled sickle cell anemia. ... After he died, she attended Morgan State University and earned a degree in mental health counseling. ...

Since 1999, Peterson has worked as a family support specialist at Casey Family Services, the direct service arm of the Annie E. Casey Foundation. She helps low-income mothers



Peterson encourages young mothers to take the time to play with their children, while dealing with the challenges of parenthood.

and fathers who learn about the center's parenting support through friends, hospital social workers and community agencies. Along with teaching and administrative duties, she handles a caseload of about 10 clients.

Imogene Peterson says she loves to help people change their lives — or support them until they're ready to change. Perhaps her greatest gift is to keep worrying about them, even if they don't.

Last year, despite her full-time work, she also managed to complete her master's degree in social work at the University of Maryland. ...

Clients listen to her, colleagues say, because they know her affection is genuine.

“Miss Imogene has a way of making people laugh at themselves when they do some-

thing wrong,” says Casey co-worker Patricia Smith. “She can turn a situation around and help a young woman learn from it without making her embarrassed.”...

“Imogene's always been very clear that she believes people love their children,” says Jessica Strauss, a former boss. “Even if they're doing something she believes is damaging, she believes it's the result of not knowing better.”

“She also understands these young parents need some attention for themselves as well as their kids. Just to instruct people how to do things with their kids doesn't get to the conditions and feelings parents have, feelings out of which behaviors come. You have to help the parents find out what their stressors are, to look at how they were raised and to look at the impact of how they're raising their children.”...

Peterson says she also finds success in the loving gaze of a young mother watching her child play. She finds it when a high school girl remembers to wipe her baby's nose. Or buys him a warm winter jacket instead of a kiddie coat.

Success is knowing she has helped someone understand that the first years of life are irreplaceable. Imogene Peterson says she loves to help people change their lives — or support them until they're ready to change. Perhaps her greatest gift is to keep worrying about them, even if they don't.



DR. ALAN E. KAZDIN

Close-up

The Child Study Center is a department of Yale University School of Medicine that brings together multiple disciplines to further the understanding of the problems of children and families. The mission of the Center is to understand child development, social, behavioral, and emotional adjustment, and psychiatric disorders, and to help children and families in need of care.

Many of the areas in which the Child Study Center has active programs are areas of common interest to Casey Family Services and the Annie E. Casey Foundation. For example, Casey's Bridgeport Division has worked collaboratively with the Center's in-patient child psychiatric program, and recently, the state of Connecticut approved a two-year contract with Casey to work collaboratively with the Center to develop a model community therapeutic foster care program.

Dr. Alan E. Kazdin has led the Yale Child Study Center for the past two and half years. With quick wit, boundless energy and a deep passion for his work, he has set out to create a 10-year strategic plan for the University's Center. The cornerstone of that work, he states with vigor, will be a commitment to evaluation.

VOICE: What makes the Yale Child Study Center unique?

DR. KAZDIN: This is a department in a medical school. It's called a "center" because it brings in various disciplines. For example, we are studying the brains of mice to learn more about ADD (Attention Deficit Disorder), and at the same time, we're looking at the impact of the "No Child Left Behind" legislation in 43 states. I attribute the Center's existence and success to a vision that the university had in the early 1900s, and that it retains today. Most other universities are moving in the direction of genome research and the advanced biological sciences. We do that as well.

VOICE: How do you view your relationship with Casey?

DR. KAZDIN: Over the long term what I consider critical is the collaboration. The key is to pool our knowledge and resources, and combine our strengths. We want to come to Casey Family Services and the

Foundation and ask how we can help in what you are trying to achieve. The emphasis will be on resources, rather than agenda. This is the best kind of investment.

VOICE: How do you see the work of the Center as complementary to that of Casey?

DR. KAZDIN: We are a research institution that also does clinical work in six areas. We do basic research into the workings of the brain, and deliver clinical services in psychiatry and psychology. We also do community work, international work and policy. All of this is relevant and related to Casey's work, some elements more than others. On my watch I want to convey our strengths toward serving the Foundation.

VOICE: One of the areas in which both arms of the Foundation work is systems reform. What are your concerns and ideas on that front?

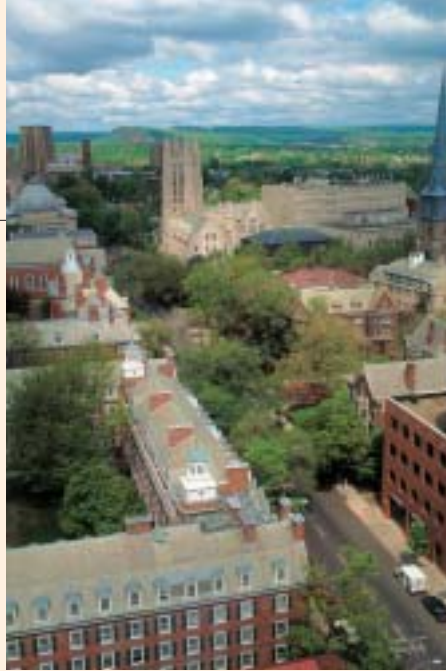
DR. KAZDIN: I am deeply, deeply disturbed that our state systems have no commitment

to evaluation. We all love to think that our programs and services are doing well. Yet there are programs that accomplish nothing, and even hurt. Commitment to a harmful approach can exacerbate if there is no data to demonstrate the program's lack of effectiveness.

VOICE: Is evaluation the solution?

DR. KAZDIN: Evaluation is the answer, and we need to commit to it immediately. We know that evaluation can be user-friendly, clinician-friendly, teacher-friendly, hospital- and social-worker friendly. It pains me to say that there are more than 500 different therapies in place for children across the nation today. The vast majority, including school intervention programs, have not been evaluated. Legislators and policymakers should know that they are wasting money by not doing evaluations. The alternative is moving from fad to fad with no one getting any better.

CLOSE-UP: YALE CHILD STUDY CENTER



Photographer: Michael Marsland. Courtesy of Yale University Office of Public Affairs.

VOICE: What can be done?

DR. KAZDIN: First, we have to reduce the cost of evaluation. And second, we have to recognize that evaluation – not programs – is the first step. Evaluation will allow us to determine what the minimum treatment is that will have a positive impact on the client's condition.

VOICE: Can you point to any promising approaches?

DR. KAZDIN: There is a movement that merits attention. It is a combination of brief treatments, applied in a series, in a stepped process. These are often delivered in telephone sessions, via the internet, CD-Rom, and videos, all of which make these interventions much more accessible for people of low to moderate means. Most importantly, these are treatments with research bases. They work. What this means is that the ability to disseminate treatments that are shown to work is greater than ever before.

VOICE: Why is there not a strong rallying cry within the field of child welfare for this kind of innovation?

DR. KAZDIN: The pivotal issue is that we must train social workers, therapists, mental health professionals and medical professionals differently. Too often they are taught to rely on traditional therapies that have no evidence attached. We must change that training.

VOICE: Would you say that there is insufficient public support for evaluation?

DR. KAZDIN: There is certainly not much financial support for evaluation. I also run a clinic for antisocial and aggressive behavior.

It is common to have a high drop-out rate. Without evaluation based on careful study, we might assume that the program isn't working. Yet we have found that one-third who do drop out early are really doing very well. We know who is doing well and who is not, and why. This is the result of careful study.

VOICE: Is it true that more children are coming into care with very severe problems?

DR. KAZDIN: There are definitely more children and young people presenting with severe problems, such as autism and pervasive developmental disorder. But it's hard to separate whether it is because we have better detection or there is a greater incidence of problems. We know we have improved our detection.

VOICE: Why has there been a lack of collaboration and communication between agencies serving children? What can the Center do to help bridge the gap?

DR. KAZDIN: I have to say that there are more holes in the boat than we have fingers and toes. The whole mental health service system needs help. Old-fashioned basketball is the best way for me to explain it. It's always the same zone defense. We tend to the children who are in our zone. They are referred into our zone; we treat them, then they leave and go to someone else's zone. And we take the next person who comes into our zone. Yes we share case records, but we really don't trust anyone else's records, so we start from scratch. There is little discussion, except within the zone. What we need is zones by facility. We need to ensure that one case worker follows the child through every zone and stays with that child, with authority to review evaluations.

VOICE: How do we break down the walls between distinct disciplines?

DR. KAZDIN: The discipline issue is part of a larger issue, related to the importance placed on counting the number of children in care. The real question should be, "How many children do you help?" I would hope that through our partnership, people would come to know that there is a different way to think about this work, and a different approach to achieving demonstrable results.

VOICE: In your tenure with the Yale Child Study Center, what achievement do you point to with the greatest pride?

DR. KAZDIN: I'm most proud of our 10-year strategic planning process. And I'm proud that there is no place in the world that brings together this kind of expertise. And the message I would like to deliver is this: If there's anyone who would like us to help them, please contact us.



Photographer: Michael Marsland.
Courtesy of Yale University.

KEEPING KIDS IN STABLE FAMILIES

Model Community Therapeutic Program Takes Shape

Casey Family Services, in collaboration with the Yale Child Study Center, will develop a model treatment foster care program over the next two years with funding from the State of Connecticut.

The project was one of 28 the state reviewed prior to announcing its decision in June. Under the terms of the agreement, Casey will work with Yale to design and implement a program that will build on the strengths of both organizations to support foster children and youth who are at risk of entering, or who are returning from, residential treatment centers or psychiatric hospitals.

Staff from Casey and Yale will work as a team in partnership with the Connecticut Department of Children and Families (DCF) to stabilize these youngsters in a family environment and to assist them to achieve successful family and community living.

