

A publication sharing ideas and insights



Voice

Fall 2005 Volume Six Issue Four

A close-up photograph of two young girls of African descent. The girl on the left has her hair in braids and is wearing a grey shirt with a pink collar. The girl on the right is wearing a red shirt and has a pink flower sticker on her cheek. They are both smiling warmly at the camera. In the background, there are colorful balloons and a sign that partially reads "VICES" and "12-692".

*Celebrate Lifelong
Family Connections*

National Adoption Day 2005

*U.S. Senators Craig and Landrieu
on Adoption*

*The Annie E. Casey Foundation
Responds to Tragedies in the Gulf
Region*

Protection for Children in Research



From the Executive Director's Desk

Not long ago, I had the opportunity to take part in a community event in Hartford, Connecticut, designed to help parents protect their children from becoming lost without a trace. The timeliness of the event was clear, as hundreds of children remained missing in the wake of Hurricane Katrina.

Perhaps the tragedy of Katrina heightened the importance of ensuring these children's safety. The lines snaked around the building long before the doors opened at 9 a.m. on a Saturday. Throughout the day, hundreds of families with infants, toddlers, and teens alike arrived, eager to process photographs, fingerprints, and dental imprints. Video cameras recorded interviews with each of the children, and all materials were given back to parents. These treasures will be carefully guarded at home, ready to present to authorities when and if ever needed. This is the third year that Casey Family Services has helped to bring this important program into the Frog Hollow neighborhood of Hartford. I was proud to join Mayor Eddie A. Perez in welcoming families and in praising them for taking these vital precautions.

As the Gulf Coast region struggles to rebuild after two crushing hurricanes within a month, it saddens all of us to see the toll the storms have exacted on the region's most fragile families. Perhaps most vulnerable of all have been the foster children of Louisiana, especially in New Orleans, many of whom now are separated not only from their birth families but also from the foster parents who represented the only stability in their young lives.

In the months ahead, Casey Family Services staff, each in his or her own way, will join their colleagues at the grant-making arm of the Annie E. Casey Foundation to contribute to the recovery. The Foundation has pledged to match individual monetary gifts from employees. In addition, the Foundation, including Casey Family Services, will work to help rebuild the state's child welfare system and restore community-based organizations with whom we have partnered.

The next few weeks are a time of family celebrations for all of us. November is National Adoption Month, and in the days ahead, we will observe National Adoption Day, National Family Week, and Thanksgiving Day. Throughout the month, we will have the opportunity to reflect on the importance of family members in our own lives and celebrate those who have generously opened their homes and hearts to children in need.

Raymond L. Torres



De la izquierda: Eddie A. Perez, el alcalde de Hartford, Connecticut, con Raymond L. Torres, el director ejecutivo de Casey Family Services, durante un acontecimiento reciente para familias en la comunidad.

Del Escritorio del Director Ejecutivo

Hace no mucho tiempo, tuve la oportunidad de participar en un evento comunitario en Hartford, Connecticut, destinado a ayudar a los padres a evitar que sus hijos se pierdan y no poder localizarlos. El evento fue evidentemente oportuno, dados los cientos de niños que se extraviaron como consecuencia del Huracán Katrina.

Tal vez la tragedia de Katrina haya agudizado la importancia de garantizar la seguridad de estos niños. Las filas ya serpenteaban alrededor del edificio mucho tiempo antes de que las puertas se abrieran un sábado a las 9 a.m. Durante todo el día, llegaron cientos de familias con sus niños, ansiosos por procesar fotografías, huellas dactilares y registros dentales. Se grabaron entrevistas en cámaras de video con cada uno de los niños, y todo el material fue entregado a los padres. Estos tesoros serán cuidadosamente custodiados en el hogar, preparados para presentarlos ante las autoridades cuando, y si alguna vez, llegaran a necesitarse. Éste es el tercer año en que Casey Family Services ayuda a acercar este importante programa al vecindario de Frog Hollow en Hartford. Me enorgulleció haberme unido al Alcalde Eddie A. Perez para recibir a las familias y elogiarlas por tomar estas precauciones tan importantes.

Mientras la región del Golfo lucha por su reconstrucción luego de dos huracanes devastadores entre un mes, a todos nos duele ver las víctimas que la tormentas se han cobrado en las familias más frágiles de la región. Quizás los más vulnerables hayan sido los niños bajo cuidado sustituto de Luisiana, especialmente en Nueva Orleans, muchos de los cuales ahora están apartados no sólo de sus familias de nacimiento sino también de los padres de crianza que representaban la única estabilidad en sus jóvenes vidas.

En los meses por delante, el personal de Casey Family Services, cada uno a su manera, se unirá a sus colegas de la división de entrega de subsidios de la Annie E. Casey Foundation para contribuir con la recuperación. La Fundación se ha comprometido a igualar las donaciones individuales monetarias de los empleados. Asimismo, la Fundación, junto con Casey Family Services, trabajará para ayudar a reconstruir el sistema estatal encargado del bienestar de los niños y a restaurar las organizaciones establecidas en la comunidad con las que nos hemos asociado.

Las próximas semanas son un tiempo de celebraciones familiares para todos nosotros. Noviembre es el Mes Nacional de la Adopción, y en los días siguientes, tendremos el Día Nacional de la Adopción, la Semana Nacional de la Familia y el Día de Acción de Gracias. Durante todo el mes, tendremos la oportunidad de reflexionar sobre la importancia de los familiares en nuestras propias vidas y también de honrar a aquellos que tan generosamente han abierto sus hogares y sus corazones a los niños necesitados.

Raymond L. Torres

BRINGING FAMILIES
TOGETHER
THROUGH ADOPTION

NATIONAL ADOPTION DAY 2005

On Saturday, November 19 – National Adoption Day 2005 – an unprecedented number of courts and community organizations across the nation will open on a normal day off to finalize the adoptions of thousands of children from foster care, as well as to honor all families formed by adoption. Expanding on the growing success of the annual event, the National Adoption Day Coalition is championing activities and celebrations throughout the month, spotlighting the needs of the more than 118,000 children in foster care who need permanent and loving families.

“By partnering with the courts, judges, attorneys, and advocates to finalize adoptions, National Adoption Day has made the dream of a family come true for thousands of children,” says Raymond L. Torres, executive director of Casey Family Services, a founding partner in the national coalition. “By setting aside this one Saturday to facilitate adoption ceremonies, we are offering children the love they deserve and the essential foundation they need for a successful life.” Adoption is one of an array of permanency outcomes, he says.

Last year, the courts and child welfare advocates finalized the adoptions of more than 3,400 children from foster care during National Adoption Day, organizing 200 events in 37 states.

“Expectations this year are even higher,” says Renette Oklewicz, grant manager at the Freddie Mac Foundation and chair of the national coalition. “Our goal is to have a National Adoption Day event in every state across the country to ensure that all children have the opportunity to find a safe, permanent family.”

In addition to encouraging adoption ceremonies, the National Adoption Day Coalition is looking to support states and child welfare agencies in finding stable and nurturing parents who are willing to adopt a child in foster care.

Toward that end, the national coalition again has commissioned the Urban Institute of Washington, D.C., to conduct a national research study to identify and assess strategies to help more children find families.

While last year’s Urban Institute report examined systemic barriers to adoption and promising administrative solutions, the



2005 study will focus more on the individuals involved in forming “forever families.”

Launched in July, this year’s research project assesses the profiles of women who are interested in adoption, as well as the children waiting to be adopted. Jennifer Ehrle Macomber, project manager for the study, says the Urban Institute also highlights innovative strategies that bring these two groups together.

Torres believes the study will forward permanency planning for youth. “In addition to developing practices that support adoption in the public policy arena, states and child welfare agencies must embrace the process of finding adoptive families for children in foster care,” he says.

To deepen the field’s understanding of what type of person might adopt children in foster care, the study reviews the 2002 National Survey of Family Growth, giving attention to women ages 18 to 44 with an expressed interest in growing their families. “Since women are the primary decision makers about adoption, this national profile helps illustrate the demographics of this population,” says Ehrle Macomber.

Torres is pleased by the month-long focus on adoption, which, along with family preservation, reunification, guardianship, and other enduring relationships, helps children achieve the lifelong connections they need. “It is more than a legal status – adoption is the recognition of a caring and unconditional bond between a parent and a child, a declaration of a lifelong commitment,” he says. To help organizations and communities recognize and celebrate these significant connections, the National Adoption Day Coalition has developed toolkits – available online at www.nationaladoptionday.org – for those planning an event in their city. This year, there are new materials for corporations and for faith-based organizations that wish to promote adoption.

