

the Link



Spring 2015

the children of today are tomorrow's parents - los niños del presente son los padres del futuro - les enfants d'aujourd'hui seront les parents de demain

In this Issue Happy 20th Anniversary to Us!

Our Link team had a great time with this issue! We had the chance to speak with many of those who were instrumental in conceiving of Healthy Families NY and making it the model program that it is now, on its 20th birthday. Enjoy a stroll down memory lane, and a glimpse at ideas for where your colleagues would like to see our program after another 20 years. We have a beautiful timeline of our important milestones, created with input from programs and Central Administration. We also have some practical findings on fatherhood in our Research Corner, and a fun new idea to use with prenatal families in our Ready, Set, Go.

Happy reading! Feel free to send your comments to Ellen Butowsky at ebutowsky@preventchildabuse.org.

—Ellen Butowsky, PCANY

Congratulations to HFNY *from Prevent Child Abuse America!*

Prevent Child Abuse America and the Healthy Families America (HFA) national office staff are delighted to congratulate Healthy Families New York (HFNY) on their 20th Anniversary. It is exciting to know the first babies born and served by the program are now 20 years old and launching into adulthood.

Over the course of the past 20 years, HFNY has partnered with the national office in several capacities. HFNY was the first state to complete the Multi-Site Accreditation process, agreeing to provide valuable feedback. At that time, the central administration component of the process did not exist. The feedback led to the development of a more sophisticated accreditation process and the development of the central administration best practice standards. This is a process of accreditation that is unparalleled in the home visiting field.

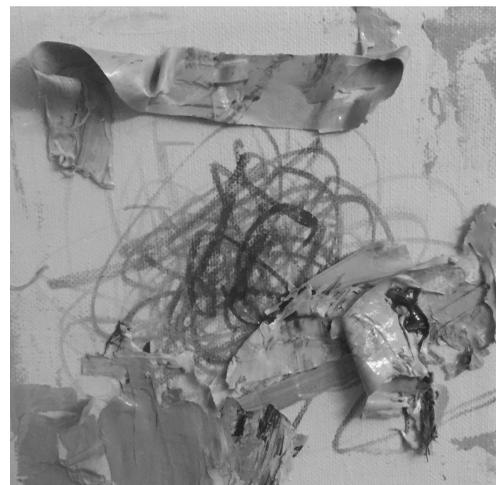
HFNY has a 20-year history of evaluating their efforts. Having launched the largest study to date in 2000, using a rigorous randomized control design, the study included experienced, accredited sites, serving a population that was more representative than many other studies of HFA programs nationwide. From a national perspective, this means that results are more readily generalized to other sites. Additionally, the large sample size allowed in-depth examination of key subpopulations such as first-time mothers enrolled during pregnancy.

The HFNY evaluation has played a major role in expanding HFA's evidence base and has taught us much to strengthen our model, such as the added value of enrolling prenatally when possible. Some of the most important outcomes of this research are HFA's impacts on children's school adjustment, preventing child maltreatment (measured by parent self-report), and preventing low birth weight among mothers enrolled in pregnancy. The HFNY results contributed greatly to HFA's status as a proven model in the federal Maternal, Infant

and Early Childhood Home Visiting program, more than any other evaluation. The overall impact of this study has been to solidify HFA's evidence base, thereby benefiting the entire network that relies on such research to sustain and grow our national presence.

With gratitude and appreciation, we congratulate all of you with HFNY on a successful 20 years, and we look forward to many more.

—*Jim Hmurovich, President and CEO, Prevent Child Abuse America and Cydney Wessel, National Director of Healthy Families America*



Art work by Davis, age 3

A Note from OCFS

This is an exciting time for Healthy Families New York. We are celebrating 20 years of supporting children and their families throughout New York State. Through your efforts we have completed over 54,000 KempeAssessments, and enrolled over 34,500 families in home visiting services. As a result, you provided over 1,342,000 home visits and over 17,500 included fathers!



We have come a long way! In 1994, the first NYS-supported Healthy Families program began. One year later, in 1995, the Healthy Families New York System began with 11 programs and the beginning of a state infrastructure to support these programs. In 2000, we grew to 28 programs and then in 2006 we grew to 36 home visiting programs. We continue to grow. With the assistance of the federal Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) funds we have been able to expand five of our existing programs to serve additional families and we recently heard that New York is a recipient of additional MIECHV funds and there are plans to expand further. OCFS has been contacted by other communities because they are interested in beginning a Healthy Families program with their at-risk families because of the success this program provides.

Your work with the most vulnerable families residing in this state has proven to be fruitful. You have been successful in improving birth outcomes for infants, reducing child abuse and neglect, promoting success in school for young children, and supporting positive parenting. Research shows us that it is critical that children have positive early life experiences. Your focus on educating families on parenting and child development, connecting families with medical providers, assessing children for delays, and helping families access community resources and services supports those positive experiences for the whole family.

I am so proud to be part of the Healthy Families New York program. We have accomplished so much in the last 20 years. With your help Healthy Families will continue to grow and help families provide the best childhood they can for their children. Thank you for all that you do to support the program, your communities, and your families.

My sincerest gratitude,
Bernadette Johnson, Healthy Families New York Coordinator

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Reflections *on 20 Years of HFNY*

Members of the PCANY Training and Staff Development team had a great time talking with HFNY staff that has been involved since the inception of the program. We had so many people we wanted to interview that there isn't enough room for them all in this issue! Check out the next issue of the Link for our interviews with Lisa Galatio, Program Manager, Marlene Shiloh, FSW Supervisor, Donna O'Brien, FSW Supervisor, Rosemary Miller, FSW and Rita Babie, FAW.



Joy Griffith
HFNY Program Coordinator
1994-2008

As we begin a celebration of 20 years, can you remember the first year you were hired? Which stand out as your best

memories?

At the time, I was pregnant, and my supervisor at the Office of Child and Family Services (OCFS) said that when I returned from maternity leave he wanted me to develop a pilot home visiting program. Meanwhile, Jim Cameron and Chris Deys from Prevent Child Abuse New York (PCANY) were conducting regional forums to generate and gauge interest about developing home visiting services. Also, at the same time, Anne Reiniger, Executive Director of the New York Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, Liz Anisfeld at Columbia University and Alianza Dominicana had started the Best Beginnings program in Washington Heights. We had a small amount of federal funding, not yet earmarked, so we began developing a request for proposal, and coordinating with the New York State Department of Health. Everything started to fall together.

One of our first questions was, 'How do we evaluate the program?' There were lots of debates about whether we should conduct a randomized controlled trial. We decided to create a data system as a first step. That system was such a good investment because it has helped us manage the program at both the state and local level, and the data has made a big contribution to advocacy efforts.

