

Title: Evidence-Based Supervisor-Team Independent Living Training; Site Visit Report

Award #: 90CW1134

Cluster: Training of Child Welfare Agency Supervisors in the Effective Delivery and Management of Federal Independent Living Service for Youth in Foster Care

Grantee: University of Louisville Research Foundation, Inc.

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Project Website: www.kentcareteam.org/tier3/independentliving.htm

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SUMMARY

A new curriculum for Kentucky's child welfare supervisors and workers is designed to enhance their knowledge and skills in their work with youth aging out of the child welfare system. The curriculum, "Time Is Ticking: Tools for Transitioning Youth," was developed by the Kent School of Social Work at the University of Louisville to address the needs of the 300 to 400 Kentucky youth who age out of foster care each year. These youth have special needs related to crisis management, relationship formation, education, employment, housing, and other basic functions of daily living.

The curriculum is based on a literature review of evidence-based practices as well as input received from an advisory board and from focus groups with youth, foster parents, workers, supervisors, private providers, and community partners. The modules of the curriculum focus on four core elements:

- Youth development
- Cultural competency
- Permanent connections
- Collaboration

Training with the curriculum is delivered over 2 days to supervisors and their workers, with an additional half day of training for supervisors. To date, the program has provided training sessions statewide to supervisors and workers in the Kentucky Cabinet for Health and Family Services (CHFS); community partners from the mental health, substance abuse, and education fields; and private providers and foster parents. The partners' involvement in the training encouraged cross-system collaboration and helped participants make connections in their community and across the State.

In addition to trainings offered in seven of the nine regions in the State, the program held a statewide Youth Summit titled "Climbing Mount O.L.Y.M.P.U.S." (Offering Louisville Youth Meaningful Participation through Unified Services). Workshops at the summit presented the curriculum's four modules, with additional workshops for those who had already attended the training. Several activities held during the summit focused on creating a shared youth vision in Kentucky by identifying ways to strengthen coordination, communication, and collaboration among youth-serving agencies.

More than 550 people have completed the training, including 200 participants in the statewide summit and 60 participants in "train the trainer" sessions to prepare them to deliver the training in their communities. Preliminary results from satisfaction surveys and pre- and posttest surveys indicate improvements in the knowledge and skills of

participants. The CHFS plans to continue delivering the curriculum to supervisors, workers, and foster parents. Program staff also plan to enhance the curriculum with a syllabus, readings, and exercises so it may be eligible for M.S.S.W. education credits.

Four free courses developed by the project are now available to the public. Topics include "Dating Violence," "Motivational Interviewing," "Mentoring," and "Reconnecting With Birth Parents." Visit the program's website to view the courses:

<http://cwte.louisville.edu/IL/home/ilmodules.htm>.

Reprinted from *Children's Bureau Express*, "Site Visit: Training on Transitioning Youth" (<http://cbexpress.acf.hhs.gov/>).

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Abstract (*adapted from the online Compendium of ACYF Funded Programs*)

The team at the University of Louisville will develop a training that will initially reach 30 supervisors and their teams of caseworkers (n = 300) in a classroom setting and subsequently back in the field, using face-to-face training reinforcement sessions and web-based training sessions to ensure the development of new coaching and mentoring skills of the supervisors as they work with their teams to, in turn, coach and mentor youth as they transition out of foster care. The evaluation of the initial training will provide the needed information on the efficacy of the training so that changes can be made before the training is disseminated to the entire Kentucky ongoing and foster care workforce, including 100 additional supervisors and 1,000 additional caseworkers. This training model builds on past training grants focused on supervisors and other strong Kentucky supervisory training.

The Raymond A. Kent School of Social Work was founded in 1918 and, for almost 70 years, has maintained a close working relationship with the practice community and the region's human service needs. The school has a long-standing partnership with the Kentucky Cabinet for Health and Family Services of developing, implementing, and evaluating child welfare training to enhance the professional development of child welfare staff.

Need for This Service (*adapted from information and materials provided by the grantee during and following the site visit and from information included in the Program Announcement*)

Youth represent approximately 30 percent of the nation's foster care population, with approximately 20,000 young people aging out of the foster care system each year. All too often, these youth have no permanent connections, little employment history or stability, lack of a high school diploma or GED, and an overall lack of independent living (IL) skills. Given these facts, these young people face numerous challenges, including crime (as victims or as perpetrators), homelessness, early parenthood, juvenile prostitution, mental and physical health issues, drug/alcohol abuse, and poor social support systems.

In Kentucky, there are approximately 2,000 youth between the ages of 16 and 21 years who are receiving or are likely to need IL services. Sixty-one percent of those youth are reported to have at least one disability, many are functioning below grade level, and 49 percent require an individualized education plan. Three hundred to four hundred of them will age out of foster care each year. As is true across the nation, lack of daily living skills, lack of a good education, lack of employability, histories of unstable placements, and, perhaps, delinquency often put these youth at high risk of a number of immediate and long-term negative outcomes as they transition from the child welfare system to the adult world. They are more likely than youth who have not experienced foster care to have severe emotional and behavioral problems, which makes them vulnerable to entering other systems of care, such as health, mental health, welfare, and criminal justice.