Casey will assume responsibility for the recruitment, licensing and support of 26 foster families. Yale and Casey will collaborate on the training of staff and foster parents. Yale will assume responsibility for developing and managing the Family Support Teams that will provide in-home

clinical and crisis intervention in support of the child and foster family. The Casey social worker, Family Support Team, DCF social worker, foster family, birth family (as possible) and community providers will comprise the team responsible for treatment planning and provision of services to meet the goals in the child's treatment plan.

“WE BELIEVE THAT CHILDREN DEVELOP AND LEARN BEST WITHIN A HEALTHY FAMILY SURROUNDED BY A CARING, RESPONSIVE, PROTECTIVE COMMUNITY.”

Periodic treatment team meetings and rounds will ensure that there is communication and collaboration among the team members and frequent review of treatment plans.

The Family Support Team will provide intensive in-home therapeutic services and 24-hour, seven-days-a-week crisis intervention services over a 12-month period for each child. Casey will have overall responsibility for case management, permanency planning and birth family connections, as appropriate. Once the services of the Family Support Team are no longer needed, Casey will continue ongoing case management. Casey will ensure that linkages are in place

with other community-based agencies to provide services based on the needs of the child for ongoing support.

“Children referred to Casey typically have experienced serious emotional and behavioral problems resulting from abuse and/or neglect and multiple placement changes in foster care,” explains Joy Duva, deputy executive director of planning and policy. In 1993, Casey developed its Treatment Foster Care Program to serve children returning from residential placement or psychiatric hospitalization as well as children at risk of institutional placement. While the average age of children referred is 11 years, the program has served both younger and older children.

“We believe that children develop and learn best within a healthy family surrounded by a caring, responsive, protective community,” Duva continues. “Our Bridgeport and Hartford divisions will manage this important and innovative project.”

This project allows Casey to build on the knowledge and experience gained through its existing treatment program. With the enhanced services provided by Yale, the program will be able to serve children with very complex behavioral health needs.

Casey's Extended Supports for Emancipating Foster Children Provides a Learning Opportunity: A Good Idea, But What Did It Cost?

DIALOGUE

Sharing Perspectives on Research, Practice and Policy

by Ben Kerman, Director of Research & Evaluation, Richard Barth and Judy Wildfire, University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill

The principle of extending supports to foster children has garnered increasing acceptance over the last decade. Practitioners and policy makers have long recognized many of the challenges faced by children emancipating from care, such as paying for higher education, finding employment, and starting families successfully. More recently, there is growing awareness that children in the general population remain dependent upon parental support longer than in the past – marrying older, establishing households later, and achieving financial independence farther into adulthood. In fact, the general notion that the system should be more active in providing supports to the vulnerable and under-resourced children coming out of care has inspired a small wave of new independent living models. However, the fears of potential fiscal ramifications temper the enthusiasm to offer additional services beyond the age of legal emancipation.

In order to make sound policy decisions, policy makers need to be able to forecast the likely financial impact of offering new entitlements, benefits and services. Good evaluations of pilot programs are essential for understanding the benefits in terms of developmental outcomes, as well as the impact on the bottom line. Early in the consideration of new approaches, policy makers may lack controlled studies and large scale evaluations of carefully implemented pilot programs: In response, they seek to learn from the “natural experiments”

of “early adopters” who pioneer the approach in their actual practice. This kind of early learning can be particularly scarce in anticipating costs given the variety of hurdles to assembling cost information. Casey's early adoption of a policy that offers

In order to make sound policy decisions, policy makers need to be able to forecast the likely financial impact of offering new entitlements, benefits and services.

extended support to all older youth who continue to work collaboratively toward transitional education, vocational and independent living goals provides insight into the possible costs of extending supportive policies for older youths.

Extending Care – Early Learning:

The case for extending care beyond the achievement of legal adulthood has been made from a number of perspectives. First there is a solid body of both literature and institutional experience that describes the vulnerability to negative outcomes for youth “aging out of care.” Surveys of former foster children often reveal that a disproportionately large percentage of the children emancipated from care describe histories of arrest, homelessness, and other struggles (see McDonald et al., 1996). For example, studies by both Cook (1994) and Brandford and English (2004) found that as many as one-third of the emancipated foster children they followed were receiving public assistance. Second, when asked, the youths themselves repeatedly identify services during and after the transition from care as essential to helping them succeed (e.g., Festinger, 1983). Similarly, experienced

providers frequently emphasize the importance of starting early to prepare for independence, and continuing supportive interventions across the critical period of actually establishing independence. Finally, though limited, empirical evaluations of foster care and extended support suggest that the long-term foster youth who access supportive services longer tend to do better than youth who discontinue services early (Brandford & English, 2004; Kerman, Wildfire & Barth, 2002).

The empirical and testimonial evidence concerning outcomes, while limited in both rigor and volume, has effectively convinced some government decision makers to extend supports for older children exiting care. As of 1998, stipends and incentives for ILP (Independent Living Program) participation were provided by 23 states, school tuition assistance by 21 states, and 26 states provided support for household startup expenses (GAO, 1999). In 1999, the Foster Care Independence Act (P. L. 106-169) doubled resources available for independent living from \$70 million to \$140 million. At the same time, the actual increase in resources is limited by the lawmakers' commitment to allocation of additional money at the state level. Moreover, the funding was earmarked for a wide variety of expenses, placing a maximum on the total resources available while not estimating costs for specific services. As federal and state officials continue to examine the actual services provided and costs incurred system-wide, budget writers and program developers face a variety of obstacles despite a growing appetite for more specific information concerning the likely fiscal encumbrance.

Casey's Extended Supports for Emancipating Foster Children Provides a Learning Opportunity: A Good Idea, But What Did It Cost?

Hurdles to Cost Estimation:

Typically, cost studies seek to generate the cost in real dollars of providing a service. This may be contrasted with a *Cost-Benefits Analysis*, which requires assessment of positive and negative outcomes in order to assign dollar values to services and consequences for society of both providing and not providing the service. The cost study is prerequisite to a cost-benefits appraisal.

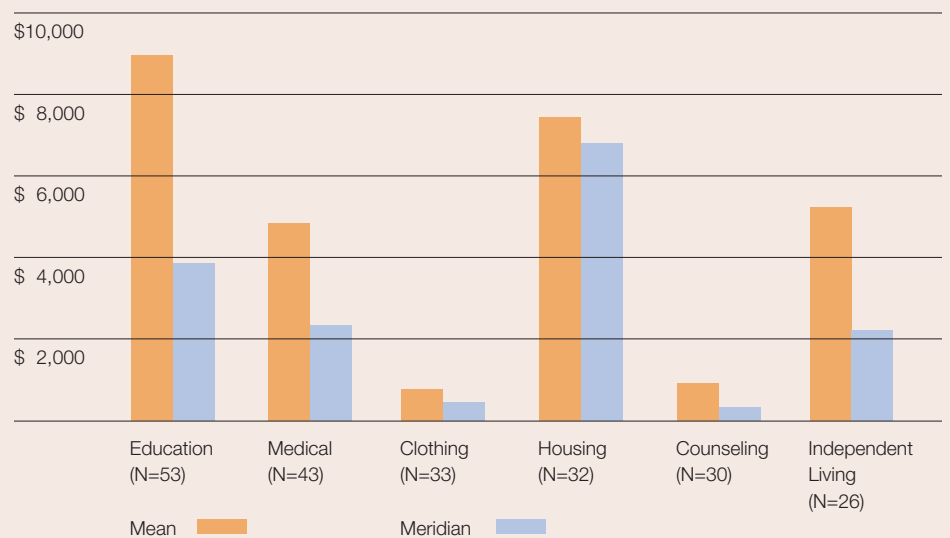
Though narrowed to the service provision domain, the Costing Study estimator is still stymied by a range of obstacles. Conceptually, it is important to clarify the definitions and parameters for costs to be considered. Is it “costs to society” or “costs to the provider agency?” Will only tangible service costs be calculated, or will overhead, indirect and even emotional costs be computed?

Methodologically, a common shortcut involves simply taking the total amount of available funding and dividing by the number of children served. However, this provides little insight into actual spending patterns and characteristics associated with various trends. Alternatively, cost estimators may seek to identify all costs (as defined) associated with individuals in a given sample of youth. This raw data collection is no less hampered by the frequent needs to combine data from multiple sources, and to match costs captured in different systems for inconsistently identified individuals. Finally, revealing costs associated with providing care may be troubling if the disclosure of proprietary information undermines the competitiveness or political support for the institution.

Casey Costing Project:

As more fully described in Kerman, Barth & Wildfire (2004), the Casey Costing

Figure 1. Costs incurred by services users after age 19 by service type



Project seized the opportunity to learn from the agency's relatively early adoption of a policy extending supports through age 22 or beyond for former foster children as they transition into early adulthood. Using a “checkbook” accounting method to overcome several of the obstacles to costing services, data was drawn from three different agency data systems in order to identify all expenses incurred by the agency on behalf of a sample of former children aged 19 and up who were followed in an earlier study (see Kerman, Wildfire & Barth, 2002). Costs were classified by general types of expenses, though the costs associated with some critical services were not included (e.g., staffing costs for informal counseling and case management).

KEY FINDINGS:

- Not all eligible youth incurred costs. The fiscal records of approximately 41 percent of the sample of former foster children included expenses incurred after turning 19.
- The typical expenses were not enormous relative to the funding resources available through state and federal programs. The median total expense across all eligible children was \$5,942, and \$9,166 for all participating children.
- As illustrated in Figure 1, the six most commonly incurred expenses were for education, medical, housing, clothing, counseling and independent living.
- Most categories consist of mostly modest expenses with a subgroup of larger expenses. This is reflected in Figure 1 by smaller medians and diverging from larger means.

The principle of extending supports to foster children has garnered increasing acceptance over the last decade. Practitioners and policy makers have long recognized many of the challenges faced by children emancipating from care, such as paying for higher education, finding employment, and starting families successfully.

