Children's Voice

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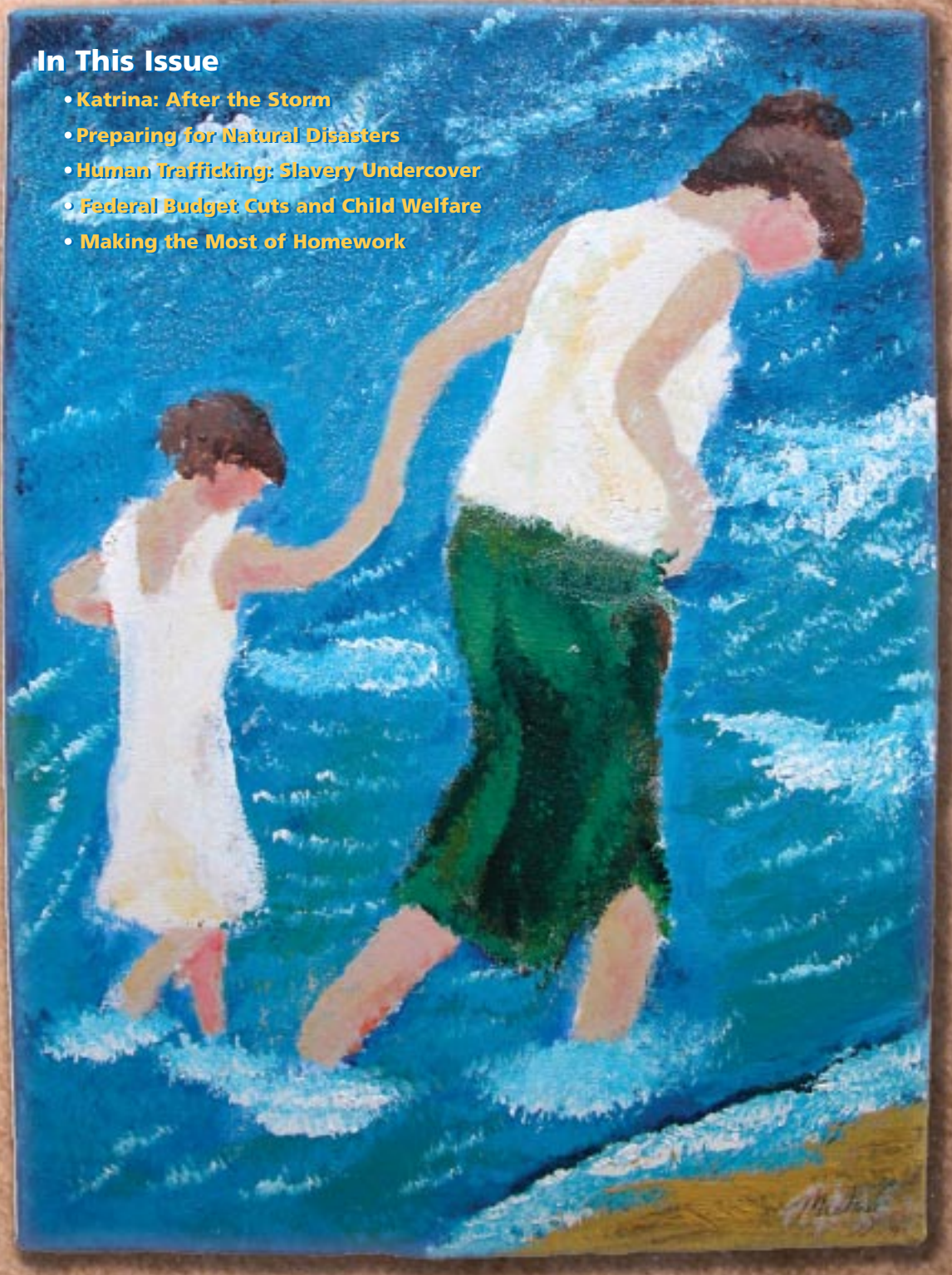

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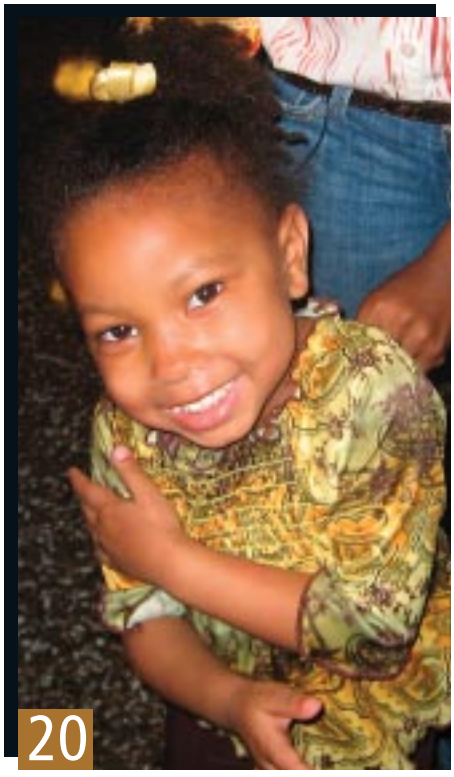
Children's Voice

FEATURES

PARENTING PAGES

MANAGEMENT MATTERS



DEPARTMENTS

On the cover: *The cover art, titled "New Home, New Life, New Joy," was created by Michael, age 17, and appears in* My Voice, My Life, My Future, *a collection of art and writing by youth in foster care, assembled by Home At Last and the Children's Law Center of Los Angeles, in conjunction with the May 2006 Foster Care Awareness Campaign. The collection is available online at www.fostercarehomeatlast.org/reports/MyVoice.pdf.*

Executive DIRECTIONS

This July marks 10 years since the eligibility requirements for children seeking foster care services were last updated. Under current law, a child's eligibility for federal foster care assistance is based on whether that child qualifies for public assistance under the former Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) program as it existed in July 1996.

CWLA will mark the 10 years these same eligibility standards have been in existence with a press event on Capitol Hill to remind lawmakers and the public that we've waited too long to reexamine them—and that by linking eligibility to 1996 income levels, fewer and fewer abused and neglected children have received federal support as inflation and the cost of living have risen. In fact, surveys and research show that only 40%–50% of abused and neglected children receive federal support today.

Adding insult to injury this year was a rancorous debate in Washington over the fiscal 2006 budget, which resulted in a $577 million cut to Title IV-E Foster Care and Adoption Assistance over the next five years. As the article "Budgeting Child Welfare" in this *Children's Voice* points out, the cuts, as part of the Deficit Reduction Act, will deeply affect child welfare services, particularly in states such as California, where an estimated 4,000 or more children and their kin families could lose benefits as a result. That act also restated the eligibility restrictions tying kids in foster care to the 1996 AFDC requirements.

To explain the need for such cuts, our country's current leadership likes to point out the role a civil society must play in assuming some of the responsibilities for caring for our most vulnerable citizens. This line of thinking contemplates a more limited role for government and more active grassroots, volunteer systems of support for our children who have been abused and neglected, and for their families who are facing incredible stresses in their lives.

The belief is that these volunteers will rise up and take care of the abused and neglected, the homeless, the hungry, the unemployed, the uninsured, and the unattended children during afterschool and evening hours, that somehow this civil society will succeed where it failed 100 years ago—a failure that led to the White House Conference on Children in 1912, CWLA's establishment in 1920, and the creation of the federal safety net designed to ensure the level of safety and protection an abused or neglected child receives is not a byproduct of the happenstance of a child's birth state.

Throughout the 20th Century, lawmakers and children's advocates toiled long and hard to create a federal system of supports for abused and neglected children. Gradually, we moved away from a time when orphaned and abandoned children were housed in infirmaries and poorhouses alongside the aged, infirm, and insane. Duncan Lindsey, in his book *The Welfare of Children,* describes how, before the great strides made in the 1900s, orphaned and abandoned children were viewed from a "residual perspective":

> *Without family or resources, abandoned or orphaned children constituted the social "leftovers" (or residual children) who had fallen beyond the economic and social pale. That this may have happened through no fault of their own was of no consequence. They were to be provided for, if at all, as inexpensively and conveniently as possible, enough to satisfy the social conscience but no more. At best, child welfare services were viewed as a grudging handout.*

Are we slowly returning to a similar perspective? Is our federal government stepping too far back from its moral and financial responsibility?

Yes, philanthropic and volunteer endeavors can do wonderful things for children in care, such as providing the extras they so often go without—the school outings, the summer camp experience, the college scholarship, or the tuxedo rental for prom. And we have many wealthy individuals in this country who want to help. Andre Agassi, Tiger Woods, and other celebrities have done outstanding work on behalf of needy children and youth. Many celebrities, including Ashton Kutcher, Demi Moore, and Nick Lachey, helped CWLA raise money during a charity auction last fall for children affected by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita.

But philanthropy is not a comprehensive means of caring for children who have multiple needs, including shelter, clothing, medical care, education, and full developmental opportunities. Although our celebrity auction raised thousands of dollars for CWLA's Katrina Kids fund, our article "After the Storm" in this issue clearly shows how donations from hundreds of organizations and celebrities to post-Katrina recovery efforts have only made a dent in the needs along the Gulf Coast. So many neighborhoods and families remain devastated that full recovery will only happen with massive, ongoing federal support.

In July, therefore, CWLA will stand on the steps of the U.S. Capitol, as we have done since 1920, and urge continued attention to the plight of children who lack safe and stable homes. We will emphasize the importance of a balanced support system that includes federal, state, local, and charitable resources, and we will ask our country's leaders to set a course that moves forward and never repeats the mistakes of the past.

Shay Bilchik

CALL FOR NOMINATIONS

Serena Merck Memorial Awards

The John Merck Fund, in association with the National Association for the Dually Diagnosed, will be honoring two individuals, each with a $5,000 cash award and plaque. These awards will be presented at the NADD 23rd Annual Conference to be held in San Diego, CA, in October 2006. The selected candidates' travel expenses to the conference will also be covered.

The John Merck Fund has established these two major, national awards to honor Serena Merck's long-standing commitment to this field, and to call attention to the invaluable role individuals play in it.

I. The Serena Merck Direct Service Memorial Award for Innovation and Dedication in Practice

Purpose: The Serena Merck Direct Service Memorial Award is given annually to an exceptional individual who has demonstrated long-term, selfless dedication and compassion in the care of or service to children who have developmental disabilities and significant mental health needs. Mrs. Merck recognized the critical importance of what quality day-to-day direct care provided by committed individuals can make to children with cognitive and behavioral disabilities.

Criteria for Selection:

- A paraprofessional or volunteer who provides direct care services for children who have mental retardation and mental health needs.
- An individual who has demonstrated long-standing commitment and innovative care that have positively affected the quality of life and/or life opportunities for individuals.
- An individual who, in his or her position, would not typically be recognized for the quality of his or her work.

II. The Serena Merck Leadership Memorial Award

Purpose: The Serena Merck Leadership Memorial Award is given annually to a person whose proven leadership and guidance have resulted in the significant improvement of quality of life for persons with developmental disabilities and mental health needs. This prestigious award, which was established in 2005, recognizes and honors an individual who has demonstrated outstanding service in the field of dual diagnosis.

Criteria for Selection:

- A professional who has demonstrated outstanding leadership in the provision of services to individuals who have mental retardation and mental health needs.
- An individual whose contributions have been recognized at the city, county, or state level.

Submission Guidelines for both awards: Organizational entities or individuals may nominate more than one prospective awardee. No self nominations are acceptable. An individual may not be nominated for both awards at the same time.

Please indicate which award the individual is nominated for and include a 300-word summary of the reason the candidate is nominated, length of service in the field, and a description of the person's impact on individuals with mental retardation and mental health needs. Two to three accompanying letters of reference from individuals qualified to evaluate the candidate's suitability for the award, as well as contact information for the nominee, should also be provided.

Nominations should be postmarked by SEPTEMBER 1, 2006, and mailed to:
Mr. Frank Hatch, Chairman, The John Merck Fund, 47 Winter Street, 7th Floor, Boston, MA 02108

It Takes an Intergenerational Village to Raise Kids in Care

PHOTO COURTESY OF CHILDREN'S VILLAGE

The new Children's Village in Santa Rosa, California, will include six grandparent units.

Lia Rowley occasionally meets child care professionals who tell her that mixing abused and neglected kids with senior citizens is a daunting idea. "Nonsense," says Rowley. "It's a no-brainer." Either way, this 60-something grandmother of 10, and her equally enthusiastic board, is moving ahead with creating an intergenerational Children's Village in Sonoma County, California.

Rowley, a child advocate with more than 30 years experience working with people at risk, has long been aware that kids, especially those from abusive backgrounds, have had little experience with the type of unconditional love grandparents can provide. "Having older people living in their own apartments, right on the village property, will add a touch of hominess to the atmosphere," Rowley says. "I'm betting that the presence of elders will do more to deinstitutionalize the village than anything else we could do."

Children's Village, now taking shape on two acres of land in Santa Rosa, will not be an institution. The village will include eight family homes for up to six kids each, a village center, a basketball court, and gardens. Every home will have live-in parents, in addition to six grandparent units onsite. What caring elders will bring to the table is their gift of time. As fellow residents and neighbors, they will be free to provide one-on-one time to children hungry for personal attention.

Rowley's professional experience with foster kids has made her acutely aware of the issues faced by hard-to-place kids being shuttled from one placement to another, never quite feeling at home. She wants the village to be different from just another short-term placement for foster kids. "We want the village to be a place for kids to call home for as long as they need it, or until they are ready to make it on their own."

The Board of Directors of Children's Village, like Rowley, is jazzed that the idea of mixing elders with kids has captured the local community's imagination. There's a sizeable senior presence in the heart of California's wine country, ready and willing to volunteer. "All we had to do was float the concept of mixing the generations," Rowley explains, "and this community, young and old, embraced it with enthusiasm."

Grandparents who live onsite will not receive a salary. They will be volunteers who, in return for a discount on the cost of their rental units, will commit to volunteering with the kids in a variety of ways, 10–12 hours per week. "They will be there to play and read and listen to the kids," Rowely says. "Life's about relationships. The elders will have the time to be there for the kids and for the village parents too. With their life experience and wisdom, we see them as a tremendous asset to the village."

