



METROPOLITAN WASHINGTON
Council of Governments

Child Welfare News

Edition 15

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Lunch & Learn at Alston & Bird, LLP

LUNCH & LEARN
Adoption & Foster Parenting

Thought about adopting a child or becoming a foster parent?
Been inspired by Wednesday's Child on the news?
Earned the employee adoption benefit, but aren't sure how to use it?

JULY 24, 2013
12:00PM—1:00PM
IN THE CAROLINA ROOM

If so, please bring your lunch, and join us on Wednesday, July 24, 2013 for a talk with foster and adoption professionals from your local communities. Learn about the children who need parents right here in the metropolitan region. Bring your questions, and have them answered.

Alston & Bird Contact person:
Judy Sorber (202) 239-3448
Adoption & Foster Parenting questions: 877-800-FOSTER

kids need families like yours



On July 24, 2013, the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG) partnered with the Washington DC office of law firm Alston & Bird, LLP to host a Lunch & Learn. The goal of the meeting was to inform their employees about the benefits of foster parenting or adopting children who are growing up in foster care in our communities.

COG Child Welfare Program Coordinator, Krystal Fenwick presented alongside recruiters: Lisa Robertson, Prince George's County Department of Social Services, Kim Walk, DC Child and Family Services, and Erica Serrano, Arlington County Department of Human Services. These ladies are experts in the field, and were more than pleased to use this opportunity to answer questions, dispel myths and help Alston & Bird employees to learn about the adoption and foster parenting process. Since Alston & Bird employees have a wonderful adoption benefit and were named one of the best adoption friendly workplaces by The Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption this hour-long interactive discussion provided those in attendance with the tools they need to take advantage of this benefit.



This Lunch & Learn was the first of three to be held this year. Two additional Lunch & Learns will be held at the DC and Germantown office of the Department of Energy in the Fall.

Would you and your co-workers like to learn more about foster care/adoption? Let us know so we can host a Lunch & Learn at your office!

Editor's Footnote



Child Welfare Team : Krystal Fenwick and Kamilah Bunn

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

Looking forward to receiving your suggestions.

Krystal Fenwick
kfenwick@mwcog.org

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

Recent Wednesday's Child Children



Alex is a charming young man with many interests including basketball. He aims to join the military one day. To learn more about Alex, call 88-TO-ADOPT ME, or click [here](#).

Photos by © 2013 Aude Guerrucci



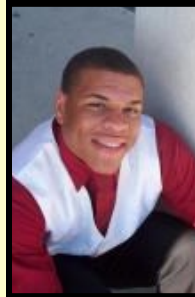
Darren is an amazing young man and basketball player. To learn more about Darren, call 88-TO-ADOPT-ME, or click [here](#).

Photos by © 2013 Aude Guerrucci



Jeremy is a sociable young man he has a wealth of knowledge and many interests. To learn more about Jeremy, call 88-TO-ADOPT-ME, or click [here](#).

Photos by © 2013 Christine Meulemans



Derrick is musically-gifted and taught himself how to play the guitar, drums, organ, and piano. To learn more about Derrick, call 88-TO-ADOPT ME, or click [here](#).



Rodney is a sweet young man who loves sports especially baseball. To learn more about Rodney, call 88-TO-ADOPT-ME, or click [here](#).

Photos by © 2013 Christine Meulemans



Davon is a charismatic and inquisitive young man. He loves to learn and is especially interested in archaeology and history. To learn more about Davon, call 88-TO-ADOPT-ME, or click [here](#).

Jurisdiction Spotlight: Frederick County Department of Social Services

Frederick County Department of Social Services (DSS) is constructing partnerships between resource families and Frederick County Public Schools (FCPS). The need for collaboration came to light a few years ago during a roundtable meeting between foster parents and staff. The families verbalized a need to learn more about the local school system. Specifically, they wanted to learn more about the types of services available to the children in their homes, and how they can access them. This led to a joint venture between Frederick County DSS, the Frederick County Foster and Adoptive Parent Association, and Frederick County Public Schools. Their first annual workshop was held in 2012, and their most recent workshop was held in early June.