For example, a few large expenses raised the Education mean to \$8,942, though the median expense was lower by more than half (\$3,828).

- No clear trends are evident before age 22, when costs trail off dramatically, corresponding to the general “upper age limit” of the program.
- Not surprisingly, the children who remain in formal foster care longer incur the greatest extended care expenses, followed by children who were adopted. Children who leave early incurred the fewest expenses at Casey. Consistent with other studies, they also had the most troubling and perhaps costly outcomes.

Despite the limitations to the method, this costing study does capture the expenses incurred at one agency that provided for the option of extended supports. While this

costing study is unable to provide definitive answers for policy makers considering expanding services for all or some sub-groups of youths in the public system, there is encouraging insight into the likely patterns to be seen in further pilot programs. This early experience and other efforts like it also help shape several emerging and pressing questions: How can services be made most effective? How can more youth be helped to access resources? How much will it cost? In the long run, how can services be provided so that this investment produces better outcomes and reduces costs relative to those incurred by children who unsuccessfully navigate the leap to independence and adulthood?

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Kerman, B. Wildfire, J. & Barth, R.P. (2002). Outcomes for young adults who experienced foster care. *Children & Youth Services Review*, 24, 79-104.

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Read Any Good Research Lately?

Nasuti, J., York, R., & Sandell, K. (2004). Comparison of role perceptions of White and African-American foster parents. *Child Welfare*, 83(1), 49-68.

In light of the growing foster care population, the disproportional representation of African-American children in the child welfare system, and the shortage of African-American foster parents, this study compares role perceptions of African-American and White foster parents and provides

information on recruiting African-American foster parents. Assets African-American families bring to fostering and the need for agencies to develop recruitment models that are sensitive to African-American foster families are discussed.

Koenig, L.J., Doll, L.S., O’Leary, A., & Pequegnat, W. (Eds.). (2004). *From child sexual abuse to adult sexual risk: Trauma, revictimization, and intervention*. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

This book examines the effect of child sexual abuse on adult sexual health outcomes. Research from a variety of disciplines is connected through a discussion of child sexual abuse, trauma research, and clinical practice. The book identifies the consequences of trauma that influence sexual risk behavior in adulthood and introduces new intervention approaches for people who have experienced child sexual abuse.

What is ... Stigma?

by Kristin Mattocks and Ben Kerman

Simply put, stigma is an attribute or label that sets a person apart from others and links the labeled person to undesirable characteristics (Fortenberry et al, 2002). Stigma impacts the individual directly through a process of social discrimination, as well as indirectly through changes in the individual's sense of self and identity. Frequently stigmatized groups include persons living with HIV/AIDS, individuals receiving welfare benefits, and individuals suffering from mental illnesses. Although much has been written in the scientific literature about these commonly stigmatized groups, little has been written about stigma among foster and adoptive children. Understanding the mechanisms of stigma may help practitioners address the problem of stigma.

Stigma for Children in Care: Though it is more common for children to be living in adoptive and foster parent homes today than it was 30 years ago, many Americans continue to express a sense of ambivalence about adoptive and foster children. A recent study found that although a majority of Americans feel that adoption "serves a useful purpose in society," 25-30 percent of Americans questioned the mental health status of adoptees and only 32 percent expressed unqualified support for adoption (Evan B. Donaldson Adoption Institute, 1997). Taken together, these findings suggest that Americans view adoption, and adoptive children, as a "second best" form of family, and that the dominant North American family ideology defines a real family as the nuclear family unit of a heterosexual couple and their biological children (Anderson, 1991).

Society gives implicit and explicit messages that living in an adoptive or foster care family is not normal. For example, the text below was taken from a Valentine's Day card produced by a major greeting card company. Though the card is meant to be humorous, in actuality, it illustrates the

depth of discomfort with foster and adoptive families in the United States today:

*Sis, even if you were adopted,
I'd still love you...
Not that you are, of course!
At least, I don't think so.
But, come to think of it,
You don't really look like Mom and Dad.
Gee, maybe you should get a DNA test or something.
Oh well, don't worry about it.
We all love you, even if your real parents don't.
Happy Valentine's Day!*

(published by Carlton Cards, 1997)

Given these sentiments, it is not hard to understand why many adoptive and foster children feel a sense of stigmatization. Adoptive children who share a home with biological siblings may feel "second best" and foster children may feel stigmatization because they do not have a permanent family.

The Process of Stigmatization: In order to better understand how stigma may play a role in the lives of adoptive and foster children, it is necessary to understand the conditions necessary for stigmatization. According to Link and Phelan's (2001) conceptual model of stigma, there are four necessary components:

- 1) *Human differences must be distinguished and labeled.*
- 2) *Labeled differences lead to stereotypes.*
- 3) *There is a movement to separate "us" from "them."*
- 4) *The labeled person loses status and suffers discrimination.*

Responding to Stigma for Children at Risk: Many of the children and families working with Casey are at high risk for both social discrimination and for building identities disproportionately centered on their child welfare case histories rather than their capabilities, compassion and character. To

address the risk and mitigate the damage, a multi-tiered approach includes prevention and early intervention at both the level of the individual child and the broader society.

Case-based strategies: With a strength-based approach, Casey workers focus on celebrating successes, opportunities for normative youth development, and engaging in individualized planning and counseling. This work helps the youth create constructive meanings regarding their experiences, and simultaneously recognizes historic victimization and vulnerability as well as emerging competencies and empowerment.

Communications Strategies: To relieve the risk for all stigmatized children, broader communication strategies are needed to target critical aspects of the stigmatization process. The fields of public relations and social marketing point to a variety of considerations regarding messaging and targeting audiences in order to promote balanced images of foster children and adoption. The distance can be closed by providing realistic "normative success stories" that potential foster parents can relate to their own lives. The challenge is to ensure a balanced mix of messages: Although alarming stories serve to alert the public to needs of youth and call for support and allocation of resources for reform, these same stories may contribute to the risk of stereotyping.

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Get Informed and Get Ready for New Challenges in 2005

View from Washington



by Robin Nixon, Executive Director, National Foster Care Coalition

Another hot, humid summer in Washington—time to think about vacations at the beach and listen to the kids complain about going back to school. It's also an election year. Discussions of polls and percentage points tend to dominate all other activity. Meanwhile, there are a number of significant pending pieces of new legislation, as well as reauthorizations of existing legislation, that could have an impact on child welfare specifically, and on the well being of children, youth, and families, generally:

- Reauthorization of IDEA—The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.
- Reauthorization of TANF—Temporary Assistance to Needy Families.
- Reauthorization of Head Start—National pre-education program for disadvantaged infants and children.
- Appropriation of Chafee ETV dollars—The Chafee Education and Training Voucher Program.
- Orderly and Timely Interstate Placement of Children Act of 2004—Legislative revision of the Interstate Compact for the Placement of Children—guidelines for the placement and adoption of children across state lines.
- Reauthorization of the Higher Education Act of 1965.
- Foster Opportunities for Success Through Higher Education Reform—The Foster

Act, which would amend the Higher Education Act of 1965 to better support foster youth.

- President's child welfare financing proposal—optional block grant demonstration project to allow states greater flexibility with federal child welfare funds.

Three reports released in April, May and June of this year have the potential to significantly change how we go about the business of child welfare in the United States. The first, from the Chapin Hall Center for Children at the University of Chicago, presents new research on the well being of older adolescents in the child welfare system. The second, from the Pew Commission on Children in Foster Care, addresses the need for changes in the federal financing of child welfare, as well as the court's role in ensuring the well being of children in foster care. The third, the 2004 KIDS COUNT report from the Annie E. Casey Foundation, takes a close look at the needs of young people in high-risk situations making the transition from adolescence to adulthood, including foster youth. All of these reports have generated press coverage, including a week-long series of discussions about foster care on National Public Radio. What is significant about these reports is that they provide a foundation for changes to laws, policies and programs mentioned above, as well as perhaps providing direction for new legislation in the 106th Congress. They also represent a real opportunity for bringing increased awareness to child welfare issues in our local communities and states.

As advocates, we are always looking for substantive research evidence and constructive strategies for achieving improvements in the

services, supports, and opportunities offered to children, youth, and families served by the child welfare system. Right now, our cup runneth over! We must work over the next five months to prepare for both a new Congress and for 2005 state legislative sessions, utilizing the rich information and recommendations provided by these reports. First steps should include:

- Getting the word out about the reports to broader constituencies of child and youth advocates, community groups, and those working in related fields such as health and mental health, education, and housing.
- Building consensus around what we agree would be productive changes to existing laws and policies, as well as around what new legislation is needed.
- Developing communications plans that will help expand that consensus to a larger audience and help national, regional, and local advocates inform policy makers, the media, and grassroots organizations.

The more prepared we as advocates can be for 2005, the more likely that we will contribute to positive changes in the supports available to the children, youth, and families.

Get Informed!

- www.chapinhall.org
- www.pewfostercare.org
- www.kidscount.org
- www.cdf.org
- www.cwla.org
- www.clasp.org
- http://cbexpress.acf.hhs.gov/
- www.connectforkids.org

The Pew Commission on Children in Foster Care

PERSPECTIVES

by *Sania Metzger, Esq., Director of Policy*



Almost one year to the date of its official launch in May 2003, the Pew Commission on Children in Foster Care released a set of 10 policy recommendations designed to reform the Title IV-E financing system and to strengthen court oversight of child welfare. The commission was challenged with developing a set of practical proposals that “could win bipartisan support” at both the state and federal levels. The composition of the commission was undoubtedly designed to accomplish those difficult goals.

