The Kempe Center Connection
March 2017

The Director’s Chair… Des Runyan

Prevention

Since 1983, The US has celebrated April as Child Abuse Prevention Month. We will hold public gatherings, place pinwheels or ribbons in public places, and try to bring attention to abuse and neglect. However, just calling attention to the problem isn’t fixing it. We need substantive steps to reduce the burden of 7.2 million children reported in 2015 with 683,000 children confirmed cases. In my view, the key to effective prevention is engineering the family environment to support and protect children.

Here is my list of 7 concrete steps to reduce child abuse and neglect:

1). **Advance girl’s education:** The relationship between years of mother’s education and rates of their use of harsh punishment or shaking of young children is clear. We need programs and policies that help girls complete their education before they become parents. Interestingly, the data suggest that the mother’s education is more important than father’s education.

2). **Delay childbearing:** Closely related to number 1, teens who have access to Long-acting Reversible Contraceptives (LARC) and who delay childbearing until after age 20 are less likely to use harsh punishment, are more empathetic to their children’s needs, and have higher incomes.

3). **Reduce domestic violence:** The data is clear, households with IPV are at increased risk for physical and psychological abuse perpetrated by both the perpetrators and the victims of IPV.

4). **Build social networks among young families:** Isolation, post-partum depression, poverty, and stress are a deadly in combination. Humans are social animals. Support in terms of group well child care, expanded community engagement, school resource centers and other are needed.

5). **Establish family-friendly business environments:** Kids need parental investment and care. Paid maternal leave has been shown to reduce shaken baby syndrome and the benefits of parents being able to attend school functions, teacher conferences, and child sports activities are well-known. Father involvement in their children’s lives has been shown to reduce subsequent drug abuse, teen pregnancy, and criminal involvement.

Continued on next page
6). **Get serious about reducing prenatal exposure to substances by enhancing screening and treatment:**
Alcohol is a clear threat to the development of infants and it interferes with effective parenting. Less research has been done with marijuana, some studies suggest risk to the fetus of subsequent mental retardation. Both substances can interfere with parental caregiving. Screening and treatment provided in a non-punitive manner are much more likely to help the child and sustain families.

7). **Make access to home visitors such as public health nurses or SafeCare counselors routine for all new young parents:** The Nurse Family Partnership and SafeCare are two home visiting programs for families with young children in Colorado that have been shown to have many benefits in terms of reduced use of medical care, greater child safety, reduced neglect, and better outcomes for children and mothers. Only about a third of families offered these services use them.

Let’s think together about these and other concrete steps that will reduce child abuse. I welcome your suggestions for other approaches that we should champion during April.

Des Runyan

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**Congratulations are in order:**

**Nicolette!**

Nicolette Thompson, Student Research Intern to the Trauma Informed Practice Program, has been awarded as a University of Colorado Denver Academic Athlete.

“An Academic Athlete is an undergraduate student who is currently enrolled for 12 or more credit hours on campus, and who maintained a 4.0 grade point average for the past two semesters (excluding summer) while carrying 12 or more credit hours each semester.”

Nicolette juggles a full-time job, is interning here with us at Kempe, and is an ER volunteer at Children’s Hospital so this is truly an accomplishment!!! The degree she is pursuing at UCD is a B.S. double majoring in Psychology and Biology and she hopes to pursue medical school in psychiatry or neurology. We congratulate Nicolette; for she has been in an incredibly intelligent, hard-working, and positive contributor to our team and we know she will go on to do amazing things in this field!

**Natalie!**

Natalie Gallardo, Research Assistant to the Trauma Informed Practice Program, has been accepted to University of Colorado at Denver’s M.A. program for Counseling (Couples & Families Track).

She has been a part of the TIP team for almost three years. She has been exposed to the incredible relevance and importance of research, advocacy, training implementation, and much more in the efforts to creating a more trauma-informed system which helps to prevent and treat child abuse and neglect. Natalie plans on continuing to work full-time during her graduate studies, but we are excited for her to follow her passion in mental health and bettering the lives of families she will eventually serve as a future LPC and LMFT!
Sasha!

