



Bringing Families Together

Annual Report 2007

July 1, 2006 – June 30, 2007



A MESSAGE FROM OUR CEO

Dear Friends,



It is with great joy that I express my appreciation for the work of Family Community Resource Center (FCRC) and affiliate agencies to families in crisis. With the economic, social, and home conditions in McLean County, it is important to remember how necessary devout and committed persons are to the preservation of families and working relationships between our state agencies. I can only imagine the difference we could make in our county by simply choosing to work earnestly as a team.

I am writing to encourage continued collaboration network partnerships with respect to our diverse field of labor. FCRC is a faith-based initiative; we advocate, educate, assist and support families based on each particular need as it is assessed by our Family Support Specialists. In the fiscal year of 2007, we participated in various training sessions that were applicable to the growth and development of FCRC. We organized and coordinated various domestic violence awareness workshops, agency fairs, foster care recruitment programs and panel discussions. We participated in permanency symposium and Fatherhood Initiative sessions. In addition, we have created a department that serves the Hispanic community. I am hopeful that those of us who dare to serve troubled families will strive to build closer, user-friendly working relationships.

I am excited regarding the work of FCRC and I anticipate serving many more families in the future as we strive to make a difference in McLean County.

Walking by Faith,

Rev. Frank L. McSwain Sr.

Rev. Frank L. McSwain, Sr.

Leadership



FCRC STAFF

Rev. Frank L. McSwain, Sr.
President & CEO

Belinda Kennedy
Manager & Assistant to the CEO

Diana Maldonado
Hispanic Community Relations Coordinator

Terry Brown
Family Support Specialist

Cassandra Allyson
Family Support Specialist

Chelcia Kennedy & Luvenia Sims
Receptionists

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Board Chairperson

Carla Harvey
Vice Chairperson

Mike Williams
Treasurer

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Secretary

Ronald Dozier
Member

Glenn Covert
Member

Warrick Palmer
Member

MISSION STATEMENT

The Family and Community Resource Center endeavors to educate the community concerning matters that are pre-eminent to the preservation of families. We work to foster cultural sensitivity among family crisis intervention personnel, as well as develop policies that effectively maintain structural and operational integrity of families.

Program Spotlight

In our fiscal year of 2007 (July 1, 2006-June 30, 2007) we organized and hosted several programs to educate and assist community members interested in learning more about specific situations. We were pleased with the attendance at these events and we plan to offer additional workshops, forums and simulations throughout the upcoming year.

Donors

We would like to thank the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services for ongoing financial support for our organization. This generosity has enabled thousands of McLean County families to make positive changes in their lives to ensure that love and stability is present in homes everywhere.

We would also like to express our appreciation to our fellow community agencies for their continuous support to families in need.

If you would like to offer support via sponsorship or through volunteerism, please contact Belinda Kennedy at 309.821.1616. Volunteer forms are also available on our website at www.thefcrc.org

The FCRC at a Glance

The Family Community Resource Center (FCRC), a faith-based initiative and non-profit organization, was founded in 2004 with a general mission in mind: to act as an advocate for families in need of support and intervention while making every effort to preserve their integrity and values. FCRC organizes and hosts a variety of events, providing ongoing opportunities for assistance, support and education. Our public outreach efforts include programs and counseling services available to McLean County residents at no cost.





Honoring Strength

In October 2006, we partnered with the Mid-Central Community Action Center to hold a Candlelight Vigil in honor of Domestic Violence Awareness Month. Survivors of domestic violence shared their stories and encouraging words, and they displayed a Clothesline Memorial project to victims and survivors of domestic violence showcasing decorated T-shirts. The vigil was held to pay tribute to all domestic violence victims, including women and children who have tragically lost their lives and those who remain strong survivors.

**"ONE WOMAN IS BATTERED BY HER HUSBAND
OR BOYFRIEND EVERY 15 SECONDS."**

- THE NATIONAL COALITION AGAINST DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

