CRB eNews
June 2013

New Volunteer Board Members

Benton
Joe Chambers

Clackamas
Michael Labhard

Clatsop
Cindy Duncan

Columbia
Iris Makinson

Deschutes
Kristina Knittel

Jackson
Anne Bartlett
Toni Higgins
Tina Timmons

Klamath
Debi Winchell

Lake
Gloria Gage
Andrew Peavy

Lane
Linda Anderson
Avonelle Kluessendorf

Linn
Deborah Dixon

Marion
Nicole Biggs
Theresa Cooke
Deborah Damico
Pamela Householder
Teresa Murphy
Jane Randall
Susan Ritenour
Mari Worley

Multnomah
Deborah Porter
David Schreiner

Polk
Kate Fear

Wasco
Taunie Maske

Washington
Manola Kerr
Gail Schroeder

2013 *"Every Day Counts…"* Conference

On May 4 and 5, 2013, over 200 CRB Volunteer Board Members, child welfare stakeholders, staff, and presenters gathered at the Sheraton Portland Airport for the CRB's annual conference, *Every Day Counts...*

The plenary session on Friday afternoon focused on Trauma Informed Practice and provided recommendations to reduce the retraumitization of parties who come to reviews. This newsletter includes a more in depth article about Trauma Informed Practice.

Saturday's plenary session was presented by Sandra WhiteHawk, Director of the First Nations Orphans Association. She spoke about her personal history of being removed from her parents and placed for adoption. Her presentation highlighted the ongoing need for ensuring Active Efforts are applied to all Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) cases. Michael Livingston and Cheryl Baldomaro-Lucas followed Sandra's presentation with detailed information on how boards can ensure that DHS is in compliance with ICWA law.

This year, there were 14 different workshops offered! The variety of topics made it difficult for attendees to choose which to attend. All materials and videos from the conference are posted on the CRB website under Education and Training.

Brian Baker, Attorney, Youth, Rights & Justice, spoke about *Improving Educational Outcomes for Children in Foster Care* at the 2013 *Every Day Counts…* Conference

Sandra WhiteHawk presented the key note presentation on Saturday at the *Every Day Counts…* conference

CRB Staff Updates:

Clayton Kubota, Field Manager for Washington County retired after being a State of Oregon employee for 13 years. He and his wife have moved home to Hawaii to be with his mother.

Clayton's last Orientation Training

Stephanie Slayton, Field Manager for Lane County, retired after working with the Citizen Review Board for 21 years. She looks forward to spending time with family and enjoying relaxing outdoors.

Erin White, Field Manager for Benton, Lincoln, and Linn Counties and CAPTA Project Coordinator, decided that since her husband obtained a job in Hawaii, that she would like to join him.

Clayton, Stephanie, and Erin will be missed. We wish them well in their future endeavors!

New Staff and Promotions

Amy Benedum was hired as a temporary review specialist in November to help with coverage through the holidays and scheduled family leave. She worked primarily in Lane County, where she had previously worked as a law clerk at the Lane County Circuit Court. Amy was hired as a permanent Field Manager for Benton, Lincoln, and Linn Counties. Amy is a graduate of the University Of Oregon School Of Law. Prior to law school, Amy was an elementary school teacher.

Sandy Berger was hired as a temporary review specialist in March. She is providing statewide coverage when needed. Sandy worked at the Klamath County Circuit Court as a Family Court Specialist, and was also the Executive Director of the Klamath County CASA Program.

Craig Coleman was hired as a part-time CRB support staff. He was a reporter for the *Itemizer Observer* in Dallas, Oregon. Craig supports the Klamath and Lake County Boards and will be assisting with the newsletter.

Megan Hassen, the Field Manager in Marion County has been chosen to serve as the Training and Policy Lead. She has taken over the training duties previously assigned to Clayton. Megan has been the field manager for Marion County since November 2011. Prior to joining the CRB, Megan managed the Marion County Circuit Court's alternative dispute resolution programs, family law programs, and managed several court sponsored CLE programs. She also taught the Law School Admission Test Preparation Course offered through Portland State University.

Sam Tazumal has been with the CRB since August of 2007. Sam was a field manager for CRB for two years, the field manager position he was in was eliminated due to budget reductions in 2009, and he accepted a voluntary demotion to a review specialist, so this is actually a promotion for him. Sam has a Master's of Social Work and 8 years of experience working with children and families as a social worker for DHS as well as other community services organizations before being hired by the CRB.

Rakeem Washington has also been hired as a field manager for Lane County. Rakeem is a graduate of Lewis and Clark Law School and represented children and youth while working for Youth, Rights & Justice (formerly the Juvenile Rights Project) for five years. For the past two years, Rakeem has worked at Portland Public Schools as a Student Support Specialist where he was responsible for implementing a new attendance protocol, restorative justice program, and activities to reduce minority over-representation in school discipline. He also taught mock trial.

