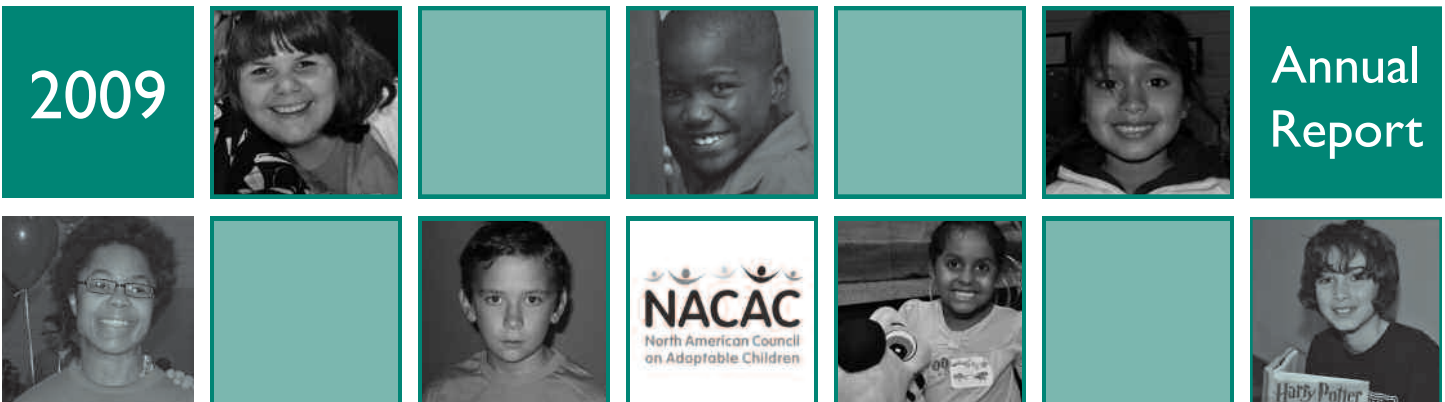


North American Council on Adoptable Children





Programs & Services

In 2009, NACAC continued to pursue numerous programs and services designed to ensure that children have permanent families and that families have the support they need. Below are the major accomplishments of the last year, all made possible by generous foundation, corporate, and individual donors.

PUBLIC POLICY AND ADVOCACY

Family and Youth Engagement Project

After NACAC and other organizations helped achieve passage of the Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act at the end of 2008, NACAC shifted its focus to state-level implementation of the Act. With funding from the Pew Charitable Trusts (through separate contracts with the Public Children’s Services Association of Ohio and Occidental College), we took on a number of activities in 2009.

In late May and early June, we held an advocacy event in Washington, D.C. with teams from 13 states. Most teams had a youth adopted at an older age, an adoptive parent who needed post-placement support, and a representative of an adoption or child advocacy group. Team members spent one day learning about the Fostering Connections Act and how to tell their stories for advocacy. On the second day, each team visited members of Congress to discuss the need for continued federal support for older youth adoption and post-adoption services.

As one attendee noted, “This experience provided me with a great opportunity to grow personally in my knowledge and effectiveness in advocating for children, as well as to be able to better effect change at the local, state and federal level. I am so thankful to be given the chance to participate.” One youth explained, “This training gave me the belief that I could work to help other kids.”

Staff also developed and shared a number of resources to help advocates implement Fostering Connections, including:

- a brief explaining the Act’s expansion of federal eligibility for Title IV-E adoption assistance and exploring how state funds saved must be reinvested in child welfare services
- a publication highlighting successes and barriers in older youth adoption
- state adoption fact sheets featuring data on the number of waiting children and youth, their ages and ethnic backgrounds, how children exit care, who adopts children from care, and Title IV-E rates.

“This experience provided me with a great opportunity to grow personally in my knowledge and effectiveness in advocating for children, as well as to be able to better effect change at the local, state and federal level.”

Staff also provided training on new federal adoption funding streams to the Annie E. Casey Foundation Family to Family consultants, at the Adoption Exchange and National Foster Parent Association conferences, and at meetings in several states.