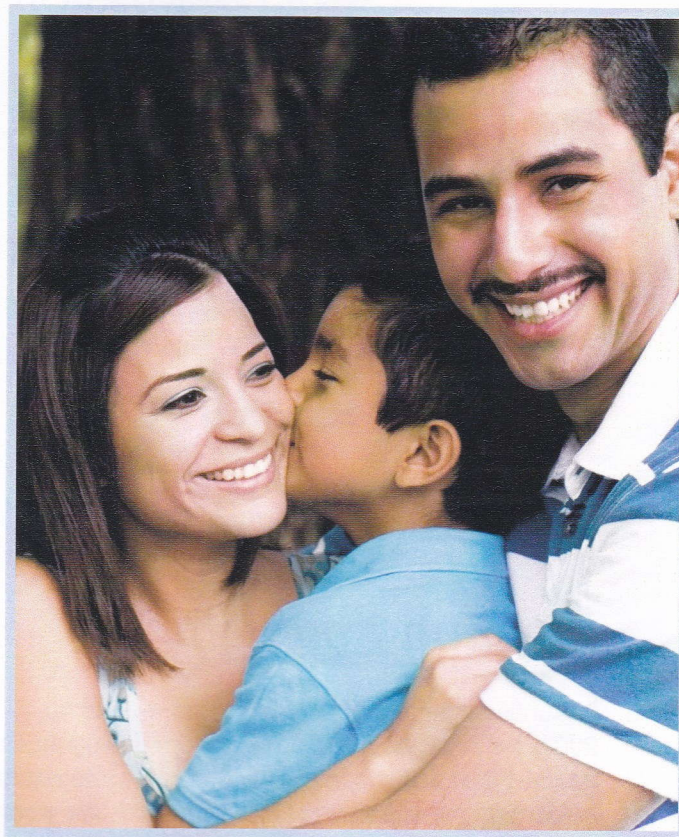


Fighting Poverty

Poverty in McLean County increased from 9.7% in 1999 to 12.3% in 2005. The number of children from low-income homes has also risen from 2,601 (1999) to 4,808 (2005). To raise awareness about these distressing facts, we hosted a Community Action Poverty Simulation (CAPS) in November 2006. Participants were able to "experience" what it's like to live at or below the poverty line through role-playing scenarios. CAPS isn't a game, however it's a hands-on effort to demonstrate how difficult it can be to obtain food, clothing, shelter and other necessities. The effectiveness of the program was apparent when, at the end of the simulation, several participants were emotionally moved as they recalled their own experiences and noted how fortunate they are to be where they are today. The University of Illinois Extension McLean County facilitated this program.

**"THIS IS THE LIFE OF AN EVERYDAY INDIVIDUAL WHO IS
FACING THESE PROBLEMS...A TEAR CAME TO MY EYES BECAUSE
AS A SINGLE PARENT THAT'S HOW I FEEL SOMETIMES."**

- CAPS PARTICIPANT



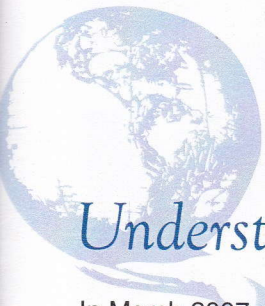
Giving Graciously

The holiday season can be difficult for some families, so we made a special effort to help those less fortunate enjoy this time of year. In November 2006, we gave five families food baskets filled with supplies for Thanksgiving dinner. Each basket included a turkey and an assortment of food items to round out their feast. In December, FCRC was selected to participate in the State Farm Community Volunteers' Giving Tree. Thanks to this program, 25 of our clients received Christmas gifts. We were honored to be chosen to take part in such a thoughtful outreach effort.

**EVER WONDERED HOW YOU COULD MAKE A DIFFERENCE
DURING THE HOLIDAY SEASON? ASK US HOW YOU CAN
HELP OUT RIGHT HERE IN MCLEAN COUNTY!**

OUR TEAM MAKES A DIFFERENCE

The Family Community Resource Center consists of individuals who are truly valuable to our outreach efforts. The Family Support Specialist and the Hispanic Community Relations Coordinator interact directly with families in need of our assistance. The team at FCRC works tirelessly, advocating for families, attending court cases and family team meetings; providing positive, factual information on behalf of our clients for administrative reviews, recommending additional community resources for specific cases, and much, much more.



Understanding Culture

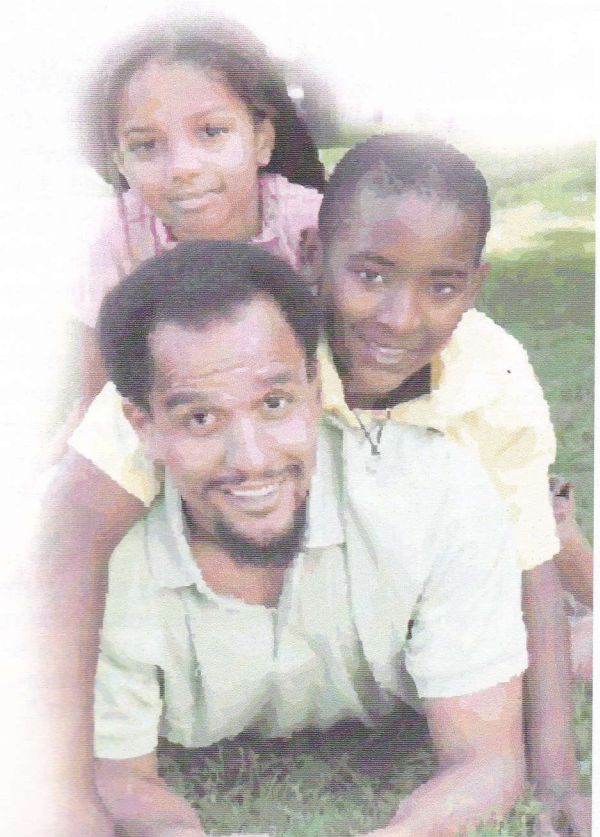
In March 2007, we were honored to have Zena Oglesby, an adoption rights activist for African-American children and founder of the Institute for Black Parenting, as a speaker at our Foster Care Community Forum. Mr. Oglesby led a discussion-based forum about promoting a common-sense approach to child welfare, with an emphasis on cultural perspective. "Understanding the ethnic community is a big part of making judgment calls [in working with families]," he emphasized. The audience, many of whom were social service professionals, supported his borrowed but time-tested philosophy that "It takes a village to raise a child."

