



**Family Strengthening Peer Network Meeting Summary
July 11, 2007, 10:00 AM- 2:00 PM**

USDA, Cooperative State Research, Education and Extension Service, Washington, DC

Co-chairs: Caroline Crocoll, USDA CSREES & Jennifer Davis, Goodwill Industries International

I. Overview of USDA, CSREES

- CSREES one of 19 USDA agencies, 400 employees (<http://www.csrees.usda.gov/>)
- Advances knowledge for agriculture, the environment, human health and well-being, and communities by supporting [research](#), [education](#), and [extension](#) programs in the Land-Grant University System and other partner organizations
- Land grant universities- every land grant university has an outreach arm in its state to take knowledge to the public; information provided by universities is evidence-based
- Developed communities of practice- brings together university faculty, non-profit partners, citizens, etc. to discuss best practices
- Cyfernet (can be used as a resource for FSPN orgs): offers research-based information on children, youth and families. <http://www.cyfernet.org/>

II. Family Strengthening- Macro Level Recommendations

- Many organizations are working on different aspects of family strengthening- but what does the whole picture look like? What key things are needed to strengthen low-income families?
- Assembly has put together a first-draft of an agenda of things that must be done everywhere, in every community and @ federal level (**see attached overview of macro-level recommendations**)
- Specific additions suggested by FSPN orgs:
 - need for infrastructure (particularly in rural areas); inclusion of housing and transportation, parents ability to access education; parenting education; good schools for children; financial literacy; family life skills education; resource management education; ensuring that public understands what 'family strengthening' means;
- General comments:
 - How will people in communities utilize this framework?
 - Can we offer a supplemental checklist, with evidence-based practices and resources?
 - How does the document differentially apply to urban and rural communities?

- Do we want to emphasize people moving out of resource-poor neighborhoods or should we focus on investing in such neighborhoods? Should it be about choice?
- How can we emphasize the employer's role in the community (i.e. hiring people from the community)?

III. National Family Week Planning and Discussion

- National Family Week (NFW) founded in 1970s by school teacher in Indiana; focuses on connections, helping families to know where resources are and to access them
- How can National Family Week be more meaningful? How can organizations celebrate the week and get the word out to local affiliates?
- Examples of work: Citizens Leadership Initiative (Pittsburgh), Family Services of Piedmont (provides advocacy training to youth and adults, resource education, partnership with housing and police department), Family and Children's Services of Minneapolis (educate citizens on how to become more involved in community), YMCA in Bellevue, WA (informational resource fair)
- Benefits of NFW for organizations: org. as leader in community, opportunity to build relationships/network with local partners, opportunity to get mayoral offices involved, publicity for agency, fundraising
- Resources from the Alliance for Children and Families: packets with media toolkit, information for national organizations, possibility of conference call with Paula
- Tactics to promote NFW: NFW advocacy awards, suggestions on nationalfamilyweek.org (including news releases to put on organizational websites)
- Where to pitch NFW: Family Strengthening Honorees Conference, Americorps members, legislative campaigns, press conferences, marry with policy departments

IV. Organizational Information Sharing

- Annie E. Casey Foundation- call for resources on Family Strengthening (will be assembled on a list to be provided to Casey Family Strengthening Awards program managers)
- Points of Light Foundation- National Conference on Volunteering and Service in Philadelphia, July 16-18, 2007
- Generations United Conference, Washington, DC, July 24-27
- National Network for Youth- call for abstracts for national conference in January
- National Assembly- Conference, September 19th; encourages other orgs to submit news to newsbytes (e-newsletter); policy briefs from Family Strengthening Policy Center to be assembled on CD
- CSREES- Future for Families Think Tank to be held @ end of month, looking at families from a multidisciplinary perspective
- Goodwill Industries International- new national Americorps Grants, formation of internal Family Strengthening teams among local affiliates

V. Presentation by Home Visiting Coalition

- Home visiting can improve children's in school readiness and can prevent delinquency
- Research also demonstrates reductions in child maltreatment and improved parenting practices

- The Education Begins at Home (EBAH) Act (S. 667/H.R. 2343) would provide federal funding for home visiting programs nationwide
- EBAH would provide \$500 million over 3 years in grants for home visiting programs
- Contact Bridget Gavaghan (bgavaghan@preventchildabuse.org), David Laird (laird@voices.org), or Branden McLeod (bmcleod@cwla.org) for more information on EBAH and the activities of the Home Visiting Coalition

VI. Parenting Success Framework

- Tele-conference being held July 26th, @ 1:30. For more information, email Molly: molly@nassembly.org
- Interviews suggest that parenting success falls into four brackets: Parenting Behaviors/Practices (interactions with child), Family Resources (resources necessary for family to thrive), Community Support (in all systems- school workplace, etc.), and Community Revitalization

VII. Next Meeting- October 17th? Topics to be discussed could include financial literacy (possible presentation by Capital One)

Participants:

Amy Beall, The Hatcher Group
 Vicki Bolton, Generations United
 Allison Burzloff, National Network for Youth
 Danielle Butler, America's Promise- The Alliance For Youth
 Caroline Crocoll, USDA CSREES
 Jennifer Davis, Goodwill Industries International
 Helen Eisner, Alliance for Children and Families
 Ross Ford, Baltimore Mayor's Office of Children, Youth and Families
 Molly French, National Human Services Assembly
 Bridget Gavaghan, Prevent Child Abuse America
 Kayla Jackson, National Network for Youth
 Jo Johnson, Child Welfare League of America
 Irv Katz, National Human Services Assembly
 David Laird, Voices for America's Children
 Beth Lovell, Volunteers of America
 Brandon McLeod, Child Welfare League of America
 Kris Minor, America's Promise- The Alliance for Youth
 Audrey Morgenbesser, American Institutes for Research
 James Murphy, Points of Light Foundation
 Angeline Mutima, Youth Service America
 Peggy Ottke, YMCA of the USA
 Paula Purcell, Alliance for Children and Families
 Bernard Sims, Baltimore Mayor's Office
 Maya Thet, National Human Services Assembly
 Michael Tower, National Human Services Assembly