



Metropolitan Washington  
Council of Governments

# Child Welfare News

Edition 11

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## Message from the Program Manager



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During these challenging fiscal and political times, the safety net meant to support the most vulnerable among us is constantly being challenged. Those who work to repair and strengthen the safety net of our

community deserve our respect and adoration. To me, in the field of child welfare, social workers are solely responsible for building and sustaining a strong safety net that surrounds vulnerable families.

On the heels of National Social Worker Appreciation month, can you recall a social worker who went above and beyond to serve a needy member of our community? Of course you can! There are countless examples of the generosity and commitment of social workers.

It is imperative that the field of social work not just be sustained, but also grow. Consider congratulating recent social work graduates who have decided to give back to their respective

communities by becoming a social worker. If you are a social worker yourself, why not mentor a student or recent graduate as a way of growing the profession.

In this edition, you will read about how social workers in Prince William County Virginia are strengthening and supporting families. You will also read about how members of congress are engaging in listening tours to align policy with the best and most promising practices in foster care delivery. Hope you enjoy this edition!

Best,

Kamilah Bunn

## Editor's Footnote



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If there are any ideas that you would like to see covered in future newsletters, please email me. Looking forward to receiving your suggestion.

Carette Rogers  
[crogers@mwkog.org](mailto:crogers@mwkog.org)

You can also contact me if you would like to unsubscribe

# This Month's Wednesday's Child Children



JD has an outgoing personality. This Monster Truck enthusiast is ready for a permanent family. To learn more about JD, call 88-TO-ADOPT-ME, or click [here](#).

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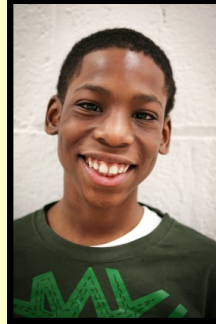
John'ta is an enchanting young man with a goal of transitioning from a hospital to a forever home. To learn more about John'ta, call 88-TO-ADOPT-ME, or click [here](#).

Photos by © 2012 Christine Meulemans



Maurice has a knack for fashion, but he aims to become an accountant or an architect. To learn more about Maurice, call 88-TO-ADOPT-ME, or click [here](#).

Photos by © 2012 Christine Meulemans



Tyrail has a million dollar smile and is very fluent in martial arts. To learn more about Tyrail, call 88-TO-ADOPT ME, or click [here](#).

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## Jurisdiction Spotlight: Prince William County Impacting Families

Prince William County's Department of Social Services Foster Care Team have been busy exploring new recruitment efforts while strategizing placements for sibling groups that come into care. There can be recruitment challenges with a limited budget in place. This agency, like most, has found creative ways to recruit through word of mouth, producing flyers and distributing them in specific neighborhoods. Attending free recruitment events has generated more foster families to flock to their packed Orientation and Training Sessions.



There has been an increasing population of sibling groups in Prince William County and a need to boost targeted recruitment for these youth. Their objective is to keep sibling groups together, but they have been unsuccessful due to limited space with respective foster families. They have been faced with another challenge of a growing number of Hispanic youth that are in the foster care system. This team has been confronted with a desperate plea in finding Spanish-speaking licensed homes and foster parents to accommodate sibling groups. The significance of placing these vulnerable youth with a family that could adjust to their needs and relate to them is critical.

It is disappointing to have to separate sibling groups and place them in unfamiliar surroundings. Sibling relationships do provide a significant foundation of continuity throughout a child's life-time and are likely to be the best relationships that most people experience. Prince William County will continue uplifting their families and going the extra mile in supporting at risk youth in the community.

# Congressional Caucus on Foster Youth



*Karen Bass, (D-Calif)*



*Jim McDermott, (D-Wash)*

The bipartisan Congressional Caucus on Foster Youth was founded in 2011. Its co-chairs are comprised of U.S. Representatives Karen Bass (D-California), Jim McDermott (D-Washington), Michele Bachmann (R-Minnesota), and Tom Marino (R-Pennsylvania). The main objective of the Caucus is to highlight the pioneering programs and policies that improve outcomes for children and youth in foster care with a strong emphasis on: safety, permanency, well-being, education opportunities, youth, family, and community engagement. This initiative is to also examine several legislative propositions for example the over-prescribing of psychotropic medications to youth in foster care.

