

# Child Welfare News

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Winter 2009

## **WATTENBERG RECEIVES PREVENTION GRANT FROM DHS**

Professor Esther Wattenberg was recently awarded a grant from the Minnesota Department of Human Services to expand her research on child welfare and immigrant families to develop strategies for the prevention of child abuse and neglect in these new populations.

The focus of this project will be threefold and include the following components:

- The preparation of a handbook for child welfare staff on best practices in issues encountered by immigrant families and children and resources for case planning.
- The preparation of fact sheets on new populations and their family composition and their practices in child-rearing, discipline, and expectations of their child's future.
- Developing workshops in consultation with a work group drawn from child welfare staff on topics of emerging practice issues with children in immigrant families.

Professor Wattenberg is in the process of convening work groups for advice and consultation. Participants will be drawn from the practice field, ethnic communities, Prevent Child Abuse Minnesota, Children's Trust Fund, and the University of Minnesota. Watch the CASCW website for updates, resources and trainings related to this exciting project.

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## **A NOTE FROM THE DIRECTOR**

As we transition from one semester into another; and fall into what is turning out to be a blistering winter, it is the perfect time to stop and reflect on all that has occurred in the past several months. As is always the case in child welfare, things move quickly and changes seem plentiful; this year has been no different.

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# spotlight on IV-E alumni

## LINDA PAGENKOPF, MSW, LICSW

Former Title IV-E student, Linda Pagenkopf, has been working as an Area Training Manager for the North West region of Minnesota for the past four and a half years.

This current position is a macro level position where Ms. Pagenkopf assesses training needs for 24 counties and 3 tribal areas. Ms. Pagenkopf collects and assesses training needs data, coordinates training activity needs and promotes involvement of all participants in assessing individual needs through organization at the regional level. She travels through out the counties and also provides assistance and support by phone and e-mail. Ms. Pagenkopf is involved in creating training based on the results of the most recent Child and Family Service Review. The current themes that are being cultivated in training are engaging fathers in case management and “compassion fatigue,” or self-care, for social workers.

Ms. Pagenkopf describes her Title IV-E MSW training as vital and states that the scholarship and experience opened so many doors. She finds that her education influences her everyday through her decision making process and the skills used to perform her work.

Also important to her success at the Macro level is her experiences as a child welfare worker for Clay County, her clinical experiences working with clients through The Village, and her personal experiences as a foster and adoptive mother.

Ms. Pagenkopf recognizes that these direct practice experiences really helped shape her work now, but also states that they are her greatest achievements. She cherishes the memories of being able to make a difference in her clients’ lives and states that work with families and children is closest to her heart.

Ms. Pagenkopf’s recommendation for Title IV-E students is to take supervision classes. She states that this leadership training is very important. She states that it is also important to know about adult learning styles as it will help in teaching different people on all levels.

Linda Pagenkopf’s final recommendation is for networking and relationship building. She urges child welfare professionals to attend trainings and workshops, and be visible. Networking connects you to people and resources and is an important skill for all social workers.



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# collaborations

## DISABILITY TRAINING PILOT UNDERWAY

The pilot training project initiated by CASCW to provide disability content to a wide range of child welfare professionals is well underway! The College of Direct Support-Child Welfare pilot offers free training to child welfare professionals (case workers, supervisors, Guardians ad litem, foster/adoptive/kinship parents etc...) in an online format. Over 90 people from Minnesota have signed up to participate in this exciting training. Three surveys will also be given to participants in addition to the training content, in order for CASCW to better understand participants' experiences with the online learning format as well as the applicability of the content to their work in child welfare. We are also

excited to have similar projects taking place in Connecticut and Maryland. Professionals from Wisconsin and Washington are also participating in order to gain a better understanding of working with children and parents who have disabilities and are currently being served within child welfare. We anticipate that participants will take 4 hours of training per month using this online training system, although it is self paced and people may move much quicker than that if they choose. We will provide preliminary findings related to satisfaction with online training formats and use of content in the next issue of CW News ... Stay tuned!

