

**Permanency for Children with
Special Needs)**

ADDRESS: 440 First Street, NW, 3rd Floor
Washington, DC 20001-2084
202-942-0267
202-638-4004 FAX
mliepold@cwla.org

The Child Welfare League of America (CWLA) has been a national leader in adoption and other permanency options for foster care children with special needs since its founding in 1920. In addition to the outreach CWLA provides by educating professionals and the public, it also equips agencies to increase adoption quality and quantity. Other outreach provided includes:

- Conferences - including 2 major national adoption conferences, four national kinship care conferences and six regional Permanency Forums. CWLA also held a national forum that brought judges and child welfare administrators together and worked with the National Indian Child Welfare Association to conduct regional forums.
- Training and technical assistance - provided in 140 localities across the United States.
- Publications - Foster PRIDE/Adopt PRIDE, a CWLA curriculum; documented standards of excellence for foster care, adoption, kinship care, and 8 other practice areas.

CWLA also promotes collaboration and currently serves as a primary partner with the Adoption Exchange Association, in the HHS-sponsored AdoptUSKids. Since 2000, CWLA has adopted new technology and research and evidence based initiatives/practice to respond to current challenges and evolving needs. The organization has provided 2 videoconferences on children in the backlog and concurrent planning and launched a growing series of video and audio conferences and trainings.

**AWARDEE: Family Services of Central Florida (Category #3 Increased
Permanency for Children with
Special Needs)**

ADDRESS: 1300 Citizens Blvd.
Suite 200
Leesburg, FL 34748
352-728-1117
352-326-2506 FAX
mlivingston@cbfamilies.org

Part of Florida's Community-Based Care Initiative, Family Services of Central Florida was contracted by the Florida Department of Family Services in 2001 to provide adoption, family support, and in-home protection to children residing in one of five counties in central Florida. Family Services of Central Florida, a faith-based social service agency, is an affiliate of Central

Adoption Rhode Island is a private, non-profit agency dedicated to recruiting families for children in foster care and supporting those children and families throughout the adoption process. After recognizing the need for leadership and collaboration surrounding permanency and adoption issues in the state, Adoption Rhode Island convened a group of professionals from public and private agencies and developed the Special Needs Adoption Coalition. Key accomplishments include the development of a Youth Speak Out team and a mental health provider list, practice and legislation, and development of a statewide public/private, parent/professional work group to help create adoption policies for the state.

Adoption Rhode Island also:

- Increased efforts to recruit families for children in foster care, including a weekly television segment, "Tuesday's Child," a website and photolisting publications, newspaper and other media recruitment, and other community events.
- Involves children in recruitment decision and activities. Children help to write their own recruitment statements and sometimes help to choose a potential match.
- Provides recruitment and matching services to approximately 140 children and 200 families per year. Adoption Rhode Island helps facilitate approximately 60 placements per year.
- Provides support services through a Parent Advocate who developed a newsletter for adoptive parents and provides phone support. Over the past 2 years, 60 children and families have been provided supportive services.
- Sponsors the annual state adoption conference, which attracts between 500-600 parents, adoptive parents and professionals each year.

AWARDEE: **Born in Our Hearts Adoption Ministry** **(Category #4 Support for Adoptive Families)**

ADDRESS: River Tree Christian Church
7373 Portage St., NW
Massillon, OH 44646
330-494-1860
330-494-3353 FAX

Born in Our Hearts Adoption Ministry at River Tree Christian Church began a partnership with the Foster Care and Adoptions Department at Christian Children's Home (CCHO) of Ohio in 2001. The ministry is open to anyone who has already adopted, those who are thinking about it, or in the process of adoption. Social gatherings are held bi-monthly with the children and adults. Due to the efforts of Born in Our Hearts, seven families have adopted ten children and three children have foster placements with a high probability of becoming adoptions. The church has also strengthened the collaboration by opening office space for CCHO's Foster Care and Adoption Department and for a counseling center.