This information shows that youth transitioning to independence have very distinct and special needs. They must learn skills related to crisis management, relationship formation, education, employment, housing, and other basic functions of daily living. Supervisors and staff working with them must develop specialized skills and an understanding of the needs of these youth in order to help them acquire the needed competencies.

Goals of Project *(adapted from information and materials provided by the grantee during and following the site visit)*

The major goal of the grant is to train providers, including child welfare supervisors, caseworkers, IL coordinators, resource parents, private providers, and community partners in how to best prepare and support foster youth as they transition from the child welfare system to independent/interdependent living.

SITE VISIT HIGHLIGHTS

The site visitor had the opportunity to participate in the Louisville Youth Summit entitled Climbing Mount O.L.Y.M.P.U.S. (Offering Louisville Youth Meaningful Preparation through Unified Services) on September 10 - 11, 2008. The 2-day conference was held at the university's Papa John Cardinal Football Stadium. It was clear that spending time at the stadium and getting to explore the press boxes and other areas was a special perk to conference attendees.

Plenary sessions were held in a large room, long and slim, with a continental breakfast laid out at each end in the mornings and box lunches at noon. The room was furnished with three rows of 11 round tables set up to accommodate eight people each. Small and colorful potted mums surrounded by Hershey's kisses were in the center of each table.

The tables faced a podium and projector screen with the following message displayed throughout the 2 days except when PowerPoint presentations were being made:

Louisville Youth Summit '08

Climbing Mount O.L.Y.M.P.U.S.

(Offering Louisville Youth Meaningful Preparation through Unified Services)

Building a safety net for foster youth as they transition to independent living.

Jamie Lee Evans and four youth from the Y.O.U.T.H. Training Project at San Francisco State University provided onsite support at the conference, presenting a keynote address and facilitating a number of breakout sessions. They also brought the Museum of Lost Childhoods and the Museum of Youth Empowerment with them. These were set up across the back of the room where conference participants could – and did – view them throughout the 2-day conference. Dottie Ansell and Peter Correia of the National Resource Center for Youth Development also were present and delivered a keynote address, as well as facilitating breakout sessions.

The four modules of the “Tools for Transitioning Youth” curriculum were offered as workshops over the course of the 2 days, targeting conference participants who had not taken the training. Additional workshops targeted those from the State child welfare agency and the private providers who had gone through the training and were designed to enhance the knowledge they had already gained. The second day of the conference was devoted to educating community partners, some from across the State, but most from Jefferson County (where Louisville is located) and the surrounding counties, about how to build a network to support youth in foster care and those aging out of foster care. Following is a detailed description of the conference:

- The first day began with welcome addresses from representatives of the university. The Director of Community Relations spoke of how his job title had changed to Director of Community Engagement to reflect the focus on engaging university faculty, staff, and students in their communities. Providing community services related to their major will soon be a requirement for students to obtain a Bachelor’s Degree from the university. The Signature Partnership Initiative (SPI) was discussed as one example of the university’s community involvement. SPI is a university-wide project working with community partners to help improve the quality of life for residents of West Louisville. The primary focus is to improve the educational attainment levels of residents of that community with an emphasis on eliminating disparities in health, economic, and social status. Participants were reminded that other schools within the university (other than the School of Social Work) can be a resource to child welfare caseworkers and were encouraged to take advantage of those resources. Finally, the Associate Dean for Research, Dr. Riaan van Zyl, at the Kent School of Social Work talked about the Federal grant that had funded the Supervisor-Team Independent Living Training and the Youth Summit.
- The Director of the City Office on Youth Development brought greetings from the Mayor and spoke of how, as functional adults, we have a responsibility to make sure that every youth in our communities has the same chance to make it that we had. He also presented a Mayoral Proclamation recognizing the day as “Youth Summit Day in Louisville.”
- The welcoming speeches were followed by a keynote address delivered by Jamie Lee Evans, Director of the Y.O.U.T.H. Training Project at San Francisco State University, and a panel of four of the former foster youth working in that project. One of the youth described the project and how it started with the premise that youth are an important resource in training staff. From that premise, the project has become a real-life example of positive youth development in action. All of the youth spoke of how invaluable it has been to them to have the

