

CALIFORNIA FAMILY TO FAMILY HIGHLIGHTS REPORT: 2007

Bay Area Cluster

Information contained in following report was self-reported by participating Family to Family counties to highlight their work and accomplishments for 2007.





2007 Highlights from the F2F Counties

California Family to Family Initiative

Bay Area Counties: Alameda, Contra Costa, Monterey, San Francisco, San Mateo, Santa Clara and Santa Cruz¹

Alameda

Year Funding Began: 2003

RECRUITMENT, DEVELOPMENT, AND SUPPORT OF RESOURCE FAMILIES

- A faith-based recruitment effort was initiated to recruit foster homes. The effort included the development of a speakers' bureau to attend local faith-based organization events and churches, holding PRIDE training sessions at local churches, and holding monthly orientation sessions at a church in South Hayward. Resource parents regularly attend the PRIDE training sessions as co-trainers alongside social workers.
- A media campaign to recruit resource families was developed, which included a DVD featuring former foster youth, adoptive parents, foster parents and department staff as well as billboard ads placed throughout the community. There has been an increase in both the number of licensed resource parents and adoption-only families since F2F implementation began.
- Foster parent socials are held on a regular basis. A department program manager attends Foster Parent Association meetings. Resource parents also participate on the Resource, Development and Support of Resource Families (RDS) Workgroup.
- All licensed resource parents have access to respite care through a licensed service provider. Foster parents who have been certified to care for drug/alcohol exposed infants and medically fragile infants receive 48-hours of respite each month.
- Resource parents receive information on Team Decisionmaking (TDM) meetings and are trained on Icebreaker meetings. Icebreaker meetings have been renamed Communicating History and Transition (CHAT) meetings.

BUILDING COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

- The Building Community Partnerships (BCP) workgroup evolved into three sub-committees: 1) Parent Engagement, 2) Youth Engagement, and 3) Community Engagement. The Differential Response program, called Another Road to Safety (ARS), was the catalyst for the Community Engagement Workgroup.
- A partnership with community-based organizations was formed in the three target areas that experience the highest rates of referrals. These organizations provide services to "low-risk" referrals within the target areas.

TEAM DECISIONMAKING

- Team Decisionmaking (TDM) meetings were implemented in September 2004 and are mandatory for all new intake cases, change of placements, and reunifications. The majority of TDMs are held in county sites, however when requested, TDMs are held in the community.

¹ Santa Cruz County did not begin implementation of F2F in 2007, so their county update is not included.

- Through the Linkages initiative, the Workforce Benefits and Administration (WBA) department staffs TDMs with a CalWORKS employment counselor. CalWORKS staff provides resources and referrals to eligible families.
- A pilot program was implemented to have parent advocates attend new intake TDMs.

SELF EVALUATION

- The Self Evaluation Workgroup provides requested “data byte” reports to staff via email with information related to the outcome measures. The Quality Assurance unit provides regular reports to staff as requested. The Business Objects Users Group (a sub-group of the Self Evaluation Workgroup) meets to review Business Object reports and created a system within the Agency's network to hold all Business Objects reports, which is accessible by all network users.
- The Quality Assurance unit also created Business Objects reports, sent to staff monthly, to assist with data entry into the Child Welfare Services/Case Management System (CWS/CMS) and provide reminders of when compliance items are due. The reports include: 1) relative placements sorted by social worker with Reassessment Due Date, 2) children 15 and a half years of age who need a Transitional Independent Living Plan (TILP) completed, 3) licensed foster homes with openings (sent to the Placement Units) and 4) a school letter report for youth turning 18 years of age. In addition, the unit has been providing group home staff with ad hoc reporter exploration.

FOSTER YOUTH PERMANENCE AND YOUTH TRANSITIONS AND INVOLVEMENT

- A former foster youth was hired by the Youth Engagement Workgroup to serve as an advisor and work one-on-one with members of the Youth Advisory Council. Youth have been collaborating with the County's Youth Engagement Coordinator to define how the voice of youth consumers could play a stronger and more formal role in child welfare improvements/activities.
- After a successful piloting period, the Group Home Step Up effort was institutionalized as a full unit of eight child welfare workers. This unit, the Group Home Family Preservation unit, is committed to securing permanent connections for youth residing in group home care.

