



SUPPORTING
EFFORTS
TO RECRUIT
PERMANENT
FAMILIES
FOR WAITING
CHILDREN

CHILD-SPECIFIC PUBLICITY

JUNE
2000

Recruiting News

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Guidelines for Success: Publicizing Waiting Children

By Marie Zemler, Coordinator,
Adoption 2002 Support Project

When Tracey Frohock handed her husband Ken a description of 10-year-old Michael, pictured in the Worcester *Sunday Telegram* in February of 1995, their lives changed forever. Ken explains, "When I saw the picture, I had no doubt that Michael would be our son." They called the Massachusetts Adoption Resource Exchange that same day to learn how to bring him home.

As the couple looked at Michael's face, they "could see happiness and sadness." As they read of his emotional and academic challenges, Ken—a therapist with a specialty in attachment and bonding—and Tracey—a special education teacher—knew they were a good fit for Michael's needs.

Just over a year ago, the power of a photolisting impacted the Frohock family a second time. When they saw Derek and Heather in a waiting child book, they were attracted to the way the siblings were looking at each other and knew "that's the way a family should look." Today, the Frohock's family portrait—including all three children—is a testimony to the joy that child-specific publicity can bring.

Whether the method is a photolisting book, newspaper column, media feature, Internet posting, or matching party, child-specific publicity is the backbone of recruitment efforts for many harder-to-place children. Child-specific publicity has two goals. First—as in the Frohock's case—it stimulates prospective parents' interest in a child and results in adoption. Second—and more commonly—it builds public awareness about the need for parents and generates resources for other children in the system.

No hard and fast rules exist about which children to publicize, and some in the child welfare field question the ethics of publicizing specific children at all. For them, photolistings and waiting child features are high-pressure tactics that either violate children's rights to privacy or mislead prospective families.

At NACAC, we firmly believe that child-specific publicity is a worthwhile endeavor when it allows families to glimpse the unique qualities each child possesses. Nonetheless, we recommend caution when determining

A Waiting Child

Born February 15, 1986, Shawn is a compassionate, affectionate, and generous teen who has an interest in the outdoors—especially sports and fishing. Shawn's teachers say that he has matured during the past school year. He has positive relationships with peers and is well liked.



Shawn
age 14

Despite evidence of learning disabilities, Shawn does well in math. He receives extra help for reading and spelling, and loves to be read to by adults.

Since entering care at age six, Shawn has made many gains. He responds well to praise and positive reinforcement and actively uses skills he has learned to control his anger. Shawn still suffers, however, from post-traumatic stress disorder—including flashbacks to his abusive childhood—and has periods of depression that may last two to three weeks. He sometimes shuts down emotionally when he feels upset.

Shawn adapts well to children of all ages and enjoys being a brother. He needs a permanent family who can be involved in his therapy, support his academic success, and help him to attach. Adoption assistance is available. To learn more, contact Glenda Hamilton of the Maine Department of Human Services at 207-287-5036. ✨

which children are prepared to share details about themselves publicly and risk the disappointment of unsuccessful recruitment efforts. Protecting children from further victimization is of the utmost importance.

Ultimately, state and local workers or exchanges—those who know children best—are and should be responsible for final decisions about which children to publicize and in what fashion. This edition of *Recruiting News* offers suggestions to assist with those decisions—including guidelines for selecting and preparing children for public exposure, questions for interviewing them, and tips for capturing them in attention-getting photographs. ✨

Workers Must Carefully Select and Prepare Children for Child-Specific Publicity

For a child who has been neglected and abused most of her life, finding a permanent family can be one of the most terrifying yet important events she will ever experience. Her worker plays a crucial role in deciding if publicity will be a part of the efforts to find a home for her, and helping to prepare her for the exposure if it is.

SELECTING A CHILD

When selecting children for publicity with the dual goals of family recruitment and heightened public awareness in mind, choose those who are representative of children in care. Publicity for a healthy infant would undoubtedly find a family for the child and inspire lots of calls, but would not generate appropriate resources for other waiting children.

