

# Recruiting News

970 Raymond Avenue, Suite 106, St. Paul, Minnesota 55114 • 651-644-3036 • fax: 651-644-9848 • e-mail: mariezemler@nacac.org

## *Waiting Children Find Homes with Faithful Families*

*By Marie Zemler, Coordinator,  
Adoption 2002 Support Project*

**F**or recruiters in search of an audience for their adoption message, faithful families may be an answer to their prayers. According to a Gallup poll conducted in the fall of 2000, 68 percent of Americans are members of a church or synagogue and more than a third attend religious services on a weekly basis. Research also shows churches and synagogues contain ideal candidates for adoptive parenthood. Through her work as director of the Religion and Family Project at Cornell University, Penny Edgell Becker discovered "involvement in a local congregation is related to a family and community centered life."

Scripture can provide themes for faith-based campaigns:

- Children's children are a crown to the aged, and parents are the pride of their children. —Proverbs 17:6
- Raise up a child in the way that he should go and he will not depart from it. —Proverb 22:6
- God sets the lonely in families. —Psalms 68:6
- Lo, children are a heritage from the Lord, children are a reward from him. —Psalms 127:3
- Whoever embraces one of these children as I do embraces me, and far more than me, God who sent me. —Mark 9:36-37

In this edition of *Recruiting News*, we profile programs that have successfully employed the family and community orientation of religious organizations in order to provide homes—and other support—for waiting children. Two themes recur throughout their varied programs. First, recruiters must learn the rules of the religious groups they approach and follow them respectfully. This means employing staff and volunteers who, ideally, practice within the particular community, or who, minimally, are willing to learn from those who do. Second, successful partnerships must be built through broad, consistent contact with members of the faith community. A one-time appearance will not find families. However, a lasting relationship with the congregation's leaders, lay members, and programming staff will not only find families but support them and their children through placement and beyond.

## A Waiting Child

*Ervin is a charming, personable 11-year-old who loves people. His wide interests include music, basket weaving, pottery, soccer, roller skating, and biking. Consistently successful, Ervin is especially talented at drawing. With a strong understanding of right and wrong, he learns from mistakes and solves problems effectively. Ervin bonds easily and his social worker says he "is much enjoyed by co-workers when he is with me in the office."*



**Ervin**  
June 30, 1989

*Prenatally exposed to drugs, Ervin has a palsy and blindness in his left eye. He also has a heart condition that will need continued monitoring. Ervin is on medication for depression and monitored quarterly by a psychiatrist. With his health needs currently under control, he is growing increasingly secure. In school Ervin has an individualized education plan that allows him to receive personal attention. Despite a learning disorder, he absorbs new information quickly. Ervin is insightful about how he fits into the world and how his behaviors affect him and those around him.*

*Ervin has been preparing for adoption and is hopeful about finding a loving, accepting, nurturing, and fun family. Ervin has four siblings, several aunts, a past foster family, and a therapist with whom he must keep in touch. Ervin is a special young man, and adoptive parents will be receiving a wonderful gift when he joins their family. To learn more, contact Meliny Staysa at 573-884-4194. ✕*

Sadly, we are not profiling any recruitment programs that reach religious communities outside the Judeo-Christian tradition. If readers are aware of such programs, please contact NACAC. With more than 10 million people in the United States practicing Buddhism, Islam, Bahai, and other varied religions, we would love to include them in a future edition. ✕

# ***Project Finds Black Families through Baptist Connections***

*Reverend Gwendolyn Horton, an associate minister at Faith Missionary Baptist Church, is also program manager of Adoption and Foster Care Recruitment for the North Carolina Division of Social Services (DSS). She and Dr. Joseph Paige—chairperson of the General Baptist State Convention's (GBSC) Adoption and Foster Care Ministry—recently shared how their state's church-based adoption and foster care initiative works.*

## **How are you facilitating faith-based recruiting? How do your roles in the church affect recruitment efforts?**

We recruit statewide, using an effective faith community network designed specifically to help us identify potential adoptive and foster parents. Our role as active Baptist ministers gives us credibility and is a major asset in our ongoing recruitment efforts. Formally organized and implemented in 1998, the GBSC Adoption and Foster Care Ministry is a cooperative, collaborative partnership between the GBSC of North Carolina and the state DSS. Our mandate is to identify African American singles and couples who are interested in becoming adoptive or foster parents, and to advocate, motivate, and stimulate interest among members of various faith communities.