## PATH WISCONSIN COLLABORATION UPDATE

In year two of the collaboration, PATH Wisconsin, a treatment foster care agency, is developing a pilot program that has been informed by the literature review and agency evaluation that was conducted by the University of Minnesota in the first year of the project. The new Permanency Pilot Project at PATH Wisconsin is comprised of the following three components: 1) Family Finding—a child-specific recruitment strategy to identify kin or other adults as a permanent placement; 2) Family Mentoring—matching PATH Wisconsin treatment foster parents with the identified permanent caregiver to ensure placement stability; and 3) Family Therapy—to assist the youth and permanent caregiver in maintaining the placement. The goal of

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## FOSTER FAMILY-BASED TREATMENT ASSOCIATION (FFTA)

In 2008, CASCW collaborated with the Foster Family-Based Treatment Association (FFTA)—an agency-led organization of treatment foster care providers—to identify ways to demonstrate the effectiveness of treatment and specialized foster care services, and to share information to improve outcomes for children and youth in out-of-home care. As part of that collaboration, CASCW has provided assistance directly to FFTA member agencies and to FFTA's Benchmark TFC! project .

CASCW's technical assistance to FFTA has included:

- Providing information and referrals for agencies operating treatment foster care

*CONTINUED ON PAGE 4*

# collaborations

## PATH WISCONSIN COLLABORATION *CONTINUED FROM PG 3*

this pilot program is to help older foster youth achieve permanence by finding a lifelong, parent-like relationship, when their permanency goal is adoption and there has not been an adoptive resource identified. Another goal is to help the youth develop lifelong, permanent connections to adults that are important to them.

Annette Semanchin Jones, the research assistant for this project, will be conducting a qualitative case study that will explore the effects of the first component of the new pilot project, the Family Finding process. The proposed study will be a qualitative pilot that will begin to explore the following questions: 1) what impact does the family search and engagement process have on the number and quality of connections the youths have with adults that may be important to them? and 2) what impact does the family search and engagement have on the youths' achieving legal permanence (i.e., adoption or legal guardianship) or emotional permanence? In tandem with this question, this qualitative study will also explore what permanence means for the youth in this project.

Annette is currently conducting interviews with youth, their foster parents and social workers, at the beginning of the family finding process, and she will interview them again six months later in the spring of 2009. Findings from this exploratory study will inform the development of methodology to evaluate the impact of the entire Permanency Project, when funding becomes available for a large scale implementation of the project.

## FOSTER FAMILY-BASED TREATMENT ASSOCIATION *CONTINUED FROM PG 3*

programs on topics such as birth & foster parent collaboration, preparing foster parents' own children for the fostering experience, critical incidents in the lives of foster care youth, and sexually reactive youth.

- Assisting FFTA's Benchmark TFC! Project—a national benchmarking effort to help treatment foster care programs collect data that can be used to better understand the effectiveness of treatment foster care and inform policymakers and funders about child outcomes—in performance management and improvement.
- Identifying and evaluating evidence-based practices in the field of treatment and specialized foster care. This component of technical assistance has resulted in the creation of two reports on evidence-based practice. The first, *Evidence-Based Practice in Foster Parent Training and Support: Implications for Treatment Foster Care Providers*, can be accessed via the CASCW website <http://cehd.umn.edu/ssw/cascw/research/ebp/>. The second, *Involving Foster Parents in Permanency Planning for Adolescents in Treatment Foster Care: Evidence-Based Practices*, is currently being edited and will be available on CASCW's website in January.

More information about FFTA, and resources for practitioners, students, and agencies, can be found at [www.fftta.org](http://www.fftta.org).

# events

## FAMILY CONNECT: MAKING FAMILY VISITS WORK FOR CHILDREN IN FOSTER CARE

On Wednesday, October 22, 2008, The CASCW held a conference where Family Alternatives, a private foster care agency, presented their research and best practice findings after a two year pilot project on foster children visits with their family of origin while they are in foster care.

