



Advocating for vulnerable children and families since 1969

Highlights of 2009

Celebrating 40 years of advocacy on behalf of vulnerable children and families

- **Federation members testified before the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Human Services:**

—On February 3, state Department of Human Services (DHS) officials provided an overview and update related to implementation of the settlement agreement, making the case for the additional funds needed for both DHS and private agencies. Gary Tester, VP of Advocacy for Holy Cross Children's Services, Brian DeVos, Director of Michigan Operations for Bethany Christian Services, and Debora Matthews, CEO of The Children's Center of Wayne County, each provided testimony on behalf of private, nonprofit service provider agencies; all three were quoted in the *Gongwer News Service* report.

—On February 17, Dona Abbott of Bethany Christian Services and Ron Apol of D.A. Blodgett for Children provided expert testimony regarding the adoption process and challenges in Michigan.
- **Good news was announced regarding reimbursement rate adjustments.**

—On April 1, we were pleased to relay to member CEOs encouraging rate adjustment news, as substantiated by DHS Chief Deputy Director Stanley Stewart in a meeting with Federation Executive Director Janet Reynolds Snyder: The foster care administrative rate for private child placing agencies will increase by \$10—from \$27/day to \$37/day—beginning June 1, 2009.

—Due to intense involvement and strong advocacy from Federation members, rate adjustments are also reflected in the FY 2010 state budget for both foster care and residential services.
- **Member experiences with seclusion and restraint were addressed in proposed legislation.** Based on input from Federation members, Rep. Dudley Spade introduced legislation to amend Michigan statute relating to the use of seclusion and restraint in residential treatment facilities. While retaining safety measures, the amendments allow for practical implementation of the requirements.
- **70+ member representatives, agency board members and service recipients met with legislators, spoke with a youth panel, and debriefed at the end of the day.** The May 12 Member Day at the State Capitol was especially worthwhile, as members interacted with a panel of youth from Isabella and Midland counties, who spoke about their experiences in the foster care system and the importance of supports for youth aging out. Our group was visited by DHS Deputy Director Stanley Stewart, Sens. Randy Richardville, Bill Hardiman, Martha Scott, Jim Barcia, and Jason Allen, and Reps. Dudley Spade, Vincent Gregory and staff of Sen. Michael Switalski. Groups of members visited the offices of an additional dozen legislators throughout the afternoon. At day's end, Public Affairs Associates hosted refreshments and conversations with Sens. Hardiman and Allen and Reps. Spade and Andy Coulouris, plus guests Children's Ombudsman Verlie Ruffin and Michigan's Children's President Jack Kresnak.
- **Direct, open, candid communication with top officials of DHS took place with Federation member CEOs and program directors.** These opportunities were hosted by the Federation throughout 2009 with Chief Deputy Director Stanley Stewart, Children's Services Administration Director Kathyne O'Grady, Bureau of Juvenile Justice Director John Evans, Office of Permanency Planning Services Director Kate Hanley, Bureau of Child and Adult Licensing's Janice Tribble, Child Welfare Training Institute Director Carol Siemon.
- **Members worked closely with DHS to develop the new adoption contract.** Members spent many hours analyzing adoption program costs and new requirements related to the child welfare reform initiatives and provided valuable input throughout the contract negotiation process. These efforts directly influenced the state budget process, resulting in a recommended 36.5% rate adjustment for contracted adoption services (later vetoed by the governor).
- **Over 50 Federation member staff conversed with State Monitor Kevin Ryan,** who had asked to hear firsthand about member agencies' experiences with settlement agreement implementation. The exchange was facilitated through the Federation's Adoption, Licensing and Foster Care MINs in January. This was Kevin's second meeting with members; he had met with a group of SE Michigan agency executives in December 2008.
- **Members represented private agencies on the Michigan Child Welfare Improvement Task Force.** Several member agency CEOs and Janet Reynolds Snyder participated in this broad-based task force, co-chaired by Pat Babcock and Carol Goss. The group met for nearly a year and issued recommendations for improving the lives and futures of Michigan's most vulnerable children.
- **Member executives worked with DHS toward performance-based residential contracts.** Numerous Federation member executives worked closely with DHS officials to develop objective, verifiable, performance-based outcome measures to be incorporated into the Residential Foster Care (RFC) contracts (juvenile justice and abuse neglect programs).
- **Janet Reynolds Snyder and DHS' Terri Gilbert represented Michigan at the Summit on Public-Private Partnership in St. Louis, MO.** Sponsored in August by the Children's Bureau and the National Quality Improvement Center on the Privatization of Child Welfare Services, two individuals representing the public and private sectors from each state were invited to participate in this information sharing and learning summit.
- **The Federation will be on the agenda at DHS Quarterly Contractors Meetings.** Beginning with the November 2009 meeting, Janet Reynolds Snyder, representing the Federation, will be part of the regular agenda as private agency providers from across the state come to Lansing for updates and dialogue with DHS top-level administrators.

