

National Kinship Review
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National Kinship Review

Presents...

a
KIN-formative
2018

**HIGHLIGHTS FROM A YEAR
IN THE
PURPOSE OF KINSHIP CARE**

A **Se**COND CHANCE **CE** INC.
Kinship Care

This has been a year of change, learning and celebration that impacted the lives of children and families in kinship care, and those who provide them with a network of support. Throughout 2018, we at A Second Chance, Inc., commented on news about the plight of children and families at home and abroad and the reality of second acts for grandfamilies. Our support for kinship caregivers, as well as our work across the nation, were also among the topics that made us newsmakers. The following are several highlights of photos, quotes, stories, and commentary that you may have missed.

The Current Immigration Crisis and America's Legacy of Punishing Poor Black and Brown Children



Decades-old facilities built to temporarily house migrant adults, now contain children and families.

Earlier this year, as the crisis at the U.S. border erupted, Sharon McDaniel, MPA. Ed.D., the president and CEO of A Second Chance, Inc. and an alumna of care, took a national look and offered a deeply personal response in an opinion editorial published in

the [*Chronicle of Social Change*](#). As the year comes to a close, the problem persists and [two children have lost their lives while in U.S. custody](#).

Forcibly removing children from their parents and placing them in group homes, detention centers and tent cities inflicts real trauma that can be lasting. In their [petition](#), thousands of mental health professionals explained why: “To pretend that separated children do not grow up with the shrapnel of this traumatic experience embedded in their minds is to disregard everything we know about child development, the brain, and trauma.”

Public-Private Partnerships: At Work for Kinship Families

Coming together around a cause and to accomplish what neither side can do alone, is what most public-private partnerships do, no matter the sector. In child welfare, that cause is children and families.

Vanessa Garrett Harley, Esq. is Philadelphia’s Deputy Managing Director for Criminal Justice and Public Safety.

She previously served as Chair of the Social Services Law Group in the Philadelphia Law Department. Garrett Harley also previously served as Commissioner of the Department of Human Services in Philadelphia.



“When done correctly, public-private partnerships can work

extremely well to benefit children and families. The government is the partner that has the legal authority and enforcement power; and therefore, an obligation to children and families that a private agency does not have.”



This is what David Fair, deputy CEO of Turning Points for Children in Philadelphia told us about the potential of partnerships to support kinship care:

“For the first time recently, it was announced that over half of children in foster care in Philadelphia were in “kinship” homes, which have been shown to result in better outcomes for children in care

” ...The shift to greater reliance on kinship care in Philadelphia and the strong collaborations between private sector agencies and public agencies has also resulted in fewer placement disruptions and higher rates of permanency. Why are public-private partnerships in the practice of kinship care essential? The answer is simple: it’s the only way it works. And as a society, we owe it to our children and families to make the system work for them.”

Taking National Kinship Models, Gold Standard Practices to Los Angeles County

For the past 24 years, A Second Chance, Inc. has provided nearly all the kinship placements for Pennsylvania's Allegheny County Department of Human Services, and for 17 years, the agency has provided services in Philadelphia. This year, Los Angeles County contracted with A Second Chance, Inc. to help thousands of relative caregivers through the foster care certification process. The [*Chronicle of Social Change* reported on the agency's efforts](#) to ease the backlog and simplify the resource family approval process in L.A. County, and also how A Second Chance, Inc. is helping the system move toward "gold standard" practices in working with relative caregivers.



Open Minds also reported on our national work in Los Angeles County: [Los Angeles County Contracts With A Second Chance, Inc. To Address Foster Family Approval Process Backlog](#)

Adoption in Kinship Care: The Celebration is One Part of the Journey



For children who
deserve a forever

home, permanency is that valued and anticipated main event. Recognizing the linkages that will continue between a child and their grandma, uncle or other relative is cause for celebration for many families. Whether achieving permanency through adoption with family, reunification or subsidized legal guardianship, education and planning are among the things that helped get them to that special day.