Rowley realizes that living in a village with 48 kids is not for all seniors. "I would venture to say there are retired folks out there for whom living in a village full of needy children would be like a day in hell," she laughs. But "there are a surprising number of elders who really enjoy being with kids. These are the ones already asking to be considered as onsite volunteers for Children's Village. These are the elders who love the energy and enthusiasm of children—older people who are open to learning from youth as well as being role models for them."

Although they are volunteers, the elders will be treated and considered as staff, including attending staff meetings. "Everyone has to be on the same page," Rowley explains.

At the same time, because the elders will not be punching a time clock, their duties will be flexible. "I see them free to wander around the village, getting to know the kids, spending time with them, throwing a ball around, or maybe reading stories to the younger ones. They need to be free to do what grandparents do with their own grandkids."

Asked about what will happen when the otherwise vigorous elders are no longer able to be as active with the kids, Rowley replied, "What happens in life? What happens in a family? There may come a time when the children are helping to take care of grandma or grandpa. That's the cycle of life. That's community."

In addition to including senior citizens as an integral part of the village community, Rowley and her board are also committed to keeping sibling groups together. Kids placed in foster care homes are often separated from their brothers and sisters—nationally, about 75% of sibling groups end up in different foster care placements. "We will make every effort to see that brothers and sisters stay together at Children's Village," Rowley promises. "We want them to see our village as their family, their home."

The first stage of Children's Village, with four family homes for the children and three apartments for seniors, is slated to open this summer. Funding for the construction has come from the community's generosity. The public agencies already providing support for the county's foster children will pick up ongoing operating costs.

Children's Village is not the first intergenerational facility for abused and neglected kids. Hope Meadows in Rantoul, Illinois, operates a similar program using the services of "honorary grandparents" who also live onsite. Time will tell if the village in California wine country will become more than a daring experiment.

—Submitted by Hank Mattimore, Santa Rosa, California. He is a court-appointed special advocate for children and a member of the Sonoma County Juvenile Justice Commission.

A Little Tutoring Goes a Long Way

PHOTO COURTESY OF LORAIN COUNTY CHILDREN SERVICES

Lorain County's School Success Program connected student Ashley Harrell (right) with tutor Regina Constantino.

The staff at Lorain County Children Services could see it coming. The abused and neglected children in their custody tended to score 15%–20% lower on Ohio's school proficiency tests than did peers who lived with their families; at that rate, they faced greater odds of eventually dropping out of school.

The staff decided a little one-on-one academic help just might make a difference. In 2001, the agency hired three tutors to help five children with their schoolwork for a couple hours each week after school. The children's academic improvement was noticeable, and the idea caught on as more social workers began requesting tutors for children in their care. Five years later, Lorain County Children Services' School Success Program funds about 60 tutors to help more than 150 children with their schoolwork.

Tutors work with the children in their homes, including foster homes, relatives' homes, or birthparents' homes, for as little as one hour or as much as eight hours weekly. Lorain County Children Services, or the child's caregiver, works with the local schools to obtain a child's school academic records so tutors can map out an academic plan.

In addition to the tutoring, some children receive loaned computers loaded with academic software. If a child's case with Lorain County Children Services is closed, including if they are adopted, the agency will continue providing tutoring help for the child if the child still needs it.

"It's been pretty amazing to see the kinds of things it's done for our kids," says School Success Program Supervisor Lea Arcuri. "It doesn't take a lot to make a huge difference."

An evaluation of the School Success Program, conducted by a professor at Case Western Reserve University, has found the mean grade point average of the young participants has increased gradually since the program's inception—from 1.7 in 2001 to 2.565 in 2005.

"It's that one-on-one relationship that has made them successful in school," Arcuri says. "It's worked for every group of kids."

In surveys about the School Success Program, 90% of the social workers, school administrators, and teachers reported positive growth in children's abilities in school and their confidence and attitudes toward school and schoolwork. More than 90% reported positive impacts from the program on teacher attitudes toward their students. And 90% of the caregivers surveyed said the program had improved results in behavior and attitudes about school for the children in their care.

Last spring, the Ohio Association of Supervision and Curriculum Development awarded the School Success Program its 2006 Civic Leadership in Education Award.

National
NEWS ROUNDUP

DELAWARE

With Delaware having the seventh-worst rate in the nation for the number of babies who die before their first birthday, *The News Journal,* in Wilmington, conducted an analysis of state birth statistics from 1992 through 2003, the latest figures available. Among the results:

- Pregnant women who didn't receive health care were eight times more likely to lose their babies.
- Greater numbers of older, suburban women are giving birth to smaller babies with more medical problems than those born to younger women.
- The state's poorest communities accounted for 26% of state births and 34% of infant deaths.
- Black women went without health care or delayed health care more often than did white women.
- Black women are almost three times more likely than white women to give birth to low birthweight babies, and they lose their babies at twice the rate of white women.

In the early 1990s, Delaware lawmakers funded home visitation, managed care, and the opening of health centers in 17 of the state's 29 high schools as a way to battle the state's infant death rate, which had sunk to the worst in the nation in 1991, according to *The News Journal.* The infant death rate improved to just under 7 deaths in 1,000 in 1994, but the rate began to creep back up in the late 1990s after the state began cutting the programs that had helped the rate to drop.

In 2004, Governor Ruth Ann Minner (D) directed a state task force to investigate why so many babies were dying before their first birthday. "We don't know the answer to the question why Delaware's rate is so high," task force Cochair Al Snyder told *The News Journal.* "We know there are multiple causes."

ILLINOIS

The Chicago Public Schools and the Greater Chicago Food Depository have partnered to create Nourish for Knowledge, a program that sends kids home from school for the weekend with bags of food, the *Chicago Tribune* reports.

Active in 16 city schools in low-income neighborhoods, the program sends bags filled with granola bars, nuts, fruit bars, and nonperishable milk home with about 2,460 Chicago schoolchildren each week. The program is patterned after similar efforts in cities nationwide, including Kansas City, New Haven, and Tucson.

"There are so many kids whose parents just don't have the means to provide enough nutrition for the kids and, unfortunately, there is a population of kids who just miss meals," Food Depository Executive Director Mike Mulqueen told the *Tribune.*

Last summer, Chicago's school district started a new summer program to provide meals for children at more than 400 schools in low-income neighborhoods, regardless of whether they were enrolled in school. The program unearthed great demand, serving about 1.2 million meals through the summer.

"It's a recognition on the part of food banks and schools that many families right now are having trouble making ends meet in terms of their food budget," Lynn Parker, Director of child-nutrition programs at the Food Research and Action Center in Washington, DC, told the *Tribune.* "During the weekend, they know that when school meals aren't available, the children and their families are struggling financially and need the extra help."

Nourish for Knowledge is funded by the Food Depository and the McCormick Tribune Foundation's Communities Program Funds, including the *Chicago Tribune* Charities, Bears Care, and Cubs Care.

KANSAS

A recent federal ruling has found that Kansas is out of compliance with its own Medicaid plan. The state-written plan restricts stays in group homes to between 140 and 180 days, depending on the level of services provided, yet Kansas has continued to pay providers for longer stays, according to the *Lawrence Journal-World.*

"This has been going on for years—10 years, maybe. It's never been questioned," Bruce Linhos, Executive Director at Children's Alliance of Kansas, told the *Lawrence Journal-World.*

Federal officials with the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services ruled last December that payments for longer stays were improper. According to state officials, the crackdown does not mean children have to be moved, but that the state can no longer bill Medicaid for their stays. Without federal funds, the state will have to cover all of the costs, rather than the usual 40%. Across the state, group homes receive $121.50 per day for each child in their care, the *Journal-World* reports.

"Bad, risky decisions are being made with the lives of some very vulnerable children—and for no good reason other than a conflict between bureaucracies," said Bill Craig in the *Journal-World.* Craig is President and CEO at Lakemary Center, a school and residential center for children with severe mental disabilities.

Local legislators are aware of the Medicaid ruling and are trying to address it. State Representative Brenda Landwehr, a Republican from Wichita, told the *Journal-World* that efforts were under way in the legislature to come up with about $750,000 to pay for group home stays through June 30, 2006, the end of the state's fiscal year.

MICHIGAN

Background checks conducted earlier this year on about 200,000 current Michigan school employees revealed that some 2,500 employees had been convicted of crimes, including sexual assault, homicide, and kidnapping, according to *The Detroit News.*

More than 100 employees had been convicted of sex crimes, which is immediate grounds for termination under tougher new school safety laws—known as the Student Safety Initiative—enacted last year. The initiative requires criminal background checks on all school employees, including janitors, cafeteria workers, coaches, and paraprofessionals. Before the initiative, only new teachers, administrators, guidance counselors, nurses, social workers, school psychologists, and bus drivers were required to undergo background checks.

Michigan House Speaker Craig DeRoche (R), who promoted the new laws, told *The Detroit News* he was surprised by the results of the checks and hoped it would result in greater acceptance by teachers of the background checks. "You can't educate children if you can't provide a safe environment," DeRoche said.

The background checks, performed by state police who cross-checked their database of known criminals with the Department of Education's school employee database, found 23 school employees had been convicted of homicide, 11 of child abuse, 10 of escaping jail or prison, 355 of drug felonies, and 21 of armed robbery. Under the new safety laws, it will be left up to each schools district's discretion whether to terminate these employees.

NEW JERSEY

The New Jersey Child Care Economic Impact Council, made up of day care providers, advocates, and business and community leaders, has conducted an analysis of the industry to call attention to its contributions and needs, according to *The Star-Ledger.*

Public preschools and the child care industry pumped $2.55 billion into the state's economy in 2005, and child care centers, preschools, and afterschool programs have created 65,300 full-time jobs, more than any other industry in New Jersey, including transportation, warehousing, and telecommunications.

"Many people felt the child care community was more like babysitting services and not really an industry," Council Cochair Ana Berdecia told *The Star-Ledger.* "It needs to be paid attention to by policymakers throughout the state."

With the average child care worker earning only $16,900 in 2000, the study points out that families and employers would be better serviced by the industry if administrators, teachers, and providers were better paid, and if more quality infant and toddler programs were created.

The study goes on to recommend that government and private industry work together to create an agency that could establish quality standards, provide training for people working in the field, and identify ways to make services more accessible and affordable to working parents.

"The child care industry still faces a number of challenges in meeting the needs of families, children, and employers in the state," the report says. "If New Jersey addresses these challenges, it can increase the bottom line returns for New Jersey employers and public returns on government investments."

The industry also needs political will and attention, Cecilia Zalkind, Executive Director of the Association for Children in New Jersey, told *The Star-Ledger.* "We need an entity—an office of early learning in the governor's policy office—that says this is a priority issue."

The study was paid for by the John S. Watson Institute of Public Policy at Thomas Edison State College, the state Department of Human Services, the Hispanic Directors Association of New Jersey, and Children's Futures, a private-public program benefiting preschool-age children in Trenton.

OREGON

Oregon Governor Ted Kulongoski (D) signed an executive order last winter authorizing a form of collective bargaining for 6,000 state-listed child care workers who watch as many as three children, the *Statesman Journal* reports.

Service Employees International Union Local 503 (SEUI), Oregon's largest state workers union, spent 18 months persuading 56% of child care workers to sign cards authorizing the union to represent them. The union will now seek to negotiate better terms for child care workers and the families they serve.

"The circumstances they face are so dire that most of the providers leaped at the chance to join a union," the Local 503 Executive Director Leslie Frane told the *Statesman Journal.*

SEUI's success follows the unionization of 4,500 state-licensed child care workers under the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees Council 75 last September due to a similar executive order by Kulongoski.

"I'm hoping with all the unions out there that they will support us and fight for the best for these kids," day care provider DeAnna Zuill told the *Statesman Journal.*

Slavery Undercover

By John Celock

Photographs courtesy of Sandy Shepherd

An estimated 14,500–17,500 people are trafficked into the United States every year. About half are believed to be children.

Growing up without running water and electricity, only eating one meal a day in a poor rural village in Zambia, young Given Kachepa imagined the United States as a place with no crime, happy families, and wealth—a life the orphaned 11-year-old saw on television's *Cosby Show.*

He was anticipating a future of earning a dollar a day, if he could find a job, and dreading coming into contact with the rampant tuberculosis and HIV epidemics, when he was approached by a Texas church group about auditioning for a choir and the chance to come to the United States. He was thrilled. This would be his chance to live life like the Huxtable family.

With the promise of two years in the United States, including the chance at an education, a salary, money for his brothers and sisters, and the ability to raise money to build schools in Zambia, Kachepa saw the perfect opportunity. With only two years of singing experience, and facing rules barring three relatives from being in the choir at the same time—he had two cousins also auditioning— he was worried about losing his chance to come to the United States. When he was picked for the choir, he thought his life would change for the better.

"I could envision nothing bad happening," he says. "Our parents trusted America as the land of the free. If I had stayed, my life would have been a fight. I would have finished [school] through the seventh grade. I would not have a place to stay—I had been sleeping in a church. I would not know where I would get money for food."

Once he arrived in the United States, Kachepa discovered he would not be living a perfect life. His dreams of living a life of prosperity, with a close-knit family in a brownstone in Brooklyn, instead turned into a life of little sleep, no money, close scrutiny, daily threats, and the fear of returning to Zambia in disgrace. Kachepa had become a victim of human trafficking.

21st Century Slaves

The U.S. government estimates some 14,500–17,500 people are trafficked into the United States—about half of them children—and 800,000 are trafficked worldwide, each year. A study released this year by the U.S. Department of Justice pinpoints the East Asia/Pacific region as the largest source of individuals who are trafficked into the United States.

According to a breakdown provided by Free the Slaves, a nonprofit advocacy group, 46% of victims are forced to work in prostitution, 27% go into domestic servitude, 10% work in agriculture, 5% in factories, and the remaining 12% in miscellaneous categories, including food service and consumer goods.

"Trafficking is a hidden phenomenon," says Martha Newton, Director of the Office of Refugee Resettlement in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. "It can be forced labor in a Chinese buffet restaurant or a strip mall in your neighborhood. It is not your stereotype of sex labor."

The Victims of Trafficking Protection Act, enacted in 2000, is the federal government's main enforcement mechanism on human trafficking. In addition to making human trafficking illegal, the law provides for increased federal law enforcement tools; allows for increased social services for victims of human trafficking, including creating a designation of certified human trafficking victims; and created the Human Smuggling and Trafficking Center in the U.S. State Department to monitor and enforce human trafficking laws.