We are excited to announce that our very own Child Protection Team Fellow, Dr. Sasha Svendsen, has accepted a faculty position at the University of Massachusetts Medical Center with the Child Protection Team. Sasha will be returning to her home state after completing a 3 year fellowship here with us at the Kempe Center. We have full confidence in her, as she has now been fully indoctrinated into this work. Well done, Sasha!

Update from START .... Don Bross

March 7 and 8, Dr. Kathi Wells, Diane Baird, Detective Faith Stevens and Don Bross presented recent and essential information on child abuse investigation, prosecution and treatment for nearly 90 members of the Great Falls, Montana professional community. Those attending included physicians, lawyers, first responders, child protection staff, treatment providers and forensic interviewers. This is the fourth time over the past decade that two or more of the same team have traveled to Great Falls at their invitation (and expense) and the exchange benefited our team members and was very well received by our colleagues in the Great Falls, MT, area, who continue to refer cases and work with Kempe faculty and allied professionals.

National Adolescent Perpetration Network (NAPN) ... Gail Ryan

The 32nd Annual NAPN conference was held in San Antonio Texas in February and drew 250 participants from across the US as well as Canada, Australia, Norway, and Sweden. The network has been sponsored by the Kempe Center since 1984, facilitated by Gail Ryan. The announcement was made that the NAPN is moving to the Global Institute of Forensic Research (GIFR) in Washington DC, where Jay Singh will take over facilitation, with guidance from the NAPN board, appointed in 2015. In addition to continuing the annual conferences, Jay brings a lot of energy, resources and technology to NAPN members including webinars, a moderated list serve, and other new features.
We wish Jay success in this transition!

Safecare Update... Katherine Casillas

EVALUATION OF SAFECARE COLORADO PARENT SUPPORT PROGRAM SHOWS STRONG OUTCOMES FOR VULNERABLE FAMILIES

The Colorado Department of Human Services (CDHS) announced today that Colorado families who completed the SafeCare Colorado program were significantly less likely to have an open child welfare case six months after completion when compared to similar Colorado families, according to a preliminary evaluation of the program. Parents and caregivers reported high satisfaction and improved skills upon completion of the program.
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**CWTS; Please welcome our newest team member:**

Michelle Mares, BS, MS, is the foster, kin, and adoptive parent training manager. Her primary mission is to cultivate strong connections between the CWTS and foster, kin, and adoptive families across the state with the ultimate goal of making the CWTS’s professional development programs for this important population as robust and effective as the programs for child welfare professionals. Michelle fostered two teenage boys until they were able to be emancipated and continues close contact with them today. This experience afforded her the opportunity to view the journeys of fostering and adopting through the lens of families and youth, a perspective that makes her uniquely suited to her role at the CWTS.

Michelle holds a bachelor of science in speech communications and a master of science in organizational leadership. As the parent teacher home visit program manager at Denver Public Schools (DPS), she led the largest parent engagement initiative in Colorado. She trained more than 450 teachers and principals in the best practices model of visiting families in their own homes, and more than 10,000 home visits were conducted the year she left DPS. She continues to leverage her facilitation skills and compassionate communication, honed over many years and in various environments, to improve the lives of children, youth, and families in Colorado.

In her spare time, Michelle enjoys snowboarding in Eldora and taking family hikes in the summer.

