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Scrapbooking with Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc.



On October 23 2013, the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG) was pleased to once again partner with The Federal City Alumnae Chapter and Washington DC Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. for a evening filled with scrapbooking and learning.

The goal of the event was twofold. While the ladies decorated scrapbooks for Wednesday's Child children, they learned more about the region's need for foster care and adoptive parents.

Both goals were accomplished. Recruiters shared information about the needs in their jurisdictions, answered questions, and dispelled myths about foster care and adoption, while creative juices flowed and valuable keepsakes were created. The 12 scrapbooks completed at the event are timeless gifts that will be used to safely store photographs taken by a professional volunteer photographer of each [Wednesday's Child](#) at their evening news taping.



Events like this encourage community involvement in the lives of kids in foster care. There are many ways to be involved and make an impact on the life of a child in foster care.

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.

We are looking forward to receiving your suggestions.

Krystal Fenwick
kfenwick@mwkog.org

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

Recent Wednesday's Child Children



Donnell is a charming, affectionate, and polite young man with many interests including sports and music. To learn more about Donnell, call 88-TO-ADOPT ME, or click [here](#).

Photos by © 2013 Aude Guerrucci



Faith is a sweet girl with a vivacious personality who loves music. To learn more about Faith, call 88-TO-ADOPT-ME, or click [here](#).



Betty is a sweetheart. She loves music especially the "Dora the Explorer" theme song. To learn more about Betty, call 88-TO-ADOPT-ME, or click [here](#).

Photos by © 2013 Aude Guerrucci



Isaiah is a personable young man. He loves to garden, especially harvesting and sorting the vegetables. To learn more about Isaiah, call 88-TO-ADOPT ME, or click [here](#).



Makiah is a sweet young man who loves to dance. To learn more about Makiah, call 88-TO-ADOPT-ME, or click [here](#).



Tony is a happy and cheerful young man. He loves dogs and lights up when he gets to play with them. To learn more about Tony, call 88-TO-ADOPT-ME, or click [here](#).

Photos by © 2013 Aude Guerrucci

Jurisdiction Spotlight: Montgomery County Child Welfare Services Directions Youth Mentoring Program

A little over a year ago, Montgomery County Child Services launched *The Directions Youth Mentoring Program*. Since the inception of the Maryland Youth Matters Practice Model in 2007 child welfare staff across the entire State of Maryland have been focusing extensive efforts on addressing the needs of older youth in the foster care system. It was recognized by professionals working with older youth that many were exiting the child welfare system without the education, life-skills, or supports needed to be self sufficient. One of the primary strategies identified to prepare for a successful transition into adulthood was to ensure that each youth had a connection to a supportive adult.



The mission of *Directions* is to establish positive connections between older youth (16 to 21 years of age) on the verge of aging out of the foster care system and adult volunteers in the community. The adult volunteers assist the youth in developing confidence to make positive life choices and provide the supports they need to achieve their potential. Most importantly, the adult can be a "listening ear" when the youth is not sure which way to turn.

The Directions Program currently has 18 trained adult volunteers. Currently there are 12 active matches between youth and mentors. *The Directions Program* will be hosting additional training classes in November 2013 and March 2014 and continue to grow the number of trained volunteers available to older youth.

November is National Adoption Month

Each year, November is recognized as National Adoption Month— providing a platform to build awareness of the tremendous need for families to come forward and provide permanence for children in foster care through adoption.

This year, activities and celebrations were kicked off by a Presidential Proclamation. While efforts made at the national level certainly help, build awareness of adoption, boost participation in local programs and events, the activities by those of us with a direct connection to adoption can often be the most effective way to promote adoption. The positive perceptions we create debunk the myths and draw attention to the tens of thousands of children in foster care who wait and hope for permanent families.

Our region's social workers were busy all month long preparing for National Adoption Day which was celebrated on Saturday, November 23! On that special day, our region joined other states, regions and cities in finalizing thousands of adoptions. This national effort also draws attention to the local children who are still awaiting permanent adoptive homes.

Wednesday's Child: Peer 2 Peer

On November 1, 2013, the Council of Governments (COG) and the Center for Adoption Support and Education (CASE) hosted a Peer 2 Peer panel event at NBC 4 Studios. This is not the first time this event has occurred, but it is the first time it was held at NBC 4. The purpose of the Peer 2 Peer Panel was to discuss Wednesday's Child and adoption with youth who are uncertain they want to be adopted, or featured on Wednesday's Child.

During the event, the young people in attendance met Barbara Harrison, host of Wednesday's Child, and heard from former foster kids who were featured on Wednesday's Child and as a result found their forever families. Panelists and attendees got the chance to openly talk about the ups and downs of foster care adoption. The afternoon was filled with food, chatting and an exclusive behind the scenes tour of NBC4 studios by Barbara Harrison.

Five panelists, former Wednesday's Child kids, shared their stories of how much fun they had during Wednesday's Child feature and how the feature changed their lives. Viewing the children's segments elicited smiles, laughs, and moments of awe.

The Peer 2 Peer event was a great way to show kids that being on television and expressing their desire for a forever family is not as scary as it seems. As a result of the event, several youngsters had epiphanies about adoption and have decided to be featured.



Regional Recruitment with DavCo

The Foster Care Advisory Committee at COG is a meeting place for social worker trainers, recruiters, and supervisors from 10 jurisdictions who identify resource families for children in the foster care system. During committee meetings, members share ideas and strategies that will increase the number of foster or adoptive parents available to care for our region's foster children.

At October's meeting, committee member, Rosa Suau, a recruiter for the Fairfax County Department of Family Services, shared she would be partnering again with Wendy's restaurants in Fairfax County to place brochures in store locations during Adoption Month and encouraged her colleagues do the same. COG coordinated with DavCo Restaurants Inc., the largest Wendy's franchisee, to have recruitment brochures on display in several Wendy's locations throughout the region during the month of November. We are hopeful this regional recruitment effort will encourage even more people to consider becoming foster or adoptive parents to our region's children.



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 jurisdictions comprised of and surrounding our nation's capital, in addition to 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)