



“We dream of a day when all children grow up in families and communities that nurture and support them, so they can make their unique contribution to the world.”

Katie Page Sander, Editor

Faith Communities Coalition Survey Results

October 2011

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INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

FCC Survey Results	1
Perspectives	2
Conference Save the Date	2
Director’s Corner	3
November is Adoption Month	3
SOCC student interns	4
Upcoming Meetings of the Faith Communities Coalition	5
SOCC Advisory Board	6

A giant thank you to all who completed our Faith Communities Coalition on Foster Care online survey in September. 24% of the 308 participants who are on our FCC mailing list responded to the survey with valuable feedback which helps us to gauge the practical impact of the regional Faith Communities Coalition meetings and look at ways that we can heighten this impact to benefit children and families. Fittingly, the winner of the \$20 gift drawing for those who responded to the survey asked that SOCC donate the prize to a family in need.

Survey results revealed that 9% of respondents have begun the process or have become approved as foster or adoptive parents, and 14% state that others in their congregation are becoming foster or adoptive parents due to being inspired by their participation in FCC meetings.

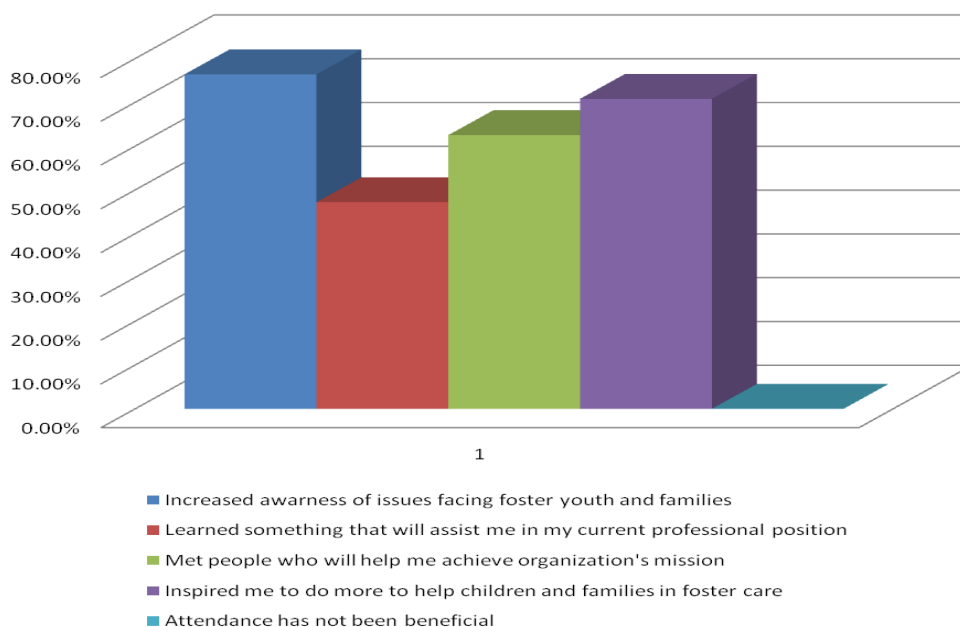
Notably, 37% of respondents stated that either

they themselves or someone in their congregation were becoming mentors to foster youth as a result of their involvement with the Faith Communities Coalition.

One third of respondents stated that they have held a “drive” or collection of items to benefit foster youth and families. One third also stated that they have been a foster care/adoption “ministry” or group dedicated to addressing the needs of foster youth and families. 37% of survey respondents have donated money, their time or skills to assist a child placing agency or individual youth.

Overall, 96% of those who responded stated that they plan to continue their involvement with the Faith Communities Coalition. One respondent remarked that FCC is “...an organization with endless opportunities. Long overdue. Every church & community should get involved.” Amen to that!

Have you, your agency, or your Faith Community benefitted from involvement from Faith Communities Coalition on Foster Care in any of the following ways?



(L) Data regarding benefits of involvement in the Faith Communities Coalition for individuals, agencies and congregations.

Perspectives

“Children”

By Daniela Page Sander, age 12

I believe that all children,
young or old,
need to have a family.

A family that treats them right.
A family of loving care.
A family with a house.
A family with every need.
A family with some wants.

A perfect family for me,
would be,
A family with responsibility.
A family that trusts you so.
A family that will let you know,
the difference between right and wrong.



A family that has fun.
A family that cares for each other.

