

Institute for Families

ANNUAL REPORT
2009 - 2010

Dean's Message



Dear Colleagues,

I am pleased to bring you the 2009-2010 annual report for the Institute for Families at the Rutgers University School of Social Work. In addition to an overview of the year's accomplishments, this report tells the noteworthy stories of participants in several of our programs. For example, we introduce you to Angel Williams, a student at Montclair State University and participant in the Speaker's Bureau. Part of our Transitions for Youth program that assists youth in New Jersey's foster care system to achieve independence, the Speakers Bureau is a peer to peer presentation on "Higher Education Options for Youth." You will also meet Barbara Buckley, a social work supervisor with the Mercer Board of Social Services. Her job is to supervise child support workers who ensure that children get the financial support and medical coverage they need. Ms. Buckley, one of many dedicated social workers in the state of New Jersey, is developing new technical skills through courses taught at the Institute for Families to enhance her job performance and make her a better supervisor and professional social worker.

Special "Spotlights" in this annual report showcase our faculty and staff accomplishments. You will meet a number of faculty members who are involved in research and evaluation projects at the Institute for

Families that further our knowledge about how best to support children and assist youth in their transition to adulthood. You will also be introduced to our Customized Workshops program created by the Office of Continuing Education, the largest university-based program of its kind in the country. In addition to offering a variety of courses and certificate programs to individual professional social workers and counselors, we also offer customized training programs to workers in agencies across the state. These workshops, developed by Institute experts, are tailored to the needs of a particular agency in collaboration with agency personnel.

Finally, I am very pleased to announce that Allison Blake, the Director of the Institute for Families, has been appointed by Governor Chris Christie to be the Commissioner of the New Jersey Department of Children and Families (DCF). While we definitely will miss Allison, I cannot think of a better person to head this critically important state department. Allison has done a terrific job for the School of Social Work during the inaugural three years of the Institute for Families. Her

vision and leadership have positioned the Institute as a respected state and national resource for training, technical assistance, and program evaluation. The Governor's selection of her to be a member of his cabinet in the critical position of Commissioner of DCF is a wonderful recognition of her talent and commitment to the children and families of our state. While the School of Social Work may be losing an asset, we are gaining a valuable partner. I wish her the best in her new position.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Richard L. Edwards". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "R" and "E".

Richard L. Edwards, PhD

Dean of the School of Social Work

Director's Message



Dear Colleagues,

I have always felt that preparing annual reports such as these helps us to take some time to reflect on the past year's accomplishments as well as the work that remains. That process is an important one for us as it helps us to appreciate everyone's contributions and to acknowledge the effort it took to get us all to that end goal. For me, this year's IFF annual report marks the end of my tenure with an organization I had the distinct honor to help build. As I write this greeting, I remember so clearly my initial discussions with Dean Edwards regarding his vision for the Institute and his commitment to having it serve the social services community in New Jersey and beyond. I recall faculty meetings where opportunities for greater collaboration were explored, the initiation of strategic planning with staff, our first symposia and being amazed at the number of people who attended, notice of our first grant award, and the incredible pride felt when the 2009 annual report won the IRIS award.

This annual report is as much a tribute to those milestones as it is a celebration of the role the Rutgers Institute for Families and the School of Social Work play in New Jersey and beyond. I hope you will enjoy reading about our work as much as we have enjoyed delivering these services. These pages reflect the effort of the entire IFF Team – a team I am very proud to have had the opportunity to have led during its first three years. Like many of you, I look forward to reading future annual reports as I am confident that IFF has only just begun to fulfill the vision Dean Edwards conceived of such a short time ago.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Allison M. Blake". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Allison Blake, PhD LSW
Director

Institute for Families

The mission of the **Institute for Families (IFF)**, at the Rutgers School of Social Work, is to support and strengthen individuals, families, and communities by building the capacity of human service professionals and organizations.

We accomplish this through our goals to:

1. **Strengthen professionals** and organizations by increasing their capacity to meet best practice standards and respond to the ever changing needs of their communities,
2. **Work in partnership** by marshalling the resources of Rutgers to create a more humane, just, and equitable society,
3. **Disseminate knowledge** in New Jersey and beyond that leads to greater understanding of social issues, and
4. **Develop leadership** in interdisciplinary policy, research, and professional development on families, communities, and organizations.

Social work is a multi-disciplinary field, informed by advances in the understanding of the human condition through research and practice conducted in social work, psychology, medicine, pharmacology, genetics, economics, and others. Additionally, the work is influenced by advocates, politicians, and policy-makers. Social workers, other human service professionals, and human service organizations must be able to demonstrate their efficiency and effectiveness with respect to policy, administration, and practice. The Institute meets the diverse needs of human service workers and organizations through our knowledgeable and diverse staff, with expertise on the vast array of issues facing New Jersey families.

Established in 1954, the Rutgers School of Social Work (RSSW) has a distinguished record of instruction, research, and public service. Fully accredited by the Council on Social Work Education, RSSW is one of the largest social work schools in the nation. Approximately 1,000 students are currently enrolled in degree programs offered on campuses in Camden, Newark and New Brunswick and at off-campus sites through-

out New Jersey. The school offers a Bachelor of Arts degree with a major in social work and M.S.W. and Ph.D. degrees. Joint-degree options include M.S.W./J.D. and M.S.W./M.Div. programs. The school has more than 50 full-time faculty members and about 140 part-time lecturers and is affiliated with more than 800 social service agencies throughout the New Jersey/New York/Philadelphia metropolitan area.

IFF was created in July 2007 to coordinate an applied social science agenda that focuses on addressing issues that threaten to undermine some families, such as poverty, child abuse and neglect, spouse or partner battering, mental illness, school failure and truancy, teenage pregnancy, delinquency, alcohol and other drug abuse, problem gambling, and HIV/AIDS. Secondly, IFF focuses on challenges that at one time or another will confront nearly all families, such as caring for aging family members and providing safe and nurturing homes for children.

These concerns translate into five broadly defined issue areas:

1. | **Promoting** healthy family development,
2. | **Protecting** children and strengthening families at risk,
3. | **Assisting** youth in the transition to adulthood,
4. | **Supporting** and protecting aging family members, and
5. | **Serving** diverse populations across the lifespan.

Achievement of our goals is made possible by increasing the capacity of human service providers through training and technical assistance in specialized knowledge, best practice, and organizational management strategies. We further serve the field through research and evaluation of the outcomes of services, as well as the needs and resources of families, communities, and organizations. Finally, we engage in direct service programs that provide an opportunity to research and demonstrate the effectiveness of an intervention and/or provide technical assistance knowledge that will allow IFF to promote effective implementation, as well as programs that fill an unmet need.

Organizationally, IFF is comprised of four offices:

- **Office of Child Welfare Initiatives**
- **Office of Training and Education Programs**
- **Office of Continuing Education**
- **Office of Research and Evaluation**

Each office strives to meet our collective responsibility to the field of social work and the mission of the Institute for Families.

IFF exemplifies the land-grant mission of Rutgers University by providing continuing education and professional development programs, program evaluation and applied research services, and technical assistance to the human services community across the state. Located on the Piscataway campus, IFF includes more than 70 staff and a cadre of subject-matter experts representing an array of human services fields and related disciplines. In addition to conference space and two “smart” training rooms in Piscataway, IFF maintains training sites in Parsippany, Princeton, Cherry Hill, and New Brunswick.

Offices of IFF

The **Office of Child Welfare Initiatives** (OCWI) coordinates four distinct child welfare programs under one office to ensure alignment of services and diffusion of knowledge across programs. These programs are primarily funded through contracts with the New Jersey Department of Children and Families and include training child protective service staff on the new case practice model, continuation of our 10 year commitment to training family preservation workers on home-based crisis intervention, and direct care services and outcomes research for youth “aging out” of the foster care system. The OCWI has a strong focus on partnership with funders and internal and external stakeholders to ensure that programs are built and enhanced through a collaborative process. The OCWI is positioned well to continue to respond to the needs of child welfare agencies and staff in the public system in New Jersey and beyond.

