

Breakthrough Series Collaborative Leadership

Jen Agosti, model-for-improvement advisor, provides consulting services focused on developing and applying continuous quality improvement methods to social service practice. She served as the project director at Casey Family Programs for the first two Breakthrough Series Collaboratives conducted in child welfare and helped adapt the methodology from the health care field to child welfare. Jen continues to serve as a lead consultant for national and statewide breakthrough series collaboratives conducted by public child welfare agencies and nonprofit organizations across the country. Prior to being a private consultant, Jen was the senior manager of systems improvement measurement at Casey Family Programs. It was in this role that she learned the breakthrough series collaborative methodology directly from the creators of the model, the Institute for Healthcare Improvement. Jen previously served as the director of the Office of Management, Planning and Analysis for the Massachusetts Department of Social Services, where she facilitated the planning and implementation of new initiatives and the annual strategic planning effort.

Kathy Barbell is the senior director of general systems improvement at Casey Family Programs. Previously, Kathy was the vice president of operations at the Child Welfare League of America in Washington, D.C. Kathy has prior experience working with Casey Family Programs. She was the founding director of the Casey Family Programs National Center for Resource Family Support for three years. Her accomplishments include the development of a comprehensive resource center for foster families and agencies devoted to improving recruitment and retention. She was responsible for transferring the Breakthrough Series Collaborative technology from the health care field to the child welfare field. She sponsored two collaboratives, on improving health care for children in foster care and recruiting and retaining resource families. Both used rapid-cycle quality improvement processes to change practice and achieve better outcomes during the 12-month cycle.

Zeinab Chahine, co-chair, was recently appointed by Casey Family Programs as managing director of strategic consulting. Prior to joining Casey Family Programs, she served as the Administration for Children's Services' executive deputy commissioner, where she was responsible for the operation of all direct and contracted New York City child welfare service programs. Zeinab has spent the past 22 years working in the child welfare field. She has previously held front-line casework, supervisory and managerial positions. She has had a significant role in the design, development and implementation of major innovative child welfare reform initiatives. These reforms have led to significant improvements in case practice and resulted in better outcomes for the families and children of New York City. Zeinab has served on various national panels aimed at improving services to families and children. She served as co-chair of the National Association of Child Welfare Administrators Safety Committee and as a member of the executive committee. She also serves as a member of the Child Welfare League of America Advisory Committee on Child Protection and Family Preservation. Ms. Chahine holds a bachelor's in psychology from Hunter College and a master's of social work from Columbia University. Currently, she is a doctoral candidate at City University of New York, Hunter College School of Social Work.

Karl Chan-Brown is a consultant and the chronicler for the Breakthrough Series Collaborative. Karl provides child welfare-related research and writing services. Over the past decade, he has had a variety of roles in the foster care arena, including chairing the National Foster Care Month effort, designing and implementing pilot programs, and staffing early Breakthrough Series Collaboratives. He also provides individual therapy at an all-volunteer agency in Seattle.

Anne Comstock, project director, recently returned to American Humane to direct this Breakthrough Series Collaborative on Safety and Risk Assessments. Prior to joining American Humane, Anne spent six years as a trainer and program manager with the Butler Institute for

Families at the University of Denver, where she managed the institute's five-year, multi-state federal grant on recruitment and retention of staff in the child welfare system. Anne spent 14 years in child welfare practice in Colorado, initially as a child protection intake caseworker and later as a community coordinator, responsible for administrative duties such as training in the agency and the community, coordination of the child protection team, organization and management of community projects and responding to citizen complaints. Anne also spent 10 years training foster parents, caseworkers and case aides across Colorado. She was a manager with the American Humane Association, Children's Division, specializing in community-based program initiatives. Anne has provided program evaluation, consultation and facilitation for private and government child welfare and human service agencies across the country.

Debra Conway became involved with the child welfare system when her children were placed in foster care. A 25-year drug addiction was her first priority. Debra struggled greatly with her addiction and eventually, she was able to maintain her recovery and slowly started to mend the damage in her family. Today, Debra's children are home with her. She has gone on to get a degree in chemical dependence and belongs to a Washington State parent advocacy committee. She is the first birth parent in the state of Washington who has successfully navigated the child welfare system to be hired on by the Division of Children and Family Service as a "parent partner."