## **How do you achieve that mandate?**

More than 4,000 predominantly black churches are in the GBSC. With its leaders' endorsement, we make presentations at state-wide meetings, and ask moderators—who are each responsible for 15 to 30 churches—to recommend the project to their pastors. We have found that pastors are the best way to get into churches; with their blessings, you will more than likely succeed. When a pastor expresses interest, we ask him to appoint a volunteer project coordinator; pastors rarely have time to do the work themselves.

Once a church is involved, one of our 10 paid pastoral consultants attends a Sunday service to welcome congregants to the Ministry. The pastoral consultant presents a certificate commending the church's involvement, introduces the congregation's volunteer coordinator, and talks briefly about adoption and foster care. Three full-time staff continually involve more moderators, pastors, and churches. We have a booth at every Baptist conference or workshop throughout the year. Two pages of every GBSC newsletter include a spotlight on an active minister, photolistings of waiting children, and an interest form. At the 2000 Martin Luther King, Jr. Day banquet, we presented plaques to pastors and moderators who contributed to the Ministry. Our ongoing visibility brings additional credibility and exposure. More than 100 churches now participate.

## **Are you involved in any other faith communities?**

The Ministry recently developed an outreach arm—North Carolina African American Faith Communities United for Children: Adoption and Foster Care. Our goal is to learn the structure of other denominations such as Episcopal, Methodist, Catholic, and Holiness, work from the top

down, and recruit in those communities. We organized an advisory committee and requested each of the cooperating communities to designate volunteers to work with us on the church, region, and state levels.

## **What do volunteers do? How do you support them?**

What works in one denomination or church does not always work in another. Our 180 volunteers know the culture of their own churches and work within them. Volunteers know their pastors and can schedule presentations for our staff or make them themselves. They are also ongoing contacts for the congregation—members can ask questions, fill out interest cards, and learn where to get more information. Continuing telephone contacts and occasional visits with volunteers are essential. Meeting in their home church from time to time boosts the relationship. Our pastoral consultants train volunteers, provide materials, share ideas and goals, and engage in mutual problem solving. We also reimburse all expenses.

## **What techniques most effectively spread the word about the need for families?**

When approaching a faith community, a recruiter should know something about it, including a notion of the congregation's educational and economic levels. We prefer group presentations with time for questions. Supportive scriptures are always useful. We also want the congregation to know who waiting children are—photolisting books and flyers can be shared before, during, and after presentations.

## **Do you partner with any other groups?**

Our project is successful because we open as many doors as possible. We partner with the state NAACP and the North Carolina Association of Black Social Workers. NAACP representatives frequently speak at community events. They now mention the Ministry's mission in every presentation. Many of the Association of Black Social Workers' members are employed at the county level. They help keep families and children moving when the Ministry makes referrals. Typically, members of these groups are also affiliated with their own church and can help us get connected.

## **What is the value of recruiting families from the faith community? How should a recruiter start?**

Churches of all faiths are natural recruitment outlets—they preach and teach about love, caring, and being there for people in need. The Holy Bible speaks of Christ's love for all children. We, as believers, are responsible to love all children as Christ loves us. Faithful or spiritual persons are caring, loving, patient, understanding, honest, and real. They relate well and bonding with children seems to be easier. To get started with a new community, we have used two approaches. The best is to seek support from senior religious leaders—understand the denominational structure and protocol, then work within it. Another effective approach is to work with local pastors. Establish one-on-one contacts with key people, including laity, then share your goals in order to recruit them to work with you.