The **Office of Training and Education Programs** provides customized training, including the latest trends, methodologies, and technology components available in the field. Our programs are developed in conjunction with our continuing education programs utilizing the School of Social Work’s expertise, resources, and subject matter experts. The Institute further meets the needs of communities to provide a continuum of social services through our training of human service para-professionals across the state, including family workers in the school districts formerly known as Abbott. Our largest initiative, the New Jersey Child Support Institute (NJCSI), successfully trained 2,379 staff members from case initiation to case closure between January 2009 and June 2010 (3,559 since the start of the project). NJCSI serves as a leader in the child support sector by presenting at national conferences and working with various states, attorneys, and task forces sharing overall philosophy and expertise in developing and maintaining a successful institute. This year we graduated our first class from the New Jersey Victim Assistance Academy. These initiatives have solidified us as a leader and role model for other states and regions. Our training and educational programs continue to promote effective human service training by imparting knowledge, developing skills, and changing attitudes in a professional classroom environment so that children and families receive the support services that they deserve.

The **Office of Continuing Education** is the largest university-based social work continuing education provider in the country. Built upon more than 30 years of experience, the program offers over 300 workshops per year at multiple sites throughout the state. By offering dynamic workshops and certificate programs, the office seeks to develop an ongoing relationship with participants by becoming a partner in their professional education throughout their career. Our aim is to continually adapt to the changing needs of those who trust us with their career development with interesting and varied learning experiences so that our partnership remains vibrant, rewarding, and ultimately of service to those most in need.

The **Office of Research and Evaluation** promotes scientific investigation using comprehensive research procedures to enhance the activity associated with local, state, national, and international projects. This mission is accomplished by using current and cutting edge methods and procedures to answer research questions and to evaluate organizations, environments, trainings and interventions, and populations (demographics, experiences, beliefs, and well-being) thus providing decision makers with the data, analyses, and reports to strengthen their chosen conclusions.

Donors

Institute for Families Donors 2009 - 2010

We would like to thank the following donors for their generous contributions to programs at the Institute for Families:

- Mrs. Lisa K. Butler
- Ms. Pamela J. Clark
- Ms. Cori Cunningham
- Dr. Richard L. Edwards
- Dr. and Ms. Arthur J. Falk

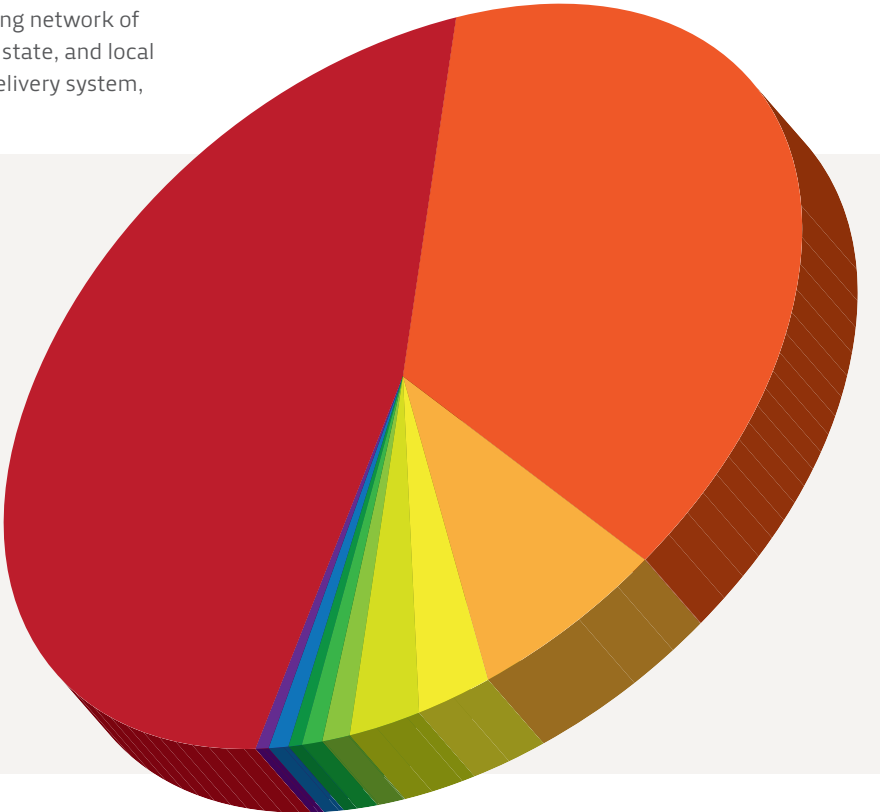
- Mr. and Mrs. A. Donald Pray
- Ms. Ellen Reaves
- Ms. Jan Stuart Rosenstein
- Mr. Ronald L. Quincy
- Ms. Donna M. Van Alst

- Pfizer Foundation
- School of Social Work Alumni Association
- The UPS Foundation

Funding

The Institute for Families has specialized expertise in a vast array of areas impacting families and a strong network of relationships with other members of the human services community. We receive funding from federal, state, and local government agencies, community service providers, and other entities involved in the human service delivery system, private foundations, and individuals.

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|---|--------------------|
| ■ NJ Department of Children and Families | \$4,255,809 |
| ■ NJ Department of Human Services | \$3,435,659 |
| ■ Continuing Education | \$620,099 |
| ■ Middlesex County DHS | \$259,166 |
| ■ State Appropriation | \$254,918 |
| ■ New Jersey Department of Law and Public Safety | \$100,774 |
| ■ NJ Department of Health and Senior Services | \$71,117 |
| ■ Private Grants | \$64,780 |
| ■ Fees for Services | \$61,750 |
| ■ Private Donations (individuals and foundations) | \$50,760 |
| Total | \$9,174,834 |



Promoting Healthy Family Development

New Jersey Child Support Institute

In keeping with its mission to promote healthy family development, the Institute for Families operates the New Jersey Child Support Institute (NJCSI) under a contract with the state Department of Human Services' Division of Family Development. NJCSI is a statewide training initiative that delivers professional development programs to child support staff in the county welfare agencies; the Administrative Office of the Courts; the Judiciary; the Probation Child Support Enforcement Units; and the Family and Finance divisions in each Superior Court vicinage.

When Mercer County's child support staff needed help with a new automated case management system, the New Jersey Child Support Institute brought the classroom directly to them.

The Web-based system, called NJKiDS, was launched in July 2009 as a central, complete information source on every case, tracking support payments and other developments.

After the initial statewide training on NJKiDS, workers at the Mercer County Board of Social Services (BSS) needed further training on the system's financial functions. So NJCSI's trainers came to the BSS offices in Trenton to guide them through it.

That type of responsiveness and expertise has made NJCSI a crucial resource for child support agencies, says Barbara Buckley, MSW, administrative supervisor of the child support program for the Mercer County BSS. From new hire training and refresher courses to the online resources it maintains, Buckley says, NJCSI provides invaluable technical assistance to workers in the field.

"They're always right on target for what we need," she says.

Buckley, who earned her MSW at Rutgers, has 34 years' service at Mercer County BSS. She became supervisor of the child support program in September 2004, managing 29 staff members who handle a total 2,800 cases.

The child support workers' job is to ensure that children get the financial support and medical coverage they need.

While the goal is straightforward, the system is more complex. The Office of Child Support Services, part of the state Department of Human Services' Division of Family Development, manages the overall operation. Services are delivered in each county by three entities: county welfare agencies, like Mercer County BSS; the Superior Court, Family Division; and the Judiciary's Probation Division.

The county welfare agencies focus on the front end of cases, finding non-custodial parents and then filing complaints with the Family Division to establish paternity and

child support orders. Custodial parents also can go directly to the Family Division to establish a support order. Once an order is in place, the Probation Division handles collection and enforcement of unpaid support. Since 2006, NJCSI has been responsible for training more than 2,600 staff in those three entities. Normally, the training is delivered at three state-of-the-art regional centers in Parsippany, Princeton and Cherry Hill.

New Hire training, provided during each new worker's first year on the job, uses the same curriculum for employees of all three entities, says Barbara Rusen, the Program Manager for NJCSI since it was created in 2005.

The training outlines the entire process, from conducting interviews and locating parents to establishing paternity and support orders, says Rusen. Enforcement remedies and the conditions allowing a case to be closed are covered, Rusen says, as are "soft skills," such as customer service, ethics and confidentiality laws. The intent is to give workers a broad overview of the entire system, not just their role in it.

NJCSI also provides refresher training for more experienced workers and specialized programs, such as courses for law clerks and attorneys. Instructors all have expertise in the subject matter and experience working in New Jersey's child support system.

Buckley says the training sessions are interactive and creative, engaging workers as they develop their skills.

Beyond the training, she says, NJCSI provides daily assistance through tools such as the online Child Support Program Manual. The manual compiles information from New Hire and refresher trainings, policy memoranda and directives, and operations manuals, providing links to appropriate statutes and regulations.