Congratulations, Sam and Megan!
Welcome Amy, Sandy, Rakeem, and Craig!

Camp to Belong Basket Fundraiser

It has become tradition for the CRB to sponsor a basket raffle fundraiser to benefit Camp to Belong Northwest. This year, there were 41 different raffle baskets or items donated. Last year, we raised $2,500 to provide scholarships to 5 children to attend camp. Would you believe that we almost doubled that amount this year?!? We raised around $4,609 between the basket raffle, the donation of a Pumpkin Ridge golf package to their annual "Bids for Sibs" auction, and a work fundraiser at a doctor's office. The generosity of our volunteer board members is mind-blowing! Thank you to all who participated in the basket raffle and other activities.

Baskets as far as the eyes can see…

Elizabeth Huntsman

Volunteer Board Member News

Elizabeth Huntsman lost her son in a car accident 14 years ago. Grieving has been a painful and sometimes "lonely" process. Still, Elizabeth, a volunteer board member of the Baker County Citizen Review Board, has strived to help others in her community with the difficult healing that follows the death of a loved one. A book she's written is bolstering that effort.

Elizabeth and her husband, David, have raised a total of 12 children – biological, adopted and foster. In 1999, her 17-year-old son, Richard, died in a car crash. It was a combination of her own grief experience, and her work with families coping with similar tragedies that served as a catalyst for the book.

Elizabeth's book, "The Fine Art of Being Vertical: Coping with the Loss of Child," was recently released by Black Lyon Publishing, an independent publishing house in her hometown of Baker City. The book is available on Amazon and at Barnes & Noble. She drafted the workbook and self-published a version two years ago to use as a tool for grief counseling she does with inmates at the Powder River Correctional Facility. Black Lyon contacted Elizabeth in March about publishing her book under the company's banner. Less than two months later, "The Art of Being Vertical" was available for sale to the public.

"It happened pretty fast, it seems. Our target was originally July and it came out by the end of April. I've done a lot of writing before, but I've never had anything published." "It's kind of fun," she continued, laughing. "I have a hard time bringing myself to say `I'm a writer.'"

Elizabeth has done advocacy work on behalf of children with her local legislators and has served on state and regional advisory boards. She's also the chairwoman for the Eastern Oregon chapter of The Compassionate Friends; a worldwide network supports bereaved families after the death of a child.

"The one piece of advice I would give to somebody who has never been blindsided by grief: If you know somebody who is grieving, don't be afraid to sit with them or afraid to say something for fear it will be wrong. Just be there for them," she continued. "Some of my best memories are of those people who came and helped me with the minutia. Some days, all you can do is stand up -- be vertical."

Looking at Reviews through a New Lens: Trauma Informed Care

The Department of Human Services, law enforcement, the courts and the Citizen Review Board are all examining how to improve delivery of services to families involved in the child welfare system who have experienced trauma. A "trauma informed care" approach recognizes the impact of trauma on a parent's and a child's current functioning, and strives to both ensure that appropriate services are provided to address past trauma, and that services are delivered in a manner that does not re-traumatize parents and children.

As Mandy Davis, of PSU's Trauma Informed Care Project explains it, when past trauma is "triggered" by a current event, the brain goes into fight, flight or freeze (disassociation) mode. At reviews, we are most likely to observe the "freeze" response, where it may look like a parent isn't tracking or otherwise engaged in the process. That is because cognitive processing and memory are impaired when a parent is triggered, which makes decision making nearly impossible.

Mandy observed CRB reviews in Columbia, Marion, Multnomah, and Washington counties earlier this year to collect information and evaluate our process in light of what she knows about trauma informed care. She addressed board members at the CRB Annual Conference, and offered tips for conducting reviews in a way that allows for potentially greater meaningful participation by those who have experienced trauma. She explained that every interaction is an opportunity to either provide the participant with a sense of safety, or an opportunity to re-traumatize him or her. She offered a number of points for the CRB program as a whole to consider as we develop trauma informed practices.

Her preliminary recommendations for using a trauma informed care approach at CRB reviews include:

(1) **Prepare the participants for what is coming up.** This includes ensuring the notice to legal parties helps prepare parents and youth for the review, field staff explaining what to expect to parents and youth in the waiting area, providing participants with a written explanation of the process and copy of the orange case notes sheet, providing an ongoing narrative of what will happen next, and acknowledge external stimuli that is beyond the board's control (construction noise, etc.).

(2) **Think about whether there's a better way to establish the basis of jurisdiction and the facts of the case.** Reading the basis of jurisdiction and reciting the facts that led to removal are additional reminders of the reasons and circumstances that led to the foster care placement. Mandy recommended figuring out a way to establish jurisdiction without reading word for word during the review. Similarly, figuring out a way to make finding number one without rehashing the facts provided in the materials should be explored.