National Adoption Day was founded in 1997 by the Alliance for Children’s Rights in Los Angeles, California, which advanced the concept of voluntarily opening courts on a Saturday to help process foster care adoptions more efficiently. Casey Family Services, the Children’s Action Network, the Congressional Coalition on Adoption Institute, the Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption, the Freddie Mac Foundation, and Target Corporation have since joined with the Alliance to form the National Adoption Day Coalition.

THOSE WITH CASEY CONNECTION HONORED

ANGELS IN ADOPTION



The Congressional Coalition on Adoption Institute – through its annual Angels in Adoption Gala – provides an opportunity for members of Congress to honor the good work of their constituents who have enriched the lives of foster children and orphans. On September 13, 2005, in Washington, D.C., congressional leaders honored several people with a Casey connection for their commitment to helping children find “forever families.”

Jim Gannaway: U.S. Senator Jack Reed nominated Director Gannaway and his staff at Casey Family Services’ Rhode Island Division for the organization’s dedication and clinical expertise in serving families formed through adoption throughout the state (see *Casey Close-up* on next page).

Dana and Leslie Kelly: U.S. Representative Tom Allen of Maine nominated the Kelly family for its unique and inspiring journey of parenting. The couple, with two birth children, has served as adoptive and foster parents for seven youth through Casey Family Services, helping these young people thrive. In 2004, the family suffered the loss of its 12-year-old adopted son, Daniel, to cancer. How the family bravely and compassionately dealt with this event is emblematic of its strength, wisdom, and commitment to children.

Tim and Maryellen Roma: U.S. Senator Olympia Snowe nominated the Roma family of Maine for its unequalled courage in caring for children who are medically fragile. In addition to four birth children, the

couple has parented 13 children, nine with special needs. Tim and Maryellen also have found the time to be trainers of potential foster parents for the Maine Department of Health and Human Services and Casey Family Services. They have spoken throughout the region about their experiences in parenting those with medical issues, emotional disturbances, and mental health challenges.

THE CONGRESSIONAL COALITION ON ADOPTION INSTITUTE – THROUGH ITS ANNUAL ANGELS IN ADOPTION GALA – PROVIDES AN OPPORTUNITY FOR MEMBERS OF CONGRESS TO HONOR THE GOOD WORK OF THEIR CONSTITUENTS WHO HAVE ENRICHED THE LIVES OF FOSTER CHILDREN AND ORPHANS.

In addition to these unsung heroes chosen from all 50 states and the District of Columbia, a select few National Angels are recognized each year for their adoption and foster care advocacy on a broader, nationwide scale. This year, the Congressional Coalition on Adoption Institute honored Victoria Rowell for her work in improving the lives of children living in foster care. A former foster youth herself, Rowell is an accomplished actress, earlier this year garnering an NAACP Image Award for her



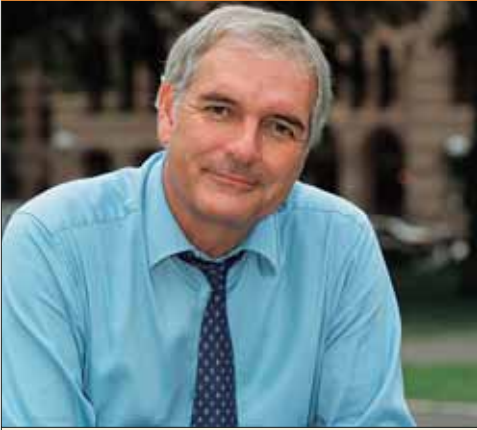
(Top, left to right): Rhode Island Division Director Jim Gannaway and adoptive parents Dana Kelly, Linda Pouliot, Leslie Kelly, and Maryellen and Tim Roma are honored in Washington, D.C., for their commitment to children.

(Above): Congressman Dave Camp honors Victoria Rowell as a National Angel in Adoption.

role on CBS’ “The Young and the Restless” television show. A mother of two, she launched her own nonprofit organization, the Rowell Foster Children’s Positive Plan in 1990. The foundation provides artistic, recreational, and cultural opportunities to vulnerable youth. Rowell has strived to increase public awareness on the issues of adoption and foster care, serving as the national spokeswoman for Casey Family Services and the National Foster Care Month Partnership.

Former National Angels include Muhammad Ali, Dave Thomas, and Bruce Willis.

The institute, whose foster care internship program is funded by the Annie E. Casey Foundation, is a founding partner in the National Adoption Day Coalition.



JIM GANNAWAY: RHODE ISLAND DIVISION DIRECTOR

Jim Gannaway joined Casey Family Services in 1992 to launch and direct the organization's fledgling Rhode Island Division. Prior to becoming the division's director, Jim Gannaway managed the children and youth programming for the community mental health center in Providence. He also kept busy in a private practice doing psychotherapy, divorce mediation and an occasional criminal defense case. The original Rhode Island Team recruited by Jim included Arleen DiCicco, Cathy Lewis, and Jim Morris, all of whom were instrumental in putting Casey on the map with an effective state-wide foster care program. Today the Providence-based Rhode Island Division with its staff of 31 is a state leader in providing an array of permanency services for children and families.

VOICE: In September, you and the division were honored by the Congressional Coalition on Adoption Institute as Angels in Adoption in your state. What are you and your staff doing to support adoptive families?

GANNAWAY: In the Rhode Island Division, we offer supports for all Rhode Island families formed by adoption through foster care, kinship care, public and private sector as well as international placements. These services are voluntary, free and aimed at meeting families at their level of need. Recently we have integrated the Casey Legal Clinic's Services into our post adoption work by teaming third year law students with clinicians on cases requiring both perspectives.

In addition to our traditional post-adoption services, we are committed to supporting permanency for the children in our Foster Care Program. We have moved 50 youth

from foster care into adoption, most all of them adopted by their Casey foster parents.

We have many great staff and families worthy of the Angels in Adoption Award. Linda Pouliot, an adoptive and foster parent at Casey, joined me in Washington, D.C., to accept the award on behalf of all those Casey families and staff. The sustaining commitment that Linda and Ray, her husband, have made to their adoptive and foster children while working with Casey represents the good work done across the agency. Lisa Guillette, director of the Rhode Island Foster Parent Association, was the co-recipient of the congressional award.

VOICE: What role do you see Casey Family Services playing in Rhode Island?

GANNAWAY: Rhode Island is progressive in establishing permanency as a goal for its children in care. As a result we have developed our casework and clinical practice to fully embrace permanency.

VOICE: What has that shift in focus meant in terms of your practice?

GANNAWAY: In past years when a child entered our foster care program, often from a psychiatric or residential facility, stability and treatment took precedent over conversations about adoption. Today we are still very attentive to the therapeutic needs of our children, while achieving stability of placement; however, discussions regarding permanency plans begin at intake. We are also more upfront with prospective foster parents, always asking if they would consider adopting. So we are placing children who will most likely be moving to adoption with those families who have indicated that they are open to the concept of foster care to adoption. It is also

important, however, to recruit resource families not interested in adoption to help us with our reunification efforts.

VOICE: As a clinical social worker and an attorney, you've combined two very different career paths. What led you to pursue both professions?

GANNAWAY: When I started out as a social worker, my jobs took me into court pretty regularly. I felt that social workers didn't get a lot of respect in the courtroom. When the opportunity for a fellowship to Saint Louis University School of Law presented itself, I took it.

VOICE: What's been the impact of the division's move to a more urban area?

GANNAWAY: We have become much more involved with our neighborhood. While we continue to provide services throughout the state, being in South Providence and having a Family Resource Center has allowed us to reach out into the community.

We are looking to expand our outreach to families in the community. As a result of our local partnerships, we can offer many services ranging from a law clinic to food preparation classes.

We've also strengthened our connection to the grant-making arm of the Annie E. Casey Foundation, which is funding several projects in our communities: Making Connections, the Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative (JCYOI), and the School-to-Career Partnership. Through JCYOI alone, 75 kids in foster care are learning and practicing important life skills. It's been a great opportunity to bring these resources to Providence.

U.S. SENATORS LARRY CRAIG & MARY LANDRIEU



Close-up

U.S. Senators Larry Craig (R-Idaho) and Mary Landrieu (D-Louisiana) serve as co-chairs of the Congressional Coalition on Adoption (CCA) and as congressional directors of the Congressional Coalition on Adoption Institute. Both lawmakers are adoptive parents and ardent advocates on issues involving youth permanency. The institute annually hosts its signature Angels in Adoption Gala, an opportunity for members of Congress to honor the unsung heroes in their home states. This year, more than 190 senators and representatives participated in the September 13 celebration, making it one of the most significant congressional events focused on child welfare in 2005. Senator Craig and Senator Landrieu, whose home state of Louisiana recently had been decimated by Hurricane Katrina, attended the gala and shared their thoughts with Voice about the coalition, its institute, and federal support for adoption.

