

2013 Annual Report for Circuit 4

Reporting Period: January 1, 2013 – December 31, 2013

Summary of Plan Activities

Prevention:

This year we saw the culmination of some of the efforts that began as ideas at the creation of our five-year prevention and permanency plan. In September, the Florida Department of Children and Families (Circuit 4), Edward Waters College and Family Support Services of North Florida in collaboration with Casey Family Programs, one of the leading child welfare organizations in the country, launched the “Community of Hope” initiative. More than 360 residents in the 32209 ZIP code attended and committed to start meeting regularly in small groups to focus on particular issues such as keeping kids in school, jobs, mentors, transportation and nutrition. Their intent is to focus on their largely impoverished neighborhood on Jacksonville’s Northwest side to make changes to make their families safe, healthy and successful. This area and other nearby communities has the city’s highest rates of family poverty, infant and child deaths, teen pregnancy, unemployment and homicides, among other things. The ultimate goal of “Community of Hope” is to bring those rates down and close gaps in education, employment and opportunities. Cheering the residents on were former Sheriff Nat Glover and Mayor Alvin Brown. Both grew up in the 32209 ZIP code and pledged to help however they can.

The Edward Waters College –Shell Sweet Community Resource Center (EWC-SSCRC) represents one of several types of community partnerships that have been supported by Casey Family Programs. Casey committed to developing these kinds of strategic collaborations as part of its Communities of Hope, an initiative informed by those who have supported families in child welfare by improving relationships within neighborhoods and communities (e.g., Bowie, 2011; Hawkins, Catalano, & Arthur, 2002; Shonkoff & Phillips, 2000). Casey Family Programs advocates for this approach as a model of change. As stated in their recent document *Building Communities of Hope* regarding those who work in the child welfare arena: Their collective wisdom has taught us that we cannot be satisfied simply to move children out of harm’s way, from an unsafe home into a safer one. Instead, we must extend our hands and guide children into a place where hope prevails and a community of caring adults surrounds them (Casey Family Programs, 2012, p. 7).

Family Support Services of North Florida, Inc. (FSS) our lead community based care agency for Duval and Nassau Counties during this reporting period added an Active Parenting Curriculum to include Parenting Teens to its Family Preservation model to support Parental Resilience. Parenting teens has proven to be one of the most challenging populations to parent thus making this addition extremely beneficial. Many of the programs offered are currently being held at the Schell-Sweet Community Resource Center or in neighborhood schools and facilities in the area.

FSS continued providing parenting instruction to incarcerated fathers (Inside Out Dads program) and also refers them to our monthly Dad All Day Network father support group for additional support when they are released from incarceration. (Parental Resilience)

FSS also provides a mentoring program for incarcerated parents re-entering society, RECIP (Re-Entry Coaches for Incarcerated Parents). This program’s goal is to reunite these parents with their children, provide parenting instruction as needed, provide a support system that will assist these parent in becoming stabilized, and linking them to community resources that will help with this process. FSS provides support and follow-up to these families. (Parental Resilience)

The Integrated Practice Team (IPT) was expanded to Nassau County to service children and families in that area. The goal is to staff cases with Child Abuse Investigators (CPI), Family Services Counselors,

Prevention staff, and Supervisors to assist with the development of a comprehensive family services plan to ensure the individual needs of the family are met while safely maintaining children in their own homes.

Between January 2013 and September 2013 there has been a total of 229 IPT staffings, with an average of 25 per month. I project the monthly average to increase by 10 to 12 per month for the remaining calendar year. (All protective factors are incorporated in the referrals for supports as needed)

Breakfast Learning Series:

(All or most Protective Factors are addressed throughout the year with these series)

January BLS Topic: Trends in Synthetic Drugs. Presenter was Ms. Susan Woodford, Executive Director for the Nassau Alcohol and Drug Prevention Coalition.