After selecting a child, workers must explore the child's situation before continuing. Essential questions include:

- **Will the child be safe?** If a child comes from a violent birth family, public exposure might be risky. If publicity could lead an angry relative to find and endanger the child, the risks outweigh the benefits.
- **Are relatives or foster parents adopting?** Routinely publicizing children who are going to be adopted by people they know undermines a recruitment campaign. Families respond to publicity because they perceive that children need help. If they are taught otherwise, they may lose interest and tell their friends not to bother.
- **Is the child's caretaker supportive?** Caretakers' cooperation has a direct bearing on children's perceptions about public exposure. If the child's caretaker cannot nurture her during the publicity campaign, select another child—especially for higher-profile venues.
- **Is the child ready for placement?** Although crises are impossible to predict, a child who is completely unprepared for life in a family setting is not well served by public exposure. Hold off on publicity if the child needs intensive therapy instead of an adoptive home. Nonetheless, placement in a treatment program should never exclude a child from recruitment efforts—if the child needs a family to be involved in a slow transition toward adoption, don't be afraid to ask for that.

PREPARING THE CHILD

A selected child should be developmentally and age-appropriately informed of the benefits and risks of publicity. Share the goals of the exposure—emphasize that the right family may or may not come forward and that the publicity is part of a larger effort to find a home. Preparation must include an honest discussion of what it will be like for the child to see himself on flyers or on television.

One key to successful recruitment is getting workers and children committed to using publicity alongside other

techniques until a family is found—with the understanding that months or years of diligence and patience may be required. Unless the child is unable to understand, always work to secure her cooperation before public exposure. If a child does not feel good about being publicized, the chances for successfully finding and placing her with a family are greatly reduced. Once the child is on board:

- **Share samples of previous efforts.** Give the child an opportunity to view materials about other children of similar age and background. This can reduce fears, spur honest questions, and minimize feelings of isolation.
- **Talk about helping other children.** Tell the child, "We are asking you to appear in publicity because we think you are [articulate/charming/mature/funny/outgoing/energetic]. We know that with your help, we can really promote adoption." Frame selection for public exposure as a compliment so the child can take pride in helping others—even if it doesn't find a family for him.
- **Discuss realistic expectations.** The child must understand that months may pass before the right family comes forward, completes a home study, and commits to adopting. Be clear that even if the publicity does not immediately find a good match, it is no reflection on the child's attractiveness, personality, or lovability. Moreover, it does not mean a home will never be found.
- **Alert adults in the child's support network.** Children may experience anxiety when publicity efforts begin as well as renewed anger at past abuse and fears about adoption. The child's teachers, therapists, and mentors must be prepared to lend extra encouragement.
- **Explore possible reactions.** Help the child to understand that neighbors and classmates may see the publicity. Explain that some don't know much about adoption. Role-play what the child will say in response to positive and negative comments from adults or peers.
- **Rehearse what to do or say.** If publicity efforts include an interview, rehearse potential questions and answers. Help the child brainstorm ideas about her interests, best qualities, biggest accomplishments, and desire for a family. If possible, make a practice tape and review it together, giving compliments and making suggestions.
- **Let the child contribute.** Give the child ownership—even a small child can select a favorite location for videotaping or taking photographs. Older children can help with descriptions. If appropriate, ask the child to share the things a prospective family should know.
- **Physically prepare the child.** Help the child pick comfortable, clean clothes that make him feel confident. Make certain he is fed and rested, avoid scheduling the session during any favorite activities, and select a time when medications are most effective.
- **Accompany the child to the session or event.** When possible, the person who prepared the child for publicity should be present for support. A trusted adult can reduce the child's anxiety and advocate for the child should the interviewer or photographer ask any inappropriate questions. ✨

INTERVIEWING CHILDREN

Developmentally appropriate, open-ended interview questions are essential for developing descriptions and recording videos. Learn as much as possible about the child's history from files, caretakers, and workers—this can prevent seemingly innocent questions from becoming landmines. Then, with the topics to pursue in mind, get the child started and press for colorful details. The questions below could start the conversation:

- *What games do you like to play?*
- *What are your favorite toys, video games, movies, books, television shows, or CDs?*
- *What's your favorite thing to do outdoors?*
- *What job would you like to have as an adult?*
- *What is your best subject in school? What do you like about it?*
- *Who is your favorite teacher? Why?*
- *What do you like to eat?*
- *What chores do you help with around the house?*
- *What are you most proud of?*
- *What are you good at?*
- *What sports do you enjoy?*
- *What activities do you participate in at school (choirs, plays, clubs)?*
- *What do you do when you are with your friends?*
- *If you could have one wish, what would you wish for?*
- *What could a person learn about you by looking at your room?*
- *What do you do during vacations from school?*
- *What holidays do you like to celebrate? What do you do for them?*
- *What school trips or vacations have you gone on and especially enjoyed?*
- *If you could visit any place on earth, where would you go? Why?*
- *What does adoption mean to you?*
- *Why would you like to be adopted?*
- *What do you want your adoptive family to be like?*

Minneapolis Youth Involved in Recruitment

James, a 13-year-old from Minneapolis, Minnesota, remains unconvinced that anyone would want to adopt a teenager like him. Nonetheless, thanks to Hennepin County's child-specific recruitment project and the work of his recruiter, Tonya Newell, James is actively involved in publicizing his need for a family.