*To learn more, contact Reverend Horton at 919-733-3801. ✎*

# Exchange Keeps Children within the Jewish Community

By Stephen and Vicki Krausz, founders and directors of the Jewish Children's Adoption Network

A member of Congress called—one of his Midwestern constituents had just given birth to a boy with Down syndrome and wanted help finding a Jewish family for the baby. We suggested a few from our database of 1,300, but none were the “typical” two-parent families that the birth parents desired. We called some of our contacts, one of whom announced the need for a family at a Jewish women's group. Someone there knew a family in New England that already had children, but now faced infertility and were considering adoption. Three weeks later, that family had completed an expedited home study and flew to pick up their new son.

The family would have looked into adoption someday, but knowing a Jewish child needed a home got them moving quickly. Since we founded the Jewish Children's Adoption Network (JCAN) in 1990, families have come forward to adopt because they understand Jewish children deserve to retain their religion and heritage. We lost enough of our children to Hitler! When a child has already lost his biological family, why should he lose his heritage too?

JCAN began when we pursued adoption to add to our own family. We were discouraged at almost every turn. Some agencies told us we were too old; others wouldn't work with Jewish families or with families who already had children. Then we heard of a Jewish child who needed a home—a child whose family members were Holocaust survivors. Unfortunately, staff from the public agency that had custody believed her heritage and her birth family's desire to place her in a Jewish home were unimportant.

Jewish Family Services and several rabbis insisted that the child's Jewish status was significant. Because of their intervention, we adopted our daughter. She retained her religious heritage and maintained contact with her extended birth family by getting together at Jewish religious, historical, and community events. After our discovery that children were being denied the right to be placed in Jewish homes, we created JCAN to help families like ours.

During the past 11 years, we have found homes for more than 1,000 Jewish children—most of whom have special needs. In many cases we found homes for children who

might otherwise have stayed in an institution, but Jewish families adopted because they were shocked at the thought of a Jewish child remaining institutionalized. Batya, for example, spent her first two years in a hospital because of medical complications associated with Down syndrome. We found a home after we showed a video of her to a prospective family that was willing to deal with her medical issues. If not for the Jewish connection, she might still be in the hospital.

How do we recruit Jewish families? Mostly by word-of-mouth. We do not have funds to do it any other way (our annual budget is \$50,000, including salaries). Our low-cost approach works because we are members of the Jewish community and understand how things get done within it. Most families come via our connections with Jewish family service agencies, Jewish communal organizations, rabbis, and parents who adopted through us.

Our exchange services are free (we are funded by donations) and available to the adoption community. If you have a Jewish child on your caseload, JCAN can refer families that match the profile that you or the birth family seek—including geographic preferences, religious affiliation (reform, conservative, orthodox, etc.), and marital status. We also know the age and abilities of the children who families are interested in parenting. We look for permanent families for more than 100 children per year and almost always find them. If you work with Jewish families, get them included in our database by completing a form that lists their background and the characteristics of children they are will-

ing to adopt. JCAN can also answer adoption questions that relate to Jewish community and law.

Members of the Jewish community often see Jewish children as extended family. If a child from their community needs a home, people who are thinking about adoption will move forward and even adopt a child whom they would not have considered from the general population. Furthermore, many Jewish families who want to adopt are uncomfortable taking a non-Jewish child out of mainstream culture and giving her a minority religion. We do not want to create further loss, especially for an older child who has integrated majority religion into her life. To reduce children's losses, workers should always contact children's ethnic and religious communities to locate families who are able to cope with special needs and who want to keep children of their heritage in their community.

To learn more about JCAN, call 303-573-8113 or e-mail [jcan@qwest.net](mailto:jcan@qwest.net). ✕

## *Hints for religious communities that want to start an exchange:*

- **Know the “hot buttons” of the community.** What will motivate families to commit? Our web site appeals to the Jewish community's commitment to tradition by listing the practices that children will miss if non-Jewish families adopt them.
- **Understand the community's attitudes toward infertility, abortion, and adoption.** A recruiter who is not conversant in the doctrine espoused by religious leaders as well as the practices of the community's members can quickly alienate or offend. Our newsletters intentionally include our entire audience even though orthodox, reform, and conservative communities embrace different beliefs.
- **Analyze what keeps community members from adopting.** What walls have prospective parents come up against in the past? They will generally tell you their concerns. As a recruiter, help lower those walls or help families find a ladder.