February BLS Topic: Teen Smoking: How to Prevent and Stop it. Presenters were Ana Santiago, Vice President of Students Working Against Tobacco (SWAT) and Sahara Soliman, SWAT Coordinator.

March BLS Topic: Helping Children with Mental Health Issues. Presenter was Laura Ninedorf, Therapeutic Services Specialist.

April BLS Topic: Human Trafficking in our Community. Presenter was Todd Raleigh, Criminal Justice Coordinator.

May BLS Topic: HIV/AIDS and Youth. Presenter was Gloria McNair, Community Outreach Health Educator.

June BLS Topic: Injury Prevention, Asthma in Children. Presenters were Alisha Pennington & Lesley Seaton, Health Educators, and Cathy Clark, Asthma Educator, from The Players Center for Child Health at Wolfson's Hospital.

July BLS Topic: Mentoring Incarcerated Parents. Presenter was Umi Kargbo, Program Coordinator.

August BLS Topic: Domestic Violence. Presenter was Starletha Cherry, Shelter Coordinator.

September BLS Topic: Dealing with Bullying. Know Your School System's Anti-Bullying Policy.

October BLS Topic: Duval County Public Schools (DCPS) Changes in Policy and New Programs to ensure all students are successful. Presenter was Dr. Nikolai Vitti, Superintendent of Duval County Public Schools.

November BLS Topic: Successful Parenting Skills. Presenter George Robinson, Parent Education Coordinator.

December BLS Topic: The Law Pertaining to Juveniles. Presenter Officer Greg Estevez.

Summer camp:

Teen Leaders of America was held at Edward Waters College-Schell Sweet Community Resource Center (EWC-SSCRC). Teen Leaders received 69 summer camp applications for the 2013 Leadership Summer Camp. Of the 69 applications received, 48 students attended the summer camp over a 6 week period. Four students were from FSS IL. The students completed workshops such as SAT Prep, Health/Fitness, FCAT Prep, Computer/ Technology, Leadership and Personal Development, and College Tours.

DAD Network: (Knowledge of Parenting/Parental Resilience)

Dad All Day (DAD) Network meets monthly at EWC-SSCC. Dad All Day is a free fatherhood program from FSS. Dads can attend to discover what being a dad is really all about. This meeting is open to all dads of all ages with children of all ages.

Born Learning: (Knowledge of Parenting/Parental Resilience)

Born Learning is a United Way Parent Education program. Born Learning is now being offered in Duval and Nassau Counties, both in the community and in jail. Born Learning is a free nine course parent education program being offered in various locations once a week. All parents who successfully complete BL will receive a 12-hour Parent education-certificate of completion.

Edward Waters College - Schell Sweet Community Resource Center (EWC-SSCRC): (All Protective Factors incorporated - Concrete Supports for Parents, Social Connections, Parental Resilience, Knowledge of Parenting and Child and Youth Development, Nurturing and Attachment)

1. EWC-SSCC holds a food distribution on a monthly basis and distributes food to needy families. SSCC has assisted over 400 families.
2. FSS IT Department has developed a Kiosk system to track services.
3. Volunteer Recognition Dinner on July 26th, 2013. Two families were recognized for their contribution to the community.

Circle of Parent Support Group Meeting: (Parental Resilience and Social Connections)

Circle of Parents offers a free meeting for anyone in a parenting role. Circle of Parents encourages the development of parents, leadership skills, parenting within the limits of the law. Circle of Parent facilitator has a different curriculum on a monthly basis.

New Partnerships (Parental Resilience, Social Connections and Concrete Supports for Parents)

1. Tiger Academy Charter School – partner with Tiger Academy to provide Circle of Parent Support Group Meeting and CRS-S joined PTA.
2. SAO Juvenile Diversion Program – partnered with SAO to provide parenting to parents who children are involved in Juvenile Diversion program.
3. Duval County Public Schools – FSS partnered with DCPS to provide Circle of Parent Support Group Meeting
4. Tiger Academy Charter School – FSS partnered with Tiger Academy and currently has a CRS worker, Angela Mack, stationed at Tiger Academy 20 hours a week to accept community referrals and provide families with resources.
5. City Rescue Mission – Barbara Jones is a member of the CRM committee to assist families with job placement training.

