



Metropolitan Washington
Council of Governments

Child Welfare News

Edition 1
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Message from the Program Manager

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It is with great pleasure that we deliver our very first edition of **COG's Child Welfare News** to you! There is so much to share about COG's Child Welfare Program and the wonderful work of our regional partners. COG, our member jurisdictions, and our colleagues in the private sector are working hard to recruit loving foster and adoptive homes for children in the Washington region. It indeed takes a village, and we are so delighted by the opportunity to share a bit about the happenings in *our village* here in metropolitan Washington.

According to the 2009 National Capital Region Foster Care Annual Report compiled and released by COG's Child Welfare Program, fewer youth are being served in our region's foster care systems. Although fewer youth are in the system, a significant number of older youth are in care. These tweens and teens need loving foster homes too. With a focus on finding homes for teens and other difficult to place children, COG and our partners launched the *Kids Need Families Like Yours* campaign this spring. The campaign featured exemplary foster

parents as spoke-families. If you didn't catch the advertisements when they aired on radio or TV during the month of May, or if you wish to see them again, please visit our facebook fan page: www.facebook.com/kidsneedfamilies and become a "fan" of our page.

Freddie Mac Foundation's Wednesday's Child program continues to feature area children who are hoping to be adopted. I cannot tell you how impressed I am each week to meet the Wednesday's child as we film their segment for NBC4 news. Each child is so resilient, and passionate about wanting a forever family. Our entire Wednesday's Child team: the Freddie Mac Foundation, Barbara Harrison and the NBC4 crew, COG, Joan Brady Photography and our wonderful venues, want nothing more than a permanent loving family to be found for each and every Wednesday's Child. I am pleased to share that the public does answer our call to action. Last fiscal year we received thousands of call for the children. Eight of last year's Wednesday's Child children are on their way to being adopted within a year

of being featured on the program! We celebrate this good news, and focus our energies on the hundreds of other Wednesday's Child children who are still waiting. Please visit www.adopt.org/wednesdayschild or www.nbcwashington.com/station/shows/wrc/wednesdays-child to view a segment. If you are a social worker with a child who is waiting to be adopted, why not give Wednesday's Child an opportunity to help!

I hope you enjoy this newsletter and find the information very helpful. October is always full of lovely surprises, "tricks & treats" and such. Please read the article about checking candy and supervising children as they enjoy Halloween.

All the 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 suggestions!

You can also contact me if you would like to unsubscribe to the newsletter.

Recruiting Families at the Black Family Reunion

The National Council of Negro Women, Inc. held the 25th Annual Black Family Reunion in Washington, D.C. on Saturday, September 11, 2010 from 11:00am until 5:30pm. This event attracts 250,000 people to the National Mall each year.

The event included a Prayer Breakfast, health screenings, free family activities and a special tribute to the late Dorothy Height, civil rights activist and longtime leader of the National Council of Negro Women. After Dr. Height's passing, the council searched for new leadership and appointed its youngest ever executive director, Avis Jones DeWeaver.

Being that the Black Family Reunion is family focused, recruiters from COG's Foster Care Advisory Committee took full advantage of this event by spreading the word about the need for foster parents in our region, especially for teens, large sibling groups and children with medical needs. Special thanks to the District of Columbia, Fairfax and Prince William County recruiters who spent hours on the National Mall talking with the public about foster parenting, distributing *Kids Need Families Like Yours* brochures and promoting the Adoption Expo.



Black Family Reunion on the National Mall

Halloween Safety Tips



Ghost and goblins aren't the only things to be afraid of on Halloween. Accidents and mishaps increase dramatically when children trick-or-treat. To avoid the many dangers children (and adults) face while

trick-or-treating and to make it an enjoyable time for all, see the helpful tips below:

- ☞ Don't eat candy while trick or treating. Wait until you are home and can inspect it.
- ☞ Bring a watch or cell phone with a backlight.
- ☞ Wear flame resistant costumes and make sure all Halloween make-up is hypoallergenic and non-toxic.
- ☞ Bring identification and legibly write your contact information on an index card and have your child place it in the pocket of their costume.
- ☞ Always trick-or-treat in groups.
- ☞ Stay on the sidewalks and out of the streets.
- ☞ Cross only at intersections and designated crosswalks.
- ☞ Don't approach unfamiliar pets and animals.
- ☞ Don't cut across yards and stay out of backyards.
- ☞ Report any suspicious or criminal activity to the police.