Presenters Joan Riebel, and Wendy Negaard are the coordinators of the project for Family Alternatives; their agency is on the front lines of child welfare reform. This specific initiative began in 2005, and developed from work that they had been involved with previously. The goal is to connect young people safely with families of origin whether or not families are reunited.

Family Alternatives researched best practice both locally and nationally. It was found that visits are linked to higher reunification rates, less reentry into care, higher placement stability and overall well being for children in the child welfare system. Most kids need to reconnect to resolve their disrupted attachments as healthy attachments are linked to success for children. The child welfare system has a responsibility to keep kids safe, but also needs to care for attachments of children. This focus on preparation of parents, children and workers is important for successful visits.

Through qualitative interviews in two Minnesota counties, this unique project captured the voices of children in foster care, birth parents, foster parents and social workers. Key

elements of helping families maintain and strengthen their relationships while living apart were explored and an interactive family visiting guide was developed based on the information gathered. Ande Nesmith presented the findings of her evaluation of the program. Preliminary findings show that these guides are already achieving great results.

Keynote speaker Heidi Brinig, Program Director at Families Together, shared her experiences in starting a visitation program through the science museums in Providence, Rhode Island.

To complete this conference, Deena McMahon facilitated a conversation with a panel of foster parents and former foster children about their experiences and recommendations about visitation, communication, support and supervision.

To find out more, to watch this conference or to order your copy of the guide, go to this link [http://cehd.umn.edu/SSW/cascw/events/past\\_events/familyconnect.aspxhttp://](http://cehd.umn.edu/SSW/cascw/events/past_events/familyconnect.aspxhttp://)

**Check out all of the Center's publications at:**  
<http://cehd.umn.edu/SSW/cascw/research/publications.asp>

# events

## CONFERENCE ON WORKING WITH INVOLUNTARY CLIENTS

On September 15, 2008, The Center for Advanced Studies in Child Welfare sponsored and hosted global and renowned experts Dr. Ronald Rooney from the University of Minnesota's School of Social Work and Dr. Chris Trotter from Monash University in Australia for the "Working with Involuntary Clients: Advances in Theory" conference at the Coffman Union Theater Twin Cities Campus. The conference presented key ideas of both Dr. Rooney's and Dr. Trotter's approaches and adaptations to work with involuntary clients, particularly those in child welfare.

Highlights of the presentations were the comparisons between the two models espoused by Dr. Rooney and Dr. Trotter, practice guidelines stemming from quality research over time, and the quality and content of the break out sessions.

Also in attendance as experienced experts in the pedagogical dialogue around work with involuntary clients were Dr. Glenda Dewberry Rooney, Carol Jud, Dr. Tony Bibus, Dr. Debra

Gohagan, and Dr. Michael Chovanec, all of whom facilitated smaller break out sessions that covered a broad and comprehensive, but yet specific and in-depth range of topics including, *Oppressed Groups and Involuntary Status, Applying the Involuntary Perspective to Supervision, Methods for work with Involuntary Clients in Child Welfare, Working with Involuntary Clients in Corrections, Work with Men in Domestic Abuse Treatment, Work with Involuntary Clients on Public Assistance, and Work with Teen Aged Parents in Foster Care.*

Break out sessions were followed by a productive and informative panel discussion among the presenters. The interactive nature allowed the audience to ask questions and produce exciting discussions around methods to apply theory and improve practice in the real world. A myriad of questions that covered a broad range of social work areas that involve involuntary clients were asked by the facilitator which proved to enhance the applicability of the conference to the wide range of participating professionals.