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**Birthdays**

Adrian Lara
Rob Murchinson
Don Bross
Natalie Gallardo
Jenny Koch-Zapel
Linda Jensen
Chad Kaneakua
Laura Schwab-Reese
Brandon Smith
Lisa Merkel-Holguin

March 4th
March 25th
March 29th
March 30th
April 2nd
April 4th
April 13th
April 28th
April 26th
April 29th

**Anniversaries**

Ashley Anderson
Evelin Gomez
Sarah Hunt
Michelle Patterson
Brandon Smith
Anita Horner
Rob Murchinson

1 year
1 year
1 year
1 year
5 years
12 years
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Ahuva, the happiest intern ever

Ahuva Levitt, a senior at Denver Academy of Torah, completed a 3 week internship with the SafeCare Colorado program. Ahuva is interested in pursuing a college degree and career in psychology or counseling, and sought to deepen her interests through her work at Kempe. During her time at Kempe, Ahuva made significant impacts by getting a long yearned for project, the “Kempe Who’s Who Book” off of the ground, by completing 20 staff interviews and typing up staff bios from those interviews. Additionally, Ahuva worked alongside Des Runyan to craft an Op-Ed regarding Long Acting Reversible Birth Control that she plans to submit to a local paper. Ahuva’s contribution to the SafeCare Colorado team, as well as to the Kempe Center, although short in length, was significant in impact, and she will be missed and not soon forgotten. We wish her all the best in her future endeavors and hope she comes back to visit or work with us!

Tickets still available RSVP to Julia Stone

[Image of Imagine 2017 event poster]
April... Child Abuse Prevention Month and the Happenings at Kempe

Every April, Kempe raises awareness of child abuse prevention by partnering with organizations across Colorado to show kids we care.

April 3 – 7
Kempe at the Capitol
Each day, Kempe will share information about key programs related to prevention and treatment with legislators.

April 4, 11 a.m.
Child Abuse Prevention Month Kick-off Rally
Colorado State Capitol – West Steps

April 6, 10 a.m.
We All Play A Role Celebration
Children’s Hospital Colorado, Boettcher Atrium
Join Kempe and Children’s Hospital Colorado as we acknowledge how “we all play a role” in preventing abuse and neglect. The atrium celebration will include remarks from professional staff, as well as education and activities for children and families.
10 a.m.-11 a.m: Special event with Four Speakers.

Following the speakers, 100 blue shirts will be handed out, a Human Blue Ribbon Picture will be taken, there will be fun activities for CHCO patients and there will be a backdrop provided for picture taking by anyone, with the theme “We all play a role”.

April 7, 10 a.m. – 2 p.m.
Denver Human Services Family Wellness Resource Fair
Denver Human Services Castro Building

April 9, 1:10 p.m.
Colorado Rockies Colorado Child Abuse Prevention Month Game
Join the Colorado Rockies and Illuminate Colorado in cheering on Child Abuse Prevention Month; a portion of each ticket sold will further efforts in Colorado to prevent child maltreatment and build brighter childhoods.
Discounted tickets available at www.rockies.com/illuminate
Promo Code: CAPMONTH

April 22, 6 p.m.
Kempe Imagine 2017: Forty-Five Forward
Join us for this signature dinner event honoring Kempe’s 45 years as a Center of Excellence in the prevention and treatment of child abuse and neglect, and inspiring support for the future. More information available online at kempe.org
Let's Get Social!
Join The Kempe Foundation on social media throughout April. We will share tips for engaging with the kids you care about, and resources to help strengthen families. Use #TheStarlingProject #CAPM2017 to engage with us on Twitter, Instagram and Facebook.

THE BLUE BAKE-OFF

Join your suite during the month of April to celebrate Child Abuse Prevention Month by participating in the 2017 Blue Bake-Off! On your suite’s designated day (see below), please bake or cook a favorite “blue” dish or snack to share! Place all of your suite’s “blue” dishes and snacks in a central location in your suite for the rest of the Kempe Center to stop by and enjoy throughout the day!

MONDAY APRIL 3RD
CWTS

MONDAY APRIL 10TH
ADMIN/SAFE CARE SUITE

MONDAY APRIL 17TH
DON BROSS SUITE

MONDAY APRIL 24TH
CPT
Spring Time

Word Search

BIRDS CHILDREN COLORADO EASTER FAMILY
FLOWERS GARDEN GRASS HIKING KEMPE
MARCH SAFETY SUNSHINE TULIPS WINDY