

Community Care

Connections

"Building Care and Understanding in the Communities We Serve"

Volume 1, Issue 1

**"Without a sense of caring,
there can be no sense of
community. "**

~ Anthony J. D'Angelo

Community Care is Now COA Accredited!

Volume 1, Issue 1

WE DID IT!!! CONGRATULATIONS COMMUNITY CARE!!! We have been recognized on a National scale by the Council On Accreditation (COA) for our CREDIBILITY, ACHIEVEMENTS and INTEGRITY regarding our employees, services we deliver and our organizational management. Through achieving Accreditation we have made a clear statement that when it comes to the services we deliver, "Good enough is not good enough." During the last few years, Community Care has been recognized by many in Maine as a High Quality Agency working hard to provide services to the youth of Maine. Receiving accreditation from a highly re-

garded organization like COA validates these efforts using nationally recognized best practice standards of excellence. COA's standards of excellence require an organization to focus on all areas that make up an agency like Community Care. In addition to service delivery, COA sets best practice standards around an organization's Future Planning Methods, Governance Model, Fiscal Management, Human Resource Management and Continuous Quality Improvement Practices. Recently some state human services departments have become COA accredited. Currently, COA is the only national accrediting body in the

United States that has accredited public child welfare agencies, including four state systems--Illinois, Arkansas, Kentucky, and Louisiana--and over twenty-five county agencies.

To learn more about The Council on Accreditation, please visit Community Care's web site www.comcareme.org and click on the COA icon in the bottom left hand corner. We now stand with ten other organizations in the State of Maine as having been recognized for having high quality and best practice standards by COA. These ten organizations stand with over 1400 other organizations internationally serving over 7 million people.



CREDIBILITY • INTEGRITY • ACHIEVEMENT

Welcome To Community Care:

Sarah Brasslett
Doris Champagne
Tobin Curtis
Ester Franklin
Loreda Libby
Barbara Mathies
Barbara Mathieu
Nicole Peters
Sarah Peters
Amanda Waterhouse-Clark

Commitment to our Vision - Note from the E.D.

Look at us! I don't even recognize us anymore! When I walk down the hall and see adults and kiddos interacting.....I don't know who they are anymore! And you know....I think that is a wonderful thing! They could be kiddos with their foster parents or community kiddos with their birth parents. They could be residents of the ADAM House or OBH with staff or they could be kiddos being served by the CFSS program with their families. They could be families coming for a supervised visit. They could be MCF parents with their foster children or they could be families coming into the clinic. How great that our kids are "just kids" and the adults in their lives are both permanent and temporary people who want the kiddos lives' to be better. There is really no need to know who is who. Just that they are part of Community Care--foster families, birth families, staff, community families.....everyone working with

one another for kids.

Recently, I had the privilege of hearing some staff talk about all that is going on in their teams and programs. And folks.....it is pretty impressive..... They talked with pride about how many kiddo groups they were running and how effective they were. They talked about combining groups for TFC kids and community kids. They talked about extraordinary efforts to put on activities and programs for their kids and families. They talked about creative ways to offer training and support to foster parents. They talked about how hard their staff were working and how they were trying to recognize their efforts. I heard the challenges too.....and there are many that need to be, and will be, addressed; but the loudest voices...the most excited voices..... were talking about the amazing work that is being done in partnership with our kiddos, foster families,

birth families, and staff.

We have worked extremely hard over these last five years to diversify, to be more inclusive and respectful of all families, to support our foster families who have been through so many changes, and to value our staff who work so hard and are so creative. We have worked to become financially stable and to meet quality service standards that are not only nationally recognized (COA accreditation!) but are also experienced every day here. There are many challenges ahead of us but I have no doubt that this group of people, who by working together in partnership, will not only "handle" those challenges but will bring our organization to an even brighter place of higher quality, more support, more creativity, greater respect and even more caring. After all.....look at us! We are Community Care! It continues to be one of my greatest privileges and pleasures working in partnership with all of you to do such important work. Thank you all.

~Kate Davis, Executive Director

CFSS- Community Family Support Services

Community Family Support Services is Community Care's In Home Family Support Program that provides support for birth, foster, adoptive and kinship parents. We also work closely with our residential programs (ADAM house and Oakland Bridge Home) to provide continuity not only for children and families in the community, but also for children that we currently serve in our own programs. Our support varies from family to family and we work to empower and partner with families in meeting meaningful goals. For more information please feel free to contact Katherine Bate or Jody Stevenson in the Bangor Community Care office at 945-4240.