Newton's office administers the certification process. Once victims become certified—a process she says allows victims to be treated as victims—they are eligible for mental health assistance, medical benefits, housing assistance, and job training and placement. Part of the certification process includes having victims cooperate with criminal justice proceedings against their captors. Since the law was passed, 969 people, including 97 children, have become certified human trafficking victims.

Child victims of human trafficking have an easier time getting certified. They can be certified with a simple letter from the Office of Refugee Resettlement and are not required to participate in court proceedings. Children receive increased mental health assistance and are placed in appropriate housing, not in detention centers. In addition, Newton's office works to reunite children with their parents or other family members whenever possible.

Congress has continued to monitor the enforcement of federal human trafficking laws. In March, a subcommittee of the House Homeland Security Committee held a hearing to assess the work of the Human Smuggling and Trafficking Center. The hearing focused on what the center is doing to fulfill its mission under federal law.

"The conditions that give rise to human and sex trafficking and human smuggling, as well as the modes, methods, and means of transportation, are often similar," said Representative Katherine Harris (R-FL) in opening the hearing, which she requested and led. "The absence of moral conscience and the willingness to engage in unspeakable acts of brutality is evident in terrorists and traffickers alike."

Harris has introduced legislation that would force those who are convicted of promoting sex crimes by children who are trafficked to comply with federal sex offender registry requirements. Her legislation also calls for the criminal forfeiture of property owned by those convicted of human trafficking.

Touring the United States as a member of a Zambian boys choir, Given Kachepa (at right and above, back row, far right), learned first-hand about human trafficking and today speaks publicly about his experience.

An Issue for the States

Although programs and laws exist at the federal level, Jolene Smith, Executive Director of Free the Slaves, says the states should become a part of the solution also by passing laws at their level. State laws, she says, would allow local law enforcement officials to handle human trafficking cases they encounter and to address the needs of their individual states. Currently, 13 states have laws making human trafficking illegal.

New York State Assemblyman Jeffrey Dinowitz (D) is pressing for a law in the Empire State to declare human trafficking a crime. His bill would establish the necessary law enforcement measures on trafficking and provide a social services safety net for victims, including money for victims to live on after being identified by law enforcement and while their visa cases are pending before the federal government. The bill would provide housing assistance so victims wouldn't have to live in jail cells, along with any additional assistance victims of sex crimes may need. Another provision would allow for state assistance with the mountain of federal paperwork victims are required to complete to become certified human trafficking victims.

The New York State Senate has passed Dinowitz's bill, and action was pending in the State Assembly at press time. Most of the Assembly's 150 members are cosponsoring the bill, and Dinowitz predicted passage and the signature of Governor George Pataki (R) this year. "People understand this bill deals with ending slavery in the 21st Century."

New Jersey passed legislation last year to make human trafficking illegal, and the legislature is now considering mandatory minimum sentences for those convicted of human trafficking, along with making those who have promoted sex trafficking to register as sex offenders.

"While I am generally against mandatory minimums, human trafficking and intentional acts to harm children are areas where I make an exception to that," says New Jersey State Assemblyman Jon Bramnick, who is supporting these efforts in the Garden State. "When you don't have mandatory minimums, you have exceptions that a judge can grant in sentencing, where such exceptions should not be the case."

Outreach at the Local Level

A key aspect of enforcement against human trafficking is reaching out to local law enforcement officials to educate them on how to find human trafficking victims. Smith, of Free the Slaves, points out it is important that local law enforcement know what human trafficking is and how to stop it.

In addition to law enforcement, Smith says her group is educating social workers, educators, grassroots organizations, and private citizens to be able to identify the signs of human trafficking. Smith notes that increased focus on the issue, including a recent program on the Lifetime Network and a plotline on television's *Desperate Housewives,* has helped increase awareness with the general public.

Newton says the Office of Refugee Resettlement has also been working closely to educate local officials to identify human trafficking, and has reached out to unconventional parties to supplement the work of law enforcement. "The meter reader and postman are good people to find victims," she says, noting these individuals come close to private residences daily.

Kachepa's efforts to raise awareness about human trafficking have been recognized by the Hitachi Foundation (above, with guardian Sandy Shepherd) and *Teen People Magazine.*

A Victim Finds His Voice

During Kachepa's 18 months with the Texas church group, he says he was forced to spend many weeks touring, singing in malls, schools, and churches. This included traveling in a crowded van, doing his own laundry, setting up and dismantling equipment, and surviving on little sleep. Kachepa did not attend school, and no money was sent back to Zambia for his family or to build a school.

Today, Kachepa is a student at Stephen F. Austin State University and wants to become a dentist.

The host families he stayed with while on the road did not find out about his plight because he was too scared to tell them what was happening. Any gifts or money he was offered he had to reject. Anything that ended up in Kachepa's luggage he alleges was taken from him and never returned by the minister who was running the church program. Kachepa says he was threatened with being deported back to Zambia if he did not comply with the rules set by the church program, which at one point included hand digging a swimming pool under the hot Texas sun.

"The threats were the biggest thing," Kachepa says explaining why he and others went along with how they were treated. "In returning you back home, they would tell your family you did not respect them. Respect is a big thing in Zambia. When our families would find out that you were the one sent back home, you would not be welcome back in your community. Your family would be embarrassed by you."

In 2000, when leaders from the church program called the local police to start deportation procedures against two choir members, Kachepa began to see the end of his ordeal. Local police heard the story of the boys' being sent away by church leaders and started to investigate, including notifying the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS). INS and the Department of Labor insisted that the boys be paid and sent to school. Program leaders eventually paid the boys but then started charging them for food, clothing, and rent, which cost the boys most of their pay. After conditions worsened, the boys called INS and asked to be removed from the ministry.

Kachepa was taken to a local Baptist church, where he was introduced to church member Sandy Shepherd, who is now his legal guardian. Kachepa, now 19, is a biology student at Stephen F. Austin State University, in East Texas, where his goal is to become a dentist.

He has also become an advocate for increased awareness of human trafficking, testifying before the Texas state legislature for passage of a human trafficking law and speaking around the country. *Teen People Magazine* honored him for being a teen trying to change the world.

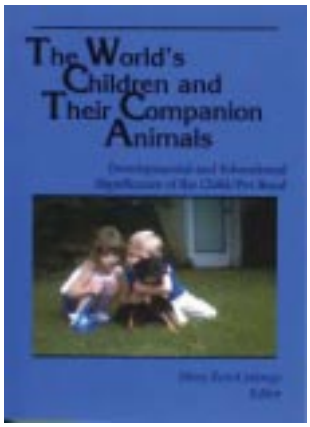
"When I was in Zambia and they told us we could come here for two years, I wanted to stay for good," says Kachepa, who supports his family in Zambia financially and plans to return one day to help. "Now I have the opportunity to stay for life, to make friends, drive, and have parents. God put me through that life to see what type of person I was."

John Celock is a freelance writer in New Jersey.

For information about or to report suspected cases of human trafficking, call the Trafficking Information and Referral Hotline at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (toll free), 888/373-7888.

The World's Children and Their Companion Animals: Developmental and Educational Significance of the Child/Pet Bond

Mary Renck Jalongo, Editor



Internationally renowned physician Albert Schweitzer once said, "We need a boundless ethic which will include the animals also." It is just such an ethic, an ethic of compassion and generosity, that holds the greatest promise for more responsive parenting, more compassionate teaching, and a more tolerant and just society.

Foreword: Stars in a Child's Universe by Michael J. Rosen
Introduction: The Special Significance of Companion Animals in Children's Lives by Mary Renck Jalongo with Marsha R. Robbins and Reade Paterno
Part One: Children, Families, and Companion Animals
* Bonding With and Caring for Pets: Companion Animals and Child Development
* Companion Animals in the Lives of Boys and Girls: Gendered Attitudes, Practices, and Preferences
* Companion Animals at Home: What Children Learn From Families
Part Two: Companion Animals in Schools and Communities
* A Friend at School: Classroom Pets and Companion Animals in the Curriculum
* Animals That Heal: Animal-Assisted Therapy With Children
* Global Companion Animals: Bonding With and Caring for Animals Across Cultures and Countries
* Portraying Pets: The Significance of Children's Writings and Drawings About Companion Animals
Part Three: Companion Animals in Print and in the Media
* Companion Animals in Books: Themes in Children's Literature
* Companion Animals and Technology: Using the Internet, Software, and Electronic Toys To Learn About Pets
Afterword by Mary Renck Jalongo

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Making the Most of Homework

By Sheldon H. Horowitz

I need more 3-hole loose-leaf paper and a new binder and some pencils and index cards and a glue stick and…and…and… because I have to do my homework.
—First grader, feeling proud and grown up about being assigned homework

This is sooooo boring! Why do I have to do so many examples when I know how to solve this kind of problem?
—Middle school student with a serious case of skateboardingitis

This is going to take me forever to do. I know the teacher said this stuff will be on the test, but if I do it all I'll never have time to hang out with my friends.
—High school student

Sound familiar? I think most every adult can think back to a time during their own school years when homework was a force to be reckoned with and when questions about the value of homework loomed large. So let's take a step back and consider the following questions:

- What does the research tell us about homework at different times in a student's education?
- What should parents and educators do to ensure homework is a positive, productive ingredient in a child's school experience?

In Search of a Definition

Look for a definition of *homework,* and you're likely to find descriptions that include

- tasks assigned by a teacher that are meant to be done outside of school (such as at home or in an afterschool program), and
- work that is planned or approved by the teacher and that is supposed to be completed by the student (sometimes without help from peers or adults).

And although there is no single rationale for assigning homework, some common reasons include

- practicing and reviewing new skills learned in school;
- reinforcing learned skills so they are not forgotten;
- increasing knowledge by discovering new information and connecting it to classroom learning;
- preparing for upcoming classroom instruction;
- developing important skills needed to successfully research a topic and report findings;
- developing self-motivation, self-discipline, responsibility, and independence; and
- becoming adept at organizing, condensing, and sharing information (often in writing).

Interestingly, when I did a cursory search for definitions online, very few sources mentioned anything about parents! Now think for a moment about the conversation that takes place in virtually every household sometime in the mid-to-late afternoon:

- "How was school?"
- "How did you do on your test?" and (you guessed it)
- "What do you have for homework?"

Parents clearly play a very important role in the homework process.

The Research Says…

As might be expected, there is no definitive body of knowledge about the benefits of homework, how much is enough or too much, how frequently it should be assigned, and for which students and in what subject areas it is most helpful. There is, however, substantial literature to suggest that homework serves a number of different purposes:

- **Practice.** Rehearse and relearn skills and information taught in class.
- **Preparation.** Introduce material that will be formally taught in future lessons.
- **Extension.** Apply learned skills to new problems and situations.

- **Integration.** Use many different skills to complete a single task (a book report or science project, for example).

The Homework Debate

Here are some of the pluses and pitfalls to homework, derived from current research:

Pluses

- There is, over time, a powerful positive link between homework and academic achievement.
- Homework is an effective tool for teaching students to work independently.
- Well-designed homework encourages good study habits (and modeling "how to" by teachers and parents is often a great help).
- Homework can effectively prepare students to identify and use resources such as the library, the Internet, research texts, and other informational sources.
- Homework can strengthen school-home communication.
- Doing homework is a highly cost-effective way to have students revisit, remember, and understand material taught in school and prepare for the next day's lesson.
- Doing homework can help students see that learning can and should take place outside the classroom.
- Engaging in homework can help students learn and practice organization and time-management skills.

Pitfalls

- Homework has been shown to provide different benefits at different stages in school, and a mismatch in assigned homework and student readiness can result in frustration and a student's reluctance to keep trying.
- Most homework should not be graded, nor should it be viewed as a test; doing so discourages students to reflect on their work and evaluate their understanding of material taught in class.
- It's unfair to use homework as a way for students to teach themselves new skills.
- Despite the temptation, homework should not be assigned as a punishment.
- Assigning too much homework may result in disinterest and fatigue; students overburdened with homework will also begin to view their assignments as punitive, and they will do what they can to avoid doing it (and, yes, even cheat to get it done).

Some Guidelines

It should be clear by this point that homework can be an effective way for students to improve their learning and for parents and educators to work cooperatively in support of a student's progress. Here are some informal homework guidelines for students throughout the grades.

Kindergarten–Grade 2

- Homework is most effective when it does not exceed 20–30 minutes per day.
- The benefits of homework may not be immediately apparent; it does, however, set the right tone for students to reflect on their school day and begin to develop good study habits.

Grades 3–6

- Students can benefit from 30–60 minutes of homework per day.
- Ideally, homework should focus on providing opportunities for practicing newly learned skills and applying concepts in a way that helps parents and teachers isolate problems and provide individualized instruction and support.

Grades 7–12

- There is no recommended timeframe for homework, and it's not unusual for students to spend as long as two hours or more per day on afterschool assignments.
- The focus of assignments should be on building on skills, taking ownership of new ideas, and helping students incorporate new information into their repertoire of general knowledge.

Recommendations for Parents and Teachers

The effectiveness of different types of homework will vary according to a student's age and ability, and more time spent on homework doesn't necessarily lead to higher achievement. That said, here are some recommended practices that can help make homework more productive (and maybe even fun) for students, parents, and educators.

Be consistent. Try to determine your child's regular pattern of homework so it can be easily incorporated into a daily routine. Offer assistance without being intrusive. Remember whose work it is, and allow your child the opportunity to take charge.

Define expectations. Teachers need to let students know if and when homework will be assigned, collected, reviewed, or graded, and how they expect parents to support the completion of homework assignments. Parents need to know, in advance, if and when signatures are required, and they need easy, ongoing access to teachers when questions and problems arise.

And everyone needs to know the rules! Some teachers are pleased when parents provide assistance and even welcome their reteaching skills or working through problems with their children. Other teachers want homework to be a 100% student effort and prefer that students submit incomplete assignments and ask for help in school as a way to keep track of student progress.

Avoid busy work. There's nothing worse than asking a child to complete 50 math problem when 10 will do the trick.

Recommended Reading

This article was adapted from *Homework: For Better or Worse,* which can be found, along with other Research Roundup features, at www.ld.org/newsltr/index.cfm. Read this article online for more information on this topic and for a list of web resources, tips for families and educators, and more.