James attends recruitment meetings on his own behalf. He insisted upon and got a more attractive photo of himself posted on the county's web site. He even wrote the following introduction to prospective families:

I like basketball; I am good at it. I might make it to the NBA. If I don't make it, I'm going to be a paleontologist or work with animals like on the Discovery Channel. I have a little sister who is already adopted and I would like to be able to keep seeing her. My hobbies are fishing, basketball, football, and video games. I like nice clothes and shoes. I like to look good. I also like animals; I would like a family that had a dog but if not that is okay, too.

James is on Newell's "top 10 list"—children who have been waiting the longest for families (at least two years since the termination of their parents' rights) and for whom she finds homes through child-specific recruitment. Although not all 10 are as deeply involved in their recruitment plan as James, Newell finds a developmentally appropriate level of inclusion for everyone on her caseload.

When Newell begins working with children and during each of her subsequent monthly visits, she answers every question they have about the recruitment plan. Typically, the children ask: "What do you do?" "What does my adoption worker do?" "What are the videos for?" or "Can I help pick my new family?" She stresses to the children that she wants to get to know them in order to share their positive qualities with the prospective families she meets.

With the children for whom public exposure is part of the recruitment plan, Newell shares all the materials she develops. Most children contribute content for descriptions, help select photographs, and provide input on video filming. If a child cannot write, Newell incorporates the child's artwork instead. Finally, Newell fills the children in on the rest of the range of her recruitment efforts—from searching for relatives, to locating previous foster parents, to giving community presentations.

The public, and even colleagues, often doubt Newell's honest approach: "Aren't children too fragile to know that recruiting is happening on their behalf? Wouldn't it be better to tell the child after a family is identified?" She believes the answer is a resounding "no," especially for older children. Regardless of how hard workers try, Newell says, they "cannot shelter children from what is happening in their lives. In fact, not knowing who is really working on their behalf and what is being done to find a home only adds to the anxiety."

Since January, when Hennepin County began recruitment for the "top 10 list," one child has started visits with a newly recruited family. Newell has also facilitated a placement with a mentor, another with an out-of-state grandmother, and two with former foster parents. By allowing the children to assist in the selection process and talking to them in advance about realistic expectations for their new families, Newell hopes better matches will occur (and blowing up, running away, and other behaviors meant to disrupt adoptive placements will be reduced). Due to the success of the project, the county recently hired a second child-specific recruiter to work with the next 10 longest-waiting children.

To learn more about James or Hennepin County's child-specific recruitment project, contact Tonya Newell at 612-348-0317 or tonya.newell@co.hennepin.mn.us.



Amateurs Can Capture Compelling Photographs

A captivating image of a child can touch prospective parents, drawing them into a waiting child's description. By contrast, a poor quality portrait can fail to motivate some families to learn more about a child.

In many jurisdictions, recruiters rely on their own skills to photograph children. The following hints—illustrated with pictures of waiting children taken by Kansas Families for Kids—can help the amateur photographer.

SUBJECT

A good photograph of a child shows character or emotion and promotes a connection for the viewer. While untrained photographers commonly shoot the subject head to toe, most good portraits include just enough of the body to capture the subject. Since primarily the eyes and mouth reveal expression, focus on them. Get down on the child's level—kneeling or sitting if necessary—and move several feet closer than seems natural. Head and shoulders should dominate the shot. Some photographers even crop pictures so tightly that some of the head falls outside the frame.

For subjects with physical disabilities, include slightly more of the child. The picture of Noeman successfully focuses on his expression while also letting prospective parents know that he uses a wheelchair. If the child is young or disabled and needs to be held, move in close so as to show only a hint of the caretaker. When possible, focus entirely upon the child by safely securing her in a chair, walker, or other supportive device.