Because of this, I'll make sure,
when I grow up,
I will;
work with kids who need families
and treat them right.
Have some kids,
make them polite.
Have enough money for my needs,
and extra for my wants.

I have been affected so,
With families who don't know,
How to treat kids right.

Save Our Children Coalition

M UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN-DEARBORN
SCHOOL OF EDUCATION



Annual Conference
Sat., March 24th, 2012

**“Mind, Body and Soul:
The Inner Experience of a
Child in Foster Care”**



DIRECTOR'S CORNER

What the State Cannot Do for Youth in Foster Care... But Communities and Individuals Can

Every child needs at least one adult who is illogically and inexhaustibly crazy about them." ~ Unknown

Soon, in Michigan, the Young Adult Voluntary Foster Care Act should pass the Michigan legislature extending foster care services for youth until age 21. It only makes sense that the State give youth who have endured abuse and neglect, the loss of their biological families, multiple schools and foster families, a little extra time to get services that may help them to function in the adult world. But there are limitations to what the State can do for children in foster care, teenagers or otherwise. Families and communities take care of children in foster care. Or they don't. No amount of training, education, monetary support or regular planning meetings can replace the unconditional love of an adult. While the State can provide certain supports, the most important thing the State can do is help reduce barriers which keep kids from connecting with lifelong relationships to adults.

I called my mom at least 10 times during my first attempt at roasting a chicken during college. My dad talked me through the replacement of the master cylinder on my first car and celebrated over the phone with me after the successful repair. My parents have "been there" for me both literally and figuratively through my life's greatest challenges and triumphs. I am almost forty and I have the privilege of knowing that whatever difficulties I may face, my parents are STILL there to catch me if I fall. I take this for granted. The security of a family (biological, foster, adoptive, chosen) is what all children, all people, deserve. Let us work together to concentrate on relationship and community building for children and families affected by foster care first and foremost. It is not enough to teach a child to balance his or her checkbook. We need to be the person on speed dial who the youth calls on a Sunday morning when they still can't get the checkbook to balance, when they're out of money or need somewhere to do their laundry.

We can be foster parents, adoptive parents or mentors. We can find out who the foster children are who are among us, in our schools, faith communities and neighborhoods and become a part of their lives. We can offer them our talents; a music lesson, a set of braces, driving lessons, kind words and encouragement. We may become that adult who falls in love with a child, finds themselves "illogically and inexhaustibly crazy about them," and provides the one big thing that a State agency, alone, can never do.



November is Adoption Awareness Month

November is National Adoption Month, a time to raise awareness about the adoption of children and youth from foster care. This year's initiative focuses on recruiting and retain parents for the 107,000 children and youth waiting for permanent families in the U.S. foster care system through professional development efforts; facilitating interjurisdictional placements, proactively finding families, working with diverse populations, diligently recruiting families who are able to meet the special needs of youth and supporting and retaining current families. More info: <http://www.childwelfare.gov/adoption/nam/index.cfm>

University of Michigan—Dearborn School of Education Child and Families Students Complete Practicum with SOCC



Abir Bazzi and Diana Young, SOCC student interns

Save Our Children Coalition was pleased to have two interns from the Bachelor's of General Studies in Children and Families program through the University of Michigan—Dearborn School of Education for the fall semester. Abir and Diana assisted in collecting and presenting data for our Faith Communities Coalition online survey, provided outreach to promote our Speakers' Bureau to educate staff at Early Childhood Centers and Head Start programs about the challenges facing young children in foster care, helped to create improved promotional materials for SOCC, and represented SOCC at community events and program planning meetings. Abir and Diana's hard work, enthusiasm and positive attitudes will be missed at Save Our Children Coalition when they graduate this December. Good luck to the both of you as you continue your careers working with children and families!

Abir Bazzi

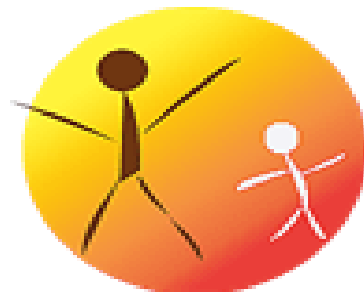
My name is Abir Bazzi, my professional goal is to pursue a career working with both children and their families. I am very pleased that I

was given the opportunity to do my internship at Save Our Children Coalition. I feel that I have benefitted from my work with SOCC in the community, learning skills that will help me when I graduate with my Children and Families degree in December 2011. One the most important things that I learned is that collaboration amongst agencies and systems is key to improving outcomes for children and families in the child welfare system.

