

## **Improving Access to College and Employment**

### **Chafee Education and Training Grant (ETG)**

Youth planning to enroll in college this summer or next fall should complete the Chafee ETG application in addition to the Free Application for Federal Student Aid and the Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance Agency (PHEAA) worksheet. Chafee ETG applications for the 2009-2010 academic year should be available on the [www.pheaa.org](http://www.pheaa.org) website on April 1. (Chafee ETG applications for the 2008-2009 academic year are still available at [www.pheaa.org](http://www.pheaa.org).) If your youth or you have questions about current Chafee applications or a youth's status, please contact PHEAA at 1-800-831-0797. If you have Aftercare youth who plan to move to another state and establish residency there, they can find information on the ETG programs in other states at: [www.statevoucher.org](http://www.statevoucher.org)

### **SAT Fee Waivers are available from the IL Project**

You can obtain SAT fee waivers for juniors and SAT fee waivers/college application fee waivers for seniors entered into PILOTS from Janice Coplin at [jtc30@pitt.edu](mailto:jtc30@pitt.edu) or 717.795.9048, ext. 231.

### **Encourage Students to Complete Financial Aid Applications**

Now is the time for youth to complete financial aid and scholarship applications if they are considering college or other post-secondary options for next fall. Your students already in college must renew their college financial aid applications each year, too. The deadline for students to complete their state grant applications is May 1<sup>st</sup> if they are considering four-year academic majors (August 1<sup>st</sup> is the deadline for first time applicants for two-year programs.) Youth need not be accepted at colleges to begin the financial aid and scholarship process. Local and community application may have early deadlines; check with your high school guidance offices. Don't let your youth miss important deadlines and possible funding.

### **Orphan Foundation Scholarship**

The Orphan Foundation of America (OFA) is now accepting applications for scholarships for the 2009-2010 academic year. Scholarships are available to eligible former foster youth who are pursuing postsecondary education. To qualify, applicants must meet the following criteria:

- Have been in foster care for one consecutive year at the time of their 18th birthday or high school graduation OR have been adopted or taken into legal guardianship out of foster care after their 16th birthday OR have lost both parents to death before age 18 and not been subsequently adopted
- Be accepted into or enrolled in an accredited postsecondary program (university, college, community college, or vocational/technical institute)
- Be under age 25 on March 31, 2009

For more information, visit the OFA website: <http://orphan.org/index.php?id=30>

## **Transitions to Permanency**

### **Preparation: The Foundation to Promote Family Leadership (Webinar)**

March 20, 2009, 2:00 p.m. EDT Preparation greatly affects almost every facet of Family Group Decision Making (FGDM); in fact, it is the foundation that upholds the entire process. This webinar, offered by American Humane, will illustrate the nuts and bolts of preparing individuals involved in an FGDM process and identify the building blocks for promoting a safe environment for these individuals. Participants are encouraged to round out the discussion with experiences and examples from their work with families during the preparation process. <http://www.americanhumane.org/protecting-children/conferences-trainings/family-group-decision-making-teleconference-series.html>

### **Teen Dating Violence Prevention**

Two websites offer a variety of down-loadable and on-line resources to help inform teens about the prevalence of teen dating violence and how they can protect themselves and others. For more information, you can visit: [www.ovw.usdoj.gov/teen-dating-violence.htm](http://www.ovw.usdoj.gov/teen-dating-violence.htm) or [www.ncjrs.gov/teendatingviolence/](http://www.ncjrs.gov/teendatingviolence/)

## Reconnecting Youth

### **Disproportionate Numbers of Girls in Juvenile Justice System Have Mental Health Needs**

Research published in this month's American Journal of Public Health finds that girls in the public mental health system were arrested at earlier ages more frequently and were charged with more serious offenses than girls in the general population. This provides strong evidence for the coordination between mental health and justice systems to provide rehabilitation.

[www.ajph.org/cgi/content/abstract/99/2/234](http://www.ajph.org/cgi/content/abstract/99/2/234)

### **Special Education Issues**

The Legal Center for Foster Care and Education announces several new products that are available on its website. The first packet of materials we want everyone to be aware of is a series on Special Education Decision-Making for Children in Foster Care. As we all know, having clear education decision-makers and strong education advocates for children in foster care is an important factor in improving education outcomes and permanency outcomes for children in foster care.

