As trainers and consultants, we are planting seeds and often do not see the fruits of our work. As an interviewer for the Developmental Screening in Pennsylvania Child Welfare Services (Ages & Stages) research project, I have had an incredible opportunity to witness the positive impact and differences that we are making for families involved in the child welfare system.

In June of 2010, interviews with caregivers began. A total of 30 counties were selected for this portion of the study. Data has been collected in 29 counties with a current total of 319 caregivers interviewed across the state of Pennsylvania. Six trainer/consultants were selected and trained to be a part of this research project. I would like to share my experiences and those of my fellow interviewers. During my interviews, I was struck by the families and their overwhelming positive attitudes of their lives despite the dire circumstances in which they were living, and they still had hopes and dreams for their children. Another interviewer expressed, “The parents of these young children want the same thing I want for my child—to be happy, healthy, and to have a good life. But achieving this goal is much harder for them due to the fact that poverty makes everything so much harder.” The most rewarding experience was hearing the caregiver’s positive perception about their child welfare worker and the system. I noticed that all our efforts, statewide, of moving toward a stronger, strength-based method of working with families, are working. With a few exceptions, most of the families felt that their caseworkers cared for them and were committed to their family being successful.

For trainers and consultants, there is a critical lesson to be learned. A long line of anecdotal information tells us that caregiver social support is an important component for successful parenting. In fact, when looking at the recurrence of child maltreatment, DePanfilis and Zuravin (1999) found that deficits in social support had a strong relationship with time to recurrence of maltreatment, which echoes an earlier literature review conducted by DePanfilis (1996) examining evidence that social isolation presents an increased risk of child neglect in families. One interviewer reflected that, “It struck me how isolated these families are; the system does a very poor job connecting caregivers to the larger community thus providing them with nurturance and support.” How can we continue to make a difference for the families served in the child welfare system? Many families articulated the positive support that they receive from the child welfare system. As trainers and consultants, we need to continue to impress upon the child welfare workers the importance of helping families to make connections. Critical connections include relationships with extended family, kin and community. Although many families in the project expressed that they received positive support from their child welfare worker, it is imperative that support is transferred from the system to family and community support networks. Establishing and maintaining connections to family, kin and the community are vital to the overall well-being

Continued on page 2
of the family. Informal support networks (i.e., places of worship, family centers, support groups), along with friends and family who convey acceptance and empathy, can significantly impact caregivers’ lives (Manji et al., 2005). The importance of helping workers understand the value of Family Group Decision Making and Family Finding to assist the families with developing the critical supports that will keep kids safe in permanent homes where all of their needs are being met. Together we are making a difference!

References:


**CONSULTANT AND TRAINER BIRTHDAYS**

**SEPTEMBER**

10 - Larry Yarberough  
17 - Audra Hennessey  
Charlene Kolupski  
21 - Mary Ann Grec  
25 - Corrie Harold  
27 - Brenda Manno  
28 - Jackie Goldstein  
Gary Shuey

**OCTOBER**

3 - Nathaniel Gadsden  
4 - Kala Lilani  
8 - Sandra Bennett  
18 - Linda Flinn  
Kurt Miller  
23 - Khary Atif  
27 - Doug Waegel
“What should I do with the extra handouts that I have at the end of a training session?”

Reducing our impact on the environment is everyone’s responsibility. Although instructor-led training is a paper-intensive activity, the CWRC is working to reduce the amount of paper waste that we generate. We recycle leftover handouts and training materials at the Child Welfare Resource Center in Mechanicsburg and we are working with our training facility providers to establish recycling bins at all of our facilities. In the meantime, you can help by using extra training handouts as scrap paper and/or recycling them in your local community. Please do not save handouts for future trainings as they may become outdated before you have the opportunity to use them. Watch for more details on our recycling efforts in future Palettes.

TO ALL RESOURCE CENTER CONSULTANTS AND TRAINERS

As you know, to be approved to train a Resource Center curriculum, trainers must first attend a Training on Content (TOC). To support our dedicated trainers/consultants, Resource Center leadership discussed holding TOCs on the weekend, on a case-by-case basis. According to leadership, staff will send correspondence to the selected trainers to solicit feedback for date(s)/time(s) that suit the majority. If a weekend date for a TOC suits the majority of the selected trainers, this information will be submitted to leadership for consideration to assess staff impact. Next steps would then be communicated to the selected trainers. The number of hours allotted to a TOC will generally represent the total number of hours associated with a curriculum. When necessary, more than one content-specific TOC will be held to meet the needs of the selected trainers.