What really stands out is that everybody—OCFS, SUNY, PCANY, DOH, and the HFNY sites were willing to be part of a team effort. That's a strength we still have."

What are you most proud of in these 20 years?

"I'm so happy and proud to be part of Healthy Families New York (HFNY); it has grown so much and is so much stronger. There has been a resurgence of funding and commitment to the program. I'm proud that HFNY is such a great resource for parents who are struggling."

What has surprised you? What did you not anticipate in your early years?

"I think we are all surprised by how much the state system has grown. HFNY is much more sophisticated. One example is how we have been able to respond to the Healthy Families

America (HFA) accreditation process as a state system, and how, through that process, we developed a strong framework for best practices.

We had a lot of debate before launching the randomized controlled trial (RCT) that has been so valuable in showing HFNY's success. For one thing, an RCT is expensive; for another it is hard to accept that some people who would benefit from the services would not receive them. Plus, you can't guarantee what the outcomes of the study will be! However, we've seen that the RCT was a great investment and we have learned a lot from it. It has given HFNY national recognition and status as an exemplary program, and over the years, it has helped to make HFNY more effective."

What would you say are the three biggest differences between then and now?

"In the beginning there were no systems in place and only a handful of very small programs. Now we have a great state system of training, data management, evaluation and many more programs. Another difference is the impact we've had in communities! When you compare the number of families served in the first year with the number we're serving now, it's really amazing. In the beginning, we spent so much time creating the system and hashing out so many questions; there were so many details that needed to be ironed out."

What kept you with Healthy Families all these years?

"HFNY is such a great program. It was wonderful to be part of a great team making a big difference. There is nothing more important than supporting families at the birth of a child."

What are you most looking forward to for HFNY in the next 20 years?

"I would like to see HFNY continue to grow and be available to more families. I'd like to see the concept of a central intake in New York be realized as a way to make sure everybody gets something at such a critical time. It is hard to make that next big step; there is a desire and need to protect what already exists. Yet we need to step out there and advocate so that HFNY continues to be an innovator and leader in the field, and it becomes a household word. We need to help communities and funders see that providing HFNY's support to families directly impacts larger issues like school readiness and literacy. My hope is that HFNY will be a strong support for New York's families for many years to come."

Joy Griffith is now the Executive Director of the Maternity & Early Childhood Foundation. The picture is Joy and her son, Taylor, now 21 years old.



Peggy Sheehan
Program Manager Schenectady
Healthy Families, hired 1997 when
the program launched

As we begin a celebration of 20 years, can you remember the first year you were hired? Which stand out as your best memories?

“In Schenectady, as we began there were so many diverse organizations that were interested in starting home visiting. We couldn’t find a boardroom big enough to talk about home visiting. When we called OCFS and talked about wanting to start the program without money, AnnMarie Corea from Buffalo was sent over and that really helped us. It would be negligent to not say how much Fatima Horne helped us because at that time she was running the Albany program. It got me very excited about working with them. Bernadette Johnson and Joy Griffith were the first OCFS people I met and it got me so excited because they were all so dedicated. That was phenomenal.”

What are you are most proud of in these 20 years?

“One of the things is meeting the young teens who were our first babies we enrolled and seeing how they are succeeding in school and relationships, and how centered they are, and knowing that HFNY had something to do with it. Seeing the ripple effect in our community: HFNY generated energy and synergy with community-based organizations that hadn’t worked together before. I think within HFNY we have been doing it -collective thinking and collaborating- for years. We were a system that knew how to create a system, and knew how to do it right. I see that people now understand what evidence-based programs can do, and know that our community has looked to us for results. They look at the performance targets and say, ‘This is what HFNY is doing; how can we do that in other systems?’ We have invested in creating consistent messaging in our community, so what families hear from their FAW and FSW they hear from the WIC Nutritionist as well.

I love that in HFNY we really view the parents as the experts. In the healthcare field we were taught to tell patients what to do. To find this model and say to parents, ‘You know your family better than I do,’... It was empowering as a professional as well to be enriched by the family. As we all refined our practice we also refined our own parenting. There is an impact within our own households and those of us involved have a different set of relationships that we might not have had. We have grown up together in this program.”

What has surprised you? What did you not anticipate in your early years?

“It surprised me and I’m also proud that HFNY helped create a positive storm around home visiting and the needs of families. I didn’t think we would be as big as we are today. We are even recognized nationwide and thanks goes to Central Administration for that. Programs come and go and the fact that we are still here and growing bigger... it has surprised me.

What would you say are the three biggest differences between then and now?

“We have an increased confidence in knowing that what we have is good. In the beginning, we were aware that we were on the right track, but it needed to mature. For example, the Best Practice Standards are really reflective of the evidence. I think our quality assurance is a lot tighter and even our training as well. I am so impressed with our trainings, especially the Core trainings and wraparounds. In looking back, I can see how enhanced the topics covered are now. We did a very good job with that early on, but now that is so much better.

I think our hiring practices have improved. We know what the qualities of the FAWs and FSWs really need to be in order to be successful. Hiring is always a difficult piece because the match is so important, but it is a lot easier now to pick people who can do the work and enjoy it.

At the beginning of the program breastfeeding wasn’t even a Performance Target and now it is such a big focus. More programs are getting FSWs certified as lactation counselors. It is unique compared to many family support programs. We partner a lot with the Early Head Start program. They have four and we have four, and that’s a big difference from before. Breastfeeding is recognized as the perfect PCI and that makes me very proud: We are helping more hospitals become baby-friendly. The home visitors will get stopped by staff in the hospital and the staff will say thank you for helping the parents become prepared for having their baby.”

What are you most looking forward to for HFNY in the next 20 years?

“I am looking forward to home visiting being available to every family so that every family has the opportunity to have someone come into the home to guide them prenatally and in the early months. I would like to see New York State be a state in which home visiting is normalized and that all new parents are waiting for that home visitor to knock at the door.



John Heck
Senior Programmer Analyst, hired
1994, Center for Human Services
Research, SUNY Albany

As we begin a celebration of 20 years, can you remember the first year you were hired? Which stand out as your best memories?

I was working at DSS on Pearl St. and when the state leadership changed, my program was de-funded and I was going to need to find a new job. Joy Griffith called me into a meeting

while HFNY was being developed, and I was hired to begin developing the evaluation design for the program.

My best memories of those early years are the excitement of having a new project, and the great people I got to work with.

Continued from Page 4

The funding was scary in the beginning, but it was a good crew to work with, and it was great traveling out to the sites and national conferences.

What are you most proud of in these 20 years?