- opportunity to be a part of the project and to train child welfare staff. It gives them continuity and a sense of belonging that foster youth seldom have, and it helps them to understand the constraints the staff are working under.
- The panelists had been asked to address three questions:
 - What has being a part of the project meant to you?
 - Why is it important to listen to youth?
 - What are your best memories in the Y.O.U.T.H. Training Project?
 - *What has being a part of the Project meant to you?*
 - I used to be very quiet and withdrawn. Now I speak up loud and clear because I know I have important things to say.
 - Being in the project to me has meant being heard, which is very important. Most of the time people listen, but they don't really hear. The project has also provided validation of my experiences in foster care. Having a real peer group helps with healing. You learn that there are other people like you. "Your parents dumpster dived for food too? WOW!"
 - It has helped me to interact with people, to build healthy relationships with adults and peers. It has given me a lot of self-confidence.
 - The project has given me the opportunity to build my political platform. It has taught me to go into a sensitive part of me and find empathy for others. Now I get to understand the difficulties and challenges of the social workers.
 - *Why is it important to listen to youth?*
 - In the social work industry, the youth is the customer. It is important to determine what the customer wants and needs.
 - It is very important to feel that others are really listening to you, that you are really being heard. It makes you feel like they care.
 - When workers get better educated by youth about youth, they do a better job for youth.
 - *What are your best memories in the Y.O.U.T.H. Training Project?*
 - My best memory is the time a social worker came up to me after a training and said, "I really heard you. I took notes and will take your message back for staff to hear too."
 - I have aged out of the project, but they keep inviting me back for special projects. The associations I have developed through my work on the project have lent a level of continuity to my life that foster children don't usually have.
 - The Project Director then shared the following:
 - If we want social workers to take a strengths-based approach with youth, we need to take a strengths-based approach with social workers.
 - Understanding the role of grief and loss in the lives of foster youth helps us to take a strengths-based approach in working with them. Grief and loss in youth are expressed in behavior, not in words. When we are taken from all we know and love, it is like someone died. Mourning must take place.
 - She spoke of how she has benefited from her work with the youth. "It goes both ways. For 8 years we've been able to have ongoing relationships with each other. For foster youth, that is healing. Consistency has been missing in their lives. We do therapeutic, supportive, healing work with each other. That is an unintended but very important consequence of this work."

- She also called the participants' attention to the Museums of Lost Childhoods and the Museum of Youth Empowerment in the back of the room, explaining how youth in California had contributed actual artifacts from their own lives, making the museums reflective of true experiences of foster care. Kentucky youth have now contributed to the museums as well.
- The presentation by the panel from the Y.O.U.T.H. Training Project was followed by a Kentucky Youth Panel presentation. Three former foster youth shared their experiences of abuse and lack of continuity while in foster care. They then shared their successes as examples of the resiliency that can result from a positive youth development approach. When asked by the audience to give the characteristics of a good child welfare caseworker, they listed the following:
 - Always there when you need them
 - Encourages you and believes in you
 - Someone who can understand their client and touch base with them
 - Able to talk with them
 - Goes out of their way to make you feel important
 - Interested in your life
 - Someone who comes through for you
- Before lunch, a former foster youth who is an aspiring comedian gave a brief standup routine about the foster care system and being a part of that system, which was followed by a presentation on "Race, Community and the Child Welfare System."
- The afternoon of the first day was devoted to three concurrent workshops: "Time is Ticking, Tools for Transitioning Youth," a module from the curriculum developed by the project; "Cultural Competence and Youth Development; Working with Youth Who Workers Find Most Challenging;" and "Youth With Mental Health Needs."
- The site visitor participated in the workshop on "Working with Challenging Youth," which was facilitated by two members of the Y.O.U.T.H. Training Project team. The curriculum for the workshop had been written entirely by youth ages 16 to 25 years of age. It began with a board game, "One Step Forward, Ten Steps Backward." Participants were divided into small work groups. Each group was given a game board and pieces, and members were assigned the roles of the youth, the agency caseworker, the residential caseworker, the CASA, the group home staff representative, and the probation officer. Any additional group members were assigned the role of observers. Participants took turns rolling the dice and moving to spaces on the game board which represented various case planning decisions made on behalf of youth. The youth was present but was not allowed to speak. He/she was only allowed to move the game piece after other players had rolled the dice. The other members of the group developed the case plan for the youth based on the squares the game piece landed on (i.e. "Youth got in fight in dorm," "Youth refused to go to school today. "). The game was followed by a debriefing with extensive discussion of how it felt to be the youth with all the planning going on around him/her.
- Facilitators then showed and led a discussion of a digital story of a former foster youth using technology to tell her story. The workshop ended with an "Understand Me Entirely Exercise" which explored the four domains of successful youth development (belonging, usefulness, power, and competence) and looked at and discussed those domains in the life of a foster child.