The Center also has a newly completed article on State Law Options that dissects the federal law and identifies several areas where states can determine how the federal law will be implemented in their state. This article can be useful to anyone who: has struggled with understanding how various states have different processes and procedures for determining who is the special education decision-maker for a child; wants to identify what areas of state law or policy may need to be clarified to more effectively implement the federal law; and wants to engage in discussions in states and jurisdictions about what would be the right policy and practice for their state.

Download materials at: [www.abanet.org/child/education/state\\_law\\_questions\\_eddm.pdf](http://www.abanet.org/child/education/state_law_questions_eddm.pdf).

Additionally, the center has completed a series of factsheets to address the issues of special education decision-making geared to different audiences.

- \* Children's attorneys
- \* Judges
- \* Caseworkers
- \* Foster parents
- \* Youth
- \* Educators

Each of these factsheets is available at [www.abanet.org/child/education/publications](http://www.abanet.org/child/education/publications).

## Program Resources

### **Interagency Working Group on Youth Programs Develops New Website**

The Interagency Working Group on Youth Programs recently announced the launch of FindYouthInfo.gov, a collaborative effort of 12 Federal departments and agencies developed out of a shared goal of strengthening community resources to support our Nation's youth. This site provides Federally-developed interactive tools and targeted information to help youth-serving organizations and community partnerships plan and implement effective youth programs. The site offers customized strategies and practical resources designed to help communities: Build and sustain effective community partnerships; Generate maps of community resources; Develop evidence-based youth programs addressing risk and protective factors; and, Access up-to-date information on Federal programs, funding opportunities, and youth-related issues. Online tools include social bookmarking, a calendar of events, news feeds, mapping tools, searchable youth program database, and much more. <http://findyouthinfo.gov/>

### **Partnering to Provide Housing for Children and Youth**

Information and resources that support partnerships between child welfare and public housing agencies are the focus of a new website launched by the National Center for Housing and Child Welfare (NCHCW). NCHCW is working to support collaborations at the local, regional, and State levels in order to better assist families when the primary barrier to reunification with their children in foster care is the lack of affordable, safe, decent, and permanent housing. The Center is also working with agencies that serve foster youth to help youth who are aging out of foster care

develop plans for achieving housing stability. NCHCW supports these partnerships on three levels:

- Educating policymakers about the need for housing subsidies and services for homeless families and youth
- Developing relationships between homeless services and child welfare agencies
- Cross-training frontline workers to work together to prevent homelessness and child maltreatment

Resources on the site include links to legislation and policy, a model of partnership between child welfare and affordable housing agencies, training materials, and a bibliography of research reports. [www.nchcw.org](http://www.nchcw.org)

### **2010 U.S. Census – Helping Your Youth to Get Involved (and Be Counted)**

The 2010 Census Partnership Program involves all types of organized entities and is a major communication effort. This nonpartisan program combines the strengths of the nation's business and professional organizations, chambers of commerce, community action and advocacy groups, corporations, governments, labor unions, media, religious, service and youth organizations, and other specialized groups. Our objective is to convey three essential elements of 2010 Census. Filling out and mailing back your Census form is:

**1. Easy      2. Safe      3. Important**

There are many ways an agency, organization, business or individual can help promote Census 2010. Some ways you can assist the Census Bureau are but are not limited to the following:

- Appoint a liaison to work with the Census Bureau.
- Use 2010 Census drop-in articles, messages and logos in newsletters, mailings, and other in-house communications (e-mail, Web site, etc.).
- Encourage employees and constituents to complete and mail their questionnaire.
- Display and/or distribute 2010 Census promotional materials.
- Identify job candidates and/or distribute and display recruiting materials.
- Provide space for Be Counted sites and/or Questionnaire Assistance Centers.
- Provide volunteers for census promotional events.
- Link to the 2010 Census Web site from your organization's Web site.
- Use and distribute educational materials.
- Participate in a speaker's bureau for the 2010 Census.
- Provide a translator and/or translate 2010 Census materials.