Unfortunately, there are more than 420,000 youth currently in our nation's foster care system and a vast number of youth aging-out of foster care. By launching the Congressional Caucus on Foster Youth, the plan is to achieve remarkable success placing children by implementing innovative practices. These political figures feel passionately about focusing on youth when they age-out of foster care system, by building on enhancements made by increasing The Bipartisan Fostering Connections to Success and increasing the Adoptions Act of 2008, which was authored by Congressman McDermott. States are now required to develop procedures for the use and supervision of psychotropic drugs in foster care. The Adoptions Act provides additional federal incentives for states to transition children from foster care to adoptive homes, expand adoption assistance to all special needs foster youth, permit states to extend care to youth up to age 21, make federal reimbursement for kinship care, and enrich health and education enhancements for youth in foster care.

Representative Bass is a new Member of Congress. She is committed to the ongoing progress to improve child welfare systems on a federal level. Representative Bachmann is a biological mother of five and has fostered 23 children. She stated that the Caucus' mission "happens to be one of my personal goals, to work on bringing stability, support and permanency to the lives of foster youth across the nation." Recently co-chairs Bass and Marino participated in the inaugural Stop of the Listening tour at Los Angeles, California. Followers received an comprehensive perspective of prevention and family unification techniques that have made a difference in safely reducing the number of children in the Los Angeles Foster Care System. In the future, COG could potentially host a Listening Tour for our region too.



*Michele Bachman, (R-Minn)*



*Tom Marino, (R-Penn)*

# Celebrating National Social Worker Appreciation Month



Social Work is an important profession that deserves recognition throughout the year. Observing National Social Worker Appreciation Month, the month of March, gives us the opportunity to show our support and gratitude for these dedicated professionals.

Together with the right education, knowledge, and perseverance to lend a hand to people help themselves whenever they need it most. Social Workers take a look at people from all perspectives of the individual's life and culture to help them achieve well being. These admirable experts understand complex support systems and work to connect people to resources they need. Focusing on a person's strengths, Social Workers can help people reach their potential. This is a demanding field that has grown by leaps and bounds as Social Workers continue to address societal needs, bringing problems to attention.

Today we enjoy many benefits of Social Workers who have worked with our underserved communities and families. Let's not just celebrate today and the month of March; let's honor social workers everyday!

## About COG's Child Welfare Program

### **The Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG) —**

The Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG) is a regional organization of Washington area local governments. COG is comprised of 22 local governments surrounding our nation's capital, plus area members of the Maryland and Virginia legislatures, the U.S. Senate, and the U.S. House of Representatives. COG provides a focus for action and develops sound regional responses to such issues as the environment, affordable housing, economic development, health and family concerns, child welfare, population growth, public safety, and transportation.

### **The Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments' Child Welfare Program —**

In partnership with local and state child welfare agencies, COG's Child Welfare Program achieves positive outcomes for youth in foster care by bolstering local governments' foster and adoptive parent recruitment and retention initiatives. COG's child welfare committees provide a platform for this work while also providing local governments in the National Capital Region with technical assistance and a gathering place to discuss and track trends in foster care.

### **Our Committees —**

- ◆ Child Welfare Directors Committee (meets quarterly)
- ◆ Foster Care Advisory Committee (meets monthly)
- ◆ Wednesday's Child Adoption Committee (meets monthly)
- ◆ Child Welfare Data Workgroup (meets monthly, October-May)
- ◆ Child Welfare Emergency Preparedness Workgroup (adhoc)

To learn more about the Child Welfare Program, please visit: [www.mwcog.org/childwelfare](http://www.mwcog.org/childwelfare)

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