- The second day of training, which fell on September 11, was opened with a moment of silence in memory of those who lost their lives on 9/11, followed by greetings from a representative of Congressman John Yarmuth and from the Dean of Kent School of Social Work, Dr. Terry L. Singer.
- Next was a keynote address by representatives of the National Resource Center for Youth Development who presented on the goals of the Center and on the four core principles on which it operates: positive youth development, permanent connections, cultural competence, and collaboration. They also discussed the Chafee Program and the fact that States can now legitimately provide services to youth aged 18 to 21 and are required to involve youth in any planning that will affect them.
- The address also included information on the Shared Youth Vision, “an alternative energy source in youth development.” In recognition of the fact that young people who are transitioning out of the child welfare system need all the supports available at the Federal, State, and local levels, Shared Youth Vision started in the Department of Labor. Federal partnerships then expanded to include the following U.S. departments and agencies:
 - Agriculture
 - Education
 - Health and Human Services
 - Housing and Urban Development
 - Justice
 - Labor
 - Transportation
 - Social Security Administration
 - Corporation for National and Community Services
- These departments have pooled resources to set up technical assistance and a support strategy in the areas of planning grants, a solutions desk, individualized technical assistance, and tools and resources. Cross-agency issues and barriers at the local area in Shared Youth Vision States can be referred through <http://www.nrcys.ou.edu/yd/solutionsdesk> and will be addressed by Federal agencies within a short period of time, thus providing State teams a single point of access to Federal information and resources available to assist States in implementing Shared Youth Vision activities.
- The address ended with the observation that a Shared Youth Vision hasn’t happened in Kentucky yet and the question, “How do we make it happen here?”
- The keynote was followed by workshops on “Time is Ticking, Tools for Transitioning Youth: Helping Youth Develop Healthy Relationships,” and on “Preparation for Collaboration.” The site visitor participated in the session on collaboration where the group was divided into multidisciplinary teams and asked to share with each other information about their agencies and the services and resources available to youth. Then each group shared with the full group two things they had not known about their sister agencies and organizations prior to this exercise. Presenters shared the following realizations from this exercise:
 - We all deal with a common population.
 - Young adults have come back to all of us. What are the resources to serve them?
 - We need to be helping each other to access resources that already exist.
- Workshop facilitators then asked the participants to identify those things their organizations do well for youth, turning the workshop into a large facilitated

networking session targeted toward building a Shared Youth Vision. The groups identified the multiple coalitions and collaborations already in place and concluded that Louisville has a good collaborative atmosphere. People really do want to work together but need to communicate more. The university committed to developing a resource list and an attendee list and sending it out to all conference participants so the contacts made during the workshop would not be lost.

- During lunch there was a panel presentation on “Mentoring Opportunities,” with presenters emphasizing the fact that mentoring is not just about what you do for the mentee, it also is about what the mentee and the experience of being a mentor does for you.
- The final workgroups of the day were devoted to building a stronger network for youth transitioning from foster care. A “World Café” approach was used to address the topic of Building a Stronger Network for Youth Transitioning from Foster Care. The session began by identifying the agencies, individuals, and organizations represented in the group, which included:
 - Peer mentors and adult mentors
 - Former foster youth
 - Family preservation staff
 - Foster parents
 - Substance abuse staff
 - Mental health staff
 - Independent Living Coordinators
 - Office of Youth Development staff
 - Group home staff
 - Frontline caseworkers
 - Child welfare supervisors
 - Private providers
 - Youth advocates
 - Juvenile Justice staff
 - Metro government representatives
 - Community organizers
- The group was then broken down into small multidisciplinary teams and assigned to work tables. Sheets of newsprint and magic markers covered the tables. Groups were asked to spend 10 minutes identifying the barriers to building a Shared Youth Vision and building a safety net for youth in this community and to write those barriers down on the newsprint. The groups reported on the following barriers they had identified:
 - Lack of resources
 - Dysfunctional families
 - Agency agendas
 - Legal system
 - Not listening to youth
 - People not wanting services in their communities
 - Racism and all the other –isms
 - Lack of awareness of resources
 - Lack of health care
 - Substance abuse
 - Lack of staff commitment
 - Lack of collaboration and communication
 - Negative attitudes toward foster care

- Lack of transportation
- Lack of education
- Dropouts
- Lack of cultural sensitivity
- Overworked professionals
- Lack of accountability
- Policies
- Community attitudes
- Labeling youth and putting them in little boxes they can't get out of
- No support in legislation
- The groups were then asked to spend 10 minutes thinking of and discussing solutions to these barriers. What are the opportunities to create a Shared Youth Vision and to make a safety net for youth happen? Their responses included:
 - Include and talk to the youth more
 - Lobby for legislative changes
 - Find flexible resources
 - Provide incentives for youth involvement
 - Get word out to youth about what is available
 - Support the workforce
 - Get executives involved
 - Increase communication in communities (TV, radio)
 - Individualize plans for youth, not cookie cutters
 - Educate the public about foster youth and what their needs are
 - Value staff
 - Get more private funding
 - Network to help youth after they have aged out of the foster care system
 - More caseworkers and resources
 - More openness with community partners
 - Free or reduced cost transportation for youth
 - Social supports
 - Long-term prevention
- Next the groups were asked to identify four priorities from the list of solutions, things to work on right away. They identified:
 - Increase resources and support
 - Increase collaboration among organizations
 - Reduce stigma and improve community attitudes toward foster care
 - Support the workforce through education, training, and funding