I am Natascha Van Reeth, a Family Support Worker in the CFSS program. I started working for Community Care in the beginning of August and at the same time, my adventure in

Maine started. I am 22 years old and I graduated as a Social Educator in June 2005 in Belgium, my home country. I heard about a program called ILEX through my college. ILEX (International Learning Exchange in professional youth work) is a program that selects social workers, as they call the profession here in the USA, to come and work in the USA for one year or longer. The goal of the program is to exchange knowledge and experience between Europe and the USA in the field of social work. To check out more about this program, go to www.ilexchange.org. I have been working now a little over 4 months for the agency and I just love it. This would definitely be something that I would do as a job in Belgium. The job is very challenging, as it is for an American worker, but for me it was a different language, not knowing much about the country, habits, culture, the social field and services that were available out there for the families that I work

with. I learned so much over these little 4 months and I am still learning. It is amazing! There are a lot of differences between Belgium – Europe – USA – Maine that I am still learning about on every level of life. I am really happy that I took this adventure and I am so grateful to have these patient co-workers and supervisors. Because in the beginning (and sometimes even still now) I felt absolutely lost. All the paperwork that has to be filled out, a whole new law system, far away from my family and friends and a whole other language. My colleagues and friends that I made since I've been here have been a great support for me. Without them, I would not make it to the end of the year. As an ILEX fellow working for Community Care I am very lucky with my job. The transition for me was hard, but the job is very challenging and I have great colleagues. That is not the case for most of the other ILEX fellows out there in the USA! Thank you all out there for supporting me.

Staff Anniversaries and A Few Fond Farewells

Ten Years of Service This Year:

BJ Kitchin, Kim Brooker, Sheila Clements, Becky Turcotte, Marianne Shirley, Carl Crawford, Kate Davis, Amy Weymouth

Nine Years of Service This Quarter:

Meg Callaway

Eight Years of Service:

Becky White

Six Years of Service:

Steve Sternal & Brynn Kimball

Five Years of Service:

Jim Hatch & Tonya Sutherland

Four Years of Service:

Heather Cole, Kim McBreairty,

Sarah McLean & Addie Buck

Three Years of Service:

Sean Scovil & Lola Willette

Two Years of Service:

Sandra Marron, Sara Taker,

Joanna Stocker, Suzanne Costallos, Amanda

Blank, Susan Randolph, Matt Brady & Shawn Graham

One Year of Service:

Nina Lindley



We'd also like to thank the following folks for their commitment to Community Care and wish them well in their future pursuits:

Dr. Elena Dlugach, Angela Pelkey, Parvana Babycon, Jessica Carter, Melissa Avery, Vicki Daigle, Suzanne Costellos, Sheila Randall, Anna Mathieu, Kathy Smith, Andrew Chamberland & Lucille Atwell.

Hope and Encouragement for Youths Aging Out of Care

There is exciting news for youths transitioning to adulthood from foster care. A program called "Friends of Youth in Care Network" is being established for youth to develop a community network for these young people. The "Friends of Youth in Care" network will connect youth to community resources to assist them with education, employment, community connections, permanent relationships, housing, and mental and physical health care. The program was started by the Youth Development Unit at USM's Muskie School of Public

Service in collaboration with the office of Child and Family Services. Their goal is primarily to work in partnership with the state, to prepare youth in care for the transition to young adulthood and to help these youth make connections and build relationships with caring adults in the community. The initial FYIC networks will be developed in Portland, Bangor, Machias/ Ellsworth, and Caribou/Presque Isle, and will bring together community liaisons/volunteers, employers, representatives from education, health care, faith community and service providers.

These folks will assist youth with college applications, job interviews, job coaching, and providing a place to go on the holidays. Nancy Markowitz is the project coordinator for this program. What a great opportunity!

For information on the Friends of Youth in Care Network contact Meg Callaway at 945-4240 who is an acting liaison.



Caring Connections Across the State

Across the state there has been some exciting events taking place. The Central team hosted a training on adoption that brought folks from DHHS, Wings, Casey Family Services, and AFFM to discuss how we can collaborate to make adoptions successful. Also the Central team hosted a Thanks-for-Giving dinner in the Lincoln office for our families there. The central team hosted a training in October that had 90 families and staff in attendance! Other exciting news is that Care has hired a new part-time FCD in the southern part of the state. The goal is to grow resources in the southern part of the state where there is a high need for homes. Growth is always an exciting topic, so look for more news on this in

future newsletters! We are also working to collaborate with our local businesses more to create networks. One recent example is placemats for restaurants that were developed by the FCD team, and placed in the Bangor Howard Johnson Restaurant. The placemats got excellent reviews from restaurant patrons, and were a great way to get our name out into the community. In the county there are groups for all ages including a children's group, a discovery group, and an explorer group. These are fun and exciting groups that help children learn and grow from. 34 children in the Skowhegan office got to make ornaments and cookies and visit with Santa at their Holiday party this year!! Everyone had a blast.