# Project Helps Children Find Families for Themselves

by Brendan Kramp

Imagine a program that gives waiting children the chance to act in a play. Consider a show that results in a girl recording a CD because of her singing talent. Envision a course that teaches African American boys about their heritage and ends with a trip to Africa. What if these services resulted in adoption for participating children? These opportunities were available through the Bandede Project. Named for an African boy's name meaning "follow me home" or "born away from home," Bandede demonstrates that faith communities are a resource not only for recruitment, but for helping waiting children make friends, develop self esteem, and explore artistic talents.

## Involving Children

Spaulding for Children staff designed Bandede to help waiting African American children in Detroit, Michigan find families. To find prospective parents, staff sought help from a center of the African American community—the church. Recognizing the church's role in community building and support, Bandede staff held social and artistic activities for waiting children in churches. Activities included a fashion show, play performances, and the Rites of Passage program—a curriculum in which African American boys studied their heritage and visited Africa as a final project.

The Bandede play, *Share Our Lives as Our Own*, written by Robert Douglas, premiered at an African American museum and focused on two families considering adoption and two African American boys waiting to be adopted. Fourteen children who were available for adoption played both adult and children's roles in the original performance.

According to Spaulding's president, Addie Williams, the play was more than just entertainment. After showcasing their personalities and talents, "The children were able to recruit families for themselves. All the kids that participated in the play were adopted, and they were so successful in their performance that they developed self-esteem resulting in positive changes in their behavior at home." Many foster parents, Williams added, saw such a dramatic change in their children's behavior after the play that they decided to adopt. Since the original performance, the play has been performed in other cities and one girl was even approached to make a CD and music video.

The children involved were referred by participating agencies, and transported to church events by an agency or Bandede staff person. Children took part in community and religious activities while being featured in recruitment venues such as a Bandede photolisting book and bookmarks for use in church members' Bibles. When prospective families were identified, Bandede staff referred them to participating agencies on a rotating basis.

## Developing Relationships

Spaulding staff started Bandede with a 1992 federal grant and five churches. The project was run by a coordinator, two church liaisons, a youth coordinator, and a support staff person. After the initial grant period, Bandede staff received a four-year award to continue. At the project's close in 1999, 15 churches and 15 agencies were involved.

*According to Addie Williams, president of Spaulding for Children, organizations that want to collaborate with African American churches must be members of the particular religious community and/or develop cultural competence. Cultural competence involves doing your homework: learn about the community, attend events within it, and understand how behaviors might be interpreted in different cultural contexts. A culturally competent recruiter knows:*

- who the church's members are,
- the appropriate way to dress,
- the church's founding history,
- who the church leaders are,
- what the services are like, and
- what programs they have worked with in the past.

*By knowing the faith community's rules and goals, an agency can avoid imposing its own.*

A primary issue for project staff was finding interested churches. They approached congregations through personal connections, always going with a church member who volunteered to help gain entry. They found out who held power in each church—the pastor, reverend, minister, deacon, or trustee board—and approached that person with the project goals. Staff inquired whether adoption was already of concern to a particular church. Establishing links with pastors and churches that took strong interest in waiting children proved essential.

## Sharing Lessons

Bandede staff quickly discovered that aligning their missions with the churches' was a key in building partnerships. Congregations and pastors who saw the mission of Bandede as linked with theirs found many ways to

involve waiting children in their communities. Bandede also found success in congregations where child welfare agencies and churches could both benefit. Agencies were well equipped to teach young couples to parent, support grandparents parenting their grandchildren, and build child tutoring programs.

Bandede staff also learned that they needed to establish an agreement between churches and agencies to clearly outline the project's goals and vision. In addition, staff specified what information the participating agency should track as well as how and when to report it.

The Bandede Project proved that investment in a faith community is a great way to achieve permanency and further recruitment efforts. The project succeeded because it operated within the faith community and effectively strengthened both the children and the churches.