BIRTH PARENT INVOLVEMENT

- Ten to twelve parents participate in the monthly meetings of the Birth Parent Involvement Group and receive ongoing training in parent leadership skills. Parent leaders have developed training for and delivered training to child welfare staff. The training focuses on the experience of birth parents in the child welfare system. They also made a presentation at a community based substance abuse treatment program.
- All parents who go through detention are invited to attend bi-monthly Parent Orientations, co-facilitated by child welfare staff and a parent leader. To date, over 580 parents have graduated from the Parent Orientation series.
- The Parent Advocate Program, implemented in July 2006, provides parent advocates on a referral basis for parents in the Family Reunification program. The parent advocates work with “first-time” parents who have children three years of age and under who have been placed in out of home care. To date, the Parent Advocates have worked with 40 birth parents. In October 2007, the role of the Parent Advocates was expanded to include facilitating Icebreaker meetings.

DIFFERENTIAL RESPONSE

- Early data has shown a low rate of recidivism for clients that were served by the Differential Response (DR) program/Another Road to Safety (ARS) program. Based on these findings, the program is expanding to include: 1) children and youth from birth to 18 years of age in an additional zip code, and 2) “after care services” for families following reunification.

Contra Costa

Year Funding Began: 2001

RECRUITMENT, DEVELOPMENT AND SUPPORT OF RESOURCE FAMILIES

- A Spanish speaking recruiter was hired on a contract basis to target outreach to the Monument Corridor community, a primarily Spanish speaking community. Outreach efforts to the community have included providing PRIDE training in Spanish.
- The Recruitment, Development and Support (RDS) committee meets monthly to review data and trends, and develop strategies to recruit homes so children can remain within their communities. Currently, there are 126 homes identified within the F2F focus area. Recruitment efforts have begun to include the development of community supports for F2F homes, such as respite care, support groups and delivering trainings within the community structure.
- As part of the County's System Improvement Plan (SIP), a sub-committee was developed to review and make recommendations on improving the placement of siblings together. Outreach efforts are being conducted to recruit homes for siblings, which has included sharing stories that illustrate the importance of sibling and community connections.
- The "Foster Family Newsletter" was changed to the "Resource Family Newsletter" and is now mailed to *all* licensed resource parents and relative caregivers.
- The Policy Steering Committee developed the "Top Ten Goals and Expectations" for working with resource families to increase communication, collaboration and retention. A strategic plan has been implemented to roll out the goals and expectations outlined within the document.
- Resource families participate in Team Decisionmaking (TDM) meetings a requested/appropriate. They also co-teach the PRIDE curriculum, participate in community college trainings for staff and resource families, and are active in community functions/recruitment efforts.
- Icebreaker meetings have increased across the county. The use of this practice has helped resource families understand the importance of family and community connections and in having placements within the "family's" community.

BUILDING COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

- Local Community Partnership Committees are active in each region of the County and include representation by a diverse group of community partners. The meetings provide the community with an opportunity to address issues and work on common solutions, to serve as a clearinghouse for information on resources and funding, and to provide information on available training, workshops and funding sources. Committee members help disseminate information regarding the Children and Family Services (CFS) Community Needs Survey, designed to identify service gaps. In 2007, the survey resulted in eleven "mini-grants" to address local service needs.
- Community partners have hosted Team Decisionmaking (TDM) meetings at their sites, took on leadership roles, and participated in TDMs by supporting the development of safety plans. Location of TDMs in the community has increased accessibility for families and community partners. TDM readiness trainings are offered on a regular basis and are open to community partners as well as foster parents.
- Statistical and outcomes data are shared at Community Partnership Committee meetings. Shared data includes updates on Differential Response, TDMs, Recruitment, Development and Support of Resource Families (RDS), disproportionality, the System Improvement Plan (SIP) and other areas of interest to the community. Data presentations are customized based on community input.
- Social workers are geographically assigned to or co-located in specific school sites, and educational liaisons are co-located at Children and Family Services (CFS) offices.