The workshop was conducted in a panel format, comprised of school professionals from the elementary, middle, and high school levels. Panel participants had a variety of backgrounds, including a reading specialist, guidance counselor, homeless student specialist, special education services, and more. The workshop was open to the public, but participants were primarily Frederick County resource parents and Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) volunteers.

The focus of the workshop was to provide resource families with information about the support services offered to all FCPS students, as well as services offered to foster children under the Homeless Student program. It also focused on helping resource families learn how to navigate the school system to ensure that the needs of the children in their home are being met.

Wednesday's Child: Back to School Drive

Each year with the help of our community partners, COG provides age appropriate school supplies to Wednesday's Child children. Sometimes the only difference between a thriving student and a failing student is having basic supplies to do homework and participate in class. The Back to School Drive helps foster children show up with confidence and gusto because they now have what every other student has. They are not left out. They are equipped to succeed in school.

We were pleased to partner with a familiar community partner The Ritz-Carlton, Pentagon City. We received gracious donations of backpacks filled with supplies from The Ritz-Carlton and COG employees, who donated over 100 school supplies.

From pencils to Kindles, we were able to provide 17 Wednesday's Child children with the necessary supplies for a successful school year. Thank you! Thank you! Thank you!



Television Turns Spotlight on Foster Care and Adoption

The concept of family is continually evolving and ABC Family's new show, *The Fosters*, presents an example of a loving, modern multi-ethnic family of foster, biological, and adopted kids. The show premiered June 3rd at 9 pm ET.

The Foster family is comprised of mothers, Police Officer Stef Foster (Teri Polo) and School Vice Principal Lena Adams (Sherri Saum); Stef's biological son from her previous marriage, Brandon (David Lambert); and their adopted twins, Mariana (Cierra Ramirez) and Jesus (Jake T. Austin). In the premiere, Lena brings home a foster child, Callie (Maia Mitchell). Her arrival challenges the family dynamic, while demonstrating the power of love.



Foster Care Annual Report Snapshot

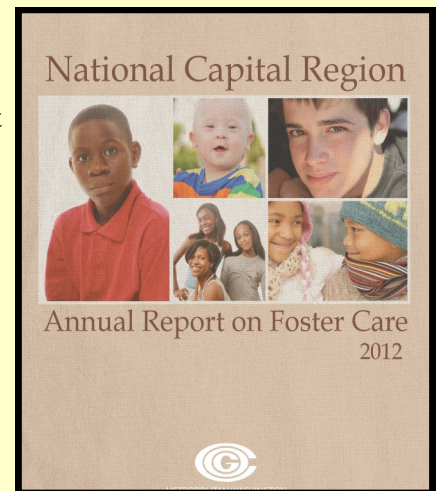
Recently, Kamilah Bunn, Child Welfare Program Manager and Agnes Leshner, Director, Montgomery County Child Welfare Services took the lead in presenting the Foster Care Annual Report to the Human Services & Public Safety Policy Committee at COG.

Each year COG gathers statistics, explores results, and determines trends occurring in the region's foster care systems. The report shows the number of children in foster care continues to decline. Also altogether in 2012, over 1,300 children were diverted from entering foster care. The declining number of children in foster care is due in part to child welfare agencies focus on family members, family preservation services, and community programs that stabilize families in crisis before they ever come to the attention of child welfare.

Additional regional findings of the 2012 survey included:

- The number of kids in foster care declined 28%, as compared to 4 years ago.
- Half of the children in foster care were placed in family foster homes.
- Child protective services investigated 21,819 hotline calls reporting abuse and/or neglect.
- Nineteen children, age 16 or older, were adopted in 2012.

To read the entire report, please visit www.mwcog.org/publications under the Health and Human Services sections and Family Issues.



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
Become our "FAN" on Facebook, www.facebook.com/kidsneedfamilies, or send us a Tweet, [@kidsneedfamily](https://twitter.com/kidsneedfamily)