For more information, contact: Benita M. Johnson, Partnership Specialist - Pennsylvania  
267-650-5871 or 215-717-7600 or [Benita.M.Johnson@census.gov](mailto:Benita.M.Johnson@census.gov)

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**Census  
2010**

## **Funding Opportunities and Sustainability**

### **Faith-Based Office to Include Community-Based Programs**

The newly named and restructured White House Office for Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships will be a resource for organizations, both secular and faith-based, to address the challenges of poverty, serve women and children, prevent teen pregnancy and improve the odds for young fathers. The Office will help "local groups learn their obligations under the law, cut through red tape, and make the most of what the federal government has to offer." [www.whitehouse.gov](http://www.whitehouse.gov)



## Engaging Teen Fathers

### Ten Promising Practices in Teen Fatherhood Programs

For many years, teen fathers were either overlooked or blamed for their role in teen pregnancy. However, interest in designing programs to reduce teen pregnancy and to enhance outcomes for babies and children, as well as meet the needs of this vulnerable population, has increased in recent years. A National Responsible Fatherhood Clearinghouse brief authored by Child Trends, **Promising Teen Fatherhood Programs: Initial Evidence Lessons from Evidence-Based Research**, identifies ten common features of "model" and "promising" programs for teen fathers. Eighteen fatherhood programs were assessed and, of these, one was identified as a "model" program and three as "promising" programs.

Based on the evidence from these programs, more effective teen fatherhood programs:

1. Partnered with community organizations such as schools, pre-natal clinics and programs for teen mothers to help recruit and engage teen fathers.
2. Had program staff develop one-on-one relationships with teen fathers, either in small groups, through individual case management, or through mentoring services.
3. Offered a comprehensive array of services to teen fathers that went beyond only parenting information.
4. Began with a theoretical program model and used theories of change or logic models that were effective with adolescent parents.
5. Delivered services in engaging and interactive ways.
6. Conducted needs assessments and/or used participant feedback to provide teen fathers the services they wanted.
7. Hired professionals who were experienced, empathetic, enthusiastic, well-connected in the community, and carefully matched to participants.
8. Incorporated teaching methods and materials that were appropriate for teen fathers and their culture and age.
9. Used an incentive with teen fathers and their families.
10. Mentored teen fathers.

A more detailed report, **Elements of Promising Practice in Teen Fatherhood Programs: Evidence-Based and Evidence-Informed Research Findings on What Works**, provides additional information about the 18 fatherhood programs, including the four that fit the criteria as "model" or "promising" programs. Both reports are available at [www.childtrends.org](http://www.childtrends.org)

## Professional Development Opportunities

### Governor's Extra-Learning Opportunities Conference

The Pennsylvania Department of Education in partnership with the Center for Schools and Communities announces the PROMISING PRACTICES-PROVEN STRATEGIES: Afterschool Programs Working for Pennsylvania Youth Conference. Plan now to attend this statewide conference in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania at the Hilton Harrisburg on March 4-6, 2009. The conference will focus on key elements of high-quality extra learning opportunities, and on developing systems that support and promote collaboration and youth success. Who should attend? All who work on behalf of children and youth. There is no registration fee to attend this conference and Act 48 and LSW credits will be available (pending approval). Details and online registration for this event are available on the Center for Schools and Communities website at [www.center-school.org](http://www.center-school.org).

### Power Through Knowledge: 8th Independent Living Disabilities Conference April 2-4, 2009. Harrisburg

Independent Living advocates from across the state will gather in Harrisburg on April 2-4, 2009 for the 8th Power Through Knowledge Independent Living Conference. The 3-day event is the largest cross-disability conference in the state and is hugely popular with IL veterans and newcomers. The conference will feature more than 25 amazing workshops with topic for the experienced conference attendees and the first-timers! Plus, entertaining dinners, a national

disability history exhibit, a march to the state Capitol and rally, an Independent Living Expo feature produces and services that promote independence. [www.PaSILC.org](http://www.PaSILC.org)

### **IL/SWAN Spring Quarterly Meetings:**

**Wednesday, April 1, 2009** – Radisson Lackawanna Station Hotel, Scranton

**Monday, April 6, 2009** – Holiday Inn, Clarion

**Tuesday, April 7, 2009** – Four Points Sheraton, Greensburg

**Tuesday, April 21, 2009** – The Conference Center, Central Pennsylvania College, Summerdale

**Monday, April 27, 2009** – Embassy Suite Hotel, Philadelphia Airport

**Tuesday, April 28, 2009** – Holiday Inn, Fort Washington

**National Pathways to Adulthood 2009 Independent Living/Transitional Living Conference June 3-5, 2009** in San Diego, CA This Conference will provide important opportunities to hear about promising practices from across the country and for participants to work together to explore effective transition solutions for young people. Connect with your colleagues and take advantage of networking and collaboration opportunities. <http://www.nrcys.ou.edu/conferences/np09>

