

National Kinship Review
Volume 1, Issue 11
August 23, 2018

[View this email in your
browser](#)

A **SECOND CHANCE** INC.



National Kinship Review

News, Networking & Information for
Kinship Care Professionals & Advocates



Clementine June (seated front left) and other volunteer members of the A Second Chance, Inc. Community Advisory Board gathers to plan this year's Community Day Celebration. Dr. David Brock (center), of A Second Chance, Inc., works together with the board which helps to keep the agency a vital presence in the community.

Strong Ties that Bind: Connecting Community and Kin

Both research and experience tell us that when children cannot remain with their parents, they do best when they are raised with relatives. Children in the care of relatives often have fewer placement changes and school changes; will likely achieve permanency, have better behavioral health, and are more likely to be placed with their siblings. But what can make the kinship care experience and families stronger, and is needed to help children to thrive and feel like they belong, are communities and those in them, say kinship care advocates and scholars.

Community-based kinship care providers can serve as that bridge, to respond to the strengths of families, while linking them to needed resources and to the people who can expand their village of care and support.

Tapping Into the Village

Helping children tap into their roots, and maintain a connection to their culture, traditions and those with lived experiences can be as close as the community. As a community-based kinship care provider, A Second Chance, Inc., has served as that bridge in the Homewood section of Pittsburgh.

The agency was there when Clementine June first stepped forward to be a caregiver for three of her sister's five young children. She tapped into a kinship village support. Then, she was about 30 years old with children of her own, but she quickly learned to coddle and walk the floor both day and night with the youngest—a baby born drug addicted and reeling from withdrawal. Now 62, the women who friends and neighbors call Miss June, pauses to count and recall the 70 or so children, many relatives, she has cared for, raised, mothered and adopted over three decades, and despite a cancer diagnosis.

“I was determined to not let any of these children, including my nieces and nephews, end up with strangers or in a group home. It was hard some days,

but I couldn't have done it without help from A Second Chance. The saying goes, 'takes a village to raise a child.' I know that it is true in kinship care," says Miss June who has been both a client and on the staff of the agency that supported her and her children over the years. Despite the challenges faced by caregivers like Miss June, research has shown that children in care experience better outcomes with kin than with non-relative caregivers. These outcomes include fewer placement changes, fewer school changes, increased likelihood of achieving permanency, better behavioral health outcomes, increased likelihood of placement with siblings and greater connections to their community and to their culture.

Strong Families, Strong Communities

Now retired, Miss June remains connected to A Second Chance, Inc., serving as an active volunteer on the agency's Community Advisory Board (CAB), work that she's done for nearly three years. CAB, made up mostly of former caregivers and those who live and work in the historic Black community that surrounds the agency, is a vital link to the agency's neighbors—what they are doing, what they need. The community members also provide a trusted voice that informs how A Second Chance delivers its kinship care model and serves the kinship triad (birth parents, children and caregivers).

She sees more than buildings on the A Second Chance campus. To Miss June, the agency is a good neighbor that's very visible, vocal and listens. "It's important for those in the community to know that A Second Chance doesn't just place kids. With its programs and services and annual events like the Red Hat Healthy Heart Luncheon and the Community Day Celebration, they are helping to strengthen the community. Those at A Second Chance, show up at meetings and demonstrate that they care about what's happening to the people in their backyard."

As A Second Chance works to meet the needs of its children and families in care, it also meets the needs of children and families who aren't in care with programs, services and events that are open to them. Consider it a prevention approach to help keep children from ever having to be removed from their parents or enter the child welfare system. Offerings like parenting classes, summer reading programs for children and even support groups for grandparents are a part of bigger effort to build strong families that in turn help to build strong communities, and ultimately a strong nation when both

are strengthened, says, David A. Brock, M. Div. whose heads the Family and Community Engagement Department at A Second Chance, Inc.