Rusen, NJCSI's Program Manager, says the manual is intended to benefit workers regardless of their time on the job. Even the most experienced workers will encounter situations they don't see every day, and, by using the manual, they can guide themselves through them, she says.

The 2,800 cases handled by Mercer County BSS represent about one-eighth of the total 23,000 active cases in Mercer County. Statewide, the caseload is approximately 360,000.

Most of the BSS' clients receive benefits under Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF), commonly referred to as "welfare," and are required by law to comply with the child support program. Services also are available to non-welfare clients for nominal fees. □

FOR MORE PROGRAMS LIKE THIS, SEE PAGE 18

A photograph of Barbara Buckley, MSW, in an office cubicle. She is wearing a light-colored blazer over a dark top and a colorful patterned scarf. She is smiling and leaning on a grey office chair. The cubicle walls are covered with various papers, notices, and a 'WELFARE' sign. In the background, other cubicles and office equipment are visible.

Barbara Buckley, MSW

BACKGROUND

The New Jersey Child Support Institute provides comprehensive training and resources for professionals working in the child support program to ensure that children and their families obtain the financial and medical security they deserve. The Institute uses an integrated, Web-based learning management system that consolidates registration, enrollment management, evaluation and reporting functions.

IFF develops all curricular materials, including hands-on computer simulations, through a multi-step process designed to help ensure that the training promotes the development and application of best practices. The process includes a focus group of child support professionals, outside review by subject matter experts, and, finally, review and approval by a Curriculum Review Committee, the Project Management Team, and the Executive Oversight Board.

Since 2006, the Institute has trained 2,676 participants in traditional classroom settings, 293 in technical assistance trainings, 5,877 in online offerings, and 625 at the 2010 New Jersey Annual Training Conference. The Institute also has been instrumental at the local level by creating and delivering workshops at annual child support conferences and providing technical assistance at remote agency sites.

Protecting Children and Strengthening Families at Risk

New Jersey Child Welfare Training Partnership

The Institute for Families serves as the lead agency for the New Jersey Child Welfare Training Partnership, a cooperative effort by select colleges and universities to train the leadership and casework staff at the Division of Youth and Family Services (DYFS). One of the partnership's projects was to develop and deliver training for Assistant Family Service Workers, professionals who support DYFS' caseworkers in the field.

Anthony Gaulman usually gets along pretty well with the parents he deals with in his work for DYFS. It helps that he's personable, and it also helps that Mr. Gaulman delivers what the parents tend to want most: time with their children, if only for a single, supervised hour in a DYFS office in Camden.

The children are in foster care, and the visits are the main contact they have with their families. Except in rare circumstances, children in foster care are required to have regular visits with their parents. Each case can vary, but weekly visits are typical, says Mr. Gaulman, an Assistant Family Service Worker (AFSW) at DYFS' Camden Central Office.

For Mr. Gaulman, 44, the AFSW position is a second career. He has 21 years' service with the state, working most of that time as a youth worker at the Arthur Brisbane Child Treatment Center in Monmouth County. After the Department of Children and Families — DYFS' parent agency — closed Brisbane in 2005, Mr. Gaulman and other staff were given the opportunity to move to other jobs

within the department. Mr. Gaulman has worked at the Camden Central Office ever since.

AFSWs, often called "case aides," perform a number of duties to complement caseworkers, ranging from clerical work to transportation, Mr. Gaulman says. But the most critical functions involve the family visits. Children's caseworkers schedule the visits, and the logistics are left to an AFSW.

Mr. Gaulman makes sure the children are transported to the visits, which often take place in the DYFS Office, and then supervises them. He keeps an eye out for anything that might be harmful to the child. A parent making promises he or she can't keep, for example, or two parents arguing in front of the child. He also has had cases where parents with histories of substance abuse showed up for visits under the influence, forcing him to cancel the meetings.

But if the visit goes well, he simply stays out of the way and documents the children's interaction with the parents.

The visits are the best part of the job, Mr. Gaulman says. "I feel like I accomplished something when the children get to interact with their parents."

Supervising and documenting the visit is a crucial function, a point that was emphasized in training Mr. Gaulman received two years ago, as part of the first group of AFSWs trained by the Child Welfare Training Partnership.

During the training sessions, role-playing scenarios would be acted out at times, and the class would split into smaller groups to discuss how they would handle the situation. Mr. Gaulman says the instructor, Anthony Mack, wouldn't take a short answer.

"You couldn't say a visit went well. You had to elaborate," Mr. Gaulman says. "Why did it go well?"

The trainees were expected to make a series of observations, such as the type of activities engaged in by the parents and children; the parents' manner; how the children handled the visit; and how well they interacted with each other.

Mr. Mack, Associate Program Manager for the Child Welfare Training Partnership, says the AFSWs are trained to make behaviorally specific observations because the records will prove important to the outcome of the family's case.

In fact, one of the points continually emphasized during the training is the importance

of the work that AFSWs do, Mr. Mack says. AFSWs are on the front line and in a position to build a trusting relationship with the families DYFS is committed to serving.

The training fills three days — one day per week for three weeks — covering a wide range of topics, such as customer service and cultural competency; building relationships; child development; working with children; recognizing abuse and neglect; responding to family members' physical, developmental or mental challenges; and crisis intervention.


Mr. Mack says cultural competency is another emphasis point in the training.

It is important to build the workers' awareness of cultural differences and empathy with the families, he says, to ensure that decisions are not based on the workers' preconceived notions.

Mr. Gaulman says the cultural competency training provided an important reminder for him.

"I try to treat everyone fairly, and treat them the way I would want to be treated," he says. "To do that, you have to understand that people from different backgrounds might do things differently than you would." □

FOR MORE PROGRAMS LIKE THIS, SEE PAGE 20



Anthony Gaulman

BACKGROUND

In January 2007, the state Department of Children and Families chose the Rutgers School of Social Work to coordinate the New Jersey Child Welfare Training Partnership. Current partners in that effort include the Richard Stockton College of New Jersey, Montclair State University, and Kean University.

During the past three years, the Partnership has provided training to approximately 3,500 DYFS leadership and casework staff on the newly adopted Case Practice Model; the AFSW training; Concurrent Planning and Mental Illness training for newly hired DYFS staff; and on-site training and technical assistance to supervisors and caseworkers in advanced case practice.

The Partnership offers training courses at locations in the northern, central and southern regions of the state and features an extensive quality assurance program to identify future training needs, assess trainee satisfaction with current course offerings, and provide a feedback loop for continual course improvements.

Assisting Youth in the Transition to Adulthood

Project MYSELF Speakers Bureau

The Speakers Bureau, established in November 2008, grew out of Project MYSELF, which provides current and former foster youth in post-secondary education with supportive mentors, academic assistance, and opportunities to develop essential independent living skills. Project MYSELF is managed by Transitions for Youth, a multifaceted program within the Institute for Families to serve youth transitioning to independence, particularly those aging out of foster care.

The comedian Jerry Seinfeld once noted that, in a survey of people's greatest fears, public speaking and death ranked first and second. Death, he stressed, was Number Two.

As daunting as it might be, public speaking is a critical skill for many careers and academic pursuits. That was the reasoning behind the Project MYSELF Speakers Bureau.

Each academic year, a select group of students is trained in public speaking and then given opportunities to practice those skills. All of the trainees are participants of Project MYSELF, a supportive mentoring program for students receiving assistance under the New Jersey Foster Care Scholars Program, a scholarship for current and former foster youth enrolled in post-secondary education.

The students are trained to deliver a comprehensive presentation titled "Higher Education Options for Youth" to a specific audience: young people aging out of foster care.

Ultimately, the effort fulfills a dual purpose: imparting useful information to foster youth while helping the student presenters to develop leadership and job-readiness skills.

The presentation covers significant ground, including the types of post-secondary education programs; the degrees or certificates available; how to apply; the requirements applicants will need to meet; and the different financial assistance programs for which they might qualify. Speakers Bureau members deliver the presentation at independent living programs and other similar locations statewide.

For Angel Williams, 19, the Speakers Bureau was a natural fit. A history major who begins her sophomore year at Montclair State University in fall 2010, Ms. Williams wants to be a teacher, so the presentations offered valuable experience.

"It was a good way to build on my skills, and develop new skills, while helping others," she says.

She was a little nervous before her first presentation, not knowing what to expect. But, for the most part, she says, the youth were receptive and involved in the sessions.

