

2012 Centennial Adoption Excellence Awards

The Advertising Council (Ad Council)

The Advertising Council is a private, non-profit organization that produces, distributes and promotes public service campaigns to deliver critical messages to the American public on behalf of non-profit organizations and government agencies in issue areas such as improving the quality of life for children, preventive health, education, community well being and strengthening families. The Ad Council began working with the Children's Bureau and AdoptUSKids in 2004 when the Bureau sought to obtain an annual targeted public service advertising campaign aimed at creating a national call-to-action to significantly increase awareness of the need to provide permanent homes for children in need of adoption. In response, the Ad Council developed a multi-faceted public service communications initiative, the National Adoption Recruitment Campaign.

The National Adoption Recruitment Campaign was created to encourage prospective adoptive parents to begin the process of adoption from foster care and to raise awareness about the tremendous need for loving, permanent homes for children in this nation. Each year, the Ad Council has produced a series of award-winning print, TV, radio and electronic ads, garnered tens of millions of dollars in donated media, and contributed to the placement of over 18,000 children through <http://www.AdoptUSKids.org>. The campaign and the corresponding fulfillment has successfully reached and inspired thousands of adults to adopt by offering important, accurate information about the United States foster care system and the adoption process. The Children's Bureau and the children and families it serves have been fortunate to work with the Ad Council, benefiting tremendously from its unique donated media model. For nearly ten years, the Ad Council has proven its ability to galvanize the media and the public on behalf of America's children in foster care.

Kirshenbaum Bond Senecal & Partners (kbs+)

Founded in 1987, Kirshenbaum Bond Senecal & Partners (kbs+) is a New York based advertising agency that provides a number of services including marketing, advertising, and public relations. Since 2004, kbs+ (formerly known as kirshenbaum bond senecal + partners) has partnered, in a pro-bono capacity, with the Children's Bureau, AdoptUSKids and the Ad Council in developing the communications strategy and creative for the award-winning Adoption from Foster Care PSA campaign. The tagline "You don't have to be perfect to be a perfect parent," was created by kbs+ during its inaugural year on the campaign to bring humor to the seemingly challenging task of adopting a child from foster care. It reassures prospective parents that even if they are not 'perfect', they can still provide the stability and security that children in

foster care need and deserve. Over the past 8 years, kbs+ has produced a robust inventory of heartwarming and engaging PSAs that garnered more than \$335 million in donated media support, and has won numerous prestigious industry awards for their work on the campaign—including multiple ADDYs for creative excellence, a David Ogilvy Award for strategic excellence, and an EFFIE Award for being one of the most effective ad campaigns developed in a given year.

Adoption Exchange Association & Partners for AdoptUSKids

The Adoption Exchange Association, through a cooperative agreement with the Children’s Bureau, has successfully operated a multi-faceted, national-scope AdoptUSKids program for the past 10 years that is designed to assist States and Tribes in the recruitment and support of foster and adoptive families for children in public foster care. The AEA and their collaborating partners, Northwest Resource Associates, the North American Council on Adoptable Children, The University of Texas at Austin and The Adoption Exchange, Inc. have demonstrated success in designing and implementing a comprehensive project to raise awareness of the need for foster and adoptive parents. The AdoptUSKids Project has provided a national website for photo listing waiting children, helped states and tribes respond to inquiries from prospective parents, built states’ and tribes’ capacity through training and technical assistance to recruit and retain parents, developed parent support models, conducted studies regarding adoption, used evaluation and feedback loops for continuous quality improvement and collaborated effectively and creatively both within the project and with external partners.

The AEA/AdoptUSKids program has not only been a key partner with the Children’s Bureau in advancing permanency for youth from the child welfare system, but has coordinated and aligned with other Initiatives of the CB including collaborative work with the T/TA Network and Child Welfare Information Gateway as well as the Ad Council and the Children’s Bureau in producing the National Adoption Recruitment Campaign. The AEA/AdoptUSKids program has recently been awarded another five year cooperative agreement with CB and we look forward to the continued success of this collaboration.

National Resource Center for Adoption at Spaulding

The National Resource Center for Adoption has a rich history of innovation, consultation, training and technical assistance as the Children’s Bureau’s center for excellence on issues related to adoption, adoption support and preservation and cultural competence. With the passage of P.L. 96-272, the Adoption Assistance and Child Welfare Act of 1980, the Federal government established a clear focus on the need for permanency for children in foster care. With that as the impetus, the NRC was first funded by the Children’s Bureau in 1985 to improve

the effectiveness and quality of adoption and post-adoption services for children with special needs nationwide. In the early years, a large part of the Center's focus was on training and more than 75,000 individuals were trained using the NRC's Special Needs Adoption Curriculum (SNAC). The Resource Center has sponsored many cutting edge initiatives that focused on current issues in adoption, permanency planning, special needs adoption, post-adoption services, recruitment and retention of adoptive parents, development of minority leaders in adoption and cultural competence in child welfare services.