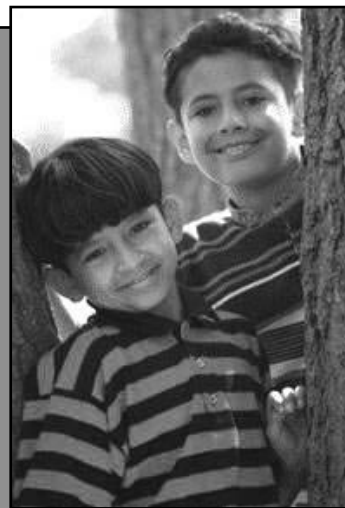
Relaxed, comfortable subjects look best and, fortunately, many children are natural performers. With a hesitant child, compliments can often bring out a beautiful smile. Other times, asking the child to make a favorite funny face, telling a supply of silly jokes, or acting foolish can break the ice.

Candid shots are often best. Fight the urge to pose and say “cheese.” Promote interesting expressions by providing props or starting an activity. A fun location such as a playground, amusement park, or zoo also helps. When the child makes a charming face, shoot quickly. If the moment passes before the shutter snaps, be patient and wait for another chance. When posing can't be avoided, ask the child to put a hand on his chin to catch a more relaxed look.



Noeman
age 17

Sibling groups are slightly more complex to shoot, but present a unique opportunity for the photographer to capture the bond between them. The easiest way to demonstrate



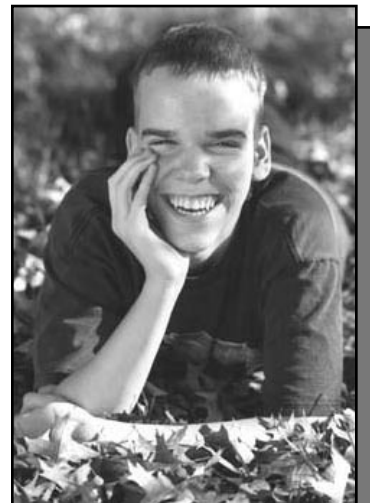
Tyrone & Mario
age 13 age 14

relationship is to have the brothers or sisters look at each other. Mario and Tyrone demonstrate their connection by simultaneously looking in the same direction. Physical contact also reveals a bond between subjects. Just as with a single child, let faces dominate the shot—overlap bodies and squeeze children together to achieve the goal. When arranging a sibling group, keep them approximately equal distances from the camera to avoid out-of-focus faces.

LIGHTING

A well-lit photo avoids harsh shadows, heavy glares, and distracting reflections. The easiest way to capture an attractive shot is to take the child outside on a cloudy day. The sun provides sufficient light to prevent the need for a flash, yet the clouds keep light and shadows even. Similarly, later afternoon photographs keep lighting simple while the setting sun gives photos a warm, golden glow.

Perfect light is not always available, so take the child outside for the photograph even if the day is not overcast. An evenly shady spot, such as beside a building, can aptly mimic cloudy conditions. If bright sunlight is unavoidable, the photographer should stand with the sun behind and off to one side of her. As Donovan's photograph illustrates, the angled light illuminates his face while producing gentle shadows that emphasize his features. Children who face directly into the sun will squint more, and the bright light may wash out their features.



Donovan
age 18

When photos must be taken indoors, keep the child away from mirrors, windows, or glass-covered art. Open the window shades and turn on lamps to flood the room with light and cause the child's pupils to contract—hopefully preventing red eye. Finally, place a hand in front of the child's face to double check for shadows coming from multiple artificial light sources.

BACKGROUND

The background of a portrait should support rather than compete with the child for attention—busyness and clutter reduce effectiveness. Step closer to the subject to remove background elements that do not help the overall image.

A good photographer learns to see what the camera sees by consistently paying attention—unlike the human eye, photographs record everything that is in the frame. Flag poles and clotheslines should not stick out of the child's ear. Lamps and trees should not sprout from a child's head.



Catherine, Albert & Angeline
age 14 age 15 age 11

The best backgrounds are simple, with a medium color tone. When shooting outdoors, look for tree foliage, grass, or water. A green, neatly mowed lawn provides an interesting yet unobtrusive backdrop for the photograph of Albert, Catherine, and Angeline.

A contrasting color—placing a light subject against a dark background or vice versa—emphasizes the subject. Black children, however, need not be photographed against a stark white background. In the shot of Tracey, the dark

background highlights his face, rather than the background, and helps the camera to clearly capture his facial features.

