

INTRODUCTION

FOSTER FACTS

Nationwide, nearly 500,000 children currently reside in some form of foster care. The number has increased 65% in the past ten years.

May, 1997

Welcome to *The Foster Care Project* in association with the documentary *Take This Heart*, produced by KCTS / Seattle. We invite public television stations in communities across America to participate in this vital project. Its purpose is to build awareness about foster care and mobilize communities to take action to improve the lives of children in foster care. Major funding for *Take This Heart* is provided by The Casey Family Program and The Annie E. Casey Foundation. The national community and educational outreach campaign is made possible by generous grants from The David and Lucile Packard Foundation, The Casey Family Program and The Annie E. Casey Foundation.

All of us can take pride in the stature and achievements of community and educational outreach within public television. Outreach adds value to public television productions through establishing community linkages that broaden public participation. It reaches new audiences, convenes diverse constituencies and promotes interactivity. Through creating innovative materials, it shapes public dialogue, increases knowledge and inspires change. Collaborations and partnerships deliver additional resources that enhance its impact.

We will be working jointly with you to create new ways to advance outreach through *The Foster Care Project*. The voices of youth in foster care are powerful and poignant in *Take This Heart*. As you begin to develop an outreach campaign, consider ways to empower youth and families, and to utilize their voices and perspectives to mobilize community efforts.

While youth in the film are adolescents (ages 10 to 17), and the primary focus of our national campaign, stations may address community priorities for other age groups. This may work especially well for Ready to Learn stations.

Background

During 1997, KCTS Television, the public television station in Seattle, will complete the development of a major public education and mobilization initiative concerning foster care in America, with an emphasis on family foster care. At the center of this national project is a 90-minute documentary film, *Take This Heart*, produced by KCTS and directed by Kathryn Hunt. KCTS will also produce a 30-minute follow-up panel discussion, featuring alumni of foster care as well as foster care experts, to address the critical issues posed by the 90-minute documentary. Stations will be encouraged to broadcast the shows together, and the accompanying outreach is designed for both programs.

Take This Heart uses the style of direct cinematography combined with an interactive approach to record the daily lives of three children in a caring foster family. Recording those moments which mark modest and crucial turnings in the children's lives during an eight month period, the film provokes questions about society's commitment and responsibility. It provides a first step toward countering the silence surrounding children who are not in the care of their birth parents. Viewers will be moved to involve themselves in improving the lives of children in foster care in their communities.

In coordination with the television documentaries, the national outreach campaign will address the public at large, with the hope that attitudes toward children in foster care and adults connected with

All photographs within the *Toolbox* were taken by Jane Gibbons, co-producer of *Take This Heart*.



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foster care in America may change as a result of the project. The following questions may be helpful to frame discussions: What are the root causes for children coming into foster care? What is the community's responsibility and role? How do we value and support foster parents? What do youth need to transition from foster care into productive adulthood? What are you, as an individual or organization, willing to do to help children and adolescents in foster care to succeed? Specific target audiences include business and community leaders, policy makers and direct participants in all aspects of foster care. The project will act as a catalyst in convening diverse organizations and in providing a means to interchange and access ideas and resources, as well as stimulate interest and discussion capable of creating change.

National Outreach Partner

The Foster Care Project is pleased to have the Child Welfare League of America (CWLA) as its national community outreach partner. Founded in 1920, CWLA is the oldest and largest organization which unites the nation's best public and private nonprofit child welfare agencies under one umbrella. It has a membership base of over 900 agencies and is the most well-known national association guarding children's rights and serving the needs of children in foster care. CWLA sets standards for the field, and provides vital services such as national conferences, training, expert consultations and publications.

