Thursday, June 25, 2015

Registration begins at 6:30 AM in Monticello Foyer

8:30 AM – 5:00 PM in the Ballroom

Science to Parenting Academy
Sponsored by Cenpatico

Trauma, Diagnosis, Medications, Loss, and Resilience

Survival Instincts and Brain Development: Utilizing Theory in Parenting Traumatized Children
Stephen Porges, PhD, Professor of Psychiatry, University of North Carolina
Social behaviors and trusting relationships are predicated on how the brain develops. In this session, we will hear a research perspective, Polyvagal Theory, of normal and atypical behavior, mental health, and development. The theory explains how reactions to danger and life threat and experiences of abuse and trauma may retune our nervous system to respond to friends, caregivers, and teachers as if they were enemies. Leaving the child to constantly scan for danger and, thus inhibiting the ability to connect. Specific parenting strategies for building parent-child connections will be discussed in the context of both trauma and autism.

Associations Between Adverse Childhood Experiences and ADHD: Analysis of the 2011 National Survey of Children's Health
Nicole Brown, MD, Albert Einstein University, New York
Children exposed to adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) often exhibit many of the behaviors that occur in ADHD. Clinicians risk focusing on ADHD as the primary diagnosis and overlooking the possible presence of a trauma history, which may alter the treatment course. Little is known about the prevalence of ACEs among children with ADHD and associations between ACEs score and ADHD severity and medication use. Caregivers and child welfare professionals will be provided strategies ensuring children are receiving the right treatment for the right diagnosis.

Psychiatric Medications for Children and Adolescents: What we know, what we don't know and why you should care!
Chris Bellonci, M.D. Tufts Medical Center, Massachusetts
There has been a steady increase in the use of psychiatric medications to treat childhood emotional and behavioral health disorders. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recently reported that 7.5% of all youth between the ages of 6-17 years old are now taking a psychiatric medication in the U.S. These rates are even higher for children who receive public insurance (Medicaid) or are in foster care. While these medications can be critically helpful in treating the emotional and behavioral health conditions for which they are prescribed, there is a significant lack of research evidence to support some of the prescribing trends being reported. This session will be an engaging dialogue on the psychiatric medications debate and why it is relevant for resource caregivers.

Luncheon
Welcome
Secretary of Education Anne Holton, JD, Virginia

Beating the Odds: How Resiliency Helped Me Overcome My Learning Disability
Ronnie N. Sidney, II, MSW
This presentation takes listeners on an adventure that documents Ronnie Sidney II’s academic experiences. While enrolled in Essex County Public Schools, Ronnie spent seven years in special education and experienced low teacher expectations, carried around stigmatizing labels and developed low self-esteem. Despite poor academic outcomes in Essex County Public Schools, Ronnie went on to graduate with his bachelor’s degree from Old Dominion University and his master’s degree from Virginia Commonwealth University. During the presentation Ronnie shares how resilience and self-efficacy, along with some very special people helped him overcome barriers and accomplish his goals.

Shattered Assumptions: Ambiguous Loss and Disenfranchised Grief in Foster Care
Monique B. Mitchell, PhD, CT, University of South Carolina
As children navigate their way through foster care, their assumptive worlds shatter as they are engulfed in a culture that precipitates loss, ambiguity, and grief. Many children are left alone to cope with their grief because the child welfare system often fails to recognize or acknowledge the losses that children experience while in foster care. This presentation will demonstrate how children in foster care experience loss, grief, and ambiguity and will provide recommendations to enhance cultural competency on loss and grief within the child welfare system.

**Building resilience, addressing behavior challenges, and strengthening relationships: Tools for the foster parents’ Toolbox**

*Dr. Robin Gurwitch, Ph.D., Professor at Duke University Medical Center, North Carolina*

At any given moment, there are approximately 400,000 children in the foster care system. Child behavior problems are often cited as one of the primary challenges facing foster families. Understanding how traumatic events impact behaviors can help foster parents as they strive to help these children reach their full potential. Ideas of building resilience in children and information about evidence-based and evidence-informed programs all are important tools in foster parents’ toolboxes. Specific tools (e.g., APA Resilience in Children, Parent-Child Interaction Therapy, Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavior Therapy, Child-Adult Relationship Enhancement, Resource Parenting Curriculum) will be discussed for addressing resilience, behavior challenges, and enhancing and strengthening the parent-child relationship.

**6:00 PM -8:30 PM**

**National Walk Me Home Event**

*Walkers Soirée*

Raise funds for the National Foster Parent Association’s advocacy and support efforts. This is not only a fundraiser, but also a great chance to get in a little exercise with the family, and enjoy a short walk along the Elizabeth River. Join us by creating a team or just walk with your family. Then after the walk, please join us for a refreshing Walkers Soiree overlooking the river at the Sheraton Norfolk Waterside to celebrate your fundraising efforts for NFPA.
Friday, June 26, 2015
Registration begins at 6:30 AM in Monticello Foyer

8:00 AM - 5:30 PM
ALL ABOARD

Exhibitors’ Hall of Knowledge will be open throughout the day in the Grand Promenade.

KEYNOTE SESSION
8:00 AM - 9:30 AM

Human Trafficking: The Child Welfare Experience and Response
Roy Van Tassell, MS, LPC, Cenpatico
William D. Holmes, M.D., Cenpatico
Irene Clements, Executive Director, NFPA
Savannah Parvu, Victim Advocate, Foster Care Alumni
Dana Wynn Steele, JD, Adoptive Parent, FACES of Virginia Families
Cynthia Downey, MPA, Cenpatico
Lanae J. Holmes, National Center for Missing & Exploited Children

This interactive presentation brings together participants to discuss the complex issues surrounding commercially sex-trafficked children (CSEC) and the disproportionate number of former foster youth who become trafficked victims. Topics will include the role of care homes and schools in grooming and vulnerability, the role of past trauma, education of resource parents, prevention and safety needs while in care and assisting former CSEC youth who come into care. Conducted in the fishbowl style, audience participation/discussion will be encouraged.

KEYNOTE SESSION
10:00 AM - 11:15 AM

Food Security, Nutrition and Behavior
Feeding Children with Child Nutrition Programs...Laura Cunliffe, JD, Senior Program Analyst, USDA

This session will provide an overview of the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) child nutrition programs and demonstrate how these programs directly improve outcomes for children, youth and families. An overview of the role these nutrition programs have in addressing food insecurity and poverty will be provided. In addition the USDA will discuss who is eligible to participate and how families can receive meals for which their children are entitled.