VOICE: *What drew you to the issue of finding families for a lifetime for foster children?*

CRAIG: I adopted my wife's children from a previous marriage. As that became known, other adoptive parents began to approach me to tell their own adoption stories and to ask for help.

LANDRIEU: I have been drawn to adoption since my youth. I am the youngest of nine children. One day, I found a child hiding under a merry-go-round in a park. I really felt for that child. I started thinking about neglected children, and that drove my passion for helping children in need. Also, my aunt was an adoptive parent so I had adopted cousins. When I was elected to office at the age of 23, I began my public work on adoption issues. At age 32, I married my husband, who was an adopted child. I just knew we would end up adopting, and we did: two children. So this issue has been a lifelong passion for me.

VOICE: *What was the original impetus for forming the Congressional Coalition on Adoption and the Congressional Coalition on Adoption Institute?*

CRAIG: There is no specific congressional committee with jurisdiction over the issue of adoption, although numerous federal policies affect children who are adopted as well as adoptive families, so members of Congress need to understand this issue. The institute was formed a few years ago when the CCA's work outgrew the ability of individual congressional offices to support it. We also wanted to include outside interests so it would have a greater outreach beyond the federal government, and that necessitated the formation of the institute. We were able to broaden our adoption promotion activities through the institute in ways that were previously impossible to do using taxpayer-provided resources within the House and Senate rules. Today, the institute is an independent entity that supports CCA activities but also has an adoption promotion agenda of its own.

LANDRIEU: The CCA was established in 1985 as a bicameral, bipartisan caucus of congressional members dedicated to improving adoption policy and practice and to focusing public attention on the advantages of adoption. In 2001, the CCA's co-chairs created the institute to more effectively raise congressional and public awareness about adoption. The institute serves as

an informational and educational resource for policymakers as they seek to draft positive adoption-related and foster care legislation. By organizing educational trips, congressional briefings, and leadership training programs, the institute educates members of Congress and their staffs about current domestic and international adoption-related matters.

VOICE: *What are the institute and the federal government doing to encourage "everyday heroes" to step forward and adopt children in foster care?*

CRAIG: After President George W. Bush established the "Adopt US Kids" website at www.adoptuskids.org, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services worked with the Advertising Council to produce a national public service campaign to promote adoption from foster care. Beyond that, the federal government provides funding and resources for states to use in recruiting adoptive parents and moving children from temporary foster placements to permanent families. The institute also sponsors Angels in Adoption, a wonderful promotional event each year. We have found that the publicity surrounding this event as well as the advocacy of the "angels"



themselves are great ways for individuals in our local communities to learn what they can do to help children in foster care who need permanent families.

LANDRIEU: The institute's mission is to promote adoption and raise awareness about the issues related to adoption and foster care. We have 180 members in the institute now, and it is known as the most bipartisan entity in the legislature. Everyone is totally focused on the issues. Primarily, we learn and educate ourselves about the needs of children so we can be better advocates. The institute is only five years old, but its outreach extends around the world in its efforts to help children find families who will love and nurture them.

VOICE: *Do you see the federal government further funding the availability of post-adoption services for parents who adopt children from foster care?*

CRAIG: I know post-adoption services often are needed in these cases, and states already are using federal funds to provide such services. Congress may well consider whether to provide more direct assistance in this area.

LANDRIEU: I believe the federal government is moving toward increased support money for post-adoption services, with the money following the children. Federal funds should accompany the child based on whatever decision is rendered by the court on placement, regardless of the income of the parents.

VOICE: *You've had the opportunity to work with a youth from foster care through the institute's Youth Internship Program, which the Annie E. Casey Foundation has supported. How was that experience – for you and for the interns?*



(Left to right): Congressman James Oberstar; Senator Mary Landrieu; Deanna Carlson Stacy, executive director of the Congressional Coalition on Adoption Institute; Senator Larry Craig; and Congressman Dave Camp.

CRAIG: Several youth interns from foster care have worked in my office. My staff and I found them to be exceptionally energetic and motivated workers. For the interns, it has been an opportunity to build a professional resume and develop a variety of workplace skills, as well as form lasting friendships and make contacts potentially helpful in finding future employment. My office and I benefited from the help provided by these talented young people. More important, I valued the opportunities to talk frankly with them about the foster care experience.

LANDRIEU: The internship program changes their lives. They are empowered. They have a story to tell, and the program helps them to see that they have a future and that they have something valuable to offer. It truly is transformative.

VOICE: *How can we help ensure that every child has a lifelong connection to a family – what we call “permanency”?*

CRAIG: Sometimes permanency can be as simple as asking people to make the commitment. Through the internship program,

I worked with a young man who spoke very highly of his foster dad on multiple occasions. You could tell that this boy felt a connection. So I decided to write a letter to the father. My message was very short and simple. It said: “Why don't you adopt?” And that's exactly what happened.

LANDRIEU: Every child, no matter what age, needs a family. Family is a natural structure where older kids help younger ones, older folks tell stories that are passed down through the generations, and everyone is a part of that natural network. I still talk with my mom every day. Americans need to go back to what is natural. That's why it's so important for siblings to be able to remain together in one family. No youth should have to “age out” of foster care.

VOICE: *What do you view as some of the barriers to successful adoptions in the United States?*

CRAIG: Recent research reports confirm that the complexity of the adoption process is one of the foremost barriers. I also hear from adoptive parents that they encountered obstacles because of differences among state adoption laws.

LANDRIEU: One barrier is the lack of understanding about the need for people to come forward and adopt. Every child deserves a family. We would like for adoption to be seen as a normal process, and I think we are working toward that end. Each parent in America should understand that he or she does not have to be a perfect parent. Just showing love and respect to one's children is the best gift a parent can offer. Children are the most valuable investment we can make in our country, and adoption is one way to make our reward even greater.

FOUNDATION
RESPONDS TO

HURRICANE DISASTER

In the wake of the one-two punch by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita in America's Gulf Coast region, the Annie E. Casey Foundation, including Casey Family Services, has responded with a multi-faceted approach designed to help now and in the long term.

According to Senior Vice President Ralph Smith, the Foundation's strategy has evolved into five important and related efforts:

Children in Care: Helping the affected states and localities respond to the challenges facing those children already in the child welfare and juvenile justice systems and those who will come into care as a result of the disaster.

Citizenship: Helping to guide and match individual contributions by Casey staff throughout the country.

Extended Family: Exploring ways to help staff, grantees, and consultants in the region who have been affected directly.

Relocation: Playing a constructive supporting role with respect to displaced families who are being relocated to cities in which the Foundation plays a role.

Recovery and Restoration: Working through the Foundation's Living Cities initiative to frame, support, and advocate an approach to the recovery and restoration planning that commits to meaningful engagement of and real benefits for low-income residents.

"Hurricane Katrina devastated children and families from two of our poorest states in some of the poorest areas within those states," observes Kathleen Feeley, director of

the Casey Strategic Consulting Group. "In Louisiana and Mississippi, where child poverty rates are the second and third highest in the nation, the disaster will tip many poor children and families in the region even further into crisis," she adds. "Children already in the public systems are especially vulnerable. Within the context of the larger problems facing the region, the needs of children in state custody could be easily overlooked."

IN NEW ORLEANS ALONE, MORE THAN 2,000 CHILDREN WERE IN FOSTER CARE AT THE TIME OF THE STORMS, AND OVER 350 WERE IN THE CARE OF THE JUVENILE JUSTICE SYSTEM.

In New Orleans alone, more than 2,000 children were in foster care at the time of the storms, and over 350 were in the care of the juvenile justice system. Every one of those children had to be evacuated to institutions and programs in other parts of the state or in nearby states, according to Feeley. Because there was no uniform evacuation system, for weeks hundreds of foster children remained unaccounted for. Although most have been located since, concerns remain that their foster families may not be able to continue to care for them. In a similar state of uncertainty, the youth in detention have been scattered throughout Louisiana, cut off from family and left without knowledge of their fates.

The Annie E. Casey Foundation is engaging in discussions with leaders of both child welfare and juvenile justice systems to determine the best ways to proceed with aid. The Foundation is exploring the potential to assist in developing recruitment and training strategies for staff and foster parents alike. In addition, to help families at risk of losing their children to state custody, the Foundation is assessing its capacity to help design crisis intervention services, including training and support systems, and to establish a flexible emergency fund targeted to fragile families. Efforts are being made to help in reducing low-risk and low-level juvenile justice cases as well.

"This crisis is without precedent in the United States," says Smith. "Although the leaders of the child welfare and juvenile justice systems are working hard to develop plans and marshal resources to deal with these problems, they will need sustained help. Every displaced child in care must be found, the temporary living circumstances evaluated, and plans made for ongoing monitoring of their well-being. This will require extraordinary cooperation among agencies in several states."

