

National Kinship Review  
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A SECOND CHANCE<sup>INC.</sup>



# National Kinship Review

News, Networking & Information for  
Kinship Care Professionals & Advocates

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## **Kinship Care: Changing a Month of Awareness to a Daily Moral Imperative**

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The U.S. Supreme Court ruled in 1979 that Kinship Care is an appropriate child welfare response and that kin could not be discriminated against when they meet the same licensing standards as non-kin foster parents. But today, only a handful of states recognize September as Kinship Care Awareness Month.

When it comes to monthly designations for causes and issues, important ones like kinship care are in a crowded lane. Our calendars and in-boxes fill with messages about everything from Breast Cancer Awareness Month in October, to Black History Month in February, to the Great American Smoke Out Month in

November. Tremendous effort and time went into elevating these concerns, often from a place of personal passion, to the national forefront.

But what happens when the cause of the month wraps up, to make room for the next one? Where does the momentum and colored ribbons go? Do the conversations and the stories these special designations spark dissipate until the same time next year? I applaud legislative efforts to call attention to kinship care this month, but as practitioners and advocates, we must advance what works for children and families—365 days a year.

I celebrate those who make up the kinship triad (the child/youth, the caregiver and the birth family). At A Second Chance, they are our reason for being. But sadly, after nearly forty years, awareness of kinship care and its value is lacking in the U.S. Kinship care is that safety net that keeps children who intersect with the child welfare system from being diverted to foster care or institutions. And kinship caregivers—grandparents and other relatives, and those who are like kin, are the saving grace for more than 2.6 million children(1). Kinship care works. The research is clear—kinship care is the best choice when children cannot live safely with their own parents.

As the nation wrestles with a growing opioid epidemic, families are being divided. Now kinship care is in the national spotlight. Grandparents and kin are stepping up, formally and informally, as courts deem drug-addicted parents unfit to care for their own sons and daughters. This is another example of the value of kinship care, but absent of crisis, I wonder who will recognize it?

Awareness months and designations do have the power to educate and move people to action. But let's make every day an opportunity to demonstrate our respect and recognition for kinship care through our policies and practice. At the same time, we can help move the nation to awareness and action in support of kinship care.

Wishing you and our children the very best,

**Dr. Sharon L. McDaniel**

President and CEO of A Second Chance, Inc.

Author of: *On My Way Home: A Memoir of Kinship, Grace, and Hope*



Coming soon to Amazon!

(1) Annie E. Casey Foundation Kids Count Data Center. 2014-2016 Current Population Survey Annual Social and Economic Supplement (CPS ASEC). Children in Kinship Care. Estimates represent a three-year average. Accessed July 21, 2017. Retrieve from <http://datacenter.kidscount.org/data/tables/7172-children-in-kinship-care?loc=1&loct=1#detailed/1/any/false/1564/any/14207,14208>

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## **Kinship Care in the News...**

[\(TEXAS\) Harvey deals a blow to Texas' already struggling child welfare system](#)

**Not only have children and families been displaced, by the storm, but hundreds of child welfare workers have been unable to return to work.**

[\(COLORADO\) Leading the Way: Colorado Makes Kinship Care a Priority for Kids in Foster Care](#)

**For three years, The Annie E. Casey Foundation supplied a team of experts to help Colorado increase its use of kinship care.**

[Get a Sneak Peak: The Face of Kinship Care: A Documentary](#)

**The documentary, produced by two Wesleyan University students, highlights the important role that familial, but non-parental, caregivers provide in the lives of children.**

[\(NEW YORK\) Avella, Hevesi bill to amend foster care law passes both houses](#)

**A bill to ease the strain on the foster care system in the state received support from child advocacy groups across Queens, and passed unanimously in both the state Senate and the Assembly.**

[\(INDIANA\) The rise of 'grandfamilies': Opioid crisis requires more Hoosier grandparents to raise](#)

[children](#)

**As the opioid crisis rages, more children are being removed from their parents' homes, and kinship placements are on the rise.**

[Report by Generations United State of Grandfamilies 2017 – In Loving Arms: The Protective Role of Grandparents and Other relatives in Raising Children Exposed to Trauma](#)

**These and other States Designate September Kinship Care Month**

[CALIFORNIA](#)

[GEORGIA](#)

[OHIO](#)

[VIRGINIA](#)

**Coming Next Month...**

**Complexity is not Complicated: Engaging with the Triad**

*Original content from ASCI's Triad Enriched Engagement Model - TEEM(TM)  
discussing the richness of relationship and information found in complexity.*

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