I'm proud of the software we worked on all these years, and how well known it has become. I've become part of the National Accreditation Panel, and have gotten to know people across the country who have really good things to say about New York and the MIS we have. I got an e-mail recently from a HFNY supervisor who had been at a HFA training and said people there were raving about our system, so it's nice to be recognized on a national level like that.

What has surprised you? What did you not anticipate in your early years?

One thing that's surprised me is that it's lasted so long and how it's grown! Something I did anticipate was how fast technology has changed and how we've had to adapt the system. The way the model changes has also affected how we've had to adapt.

What would you say are the biggest differences between then and now?

One big difference is the size of the program. This started as a pretty small program and has grown to include so many sites and such an extensive data system. The other difference is that we know what we're doing a lot more now. The whole system has really matured, and we have a really good thing going.

What is it that has kept you with Healthy Families all these years?

What's kept me here is that I'm really passionate about this MIS. I've really enjoyed adapting the software to people's needs, and it's the first system I worked on that actually matured. I've also really liked doing the training, and visiting different sites.

What are you most looking forward to for HFNY in the next 20 years?

Well, I'm looking forward to my retirement at some point! But for HFNY I would hope that the program keeps getting funded and has all the resources needed to keep it strong. I hope there will be passionate people that keep working on the program, and that people in general will continue to feel strongly about it.



Bill Perry

Broome County Healthy Families, hired 2003

As we begin a celebration of 20 years, can you remember the first year you were hired? Which stand out as your best memories?

One thing I will always remember is that we had a conference...it was John Heck and me, and 350 women. I can remember standing off to the side with John, chatting. Though I had been in the human service field

that is dominated by women, I had not experienced anything like that. What we were talking about doing was new; fatherhood was a new concept. People needed to get past that this was just a program for mothers and see it as a program for new parents. In many cases, what prevented women staff from opening to father involvement were their own biases from their individual situations in life. Something that helped was having a really supportive supervisor in Sue Hayne.

What are you most proud of in these 20 years?

For me, that's simple. Here you are calling someone to get a recollection about the father involvement initiative in Healthy Families New York. When we started, it wasn't a concept; no one even thought about it. Now we're discussing from where we've come, its evolution.

What has surprised you? What did you not anticipate in your early years?

I remember when Joy Griffith really encouraged Sue and me to present at a HFA National Conference. We recognized that not only is it working here, but also it can work anyplace. We presented at HF and well as the PAT conference; another organization that was about getting fathers involved. Then all of a sudden we started to get calls from other HF sites that asked us to come and explain the concepts. They were interested!

I did not grow up in a two-parent home and did not recognize the impact that could have on someone. I was surprised that the environment one was raised in had so much to do with how a home visitor would accept this concept of father involvement or not. The same applied to the program mothers. There was a challenge getting mothers with previous children where dad wasn't involved, to be open to the idea of including him with the current pregnancy. Another surprise was when I was talking to the fathers, I didn't know if I was getting information across to them, and then they would repeat what had been discussed when I would go back out.

What would you say are the three biggest differences between then and now?

There's an acceptance of father involvement by so many now. At the last HFNY state conference in Geneva, there was a whole dorm for the men employed by HFNY; quite different from the previously-mentioned experience of just John and me. It was a small dorm... but it was a dorm of men! And now we have caseloads with numerous dads on board!

What is it that has kept you with Healthy Families all these years?

For me it was the challenge...that's just my personality. Here was this opportunity to really make something work. It had fallen on me to make it work in my program, and then when I became a supervisor, I took on mentoring some of the other fatherhood advocates.

What are you most looking forward to for HFNY in the next 20 years?

When there was a need to cut the budget, frequently the father advocate was the one who was cut because he was the "add on." We should do what's best for everyone and not follow what seems in the short-run to be the easy path.

I hope we continue to share information with newer programs. It doesn't take much to bring a person from another program to shadow staff and learn about engaging fathers. As a HFA peer reviewer, I see there is room around the country for growth; I can review 100 charts and not see a father mentioned. HFNY can be a leader across the country regarding father involvement.



Susan Mitchell-Herzfeld

Began working with Healthy Families New York in 1994, Director of Evaluation

and Research at NYS Office of Children and Family Services

As we begin a celebration of 20 years, can you remember the first year you were hired? Which stand out as your best memories?

Joy Griffith, then Coordinator of HFNY, approached me about being involved in an evaluation of a home visiting program. It was unusual for a program developer to ask evaluators to be involved from the start; that never happened before. What it meant was that Joy immediately included me and the other evaluation folks as part of the team. That team of all the different players has lasted to this day and just kept growing stronger. I remember those first meetings and how welcoming the program managers were to the evaluation and data collection staff. That also doesn't always happen. We really worked closely together to figure things out.

The national folks also reached out and asked us to be part of a research team. The goal of that was to really discuss the results and how to improve the program across the country. The discussions about domestic violence, substance abuse and mental health were all taking place at that national level.

What are you are most proud of in these 20 years?

The Randomized Control Trial (RCT). It was very difficult to get it started and I'm very proud that it worked out so well, and of the longevity of it. It is still going and the 15-year follow-up is being planned right now. It was the impact of the results from the RCT that saved the program when there were big budget cuts. I had thought with everyone being cut, HFNY would be out the door, but because of the research, we were able to convince the state to keep it going. The RCT has also had an impact nationally with so many of our findings being

used to support federal funding going to other HFA programs.

What has surprised you? What did you not anticipate in your early years?

I would not have thought that the RCT would be so challenging to get off the ground. We had to convince people internally, and then get program managers, their host agencies and communities to come on board. I was impressed at how committed the program managers were to the process; they never circumvented it even when they got pressure to do so from their communities because "someone really needed the service." It's surprising to me that we would still be using the RCT to inform practice.

What would you say are the three biggest differences between then and now?

The size and scope of the program; when we started we didn't even have uniform performance targets, with each program developing their own. We standardized them across programs so we could compare and use the results to improve and grow. The improvements and changes in quality over time that we've been able to make, for example, the prenatal enrollment, which now is integrated nationally. And the quality of training. Our training team added innovative components that were not driven nationally but from within New York.

What kept you with HF for so long?

Well, I had to be involved in the evaluation, but my colleagues could see I had a greater commitment to HFNY than to other projects in my career. This was because of the results of the evaluation; I saw that they had long-term potential, and I thought this program would show effect with the right kind of research design. Also, the responsiveness of the programs to the results. They utilized the results, although sometimes there would be some initial resistance, they always ended up using them and finding a way to integrate them into their program. If they hadn't, we wouldn't have been able to continue the RCT. The commitment of program managers and staff increased

my own commitment.

What are you most looking forward to for HFNY in the next 20 years?

I hope OCFS can put resources into getting out the results from the 15-year RCT since it can influence state and national policy. It's really important to have results published in peer-reviewed publications, and there needs to be a commitment to getting the results out to the public. I also hope for more stable funding mechanisms so programs and innovations are not subject to the whims of the budget process.