The Foundation will continue to help minimize the number of children removed from birth and kin families due to poverty and housing crises not only in this disaster but for the future.

In the process, it is hoped that valuable lessons will be learned for restoring hope and opportunity to literally millions of others who, like the families of the Gulf Coast, hover near the brink of disaster every day.

GRANDRALLY 2005: CALLING ON CONGRESS TO SUPPORT

GRANDPARENTS RAISING GRANDKIDS



More than 500 grandparents and other relative caregivers from across the nation gathered recently to deliver a singular message to Congress: “We need help.” These heads of household converged on Capitol Hill for the nation’s second GrandRally on September 14, 2005, urging lawmakers to recognize and support them in keeping their families together and their children safe.

Across the country, more than six million children – one in 12 – are living in households headed by grandparents and other relatives. Of those, two in five children are in homes without either mother or father present, according to the Children’s Defense Fund. Family members are stepping forward to provide safe and loving homes for these children because their parents are unable to do so as a result of substance abuse, serious health and mental health problems, domestic violence, incarceration, or death.

Grandparents, other relatives, and children traveled by plane, bus, train, and car from about 40 states to attend the event. The GrandRally provided these caregivers an opportunity to share their concerns with each other and with members of Congress.

For Jessie, a grandmother from Connecticut, the challenge of making ends meet to support her family is very stressful. “I came to Washington today to say that it’s not right that there isn’t more help,” she says, having attended the GrandRally with other members of New Haven’s Grandparents on the Move support group, whom Casey Family Services accompanied to Washington. After her son passed away, Jessie began to care for her two grandchildren, supporting them on a tight budget.



(Top): Senator Hillary Clinton offers support to relative caregivers on the Capitol lawn during the GrandRally.

(Above): Members of New Haven’s Grandparents on the Move with the Child Welfare League of America’s Shay Bilchik.

“The stories shared at the GrandRally, and those of the millions of grandparents and other relatives raising children, powerfully illustrate the fact that these families often must struggle to get the supports and services they need for the children in their care,” states Marian Wright Edelman, founder and CEO of the Children’s Defense Fund.

The event was sponsored jointly by AARP, the Children’s Defense Fund, the Child Welfare League of America (CWLA), Generations United, and the National Committee on Grandparents for Children’s Rights.

“These kinship relationships, as well as guardianship, play an essential role in helping children find permanency,” says Sania Metzger, Esq., director of policy at Casey Family Services. “Research suggests that kinship care offers greater stability for children who are living with their relatives. It is in the best interest of children for Congress to recognize the value of these placements.”

According to Shay Bilchik, president and CEO of CWLA: “Congress can help assist these caregivers in accessing the supports and services they need to perform their vital responsibilities. We should not be asking grandparents raising grandchildren to choose between buying medicine for themselves or food for their children or ask an aunt raising nephews to have to take on a second job in order to pay for child care, but these are the compromises relative caregivers face every day.”

GREAT SUMMER

JOBS FOR

GREAT KIDS



This summer, more than 50 kids from Casey Family Services' Baltimore and Bridgeport divisions were earning and learning from their summer jobs. "In both of these cities, our kids rose to the occasion to make their summer jobs a successful experience," says Casey Family Services Executive Director Raymond L. Torres. "We do everything we can to prepare and support these young workers and their employers, so it's a win-win for everyone."

Everybody into the Water

When February rolls around, Kevin Amado, Jr. and Rosalind Wilkins of the Baltimore Division already are thinking about summer. They start encouraging teens who want to work to get their paperwork together to apply for a summer job.

Partnering with the Baltimore Department of Recreation, Amado and Wilkins help teens get jobs as attendants at the city swimming pools. The program, which has grown steadily since 2001, placed 41 youth, aged 14 and 15, this past summer.

Casey Family Services guides the teens through the process. Staff member Patricia Smith generously donates her time to provide free training in CPR and First Aid. Before they start working, teens also participate in workshops to learn about saving money and spending wisely.

"It's hard to get a job when you are 14 or 15 years old, but these kids want to work so they can bring some money into the house," says Amado. "They really enjoy the feeling of making their own money. It's amazing what a job can do for young people. They get a tremendous sense of accom-

plishment and a boost in confidence, self-esteem, and pride from working."

Succeeding on the job can be the key to succeeding in life, according to Wilkins. "One young man came to us when he had just been kicked out of his house," she remembers. "We found him a safe place to stay and got him a job as a pool attendant. He worked his way up to lifeguard, and this summer, he graduated from high school and is headed to college. The job helped him turn his life around."

Life Skills and More

This was the first year of the Bridgeport Division's summer jobs program. Twelve young people, between the ages of 13 and 20, participated in the program.

"They all did an excellent job," says Team Leader Audra Holmes-Greene. "They learned about being part of the workforce. Through this, they were able to see authority figures – especially adults giving direction, with whom they often have a problem – in a positive light."

The employers enjoyed the experience, too. "They wanted to give back to the community, and, because of the support we pro-

vide, they were able to participate in the program," she says. "In addition to the valuable work experience for the kids, we are developing stronger partnerships with the community."

Casey Family Services in Bridgeport partnered with a number of agencies and stores in the summer jobs program. For example, through a collaboration with the Department of Labor, teens had access to job listings and other resources. Casey held a variety of courses and workshops to help teens prepare for everything from how to dress to interviewing techniques. The teens also were trained in CPR and First Aid and did group work on filling out employment applications.

"To plan this program, we asked ourselves, 'What would our youth like to do?' and then 'What can they do?' We worked with our young people to determine which job they wanted, and then we went and found it for them," says Holmes-Greene. "We knew some of the kids were going to have a real challenge. But we made a commitment to match their courage to be employed with our best efforts."

IT'S MY LIFE CONFERENCE 2005

Growing up is hard to do. The transition into adulthood presents challenges for all young people, but for youth “aging out” of foster care, facing adulthood can be a frightening prospect. To support youth in successfully reaching independence, the Annie E. Casey Foundation’s grant-making and direct service arms, along with Casey Family Programs and the Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative, joined in a collaborative effort beginning in 2003. The result was the first annual national conference – It’s My Life – focusing on key issues that affect youth moving out of foster care or other substitute care.

For the first time in its three-year history, the It’s My Life Conference will be offered on the East Coast on November 14-15, 2005, in Baltimore, Maryland.

It’s My Life 2005 will bring together the nation’s leading child welfare professionals and advocates who will demonstrate promising practices in preparing foster youth for adulthood.

The conference will include more than 50 workshops, panels, and other sessions for the 600 expected participants. Offerings will address the needs of youth facing transition, those in the process of transitioning, and those already living independently.

This year’s speakers include Regina Louise, author and child advocate; Josh Shipp, television show host, author, and motivational speaker; and Tony Shellman, co-founder of Enyce Clothing Company and a spokesman for National Foster Care Month. “Each of the speakers has transformed his or her personal adversity into vibrant and successful lives,” says David Johnston, senior program associate for life skills with Casey Family Services. “Their individual stories contain powerful and profound messages that are sure to resonate with the youth in attendance.”

BLENDING APPROACHES TO YOUTH TRANSITION WITH PERMANENCE

“Regardless of age, race, or cultural background, special need, or complex circumstance, all youth need and deserve a family to count on for a lifetime, and all youth need and deserve to be adequately prepared to face the adult world.”

–From “A Call to Action: An Integrated Approach to Youth Permanency and Preparation for Adulthood”

Close to 200 experts from across the country gathered in San Francisco this past spring to strengthen practice and policy ensuring permanency for older children and youth. The event, the National Convening on Youth Permanence, coincided with the release of a new guide to youth permanency and preparation for adulthood developed by

the Casey Center for Effective Child Welfare Practice in collaboration with the California Permanency for Youth Project, Casey Family Programs, and the Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative, all sponsors of the Convening, along with the Dave Thomas, Peninsular and Stuart foundations.

The guide, “A Call to Action: An Integrated Approach to Youth Permanency and Preparation for Adulthood,” sets forth five principles essential to a holistic and integrated approach:

- 1) Embrace sound definitions of permanency and preparation for adulthood and a comprehensive approach to outcomes.
- 2) Blend youth-related policies and practices into the process of integrating customized permanency outcomes and comprehensive preparation for adulthood.

3) Customize planning and decision making to be youth centered and family focused.

4) Ensure comprehensive, continuous, customized, and collaborative services for youth and families.

5) Promote a vision of shared responsibility for change.

Convening participants recognized that a broad array of individualized permanency options for youth exists, including reunification with birth parents, guardianship, and adoption. The Casey Center will host the 2006 National Convening on Youth Permanence, set for September 2006 in Washington, D.C.

Casey's Baltimore Division appoints a new director to oversee its efforts to make a tangible difference in the lives of vulnerable children and families in the historic East Baltimore community.