Diane DePanfilis is associate professor and associate dean of research at the University of Maryland School of Social Work. She is also director of the Ruth H. Young Center for Families and Children, an organized research center designed to promote the safety, permanency, stability and well-being of children, families and communities through education and training, research and evaluation, and best practice service programs. During the last 30 years, she has provided local child welfare services as a caseworker, supervisor and administrator; worked as a consultant at the national level conducting program evaluations and providing training and technical assistance to child welfare and community-based programs; and conducted extensive studies related to child welfare service delivery, child maltreatment prevention and policy and community service program implementation.

Kathy Deserly has worked in the child welfare field in tribal communities since 1974. She spent 12 years working in tribal communities in Southern California serving as assistant director of a Native American foster and adoption agency before going to work as a policy analyst and technical assistance specialist for the National Indian Child Welfare Association in Portland, Ore. In those positions, she provided extensive training and technical assistance to tribal and nontribal programs on topics related to tribal child welfare and social services. Ms. Deserly moved to Montana in 1996 to serve as the state tribal child welfare specialist, where she spent nearly five years as a liaison to the Montana tribes. Since 2003, Kathy has been working as an independent consultant, working with several national child welfare resource centers, community organizations and numerous tribes. Kathy is a founding board member of the Indian Child and Family Resource Center, a training and technical assistance center for tribal social service programs, private providers and state agencies. Kathy has provided various technical assistance to states and tribes, including child safety and risk assessment, child welfare program reviews, family group decision making, development of a statewide tribal child welfare association and development of administrative standards for tribal Title IV-E programs.

Susan Dougherty, model-for-improvement advisor, has over 20 years' experience writing in the child welfare field, with a primary focus on practice issues in child protective services and family foster care. She was a member of the planning teams for the Casey Family Programs Breakthrough Series Collaborative on recruiting and retaining resource families, and the National Resource Center for Family-Centered Practice and Permanency Planning and the Casey Center for Effective Child Welfare Practice's framework on youth permanency. She was

also on the faculty of the Massachusetts Breakthrough Series Collaborative on adolescent permanency and served as improvement advisor for a collaborative on permanence for older youth.

Maryam Fatemi has a master's in counseling from Loyola Marymount University and is a licensed marriage and family therapist. She has worked with children and families for nearly 30 years, and has been with the Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services since 1984. She currently serves as regional administrator, overseeing the department's operations in the Pomona Valley. She has worked as a children's services worker, a dependency investigator for the juvenile courts, a training supervisor, an assistant regional administrator and regional administrator. She has also served as a regional director and, from March 2002 to August 2003, was interim chief of the Bureau of Children and Family Services.

Ernestine S. Gray was first elected to the Orleans Parish Juvenile Court, Section A, on Nov. 6, 1984, to fill an unexpired term. She was re-elected in July 1986, Oct. 1994 and Nov. 2002. Ernestine attended Spelman College in Atlanta, Ga., and the Louisiana State University School of Law, where she received her juris doctorate in 1976. Ernestine was admitted to the Louisiana Bar on Oct. 2, 1976. Before Ernestine's election to the bench, she was engaged in the private practice of law. She also worked with the Baton Rouge Legal Aid Society, where she handled hundreds of family law cases. In Nov. 1977, she was hired by the Louisiana attorney general to work in the anti-trust unit. In Dec. 1979, she became a trial attorney with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, a position which she held until she resigned to become a candidate for judge. She served as 57th president of the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges and president of the YWCA, YMCA and the Volunteers of America Board of Directors. She is currently serving as president-elect of the Board of Directors of the National Court Appointed Special Advocates Association.

