News From the Field
National child welfare policy, practice and research

From the Desk of the Executive Director

As we begin to welcome fall, we think of a new school year beginning and the opportunities to learn and share knowledge. The articles in this issue of News From the Field reflect that spirit.

We celebrate another successful national child welfare conference (held biennially since 2005) and the opportunities for learning that come from convening diverse child welfare professionals from across the country. We applaud the passage of legislation that will offer Pennsylvania foster youth free tuition to attend college. We welcome new students to learn and launch their careers in child welfare. And we look forward to collaborating with new colleagues from “across the pond” as we pursue knowledge and bring about change on behalf of some of our most vulnerable children and youth.

As we continue to engage in the pursuit of knowledge and use that learning for the greater good, we celebrate you as partners and collaborators in improving the lives of victims of child abuse and neglect.

Debra Schilling Wolfe
Executive Director
The Field Center for Children’s Policy, Practice and Research

Pennsylvania Legislature Passes Tuition Waivers for Foster Youth

Years of advocacy by stakeholders supporting foster youth culminated in the successful passage of the Fostering Independence Through Education Act in June of 2019. The Field Center, alongside various partners, drafted and advocated for tuition waiver legislation that would best support foster youth seeking higher education. The legislation was introduced by Representative David Hickernell and gained significant bipartisan support in the 2017-2018 legislative session.

Although it failed to be brought up for a final vote during that session, advocates continued to push for Pennsylvania to join the 28 other states that already offered some form of state-level tuition waivers or scholarships for foster youth.

The Field Center facilitated advocacy efforts during the 2018-2019 legislative session, including authoring a report on the potential cost implications of a tuition waiver for foster youth. By the end of the fiscal year, the Pennsylvania House of Representatives included the Fostering Independence Through Education Act in the School Code, which Governor Tom Wolf signed into Law on June 28, 2019.
The Fostering Independence Through Education Act positions Pennsylvania ahead of many other states with its innovation to include private institutions as well as public schools in the tuition waiver program. The Field Center believes that foster youth, like all students, can succeed best when they are provided a diversity of opportunities and choices. Beginning in the Fall of 2020, anyone who is eligible for the Pennsylvania Chafee Education and Training Grant Program will be able to attend college in Pennsylvania tuition-free. To receive the Chafee Grant, a youth must have been in foster care in Pennsylvania after the age of 16 and apply to receive the grant before their 21st birthday. Approved grants may be used until age 23. The legislation also requires that every institution in the state designate a Point of Contact for foster youth, to help them identify and apply for financial aid and scholarships, gather verification documents, and access campus and community resources and services. Finally, the legislation requires both institutions and government agencies to collect and analyze data on the utilization of tuition waivers, to improve retention and student success.

To view a fact sheet on the Fostering Independence Through Education Act, click here. The full text of the Fostering Independence Through Education Act is available on pages 37 - 45 of the School Code here.

GLOBAL ENGAGEMENT TO END TRAFFICKING:
UNIVERSITY OF NOTTINGHAM RIGHTS LAB TO PARTNER WITH THE FIELD CENTER

Leadership of the Rights Lab, a University of Nottingham (UK) Research Beacon of Excellence and the world's largest research program working on the problem of modern slavery, recently visited the Field Center to present a workshop on modern slavery and anti-human trafficking, sharing the rationale, research questions, discoveries, and impact of their work, as well as pragmatic lessons about working with partners and stakeholders to effect positive change in the area of modern slavery and human trafficking.

Professor Zoe Trodd, Director of the Rights Lab, and Todd Landman, Rights Lab Executive Director, Professor of Political Science, and the Pro Vice Chancellor (Executive Dean) of the Faculty of Social Sciences at the University of Nottingham approached the Field Center as a potential research partner based on our recent research on human trafficking prevalence and child welfare risk factors among homeless youth. The two organizations agreed to pursue a joint research agenda, with Dr. Johanna Greeson taking the lead on behalf of the Field Center.