The Food and Behavior...Jane Hersey, Feingold

There are many things that can influence how a child behaves and his ability to focus and learn, including certain food additives, such as dyes made from petroleum. Since 1976 Jane Hersey and her colleagues at the Feingold Association have shown many thousands of families how to turn their child's life around by changing their shopping list. She began volunteering after seeing the dramatic help her family received from the program. A former teacher and Head Start consultant, Jane has given countless workshops to parents and professionals, testified before government agencies and Congress, and is the author of “Why Can't My Child Behave?”

Lunch on Your Own
Food Trucks will be available at Waterside Plaza next to the hotel

FLIGHT DECK: SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION SESSIONS...York/Stratford Ballroom
RUNNING SIMULTANEOUSLY WITH ALL WORKSHOPS ON FRIDAY AFTERNOON and REPEATED DURING SESSION B.
1:00 PM - 2:30 PM
These discussion group sessions are designed to give registrants an opportunity to engage in small group discussions on relevant topics in foster, adoptive, and kinship caregiving. Each presenter will have material to share at their small group table for registrants to sit and learn, together.

**F1. Anchoring Youth with Disabilities in Long Term Support Systems...Jennifer Howard, MPP, MSW,**
The purpose of this presentation is to introduce foster parents and case workers to a broad range of services within the long-term care (LTC) system. As youth with disabilities age out of the foster care system, it is important that the youth's foster parent(s) and case manager are not only aware of supports and services available, but advocate on behalf of the youth in transitioning into LTC. This presentation will provide information on the spectrum/array of LTC supports and services available, such as transportation, housing, and employment, as well as provide insight into how foster parents and case managers can support the transition of a youth with disabilities into the LTC system.

**F2. Bridging the Gap...Chauncey Strong, BA, Fairfax County Department of Social Services**
This workshop highlights best practice in child welfare as it relates to building and maintaining relationships and communication between birth parents and foster/adoptive parents involved in a child’s life. The workshop will examine the benefits and challenges of "Bridging the Gap". It will explore the respective roles and responsibilities of all parties involved in conducting the initial "Icebreaker" meeting and maintaining positive communication and relationships. In addition, the workshop highlights effective partnership and collaboration between public and private child welfare agencies. This interactive workshop will include; a PowerPoint presentation, handouts, DVD and open discussion.

**F3. Journeys through Life Books...Donna Foster, North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services**
Children who enter the social service system have been traumatized and may have difficulty holding on to a positive self-concept. Children tend to trust and share more easily with other children and animals. "Shelby and Me" will be introduced in the session. Shelby is a golden retriever who befriends the child and together they work on their life books. Life books create order and fills in the gaps in children’s lives. In this session you will learn how therapeutic life books are to children and how to create them.

**F4. Navigating Your Child’s Adoption Story...Nina Marino, MSW, LCSW and Emily Webb, LCSW, Lutheran Family Services of Virginia**
Helping your child tell his or her adoption story in a way that is empowering, positive and healthy can be a challenge. In this lively discussion you will learn how to help children choose when and how to talk about their adoption and the bumps in the road that families may face. Join us to learn more about supporting your child, share with other parents, and talk with mental health professionals who specialize in the challenges facing families created through adoption.

**F 5. NO!...Black Fathers have not Abandoned Ship...Ronnie N. Sidney, II, MSW and Shyla Betts, Middle Peninsula-Northern Neck Community Services Board, Daryl Fraser, Virginia Commonwealth University**
Explore the current and historical perceptions of black fathers in America. This presentation seeks to dispel the myth of the absent black father and explore the roles of non-residential and single black fathers. The presentation will explore structural inequalities (e.g. incarceration, unemployment) that destabilize black families and communities. Discussion will highlight the National Fatherhood Initiatives "Inside-Out Dad" program for incarcerated fathers and other programs seeking to change how black fathers are perceived.

**F6. Oklahoma Bridge and Diligent Recruitment...Karen Poteet, MPA, Oklahoma Department of Human Services**
Stop by here to learn about the federally funded recruitment and retention program, The Bridge to the Future. It focused on four key areas within child welfare services: 1) recruitment; 2) retention; 3) process improvement; and 4) customer service. The project provided enhanced support for resource families through training and timely information regarding processes and resources. These activities resulted in an increase in the use and support of kinship placements when children enter a shelter.

**F7. Port of Support: FACES of Virginia Families Ambassador Program...Kim Barbarji, Lisa Mathey, and Jennifer Jones, FACES of Virginia Families Ambassadors**
Sail along with "Port of Support: FACES of Virginia Families Ambassadors" to ports of call that explore how the FACES of Virginia Families Ambassadors provide resources and support to strengthen and retain foster; adoptive and kinship
families; develop partnerships with child welfare professionals to help children navigate life in the child welfare system; and get PAID!

**F8. Raising a Child to Thrive...**Thomas Rector, BioSocial Theorist
Understanding the development of the brain and dynamics of memory formation gives parents the tools to be teachers. The role of parent is to teach the fundamentals of how to be a productive adult: self-sufficient, honest, responsible, and respectful. This approach, is unique, easily understood, and works with children that have experienced one placement or five or more placements. “Biosocial Cognition,” is a paradigm-shifting viewpoint on the day-to-day interactions that guide children through their life’s challenges.

**WORKSHOPS (F9-F18)**
**1:00 PM - 2:30 PM**

**F9. Advocates for Families First Collaborative...**Wilton
Jean Fiorito, National Foster Parent Association; Kim Stevens, North American Council on Adoptable Children; and Jaia Peterson Lent, Generations United
Advocates for Families First is a collaboration dedicated to the vision that all children and youth receive supported care in a kinship, foster or adoptive family when they cannot remain safely at home. Our mission is to build a unified national movement to support kinship, foster and adoptive families who care for children and youth. We are undertaking efforts in three areas: policy advocacy, capacity building for organizations working with families, and improve the public perception of families who care for children. We will explain the efforts that are ongoing in these areas and provide samples that can be used when attendees return to their homes.

**F10. Building School Strategies for Successful Youth in Foster Care...**Eppington
Marjory Curry, MPA, Marjory Curry & Associates LLC
This workshop is designed to help foster parents, social workers, educators, probation officers, mental health providers, CASAs, and other community professionals to understand how trauma affects educational outcomes for youth in foster care. This training will help service providers utilize trauma-informed approaches to delinquent and unruly behavior and thereby reduce out-of-school suspensions among youth in foster care.

