

CONNECTS

CASEY

SPRING 2000
A REPORT FROM THE
ANNIE E. CASEY FOUNDATION

IN THIS ISSUE: NY Child Welfare Panel; Q&A's About Grants; Casey Fellows Learn "From Within;" Baltimore Grants; Resource Corner; Awards; INSITES

PIONEERING PANEL HASTENS PACE OF CHILD WELFARE REFORM

Even New Yorkers who thought they were anesthetized to child abuse horrors were shocked by the 1995 death of Elisa Izquierdo. The body of the six-year-old was found at Thanksgiving, badly beaten by her mother and left unaided and dying in their apartment for two days.

The mother pleaded guilty to the killing and is now serving a 15-year sentence, and a child welfare caseworker was eventually dismissed for mishandling the case. As headlines across the nation generated an outpouring of outrage, New York City Mayor Rudolph Giuliani set about reorganizing the city's child welfare agency. Meanwhile, two child advocacy groups filed suit in federal court in 1995 to have the child welfare system put into receivership.

These kinds of lawsuits can drag on for years, resulting in narrowly drawn remedies that do not address wholesale system changes that should be the basis of long-term reform. That was the kind of impasse that the Casey Foundation hoped to stave off when it



SUSIE FITZMAURICH

suggested some alternative approaches to settle the case, known as *Marisol v. Giuliani*.

In the interest of avoiding a protracted and contentious court fight, the plaintiffs and the city defendants agreed upon a version of the Casey Foundation's proposal. The result was the formation of a special advisory panel to provide outside, objective recommendations on the most effective ways to accelerate reform of the city's child welfare system, now known as the

Involvement of families and communities in child welfare practice is a key component of the special advisory panel's work in New York City.

Administration for Children's Services (ACS). Operating costs for the five-person panel, which represents a range of child welfare experience at the county, state, and federal levels and includes a New York-based staff director and assistant, have been underwritten by the Foundation.

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We believe **THE OUTLOOK** for large numbers of children in this country is not likely to change without a major effort to **BOLSTER THE SUCCESS OF FAMILIES** in challenging neighborhoods.

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The Casey Foundation is a private charitable organization dedicated to helping build better futures for disadvantaged children in the United States. The primary mission of the Foundation is to foster public policies, human-service reforms, and community supports that more effectively meet the needs of today's vulnerable children and families. In pursuit of this goal, the Foundation makes grants that help states, cities, and neighborhoods fashion more innovative, cost-effective responses to these needs.

THE GRANTS PROCESS: FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q *Why does the Foundation require a separate “request for funds”? Why isn’t a signed letter of agreement sufficient?*

A While the letter of agreement is considered to be a binding contract, it is not what the Foundation uses to trigger a payment. Signing a contract and making a payment are two separate transactions. The executed contract goes into the Foundation’s central files, and the request for payment goes to the accounting department for action. The contract reflects an agreement between the Foundation and the grantee on a proposed scope of work. The request for payment ensures that the grantee receives money to do the work.

Q *Once a grant has been approved, what has to be done to start the payment process?*

A Before a payment can be made, the Foundation should have received, at a minimum, a proposal, a detailed budget, and the grantee’s tax information (a W-9 or a tax determination letter). For continuation grants, the grantee should have fulfilled all the requirements of any prior grant. Once a grantee receives the letter of agreement, it should be completed, signed, and returned to the Foundation with a written request for payment.

Q *Why does the Foundation require original receipts for expense reimbursement?*

A When non-tax-exempt individuals or organizations are reimbursed for expenses, those payments become Foundation expenditures. Original receipts are needed to justify those expenditures to our auditors and the Internal Revenue Service. Copies of the receipts should be sufficient for the payee’s files.

Q *Why does the Foundation request a new W-9 form every year?*

A Sometimes payee information changes from one year to the next. Requiring W-9 forms on an annual basis helps the Foundation keep the most up-to-date information for our own records and for tax reporting purposes.

LEARNING “FROM WITHIN” TO FOSTER CHANGE

Craig Levine had some guilt pangs about taking time from his burgeoning career as a children’s rights lawyer for the year of reflection, introspection, and experiential learning offered by the Annie E. Casey Children and Family Fellowship. Carla Dartis expected to be able to apply what she learned to her work, but didn’t anticipate how much the experience would change her outlook on life. And Abel Ortiz—who had worked in a state where the Foundation didn’t have much history—didn’t know what to expect.

All three emerged from their stint as Fellows with a new level of confidence, skills, and optimism about their potential to make a difference for children and families.