To learn more, contact Spaulding at 248-443-7080. ✖

## *Faith-Based Agencies Unite for City-Wide Adoption Sabbath*

Last November, Pastor Horace Sheppard, Jr. addressed his congregation at West Oak Lane Church of God in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania with a two-fold message. For those called by God to adopt, more than 300 area children desperately needed families. Those not called to parent, he said, were still called to help waiting children and adoptive families. As Christmas approached, the church's youngest members proved the Pastor's message true as the youth group hosted a holiday party for foster children and gave out gifts that the youth group members had purchased and donated.

West Oak Lane Church of God was one of more than two dozen congregations in the Philadelphia area to hear adoption messages during National Adoption Awareness Month. The city's Faith-Based Partnership for Adoption—a coalition of faith-based social service organizations—spearheaded the first-ever Adoption Sabbath with a mission to “use the power of the pulpit to educate congregates of all ages about the pressing needs of our children.” Through a kick-off event and weekend of presentations, Adoption Sabbath built public awareness and united participating agencies in an interfaith collaboration.

### **Building the Partnership**

For Richard Gitlen, assistant executive director of Lutheran Children and Family Services and Adoption Sabbath chairman, the Partnership made sense. “Collectively, our organizations came from a background of hundreds of years of moral and ethical services to families and children. We had a message to send about the number of waiting children and by sending the message as a unified voice, we made it stronger.”

The Partnership—comprised of Jewish Family and Children's Service, Lutheran Children and Family Service, Episcopal Community Services, Bethany Christian Services, and Bennett and Simpson Enrichment Services—had been working together since 1998 to enhance services for children placed with their foster families. Seeking to focus and cement the relationship, each agency brought a staff person and two religious community leaders to a brainstorming luncheon last spring. There, a rabbi proposed a city-wide Adoption Sabbath, an idea which blossomed over the ensuing six months.

According to Gitlen, the Partnership's “collective resources” were central to Adoption Sabbath's success. The Partnership enlisted One Church, One Child of Pennsylvania and, when word spread, Philadelphia's Department of Human Services approached the Partnership to volunteer financial support.

### **A Weekend of Celebration**

A noon kick-off reception on Friday launched the weekend. The audience of 200—including religious

leaders of several faiths, city commissioners, the mayor, a congressional representative, and adoptive families—enjoyed a light lunch in the mayor's reception hall. The media personality who records Wednesday's Child features hosted the event, which included speeches by an adoptive mother of 22 and Father George Clements—adoptive father of four and founder of One Church, One Child—as well as a musical performance by adopted children.

Bringing dignitaries together for a media-worthy event could not have been accomplished without combined efforts, according to Lisa Covington, Bethany Christian Service's public relations specialist and Adoption Sabbath representative. “Everyone knew somebody somewhere,” she explained. The Partnership also combined funds to hire a public relations specialist who created press packets and enticed media. The public relations professional generated coverage by the Associated Press, two local news stations, and several area newspapers despite competition from the ongoing presidential election.

Following the kick-off, staff from participating agencies spent the weekend in churches, synagogues, and Sunday school classes touting the importance of adoption. In many instances, staff approached their own worship communities with the message. In other settings, the minister, pastor, reverend, or rabbi addressed congregants during services. Speaker's notes compiled by the Partnership helped unify and simplify delivery of a compelling message. Since Adoption Sabbath, nearly 100 families have come forward to learn about adopting. Many are presently in the process of becoming foster and adoptive parents.

### **Strengthened Relationships**

Adoption Sabbath was, for many faith-communities, a catalyst to enhance a pre-existing relationship with the adoption community. For example, though worshippers at True Light Fellowship church had heard adoption messages at services before, renewed support from Pastor Wesley Pinnock has united the congregants in a mission to provide homes for waiting children. Since Adoption Sabbath, the church hosted two faith-based agencies at an adoption and foster care extravaganza for their Martin Luther King, Jr. Day celebration. At the event, foster and adoptive parents, birth parents, and professional staff taught congregants about child welfare while foster children danced and performed a mime show.

Adoption Sabbath also galvanized the relationship between member agencies in the Partnership. Using footage from Adoption Sabbath, the Partnership created a faith-based recruitment video for use in future presentations. The group is pursuing funding for a structured, year-round relationship with each other and their faith community partners, but is committed to joint recruitment efforts regardless of future grants. Above all, say Partnership members, they will faithfully ensure that families pursuing adoption are prepared and supported.