LESSONS LEARNED

Unique and Innovative Features *(adapted from information and materials provided by the grantee during and after the site visit)*

- This 2 and a half day curriculum is designed to train supervisors and their teams of caseworkers together in a classroom setting for the last 2 days. The first half-day is for the supervisors only.
- The multidisciplinary aspect of this training was unique. Recognizing the lack of collaboration among the agencies and organizations working on behalf of youth, the grantee opened the training to community partners from mental health,

substance abuse treatment, and education as well as to Recruitment and Certification specialists within the Cabinet, private providers, and foster parents. The private providers, especially, were enthusiastic about the training and were strong supporters from the beginning, sending many supervisors and caseworkers to participate. This was a positive outcome since half of the children in out-of-home care in Kentucky are cared for by private providers.

Challenges *(adapted from information and materials provided by the grantee during and after the site visit)*

- Getting supervisors and their teams from the public child welfare agency to sign up for the training was a challenge, partly due to the fact that the previous administration did not value the training and partly due to increased caseload sizes across the State. This fact, plus the grantee's recognition of the need for more collaboration across groups of supervisors, caseworkers, private providers, Independent Living Coordinators, specialists, foster parents, and youth resulted in their opening the training to each of those groups who touch the lives of youth in the foster care system.

Successful Strategies and Keys to Success *(adapted from information and materials provided by the grantee during and following the site visit)*

- Based on information gathered during the focus groups, the grantee decided to have youth present their stories during the training. Feedback from training participants highlighted the importance of the youth voice in this type of training. The grantee's belief in the importance of the youth voice was strengthened when they connected with the Y.O.U.T.H. (Youth Offering Unique Tangible Help) Training Project at San Francisco State University, another grantee in this cluster.
- Conferences such as the Youth Summit are an excellent and effective way of bringing people who would otherwise not participate in training to the table.
- It is important to engage public child welfare leadership early on in projects such as this one so they will be supportive and encourage their employees to attend.
- Engaging other community partners who touch the lives of foster youth in this training and in strategically addressing the needs of those youth was an important step in building a Shared Youth Vision.
- Through the focus groups and feedback during earlier training, the grantee had learned that a major issue in Kentucky was the lack of collaboration among those working on behalf of foster youth, including representatives from R&C teams, private providers, foster parents, and even the youth, as well as with other community partners from mental health, substance abuse treatment, and education. Consequently, they decided to expand the training to include all of those groups among its participants. This multidisciplinary approach culminated in the Youth Summit, a 2-day conference, which included representatives from all of these groups. It also opened the door for beginning a Shared Youth Vision for Jefferson County (where Louisville is located) and perhaps for the State.

OUTCOMES

Summary of Activities and Accomplishments *(adapted from information and materials provided by the grantee during and after the visit)*

- **Literature Review:** Project staff conducted an Evidence-Based Practice search of the independent living (IL) literature to help inform the curriculum. They also conducted a content analysis of all existing IL curricula from the twelve previous Children's Bureau Grants and from the Kentucky Training Department for the same purpose.
- **Focus Groups:** Early in the life of the grant, project staff conducted eight focus groups with youth, foster parents, caseworkers, supervisors, private providers, and community partners to help inform the curriculum development. They later presented the data gathered during those focus groups at a national professional social work conference.
- **Advisory Board:** The project formed an Advisory Board that met five times during the course of the grant to give guidance. The board reviewed the curricula and helped in the revision process, helped develop a strategic plan for recruitment of training participants, helped recruit participants, and helped evaluate the process.
- **The Curriculum:** The IL curriculum, "Time is Ticking: Tools for Transitioning Youth," is a 2 and a half day training (2 days for teams of supervisors and caseworkers together and a half-day for supervisors) geared toward professionals in social work who are working with youth who are aging out of the child welfare system and transitioning to independence. It addresses the workforce needs of child welfare supervisors and their teams of caseworkers by focusing on the four core elements of youth development, cultural competency, permanency connections, and collaboration, using a classroom and web-based setting to provide the trainees with tools to ensure that the skills learned become a regular part of their practice as they work with the youth as they prepare to transition out of foster care. Youth presenters bring the youth voice to the training. While the curriculum was originally developed for child welfare supervisors in the Department for Community Based Services of the Kentucky Cabinet for Health and Family Services (CHFS), Division of Protection and Permanency, and their teams, it was later modified for private providers and for foster parents.
- **The Training:** The project, which had projected training 330 people, provided the training in seven of the nine regions of the State and actually reached a total of 550 people. Those receiving the formal 2 and a half day training included 300 supervisors, front line staff, foster parents, and private providers. An additional 60 supervisors, specialists, and trainers participated in the Training of Trainers sessions. Then 200 people received training at the 2-day conference, Climbing Mount O.L.Y.M.P.U.S. Those participants included 27 Cabinet supervisors/clinicians, 30 Cabinet front line caseworkers, five foster parents, 10 IL Coordinators, 43 private providers, 58 community partners, and 27 academics.
- **Web-Based Training:** The project also developed four online refresher courses, which offer a Certificate of Completion to those who successfully complete them. Located at <http://cwte.louisville.edu/IL/home/ilmodules.htm>, these courses are free and available to anyone. The modules include Dating Violence, Motivational Interviewing, Mentoring, and Reconnecting with Birth Parents.
- **Youth Summit:** During its final year, the project sponsored a statewide Youth Summit, a 2-day conference entitled Climbing Mount O.L.Y.M.P.U.S. (Offering

