

Project MATCH
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Project MATCH

Making Appropriate & Timely Connections for Children

Connections

June 2010

Congratulations Karen Sorrell, Social Worker of the Quarter!



The staff at Project MATCH would like to recognize and thank **Karen Sorrell, BA, TFC-CM, of Bluegrass Therapeutic Foster Care** for her outstanding efforts in working toward permanency for the youth on her caseload! Karen was nominated by Nioma "Bernie" Obradovich, a SNAP worker, who described Karen as being "dedicated, flexible and willing to work whenever needed to ensure the needs

of her children are met." Karen has been instrumental in making sure her youth attend SNAP events. She has worked toward sibling reunification and has partnered with cabinet staff/therapists/foster parents and adoptive parents. Karen will receive a \$25 Wal-Mart gift card for her hard work and dedication to Kentucky's children and youth in foster care. **Karen your hard work has not gone unnoticed and we appreciate all that you do!**

Nominees should:

- 1) Be a public or private agency worker in one of the four intervention regions; and
- 2) Be a role model for recruiting, training, and/or providing excellent customer service to our foster parents;
- 3) Be a role model for working in partnership with resource parents (foster adoptive and or kinship caregivers); or
- 4) Be innovative when achieving permanency.

Nominate a Social Worker or Resource Parent to be the next Project MATCH award recipient!

Nominees should:

- 1) Be an active foster/adoptive/kinship care parent in one of the four intervention regions; and
- 2) Be a role model for supporting other foster/adoptive/kinship care parents;
- 3) Be a role model for working in partnership with public and/or private child care agencies; or
- 4) Be a role model for supporting child/youth in permanent placements.

All nominations should include name, contact information, agency name and location, and a short essay about why they are being nominated (250 words or less). Please submit nominations for this quarter to Jessica Morris at jessicamorris@uky.edu by **July 19, 2010**. Award winners will be recognized each quarter in the Project MATCH newsletter and given a \$25 gift certificate.

Regions Roll Out Family Finding Projects

All four intervention regions have successfully rolled out their own versions of the Family Finding Process!

The picture on the right shows the success that the Lakes Region's Everlasting Connections program is achieving. The white leaves illustrate existing connections, the green leaves are possible connections that were found by the team and the orange leaves represent an everlasting connection, a connection that is considered durable and lifelong.

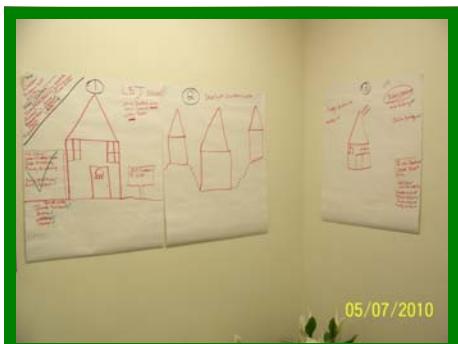
The pictures below show Eastern Mountain worker Sheena Halsey and Greg Prater engaging in the mobility mapping process; as a result of Family Finding efforts, Greg has received several phone calls and letters from people willing to commit to him, a copy of his father's obituary, a picture of his mother and father, and a picture frame that his father made.



Strategies for engaging youth in the mobility mapping process



Choose a location where the youth feels comfortable.



Use the information collected to create a "shared vision."

"In every conceivable manner, the family is a link to our past, bridge to our future."

-Alex Haley



Let the youth take the lead during the process.



Encourage the child's caregivers to get involved.

Serretta's Story: A social worker's experience with Family Finding

Serretta Thompson, a former PCWCP student, has been a member of the Fayette County Permanency team since April 2009. Her outstanding work with Fayette County's Golden Connections team has helped many children to reconnect with people from their pasts. It is obvious that Serretta has a passion for working with youth and she herself describes it as her "destiny."