Parents and teachers should be vigilant to ensure that assignments are interesting, challenging, and varied in format.

Keep an eye on the clock. More is not better when it comes to homework. Be sure to spread the burden of homework over time, and be sensitive to the setup and cleanup time students often need to complete their work. Remember also that homework is likely to be assigned in a number of classes, so efforts to coordinate a calendar of demands would be very helpful. Parents can be very helpful by assisting their child to anticipate scheduling challenges (many assignments due at once, juggling extracurricular activities) and identifying the resources and possible accommodations necessary to complete assignments.

Guarantee success. Homework should be designed so students can compete most if not all of the tasks successfully. In every instance, student effort should be acknowledged, even when they struggle and make mistakes.

Provide feedback. Students will quickly perceive homework without feedback as meaningless and unnecessary. Explicit, well-targeted feedback has been shown to improve overall student performance.

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After the Storm

In August 2005, Rachelle Daniels was well on her way to permanently making 13-year-old Katie and 2-year-old Nephi part of her family. Having come from a big family, she had long desired children, but, being single, she was the only one of her five brothers and sisters without kids.

When she began foster parenting, Daniels brought two children into her Gulfport, Mississippi, home, but the placements didn't work out. Then siblings Katie and Nephi arrived, and something clicked. Daniels had wanted to care for a sibling group, and Katie and Nephi fit that mold. They also represented other family characteristics Daniels desired—a boy and a girl, an older child and a toddler.

Both children came to Daniels abused and neglected—Nephi (pronounced NEF-eye) was nearly beaten to death at 4 weeks old, and Katie is "environmentally mentally retarded," Daniels says. But working through a number of different therapists, Daniels began to notice both children progress mentally and physically.

Katie and Nephi lived with Daniels for a year and a half before the state terminated their birthmother's parental rights in August 2005. Within days, Daniels completed the paperwork to adopt Katie and Nephi and was working to find an attorney to move adoption proceedings forward when, she says, "the hurricane took over."

Hurricane Katrina blasted through the Gulf Coast on August 29, forever changing the landscape of Mississippi Gulf Coast towns, including Gulfport, and causing levies to overflow and devastate New Orleans.

Katrina blew the back porch off Daniels's home and ripped holes in her roof, but she and the children survived the storm and continued to live in the house with the help of a tarp and a generator, until Hurricane Rita blew through next, damaging the house beyond temporary repair.

Homeless and at risk of losing her foster children, life in the storm's aftermath was overwhelming at first for Daniels, but she has fought to rebuild her home and hang onto the life she started building with Katie and Nephi.

"I wanted to just bury my head in the sand, but when you have two kids looking at you, you have to be there for them," Daniels says. "You have to keep going."

Battered and Scattered

Before the 2005 hurricane season, children and families in Alabama, Louisiana, and Mississippi already faced greater odds of living in poverty than elsewhere in the country. According to the National Center for Children in Poverty, 21% of Alabama children, 23% of Louisiana children, and 24% of Mississippi children live in poor families, compared with 17% of children nationally.

Katrina and Rita made prospects that much more grim for these children and families to eventually emerge from poverty. The storms left an 80,000-square-mile debris field stretching from the Texas–Louisiana border to the Alabama–Florida border. Months after the storms, those working to pick up the debris continue to face housing and staffing shortages, as well as crippled health care, education, and child care services.

Child and family service providers have been no exception. They've witnessed, first hand, families' struggles to rebuild and relocate, and have scrambled to keep up with their needs. Making matters worse, many organizations and agencies helping families are struggling themselves to repair and staff damaged offices as evacuees begin to trickle home, if at all. And then there's the post-traumatic stress. No one has escaped it, including children, parents, social workers, therapists, and agency executives.

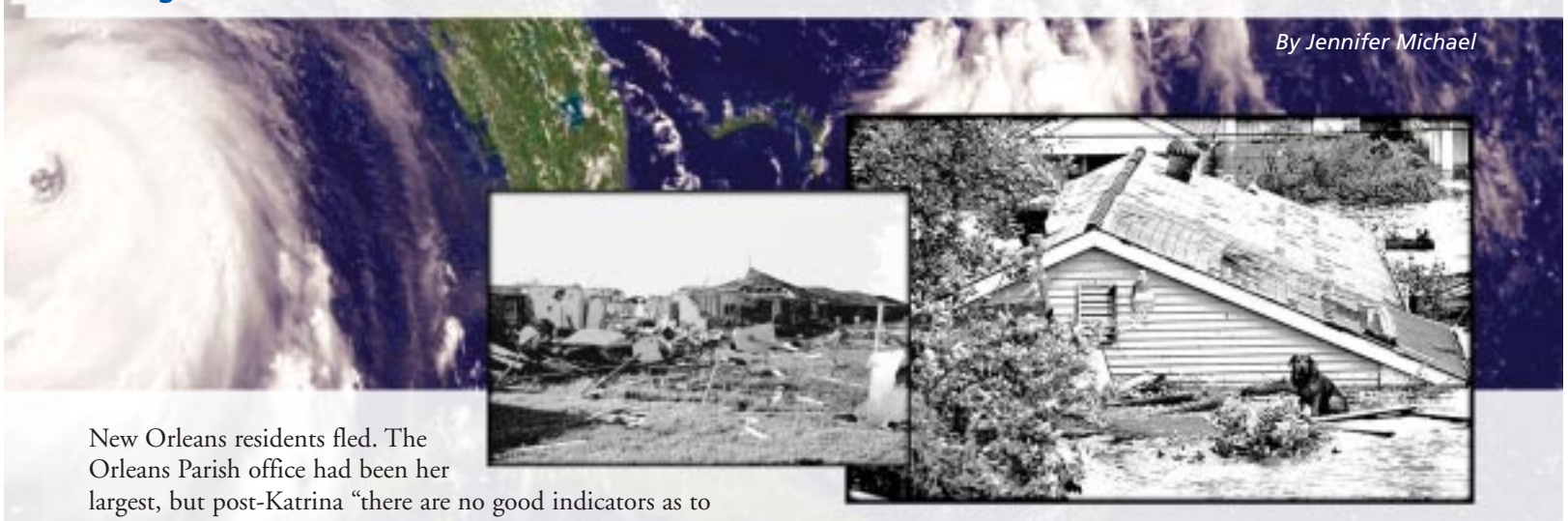
"It's an understatement to say that Hurricane Katrina created multiple hardships for our staff and service population," says Rickie Felder, Director of the Division of Family and Children Services, Mississippi Department of Human Services. "Mississippi lost offices, equipment, and paper case files. In addition, many of our own staff lost their homes."

Louisiana suffered the brunt of the hurricanes, incurring at least 75% of the housing damage from Katrina and Rita, according to Governor Kathleen Blanco (D). The storms stole 1,100 lives, displaced 780,000 people, closed 18,000 businesses, and left 240,000 people unemployed.

Marketa Gautreau, Assistant Secretary of Community Services for the Louisiana Department of Social Services, describes the "new" and "very convoluted" landscape she now works in. As

Recovery has been slow, and the needs great, for children and families along the Gulf Coast in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina.

By Jennifer Michael



Katrina bore down on Louisiana, 2,000 children in foster care evacuated. The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children helped locate all of them within weeks. Six months later, approximately 300 foster children remained out of state. Some birthparents were still missing.

Gautreau explains the daily questions tristate casework raise: "If a [Louisiana foster] family has decided to stay in Minnesota, we now have to decide whether this becomes a Minnesota case or whether we transfer this case to the Minnesota courts and take it off of our courts. But what if the birthparents are in Alabama and they are not ever going to move to Minnesota? Then should it be an Alabama case if the goal is reunification for the child?

"We've never had this before. Our parents have always pretty much been in-state and stayed in state. But because of the evacuation, people are scattered everywhere."

Gautreau says another major issue she faces is how to realign staff in New Orleans and in other areas of the state to where New Orleans residents fled. The Orleans Parish office had been her largest, but post-Katrina "there are no good indicators as to what New Orleans is going to look like. No one has a crystal ball. No one is able to project how many people will really come back to the city."

Meanwhile, she has consolidated staff from Orleans Parish and other damaged offices in the New Orleans area into the East Jefferson Parish office.

"Those who have returned to work are literally doubled, tripled, and quadrupled up and working out of a conference room," she says, "which is certainly not conducive to confidentiality and working with children in crisis."

In New Orleans, overall social and human services had returned to about 20% capacity six months after Katrina. One-third of the approximately 6,500 social workers in Louisiana, for example, lived and practiced in the affected areas, according to Carmen Weisner, Executive Director of the Louisiana chapter of the National Association of Social Workers (NASW).

Yet "there's nobody who's coming back who doesn't need social services," says Keith Liederman, Executive Director of Kingsley House, a private agency serving children and families in New Orleans.

Six months after Katrina, Kingsley House was serving about a one-third of its normal population of kids. But even with fewer children, their needs—particularly their mental health needs—have been magnified. Yet, only one full-time and one part-time counselor remained on staff, compared with the five counselors Kingsley House employed pre-Katrina.

"Everybody is focusing on adults' mental health issues, but the kids' issues are kind of getting swept under the table," Liederman says, noting that even some of the schools that had reopened in New Orleans were not offering counseling services.

Before Katrina, some 55,000 children attended more than 100 schools in Orleans Parish. In February, 20 Orleans Parish public schools had reopened, with a capacity of about 10,600 students. By Fall 2006, according to Orleans Parish school board member Torin Sanders, approximately 30–40 schools are expected to open in Orleans Parish—about 60% of them to be charter schools—serving some 25,000–30,000 students.

Child care services have also remained depleted. "Folks who have managed to navigate the housing impediments and find jobs can't find child care," explains Judy Watts, President and CEO of Agenda for Children, a Louisiana child advocacy organization.

Before Katrina, 265 licensed child care centers operated in Orleans Parish, compared with 41 earlier this year. Overall, Watts says, the state has lost 341 licensed child care centers and about 400 family child care providers, out of some 2,000 child care centers and 6,800 family child care providers pre-Katrina.

In some Mississippi counties, more than 95% of the child care programs were destroyed, according to the National Association of Childcare Resource and Referral Agencies.

With such basic necessities as schools, child care, and mental health services sharply reduced, Liederman says many people have left New Orleans soon after returning, realizing they can't make a go of it.

Gautreau's out-of-state foster parents have struggled also. Six months after Katrina, the number of foster care disruptions—kids returning to social service offices—were beginning to spike. "Foster care disruptions are increasing with our people out-of-state because they simply can't cope," Gautreau says. "They might have been great foster parents in New Orleans, but they don't have a job, they don't have their home, they

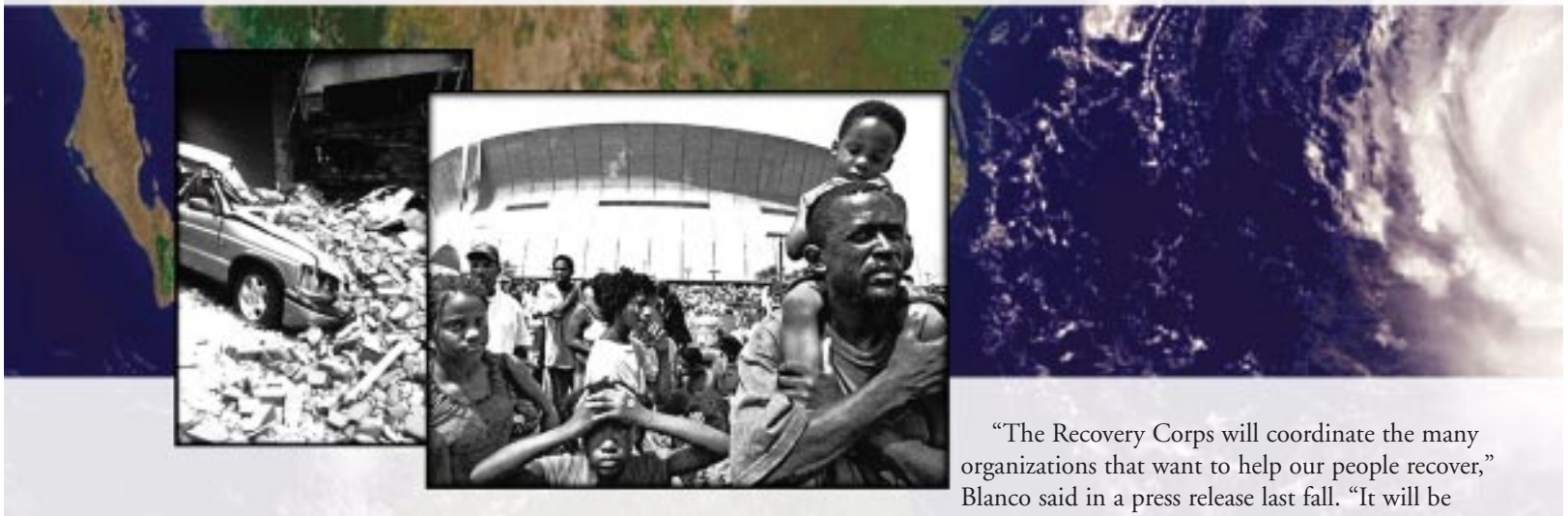
don't have all their usual supports, and the added burden of a foster child is just more than they can take."

But in Mississippi, Rachelle Daniels continues to fight to hang on to Katie and Nephi, watching as the walls of their home begin to go up again, and waiting for adoption proceedings to resume.

Making Do With a New Way of Life

Though Daniels still fears losing Katie and Nephi because her home was destroyed, the staff at Mississippi Children's Home Services have supported her and given her additional financial assistance.

Refusing to go to a shelter for fear her children might be harmed if she were to take her eyes from them, even for a moment, Daniels and the children stayed temporarily with her relatives before a 28-foot trailer arrived from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). The trailer now sits next to her damaged home and serves as the temporary living quarters for Daniels and the children while her brother-in-law helps rebuild her 1,700-square-foot house.



The sooner the house is rebuilt, the sooner Daniels can complete the home visitation portion of the adoption approval process, and the sooner she can officially call Nephi and Katie her son and her daughter. The FEMA trailer is cramped, leaky, and moldy, but in the end, Daniels said she's just "grateful to be alive."