Sue is now happily retired, spending her time biking, snowshoeing and traveling.

Lisa Gordon

Office of Children and Family Services, Program Contract Manger for HFNY, 1995, now Senior Director of Performance Improvement, OCFS

As we begin a celebration of 20 years, can you remember the first year you were hired? Which stand out as your best memories?

"My first memory is of Joy Griffith and me being approached to take on the project of developing the RFP for the first Healthy Families programs in New York State; really the first home visiting programs of their kind here. We had no idea what "home visiting" meant at the time. I remember us working to identify partners to help work through the first RFP and working very closely with the Department of Health. One memory that stands out for me is the Home Visiting Council, which was a very diverse collection of partners from across the state. The group worked long and hard to develop a 5-year Strategic Plan for HFNY; it was a vision for where the program could go."

What are you most proud of in these 20 years?

"I am, and OCFS is, very proud that HFNY is a nationally recognized, evidence-based program."

What has surprised you? What did you not anticipate in your early years?

"I never would have imagined that we

Continued on Page 7

would have a 15-year randomized control study, that we would have grown to the size we are, reaching as many families as we are, and garnering the national recognition we have. From day one we used a team approach: everybody—all the partners: OCFS, the training team at PCANY, the data and research folks at the State University of New York (SUNY), the NYS DOH – had their own area of expertise. Each brought that to the table and it was honored and utilized in developing and guiding the program, and that practice continues.”

What would you say are the three biggest differences between then and now?

“We’re in greater direct partnership with HFA. One example of this is the accreditation process. Another difference is that HFNY has grown up, and in that process has contributed to a national perspective on and federal commitment to home visiting! Third, we have the evidence-based “stamp” that the state, our communities, and the nation can be very proud of and use to inspire younger programs.”

What has kept you with Healthy Families all these years?

“I do still feel that I am part of HFNY! We’ve proven that prevention works and is cost-effective. I want to see this project expand and get more exposure; we should use the prevention lessons learned, and infuse other child welfare programs across the state with the practices that we know strengthen families and gives our communities healthier, happier children.”

What are you most looking forward to for HFNY in the next 20 years?

“I hope we see more local social service districts recognizing the value of HFNY and advocating for a program in their communities.”



Patricia Bobo

FSW, Buffalo Home Visiting Program, hired 1995

As we begin a celebration of 20 years, can you remember the first year you were hired? Which stand as your best memories?

“Starting to do something that was different... I had worked in prevention and was always looking for what was wrong – the problems and issues versus being able to see strengths and what works. Looking at positives in building families up was very different. Instead of feeling that I had to help them get out of their situation, I learned to help them build their self-esteem so that they could do it for themselves.”

What are you most proud of in these 20 years?

“When I have come in contact with families that I provided services for and they say how our program impacted them, even when I felt at times I wasn't getting anywhere. These times make me realize that I wasn't spinning my wheels, but helping to make a difference in somebody's life. Also, when we started developing tools that other programs and other states wanted to use—we were pioneers!”

What has surprised you? What did you not anticipate in your early years?

“That we've been able to prove that we really make a difference and still get funded. I had other past experiences where this didn't happen. I didn't anticipate that we'd be so large, stay in existence and have such a good impact on families and on HFA.”

What would you say are the biggest differences between and then and now?

“I was so much younger then, ha ha! We had to create things to use, and now we have so much available: curriculum, materials, forms. It's not so much trial and error; we learned what practices are the best for everybody. I really appreciate that things are done the same at all programs in New York State versus seeing other programs do things that are so different than us.”

What are you most looking forward to for HFNY in the next 20 years?

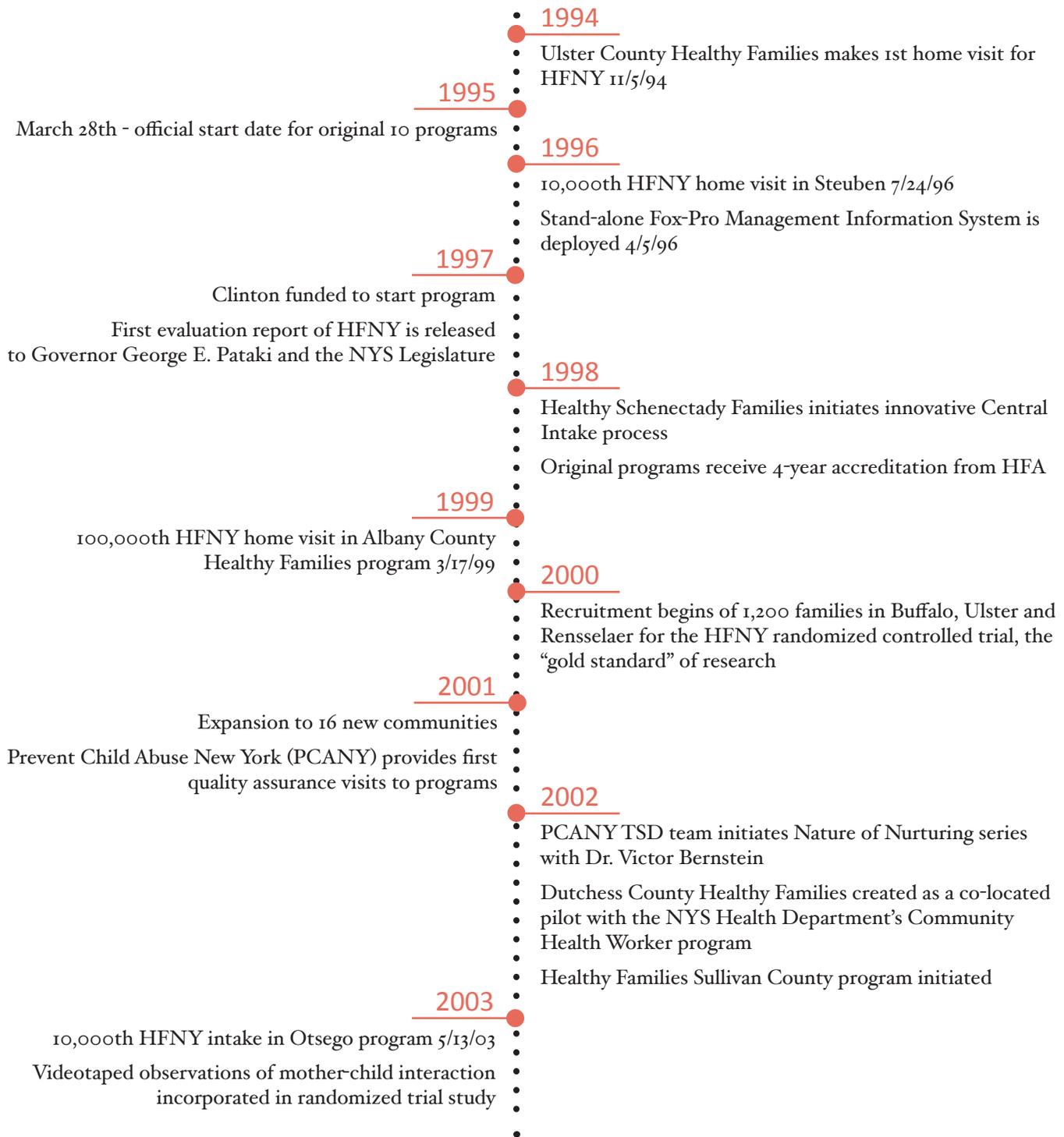
“That it continues to be available and grow in a positive way. The research is good, but it puts a lot of pressure on everybody and everybody has to work very hard. I would also like to see more resources provided to benefit families in their communities. From education to daycare, they really struggle and it would be nice to see families not have to jump through hoops to get services. All of this gets overwhelming for home visitors who try so hard to help. We also have a lot of families where English is their second language, and getting help with translation can be so hard. They do the best they can with what they have.” (Pat then joked that she could develop a translation app in her retirement.)