Arielle Milsted, a 21-year-old Social Work major at Rutgers, says she chose the Speakers Bureau because she had always been

uncomfortable with public speaking, and she felt she needed to develop the skill.

In addition, the presentations were helpful because she was working with young people much like those she is likely to encounter in her future career as a social worker.

There were times when it was a challenge to get the youth to focus and participate, she says, but it was a positive experience overall.

Ms. Milsted and Ms. Williams delivered presentations throughout the state, in places such as Glassboro, New Brunswick, and Irvington. Both say they got the impression that much of the material was new to the audience members, even information as basic as the New Jersey Foster Care Scholars Program.

Ms. Williams graduated from St. Vincent Academy, a private high school in Newark that helped prepare her for college. But she says most youth in foster care aren't so lucky, and people in her age group would have benefited from the Speakers Bureau presentation when they were nearing high school graduation.

Ms. Milsted, a graduate of Paulsboro High School in Gloucester County, says she felt there was an added benefit to having the presentations to foster youth delivered by others who grew up in foster care.

"We could be role models," she says. "We could say, 'We were where you are, but we're here now. You can do it, too.'"

Both Ms. Williams and Ms. Milsted had special plans for their semester break this past summer.

Ms. Milsted spent four weeks studying abroad at the University of Babeş Bolyai in Romania, visiting various social work agencies in Romania and then working a two-week internship with one of those agencies.

She will receive credit for the program toward the field experience that is required for her senior year at the School of Social Work.

Ms. Williams, meanwhile, was one of 14 students selected for the Summer Housing and Internship Program (SHIP), another Transitions for Youth offering that provides housing and paid, career-directed internships for Project MYSELF participants every year.

SHIP participants live in Rockoff Hall, a dormitory in downtown New Brunswick, for 10 weeks between Memorial Day and mid-August. Transitions for Youth arranges the internships and also schedules various skill-building exercises, community volunteer opportunities, and group activities designed to build peer support. □

FOR MORE PROGRAMS LIKE THIS, SEE PAGE 22



BACKGROUND

Student presenters for the Speakers' Bureau were recruited from Project MYSELF, a program designed to help current and former foster youth improve their academic performance, finish their education and develop essential life skills.

Presenters were required to have a GPA of 2.7 or better and complete training that focused on:

- **Evaluating the content** of the "Higher Education Options for Youth" PowerPoint presentation.
- **Public Speaking 101** – a primer on posture, voice, content delivery and addressing audience members' questions. Participants engaged in role-playing exercises and other activities to help prepare them to handle various public speaking situations.
- **"Strategic Sharing"** – approaches for a presenter to disclose personal history and life experiences while ensuring his or her emotional well-being.

In the 2009-2010 academic year, 10 presenters were trained and delivered presentations at eight different locations, including DYFS-contracted service providers and independent living programs funded through the Chafee Foster Care Independence Program.

Student presenters also staffed a table at "Aging Out-Don't Miss Out" conferences in Sayreville and Salem.

Following each presentation, Transitions for Youth staff conducted an evaluation with the presenters, discussing the strengths and challenges of each presentation. Presenters were asked for suggestions on improving the delivery of future presentations. Speakers' Bureau members also receive stipends for each completed presentation.

Angel Williams

Supporting and Protecting Aging Family Members

Adult Protective Services

Adult Protective Services (APS) is a statewide program to investigate abuse, neglect and exploitation of seniors and other vulnerable adults living in the community. The service is provided by different agencies in each of New Jersey's 21 counties, under supervision of the state Department of Health and Senior Services. Since 1991, every APS worker has been trained at the Rutgers School of Social Work.

Every week, the APS trainees participated in some sort of interactive learning exercise. During the fall sessions, they were full-blown simulated cases.

The classroom would be transformed into another place. One week it was the home of an elderly widow who might be neglecting herself. Another time, it was the shabby apartment of a potential perpetrator of elder abuse. Experienced social workers played the key roles, while new APS workers walked in and tried to make sense of it all.

The trainees exercised the skills they had learned: the ability to get in the front door in the first place; engaging people to gain their trust and cooperation; observing everything around them; effective interviewing.

It was the perfect training for real world investigations, says Lisa Barnes, MSW, LSW, the APS coordinator for Family & Children's Service in Long Branch. As in real life, says Ms. Barnes, who completed the training in 2009, you have to piece together the truth on your own.

You need to use all of your powers of observation. Is the place a mess? Are there bills

piled up? How do family members interact with one another? Is there evidence of different risk factors, such as alcohol abuse?

Then: Who should you interview? What questions should you ask? How should you ask them?

A video camera ran through some of the sessions, and, afterward, the trainees and their classmates reviewed the tape to evaluate the casework. The camera provides critical insight into what works and what doesn't, Ms. Barnes says.

"You see everything about yourself in a different light: your body language, how you approach people, your thought process," she says.

The APS training includes 16 weekly sessions, split between the spring and fall. Ada Saperstein, who developed the training and has been the program coordinator since it debuted in 1991, says the simulations have always been a part of the curriculum, which received a Brookdale Best Practices Training Award in 1993. The "actors" are retired APS investigators and current social workers who specialize in working with the elderly.

The main purpose, Ms. Saperstein says, is to increase the new workers' confidence, because they won't be able to apply the skills they learn without confidence in themselves.

Ms. Saperstein says she begins each year's class by asking the trainees for an informal "confidence rating." Many of them, she finds, will rate themselves at a 2, 3, or 4 on a scale of 10. By the end of the year, those same students are more likely to answer 7 or above, she says.

APS workers are required to begin training within their first year on the job. The number of new hires being trained has fallen in recent years. At the same time, however, the number of APS cases has been on the rise.

For example, between 2008 and 2009, Family & Children's Service, the APS agency for Monmouth County, saw a 42 percent increase in the number of cases investigated, says Ms. Barnes, who started as an APS worker in 2008. Now the coordinator, she still maintains a caseload as well.

"If we don't go, there's usually no one coming behind us," she says. "So we will take cases that other agencies might not."

The most frequent type of allegation is neglect — either self-neglect or by a caregiver — and psychological or verbal abuse is more common than physical abuse. Recently, there has been a marked increase in financial exploitation: adult children or family

members raiding elderly people's bank accounts, using their benefit checks, or getting them to take out reverse mortgages without informed consent.

Ms. Barnes says that increase appears to be tied to the economy. Money is tight, and families are dealing with greater stress. More adult children than ever are moving back into their parents' homes, leading to opportunities for elderly residents to be abused, neglected or exploited.


Vincent D'Elia, president and CEO of Family & Children's Service, says most APS agencies are government offices, while about one-third of them are private nonprofits.

D'Elia says an agency like his can be less bureaucratic and also has close ties to the community, which helps in many cases because people referred for APS investigations usually need other assistance. Family & Children's Service itself runs various support programs that could benefit people in that situation, D'Elia says.

Ms. Barnes, who earned her MSW at Fordham University, formerly served as program coordinator at Spring House, a transitional housing program in Eatontown for homeless mothers and their children. She says the APS work is very different from her previous position and is very rewarding.

"As difficult as it is, as sad as it is, it can be uplifting," she says. "You're helping people everyday, and you see it right away." □

FOR MORE PROGRAMS LIKE THIS, SEE PAGE 25

A woman with blonde hair, wearing a black jacket over a red and black patterned top, stands outdoors in a residential neighborhood. She is holding a black folder and has a lanyard with an ID badge around her neck. The background shows a street with houses, trees, and utility poles.

Lisa Barnes, MSW, LSW

BACKGROUND

The Rutgers School of Social Work has been the sole source of APS training since 1991, training more than 1,400 workers in that time period. APS training has been housed in the Institute for Families since it was created in 2007.

The curriculum has changed in recent years to keep up with new developments. For example, two years ago, a training module on safety — taught by a police detective — was added to respond to a growth in the number of APS workers assaulted on the job. All other training modules have been updated since then as well.

In addition to the new worker training, IFF also provides supervisory training three times a year and two or three advanced workshops for current workers. Topics for those workshops often come from suggestions by new workers on the evaluation forms they complete at the end of their training.

Serving Diverse Populations

New Jersey Victim Assistance Academy

The Institute for Families (IFF), in collaboration with government agencies, service providers, and other victims' rights organizations, established the New Jersey Victim Assistance Academy. The academy held its initial eight-week session between March and May of this year, offering a broad, fundamental overview of victim services. The training topics offered serve to build a firm foundation for professionals who work in the field.