In addition, NACAC began helping state leaders and advocates in Arkansas, Colorado, Maryland, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, and Nebraska implement the adoption provisions of the Fostering Connections Act. Staff advised states on how to invest the new funds in increasing adoption assistance benefits,

expanding recruitment activities for older youth, and extending adoption assistance to children who would have been excluded in the past due to their adoptive family’s income.

Breakthrough Series Collaborative

With funds from Casey Family Programs, NACAC handled travel and logistics for Casey’s Breakthrough Series on Timely Permanency through Reunification. Twelve teams of workers, youth, administrators, parents, and judges from California (Sacramento, Compton, Pasadena, and San Francisco), Colorado, Iowa, Oklahoma, Michigan, Minnesota, Nevada, Pennsylvania, and Virginia attended two learning sessions—one in March and the other in September.

During these multi-day events, attendees participated in sessions on constituent engagement, addressing disproportionality/disparate outcomes, committing to reunification, engaging the family, services and support, and much more. Then teams returned home to actively work to implement systems change efforts.

Family to Family Initiative

With funds from the Annie E. Casey Foundation, NACAC staff partnered with Casey’s Family to Family initiative to improve child welfare systems in Kentucky and California. In Kentucky, for example, staff helped examine racial inequities in placement practices.

In California, NACAC was part of the Casey Erasing Racial Disproportionality and Disparity team that helped Fresno assess its system through case file reviews, staff and constituent interviews, focus reviews, and management feedback sessions.

Photo Credit
Most of the photos in this annual report were taken by Matt Lorz at the 2009 NACAC conference in Columbus, Ohio. Other photos were taken at NACAC events during 2009.

Through the Casey grant, NACAC contracted with ChildFocus to provide technical assistance about kinship care to Family to Family sites and work with states implementing the kinship provisions of the Fostering Connections Act.

Other Policy Efforts

During 2009, NACAC continued to partner with other national organizations to strategize about reforming the Multiethnic Placement Act to better meet the needs of children of color.

NACAC remains a committed partner of Voice for Adoption, which advocates for adoption and foster care policy reform at the U.S. federal level.

PARENT LEADERSHIP CAPACITY BUILDING

Parent Group Development

In 2009, with funds from Jockey International's *Jockey Being Family*[™] initiative, NACAC targeted the creation and support of parent groups in Baltimore, Dallas, Detroit, and Miami. In each community, we conducted needs assessments, identified leaders, and built connections. In July, 42 leaders attended a conference focused on maintaining and rejuvenating groups, facilitation, creative services within groups, fund raising, grant writing, adoption subsidy, creative programming for children, and advocacy.

One group leader expressed her gratitude to Jockey and NACAC for the training:

"We wish to thank Jockey International for making possible the 2009 Parent Leadership Training Conference in Minneapolis. The training and materials provided by *Jockey Being Family* and NACAC enhance much of what we do for children and families on a day-to-day basis. We are also thrilled with the relationships that we are forming through the ongoing forums!"

Another attendee noted, "I can honestly say this experience is going to change my life and hopefully the lives of many other families. My battery and my passion have been charged. Thanks!"

NACAC is now working with 17 new groups and 23 existing groups in these four communities.

We also gave 16 mini-grants, funded by Jockey, to new and emerging parent support groups across the U.S. and Canada.

In addition, AdoptUsKids, a cooperative agreement with the Children's Bureau, contracted with NACAC to empower parent groups and partner public agencies to expand respite programs in communities across the U.S. In October, we hosted a two-day respite training for 68 participants who received 33 grants of \$5,000 each to start a respite program. Evaluations showed that the participants gained significant knowledge about respite services at the training. Staff also worked directly with more than 20 grant recipients as they implemented plans to enhance respite care in their communities.

Community Champions Network

Jockey Being Family[™] also provided funding for NACAC's Community Champions Network (CCN) in 2009. In this third year of the effort, we have built strong, energized coalitions in 13 communities: Los Angeles County and Sacramento, California; Kansas City and St. Louis, Missouri; Tampa and Orlando, Florida; Washington, D.C.; Eau Claire, Wisconsin; Virginia; Colorado; and the provinces of Ontario, Nova Scotia, and New Brunswick. More than 1,500 individuals have joined CCN's

"I can honestly say this experience is going to change my life and hopefully the lives of many other families. My battery and my passion have been charged."

effort to advocate for post-adoption services in their communities, and to share information and resources with each other across North America.

