



United Advocates for Children and Families Newsletter
June 2011

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UACF Vision Statement

Inspire Hope and Courage

UACF Mission Statement

Promote the emotional, behavioral and social well-being of children, youth and families through transformational leadership.

Seven Principles That Guide Our Work:

- Family Driven, Hope Centered and Youth Guided
- Full Domain and Environment of the

June 2011

Parent Partner Coalition (PPC) Attends Legislative Day

On May 25th, Vickie Mendoza, UACF Director of the Institute for Family and Youth Leadership, along with seventeen Parent Partners and family members participated in this year's UACF Legislative Day. Representing six of our twelve regions, this group braved the rainy weather and visited legislators' offices, toured the Capitol, and checked out all the informational booths. Cindy Clafin, UACF's Director of Training and Education, hosted a Public Policy Training, giving a better understanding of how the government works. Participants were provided with information on their representatives as well as educated on how to voice their concerns and issues. The participants visited with their district's representatives later in the day.



Once the day's events were over, it was off to the UACF Institute for Family and Youth Leadership Awards Dinner. After Dr. Oscar Wright, UACF CEO, gave his appreciation for all those who participated, acknowledgements were given to the Regional Family Network Leaders (RFN) for their time spent as leaders in their regions. Susie Baker, Parent Partner and PPC member from Kern County helped to facilitate stories about the day at the Capitol. The evening commenced with presentation of the awards.

Family member Jennifer Wheeler received the award for "Most Outspoken". This was given to a parent who was able to effectively verbalize their thoughts and opinions at the Capitol.

UACF's Founding Mothers, Karen Hart, Nancy May and Carolyn Cooper, received the "Longevity in Advocacy Award" given by the Parent Partner Coalition (PPC). Karen Hart was in attendance to accept on behalf of the three awardees.

Susie Baker received an award for her "Collaboration with Agencies for The Betterment of Children, Youth and Families Living With Serious Mental Health and Behavior Health Challenges". This award was

- Child
- Community Based Support Services
- Culturally and Linguistically Competent
- Prevention and Early Intervention
- Strength based Intervention
- Interagency Collaboration?

Our Goals are:

- To Provide a Voice for Family Members
- Empower Family Members and Healthcare Professionals Through Training and Technical Assistance
- To Form Strategic Partnerships to Leverage Local and Statewide Resources.

UACF Board of Directors

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On behalf of UACF Board of Directors and staff we would like to extend our appreciation to Gwen Slattery and Leona Jull for their commitment and dedication in serving for several years on the

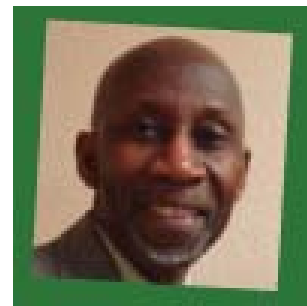
presented by UACF and Department of Mental Health (DMH) because of her work with Therapeutic Behavior Services (TBS).

The award for "Most Supportive Agency" was presented to Crittenton Services for Children and Families for their support to Parent Partners; presented by the Parent Partner Coalition (PPC).

On May 26, 2011, the Oversight and Accountability Committee (OAC) meeting was attended by several Parent Partners and family members who participated at Legislative Day. The UACF Institute For Family and Youth Leadership has been educating and supporting Parent Partners and family members as they learn more about the Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) and participate in community forums that are being provided through the Client and Family Leadership Committee (CFLC). The family movement is gaining strength as their voices are being heard and their numbers are growing.

From The Desk Of The CEO

Young Minds Matter
By Dr. Oscar Wright



Grandparents Raising Grandchildren

You assumed that your days of raising children were over, but a surprise of great consequence awaited with little or no advance notice; having to raise your grandchildren, with one experiencing a severe mental disorder. When parents are rendered unable to care for their children because of incarceration, poverty, substance abuse, or some serious health condition, grand families become primary caregivers; a role in which many, though supportive, are highly unprepared.

Census data indicate about 6 million children in the United States are living in households headed by a grandparent or other relative. An analysis of this emerging trend, especially of those grandparents caring for children with mental health issues, reveals both a crisis of support and an opportunity to serve the unmet needs of these aging caregivers.

From a positive perspective, nurturing grandparents allow children to flourish:

- Grand-families tend to enable siblings to stay together.
- Children stay in contact with family members.
- A reduction in additional traumatic transitions.
- A reduction in out of home placements.
- Stability of care
- Children tend to thrive when raised by relatives due to knowledge of the environment.

On the other hand, the care of young children experiencing mental challenges is particularly intense and physically demanding. Grandparents may experience frustration of shame or guilt about their own child's inability to care for the grandchild. Stress-related conditions such as depression and hypertension are not uncommon. Family relationships can be strained and custody disputes may worsen the situation. In addition, when grandparents assume responsibility for young

**board. You will be missed,
but never forgotten!**

children, often unexpectedly, they may face increased strain because of low or limited incomes. For example, with 70 percent of grandparents under the age of 60, many are too young to qualify for Medi-Care, Social Security, and other public benefits available to seniors.