Bi-partisan perspectives were represented by the commission leaders, each of whom formerly served in the U.S. Congress: Bill Frenzel, currently with the Brookings Institute, and William Gray, the current executive director of the United Negro College Fund, served as chairman and vice-chairman respectively, and provided the commission with experienced leadership in consensus building.

Assisting Frenzel and Gray in the development of a comprehensive package of policy recommendations was a diverse commission comprised of child welfare experts and stakeholders. The commission included a youth formerly in foster care, child welfare administrators from both the private and public sectors, active members of the judiciary, a state legislator, and Judge William A. Thorne, Jr., a Pomo Native American. Casey’s own Gary Stangler, executive director of the Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative, was also a member of the prestigious commission.

The package of 10 recommendations, summarized below, are intended to provide state child welfare agencies and state courts having jurisdiction over child protective cases with new resources, options, incentives and tools to better ensure that children grow up in a safe and permanent home and that judicial resources are efficiently used to minimize the time children and their parents wait for the imperfect judicial process to decide their fate. In the words of Chairman Frenzel: “The nation’s foster care system is unquestionably broken. The commission’s recommendations focus on what states and courts must do to help children get safe and permanent homes.”

Financing Child Welfare

The Pew Commission report recognizes that the current federal child welfare funding system encourages an over-reliance on foster care at the expense of “other services to keep families safely together and to move children swiftly and safely from foster care to permanent families.” Under the current child welfare financing system Title IV-E of the Social Security Act, the largest source of federal funding, is an open-ended entitlement that reimburses states for a percentage of their cost for out of home placements. States are also reimbursed for a portion of certain expenses for training and program administration under Title IV-E.

Federal funding for preventive services to prevent the removal of children from their homes and to expedite the return of children to safe homes is primarily funded by Title IV-B of the Social Security Act (Parts I and II). Part I may be used for any child welfare purpose while Part II funds may be used for four specified purposes – family

preservation, family-support, time-limited family reunification, and adoption promotion and support services. Unlike Title IV-E federal funding for out of home placement, preventive and adoption services funding is a capped entitlement that is subject to the vagaries of the federal budget process from year to year. The most significant difference between Title IV-E and Title IV-B is the amount of federal funding available to support these important programmatic areas.

It is estimated that in fiscal year 2004 federal foster care expenditures will be \$4.8 billion while the total appropriation for Title IV-B in fiscal year 2004 was \$693 million.

“AS THE SYSTEM IS NOW, WE END UP REMOVING CHILDREN WHEN THEY COULD REMAIN AT HOME IF WE HAD THE APPROPRIATE SERVICES TO OFFER THEM. WE INTERVENE WITH A SWORD WHEN A SCALPEL WOULD REALLY DO.”

Helen Jones-Kelly, Esq., Ohio Children’s Services

The policy implications of this enormous gap between federal funding for foster care services and services intended to help stabilize families and to prevent foster care placements was the primary focus of the Pew Commission. The following six financing policy changes are encouraged by the Pew Commission:

Almost one year to the date of its official launch in May 2003, the Pew Commission on Children in Foster Care released a set of 10 policy recommendations designed to reform the Title IV-E financing system and to strengthen court oversight of child welfare.

- Provide federal adoption and federal guardianship assistance to all children placed in either permanency placement or foster care.
- Make all children – including members of Indian tribes and children who reside in the U.S. territories – in need of foster care eligible for federal support regardless of family income.
- Allow states to reinvest federal dollars that would have been expended on foster care into other child welfare services if they safely reduce the use of foster care. Funds could be reinvested in any services to prevent the placement of a child in foster care or to facilitate a child's departure from foster care.
- Provide states with flexible, sufficient, and reliable federal funding through the creation of an indexed Safe Children, Strong Families grant by combining the administration and training components of Title IV-E with federal funds provided by Title IV-B. Maintain the state federal partnership by continuing the state match requirement.
- Increase public accountability of child welfare by improving the effectiveness of the Child and Family Services Reviews, e.g., use better measures of child well being, and use longitudinal data. Permit states to reinvest a portion of any penalties incurred into state Program Improvement Plans. Maintain the federal match for the State Automated Child Welfare Information System and encourage a

Congressional mandate directing the National Academy of Sciences to recommend better outcome and measures.

- Promote innovation of the best ways to help children who have been abused and neglected by enhancing the child welfare waiver programs; maintain funding for research and evaluation and sharing of best practices. Provide incentives for workforce improvements and for all forms of safe permanence for children in the foster care system.

Strengthening Courts

Although undervalued, the dependency courts are vital partners with the state child welfare agencies in their obligation to act in the best interest of children who are alleged-victims of child abuse or neglect.

The Pew Commission made the following recommendations to improve court oversight:

- Adoption of court performance measures by every dependency court.
- Adoption of incentives and requirements for effective collaboration between courts and child welfare agencies.
- Creation of a strong voice for children and families in the court and effective representation by better trained attorneys and volunteer advocates.
- Exertion of leadership by state Chief Justices and other state court leaders in organizing their court systems to better serve children, provide training for judges, and promote more effective standards for dependent courts, judges and attorneys.

In addition to the 10 detailed policy proposals advanced as recommendations, the Pew report also comments on several other issues it refers to as the continuing challenges of foster care. These challenges are over-representation of children of color in child welfare, and the imperative that services are coordinated with other human services and across state lines as in the case of inter-jurisdictional adoption placements.

What's Next?

In its conclusion, the Pew Commission report urges thoughtful discussion and swift implementation of its “bold, fair and achievable” proposals to improve the child welfare financing structure and to strengthen court oversight. Congressional hearings on the Pew recommendations are anticipated for later this year. In the meantime, the fate of the Pew Commission recommendations rests in the hands of all of us who count ourselves as stakeholders in the child welfare field. It is incumbent upon us to use our voices, connections, the power of the pen, and our organizational base to help ensure that the momentum ignited by the Pew recommendations grows and that the momentum for change is experienced by those in positions to implement the package of policy proposals, as well as those whose lives would be directly impacted by the recommended initiatives.

www.pewfostercare.org

FOSTER CARE ALUMNI OF AMERICA...

MEET THE LEADERS

by Ginny Stephan

Foster Care Alumni of America (FCAA) has come together for one purpose: to connect, engage, and empower adult alumni of foster care. The intention is to create a powerful collective voice that can transform the lives of those involved in, or in transition from, legal out-of-home care.



Angela Cross, alumni relations specialist for Casey Family Programs, and Jerry Hobbs listen to colleagues as they plan for the official launch of Foster Care Alumni of America.

This effort is being led by Executive Director Jerry Hobbs, Board President Misty Stenslie and myself, Ginny Stephan, Board Vice President. We are working hand-in-hand to prepare FCAA for its official launch in May 2005.

Jerry Hobbs Jerry is the yeast that will leaven our entire organization. An alumnus himself, he is constructing the foundation for FCAA to become a change catalyst in the foster care alumni community. Before coming to FCAA, he was an education specialist with Casey Family Programs in San Diego, California. Prior to that, Jerry held senior management positions in several mid-size manufacturing firms. He began his career as a teacher of English, social studies,

speech and debate at a large public high school.

Jerry entered foster care in Sacramento when he was 8 years old. After eight placements in three years, he settled into family life with the Piercy family until he “aged out” of care at age 18. He then received a full scholarship to California Baptist University and graduated summa cum laude. Jerry completed teacher certification training and received a California professional teaching credential (7-12) in business, marketing, social studies, and English with supplementary authorizations in biology and speech.

In 2001, after a successful 23-year career in business and raising two children, Jerry took early retirement and returned to the field of education. Most recently, Jerry earned a M.S. Education from the University of Kansas in special education with an emphasis in learning disabilities. His master’s project involved studying the educational needs of children in out-of-home care.

Misty Stenslie Misty brings a wealth of knowledge and experience to FCAA. She has worked in the child welfare system since 1988. She has been a social worker for youth with special needs in treatment foster care, an advocate for better practice and policy in the foster care system, a child protection worker and a nationally recognized trainer and public speaker on foster care and child welfare issues. In addition to her professional experience, Misty spent 12 years in the foster care system and has been a foster parent to three teenagers.

Ginny Stephan I entered foster care at the age of 5 and spent the next 17 years in care. I graduated from St. Louis University in

1990 with a B.A. in education and am currently working on my master’s in special education. I live in Missouri with my husband of 12 years and three children (ages 11, 7, 5). I teach third grade at First Baptist Christian Academy in O’Fallon, Missouri, and am working on a book about my foster care experience.

Since 1994, I’ve been a frequent presenter at foster parent conferences and other meetings hosted by Casey Family Services. I’ve written articles for the Bridgeport Division’s newsletter, I write a regular column for foster youth, entitled “Ask Ginny” for the agency’s website, and am a contributing columnist for *Voice*.



Board members Angie Curtis, Board President Misty Stenslie and Vice President, Ginny Stephan.

Plans for the Future We all share Jerry’s goal “to develop, disseminate and replicate a model of educational mentoring that includes components of resiliency training, mentoring, tutoring and related training. This will ensure that the educational outcomes of children/youth in care are significantly better than they are now.”

We also plan to mobilize the 12-15 million foster care alumni across the country, advocate for them and serve as a resource.