TEAM DECISIONMAKING

- Team Decisionmaking (TDM) meetings are held for imminent risk, emergency placements, placement changes, and exits. Imminent risk and emergency placement TDMs are required for specific zip codes and countywide for African American families with children under five years of age. Placement change TDMs are now available to all dependent youth and their families. The implementation of exit TDMs has begun and is designed to target children and youth with the highest level of need who are experiencing multiple placements and transitional-aged youth. A firewall has been put in place to ensure that all emancipating youth are provided with an exit TDM.
- In partnership with the community, CFS developed a TDM “data bundle” that includes statistics identified as important progress markers by members of the community. The data bundle is shared at all monthly Community Partnership Committee meetings
- TDMs are the focus of a featured article in CFS’s bi-monthly Resource Family Newsletter, which is mailed to all care providers. The focus of the articles is on information sharing, education and recruitment, and includes current TDM statistics and upcoming TDM community partner readiness training sessions.
- Regular “dialogues” at unit and division level meetings are held with all TDM facilitators and the TDM supervisor to address challenges faced by staff around TDM logistics, process, action planning, etc., and to provide coaching and support. A bi-monthly facilitators’ meeting is held to support consistency in facilitation practice, share helpful hints, and discuss common challenges.

SELF EVALUATION

- Regular data reports provided by the Self Evaluation team include monthly caseloads, monthly and quarterly child outcomes reports, and outcome reports on specific projects that are completed as needed (e.g. effectiveness of Parent Partners on speed of reunification and recidivism, etc.). The team meets regularly with internal staff and the community. Data, collected through the Child Welfare Services/Case Management System (CWS/CMS), Business Objects, SafeMeasures, the UC Berkeley (UCB) website and the TDM database, is shared through reports, presentations and within trainings conducted throughout the County.

FOSTER YOUTH PERMANENCE AND YOUTH TRANSITIONS AND INVOLVEMENT

- The Youth Adult Preparation Process (YAPP) utilizes TDMs to provide a venue for infusing California Permanency for Youth Project (CPYP) values, planning for transition and life skills development, and addressing permanency options. Supervisors heading units that work with older foster youth met with the County’s CPYP liaison to discuss Permanency Case Conferencing.
- The California Youth Connection (CYC) chapter and youth speakers’ bureau remain very active within the County and lobby at the state level. Members of CYC are contacted for feedback, advice and direction prior to the implementation of policies and programs impacting foster youth.
- A Transitional Housing Program Network was established with administrators from *all* transitional housing programs located within the County that serve current and former foster youth. The two objectives of the network include: 1) insuring the highest quality of programs within the County and 2) providing an effective continuum of care. In addition, a collaborative was formed between CFS management staff and all public agencies serving transitional age youth, including juvenile and adult probation, children and adult mental health, health services, homeless services and education.

BIRTH PARENT INVOLVEMENT

- The Parent Partner Program is staffed by a supervisor and includes two full-time Parent Partners and two part-time Parent Partners. The Parent Partners have become part of the newly formed Family Engagement Unit, which includes Early Intervention Outreach Specialists and the Resource Parent Liaison.
- Parent Partners are life-trained paraprofessionals who have successfully navigated the child welfare system. They offer a wealth of knowledge and experience in three ways: 1) as parent advocates, 2) as parent leaders, and 3) as parent trainers. Parent Partners provide a training, co-led by a Parent Partner and CFS staff, called “Navigating the Child Welfare System” for parents and family members. Sessions are held at in-patient and out-patient treatment facilities and in both Spanish and English. Parent Partners are able to enhance the training experience by sharing their own unique perspectives and real-life experiences.
- Parent Partners are also regular contributors to the Resource Family Newsletter, have participated in both newspaper and television interviews, and have offered technical assistance on including parents in child welfare to the State of Washington as well as Trinity, Tuolumne, Kern, Nevada, and San Mateo Counties.

DIFFERENTIAL RESPONSE

- Through the Differential Response (DR) program, state redesign funds are used for community-based case management services in the F2F phase-in areas. At the end of 2007, two Community Engagement Specialists (CES) positions were shifted from contract work to County positions. CESs link Path 1 families to DR services as well as network with community partners and attend community events to recruit foster homes in the F2F areas.

Monterey

Year Funding Began: 2003

RECRUITMENT, DEVELOPMENT, AND SUPPORT OF RESOURCE FAMILIES

- Recruitment continues to be supported by a strong partnership with the local media for radio and television advertising to recruit new resource parents. Spots routinely air in both English and Spanish. New marketing materials for recruitment included signage on local buses, ads at local theatres, as well as new posters and displays. A social marketer has assisted Family and Children Services (FCS) with the development of these marketing materials, as well as for Pathways to Safety/Differential Response (DR) program. A system has been developed to track successful recruitment efforts. Data collected through the tracking system is reviewed at monthly Recruitment Subcommittee meetings. The FSC website has also been updated, www.f2fmc.org.
- Members of the Recruitment Subcommittee include community liaisons from partner agencies, local foster family agencies, foster parent peer recruiters, and probation department and agency staff. The committee is chaired by a departmental management analyst, who is also a former foster parent. This group coordinates presentations as well as participates at local events.
- Recruitment efforts in 2007 resulted in 22 new licensed foster family homes. While this is a decrease in the number of new homes from the previous year (36 licensed in 2006), fewer homes closed (22 total) during the year. Of those that closed, twelve were due to adoption finalization, four were due to families leaving the County, and the remainder closed for other reasons.