New Improved Prospector Program

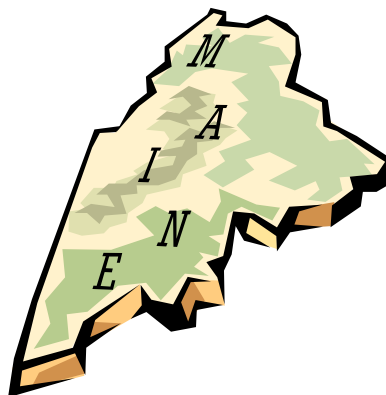
The Prospector Program will be reintroduced to help in the recruitment of foster parents and key staff positions. Foster parents and staff that refer folks to the role of foster parent, clinician and/or residential staff will receive a monetary incentive that will be gradually paid out to the referring party. Talk to your teams about this soon to be implemented program. Refer folks to Community Care and be reap rewards for it!



Updates From the State

Last January, a huge crowd dressed in red swarmed the halls of the Cross Building in Augusta to demonstrate to the legislature that the package of proposed cuts to services for children and families and those with disabilities were far too deep. Among the cuts proposed by the Department of Health and Human Services were further reductions in already substantially lowered daily rates to treatment foster parents. Another cost-cutting measure referred to as “full case/full court” proposed a model that would give treatment foster care agencies responsibility for all the legal components of client cases in addition to treatment – with no increase in resources. The hearings before the Health and Human Services and Appropriations committees were inspiring as hordes of protesting consumers, foster parents, and agency providers stood up to address their concerns about how the proposed changes could undermine the welfare of some of the most vulnerable citizens who depend on the range of mental health and welfare resources historically funded by the state – children. Foster parents spoke movingly about their dedication to caring for troubled children and their fears that further reduction in foster care rates might make it financially impossible for them to continue. Youth spoke about how crucial state-funded services were for them. In response to this stream of testimonials, legislators asked penetrating questions that eventually resulted in a new charge to the DHHS: **go back to the drawing board**. Basically the legislature told the DHHS they would postpone making decisions

about many of the proposed cuts for nearly a year in order to allow DHHS to meet with stakeholders and carefully examine how the combination of various cuts on the table would affect children and families. The Children's Services Reform Steering Committee was formed in response to this charge and wrapped up its collection of recommendations back in November. Remarkably, the Commissioner made no edits to these final recommendations. Those recommendations are now in the hands of the Legislature for review and decision this session.



For those most concerned about treatment foster care, the two most noteworthy recommendations are that **foster parent daily rates remain UNCHANGED** and that **full case/full court not be pursued**. This means no further reduction in foster parent reimbursement rates, as proposed a year ago, and no shift from

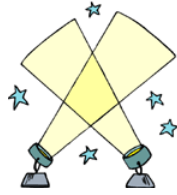
treatment foster care agencies focusing their full efforts on supporting the treatment of children and their families. For those concerned about residential care, the reform committee recommended that all residential programs emphasize the active role of families in treatment in the interest of planning for kids to return to a family living environment. While these are considered positive changes by most in the system, there will no doubt be other important - and somewhat controversial - changes as Maine moves more aggressively toward promoting timely permanent living situations for children in the foster care system. There is no question that we will see increased expectations to work cooperatively with children's birth family and kin as soon as children enter the foster care system, that more intensive efforts will be made to find adoptive families for children who may not safely return to family members, that fewer youth will be referred to residential programs, and that out-of-district foster care placements will become more the exception than the rule. These and other dynamic changes are aimed at both improved long-range outcomes for children and long-range savings for Maine. If you are interested in learning more about the recommendations of the Children's Services Reform Steering Committee, visit their website:

www.mainechildrensreform.org

As hearings on the reform measures are scheduled, teams at Community Care will be kept updated.

Spotlight!

**Meet the
Foster Care
Development
Team**



**Top Photo: Matt Brady -
Central FCD**

**Center Photo:
Tammy Delisle - Northern
FCD**

**Bottom Photo: Scott Brown-
Lead FCD, Bonnie Newcomb &
Julie Smith - Southern FCD's**



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Place
Stamp
Here

