



“What’s Happening Now in Foster Care?”

The Mid-Oakland Regional Faith Communities Coalition on Foster Care hosted Department of Human Services Director Maura Corrigan on November 8, 2011 at Kirk in the Hills Presbyterian Church in Bloomfield Hills. Volunteers from The Foster Care Committee at the Kirk spearheaded the organization of the event with the assistance of Faith Communities Coalition Coordinator Rev. Dr. Kate Thoresen.

You can view Corrigan’s full address here:



Inside This Issue:

What’s Happening Now in Foster Care?

Perspectives: Poetry from a foster alumna

Save The Date: Annual SOCC Conference

FCCFC Upcoming Meetings

Holiday Gift Collection for Foster Youth

Director’s Corner

Foster Youth College Goal Sunday

SOCC Advisory Board



Over 150 people, representing various religious congregations, service agencies, community groups and concerned citizens came to hear Director Corrigan speak about her plans to improve outcomes for youth and families in the foster care system. Corrigan thanked the Faith Communities Coalition on Foster Care opening doors and hearts to children in need, applauding the work of the Save Our Children Coalition in its efforts to involve communities in caring for children in the child welfare system. The Department of Human Services is looking to faith communities in Michigan to assist with their ongoing effort to recruit mentors, foster parents and adoptive parents. Over thirty service agencies displayed information about their programs and services at the event.



Above: Rev. Dr. Kate Thoresen (left), director of the Faith Communities Coalition on Foster Care and Maura Corrigan, director of the State of Michigan

Perspectives

I Am From

**I am from the candy store that was across the street.
I am from tacos for dinner, and pickles and jalapenos.**

**I am from a sister who messed around with me,
a brother who I barely ever saw, and a short mom.**

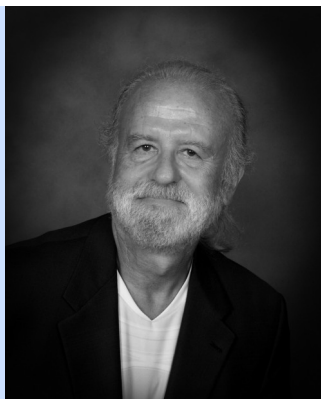
**I am from getting put in a shower with super
cold water for punishments.**

**I am from having to sleep in the garage,
from crying and screaming, and getting pinched hard.**

**I am from standing up in the car while we were
pulling into the driveway.**

**I am
Esteban**

Foster Youth Alumna



Save The Date

Saturday, March 24, 2012
8:00a.m.—2:45p.m.

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

- A conference for Educators, Foster & Adoptive Parents, Child Welfare Personnel, Faith Communities Members, Physical and Mental Health Providers, and Concerned Citizens.
- Morning breakout sessions on the perspectives of children in foster care at different developmental stages (infant/toddler, latency age, adolescence and young adult).
- Afternoon breakout sessions on the experiences of children in foster care in the legal system and at school, and the effects of foster care placement on their mental and physical health.
- 4.5 Social Work CEU's will be available
- Online Registration Coming Soon at www.saveourchildrencoalition.org
- University of Michigan - Dearborn
Fairlane Center North
19000 Hubbard Drive
Dearborn, MI 48126

Keynote Speaker,
Michael Trout, is the
founder and director of the
Infant-Parent Institute in
Champaign, Illinois.

UPCOMING MEETINGS OF THE FAITH COMMUNITIES COALITION ON FOSTER CARE

February 7: Mid Oakland Region: Camps for Foster Kids and Respite Care

Tuesday, Feb. 7, 6:30 pm

First Presbyterian Church, 1669 West Maple Road, Birmingham, MI 48009

Matt Henry, formerly involved with child protective services and now director of Skyline Camp and Retreat Center, plus Dan and Amy Robinson, directors of Royal Family Kids Camp will share life changing stories of foster kids at camp—and ways congregations can help.

Kate Thoresen will briefly describe the benefits of respite care.