- A California State University Monterey student surveyed foster parents as part of their senior capstone project to help the County gain a better understanding of factors that impact retention. After graduation, the student, a former foster youth, was hired as an F2F liaison by a community partner.
- Hartnell College continues to provide pre-service classes, introductory classes for relatives and non-related extended family members, as well as advanced and specialized classes for resource families. A specialized class for caregivers of teens has also been initiated.
- Respite is available to all licensed, relative and near kin caregivers, largely through PSA/HIV, the Specialized Care and Incentive Assistance Program (SCIAP) and STAP funding. Due to an increase in the utilization of respite, a cap was set for reimbursement (up to 16 hours per month). To help ensure respite is available, efforts are underway to recruit community members who would volunteer to provide respite without compensation. The eight-hour pre-service training for respite providers was significantly revised to include more information about children's needs, behaviors, and behavioral interventions. In addition, efforts continue to enhance the procedures for screening and matching respite providers to caregiver families.

BUILDING COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

- Growth of community partnerships was supported through a shift in allocation of resources from the Monterey Peninsula to Salinas, where more children were entering care. Community Human Services, a key community partner, employs four F2F liaisons, one located in the southern part of the county, one on the Monterey Peninsula, and two in the largest city, Salinas. Alisal Community Healthy Start, one of the original community partners, continues work in East Salinas.
- The F2F liaisons serve as the link to individual communities. Liaisons conduct local area coalition meetings to educate and inform community partners about the need for resource families, as well as the needs of birth families, caregivers, children and youth at risk of abuse and neglect. They also attend Team Decisionmaking (TDM) meetings.
- Local F2F liaisons and coalitions have worked at community events to recruit caregivers, have provided resources when asked to assist families, and have helped in “getting the word out” about F2F. One group of coalition members made quilts for foster families for Christmas, while another put on a community awareness event in conjunction with a Farmers’ Market.
- The executive director’s staff and key supervisory staff meet jointly with the chairs of the strategy committees and the coordinator for policy development to discuss countywide planning and related issues. Due to personnel changes and leaves of absence, some activities planned for 2007 were not completed.

TEAM DECISIONMAKING

- Team Decisionmaking (TDM) meetings are held for initial entries, imminent risk, reunifications and placement changes. First entry and imminent risk TDMs are mandatory in areas that have rolled out geographically. TDMs can be waived if the request is approved at the supervisor and manager level. There are still a few areas of the County where TDMs are not available; most notably, in the northern part of the County as well as a few rural areas scattered throughout the County. Discussions began in 2007 with Differential Response community providers to explore securing community sites and engaging the community in these areas.
- TDMs are guided by protocol developed in 2004, the year TDMs were rolled out in the County. A workgroup, consisting of members of the TDM sub-committee, community partners, agency managers, staff and supervisors, as well as TDM facilitators, began meetings in fall 2007 to begin a comprehensive review and revision process for the entire protocol.

- TDMs are usually held at one of twelve community sites. TDMs are held at FCS offices if there is a safety concern (i.e., domestic violence), if a community location is not available, or if it more convenient for the family. On a few occasions, TDMs have been held at local hospitals. A total of 228 TDMs were held in 2007, which is an increase from 126 held in 2006 and 118 held in 2005. The majority of TDMs are held for emergency placements or imminent risk. The increase in total TDMs held in 2007 was accomplished despite a change in TDM supervision and complete turnover in facilitators during the calendar year.
- The TDM process is valued by both staff and supervisors. Supervisors provide coverage for each other to ensure a supervisor participates in every TDM. The use of note taking via laptop and a portable printer is being piloted. Clerical support provides Spanish-English translation of TDM notes when needed.