Louisville Youth Meaningful Preparation thru Unified Services). This conference, which was an effort to reach a broader segment of the child welfare community, targeted child welfare supervisors, caseworkers, IL coordinators, resource parents, private providers, and community partners from across the State and was attended by 200 people over the 2 days, with a core group of 170 in attendance both days. The conference included training modules from the curriculum developed through the grant. New modules were added for those who had already participated in the training. Several keynote speakers, including representatives from the National Resource Center on Youth Development and a team of former foster youth who are a part of the Y.O.U.T.H. Training Project at San Francisco State University, addressed participants during plenary sessions.

Evaluation *(adapted from information and materials provided by the grantee during and after the visit)*

Evaluation consisted of a Satisfaction Survey and a pre- and posttest. The Satisfaction Survey measured helpfulness and practicality of materials, exercises, and lecture; participants' belief that they increased their knowledge in this area; likelihood that they will apply the knowledge they learned; importance of the training; and level of the training (too difficult, too easy, just right). Preliminary evaluation findings are promising, indicating that learning does occur during the 2 and a half day training. In addition, scores on building trusting relationships improve over time as a result of the training as does willingness to collaborate.

Dissemination *(adapted from information and materials provided by the grantee during and after the visit)*

- The entire curriculum and refresher courses have been published on the web. Project staff plan to write up the focus group data and the evaluation findings for publication.
- The Youth Summit disseminated information about the training throughout the State of Kentucky. The presence of the youth trainers and the Project Director from the Y.O.U.T.H. Training Project at San Francisco State University ensured that information about this project would reach California.
- The grantee plans to give the curricula and other information developed through the grant to Child Welfare Information Gateway and to the National Resource Center on Youth Development for national distribution.
- The Principal Investigator for the grant coauthored an article entitled "Promoting Interdependent Living Skills for Youth Aging Out of Care through Healthy Relationships: A Child Welfare Practice Framework," for publication in the journal *Families in Society*.
- The Principal Investigator and Co-Principal Investigator edited a special issue of the journal of the American Public Human Services Association, National Staff Development and Training Association, *Training and Evaluation in Human Services*, which included an introductory article coauthored with Pam Johnson, the Federal Project Officer for the grants, an article reviewing the previous 12 grant projects on independent living, an article on the evaluation of the previous 12 grant projects on independent living, six articles from each of the grantees in the current IL grant cluster, and a final article on the cross site evaluation conducted by James Bell Associates, Inc. This journal will be available online to

National Staff Development and Training Association members, hard copies will be available soon to the grantees so that they can disseminate them, 100 hard copies will be available for a conference in May focused on youth workers, several hundred hard copies will be available for the Pathways youth conference in June, and another special issue will come out next Fall, which will include these articles and several additional articles in *The Journal of Child and Youth Care Work*.

Sustainability (*adapted from information and materials provided by the grantee during and after the visit*)

- The Training Division of CHFS, of which the Division of Protection and Permanency is a part, will continue to train supervisors and their teams using the curriculum developed through this grant.
- Project staff will enhance the curriculum, adding a syllabus, readings, and exercises, so that the training can become a Credit for Learning course and attendees can get M.S.W. credits for completing it.
- University faculty will continue to work with local leaders and work to engage more State leaders to build a Shared Youth Vision in Jefferson County and hopefully in the State.
- The grantee conducted Training of Trainer sessions for Recruitment and Certification supervisors to enable them to train foster parents. They also conducted Training of Trainer sessions for IL Coordinators so they would be prepared to train youth in the curriculum "Love U 2" on building and maintaining healthy relationships and avoiding violent and other unhealthy relationships.
- Project staff plan to write additional grant applications in order to build on the accomplishments of this grant.