Their groundbreaking work with State Adoption Program Managers in the early 1990's resulted in the development of a model for state adoption practice, including post adoption services. Established in 2005, the Minority Adoption Leadership Development Institute (MALDI) at the NRC provides and enhances leadership skills of potential and emerging leaders of color within the child welfare adoption field.

The NRC has worked hand in hand with the Children's Bureau in assisting States through training and technical assistance to implement Federal legislation. Their work, along with their colleagues in the T/TA Network, has been critical in supporting States to implement the Adoption and Safe Families Act of 1997, the Multi-Ethnic Placement Act as amended, the adoption tax credit, Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008 and the Adoption 2002 Initiative to double the number of children adopted from foster care launched by President Clinton in 1996 which served as a blueprint for Federal leadership for adoption and other permanency planning for children.

Since 2004, the Resource Center has focused on developing, supporting and maintaining a range of services to States and Tribes to increase the number of children adopted from the child welfare system and improving the effectiveness and quality of adoption and post-adoption services. Their current mission is "To assist states, tribes, territories, and courts in building its capacity to ensure the safety, well-being, and permanency of abused and neglected children through adoption and post legal adoption services program planning, policy development and practice.

The NRCA is operated by Spaulding for Children which was established in 1965 as a special needs adoption placement agency. Spaulding and the NRCA are currently led by Addie Williams, the President and CEO of Spaulding for Children. Addie has been with Spaulding since 1996 and has been its' President since June of 2000. She has successfully overseen and implemented many changes at the NRCA over the years to assure their resources and technical assistance are always cutting edge and that they are meeting the current capacity building needs of the states' and tribes' adoption initiatives.

Natalie Lyons

This award recognizes Natalie Lyons, who contributed so much to the national adoption community throughout her most productive life. Natalie joined Spaulding for Children in 2001 as a trainer/consultant for the Spaulding Institute for Family and Community Development. In 2002, she transferred to the NRC as an Adoption Program Specialist and as her talent, skill and expertise were immediately recognized, she was promoted to Associate Director of the NRC after just 3 months. She was named Director of the NRCA in 2003 and continued in that position until her passing last March. She also served as the Vice President of Spaulding during this same period of time. Under her leadership, the NRCA continued to be a recognized as a center of excellence and she was well known and respected nationwide.

Under Natalie's leadership, the Children's Bureau's cooperative agreement with the NRCA resulted in the development and support of a range of services focused on increasing the number of children adopted from the child welfare system and improved the quality of adoption and post adoption services.

Just a few of her accomplishments included the creation of the Minority Adoption Leadership Development Institute, the goal of which is to enhance the leadership skills of potential and emerging leaders of color from across the nation. She also provided the leadership for the development and distribution of many resources made available to the states regarding adoption competence and cultural competence. Her support of the National Association of State Adoption Programs has significantly contributed to its' strength and longevity. Natalie's ever positive approach and strong collaborative manner always brought out the very best in every life she touched and is evident in every project in which she had a hand.

National Association of State Adoption Programs

The purpose of the National Association of State Adoption Programs is to provide a forum in which State Adoption Managers can pool their expertise, share information, provide professional support to one another and promote networking activities as an association with other child welfare organizations and individual professionals so that each state can develop and maintain an efficient, state-of-the-art adoption program. NASAP is a peer professional organization and membership is automatic for all who are identified by their State as the statewide adoption manager or adoption specialist.

This Association began as a collaborative dialog between state adoption program managers, the National Resource Center on Special Needs Adoption and the Children's Bureau in 1996. Ada White was the Louisiana State Adoption Manager and had been involved with the State Foster Care Managers Association at its' inception some years earlier and she proposed the idea that the adoption managers would benefit from a similar association with regular meetings, exchanges of

information, and networking. The original founding members provided leadership and vision by creating a national organization that is dynamic, diverse, collaborative and high performing.