To learn more about the University of Nottingham Rights Lab, click here.

To review the Field Center's research on human trafficking prevalence and child welfare risk factors among homeless youth, click here.

INTERDISCIPLINARY PARENT REPRESENTATION IN DEPENDENCY CASES

BY GABRIELLA RAVIDA, JD CANDIDATE
UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA LAW SCHOOL

Interdisciplinary parental representation shows great promise in positively impacting the child welfare system. The interdisciplinary model of parental representation involves a team of attorneys and social service providers assisting parents who are involved in dependency proceedings. Studies have consistently shown the many benefits to families when parents work with an interdisciplinary legal and social services team.

The Field Center seeks to understand more about the impact that interdisciplinary parental representation could have on the Philadelphia child welfare system. City-wide implementation of this model could produce better outcomes for families involved with the child welfare system and significant savings to the city. The Field Center is researching existing applications of this model and will release a cost-benefit analysis of how such an initiative could change parental representation in child dependency hearings in Philadelphia.

FIELD CENTER INVITED TO TESTIFY ON THE STATE OF Foster CARE

Rep. Kristine Howard invited Field Center Executive Director Debra Schilling Wolfe to deliver the opening testimony before the Pennsylvania Democratic Policy Committee's hearing on The State of Foster Care on September 9, 2019. The purpose of the committee hearing was to better understand challenges facing the foster care system and hear potential solutions.

Ms. Wolfe identified that the foster care crisis could best be addressed with three simultaneous approaches: a new focus on preventing foster placements, reimagining recruitment efforts, and focusing on the retention of quality foster homes.
Program Manager Sarah Wasch offered testimony on a recent example of how the legislature took action to improve outcomes for foster youth through the passage of the Fostering Independence Through Education Act. Her remarks also identified where this legislation fell short.

Click here to read Debra Schilling Wolfe's testimony and here to read Sarah Wasch's testimony

2019 ONE CHILD, MANY HANDS: MULTIDISCIPLINARY CONFERENCE ON CHILD WELFARE A HUGE SUCCESS

From June 5th to 7th, policymakers, practitioners, administrators and researchers from throughout the country gathered at The University of Pennsylvania Law School for the Field Center's biennial child welfare conference. With participation from various sectors and disciplines, professionals involved in the child welfare system heard from national experts on critical and cutting-edge topics while networking and re-energizing.

With keynote addresses by Dr. Rachel Berger, Prudence Beidler Carr, Esq., and Debra Schilling Wolfe, a variety of workshops featuring important and innovative work, and plenary panels on Legal Issues and Developments in Child Protective Services, the Family First Prevention Services Act, Navigating the Pitfalls of Transition to Adulthood for Vulnerable Youth, and Predictive Analytics, attendees left with new information to apply to their work and a refreshed commitment to the field.

Save the date for June 2021 for the next conference! Call for Papers to be released in the fall of 2020.

Click here to view videos from this year's conference.
A highlight of this year’s “One Child, Many Hands” biennial child welfare conference was the Plenary Panel entitled “Legal Issues and Developments in Child Protective Services.” The panel, moderated by Kathleen Creamer, Esq., Managing Attorney of the Family Advocacy Unit at Community Legal Services included three attorneys: Nadeem Bezar, Esq., Partner at Kline & Spector, Frank Cervone, Esq., Executive Director at the Support Center for Child Advocates, and Kara R. Finck, Esq., Practice Professor of Law at the University of Pennsylvania.

The panelists introduced conference attendees to complex legal issues, including precedent-setting cases that may shape the landscape of child welfare. Presenters explored the relationship between substance-exposed infants and child abuse and discussed an emerging issue regarding child welfare agencies’ rights to refuse to certify gay and lesbian couples as foster parents. Attendees learned that legal representation for children and parents involved in child welfare proceedings is not guaranteed in all 50 states, and that the determination for who has a right to an attorney is decided individually by each state. Additionally, the panelists debated how child welfare agencies should be held accountable when tragedies occur, or when they do not adhere to the policies in place to protect children.