Stacie Hanson recently joined American Humane as the project associate for the Breakthrough Series Collaborative on Risk and Safety Assessments. In this role, Stacie will be working closely with the teams on their data plans and measurement. Prior to joining the American Humane Association, Stacie was a researcher at OMNI Institute in Denver, where she provided evaluation services and technical assistance for community organizations around the state of Colorado. She has also worked at the Colorado Office of the State Auditor and the Center for Social Development in St. Louis, Mo., conducting research and evaluation related to child welfare, civic service and financial asset building programs for the poor. Stacie earned her master's in social work from Washington University in St. Louis, and her bachelor's in social work from Pacific Lutheran University in Tacoma, Wash. Stacie volunteers with the Court Appointed Special Advocate program in Denver, where she works with children and youth involved in the child welfare system.

Kary A. James was most recently a manager of systems improvement methodology in the Casey Family Programs Technical Assistance Unit and led the Breakthrough Series Collaborative on improving educational continuity and school stability for children in out-of-home care. Prior to assuming this role, Kary was a systems improvement specialist and supported Casey's internal and external Breakthrough Series Collaborative efforts. Prior to joining Casey Family Programs in 2004, Kary worked for The Philadelphia Health Management Corporation as coordinator for their intensive outpatient treatment program. Additionally, she supervised the child social work unit of the Albert Einstein Healthcare Network/Jefferson Health System's crisis response center and worked as a social worker for the Portsmouth Department of Social Services foster care services unit. Her professional experience includes direct service, mental health and substance abuse treatment and program development and management. Kary holds a master's in social work, with a concentration in clinical social work and a bachelor's in sociology and criminal justice.

Caren Kaplan is the director of child protection reform at the American Humane Association and is the project leader for this Breakthrough Series Collaborative. At American Humane, Caren's areas of work currently include differential response, safety, risk and comprehensive family assessments and chronic neglect. Prior to joining American Humane, Caren worked for nine years at the Child Welfare League of America, where she partnered with traditional and nontraditional stakeholders in the identification and monitoring of child protection practices nationwide; the development of best practices guidance; and the creation of strategic alliances to promote interdisciplinary, comprehensive, community-based solutions to keeping children safe, reducing the risks of maltreatment and supporting and strengthening families.

Suzanne Lohrbach is the clinical supervisor for traditional child protection field services and family group decision making for Olmsted County Child and Family Services in southeast Minnesota. She is consultant to a public-private domestic violence team addressing the overlap between child maltreatment and spouse abuse. She is the Minnesota lead for the implementation of "Signs of Safety," an Australian framework for guiding child protection practice. Suzanne has 20 years' experience as a child and family therapist working with high-risk child protection cases. She has developed "Family Works," a community-based child protection program using large group, small group and in-home services for challenging families. Suzanne has presented at state and national conferences on child welfare issues. Suzanne received the 2002 Women in Leadership Roles Award for her work in child welfare reform.

Shantay "Shawn" Mines is a consultant currently working for the New Jersey Department of Children and Families, in the adolescent services unit. At the department, Shantay has served as a panel speaker and presenter for resource family recruitments, reviewed numerous requests for proposals for programs funded by the Division of Youth and Family Services, participated on workgroups for the implementation of New Jersey's child welfare reform plan and worked on several new initiatives taken on by the adolescent services unit. Shantay was the 2006-2007 president of the National Foster Youth Advisory Council, a nationwide youth-driven board dedicated to improving the lives of youth in foster care. Shantay is also the former president of the Division of Youth and Family Services Central Region Youth Advisory Board -- a group of young adults, currently or formerly in foster care, who provide input to the division on services. Shantay has served as a keynote and panel speaker for several child-serving agencies, most recently at the Annie E. Casey 2007 Kids Count Conference. Shantay is a former foster child in the state of New Jersey, and was in care for four years. He has a bachelor's in pan-African studies and is currently pursuing a master's in counseling psychology at Seton Hall University.

Donna Parrish is American Humane's project manager for the Breakthrough Series Collaborative on Safety and Risk Assessments. Donna has over 14 years' experience in the human services field and is a licensed professional counselor in the state of Colorado. Donna has served as a youth counselor, family therapist, clinical supervisor, honorarium faculty member at the University of Colorado at Denver and Health Sciences Center, trainer, consultant and most recently, project manager. Donna has a strong emphasis in clinically sound and culturally responsive child-protection treatment and assessments. Donna worked in a county child welfare agency for four and a half years as a clinical supervisor. She is also the co-founder of the Institute for Cultural Connections, a training and consulting group that provides practitioners with tools, strategies and interventions to deliver services in a culturally responsive manner.