ATTACHMENTS

- The Museums of Lost Childhoods and of Foster Youth Empowerment
- The Shared Youth Vision
- The Four Core Principles for Adolescent Transitional Living Programs

The Museum of Lost Childhoods and The Museum of Foster Youth Empowerment

Conceived by foster youth and former foster youth working in the Y.O.U.T.H. Training Project at San Francisco State University, the Museums of Lost Childhoods and of Foster Youth Empowerment are collections of artifacts of foster youth culture, many of which were actual items from former foster youth's lives, contributed to the museum in the hope of making an impact on the child welfare system. They are exhibited on clear plastic risers or in cases and placed on tables that are draped in black cloth. Each item is accompanied by a description of the item in the context of foster care and the experience of the person who contributed it.

Participants first come to the Museum of Lost Childhoods, which is introduced by the following statement, displayed on an easel at the head of the table on which the artifacts are displayed:

Childhood years are most influential for a person's cognitive, social and emotional development. There are teachable moments in learning to ride one's first bike, in being read a story at bedtime, in celebrating a birthday with family. The Y.O.U.T.H. Training Project reminds us that these and countless other teachable moments are just that, moments – glimpses of time where the present affects the future. The Museum of Lost Childhoods, conceived by members of the Y.O.U.T.H Training Project, offers a starkly contrasting look into childhoods where developmental moments were in essence lost, and replaced with the memories laid out before you.

The memorabilia displayed on the table include the following and many similar items:

- A box of the powdered milk provided by the foster parents who refused to purchase "real milk" because it was more expensive.
- Motel soaps and shampoos from which group home residents had to choose two items at a time for personal hygiene use.
- Multiple prescription bottles to represent the overmedication of so many foster youth.
- Liquor bottles and drug paraphernalia to represent the substance abuse so many foster children and youth resort to in order to escape from their pain.
- A baby book in which nothing had been entered except the baby's name.
- The toothbrush given to an African American youth to use as a hairbrush by group home staff when the youth's brush was lost because "Black hairbrushes were not available".
- The unsightly hospital gown that was almost transparent from age and wear that had been issued to a youth in an in-patient mental health facility for 24 hour wear.
- Dental floss to represent the lack of attention to dental hygiene for foster children and the resulting serious dental problems that so many of them develop.

Then one comes to the Museum of Foster Youth Empowerment, introduced by the following statement:

In contrast to the Museum of Lost Childhoods, we present the Museum of Foster Youth Empowerment. Presented here are examples of the many forms of success of foster youth and the multitude of people which are a part of that process. Ultimately this museum exists as a testament to the unwavering perseverance, strength, and amazing spirits of foster youth who have become empowered in their own lives and who strive to create change for others.

The artifacts on this table reflect the resiliency of so many foster youth and the beneficial impact on their lives of a positive youth development approach in child welfare. They include such items as:

- Examples of one youth's journaling, her method of lending voice to her feelings, experiences, and choices.
- High school diplomas and GED certificates of foster youth.
- Pictures of a former foster youth with her young daughter, an obviously healthy and happy child of approximately two years of age.
- The business cards of former foster youth now working in the human services and other professional fields.
- College diplomas and graduation pictures of former foster youth who have obtained their undergraduate and their graduate degrees.
- Community service award certificates reflective of the very significant contributions youth are making to their communities.
- Y.O.U.T.H Training Project awards presented to youth trainers.
- Y.O.U.T.H. Trainers – pictures of youth trainers in action.
- Youth advocates (former foster youth) meeting with Gov. Schwarzenegger and members of the California General Assembly to advocate for foster care reform.

The Shared Youth Vision

In 2003 the White House Task Force Report on Disadvantaged Youth noted that despite billions of public and private dollars spent on services to youth, many of the neediest youth were still being left behind. The report cited a lack of communication, coordination, and collaboration among federal agencies that provide services to youth, especially the country's neediest youth. In response to the White House Task Force Report, a Federal Partnership was formed to develop more effective interagency collaborations to better serve targeted youth populations with priority given to serving the neediest youth.

What federal agencies make up the Federal Partnership?

The Shared Youth Vision Federal Partnership includes the following agencies:

- U.S. Department of Education
- U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
- U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
- U.S. Department of Justice
- U.S. Department of Labor
- U.S. Social Security Administration
- U.S. Department of Transportation
- Corporation for National and Community Service

What is the mission of the Federal Partnership?

The mission of the Shared Youth Vision Partnership is to serve as a catalyst at the national, state, and local levels to strengthen coordination, communication, and collaboration among youth-serving agencies to support the neediest youth and their healthy transition to successful adult roles and responsibilities.

Who are the neediest youth?

The White House Task Force Report identified the following as the neediest youth:

- Children of incarcerated parents
- Court-involved youth
- Youth at risk of court involvement
- Homeless and runaway youth
- Migrant youth
- Out-of-school youth
- Youth most at risk of dropping out
- Youth in or aging out of foster care

The Federal Partnership later expanded the definition of neediest youth to also include:

- American Indian and Alaska Native youth
- Youth with disabilities

What does the Federal Partnership do to accomplish its mission?

