

**MARCH 2005
HAPPY SPRING!**

Focus on Collaboration

Working Together in the Philadelphia Area: The AIC and Temple University

Most youth in foster care face daunting challenges in terms of academic preparation. The Achieving Independence Center and Temple University have partnered to try to improve the academic future for youth in care.

Miguel Melendez has faced long odds from birth. Before his first birthday, he was in foster care. For the past 18 years, living in Philadelphia, he's bounced from school to school, his home situation often in flux. His probability for success hovered around zero. Now a junior at the city's Daniel Boone High School, Melendez, 18, is living on his own and is on track to be the first in his family to claim a high school diploma.

Kimberly Washington is another long shot. The Temple senior and Philadelphia native entered foster care at age 3. She nearly flunked out of her first semester of college, but now — with graduation from The Fox School of Business nearing in May — is polishing her law school applications.

Melendez and Washington are just two of the hundreds of local foster care kids who have vanquished their near-impossible odds through the support of the Achieving Independence Center, a city-run agency in which Temple is a vital partner.

"I probably wouldn't be at Temple right now if I hadn't gotten help at the center," said Washington, now a math tutor at the AIC. "I wasn't prepared for college when I came here and wouldn't have finished on my own."

The University's Center for Social Policy and Community Development, part of the School of Social Administration, provides foster care youth who visit the AIC with academic support meant to steer them toward a high school diploma and postsecondary schooling. The center also manages the AIC's male mentoring program.

"The adults in the center care about us and want to help us succeed," said Melendez, who also participated in supervised independent living. "I took everything they've shown me and applied it a step further and am now living on my own. I've been out on my own for two months now."

Family Group Conferencing: Bringing the Family into Family-Centered Practice

A recent web cast is now available for viewing as well as archives and handouts for downloading if you would like to learn more about family group conferencing. Segments include Karin Gunderson speaking about family group conferencing, Deanna Grace on FGC in the African-American Community, and Pattie Elofson on FGC with Native American families.

www.hunter.cuny.edu/socwork/nrcfcpp/webcasts/index.html

Teen Zone: Written by Youth for Youth

An online newspaper for Philadelphia teens by Philadelphia teens has just gone live on the web. It can be accessed at <http://www.teenzoneonline.com>. All content is produced and managed entirely by students in public and private schools in Philadelphia. If you work with Philadelphia youth, here's a way for them to stay connected to home.



Working with "At Risk" Populations

City and Rural KIDS COUNT Pocket Guides

These KIDS COUNT Pocket Guides are designed to give advocates and policymakers a better understanding of conditions faced by the families living in large cities and rural areas in their states. Based on data from the 2000 Census the City KIDS COUNT Pocket Guide provides detailed, objective data needed to track the well-being of children in 71 large cities. The Rural KIDS COUNT Pocket Guide provides 2000 Census data on the well being of children in the rural portion of each state. http://aecf.org/kidscount/pocket_guides/index.htm

Screening and Assessing Mental Health and Substance Use Disorders

This guide includes profiles of more than 50 instruments, guidelines for selecting instruments, and best practice recommendations for diverse settings and situations. It is intended as a basic tool for professionals working toward the goal of early, accurate identification of youth with mental disorders. Once identified, these youth can receive the services required to improve their lives, reduce recidivism, and promote community safety. Child welfare professionals may find much of this information useful as well. www.ojdp.ncjrs.org/publications/PubAbstract.asp?pubi=11936

Inhalant Abuse on the Rise Among Young Teens

The University of Maryland Center for Substance Abuse Research is reporting that despite the decline in teen drug use since 2002, more and more eighth graders are trying inhalants and don't think it is a "great risk" to do so. The report is based on the University of Michigan's national Monitoring the Future survey. "This turnaround in their use continues to suggest a need for greater attention to the dangers of inhalant use in our media messages and in-school prevention programs," says Lloyd Johnston, the study's principal investigator. For more information, go to: <http://www.cesar.umd.edu/cesar/cesarfax/vol14/14-03.pdf>

Truancy Web Site Offers Information and Resources

The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention's truancy Web site features information on truancy, best practices, federal and state initiatives, publications, and other resources. Information from OJJDP's December 2004 truancy conference will be added in the coming weeks. <http://www.ojdp.ncjrs.org/truancy/index.html>

Dynamic Picture of Marijuana and Cocaine Use

"Predicting Heavy Drug Use" (60 pp.) describes the movement of adolescents and young adults into and out of drug use, and also predicts heavy drug use. The data source is the Department of Labor's National Longitudinal Survey of Youth, started in 1979 with a sample of 12,686 adolescents ages 14-21. www.whitehousedrugpolicy.gov/publications/predict_drug_use

Partnering with Parents and Foster Parents

Prevention 2005: Safe Children and Healthy Families Are a Shared Responsibility

In preparation for Child Abuse Prevention Month in April, the Prevention website has been updated with a new community resource packet. The website and packet feature fact sheets and a poster in both English and Spanish that emphasize the theme of shared responsibility for preventing abuse and neglect and protecting children's safety and well-being. <http://nccanch.acf.hhs.gov/topics/prevention/index.cfm>

