Racial Disproportionality Addressed in WA State’s Child Welfare System

THE NATION’S CHILD WELFARE SYSTEM has for some time been experiencing problems with racial disproportionality. According to the Child Welfare League of America, “recent research indicates that overrepresentation of children of color in the foster care system is a widespread concern.” The Child Welfare System is overwhelmed with racial disproportionality. To begin with, African American and Native American children are vastly over-represented in our country’s foster care population. This means that while these groups make up only a comparatively small percentage of youth across all of America, they make up a considerably larger percentage of youth in the foster care system.

The King County Racial Disproportionality Coalition is working to address this issue and has been holding regular meetings since 2002. A research subcommittee supports and tracks the progress of the research team in analyzing baseline data, implementing decision point focus groups, and designing the evaluation. A subcommittee will begin designing the implementation of cross-system intervention strategies, including program supports and enhancements, and an overall communication plan. Findings from the research team conclude that many factors contribute to racial disproportionality in the Child Welfare System, including factors the coalition cannot directly address. The report from this team states that, “societal factors outside the reach of the child welfare system [affect disproportionality in the child welfare system], such as poverty, housing, community safety, racism expressed in the larger community and media, and the differential history of discrimination experienced by people of color in this country.” The report concludes, however, that the coalition can influence “factors associated with policy, funding, practice and contracting,” factors associated with individual attitudes, values, stereotypes and racial biases of people involved in the …system.

The Honorable Judge Patricia Clark of the King County Superior Court and Co-Chair of King County’s Racial Disproportionality Coalition, is confident that with everyone working together positive results will soon start to show. “Our work is not only being followed by the rest of the state,” says Judge Clark, “but by the rest of the nation.” With the help of Regina Jones, Executive Director, of the Commission on African American Affairs and active member of King County’s Racial Disproportionality Coalition, there’s a chance that enough information about this serious problem will convince Governor Gregoire to take an active role in participating in some solutions.

Part II of Military Draft Series: Expert Opinions on Possibility of 2005 Draft

FOR PART II OF THIS SERIES, I asked a variety of individuals and experts for their opinions about the impact they believe a Draft will have on the youth of this nation and the people of the world. The National Priorities Project has a website that lists the cost of the Iraq War updated to the exact second. As of March 1st, 2005, at 5:25PM, the U.S had already spent a grand total of $136,714,633,298 for weapons, war and the invasion in Iraq. The truth is, our resources are being stretched so thin in Iraq that the possibility of a Draft in 2005 is becoming more of a reality than ever before. What could this mean for you? What could this mean for your friends and the rest of the youth in this nation and the youth in Iraq?

Aimara Lin started the Bay Area Chapter of Not In Our Name in March of 2002. Not In Our Name is a national project composed of a “network of individuals and organizations committed to standing with the people of the world.” The Not in Our Name Pledge of Resistance states, “We believe that as people living in the United States it is our responsibility to resist the injustices done by our government, in our names.” After Lin started the Bay Area Chapter, folks have been attending the weekly Wednesday meetings, getting educated and becoming involved in the Bay Area ever since.

I asked Lin for her thoughts and feelings about the Draft and the War in Iraq, and Lin replied that, “No matter how much money the government offers, their lives are worth more to themselves and their families than [anything] this government could send these youth out to do.” About the possibility of a 2005 draft, Lin said, “If a Draft does happen, it’s going to be a direct result of the unpopularity of this war.” For more information about Not In Our Name, visit www.notinourname.net/index.html.

Nancy Lessin founded the organization Military Families Speak Out in November of 2002. Lessin is the mother of a stepson who is currently in Iraq. Lessin started this program with a friend who was the father of a soldier about to be deployed. Military Families Speak Out was started in Boston, Massachusetts and is internet-based. Lessin informed me that they now have “well over 2,000 military families across the United States speaking out against this war.”

Lessin emphasized that, “the reality is, the draft is already here in certain forms.” Lessin described three different ways that the draft is here. The first she called the “poverty draft”, which essentially targets the young, poor youth of this nation. Lessin said that when young, poverty-stricken people are looking for “security, real living-wage jobs, health insurance and money for college”, they often turn to the military because it seems to be their only viable option. Lessin went on to say that it seems that the U.S Government is taking advantage of young people’s hardships.
Dear Rico,

[In response to your article “Making Your Path” in the March 2005 issue of the Mockingbird Times, I am so glad to hear you taking responsibility and not blaming the “system.” I receive the Mockingbird Times every month and initially thought the concept was great. Unfortunately all the whining and blaming of the “system” put me off and it usually went in the trash pretty fast. Your article caught my eye.

I agree you should not have to worry about housing. Nor should you have to worry about college. There are plenty of programs to help you contact the YMCA in Seattle about their Independent Living Program. Contact Treehouse for tuition assistance. Apply now for the Governor’s Scholarship. A girl on my caseload got $500,000 for college and her grades were not great. It is an underused resource. Friends of Youth, (425)869-6490 has several transitional living programs. There is a wealth of resources for people transitioning out of foster care in Region 4, especially when they have your attitude and insight.

I want to wish you good luck and a successful future.

