

National Foster Care Month 2015

GET TO KNOW THE MANY FACES OF FOSTER CARE

**WEBINAR:
“SUCCESSSES AND CHALLENGES OF TRANSITIONING YOUTH
FROM CONGREGATE CARE”**

BIOS:

Tom Zimm

Tom is the clinical coordinator at Hephzibah Children’s Association, based in Oak Park, IL. He has two decades of experience working in a range of capacities with children impacted by trauma, abuse, and neglect. He has served as a case manager for the Illinois DCFS, a placement stabilization specialist, a children’s therapist in community and residential settings, and as a clinical supervisor for social workers and milieu staff in a residential setting. He earned a master’s degree from the Jane Addams School of Social Work at the University of Illinois-Champaign.

Chris

Chris, who is 18 years old, will transition from Plummer Home when he begins college in the fall. At college, Chris will live in a dorm and study social work. He is working to strengthen his family relationships, including recently reconnecting with his dad after many years of separation. Chris is an accomplished songwriter who recently became a finalist in a songwriting competition for teens. He also performed his music at the State House. Chris enjoys cooking and preparing meals for his peers once or twice a week.

James Lister

James joined the Plummer Home as its executive director in 2006. Under his leadership, Plummer Home has launched several new programs, including independent living programs, intensive family support programs, and a community-based juvenile justice program. Most recently, Plummer Home established a foster care program, stepping into the shoes of Casey Family Services (Lowell Division), when that program closed. During his tenure, Plummer Home has revised its outdated and politically controlled board-appointment structure; adopted its first strategic plan; more than tripled its fundraising results; and stabilized its finances. In 2010, James led the organization in the design and piloting of a practice model to help teens in group care connect or reconnect with permanent families. Among the first in the country to be doing this work with group-care teens, he was selected to present Plummer Home’s model at the national conference of the American Association of Children’s Residential Centers for three consecutive years.

James earned his B.A. degree in Criminal Justice from the University of Massachusetts at Lowell, and later his M.B.A. degree from the same institution. He currently serves on the boards of the Salem Community Charter School, Children’s League of Massachusetts, and the American Association of Children’s Residential Centers.

Ray Pillidge

Ray has worked in the Massachusetts Child Welfare System for 25 years. Currently Ray is the Regional Director for the Northern Region of the Massachusetts Department of Children and Families, a position he has held for the last seven years. Prior to this Ray was the Area Director of the Lawrence Office of the Department of Children and Families. In this capacity, Ray was nationally recognized by the Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, for his leadership in partnering with the local community around strategic planning and culturally responsive engagement.

Ray's professional interests are in organizational development and change, and in restorative justice practices in Child Welfare such as Family Group Conferencing. Ray received his M.S.W. from Boston University and has a Master's degree in Social Policy from the Heller School at Brandeis University. Ray has also been on the adjunct faculty at Salem State College where he taught 'Community Practice and Social Change.' He has also taught in the Urban Leadership Program at Simmons School of Social Work

Lauren Frey

Lauren has 35 years of experience in child welfare and is managing member of 3P Consulting LLC, an organization that assists public and private child welfare agencies in achieving timely exits to permanent family for youth in foster and congregate care. Lauren's consulting group specializes in practice-model development, consultation and technical assistance related to family search and engagement, collaborative teaming and implementation, and supervision of direct permanency practice to prevent youth from "aging out."

Beginning her career as a frontline social worker in foster care and adoption, Lauren has held supervisory, program development, and management positions in child welfare. Formerly the project director for permanency services at Casey Family Services in New Haven, CT, for 10 years, Lauren guided the development of a foster care practice model to achieve permanency for older youth with treatment-level needs, including agencywide model implementation across seven States. A national child welfare trainer, speaker, and author, Lauren also brings lived experience as the parent of young adults adopted after they aged out of foster and group care.

RJ

RJ is 19 years old and plans to transition from Plummer Home over the summer, at which time he will move in with his older sister, K. While at Plummer, RJ and his sister were reconnected after a long separation and are committed to having a strong relationship. RJ plays several instruments and has showcased his musical abilities at several events and shows, including at the State House. He plans to attend community college for video game simulation. RJ hopes to work as a video game designer and a music composer for video games.

K.

K. is in her early 30s. She has an unwavering commitment to her younger brother, RJ, who will be transitioning to her home this summer. She enjoys cooking and is a poet who has shared her work in numerous venues.

Taffy Compain

Taffy is the National Foster Care Specialist for the Children's Bureau at the Administration for Children and Families in the Department of Health and Human Services. As the National Foster Care Specialist, Ms. Compain provides leadership on national foster care initiatives, including National Foster Care Month. Ms. Compain serves as the federal liaison to the National Association of State Foster Care Managers and Federal Project Officer for over a dozen discretionary grants aiming to improve permanency for children and youth in foster care through the development of child welfare diligent recruitment programs for foster and adoptive families. She has over 20 years of experience in child welfare practice and administration, beginning her career in foster care services at the Florida Department of Children and Families. Ms. Compain relocated to Washington, D.C., managing the Training and Technical Assistance Center at the Child Welfare Reviews Project of JBS International before joining the Children's Bureau. A bilingual native of Puerto Rico, she has supported numerous efforts to engage and service the Latino community throughout her career.

Melinda Baldwin

Melinda works at the Children's Bureau in the Capacity Division. She led the team in the development of the Congregate Care Brief, *A National Look at the Use of Congregate Care in Child Welfare*. She serves as the Federal Project Officer for two work force development grants and is temporarily the Federal Project Officer for the Bureau's trauma grants. She has worked in both the public and private sectors of child welfare in Illinois, serving as the Director of Child Welfare of a private, non for profit child welfare agency that served children and families in a continuum of service delivery from residential care, specialized and traditional foster care, and prevention work in the community. She developed the Weekender program that transitioned children living in group homes into family foster care settings. As a part of this endeavor she developed an extensive training program for foster parents to prepare them to successfully care for these children. This program created a smoother transition for children into family and community settings. As a member of the faculty at Northeastern Illinois University she was field director of the BSW program, placing over 70 students a year in community agencies throughout the Chicago area. She taught courses across the curriculum, developing classes in policy, law, and child welfare. She sat on the Board of Directors of the Oak Park River Forest Day Nursery. She recently defended her dissertation at the Jane Addams College of Social Work at the University of Illinois Chicago.



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