Tom Pomonis is currently a consultant with the Breakthrough Series Collaborative project, focusing on helping teams develop their measures. He has more than 17 years' experience in child welfare, working successfully in many different aspects. As a long-time state employee, he was involved in writing policy, computer system development and implementation

(SACWIS/AFCARS/NCANDS), research, and the federal review processes (CF SR, and IV-E). More recently Tom has become a private consultant. He holds a master's in regulatory economics.

Barry Salovitz has had 32 years of private and public sector experience in child welfare services, across a broad spectrum of positions and responsibilities. His consultation experiences include work with federal, state, county and private child and family service organizations in the United States and internationally. Barry was formerly director of the National Resource Center on Child Maltreatment, managing a team of nationwide consultants and delivering consultation services to numerous states and tribes, in support of Child and Family Services Reviews and Program Implementation Plans. Barry was the lead author of the seminal New York State safety, risk assessment and services planning model. The safety assessment component, first embedded in the model, has become the nationwide standard for initial safety assessment protocols. Barry has helped several states and counties design and implement child-safety and risk-related protocols, applicable throughout the case continuum. His most recent work has focused on reunification decision making and the judicial and child welfare agencies' interrelationships. In 2006, the International Journal of Child Abuse and Neglect published Barry's co-written article, "Evolving a Theoretical Model of Child Safety in Maltreating Families."

Damon Marco Saunders is currently a supervisor, and prior to this role, worked five and half years with the Fairfax County Department of Family Services in Virginia, as a child protective service social worker. He has worked directly with families throughout their involvement in the system – from investigation through ongoing services. He has a master's in social work and is currently in the process of getting his social work license.

Lewis H. (Harry) Spence, co-chair, is currently a lecturer at Harvard Graduate School of Education and Kennedy School of Government. In 2001, Lewis was appointed commissioner of the Massachusetts Department of Social Services, which provides a wide variety of family programs for more than 21,000 Massachusetts families. He completed his service as commissioner in June 2007. From 1995 to 2000, Lewis served as deputy chancellor for operations for the New York City Public Schools, the nation's largest school system. Prior to his work in New York, Spence was appointed to the post of receiver for the bankrupt city of Chelsea, Mass., where he served for four years. Lewis has also served as lecturer in public policy at the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard; court-appointed receiver of the Boston Housing Authority, which became a model for public housing intervention across the nation; and executive director of the Cambridge Housing Authority. He has also worked in private real estate development, consulted on the Advanced Placement program to the College Board, and practiced law. Lewis, a resident of Boston, received a juris doctorate in 1974 from Harvard Law School and a bachelor's from Harvard College in 1969.

Tess Thomas has been a foster parent and advocate for youth for many years. She is the founder and executive director of Thomas House, a family foster home for boys aged 8 to 18. Tess administers Thomas House with a hands-on approach -- counseling, disciplining and most of all, loving the youths she treats as her own. Her mission is "to provide the highest quality services available to youth, who can fit into a family type atmosphere, but who require more structure than is provided by a typical foster family; to provide a safe environment for these youths to develop and grow emotionally and academically; and to welcome parents and families to be involved with the program." Tess received her formal education at Olympic College (where she was inducted into the Hall of Fame) in Bremerton, Wash. She later went on to the University of Puget Sound in Tacoma, then to the University of Washington. Tess worked with mentally challenged children at the Olympic Center, in Bremerton and went on to establish a tutoring outreach program called H.E.L.P (Help Every Little Person). In the early '70s, she worked for the Seattle Public Schools on a special desegregation integration project. Tess has received

numerous awards and recognition for her work as an advocate for children and her community. She was awarded the 2005 Bank of America Local Hero Award. Tess has written a book titled, *The Love Returns* on her experience at Thomas House

Tamika Youmans serves as a youth on the Worcester West Area Office's adolescent breakthrough series team in Massachusetts. Tamika is 21 years old. She aged out of the system at 18, but later voluntarily signed herself back into care. She currently works as a clinical counselor in a residential program.