**F11. Effective Support Services for Foster/Adoptive/Kinship Families...**Claremont
Diane Martin-Hushman, AdoptUSKids; Mary Boo, AdoptUSKids; and Marie Youngpeter, National Resource Centr for Diligent Recruitment at AdoptUSKids
In this session, we will share research results on effective support services for foster, adoptive, and kinship families. To make their dreams of safety and stability come true, these families often need support as they raise children who have experienced trauma. Across the country, many organizations are providing comprehensive services-- including case management, evidence-based/informed therapeutic interventions, peer support, training, mental health care, and respite—that help families meet their children’s needs. We will explore themes and commonalities across effective programs and demonstrate how support services can help families.

**F12. Navigating the Waters of Psychiatric Care...**Westover
William D. Holmes, M.D., Cenpatico
This presentation is designed for caregivers and other adults who interact with psychiatrists and other psychiatric providers. The information presented will focus on what to expect from psychiatric care as well as guidelines for becoming a better-informed consumer of psychiatric care. Basic principles of informed consent will be covered. In addition, there will be a brief overview of the major types of psychiatric medications and their uses.

**F13. Saving my Sanity...Keep on Fostering...**Brandon B
Betty Hastings, author, From Trials to Triumph
Retention of seasoned and quality foster homes is becoming more challenging. Foster parenting is a tough job, and very discouraging at times. Stress, anger and challenges are constantly coming into the foster parent’s everyday life giving a feeling of “Why continue?” This discussion group will explore the reasons you began fostering, steps of encouragement, and working through it all without losing your sanity. A foster/adoptive mom who was a foster child and has had more than 450 placements in her home will present this session. She has been there, done that, and kept on Fostering.”
F14. Stress Management Techniques for Caregivers...Riverview
Gregory Canillas, Ph.D., Chicago School of Professional Psychology
This workshop is intended to provide strategies for managing stress for foster parents. The workshop will focus on several key areas that will assist foster parents in managing the daily stressors that are involved in fostering children and youth. The key areas will include: self care, skills building, providing structure/boundaries, collaboration with collateral contacts and developing a support system. The discussion will also focus on how to parent and advocate for youth in foster care while maintaining balance that reduces one’s stress.

F15. Tangled: Hair, Race, and Identity...Brandon A Naijean Bernard-Onwere, Ph.D., and Easter Spates, LPC, Cenpatico
For traumatized children, a sense of normalcy in their new placement can be comforting in the midst of chaos. One way that caregivers can promote healing and build a strong racial identity is through hair care. The goal of the presentation is to help participants to gain confidence in taking care of their African American child’s hair. A hands-on presentation will also provide participants a chance to see the importance of appropriate hair care for African American children in foster care.

F16. There’s an App for that! Enhancing the Well-being of Children in Care...Greenway
Joy Kelleher, LCSW, TecTree and Key Development Assets
The presentation will outline how smartphone apps can be used to the daily life space of children and young people in foster care. Participants will learn how that data can highlight trends and patterns in behavior, track placement outcomes and improve the communication between foster and kinship caregivers and the agencies that support them. Global examples including the USA will be highlighted in terms of how technology has impacted positively service delivery and the care of foster children. The workshop will describe the Key Developmental Assets™ (KDA) APP and online platform and its application within foster care and children’s services.

F17. Traditions in Caring and Collaborating in Kinship Care...Montpelier
Eileen Pasztor, DSW; Donna Petras, PhD, MSW; and Marcus Stallworth, MSW, Child Welfare League of America
Kinship care often is an emotionally charged experience. This workshop features an evidence-based approach to collaborating with kinship caregivers to document ability, resources, and willingness to care for their younger family members. Assessment issues include legal, financial, child behavior, family relationships, fair and equal treatment, access to community supports, and more. The workshop offers strategies to respectfully address the dynamics of family attachment versus agency authority and will share recommendations from NFPA’s Kinship Care Committee.

F18. Trauma-focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy...Providence
Roy Van Tassell, MS, LPC, Cenpatico
More than 25% of children will have at least one traumatic experience before age sixteen. For children who come into care this number is even higher and many meet the criteria for PTSD. This clinically focused, informative and interactive presentation provides an overview for caregivers and stakeholders of Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (TF-CBT). TF-CBT is one of 3 interventions selected by the Kauffman Best Practices Project as an empirically proven model for helping children and their caregivers heal from the impact of abuse and trauma.

FLIGHT DECK: SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION SESSIONS...York/Stratford Ballroom
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2:45 PM – 4:15 PM
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F19. Advocacy 101...Josh Kroll, North American Council on Adoptable Children
In this session, participants will explore the tools necessary to advocate for your child and for all children. The session will start with problem identification; move on to laws or rules that cover the problem; and how to find a solution. Those concepts will then be expanded to class advocacy and advocating for all children.
F20. Anchoring Youth with Disabilities in Long Term Support Systems...Jennifer Howard, MPP, MSW, The purpose of this presentation is to introduce foster parents and case workers to a broad range of services within the long-term care (LTC) system. As youth with disabilities age out of the foster care system, it is important that the youth's foster parent(s) and case manager are not only aware of supports and services available, but advocate on behalf of the youth in transitioning into LTC. This presentation will provide information on the spectrum/array of LTC supports and services available, such as transportation, housing, and employment, as well as provide insight into how foster parents and case managers can support the transition of a youth with disabilities into the LTC system.

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F22. Navigating Post-adoption Services: From High Waves to Smooth Sailing...Cynthia Peterson, MSW, Child Welfare Information Gateway
Adoption is a lifelong process. Families often need additional support at various times after a child’s adoption is legally finalized. There may be normal adjustments as a child develops and as adoption-related issues arise. While the majority of adopted children function within a normal range and their families are satisfied with their adoptions, experts tell us that 100% of children who are adopted through foster care have experienced trauma. Families and children can receive postadoption support through peer support groups or through professional adoption-competent services. Adoptive and birth mothers, fathers, and their families also may need postadoption services to help manage their roles and to mediate postadoption contact. Join us for this interactive workshop that will examine the need for, and issues related to postadoption (and postpermanency) services. Find out the types of postadoption services available throughout the country and how families can access services. Bring your laptop and come experience some of the new resources and tools available through the Children's Bureau and Child Welfare Information Gateway.