SELF EVALUATION

- The Self Evaluation team meets approximately once a month. All team participants sit on other interagency and intra-agency evaluation workgroups and participate in state evaluation sub-committees. A number of reports are generated from FCS, including: AB636 outcome based reports, referral based reports, case reports, adoption reports, System Improvement Plan (SIP) reports, and comparison reports with matching between the TDM database both by client and zip code. Regular coalition specific reports are provided to community partners and include information on rates of referrals, placements at first entry, foster care, relative and near-kin, as well as the numbers of foster families.
- The first Peer Quality Case Review (PQCR) was held in January 2007 and the focus was on recurrence of maltreatment, particularly for referrals involving children ages birth to five where the initial referral was for a positive toxicology screen at birth for drugs and alcohol. Community partners participated in a focus group as part of the PQCR process. In September 2007, the second Self Assessment was conducted, which included input from community partners. The SIP incorporates F2F strategies throughout.

EDUCATION

- Educational technical assistance and consultation continues to be provided through the Stuart Foundation. As documented in the Child Welfare Services/Case Management System (CMS/CWS), educational placement has improved from 11 percent in 2006 to over 83 percent in 2007.
- Improving educational outcomes is a focus of the SIP. Improving educational outcomes has been supported by efforts to have clearer role clarification and coordination with Foster Youth Services.
- One related recruitment goal has been to have a licensed caregiver in each school to help minimize the need for school transfers when children come into care.
- The Casey Family Program video, *Endless Dreams*, has been used as a resource in outreach to educational partners.

San Francisco

Year Funding Began: 2001

In 2007, the San Francisco Human Services Agency (SFHSA) 12 workgroups were formed that were either long-standing (such as the F2F workgroups) or newly identified (such as Organizational Workgroup). These workgroups convened in the summer and developed strategies identified in the System Improvement Plan (SIP) and the Foster Care Improvement Task Force. The co-chairs of each work group include representatives from both child welfare and the general community.

RECRUITMENT, DEVELOPMENT, AND SUPPORT OF RESOURCE FAMILIES

- A newly revised Child Welfare League of America (CWLA) PRIDE foster care curriculum, including modules on domestic violence, was recently updated and will be rolled out to providers. The Family Violence Prevention Fund Technical Assistant team has distributed the mini-magazine Foster Care Connect to provide information on talking to and supporting children exposed to domestic violence, as well as helping caregivers understand the dynamics of domestic violence.
- Plans are underway to implement a school-based recruitment strategy through partnership with San Francisco Unified School District (SFUSD). In June, SFHSA and SFUSD staff, as well as staff from the adoption agency Family Builders, visited San Diego County to learn about focused recruitment efforts through the school district that could be implemented in San Francisco.
- Youth and birth parents are presenters at new foster parent orientations. SFHSA has contracted with Edgewood's Kinship Center to provide relatives with increased training opportunities and to increase permanence for children in kin care. Edgewood is contacting families where children who have been placed in foster care for at least nine months to inform them of permanency options including adoption, Kinship Guardianship Assistance Payment (Kin-GAP), and legal guardianship.

BUILDING COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

- Community partnership has been particularly successful with the implementation of the Differential Response (DR) program, and SFHSA has increased its DR staff by six positions.
- SFHSA reissued request for proposals (RFPs) for Family Resource Centers (FRCs) so that services supporting best practice would be consistent across the different agencies. For example, each center will offer community-based visitation services. Previously only two centers provided this service. Family Violence Prevention Fund is working with SFHSA to increase capacity and training efforts for staff at six FRCs.
- The San Francisco Unified Family Court has rolled out the Drug Dependency Court in partnership with SFHSA and Community Behavioral Health Services. This new and exciting project started in November 2007 and involves collaboration with local drug treatment programs as well as parent partners.
- Child welfare has begun work with national F2F Technical Assistant consultants to build on parent engagement efforts. A Parent Advisory Council was developed and currently contracts out peer mentor positions and a parent support group with a local community based agencies. The parent engagement work will build on these efforts by initiating the Building a Better Future curriculum and increasing the number of parent mentors available to work with clients and staff.
- SFHSA is working with a citywide initiative to develop a plan to geographically assign staff with community partners and other agencies in targeted neighborhoods to implement a family team model for case planning.