It was the first day of the first-ever class of the New Jersey Victim Assistance Academy, and Jessica Kwasnick already had a sign that the experience would prove valuable.

The guest speaker that Tuesday morning in March was Richard D. Pompelio, founder of the New Jersey Crime Victims' Law Center — the man who literally wrote the book on victims' rights in New Jersey.

Ms. Kwasnick, the Domestic Violence Team Leader for the Superior Court in Hudson County, had seen Pompelio's book many times, on the desks or in the hands of judges and attorneys with whom she worked. Over the next seven Tuesdays in Piscataway, the string of expert presenters continued: Linda Burkett, coordinator of the Victim Witness Advocacy Unit in Camden County; Marsetta Lee, director of the state Victims of Crime Compensation Office, who was also a participant in the academy class; and Kathy Friess, coordinator of the New Jersey Human Trafficking Task Force, to name a few.

The guest speakers, though, were but a part of the puzzle. Their presentations built

on the information that had already been presented in what Ms. Kwasnick called the most organized and effective training she ever received. Much of the material covered new ground for her, relating to victims of all types of crime, not just domestic violence.

At age 29, Ms. Kwasnick is a veteran of two positions working with domestic violence victims. She began her career as a victim's advocate for the Passaic County Women's Center, a Paterson-based nonprofit that serves domestic violence and sexual assault victims. At that time, she held a bachelor's degree in criminal justice from Kean University and was working on a master's in public administration, also from Kean. In 2007, after she had completed the MPA, Ms. Kwasnick moved on to the courthouse in Hudson County.

Currently, as a Domestic Violence Team Leader, she supervises 12 people in an office that initiates domestic violence complaints and then manages the court schedule to resolve those cases. The office staff informs victims of all available options within the Family Court and other court systems,

including the immediate or long-term relief they may seek, such as restraining orders, child custody and child support. Ms. Kwasnick and her staff also refer victims to services, often through the county prosecutor's victim witness advocacy unit or Women Rising Inc., the domestic violence services agency in Hudson County.

The court position is different from her previous job, Ms. Kwasnick says, in that it requires objectivity. Her office must serve both victims and the defendants.

In Hudson County, Ms. Kwasnick says, they have seen an increase in recent years in the number of domestic violence cases that actually go to trial.

"I think it shows that the victims are gaining knowledge and courage from organizations like Women Rising and following through with their cases," Ms. Kwasnick says.

A side benefit from the academy training was that it gave Ms. Kwasnick ideas for additional training, not only for herself but her staff. For instance, since Friess' presentation on human trafficking, Ms. Kwasnick has been working with Ms. Friess to schedule training on that topic for her intake workers.

Ms. Kwasnick also picked up valuable information related to working with and interviewing child victims; burnout and resiliency, a common problem for people who work in victim services; and cultural competency, a critical skill when working in

an urban center such as Jersey City, which has a significant population of recent immigrants.

Some of the immigrants may come from cultures where victims are less likely to come forward, or where family violence is viewed differently than in the United States. The academy training offered techniques for engaging and communicating effectively with those populations, Ms. Kwasnick says.

Ms. Kwasnick feels that the small class size — 11 people — and the fact that participants came from diverse backgrounds and professions helped make the training more effective. The classmates were able to get comfortable with one another, and that, coupled with their different experiences, resulted in better discussions and interactions, she says.

Since the classes ended, Sandra Moroso, the IFF Senior Project Coordinator for the academy, has set up an email group to keep in touch with the participants and share resources, such as research studies and news articles.

Ms. Moroso says she is planning a "booster" session for the academy participants in September. □

FOR MORE PROGRAMS LIKE THIS, SEE PAGE 24

BACKGROUND

The New Jersey Victim Assistance Academy was established in October 2008 with the assistance of a grant from the U.S. Department of Justice, Office for Victims of Crime. The federal grant is administered by the New Jersey Division of Criminal Justice, State Office of Victim Witness Advocacy.

The academy's 40-hour program offers a comprehensive, academic-based curriculum designed to enhance the quality of victim services and meet foundation-level training needs of a wide range of service providers and allied professionals.

Participants in the training are given the tools to enhance their own professional development as they also learn and practice skills needed to empower crime victims to make their own choices in coping with their victimization.

In addition to IFF, the academy is directed by a multi-disciplinary steering committee, whose members represent direct service providers, academic faculty, agency administrators and professional trainers dedicated to assisting crime victims.

Ms. Moroso, the IFF Senior Project Coordinator, said the curriculum is modeled after the one utilized by the National Victim Assistance Academy. A sub-committee is reviewing the curriculum and integrating feedback and experiences from the first completed class to recommend improvements before the second class begins in the spring of 2011.

Jessica Kwasnick

Promoting Healthy Family Development

In addition to the **New Jersey Child Support Institute**, [SEE PAGE 8](#) IFF is engaged in...

Passaic Even Start Evaluation

Office of Research and Evaluation

United Passaic Organization (UPO) is the designated Community Action Agency for the City of Passaic. A broad-based community service organization, UPO works to alleviate poverty and improve the quality of life for the city's low-income residents. UPO operates the Even Start Family Literacy Program, which helps break the cycle of poverty and illiteracy by integrating early childhood education, adult literacy or adult basic education, parenting education, and interactive parent and child literacy activities into a unified family literacy program that helps children reach their full potential.

IFF is evaluating the extent to which UPO's Even Start program improves literacy for children and families, resulting in increased economic opportunities. Initial findings have identified substantial gains in literacy among both children and parents participating in the program. Funding for this evaluation has been continued through fall 2010.

Certificate Program in Using the Arts in Prevention

Office of Continuing Education

This certificate program, a joint effort with the Center for the Arts, is intended for social workers, teachers, artists and professionals who work with young people. Research has shown that using the expressive arts with young people can have a powerful effect in

preventing alcohol, tobacco and other drug use/abuse, and other social/psychological issues. Participants will learn how to use various media, such as drama, visual arts, writing, movement, dance, music and communication media with individuals, schools, community groups, and alternative settings. The certificate includes an overview of the relevance, theory and utilization of expressive arts as part of a comprehensive prevention strategy.

Certificate Program in Child/Adolescent Mental Health

Office of Continuing Education

This certificate program offers clinicians the opportunity to increase their diagnostic and treatment skills particular to the needs of children and adolescents. Designed for the advanced practitioner in a variety of settings, these workshops address developmental, environmental, cultural, and family issues that impact clinical interventions. Workshop topics include developmental theories, comprehensive assessment, differential diagnoses, legal and ethical issues, socio-cultural influences, psychopharmacology, and treatment modalities.

Certificate Program in Adoption

Office of Continuing Education

This certificate program offers comprehensive training and to mental health practitioners in the core issues facing most adoptive families. Theory and research workshops

present the psychology of adoption of infants or older children. This program was originally developed through an Adoption Opportunities grant from the Administration of Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, awarded to the New Jersey Adoption Program.

Certificate Program in Parent Education

Office of Continuing Education

This certificate program is intended to enhance the skills and knowledge of parent educators and other professionals working with children and families. Such professionals might include: social workers, guidance counselors, teachers of Health and Family Living courses, and case workers at child welfare agencies or at county boards of social services.

Let's Talk Adoption Annual Conference

Institute for Families

New Jersey's 27th Annual "Let's Talk Adoption" Conference was held on November 7th, coordinated by Concerned Persons for Adoption and co-sponsored by the New Jersey Interagency Adoption Council. More than 400 people were in attendance, with over 200 of them receiving continuing education hours through the Institute for Families. The keynote speaker this year was Alison Larkin, adoptee, internationally acclaimed comedienne and bestselling author of "The English American." Her address

was titled "Why My Adoption is a Laughing Matter: The English American talks about nature, nurture and how her search for her American birth parents helped her find herself." Thirty-six workshops were offered, geared towards pre-adoptive parents, adoptive parents, social workers, teachers, and school counselors, including workshops designed to be Hague compliant.

Arts in Prevention Annual Conference

Institute for Families

This year's conference was titled "Breaking Down the Walls: Reaching Youth, Families and Communities through the Arts." Held on October 29th and 30th, this was the tenth annual conference dedicated to promoting and supporting the use of art to promote peace and tolerance. Nearly 100 people attended the conference, sponsored by the Center for the Arts: Creativity, Experience, Empowerment, and co-sponsored by the Institute for Families with a focus on community and collaboration in partnership with NCADD Middlesex County and the Healing Arts Project. The conference aims to educate arts organizations, artists, prevention specialists, social workers, community workers, teachers, and counselors in the utilization of the arts as a tool in a comprehensive prevention strategy and as a positive youth development tool.