F23. Navigating Your Child’s Adoption Story...Nina Marino, MSW, LCSW and Emily Webb, LCSW, Lutheran Family Services of Virginia
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F24. NO!...Black Fathers have not Abandoned Ship...Ronnie N. Sidney, II, MSW and Shayla Betts, Middle Peninsula-Northern Neck Community Services Board, Daryl Fraser, Virginia Commonwealth University
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F25. Oklahoma Bridge and Diligent Recruitment...Karen Poteet, MPA, Oklahoma Department of Human Services
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F26. Port of Support: FACES of Virginia Families Ambassador Program...Kim Barbarji, Lisa Mathey, and Jennifer Jones, FACES of Virginia Families Ambassadors
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F27. Raising a Child to Thrive...Thomas Rector, BioSocial Theorist
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WORKSHOPS (F28 –F37)
2:45 PM – 4:15 PM

F28. Deflecting Mother Blame...Montpelier
Diane Martin-Hushman, North American Council on Adoptable Children
Why do traumatized kids often treat the mother figure so badly? Come learn why this happens and understand what is happening from the children’s perspective. We’ll also talk about you and what happens for you when deflecting this blame. The presenter will help you cultivate skills, rethink expectations, use humor, develop resiliency, and prepare you for a healthier relationship with your children.

F29. Grief and Loss: How Do You Mend a Broken Heart...Greenway
John DeGarmo, Ph.D.
This session will focus on emotional challenges, difficulties, and trials that foster parents and kinship caregivers face when a child in care leaves their home. Tools for addressing the sorrow and loss as a foundation for gathering strength and healing the grief will be discussed.

F30. Helping Youth Successfully Transition to Adulthood...Eppington
Chauncey Strong, MSW, Fairfax County Department of Family Services
Presenting in the Fishbowl model, the workshop will allow participants to hear from foster care alumni about their life in Flux and how the development of the Flux training module can help other youth with their transitions into adulthood.

F31. Making the 1st Placement the LAST Placement...Claremont
Jennifer Surratt, LCSW, and Rebecca Ricardo, LCSW, C2Adopt
Using a trauma-informed and adoption/foster care competent approach to parenting increases the odds that placements will last. This workshop will give an overview of a new training curriculum adapted from Jayne Schooler and the National Child Trauma Stress Network - "Becoming an Adoption & Trauma Competent Healing Caregiver". The curriculum to be discussed is designed for foster or adoptive parents to help better understand the impact trauma has had on their child’s brain, behavior and development. The training also provides skills and techniques for parenting more effectively.

F32. Partnering with Children for Academic Success...Riverview
Gregory Ford, MSW, and Monica Bolton
The use of imagination sets the stage for a powerful discussion on how to position youths in a place of achievement and service. Coach Ford builds on the need for leadership and how to bring out the leadership trait in youths. Athletic activities dominate American society. Learn how athletics influences our kids and how we can use athletics for positive outcomes. Strategies for partnering with children for academic achievement will be discussed. This presentation uses video clips; discussion; audience engagement; and story telling to convey a positive message and to help parents and providers achieve measurable outcomes and create success stories. Coach Ford has been featured in the Baltimore Sun, USA Today, Orlando Sentinel, and PBS.

F33. Resiliency Building for Children in Care...Poplar
Stan Waddell, LPC, Cenpatico
Resiliency is an important factor in healing from past trauma as well as strengthening attachments. Participants will understand how attachment and resiliency are closely related, and how increasing resiliency will in turn strengthen attachment. Participants will be able to identify factors that impact resiliency, as well as identifying human adaptive process and how it impacts resiliency. Steps to build resiliency in times of trauma and after times of trauma will be identified. This workshop will also look at the 12 steps for successful survivors of trauma.

F34. Saving my Sanity...Keep on Fostering...Brandon B
Betty Hastings, author, From Trials to Triumph
Retention of seasoned and quality foster homes is becoming more challenging. Foster parenting is a tough job, and very discouraging at times. Stress, anger and challenges are constantly coming into the foster parent’s everyday life giving a feeling of "Why continue?" This discussion group will explore the reasons you began fostering, steps of encouragement, and working through it all without losing your sanity. A foster/adoptive mom who was a foster child and has had more than 450 placements in her home will present this session. She has been there, done that, and kept on Fostering."

F35. Suicide Risk Assessment and Prevention Strategies...Brandon A
Christy Letsom, Chair, Virginia Suicide Prevention Coalition
QPR...Question, Persuade, and Refer -- 3 simple steps that anyone can learn to help save a life from suicide. Just as people trained in CPR and the Heimlich maneuver help save thousands of lives each year, people trained in QPR learn how to recognize the warning signs of a suicide crisis and how to question, persuade, and refer someone to help. Each year thousands of Americans, like you, are saying, "Yes" to saving the life of a friend, colleague, sibling, or neighbor.

F36. Youth who Identify as LGBTQ: Improving Outcomes through Partnerships...Wilton
Gregory Canillas, Ph.D., Chicago School of Professional Psychology
This workshop is intended to provide strategies for working with foster children who identify as LGBTQ. The workshop will focus on key issues for foster parents and social workers who work with this population in order to improve their outcomes in foster care. The presentation will focus on key issues faced by LGBTQ children/adolescents in foster care. Additionally, the presentation will focus on developing collaborative relationships between foster parents, social workers, teachers, school administrators and other collaterals working with the child/family in order to help children/adolescents who identify as LGBTQ to fulfill their promise.

F37. CALLING ALL TRAINERS Session
2:45 PM - 6:00 PM
Annual Trainers Forum Hosted with CWLA...Providence
In the 1970s and '80s, foster parent trainers, including peer trainers, from across the country met at annual NFPA conferences to network, share resources and advocate. Then for the 2013 and 2014 conferences in CA and FL, CWLA and NFPA sent a beacon of light to reconvene the "armada" and the training ships docked! This is an opportunity to connect, reconnect and share. Please join us.

DINNER ON YOUR OWN
Check your 45th Annual Convention Guide for coupons for local eateries.

HEROES GALA
Sponsored by Connecting Hearts: The Deborah J. Johnston Foundation & The City of Norfolk
Half Moon Celebration Center-Nauticus Museum
7:00 PM – 11:30 PM
A Just Desserts Gala to celebrate our everyday heroes...YOU and Your Family!
Enjoy a celebration of you and your family. Join us for desserts, sparkling cider fountain, and cash bar. We will take time to honor foster, adoptive, and kinship families through a video of clips submitted by and about our everyday heroes. Then keep those dance shoes on for the DJ! This is a great time for the whole family!
Saturday, June 27, 2015
Registration begins at 7:00 AM in the Monticello Foyer
8:00 AM - 5:30 PM

SETTING SAIL
A day sponsored by Virginia Department of Social Services and FACES of Virginia Families

Exhibitors’ Hall of Knowledge will be open throughout the day in the Grand Promenade.