Diana Young

My name is Diana Young. My background is in Early Childhood Education and will be graduating in December, 2011 with a major in Children and Families. My internship with Save Our Children Coalition (SOCC) has opened up a whole new area of learning for me. I have gained a tremendous amount of knowledge about foster care and foster care issues through participation in community awareness events and assisting in the development of several of SOCC's projects.

I have had the opportunity to attend various SOCC activities and am inspired by the different ways groups of people within the community support the needs of foster children and families. I have met so many passionate, hard-working individuals who are truly making a difference in the work they do. I have found my internship with SOCC to be a valuable part of my educational experience.



UPCOMING MEETINGS OF THE FAITH COMMUNITIES COALITION ON FOSTER CARE

Thursday, November 3, 2011

Grosse Pointe Memorial Church, 16 Lakeshore Dr., Grosse Pointe Farms

WHAT IS IT LIKE TO BE IN FOSTER CARE?

The Eastside Faith Communities Coalition on Foster Care presents the stories, hopes and dreams of several youth who are aging out of the foster care system. Saba Gebrai and the Blue Babies of the Park West Foundation will speak. Also, Nicole Wood, a foster care alumna who is a Research Associate with the River Rouge Promise Neighborhood Initiative will also share about her experiences in foster care --both as a youth and now as one dedicated to helping other foster children and youth.



Tuesday, November 8, 2011,

Kirk in the Hills Refectory, 1340 W. Long Lake Rd, Bloomfield Hills

WHAT IS HAPPENING NOW IN FOSTER CARE?

State Director Maura Corrigan, of the Michigan Department of Human Services, to speak at the next Mid-Oakland Faith Communities Coalition on Foster Care meeting

Hear dynamic presentations and updates concerning foster care and adoption in Michigan. Local service agencies will provide booths of information on ways individuals can make a difference. Large or small contributions all add up to help change a life.

Next Mid-Oakland FCC meeting **February 7, 2012** First Presbyterian Church of Birmingham.

Thursday, January 26, 2012

St. Luke's Lutheran Church 4205 Washtenaw Avenue Ann Arbor

The Washtenaw Faith Communities Coalition presents a panel of experienced foster parents talking about their experiences.

Upcoming Washtenaw FCC meetings **April 26, 2012, July 26, 2012, October 25, 2012**



Monday, February 13, 2012

Faith Community Church, 44400 West Ten Mile Rd., Novi

Westside Faith Communities Coalition invites you to come hear about the history and vision of the Save Our Children Coalition and upcoming events.

Upcoming Westside FCC meetings **May 14, 2012 September 17, 2012 and November 12, 2012**

For more information call/email Rev. Kate Thoresen, coordinator, at 248-643-8373 or kthoresen7@gmail.com or contact Katie Page Sander, Director of the Save Our Children Coalition: soccproject@umd.umich.edu

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:

Ismael Ahmed, University of Michigan-Dearborn

Gail Bagale, SOCC Founder/Consultant

Brenda Baker-Mbacké, Michigan Foster Care Review Board

David Benjamins, Children’s Hospital of Michigan

Paul Duford Employment and Training Designs, Inc.

Danita Echols, Wayne County Department of Human Services

Tracy Green, Detroit Center for Family Advocacy

Nicole Hoshock, Michigan Department of Human Services

Cameron D. Hosner, Children’s Hospital of Michigan

Annette Howard, Life Directions-Detroit

Gilda Jacobs, Michigan League for Human Services

Viola King, Juvenile Law Group

Jack Kresnak, Michigan’s Children

Shirley Mann-Gray, Children’s Hospital of Michigan

Kelly Ramsey, 3rd Judicial Circuit Court of Michigan

Amy Skehan, University of Michigan—Dearborn

Reco Spencer, Lutheran Social Services of Michigan

Trisha Stein, Child’s Hope

Deborah Strong, Great Start Collaborative Wayne, Student Advocacy Project

Cynthia Swift, Child’s Hope

Veda D. Thompkins, Families on the Move, Inc.

Kate Thoresen, Faith Communities Coalition on Foster Care

Mary Trepanier-Street, University of Michigan-Dearborn

Nicole H. Wood, The Guidance Center, River Rouge Promise Neighborhood Initiative

Lacea Zavala, The Guidance Center, Kids-TALK Children’s Advocacy Center



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If you would like to be removed from the Save Our Children Coalition mailing list, please e-mail

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