ALLERGY REMINDER

Just a reminder if you purchase candy for participants at your trainings, that many people have food related allergies. While none of our Training Rooms are “Peanut or Dairy Free Zones”, we ask that you consider the potential for food allergies when choosing treats for the classroom.

Thank you!
SAVE THE DATE

SPRING 2013 DIVERSITY EVENTS

**Southeast Region**

**April 3, 2013**

Montgomery County Human Services Center
1430 DeKalb Street, 1st Floor
Norristown, PA 19404

**Philadelphia**

**April 4, 2013**

Temple University Center City
1515 Market Street
Philadelphia, PA 19102

**Northeast Region**

**April 10, 2013**

Mayfield Training Room
1300 Old Plank Road
Mayfield, PA 18433

**Western Region**

**April 17, 2013**

Meadville Training Room
18282 Technology Dr., Suite 302
Meadville, PA 16535

**April 18, 2013**

Monroeville Training Room
Penn Center East, Building #4
400 Penn Center Blvd., Suite 741
Pittsburgh, PA 15235

**Central Region**

**May 9, 2013**

The Pennsylvania Child Welfare Resource Center
403 East Winding Hill Road
Mechanicsburg PA, 17055
SAVE THE DATE: CONSULTANT AND TRAINER ADVISORY GROUP (CTAG)

UPCOMING MEETINGS

September 26, 2012    CTAG Meeting-Conference Call

UPCOMING EVENTS

October 11, 2012    Mechanicsburg
October 17, 2012    Monroeville
October 25, 2012    Norristown

“We may not be able to prepare the future for our children, but we can at least prepare our children for the future”

~ Franklin D. Roosevelt ~

TRAINERS AND CONSULTANTS HANDBOOK REVAMPING

A collaborative group of trainers, consultants and staff of the Pennsylvania Child Welfare Resource Center have formed a workgroup that is currently revamping the Trainer and Consultant Handbook which was last published in 2000. The new comprehensive manual will include current policies and procedures, competencies, processes, resources, and forms that both trainers and consultants will find valuable and user friendly. The workgroup has been working diligently on bringing all the policies, processes and procedures up-to-date for the new manual. Once completed, the new Trainer and Consultant Handbook will be distributed to all contracted trainers and consultants.

There is still a lot of work to be done, and the workgroup welcomes your contributions. If you are interested in joining this workgroup, please contact Amy Wamagiris, the Curriculum and Trainer Development Supervisor at alw130@pitt.edu. Look for more information regarding the workgroup’s progress in future issues of the Palette.
TRAINER TIP: DON’T BE SURPRISED!

Many of us like nice surprises, but most of us don’t like challenging surprises on training days. The staff at the CWRC works diligently to make sure that you receive all of the materials that you need for your upcoming training sessions in a timely manner, but in spite of using a detailed quality control process to check each box, occasionally we make a mistake when we prepare the materials for a training session.

You can help us and yourself to make sure that you have everything you need BEFORE your training begins by checking your box as soon as you receive it. You should receive your box two weeks or more before your session. This gives us time to correct any issues regarding your materials, if we hear about them in advance. Correcting training materials issues the night before or the day of your training session is much more challenging than taking care of it ahead of time and is much more stressful for both you and us. So, please help us help you and check your training materials as soon as you receive them. If you are missing something or have other concerns, please contact your Regional Training Specialist. Here’s hoping that all of your training day surprises are nice ones!

CONSULTANT AND TRAINER INSURANCE REMINDER

Please remember to submit renewal policies for your commercial general liability and auto insurances. The University of Pittsburgh requires that current policies be on file at least three weeks prior to a scheduled training or consultation.

If you have been scheduled to train or provide consulting services and we do not have a current policy on file, we will not be able to utilize your training and/or consulting services, and your training/consulting opportunity will be rescinded.

Renewals can be emailed to Crystal Bittinger at crystalb@pitt.edu, faxed to 717-795-8013 or mailed to The Pennsylvania Child Welfare Resource Center, 403 E. Winding Hill Road, Mechanicsburg, PA 17055 to the attention of Crystal Bittinger.

In partnership with families, communities, public and private agencies, we prepare and support exceptional child welfare professionals and systems through education, research and a commitment to best practice.”