- **Kadi Janssen joined the Federation staff part-time, effective June 1.** As policy analyst, Kadi assists Janet Reynolds Snyder with monitoring Michigan's system reform efforts and legislative matters.
- **A new Policy Press for member CEOs was launched.** With Policy Analyst Kadi Janssen on board, this new bi-weekly publication provides CEOs with timely updates regarding federal and state legislative and policy news in the child welfare field. The *Policy Press* complements the bi-weekly *FYI*, which touches on those same issues, but also summarizes state/executive/administrative activities, member news, Federation activities, reports and resources, announcements, training opportunities, and media coverage.
- **Using the talents of MSU interns, the Federation collaborated with DHS on a foster family and adoptive family recruitment campaign.** MSU students Brian Keehner and Jessie Murningham worked with Federation staff and the state DHS on an initiative geared toward a foster family and adoptive family recruitment campaign in Michigan.
- **Three agencies joined as Full Members:** Adoption Option, based in Midland, Child & Family Services of the Upper Peninsula, based in Marquette, and St. Louis Center for Exceptional Children and Adults, based in Chelsea. *Welcome, all!*
- **A record number (85) of private agency colleagues and supporters enhanced the Federation's public policy voice as Individual Members.**
- **April's Child Trauma Conference, featuring Dr. Bruce D. Perry and over a dozen Michigan child trauma experts, was a tremendous success, drawing over 400 participants over two days.** Feedback from the event

was overwhelmingly positive. Special thanks to Wedgwood Institute, sponsor of the Social Work Continuing Education credit hours that were issued to dozens of participants.

- **Federation Corporate Sponsor Berends Hendricks Stuit Insurance Agency (BHS) provided extra value to Federation members:**
 - HR Lunch & Learn in-depth discussions on one specific topic per meeting.** Topics covered in 2009 were Compensation Packages and Innovative Benefit Packages/Wellness Programs.
 - Spring Human Resources (HR) Training Day program.** BHS brought to members industry experts to provide the latest HR updates via a lively and interactive day-long training session. Topics covered: Family Medical Leave Act and employment law updates, the Employee Free Choice Act, personnel files and employee handbooks.
 - Complimentary employee handbook audit and analysis (value \$3,000).** BHS generously offered this valuable service to incoming Full members and current members who are clients of BHS.
- **"Take Charge of Your Journey!" 2009 Michigan Teen Conference was a huge success.** Held in June, this event was spearheaded by conference fiduciary and Federation Member Lutheran Social Services of Michigan. Nearly 130 teens and over 50 adults (chaperones and workers) sharpened their understanding of what is available and required for foster youth to make the challenging transition to adult life. A new feature at the conference, **StoryCorps**, captured for all time stories of youth in foster care.
- **Nearly 80% of Federation Full Members heard from national experts and Michigan colleagues present at the Senior Management Conference,**

including nationally renowned neurological child development specialist Dr. Bruce D. Perry, senior fellow at the ChildTrauma Academy; national policy expert Patrick Lester of the Alliance for Children and Families; plus numerous Michigan-based professionals.

- **Dr. Bruce D. Perry returned in November for three regional seminars focused on Child Trauma: Impact & Interventions hosted by member agencies: November 17** at Starr Commonwealth in Albion; **November 18** at Pine Rest Christian Mental Health Services in Grand Rapids; and **November 19** at The Children's Center of Wayne County in Detroit. These sessions reached over 450 individuals from child welfare, court, education and private practice settings.
- **An online Training Interest Survey 2009 yielded 256 responses.** During April and May, the Federation collected input and then issued a full summary report to member CEOs and Staff Training MIN members to assist with future planning and address accreditation standards related to professional development.
- **Job Postings attracted thousands of hits at www.michfed.org.** Numerous member agencies benefited by listing employment opportunities through the Federation website. The Job Postings site registers 1,000+ hits each month.
- **Over 5,000 actual salaries paid are reflected in the 2009 Salary & Fringe Benefits Survey of Private Agencies Summary Report.** This extensive annual compilation and comparative report is the only one of its kind in Michigan, benchmarking compensation packages specific to the private, nonprofit child and family service provider agencies across the state. The 5,018 salaries cover 58 job classifications across 39 agencies.

Special thanks to Committee and Member Interest Network chairs

Record numbers of member colleagues participated in Federation Committees and Member Interest Networks (MINs). Thank you to everyone for your involvement. We would like to take this opportunity to publicly thank all committee and MIN chairs who have led colleagues through the many challenges faced in providing quality services to vulnerable children and families:

Nominating Committee: **Addie Williams**, Spaulding for Children
Public Policy Committee: **Brian DeVos**, Bethany Christian Services

Adoption MIN: **Dona Abbott**, Bethany Christian Services
Family Services MIN: **George Winn**, The Children's Center of Wayne County
Foster Care MIN: **Sonia Noorman & Carolyn Rayford**, Lutheran Child & Family Service of MI
Licensing MIN: **Cristina Peixoto**, Catholic Social Services of Oakland County
Residential Treatment MIN: **Fred Prasser**, The Manor

Accreditation/CQI MIN: **Nick VanZanten**, Lutheran Social Services of Michigan
Human Resources MIN: **Annette Sobocinski**, Whaley Children's Center, and **Valerie Warren**, The Children's Center of Wayne County

Information Technology MIN: **Eric Musum**, Lutheran Child & Family Service of MI
Staff Training/Development MIN: **Vito Lentini**, Wedgwood Christian Services