TEAM DECISIONMAKING

- A protocol for Team Decisionmaking (TDM) meetings was implemented in permanency/reunification and all staff received training. A new TDM supervisor and a new bilingual facilitator were hired in 2007.
- Nationally recognized domestic violence experts, Family Violence Prevention Fund, have provided monthly consultation to TDM facilitators to promote use of in-the-moment strategies for when domestic violence is present or suspected during a TDM. A training was held to assist staff in implementation of a domestic violence protocol. The protocol will improve communication between social work staff and TDM facilitators in identifying domestic violence *prior* to TDM meetings, which will have a direct and positive impact on both safety and decision-making. A meeting was held in San Francisco with TDM staff from San Francisco and Macomb County, Michigan, to share practices and insights on domestic violence/TDM techniques. Through the Greenbook project and in partnership with California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids (CalWORKs), domestic violence liaisons from both batterers'

intervention programs and domestic violence shelters were developed to provide expertise in this area. These liaisons are located on site at SFHSA offices and have participated in a number of TDMs. Child welfare is partnering with CalWORKs to use Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) dollars to establish a domestic violence coordinator who will identify and address related program and policy issues with staff and partners.

SELF EVALUATION

- SFHSA has a contract with an outside firm to provide data analysis. The data in 2007 indicated:
 - A 93.7 percent usage of the Structured Decision Making (SDM) hotline tool, which is on target for a county in early implementation;
 - Forty-six percent of safety interventions at investigation utilized community agencies and/or services;
 - Approximately 43.2 percent of safety interventions at investigation utilized family, neighbors, and other partners in working with the family.
- The Self Evaluation Team was instrumental in developing a youth survey. Stipends are being provided to participating youth and SFHSA anticipates a good response rate.
- SFHSA Policy and Planning staff developed a quarterly outcome report format which has been shared with child welfare staff to identify trends, areas of strength, and needed improvements.

FOSTER YOUTH PERMANENCE AND YOUTH TRANSITIONS AND INVOLVEMENT

- A Youth Permanence Workgroup was developed to identify ways to promote and sustain permanency and self-sufficiency for youth. A number of different community partners are involved.
- To better underscore the need for permanency, and that long-term placement is not a desirable permanent plan, SFHSA held a staff contest to change the name of the Long Term Placement section; the winning name was “Transitions to Permanency Unit (TPU).”
- The Family Finding Initiative identifies family connections for youth older than 13 years of age. The County was allocated \$750,000 of state dollars in FY07/08 to assist with the adoption of older children and youth. With these funds, SFHSA expanded its contract with Family Builders, a nonprofit Foster Family Association (FFA). With the additional funds, Family Builders was able to hire four more staff to support their family finding work and hire a part-time person to coordinate the Hearts Gallery. Expanded capacity through the funds allowed Family Builders to expand their capacity from the original 20 youth served to 100. The project has served 60 youth so far. SFHSA also directed funds to its training contract with the Bay Area Academy for permanency-related training. Mandatory trainings for staff focused on permanency and resiliency were held.
- SFHSA established additional services to stabilize placements and increase permanency through its contract with the Seneca Connections program. Seneca provides crisis intervention and intensive case management services for children and youth at risk of losing their placement and moving to a new placement, including higher-level placements. Seneca was also awarded the SB163 Wraparound contract in August 2006, and is serving youth placed in or at risk of placement in group homes levels 10 and above in an effort to step them down to family-like settings and community placements.
- SFHSA is working with the Youth Law Center on the Stuart Foundation funded Birth to Six Permanency Project. This initiative, which is in the early planning stages, will focus on identifying and implementing evidence-based best practices for very young children in the child welfare system. Focus groups with staff and partners (parents, foster parents, and kin providers) were held in fall 2007.

- Additional efforts to reduce congregate care and establish permanency include the development of evidence-based mental health practices around addressing trauma and reducing associated behaviors so that youth and children may be placed in and/or stay in family settings. In May 2007, the SFHSA Deputy Director and other Family and Children Services (FCS) staff, as well as staff from Community Behavioral Health Services, attended an orientation session with several other counties to get information about how this project could be funded. In September, several staff, supervisors and a program manager along with staff from Community Behavioral Health received the first round of training in the model.