(3) **Read the findings as a question instead of a statement.** Board members have been trained to read each finding out loud as a statement. This style of reviewing may be confusing to participants who aren't familiar with our process; it may lead to the belief that the board has already made the finding without allowing the parties to be heard. Mandy suggested posing the finding as a question, such as, "The Board will next consider, has DHS made reasonable efforts to provide services to make it possible for the children to safely return home?" Stated this way, parents are more likely to understand they will have an opportunity to speak before the board makes a finding.

(4) **Explain what concurrent planning means.** Parents often don't understand what "concurrent planning" means, and may believe the board is talking about having the agency move to adoption. Mandy suggested explaining the concurrent plan is the backup plan, and will only be used in the event a parent doesn't make enough progress and the court changes the plan.

(5) **Understand decision making may take time.** Parents and youth with trauma issues may have difficulty making a decision right away. If they are put on the spot, they may feel forced into a decision that they don't understand. In addition, the trauma brain may have trouble remembering what was decided.

(6) **Understand the impacts of trauma and think about how services could be provided differently.** Mandy explained parents who have experienced trauma may seem forgetful, lazy and like they don't care, when these issues may actually be due to the trauma they have experienced. For example, many people with a trauma background have trouble getting up in the morning. Offering them services at this time may not be helpful. Moreover, the trauma brain can forget important facts. Parents may not remember instructions that were previously given. In light of this, reminder calls may help parents remember service appointments. Finally, it is important participants have a sense of safety while they are receiving services. A sense of safety is necessary before emotional regulation can occur. In turn, emotional regulation must be present before cognitive processing is available.

Understanding the impact of trauma and tailoring services accordingly has the potential to help parents and children heal, and move on with their lives. Mandy will be meeting with CRB Field Staff in late July to discuss our next steps for integrating trauma informed practices into our program. In the meantime, please feel free to discuss her recommendations with your board and field manager.

Training Opportunities

Volunteer Recruitment & Scheduled Orientation Trainings

If you know someone who might be interested in serving on a board, please refer them to Amy Church, Volunteer Resource Coordinator. Often the best referrals come from our current volunteer board members. We are actively seeking volunteers in Baker, Coos, Curry, Lane, Lincoln, Linn, Malheur, Morrow, Umatilla, Union, and Wallowa.

Orientation Trainings are scheduled on these dates:

- June 20-21 – Baker City
- July 15-16 – Albany
- September 24-25 – Portland
- October 17-18 – Eugene

"Bringing our Children Home: An Introduction to the Indian Child Welfare Act"

This ICWA educational resource video is the culmination of the ongoing collaboration between the Mississippi Courts, Child Welfare Agency, and the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians in consultation with the National Resource Center on Legal and Judicial Issues and the National Resource Center for Tribes. The video was produced by Mad Genius, Inc., Ridgeland, Mississippi.

The video will be a companion to the National ICWA Judicial Curriculum currently in development, a resource designed for state court judges, courts, and judicial educators.

link to video:

http://courts.ms.gov/trialcourts/youthcourt/youthcourt_ycvideos.html

The Power of Community

NCRP

Ending Child Abuse and Neglect.

"Trauma-Informed Child Welfare: What does this mean for your work?"

Presenter: Julie Collins, Child Welfare League of America

The outcomes of the ACEs study and neuroscience along with the focus of federal grant programs by SAMHSA and ACF have brought focused attention to the need for child and family serving systems to be trauma-informed. This is resulting in states and counties moving towards trauma-informed child welfare systems and practices. But what does this matter for the work of Citizen Review Panels? This webinar will help you understand what trauma-informed systems and practices are, what this means for child welfare, and what it might mean for your work. Helpful resources will also be shared.

Date: Tuesday, July 23, 2013
Time: 11:00 AM – 12:00 PM CDT (1:00 PM – 2:00 PM PST)

Space is limited. Reserve your Webinar seat now at: https://www1.gotomeeting.com/register/591244752

Youth Stories from Camellia Network: These Stories are Powerful

Throughout the month of May, in celebration of National Foster Care Awareness Month, Camellia Network shared the stories of real people with firsthand experience aging out of the foster care system. The stories were shared in emails, on Facebook, Twitter and at https://camellianetwork.org/80aday/.

Additional stories were recently posted, hopefully, you will have time to watch the videos and continue to be inspired by the stories, aspirations and outcomes of people who aged out of the foster care system.

If you would like to serve on the *Every Day Counts… CRB Annual Conference* planning committee for 2014, please contact Amy Church, 503.986.4535, amy.m.church@ojd.state.or.us