February 13: Western Wayne Region

Monday, February 13, 6:30 pm

Faith Community Church, 44400 W. 10 Mile Road, Novi, MI 48375

Come hear more about the Save Our Children Coalition and its programs and work on behalf of foster youth and connecting needs of foster children, youth and families with resources congregations can provide. Other meetings scheduled here on Mondays, May 14, September 17 and November 12, 2012.



February 16: Eastern Wayne County Region: Fostering Hope Through Camping Experiences

Thurs. Feb. 16, 6:30 pm

St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church, 375 Lothrop Rd., Grosse Pointe, 48236

Hear Michigan State University's Joanne Riebschleger, PhD, LMSW share highlights of the MSU summer Camp for Aging Out Youth PLUS Vicky Thompson Sandy of Lutheran Social Services, describe the benefits siblings experience when they can go to camp together. For more information contact Rev. Matt Parker- Wrzeszcz, at pastormatt@gpmchurch.org. Additional Eastern Regional meetings scheduled for Thursdays, May 24, August 16 and November 8, 2012.

February 27: Mid- Michigan Region

Mon. Feb. 27, 6:00 pm

Ichthus Mansion 3340 Parkside, Flint 48503

Come hear how Faith Communities can work together to improve the lives of youth in foster care. This regional coalition meets on the last Monday of every month. For more information, contact Ginelle Barry at

gbarry@ifosterhope.com

March 22: Northwest Detroit Region

Thursday, March 22

Greater Grace Temple, 23500 W. Seven Mile Road, Detroit, MI 48219

Also meets on June 21 at Hartford Memorial Baptist, 18700 James Couzens Freeway Detroit, MI 48235; September 20 at Greater Grace Temple, 23500 West Seven Mile Road Detroit, MI 48219; December 13 at Hartford Memorial Baptist, 18700 James Couzens Freeway Detroit, MI 48235

April 26: Washtenaw County Region

Thurs. April 26, 6:30 pm

St. Luke of Ann Arbor, 4205 Washtenaw, Ann Arbor, MI 48108.

Other meetings scheduled here on Thursday, July 26 and Thursday, October 25th 2012

Check out
www.saveourchildrencoalition.org
for updates on events, resources
and stories about
"Congregations in Action."

Encourage others to see Detroit Public TV's
8 minute documentary on our work,
Congregations Caring for Michigan's Kids
at <http://www.youtube.com/user/saveourchildren1>.
DVD copies are available upon request and at meetings.

University of Michigan—Dearborn Faculty and Staff Collect Holiday Gifts for Foster Youth



Above: Cindy Hanes-Berry was overwhelmed with generous donations from UM-D faculty and staff after organizing a holiday gift drive for youth in foster care.

For the second year in a row, Cindy Hanes-Berry added to her regular duties as a Government Relations Specialist at the University of Michigan-Dearborn to organize a gift drive for youth in foster care. In collaboration with SOCC and local agencies serving foster youth and families, Cindy collected wish lists for foster youth in need.

An email sent to UM-D staff and faculty requesting donations produced a tremendous response. Individuals and entire departments put their money and creativity to work in responding to the youths' wish lists. One such group of staff from the Early Childhood Education Center (ECEC) spent an evening shopping for the children they sponsored, followed by dinner together.

Holiday bags filled with gifts valued at a total of over \$10,000 were collected and distributed to 148 foster youth in the Wayne County area. Easy Bake Ovens, basketballs, dolls, books, educational toys, remote control cars, coats, hats and boots and gift cards filled every nook and cranny of the Office of Government Relations, then were loaded into

agency vans and cars for safe delivery. For some, these gifts were the only ones received this season.

SOCC is thankful to Cindy Hanes-Berry for giving so much of her time and heart to this project, and to the generous staff and faculty community at UM-Dearborn who helped to make this holiday brighter for area foster youth.

Below: UM-D staff and faculty donated over \$10,000 worth of gifts for foster youth in the Wayne County area.