CALIFORNIA CONNECTED BY 25 INITIATIVE

- A partnership was built between child welfare, workforce development, as well as with the Independent Living Skills Program (ILSP). Through CC25I, several cross-trainings have been conducted, referrals from ILSP to the WFD One-Stop have been implemented, and work has continued to build the capacity of the One Stop to work with foster youth.
- SFSHA worked with Honoring Emancipated Youth (HEY) to build relationships with vocational community-based organizations (CBOs) to enroll and retain more youth in these programs. The initial work has included outreach materials including a program listing for staff and caregivers and a cheat sheet for outreach from the CBOs.
- A stronger relationship with the City College of San Francisco (CCSF) Guardian Scholars Program has been built to support youth-focused practices, including quicker eligibility checks, having SFHSA staff assist with CCSF enrollment, assisting on cases, providing names of interested youth, and coordinating resources. SFHSA is also promoting a college track for students in the Transitional Housing Plus program (THP+).
- A tool has been created to assist in co-case management of youth involved with SFHSA and Juvenile Probation. A Host Family component of the THP+ program has been implemented in partnership with First Place Fund for Youth. In addition, efforts are continuing to provide 30 youth on Individual Development Accounts (IDAs).
- A permanency grid has been implemented to review all cases in the Transition to Permanency Units for permanency efforts. A permanency activities grid was distributed to assist staff in understanding permanency in their daily work and decisions.
- A process is being developed to review and plan emancipation. GOALS meetings have been implemented to empower youth in planning around emancipation.

San Mateo

Year Funding Began: 2001

RECRUITMENT, DEVELOPMENT AND SUPPORT OF RESOURCE FAMILIES

- Work continues to improve the foster care program, to maintain existing and recruit new foster, kin, and adoptive homes, and to support resource families. The Public Information Officer and the Human Service Agency (HSA) Training Coordinator have developed and distributed marketing materials that focus on adolescents and resources available to caregivers to help increase recruitment of resource families.

- Adolescent panels are included at every foster parent orientation. The foster parent training curriculum was reviewed and revised to ensure that parents are provided with necessary information about the child welfare system, including how it works, requirements, available resources, and contact information for staff that can help provide guidance on challenges that arise around supporting youth. One of the main goals of the revision was to increase communication between staff and families to promote support and stability for families.
- The Foster Parents of Adolescents subcommittee continues to provide a forum for foster parent training opportunities to support their critical role as the link between the child/youth and their family. The committee is also being expanded to include members in strategic planning.
- Two partnership conferences were held in FY06/07 to strengthen relationships between HSA and foster parents, to increase shared understanding around expectations of working relationships, and to promote a true partnership. In addition, HSA and foster parents are collaborating to build an improved retention program.

BUILDING COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

- HSA continues to maintain working relationships with community partners to support children, families, and resource parents. This includes improving stability for children/youth that reunify with their families by increasing family and community participation in case planning and assuring that resources continue to be available after reunification.
- The needs of community partners in regards to increasing family stability is being assessed to help improve the team-based case planning processes and support successful reunifications. The Stability and Permanence Project Managers and Team Decisionmaking (TDM) Workgroup are conducting bi-monthly meetings with community partners to continue building relationships and solicit feedback on operations, policies and protocols, and challenges. In conjunction to the meetings, a clear, concise and community focused description of the role of community partners in team based-case planning meetings as well as a venue for community partner feedback on the TDM process (i.e., is their voice heard) are being developed.

TEAM DECISIONMAKING

- Preset time slots are being used to schedule Team Decisionmaking (TDM) meetings to increase the efficiency of the scheduling process and decrease the response time between social workers, social work supervisors and TDM staff to provide the necessary information to begin scheduling. The TDM referral form has been revised to require staff to provide specific dates and times as well as to provide specific information about the purpose of the TDM. Staff are also asked to provide information about the type of decision (i.e. placement move, safety/case planning, sustain placement) they anticipate being made and facts/issues about the situation that have led to the request of a TDM. The purpose of this information is to ensure that all possible participants have been invited and the best decision can be made.
- The TDM team has been expanded to include asset coaches, Citizen's Review Panel members, representatives from faith-based organizations and attorneys at meetings as needed.
- Social workers are held accountable for placement decisions and must justify why a child was placed without a TDM. Efforts are made to keep children within their community or nearby and this is a priority when determining placement.

SELF EVALUATION

- The Differential Response (DR) Manager, Management Team and County Breakthrough Series Collaborative use data, generated by the CARE system, to analyze key outcomes, including the number of new referrals, number of active and closed referrals, number of completed pre-and post-FASTs, and engagement rates to guide and develop management actions. This team is also working on developing a

community based data system that can be used by community partners to track service delivery time. In addition, the Business Systems Group, County Breakthrough Series Collaborative, and Agency Director use a web-based data collection system to track projections of DR referral activity, shifts in caseload and service needs, and identify methods of re-directing or shifting funds to community resources and community based services. This data is used to analyze staffing patterns, assess program effectiveness and outcomes, track community involvement, and support team-based case planning.