The Federal Partnership engages in the following activities to strengthen coordination, communication, and collaboration among youth-serving agencies:

- Develop, create, and initiate collaborative approaches to prepare the nation's neediest youth for success in a global, demand-driven economy

- Communicate the Shared Youth Vision to States and local workforce system providers and other youth-serving agencies across the nation
- Engage the support of state and tribal leadership
- Facilitate the alignment of program, policies, and funds
- Leverage resources and promote outreach to recruit additional partners to connect the neediest youth to quality secondary and post-secondary educational opportunities and high-growth and other employment opportunities
- Provide tools and activities to support state and local Shared Youth Vision efforts

How is the Shared Youth Vision initiative implemented at the state, tribal, and local levels?

The Shared Youth Vision calls upon the youth service system at all levels to work collaboratively in designing and coordinating programs focused on serving the neediest youth. States, tribal governments, and local areas all play a critical role in the outcomes of youth served through their programs. Youth serving systems and organizations can implement their Shared Youth Vision initiative by working together to:

- Conduct an analysis to gather data on the neediest youth; identifying gaps in existing services and infrastructures
- Target services to the neediest youth
- Develop strategic plans and coordination initiatives at all levels to better serve the neediest youth
- Build partnerships and engage economic development agencies, business and industry associations, community-based and faith based organizations in the development and implementation of collaborative vision activities

How do youth serving agencies, youth, and communities benefit by implementing a Shared Youth Vision?

By collaborating in designing and coordinating programs focused on serving the neediest youth, all youth service organizations, youth, and communities benefit through:

- Better use of resources
- Better outcomes for programs
- Better futures for the youth and the economy

What resources are available for the Shared Youth Vision?

The following resources are available at www.doleta.gov/ryf:

- Shared Youth Vision Overview
 - Shared Youth Vision PowerPoint Presentation that can be adapted for State, Tribe, and local use
 - Training and Employment Guidance Letter (TEGL) 28-05
 - Executive Summary: White House Task Force Report on Disadvantaged Youth
 - Federal Funding Matrix
 - Shared Youth Vision Assessment Tool
 - Shared Youth Vision Indicators
 - Workforce Investment Area (WIA) State Planning Guidance Training
 - Key Federal Partners Contact List
 - Contact List for Regional and State Representatives
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Shared Youth Vision: Federal Partnership Activities

- 2004 Regional Youth Forums
- 2006 Advanced Level State Forums
- 2007 Regional Dialogue Meetings
- Shared Youth Vision Pilot Projects
- 2007-08 Analysis of Federal Partnership and State Pilot Team Activities
- Technical Assistance Initiatives for States:
 - Solutions desk
 - Webinars
 - “Community of Practice” State Conference Calls

For additional information on the Shared Youth Vision, Please contact your Regional or State representative or the Federal Partnership at youthfed.team@dol.gov or visit the Shared Youth Vision web site at <http://www.doleta.gov/ryf/>.

**National
Child Welfare
Resource
Center for Youth
Development**

A service of DHHS Children's Bureau

The Four Core Principles for Adolescent Transitional Living Programs

Youth Development: There is a range of life skills youth need to learn in order to function independently, especially in the areas of education, employment, housing, relationship formation, and service acquisition. They must also be trained to recognize and respond to crises that place them at risk after emancipation. Another key component of youth development is the involvement of youth in the decision-making for their case. Youth need to be empowered to make these types of decisions so that they feel equipped to do so after emancipation.

Collaboration: Collaboration refers to the need for child welfare teams to seek community involvement in the life of the youth. This community involvement creates linkages that can assist youth after their emancipation and may provide them with job and mentoring opportunities. Child welfare supervisors and their teams need training in techniques such as family team meetings, which bring together multiple family members, friends/acquaintances, and professional helpers, both intra- and inter-agency partners.

Cultural Competence: our understanding of cultural competence is constantly evolving as cultures change. Given the overrepresentation of children of color in the child welfare system, supervisors and workers must have an adequate understanding of youth strengths and needs related to culture. Since the youth who are transitioning out of foster care are not a homogenous group, there is a need for culturally sensitive and individualized interventions. One strategy to encourage ethnic identity in the emancipation process is the use of "rites of passage" that are common to many ethnic groups.

Permanent Connections: This final core principle relates to the need for youth transitioning to independence to learn skills and have the opportunity to form healthy family, social, and professional relationships. It underscores the importance of involving as many family and friends as possible in the casework process and transition to independence. Youth must be given the opportunity to explore their feelings about past family relationships and consider relationships they want to form in the future. Transitioning youth have been exposed to poor role models of relationship initiation, maintenance, and dissolution through their families of origin and often in their foster homes. They need additional training and modeling of how to identify appropriate romantic and friendship partners, how to initiate romantic relationships and friendships, how to discern compatibility with others, how to maintain close relationships and how to

dissolve close relationships properly and safely when necessary. They also need the assistance of their child welfare worker to establish any necessary helping relationships to support them following emancipation.