News

DEDRA LAYNE NAMED BALTIMORE DIVISION DIRECTOR



Casey Family Services recently named Dedra Layne, a seasoned human services professional and lifelong Baltimorean, to take the helm of the organization's Baltimore

Division. In her capacity as division director, Layne oversees a staff of 26 working to make a tangible difference in the lives of vulnerable children and families in the historic East Baltimore community.

Casey Family Services operates a family resource center within the division to provide parent training and crisis intervention for young families, home-based day care,

short-term counseling, and intensive family preservation services. These offerings are helpful to disadvantaged, single adolescents and other young parents to avoid out-of-home placement for their children. In addition, Layne is leading the development of the division's foster care program for teen mothers and their babies. Over the past year, the division has been working closely with the grant-making arm of the Annie E. Casey Foundation on its overall redevelopment strategy for East Baltimore.

Prior to joining Casey, Layne served as program director for Safe Haven of Baltimore from 2002 to 2005 and as the agency's program coordinator from 1996 to 2002,

assuring quality services for clients who were homeless and severely mentally ill. In her 17-year career, she has offered intensive outpatient mental health services and case management with the Assertive Community Treatment Team at the University of Maryland Medical System in Baltimore. At Mt. Carmel Place in Washington, D.C., she provided live-in support and training for women who were homeless and pregnant.

Layne holds a Master of Social Work from the University of Maryland at Baltimore and a Bachelor's degree in Social Work from Coppin State University. Layne and her husband are the parents of a 12-year-old daughter.

CONNECTICUT MOVES TO BOLSTER ITS CHILDREN'S COURTS

After successfully piloting a regional probate court dedicated to children's issues in the New Haven region, Connecticut lawmakers recently moved to expand the state's judicial reform initiative. Enacting recommendations initially made by Casey Family Services in a 2003 study of Connecticut's probate court system, the state is directing vital resources to issues that impact youth permanency.

The Children's Court – administered by Judge Frank Forgione – is responsible for cases involving temporary custody, guardianship, the termination of parental rights, adoptions, paternity, emancipation, and voluntary admissions.

A small team of court-dedicated social workers join with families to help connect parents and children with community resources and treatment options.



In addition to establishing a permanent role of the court's pilot project in New Haven, the legislature has authorized six additional regional children's courts throughout the state within the probate system.

According to Judge Forgione, the court holds family conferences at the outset of each case in order to determine which types of services are needed. This tailored process includes input from the family members.

"The families feel that they are a part of the process and, therefore, that their input is valued in determining their futures," says Forgione.

The Children's Court has handled 1,855 children's matters during its first year of operation.

"Through our direct work with families, we knew the courts could do better for children," says Raymond L. Torres, executive director of Casey Family Services. "Judge Forgione has been a wonderful advocate for children during this pilot project, and we are pleased that children and families in other parts of the state will benefit from a court system that is more responsive to their unique needs."

“Let there be PEACE...”

A Profile of Kyra Turner

by Gregory Simpson, Case Information System Administrator, Casey Family Services

“To whom much is given, much is required,” explains Kyra Turner on why she joined the Peace Corps before coming to Casey Family Services’ Bridgeport Division as a foster care social worker in 2004. “I always wanted to do some international work. The Peace Corps teaches you professional skills and gives you the opportunity to learn a new culture and language and to meet new people.”

After meeting her induction group in Atlanta, Georgia, Turner headed to West Africa with 30 women, the first all-female Peace Corps contingent to Togo. There she participated in two months of training on the culture and language. French is the common Togo language so Turner took French classes. Citing this as the biggest challenge, she said she had to “learn how to cope with not being understood.”

Turner experienced many adjustments, including the heat (“It was 105-110 degrees most of the time”) and the food (“I had to get used to eating mostly rice, fish, and beans”). These discomforts were more than made up for by the beautiful mountainous landscape and the outgoing and warm people she met. “They don’t have much to give, but they share what they have.”

Turner’s assignment focused on promoting education and empowerment for young women, mostly ages 14 to 21. “In Togo, education is not free, and parents prefer to send boys to school, believing girls would not use the education.” The cost to send a youth to school for a year is equivalent to \$30, including tuition, books, supplies,



Kyra Turner, a social worker in Casey Family Services, joins local villagers during her Peace Corps tour in West Africa.

uniforms, and food. But that is a lot of money to them.

Part of Turner’s empowerment work involved conducting an after-school group for young women twice weekly. She reports that sexual harassment of female students by teachers is not uncommon, with complaints either ignored or handled by sending the teacher to another village where the pattern of sexual harassment continues.

The opportunity to tour Africa during her breaks was a bonus. Turner visited South Africa, Egypt, Ethiopia, Ghana, Benin, and Burkina Faso. She returned to West Africa in December 2004 and again in May of this year, taking with her donations for a girl’s scholarship fund as well as medical and educational supplies. The Peace Corps “has ignited a flame in me,” says Turner, who now is in charge of her church’s international mission.

“The best part of the Peace Corps experience was learning more about myself – about who I am when I’m not where I’m most comfortable. I learned how to use my voice more and speak out.” She laughs and adds, “But my biggest accomplishment was

learning how to pack. When I first went to Togo, I took two huge suitcases with expandable tops. Now I can travel with a knapsack.”

Turner sees parallels between the Peace Corps and Casey. “Advocacy runs throughout. You need to teach people how to use their own voices. We don’t empower people – people empower themselves.” Also similar is the need to “take people as they are and get to know them as individuals rather than as a group.”

Back home, Turner is involved in recruitment as part of the Peace Corps Volunteers of Connecticut, addressing church and school groups about the sacrifices and rewards of the two-year experience.

Turner maintains close to a dozen relationships in Togo through letters, email, and phone. The most important relationship Turner made, however, was not arranged by the Peace Corps. She became engaged to a Togolese man named Francis, whom she met through the organization for which they both worked. Their wedding is set for the day after Thanksgiving.

Summing up her feelings about finding Togo and Casey, Turner says, “I don’t think things happen by accident. I was really, really fortunate.”

Engaging the Human Spirit in Permanency Work

View from Washington



by Robin Nixon, Executive Director, National Foster Care Coalition

At the recent Growing Pains Conference in Atlanta, Georgia, I was exhilarated by the energy and passionate voices of the hundreds of young people and youth workers, yet was anxious about the safety and well-being of family members and others living in the path of Hurricane Rita. I could hardly help but think a lot about permanence over those few days. I wondered about different people's perception of permanence, about the fragility and elusive nature of permanence for all of us, whether in terms of family, or of our own existence here on spaceship Earth.

Jaiya John, one of the keynote speakers at the conference and an author and poet of mind-boggling talent, read a poem he had written the morning of his speech. It was a song of struggle and pain, a life story tied together with chains of tragedy and bright ribbons of hope. He spoke of his own adoption as the creation of family and stability. But it also was the greatest threat to his sense of self as a person of color in a white family and community. He said that efforts to help youth find a path to successful adulthood must be as much about honoring and nurturing a youth's sense of belonging as it is about learning skills. He emphasized that we must think about our work and our role as not just sharing knowledge and experience but also as being open to, and receiving the gift of the internal and spiritual beauty that each child and youth offers



THE CHILD WELFARE COMMUNITY HAS BECOME MUCH MORE AWARE IN RECENT YEARS OF OUR NEED FOR DIALOGUE WITH YOUNG PEOPLE ABOUT THEIR DREAMS, DESIRES, AND UNDERSTANDING OF PERMANENCY, SAFETY, AND WELL-BEING.

us. He professed that a young person who goes out into the world believing that he or she is beautiful and has a place is a young person capable of independence and interdependence.

The child welfare community has become much more aware in recent years of our need for dialogue with young people about their dreams, desires, and understanding of permanency, safety, and well-being. We have seen increased and genuine efforts to engage youth in planning and decision making and to celebrate individuality and differences of race and culture. At the same time, we continue to struggle to achieve

milestones for permanency within the context of demanding child welfare standards and policies. These guidelines often do not accommodate themselves very well to our understanding of the emotional and spiritual aspects of permanency as voiced by John and others. Increasing the number of adoptions for children and youth in foster care may feel like a hollow victory if the very children and youth we serve are unable to find beauty and belonging along their life's journey.

The Clinical Connection:

Understanding Evidence-Based Practice



by Eliot Brenner, Ph.D.,
Director of Clinical Services,
Casey Family Services

In recent years, there has been a growing emphasis on demonstrating the effectiveness of mental health and child welfare services. Not surprisingly, consumers, regulators, and funders want to ensure that children receive the most effective interventions available. The term evidence-based practice is used to describe an array of effective interventions that are supported by scientific research.