We would like to give special thanks to the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services, Illinois African-American Family Commission, African American Advisory Council and the Illinois State University School of Social Work for their assistance with this program.

"I REALLY LIKED THE CONCEPT OF THE COMMUNITY WORKING TOGETHER TO BRING ABOUT CHANGE, AND I REALLY ENJOYED THE KEYNOTE SPEAKER, MR. OGLESBY. I LIKED HIS PHILOSOPHY, HIS IDEAS, HIS THOUGHTS AND [THE IDEA OF] TRYING TO INVOLVE THE COMMUNITY."

- FOSTER CARE COMMUNITY FORUM PARTICIPANT

Family  Community
RESOURCE CENTER



Improving Images

A criminal record isn't something most offenders are proud of; a record often reflects a moment of vulnerability in their lives. A record or the fear that an arrest or other infraction will be discovered by current or potential employers can sometimes keep individuals from moving forward. In February 2007, we hosted a Pardon, Expungement & Sealed Seminar to explain how to clear and correct false information on file. Assistant State Defender Christine Fischer lead the discussion as she defined expungement and targeted topics such as petitioning for clemency, clarifying which records can and cannot be sealed and answering general questions. About 150 people attended to learn more about being proactive to help take charge of their future

A FELONY CONVICTION CAN PREVENT A PERSON FROM OBTAINING A JOB, HOUSING AND EDUCATION.



Boosting Confidence

"By closing the exits of abusers we open the door to freedom to those who are victims. It [abuse] has to stop and it has to stop now." Rev. Frank McSwain spoke emphatically of the goal of the In Her Shoes program (April 2007), a simulation designed to show the choices available to individuals involved in abusive relationships. We partnered with Mid-Central Community Action's Countering Domestic Violence services to reach out to teachers, students, men, women, and survivors and victims to help educate them about handling abusive situations, and to encourage them to spread the word that help is available. "I've learned that it's a process," says Linda Foster, FCRC's Board Chairperson. "In the end it is worth it [to seek help]...but you have to be willing to go through with it."

**"THIS PROGRAM TOUCHED MY HEART IN SO MANY WAYS...
IT'S NOT JUST PHYSICAL, IT'S EMOTIONAL AND VERBAL
ABUSE. I UNDERSTAND NOW THAT THERE IS HELP...
NOT TO BE ASHAMED OF THE SITUATION.
THIS SHOULD BE AN ANNUAL EVENT."
- IN HER SHOES PARTICIPANT**

Encouraging Well-Being

All children deserve to live in a safe and loving environment. Unfortunately, not all children are afforded this opportunity, and in such situations foster care can be a lifesaving action for young people in need of emotional and physical stability. In April 2007 we held a Foster Care Awareness Workshop to spread the word about the need for foster parents. Guest speaker Rev. Dr. Joel Damon Taylor shared how important it is to have caring, responsible adults open their homes and hearts to children of all ages. Over 250 people attended to learn more about how foster families truly make a difference in the lives of many youths today.

**16,326 CHILDREN WERE IN THE
ILLINOIS FOSTER CARE SYSTEM IN 2006.**

LEADING THE WAY TO A BETTER TOMORROW

*In addition to special programs throughout the year,
FCRC offers on-going outreach opportunities in
the following areas:*

Domestic Violence Awareness

Cultural Diversity Training

Resource Referral Program

Pardon-Expungement-Sealed Seminars

Credit Counseling

Offering Resources

Making an effort to connect people in need of assistance with the appropriate resources is just part of our ongoing mission. There are many organizations that offer services, most for free, to help individuals and families through difficult times. In June we hosted a Resource Fair as an opportunity for the public to learn more about these organizations. The Baby Fold, The Children's Foundation, Mid-Central Community Action Countering Domestic Violence services, Department of Human Services, OSF and the MARC Center were just a few of the agencies that provided information to curious attendees.

**FCRC WORKS WITH MANY LOCAL AGENCIES TO ENSURE
FAMILIES ARE GIVEN THE ASSISTANCE THEY NEED BY
PROFESSIONALS WHO ARE KNOWLEDGEABLE,
EMPATHETIC AND HELPFUL.**

Supporting Victims

Domestic violence is a serious matter, and no one, children especially, should ever fall victim to such meaningless and harsh treatment. In June 2007 over 90 individuals attended our Living in Fear: The Effects of Domestic Violence on Children workshop, an active discussion about how children are affected by violence in the home. We partnered with Prevent Child Abuse Illinois to lead this local crusade against domestic violence.

**NEARLY 5.3 MILLION INCIDENTS OF INTER-PARTNER
VIOLENCE OCCUR EACH YEAR AMONG U.S. WOMEN
AGES 18 AND OLDER. TWO MILLION INJURIES AND
1,300 DEATHS OCCUR NATIONWIDE EACH YEAR**



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RESOURCE CENTER

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