BREAKFAST WITH KEYNOTE BY AMERICAN BAR ASSOCIATION’S PRESIDENT-ELECT
7:30 AM – 10:30 AM
Paulette Brown, President-elect, American Bar Association, and Howard Davidson, JD, ABA

Navigating the Legal System in Child Welfare: Parent Roles, Rights, and Responsibilities
Judge Thomas “Britt” Hammond, Georgia
Christopher Church, J.D., University of South Carolina
Dana Wynn Steele, J.D., Virginia

Foster and adoptive parents have a legal right to be notified of foster care proceedings for children in their care. Furthermore, they have a right to be heard during those proceedings. This right has existed for some time; however, states are at various stages of implementation. Many have passed comprehensive foster parents’ bill of rights. Others have passed laws piecemeal. This plenary session will explore the national landscape of a foster parent’s right to be heard, all the while stressing the importance of exercising that right. The presenters will also offer tips for testifying to make sure foster parents, the court, and everyone involved in a child’s case gets the most out of foster parents’ important testimony.

KEYNOTE SESSION
10:45 AM – 12:30 PM
Communication Boot Camp for the Child-focused Advocate
Jeff Cotton, MFT, Jeff Cotton Training

Of the many hats parents wear, few are as critical as being a child-focused advocate. This means we actively listen more than we speak. And, when we do, our words are thoughtful. Our intention is to activate other professionals in the vision and toward the same destination. It takes a village, and a wider net, to help youth get support services they need and respect they deserve.

We accomplish this by consciously ‘upping’ our game, namely our listening and speaking skills. It means we cultivate assertion over passivity or aggression. Being assertive, being ourselves, being true in what we say and how we live, is a life stance, not some techniques. This training is designed to help ‘up’ your skills as a child-focused advocate, no matter your level of expertise.

LUNCH ON YOUR OWN (Hotel Sandwich and Soda Cart, available for purchases)
12:30 PM – 1:45 PM

Luncheon For Virginia Residents, only…
FACES of Virginia Families Annual Luncheon
Lt. Governor Ralph Northam and Secretary Bill Hazel, Health and Human Resources
Special Presentation by Virginia’s Adoption Champion, Debbie J. Johnston, CEO, Care Advantage

WORKSHOPS C
2:00 PM - 3:30 PM

S38. Effective Post Adoption Services…Westover
Rebecca Ricardo, LCSW, and Jennifer Surratt, LCSW, C2Adopt
C2Adopt will share their model for providing post adoption services in Central Virginia. The approach fuses together best practices of trauma informed care, adoption competence and parenting skill building to maximize attachment and meeting a child’s emotional needs. A brief review of the assessment process as well as discuss the range of services offered to families. Presenters will highlight what they have found to be most useful to clients as well as identify barriers and gaps in services.

**S39. Fatherhood: Changing the Game**...Brandon A  
Rob Rodriguez, Aaron Rodriguez, and John Wistl  
Single, Foster/Adoptive Father and Founder of Family 4 Life, Rob R. Rodriguez and two of his 2 sons, Aaron Rodriguez and John Wistl deliver an interactive presentation about the joys and challenges of fatherhood. He will concentrate on ways to stay connected to your children in a fast paced world. Through storytelling and engaging activities, he will provide practical real world applications that can help strengthen a father’s bond to his children. This workshop is good for all fathers and those interested in supporting fatherhood; and includes a short Q&A session with John and Aaron.

**S40. Federal Policy & Child Welfare Advocacy**...Riverview  
John Sciamanna, Child Welfare League of America  
With a different power structure in Congress and the Administration in its last two years, this promises to be a challenging first session of the 114th Congress. This workshop will provide an update on what is expected for services and funding in child welfare, Medicaid, Home Visiting, and the Social Services Block Grant.

**S41. Identifying Forms of Sexualized Behavior from Developmental to Predatory**...Claremont  
Steven Wolf, Ph.D., Virginia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services  
This workshop explores the nature of childhood sexuality, identifying what is considered developmentally usual and expected sexual behavior at each developmental age, and examines the degrees and nature of childhood sexual problems from sexual reactivity to the sexual abuse of others. Those attending will be provided with a set of screening instruments useful in defining the nature of a child’s sexual behavior, a bibliography of relevant books and articles, and a list of useful web-based and other resources. During the presentation, attendees will have the opportunity to use the screening instruments to assess examples of childhood sexual behavior.

**S42. Marriage and Foster Parenting**...Providence  
John DeGarmo, Ph.D.  
This workshop focuses on the difficulties that caring for a foster child can bring to a marriage. During the presentation, participants will come to understand the many challenges that foster parents face in their marriage while foster parenting.

**S43. Preparing Foster Parents to Minimize Trauma and Maximize Teamwork**...Brandon B  
Donna Petras, Ph.D., Child Welfare League of America  
This workshop is designed for agency staff and foster parent trainers who are seeking an innovative, cost effective strategy to prepare and assess prospective foster/resource families as team member in child protection and trauma-informed care of children. CWLA and Foster Parent College have developed a model that integrates the strengths of traditional groups, agency staff and family one-on-one meetings, and online training to meet the learning needs of diverse families, and agency and family resources. The model is informed by the latest research in order to achieve child and family safety, well-being and permanency outcomes. The workshop will feature strategies, techniques, vignettes and examples drawn from the model.

**S44. Set Sail: Fostering Attachments through Play and Parent-Child Interactions**...Greenway  
Brenda Doremus-Daniel, MSW, LCSW, DePaul Community Resources  
This interactive workshop will provide participants with an opportunity to explore attachment parenting interventions and their applications for foster/adoptive parents and the youth they serve. Emphasis will be placed on learning and practicing interaction-based activities that promote attachment; use of the attachment relationship in discipline; and promoting healing for youth and adolescents. Applications designed specifically for both children and teens will be shared and participants will be provided valuable tools to enhance their relationships with the youth they serve. Appropriate for both parents and providers, this workshop will help to enhance relationships, trust, and effective parenting.
S45. SOS...All Hands on Deck for the Inevitable False Allegation...Poplar
Lana Freeman, National Foster Parent Association
From the perspective of a long-term foster parent, the goal of this training is to provide foster families with information on important issues concerning allegations and the investigation process. It may be used as a resource to network and to raise awareness on this issue. It will also provide steps to protect families from allegations and the resulting nightmare.

S46. Adoption Subsidy (This workshop runs from 2:00 PM-4:15 PM) ...Eppington
Josh Kroll, North American Council on Adoptable Children
In this workshop, you will learn the basics of adoption assistance for children adopted from foster care. Topics include eligibility, benefits, taxes, and more. Participants will receive state specific information and will come away with concrete information and strategies to better advocate for foster and adopted children with special needs. There will also be an overview of the Federal Adoption Tax Credit.