Daily discomforts prevail in New Orleans as well, Liederman says, where 24-hour reconstruction efforts cause daily traffic backups, and limited store hours and workforce issues create long lines at groceries and restaurants. "The day-to-day grind is tough."

Raintree Children and Family Services, a group home for girls ages 10–18, has reopened its facility in Orleans Parish, and the nine girls in the program have returned from Natchitoches, Louisiana, where they had evacuated. But life is different for them in many ways.

"When we first came back, we tried to prepare them as much as we could [for a different environment]," explains Clinical Therapist Shannon Lovell. "Although our street and the immediate surrounding area of where Raintree is located faired okay and was cleaned up and felt sort of normal, it still really wasn't completely normal. You still saw the military in Humvees going up and down the street throughout the day. You had military carrying weapons. And the kids would ask me, 'Shannon, why do we have these people here.' It made them feel uncomfortable."

The girls have also had to become acquainted with 10 new staff replacements. These staff have to spend more time than usual transporting the girls around the city because public transportation is limited and the schools that are open are scattered citywide. Although Raintree is equipped with water sprinklers and smoke detectors in every room, the staff has to conduct fire checks every two hours, inside the facility and out, as an extra precaution due to inadequate water pressure throughout the city.

With Raintree as one of the few group homes open in New Orleans, 30 girls waited for one of the agency's 10 slots to open last February. Before Katrina, Lovell says, an average 3–10 girls waited for services.

Some bright spots have emerged within New Orleans' social services industry, however. Governor Blanco created the Louisiana Family Recovery Corps (LFRC) to coordinate and deliver comprehensive humanitarian services to displaced citizens throughout the state and to provide opportunities for evacuees to return.

"The Recovery Corps will coordinate the many organizations that want to help our people recover," Blanco said in a press release last fall. "It will be staffed by trained people from within the state who can be sent into the field to work one-on-one with individuals and families affected by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita."

The three lead LFRC subgrantees have been Volunteers of America in North Louisiana, Catholic Community Services in Baton Rouge, and the Community-Based Services Network in greater New Orleans—a consortium of agencies that includes Kingsley House, Catholic Charities, Volunteers of America of Greater New Orleans, Children's Bureau, and Family Services of Greater New Orleans.

"We really believe that if we don't partner post-Katrina, we're not going to recover—there's just not enough of us now," Liederman says about the involvement of his agency in the Community-Based Services Network. "Everybody realized there is so much need, we can't just keep working individually."

The Community-Based Services Network, Liederman explains, serves as a type of "preferred provider network" in which a displaced family undergoes the intake process just once, and all of the organizations in the network have access to that family's service plan.

In addition to working with the Community-Based Services Network, Kingsley House opened its Resettlement and Recovery Center this past winter, which has provided door-to-door outreach to

hundreds of families, connecting them with needed services, including counseling, child and adult day care, and health care enrollment.

Kingsley House has also leased some of its property, in partnership with the Orleans Parish School Board, to serve as a FEMA trailer site. Ninety trailers are housing social service personnel, public school teachers, and health care staff.

Planning for the Next Big One

"We're altering our disaster planning and preparation in a huge way," Liederman says. In case of future evacuations, his staff is acquiring portable accounting software—the accountant for Kingsley House had to do the staff payroll from memory during the Katrina evacuation—and will take along the computer software necessary to make updates to their website.

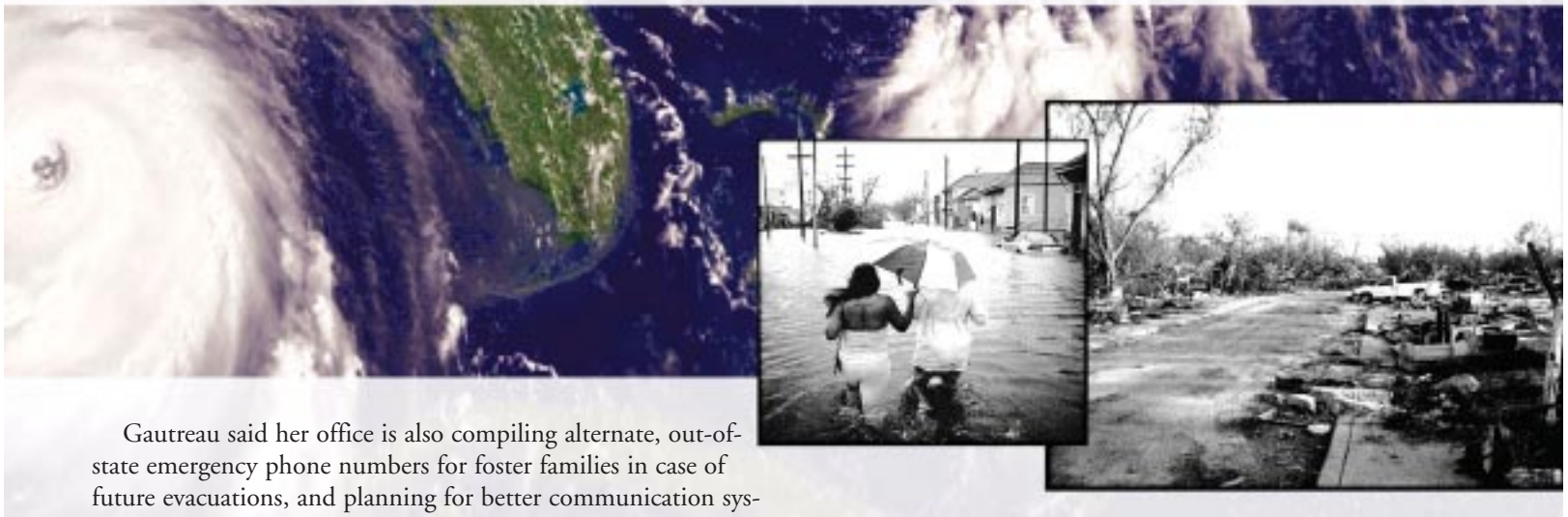
Most importantly, all staff and program participants are providing Kingsley House with emergency landline telephone numbers for out-of-state relatives or friends in case of another evacuation. Before Katrina, many people provided emergency cell phone numbers, which were of no use during and after Katrina because cell phone service was out.

Louisiana's Department of Social Services set up a shelter in Baton Rouge specifically for children, but only 67 children arrived there—most having been disconnected from parents after they were rescued from roof tops. In many cases, the children were sent to the Baton Rouge shelter, while their parents were evacuated to Houston shelters.

Rickie Felder, with Mississippi's Division of Family and Children Services, says his office is also taking a second look at their emergency plan, "We are assessing and developing plans with the Governor's Office and the Mississippi Emergency Management Agency to address future disasters based on lessons learned from Hurricane Katrina."

Seeking Continued Federal Assistance

Reacting to Katrina and Rita, Congress dedicated more than $85 billion last fall to hurricane recovery, including a one-time, $500 million increase in Social Services Block Grant (SSBG) funding to areas affected by Hurricane Katrina. SSBG is a state-run, flexible funding source that allows for 29 different program, including programs for vulnerable children and youth.



Gautreau said her office is also compiling alternate, out-of-state emergency phone numbers for foster families in case of future evacuations, and planning for better communication systems in the event of a storm, such as having satellite phones or walkie-talkies on hand. They are also working on better reunification efforts within shelters, such as computer systems to match up family members more easily, and requiring adults and children to wear armbands with identifying information.

By and large, however, foster families successfully evacuated together during Katrina and eventually connected with the Department of Social Services, Gautreau says. "I kept saying over and over to the national press, 'The system worked.' Our foster families evacuated with their children. They took responsibility for the children in their care, and we found them all relatively quickly. We found 1,500 of the 2,000 in two weeks, and it was simply a matter of getting a phone number that would work."

Still, Gautreau's office was flooded with calls in the weeks following Katrina with offers to adopt children who had lost parents, which surprised Gautreau. "Everybody thought there were going to be all these Katrina orphans, which actually was very interesting to me because I could never figure out where they thought all the adults were going. Did they just think the water was washing away tall people and leaving short people?"

"In the impacted states, we are seeing an infusion of federal and foundation dollars that will indeed help in the short run," says Weisner of NASW's Louisiana chapter. "However, it's the work that lies ahead in the years to come that gives me pause and concern."

Governor Blanco voiced similar concern in a speech to the Louisiana Legislature last February. "The harsh reality is that for many people in Washington, Katrina is yesterday's problem, and Rita never happened."

The Urban Institute is one Washington-based organization that has not forgotten. Last winter, it issued a report outlining the poor conditions in which children and families in New Orleans lived before Katrina, and urging the federal government to commit to a major investment in expanding programs for them.

Urban Institute Senior Fellow Olivia Golden wrote, "Services to young children before Hurricane Katrina were too often mediocre. Since the storm, children's needs are greater and the lack of quality care and services more dangerous."

The one realistic opportunity to make a difference for these children, Golden points out, is through expansion of Head Start and Early Head Start—large-scale programs for poor

PHOTO COURTESY OF NCMEC

Missing, Then Found

Hurricanes Katrina and Rita left the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC) with a massive project on its hands—locate the 5,192 children reported to NCMEC as missing or displaced. The task took six months. On March 16, NCMEC made its final family reunification when 4-year-old Cortez Stewart was able to see her mother and siblings for the first time since the family's evacuation from New Orleans following Hurricane Katrina.

Last September, just one week after Katrina ravaged the Gulf Coast, NCMEC established the Katrina Missing Persons Hotline (888/544-5475), logging more than 34,000 calls related to separated families and missing persons. The agency received reports of 4,710 children missing or displaced in Louisiana, 339 in Mississippi, and 39 in Alabama. After Rita struck three weeks later, another 28 children were reported missing or displaced in Louisiana, and 76 in Texas. All but 12 of the more than 5,000 were found alive and living with relatives, family friends, or other adults, according to the Associated Press.

"I can't say there aren't a few children who may have been missing and not reported to us, but we received more calls than anyone else did, and all our cases have been resolved," Bob O'Brien, Director of NCMEC's missing children division, told the Associated Press.

NCMEC worked with a cadre of organizations to locate the children, including the U.S. Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, the network of state missing child clearinghouses, the FBI, state and local law enforcement agencies, children's protective service agencies, Project Angel Flight, the American Red Cross, and media outlets.

At its peak, NCMEC's www.missingkids.com website recorded 10 million–20 million hits per day from 220 countries, far surpassing its average 1 million hits per day.

In the case of Cortez Stewart, the little girl was staying with her godmother, Felicia Williams, when they became separated from Cortez's mother, Lisa Stewart, and her five other children. As families evacuated New Orleans, Cortez and Williams headed east to Atlanta, and Lisa and her family headed west to Houston. For months, Stewart and Williams tried unsuccessfully to locate one another. Finally, NCMEC located information about Williams through her previous employer and, with help from the U.S. Postal Service, was able to obtain a proper address and phone number for her in Georgia.

children that have demonstrated benefits for children and use well-designed program models.

Other national organizations have also raised concerns about the needs of children and families in the post-Katrina landscape. Earlier this year, CWLA, Voices for America's Children, the National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies, and the National Mental Health Association called on FEMA to establish an office that would be responsible for anticipating and meeting the unique immediate and long-term needs of children in times of emergency and recovery.

"We believe the establishment of such an office will better enable the federal government to have a coordinated, high-level response to the needs of children when future manmade or natural disasters occur," says Voices for America's Children President Tamara Lucas Copeland.

The Flip Side of Disaster

Rachelle Daniels knows all too well what it's like to live through a slow recovery process. For her, a new house can't come fast enough. She worries constantly that the state may take the children from her because they continue to live in a trailer—an environment that creates daily challenges in her efforts to raise a toddler and a preteen.

Foster mom Rachelle Daniels currently lives in a trailer with her two children.

Nephi is "all boy," rambunctious and full of energy, but he has little room in the trailer to play and Daniels can't afford a fence for the yard. He's torn up the blinds covering the trailer windows, and bumped his head badly on the refrigerator door. Daniels is with him all day because she can't return to work as a family child care provider until her house is repaired.

Tight living quarters are also tough when Daniels and Katie get into an argument. "There's no privacy in a camper," Daniels explains. But Katie has been able to return to school, a routine she enjoys, and she has started to pitch in more with chores, such as washing the dishes.

On the bright side, with fewer doors to hide behind, the barriers that existed in Daniels and Katie's relationship before the storms have since vanished.

"[Life after the hurricanes] erased some boundaries and drew us closer," Daniels said. "It brought a lot of people closer."

Jennifer Michael is Managing Editor of Children's Voice.

CHILD WELFARE LEAGUE OF AMERICA

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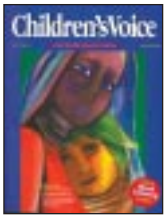

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Preparing for Natural Disaster

Planning for a devastating storm or other natural disaster is only one piece in the work of child welfare workers. Crisis is our business—not our crises but clients' crises. A major hurricane or other natural disaster is yet another crisis that could come our way as we do our business.

In 1992, when Hurricane Andrew hit South Dade County, Florida, I was working as the CEO of the Child Welfare Division of Catholic Charities, Archdiocese of Miami. Years before Andrew ever hit South Dade County, our agency had developed a hurricane plan—the government entity overseeing the child welfare at the time left it to agencies to develop their own plans.

Not only did our agency save up to 400 lives in one day in August 1992, we were able to keep all employees on the payroll, place and track all the children outside the agency and county where the devastation occurred, and come back online after rebuilding with an even stronger, more comprehensive program than before. Good leadership, strategic planning, rehearsal, and doing it all together were the reasons we successfully weathered the storm.

The process, not the final storm plan on paper, is what counts. Working together through all the steps of strategic planning, and rehearsing the plan together, makes the difference. The work my team did during the years before Hurricane Andrew paid off. When the storm hit, the staff already knew

- what a storm is and what it can do;
- how to address a storm's many challenges;
- the contingencies to use when coping with the challenges;
- that expectations may turn out wrong during the actual event;
- how each person on the staff thinks and acts, especially under pressure;
- who within and outside the agency can be counted on;
- that leadership is a chain of command and that you might have to be in command when others are incapacitated; and
- in Catholic Charities' case, knowledge of a good God who will give you peace of mind to get through it all.

Leadership and Strategic Planning

The leader of an agency must be the one willing to take responsibility, while empowering others to do their jobs. He or she must be able to delegate and take command as appropriate and determine when either is needed.