So, how do we help these heroes of hope? Grand-families need time out from the physical, mental and emotional demands of daily caregiving. Respite care provides temporary relief for caregivers from the ongoing responsibility of caring for an individual, children in this case, with special needs. It is important to note that respite care is not child care. Respite care is an opportunity to re-energize and refuel to meet the unrelenting challenges. With quality respite care, the grandparent has time to participate in support groups, obtain services so the family can function effectively, or secure health services that protect their ability to raise special needs children.

In December 2006, Congress passed and the President signed the Lifespan Respite Care Act. It will be up to Congress to provide funding. We simply must engage the participation of grand families in the design and implementation of respite care programs on the state level. Not only should grand families become a targeted group for respite care, but they should also be intricately involved in the development and implementation of this new program. To help strengthen this family unit, we must identify and make readily available a pathway to community support systems for grand-families and other caregivers.

Dr. Oscar Wright is the Chief Executive Officer for the United Advocates for Children and Families, a statewide advocacy, policy and training organization for families, youth and children. Your comments are welcomed. He can be contacted through Colleen Schneider, Special Assistant to the CEO at: cschneider@uacf4hope.org.

Alameda County Attends 2011 CMHACY Conference

CMHACY 2011

by: Tanya McCullom

The California Mental Health Advocates for Children and Youth (CMHACY) conference was another success this year. The conference was scheduled May 10, 2011-May 13, 2011. This is the 2nd consecutive year that the Alameda County Family Partnership Program has been able to sponsor families and youth to attend the conference. Alameda County was well-represented!



During the CMHACY pre-conference, United Advocates for Children and Families (UACF) hosted a panel discussion for families/caregivers. The topic was "Child Protective Services-A Public Forum Discussion". The facilitator, of the panel was

Janey Swain, Youth Advocate Social Worker, Sacramento County Child Advocates Inc; the participants on the panel were Judge Juan Ulloa, Imperial County Superior Court, and Tracy Buckingham, Social Services Assistant Director of San Luis Obispo, as well as a parent and youth. The discussion included the Child Welfare system and what can be done to change the system and make it better for families who have to enter the system. The parent and youth had the most compelling stories to share regarding their experience in the Child Welfare system. They both spoke eloquently and challenged all of us to take a closer look at what we do as providers and how we provide services to the families. The panel as a whole implored us to listen to what the families have to say, including the children and not make assumptions.

Other workshops hosted by United Advocates for Children and Families, (UACF), were the UACF Annual Membership Meeting which included public policy developments and a special presentation on the "Family and Youth Movement", two workshops, Building a Community of Support for Military Families and Children: Available Mental Health Diagnosis and Treatment, and Building a Community of Support for Military Families and Children: Available Resources, both facilitated by Cindy Claflin, UACF Director of Training & Education. UACF hosted the Parent Partner Coalition (PPC) Breakfast and Dr. Oscar Wright participated at the CMHACY Policy Panel.

The workshops were informative. The talent show was fun and the dance was energetic! And, of course, you can't beat the beautiful scenery of Asilomar beach and coastline. This conference is a great place to unwind, unplug, and relax.

Spirit of ExCEL Award

Tanya McCullom Receives UACF Spirit of ExCEL Award for June 2011

Tanya McCullom, Program Director of UACF in Alameda County has been selected to receive the Spirit of ExCEL Award for her strong leadership abilities and commitment to the organization.



Tanya has demonstrated time and time again her willingness to go beyond what is generally expected in the course of a work day. Tanya is always willing to assist one of her colleagues, with no hesitation in providing their needed support. Her team player mindset is exemplary and appreciated by all who have had the pleasure of working with her.

UACF appreciates Tanya's leadership. Tanya has led us to a new program within UACF, A Better Way. As a result, the Alameda Program has doubled its staff size and Tanya has truly enhanced the credibility of UACF in both Alameda County and statewide.

Congratulations Tanya for your excellent work ethic, team participation and consistency!

Parent Partner 101 Training

UACF Parent Partner 101 Training a Success

United Advocates for Children and Families. (UACF) has completed their first Parent Partner 101 certification training in Alameda County for the Early Connections 0-5 programs. The Parent Partner certification training is a three (3) day comprehensive training that includes the initial pretesting on the role of a Parent Partner. At the completion of the three (3) day training the participants are tested to receive their certificate of certification.



There are a total of eleven (11) modules in the course of the three (3) day period. Some of the topics covered are: The History of the Parent Partner, The Wraparound Program, The System of Care Program, Conflict Resolution, and Engaging Families, just to name a few.

The goal of this training is to help Parent Partners empower the families they are working with in their communities, and to help the families to make wise decisions on behalf of their child or youth.

The objective of the Parent Partner 101 certification training is to give Parent Partners the skills and expertise to assist families of children and youth with mental health/behavioral health challenges.

We are currently scheduling more training's throughout the state of California, so watch our web site for updates on trainings in your area.