One experience that has really stood out to Serretta while participating in Family Finding is the mobility mapping activity. Through this activity she was able to "watch the youth's imagination grow." Mobility mapping gives the child a sense of empowerment because they can "take ownership" of what they draw and "relate their history in more detail." During this activity the child will draw pictures of the homes they have lived in as well as the people they knew throughout their lives. Since this activity can bring back painful memories, Serretta encourages the youth's therapist to attend the

meeting. She is also very patient with the youth and lets them know that they can stop at any time. Most of Serretta's youth have "loved drawing and telling their story." She feels that through the process she is able to



Serretta Thompson

Serretta talks about the youth's eagerness for adoptive placements. It is very important to Serretta to make sure that these youth do not develop false hope about a relationship before a connection is established.

Although she is up front with each child it is still very common for a youth to ask that person from their past to adopt them. It has been her experience that most of the people that come forward want to be a support for these children but they are not interested in adoption or a placement right away.

Serretta feels that "the ability to connect youth with lifelong relationships is the most important part of her job." She gets to "empower them" and bring

"trustworthy" people into their lives with the use of tools like mobility mapping and file mining.

Serretta's dedication to this initiative has made an impact on the lives of many and we thank you Serretta so all that you have done for child permanency.

form a stronger bond with each of her kids. However, her favorite part of the process is what is at the core of Family Finding, seeing youth reconnect with significant people from their pasts.

When asked if she has been faced with any challenges,

"I am very honored to be in this position and believe it will lead to greater things for our children and families and Protection and Permanency as a whole."

- Serretta Thompson

DR Specialist working collaboratively to recruit resource parents

The Project MATCH staff would like to take this opportunity to recognize Diligent Recruitment Specialist, Tamra Dobson from The Lakes region. On March 20, Tamra orchestrated a recruitment activity that involved collaboration between DCBS, R&C and PCC staff members. This recruitment activity was held at, "The Real Women's Expo" which was presented by the Contemporary OB/GYN of Western Kentucky and Bristol Broadcasting. Tamra felt

that this would be "the perfect setting to get information about foster care and adoption into the hands of over 900 women".

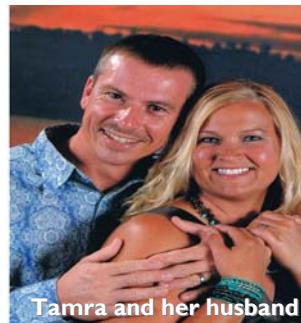
The following agencies from The Lakes region volunteered to sponsor the booth, Benchmark, DCBS, Necco and Omnivision. Each of these agencies took their turn working with Tamra to promote their agency for one hour. Every agency had the chance to distribute information that related to this region's need for foster and adoptive homes

as well as their own agency brochures, cards and information. Tamra would provide the prospective parents with information about Project MATCH at the same time.

One of the highlights of the activity was Tamra's idea to use four posters from the SNAP office, each of which showcased a child waiting to be adopted. These posters caused "much discussion" and "moved some to tears."

As a representative of Project MATCH, Tamra has done a fantastic job

demonstrating the importance of collaboration. When asked her opinion Tamra stated, "all in all this was a good day, not only for the amount of information that was shared but for the collaboration among all agencies."



Tamra and her husband

**Mix & MATCH
Meeting Purpose:**

To begin to build a shared vision on how to achieve permanency for kids in out of home care

Local Mix & MATCH groups are making a difference by:

- Targeting homes for teens
- Looking for ways to engage the Spanish speaking community
- Building partnerships with the court system
- Finding ways to improve placement decisions

Project MATCH Mix & MATCH Meetings

The project MATCH Mix & MATCH meetings are taking place in four regions: Eastern Mountain, Southern Bluegrass, Two Rivers and The Lakes—see the dates and locations below. All meetings are held from 9 a.m. to noon, local time.

The Richmond meeting still needs resource parents to attend. If you are a resource parent and are interested in attending the Richmond meeting please contact Jessica Morris at jlmull2@uky.edu or (859) 257-5345 to reserve your spot.

These meetings are a great opportunity for resource parents, DCBS staff, private agency staff and community partners to work collaboratively and share expertise, review regional data, and discuss barriers to positive outcomes for children. TRIS training credit is available for resource parents. Continuing Education credit is also available.