Miss June is among many community leaders and volunteers who are doing their part. Even now, with raising a 6, 10 and 16-year-old at home, for the past few months, she has been on the planning team for the agency's Second Annual Community Day Celebration scheduled for mid-August. And when that rush is over, she will shift to her annual volunteer work in support of A Dance for Life, one of the agency's signature activities. This rite of passage program for teen girls is another example of how a community-based provider stays connected and partners with stakeholders in the community who should also share the responsibility for caring for youth. Each November, A Dance for Life culminates in a much-anticipated grand ball that is attended by caregivers, birth parents and community members who pack the room to admire the girls in their white gowns and to celebrate their journey and accomplishments.

Agency and Community, Together for Families

"These are our young people, our seniors and our families. That's why the agency creates opportunities to work together with neighbors and families and the community. It's just about the programs and services. We want to have a presence in the place where we work and sew into the fabric of kinship care village of support. For those in care and who are not, we, we want to be a source of empowerment, uplift, information and care," says Dr. Brock, the agency's representative on the Community Advisory Board.

While community-based providers aren't just about the programs and services they offer, at A Second Chance, many have become a fixture and a support for families and those in the community. One is the long-running Camp C.O.P.E.S. (Children Optimizing Personal Experience through Sports), which provide a safe fun space for young men to escape the streets during the summer, play basketball and learn leadership skills. And one of the newest and most in-demand programs is ASCI Reads, a summer reading and cultural program for young readers. ASCI Reads, which helps prevent the so-called "summer reading slide," involves caregivers and parents in the community in the child's book selections and learning experience. Also, this year, a free legal clinic was launched for clients and community alike who need legal guidance and services.

What We're Reading: News

NATIONAL: [How This New Law Will Help Grandparents Raising Grandchildren](#)

Now that the Supporting Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Act is law, what will it mean for the more than 2.5 million grandparents who've stepped up to raise children when their parents are unable to do so? The legislation was first introduced by Sen. Susan Collins (R-Maine) and Sen. Bob Casey (D-Pa.) in May 2017.

NATIONAL: [Biden launches 'As You Are,' an LGBTQ family acceptance campaign](#)

This month, The Biden Foundation launched "As You Are," a campaign to raise awareness of the importance of family acceptance in the lives of LGBTQ young people. According to former Vice President Biden, "We'll use our resources to highlight the harms of family rejection - and lift up research, best practices and personal stories to powerfully show the significant value of family acceptance."

NATIONAL: [Child Welfare Ideas from the Experts #8: Parity for Kinship Foster Caregivers](#)

The Chronicle of Social Change highlights policy recommendations made this summer by the participants of the Foster Youth Internship Program.

PENNSYLVANIA: [Unknowns in new legislation cause concern for children and youth services](#)

Legislation that will affect children and youth services nationwide was slipped into the bipartisan Budget Act that passed in February, according to Mark Egly, director of Lycoming County Children and Youth Services. To date, he said, "There are more questions than answers right now." The Family First Prevention Services Act

redirects federal funding referred to as Title IV-E, used for foster and adoption placement costs, toward preventative measures.

WASHINGTON: [As kinship caregivers struggle, Washington's foster care system benefits](#)

A crisis festers while family members who care for neglected children receive little support from the state.

OREGON: [Oregon ranks first for homeless youth](#)

Oregon ranks first in the nation for the rate of homeless children and youth and 10th in the percentage of foster care placements, according to a new report by WalletHub.

TEXAS: [Lawmakers get a lesson on the drug problem in Texas, by the numbers](#)

Drug abuse is involved 70 percent of the time when Texas Child Protective Services removes children from their families. Half of the inmates in county jails across the state have demonstrated a need for drug treatment.

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

AUSTRALIA: [Plenty of money for NT youth: PM](#)

Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull has rejected suggestions his government should be contributing to the cost of fixing addressing youth justice and protection systems in the country's Northern Territory.

www.asecondchance-kinship.com