



Metropolitan Washington
Council of Governments

Child Welfare News

Edition 10

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Message from the Program Manager



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Brrr.... Winter is here, but our hearts are always warmed during the sentimental month of February. Who can forget receiving those special

Valentines in school or eating way too much chocolate from heart-shaped boxes!

As we ponder the concept of love this month and how we all share it freely, we must also remember the children who are not accustomed to receiving proper affection. Many children have arrived in foster care because their caretakers expressed themselves violently rather than lovingly.

The aftermath of the lack of learning how to properly receive love is often the refusal of love when it is offered, or the dismissal of love as false when it is actually genuine. Our region's social workers, therapists, and excellent foster parents are consistently trying to influence foster children to trust again, and most importantly, love again.

This month you will read more

about our team of professionals and the work in which they are engrossed. From representing and advocating for foster parents, to out of the box thinking, to recruiting permanent adoptive families, to lovingly and selflessly volunteering without asking for a penny in return, folks in our region are certainly involved in "a labor of love!"

Happy Valentine's Day,

Kamillah Bunn

Editor's Footnote



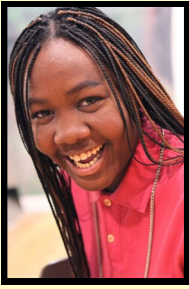
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If there are any ideas that you would like to see covered in future newsletters, please email me. Looking forward to receiving your suggestion.

Carette Rogers
crogers@mwkog.org

You can also contact me if you would like to unsubscribe

January's Wednesday's Child Children



Angelica has a beautiful smile and just wants to find a loving, caring, and supportive family. To learn more about Angelica, call 88-TO-ADOPT-ME, or click [here](#).

Photos by © 2012 Joan Brady



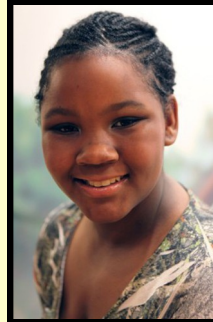
Three year old Donnel is absolutely charming, cute, and curious. To learn more about Donnel, call 88-TO-ADOPT-ME, or click [here](#).

Photos by © 2012 Joan Brady



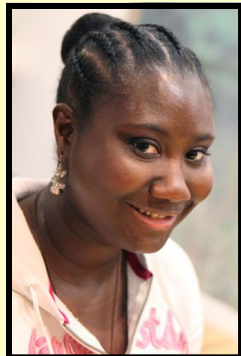
Keshawn is a charming young lady who wants to be an actress. Check out her new look. To learn more about Keshawn, call 88-TO-ADOPT-ME, or click [here](#).

Photos by © 2012 Joan Brady



Nyree is a sweet, intelligent, outgoing, and confident young lady who wants to be a forensic pathologist. To learn more about Nyree, call 88-TO-ADOPT-ME, or click [here](#).

Photos by © 2012 Joan Brady



Ramatu is an aspiring social worker. To learn more about Ramatu, call 88-TO-ADOPT-ME, or click [here](#).

Photos by © 2012 Joan Brady

Jurisdiction Spotlight: DHR's Foster Parent Ombudsman

John Bertulis is a gentle giant with a deep familiar radio announcer voice you could not forget. He is always commissioned to serve as a master of ceremony at many child welfare events around the state of Maryland. Maryland's Department of Human Resources is fortunate to have John Bertulis as the State's Foster Parent Ombudsman.

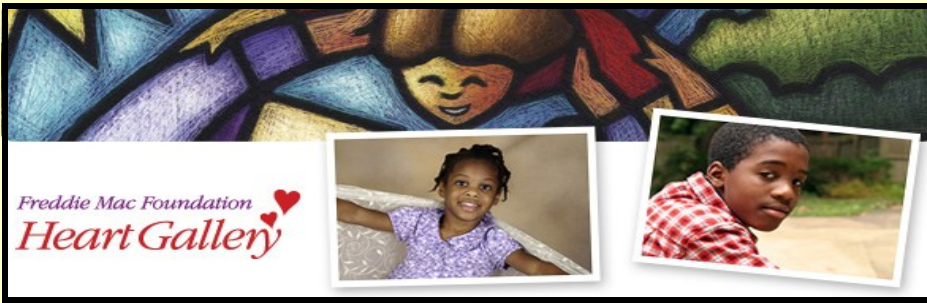
John has served in child welfare for over 24 years. His experience includes foster care, child protective services, resource family support, and community organization. For nineteen of those years, John was privileged to serve with Frederick County's Department of Social Services. He always wanted to advocate for foster parents and support their efforts incessantly.