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## MARK COURTNEY TO PRESENT AT 10<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL ITV CONFERENCE

CASCW's tenth annual child welfare teleconference on a topic relevant to child welfare best practices will be on April 22, 2009 from 9:00 am to 12:00 noon at the Cowles Auditorium, Humphrey Institute, University of Minnesota. The topic is Adolescents Aging Out of Foster Care, and the keynote presenter will be Mark Courtney, Executive Director of Partners for Our Children and Professor in the School of Social Work at the University

of Washington. There will be a panel of local community practitioners and policy makers who will respond to his presentation and present their own issues and ideas: Michelle Chalmers, Co-Executive Officer of Ampersand Families; Elizabeth Hinz, Liaison for Homeless and Highly Mobile Students for the Minneapolis School District; and Claire Hill, Social Services

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# events

## 2008-2009 LESSONS FROM THE FIELD: AUTISM SERIES

This year, CASCW is pleased to co-sponsor the Center for Excellence in Children's Mental Health's series of workshops focusing on bridging the gap from research to practice in children's mental health. This year's Lessons from the Field series will focus on Autism Spectrum Disorders. On November 21, 2008, the first workshop in the series, Foundations of Autism, was held on the University of Minnesota metro campus and broadcast to over 35 host sites around the state. At this workshop, keynote presenter, Dr. Scott Selleck, and a panel of University faculty and community professionals with expertise in the field of autism presented on the current research and what it can and can't tell us about the many facets of autism causation and resulting presentations and interventions.

The second workshop in the series will be held on February 12 from 9:00 A.M. to 12:30

P.M. The focus of this workshop will be early identification and intervention for children with autism spectrum disorders. The lead presenter will be Dr. Wendy Stone, who is nationally renowned in the field of early identification and intervention. Her work has focused on the developmental aspects of autism, including the contributions of early imitation, play, and prelinguistic communication to later cognitive and behavioral outcomes. This workshop will also feature community professionals with expertise in the field of autism.

Because CASCW is a sponsor of this event, child welfare professionals are able to attend the "Lessons from the Field" workshop series for no cost. For more information or to register, visit: [www.cmh.umn.edu](http://www.cmh.umn.edu) .

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## ITV CONFERENCE *CONTINUED FROM PG 6*

Program Consultant, Adolescent Services, MN Department of Human Services. The program will be broadcast to about 30 ITV sites in counties throughout Minnesota and will also be available live through "web streaming", enabling participants anywhere to view and participate on their computers. Through this technology, CASCW can provide an interactive

training seminar to child welfare practitioners in out state locations, as well as nation-wide. A companion publication titled CW360 is being developed to support the dissemination of this critical information. More information regarding the conference and registration will be available on the website in February.

# Minn-LInK update

## MINN-LINK UPDATE

This fall the Minn-LInK project has been preparing to release a number of studies that have been underway throughout 2008. Specifically, we are completing a study of the special education use of former Part C recipients. Part C is an early intervention program intended to help families with infants and toddlers that have developmental delays and disabilities. We also have a study of homeless and highly mobile students in process where we have explored educational and child welfare outcomes of students who have been identified as homeless by three Minnesota school districts. Using the data from this study, we intend to create estimates of the total population of homeless students in Minnesota, given that this population is hard

to identify and under served. The exploration of an estimating model should also help facilitate discussions about how systems might intervene earlier in the lives of these students.

Other studies include a descriptive study of education and child protection involvement of a treatment foster care population, a three year follow-up on a population of students who were involved with child welfare due to educational neglect, and a new study of child well-being related to the MFIP use of families. There are two study manuscripts currently under review with NASW Children & Schools and Public Health Nursing journals and a discussion of the importance of investing in early care and education was recently published in Miller-McCune.com.

CECMH

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Excellence  
In Children's  
Mental Health

## 2008-09 Lessons from the Field: Autism Series

### Workshop # 2: *Early Identification and Intervention*

February 12, 2009 9:00 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. (Check-in at 8:30 a.m.)

Lead Presenter: Wendy Stone, Ph.D., Vanderbilt

Co-Presenters: Mary Hunt, Early Childhood Special Education, MN Dept. of Education  
Pat Pulice, Autism Services Director, Fraser Child & Family Center

Metro Location: Coffman Union Theater, University of MN, Minneapolis Campus

Greater Minnesota Host Sites: The Series will be broadcast live to over 35 host sites in Greater Minnesota. For site listings, go to: [www.cmh.umn.edu](http://www.cmh.umn.edu)

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### SAVE THE DATE

April 14, 9:00 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. - *Multi-disciplinary Interventions*

Lead Presenter: Randi Hagerman, M.D.