PRESENTATION SKILLS 101 TRAINING:

Know Your Message, Know Your Audience, Know How to Use Yourself

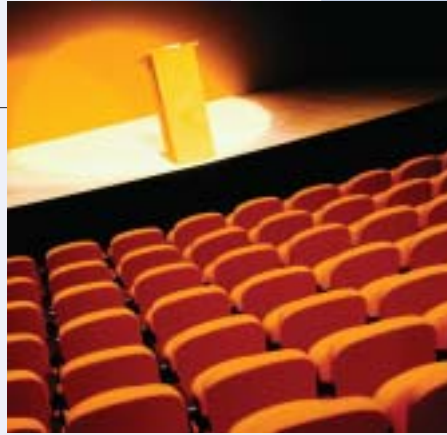


by Sarah B. Greenblatt,
Director,
The Casey Center for
Effective Child Welfare
Practice

The Casey Center for Effective Child Welfare Practice, in collaboration with the Casey Training Department, has launched a new training opportunity to support Casey staff in strengthening our overall presentation development skills. Presentation Skills Training 101 focuses on the knowledge and skills needed to turn an idea about a practice experience into an effective presentation. The first Presentation Skills 101 Training was held in May, 2004 with 20 staff from throughout the agency who together deepened their understanding of the “Three Knows” – *Know Your Message, Know Your Audience, and Know Yourself* – the key elements of effective presentation development. The training aimed to

- 1) enhance staff capacities to shape their messages for various types of audiences, and
- 2) to ground their presentations in the fundamental principles of adult learning, considering a mix of presentation formats.

Additional Presentation Skills 101 trainings are scheduled for October 2004, and Presentation Skills Training 102 is in the making for 2005 – promising an opportunity for staff to develop and practice basic presentation delivery skills. Presentation skills trainings are designed to compliment the PowerPoint training series that has also been available this year to Casey staff.



I was joined by seasoned trainers, Casey Center consultants Sally Tubbesing from Maine and Trish Torruella from Connecticut, in facilitating this training. Lauren Frey, Center project manager, also assisted in developing the training’s content. Together the trainers modeled flexibility and the processes needed to develop and then facilitate a presentation that meets a targeted audience’s varied needs.

Homework. The most unique aspect of this training involved the opportunity for participants to bring with them an idea from their practice that they hoped to develop into a presentation – and they were asked to complete a brief series of questions that could be used as the core of the training itself. The subject areas included:

- *Your Presentation Idea*
- *Program Area*
- *Types of Presentation Goals*
- *Audience Type*
- *Unique Practice Strategies Used*

Participants were invited to work consistently throughout the training day with learning partners with whom they do not ordinarily work. Learning partners considered how their respective practice presentation ideas

were grounded in Casey’s practice principles, experiences and research. Together Casey learning partners explored their worst and best presentation experiences, qualities of an effective presentation/presenter, and attributes of adult learning styles – while deepening their awareness of their own presentation styles and strategies.

Learning While Doing. Feedback from the participants indicated that they appreciated the reciprocal learning that occurred throughout the day, especially being paired with the same “learning partner.” One participant commented at the end of the training that “...*the session helped me take my presentation from a title to a full-blown thing...how to use exercises to augment learning...and how Casey can share its experience in a way that diminishes professional arrogance. ...*” Others indicated that: “...*I can become more confident now....*” “...*I’d like to use the learning partner model in a case conference setting....*” “...*it feels doable now – I feel inspired....*”

Coordinating the Presentation Skills 101 Training has offered the Casey Center yet another opportunity to *learn while we are doing*. As we came up with the outline for the training – we found that we were indeed reviewing our message in the context of our audience and in the context of how to use our genuine selves to facilitate an exciting adult learning opportunity. We look forward to working with many more Casey staff in Presentation Skills Training in the months to come.

Casey Family Services operates divisions throughout the Northeast and in Baltimore, Maryland, offering support services and programs for vulnerable children and families.

News

Casey Family Services Names Director in Vermont



Nita C. Lescher was recently named director of the Vermont Division. In her new role, Lescher will oversee a staff of 27 people and programs serving more than 60 children in foster care and 100 families in Post-Adoption Services and Family Advocacy and Support programs. Established in 1984, the division has offices

in White River Junction and Waterbury and works closely with other public and private child welfare agencies throughout the state.

“We are pleased to have such an outstanding individual join our family,” Executive Director Raymond Torres said. “Nita Lescher possesses impressive skills and experience that will be invaluable in advancing the mission of our agency.”

Prior to joining Casey Family Services, Lescher served as the program director for Child and Family Services Agency Placement Identification and Referral Office of the Consortium for Child Welfare in Washington, DC. She was also the training manager and then project director for the Virginia Commonwealth University/ District of Columbia Child and Family

Services Agency Training Project, also in Washington, DC.

“When I first came to Casey, I was well aware of its resources and national reputation,” Lescher said. “But what set it apart for me was the attention to process and the inclusive way of operating – the attitude that everyone has something to contribute, no matter what their rank.”

She holds a Master’s degree in Social Work from Catholic University in Washington, DC and two Bachelor degrees from the College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, Virginia, and the University of Cincinnati. She also completed doctoral course work in social work at the University of Maryland.

Staff Updates

Honored: Flanked by Team Leader Sheila Fitzgerald and Division Director Allen Casad, John Thompson of Massachusetts displays his award.



Casey Staff who were recently recognized for their work included social workers Lynn Stanley of New Hampshire and John Thompson of Massachusetts. Lynn Stanley was honored at New Hampshire’s State

Department of Children, Youth and Families Annual Conference. John Thompson was one of 23 individuals recognized by the Office of Child Care Services.

PROMOTIONS

Casey Family Services congratulates the following individuals on their promotions:

Audra Holmes-Greene has been promoted to team leader in the Family Connections Program in Bridgeport, CT. Audra has been with Casey Family Services since 2002 as a clinical social worker in the Post-Adoption Services program.

Lori Libertella has been promoted to youth program coordinator for the Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative in Rhode Island. Lori has been with Casey Family

Services since 1999 in the post adoption program.

NEW HIRES

Jacqueline Caldwell, administrative assistant, Baltimore; Brunilda Clermont, social worker, Bridgeport, Connecticut; Kate Cusick, administrative assistant, New Hampshire; Stephanie Janes, social worker, Bridgeport, Connecticut; Diane Jensen, social worker, Maine; Nita Lescher, division director, Vermont; Carol Mandigo, team leader, New Hampshire, Kristin Mattocks, senior research associate, New Haven, Connecticut; Elizabeth Pedrosa-Boyce, social worker, Baltimore; Fred Slade, family support specialist, Baltimore; Kyra Turner, social worker, Bridgeport, Connecticut.

COMING TO AMERICA

by Gregory M. Simpson,
CIS Administrator

Think back to when you were 15 – where you were living, with whom, what you did day to day.... Now imagine, if you will, leaving all that behind with only the clothes on your back and heading to a foreign land, not sure if or when you would see your loved ones again. If those thoughts are not stressful enough, imagine leaving your country on a small fishing boat with 86 other refugees for a seven-day journey, and after four days, running out of food and water.

This was the experience of Binh Tran, a social worker for Casey's Rhode Island Division's Post-Adoption Services program.

"We were packed in like sardines," says Binh, originally from Saigon (now Ho Chi Minh City), Vietnam. "Guns were shooting at us while we were leaving the coast. The ocean was so rough that we kept vomiting but eventually there was nothing left to come out. When we ran out of water, we had to take off our clothes and soak up the water when it rained." If this wasn't enough, Binh adds, "I didn't know where I was going or in what country I'd end up."

Having left his parents and nine older sisters, Binh landed at a Malaysian refugee camp in 1981 where he lived for two years with thousands of other refugees. "My parents arranged the whole trip with gold bullion, as they didn't want me to go into the Communist Vietnamese army which was fighting the Chinese and also Pol Pot in Cambodia."



Binh Tran, a social worker for Casey's Rhode Island Division, visits his native country of Vietnam. Tran became a refugee at age 15.

So, while the typical 15-year-old in the United States was leading the usual high school life, Binh "had to cut down trees to build shacks and go up to the mountain to bathe." He did not attend school but did begin learning English.

Two years later, Binh flew to Boston to live with an uncle. He remembers arriving at Logan Airport when snow was falling. He had never seen snow, not even in movies. "When I saw snow falling, I said, 'Where is this snow coming from?' I never thought anything so beautiful could be so cold. It was a real shock to my body. I got off the plane with flip-flops on. The first week in school the teacher allowed me to sit by the window to see the snow fall. I remember that distinctly."

Faced with starting a new life in America, Binh told himself, "I have two options – to make something of myself or to give up on the whole thing. I made the best of it and it

has helped me to be strong and to be who I am right now. It is one of the reasons I have chosen this profession. I know what some of the kids have gone through. I can identify with kids who feel they have to survive by themselves."

Binh remembers his first impressions of America included "how big people were."

Smiling, he explains, "At age 17, I had to always look up." Binh also was impressed with the freedom people had. "I never had such freedom, even while living in Malaysia. The whole experience of coming to America was so striking, so different."

At 19, Binh graduated from a small Catholic high school to attend Boston College on a full scholarship. He studied psychology. "I like psychology because it's a way to understand myself better, as well as others." After college, he worked for a year with Vietnamese refugees before attending Boston College's School of Social Work. Binh worked fulltime while a graduate student, as a translator and co-therapist at the Indo-Chinese Psychiatric Clinic.

Currently, Binh has five sisters living in Massachusetts as well as his parents. Four other sisters still live in Vietnam. Binh has visited Vietnam three times since leaving in 1981, the last time in March 2002. It took 14 years before he saw his parents again after leaving in 1981.

"It was a shock to be so sheltered and then be so independent at the age of 15," Binh reflects. "It was quite an adjustment to make. Sometimes I feel that people in this country take things too much for granted."

WINOOSKI: CREATING A NEW REALITY

The Picket Fence Preview, a web-based Vermont real estate service, paints an idyllic picture of Winooski. “Just over the hill from Burlington, there’s a small, pedestrian-friendly city full of churches and historic mill buildings. It’s called Winooski – the Indian word for the wild onions found on the riverbanks that to this day provide a dramatic border for this city rich in labor history and French-Canadian traditions.”