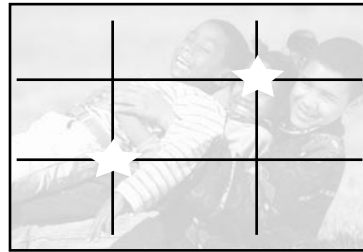


Tracey
age 17

COMPOSITION

The best portraits are unique and interesting. Creativity is key! To increase the chances that a fantastic photo will come out of a session, use film liberally. Take multiple horizontal and vertical shots in several locations.

Asymmetrical or informal balance is often more pleasing than precisely centering the child's face in every shot. Photographers often use the rule of thirds to help them create an interesting yet balanced shot. The eye is naturally drawn to a point about two-thirds up a page. Therefore, the photographer draws an imaginary tic-tac-toe board



through the frame of the picture she is composing. She then concentrates on landing the most interesting elements of the photograph at a point where the lines intersect on the grid, rather than right in the center. In the photograph of Nathan, Earlisha, and Michael, their faces occupy the upper right side of the frame and their legs balance the opposite side.



Nathan, Earlisha & Michael
age 8 age 9 age 12

Make a picture of a moving child more dynamic by leaving space in front of him so he appears to move into the frame rather than out. By the same token, if the child gazes to one side, leave room in that direction.

When composing a shot, attempt to draw the eye of the viewer to the subject's face using linear items—such as trees, monkey bars, or even arms. In Jennifer's portrait, both of her arms and the chain of the swing point toward her enthusiastic expression. Plus, by shooting the linear elements diagonally, rather than straight down or across, the photographer added a sense of motion to the picture.

Great photos require patience and practice. Use a lot of film and take as much time as possible to get the right shots. A photo session can be an excellent time to build the child's self-confidence and discuss the recruitment process with him. Once the shoot is over and the pictures are developed, remember to share copies with the child and the adults who are important to him.



Jennifer
age 11

All photographs were taken by Dave Eulitt, volunteer photographer for Kansas Families for Kids. For information on the featured children, contact David Scott at 785-354-4663 or dscott@kffk.org.

*NACAC Conference
Includes Recruitment Track*

From July 27-30, 2000 the North American Council on Adoptable Children (NACAC) will present its 26th Annual Conference, "The Future for Children Is Families," in Baltimore, Maryland. Held at the Omni Inner Harbor Hotel, the conference includes more than 90 institutes and workshops.

The conference will feature a track on the recruitment and retention of adoptive families, including an institute on finding minority families under the Multiethnic Placement Act. Other workshop topics include facilitating successful teen adoptions, recruiting with advanced technology, using child-specific recruitment, retaining families, overcoming geographic barriers, and matching via adoption parties. Sessions in other tracks cover a wide range of topics from parenting, to post-adoption services, to search and reunion.

To receive a conference registration booklet, including information on fees, travel, and accommodations, contact NACAC at 651-644-3036 or info@nacac.org or visit our web site, www.nacac.org.

TV Reporters Discuss Features in Schools

"Kids can be cruel," explains Nancy Montoya of International Media Broadcasting. "When children appear on a waiting child feature, the other kids start whispering and making things up. Foster care and adoption become taboo subjects. Our whole point is that it's nothing to be ashamed of."

For the past 20 years, Montoya has been producing waiting child features for 12 television stations around the country. She believes that part of her obligation when airing such a feature is to better educate the teachers and classmates of featured children about the segments—and adoption. "Above all, a waiting child feature should do no harm. But we can take it a step further and proactively make a big difference in helping a child's class respond positively. We can prevent most of the teasing and shame by putting the class on notice in advance about the nature of what we are doing and why."

When the child is interested and willing, Montoya sends the news anchor who filmed the feature into that child's classroom or to a smaller group of friends (if an older child prefers less attention) before the piece airs. The visit is an opportunity to show the feature, discuss adoption, make the waiting child feel important, and prepare the classroom to be supportive.

Montoya has not encountered problems convincing reporters to visit classrooms—they enjoy community involvement and find visits to be time well spent. Being in the schools often triggers ideas for other stories as well. Montoya, however, encourages workers to spend time with new reporters or those who are childless to prepare them before they speak to a young audience of children.

International Media Broadcasting and the Arizona Children's Association are presently collaborating on a video to educate teachers about adoption and foster care. To learn more, contact Nancy Montoya at 520-797-8088.