To create and support the coalitions, staff provided training, resources, post-adoption service models, and more to the leaders and members of each group.

These interventions have truly made a difference for coalition members:

- "I am a stronger advocate. I am more involved than I ever was before. I am ... always thinking about how to educate others, how to help my children and our parents and ways in which our group can grow."
- "I've acquired skills in the area of starting a support group, a better understanding of how to advocate for our children, and a feeling of community with other adoptive parents nationwide."
- "I am actually learning to fight for more than just my own children. I am learning to be the voice of all children that need to be heard!"

With our support, the coalitions are enhancing services for adoptive families and improving their adoption systems. In Ontario, for example, adoptive parents have launched 10 to 15 new parent support groups throughout the province to meet the needs of both urban and rural special needs adopters. The Kansas City group is now doing recruitment, preparation, and home studies of adoptive families and addressing the need for consistent and unified service delivery.

In New Brunswick, the New Brunswick Adoption Foundation and adoptive parents have established a committee to



“We knew to come back to NACAC because after over ten years of getting assistance from you, it always proved to be current and accurate information...”

identify community needs and responses that will support adoptive families and children and youth waiting for families.

ADOPTION SUPPORT

Adoption Subsidy Resource Center

NACAC’s Adoption Subsidy Resource Center—funded primarily by the Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption—provides information, support, training, and advocacy about adoption assistance in the U.S. and Canada.

When a number of states tried to cut adoption assistance benefits in 2009, our staff responded quickly to explain the value of adoption assistance in ensuring permanency for vulnerable youth. Staff worked with advocates and leaders in Georgia, Illinois, Minnesota, Ohio, Ontario, Pennsylvania, and Virginia to defend or improve adoption assistance policies in those communities.

In 2009, NACAC staff and volunteers offered information to more than 15,000 individuals about the benefits available to children with special needs who are adopted from foster care.

Of those people served, about 1,000 received more in-depth information and case advocacy to ensure that families have the benefits their children need to grow and thrive. For example, one family was planning to adopt nine-year-old twin girls in August. Due to changes in state policy, the girls would not have been eligible for adoption assistance.

NACAC staff learned that the children had been in care for more than five years, and advised the state that this meant the girls would become eligible for federal adoption assistance in October 2009. When the adoption was finalized in the fall, the family received the support their daughters needed.

Adoptive parents are grateful for our supportive staff and accurate information. As one explained, “We knew to come back to NACAC because after over ten years of getting assistance from you, it always proved to be current and accurate information that allowed us to feel comfortable to move forward in adopting a special needs child in one prior case, and helped us overcome an obstacle along the way in another adoption later on.”



In addition to supporting parents, NACAC provides necessary and useful information to professionals. As one public agency staff member noted, “Thank you soooooooooo much. This is much better than what I have found so far!”

Project staff and volunteers also trained about 1,300 parents and professionals on adoption assistance in 11 states during the year. One attendee praised the training, “This workshop is really valuable and should be regularly repeated, because the topic will always be relevant and the information will always be needed!”

Minnesota Adoption Support and Preservation

With funding from the Minnesota Department of Human Services (DHS) from January to June 2009, NACAC provided peer support to adoptive families across Minnesota. Through the MN ASAP parent support network, our team of experienced adoptive parent liaisons shared resources, parenting tips, information, and emotional support with more than 1,000 adoptive families and adoption professionals through about 5,000 contacts. These services helped reduce families’ isolation, enhanced their ability to meet their children’s needs, increased families’ stability, and prevented adoption disruptions.

For example, staff worked with a mom who was considering adoption disruption. Her child had reactive attachment disorder, and the parents did not understand how much the disorder affected the family. Staff shared resources, discussed attachment, and went with the mom to training on self-regulation and attachment. At our suggestion, the family also started using respite. As a result, the family is no longer in crisis.