The first Executive Committee and original incorporators consisted of President Ada White (LA), Vice-President Brenda Kerr (VA) Treasurer Patsy Buida (TX), Secretary Jane Morgan (OK) and Members-at-large Karen Oghalai (WI), Julie Hoffman (ND), LeRoy Franke (UT), and Mary Dyer (NE). The initial meeting was held in 1997 and annual meetings have continued since that time.

The National Resource Center for Adoption provides support services to NASAP by acting as the fiduciary agent, by providing technical assistance to aid the development of the organization, by facilitating communication and by supplying technical planning for the annual meeting.

The Association of Administrators of the Interstate Compact on Adoption and Medical Assistance (AAICAMA)

The Interstate Compact on Adoption and Medical Assistance (ICAMA) was established in 1986 to safeguard and protect the interstate interests of children covered by an adoption assistance agreement when they move or are adopted across state lines.

ICAMA has its underpinnings in federal law. As part of the effort to encourage the adoption of children with special needs, P.L. 96-272, the Adoption Assistance and Child Welfare Act of 1980, directed states to protect the interstate interests of adopted children. The Children's Bureau, in a very successful and productive partnership, provided support to encourage State participation in ICAMA through grants to the Association of Administrators of ICAMA from 1986 through 2008. The District of Columbia and 49 states, are signatories to the ICAMA.

ICAMA is an agreement between and among its member states that enables them to coordinate the provision of medical benefits and services to children receiving adoption assistance in interstate cases. The Compact, which has the force of law within and among party states, provides a framework for uniformity and consistency in administrative procedures when a child with special needs is adopted by a family from another state, or the adoptive family moves to another state. Since the passage of the Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008, the Association of Administrators of ICAMA has also enhanced its' focus on connecting states to facilitate medical and supportive services for children eligible for subsidized guardianship.

Child Welfare Information Gateway

An integral service of the Children's Bureau, Child Welfare Information Gateway (CWIG) is a clearinghouse that promotes the safety, permanency, and well-being of children, youth, and families. It connects child welfare and related professionals, organizations, States and Tribes, and the public to resources, information, and online tools. The function of the clearinghouse started with two areas that were legislatively mandated, the National Clearinghouse on Child Abuse and Neglect Information (established in 1974) and the National Adoption Information Clearinghouse (established in 1986). Organizational changes and the re-authorization of CAPTA prompted the Children's Bureau to consolidate the operations of the clearinghouses; in 2006, the clearinghouses were renamed Child Welfare Information Gateway.

Once considered solely a fulfillment warehouse and call center, CWIG is now a multi-task operation that supports the Children's Bureau and serves as a national, multi-faceted informational source for the field, covering a wide range of topics related to child welfare, child abuse and neglect, and adoption. Over the past 20 years, the leadership under which the Bureau's clearinghouse services have been provided has significantly impacted its direction and success, including former Directors Candy Hughes, Mary Sullivan, and most recently, Co-Directors Mike Torpy and Pam Day.

More than a repository for information, CWIG supports the Children's Bureau and provides numerous resources, including product development; dissemination/outreach via web, print and electronic formats; websites and databases; and other online learning tools for improving child welfare practice. In FY 2011, the Information Gateway website received over 5 million visits. During the same timeframe, the clearinghouse maintained close to 70,000 publications in its library; delivered Child Welfare in the News to over 1 million subscribers, and provided support and materials at over 100 conferences. CWIG is a key provider of services for the Children's Bureau and its Training & Technical Assistance Network and continues to identify innovative ways to increase its visibility and meet customer needs.

Penelope L. Maza

Dr. Penny Maza has been working in the child welfare field for over thirty years, primarily as a senior staff member and a manager in the federal government. She has also served as the Research Director of the Child Welfare League of America. Her work includes research, program evaluation and innovation, quality assurance, analyses of administrative and other data sources, and analyses of management systems of public and private child welfare agencies. Her over 50 publications in child welfare and other work have not only influenced the operation of

State child welfare and other programs, but has also had an impact on and been incorporated into federal legislation. For over ten years, she has been analyzing Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS) data to inform child welfare policy and practice, including adoption practice. Integral to that work, she has worked closely with State program managers to identify critical issues to be explored and to interpret findings. State Adoption Managers eagerly anticipated her annual presentations which served to inform the field and provide key insights into adoption and child welfare practice. Since her retirement from the Children's Bureau in 2008, Dr. Maza has been providing consultation services to a variety of child welfare organizations, including state child welfare agencies, on a wide range of child welfare-related topics. She holds a Ph.D. in sociology from the Ohio State University.