“I knew there were more ways to change the world than to haul people to federal court” to make government programs more accountable to the children and families they exist to serve, says Levine. “Now I feel that I have a greater appreciation of the nitty-gritty and how-to of

those other approaches. I’m confident that this knowledge will serve me well and will also serve those I’m working for and with.”

“The Fellowship doesn’t just teach people to analyze a particular subject matter, but to adjust your whole way of being so the potential can come forth,” reflects Dartis, now a program officer in the Children, Families, and Communities Division of the David and Lucille Packard Foundation. “Something as great as that can only come through a lot of soul-searching, trial and error, and critical thinking. Discussing every single weakness that holds you back can be a very devastating experience, but it wasn’t. There was the proper degree of support and balance, and the chance to test what you were discovering about yourself.”

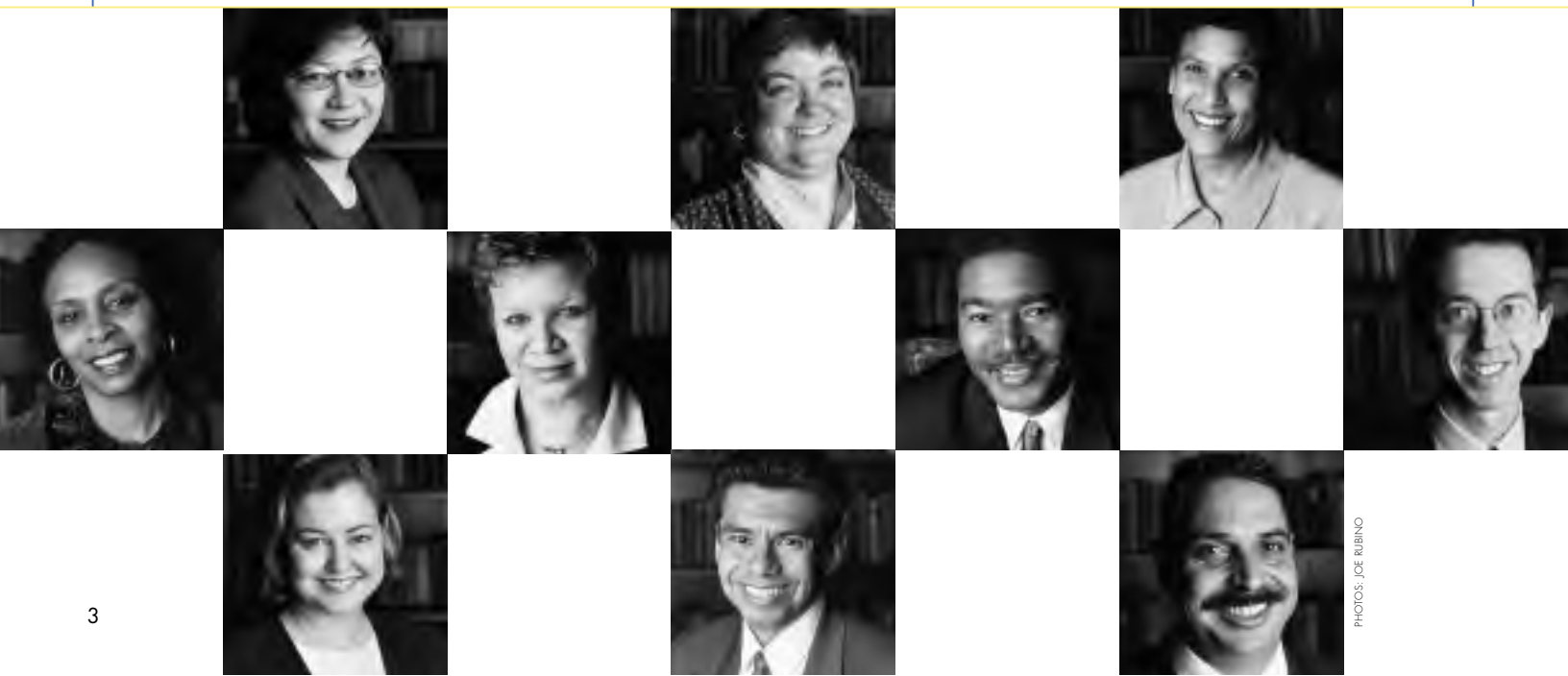
“It was a whole package of leadership development skills that I wasn’t anticipating—how do you relate to people, groups, communities, and larger systems

in the state—I learned a lot from that,” says Ortiz.