AWARDEE: **The Collaboration to Camp A.L.W.A.Y.S.** **(Category #4 Support for Adoptive Families)**

Relations District Court
520 King Street, 1st Floor
Alexandria, VA 22314
703-838-4088 x290
stephen.rideout@cialexandria.va.us

Stephen W. Rideout is a Chief Judge of the Alexandria Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court. During his tenure, Judge Rideout has been involved in numerous national, state, and local initiatives seeking to improve permanency for children, expedite adoptions, and create public awareness of children in the foster care system needing adoptive homes. His leadership has brought to the attention of his judicial colleagues the importance of achieving permanency for dependent children. Most recently, Judge Rideout introduced and implemented Adoption Saturday Celebrations (ASC) in Virginia and to the Alexandria Model Court Project. ASC's are adoption ceremonies to celebrate finalization; 3 celebrations have been held since 2002. A total of 19 children and their families have participated in these celebrations. Judge Rideout's implementation of ASC in Virginia has resulted in 15 additional localities implementing ASC, with a total of 241 children and their families participating in these events since 2002.

Participation in ASC is a collaborative effort between many entities, such as the city mayor, the Alexandria Department of Human Services, Court Appointed Special Advocates, and the Virginia Department of Social Services. Other ways in which Judge Rideout has made the public more aware of the ASC include:

- Dissemination of ASC brochures at all trainings for new judges.
- ASC booths at judicial conferences and meetings.
- Local media coverage of Judge Rideout's ASC program, which provides for public education and awareness of the benefits of adoption.
- Participation on numerous national, state, and local advisory committees and councils, including the lead judge of the Alexandria Model Court Project and special advisor to Virginia's Court Improvement Program - Foster Care and Adoption.

AWARDEE: **One Church One Child of Illinois** **(Category #5 Public Awareness)**

ADDRESS: 1911 South Indiana
Chicago, IL 60616
312-328-2322
312-3808-5201 FAX
ahudson@idcfs.state.il.us

One Church One Child (OCOC) has been a leader in special needs adoption for 23 years. Since its inception, over 20,000 presentations have been made in churches, schools and programs, and thousands of community members have been made aware of the need to adopt children. Annually, over 1500 presentations are made statewide regarding the need for foster and adoptive families. It is estimated that over 15,000 Illinois children have been adopted as a direct result of

the recruitment and community outreach efforts of OCOC. An estimated 60,000 children have been adopted nationally because of the program.

In an effort to continue to strengthen the many partnerships it currently has in the Faith community, Illinois recently obtained an endorsement of the National Baptist Congress of Christian Education, which permits the OCOC concept to be taught as a course in the Congress. Since 2000, this partnership has allowed for outreach to more than 900,000 families. Endorsements have also been obtained from other faith-based organizations in Illinois.

OCOC also works with private agencies to see that families are licensed and matched with waiting children. Currently over 200 families have been mentored through the licensing process and are now providing foster or adoptive care to children in Illinois

AWARDEE: **Chany Ockert and Andrew Harmon, Recruitment Specialists** **(Category #5 Public Awareness)**

ADDRESS: A Family For ME
P.O. Box 754
Gardiner, ME 04345
207-588-0996
207-582-9027 FAX
affme@aol.com

Chany Ockert and Andrew Harmon have been instrumental in increasing the visibility of children in foster care through innovative and varied public awareness campaigns and activities, which have encouraged families and individuals to adopt Maine's special needs children. Chany and Andrew have developed an effective working relationship with the media and both meet with a local television's advisory board to explore additional ways to support the adoption message. The local television station with which they work features Maine's waiting children, weekly. Chany and Andrew's other accomplishments include:

- Brought the business community in as partners in the effort to increase public awareness, such as distributing informational flyers on pizza boxes throughout the state.
- Attend community events with displays that inform, encourage and motivate families to consider adoption and fostering.
- Work with churches and hospitals to increase visibility of children through flyers, display boards, and personal presentations.
- Make use of technology by photolisting on AdoptUSKids, the Maine State web page, and their own website.
- Made media connections with local radio stations and newspapers.