John's role as ombudsman allows him to evaluate and mediate concerns made by or on behalf of foster parents that may unfavorably affect their relationship with a foster child or the foster parents' rights. In addition to addressing complaints, he also identifies system-wide issues that recommend appropriate changes in public reports to the Secretary of DHR and the Executive Director of the Social Services Administration. John has immensely learned how to be an excellent listener. He points out that sometimes foster parents just need someone that will take the time to listen to them because it makes them feel better, and he positive results. Over the years, John has discovered a great joy in serving Maryland's foster families and finds his profession to be rewarding and worthwhile.



John Bertulis

Freddie Mac Foundation's Heart Gallery Visits COG



Freddie Mac Foundation's Heart Gallery is a beautiful compilation of portraits of foster children waiting to be adopted. You may find this traveling gallery at a mall or library in the Metropolitan Washington region. For years now, the Heart Gallery has come to COG, in the lobby corridor, to win the hearts of someone who may want to adopt a child. COG's Executive Director, Dave Robertson, and Chairman of the Board, Frank Principi of Prince William County, took pleasure in viewing this poignant exhibit.

Observers stop in amazement by the clarity of each picture that depicts the inner self of each child. From a child welfare professional's perspective, there has been much success that has come from this added recruitment component; 71 children have been adopted because of this effort. The faces of the gallery have touched someone or a family that want to help children in foster care and galvanized a host of committed partners to give back. To view the heart gallery online, click [here](#).



L: Dave Robertson, COG's Executive Director; COG's Chairman of the Board, Frank Principi



Wednesday's Child Volunteer Photographer Honored



L: Mayor William Euille , Joan Brady, Dave Robertson, COG's Executive Director & Andrea Harrison, COG's former Board Member Chair

Joan Brady makes time to fulfill her passion of photography. Even with the most camera shy Wednesday's child, is to make them feel like a star. She was recently honored at COG for the 2011 Regional Partnership Award. Over the years, her work has resonated as being exceptional and notable. She has provided outstanding service as the volunteer photographer for COG, NBC4 and the Freddie Mac Foundation's Wednesday's Child Program.

The Wednesday's Child photographs are often used to recruit for permanent caring families for each Wednesday's Child. She has served in this essential role for over a decade. Joan has a talent for making children feel calm and laid-back in front of the camera. Beyond the camera lens, she has a flair for producing the perfect masterpiece of beautiful, attractive photos

that leave genuine memories of the day. She ensures that at every Wednesday's Child taping, each child is given a photo on the spot. For Joan, it's more than just giving back, it is bringing out the real portrayal of each child that attracts viewers to hopefully pursuit fostering or adopting a child.



© 2009 Ellen Zangla

Joan Brady

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



Perhaps third time IS the charm! After two disrupted adoptive placements, Charles was being prepared by his Wendy's Wonderful Kids Recruiter, Adrienne Jubilee, for his third Wednesday's Child appearance in four years. Naturally uncertain about whether this time—the third time—would be different, Charles defensives were up, and he was understandably unsure the day of the taping.

Being such a strong advocate for Charles, Adrienne Jubilee would constantly (apologetically) explain to the crew and Barbara Harrison that “Charles IS funny, charismatic and charming, once he warms up.” Even without an animated affect during the filming, calls and emails from interested families began to come in. However, after sifting through paperwork on the families who initially inquired about Charles, it became apparent to Adrienne that Charles' match would take more time.

Less than a month later, during a Wednesday's Child Peer to Peer Panel event, in walked a single father who just relocated to the DC area from Georgia. He adopted his son through Wednesday's Child Atlanta, and was anxious to connect with the Wednesday's Child community in the Nation's Capital. As the event came to a close, the dad mentioned to the event coordinator, “Ya know, I am interested in a child you recently featured too. I think his name is Charles.”

The coordinator immediately called Adrienne to share the news about this single dad, his experience with his son (also a Wednesday's Child), and the interest he expressed in having Charles join the family. Adrienne reached out for herself and was immediately impressed with the dad. Goosebumps forming on the forearms, Adrienne knew this time was different...could this be THE one? Adrienne worked with the dad to update his home study and paperwork so he could finally meet Charles.

Months went by (they seemed like years), before he could legally meet Charles face-to-face. Finally on October 1, 2011, he met Charles at the annual Wednesday's Child Match Party. They were immediately inseparable at the Match Party, and now Adrienne reports at each outing that their bond grows stronger.

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 21 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 (ad hoc)

To learn more about the Child Welfare Program, please visit: www.mwcog.org/childwelfare
Become our “FAN” on Facebook, www.facebook.com/kidsneedfamilies, or send us a Tweet, [@kidsneedfamily](https://twitter.com/kidsneedfamily)