May 13, 9:00 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. - *Integrative Medicine*

Lead Presenter: Lawrence Rosen, M.D.

# UMD update

## UMD SUMMER INSTITUTE IN AMERICAN INDIAN CHILD WELFARE

The Center for Regional and Tribal Child Welfare Studies in the University of Minnesota-Duluth Department of Social Work successfully carried out the pilot Summer Institute in American Indian Child Welfare in July of 2008. With support from the University of Minnesota Children, Youth and Family Consortium, and tribes across northern Minnesota, the Center held a no-cost, week long seminar for tribal child welfare workers and administrators. The Summer Institute was the first training opportunity of its kind in the region, where the content, delivery, and location were specifically designed to meet the needs of tribal child welfare workers.

Approximately 60 tribal child welfare workers and administrators spent a week at the Leech Lake Tribal College campus, learning from American Indian and First Nations scholars and professionals from across the United States and Canada. Presentations were offered by: Terry Cross, the Executive Director of the National Indian Child Welfare Association; Dr. Priscilla Day, Director of the Center for Regional and Tribal Child Welfare Studies; Dr. John Red Horse, Professor of American Indian Studies at UMD; Staff members from Wichi-itte-win Family Services in Fort Frances, Ontario; Tribal judges and attorneys from Indian communities across Minnesota; Minnesota tribal child welfare program administrators; and tribal elders and spiritual leaders from northern Minnesota Ojibwe communities. Participants were able to develop new practice skills, share collective experiences, and learn from American Indian child welfare professionals and scholars.

The Institute was a resounding success. All surveyed participants indicated that they would recommend the Institute to other tribal child welfare workers, and either agreed or strongly agreed that the content was relevant to their practice. One element of the Summer Institute which participants appreciated was the dual focus on two distinct concentrations: a practice track, and an administration and policy track. The practice track was developed specifically for tribal child welfare case workers, and included case management skills, court preparation and appearance, and foundational concepts in Indian child welfare history and law. The administration and policy track focused on creating healthy working environments, program development and evaluation, and tribal organizational best practice models. The first annual Summer Institute was an important step in improving the capacity of tribal child welfare programs.

Summer Institute organizer Dr. Priscilla Day said that courses and content were developed from critical issues identified in "focus groups held with American Indian social work practitioners and administrators." Dr. Day said that "one of the top needs identified was training designed specifically for tribal child welfare workers." She noted that "this opportunity for tribal child welfare practitioners to come together to learn, share, and network, fulfilled a dream we have had for many years." Center staff members are hopeful that future years will build on the success of the Institute's pilot offering, and help create a child welfare system that is responsive to the needs and

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# center news

## CASCW STAFF UPDATES

This fall, our Associate Administrator, Heidi Wagner, was asked to step up and fill a vacancy in the School of Social Work's administrative team. Heidi will be on special assignment to the School through the end of the school year. We congratulate Heidi on this exciting opportunity and recognition of her ongoing exceptional service to the School.

We are excited to welcome Meredith "Scotty" Daniels, who joins the CASCW team in January. Scotty comes to us from Gamble-Skogmo where she was Project Coordinator and Assistant to the Chair. She will take over some administrative tasks formerly covered by Heidi Wagner and allow CASCW to expand its administrative capacity to support a range of new projects and initiatives. Welcome Scotty!

## GAMBLE-SKOGMO CHAIR ON LEAVE

Gamble-Skogmo Professor Susan J. Wells will be on leave from the School of Social Work beginning on January 1, 2009. During her spring semester leave, she will be at the University of British Columbia, Okanagan in Kelowna, BC, Canada. Susan can be reached during her leave at her UMN e-mail address: swells@umn.edu. We'll miss you Susan!