Bessie Centers, Melitta Banks, Sheena Halsey, Charlotte Jones and Darlene Allen listen to training at the Hazard Mix & MATCH meeting.

Lexington: Chrysalis House Community Center	July 27, 2010
Richmond: EKU Stratton Building Room 333	Aug. 3, 2010
Prestonsburg: MSU Post Secondary Building Room 131	Aug. 10, 2010
Hazard: KY River ADD office	Aug. 12, 2010
Bowling Green: Hampton Inn	June 7, 2010
Owensboro: Owensboro Police Dept. Community Room	June 29, 2010
Mayfield: Purchase ADD office	Aug. 26, 2010
Hopkinsville: Christian County Public Library	July 22, 2010

Project MATCH

Making Appropriate & Timely Connections for Children

UNDERSTANDING TARGETED RECRUITMENT

Q : What is Targeted Recruitment?

A : Targeted Recruitment efforts are strategically designed to reach certain groups of people, neighborhoods or communities who are the most likely to foster/adopt. Targeted recruitment focuses on getting the right message to the right people; yielding the highest number of families who complete the approval process and go on to receive a placement.



How to Do Targeted Recruitment:

1. **Describe the children in care:** Total number in care broken down by age, ethnicity, special needs or membership in sibling groups.
2. **Describe the current capacity:** Total number of beds broken down by acceptability criteria.
3. **Make a plan to fill in the gaps:** Identify and reach out to families who can care for the kids most in need of homes.

“Insanity: doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results.” Albert Einstein

Targeted recruitment is a new way of looking at how to find homes for children in foster care.

- Research recommends agencies focus the majority of their recruitment efforts on Targeted Recruitment.
- Recruitment is an agency wide responsibility and ALL representatives of the agency should be knowledgeable about the process of becoming a resource parent and be able to answer questions.
- Include experienced resource parents as part of the recruitment team. Current resource parents can answer questions and provide support for prospective families. Current resource parents are considered to be the best recruiters and are seen as open, credible, and honest experts on foster care/adoption.
- Recruitment efforts should be culturally sensitive and inclusive. Services provided, information and forms should be in the language of those being served.
- Current and alumni foster youth should be used in recruiting when appropriate .

TIPS FOR TARGETING RECRUITMENT EFFORTS

Partnering with Communities of Faith

- Identify existing relationships with pastors, rabbis, priests and other spiritual leaders
- Seek access through members of that congregation
- Establish the relationship between foster care/ adoption and the mission of the church
- Ask questions, do your homework and do not make assumptions
- Be prepared to educate about confidentiality, informed consent, etc.
- Find churches that seem to be a good match with the kids in care

Ways Congregations can help:

- Adoption Sunday- service set aside to raise awareness in the congregation about adoption
- Small group presentations- facts are shared about the foster care/adoption process
- Donating items to kids in foster care
- Sponsoring a child in foster care
- Placing recruitment posters and brochures in the building

PARTNERING WITH BUSINESSES

- Convince the business resource parent recruitment is worthwhile
- Clarify the need for resource parents
- Be prepared to address misperceptions about foster care/adoption
- Remind the business that working with you can enhance the image of the business in the community

Here are some examples of what you have to offer:

- Employee Retention: Businesses involved in the community are more likely to retain employees
- Increased employee morale and attendance
- Enhanced brand image
- Increased customer goodwill and loyalty
- FREE advertising

Ways businesses can help:

- Displaying posters in employees' break rooms
- Printing a story about the need for resource parents in company newsletter or through mass e-mail
- Allowing you to distribute information about becoming a resource family in paychecks or new employee materials



TAKING ON HOMES FOR TEENS

Include Experts. Have teens and their parents speak to classes and at activities for resource parents

Use respite and mentoring. Develop current resource parents by providing opportunities for licensed families to provide respite or mentor teens in care so that they can develop relationships.

Ask a teenager. Have discussions with teens about permanency and consider their input when recruiting families for teenagers.