The staff's safety and that of their families comes first. Part of the agency plan must include each staff member's own personal plan for his or her own family. Staff can't perform if they don't know their families are safe.

True strategic planning must take place and involve everyone in the organization in some way and at some point. Once the cycle of planning is complete, it begins again and is ongoing.

Securing records and material should be included in the strategic plan, including the security and physical protection of all records, documents, agency history, electronic and paper files, equipment, tools and materials the agency uses in the care and therapy of the clients, clients' possessions, and anything else that can fly, float away, or get wet. Back up all records, physically and electronically, keeping one set on site at the agency, and another set in a safe location elsewhere.

The children in your care must know their things are safe and will be available later, but they must also be prepared for the possibility of total loss. Such preparations might be a usual course of treatment at the beginning of storm season. Have clinical staff develop this part of the plan.

The Evacuation Plan

Even if your agency is not located in an evacuation zone, find an alternate location that could serve as a shelter if you need one. In most areas of the country, institutions must find their own shelter for a storm. Institutions aren't welcome at public shelters.

A mini version of everything that makes your program work needs to go with your children and staff in case of an evacuation, including a portable set of client records and medications. Also, bring enough clothing, outdoor camping bedding, toiletries,

Leadership, strategic planning, and rehearsal are critical when child welfare agencies prepare for hurricanes or other natural disasters.

By Robert F. Tywoniak

PHOTO CREDIT: MARLENE QUARONI

After Hurricane Andrew devastated his agency's facility, Father Bob Tywoniak put a well-thought-out emergency plan to the test. Above, Tywoniak (left) accepts a $20,000 check from a member of the Hurricane Andrew Relief Team in September 1992.

towels, and hospital-type bathing materials, such as sponges. Children should be allowed to take a toy and stuffed animal. Staff should bring portable games to keep the children occupied for long periods.

Your designated shelter should have enough food and water to last two to three weeks. Make sure you have what you need to purify water—this can be done using bleach at the rate of eight drops per gallon of water. All food must be edible without cooking, and be sure to have food on hand for those with allergies.

Post-storm plans are important too, including possible replacement of program participants. Get to know and develop contacts at public and private agencies that are nearby but outside possible storm strike zones and who would be willing to help you. State agencies will also have to be notified and involved in your long-term strategies.

Teaming Up

Staff assignments need to be developed as a part of the storm preparation plan. People should be clear about their roles and duties and when they should perform them. Consider having three teams: a prestorm team, a storm team, and a post-storm team. Rehearse their functions before storm season each year, and assess outcomes. This is meant literally—practice right down to moving everything.

When a hurricane watch goes into effect, the agency leader communicates the emergency and the prestorm team begins its job. This team makes all the preparations, including moving all the prepared provisions into the prearranged place of shelter. That shelter might be right where the agency is located or at another location outside the evacuation zone.

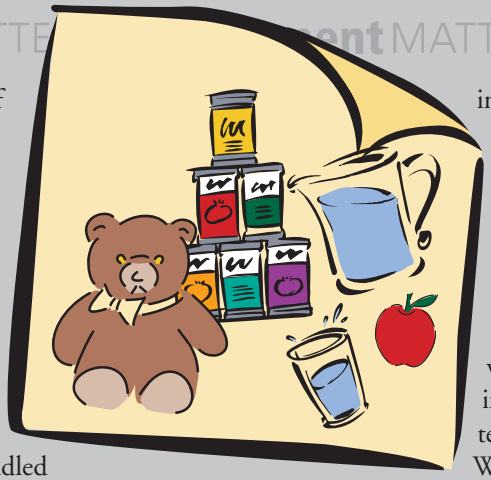
The executive or program director in charge must stay in touch with the leaders of the pre- and post-storm teams. The executive is the de facto leader of the storm team; at the same time, however, he or she must get some rest.

While the prestorm team is preparing the agency for the emergency, the agency must continue serving the children as usual, and the other two teams are preparing their personal property and families for the storm.

When the storm warning goes into effect, the actual storm team relieves the prestorm team. The storm team will stay sheltered with the children throughout the storm and thereafter until help arrives and relocation takes place. Carefully select this team. Each member must be ready to endure all the challenges of care under the most difficult circumstances. These people might be those who have no family to be concerned with. If they do, they must be confident in their own family plan. They should even be permitted to bring family members with them if necessary.

The storm team may be larger than a normal shift would be. Members will have to take turns resting and performing various tasks. The storm team should include line staff, such as house parents; administrative staff; and clinical staff. Again, think of this as a mini version of the agency going on the road, even if you are staying in place. The agency CEO would ordinarily be the leader of this team.

The leader of the agency should brief the children and staff together before moving the children or getting them settled down if remaining onsite. The agency leader should explain the impending storm situation to the children and what the experience may be like. All the logistics and seriousness of the matter must be firmly explained. They must be assured everything is being done to protect them and that they must follow all instructions. The agency leader takes charge of this process and establishes authority. From that point on, the chain of command must be clear.



Once the children and staff have been briefed, then move into the shelter. Be sure your plans include contingencies in case the storm compromises the safety of the shelter. Activities for the children will keep them occupied as the storm makes its final approach.

During the height of the storm, everyone might be huddled together. Singing songs together, gently talking to the children, or telling stories can be calming. Having a radio tuned to local broadcasts is helpful to know what is going on. In Florida, the broadcasters are trained to be honest yet calming. Knowing what is going on helps everyone to keep in control of the situation. This can be reassuring, if not life saving.

Immediately after the Storm

Once the storm passes, the leader of the shelter facility and the leader of the children's agency should assess the physical and emotional well-being of everyone and everything. With the storm team, they will make adjustments in living space and how services will be delivered. They will communicate with the outside, including the post-storm team, and assess transportation conditions. Note that local authorities might not want anyone traveling on the streets until further notice—stay tuned to that radio.

You may receive a visit from a coroner. Yes, he or she needs a head count and should be made aware of your agency's plan in advance. Know too that telephones might not work because cell towers and phone lines are down; a ham radio might be good to have on hand.

At this point, the post-storm team should go into action. Someone needs to scout the home facility and assess whether the children and staff can return. Everyone may have to stay at the shelter instead. The scout must communicate with the storm team, and decisions must be made about whether to return. During geographically large storms, no relocation might be possible for some time after the storm. Be prepared to survive for one or two weeks.

During Hurricane Andrew, we had taken shelter at a nursing home facility, which sustained some damage during the storm. Immediately after the storm, our post-storm team was unable to reach us, so a member of my storm team and I left the shelter to inspect our agency facility, which turned out to be uninhabitable. After waiting more than 24 hours, community partners we had established outside the storm strike zone arrived with transportation to take our program participants and staff from the nursing home to another shelter that was not damaged.

With the help of the community partners, storm team staff, and a few post-storm team members, all the children who had been staying in our residential facility were placed in foster homes outside the storm strike zone. The storm team remained on duty until all the children were placed. We made arrangements to continue monitoring the children in the new placements. All portable records and medications followed the children.

Rebuilding and Recovery

Be ready for a few things during the first day or two after the storm—first, the needs of your staff. If they are not cared for and supported, they won't be able to care for the children. Be sure they are bathed and fed before the children. This might sound inappropriate, but staff will step up and care for others when they too feel safe and cared for. Agency leaders must make sure their own needs are taken care of as well so they can have the energy to perform their duties.

Second, be ready for mutiny. Yes, mutiny. We are all human beings with needs and emotions. Even the best of staff will be overwhelmed by emotions and concerns. They will want answers to their questions, and the leader must be ready to process all of that. Admitting one's own concerns and fears is helpful, yet working with staff and displaying leadership to develop a new plan on the spot will help rebuild unity and loyalty. The children may be involved in this in some way too. The leader's ability to speak with inspiration is helpful as the process begins.

Third, accept help from others, including your community partners. Partners should be able to listen to you and help you plan for your staff and clients. They should be trusted to relieve you at some point, if necessary. Remember, the leader and staff still need to get back home and assess their own personal situations.

Finally, your storm plan should include a contingency for gathering staff together afterward. Days later, getting back together to support one another and to begin planning anew are important. In my case, it was an opportunity to push ahead with plans that had been considered for years.

With good leadership, strategic planning, rehearsal, and doing it all together, things may actually turn out better after the storm for your agency as well.

Reverend Robert F. Tywoniak is Director and Pastor of the St. George Parish Social Ministry, Fort Lauderdale, Florida.

A Hole in the Heart

...and How Programs Can Help Mend It

By Patrick Mitchell

Some child- and family-serving programs go all out to get men involved for the sake of the children they educate and care for. Others could do more, says Irene Luckey, Research Associate Professor at the Institute for Families in Society, University of South Carolina. She's the principal investigator for the Center for Fathers and Families' Fatherhood Initiative, and she works closely with fatherhood programs throughout South Carolina.

I asked her what programs can do to get men more involved. For starters, she said, program staff must carefully examine the messages they send to men, and the messages they receive from other programs and their communities. Only then can they tap into the truth of the matter and change things for the better.

Programs serving children are inconsistent when it comes to what they say they want in terms of male involvement and what they actually do, Luckey says. "As a society, and in many of our programs, we're confused. We say we want men to be involved in our programs serving children, but most of the mechanisms there are not supportive of that. If we say we want men to be involved in the nurturing and early education of their children, then the environments [at the programs] really need to display that. Society is sort of sending mixed messages, and I think programs serving children really need to figure that out."

One negative thing program staffs sometimes do, and which impedes the programs' male involvement outreach, is to tell men—implicitly or explicitly (and almost always unwittingly) that if they can't provide for their child financially, then they have nothing significant to offer.

"One thing we need to do is to change some of the messages we give out; for example, the message to dads that, 'If you don't have money to offer, you're useless.' This makes men tend not to come around and seek a connection with the child. They do have something to offer, but they just don't know it," she said.

"The other thing would be to help mothers understand that, regardless of how you feel about this man, he is this child's father, so do not demonize this man."

Luckey has seen plenty of adult men cry as they recall growing up without their fathers around. They feel something is missing from their lives. "One of the major problems I see is that hole in the child's heart about their dad. There's a void when children don't see their fathers."

Programs serving children, she says, will serve them better if they strive to get good men involved. Researchers see a host of negative outcomes for children who experience years of father absence; Luckey warns that children who grow up without involved dads are at an increased risk for growing up poor, getting into trouble with the law, abusing drugs and alcohol, dropping out of school, teen pregnancy, and even suicide.

On the flip side, research shows that kids whose dads are involved in their education, for example, tend to get better grades in school and enjoy school more.

Most fathers genuinely want to reach out and be involved, Luckey observes, but they need a push from the programs serving their children. They need positive, thoughtful program staff to make them feel truly welcome.

Men are increasingly ready to step in and get involved at home and in the programs serving their children. "I see men being more involved hands-on with their children," Luckey says. "They're not just going to work and bringing home the money so their children can be provided for, but they're actually doing things like changing diapers, babysitting, taking care of them.

"The other thing I see is men allowing their children to be a part of their lives—not just [being] with the child inside the house, but they're taking their children with them and letting them see their world."

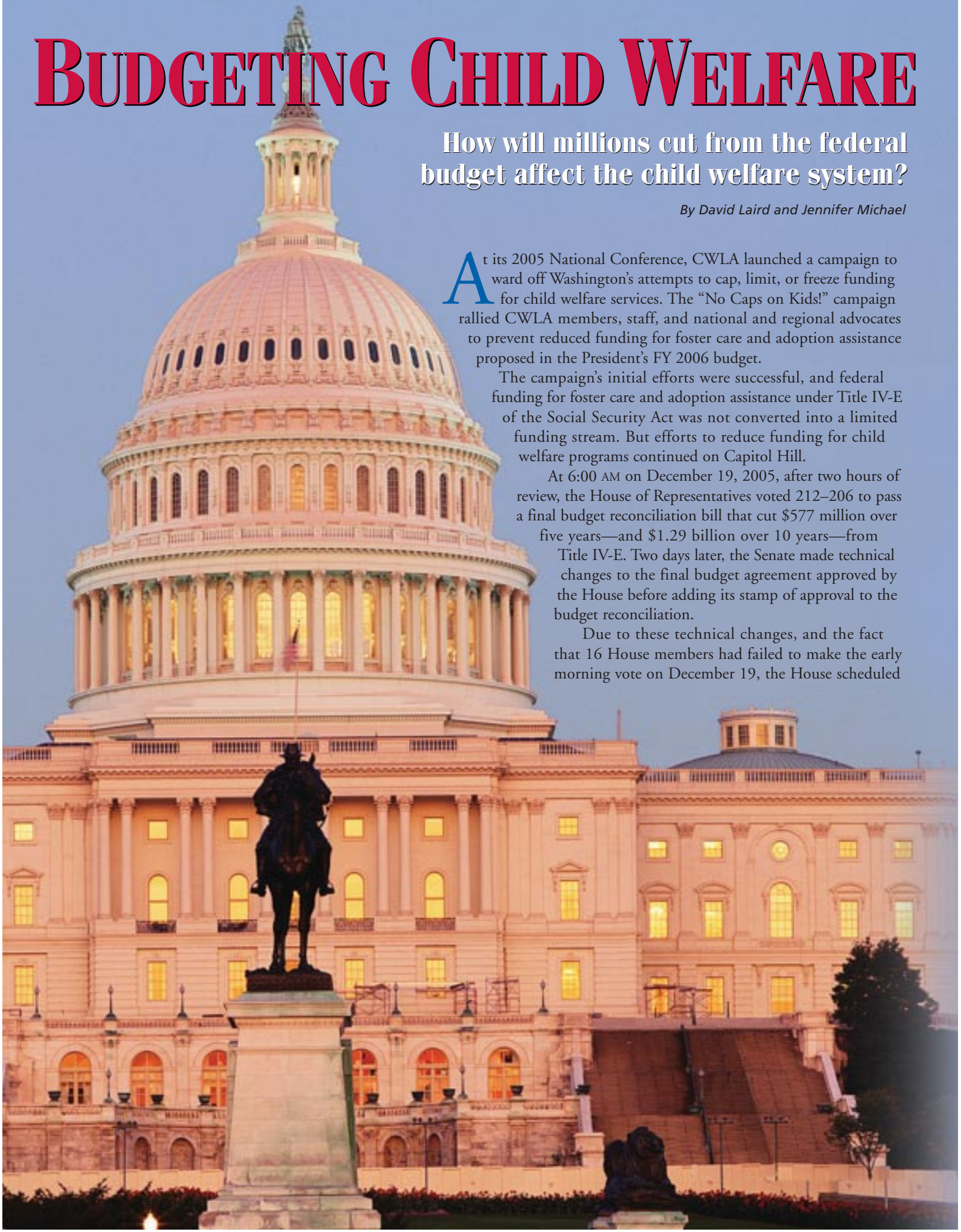
Dr. Luckey and I, and many dedicated professionals, share an exciting truth regarding male involvement in child- and family-serving programs: Great things happen when dads get involved.