*To learn more, contact Richard Gitlen at 215-881-6800. ✈*

# Rural Texas Chapel Makes Adoptions a Community Affair

by Brendan Kramp

With its small, rural setting, the Bennett Chapel Missionary Baptist Church—located in the remote Sabine National Forest in a community near Shelbyville, Texas—seems an unlikely place to find adoptive and foster parents. But due to the close-knit community and leadership of Reverend W. C. Martin and his wife, Donna, Bennett Chapel families have welcomed more than 100 children into adoptive and foster homes.

The flurry of adoptions originated with Donna Martin who, after her mother's death, felt a void in her life that led her to investigate becoming a foster parent. Donna learned of classes for prospective foster and adoptive parents being held in the city of Lufkin and brought her sister, Diann, to attend. Not long after finishing, Diann adopted a six-year-old and Donna and Reverend Martin adopted two children and became foster parents to two more.

The children changed the Martins' lives so much that the Reverend brought a message to Bennett Chapel. He did not tell his congregation to adopt, but he acknowledged the role the church could play in helping more children. "I encouraged our church to get involved," Martin says. "I told them it could really make a turn in society....The church needs to get involved in lives, not just souls."

After receiving an overwhelmingly positive response from interested families in his congregation, Reverend Martin contacted Texas Department of Protective and Regulatory Services (DPRS) caseworker Susan Ramsey. "I told him I would come to teach the training classes for prospective adoptive and foster parents if he could get 10 potential families to attend," Ramsey explained. "When I arrived there were 24 families at the first meeting. It was incredible. And Reverend Martin let us hold the meetings in the church, which is the center of the community."

If Ramsey had not come to Bennett Chapel, congregation members would have needed to travel more than 70 miles for training in Lufkin. After the first series of classes, 18 families finalized adoptions. In the next two series, even more families signed up. Theresa Lathan and her husband, Glen, were one such family. They adopted five sisters who had been separated. Theresa explained, "I brought them together to let them know that they are sisters."

Most of the children adopted by Bennett Chapel members come from Houston and have histories of abuse or

neglect. The special issues these children bring are sometimes magnified because fewer resources and professional medical services are available in the rural area. The prospective parents knew raising their children would not always be easy, but Ramsey credits the Bennett Chapel and surrounding community for being the drive behind the large number of successful adoptions. "The people in the Bennett community are comfortable with who they are," said Ramsey. "They are good, honest, hard working people who aren't threatened by the idea of bringing children into their homes. They don't view themselves as a blessing for the child. They view the child as their blessing."

Another central factor that led to the community's interest in adoption came from the efforts of Reverend Martin and the Bennett Chapel itself. Reverend Martin happily opened up the chapel to meetings, classes, and social functions where foster and adoptive parenting were the focus—independent of religious services. The advocacy of the church and members of the community functioned as both a support group and a source for information and referral for other families. Additionally, teaching local pre-service classes helped to include a network of neighbors that extended beyond the congregation into the surrounding Shelby County area.

The Bennett Chapel community is now working with DPRS to build a community-wide Family Outreach Center to provide much needed resources, support, and gathering space. "I really think that if we could get some of these resources in this community, we would see so much come out of that," said Judy Bowman, a supervisor with DPRS. "There are very few places in society where one small group has the chance to impact so many lives."

"We've been getting calls from other regions in the state asking us how we did it so they can replicate it," noted Bowman. "We have to tell them we didn't do it. There's no way we could go out and sell something like this." ✨

## Exchanging Ideas *Tips from the Adoption Exchange Association (AEA)*

*The Louisiana Department of Social Services, an AEA member, notes that faith-based organizations have traditionally been active in providing services to families. Their involvement in adoption can increase public awareness and help agencies expand outreach. In developing relationships with the faith community, representatives from all local ethnic groups should be part of the initial planning with the agency. The following tips can help build relationships within the faith community:*