True enough. But looking beyond this picturesque description, Winooski statistics reveal a harsher reality of life within the city limits. The rate of children ages 0 – 17 living in poverty is nearly 40 percent — more than three times the state rate of 10.7 percent. (The federal poverty threshold for a family of four is \$17,105, according to the 1999 U.S. Bureau of the Census report.) The rate of children receiving welfare in Winooski is also three times the state rate. The percent of children in families receiving food stamps is 22.6 percent in Winooski, compared with 10 percent in Vermont. School outcomes are very poor, with just 63 percent of students completing high school, as compared with 82 percent in the state. In nearly all categories, Winooski has some of the lowest total outcomes for children in Vermont. With a large elderly population, the town also faces a shrinking tax base. (Source: Planning Division, Vermont Agency of Human Services website, 2003 Community Profiles, www.ahs.state.vt.us)

Yet, there is a sense of expectation and optimism among many in this community of 6,500 residents. A \$180 million redevelop-



Casey Family Services will move its Waterbury, Vermont office to this newly renovated, 100-year-old building in downtown Winooski this fall.

“Casey’s move is being looked at by the Winooski community as the launching of the redevelopment effort.”

ment of the downtown center is in the planning stages, and Casey Family Services is catalyzing the effort with the renovation of an historic building that will house its Vermont office in Waterbury and, eventually, the administrative offices for the entire Vermont Division. “Casey’s move is being looked at by the Winooski community as the re-launching of a longtime redevelopment effort,” says Ed Rennells, New Hampshire division director and former Vermont acting division director.

That redevelopment effort actually began 40 years ago, according to Bill Rowe, president of the Rowe Design Group, which is renovating the historic Hanson Block. During the 1960s, Winooski was one of about 20 cities in the country designated as a model for Urban Renewal. This designa-

tion was supposed to include a major federal investment, but the total urban renewal project never materialized. “The town was able to keep alive the sense that Winooski had merit, and a few positive changes did take place,” explains Rowe, “including the demolition of several dilapidated buildings and the creation of a large parking area downtown.” This area is the site of the planned redevelopment project, which has been in the works for more than 10 years.

“No formal funding had been allocated,” explains Rowe. “But we didn’t wait for others to take action — we went ahead with our plans to invest in the downtown area.” Those plans are to renovate the 100-year-old two-story brick building named after its original owners, the Hanson family, who farmed the land where the building now stands, and to build a new four-story building adjacent to it. By November, Casey will occupy the first and second floors of the new building and the second floor of the Hanson Block. A large room on the second floor will serve as a community room that will be open to other community groups and organizations for meetings and trainings. The Department of Social and Rehabilitation Services (SRS) will share a floor of the new building with Casey. The Hanson Block is “treasured by the town,” according to Rowe, and its renovation is being met with widespread enthusiasm.

Rennells is very clear about the reasons for the move from Waterbury up to Winooski. “First, Winooski has some of the worst outcomes for kids in the state, and Casey wants

“It was time for the Vermont division in Waterbury to develop a more community-based program that served the needs of a broader, more diverse population.”

to respond to that,” he says. “And, there’s a feeling that other agencies and community partners really want us there. There’s been a sense of collaboration all along – we have strong partnerships to help us move forward on our efforts to make Winooski a better place for kids and families.”

Indeed, beginning three years ago, Casey’s collaboration with SRS and the University of Vermont on a Community Child Protection Program provided impetus for a more permanent presence in Winooski.

Winooski’s diverse population took root in its past as a mill town. A longtime French-Canadian stronghold, today the town is home to the largest federal Refugee Resettlement Program in the state and large numbers of Vietnamese, Bosnians, Sudanese and Russian-speaking families. With a difficult and often contentious past among diverse nationalities, Winooski residents are setting aside their differences. In 2001, Casey-sponsored community forums revealed new ways that townspeople, community organizations and city officials could work together to address common concerns. For example, many parents expressed concern that they were not able to be home when their children returned from school. There was a consensus that the town needed a community center, a safe place for kids to go, but more importantly, a place where people could learn to understand each other and connect with their diverse and multigenerational needs. Casey plans to



The renovated Champlain Mill building currently houses shops and offices.

“No formal funding had been allocated, but we didn’t wait for others to take action – we went ahead with our plans to invest in the downtown area.”

play an active role in the creation and operation of this community center, which will be funded by the community.

The Earned Income Tax Credit Program (EITC) is further evidence that Casey has not waited for the physical move to become involved in the Winooski community. According to Robyn Wainner, site coordinator for EITC in Winooski and community liaison for Casey’s Vermont Division, volunteers processed 150 federal tax returns and 144 state returns during the past tax season, generating a total of \$93,495 in combined federal and state refunds for families. Interpreters facilitated returns for Somali-, Russian- and French-speaking clients, and a special effort was made to reach out to

Vietnamese families who had been subjected to exploitive CPA practices in the past. In addition to the EITC work, Casey is helping to create a teen advisory board at the high school and after-school programs for younger students.

“This move is an opportunity to build on the work that our community liaison and other staff have initiated in the Winooski community,” Rennells says. “It will enable us to develop a community-based program that serves the needs of a broader, more diverse population. This reflects the overall changes that are taking place throughout Casey,” he said.

He is grateful for the positive response from Winooski residents. “The community saw that we were willing to invest in it, and they were thrilled!” Recently, the governor supported a loan for the redevelopment effort and projects are out for bid. “There is a sense that people are coming together, uniting their strengths in a common purpose to make life better in Winooski,” describes Rennells. “It’s a great feeling!”

YOUTH LEARN LIFE SKILLS AT THE ROAD 2 SUCCESS

BALTIMORE HOSTS FIRST CASEY DIVISION-SPONSORED SIMULATION EVENT



Baltimore youth learn to handle real life challenges at the Road 2 Success conference.

As the day began, 17-year-old Shane was looking forward to possibly purchasing a car, moving into his first apartment and finally having a chance, with money from his new job, to buy a few gifts for himself. A high school diploma in hand, he was finally free to live life as he had always planned. Or so he thought.

By day's end, life, he discovered, required a lot more navigating and forethought than he had anticipated.

More than 60 youth from the Baltimore, Maryland community gathered recently in the halls of Sojourner-Douglass College for a one-day event that would expose them to some of the challenges they're likely to encounter as they transition into adulthood and independent living. Approximately half of the attendees said they are planning on moving out on their own next year.

The conference, entitled Road 2 Success, provided youth the opportunity to learn life skills through educational workshops and a "real world" simulation event. Participants were given a monthly salary and job title and challenged to set up residency on their own. Youth journeyed from storefront to

storefront to complete tasks that included applying for an apartment, obtaining rental insurance, setting up a bank account, buying furniture, signing up for utilities and researching child care services. Whoever completed all the required tasks, including establishing residency, and had the highest balance remaining in their bank account would win the grand prize – a 25-inch color television.

As the youth waited anxiously to begin their journey, Anna Williams, director of Casey Family Services' Baltimore division, reminded the young men and women why they were participating in such an event.

THE CONFERENCE PROVIDED YOUTH THE OPPORTUNITY TO LEARN LIFE SKILLS THROUGH EDUCATIONAL WORKSHOPS AND A "REAL WORLD" SIMULATION EVENT.

"People can take away your clothes, your home, your car. But they can't take away your knowledge. I want you all to remember this, knowledge is power. I hope today you will learn skills that will empower you and help you as you transition into independence," she said.

Casey Family Services' Baltimore division partnered with Johns Hopkins Center for Adolescent Health and New Pathways Independent Living Programs to offer the conference, which was designed primarily by a youth steering committee.



Participants visited simulated store fronts to practice independent life skills.

Casey family support specialist Lisa D. Sutton and April Davis-Hurt, who, along with deputy director Colette Walter-Thomas and team leader Beverly James, were instrumental in bringing the Road 2 Success to fruition. Earlier they had attended a training offered by Independent Living Resources, Inc. on how to develop a youth conference, modeled after their Real World youth simulations. They then proposed that the Baltimore division offer a similar conference. Baltimore was selected to be the first Casey division to host such an event. The Hartford, Connecticut division will hold a similar event in the coming months.

In a pre-conference workshop on budgeting, presented by Jamal Evans, youth learned about opening up a checking or savings account and the importance of managing their money. They learned the difference between gross and net income and what pay check deductions mean.

"When we talk about budgeting, we mean that we want your money to work for you," Evans said. "Take at least 20 percent of your

The event exposed youth from the Baltimore, Maryland community to some of the challenges they may encounter as they transition into adulthood and independent living.

ROAD 2 SUCCESS

money, whether it's from grandma, Uncle Edgar, or a job, and put it in a savings account."

Several youth had already begun saving for their future.

"I'm going to get an apartment and pay for my driving school," offered a young woman, who puts a portion of every paycheck into a savings account.

"How often do you visit your savings account?" Evans asked.

"I don't," she replied, grinning proudly.

After learning some of the basic skills they'll need to live independently, youth embarked on the Road 2 Success simulation. The simulation featured storefronts including Rest Easy Insurance, Casey Family Savings, Cash Connection, Health Insurance, Rent A Center/Electronics, Student Loans, and Transportation.



Students completed applications for apartments, insurance and utilities.

The Comcast Cable storefront was the first stop for many of the youth, who viewed having cable television as an absolute necessity. But they soon learned they couldn't

hook up the service until they first had a place to live and address to supply.

A crowd of youth gathered at Roof Over Your Head to apply for apartments, although Cozy Casas down the road also offered rental properties. Carlos and a friend decided that if they split the rent as roommates, they could afford to live on their own and have money for extra services, like cable.

"I need a two bedroom place for me and my baby," said a young mother.

"You won't be able to afford a two bedroom apartment on your budget," explained the realtor. "You'll have to get a one bedroom."