A regular contributor to Children's Voice, *Patrick Mitchell publishes a monthly newsletter,* The Down to Earth Dad, *from Coeur d'Alene, Idaho, and facilitates the Dads Matter! Project™ for early childhood programs, schools, and child- and family-serving organizations. He conducts keynote addresses, workshops, and inservice and preservice trainings. To reserve Patrick Mitchell for speaking engagements, or to implement the Dads Matter! Project™ for your families and community partners, call him toll-free at 877/282-DADS, or e-mail him at patrick@downtoearthdad.org. Website: www.DownToEarthDad.org.*

Budgeting Child Welfare

How will millions cut from the federal budget affect the child welfare system?

By David Laird and Jennifer Michael



At its 2005 National Conference, CWLA launched a campaign to ward off Washington's attempts to cap, limit, or freeze funding for child welfare services. The "No Caps on Kids!" campaign rallied CWLA members, staff, and national and regional advocates to prevent reduced funding for foster care and adoption assistance proposed in the President's FY 2006 budget.

The campaign's initial efforts were successful, and federal funding for foster care and adoption assistance under Title IV-E of the Social Security Act was not converted into a limited funding stream. But efforts to reduce funding for child welfare programs continued on Capitol Hill.

At 6:00 AM on December 19, 2005, after two hours of review, the House of Representatives voted 212–206 to pass a final budget reconciliation bill that cut $577 million over five years—and $1.29 billion over 10 years—from Title IV-E. Two days later, the Senate made technical changes to the final budget agreement approved by the House before adding its stamp of approval to the budget reconciliation.

Due to these technical changes, and the fact that 16 House members had failed to make the early morning vote on December 19, the House scheduled

a second vote on the cuts for February 1. In the weeks leading up to the second vote, CWLA and other child advocacy organizations fought an uphill battle and continued lobbying hard against the cuts. The fight helped: The House vote on February 1 was even closer, but a razor-thin 216–214 majority still voted in favor of the $577 million cut to Title IV-E for FY 2006. The cut was retroactive to October 1, 2005—the beginning of the fiscal year.

"Reconciliation was a closed-door process that allowed for no debate," says CWLA Government Affairs Codirector John Sciamanna. "They were hoping you wouldn't notice."

Addressing CWLA's 2006 National Conference this past February, Representative Jim McDermott (D-WA) pointed out the cuts happened despite child poverty rising in this country. "Most members of Congress never get near the children you are helping," said McDermott, who voted against the cuts. "Congress can and should do more."

Attempting to explain the cuts, House Budget Chair Jim Nussle (R-IA) points out they will help curb spending on "automatic-pilot programs" he charges are growing at an unsustainable rate of about 6% annually. "If nothing is done, they will continue crowding out other priorities—such as education, veterans' benefits, heath care—and the list goes on…The problem will continue to get worse—the baby-boomers will retire, medical costs will continue to skyrocket, and the strain on our economy will continue to grow."

But with $577 million cut from the largest funding source for child welfare, what does this mean for children and families down the road? During CWLA's 2006 National Conference, foster parents and child welfare advocates from around the country descended on Capitol Hill to meet with lawmakers and express their concern about the funding cuts and future proposals that could jeopardize their work with children in need.

Wearing a bright blue and red "No Caps on Kids!" button, foster parent Raynard Price from Palmdale, California, eagerly sought out the representative from his district. Over the past 11 years, Price has cared for 24 teenage boys in foster care. "I can't recall the last time I had an increase in the money I receive to care for the kids," he said, "but all the costs around me have gone up."

PHOTO BY JENNIFER MICHAEL

Raynard Price, a foster parent from California, joined other CWLA National Conference participants on Capitol Hill last spring to urge lawmakers not to cut federal foster care funding.

Building the Budget Structure

A 2004 Urban Institute study highlights the complexities of the federal funding streams supporting child welfare. The latest data shows that the combined allocations for child welfare nationally exceeded $22 billion in FY 2002. This number represents all direct and administrative costs for services to children and families. Out of the $22 billion, the federal government funded more than 50%, states assumed 37%, and the remaining 12% came from local sources.

A glimpse at the history of our nation's child welfare system might be helpful in better understanding the federal government's complex funding structure. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, in 1904, more than 93,000 children were deemed dependent and relied on outside sources for care, and another 50,000 were in the private care of foster homes.

The role of child protective services as an organized, established office came about following the 1909 White House Conference on the Care of Dependent Children, when President Theodore Roosevelt called for the establishment of the U.S. Children's Bureau to coordinate all federal and state child welfare efforts.

"Each of these children represents either a potential addition to the productive capacity and the enlightened citizenship of the nation," Roosevelt said, "or, if allowed to suffer from neglect, a potential addition to the destructive forces of the community."

The Children's Bureau was established in 1912 to coordinate and design all federal activity related to child welfare, including services related to child abuse and neglect, child protective services, family preservation and support, adoption, foster care, and independent living.

In 1920, 68 child welfare agencies banded together to found the Child Welfare League of America. CWLA soon became a guiding voice for abused and neglected children.

The Social Security Act of 1935, designed to provide relief for veterans and the elderly who were unable to enter the work force after the onset of the Great Depression, included provisions (Title V) to provide initial federal support for child welfare activities. Closely linked to Title V was establishment of Aid to Dependent Children (ADC), which provided financial support to widowed mothers who did not have sustainable income to meet the essential needs of the children in their homes.

In 1958, amendments to Title V required states to commit resources to child protection. Previously, state activity was limited to those states that took up the cause independently. By 1961, ADC became Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC), expanding federal support for low-income families

and allowing the use of dollars to assist children eligible for foster care. This service expanded a community's ability to find proper placements with the needed supports for children.

The Child Abuse Protection and Treatment Act was enacted in 1974, mandating the first reporting system for children suspected or confirmed of being abused or neglected. It remains the only federal law directed solely at the prevention, assessment, identification, and treatment of child abuse and neglect.

Substantial child welfare reform came in 1980 with the Adoption Assistance and Child Welfare Act, which strengthened funding for Title V Child Welfare Services and created Title IV-E Foster Care and Adoption Assistance. Today, Title IV-E accounts for 48% of federal child welfare funding.

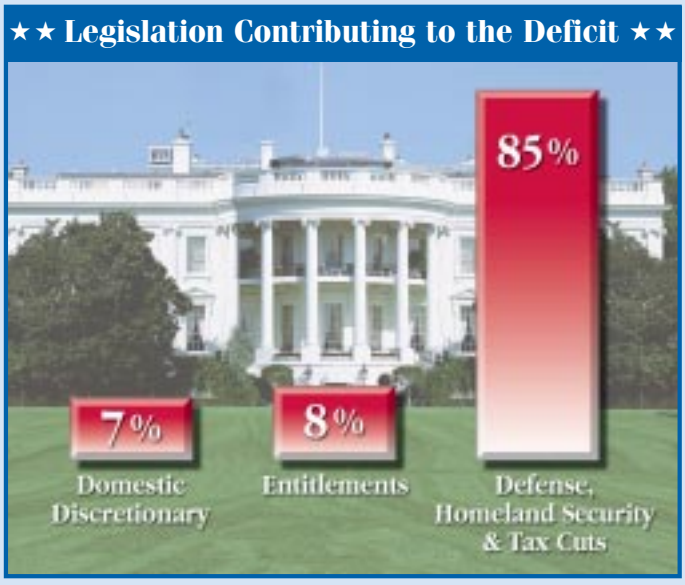
Reforms in the 1990s were aimed at curbing the rising number of children entering foster care as a result of increased substance abuse. The expansion of Title IV-B in 1993 established the Promoting Safe and Stable Families and Family Preservation programs, which provide prevention and other services for children and families. The Adoption and Safe Families Act of 1997 established strict time guidelines for states to follow in seeking permanency solutions for children.

AFDC was dismantled in 1996 and replaced by Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF). Although it is separate from Title IV-E funding, states can use TANF to fund child welfare services. TANF represents 20% of federal funding for child welfare and, as an entitlement program, is a guaranteed federal funding source.

Controlling Spending

Growth in entitlement spending for such programs as Medicare and Medicaid has sparked recent debate about the need to control the federal deficit. The White House estimates federal spending in FY 2007 will result in a $437 billion deficit—the fourth consecutive year the federal deficit will exceed $400 billion.

Since 2001, entitlement spending, including allocations for child welfare, has accounted for only 8% of new federal legislation contributing to the deficit. On the other hand, increased funding for defense and homeland security, along with the loss of revenue from tax cuts, has accounted for 85% of the federal deficit. The remaining 7% of new legislation was allocated to domestic discretionary spending, excluding homeland security.



The budget reconciliation act Congress passed in February is known as the Deficit Reduction Omnibus Reconciliation Act of 2005 (DRA). The first attempt to curb entitlement growth since 1997, DRA slashed federal entitlement programs by $39.7 billion, including the $577 million cut to Title IV-E Foster Care and Adoption Assistance, $12.7 billion to student loan programs, $5 billion to child support enforcement, and $6 billion to Medicaid.

DRA also reauthorized TANF for five years without increasing funding. The reauthorization requires states to meet higher work requirements in 2006—at least half of TANF adult recipients in single-parent families, and 90% of two-parent families, have to meet work requirements in FY 2007. To lower these requirements, a state must reduce the number of families receiving TANF assistance since 2005. Most states will face difficulty meeting these requirements, as they lack appropriate support services. States that fail to meet the requirements, however, may be subject to penalties, such as loss of TANF block-grant funding.

Reductions to Title IV-E

Out of the $577 million Congress cut from Title IV-E Foster Care and Adoption Assistance, $397 million came from repealing a 2003 Ninth Circuit judicial ruling known as *Rosales vs. Thompson.* The ruling had expanded Title IV-E foster care eligibility to some children being cared for by grandparents and other relatives in nine states—Alaska, Arizona, California, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, Oregon, and Washington—as well as Guam and the Mariana Islands, and was seen as a bellwether for other states. Most of the states in the Ninth Circuit had passed FY 2006 budgets anticipating this expanded eligibility.

In overruling *Rosales,* however, Congress prohibited families from receiving Title IV-E benefits unless they meet all the requirements of foster placement—requirements that are sometimes unnecessary for relatives caring for children. IV-E eligibility will be based only on the income of the family found to be abusive, not on the income of the family with whom the child is living while in foster care. A child placed with a low-income relative, therefore, may no longer qualify for IV-E benefits.

David Berns, Director of Arizona's Department of Economic Security, estimates his state will lose between $600,000 and $1 million a year as a result of Congress overruling the court decision.

Last February, during an audio conference organized by the Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP), Berns said, "[Congress's] decision is really contrary to what I think is the philosophy of promoting relative care, because it really is going after the funds exclusively for those grandparents and other relatives who have come to the rescue of their children and then find that they need this assistance. Now we won't have the federal support to maintain that; we'll have to do it entirely with state funds."

California, which serves 63% of the children in foster care out of the nine states affected by the repeal of *Rosales,* expects an estimated 4,000 children will lose Title IV-E assistance. The reduction in federal foster care eligibility will also cost California $20 million per year and reduce the income of a grandparent serving as a foster parent for two grandchildren by $592 per month, or $7,000 per year.

The $577 million cut to Title IV-E Foster Care and Adoption Assistance also included $180 million lost as a result of new restrictions on the use of Title IV-E administrative case management funding for the placement of children in kinship homes, children considered candidates for foster care, and children leaving ineligible facilities—such as psychiatric and crisis centers and some juvenile detention facilities—and moving to foster care.

The cut to Title IV-E concerns California foster parent Raynard Price. "Cutting this budget just may put more families in crisis than there already are…More kids are going to go to prison, and that's going to cost taxpayers in the long run. It's that simple."

Other Cuts

Other programs adversely affected by DRA include child support enforcement and Medicaid. Child support enforcement will be cut by $1.5 billion over five years, and $4.9 billion over 10 years. The Congressional Budget Office estimates this will result in the loss of $2.9 billion in child support payments over five years, and $8.4 billion over 10 years.

DRA also clarifies states' use of Medicaid-funded targeted case management services (TCM) for children in the child welfare system, limiting the ability of state child welfare agencies to use Medicaid TCM services for children in foster care, but resulting in federal savings of $760 million over five years and $2.1 billion over 10 years.

Changes to Medicaid will allow states to charge families a copayment of 10% of the cost of services if their income is at the poverty level or up to 150% of the federal poverty level—$16,000–$24,000 for a parent and two children. Previously, the law restricted copayments to $3.

"Children in foster care are protected [from] some of these cuts," said CLASP Senior Staff Attorney Rutledge Hutson during CLASP's audio conference, "but [we need] to pay attention to…the families who are not yet in the child welfare system, whose children have not yet been removed from their care. If they are impacted by these increased copayments, or premiums, or restricted benefits, they may fall into the child welfare system.

"We have lots of good research that shows many children in the foster care system are there because their parents aren't able to access medical care they need…they basically end up surrendering their child[ren] to the child welfare agency to try and get [them] the services they need."

One of the few increases as a result of DRA is $40 million for Promoting Safe and Stable Families, and the allocation of two $10 million grants for improving how courts handle child welfare cases.

DRA also reauthorized the federal child care program, with few changes. Child care funding will increase by $200 million in the first year—a less than 5% increase in funding—but funding will be frozen for the last four years of the reauthorization. Any future increases in federal child care funding will depend on annual appropriations decisions. Congress has not approved any increases in child care funding since 2002—funding has only been reduced.

At press time, eight separate lawsuits had been filed to challenge DRA's passage. The lawsuits, filed by parties outside of child welfare, noted the version of the bill signed by President Bush contained some technical changes that had not been made to the version passed by Congress. The Constitution mandates that the version of a bill signed by the President must be identical to the version passed by Congress.