We Need Kinship Caregivers and They Need A Safety Net



Aunts and uncles, grandfathers and grandmothers, and sisters and brothers value keeping their families together—the families that make up our nation. But for many, it is a financial hardship. What would the U.S. do without grandfamilies and other relative caregivers? And who would care for the 2.6 million children across America who cannot remain with their parents? This is

evidence enough for why advancing this time-honored tradition called kinship care must be a moral imperative.

In this opinion editorial published in the [*Chronicle of Social Change*](#), Dr. McDaniel started by asking some of the real experts, grandfamilies. She also offered some recommendations of her own:

- Provide kinship navigation services.
- Ensure that local senior centers are equipped to support grandparents raising grandchildren with housing vouchers, support groups, counseling and in-home services, financial support and respite care.
- Create more effective and readily available drug treatment centers that serve the entire family. Caregivers need to understand how to negotiate the complexities associated with drug addiction and the impact on the children in their care.
- Create more holistic community-based kinship care programs like those offered by A Second Chance, Inc. where families and their children find the support services they need before it becomes necessary for children to be removed.

In a related feature, [Caregiver](#) magazine turned to our staff and one of our grandfamilies for a thoughtful and candid conversation about what it takes to parent the second time around.

Recognition for Kinship Care and It's Long Journey

Today, while many more in the system recognize kinship care's power and benefit, some have yet to realize that families in crisis have value—and can be solutions and partners in their children's care and decision-making. In September, which is National Kinship Care Month, we asked several national advocates for children and families to reflect on kinship care. This is what two of them shared:



Puneet Sahota, MD, Ph.D., is the director of research at the National Indian Child Welfare Association in Portland, Oregon:

"American Indian/Alaska Native (AI/AN) children are more likely to be placed into out-of-home care than children of other ethnic backgrounds. The Indian Child Welfare Act specifies a preference for AI/AN children to be placed with kin first and is viewed as a model for child welfare placement preferences. Kinship care is important for AI/AN children because it facilitates intergenerational transmission of culture and identity."

Marc Cherna, director of the Allegheny County Department of Human Services:



“In Pennsylvania’s Allegheny County, we are—have been for more than two decades—committed to kinship care when children cannot be safe in their own homes. We know kids do better with those they know and love, so we do all we can to place children with close family or friends. The importance of kinship care to child stability has become even more pronounced with the progression and severity of the opioid epidemic in Allegheny County. About 40 percent of children referred to

our child welfare agency last year were referred because of an opioid-related incident. The critical role kin play in our society cannot be underestimated and deserves to be spotlighted during National Kinship Care Month.”

Strong Ties That Bind: Connecting Community and Kin



A Second Chance, Inc.'s Community Advisory Board help to organize a village of care.

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

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.

News & Information You Can Use

NATIONAL: [The First Twelve Models That Could be Cleared for Family First Act Funding](#)

This month, the Children's Bureau released a slew of information on the Family First Prevention Services Act, including the most anticipated info: a list of the first programs and models to be considered for the law's newly established clearinghouse.

KANSAS: [DCF wrong to rush questionable grant](#) (Editorial)

The Kansas Department for Children and Families, the state agency charged with helping families and keeping vulnerable youngsters safe, has failed on numerous fronts.

NATIONAL: [Medical checks ordered for all kids held in US custody after death of 2nd immigrant child this month](#)

U.S. Customs and Border Protection has ordered medical exams for all children it holds in custody following the Christmas Eve death of an 8-year-old Guatemalan boy, the second immigrant child to die in federal detention this month.

OHIO: [Kinship Care in Ohio: The Burden of a Blessing](#)

Thousands of Ohio children are spending their holidays in the care of relatives. While kinship caregivers can be a blessing for families in crisis, these caregivers often are burdened with unplanned expenses.

KENTUCKY: [Kinship Care Troubles](#) (Part 1 in a Series)

There are thousands of children in the commonwealth being raised by grandparents or other family members—while they are stepping up to care for these children—many of them say the state is falling

short in providing the resources they need to be successful in caring for them. In a three-part series we explore the topic of kinship care in Kentucky. (Also see [part two](#) and [part three](#) of this series on kinship care.)

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