Another set of roommates requested a furnished apartment. "They only want \$100 for furniture each month, but it will cost us like \$1,000 to buy all that furniture."

The "Auto Sales and Services Showroom" saw the least amount of traffic with most adolescents opting to save their money and instead purchase bus passes.

One young man who "adopted" an abandoned "baby" (doll) that had been left on a table, and as a result, had to take on the expense of child care, was honored with a prize at the end of the conference. Meanwhile, the color television grand prize was awarded to Shane, who had a balance of \$1003.09 left in his bank account after setting up residency. Part of his ability to save was due to the fact that he had a higher salary than other youth.

At the onset, the youth had to select their desired level of education. Then they were given a job title and salary that matched that level, Sutton explained. Shane chose to go to



Financial workshops taught youth about budgeting and managing money.

college and was therefore given a salary that matched a higher level job. He also opted for a bus pass and a roommate, enabling him to save extra money.

Many other youth bought bus passes but then spent that money on clothes and extravagant furniture and gifts, Sutton said.

"As a research organization it was great to partner with Casey in this wonderful community event. Our youth thoroughly enjoyed this opportunity that afforded them with new life applicable skills," Nedra Davis of John Hopkins Center for Adolescent Health said.

"The youth were able to see that you have to first think of what you need and then think of what you want, and often make a sacrifice," Williams said. "This was a tough lesson for many to learn."

While they may have learned tough lessons, the youth's response to the event was overwhelmingly enthusiastic. "It made me realize how expensive having a house and supporting yourself can be," said one adolescent. "You may have to sacrifice your wants in order to support your necessities."

Congratulations to our 2004 Graduates!



We are pleased to announce that 26 Casey Family Services young men and women have graduated this year.

Each graduate received a certificate of achievement and a letter of congratulations from Executive Director Raymond Torres.

CONNECTICUT:

Adelina, Brittany, LaShanda, Michael, Samuel, Tiffany, Tonnisha

- Adelina will attend Katherine Gibbs College.
- Brittany plans to attend college.
- LaShanda plans to attend college.
- Michael is planning on attending a college in New York City for dramatic arts to attain his goal of becoming a master thespian.
- Samuel wants to expand upon his education by completing his second post-graduate program in architecture and engineering.
- Tiffany will attend Capital Community College part-time in the fall. She would like to major in accounting and has an interest in culinary arts.
- Tonnisha will be attending Virginia Union University. Tonnisha was a member of the indoor/outdoor track team, Student Council executive board, urban poetry club and peer mediator club.

MAINE:

Aric, Christina, Kimberly, William

- Aric will attend Central Maine Community College in the Electrical Technician Program.
- Christina is considering art school and working full-time this summer.
- Kimberly will attend college at the University of Maine at Farmington in the fall.
- William has been accepted into the liberal studies degree program at Southern Maine Community College.

BALTIMORE, MARYLAND:

Candelaria, Cienna, Kathleen, LaShawnda, Marvin, Shazelle

- Candelaria is looking to enroll in a local community college. She has received a special certificate from the department of education and is active in the community as a worker for CASA.
- Cienna will be studying dental hygiene at Baltimore Community College.
- Kathleen has received her high school diploma.
- LaShawnda will be attending Villa Julie College.

- Marvin would like to attend either a trade school or music school.
- Shazelle wants to join the workforce then look into attending a trade school.

MASSACHUSETTS:

Branden, Holly, Robert, Shaun

- Branden plans to attend college or join JobCorps.
- Holly has begun her Master's program at Simmon's College of Arts Graduate School of Special Education/Language Literacy.
- Robert plans to attend Merrimack College.
- Shaun plans to join the workforce after graduation.

NEW HAMPSHIRE:

Jeremy, Margaret

- Jeremy plans to work during the fall semester then attend college in 2005.
- Margaret received two scholarships and will be attending Daytona Community College.

VERMONT:

Amanda, Jason, Keisha

- Amanda plans to work with community members around the development of a job related to her interest in floral design and hopes to attend community college.
- Jason plans to pursue a career of his liking.
- Keisha has earned her hair design certificate and plans to enter the workforce.



CASEY MAKES LAW SCHOOL REAL

Above: Professor Nancy Cook works with student interns participating in the Community Justice and Legal Assistance Clinic at Roger Williams University School of Law. Photo by Silverman Photography

This year, students at the law school at Roger Williams University in Providence, Rhode Island, participated in a new program, the Community Justice and Legal Assistance Clinic. Casey Family Services is one of the partners in this clinic.

“This is the third law school in which I have tried to develop relationships with community-based organizations that don’t have lawyers,” says Professor Nancy Cook, who launched the program. “It has gone much more smoothly than the other two. Part of that is Rhode Island, and part of it is hooking up with Casey Family Services early on, and part of it is having a great group of students who see their work as collaborative, interdisciplinary and community-based.”

Law student Michael Moore worked with a family who had been involved with Casey Family Services for a long time. The mother wanted the father’s name on her child’s birth certificate. “On March 11, I went with them in front of the magistrate and got the child’s name legally changed,” says Moore. “I learned a lot about trusts and estates in law school, but from this client, I learned the importance of having a name.”

The reality of this family’s legal needs, and Moore’s ability to help them, was a far cry from the rest of law school. “It’s not from a text book, these are real people,” says

Moore. “We are living these cases, and that should be part of a legal education.”

The court experience was especially valuable for Moore. “I am blind and it was great for me to know what I can do when I finish

“It’s not from a text book, these are real people. We are living these cases, and that should be part of a legal education.”



Casey Family Services is a partner in the legal clinic offered at Roger Williams. Division Director Jim Gannaway joins Professor Nancy Cook outside Casey’s Providence office.

law school,” Moore says. “Originally, I was going to be a sports and entertainment lawyer, because that was what I was doing before I lost my vision. Now, I’ve totally changed and decided to go into children’s advocacy and disability law.”

Kathleen Giles had studied Family and Child Services as an undergraduate at Syracuse University. She thought working at the clinic would be a way for her to incorporate her passion about children’s rights into her law studies.

“My first client was a Casey kid who has been there for the long haul and has a lot of problems,” says Giles. “The major challenge was establishing trust between us. He is only a year younger than I, and he was very skeptical about my representation,” she recalls. “But every time we would meet we would make progress. I was giving him options, and he was making decisions rather than not being part of the process.”

Working with her client was a personal growth experience for Kathleen. “It forced me to think about things more clearly and ask more questions. I think that I naturally have a prosecutorial mindset, but now I can definitely see the other side.”

The investigating process was also difficult. “We were working toward a judicial conference, but we weren’t even sure what the allegations were,” she remembers. “Getting even basic information really posed a problem.” Despite the difficulties, Giles and Moore appreciated the opportunity to apply their legal education, and the support they got from Casey throughout the clinic. “You have a safety net, which you don’t have when you hang out your own shingle,” says Moore. “I like the way Casey has helped us, not only for the people in our clinic but also for the people in our community.”

“We were accepted into the Casey family because we were helping people in their family.”

“The goal of this program is to offer residents the opportunity to obtain their driver’s license, which will help increase their self-sufficiency and job prospects.”

Driver Education Program Aims to Promote Independence

Marisol never thought she would one day be able to drive – a basic activity that most of us take for granted. But after receiving months of driver education tutoring from Marta Romero, a family support specialist for Casey Family Services’ Massachusetts Division, her dream of having a driver’s license is now just around the corner.

Armed with a driving permit, Marisol is taking lessons to prepare for the road test. And word of her achievement has spread, opening new doors for many others anxious to experience such freedom.

Romero’s second driver education student, Jose, a maintenance worker who struggles with learning disabilities, hoped to obtain a driver’s license, which he needed in order to assume a higher paying position within his department at the Lowell Housing Authority. After some tutoring, Jose received his license – and the position.

Recognizing the need for such a service, particularly within the Latino community, Marisol lobbied successfully for Casey’s Family Resource Program to offer a driver education class in both English and



Obtaining a driver’s license enabled Jose to get a higher paying position at his company.

Spanish. The agency has since partnered with the Lowell Housing Authority’s Family Self-Sufficiency Program, Lowell Auto School, and Safety First Driving School to sponsor a certified driver education program for residents of North Common Village and George Flanagan housing developments. The costs are shared by Casey, the Lowell Housing Authority and participants.

“The goal of this program is to offer residents the opportunity to obtain their driver’s license, which will help increase their self-sufficiency and job prospects,” Romero explains. “Developing from scratch a driving education curriculum in Spanish was a tremendous challenge. I translated many materials, created lessons plans with exams, and searched for videos in Spanish.”

Since the program began last year, 14 Spanish-speaking students and two English-speaking students have completed the knowledge course portion of the curriculum, and many are still working toward

obtaining their driving permit or driver’s license.

The program also has proven therapeutic. “While working through their driving education experiences, individuals built trust, opened up about their lives and built a connection with myself and each other,” Romero adds.



Marisol takes a driver education class. The classes are offered in both English and Spanish.

Helen McCreedy, team leader for the Family Resource Program, and Romero say that they hope to meet with the Massachusetts Registry of Motor Vehicles to discuss their concerns about the Spanish language used in the tests and ways in which the agency could better accommodate the testing needs of driving candidates with special needs.