WORDS THAT DESCRIBE WAITING CHILDREN...

Accomplished	Cautious	Endearing	Inquisitive	Patient	Sincere
Active	Charming	Energetic	Intelligent	Peaceful	Sociable
Affectionate	Charismatic	Engaging	Interesting	Perfectionistic	Spirited
Alert	Cheerful	Enthusiastic	Introspective	Persistent	Spiritual
Amusing	Clever	Expressive	Irresistible	Playful	Spunky
Animated	Comical	Extraordinary	Jovial	Pleasant	Steadfast
Appealing	Compassionate	Extroverted	Joyful	Poetic	Strong-willed
Articulate	Considerate	Exuberant	Likeable	Polite	Studious
Artistic	Creative	Fascinating	Lively	Popular	Sweet
Athletic	Cuddly	Generous	Loving	Positive	Talented
Aware	Curious	Gentle	Loyal	Practical	Talkative
Bashful	Delightful	Genuine	Mature	Precious	Tender
Bold	Dependable	Gifted	Merry	Precocious	Thoughtful
Bright	Determined	Helpful	Mild	Rambunctious	Tireless
Bubbly	Diligent	Hilarious	Mischievous	Reliable	Trustworthy
Busy	Dramatic	Honest	Musical	Religious	Upbeat
Calm	Dynamic	Humorous	Obedient	Resourceful	Vivacious
Captivating	Eager	Imaginative	Optimistic	Respectful	Warm
Careful	Earnest	Independent	Outgoing	Sensitive	Well-behaved
Caring	Easygoing	Innovative	Outspoken	Shy	Whimsical
					Witty

“Ask the Expert”

This issue's expert is Terrell Moffett, owner of Moffett Photography and recipient of an Adoption 2002 Excellence Award for his volunteer efforts capturing engaging images of Idaho's waiting children since October of 1998.

Q At my agency, workers usually take their own photos of waiting children. What benefits can we get from partnering with a professional photographer? How can we find the right person?

A If a family is presented with two pictures—a polaroid of a child in a dirty white tee-shirt standing by a wall and a professional portrait of a well-dressed child in an attractive light—which will draw the first inquiry? The better a child's photograph, the easier it is to find a family, and it's hard to compete with the quality a professional can offer. The right photographer will be experienced with children's portraits and ready to handle the unpredictability of special needs. Look for someone patient enough to get a good shot even when that might seem impossible.

Q I am going to take a child in for a professional photo. What can I do to help the session run smoothly?

A Plan to purchase the right clothing for the child—small children look best in all white, while older children should wear dark, solid colors. New clothes look good, and when children are dressed nicely they often behave accordingly. Contact the photographer ahead of time to share details about the child's personality and clothing selection, so he can set up the background, props, and lighting in advance. Finally, be prepared to take a backseat during the photo shoot—the photographer will need to focus all of his attention on the child.

Q My agency is forming a partnership with a professional photographer who is new to taking portraits of children with special needs. Can you offer any helpful hints?

A Some sessions with special needs children are a breeze, but other times physical or emotional problems make getting a good shot difficult. Here is a technique to try with a hyperactive child: For 15 to 20 minutes, use whatever backgrounds and props the child wants and take pictures on a digital camera. Then, take the child to the computer to show him what you've got. Once he's calm, ask the child to do a couple of shots your way. Load the camera with real film and move quickly—this usually buys about 5 to 10 minutes of attention. Portraits of special needs children take more time and effort than with the average client. But when you finally get a good shot, it's much more rewarding.

To learn more, visit Moffett Photography at www.moffettphoto.com, or contact Terrell Moffett at 208-465-4931 or terrell@moffettphoto.com. Kelly, pictured above, was adopted after the portrait Mr. Moffett took of him was publicized. ♿

Next Up...

Upcoming Trainings, Conferences, and Events

JUNE 21-23 • ARLINGTON, VA

The Children's Bureau, along with the National Resource Center for Information Technology in Child Welfare of the CWLA, sponsors *Making IT Work: Supporting Child Welfare with Information Technology and Data*; Julie Ohm, 202-942-0331, john@cwla.org.