Community Resource Specialists: (Parental Resilience Social Connections and Concrete Supports for Parents)

1. DCF Davis Street – Angie White has assisted 501 families and a total of 1,303 children.
2. DCF Roberts building – Dina Monroe has assisted 553 families and a total of 1,146 children.

3. SSCC – Angela Mack has assisted 256 families and a total of 528 children.

Total number of children 2,977 and total number of families 1,310.

Kids First of Florida our lead community based care agency in Clay County continues to support prevention efforts in Clay County through the Green Cove Springs Neighborhood Resource and Referral Center. It remains a community resource for the rural area. Neighbors refer neighbors to the center for services and a utilize the location to apply for benefits.

Partners include: Quigley House Domestic Violence Shelter, Northeast Florida Community Action Agency, WorkSource, ACHA, DCF and faith based groups. The health department provides a dental van to assist with the children's dental needs. The Clay County Foster Parent Association provides a clothing closet and food distribution.

KFF provides funding assistance to the CPI's to help families get through a crisis in the home, such as an inability to pay for rent or electricity, and to keep the family together as they work through their current situation. KFF created a Prevention Coordinator position this past year that works with families referred by DCF or School Social Workers where there are no mal-treatment concerns, but assistance with referrals or crisis management may prevent future calls to the Hotline. The Clay Action Coalition and The Mercy Network continue to aid in the provision of the protective factors in the community.

The Nassau County Family Support Services of North Florida Inc.'s Neighborhood Center has seen tremendous expansion in services and use by the community provided services through Nassau Strengthening Ties and Empowering Parents (STEPS) program. Services stabilize families with positive skills to prevent abuse before it occurs and incorporates the protective factors. Co-locating in the FSS Nassau office has provided value to residents within the rural area. Highly successfully programs include: Breakfast Learning Series-Monthly educational series, Daily Transportation through Council on Aging partnership, Daily Individual Substance Abuse Treatment, Weekly Women's Empowerment meetings, Weekly PRIDE training, Weekly Individual therapy for children and adults, Weekly substance abuse group, Weekly group parenting classes, Weekly individual parent education, Weekly Pre and Post Adoption Counseling, Monthly Foster Parent Association meeting, Monthly Relative Caregiver and Medicaid assistance and Ongoing Adoptions Finalization. The Protective Factors are the foundation of service provision.

Adoption Promotion:

Family Support Services of North Florida Inc. (FSS) began utilizing PRIDE as the standard parent education program in February of 2011. This change has resulted in prospective adoptive families having a better understanding of the challenges they may face when adopting special needs children. Incorporating the PRIDE classes into the Comprehensive Services Program and having the course taught by adoption competent therapists has also helped to increase the knowledge that our families obtain.

In July of 2011 FSS took adoption recruitment responsibilities in-house and added two Adoption Recruitment Specialists to the Adoptions Department. These two recruiters in conjunction with the Wendy's Wonderful Kids Recruiter that was already at FSS have been able to attend all PRIDE graduations as well as community events to speak about adoption of special needs children. These three positions are able to provide more individualized attention to our approved prospective adoptive parents which helps to keep our families engaged. Adoption promotion events include:

- Heart Gallery (available online, throughout FSS offices, & at the Main Public Library)
- CBS 47 Interviews (airing on Action News Website & TV channel, as well as airport kiosks)
- Lunch and Learn Recruitment Events

- PRIDE Classes
- Employee & Community Trainings & Webinars
- DCF Monthly Conference Calls
- WWK Conference
- FSS Brochures, Billboards, Newsletter, & Website
- CMO Websites

Support of Adoptive Families:

FSS increased the number of adoption competent therapists from 2 in 2010 to 4 in 2013.