Oscar Chavez Family

Oscar Chavez, a respiratory therapist from Elkton, Maryland, is being recognized with an Adoption Excellence award because he exemplifies the power of conviction and tenacity to achieve a lifelong dream of becoming an adoptive parent. His Cecil County, Maryland Department of Social Services adoption worker describes him as a “generous, kind, charismatic man who puts the happiness of others, most notably his children, ahead of everything else.” Oscar's status as a single male adoptive parent makes him unique in that only 2-3 % of those who adopt children from foster care are single men. In addition, he made the decision to adopt an older youth.

Mr. Chavez's son, Delano, now 16 years of age, was placed with him at the age of 13 and he also has a second son, also age 16, placed with him for adoption and they will finalize the adoption during November of this year. As an additional challenge, both of these adoptions were accomplished interjurisdictionally from two different states.

Mr. Chavez first identified each of his sons on the AdoptUSKids national photolisting website. He is an AdoptUSKids media spokesfamily, and he will be providing the adoptive family perspective to national and local media when the 2012 National Adoption Recruitment Campaign, targeting the recruitment of families for 14 to 16 year olds, is launched to the public on October 24th.

Traci Lucien Family

Traci Lucien , vice president for media operations and support for AARP, is being recognized with a 2012 Centennial Adoption Excellence award as she has proven to be an inspiration and role model for non-traditional adopters. As a 51 year old single, African American professional woman, Ms. Lucien redefines the traditional image of Americans whose path to parenthood intersect with children who wait in foster care for permanent adoptive families.

At the age of 49, Ms. Traci Lucien decided it was the right time in her life to begin a family. She was stable in her career, but was not in a relationship. She wanted a child, and adopting an older one from foster care seemed a natural path. She found the AdoptUSKids national photolisting website and began searching.

Ms. Lucien lives in Laurel, Maryland and halfway across the country, Talynn had been in foster care for most of her seven years of life in Topeka, Kansas. “When I first saw her picture on the site, something about her intrigued me, something in her eyes, there was something there; she looked so familiar,” Ms. Lucien commented when interviewed for this award.

In May, 2012, Ms. Lucien and Talynn were featured in an O! Magazine article, “How to Change Your Life at Any Age.” Ms. Lucien also states that she is not finished building her family through adoption.

Hawaii Department of Human Services

The Hawaii Department of Human Services is being honored with an Adoption Excellence award in recognition of their strong performance in adoption and the achievement of permanency for children in foster care over the past several years.

First, as identified in the Children and Family Service Reviews, Hawaii has far exceeded the standard on three key permanency indicators. These indicators include: Timeliness of Adoptions, Permanency for Children and Youth in Foster Care for Long Periods of Time, and Placement Stability. In addition, Hawaii has had the greatest increase of all states in the rate of Increase in Older Youth Adoption between the years of 2002 and 2011 as revealed in an analysis of AFCARS data. During this same time they have ranked in the top ten states for rates for Increase in Special Needs Adoption and also for the Highest Adoption Rate.

Hawaii also embraces the spirit of the Fostering Connections for Success legislation through the use of “Ohana conferencing” which is a family group decision making model and through Project First Care which places an emphasis on placing children with an appropriate relative.

New Mexico Children, Youth and Families Department

New Mexico Children, Youth and Families Department is being recognized with an Adoption Excellence Award due to their strong performance in the area of adoption and their commitment to innovation in their practice. They have ranked in the top five of all states in the last five years in three important permanency categories: Increase in Older Youth Adoption, Highest Adoption Rate and Increase in Special Needs Adoptions.

They received a Diligent Recruitment grant from the Children's Bureau in 2008 and an Implementation Center project to implement a statewide practice model which includes a customer service approach designed to improve the experience of current and prospective foster and adoptive parents, based on the new AdoptUSKids customer service model.

Kentucky Cabinet for Health and Family Services/ Department of Community Based Services

The Kentucky Cabinet for Health and Family Services/Department of Community Based Services is being honored with an Adoption Excellence Award in recognition of their strong performance in the area of adoption and their ongoing commitment to program improvement in this area. They have ranked in the top 10 states for the rate of Increase in Special Needs Adoptions between the years of 2002-2011 and for four of these years, 2007, 2009, 2010 and 2011, they ranked number one of all states in this category.

Kentucky received a Diligent Recruitment grant from the Children's Bureau in 2008 and their Project MATCH has spent the past four years testing the application of vision-driven, evidence-informed strategies to address barriers in recruitment, selection and retention of kinship and resource families. As they enter the fifth year of the project they are working to assure sustainability of the program on a statewide basis.