

YOUNG PROFESSIONALS COUNCIL WECOMES NEW EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE AND HOSTS INAUGURAL WEBINAR

By Maggie Zhu, MSW Intern

The Field Center is thrilled to announce the new Executive Committee of the Young Professionals Council (YPC), stepping into their roles in the Spring of 2024. **Jessica Taflin**, Director of Outpatient Services at Children's Crisis Treatment Center, takes on the role of YPC Chair. **Molly McLaurin**, Founder of Monarch Connections, LLC, is the new Events Chair. Reflecting on her recent appointment, Jessica remarked, *"I was drawn to the YPC to become a member while supervising a behavioral health program at a foster care agency. I felt that at that time, the work I was facilitating wasn't enough. I was searching for a deeper connection to the foster care network and to connect with more like-minded young professionals who were just as passionate as me. Several years have passed since that time and I am excited to have grown to become the YPC Chair."* With these new leaders at the helm, the YPC will continue to benefit from the Field Center's critical professional education and contribute to our work by broadening our reach.

Earlier this semester, the YPC held their very first webinar — a panel discussion on the topic of "Strengthening Families Impacted by Foster Care and Adoption". The panel discussed three main questions of 1) the importance of attending to the unique needs of families impacted by foster care and adoption, 2) how caregivers and adoptive parents can support and understand healthy child development, and 3) how caregivers and adoptive parents support their children who experience grief and trauma. The three panelists brought expert perspectives in kinship care, transracial adoption, and foster care/adoption and LGBTQ identity.

Events Chair Molly, a key organizer of this inaugural event, commented: *"There is a dire need to hear from experts, not only through qualitative research, but by listening to those with lived experience. Two of the three speakers in the Strengthening Families webinar spoke from their professional viewpoints in addition to their lived experience of having been placed in foster care, adopted, and having such diverse backgrounds as attendees got to witness. The success of the webinar was a result of the Field Center elevating the voices of folks who know what they are talking about."*

Discussing kinship care, Dr. Joseph Crumbly emphasized the importance of caregivers maintaining awareness of how pre-existing relationships and family dynamics may change. He specifically addresses how to respond to the change of trust, priorities, roles, responsibilities, loyalty and more. He mentioned that when supporting families as professionals, they need to help the families to recognize their strengths and abilities to change in order to end intrafamilial and intergenerational trauma. Addressing transracial parenting, particularly in families where White parents adopt Black children, helping parents build racial awareness, avoid color-blindness, and support healthy racial identity is one of the key aspects addressed by Stephanie Oyler. It is crucial for adoptive parents to be aware of the different experiences they have from their child(ren). As a professional who works closely with LGBTQ+ children and families, Amanda Woolston acknowledged the necessity of demarginalization and normalization for children and families; she recommends pursuing connection to other families or communities that share similar LGBTQ+ identities.

To view a recording of the webinar, click [here](#).