S47. Special Education Rules and Challenges...Montpelier
Rebecca Walawender, U.S. Department of Education
Special Education Rules and Challenges...will outline the rules about special education in the United States. Participants will learn about how to access special education services as well as the federal requirements set forth for school districts regarding special education. This is the workshop for you if you have wondered about the federal I.D.E.A., 507, and other federal programs designed to ensure our children receive the education they are entitled to in the U.S. You will also learn about the Special Education laws that entitle parents to have a voice in their child’s educational services. Participants will learn their rights to advocate and help plan for services as well as the best methods for getting and keeping educational services.

WORKSHOPS D
3:45 PM – 5:15 PM

S48. Creating Community: Supporting ALL of the Families of the Foster Child...Greenway
Myrna McNitt, International Foster Parent Organization
Child centered practices in child protection are grounded in creating continuity of care. Often this is missed and children are uprooted from all that is familiar and important to their sense of well-being and social identity. When placed in care the foster child loses family relationships and much of what has been community to them. Foster children benefit from a holistic and wraparound approach to inclusive care. This involves using practice skills of working across disciplines to assure the community meets the needs of the child. This approach requires including all families of the foster child -birth, kinship, and foster families - in the community of caring. This workshop will use a case study to skills of practice.

S49. From Bow to Stern: Community-based Clinician Collaboration for Foster Families...Westover
Megan Boyd, LPC
Becoming a foster parent for a child with behavioral, emotional, or trauma-based concerns can be overwhelming. Because of the continued growth of community-based counseling services as a delivery method for mental health treatment, foster parents often have many unanswered questions regarding how to best partner with clinicians to enhance the child’s success in care. This workshop will provide the following information: 1) Common mental health and behavioral concerns associated with children of trauma. 2) Ways to advocate for the child’s needs. 3) The process of community-based counseling. Participants will learn how to navigate the collaborative relationship between clinicians, foster parents, and other resources.

S50. Emancipating Youth: Keys to their Success and Identity...Brandon B
Gregory Canillas, Ph.D, Chicago School of Professional Psychology, Michael O. Rocchio, and Barry Bartlett
There are an estimated 500,000 children in the foster care system. A study was conducted several years ago that looked at the homeless population in Los Angeles and researchers found that approximately 25% of the population had been previously in the foster care system. This workshop is intended to provide strategies for working with youth who will emancipate from the foster care system. The workshop will focus on several key areas that will assist youth in making the transition from foster care into adulthood. The key areas will include: education, employment, mental health, housing, mentorship, skills building and self-care. The discussion will also focus on how to advocate with social workers for youth in foster care.
S51. Media Safety...Poplar
Aditi Dutt, Bon Secours Family Focus
This workshop will address the impact that exposure to sex & violence in the media has on the development of young children. Parents and professionals working with children will learn the ways that children are exposed to sex & violence in all the different kinds of media and how to protect them.

S52. Parenting from the Whole Brain Perspective...Providence
Sarai Leeb, MSW, Cenpatico
The goal of this training is to provide participants with tools and strategies to help youth achieve integrated and healthy brain functioning. This process is discussed in a clear and concise fashion explaining the neurological relationship between the brain, behavioral, emotional and cognitive functioning. It further explains how relationships, experiences, and memory can affect a child’s brain development and self-regulation. Strategies to help parents and professionals are explored from a "Whole Brain Perspective". This workshop is adapted from evidence based innovative research in the field of neuroscience, described in a straightforward and clear format.

S53. Shared Parenting: Redefining the role of foster parents...Brandon A
Donna Foster, MSW, North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services
This workshop will present the concept of foster parents as active, vibrant partners in the reunification effort. There is a need for birth parents and kinship parents to receive not only services that enhance the lives of children, but also mentors to the families so that children receive the best we have to offer.

S54. Stop Bullying: Taking a Stand...Riverview
Jeff Cotton, MFT, Jeff Cotton Trainings
Bullying is unwanted, aggressive behavior among school-aged children that involves a real or perceived power imbalance. The behavior is repeated, or has potential to be repeated. One incident of bullying can have lifelong implications for youth. Both kids who are bullied and who bully others may have serious, lasting problems. This training covers a veritable smorgasbord of what to do and what not to do.

S55. What to Expect from Psychiatric Care...Wilton
William Holmes, M.D., Cenpatico
This workshop is designed for caregivers and other adults who interact with psychiatrists and other psychiatric providers. The information presented will focus on what to expect from psychiatric care as well as guidelines for becoming a better-informed consumer of psychiatric care. Basic principles of informed consent will be covered. In addition, there will be a brief overview of the major types of psychiatric medications and their uses.

S56. When New Children come Aboard: The Impact of Fostering on the Birth Children of Foster Parents...Claremont
Eshele Williams, Ph.D.,
This workshop addresses NFPA’s commitment to respect the impact of fostering on birth children of foster parents. In June 2014, the Board appointed an ad-hoc committee to explore this issue. The committee chair, Eileen Pasztor, has been reaching out to NFPA members and other colleagues across the country to obtain insight into the challenges that birth children experience as other children come and go, and as relationships and families are created through fostering. This workshop will address the findings of the Ad Hoc Committee, with an emphasis on how to increase supports for birth children as their families engage in the fostering experience.

6:30 PM – 10:30 PM
Take Me Out to the Ballgame
Picnic in the Park and the Norfolk Tides game. (Required separate registration directly with Ballpark)
(AAA ball team for Baltimore Orioles)
Sunday, June 28, 2015
8:00 AM - 11:00 AM

Brighter Tomorrows

National Foster Parent Association Membership Breakfast WITH CLOSING SESSION

I Cried till I Laughed...The Joys of Parenting
The Comedy Team of Foster Parents... Matthew Hoffman, Maryland & Claudia Fletcher, Minnesota

NFPA MEMBERSHIP MEETING
STAY AND LEARN ABOUT YOUR NFPA AND THE ROLE YOU CAN PLAY AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL.
Stephen Porges, Ph.D.,

Dr. Porges is Professor of Psychiatry at the University of North Carolina. He is Professor Emeritus of Psychiatry at the University of Illinois at Chicago, where he directed the Brain-Body Center, and Professor Emeritus at the University of Maryland, where he chaired the Department of Human Development and directed the Institute for Child Study. He served as president of the Society for Psychophysiological Research and President of the Federation of Behavioral, Psychological, and Cognitive Sciences. He is a former recipient of a National Institute of Mental Health Research Scientist Development Award. His research on heart rate variability spans almost five decades of continuous NIH funding during which he investigated neural mediators, developed new technologies to monitor and quantify, and studied clinical populations. He is the first scientist to quantify heart rate variability and to document its sensitivity and resilience to environmental challenges. In 1994 he proposed the Polyvagal Theory, a theory that links the evolution of the mammalian autonomic nervous system to social behavior and emphasizes the importance of physiological state in the expression of psychiatric disorders. He is the author of The Polyvagal Theory: Neurophysiological foundations of Emotions, Attachment, Communication, and Self-regulation (Norton, 2011). Learn more about Dr. Porges and his groundbreaking work at [www.stephenporges.com](http://www.stephenporges.com).