Family Development Credential (FDC)
Office of Training and Education

The FDC program offers high quality, sequential training designed to provide family workers with baseline competencies and skills needed to empower families to attain a healthy self-reliance and interdependence with their communities. In addition, the FDC credential granted by Rutgers University reflects a standard of excellence recognized by major family-serving agencies and has been recommended by the National Program on Non-collegiate Sponsored Instruction (PONSI) for seven college credits. Family workers receive 90 hours of training, led by a qualified instructor. Technical assistance is provided to family worker coordinators who serve as portfolio advisors for the FDC program. In the framework of the program, portfolio advisors provide guidance to family workers in the areas of skills practice and the development of a skills portfolio that documents their work. The comprehensive FDC training and portfolio review process is provided through the Institute for Families. The credential is granted by Rutgers University, after it is determined that a candidate's skills portfolio has met the standards established by the University and the candidate has passed the curriculum-based written exam developed by Rutgers University. The training sessions are targeted to meet the

specific needs of New Jersey family workers and are scheduled regionally to assure accessibility to participants. Since 2004, 595 Abbott District family workers have received IFF's FDC credential, which reflects a standard of excellence recognized by major family-serving agencies. In fall 2009, FDC began a fee based module for non-Abbott workers. Future growth of the program will continue in 2010 with evaluation of the fee based side of training, exploring the possibility of garnering college credits through Rutgers, and identifying refresher courses and add-ons for the fee-based side of the course.

Early Childhood Mental Health Promotion and Access Initiative (HCFNJ Project)

Office of Research and Evaluation

Initiated in response to a documented need for behavioral health services for young children in New Jersey, the Health Care Foundation of New Jersey has supported mental health consultant services in a number of preschool programs in the cities of Newark and Irvington. The Early Childhood Mental Health Promotion and Access Initiative has supported a range of services, including direct services to children, support and education to teachers and parents, mental health screening, and universal classroom curricula, since the fall of 2006. These services are provided by three organizations,

FAMILY Connections, Ironbound Community Corporation, and the Irvington Family Development Center, serving three communities. The Institute for Families is engaged in an evaluation of the structure, process, and outcomes of the initiative. The associated brief report reviews some of the literature regarding the etiology and prevalence of mental health problems in young children, the efficacy of intervention and prevention through preschool based mental health consultants, and highlights preliminary findings from IFF's evaluation.

Protecting Children and Strengthening Families at Risk

In addition to the **New Jersey Child Welfare Training Partnership**, [SEE PAGE 10](#) IFF is engaged

Adoption Certificate – Child Welfare Track *Office of Child Welfare Initiatives*

This program is offered exclusively to employees of the Division of Youth and Family Services (DYFS) working directly with children and families engaged in the process of adoption. The focus of the certificate program is to expand worker professional development and knowledge of the issues facing adoptive parents. A certificate is awarded after completing 6 required workshops. Training workshops include a broad range of adoption related topics and their impact on children at different stages in their development.

Family Preservation Institute *Office of Child Welfare Initiatives*

Family Preservation Institute

Office of Child Welfare Initiatives

New Jersey's Family Preservation program is a short-term, family based service designed to assist families in crisis by improving parenting and family functioning to maintain children with their families, or to reunify them. This service was built on the conviction that many children can be safely protected and treated within their own homes when parents are provided with the services and supports and empowered to change their lives. There are two components of the training: 1) training for new workers and 2)

ongoing workshops for professional development of the FPS workforce.

Family Preservation New Worker Training introduces FPS workers to a variety of simulated training experiences related to child protection issues and the competencies needed to achieve the goal of safely maintaining children with their families. Training sessions are offered two days per week for two consecutive weeks, allowing workers the opportunity to apply what they learned in their work environments. During 2009, the training for newly hired staff was revised and updated based on current trends in Family Preservationist work and to reflect changes made effective by the adoption of the Case Practice Model. The training was well received as evidenced by positive feedback from participants, trainers and supervisors from Family Preservation agencies.

The Family Preservation Professional Development training offers competency-based workshops to further develop FPS workers in their ability to provide high quality evidenced-based services to families. The workshops have a cognitive/behavioral approach and focus on providing background knowledge of theory and concepts, demonstration of skills, participant involvement via exercises and discussion. The professional development classes had an increase in attendance during the 2009-2010, as more

than 75 workshops were offered during the contract period. Trauma Systems Therapy and Integrating Attachment Focused Strategies were included to further address the needs of children and families.

Certificate Programs in Violence Against Women

Office of Continuing Education

in association with the Center on Violence Against Women and Children (VAWC)

Initially funded by the Verizon Foundation, this certificate program gives participants the chance to develop their knowledge and skills by participating in workshops with a multi-disciplinary focus on the clinical, workplace, and nonprofit/policy/advocacy spheres as they relate to violence against women (VAW) issues. Since 2009, VAWC offered 35 workshops, with a total of 436 participants.

Striving for Social Justice: A Symposia Series *Institute for Families*

The Institute for Families launched a symposium series intended to shed light on current social issues and engage stakeholders and policy makers in discussion about how to bring change. To date, three have been held with audiences reaching over 100 and bringing professionals from social work, education, judiciary and criminal justice.

In April 2009, Ruth McRoy, an expert on adoption and disproportionality in child welfare, was the keynote speaker. In addition to the keynote presentation, "Addressing Disparities and Disproportionality in Child Welfare: Best Practices and Emerging Opportunities" the event included remarks from state and national experts intending to highlight current work in New Jersey and offer suggestions for continued progress.

In December 2009, John Tuell, Director of the Child Welfare Juvenile Justice Systems Integration Initiative at the Child Welfare League of America, and a national expert in child welfare/juvenile justice systems collaboration, was the keynote speaker at the third annual symposium. In addition to Mr. Tuell's remarks, the symposium "Collaboration and Systems Integration: Juvenile Justice and Child Welfare" included remarks from local and state leaders in the field on promising practices and the road forward. This symposium was co-sponsored by the Middlesex County Judiciary.

IFF is pleased to announce the symposia are available on the Rutgers School of Social Work website. To see each lecture and corresponding power points, please visit socialwork.rutgers.edu/IFF.

SPOTLIGHT ON... CUSTOMIZED WORKSHOPS

Footprints for Life Evaluation

Office of Research and Evaluation

IFF is working with the National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependency of Middlesex County, Inc. to examine changes in knowledge and behavior among second and third graders participating in a substance abuse prevention intervention. Based on pretest/posttest reports from teachers and parents, preliminary findings suggest that children who participated in the program had statistically significant improvements in social competency compared to children who did not participate in the program.

Since the beginning of the fiscal year in July 2009, the Office of Continuing Education has developed and delivered a total of 91 Customized Workshops. These workshops met the individualized needs of a wide variety of organizations ranging from community-based agencies to the Division of Probation to a State-run residential program.

These 90 plus Customized Workshops were designed upon request of organizations seeking specific training for their staff on challenging topics they are confronting in their work. Customized Workshops can be targeted to meet the particular needs of each organization's staff at all levels including direct practitioners, supervisors and administrators.

Careful attention is paid to customizing the workshop to the unique needs of the receiving organization – taking into account their staff, population served and specific organizational characteristics and needs. Customized Workshops are developed via careful ongoing collaboration with the requesting organization, instructors, and the Office of Continuing Education staff to ensure the workshops are truly customized to meet the receiving organization's needs.

Customized Workshops at the Office of Continuing Education are delivered in several formats including single-session workshops, a series of related topics or an entire certificate program. Every workshop is delivered onsite at the organization which ensures cost-effectiveness, convenience, and uniform learning for the entire staff. Customized Workshops can be delivered throughout the course of the year or intensively to meet more immediate needs of staff groups and their organization.