AWARDEE: **Oklahoma's NEWSChannel 8** **(Category #5 Public Awareness)**
KTUL-Tulsa ABC

ADDRESS: P.O. Box 8
Tulsa, OK 74101
918-445-8888

For the past 20 years, NewsChannel 8 has aired "Waiting Child" on a weekly basis. Over two thousand children have been placed as a result of this program. In 2002, the television station increased its adoption awareness campaign of waiting children through the Waiting Child Photography Exhibit. NewsChannel 8, in partnership with Waterworks Photography Association brought the exhibit to the Oklahoma Department of Human Services with the hopes of increasing the public's awareness of the need for more adoptive homes. The exhibit, which toured Oklahoma for approximately one year, featured some of the hundreds of Oklahoma children waiting for adoptive homes.

The Photo Exhibit opened to more than 400 visitors. It featured fifty portraits of waiting children, including single children, sibling groups, and older children. The Waterworks Photography Association donated their talents and time to create the portraits. As a result of this media recruitment tool some of NewsChannel 8's staff have become adoptive parents. Approximately fifteen of the children from the exhibit are now in adoption placements.

CATEGORY #6 INDIVIDUAL AND/OR FAMILY CONTRIBUTIONS

AWARDEE: Dr. Joyce Maguire Pavao, (Category #6 Individual and/or
Therapist Family Contributions)

ADDRESS: Center for Family Connections
350 Cambridge Street
Cambridge, MA 02141
617-547-0909
617-497-5952 FAX
Kinnect@aol.com

An adopted person herself, family therapist and author Dr. Joyce Pavao has addressed the unique challenges and needs of children whose lives are affected by loss, rejection, and abandonment since the 1970s. Throughout her years of work, she has pushed to raise the consciousness about issues that impact best practice and policy for working with complex families. Dr. Pavao is the founder and CEO of the Center for Family Connections, which sees 1500 families a year. Her clinical models for working with complex families are taught and practiced nationally and internationally. Dr. Pavao's models for working in the world of adoption have universalized for work with other kinds of complex families, such as kinship, and guardianship.

AWARDEE: Maria & Evan Thomas, Adoptive (Category #6 Individual and/or
Parents Family Contributions)

ADDRESS: 955 South Park Terrace

ADDRESS: Bureau of Family Services, Office
for Children and Families
Ohio Department of Job and Family
Services
255 East Main Street, 3rd Floor
Columbus, OH 43215
614-466-9274
614-728-6726 FAX
browdr@odjfs.state.oh.us

Under the leadership of Ronald Browder, the number of adoptions in Ohio has risen over the past 7 years. During this time, Mr. Browder has provided consistent leadership in the area of adoption, serving as the Policy Coordinator in the Director's office, Ohio Department of Jobs and Family Services and then as the Chief for the Bureau of Family Services, which is his current position. Mr. Browder's accomplishments include:

- In Fiscal Year 2001 to 2002, there was a 13% increase in adoptions, from 2,018 children to 2,285. This indicates a 60% increase in the number of adoptions when compared to those that occurred in FY 1998 to 2002.
- There has been a significant drop in the number of waiting African American children under Mr. Browder's leadership. As of March 2002, there were more African American children placed for adoption than there were white children placed for adoption.
- An increase in the percentage of children adopted within 12 months of their date of permanent commitment, from 24% in the middle of FY 1999 to 37% in the middle of FY 2003.

Mr. Browder also has responsibility for protective, kinship, and foster care and adoption services. He has been instrumental in providing permanency for Ohio's children through innovative planning with limited resources. Some of his achievements include leading the development and implementation of the AdoptOHIO program, which enhanced the collaborative efforts of public and private agencies and he provided oversight for the development of the AdoptOHIO Photo Listing, which currently lists over 2,500 children. Mr. Browder also accessed funds to promote county faith-based recruitment and retention programs for foster and adoptive parents. In his personal life, Mr. Browder has provided foster care to teenage African American males and he has adopted three children with special needs.