What is it that has kept you with HFNY for all these years?

“Because I'm a little special, ha ha! I've always believed that as individuals it's up to us to work to bring a difference to peoples' lives. We have to be there for people, be in their lives and help them make changes. I enjoy people. The system tears you down and makes you feel not worthy. Coming from that background, I've learned that you can determine your future, no matter where you come from and what you look like. I want to help others see—you've got your own destiny.”

Timeline *20 Years of Healthy Families*

This timeline was created by all of our programs and Central Administration partners. Take a stroll through Healthy Families New York's milestones, large and small, over the past 20 years. We had so many great things happen over the years, they wouldn't all fit in this issue. Go to the Healthy Families New York website home page under "What's New" to see the complete timeline! healthyfamiliesnewyork.org





• 2004

- American Public Health Association presentation: “Impact of prenatal home visitation on low birth weight: a randomized trial of the HFNY model”
- Healthy Families New York is first program to receive multi-site accreditation

2005

Healthy Families New York celebrates 10 year anniversary
 Program Manager/Central Administration summit in Glens Falls

2006

- Healthy Families New York became part of the NYS Budget General Fund
- HFNY established as a proven practice by Rand Corporation Promising Practice Network

2007

healthyfamiliesnewyork.org is launched
 Prenatal pilot initiated among several sites through work of Central Administration’s Early Enrollment Committee

2008

- HFNY expansion now includes 37 sites
- 20,000th HFNY participant enrolled, Healthy Families Suffolk 6/26/08

2009

PCANY TSD Team designs 3-day MI series and provides to all programs in state
 All programs attend Training Institute in Geneva (New York that is!)
 “Reducing Low Birth Weight through Home Visitation: A Randomized Controlled Trial” published in the American Journal of Preventive Medicine

2010

- 25,000th HFNY participant intake in CAMBA-Flatbush 7/26/10
- “Effects of Healthy Families New York on the promotion of maternal parenting competencies and the prevention of harsh parenting” published in Child Abuse and Neglect

2011

1,000,000th HFNY home visit in Brookdale program 5/20/11

2012

- 30,000th HFNY participant is enrolled in Parkchester Healthy Families 11/29/12

2013

Healthy Families Washington Heights joins the HFNY
 HFNY programs and Central Administration receive 5-year multi-site accreditation

2014

- Data collection begins for the 15-year follow-up of randomized controlled trial
- Since the beginning of the MIS, there have been entered 34,280 participants, 2,233 home visitors, 118,326 ASQs, 53,800 Kempes, and 1,093,984 home visits
- As of 10/31/14, HFNY has served more participants than the entire population of Rome NY. Rome has 32,837 people (2013) and we have served 34,280 participants.



The Milky Way

The Birth and Life of the Milky Way Healthy Families New York ... 20 Years Later ... Breastfeeding Advocacy

Rayza Delacruz-Stitt, RN, MSN - Program Director Bushwick Bright Start HFNY - Program Certified HFA Trainer



I have been with Healthy Families New York since its inception. In fact, I joined HFNY “prenatally” in 1993 in one of the earliest programs, just before we became a formal state system. I have been honored to be a part of HFNY’s evolution to a program that is committed to supporting breastfeeding families.

OUR STORIES HAVE CHANGED

Our own Ellen Butowsky, now with the Training and Staff Development Team, recalls times at State Leaders Meetings, when she was a Program Manager, how a fellow Program Manager would joke with her about the timing of her breastmilk pumping. He said that he noticed whenever we were talking about a tough policy decision, Ellen would conveniently “need” to excuse herself to go pump milk. That was in 1998, and as a state system, we did not recognize like we do now, that it was actually a physiological fact that Ellen needed to pump at least every two hours.

Now it is common to see Program Managers, researchers, and others arrive at our meetings with their laptop bag on one shoulder and their breast pump bag on the other. Today, our colleagues barely bat an eye at those women getting up to pump their breast milk. In fact, they may just be wondering if they’ve found a comfortable place to express their milk for their child.

FROM ANECDOTAL TO EVIDENCE-BASED

During the early years of HFNY, a landslide of human lactation research and information, and new approaches to promoting breastfeeding was just beginning. For many, even in HFNY, this felt like a whole new universe. There were several of us, including yours truly, and Program Manager and advocate extraordinaire, Peggy Sheehan from Schenectady, who were making heads turn in our state meetings. Anytime (and it was many times) that I started a sentence using the word “breastfeeding,” I could not help but feel that there were some who were thinking, “Here we go again”. Twenty years later, in our meetings we are likely to hear at least one formal presentation, research finding, policy discussion, informal sharing, or even a personal story about breastfeeding support, management, and advocacy.

WE HAVE COME A LONG WAY, BABY

After some years of discussion and advocacy, breastfeeding initiation was added as one of the Performance Targets for our programs, with staff entering information regarding breastfeeding initiation into our management information system.

