



Save Our Children Coalition Newsletter

Catherine Parkins, Editor



Welcome to our first edition!

Welcome to the first edition newsletter of the Save Our Children Coalition Project at the University of Michigan-Dearborn School of Education!

For those of you who've helped form SOCC out of the Save Our Children Summit in November 2007, hello! And to all newcomers, welcome!

This newsletter seeks to fulfill one of the goals of SOCC: to provide community outreach and collaboration of efforts with members and organizations in the foster care community. The

other goals of SOCC are to educate through conferences and support system reform.

The newsletter will be produced periodically in addition to the website that SOCC will launch in December 2008. Keep watch for updates on the website project!

Feel free to pass this newsletter along to anyone who shares the vision to reach out and assist children in the foster care system.

If you have news or information you would like included in a future edition of the e-newsletter, please

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Thanks and enjoy the newsletter!

“What Happens to a Child in Foster Care?” conference a success!

Seventy guests were in attendance on Saturday, September 27, 2008 at UM-Dearborn's School of Education for the “*What Happens to a Child in Foster Care?*” conference. The program explored the foster care process from the service delivery angle and from the court's standpoint. These presentations were delivered respectively by **Brenda Baker-Mbacké** of

the Michigan Foster Care Review Board, and **Chief Justice Kelly Ramsey** of 3rd Judicial Circuit Court of Michigan.

A special *thank you* goes to our CIAO Project volunteers who staffed registration tables and information booths during the event.

Feedback gathered from participants indicated the conference was a phenomenal success! Response sheets

have provided data on the needs for future education and information for the foster care communities and service providers.

We will be developing a Winter 2009 conference based on feedback obtained at the Fall conference, with input from the SOCC Advisory Committee. Stay tuned for more information!

Save Our Children Coalition website: coming soon!

In December 2008, SOCC will launch its home on the web!

Right now, SOCC is working to gather information for **the online resource directory** that will provide searchable, relevant, up-to-date information for everyone connected to foster care.

We are working with youths in foster in order to make the upcoming website kid-friendly so they can make the most of the information as well.

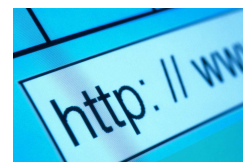
The website will also include events and activities notices for SOCC and other foster care organizations.

After the website launches in December, we will welcome contact from any organization or group who would like their information presented in the online resource directory.

Organizations who are involved in foster care will also be able to submit upcoming events notices to be included on the SOCC

website. You'll help us to fulfill our objective in coordinating efforts between organizations and individuals who seek to improve the lives of children in foster care.

Watch for future updates on the website as they become available!



Faith Communities Coalition on Foster Care

From the SOCC conference in November 2007, a faith-based coalition to support children in foster care was formed. The **Faith Communities Coalition on Foster Care** seeks to enlist faith based community support and work with congregations of all faiths throughout our metropolitan Detroit area in order to raise awareness of the critical needs and to help support foster families and children.

The coalition consists of foster parents, adoptive parents, educators, a pediatrician, social workers, trainers, lawyers, tutors, a grant writer, pastors, business executives and a camp director. Members from a variety of faith communities participate and we anticipate reaching out to the Muslim and Jewish communities in the near future. Readers of this newsletter are urged to contact key leaders in their own faith communities--or their friends in faith communities--to respond to

the call to action to make a difference in the life of a foster child. Already churches are providing camperships for summer camps, book bags filled with school supplies, providing Thanksgiving dinners for foster families, sponsoring an all expense paid holiday week-end at skyline Camp and Retreat Center. Our faith communities can play a key role in the recruitment and support of foster families. Imagine if 100 faith communities would help support just one foster child, what a difference that could make in a year. This newly emerging coalition is focused on continued information gathering

Faith Communities Coalition on Foster Care meetings are held monthly in the Fireside Room at First Presbyterian Church, 1669 West Maple Road, Birmingham, MI. 48009.

and ways we can build relationships between faith communities and social service agencies. An immediate goal is to enlist the help of 100 faith communities to promote May as Foster Care Month with a kick-off on the weekend of May 1-3, 2009. Included in the resources will be materials for pre-publicity, bulletin inserts, ways to spotlight foster care during a day of worship in May, invitation to local representatives and recruiters from the agencies, and a list of specific ways for individuals and congregations can make a difference in the life of a child.

For more information or to get on the email list, contact the coordinator, Rev. Kate Thoresen, at kthoresen7@gmail.com. Or call 248-643-8373.

Help “Big Family of Michigan” this holiday season

With the holiday season upon us, consider lending a hand to **Big Family of Michigan**, an organization that seeks to make the season that much brighter for children in foster care.

For the 2007 holiday season, Big Family of Michigan helped provide gifts to over 5,000 children.

How does this work?

Agencies provide names of foster children with each child’s “wish list,” three items they would like as a holiday gift. From there, Big Family of Michigan seeks donors who provide new gifts based on that wish list or gift cards to retailers.

Big Family of Michigan then works with the agencies to pick up the holiday gifts and deliver them to the foster children.

The organization works throughout the area and state of Michigan, especially in Wayne, Oakland and Macomb counties.

For more information or to get involved with Big Family of Michigan, please contact Jeanne Fowler at 586.445.7735 or by e-mail at jangelfun@sbcglobal.net.



SOCC Advisory Committee

The SOCC Advisory Committee, representing the many perspectives and “voices” of those who care about the welfare of Michigan’s children in foster care, utilizes the special expertise of many of our supporters in moving the Coalition forward.

The Advisory Committee is composed of the following members:

Gail Bagale, SOCC Volunteer

Brenda Baker-Mbacké, Michigan Foster Care Review Board

Paul Duford, Shared Youth Vision Project

Danita Echols, Wayne County Department of Human Services

Rosalind Folman, Developmental Psychologist

Jonnie Hill, CIAO

Cameron D. Hosner, Vista Maria

Annette Howard, Faith Communities for Families

Gilda Jacobs, Senator, State of Michigan

Viola King, Legal Aid and Defender Association

Jack Kresnak, Michigan’s Children

Shirley Mann-Gray, Children’s Hospital of Michigan

Mona Perdue, Michigan Youth Opportunities Initiative

Kelly Ramsey, 3rd Judicial Circuit Court of Michigan

Marge Redmond, Northwest Counseling & Psychotherapy Center

Trisha Stein, Child’s Hope

Deborah Strong, Great Start Collaborative Wayne

Cynthia Swift, Plymouth-Canton Community Schools

Veda D. Thompkins, Families on the Move

Kate Thoresen, Faith Communities Coalition on Foster Care

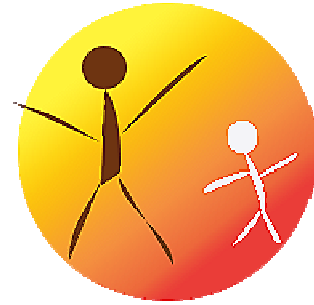
Mary Trepanier-Street, UM-Dearborn

Annemarie Valdez, Child’s Hope

Paul Zions, UM-Dearborn

Contact the SOCC office!

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