- TDM data is analyzed monthly to review where children/youth have been placed, and determine if families are being preserved or if children's placements are being stabilized and sustained. This data is also used to address and overcome issues around disproportionality.

DIFFERENTIAL RESPONSE

- Differential Response (DR) was implemented in July 2006 and has resulted in an average of 250 referrals per month to community-based service providers. Through the three paths of DR, at-risk families have an opportunity to be connected to preventive and support services through collaboration and contracts established with community-based organizations. To support the continued implementation of DR countywide, DR liaisons have been trained and coordinated outreach efforts within the community continue to be emphasized.
- Through the Breakthrough Series Collaborative meetings, community partners who provide DR case management are able to communicate with HAS, and research and share best practices. The focus of the meetings has shifted to also allow participants to form a community advisory council on DR policy and protocol. Joint leadership is shared between the HSA and community partners with the goal of evolving into a community led, community driven collaborative.

Santa Clara

Year Funding Began: 2001

RECRUITMENT, DEVELOPMENT, AND SUPPORT OF RESOURCE FAMILIES

- Recruitment, Licensing and Adoption Home Studies, including relationships with community colleges and the PRIDE/Kinship PRIDE curriculum, have been realigned. Repositioning these services to one sector has increased the County's efficiency and effectiveness through streamlining the whole process of recruitment to licensing or conducting home studies for adoptions. In addition, this restructuring has increased communication with the Foster-Adoptive Parent Resource Center and commitment to the overall goal of having additional quality resource homes.

BUILDING COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

- Six Community Action Teams (CATs) are in place. Four teams are defined by region and two teams are defined by culture and ethnicity. Each CAT is co-chaired by a community member and department staff. Each respective CAT has representatives who are available to participate in TDMs on an as-needed basis.
- A joint response program has been developed with law enforcement to reduce the number of children coming into care, with a major emphasis on children of color. This joint response program has expanded beyond the San Jose Police to all jurisdictions within the County.

TEAM DECISIONMAKING

- Team Decisionmaking (TDM) meetings were implemented in July 2003. TDMs are held for children entering foster care, children changing homes within foster care, and children exiting foster care due to family reunification or aging out of the foster care system.

- Statistical analysis reveals that the majority of placement change situation TDMs result in a decision to preserve placement or change to a less restrictive placement.
- The majority of TDMs are held in county sites, however when requested, TDMs are held in the community.
- The Department of Children and Families Services (DCFS) has instituted the requirement of scheduling a TDM for all runaways to address safety issues, develop a safety plan and review placement options to prevent child from running away. The goal of TDMs for runaways is to address the need to plan for the child's return and discourage recurring placements into the children's shelter.

SELF EVALUATION

- The Self Evaluation Committee has evolved into the County's System Improvement Plan (SIP) data team and continues to provide data and information on County progress in SIP outcomes to SIP community stakeholders.

FOSTER YOUTH PERMANENCE AND YOUTH TRANSITIONS AND INVOLVEMENT

- The County is working with California Youth Connection (CYC) and the County's Youth Advisory Board (YAB). YAB averages 20 members per month of both current and former foster youth, who review current programs in foster youth education, housing, and employment services, and recommend ways to improve these services.

CALIFORNIA CONNECTED BY 25 INITIATIVE

- Santa Clara County continues to actively participate in the California Connected by 25 Initiative (CC25I) and has built several comprehensive programs with services to support foster youth who are transitioning to adulthood, ages 14-24, including:
 - Career Pathways—College and career development programs through the local community colleges
 - Financial Literacy Program—A financial literacy curriculum program supported by volunteers from the financial community and emancipated foster youth as trainers that results in establishment of Individual Development Accounts (IDA) for youth with matching funds for three years.
 - Creative Housing Options—Programs including a Transitional Housing Plus (THP+) Program with scattered sites, University dorm housing and a host family model.
 - Participation in the Efforts to Outcomes (ETO) database and tracking system for youth involved in Independent Living Skills (ILP) Programs.
 - Collaboration with local school districts, colleges, the County Office of Education, Foster Youth Services and private non-profit agencies to establish educational services aimed at improving educational outcomes for children K-12 and youth ages 18-24.

Family to Family County Contacts

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