This year our series have included some of the following:

- **Catholic Charities of Metuchen:** a series of 10 workshops with topics in both clinical and nonclinical practice
- **Catholic Charities of Trenton:** a series of 5 workshops that met relicensing requirements for social and cultural competence, ethics and customized to benefit the clinical and supervisory needs of their staff
- **Catholic Charities of Camden:** a series of 7 workshops for completion of the Case Management Certificate
- **Proceed Inc.:** a series that focused on Substance abuse assessment and treatment
- **Hudson and Monmouth County Division on Juvenile Probation:** a 5 module series on Motivational Interviewing for their probation officers focusing on working with juveniles and their families
- **Union County Division of Youth Services:** a series that focused on adolescent substance abuse
- **Saint Peter's University Hospital:** Certificate in Geriatric Healthcare delivered to a multidisciplinary group of healthcare professionals
- **Bonnie Brae Residential Treatment Center for Adolescent Boys:** a series of 8 workshops for the completion of the Nonprofit and Public Management Certificate

Assisting Youth in the Transition to Adulthood

In addition to **Speakers Bureau**, **SEE PAGE 12** IFF is engaged in...

Transitions for Youth

Office of Child Welfare Initiatives

Transitions for Youth (TFY) is a multifaceted program that utilizes a positive youth development framework to address the various needs of youth transitioning to adulthood. We are especially committed to serving communities and their most vulnerable young people, specifically those youth involved in foster care, juvenile justice and mental health systems.

One critical service the TFY program offers is a website, TransitionsforYouth.org, which focuses on issues relevant to youth aging out of New Jersey's child welfare system. The website also spotlights the dedicated professionals who help these young adults succeed in moving to independence. The website is designed to provide information and assistance to youth, parents, providers, DYFS employees and others interested in the success of youth aging out the child welfare system. Under the umbrella of TFY, IFF also offers Project MYSELF, the Summer Housing and Internship Program, the Data Collection Project, Youth Advisory Board, and the Training Initiative for Child Welfare Staff and Community Partners. Each of these programs is discussed in some detail below.

Project MYSELF

Office of Child Welfare Initiatives

Project MYSELF (Mentoring Youth toward Social, Educational, and Life Fulfillment) is a multi-service program for current and former foster youth as they pursue post-secondary educational opportunities. Project MYSELF (PM) participants are automatically enrolled into Project MYSELF upon receiving financial assistance from the New Jersey Foster Care Scholars Program (NJFC). Through NJFC, young adults aging out of the child welfare system also receive the mentorship, support, guidance, referrals and encouragement needed to stay in and succeed in school. Each Project MYSELF participant is assigned a support coach, who is available to help youth with issues related to academic functioning, emotional resiliency, physical wellness, and community, peer and adult partnerships. The program is designed to (1) improve academic performance, (2) increase retention rates, (3) complete post-secondary education degrees, and (4) develop essential life skills and competencies. PM services include (1) support coaching, (2) assessment and referrals, (3) ementoring and tele-mentoring, (4) crisis intervention, (5) emotional resiliency skill-building groups in the New Brunswick office, (6) monthly outreach in the form of a newsletter and (7) social networking site (Facebook) which highlights information related to PM events, meetings, resources and information on relevant top-

ics around positive youth development and improving their academic functioning.

In the fall 2009 semester, a total of 314 youth were served through Project MYSELF. In the spring 2009 semester, a total of 340 youth were served.

Summer Housing and Internship Program

Office of Child Welfare Initiatives

The Transitions for Youth Summer Housing and Internship Program (SHIP) provides a model housing and internship program that supports foster and former foster youth who are pursuing higher education. SHIP helps students who lack the financial and social connections to get safe and stable housing during the summer months when most colleges and universities close their on-campus housing facilities. TFY-SHIP also provides career-related internship experiences, aligned with individual participant's academic and career goals, as well as life-skills workshops, intensive case management, recreational activities and cultural learning opportunities. SHIP participants completed their internships in a variety of programs and organizations in law enforcement, counseling, social services, theatre and business programs. This, in addition to the support, guidance and mentorship offered by SHIP staff was, as one participant put it, "an opportunity of a lifetime."

During the summer of 2009, 10 youth participated in the program. On August 11th,

2009, students successfully completed the Summer Housing and Internship Program (SHIP). The last day was met with a graduation celebration including a welcome from Dr. Allison Blake, Director of the Institute for Families and a special guest speaker, then-Commissioner Kimberly Ricketts from the Department of Children and Families. SHIP participants shared their resounding gratitude and spoke of the impact these "real life" experiences afforded them in their quest to finish their schooling and to be prepared for the current job market. Included in the celebration were staff from the School of Social Work, the Institute for Families and Transitions for Youth. Also joining in the graduation festivities were partners and internship supervisors from the communities of New Brunswick and Highland Park as well as invited caseworkers and supervisors from the Division of Youth and Family Services (DYFS). All were there to celebrate the accomplishments of the 2009 graduates of the program.

Data Collection Project

Office of Child Welfare Initiatives

Dataweb 3.0 is a web-based system that collects information on services provided to youth that are enrolled in Transitions for Youth programming. Dataweb 3.0 is currently used as an internal case management system by Transitions for Youth staff to track client demographic information,

risk behaviors, service delivery and to track client progress.

Data collected is used for service delivery and program evaluation; to gain insight into client outcomes; contract compliance; and project management. It is the intention to utilize Dataweb data to inform and improve service interventions, to contribute to the development of best practice standards, and to further define the needs of this unique population.

Youth Advisory Board

Office of Child Welfare Initiatives

The Youth Advisory Board (YAB) was created to encourage youth within the aging out population to have a voice in foster care decision-making while simultaneously providing skill-building opportunities. By providing a safe environment and empowering these young adults to become leaders, YAB promotes youth and adult partnerships, has influenced change in youth programs and services, and effected policy and administrative planning for youth, including homeless youth, within the NJ child welfare system. The Middlesex County Youth Advisory Board (MCYAB) is youth-organized and youth-run with input from adult supporters. The group meets bi-weekly and is responsible for completing two projects that review and inform youth policy and generate ideas

to improve practice within the child welfare, mental health or juvenile justice systems.

A handbook was also created by YAB youth members entitled, "Resource Guide for Aging Out Youth" to be distributed to their peers.

Statewide Youth Advisory Board Coordinator Position

Office of Child Welfare Initiatives

The Transitions for Youth Program is responsible for the coordination of 12 YABs throughout the state. The statewide coordinator is responsible for providing support and technical assistance using a positive youth development/strengths based framework, ensuring that YABs are working within the mission and goals intended. In collaboration with DYFS staff, a YAB replicable model is being created. Tools were created to standardize the facilitation of YAB meetings and to ensure fidelity to the model is maintained. YAB coordinators report on progress, youth projects and information relevant to inform child welfare policy or to improve service delivery to youth. Individualized monthly reports, and the observation of effectiveness of each youth advisory board is also an essential component of this project.

Adolescent Training Initiative for Child Welfare Staff and Community Partners

Office of Child Welfare Initiatives

Professional development training is offered to Division of Youth and Family Services (DYFS) staff, Independent Living Service Providers and behavioral healthcare staff based on the Positive Youth Development Model. This ensures staff serving foster care youth in New Jersey utilize evidence-based approaches. In 2009, IFF trained a total of 232 DYFS and Independent Living staff. Of these, 68 completed Creative Life Skills Training, which teaches adults working with youth how to assist youth to attain life skills that support their successful transition to adulthood. Seventy-four (74) workers completed the Ansell Casey Life Skills Assessment Plus (ACLSA +), which provides a comprehensive approach to assessment, goal planning, life skills instruction, and the evaluation of life skill activities. And ninety (90) workers completed Circles of Support, which focuses on adolescent development and the particular needs of youth aging out of foster care.

The Career Gateway Evaluation

Office of Research and Evaluation

IFF is evaluating the Career Gateway Program offered at sites throughout New Jersey by Allies, Inc. The program seeks to help high school graduates with physical disabilities work toward job placement. Specific program goals include (1) reducing the time between leaving high school and gaining employment; (2) preparing recent high school graduates with physical disabilities for the attainment of basic and/or work readiness skills; (3) providing various environment for graduates to sample career opportunities; and (4) linking graduates to social services that can best support their individual career objectives. This multi-method evaluation will assess program implementation and process, as well as document outcomes achieved by program participants.

Serving Diverse Populations

In addition to the **New Jersey Victim Assistance Academy**, [SEE PAGE 16](#) IFF is engaged in...

Ryan White Planning Council and Technical Assistance

Office of Research and Evaluation

IFF provides technical assistance with evaluation and quality management activities to the Middlesex-Somerset-Hunterdon Ryan White Part A program. In addition to maintaining a program-wide service utilization database, IFF evaluates the extent to which Ryan White-funded services result in improved health outcomes for people living with HIV/AIDS. In addition, IFF provides a comprehensive quality management program that documents the extent to which services delivered through the local Part A program meet established quality indicators.