Dr. Nicole Brown

Dr. Christopher Bellonci...a Board-Certified Child/Adolescent and Adult Psychiatrist; Assistant Professor in the Psychiatry Department of Tufts University School of Medicine; and the Senior Psychiatric Consultant at Walker in Needham, Massachusetts. Walker is a multi-service agency working with children experiencing severe emotional and behavioral disorders secondary to major mental illness, trauma, and developmental disorders. He is President of the American Association of Children’s Residential Centers. Dr. Bellonci has consulted to the Department of Children’s Services in Tennessee in support of their efforts to decrease seclusion and restraint and better monitor the use of psychotropic medications for children in care. Dr. Bellonci co-authored the Practice Parameter on The Prevention and Management of Aggressive Behavior in Child and Adolescent Psychiatric Institutions with Special Reference to Seclusion and Restraint for the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry (AACAP). Dr. Bellonci is a member of AACAP’s Workgroup on Quality Issues that is responsible for writing the practice parameters that define the standards of care for the field of child psychiatry. In 2008 he provided testimony to the U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Education and Labor regarding unlicensed and unregulated boot camps and wilderness programs as well as the House Ways and Means Subcommittee on Income Security and Family Support regarding the increasing use of psychotropic medications for children in the Child Welfare System. Dr. Bellonci provides consultation, lectures and technical assistance nationally on the subjects of child psychiatric practice, foster care, special education, residential treatment and mental health best practices. Learn more about Dr. Bellonci’s work on psychotropic medications at [http://www.nrcpfc.org/webcasts/26.html](http://www.nrcpfc.org/webcasts/26.html).

Robin Gurwitch, Ph.D...a licensed clinical psychologist, is a Professor at Duke University Medical Center. She has been involved in service, training, and research involving children considered at-risk, including children in the foster care system for over 20 years. She can be reached at robin.gurwitch@duke.edu. Learn more about Dr. Gurwitch’s work at [http://www.scdhec.gov/Health/docs/ophp/2014/Dr.Gurwitchbio.pdf](http://www.scdhec.gov/Health/docs/ophp/2014/Dr.Gurwitchbio.pdf).

Monique Mitchell, Ph.D., CT... a research assistant professor at the Center for Child and Family Studies in the College of Social Work at the University of South Carolina. She is the South Carolina Research Director
for the National Youth in Transition Database (NYTD) federal data collection. Her research specialties include the lived experience of children and youth in foster care; life transitions; ambiguity; grief and loss; social support; spirituality; and youth empowerment. Her specific expertise involves informing programming and policy using child-centered research, providing consultation to invested parties in the child welfare system, and designing and developing youth workshops, resource kits, and learning programs that serve children in foster care. Learn more about Dr. Mitchell's work at http://cosw.sc.edu/faculty/monique-b-mitchell.

**Convention Presenters**

*(alphabetical order by first name)*

Aditi Dutt has been a family educator since 2001. She is one of only a handful of professionals certified by the American Psychological Association (APA) to teach the ACT against Violence curriculum in the Commonwealth of Virginia. She currently works with Bon Secours Family Focus. duttaditi@hotmail.com

Betty Hastings is the former President of the Tennessee State Foster/Adoptive Parent Association. She has authored the book, *From Trials to Triumph* from her own experiences as a foster child and a foster/adoptive parent. ten.bettyboop@yahoo.com

Brenda Doremus-Daniel, MSW, LCSW, is presently serving as an outpatient mental health clinician with DePaul Community Resources in Charlottesville, Virginia. She has worked with children, adolescents and families involved with the foster care system as a therapeutic foster care social worker, administrator, trainer, lecturer, and therapist for the past fifteen years. Her service to others revolves around her passion to help individuals and families form healthy, healing relationships. bldaniel@gmail.com

Chauncey Strong earned his BA from Elizabeth City State University in 1991 and his MSW from Norfolk State University in 1993. He is currently a Foster Care Supervisor with Fairfax County Department of Family Services and supervises the work of the Permanency and Life Skills Unit. He has worked for 21 years in child welfare. Chauncey is a motivational speaker, trainer and a committed advocate for children and families. Mr. Strong can be contacted by email at Chauncey.strong@fairfaxcounty.gov.

Claudia Fletcher is a former foster parent and adoptive parent of 12 children, currently ages 16-28 and grandmother to two. She and her husband have survived the journey thus far. She is also the Regional Director for the Upper Midwest for Bethany Christian Services. You can reach her by contacting cfletcher@bethany.org.

Cynthia Peterson is a Program Manager for Child Welfare Information where she provides expertise in various child welfare areas including out-of-home care, permanency planning, and youth services. Cynthia also serves as the led in planning and implementing National Foster Care Month, in collaboration with the Children's Bureau. cpeterson@childwelfare.gov

Diane Martin-Hushman works for NACAC as the Parent Coordinator. Working with groups to establish post permanency services/supports to create peer-to-peer support, respite and an AdoptUSKids guide of creative post permanency supports. Prior to that worked in therapeutic foster care. Parent of six adopted kids, former foster parent and kinship caregiver. hushman@nacac.org

Donna Foster was a foster parent for 17 years and remains close to her children. She is, also, a birth mother of 2 children, stepmother of 3 children, 19 grandchildren and 2 great grandchildren. She is a national trainer, NCDHHS trainer of trainers, keynote speaker, and author. She brings humor into her interactive workshops. Contact: donnagfoster@aol.com.
Gregory Ford is a social worker, track coach and author. Chasing the Artificial Rainbow is a book written to illustrate how coaches, parents, athletics, counselors can play a major role in the success of students. Greg’s work in unique approaches to academic achievement have featured in the Baltimore Sun, Orlando Sentinel, USA Today and National Football Foundation. Greg will be embarking on opening a group home for adolescent girls in 2015 - name "Imagination". fordbsu@yahoo.com

Jean Fiorito, NFPA, Kim Stevens, NACAC, and Jaia Lent, GU work in collaboration to bring a united voice to adoptive, foster, and kinship families as well as influence public policies for caregivers. info@advocatesforfamilies.org

Jeff Cotton, MFT of Jeff Cotton Trainings has worked with children and families for 35 years. For the past 25 years, he's conducted inspirational, thought-provoking seminars for foster family agencies, group homes and schools throughout the United States. jeff@jeffcottontrainings.com

Jennifer Howard, MPP, MSW is a Gerontologist who focuses on long-term services and supports policy for older adults and people with disabilities. Ms. Howard's personal experience with the foster care system and educational and professional background provide her with unique insight into the difficulties faced by foster youth with disabilities transitioning out of foster care. Email: jhoward@impaqint.com

Jennifer L. Surratt, LCSW, has 15 years of experience in foster care and adoption. Her areas of expertise are trauma, attachment and adoption/foster care issues. She can be contacted at jsurratt@c2adopt.org.