- *Distribute information to congregations and faith organizations through public forums, mailings, and media alerts.*
- *Establish a community planning team to conduct discussion groups composed of clergy, laity, nonprofit, business, and labor leaders to mobilize their participation.*
- *Develop work committees with congregation members or leaders as chairpersons.*
- *Match prospective adoptive families with faith-based support teams and offer activities based on faith-based organizations' outreach and ministry goals.*
- *Use faith-based group members as volunteers for office tasks or events.*

# “Ask the Expert”

*This issue's expert, Cassandra Calendar-Ray, is executive director of Virginia's One Church, One Child program. To learn more, call her at 804-329-3420 or contact the National Office at 202-789-4333.*

**Q** What is One Church, One Child? How can I find out if it is active in my area? How might my agency be able to start collaborating with One Church, One Child?

**A** One Church, One Child is a national adoption education and recruitment program designed to find adoptive families for African American children. Founded in 1980 by Father George Clements, a Catholic priest, the organization now operates in more than 25 states. Our goal is to find at least one family in each participating church to adopt one child. Call the National One Church, One Child office in Washington, D.C. to find out if the program is active in your area. Then call specific One Church, One Child organizations to discuss collaboration possibilities. We are always looking for partners.

**Q** We have been trying to work with the faith communities in our area, but just seem unable to connect. Based on your experience with churches, how should we make initial contact?

**A** Make initial contacts with pastors, elders, priests, rabbis—whomever is the congregation's leader. These clergy leaders may then direct you to other contacts within the church. Leave a message and/or send a written communication if you are not able to speak directly. If you are unable to reach a particular leader, identify an associate clergy or missionary leader to ask for assistance in recruiting prospective families. Get a feel for the organizational structure of the church or faith community. Find out if the church's focus slants towards missions or towards education and if family life is a dimension of its programs. Find a niche that adoptive family recruitment fits into and make that connection clear for the persons with whom you are meeting. If you are given the opportunity to make a presentation, arrive ahead of time, adhere to whatever time limitations you have been given, and remain for the service or meeting. Finally, ask leaders how they see recruitment fitting into the programs and activities of their church. You may also want to try clergy associations or fellowships for an initial contact point.

**Q** We have found success making presentations and handing out brochures in churches. Now we want to further our connections. What are some more advanced ideas for collaboration?

**A** The sky's the limit. We have contributed articles to newsletters, church-based training manuals, and resource materials. Churches have hosted adoption parties and parent support groups. Pastors have conducted dedication ceremonies for children adopted at any age. Church associations have supported workshops. Many churches have child care centers and may be able to provide staff for local, regional, or state conferences. Other churches have counseling programs that can be a resource for families. Churches can help fill social service gaps or meet some immediate needs. One of our church partners provided the cost of an eye examination and glasses that a child needed. A missionary group prepared and delivered dinner for a week to a family with eight children—two through adoption—when one child was hospitalized. Finally, church members are ready volunteers for festivals and other community-based adoption activities. ✕

## Next Up...

### Upcoming Trainings, Conferences, and Events

**APRIL 2-6 • WASHINGTON, DC**

The fourth National Child Welfare Data Conference and NCANDS Meeting is sponsored by the Child Welfare League of America; Nicky Dixon, 202-942-0308, [ndixon@cwla.org](mailto:ndixon@cwla.org).

**APRIL 23-28 • ALBUQUERQUE, NM**

*Faces of Change: Embracing Diverse Cultures and Alternative Approaches* is the 13th National Conference sponsored by the Office on Child Abuse and Neglect; PaL-Tech, Inc., 703-528-0435, [13conf@pal-tech.com](mailto:13conf@pal-tech.com).

**APRIL 30-MAY 5 • CINCINNATI, OH**

The Ohio Family Care Association and the National Foster Parent Association host *Foster Care: The Heart of It All*, Karen, 800-557-5238, [www.nfpanic.org](http://www.nfpanic.org).

**MAY 11-12 • ALBANY, NY**

*Adoption 2001: A Family for Every Child* is the New York State Citizen's Coalition for Children, Inc. 12th annual adoption training conference; 607-272-0034, [www.nysccc.org](http://www.nysccc.org).