The Post Adoption Services program available in Duval and Nassau Counties has been expanded and renamed to Comprehensive Adoption Services and offers services and support from the time a family expresses interest in adoption through the finalization and beyond. Parent education classes are separated into two groups- families interested in becoming licensed foster parents and families interested in being approved for adoption.

PRIDE classes are taught by adoption competent therapists from the Comprehensive Adoption Services Program. Those therapists go on to complete the prospective adoptive family’s adoption home study and are then available to FSS to assist in match staffings and sibling separation staffings. This has increased the level of education prospective adoptive parents receive regarding the children that are available for adoption and helps families to “select out” if they determine that adoption of special needs children is not a viable option for their family. Current services are as follows:

INTAKE

- Families may self refer to the program or if they have worked with a post adoption counselor through the pre adoption process they would remain with the same counselor throughout services.
- When families seek services, an intake person or the Post Adoption Counselor conducts a brief intake questionnaire to determine what service is being requested or is needed.
- Families in crisis are given priority status with contact by the Post Adoption Counselor immediately or within 24 hours of the initial call.

CRISIS MANAGEMENT

- Families have access to crisis management services 24 hours, 7 days per week.
- Families have access to speak with a counselor over the telephone or in person to assist with crisis intervention.
- CHS currently maintains a 24 hours, 7 days per week answering service that pages the counselor after hours if crisis intervention is needed.

CASE MANAGEMENT

- A comprehensive assessment of the child and family is completed to determine appropriate services.
- CHS participates, when requested by parents, in the Individualized Education Plan (IEP) with parents, child and school personnel to ensure the best educational placement is arranged and supported.
- CHS ensures linkage to community resources.

COUNSELING SERVICES

- Initial Interview/Assessment
- Signing of Consent/Release of Information forms
- Provide handouts/literature

- ✓ Core Issues Of Adoption
 - ✓ Post Adoption Flyers
 - ✓ Grief and Loss in Adoption
 - ✓ Book recommendations
- Continue interviews for Assessment
 - Begin discussion of Core Issues
 - Eco-Map; Genogram (as indicated)
 - Complete written Assessment (within 30 days of initial session)
 - After an assessment is completed, the Adoption Counselor may determine that the family is in need of individual and/or family counseling due to adoption related issues.
 - The Adoption Counselor provides individual counseling and/or family counseling in the adoptions office or in the family home when appropriate.

POST ADOPTION EDUCATION

CORE

- Adoption-specific education (group sessions)
- Core Issues of Adoption
- Attachment & Trauma
- Adoption Specific Parenting Strategies
- Discussion of how the families have used that information to identify and address these issue within their own families since the adoption was finalized
- Update/information regarding Comprehensive Adoption Services and other community resources

PARENT SUPPORT GROUPS

- Adoption Support Groups are parent-run agency facilitated meetings that allow adoptive parents and children to obtain mutual support from other families with similar experiences. Families build informal networks and assist one another through mutual support, helpful advice, shared joys and milestones.
- CHS is available to assist in the start-up of support groups in other counties.
- Child care is provided during support group meetings.

RESPIRE SERVICES

- Respite services are designed to assist families with temporary out of home care to deescalate crisis, prevent adoption disruption or dissolution and assist families with support services as needed.
- The Adoption Counselor assists families in identifying extended family support and community support (i.e. clergy, friends, etc.) they can rely on when needed.

ADOLESCENT (ECHO) GROUP

Currently, there are approximately 100 children in identified adoptive homes and 60 children who are in non-identified status in Duval and Nassau counties. A three-hour class will be offered to these youth to prepare them for the adoption process.