JUNE 24-27 • ARLINGTON, VA

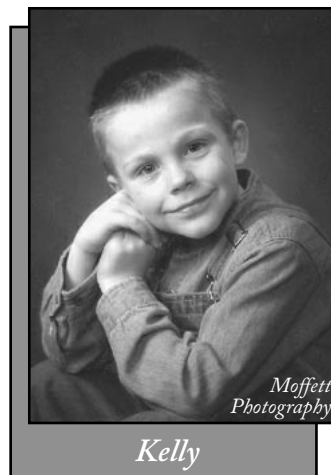
Imagine a World Where Every Child Can Thrive is the National Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) Association's 19th annual conference; Sheryl Dorney, 800-628-3233, staff@nationalcasa.org, www.nationalcasa.org.

JULY 12-15 • CHICAGO, IL

The American Professional Society on the Abuse of Children (APSAC) presents its 8th annual colloquium; 312-554-0166, apsaceduc@aol.com, www.apsac.org.

AUGUST 4-5 • CINCINNATI, OH

Making a World of Difference for Youth 9-15 is the 7th Annual National Older Kids Conference sponsored by the Ohio Professionals for School-Age Care; Flo Reinmuth, 614-224-0222 x162, flo_reinmuth@opsac.com, www.opsac.com.



Bulletin Board

CHILD WELFARE REGULATIONS ISSUED

In January, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) released final child welfare regulations to improve services and outcomes for children. The regulations, which went into effect March 25, 2000, clarify requirements concerning reasonable efforts and termination of parental rights under the Adoption and Safe Families Act of 1997, and outline penalties and corrections for violations of the Multiethnic Placement Act, as amended. The regulations also describe the protocol that HHS will use during upcoming child and family service reviews. Each state must complete a self-assessment and an on-site review. The results-focused monitoring concentrates on outcomes and systemic factors that affect them, including whether or not a state is successfully operating an adoptive family recruitment program. Unlike past federal reviews, the monitoring effort is primarily designed to help states improve services before assessing penalties for non-compliance. To learn more, visit the Children's Bureau web site at www.acf.dhhs.gov/programs/cb/.

"People need to do something to make adoption happen faster for foster kids. There is plenty of advertising to educate people about things like tobacco, smoking, safe sex, drinking and driving, and on and on. But I only remember ever seeing one commercial about adoption. If you were to put more types of advertising out there, people would be more interested in adopting."

Elizabeth—adopted at age 18

Publication Provides Updated Standards

The Child Welfare League of America's (CWLA) newest edition of *CWLA Standards of Excellence for Adoption Services* (2000) reveals significant changes from previous adoption standards. Specifically, the new *Standards* focus strongly on being applicable to all sectors of adoption—public and private agencies, including domestic infant, international, and special needs adoption—and on being reflective of how the adoption field has evolved in the past decade. To order a copy, contact CWLA at 800-407-6273 or cwla@pmds.com, or check out www.cwla.org/pubs. ✕

Online Digest Contains Child Welfare News

The National Clearinghouse on Child Abuse and Neglect Information and the National Adoption Information Clearinghouse are producing a free monthly electronic digest, that debuted in March. Designed for professionals concerned with child abuse and neglect, child welfare, and adoption, *Children's Bureau (CB) Express* publishes current news stories related to the field, listings of resources, recent studies and research findings, and updates on the activities of National Child Welfare Resource Centers. Articles can be selected and e-mailed to other colleagues. View *CB Express* at www.calib.com/cbexpress. To subscribe to the e-mail edition, send a message to cbexpress@calib.com with "subscribe cbexpress" written in the subject line. ✕

Book Examines Adoption and Guardianship

Produced by the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL) and written by Steve Christian and Lisa Ekman, *A Place to Call Home: Adoption and Guardianship for Children in Foster Care* (2000) discusses adoption and legal guardianship as permanency options for children. After a brief overview of the foster care system and recent changes in adoption, this book also highlights examples of different state programs for recruitment, subsidized guardianship, adoption support, and child welfare agency improvements. To obtain a copy, contact NCSL at 202-624-5400 or 303-830-2200. ✕

Report Reveals Youth's Ideas for Improvement

Authors Janet Knipe and Joy Warren talked with youths in the foster care system to learn what could be done to improve child welfare services and meet the needs of those in foster care. The results are organized and explained in *Foster Youth Share Their Ideas for Change* (1999), a book with many ideas to help agencies be more effective and efficient. To order, contact CWLA at 800-407-6273 or cwla@pmds.com, or visit www.cwla.org/pubs. ✕

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