The Children and Family Fellowship seeks to increase the pool of leaders with the insight and ability to manage reforms and initiatives that produce better results for children and families.

The Fellowship, launched in 1993, taps mid-career professionals who have demonstrated leadership in working for positive change on behalf of children and families. This year’s class included six women and four men with backgrounds in economic development, banking, human services, government, education, philanthropy, and law. The Fellows ranged in age from 33 to 52 and included four African Americans, one Asian American, two Latinos, one Native American, and two whites.

The Fellowship is an intensive, full-time program that lasts 11 months. It intersperses residencies at the Foundation with field placements and seminars that



PHOTOS: JOE RUBINO

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bring the Fellows in contact with innovative agencies, programs, leaders, and consumers of services. Led by senior associate Donna Stark with a core faculty of consultants, this year's program was structured around five themes: individual leadership development; organizational development; systems thinking; creating an environment for change; and synthesis, integration, and application.

Based on a series of assessments done by themselves and people with whom they had worked, each Fellow developed a plan for personal and professional growth and worked to shape and achieve their goals with the help of the Fellowship team and Foundation sponsors.

In addition to intensive study, field projects, and group dynamics exercises, Fellows worked with Ellen Schall, of the Robert F. Wagner Graduate School of Public Service at New York University, to co-design a set of extensive, site-based seminars. They learned about a corporate player's role in the workforce development movement—and other forms of community involvement—through a series of interactions with the United Parcel Service. They analyzed how the various tiers of a large organization interact by examining the New York child welfare system. And they studied what it takes to manage and sustain change by looking at Philadelphia's education reform efforts.

As director of Child Welfare Projects for the Utah Division of Child and Family Services, Ortiz says he's had ample opportunity to apply his arsenal of Fellowship tools. Charged with implementing a major new piece of child welfare legislation, he's been able to employ both broad learnings about compromise and negotiation and

specific techniques like a "future decision tree," in which you work backward from a desired goal and map out the steps most likely to achieve it.

But it is the learning "from within," as Craig Levine puts it, that distinguishes the Fellowship from a purely academic or professional exercise.

"The Fellows analyze group behavior not as a phenomenon out there in the world somewhere, but rather as an ongoing reality within the Fellowship itself," he explains. "This effort requires courage and candor, and Fellows are asked to come forward with both."

The 1999–2000 class of Casey Foundation Children and Family Fellows (from top left): Linda Asato, Leann Ayers, Carla Dartis, Norma Hatot, Carolyn Hayden, Grant Jones, Craig Levine, Peggy Mainor, Abel Ortiz, Mitchell Salazar

FAMILY STRENGTHENING BEGINS AT HOME: MORE BALTIMORE GRANTS ON THE WAY

When the Foundation moved to Baltimore in 1994, we made a commitment to extend our hand to the many local organizations striving to improve the outlook for children and families in challenging circumstances. Taking seriously the notion that family strengthening begins at home, the Foundation in 1995 launched the Baltimore Direct Services Grants Program, which has funded more than 130 nonprofit organizations that work directly with children, youth, and families in the Baltimore community.

The Foundation announced last month that it is seeking applications for the sixth round of Baltimore Direct Services Grants. The 20 to 30 grants, ranging from \$2,000 to \$20,000, may be used for a broad range of services, including health care, education, job training, counseling, violence prevention, recreation, cultural arts, and child care. Past awards have helped to support activities ranging from summer camps and mentoring programs to employment services and help for families living with AIDS. For more information about the program, call the Foundation at 410.223.2891.

RESOURCE CORNER

In Print:

- 1998–1999 ANNIE E. CASEY FOUNDATION ANNUAL REPORT—This report provides an in-depth review of the Foundation’s initiatives and grantee activities over the past two years. It opens with a sophisticated chart that illustrates key elements of our Neighborhood Transformation/ Family Development and *Making Connections* initiatives. Each of our three major areas of grant making—Reforming Public Systems, Promoting Accountability and Innovation, and Transforming Neighborhoods—are described through profiles and photographs of grantees. The financial statements for 1998-1999 are presented, as well as a complete listing of Foundation staff. Copies will be mailed to all grantees.

- STRONGER LINKS: NEW WAYS TO CONNECT LOW-SKILLED WORKERS TO BETTER JOBS—Presented as an updated report on the status of the Foundation’s Jobs Initiative, this publication offers practical information on the innovative programs that have emerged from this initiative in Denver, Milwaukee, New Orleans, Philadelphia, St. Louis, and Seattle. It highlights strategies, program results, and lessons learned from the ongoing efforts to reform the labor market for low-income young adults.