Resource Corner

Reviews

At A Glance

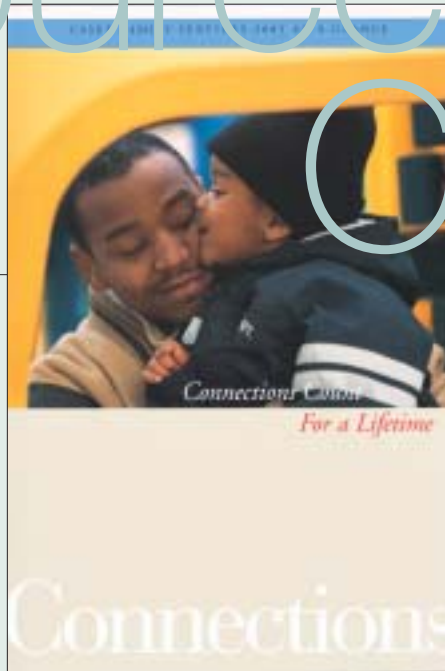
Casey Family Services' latest progress report, *At A Glance* highlights the importance of providing needed support services to youth transitioning into adulthood, as well as to single parents trying to make ends meet. Several Casey youth are featured, including Holly Moffett, who after living in multiple foster homes, graduated from Boston's Emmanuel College and is realizing her dream as a school teacher. Seventeen-year-old Danny Christopher, who was recently adopted by his foster family, is setting a strong example for other youth as well, as winner of the national Kids-to-Kids Service Award. And Devon Lane, a young single father from Baltimore, Maryland, is working hard to improve life for himself and his son. Meanwhile, the future is looking brighter for Phyllis McQueary, a single mother of three, who recently purchased a new car and is planning on buying a home.

To view the report, please visit www.casey-familyservices.org.

KIDS COUNT Data Book

The 15th annual *KIDS COUNT Data Book* provides a state-by-state statistical portrait of the educational, health, and economic conditions of American children. This year's essay focuses on the increasing number of "disconnected" youth without degrees or jobs who face a difficult transition to adulthood.

To view of a copy of the report, please visit www.aecf.org.



ADVOCASEY

The Spring 2004 issue of the Annie E. Casey Foundation's policy magazine, *ADVOCASEY*, examines the staffing crisis facing the nation's human services workforce. The magazine takes an in-depth look at how this issue is affecting the small town of Greenville, North Carolina, as it struggles to hire and retain qualified workers to provide child and family services. The issue also presents a story on promising practices being implemented in Michigan where an innovative process for hiring social workers

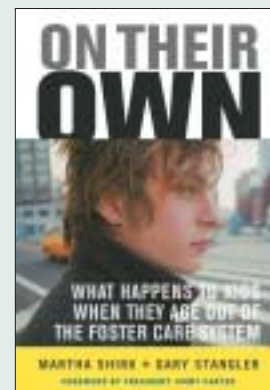
in advance is helping to lower case loads and improve services to needy kids. Successful practices taking place in several other states are highlighted, including a "pay for performance" approach by a Cincinnati program.

To view a copy online, please visit www.aecf.org.

On Their Own: What Happens to Kids When they age Out of the Foster Care System

A new book, *On Their Own: What Happens to Kids When They Age Out of the Foster Care System*, takes an in-depth look at the challenges most youth face when transitioning out of the foster care system. Award-winning journalist and author Martha Shirk spent two years interviewing foster care alumni as they struggled to become successful, happy adults in spite of childhoods often marked by chaos. *On Their Own* is co-authored by Gary Stangler, executive director of the Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative, with a forward provided by President Jimmy Carter.

Available in bookstores or online at www.westviewpress.com



What the Media Say

National Foster Care Month Blue Ribbon Campaign



The first annual Blue Ribbon Campaign, promoted by Casey Family Services, Casey Family Programs and the National Foster Care Month Partnership, generated more than 263 media stories nationwide

during the month of May. Highlights included articles in The New York Times, Boston Globe and Parade Magazine, television coverage on The Today Show, The Wayne Brady Show and Dr. Phil, and news broadcasts on National Public Radio and Latino USA. The following is an excerpt from an NPR interview featuring Casey Family Services spokesperson, Victoria Rowell, and screenwriter Antwone Fisher.

For many years, May has been recognized as National Foster Care Month, a time when state and private child-care agencies promote programs encouraging people to make foster children a part of their family... Despite the many imperfections of the system, two African-American celebrities overcame the odds and found personal success after spending at least part of their childhoods in the foster-care system, Emmy-nominated actress Victoria Rowell from *The Young and the Restless*, and Hollywood screenwriter Antwone Fisher, best known for the self-titled film. Both defied expectations and are now committed to improving the lives of foster kids around the country... Victoria, is the system too broken to celebrate (National Foster Care Month) these days?

"I celebrate all the mentoring I got through the women who raised me and the good social workers out there and the people who cared... There's a lot to celebrate today."

Tavis Smiley with Victoria Rowell, *National Public Radio*, 5/26/2004

NECN Airs Documentary on St. Charles Children's Home in New Hampshire



NEW ENGLAND CABLE NEWS

A second documentary on the sisters of St. Charles Children's Home in Manchester, New Hampshire aired on NECN this Spring. In the first production, NECN producer Barbara McLeod interviewed Kayla and Savanna, siblings aged 11 and 6, who represented the hundreds of children throughout New Hampshire waiting for permanent homes. In the follow-up story, the five children who had been profiled had all been adopted or placed with loving foster parents. Kayla and Savanna had found a family with Donna and Mike Coraluzzo, who had just finished their foster parent training at Casey's New Hampshire Division office in Concord. With ongoing support from Casey Family Services, love and dedication from Donna and Mike, Kayla and Savanna are thriving.

Another mouth to feed, another life to shape

Ideally, every family would function in harmony. Realistically, that doesn't always happen. So there are people like Jim and Aline

Cameron. They are foster parents. ... May is National Foster Care Month, and beyond celebrating parents who yield their time and homes to take in kids, it's a time for foster-care agencies and the state's Department of Social Services (DSS) to plead their needs. ... They need more Camerons. ... In Massachusetts, more than 10,000 children are in the care of DSS; 7,923 of them live with foster families, 2,353 in residential group homes.

Francyne Fuller, resource coordinator for the Lowell office of Casey Family Services, says the private, nonprofit child welfare agency works "primarily with older adolescents" referred by DSS. "They're older, have been in the system for a while." ... When Casey Family Services called the Camerons, it was to place [Jennifer] for two days while a home was found.

The Sun, Lowell, MA, 5/24/2004

Accountability key to solving educational woes

State governments, local school systems and parents all must be accountable for student performance, an education professor stressed during a recent talk in Bridgeport. ... "Everyone has a role to play and a responsibility," said Pedro A. Noguera, a New York University professor who has written and lectured on urban schools and student achievement.

Noguera was the keynote speaker at the Bridgeport Child Advocacy Coalition's breakfast conference, entitled "Defining Achievement in an Era of No Child Left Behind." The event was co-sponsored by Casey Family Services.

Bridgeport News, Bridgeport, CT, 5/6/2003

2004: Important Dates

August

September

August 4-8

2004 UNITY: Journalists of Color
Convention and Career Expo
Washington Convention Center
Washington, DC
www.unityjournalists.org

September 1-3

Kids are Worth It!
Child Abuse and Neglect Conference
Prevent Child Abuse Kentucky
Lexington, Kentucky
www.pcaky.org

September 8-10

15th Annual Family Preservation
Conference
New Mexico State University School of
Social Work
San Antonio, Texas
www.nmsu.edu

September 17-22

9th International Conference on Family
Violence:
Working Together to End Abuse
Family Violence & Sexual Assault Institute
(FVSAI)
San Diego, California
www.fvsai.org

September 27-28

National AIA Resource Center 2004
Conference
"Raising Kin"
National AIA Resource Center
Chicago, Illinois
www.uclink.berkeley.edu

September 27-29

Implementing and Enhancing Youth
Court Programs
National Youth Court Center
Portland, Oregon
www.csg.org

October

September 29-30

18th Annual Children's Network
Conference
"Connecting the Pieces: Family Violence,
Substance Abuse and Children At-Risk"
Children's Network of San Bernardino
County
Ontario, Canada
Jcelise-reyes@hss.sbcounty.gov

September 29-October 2

17th Annual National Independent Living
Conference
"Growing Pains"
Daniel Memorial Institute
San Antonio, Texas
<http://conferences.danielkids.org>

October 12-14

Fall 2004 Foster Care Conference
Foster Parents Association of Washington
State (FPAWS)
Renton, Washington
fpaws@fpaws.org

October 12-14

It's My Life Conference
Casey Family Programs, Casey Family
Services, Jim Casey Youth Opportunities
Initiative
Holiday Inn, Capitol Plaza
Sacramento, California
www.casey.org

October 17-20

National Partnership for Juvenile Services
Representing America's Youth:
Effective Staff and Programs
Grand Rapids, Michigan
www.njda.com

October 20-22

2004 Child Welfare League of America
Biennial Leadership Summit "Is the System
Broken? Creating the Will, Wisdom, and
Ways to Meet the Needs of America"
Child Welfare League of America
Hilton Head, South Carolina
www.cwla.org/conferences/conferences.htm

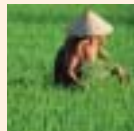
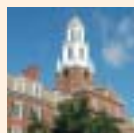


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Voice

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Voice is published quarterly by Casey Family Services for child welfare professionals, advocates, and the children and families they serve. The opinions expressed within this publication do not necessarily reflect the views of Casey Family Services or the Annie E. Casey Foundation. Casey Family Services is the direct service arm of the Annie E. Casey Foundation, a private charitable organization established in 1948 by United Parcel Service Founder Jim Casey and his siblings in honor of their mother.

The Foundation is dedicated to helping build better futures for disadvantaged children in the United States. Started in 1976, Casey Family Services offers quality long-term and treatment foster care, post-adoption services, family reunification, family preservation, family advocacy and support, family resource centers, and assistance to young families and families affected by HIV/AIDS, and technical assistance through the Casey Center for Effective Child Welfare Practice. The mission of Casey Family Services is to improve the lives of at-risk children and strengthen families and communities by providing high-quality, cost-effective services that advance both positive practice and sound public policy.

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