**MAY 19-22 • MINNEAPOLIS, MN**

The National Court Appointed Special Advocate Association (CASA) hosts its 20th annual conference, *The Power of Hope in a Child's Life*, 800-628-3233, [staff@nationalcasa.org](mailto:staff@nationalcasa.org).

# Bulletin Board

## ADOPTION ASSISTANCE POLICY CLARIFIED AND CHANGED

In a Policy Announcement issued January 23rd, the Administration on Children, Youth and Families set comprehensive guidelines for determining a child's eligibility for federal (Title IV-E) adoption assistance. The announcement contains a more carefully ordered explanation of current policies as well as policy revisions to make the guidelines comply with the adoption assistance provisions of the Social Security Act. The most significant revisions deal with IV-E eligibility of children adopted through private agencies. The Announcement states that eligible children must be:

- AFDC-eligible both upon removal from the birth home, and when adoption proceedings begin (instead of either of those two times); and
- in state custody (instead of in the custody of a private agency, even if the child meets all other eligibility criteria).

In addition, children who are voluntarily placed for adoption (outside of the foster care system) cannot be deemed eligible for Title IV-E assistance through a subsequent judicial action. Once parents have voluntarily placed a child, court action cannot alter the official nature of removal. To see a complete copy of the Policy Announcement, visit [www.nacac.org](http://www.nacac.org).

*"It's an uncomfortable feeling to be a 'caseload' or a 'foster child.' That way you don't belong. Adoption is belonging. ... There are too many 'boundaries' that a foster child must live with."*

*—a 17 year old who spent time in foster care before being adopted*

### ***Manual Helps Plan Recruitment Efforts***

In *A Community Outreach Handbook for Recruiting Foster Parents and Volunteers* (2000), authors Kathy Barbell and Lisa Sheikh help recruiters work with mass media, identify outreach opportunities, and develop an agency response to inquiries. Suggestions and worksheets help recruit and retain families and locate supportive volunteers. To order, contact the Child Welfare League of America at 800-407-6273 or [www.cwla.org/pubs](http://www.cwla.org/pubs). ✕

### ***Video Showcases Adult Transracial Adoptees***

Produced for the Association for Transracially Adopted & Fostered People (ATRAP), the video *Love Is Not Enough* (2000) features interviews with three adult transracial adoptees who talk about their personal experiences. Each focuses on one facet of transracial adoption: racism and identity, intercountry adoption, and tracing birth parents. Visit [www.btinternet.com/~infactuation](http://www.btinternet.com/~infactuation) to order. ✕

### ***Survey Reports on Concurrent Planning***

The National Resource Center for Foster Care and Permanency Planning's report, *Concurrent Planning: Tools for Permanency, Survey of Selected Sites* (2000), discusses the structural changes within agencies, the roles of social workers, and the challenges of preparing for multiple outcomes involved in concurrent planning. To obtain a copy, call 212-452-7053 or e-mail [nrcfcp@shiva.hunter.cuny.edu](mailto:nrcfcp@shiva.hunter.cuny.edu). ✕

### ***Book Focuses on the Aftermath of Sexual Abuse***

Author Julie Skinner addresses the question, "What happens to the survivors of child sexual abuse in its aftermath?" in *Coping with Survivors and Surviving* (2000). Her work draws from a qualitative study of the effects of child sexual abuse on children and caregivers, specifically mothers and teachers. She recognizes the unique relationships that develop between children, mothers, and teachers, and emphasizes the need for support for all involved. Call 800-821-8312 or e-mail [bkorders@taylorandfrancis.com](mailto:bkorders@taylorandfrancis.com) to order. ✕

### ***Authors Consider Permanency and Ethnicity***

Written by June Thoburn, Liz Norford, and Stephen Parvez Rashid, *Permanent Family Placement for Children of Minority Ethnic Origin* (2000) considers same race and transracial child placements while going beyond divisions of "black" and "white" that frequently inform permanency planning. The authors draw from a long-term study following a variety of child placements and use their findings to look at the issue within a wider social context than skin color and race. To order, visit [www.jkp.com](http://www.jkp.com). ✕

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