In 2003, we wrote a policy on breastfeeding, and updated it in 2006. The training standard was also updated to include a requirement that all new staff receive breastfeeding training. I am so proud to be a part of this program that took a stand to support the American Academy of Pediatrics policy statement on breastfeeding. By now, most of you are familiar with the mandates of that policy regarding lactation and breastfeeding practices. Programs adhering to the policy are more likely to:

- Provide evidence-based information
- Provide breastfeeding resources
- Create an environment that supports breastfeeding
- Provide materials that promote breastfeeding as the norm
- Collaborate with community partners (support groups, classes, counselors, International Board Certified Lactation Consultants, Certified Lactation Counselors, WIC)
- Make the pursuit of lactation studies part of staff development conversation

THE LINK, A GREAT FORUM TO RAISE AWARENESS

The LINK has provided a forum for advocacy, disseminated information, and raised awareness across HFNY regarding breastfeeding practices and support. In the late 90s, the Training and Staff Development team conceived of the idea of a newsletter that would “link” and inform HFNY programs and Central Administration all across our state. Our colleague and Director of Training, the late Ann Pitkin, supported our creative, and, at times, wacky ideas. We proposed to Ann that a type of “Dear Abby” breastfeeding corner would be a great addition to the newsletter. She said yes to an ongoing column focused on breastfeeding advocacy and support. Believe me, in those days, that was a bit revolutionary. We tossed around some possible names for the column, but could not land on anything. Within a couple of days, Ann called me to announce in her excited voice: “I have the perfect name for your column, The Milky Way.” She went on to explain, “...as in the Galaxy.” We were then set on our course to use the Milky Way column as a vehicle to expose as many in HFNY as we could to the not-so-familiar universe of human lactation and breastfeeding support. What really shows our success is that I know that today, just about any one of you could write this column!

I took on the challenge to find a connection with any Link topic and breastfeeding. I invite you to go back and re-visit your reactions to the topics that we covered over the years. Or some of you may be looking at these writings for the first time. Either way, enjoy this walk down the Milky Way Memory Lane!

You can find these articles from past issues under <http://healthyfamiliesnewyork.org/newsletter.cfm>

Impact of Father Involvement in Home Visiting

Sandra L. McGinnis, Ph.d, Senior Research Scientist and Kristen Kirkland, Ph.d, HFNY Research & Evaluation Coordinator Bureau of Research, Evaluation and Performance Analytics, NYS Office Of Children and Family Services

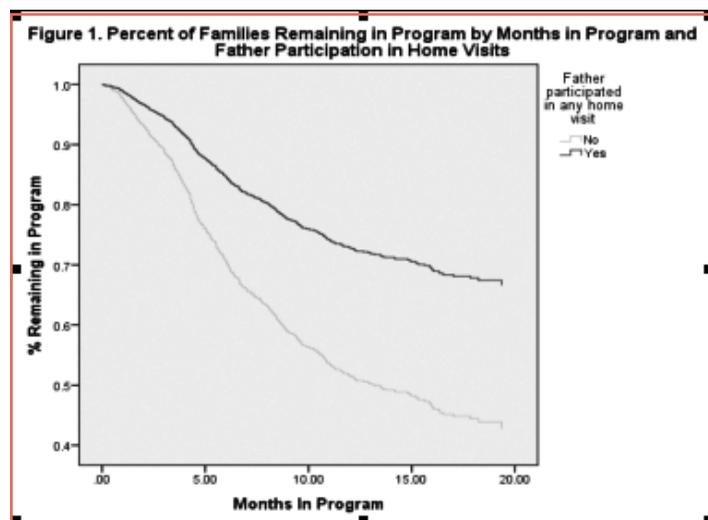
OVERVIEW

Rates of father involvement in Healthy Families New York (HFNY) increased following the start of the Fatherhood Initiative. The goal of this analysis was to gain a better understanding of how father involvement in home visits affects the likelihood that the family will remain in the program; that the father will remain with or join the family household; and that the father will maintain emotional involvement with the child.

STUDY DESIGN AND FINDINGS

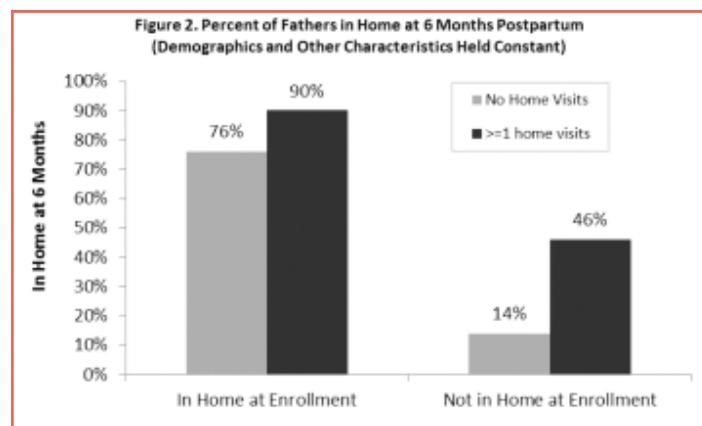
A father was defined as being involved in home visiting if he had participated in at least one home visit. Participation varied by father’s residence—66% of fathers who lived with the family participated in home visits, compared to 40% of the fathers not living with the family.

As shown in Figure 1, father involvement in home visiting was associated with a greater likelihood that the family would remain in the program at any point in time, controlling for pertinent characteristics. By six months postpartum, the probability that a family would remain in the program when there was no father participation in home visits was only 44%, but if the father participated in at least one home visit the probability of remaining in the program increased to 72%.



The likelihood of a father who lived in the home at enrollment remaining in the home until six months postpartum also increased substantially if he participated in home visits, and the likelihood that a non-resident father at enrollment would move into the family home by six months postpartum

increased quite dramatically (even controlling for the father’s emotional involvement with the child at enrollment). See Figure 2. Similarly, the likelihood of a father being emotionally involved with his child at six months, regardless of residence, increased substantially if he participated in home visits (data not shown).



CONCLUSIONS

The findings suggest that encouraging father participation in home visits is a potentially valuable strategy to improve family retention. Furthermore, participation may increase family stability by encouraging the father’s co-residence with the family, and his emotional involvement with his child.

NEXT STEPS

There is significant variation in father involvement across program sites. Much work remains to be done to better understand the barriers to father involvement and the strategies used by programs to encourage father involvement. In addition, work will need to be undertaken to understand how father involvement in home visits produces these results.

Newburgh and Middletown Healthy Families

Lauren Owens, Program Manager

Newburgh Healthy Families was established in 2000 through funding from the New York State Office of Children and Family Services (NYS OCFS), and has been providing services to the community for 14 years. In 2008, Occupations, Inc. was given additional funds to establish Middletown Healthy Families and expand services to the central area of Orange County. In Newburgh, we serve the entire city of Newburgh and parts of the towns of Newburgh and New Windsor. In Middletown, we serve the City of Middletown and the Town of Wallkill.