AWARDEE: **Ada White, Director of Adoption Services** (Category #6 Individual and/or Family Contributions)

ADDRESS: Child Welfare League of America
440 First Street NW, 3rd Floor
Washington, DC 20001-1084
225-683-9233
202-638-4004 FAX

In addition to her direct care of children, Ms. Gilbert has worked closely with numerous local resources such as the Health Department, school system, Head Start and private therapists. She has also assisted the Frederick County DSS with pre-service training of resource families, making television appearances and writing newspaper articles to educate the public and raise community awareness regarding the need for foster and adoptive families. The Department recognized Mrs. Gilbert and her late husband by dedicating the agency family visiting rooms in their names.

AWARDEE: **Ana Dean, Senior Social Worker** **(Category #6 Individual and/or Family Contributions)**

ADDRESS: Hennepin County Children, Family,
and Adult Services
Health Services Building
525 Portland Avenue MC961
Minneapolis, MN 55415
612-348-4341
612-348-3481 FAX
ana.dean@co.hennepin.mn.us

For the past seven years, Ana Dean has served as the Targeted Recruiter for State Ward placements at Hennepin County Human Services. Ms. Dean's efforts with the recruitment program have resulted in a steady increase in adoptions. She organizes a number of events at which prospective parents meet the county's waiting children who need permanent homes. These events include 2-4 yearly matching events, twice yearly video shows, and a yearly November Adoption Month celebration. Each event has resulted in at least 2 or 3 parent to child matches. Ms. Dean has also accomplished the following:

- Built partnerships between Hennepin County and numerous community groups including churches, private adoption agencies, and Minnesota Adoption Resource Network. These collaborative efforts have enabled Ms. Dean to present waiting children to agencies throughout the entire state, which has resulted in an increase in adoptions.
- Developed 2 programs in adoption that have won national awards. Two programs include the Hennepin County Adoption Web Site and Child/Family matching tools.
- Developed a network of support groups for children waiting for adoption. She facilitates a monthly support group for teenagers waiting to be adopted.
- Strong advocate in promoting special needs adoption.

AWARDEE: **Delores J. Saini, Foster/Adoptive** **(Category #6 Individual and/or Parent Family Contributions)**

ADDRESS: 209 North Crossing Drive
Columbia, SC 29229
803-699-4725

803-736-9021 FAX
dsaini1@aol.com

Inspired by a schoolteacher, who was a foster parent, Delores Saini became a foster adoptive parent herself in 1983. She has welcomed over 60 children to her home while raising 3 birth children and a grandchild. Ms. Saini is an upstanding pillar in her community and is an advocate surrounding social, economic and educational issues. Her accomplishments include:

- Served as president of Foster Parent Association of New York and vice-president and secretary of Foster Adoptive Parent Association from 1989-1994.
- Served as CSE with the New York Board of Education (Committee on Special Education) school review team and preschool. Here, she assisted the psychologist, social worker, and teacher with children's' Individual Education Plans.
- Served as secretary of Pontiac Head Start Parents Committee.
- Member of Family Connection Support Parents, North American Council on Adoptable Children, Council on Adoptive Children, and others.
- Collects and donates clothing to give to foster or needy children.

CATEGORY #7 APPLIED SCHOLARSHIP AND/OR RESEARCH

There were no awards in this category.

CATEGORY #8 PHILANTHROPY

AWARDEE: **Raley's Family of Fine Stores** **(Category #8 Philanthropy)**

ADDRESS: P.O. Box 15618
Sacramento, CA 95852
916-373-6590
916-373-0881 FAX
nmcgagin@raleys.com

Raley's Family of Fine Stores has exhibited excellence in the field of adoptions through its generous donations to Sierra Adoption Services and the children it serves. The family-owned and operated grocery business started with one store in 1935. The business has since expanded to 94 stores throughout Northern California, Nevada, and New Mexico. Thomas Raley, one of the business's owners, works hard to promote his philosophy of "treating others the way you want to be treated" and extends this to the children in the community who hope for a family of their own. Ways in which Raley's Family of Fine Stores has served as an example of philanthropy include:

- Since January 2002, the business has helped over 22 children with donations to Sierra Adoption Services totaling \$110,000.
- Raley's employees invited Sierra Adoption Services to participate in their United Way campaign in October 2002. Employee contributions will help to place 3 children with adoptive families.