John DeGarmo, Ph.D. has been a foster parent for 13 years, and has fostered over 45 children, adopting three of them. He is the author of several books, including the highly inspirational book Fostering Love: One Foster Parent's Journey, and the foster care children's book A Different Home: A New Foster Child's Story. drjohndegarmo@gmail.com

John Sciamanna has been working on federal policy regarding children's issues for more than two decades. He has worked in the United States Senate as well as worked with several non-profits as an advocate and lobbyist. He works for the Child Welfare League of America (CWLA) and has headed up two coalitions over the past three years, the National Foster Care Coalition and the National Child Abuse Coalition. John.sciamanna962@gmail.com

Josh Kroll is the project coordinator of the Adoption Subsidy Resource Center of the North American Council on Adoptable Children. He has been helping families for over 15 years with adoption subsidy and adoption tax credit questions. He was a 2011 Angel in Adoption and was on the board of NFPA for more than 3 years. joshk@nacac.org

Joy Kelleher, LCSW has over 20 years experience within the USA and Europe working with children and families, including working for a large, international private foster care agency, The Core Assets Group, LTD. and working as a Principal Social Worker for foster care services in Cork, Ireland. Since 2010 she has been working with the Core Assets Group to develop innovative technologies to enhance foster care services through the Tectree, and Key Developmental Assets companies. joy@tectree.com

Karen Poteet has worked in the human services arena for over 30 years and currently serves as Programs Administrator in the Oklahoma Department of Human Services Aging Services. Ms. Poteet and her husband are the proud parents of four children. They were licensed foster parents from 1999-2002 in Illinois and increased their family via adoption of the youngest two of their children in 2002. karenpoteet@cox.net.
Lana Freeman, Foster/Adoptive parent for over 31 years. Trainer/Consultant on the foster care system in Oklahoma and Texas for over 27 years. NFPA Member at large, President of the Foster Care and Adoptive Association of OK, and Recruiter/Trainer for St. Francis Committee Services. Lanaf73@gmail.com

Laura Cunliffe is a Senior Program Analyst with USDA’s Child Nutrition Programs. In this role, she is responsible for policy and program development for the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs. Ms. Cunliffe has been with USDA since 2012 and has a BA from Wheaton College, and a JD from Samford University’s Cumberland School of Law. For more information after the presentation, you may contact Laura at Laura.Cunliffe@fns.usda.gov.

Marjory Curry is a former foster youth committed to serving as a national leader in informational trainings and workshops geared to improve outcomes for youth in foster care. Marjory strives to use her personal experiences in foster care coupled with research and best practices to train service providers while simultaneously advocating for trauma-exposed youth. marjoryacurry@gmail.com

Mary Boo is a part of the Family Support Team with the National Resource Center for Diligent Recruitment at AdoptUSKids.

Marie Youngpeter, M.S. is a consultant with the National Resource Center for Diligent Recruitment at AdoptUSKids. Working 30 years in child welfare.

Myrna McNitt is a trainer and consultant in child welfare. She conducted training for resource families throughout the USA and internationally. She is on the Board of Trustees of the International Foster Parent Organization working to deinstitutionalize children in developing countries. myrnamcnitt@comcast.net.

Naijean Bernard-Onwere, PhD, is a Foster Care Trainer with Cenpatico, a managed care organization that manages behavioral health care services for underserved populations. Her interest in today’s topic stems from her dissertation research in the Caribbean on racial identity. Naijean can be reached via email at nonwere@cenpatico.com.

Nina Marino, MSW, LCSW, is the statewide Director of Treatment Foster Care and Adoption for Lutheran Family Services of Virginia. For more than eight years, Nina has provided trauma-focused services to children and adolescents as well as conducting community training and education. nmarino@lfsva.org

Rebecca Ricardo, LCSW, currently serves as Executive Director for C2Adopt (formerly coordinators2inc). She has worked in the field of adoption and foster care since 1991 providing services in both placement and support. Rebecca provides training on a wide variety of adoption issues that include but are not limited to core issues, trauma, attachment, search/reunion, birth parent issues and more. You may reach her via email at rricardo@c2adopt.org.

Rebecca Walawender is the Deputy Director in the division of Monitoring and State Improvement Planning, Office of Special Education Programs, at the U.S. Department of Education. Rebecca.walawender@ed.gov

Ronnie Sidney II, MSW, Daryl Fraser, and Shayla Betts earned their Master of Social Work degree from Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU). Mr. Sidney and Mr. Fraser are dispelling the absent black father myth by being present in their children’s lives and facilitating programs for incarcerated fathers. Mr. Sidney works as an Outpatient Therapist & Ms. Betts as a Behavioral Specialist, both employed by the MP-NN CSB. Mr. Fraser is an Asst. Professor at VCU. POC: Ronnie Sidney II - rnsidney@vcu.edu.
Sarai Leeb attended and graduated from Fordham University with a Master's degree in Social Work. Sarai has over 25 years child welfare experience in both clinical and direct care practice. Sarai is presently employed as a full time senior trainer for Cenpatico, providing training to stakeholders within Texas and throughout the country. sleeb@cenpatico.com

Stan Waddell has been working with at risk children and families for 28 years. He is currently the national trainer for Cenpatico, training foster care systems on dealing with trauma in children and families. He can be contacted at swaddell@cenpatico.com.

Steven Wolf, Ph.D., has worked with persons having problematic sexualized behavior for nearly 40 years. Dr. Wolf currently directs the Office of Sexually Violent Predator Services for the Virginia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services for the Commonwealth of Virginia. In this role he was part of the original and is part of the current design team developing secure and outpatient services for adult sex offenders for to be Sexually Violent Predators (SVP). Steve.wolf@dbhds.virginia.gov

Thomas Rector, CEO, Thomas Home Center, is a national speakers and workshop presenter on the “BioSocial Cognition” theory. He is committed to his advocacy and volunteerism supporting children and parents. tcr@thomashomecenter.com

6/3