The Adolescent (ECHO) Group will focus on the following areas:

- Preparation for transitioning to an adoptive home
- Life Book

- Identity Issues
- Grief and Loss
- Overcoming barriers to accepting adoption

PARENT EDUCATION

- Parent education classes are offered to assist families with improving parenting skills, as well as training on child development as it relates to adopted children and adoption issues (i.e., attachment, loyalty, entitlement, trans-racial /trans-cultural issues).
- Children’s Home Society (CHS) uses a research-based curriculum highlighting topics such as: building nurturing parenting skills, increasing parent’s awareness of developmental needs and the educational needs of their children, positive self-concept and self-esteem for adopted children, behavior management and age appropriate consequences.
- Parenting classes are offered in a group setting and take place in the evening hours to accommodate working parents.

Parenting classes are available year-round in Duval County through the CHS Family Life Education Program. CHS will explore the opportunities to provide this service in other participating counties. Protective factors: (Parental Resilience, Knowledge of Parenting /Child Youth Development, Societal Connections)

In Clay County, Kids First of Florida continued its efforts to recruit adoptive families, primarily those who are interested in adopting teens. The agency transitioned from MAPP to PRIDE pre-service training in order to help prospective adoptive families have a better idea of the realities of adopting a child. KFF has used billboards advertising foster care and adoption, as well as a photo display at a local church in its recruitment efforts.

The Adoption Home Finder position not only utilizes the adoption website for prospective adoptive parents, but also researches each child's case to locate family, friends, or other connections to the child who might be interested in adopting. On November 12, the Clay County Commissioners will recognize an adoptive family and will read the "Adoption Proclamation" declaring November the National Adoption Month. KFF will host its annual adoption dinner on November 7, celebrating local adoptive families.

POST ADOPTION (Clay County)

A monthly post adoption support meeting is held, with different trainers coming to cover topics relevant to post adoptive parents. Child care is offered during these trainings in order to encourage more people to come. Although there is no formal respite program for post adoptive parents available, the KFF post adoption counselor works with adoptive families in seeking available resources and services in this area.

Progress

Prevention of Child Abuse, Abandonment and Neglect

- Objective 1.1 By June 2015, identified Circuit 4 grassroots champions and community organizations will have been engaged in Neighborhood Center development and expansion.
- Objective 1.2 By June 2015, Circuit 4 will have incorporated the five protective factors in the enhancement and expansion of Neighborhood Center primary prevention efforts.
- Objective 1.3 By June 2015, Circuit 4 will have expanded the use of educational systems, businesses and other community resources to support Neighborhood Center initiatives for sustainability.
- Objective 2.1 By June 2015, Circuit 4 will have built the capacity to offer evidence-based parenting programs across circuit.

- Objective 2.2 By June 2015, Circuit 4 offer evidence based Substance Abuse Primary Prevention programs across circuit.
- Objective 3.1 Ensure Circuit wide awareness of Pinwheels for Prevention Campaign
- Objective 3.2 Continue promoting support of Health Families Florida beginning

Circuit wide our community based care agencies have achieved greater than 75 percent of objectives established in the five-year prevention plan. One of the key change agents has been the community resource centers that have been the hub of prevention efforts fueled by the provision of the protective factors that enhance the lives of the children and families we serve. The Community of Hope event was a mobilizing factor for the community and has renewed a commitment to change throughout neighborhoods. This initiative will be a driving force as subcommittees have been forming to address key areas of family safety and stability, health and education of children.

Adoption Promotion:

- Objective 1.1 By June 2015, Circuit 4- Circuit 4 will have implemented a targeted community-specific recruitment effort specifically tailored to provide adoptive families for children with special needs.
- Objective 1.2 By June 2015, Circuit 4- Circuit 4 will provide enhanced services and resources for prospective parents regarding the rewards and challenges of adoption.
- Objective 1.1 20% of all prospective adoptive parents will have completed the “enhanced” MAPP curriculum by September 2010.
- Objective 1.2 40% all prospective adoptive parents will have completed the “enhanced” MAPP curriculum by January 2011.
- Objective 1.3 50% all prospective adoptive parents will have completed the “enhanced” MAPP curriculum by May 2011.
- Objective 1.4 75% all prospective adoptive parents will have completed the “enhanced” MAPP curriculum by September 2011
- Objective 1.5 100% all prospective adoptive parents will have completed the “enhanced” MAPP curriculum by January 2012.
- Objective 2.1 Use established resources of the Explore Adoption Targeted Recruitment Resource Guide to engage targeted community as a source for adoptive parents and a greater resource for raising awareness of the need.
- Objective 3.1 By June 2015, Circuit 4 will have partnered with active community outreach and neighborhood associations to recruit and secure candidates for Community Ambassadors for adoptions.
- Objective 4.1 Use established resources of the Explore Adoption Targeted Recruitment Resource Guide
- Objective 5.1 Use established recruitment programs to increase the number of African American families interested in adopting children from the child welfare system.

Circuit wide Adoption goals have been met or exceeded during the implementation of the five-year plan. PRIDE replaced MAPP in February of 2011. The change resulted in prospective adoptive families having and even greater understanding of the challenges that they may face when adopting the special needs children in our population. Solid promotion strategies, community awareness and media support has aided in the continual support and success of adoption efforts. However, there is always room to improve.

Support of Adoptive Families:

- Objective 1.1 By 30 June, 2015, respite care will be available for all adoptive parents when needed.
- Objective 2.1 By 30 June 2015; Circuit 4 will have incorporated the five protective factors into a support group for adoptive families.

Objective 1.2.1 By June 2015, Circuit 4 will have increased the number of adoption competent child welfare workers providing services to adoptive families.

Objective 1.2.2 By June 2015, Circuit 4 will have expanded pre-adoption education to include the five protective factors for prospective adoptive parents and their families.

Circuit wide Support of Adoptive Family goals have been met or exceeded during the implementation of the five-year plan. Respite services are available and designed to assist families with temporary out of home care to deescalate crisis, prevent adoption disruption or dissolution and assist families with support services as needed. An Adoption Counselor assists families in identifying extended family support and community support (i.e. clergy, friends, etc.) upon whom they may rely when needed. The protective factors have been incorporated into adoption support groups and support of adoptive family services. Support groups are parent-run agency facilitated meetings that allow adoptive parents and children to obtain mutual support from other families with similar experiences. Families build informal networks and assist one another through mutual support, helpful advice, shared joys and milestones. Post Adoption Education covers core topics such as attachment and trauma, community resources, adoption specific parenting strategies etc. The number of adoption competent therapists increased from 2 in 2010 to 4 in 2013.

Circuit 4 is on target to accomplish our target goals by June 2015. Our progress since the creation of the plan in 2010 has been consistent and in many areas goals have been reached ahead of schedule. The unique community partnerships within the Circuit among our local leaders, officials, residents and grassroots organizations has aided our ability to “move the needle” in our ability to impact the lives of the children and families in our community.

Highlights and Accomplishments

The Community of Hope Event held 12 September was a mobilizing effort that gave residents a clear picture of what the data shows is happening in their community and provided a mechanism for them to identify priorities and strategies to enact change driven by the community stakeholders rather than government entities. It is truly a community driven effort and a commitment to ongoing action outcomes in lieu of planning or rhetoric.

Family Support Services of North Florida Inc. (FSS) and Duval County Public Schools – Parent Academy entered into a Partnership to facilitate Circle of Parent Support Group meeting on Saturday’s. Circle of Parent Support Group will be held at S.P. Livingston Elementary School. S.P. Livingston is a neighborhood school in the New Town Success Zone. This local school is part of the Community of Hope Event that was held on September 12, 2013.

Jean Gibson Training/Fundraising Specialist from The Ounce of Prevention Fund of Florida Inc. will train all staff and provide all supplies for staff to facilitate the support groups, including a stipend for starting a new support group.

Next Steps

Next steps include the facilitation and monitoring of progress. The Department of Children and Families and our community based care partners will continue to provide technical assistance and support to subcommittee efforts and aid in connecting resources when identified.