Middlesex-Somerset-Hunterdon HIV Health Services Planning Council Support

Office of Research and Evaluation

IFF provides staff support to the Middlesex-Somerset-Hunterdon HIV Health Services Planning Council. The group is charged with several federal mandates including (1) assessing community needs; (2) conducting comprehensive planning; (3) establishing funding priorities and allocating resources for HIV/AIDS services; (4) ensuring coordination with other Ryan White and HIV-related services; (5) assessing the administrative mechanism; and (6) developing standards of care. The group allocates about 2.3 million in funding each year.

Certificate Program in Training Skills

Office of Continuing Education

The best training goes far beyond simply presenting material - it utilizes methods that engage the learner in every facet of the training experience. When learners are connected to the material - they retain it. The Training Skills Certificate teaches participants how to design, and deliver memorable and effective trainings. Based on how adults learn, the skills covered in the program increase knowledge retention and satisfaction from participants.

Certificate Program in Developmental Disabilities

Office of Continuing Education

In 1997, RSSW began working to develop a Certificate Program in Developmental Disabilities when it convened an advisory group comprised of representatives from agencies serving persons with disabilities. The initiative originated collaboration with the Elizabeth M. Boggs Center on Developmental Disabilities at the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey (UMDNJ).

Many participants work for the New Jersey Division of Development Disabilities (DDD) or for schools or agencies serving people with disabilities. DDD has added the first workshop of the certificate program to its orientations sessions for new employees. In addition, the Boggs Center at UMDNJ supports the program and promotes it at their educational events.

Expert Witness Training Program

Office of Training and Education Programs

Funded by the Division of Youth and Family Services (DYFS), the Expert Witness Training Program is designed to provide information, demonstrations, role-playing, and practice testimony opportunities for psychologists and psychiatrists who contract with the DYFS Practice Section of the Division of Law in the Attorney General's Office. Those trained are prepared to provide expert evaluation and testimony in Family Court on DYFS matters. The Expert Witness Training is offered in the fall and spring semesters. The trainings are conducted over a 3.5 day period resulting in 20.5 CEH (APA approved Continuing Education Hours) for participants.

Certificate Program in Nonprofit and Public Management

Office of Continuing Education

Inspired by the work of RSSW Dean Richard Edwards, as well as many experienced faculty, this certificate program is designed to build and enhance the knowledge, skills, and competencies of current and future leaders of nonprofit and public human service organizations and to assist them in strategically managing the many challenges presented in today's human services environment.

Certificate Program in Case Management

Office of Continuing Education

The Certificate Program in Case Management has been designed to address the need for extensive training in this practice modality that is used by all social workers and requires specialized skills to perform numerous functions. Social workers and other direct service providers working across all areas of human services, in which case management is an integral part of client services, are given an opportunity to enhance their skills in working with their clients and the systems with which they interact.

Clinical Supervision Series

Office of Continuing Education

Through this 20-hour course, we keep clinical supervisors current on core issues, models, and techniques in clinical supervision. This series also helps them manage supervisees, and reviews legal and ethical issues in clinical supervision. We have been offering the Clinical Supervision Series since the summer of 2004. The series meets the continuing education requirement for Licensed Clinical Social Worker to provide clinical supervision in the state of New Jersey.

Paterson Housing Authority Evaluation
Office of Research and Evaluation

This evaluation project assessed three federally funded programs that provide opportunities and support to public housing residents. A program aimed at senior and disabled residents seeks to help them maintain their independence by bringing relevant support services to public housing sites. A second program helps struggling families access social service programs, provides adult computer literacy classes,

financial literacy training, cultural and fitness activities for youth, employment readiness programs and job placement services. The third program seeks to develop a neighborhood network through computer classes, employment readiness services and summer enrichment programs for youth. IFF's work is focusing on documenting the implementation of these programs and evaluating the outcomes that have been achieved by clients.

Supporting and Protecting Aging Family Members

In addition to the **Adult Protective Services Training**, [SEE PAGE 14](#) IFF is engaged in...

Wellness Initiative for Senior Education (WISE)

Office of Research and Evaluation
IFF's Community Initiative office is assessing the progress of senior citizens who participate in the WISE substance abuse prevention program. Through both an experimental and focus group evaluation, IFF examines changes in knowledge, attitudes, and self-efficacy of the WISE program participants.

Funded through the New Jersey Prevention Network, the WISE evaluation found significant differences between those who participated in WISE and a control group that did not participate in the program. Specifically, the evaluation determined that participants had an enhanced knowledge of medication and the effects of alcohol, felt empowered by the program, increased their understanding of health and wellness, and changed their lives in a positive way. Overall, the participants enjoyed the program and the information it provided.

Gerontology Certificate Programs
Office of Continuing Education

For human service professionals who are seeking specialized training in working with older adults, the Office of Continuing Education offers several certificates in the field of gerontology. The Basic Certificate Program in Gerontology is designed to provide the foundation knowledge for people directing their careers toward serving older adults and their families. A multidisciplinary perspective is

used in the planning and implementation of this certificate program. The advanced certificate program offers more advanced knowledge and skills for social workers and others who work with the elderly. It has been specifically designed for students who have completed the Basic Gerontology Certificate Program and who are looking for more advanced training.

Focus on Faculty Partners:

One of the most important aspects of having an “institute” for Families within a school of social work is that it creates new opportunities for faculty and staff to collaborate on behalf of the community. This past year was no exception to new partnerships and important contributions. We thought our stakeholders would be interested to learn more about those partnerships:



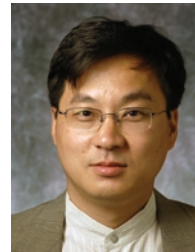
Rebecca Davis, Ph.D. *Associate Professor and Director of Center for International Social Work*

Dr. Davis' expertise in international child welfare practice and transnational practice in general made her a likely partner to provide leadership and guidance when IFF began working on a federal grant in partnership with International Social Services and the NJ Department of Children and Families. Dr. Davis serves as a consultant and subject matter expert on the grant, which was awarded in October 2009, which requires New Jersey to follow up on child welfare cases where children have returned to family members in other countries. Dr. Davis also represents the school and the institute on a special immigration advisory panel, working with DYFS and its community partners to assure staff are prepared to meet the needs of new immigrant families.



Emily Greenfield, Ph.D. *Assistant Professor and Coordinator for the Programs on Aging*

Dr. Greenfield's collaboration with IFF began when she first joined the RU community. Space at the School of Social Work was tight so Dr. Greenfield's first office was located at the institute. These early space challenges helped forge an important partnership for the continuing education programs at IFF as well as the research and evaluation team. In addition to providing numerous workshops, Dr. Greenfield helped facilitate a relationship with the community based organizations in the state that provide services to the NORCs – Naturally Occurring Retirement Communities.



Chien-Chung Huang, Ph.D. *Associate Professor*

Dr. Huang has been a partner on numerous IFF projects, but that partnership began with his work on the NJ CSI Training Institute overseeing evaluations and contributing new knowledge to the field through additional data analysis, publications, and conference presentations. Dr. Huang has also assisted on other projects providing cost benefit analysis components to IFF's program evaluation work.



Kathleen Pottick, Ph.D. *Associate Dean and Professor*

Dr. Pottick, also a founding member of the IFF Advisory Committee, has been a respected member of the research community for many years. She helped IFF faculty and staff forge new relationships with foundations and other entities within Rutgers that ultimately helped shape the institute's research agenda. IFF is most proud of its partnership with the Healthcare Foundation of New Jersey, and the opportunity to evaluate an early childhood mental health pilot.



Cassandra Simmel, Ph.D. *Assistant Professor*

Dr. Simmel brings considerable expertise in child welfare and youth development to the Rutgers Community. She has worked in collaboration with faculty and staff at Transitions for Youth to develop an evaluation of Project Myself and SHIP. She is also working with the NJ Department of Children and Families on an evaluation of their new case practice.



William Waldman, MSW *Lecturer and Executive in Residence*

Mr. Waldman was a founding member of the IFF Advisory Committee, and in that role he helped shape our thinking about the value of creating an annual symposia series focused on social justice issues. In addition to moderating our first two symposia, Professor Waldman facilitated the relationship between the institute and the Middlesex County Family Court this past winter resulting in the third symposia “Systems Integration and Collaboration: Juvenile Justice and Child Welfare.”

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An Appreciation:

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