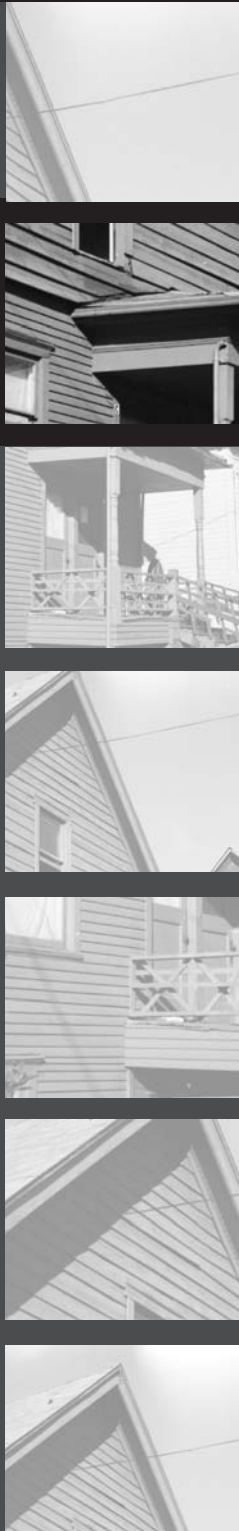
An expert in foster care and child welfare issues and programs, CWLA has been actively involved in developing concepts and resource materials for the national outreach campaign.

National Foundation Support

The Foster Care Project brings together three national foundations whose support makes possible the broad national scope of the campaign, as well as the targeted effort to create high impact projects in five local communities.

- *The David and Lucile Packard Foundation* was created in 1964 by David Packard, co-founder of the Hewlett-Packard Company, and his wife, Lucile Salter Packard. They believed America to be the home of a unique type of organization dependent upon private funding and volunteer leadership. Together, universities, national institutions, community groups, youth agencies, family planning centers and hospitals constitute a great American tradition that complements government efforts to focus on society's needs. By using private funds for public purposes, programs of this type channel the personal commitment of millions of individuals who participate as volunteers or donors. Now in its thirty-second year, the Foundation will continue to support these organizations with the hope and expectation that it can strengthen them and, thereby, help people through the improvement of scientific knowledge, education, health, culture, employment, the environment and quality of life. Since its founding, the Foundation has had a major interest in the health and well-being of children. In 1989, the Center for the Future of Children was established as a multidisciplinary research, policy and grantmaking program to expand the Foundation's activities on behalf of children and their families.

- *The Casey Family Program* is a private operating foundation, headquartered in Seattle, that provides planned, long-term family foster care for children and adolescents who are not able to live with their birth parents. Established in 1966 by UPS co-founder Jim Casey and his siblings, The Casey Family Program now serves 1,500 young people through 23 offices in 13 states. Its 350 full-time staff members provide long-term services that help youth grow up to be healthy, self-sufficient adults; conduct research that contributes to the development and refinement of Casey's foster care practices and resulting outcomes for young people; and promote ways to improve the lives of children in the nation's out-of-home care system.
- *The Annie E. Casey Foundation* is a private charitable organization dedicated to helping build better futures for disadvantaged children in the United States. It was established by Jim Casey, one of the founders of UPS, and his siblings, who named the Foundation in honor of their mother. The primary mission of the Foundation is to foster public policies, human service reforms and community supports that more effectively meet the needs of today's vulnerable children and families. Established in 1976 as the direct operating unit of The Annie E. Casey Foundation, Casey Family Services (CFS) operates seven offices in six New England states. CFS provides programs that demonstrate values, principles and strategies that lead to permanency through family-based care for children who are separated or at risk of separation from their families.



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Purpose

The purpose of the national outreach campaign is to extend the impact of *The Foster Care Project* into local communities, bringing attention and coordinated action to foster care issues and outcomes, with an emphasis on building community resources to improve the lives of children in foster care. In coordination with the television documentaries, the campaign will expand public awareness and dialogue, develop and present solutions, and motivate action and change on important issues for children, families and communities. National and local campaigns will work together to achieve the following outcomes:

- public support for resources which children need to achieve positive outcomes;
- community mobilization and individual actions on behalf of children;
- public understanding and concern for the needs of children and families in the foster care system;
- recruitment and retention of foster parents, especially in minority communities and urban areas;
- legislative debate on policies and procedures regarding foster care; and
- public education for policy makers regarding the complexities of foster care.

The national campaign provides information, strategies and resources to support station initiatives nationwide. Stations are encouraged to tailor their outreach plans to the specialized needs of their own communities.