Such services are so important for families raising children with serious special needs. As one parent wrote, “Without ASAP my god I really don’t know where I would be at today.”

In the spring, the MN ASAP conference educated more than 200 parents and 40 children and youth. One attendee’s evaluation comment confirmed that we met our goal: “I learned

“I learned a lot, and met parents dealing with common issues.”

“I’m looking forward to going home and parenting with renewed energy.”

a lot, and met parents dealing with common issues.” Another noted, “I’m looking forward to going home and parenting with renewed energy.”

Although DHS funding for MN ASAP ended in June, a bridge grant from the Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption enabled us to maintain some support to adoptive families through the end of the year. Beginning in March 2010, DHS has again contracted with NACAC to support adoptive families in the state.

The Harambee Village at NACAC

With funding from HOPE Adoption & Family Services and Children’s Home Society & Family Services, the Harambee Village at NACAC offered families raising African American children support and information to help their children develop a strong, positive identity. Harambee also helped parents and children respond to the challenges of being a transracial family.

Harambee’s services included special events, training, and family villages (support groups for parents with culturally relevant activities for children). From January to June 2009, when the program ended, more than 100 families participated in 20 villages including a Kwanzaa celebration and a Juneteenth gathering.

EDUCATION AND INFORMATION SHARING

Annual Conference

About 735 individuals came to the 35th annual NACAC conference in Columbus, Ohio. Participants attended about 80 educational sessions on a variety of topics, built connections with other adoption community members, and returned to their homes informed and inspired. In evaluations, attendees wrote:

- “I have ‘filled my (empty) cup’ and feel motivated once again to tackle the job of parenting my special needs child.”
- “I am so glad I finally attended the conference. I wish I had come years ago.”
- “I learned, I enjoyed, I am empowered.”

Jockey International, the Pew Charitable Trusts, and Casey Family Services pro-

vided scholarships for 66 parent group leaders and adoptive parents to attend their first-ever NACAC conference. One scholarship recipient told us, “Thanks for a great conference. All 7 of us attended from my family. My husband and I benefited greatly from the sessions. The childcare was awesome. Although our kids weren’t sure about being away from us, they thoroughly enjoyed the experiences they had.”

In addition to the scholarship sponsors listed above, the following entities supported the 2009 NACAC conference: the Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption, Barbara Orlik for the Sara Berman Memorial Children’s Fund, and the American Academy of Adoption Attorneys.

“I have ‘filled my (empty) cup’ and feel motivated once again to tackle the job of parenting my special needs child.”

Other Training

NACAC offered training in 21 states and 2 provinces to more than 3,300 adoption community members on a wide variety of adoption-themed topics. Some of the more popular topics in 2009 included parent group development, advocacy, deflecting mother blame, adoption competency, transracial parenting, family preservation, and taking care of the caregiver.

Sharing Information

Through our web site and quarterly newsletter, *Adoptalk*, NACAC shared information with tens of thousands of adoptive parents, prospective adopters, and adoption professionals in 2009. A social worker who receives our newsletter wrote to thank us: “*Adoptalk* is a valuable tool and resource that enhances



NACAC Special Events

AdoptWalk 2009

On a cold and windy Minnesota day in May, about 275 walkers (including the family pictured above) raised more than \$25,000 for NACAC. The event was a success thanks to the title sponsorship of *Jockey Being Family™*, plus sponsorship from the Target Adoption Network and Walling, Berg & Debele, P.A.

Voices from the Heart Gala

In spite of the struggling economy, the November 2009 Voices from the Heart Gala raised about \$27,000 to support NACAC’s good work. More than 145 guests honored Wendy’s FourCrown, Inc. for its outstanding work in raising funds for the Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption, and recognized Minnesota State Senator Tony Lourey for championing legislation that designated Minnesota’s adoption incentive funds for post-adoption services. A highlight of the evening was a greeting from the Kennedy family, who had just finalized the adoption of three siblings as part of National Adoption Day.

the recruitment efforts of agencies across the United States and Canada.”