One way to understand evidence-based interventions is to assess the quality of research that supports them. The gold standard for evaluating scientific research is the randomized clinical trial, which derives from the field of medicine. Researchers in clinical trials randomly assign participants to treatment conditions. For example, participants in a medication study might receive a target medication or a placebo. In a double-blind trial, neither the participant nor the doctor knows which participants are receiving the target medication and which are receiving the placebo.

When evaluating evidence that supports interventions in mental health and child welfare, it usually is not possible to conduct double-blind studies. However, it still is possible to be scientifically rigorous. A number of government agencies and professional organizations have systems for evaluating the quality of evidence for interventions in mental health and child welfare.

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's (SAMHSA) National Registry of Evidence-Based Programs and Practices evaluates the efficacy of community, school, mental health, and social services programs. SAMHSA has doctoral-level scientists select and rate programs using strict methodological criteria. Based on their ratings, SAMHSA categorizes programs as model, effective, or promising. Model programs are those that

ONE WAY TO UNDERSTAND EVIDENCE-BASED INTERVENTIONS IS TO ASSESS THE QUALITY OF RESEARCH. THE GOLD STANDARD IS THE RANDOMIZED CLINICAL TRIAL, WHICH DERIVES FROM THE FIELD OF MEDICINE.

have the greatest degree of scientific support. The SAMHSA website allows users to search for programs using a range of criteria. A user can search by content area (for example, treatment of trauma), target population (for example, age or ethnicity), or setting (for example, rural or urban). To illustrate, the SAMHSA website, modelprograms.samsha.gov, indicates that a model treatment for children who have been victims of sexual abuse and are suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder is Cognitive-Behavioral Treatment for childhood sexual abuse.

To categorize the evidence supporting different psychological treatments, the American Psychological Association uses expert psychologists and a three-tiered system: well-established, probably efficacious, or possibly efficacious. Well-established treatments are the most rigorous of the three and are supported by at least two randomized clinical trials with control groups. For example, parent training programs are a well-established treatment for children with oppositional behavior. Last year, Casey Family Services invited Alan Kazdin, Ph.D., an expert in parent training with the Yale Child Study Center, to conduct a workshop on this treatment.

The Child Welfare League of America (CWLA) has a two-tiered system (high level of evidence, medium level of evidence) for evaluating research for different interventions. CWLA examines the evidence related to timely reunification, permanency after leaving care, timely adoption, placement stability, maltreatment recurrence, and safety in care. CWLA further categorizes evidence. For example, factors improving the timeliness of reunification are as follows:

- Including extended family members in the child's permanency planning.
- Providing intensive services (at least three times per week).
- Offering flexible funding.
- Making available community services such as substance abuse treatment.

By documenting the success of our practices, we are ensuring positive outcomes for children, which is always best practice.

POLICY CORNER

LESSONS FROM NEW ORLEANS ON THE HIGH COST OF BEING POOR



by Sania Metzger, Esq.,
Director of Policy, Casey
Family Services

“Within the Gulf region are some of the most beautiful and historic places in Ameri-

ca. As all of us saw on television, there’s also some deep, persistent poverty in the region as well. The poverty has roots in a history of racial discrimination, which cut off generations from the opportunity of America. We have a duty to confront this poverty with bold action.”

– U.S. President George W. Bush

It seems the events that unfolded in the Gulf region following Hurricane Katrina were a wake-up call to the nation. As one *New York Times* reader critically observed on September 11, 2005: “I was surprised to learn of the poverty conditions that prevailed in New Orleans. ... Why didn’t the economic-social-racial conditions get some attention in the paper prior to the hurricane?” While low on the national radar, New Orleans has long struggled with issues of class and race.

Part of the answer to why these conditions were not more central to the national dialogue may be found in an excerpt from Andrew Billingsley and Jeanne Giovannoni’s *Children of the Storm, Black Children and American Child Welfare*: “The underlying philosophy of the present child welfare system is that all families should be able to function adequately without the assistance of society and that failure to perform the parental role without such assistance is indicative of individual pathology.” Although made in the child welfare context nearly three decades ago, the authors’ perspective has enormous relevance for the treatment of today’s working poor.

As the national political debate heightened by Hurricane Katrina continues to gain in volume and intensity, a recurring goal and theme of policymakers must be the expansion and development of preventive strategies and services to maximize a family’s ability to handle its own family crisis.

Urgent policy discussions and recommendations are needed to do the following:

Narrow the definition of child abuse and neglect: Policymakers should consider narrowing child neglect policies to require misconduct on the part of the custodial parent against a child and to exclude those circumstances that develop because the family is living without sufficient resources. Innovative policies with demonstrated success, such as dual track and differential response systems, provide direction on how to better serve more vulnerable families.

Provide economic opportunities: Community leaders must establish an array of economic supports, including job opportunities at a living wage that provide health and pension plans, access to consumer-friendly banking services, a fair tax structure, and incentives to save toward home ownership and other asset-building initiatives. According to Westat’s Dr. Robert Hill, such “family strengthening welfare policies” can reduce racial and ethnic disproportionality as they enhance the social and economic status of families struggling to rise up from generational poverty.

Increase preventive services: Federal efforts for in-home services that support, preserve, and stabilize reunited and new families should match state and local needs. In fiscal year 2000, a mere five percent of federal funding

was spent on preventive services. In 2004, federal spending, according to the Congressional Budget Office, highlighted the philosophical imbalance when \$4.8 billion was spent on foster care, \$1.6 billion on adoption assistance, and \$463 million on preventive services.

Listen to parent voices: Parents most at risk of involvement with child welfare, as well as those whose children have been placed in out-of-home care, must be meaningfully involved in all decisions related to their children. Parents also must receive timely and adequate legal representation and given opportunities to identify and shape policy issues and solutions impacting their lives.

A Silver Lining?

After several heart-wrenching days of watching the people of the Gulf region, especially New Orleans’ most vulnerable residents – the working poor, the disabled, the old, the young, and people of color – suffer unspeakable indignities wrought by Hurricane Katrina (the flood surge, the inadequate levee system, the failure of governments, and the incompetence of the Federal Emergency Management Agency), the notion of a silver lining seemed absurd. But it actually was during this difficult time that a silver lining appeared in the faces of the caregivers – the parents, the grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins, neighbors, and even the youngest of siblings. One could see their resolve, their determination to survive and to maintain their families in the process. What emerged was a true and accurate picture of economically marginalized people telling their own stories, asserting their humanity, and – in the process, it is hoped – reminding each of us of our own.

WHAT IS ... PROTECTION FOR CHILDREN IN RESEARCH

DIALOGUE

Sharing Perspectives on Research, Practice and Policy

by Carol Ripple, Ph.D., Senior Research Associate, and Ben Kerman, Ph.D., Director of Research, Casey Family Services

The revelation that foster children had been included in HIV/AIDS drug trials exploded in the media in the spring of 2005, and the reports were met with outrage. Federally funded researchers had recruited 13,878 children to test treatment approaches in the '80s and '90s, five percent to 10 percent of whom were in foster care. Critics claimed that foster children – most of whom were minorities from poor families – were treated as “guinea pigs.”

Researchers staunchly defended the benefits of the trials. Testifying in hearings before the 109th Congress, Dr. Stephen Spector claimed that the successful treatment of children demonstrated the benefits. He added that “denying children in foster care an opportunity to benefit from such treatments would be medically unacceptable and morally reprehensible.”

Whether or not we agree that the trials were justified, those of us concerned with children's rights and well-being are challenged by the issues raised. Omitting foster children from clinical trials denies them potential benefits and restricts the understanding of how to best treat the most vulnerable children. At the same time, protections and rigorous oversight are essential.

Assurances of Protection

There are three main sources of protection for all human research participants:

- *Ethical codes* are designed for professionals, including social workers, and are provided by several associations. These guidelines

address policy and practice and moral obligations and cover topics such as confidentiality and consent.

- *Federal and state laws* establish the conditions under which children and adults may be recruited for research purposes.
- *Internal Review Boards (IRB)* are composed of people from a range of disciplines and backgrounds. Housed in hospitals, universities, or other institutions seeking to ensure the protection of human subjects, they review research plans for participant protections, scientific merit, and potential research benefits.

These mechanisms apply most clearly to research supported by federal or state funds and to studies intended to produce generalizable knowledge. Agencies conducting internal program evaluation may be exempt from some of the requirements, though they remain ethically and legally responsible to protect the welfare of their participants.

Components of Protection

Four main components are central to protecting human study participants:

- *Informed consent* must be signed by participants or by parents or guardians of participants under age 18. Federal law requires a children's advocate in some studies.
- *A statement of risk/benefits* is part of the consent document. This spells out any potential risks associated with participating (e.g., experiencing side effects from medications) as well as benefits to the individual participant (e.g., feeling better) and to the broader population (e.g., finding a cure).