On the Web:

- INNONET—This website of the Innovation Network, Inc., features an evaluation “toolbox” that guides nonprofits and public agencies through the planning and evaluation process and includes sample data collection instru-

ments, surveys, interviews, discussion group questions, protocols, and more: www.inetwork.org

- CHRONICLE OF PHILANTHROPY—This electronic version of the biweekly periodical offers the complete contents of the most current issue, an archive of articles from the past two years, and more than four years’ worth of grant listings, all fully searchable: www.philanthropy.com

- FUNDSNET—Fundsnet Online Services assists nonprofit organizations, colleges, universities, and grant writers in their quest to find financial resources via the Internet. Includes an extensive set of links to nonprofit resources, as well as a number of Spanish language websites: www.fundsnet-services.com

A NOTE OF RECOGNITION

The following section highlights awards and honors bestowed upon Casey grantees. We invite you to send any information on awards and honors you’ve received to Deborah L. Cohen, Editor, Casey Connects, Annie E. Casey Foundation, 701 St. Paul St., Baltimore, MD 21202.

THE WARREN/CONNER DEVELOPMENT COALITION, the lead organization in the Rebuilding Communities Initiative (RCI) in Detroit, has received a \$1.2 million award from the Daimler Chrysler Corporation Fund. The award, which will be paid over four years in \$300,000 installments, will support a joint effort to help beautify a section of Detroit’s East Side that covers part of RCI’s target area and is home to two major Daimler Chrysler plants. The project will involve cleaning up lots, painting, gardening, landscaping, and other beautification activities with an eye not just to physical improvement but to community engagement and collaboration.

PLASTICOMM, a manufacturing company and key element in the Denver Workforce Initiative, has been selected as an Inner

City 100 Awardee. The award was presented to Plasticomm President Ron Montoya. This national honor, created through a joint effort of *Inc.* magazine and the Initiative for a Competitive Inner City, recognizes companies that have made particularly outstanding efforts to locate businesses within cities and to train and retain workers living there. The keynote speaker for the evening gala was Magic Johnson.

“LEGACY,” a 90-minute television documentary capturing the five-year transformative journey of a Chicago family, has been selected by film critic Roger Ebert for his annual Overlooked Film Festival. “Legacy” chronicles how the violent death of a promising young man touches and changes the lives of each member of his family. One of only 12 films selected from among national and international contenders, “Legacy” was also featured in this year’s Sundance Film Festival. The documentary, which has an extensive community outreach component, will air on HBO next year.



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The Foundation's willingness to assume this pioneering role was based, in part, on skepticism about litigation as a solution.

"The creation of the panel represents an effort to break through the distraction and wasted effort that can sometimes result from an adversarial confrontation," said Doug Nelson, president of the Foundation and head of the panel. He also noted that the panel's intensive two-year review of the system is designed to "focus change in ways that meet the goals of the plaintiffs and the defendants."

An important aspect of the panel's work has been a series of reports addressing key issues and offering extensive recommendations and timetables for implementation. In its most recent report, the panel stressed the importance of increased training and skills development to help caseworkers more accurately assess children's needs and help supervisors coach and support young, inexperienced staff workers.

The panel cited a number of impediments to good practice, including overcrowded dockets, delays, and inadequate attention to permanent settings in New York City's Family Court.

The panel's recommendations reflect the Foundation's commitment to significant involvement of families and communities in child welfare practice. For example, the panel reinforced the need to allow children to bring clothing and other personal items with them, keep in regular contact with their families, and have personal contact with a caring adult throughout the placement process.

To improve the performance of the more than 100 private agencies that contract with the city to provide a range of foster care services, the panel recommended a more equitable reimbursement system that would be linked more closely to performance.

In addition to the reports, the panel has provided technical assistance to

ACS, highlighted exemplary practices, and made experienced consultants available to ACS staff. Serving on the panel with Nelson are John Mattingly, the Foundation's team leader for child welfare policy; Carol Williams, a former associate commissioner of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Children's Bureau; Judith Goodhand, former director of the Cuyahoga County Department of Children and Family Services in Cleveland; and Paul Vincent, former director of Alabama's Division of Family and Children's Services.

The panel is scheduled to complete its work in December. As Nelson notes, "While it's too early to evaluate how well or how fully we've achieved our goal, there is reason to believe that a lot of progress has been and can be made in New York City." Reports and other information about the panel are available on the Foundation's website, www.aecf.org.