Fatherhood Training Curriculum

The National Family Preservation Network has released an Advanced Fatherhood Training Curriculum (AFTC) package. The curriculum focuses on best practice and the actual skills needed to engage fathers. The AFTC is intended for use following training on NFPN's basic Fatherhood Training Curriculum. A reduced price is available with purchase of both training curricula. <http://www.nfpn.org/fatherhood/>

Cultural Competence Training

A new family support resource on cultural competence has been made available by the National Resource Center for Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention (FRIENDS). This training tool, "Introduction to Cultural Competence," includes a facilitator's guide, PowerPoint presentation, and list of resources. www.friendsnrc.org/resources/fact_sheets.asp

State Policies on Foster Parent In-Service Training

States have a variety of policies regarding in-service training for foster parents. Areas covered in the study found on the following website are: mandatory annual training requirements; acceptable source of training (provider, modality); content of training; funding issues; source of requirement (statute, policy, etc.); and consequences of non-compliance.

www.hunter.cuny.edu/socwork/nrcfcpp/info_services/state-policies

Guardianship Resources

The NRCRCPPP is in the process of reviewing and updating all of its website materials. One of the newest additions is a page on Guardianship resources, including two PowerPoint presentations used in a recent teleconference in which State foster care and adoption managers were updated with the latest information on the use of subsidized guardianship as a permanency option. http://www.hunter.cuny.edu/socwork/nrcfcpp/info_services/guardianship.html

Working with Youth in Transition

SAT and College Fee Waiver Requests for 2004-05

The Independent Living Project provides fee waivers for the SAT for juniors and seniors as well as fee waiver request for college admission applications. Youth must be registered in PILOTS to qualify for the waivers. Forms are now available from Ann Molsky at the Independent Living Project. Contact her at akm9@pitt.edu or 717.795.9048, ext. 231.

Audio and Power Point Slides from "Adolescence and the Transition to Adulthood"

Now available from Chapin Hall Center for Children, the audio portion of a conference held November 2004. Full audio recordings of sessions on the transition to adulthood, health/mental health, vulnerable populations, youth development/civic engagement, juvenile justice, education, workforce development, and public policy. Selected Power Point presentations from many sessions also available. <http://www.about.chapinhall.org/conferences/NovATA/presentations.html>

Scholarships for 2005-2006

Independent Living Project Scholarship

The Independent Living Project Scholarship **application deadline is 2 May 2005**. Youth who attend or plan to attend a post-secondary institution of higher education are encouraged to apply. Those youth who are or were enrolled in a Chafee grant-funded Independent Living program with a county or private provider receive first priority. Recipients will each receive \$1000 for the 2005-2006 year. Scholarships are renewable. For more information, please contact Steve Eidson at the Independent Living Project at: 717.795.9048, extension 701 or see13@pitt.edu.

Pennsylvania State Foster Parent Association Scholarship.

The program is open to high school seniors who are presently in care through a private or public agency in Pennsylvania or whose parents are "active" members of PSFPA and whom will be continuing their education through a higher learning institution, college, technical, or trade school. The scholarships are awarded on a competitive basis and are a one-time grant. Applications are on the PSFPA website at <http://psfpa.com/ScholarshipApp.pdf>, or by calling (717) 671-0102 or 1-800-951-5151. The **application deadline is 1 April**.

People in the News

Deborah Kissell, the Independent Living coordinator from the Bedford County, gave birth to a son in January. We extend our best wishes to Deb and her husband.

If you have news to share, please e-mail Steve Eidson for inclusion in the next UPDATE.

Professional Development Opportunities in 2005

Independent Living Statewide Meeting, "Building Bridges to Adulthood," Penn Stater Hotel and Conference Center, 28-29 April 2005.

CASSP Children's Interagency Conference, Penn Stater Hotel and Conference Center, 3-6 May 2005. Web site: <http://pacassp.psych.psu.edu>

Daniel Memorial's 12th Annual Foster Care Conference, "**Soaring to New Heights**," will be held 18-20 May at the Omni Hotel in Jacksonville, FL. www.danielkids.org

"Pathways to Adulthood: Independent Living/Transitional Living Conference," 18-20 May 2005. Westin Peachtree Plaza Hotel, Atlanta, Georgia. Sponsored by US Department of Health and Human Services. For information: www.nrcys.ou/nrcyd

The **SWAN Summer Statewide Meeting** is 16 June at the Grantville Holiday Inn. More information and details will be available soon.

Pennsylvania IL Youth Retreat: "**Freedom, Focus, Future: Mission Independence**," Penn State Mont Alto, 11-15 July 2005.

The Pennsylvania Communities of Practice **Transition Conference** will be held at the Penn Stater Hotel and Conference Center on 20-22 July. For information, visit www.pattan.k12.pa.us

The North American Council on Adoptable Children (NACAC) conference is at the Westin Convention Center, Pittsburgh, 3-6 August. Please note that because it is coming to Pennsylvania this year, SWAN is partnering with NACAC instead of holding its own separate conference. More details are available at www.nacac.org/conference

Daniel Memorial's National Independent Living Conference, "**Growing Pains**," will be held 21-24 September at the Westin Peachtree Hotel in Atlanta. www.danielkids.org

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