Freddie Mac
Foundation
*Adoption
Expo*

Saturday,
November 6, 2010
Washington, DC



This free event
will provide
everything you
need to know
about adoption.

Wednesday's Child Success: A Social Worker's Perspective



Amber Brown

Amber Brown of Lutheran Family Services in Winchester, Virginia first heard of the *Freddie Mac Foundation's Wednesday's Child* program from a co-worker. Intrigued with the structure of the program, Amber immediately targeted Wednesday's Child as a strategy to augment her existing adoption recruitment efforts for the children on her caseload. Amber did not hesitate to explore the *Freddie Mac Foundation's Wednesday's Child* program for Shania, a sweet, affectionate little girl who had just been referred to Amber for recruitment.

Shania has a pervasive stutter and Amber found that people often pulled back from her. Amber hoped that by featuring Shania on the *Freddie Mac Foundation's Wednesday's Child* program, the community and millions of NBC4 viewers would have the opportunity to see Shania through a different light. Amber felt that the increased visibility from the feature was sure to lead to the permanent home Shania was longing for.

Having never used the *Freddie Mac Foundation's Wednesday's Child* program before, Amber really appreciated the way the program prepares social workers, especially workers who are new to the program like her. Kamilah Bunn acclimated Amber to the process and organized the activity for Shania's taping. Shania loves animals, especially horses, so a visit to the National Zoo was planned to see the Przewalski horses there.

Shania's feature appeared on the *Freddie Mac Foundation's Wednesday's Child* May 13, 2009. She was not camera shy and very confident during her taping. Amber saw how empowered Shania felt when she was able to touch on what she wanted in her forever family. Shania's confidence paid off as she received more than a dozen inquiries after her segment aired.

Shania still reflects on that day: meeting Barbara Harrison, visiting the National Zoo, lunch, receiving memorabilia, and the rainy weather. Most importantly, Shania remembers feeling like a star! Amber encourages other recruiters to take advantage of the *Freddie Mac Foundation's Wednesday's Child* program especially for teens and children who are harder to place. Shania now has a permanent family and a smile to go along....

Child Welfare Committees

COG's Child Welfare Program has 47 active committee members who sit on one or more of the following COG committees: Child Welfare Directors, Foster Care Advisory, or the Wednesday's Child committee. Please visit www.mwcog.org/childwelfare to learn more about the work of these committees.



Director, Valerie Cuffee
Wed's Child, Denise Eigen
Foster Care, Gerson Paniagua



Director, Suzanne Chis
Wed's Child, Dahlia Foreman
Wed's Child, Michele Mintling
Foster Care, Diana Tracey



Asst. Director, Mike Demidenko
Wed's Child, Erica Burns
Foster Care, Jennifer Long



Director, Gloria Brown
Foster Care & Wed's Child, Lisa Robertson
Foster Care & Wed's Child, Lavette Sims



Admin., Heather Peck Dzewulski



Director, Kathy Froyd
Wed's Child, Beverly Howard
Wed's Child, Anne Goldberg
Foster Care, Emma Marshall
Foster Care, Rosa Suau



Director, Agnes Leshner
Foster Care, Linda Gore,
Foster Care, Corrinne Millette
Foster Care, Shari Zouhairi,
Wed's Child, Catherine Robinson



Director, Janine Sewell
Wed's Child, Diane Gestrich
Foster Care, Van Washington



Director, Dr. Roque Gerald
Foster Care, Ritu Atwal
Foster Care & Wed's Child, Charelia Bazemore



Wed's Child, Christopher Wirt



Wed's Child, Amber Brown



Wed's Child, Matthew Shaffer



Foster Care, John Bertulis