### **IL/SWAN Summer Statewide Meeting**

Lancaster Host Resort and Conference Center, Lancaster, June 23-24, 2009

### **17<sup>th</sup> Annual Pennsylvania Permanency Conference**

Lancaster Host Resort and Conference Center, Lancaster, June 24-26, 2009

### **Independent Living Project Updates:**

#### **Pennsylvania Independent Living Statewide Youth Retreat**

This summer's statewide IL Youth Retreat is July 13-17, 2009 at the University of Pittsburgh at Johnstown. The theme, "DREAM -- (Determine, Realize, Educate, Achieve, and Motivate) was suggested by Ivory Bennett, a high school senior from Allegheny County. The banquet speaker on July 16<sup>th</sup> is going to be Jaia Johns. More information will be sent to IL programs in the early April.

#### **Know Your Rights Manual Trainings**

The Know Your Rights manual, which was developed by the Juvenile Law Center, Kids Voice and the Youth Advisory Board, has been recently updated. Training is available in your area from the Juvenile Law Center, Kids Voice or the IL Project staff at the University of Pittsburgh. If you have not already submitted a request for training, please contact your IL specialist at Pitt and we'll arrange for one of the groups to provide training for your youth, staff and/or partners.

#### **Ansell-Casey Life Skills Assessment (ACLSA) training**

Justin Lee and Steve Eidson recently completed a three-day training from Casey Family Programs are certified to train programs about the ACLSA and its many advantages and resources for youth and programs. If you'd like to learn more about the ACLSA and how it could be used (or better utilized) by your program, please let either Justin or Steve know.

#### **Independent Living Curricula: Coming Soon Throughout the State**

Two new Independent Living curricula will soon be offered by the IL Project; currently, they are in the final stages of review at the University. The first curriculum, The Foundations of Independent Living: An Overview, is a one-day introduction to IL programs. This training would be excellent for anyone who wants to have some knowledge of IL services and the transition philosophy. The second curriculum, The Independent Living Services Continuum: Engaging Youth in Their Transition Process is a two-day workshop for Independent Living professionals. Look for more information about workshops which will be offered in your area this spring and summer.

#### **CWTP Training Calendar:**

If you'd like to know what courses are offered to counties and providers, the Encompass database has been updated so that you can view all of the training opportunities at the CWTP. The following website will provide access to trainings at: <http://www.encompass.pitt.edu/>

### **Parent Ambassador Support Now Available**

As we mentioned last month, Tonya Burgess has been hired by the CWTP to work with family engagement programs. As she states: "I'm originally from Chicago and have lived in Pennsylvania for over 15 years. As a teenager I was in the foster care system for over four years. I was constantly being moved and was placed in over eight foster homes. While in foster care I became pregnant at the age of 18 and was discharged from care after the birth of my daughter. Thirteen months later I had a son. The only involvement I had with a system was through the public assistance welfare, food stamps and medical program. It was not until my son became much older, that my family and I became involved with the Juvenile Probation system. Once again, I experienced confusion, a sense of loneliness, hopelessness and felt abandoned. I was let down by the same system that was supposed to help my family. These feelings were not new to me I had felt them before as a youth, as a teenager and now as an adult. It is because of these experiences that I gladly signed up and accepted the position as a Parent Ambassador with the Pennsylvania Child Welfare Training Program. I want to let Parents know they have a voice and can be empowered to make change. As a Parent Ambassador, I look forward to working with parents across the state that may recently or in the past been involved in the Child Welfare System. It is important for parents to take an active role by getting involved in trainings, educations, and becoming informed so we can be advocates and role models to make the essential changes needed in our communities and the Child Welfare systems." If you'd like to talk to Tonya and/or get her input into your efforts, please contact her at 717.795.9048 or [tob12@pitt.edu](mailto:tob12@pitt.edu).

### **People in Transition – Welcome and Congratulations to:**

**Matt Dietrich** has joined the IL program staff at Keystone Adolescent Center in Greenville, Mercer County.

**Jessica Strong** has joined the IL program at Ward Home in Pittsburgh.

**Jessica Davis** is a new IL worker at Hill House in Pittsburgh.

**Kim Barsness** and **Rhianna Diana** have recently joined the IL Success Program at Auberle in Pittsburgh.

Circle C in Pittsburgh has two new members on it R U Ready team: **Andre King** and **William Battles**.

**Rachelle Riblett** is the new IL contract monitor for Westmoreland County's Children's Bureau.

#### **UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH IL PROJECT**

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