- *Confidentiality assurances* may describe security provisions (e.g., keeping data locked up or encrypted), use of ID numbers instead of names, and computer system protection. Researchers typically must state with whom and when they will and will not share information.
- *Safety monitoring* describes the steps that will be taken to assure participant's safety, such as dealing with problems that could arise and steps taken to reduce risks.

Our Role in Protection

Even with protections in place, the rights and well-being of children may be at risk. Research suggests that many IRBs are overwhelmed. Conflicts of interest can threaten independent review, and resources to police IRBs are limited. Guidelines for protection vary from state to state, and few real-life situations are so clear cut that there isn't room for interpretation.

Protections for foster children *did* exist during the HIV/AIDS trials. Moreover, pressure from some child advocates to include them in trials was intense, given the limited treatment options at the time. Still, the subsequent uproar demonstrates the sensitivity of using vulnerable children in research.

Even when there are protections for young research participants, concerned adults should be vigilant. Knowing the types of assurances and components of protection helps us to ask the right questions when a child is eligible to be a research participant. Are the protections adequate? Will they be enforced? As long as research requires engaging human subjects, caring adults will need to make sure that children's rights are adequately protected.

The Quality Service Review Results Inform Post-Adoption Services Development

by Ray Foster, Ph.D., and Linda Radigan, Ph.D., Human Systems and Outcomes, Inc.; and Ben Kerman, Ph.D., Director of Research, Casey Family Services

In 2002, Casey Family Services commenced a multi-site Quality Service Review (QSR) program evaluation of its Post-Adoption Services (PAS). The goals for this QSR were to support a reflective approach to local practice development and to help the organization's administration identify options for agency-wide program development and support.

Since Casey Family Services established its first PAS program in 1991 in Bridgeport and Hartford, Connecticut, the agency has amassed considerable experience serving adoptive families. Since then, additional PAS teams were established in other Casey divisions: Maine, New Hampshire, and Rhode Island. Each site varies in its local operating style, service mix, and staffing. However, each site supports, strengthens, and preserves adoptive families; endeavors to increase awareness of adoption-related issues; and enhances the capacity of service providers to meet the unique needs of adoptive families.

Casey's contributions to the field of adoption-competent practice have been timely in terms of two key changes in federal policy. The Promoting Safe and Stable Families Act, amended in 1993, required states to apportion 20 percent of their grant funds to post-adoption services. At the time, communities around the country had a dearth of adoption-competent professionals. Then, in 1997, Congress passed the Adoption and Safe Families Act that tightened time limits for child welfare systems to help children achieve permanency.

Building on the experiences of its six PAS sites, Casey Family Services pioneered the development of best practice approaches for supporting adoptive families. Its white paper, "Strengthening Families and Communities: An Approach to Post-Adoption Services," proposed that PAS programs should endeavor to supplement, rather than supplant, those services that are, or should be, locally available, adding adoption-competent resources to an already functioning local system of care.

QSR Promotes Reflective Practice

Casey Family Services retained Human Systems and Outcomes, Inc. to implement this particular QSR, which involved a participatory evaluation process involving multiple case reviews and focus groups.

Conducted by a team of qualified, independent reviewers who spent one week at each site, the reviews were completed in May 2005. Focus group findings and interviews with stakeholders were woven together to provide an interpretative context for local performance and to identify additional options for program development. Across all sites, a broad and diverse group of consumers and other service providers offered input. A total of 56 families participated voluntarily in the QSR process. Thirty-eight focus groups were conducted, involving 284 stakeholders.

Applying QSR Findings

The value of the QSR rests in the way in which this rich feedback from the individual evaluations is used to facilitate learning and inform program development across the organization. Individual case review findings were aggregated within each site to

produce graphic patterns that helped the review team and local participants find and discuss status and performance patterns. These themes were further explored in light of key informant responses to affirm good results and effective approaches, as well as point to areas that may benefit from further refinement. The QSR team produced a summary of the strengths and needs of families being served, describing the challenges facing frontline PAS practitioners and identifying further options for program development.

Flexible PAS Approach Affirmed

Overall, families were seen as making progress in achieving their goals, according to the QSR. Professional collaterals and service participants appreciated Casey's programs and saw its flexible and quality services as valuable parts of the local system of care. Community providers identified their Casey partners as integral to stimulating interest in early and competent supports for adoptive families. A significant and consistent strength across all sites was the high-satisfaction level among parents and professional partners. Most parents were convinced that the support of their Casey Family Services division was vital to their family's past and ongoing successes. Referring professionals felt confident that their families would be creatively and tirelessly supported by the organization.

Reflecting Casey's desire to supplement local capacities, the agency's PAS model varied across its sites in several important ways to reflect both division assets and local needs and to shape potential areas for administrative supports. Some divisions used clinical models that emphasized

THE QUALITY SERVICE REVIEW RESULTS INFORM POST-ADOPTION SERVICES DEVELOPMENT

individual and group therapy as primary modes of intervention. Some sites focused on office-based counseling while others provided a combination of office- and home-based treatment. Several sites used a case management model of service, though this typically was seen as a means to develop a therapeutic relationship. Some divisions emphasized more integrated, interagency teaming while others tended to work independently.

All sites were engaged in a system of care development and capacity building at the state or local level. However, the scope of these activities varied significantly.

Other valued service components included: parent support groups; flexible service provision; and talented, respectful staff. For instance, each site offered parent education that was highly rated by families served. Parents everywhere enjoyed and gained from the peer learning and support that came from these educational events.

Turning Practice Challenges into Improvement Plans

Consistent cross-site themes suggested a variety of additional program development options. One such theme, the ebb and flow of families' needs for support, is well known to the PAS teams. Some sites have been developing new ways of meeting the needs of families and preserving the supportive relationships through short-term active service episodes, interspersed with variable periods of low-intensity support or lifeline services. Looking forward, the programs will continue to refine their use of practice tools and documentation procedures to support best practice.

PAS Incorporates a Variety of Successful Roles and Activities

<i>Providing direct services</i>	<i>Facilitating services</i>	<i>Strengthening local system of care</i>
Assessment and planning Outreach and clinic-based counseling Support groups Crisis responding Preventive services	Case managing Case coordinating Flexible gap filling	Training Consulting Convening

QSR Highlights Questions for Ongoing Program Development

<i>What is Casey's role in filling system gaps?</i>	<i>What do Casey teams need in order to succeed?</i>
Clear and consistent role definition Direct and indirect service role	Procedures that support defined role Practice tools Advanced training Expert consultation

Gaps in the service system continue to face families who have adopted. In some sites, there is a glaring need for respite services. In other divisions, practitioners face a dearth of child psychiatric resources or adoption-competent collaborators. The essential challenge for further developing PAS is to clarify the agency's role in a system and to develop the supports and tools needed to succeed in this refined role.

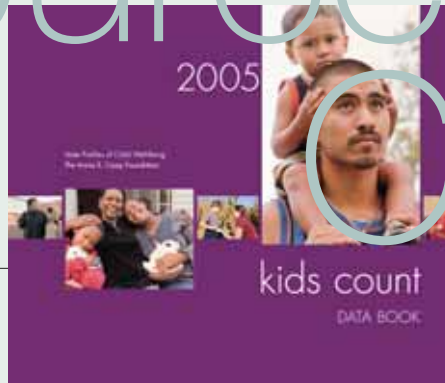
As a result of the QSR, action plans were tailored to local conditions. The evolving definition of each program's role in its own system of care helps to direct intake parameters, resource allocation, clinical practices, and administrative procedures. Teams reflected on their program models and goals and examined whether their practice tools and procedures provided optimal support for their goal-directed activities. Specific assessment and planning tool ideas were explored according to the types of challenges faced. In several sites, interest in additional training sparked follow-up plans.

In other locations, ideas for potential community activities or partnerships emerged. For example, one group of state agency stakeholders identified a new interest in the program's early intervention services.

For the next step, agencywide action planning can mine the findings to design an ongoing support plan that promotes individual program development and helps achieve goals for further outcome measurement, dissemination of effective approaches, and enrichment of technical assistance. In light of the successes of the PAS flexible service approach, administrative supports must strike a delicate balance. To the extent that model consistency, coordinated response, and practice standardization help accomplish agencywide goals, enhanced oversight and goal-directed exchange across sites may be useful. At the same time, local autonomy facilitates flexible and creative response to emerging system needs and practice conditions.

Resource

Corner

Reviews***The National Adoption Day Website***

On National Adoption Day 2005 – Saturday, November 19 – an unprecedented number of courts and community organizations coast to coast will come together to finalize thousands of adoptions of children from foster care and to celebrate all families who adopt. The National Adoption Day website, www.nationaladoptionday.org, offers a host of resources for individuals, families, and communities to use in discovering and developing local celebrations of adoptions. In addition, you can register an event in your area on the website.