Components of the National Outreach Campaign

The Foster Care Project is designed to make a measurable impact through action-based involvement in communities. At the forefront of this effort are five intensive community organizing projects, funded through Community Service Action Grants. The five participating stations and their community partners include: KLRU/Austin and The Casey Family Program-Austin Division; KCET/Los Angeles and the Child Welfare League of America, Western Office; MPT/Maryland Public Television and the Maryland Association of Resources for Families and Youth; WTVS/Detroit and Evergreen Children's Services; and KCTS/Seattle and The Casey Family Program-Seattle Division. Stations were selected based on a number of factors: outreach capacity of the station, including its prior outreach projects; the presence of a strong foster care lead organization; ongoing system reform efforts related to child welfare; geographic diversity; and committed and capable local leadership. The five stations have been paired with a "lead community agency" which will work in partnership with them. The role of the agency is crucial: providing the content expertise on youth in foster care as well as offering access to key constituencies that can benefit from the activities. The project includes a priority-setting phase which will result in an action plan; implementation phase; and evaluation. Projects are expected to define outcome measures and to report on what they accomplish.

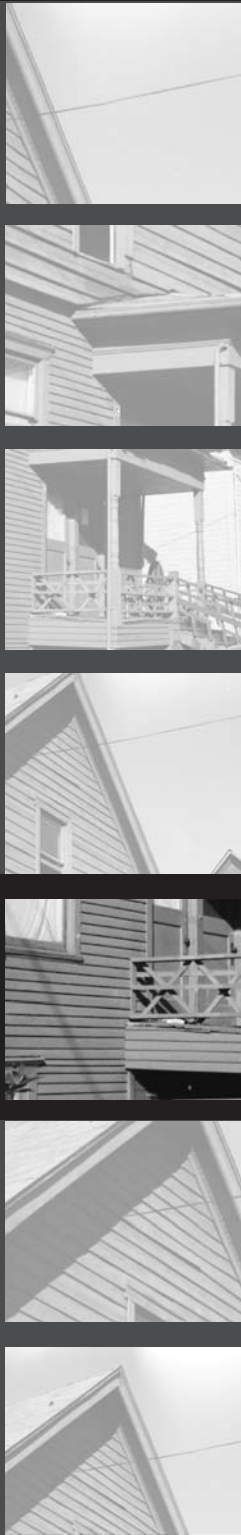
Other campaign components/resources (see section on Highlights of the National Outreach Campaign) in this broad-based effort include five

additional incentive minigrants for action-based projects; an edited version of the documentary along with a *Discussion Guide* to be used for information and educational purposes; *Viewer Response Guide*; *Foster Care World Wide Web Site*; presentations at child welfare, foster parent and other national conferences; and a special event in Washington, D.C.

All About the Toolbox

This *Toolbox* is the project's primary "how-to" resource for public television stations and their community partners to design, implement and evaluate effective local community outreach campaigns.

- **Take This Heart:**
You'll learn more about the documentary *Take This Heart* through production notes and a press release. You'll also find out more about the foster family presented in the film by reading their personal profiles.
- **Foster Care Content Materials:**
The *Toolbox* offers vital information on foster care and child welfare, including definitions, history and current issues; media guidelines; 12 challenges in foster care; and a two-page fact sheet which can be distributed to elected officials, business leaders and other special audiences.
- **National Community Partner & Resources:**
The Child Welfare League of America is introduced along with its services and how they can assist your campaign. A Resource Guide of national service providers is also included.



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- **Action Planning:**

The Foster Care Awareness Outreach Action Plan helps stations and their community partners to design their local campaigns, beginning with a survey of community foster care needs. The priority-setting strategy leads to agreement on which of the community's most pressing foster care need(s) can best be assisted by a public television outreach campaign. An evaluation form is also provided.

- **Station Incentive Grants:**

Stations are encouraged to apply for five new incentive minigrants for action-based projects in their communities. Information on the competitive process, including requirements and deadlines, are provided along with an application form.

- **Outreach Strategies:**

The *Toolbox* encourages creativity and innovation in designing foster care awareness campaigns. The Menu of Outreach Opportunities and Great Outreach Ideas provide a range of activities which can target special audiences and be adapted to your local community.

Outreach Extensions serves as the national director for the outreach campaign, and will assist station efforts by providing technical assistance. It will work closely with funded public television projects to deliver the national campaign. CWLA, the national outreach community partner, will also provide technical assistance to the community partners.

So, we are off and running! On behalf of the youth and families that we assist, thank you for signing on to do great work.

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