Amanda Myers, Ali Buendia, Kathy Gentile, and Maria Robert from Middletown HF, dressed for a Parenting Group Halloween Party

Our host agency, Occupations, Inc., is a large multi-service rehabilitation agency that provides services to a broad range of individuals and families throughout the Hudson Valley Region. Serving over 10,000 individuals and families per year, Occupations, Inc., has an established history of providing culturally competent, focused, and results-oriented interventions. As of January 1, 2015, Occupations, Inc., Stony Ford Foundation, Family Empowerment Council, and New Dynamics have joined together and now all share one name, Access: Supports for Living. As an agency, we are excited to continue to support the individuals and families in the Hudson Valley under this new name. Access: Supports for Living provides services to individuals and families under the auspices of the NYS OCFS, the Office of Mental Health, the Office of People with Developmental Disabilities, the Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance, and other state and federal oversight systems. Occupations, Inc., works in the areas of mental health, developmental disabilities, foster care, and child welfare to provide a variety of services including residential care, community care, clinical services, crisis services, and employment services. The staff benefit from the expertise available to them through the

programs in our agency that assist us in providing seamless services to the families.

At the heart of Newburgh and Middletown Healthy Families is a dedicated, passionate and motivated team. The staff spends the majority of their time in the community providing outreach, assessment, and home visiting services.

This requires that program staff be flexible in their schedule. It is not uncommon to see a team member arriving at the office early, leaving late or venturing out on a weekend to meet a family or participate in a community activity. Throughout the year, we have the opportunity to participate in many community events and health fairs. There is often a “friendly competition” between staff as to who can get the most referrals at these events. Both sites have established relationships with many service providers in the agency, and these relationships are an example of the collaborative effort to support our communities.

Our Healthy Families programs hold monthly parenting groups for families. These groups give our staff the opportunity to showcase their hidden talents: The photographers on the team take our participant family portraits, the designers make the backdrops, and the artists host the craft activities. Of course, a group event wouldn't be complete without the snacks brought by our cooks and bakers. There is something to be said when the smiles on the staff's faces are as big as those of the children and parents, showing genuine pride and love for our work. Our team continues to go above and beyond to engage fathers in our program and promote parent child relationships with them. Each team member supports the families to identify their dreams and plan the steps to accomplish their goals.

The Middletown and Newburgh Healthy Families programs share one Program Manager. In Newburgh Healthy Families there is one full-time Supervisor, one half-time Supervisor, one Family Assessment Worker, six Family Support Workers and a part time Case Aide/Data Entry Worker. In Middletown Healthy Families there is one full-time Supervisor, one half-time Supervisor (splitting the time with Newburgh), one Family Assessment Worker, five Family Support Workers and one part-time Data Entry Worker.

For more information on our Healthy Families programs please contact us at (845) 725-8349 for Newburgh and (845) 421-6381 for Middletown.



Lauren Owens, Lucia Cortez, Vickie Nelsen, Jasmine Fermain, Natasha Carmona, and Manouska Archer from Newburgh HF at the Truck or Treat Event.

Here is what some of the staff shared about the program when asked: "If I were set down in your program, what would let me know I was there and not somewhere else?"

"The relationships that are built with our families are genuine." *Maria Roberts, FAW*

"Watching our families grow and develop in ways they never thought possible." *Amanda Myers, FSW*

"Our team is very diverse, each of us having different interests, passions, and areas of expertise. Since we all work together, our families know they can come to Healthy Families Middletown for a variety of needs and receive solid information."

Ali Buendia, FSW

"Working with families and watching them develop parenting skills with their children. I love having the opportunity to provide families with support in their everyday life experiences." *Kathy Gentile, FSW*

"You will receive complete support from your co-workers." *Marivette Contes, FSW*

Our offices are full of books, activities, toys and information that "breathe" parent child interaction and health. Our FAWs and FSWs are committed to supporting families, as evidenced by the "positive talk" atmosphere of our workspace." *Kim Cannon, Supervisor*

"The way we serve our families; we are non-judgmental and empower them to build their own lives." *Manouska Archer, Supervisor*

"We serve the families who need us most and build a very close relationship with the community. People know us... We are well known in the community and recognized as people who can be depended on." *Vickie Nelsen, FSW*

"The unity, commitment, and strength that we have. The caring that each staff presents. We go above and beyond to help our participants to become self-sufficient. We try to motivate them towards continued success on their goals. The efforts by staff to engage families are genuine." *Crystal Belizario, FSW*

Welcome Timothy Hathaway



I am excited to join the Healthy Families New York (HFNY) network. I am coming to you from Prevent Child Abuse North Dakota where I was the Executive Director from 2010 until December 2014 when I joined PCANY. I have 28 years of experience working with children and families, and a strong commitment to the work of supporting parents as they create healthy environments for their children. I am passionate about

eliminating racial disparities, driving best practice standards for child abuse prevention, achieving excellence in non-profit administration, and advancing place based, partner driven solutions.

Prior to my work with Prevent Child Abuse, I spent almost 20 years with Head Start programs in a variety of capacities including Parent and Child Centers, Early Head Start, Head Start and the federal Technical Assistance Network. Early in my career, I managed and directed early care and learning programs for the YMCA and faith based communities. I am a firm believer in the value of professional development and have been a trainer and consultant to early childhood professionals.

As I join the statewide team at PCANY, my focus will be on proven child abuse prevention strategies including home visiting, community based sex abuse prevention, advocacy, and public awareness. I will pursue innovation by supporting professional development opportunities and research-based best practice approaches directed at building strong communities and families.

Farewell Chris Deyss



The end of 2014 marked my retirement as Executive Director of Prevent Child Abuse New York. It has been an honor to work for and with Healthy Families New York (HFNY) for more than two decades. 1992: symposia and advocacy to "sell" the program, 1994: sites started in Chemung, Ulster and Rensselaer Counties with local funding and in Manhattan with Children and Family Trust Fund, 1995: legislation to

establish the statewide home visiting program, 1998: establishment of our HFNY training and staff development team, 2000 and 2007: expansions to even more communities, and year-after-year advocacy with the legislature and governor's office to continue and expand funding.

During the next period of my life, I expect to be spending more time with my grandchildren—11-year-old triplets and newborn Marcus close by, and 2- and 5-year-old grandsons in Japan—and to do lots of reading and writing, especially about family and parents.

I bid farewell and very best wishes to all of you, site staff and state leaders, who comprise the HFNY system. You are an amazing group of men and women. Every day, each of you makes a difference in the lives of children and parents, and strengthens our communities. Thank you.

Farewell Ethelena Bailey Persons



Twenty years ago, I had the good fortune to join Healthy Families New York (HFNY) and with a tiny team, laid the groundwork for what became the Prevent Child Abuse New York (PCANY) Training Team we have today. I took a detour into child welfare and addiction services and seven years ago, when an HFNY Training and Staff Development position opened up, I eagerly returned. The last several years with PCANY and HFNY have been wonderful. I cannot think of anything better that happened to me than spending the last years of my career with all of you.