To view the full panel from the One Child, Many Hands Conference, click [here](#) and select Plenary Panel II.

### FIELD CENTER ADVISORY BOARD UPDATE

We are delighted to announce and welcome two new members to the Field Center Advisory Board this fall. These dynamic individuals bring depth and breadth of experience and will be a valuable addition to our Advisory Board.

**Andrew Cohen** serves as Executive Director of Employee Relations at Comcast. Andy grew up in the suburbs of Philadelphia and is a 2009 graduate of the University of Pennsylvania Law School. After law school, he practiced Labor & Employment law at Blank Rome LLP.

Throughout his career, Andy has represented victims of child abuse and neglect as a Child Advocate through the Support Center for Child Advocates. Before joining the Advisory Board, Andy was the Chair of the Field Center's Young Professionals Council, where he helped grow the membership and organized several events to raise awareness of the Field Center's mission. Andy currently resides in Queen Village with his wife Blair, daughters Lila and Dylan, and puggle Winnie.

**Mark Solomon** was the founder and chairman of CMS Companies, a financial services firm that made investments in alternative asset classes such as real estate and operating businesses on behalf of the partners of the firm and its clients. In 1978, he co-founded M Financial Group, a life insurance buying cooperative.

Mark has been involved with the Gesu School, the board of Dream Camp and, most recently, with CB Community School, a private high school in Philadelphia whose student body is limited to children in foster care. He is the founder of American Friends of Yemin Orde, which supports a youth village in Israel. Mark’s primary philanthropic focus has been children at risk, for which he has been recognized by several organizations. He served as a national vice chair of the United Jewish Appeal and is currently a member of the board of trustees of the Jewish Federation of Greater Philadelphia. Mark has also served on a number of corporate and philanthropic boards, including Vishay Intertechnology and the Marcus Family Foundation.

### FIELD CENTER RECENT PUBLICATIONS

Field Center experts recently published the following:


 FIELD CENTER WELCOMES NEW SOCIAL WORK STUDENTS

Through the Multidisciplinary Student Training Institute, the Field Center provides internship and field placement opportunities for selected students across multiple disciplines. Students receive training, career mentorship, and hands-on work opportunities within the field of child welfare. Each year, The Field Center works with a cohort of graduate social work students, a law fellow in child welfare policy, and other promising graduate and undergraduate students, to create the next generation of leaders.

Rachel McLaughlin recently began her advanced year field placement with the Field Center. She is pursuing a Masters in Social Work degree with a macro concentration through the University of Pennsylvania School of Social Policy and Practice (SP2) and is enrolled in SP2’s Child Welfare and Well-Being specialization. She graduated in 2018 with her Bachelors in Social Work degree from Virginia Commonwealth University. Rachel is excited to join the Field Center and learn more about how research and policy work together to promote best practices within the child welfare system.

Kewen Wang joined the Field Center in September 2019 as an advanced year Masters in Social Work candidate with a macro concentration through the University of Pennsylvania School of Social Policy and Practice (SP2). Kewen earned her BA in Sociology at Renmin University of China. Kewen is completing SP2’s Child Welfare and Well-Being specialization and hopes to gain more knowledge about how to connect policy, practice, and research in the real world of child welfare through her internship. She plans to advocate on behalf of vulnerable children in her home country, China, after graduation.

 FIELD CENTER RECENT PRESENTATIONS

Field Center Faculty Director Dr. Cindy Christian recently delivered the following presentations: The medical evaluation of child physical abuse at the New York State Police Conference on Child Physical Abuse, Albany, New York; Clinical Guidelines for the evaluation of child physical and sexual abuse to the Defense Health Board, Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense, Virginia; “Metabolic and Genetic Mimickers of Child Abuse,” “The Differential Diagnosis of Child Physical Abuse,” and “Unusual Visual Diagnoses in Child Abuse” at the Intercap International Child Abuse Conference in Vienna, Austria; and “From Hospitalization to Investigation: Working together to protect children” and “Variations on a theme” at the Baby and Toddler’s Conference in New York City.