A web site visitor also sang NACAC’s praises, “I just wanted to say what a terrific resource your site is. I am currently in the process of adopting from foster care, and your site has been a huge help. Much of the information about state subsidies and tax credits either isn’t available elsewhere or is explained much more clearly here. I truly appreciate your efforts to make adoption more accessible for everyone.”



Donations & Finances

NACAC is grateful for the support of our many individual and organizational donors. In addition to the donors listed below, many people contribute to NACAC through state and federal workplace campaigns. The incredible support of all of our donors enables NACAC to achieve the outcomes detailed in this report to help vulnerable children and their families.

Patron (\$10,000 & up)

Artha Capital Management, CT
Debra Steigerwaldt Waller
Foundation for Adoption, WI

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Tom & Sue Schade, MA
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Ruth McRoy, CA
Maureen Sheehan & Benjamin Hulse, IL, *in honor of the Gertrude & Raymond Kroll Endowment Fund*
Kim Stevens, MA

Builders (\$250–\$499)

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Jewell McCliment, PA
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Dolly Swanson, MN
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Daniel Cowan, MI, *in honor of Joe & everyone at NACAC*
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Family Design Resources, PA
Family Foundations Minnesota, MN
Janice & Harry Goldwater, MD
Sarah Greenblatt, CT
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Hyun Sook Han, MN
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Lansing & Kingsley Wood, CA, *in honor of their children*
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Ted & Kathy Zwieg, MN

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in honor of Roberta Frank
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Ansible Software, CA
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Thomas & Kathryn Bawek, MN
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Kelly & Donald Cates, MD, *in honor of Joe Kroll*
Marcy Clausen, CA
Eileen A. Collette, MN
Twila Costigan, MT
Heather Craig-Oldsen, NE, *in honor of Joe Kroll & his fine work for so many years*

Planned Giving

One sentence in your will can make a significant difference for waiting children and adoptive families:

“I give and bequeath to the North American Council on Adoptable Children, 970 Raymond Avenue, Suite 106, St. Paul, MN 55114, the sum of ___ dollars

(or ___ percent of my estate) to be used for its general purposes.”

2009 FINANCES

Income

Foundation Funding	\$820,845
Government Grants and Contracts	\$177,733
Other Contracts and Training Fees	\$463,592
Conference Income	\$181,095
Contributions	\$129,138
Membership Fees	\$68,908
Special Events (net)	\$30,416
Interest/Investment Income	\$53,910
Sales of Goods/Publications (net)	\$1,403
TOTAL INCOME	\$1,927,040

Expenses

Breakthrough Series	\$325,688
Public Education (includes conference)	\$294,042
Public Policy Education and Advocacy	\$217,103
Parent Group Support	\$210,577
MN ASAP & Post-Adoption Support in Minnesota	\$197,933
Family and Youth Engagement Project	\$174,975
Adoption Subsidy Resource Center	\$93,423
Community Champions Network	\$88,570
Harambee Village at NACAC	\$35,683
Management	\$135,229
Fundraising	\$150,030
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$1,923,253

Balance Sheet

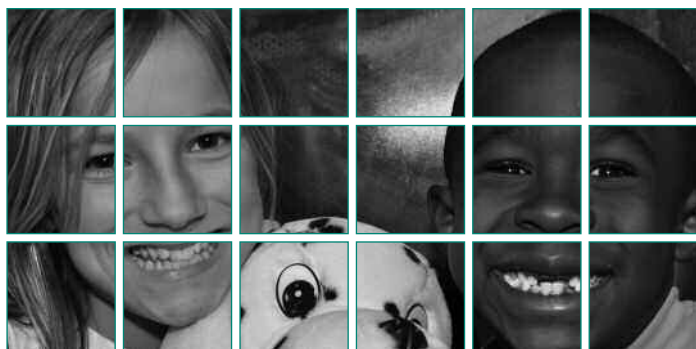
Excess of Income over Expenses	\$3,787
Fund Balance—January 1, 2009	\$359,009
Fund Balance—December 31, 2009	\$362,796
Assets—December 31, 2009	\$579,034

Megan Quirk, IN
 Real Life Fitness, MN
 Faye Rice, MN
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 Carolyn Roberson, MN
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