Ongoing Debate Over Federal Budget Reform

Over the past several years, repeated proposals have been offered to reform federal and state supports that provide services to abused and neglected children, their families, and children who are at risk for abuse and neglect. Currently, of those children in the United States who are found to have been abused and neglected, 40%–46% receive no services.

Opinions differ greatly among federal policymakers and children's advocates over how these proposals can improve supports. Every year since 2002, President Bush has offered a child welfare reform proposal—which has not yet been approved—that would convert federal child welfare funding into a block grant, allowing states the option of receiving a lump sum over five years. States electing this plan would receive a fixed, capped funding allotment to cover all child welfare operating and service expenses over the five years. This option, proponents say, would create greater fiscal responsibility and allow states to redirect any unallocated funds toward greater prevention efforts.

Opponents charge that block grants are a piecemeal approach and cannot address unexpected situations, such as a sudden rise in foster care caseloads due to the spread of methamphetamine abuse. And history shows that block grants can fail to keep up with inflation. The Social Services Block Grant, for example, was converted into a fixed annual funding stream in 1981 and has lost 84% of funding when inflation is taken into consideration.

"CWLA is supporting a comprehensive review of the child welfare funding structure," says CWLA President and CEO Shay Bilchik, "one that recognizes and fully utilizes the interplay between federal, state, and local supports. These reforms include providing a flexible array of services aimed at prevention, greater supports for children presently in foster care, and continued services for those after they are adopted or age out of formal care."

David Laird is CWLA's Program Manager for Government Affairs.
Jennifer Michael is Managing Editor of Children's Voice.

Popular Workforce Study Now Available

The *2005 Salary Study,* CWLA's popular child welfare workforce study is now available on CWLA's members-only website and can be purchased on CWLA's webstore. Published every two years, the *Salary Study* marks trends concerning the child welfare workforce.

For more than 20 years, the study has provided information about average salaries, broken down according to public and private agencies and by such categories as chief administrators, child protective services workers, residential workers, child day care staff, and research.

The survey covers education levels for the same categories of workers. For instance, the starting salary for a child protective service worker with a college degree working for a public agency ranged from a low of $24,410 to a high of $42,468; for private agencies, the range was $22,000–$65,981.

For residential child and youth workers with college degrees, starting salaries ranged from $14,560 to $43,835, in public agencies; private agencies in the same category had a starting salary range of $12,500–$33,177.

For child day care workers, the starting salary range for lead teachers was $16,000–$46,685. The survey also includes data on benefits structures and staffing level information.

CWLA member agencies can download the *2005 Salary Study* at www.cwla.org/membersonly; member number and password are required to log in.

Or go to www.cwla.org/pubs or call toll free 800/407-6273 to purchase a copy (Item number 10307, $28.95).

Addressing Indian Child Welfare and Meth Addiction

Few communities have escaped the effects of methamphetamine addiction on children and families—neither big cities, nor remote Indian reservations. Tribal nations, in particular, face unique challenges concerning meth, including the extreme distances separating tribal peoples from available services, a lack of appropriate activities for tribal youth, and insufficient law enforcement.

To support tribal child welfare, CWLA participated in a hearing on Capitol Hill before the Senate Indian Affairs Committee last spring to stress the necessity of increasing the partnership of federal, state, and tribal governments in planning and responding to meth.

CWLA submitted testimony on the effects of meth on the child welfare system and made a number of policy recommendations, including the guarantee that tribal representatives will be full partners in developing plans to combat meth use, specifically as it relates to child welfare. CWLA also requested passage of the Indian Child Protection and Family Violence Act, the reintroduction of the Child Protection/Alcohol and Drug Partnership Act, and that tribal nations have full access to Title IV-E foster care, adoption assistance, and training funds.

Meth addiction is "causing challenges far beyond regular substance abuse addictions" for tribal nations, said Senator Byron Dorgan (D-ND) in announcing that he and Senator John McCain (R-AZ) were introducing legislation to expand the meth hot spots designation to tribal areas, and to make Drug Endangered Children (DEC) programs available to tribal communities. Currently, the Combat Meth Act, included in the Patriot Act, contains a $20 million allocation to support DEC programs, but this funding is not available for tribal governments.

Existing data on meth use affecting tribal communities is startling. The National Survey on Drug Use and Health shows that 1.7% of the American Indian/Alaska Native population reported meth use in the past year. This rate is only behind Native Hawaiians (1.9%) and those of two or more races (1.9%) as the highest rates of use, according to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). Fewer than 1% of white, non-Hispanics reported using meth in the past year, even though meth addicts accounted for 73% of people entering treatment for substance abuse. Native Americans represented only 2.2% of people entering treatment due to meth use, SAMHSA data shows.

Making Child Welfare a Centerpiece on Capitol Hill

Last spring, CWLA and other leading national organizations began participating in a new Congressional briefing series designed to inform Senate and House staffers about the needs of children in the child welfare system.

"The impetus of the briefing series was a desire to shift to a more proactive approach in terms of our children's legislative agenda," says CWLA Government Affairs Codirector John Sciamanna. "The ultimate goal is to make children, particularly those in child welfare, a centerpiece of the November elections."

At the first briefing in March, CWLA's government affairs staff released two documents—Background of Child Welfare Services, which details population trends of child abuse, children in foster care, adoption rates, and youth transitioning from care, and Funding of Child Welfare Services, which provides an overview of all federal funding streams that support child welfare services and notes current funding levels. Electronic copies of these reports are available by e-mailing govaffairs@cwla.org.

At the same briefing, the Urban Institute presented findings from a survey, *Cost of Protecting Children V: Understanding State Variation in Child Welfare Financing,* documenting the amount states spent on child welfare activities in FY 2004 and what services the funds supported.

CWLA Publishes Monographs on Quality of Care for Vulnerable Children

Vulnerable families are often the most in need of multiple services and community supports to address their behavioral health needs. These needs often are exacerbated by larger social conditions such as poverty, racism, violence, and untreated trauma.

The solution lies in an integrated response, because no one child- or family-serving system has the resources to address person-specific issues and the larger social conditions that affect them.

In 2003 and 2004, CWLA and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation convened a series of three summits as a first step toward addressing this problem. The summits brought together the experience and expertise of a diverse range of stakeholders, including federal, state, and local officials; public and private service agencies; researchers and academics; and service consumers, including youth involved with the different systems and their families.

CWLA has posted on its website the second of two monographs—*Integrating Systems of Care: Improving Quality of Care for the Most Vulnerable Children and Families*—to support the development of a consensus agenda for systems-culture change. It outlines a detailed plan for change across these systems and identifies the steps necessary to implement this approach at the national, state, and local levels.

The first monograph, *Improving the Quality of Care for the Most Vulnerable Children, Youth, and Their Families,* addressed what we know and what we are learning to improve the quality of care for our most vulnerable children, youth, and families.

Both monographs are available online at www.cwla.org/programs/bhd/qualityofcare.htm

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BULLETIN BOARD

The Effect of Religiosity on Teen Sexual Behavior

Teens from religious families, and who have friends who regularly attend religious services, tend to have sex at later ages than do teens whose parents have less strong religious beliefs and whose peers don't attend services regularly, according to new research developed by Child Trends and released by the National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy.

The research found that some 38% of teens whose parents score highest on a religiosity scale—based on beliefs, prayer, and attendance at religious services—have sex by age 18, compared with 44% of those whose parents score in the medium range, and 49% of those whose parents score lowest on the religiosity scale.

About 48% of teens have sex before age 18 when 25% or less of their peers regularly attend religious services. By comparison, 41% of teens have sex by age 18 when 75% or more of their peers regularly attend religious services, according to the research.

Closing the Education Gap for 100,000 College-Qualified Youth

If foster youth completed high school and attended postsecondary education at the same rate as their peers, nearly 100,000 additional foster youth 18–25 years old would be attending higher education, according to a report from the Institute for Higher Education Policy.

Higher Education Opportunities for Foster Youth: A Primer for Policymakers estimates that at any time, approximately 300,000 youth ages 18–25—prime college-going years—are in the foster care system. Some 150,000 of these youth are college qualified, but only about 30,000 attend postsecondary education.

The report identifies a number of factors that keep youth in foster care from pursuing higher education, including overworked, underpaid, and insufficiently trained social workers; foster parents who turn over frequently and do not receive adequate training and support; and overburdened school counselors who don't provide the adult mentoring and nurturing for youth in foster care to develop independence and maturity.

Independent-living programs generally help youth in foster care ages 16–21 transition to self-sufficiency, according to the report, but the programs only serve about half the eligible youth in care.

The report makes several recommendations:

- Achieving high levels of educational attainment for all youth in foster care should be embedded in the professional responsibilities of those who care for and serve them.
- Sustained, comprehensive independent-living programs should be available to all youth in care as early as age 14.
- The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services should carry out its legislative mandates to systematically evaluate independent-living programs and encourage adoption of best practices.
- States should be required to provide Medicaid coverage for youth in care up to age 24, especially to enable them to obtain mental health services.
- Whenever possible, youth in foster care should remain in the same school even if their residential placement changes.
- Federal programs such as TRIO, GEAR UP (Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs), and Free Application for Federal Student Aid should be modified to more effectively reach youth in foster care.

The full report is available online at www.ihep.org/Pubs/PDF/fosteryouth.pdf.

State-by-State Approaches to Reducing Unintended Pregnancies

Of the 6 million pregnancies that occur among American women each year, nearly half are unintended, resulting in 1.4 million unplanned births and 1.3 million abortions annually, according to the Guttmacher Institute. The institute recently assessed each state's level of commitment to improving access to contraception, and ranked them accordingly.

The analysis found that a geographically and politically diverse group of states, including Alabama, Alaska, California, New York, and South Carolina, rank highest in their efforts to serve women in need of contraceptive services, allocate public funding to family planning, and adopt laws and policies that promote access to contraceptive information and services.

The analysis also revealed that other states, including Indiana, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, and Utah, are "failing the women who live there," according to the institute. The report concludes that both state and national policymakers must take "bold new steps" to improve women's health if they are to meet the goal established by the federal government in 2000 for reducing unintended pregnancies by 40% nationwide by 2010.

"Our nation has shown an incredible ability to marshal resources and focus public attention to tackle some of the most challenging public health problems, such as smoking and obesity," says Guttmacher President and CEO Sharon Camp. "By following the example of states ranging from California to South Carolina, and Alaska to Alabama, which have made huge strides in improving access to contraception, we can make similar progress toward reducing unintended pregnancy in all states."

Real Parents Share Their Stories in Reunited

A new video funded by the Oregon Department of Human Services features the real stories of substance-abusing parents who talk openly about their recovery and their efforts to regain custody of their children from child protective services.

Most of the parents were addicted to methamphetamine when their children entered the child welfare system. A desire to make a better life for their families motivated the parents to sit before the camera and film the 25-minute video, *Reunited*. They not only talk about their recovery, but also about the benefits of working with the child welfare system. The film also provides information about the Adoption and Safe Families Act and the time limits for reunification mandated by the federal law.

Reunited is being distributed to all child welfare agencies in Oregon as a teaching tool for new parents who enter the child welfare system. Agencies elsewhere can purchase the video through www.ASFAvideo.org.

A Closer Look at Rural Children's Needs

Rural life can offer some children advantages and disadvantages at home and in early care and education settings, compared with the experience of nonrural children, according to findings in *Rural Disparities in Baseline Data of the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study: A Chartbook*.

Released by Child Trends and the National Center for Rural Early Childhood Learning Initiatives at Mississippi State University, the report outlines some of the advantages for children living in rural areas, including a greater likelihood of

- contact with a nonresident or noncustodial parent within the previous four weeks for children not living with their fathers,
- enrollment in a Head Start program during the year before kindergarten,
- small kindergarten class sizes (15 or fewer children),
- an orderly kindergarten class,
- ratings of child social competence,
- regular family dinners, and
- safe neighborhoods.

Disadvantages for young children in rural areas, compared with their nonrural peers, did emerge in the research:

- Mothers of infants in rural areas are more likely to report feelings of depression.
- Other than Head Start, young children in rural areas are less likely to participate in center-based early care and education, a type of care that has been found to predict better language and cognitive development in children.
- At kindergarten entry, a lower proportion of rural children are proficient in letter recognition and identifying the beginning sounds of words.

"These findings help specify where to target efforts," says Cathy Grace, Director of the National Center for Rural Early Childhood Learning Initiatives and a professor at Mississippi State University. "For example, strengthening the early language and literacy stimulation that young children receive is among the potential targets for work with young children in rural areas."

Educational Well-Being of U.S. Children Stagnate Since 1975

America has made great strides since 1975 in the well-being of children in many important areas, except education, according to the 2006 Child Well-Being Index (CWI), which measures the trends in the quality of life of children and youth.

"The overall well-being of children and youth in the United States has persistently improved over the past decade," says CWI developer and Duke University sociologist Kenneth Land. "This year's Child Well-Being Index, however, raises serious concerns around education and illustrates the urgent need for policies and practices that serve our nation's youth in this area."

In a statement, U.S. Education Secretary Margaret Spellings said,

> *Over the last five years, more reading progress was made among 9-year-olds than in the previous three decades combined. While this is great news for our younger students, we are not seeing the same kind of results at the high school level, where reading and math scores remain stagnant. It's time we make high school reform a priority, apply the principles of No Child Left Behind, and ensure that a high school education in America is a ticket to success, not a certificate of attendance.*

Ruby Takanishi, President of the Foundation for Child Development, points out the need to better use research to guide policy to move educational attainment levels upward. "We have seen how effective integrated prekindergarten to grade three programs can be in giving children a strong foundation with which to start life," Takanishi says. "Quality early education programs that couple strong curricula with qualified and competent teachers are essential to maintain prekindergarten's momentum through primary and secondary grades."

On the positive side, the CWI indicates that, since 1975, fewer teenage girls are having babies, and fewer children are smoking, drinking, using illegal drugs, and committing crimes. More 3- and 4-year-olds are attending pre-K, more young adults are getting college degrees, decreasing numbers of children are committing suicide, and more young people are attending religious services.

A national, research-based composite measure updated annually, the CWI combines data from 28 indicators across seven domains into a single number for child well-being. To read a full report about this year's CWI, visit www.soc.duke.edu/~cwi.

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