Faculty Directors Dr. Sara Jaffee and Dr. Johanna Greeson presented on a conference-wide Plenary Panel addressing “Navigating the Pitfalls of the Transition to Adulthood for Vulnerable Youth” at One Child, Many Hands: A Multidisciplinary Conference on Child Welfare at the University of Pennsylvania Law School.

Faculty Director Kara Finck was a panelist at the Pennsylvania Bar Institute Training on Current Issues for Child Advocates on “Holistic Representation: Addressing the Collateral Issues of Dependent Youth;” at the One Child, Many Hands Multidisciplinary Conference on “Current Legal Issues and Rulings in Child Welfare;” and at the AALS National Clinical Conference addressing “Teaching Law Students to Address Race and Privilege as Part of Professional Competence.”

Dr. Johanna Greeson, and Dr. Ioana Marinescu presented on “National Count of Foster Homes and Exploration of Macroeconomic Factors that Impact Capacity” at One Child, Many Hands: A Multidisciplinary Conference on Child Welfare.

Program Manager Sarah Wasch, MSW presented at the PCCYFS Resource Parent Conference in Philadelphia, PA on “Fostering the Future: Making College a Reality for Pennsylvania Foster Youth.”

Faculty Directors Cindy Connolly, Antonio Garcia, and Kara Finck, and Faculty Affiliate Caroline Watts presented a workshop entitled, “Promoting Cross Discipline Professional Education and Dismantling Challenges to Interdisciplinary Practice on Behalf of Children and Families,” at the One Child, Many Hands Conference in Philadelphia.

Kara Finck served as a trainer on “Child Welfare Practice and Policy” for the Nurse Family Partnership Program in Philadelphia.

Sarah Wasch, MSW and Stoneleigh Emerging Leader Fellow Seth Morones, MSed presented a workshop entitled “From Foster Care to College: Exploring Practice and Policy Approaches to Improving Post-Secondary Educational Opportunities and Outcomes” at the One Child, Many Hands Conference in Philadelphia, PA.
Should the Government Give Everyone $1,000 a Month?

New York Times

Andrew Yang thinks a universal basic income can cure American capitalism. Channeling the munificent and legally dubious energy of a techno-futurist Oprah, Andrew Yang kicked off Thursday night’s Democratic presidential debate with an announcement that he would randomly select 10 families to receive $1,000 a month for the next year. Mr. Yang, a businessman who is polling just behind Mayor Pete Buttigieg and ahead of far more experienced politicians, has staked his candidacy on the idea of having the government give every American citizen this “Freedom Dividend,” no questions asked, to end poverty, protect workers from the threat of technological disruption and usher in a new era of “human capitalism.”

Pennsylvania foster kids will be able to attend college tuition-free in 2020. But the law could be even stronger, advocates say

Pennsylvania Capital Star

EXTON - Starting in fall 2020, young adults in the foster care system will be able to enroll tuition-free at Pennsylvania colleges and universities. But at a Monday hearing on foster care convened by the state House Democratic Policy Committee, child welfare experts told lawmakers the legislation could be even stronger. This summer, the Pennsylvania General Assembly approved a bill that requires post-secondary institutions to provide tuition and fee waivers to teens and young adults who were in foster care at age 16 or older.

Protecting Children, Preserving Dreams

The Field Center is a collaboration of

The Field Center is a member of

Founding Benefactors: Joseph and Marie Field

Click the link below to learn more about The Field Center www.fieldcenteratpenn.org

To receive more information about Field Center work, trainings, and events please click HERE.