A Family for Every Child: Strategies to Achieve Permanence for Older Foster Children and Youth

The U.S. child welfare system faces serious challenges that have been growing for more than a decade. In response, the Annie E. Casey Foundation, in consultation with community leaders and child welfare practitioners nationwide, has developed a reform initiative called Family to Family. Written by the North American Council on Adoptable Children, *A Family for Every Child: Strategies to Achieve Permanence for Older Foster Children and Youth* is a user-friendly guide to promising practices, policies, and strategies that compiles tools developed by the Family to Family initiative.

For more information, visit www.aecf.org/initiatives.

2005 KIDS COUNT Data Book

The Annie E. Casey Foundation released the 16th Annual *KIDS COUNT Data Book* on July 27, 2005. This comprehensive report is a national and statewide effort to track the status of children in the United States. It offers state-by-state tracking, supplemental data, and the essay, “Helping Our Most Vulnerable Families Overcome Barriers to Work and Achieve Financial Success.” This year’s report indicates that the trend of improved childhood outcomes in the 1990s is being diminished by chronic parental underemployment. The data book also underscores the fact that children from poor families often lack the opportunities and assets that will enable them to become successful adults. As a result, these young people frequently reach adulthood without the necessary tools, experiences, and connections to succeed.

For more information, visit www.aecf.org.

Breakthrough Series Collaborative: Recruitment and Retention of Resource Families

In this 2005 report of the Breakthrough Series Collaborative, teams from state, county, and tribe-administered child welfare agencies come together to conduct small-scale practice changes that are rapidly tested and disseminated and that can lead to dramatic systemwide improvements in a short time. This report illustrates the use of the methodology and describes the successful strategies and lessons learned by the 22 public child welfare agencies that participat-

ed in this breakthrough series collaborative on recruitment and retention, sponsored by Casey Family Programs.

For more information, visit www.casey.org.

Inspire Foster Youth

Young adults and teens will be inspired by *The Winners – 100 Prize-Winning Essays by Teens in Foster Care*. This book, edited by Youth Communication, is a collection of short essays that model positive behavior and attitudes by those in foster care. Themes include “How I’ve Helped Others” and “How I’ve Been Helped” plus “Four Steps to Positive Change.”

To order the book, visit www.youthcomm.org.

A Beginner’s Guide to Adoption

Have you considered adoption? Do you have questions on the subject? Answer your questions with *A Child Is Waiting: A Beginner’s Guide to Adoption*. This informative publication from the Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption answers general questions for parents looking to grow their family through the process of adoption.

To receive a free copy, visit www.davethomasfoundationforadoption.org.

Parenting Wisely

Parenting Wisely is an interactive CD-ROM program designed for parents of pre-adolescents and adolescents (ages 8 to 18) to improve parenting knowledge and skills and to strengthen the relationship between youth and adult.

For more information, visit www.familyworksinc.com.

What the Media Say

Media

“Aging Out” on Massachusetts Public Television

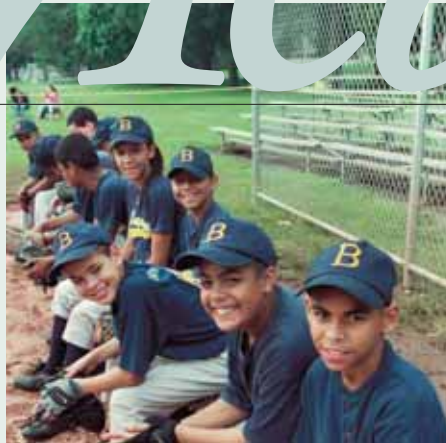
“There shouldn’t be a magic age at 18 for ending or cutting benefits,” says Anita Marshall, social worker for Casey Family Services. She says the Department of Social Services should change its policy of “aging out” kids who don’t stay in school.

Department of Social Services Deputy Director Susan Getman admits the department could do a better job. “One of the things we have to reinforce is that youngsters can come back to the department and ask for their involvement to be reconsidered,” she says. “However, young adults in foster care must realize they are not kids anymore and are responsible for their own actions.”

A Tale of Two Brothers through the System
“Greater Boston with Emily Rooney”
WGBH-TV
June 2005

Experience that Pays

“There can be plenty of barriers to getting a job if you’re a young person,” says Rob Franciose, who oversees First Jobs, a program that creates opportunities for people with disabilities or who have an unstable home. The organization was made possible over the last two years by a grant from the Annie E. Casey Foundation. First Jobs collaborates with Casey Family Services, Sweetser, and Maine Youth Opportunities Initiative at the Muskie School of Public Service at the University of Southern



Maine, among others. These agencies act as a conduit to the program, identifying kids who could use help getting a job. This summer, more than 15 kids worked at places like Hannaford Bros., the University of Southern Maine, and Home Depot as part of the program.

The Portland Press Herald
Portland, Maine
July 2005

Little League Returns to Bridgeport, Connecticut

John and Sam Torres wanted to memorialize their late father, Martin, in a way that would impact children in their own Bridgeport community. In 2004, the brothers formed the Bridgeport Caribe Youth League, an organized sports program designed to emphasize the same leadership qualities their father instilled in them: commitment, integrity, pride, and respect.

John and Sam are very pleased to have Casey Family Services on board. “Because of Casey Family Services and other sponsors, we’ve been able to expand this program and provide more outreach to the community. We’ve had field trips where we’ve taken the kids to see the Bridgeport

Bluefish games and marched in the Puerto Rican Day Parade,” states John. Sam believes the league’s positive impact can be seen on various levels: “These kids walk away from the game knowing that winning is exciting and fun, but it’s not everything.”

El Canillita
Bridgeport, Connecticut
August 2005

New Jersey Reforming Child Welfare System

New Jersey’s difficulties in streamlining its cumbersome adoption procedures for children who are wards of the state were prominently cited this week by a panel of experts appointed to monitor the state’s reform of its child welfare system. A federal court ordered the improvements in response to a class-action lawsuit. ... One principal feature of the reform plan called for dismantling the state’s six Adoption Resource Centers (ARC), which were meant to speed adoptions for children. ... Sarah Greenblatt, director of the Casey Center for Effective Child Welfare Practice, part of [Casey Family Services], said that New Jersey had been a leader when it created its ARCs more than 20 years ago. The centers were needed, she said, because caseworkers were too busy safeguarding neglected and abused children to focus on the adoption of foster children. The state’s new focus may yet succeed, she said. “The one-child-one-worker plan has a good chance of working if workers are trained about what their role is and if they have the resources.”

The New York Times
New York, New York
October 2005

2005-2006: Important Dates

November

November

National Adoption Month
www.nationaladoptionday.org

November 14-15

It's My Life Conference
 The Annie E. Casey Foundation/Casey Family Services, Casey Family Programs, and the Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative
 Baltimore, Maryland
www.casey.org

November 19

National Adoption Day
www.nationaladoptionday.org

November

November 20-26

National Family Week
www.nationalfamilyweek.org

December

December 7-10

Annual Conference & Expo 2005
 National Association for the Education of Young Children
 Washington Convention Center
 Washington, D.C.
www.annualconference.naeyc.org

December 12-14

A National Forum Child Welfare Conference
 "Keeping It Real"
 Action for Child Protection
 La Fonda Hotel
 Santa Fe, New Mexico
www.actionchildprotection.org

February

February 27-March 1

The Child Welfare League of America 2006 National Conference
 "Children 2006: Securing Brighter Futures"
 Child Welfare League of America
 Marriott Wardman Park
 Washington, D.C.
www.cwla.org

March

March

National Professional Social Work Month
 National Association of Social Workers Foundation
www.naswfoundation.org/

March 5-7

2006 Black Administrators in Child Welfare Conference
 "Building Partnerships to Serve African-American Children and Families"
 Sheraton National Hotel
 Arlington, Virginia
www.blackadministrators.org

March

March 20-23

Parents as Teachers 15th Annual Conference
 Parents as Teachers National Center
 Renaissance Grand Hotel
 St. Louis, Missouri
www.parentsasteachers.org

April

April 1-4

2006 Annual CASA Conference
 "Children: They're Everybody's Business"
 Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA)
 Town & Country Resort
 San Diego, California
www.casenet.org

April 2-5

Annual Protecting our Children Conference
 National Indian Child Welfare Association
 San Diego, California
www.nicwa.org



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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 the Annie E. Casey Foundation, including Casey Family Services. Casey Family Services is the direct service arm of the Annie E. Casey Foundation, a private charitable organization established in 1948 by UPS 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 foster care, post-adoption services, family reunification, family preservation, family advocacy and support, family resource centers, 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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