

# The Collaboration to AdoptUsKids

## Training & Technical Assistance E-Notes

### January, 2008

#### Recruitment Works/Retention Matters

A 2006 Massachusetts's survey identified several services and supports cited by the members of the public as most likely to positively influence a future decision to adopt. These factors included:

- Access to professionals who could talk to you about the adoption process
- Opportunities to meet children in foster care who need adoptive families
- Being knowledgeable of adoption process
- Having supportive services
- Being knowledgeable of children in foster care
- Having access to post-adoption services

The study was conducted by the Center for Adoption Research at the University of Massachusetts Medical School Survey and the Massachusetts Adoption Resource Exchange (MARE). The responses described above are detailed in *Increasing Knowledge About Foster Care Adoption*, one of three policy briefs reporting the results of the survey. The other briefs are entitled *Diversity and Adoption Recruitment in Massachusetts*, and *Recruitment of Families to Adopt Children from Foster Care*. All of the reports can be found on the website of the Center for Adoption Research at <http://www.umassmed.edu/PolicyBriefs.aspx>.

#### Inter-jurisdictional Placement Services

For assistance with issues related to court jurisdiction, consult the *Court Jurisdiction and Venue for Adoption Petitions* publication on the Child Welfare Information Gateway website. This resource provides an overview of relevant legal concepts as well as procedural examples and a link to the State Statutes Search for state-specific laws.

Access the page at:

[http://www.childwelfare.gov/systemwide/laws\\_policies/statutes/jurisdiction.cfm](http://www.childwelfare.gov/systemwide/laws_policies/statutes/jurisdiction.cfm).

#### Tips & Tools

*Successes for Children and Families: It's Time to Build on What Works in Child Welfare* is a new publication from the North American Council on Adoptable Children (NACAC) highlighting programs across the country which have successfully utilized flexible funding approaches to improve outcomes for children and families.

The report identifies elements common to all of the programs as including:

- Understanding children's and families' strengths and needs and tailoring services to meet those needs
- Maintaining children's extended family and community ties
- Developing partnerships with community agencies and other child and family services systems to more effectively meet the needs of children
- Blending and integrating funding sources to provide more flexible use of resources
- Use of data to track results and be more accountable for the resources allocated.

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#### T/TA Editor's Memo

Following a national search to fill two open positions, Dixie van de Flier Davis, President and Executive Director of The Adoption Exchange, Inc., is pleased to announce the hiring of **Tava Serpan** as Vice President of The Education Center/Director of AdoptUsKids T/TA, and **Sharri Black** as Manager of the AdoptUsKids training and technical assistance program.



**Tava Serpan, MSW** will fill the position of Vice President of Education Center and AdoptUsKids Training and Technical Assistance Director beginning February 4, 2008. Tava's experiences as a Director of Residential Services for developmentally disabled children and adults, Director of Organizational Change and Innovation at the Kansas Neurological Institute, and her experiences in community planning (CHIP) bring the credentials and skills needed in

The full report is available by [clicking here](#).

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## T/TA Highlights

AdoptUsKids is partnering with Washington State to pilot a targeted recruitment project, using a market segmentation approach. The pilot involves AdoptUsKids contracting with a marketing consultant for a service to determine socio-demographic characteristics of existing successful foster and adoptive parents.

According to our T/TA consultants, Mary Brooks and Judy and John McKenzie, "marketing research can tell us by zip code where families who share characteristics of the State's successful families reside (potential target markets). In addition, it can tell us where potential foster and adoptive families shop, which media they prefer and other important demographic information." This information is being used in Washington for developing recruitment messages to appeal to targeted families, for fine-tuning their local recruitment plans and strategies and developing partnerships with businesses, agencies and churches in targeted areas. Washington was also able to refine their methodology to align zip codes of target markets with zip codes where the State's foster children lived prior to coming into care. In doing so, the State is able to establish recruitment plans that support the State's goals of placing children in their home neighborhoods and school districts.

This technical assistance project is in very early stages so it will be some time before results can be shown. However, we and the State are hopeful that this methodology will give Washington an additional tool to help them become more data-driven in their approach to targeted recruitment and enable them to track results over time.

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## Recruitment and Retention Network

*Jane met her friend, Alice, for lunch and was full of excitement. "I gained 60 pounds over the Holidays!" she said. Alice, of course, was astonished. "60 pounds? Are you sure?" she asked while staring intently at her friend. "Yes," Jane replied. "We just received our first foster child this week. She's such a good kid. We love it." "Whew! That explains it." Alice said, relief showing in her voice.*

*Would you like to gain some extra pounds now that the holidays are over? Look into foster parenting.*

This is an excerpt from a letter-to-the-editor, sent to newspapers around her State by Jan Feuer of the New Hampshire Foster & Adoptive Parent Association, an AdoptUsKids Recruitment and Response Team. The letter included instructions on where to call for information, and indeed generated calls from prospective foster parents, but is only one example of an approach to public awareness that Jan has been practicing for the last twenty years. She faithfully sends monthly letters to more than 60 New Hampshire newspapers educating readers about child abuse and neglect and the need for foster and adoptive parents.

While it is difficult to track the impact of an individual letter, Jan's experience with the RRT and previously as an employee of the State Division for Children, Youth & Families leads her to believe that the letters have been effective in educating the public about the needs of children in foster care. For more information, Jan Feuer can be reached at [jfeuer@worldpath.net](mailto:jfeuer@worldpath.net).

Please send us your stories and ideas that have shown results in recruitment, retention and interjurisdictional placements. Email your offerings to [tta@adoptex.org](mailto:tta@adoptex.org).

this position for strategic planning, change management, group facilitation and developing and implementing training programs. She has excellent background in facilitating stakeholder dialogue, consensus building and team-building. Tava will be based in the Aurora, CO offices of The Adoption Exchange, Inc.



**Sharri Black, MSW** will fill the new position of Manager of AdoptUsKids T/TA, beginning January 21, 2008. Sharri has over 28 years of experience in child welfare in both public and private settings. She is experienced in recruitment, retention and community initiatives and has developed curriculum to train foster and adoptive parents and professionals. She served as Program Manager for Adoption and faith-based programs at Spaulding in Michigan, State-wide director for Kansas's privatized adoption program and program manager for family involvement for Kansas' Systems of Care Initiative. Sharri is experienced first hand with foster care and adoption as an adoptee herself and parent of three children adopted through the foster care system. Sharri will work from her home in Kansas.

Tava and Sharri bring talents that complement the skills and expertise of our very qualified team of T/TA consultants. Our goal is to continue to deliver the best available services that can be tailored to meet each State's and Tribe's unique recruitment and retention needs.

We welcome your inquiries at [tta@adoptex.org](mailto:tta@adoptex.org) or (303) 755-4756 (The Adoption Exchange) and promise a quick response.

Best wishes for a great start to 2008!

## FYI

See and download materials developed for the new AdoptUsKids Spanish-language campaign on the Ad Council website at

<http://www.prnewswire.com/mnr/adcouncil/30974/>.

We need your opinion! We hope you will give us your feedback in an online evaluation survey which will be linked to next month's E-Notes. The survey will be quick and simple and will help us to understand how E-Notes is used and how we can improve our service to you.



## Subscribe or Forward

Please help us share E-Notes with others by forwarding this issue, or by visiting the [T/TA website](#) to access our sign-up form.

## Contact Us

For more information about AdoptUsKids Training and Technical Assistance Services, contact (303) 755-4756 or email [tta@adoptex.org](mailto:tta@adoptex.org).

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