Valuing Children and Those that Take Care of Them

My first job in child welfare, with a Masters Degree, paid me little more than minimum wage. I was frequently “on call” 24/7 and worked most days more than 10 hours. I made decisions that changed peoples’ lives forever. I held lives in my hands (literally and figuratively), and juggled the tasks of advocating for the child, the biological family and the foster parent all at the same time. It was emotionally and physically draining work that was almost always thankless. It was the best and the worst job I have ever held. Child welfare workers have the privilege of seeing their work improve lives and of learning about people of all kinds. Playing a role in families and children being healed is a powerful thing. But our culture and society don’t value child welfare workers. They’re often portrayed in the media as baby stealers, or crazy, or negligent or abusive or lazy. We hear people around us comment about how they could never tolerate helping “THOSE people” or that they wouldn’t want to risk having “THOSE kids” around their kids. Which brings me to the subject of how we value foster parents. You hear about how all foster parents are “in it for the paycheck” (about \$14 a day in Michigan!). We ask these families to do an almost impossible job—to love and care for a child as your own, while never forgetting that they are not your children and that you will be fairly powerless in making decisions about their fate. We say, “better you than me!” and we turn away. And while we know that incompetent child welfare workers and bad foster parents exist, I believe that the problems we see are larger than the examples of the “bad apples.” I believe that by not valuing those that take care of children by paying them a living wage, providing needed services, giving community support and recognizing the important roles each play, we show how little we value children. SOCC was built and is sustained by those who see the value in “THOSE” children, “THOSE” child welfare workers and “THOSE” foster parents and yes, “THOSE” biological parents. As a community, we are responsible for helping to change how we take care of those that take care of kids.



DIRECTOR'S CORNER

Foster Youth College Goal Sunday

The University of Michigan-Dearborn is proud to host the only Michigan College Goal Sunday focused on the needs of foster youth on Sunday, February 19, 2012 from 1:00-4:00 p.m. Dedicated agency, state, financial aid professionals and student volunteers will staff the event.

The event will be held in the Fairlane Center South at 19000 Hubbard Drive located between Southfield and Evergreen Roads. For further directions, please visit http://www.umd.umich.edu/maps_directions/

Volunteers will be available to help foster youth complete the 2012-2013 FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) online at www.fafsa.gov

So you can complete the FAFSA form on College Goal Sunday, please bring the following items with you on February 19, 2012:

- Your PIN number
- Your Social Security Number
- Your driver’s license (if any)
- Your W-2 forms or other records of money earned in 2011
- Your 2011 Federal Income Tax Return (if filed)
- Your alien registration card (if you are not a U.S. Citizen)

A panel discussion is scheduled from 2:15-3:30 p.m. Panelists will discuss programs of support for foster youth pursuing higher education and the college experience of foster youth, including the Education and Training Voucher (ETV) program, Michigan’s Tuition Incentive Program (TIP), Youth in Transition (YIT) Funds, and Seita Scholars from Western Michigan University. Also, a browsing fair of state and public agencies as well as colleges and universities will give students an opportunity to collect brochures, information and contacts.

For additional information, please contact Sally Foster at sfoster@umd.umich.edu. Please use the phrase "Foster Youth" in the subject line.



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/volunteer 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, Michigan Department of Human Services / Child Welfare Training Institute

Tracy Green, Detroit Center for Family Advocacy

Nicole Hoshock, Michigan Department of Human Services

Cameron D. Hosner, Children’s Hospital of Michigan Foundation

Annette Howard, Life Directions

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

Reco Spencer, Lutheran Social Services of Michigan

Trisha Stein, Child’s Hope

Deborah Strong, Great Start Collaborative Wayne/Student Advocacy Center

Cynthia Swift, retired—Plymouth-Canton Community Schools

Veda D. Thompkins, Families on the Move

Kate Thoresen, Faith Communities Coalition on Foster Care

Mary Trepanier-Street, retired—University of Michigan-Dearborn

Nicole H. Wood, Promise Neighborhoods Initiative, The Guidance Center

Lacea Zavala, KIDS-Talk, The Guidance Center



Save Our Children Coalition

19000 Hubbard Drive, FCS C-25
Dearborn, MI 48126

Phone: (313) 593-5052

FAX: (313) 593-9961

E-mail: SOCCProject@umd.umich.edu

WWW.SaveOurChildrenCoalition.org