## SUMMER *CONTINUED FROM PG 9*

strengths of American Indian families. More information on the 2009 Summer Institute, and for resources—including video clips—from the 2008 Summer Institute, can be found at: [www.d.umn.edu/sw/cw/SummerInstitute.html](http://www.d.umn.edu/sw/cw/SummerInstitute.html).

## NOTE FROM DIRECTOR

### *CONTINUED FROM PG 1*

At the start of this academic year, CASCW, through Title IVE funding has *continued* to fund stipends of 41 MSW students who are dedicated to working in the field of public child welfare. These 41 stipends (averaging approximately \$10,000 each) are spread across all three of our campuses, including distance sites at Rochester and Moorhead. We are thrilled to have such a robust and diverse group of students this year with keen and varied interest across the child welfare spectrum.

At the national level, new child welfare legislation was passed and signed into law by President Bush on October 7, 2008. The Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008 (PL 110-351) focuses on increasing permanency and wellbeing for children in child welfare out-of-home placements. A synopsis of PL 110-351 can be found on the Children's Defense Fund website [http://www.childrensdefense.org/site/PageServer?pagename=priorities\\_childwelfare#foster](http://www.childrensdefense.org/site/PageServer?pagename=priorities_childwelfare#foster). The passing of this law has significant implications in our day to day work with children and families in Minnesota and covers four main areas: Promoting Permanent Families for Children in Foster Care (with relatives, adoptive families, birth families

**NOTE FROM DIRECTOR** *CONTINUED FROM PAGE 10*

and other relatives); Improving Outcomes for Children and Youth in Foster Care; Increasing Support for American Indian and Alaska Native Children; and Improving the Quality of Staff Working with Children in the Child Welfare System. Please take a moment to review this important legislation.

At a state level in Minnesota, CASCW has continued its collaborations with county agencies and the Department of Human Services (DHS). Most recently, CASCW participated with other Title IVE programs, Schools of Social Work and DHS in exploring a new model of State/University partnership for the education and training of Minnesota's child welfare workforce. There is considerable interest across many schools of social work in this collaboration and we anticipate much discussion and activity with the State, counties and educators in this area in the upcoming year.

A little closer to home, the staff at CASCW collaborated with a number of key stakeholders in Minnesota's child welfare community to create a CASCW Advisory Board. This body of professionals is critical to our success as we move forward and continue to work toward fulfilling our mission to improve the well-being of children and families who are involved in the child welfare system by; educating human service professionals, fostering collaboration across systems and disciplines, informing policy makers and the public, and expanding the child welfare knowledge base. To see a list of participating CASCW Advisory Board members, go to <http://cehd.umn.edu/SSW/cascw/about/advisory.asp> . We are incredibly

fortunate to have such a knowledgeable and committed group of professionals in this advisory capacity.

As we all prepare for the upcoming year, I suspect that our minds turn to the difficult times the children and families we serve will be facing. That of course also encompasses the difficult budget times, agencies and child welfare professionals must manage. Staff at CASCW are mindful of these circumstances and will work in the upcoming months to identify resources that will be most useful to you as you move forward in this ever changing climate. As always, if you have questions, comments or concerns please don't hesitate to contact me or any of the CASCW staff directly.



*Regards, Traci LaLiberte*

# announcement



Center for Advanced Studies  
in Child Welfare

Save the Date! April 22, 2009

## Adolescents in Foster Care

### Keynote with Mark Courtney

International Expert on Youth in Foster Care; University of Washington Executive Director of Partners for Our Children

Followed by panel of local practitioners addressing emerging and best practices in Minnesota

Presented in Cowles Auditorium, University of Minnesota

Registration to be available after January 1, 2009

CEUs will be provided at the forum for this half day event

<http://cehd.umn.edu/ssw/cascw/>

This forum has been developed under the auspices of: Federal Title IV-E Funding, Minnesota Department of Human Services (Contract #439481), The Center for Advanced Studies in Child Welfare at the School of Social Work in the College of Education and Human Development.

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