Collaboration with the training team, central administration, program staff and visiting program families has been invaluable to my work in a statewide system. As a training facilitator (you all know I do not see myself as a “trainer”), it’s been my experience that our training informed the work of programs, and the work of programs informed our training in a continuous, circular feedback system that was quite extraordinary! I am proud of our work together, and it has been a privilege and pleasure to work with all of you!

After nearly 40 years of social work practice, administration and training, it is time for me to take on some different projects. I look forward to traveling, playing tennis, and most importantly, spending time with my family. I also expect my experiences will continue to be useful in the service of others, in some capacity, at some future point.

I wish everyone in HFNY much success in the coming years. I’ll be checking in to see how you all are doing. No good-byes for me! Let’s just say, until we see each other again!

Memories from Nature of Nurturing

Victor Bernstein, Ph.D.

When I remember our time together in the Nature of Nurturing training, I feel a warmth I can't really describe—warmth that contains gratitude for Ann Pitkin, former Director of the Training and Staff Development team for having brought me to Healthy Families New York in October 2002—and warmth of family, for my “sisters” on the training team, Louise Henrie, the former Program Associate, who was such a day-to-day support to me, and for all the staff I got to know across the state over the next three years. I also feel a warmth of pride, not just because this was perhaps the most meaningful work I've done, but also because the Nature of Nurturing work has carried on and expanded into new programs with staff I have never met, and into reflective supervision. I saw this when I was with you again in 2012. The Nature of Nurturing has legs!

I wonder how this has been possible, given all the pressures of data collection, outcomes, program fidelity, and quality assurance that have come to characterize not just Healthy Families, but family support programs throughout the nation. I want to venture a guess: CARING RELATIONSHIPS AND THE PARALLEL PROCESS. I want to thank the Healthy Families leadership for their support of this work, recognizing that how you are is as important as what you do. As long as we hold one another in our hearts and minds and we protect one another from the 'forces of risk,' we will remember to remain present for one another and, thus held, we can be present for the families. Healthy relationships beget healthy relationships—this starts with the tone set at the top

by Bernadette Johnson, and by the positive interaction of the research and evaluation team with programs. Given the power of the Healthy Families program, as long as we treat one another with caring and respect, we cannot help but be successful.

As you know, I always like to come up with phrases and metaphors (some borrowed) that describe what I like to call 'The Shape of Effective Practice.' Do you remember the Beach Ball? Do you remember the 75%-25% rule: We need to spend 3 times as much time on what is working as on what is wrong. I would like to share one with you that I call The Four Legs Under the Table of Effective Practice: Connectedness (relationship), Hoping, Coping (that includes reflective practice), and Fun. Remember, any time the parent smiles and the child smiles, you are witnessing an Ordinary Miracle, and you are doing your job. Mutual Competence Forever!

Congratulations to Healthy Families New York on your 20th anniversary. The families are so fortunate to have you in their lives.

Much Love,
Victor



Design your own “Put THAT on a T-shirt”

Brette Wolff Ottavino, PCANY

Inspired by conversations in a PCANY prenatal training, this activity brings to life the strengths and challenges of pregnancy for the entire family.

This activity can be used in the home with families and also in a staff meeting. With a focus on creativity, imagination, and self-expression, this activity is an exciting and unique way to communicate by literally “wearing your feelings on your sleeve!”

*Note: This activity has two options. The first uses a paper cutout of a t-shirt or the outline of a t-shirt on paper. The second uses an actual t-shirt.

Materials

Option 1:

Construction paper or white paper

Markers, Crayons, Colored Pencils

Scissors (optional)

Glue sticks (optional)

Craft Materials (optional)

Link to t-shirt stencil:

http://all-free-download.com/free-vector/download/t_shirt_template_clip_art_19107.html

Option 2:

White t-shirt

Fabric Markers and/or Sharpie Pens (be mindful about using markers that might stain through the shirt. Consider using a piece of cardboard or cloth to keep the color from staining the back.

Fabric Glue (optional)

Fabric Crafts (i.e. patches, buttons, glitter glue, puffy paint) (optional)

Step 1: Getting Ready

For some background information on how this all got started... home visitors in a prenatal training were sharing how some parents say they want to have a t-shirt to wear that would tell people if it was okay or not okay to touch their baby bump. A light bulb went off in hearing these stories! What a fun and safe activity to provide family members and professionals an outlet to express their experiences and perceptions of the baby in a tangible way! So have fun with this!

For this step you will want to decide how many shirts there will be. Don't forget you can write on the back of the shirt(s) as well.

Before deciding what to put on the front (and back) of the shirt, think about the following:

If I could have a shirt that would either describe how I am

feeling about this pregnancy or let other people know something about how I am feeling, it would say _____

For use in the office with staff, you can use this activity to think about a particular family or consider using it during a staff meeting or supervision and consider the additional prompts:

If I could have a t-shirt that would communicate my passion and joy in this work, it would say _____

Feel free to customize and personalize this as fits your community, culture, and programs. This activity could also be adapted to talk about grief, loss, and goal setting.

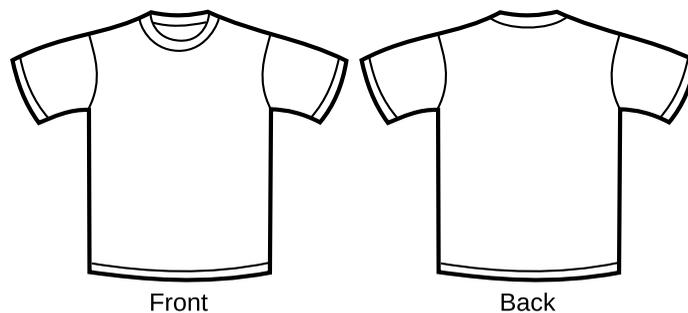
Note: Invite all members of the family unit to participate (fathers, siblings, extended family, close friends) if that works. Remember, although the mom might be carrying the baby, everyone has their own perceptions they may want to express about the pregnancy.

Step 2: Getting set

Get the slogan set up and begin decorating.

Step 3: Go!

Have fun and please feel free to email in some photos to eburtowsky@preventchildabuse.org! We would love to be able to circulate some of the fun phrases and experiences around the state!



the Link

Spring 2015



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and Family Services**



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In the **Next Issue**

HFNY: Celebrating 20 years! (Part 2)

We had so much good material that we couldn't contain ourselves! The next issue of the Link will offer more interviews with our founding mothers and fathers and some great photos from our 20th Anniversary reception at the PCANY conference in April.

**"The trouble with being punctual is that
nobody's there to appreciate it."
—Franklin P. Jones**