- In an effort to assist the 2,700 local children who are waiting to be adopted, Raley's lists Sierra Adoption Services' upcoming events on its website and allows the adoption agency to use the company's logo to leverage additional donations.
- Raley's and its employees help over 25 local children find adoptive families.
- Raley's also gives major gifts to other local health and human service organizations, including the Boys & Girls clubs, Children's Crisis Nurseries, and the Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation.

CATEGORY #9 JUDICIAL OR CHILD WELFARE SYSTEM IMPROVEMENT

AWARDEE: **Juvenile Dependency Court, Santa Clara County Superior Court** **(Category #9 Judicial or Child Welfare System Improvement)**

ADDRESS: 115 Terraine Street
 San Jose, CA 95113
 408-491-4748
 408-491-4797 FAX
ledwards@sct.co.santa-clara.ca.us

In 1985, with a population of 1.5 million, there were over 3,900 children under the jurisdiction of the Santa Clara Juvenile Dependency Court. Today, under the leadership of Presiding Judge Leonard Edwards, there are 2,850 children under court supervision in an overall population of 1.8 million. During this same time period, adoptions have increased from less than 30 to over 240 each year. The keys to the court's success have been attributed to long term planning, a commitment to change, strong judicial leadership and the implementation and utilization of best practices. Over the past 18 years, the Juvenile Dependency Court has done the following to contribute to the significant changes that have taken place:

- One judge handles a child's case from the beginning to end. A trained attorney represents every child from the first hearing through completion of the case and dismissal. Counsel also represents parents and social workers throughout the case.
- The court led in the creation of a CASA program in 1985. The program now has 1,000 volunteers.
- The court created one of the nation's first dependency mediation programs.
- The court worked with the Santa Clara County Department of Family and Children's Services to create one of the nation's first Family Group Conference programs.
- The court created one of the nation's first dependency drug treatment courts to work intensively with substance abusing parents.
- The court and Department of Family and Children's Services hold bi-annual, all day trainings for the court system and the community.
- The court formed the Permanency Planning Committee over 10 year ago, which addresses administrative problems relating to the timely permanency of children in the system.
- The court invites the local media to learn more about the juvenile court and its proceedings.

- The court has no adoption backlog. Whenever a case is ready for an adoption to take place, the matter is scheduled immediately for the adoption hearing and dismissal.

AWARDEE: **Mecklenburg County Youth and Family Services (DSS)** **(Category #9 Judicial or Child Welfare System Improvement)**

ADDRESS: 720 East 4th Street
Charlotte, NC 28201
704-336-4740
704-336-7429 FAX

Due in large part to innovative initiatives the agency has instituted, Mecklenburg County Youth and Family Services (DSS) has experienced a dramatic increase in the number of children leaving foster care through adoption over the past 3 years. The following accomplishments are attributed to DSS's success in reducing the number of children coming into foster care and to expediting children leaving the system:

- Team Decision-Making - the process of inviting families and community partners to help in making critical placement related decisions.
- Shared Parenting - the process of creating a relational bridge between birth and foster parents.
- Neighborhood Based Recruitment - the opportunity to actively recruit, train and support resource families who live in the same neighborhoods where children and families are involved with the child welfare system.
- Recruitment Team - responsible for recruiting, training and preparing families to adopt special needs children.
- Community Awareness - the agency participated in a pre-game show with the NFL's Carolina Panthers to increase community awareness of the need for foster and adoptive parents.
- In-home recruitment parties - friends and neighbors hold these to raise consciousness of the need for foster and adoptive homes in the community. These efforts have resulted in over 50 homes being licensed and approved for special needs children in one year.
- Tracking system - a backlog team was assembled to identify the children in custody for twelve months or more and the barriers to achieving permanence for these children; the team identified 723 children. As for June 2003, the backlog has been reduced by 30%.
- In 1999-2000, 51 adoption, representing 15.5% of the children leaving custody, were completed. The number rose in 2002-2003, when 168 adoptions were completed, representing 30.5% of children leaving custody.