DHS Social Worker III

Best Regards,
Jim Theofilis

Mockingbird Response:

Thank you for taking the time to send Rico a message of goodwill. Receiving feedback regarding their articles has a very positive impact on youth so again I thank you. I am appreciative of your honest feedback re: the perception that Mockingbird Times spends too much time focus on “blaming the system.” As you might guess, we get that feedback particularly from folks from DCFs, although not as much lately. I would like to point out that we work hard to ensure that there is a balance in the paper between allowing youth to give voice to their experiences in the system while ensuring that we also discuss solutions and personal responsibility. Often, youth need a bit of time before they can get beyond being locked into their experience as victims and survivors, and move towards seeing themselves as having some authority and choice over their lives. At the same time, most of their issues are real and legitimate, particularly for the older adolescent (we’ve just had two youth who lost their foster home at age 18, becoming homeless six months before their High School graduation). I just want you to know that we do strive to find a balance. Again, thanks for taking the time to send a message to Rico.

Mark your Calendars...May is National Foster Care Awareness Month!

All incoming Letters to the Editor should be addressed to Mockingbird Editorial Staff and will be opened by Editorial Staff. All incoming correspondence to reporting staff under 18 years of age will be opened first by Mockingbird Editorial Staff.

ABOUT US: The Mockingbird Society is a private non-profit organization dedicated to building a world class foster care system and improving the other systems that serve children and adolescents involved in homelessness and foster care. The Mockingbird Times is a monthly newspaper written and produced by youth who have experience in foster care and/ or homelessness. All youth employees of Mockingbird Society are paid between $7.50 and $8.50 an hour. Additionally, youth from across the country submit articles, art work, poetry and are compensated up to $25 per published piece. The Mockingbird Times has a monthly circulation of 60,000 copies being distributed across Washington and the U.S.A, as inserts in Real Change, Seattle Sun and Seattle Star newspapers and our own distribution list. Youth involvement is the key to the philosophy, values, and success of The Mockingbird Society and, as such, youth are involved in all aspects of organizational development and decision-making. Donations to The Mockingbird Society may be tax-deductible and are greatly appreciated. No part of the Mockingbird Times may be reproduced without the written permission of The Mockingbird Society. All contents copyright 2004 The Mockingbird Society.

A Mockingbird Inside Your Mailbox

Make a difference in the lives of our most vulnerable youth and support the Mockingbird Society!

Donations may be tax deductible and all donors receive the Mockingbird Times. Enclosed, please find my check made payable to Mockingbird Society in the amount of: $__

Suggested Donations:  
$1,000+... Protector $500-999....Caretaker $250-500.....Organizations $50+....Supporter $25....Foster Parent

NAME ____________________________  PHONE ____________________________

ADDRESS ____________________________ EMAIL ____________________________

CITY STATE ZIP  ☐ Please do not include my name on published donor lists.

Please fill out and mail this form with a check or money order payable to: The Mockingbird Society, 2100 24th Ave South Suite 350, Seattle WA 98144

Thank you for your generosity!

Mockingbird Times, April 2005

Mockingbird Times, April 2005

Mockingbird Times, April 2005

Mockingbird Times, April 2005

Mockingbird Times, April 2005

Mockingbird Times, April 2005
Movie Review: The Boogeyman is NOT Going to Get You

COURTNEY KONETZKO

Bogeyman is a badly produced horror film that relies completely on shock tactics to make the audience scared, which I guess is the thing that places it in the horror genre. Bogeyman is the story of a little kid who is afraid to go to sleep because whenever he turns out the lights the bogeyman comes into his bedroom. The little kid tries to tell his dad about his fear and his dad tells him everything is going to be alright. The dad proceeds to tell his dad about his fear and his dad tells him the thing that places it in the horror genre.

Boogeyman makes you tense because you never know when the bogeyman is going to jump out of the closet along with lightning fast imagery and insanely loud sounds that sound like a hellish roar on your seat. It’s similar to the sensation you get when a cat runs out in front of your car. A good horror movie is one that makes you leave your lights on after watching it; one that sends chills through you and makes you wonder about the things happening in their life. Ogata goes on to say that any activity youth participate in that gets them off the streets is a step towards addressing other issues in their life.

I have attended the open gym every week since it’s been open and I would like to thank Zach and Rick for designing the program, the University Presbyterian Church for providing the space and Tyler Bauer and Johnny Ogata for taking the time to come and play basketball with all of us youth. The gym is located at 4540 15th Ave. NE and is open from 12:30-2:30 every Tuesday.

Mockingbird Times, April 2005
**Clarity Achieved in Providing Medical Care to Minors**

**DARUIS REYNOLDS**

**YOUTH AND DOCTORS FACE A SIMILAR PROBLEM IN WASHINGTON STATE**

Doctors are sometimes not sure what kind of services they can give a youth without getting in trouble with the law and youth don't know what kind of health services they are eligible for. To fix this problem Columbia Legal Services, Seattle Public Health and UW Medicine came together to create a summary of health care services that can be offered to minors.

The summary explains what rights the youth have and whether or not the doctor has to have parental consent. It also says if the parent has to be notified or not. Below is an excerpt from this document, please go to www.washingtonlawhelp.org for the complete document and more information.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service needed</th>
<th>Minor Consent Sufficient for Confidential Care</th>
<th>Parent/Guardian Consent Required</th>
<th>Parent/Guardian Notification Required</th>
<th>Source and Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Emergency medical services:</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>If the parent's consent is not readily available, the consent requirement is satisfied and the minor can receive medical services. RCW 7.70.050(4); Minors may obtain tests and/or treatment for sexually transmitted diseases if they are 14 years of age or older without the consent of a parent or guardian. RCW 70.24.110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexually transmitted disease testing/ treatment (including HIV):</td>
<td>Yes, if 14 or over</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Public Health – Seattle &amp; King County will test and treat individuals regardless of age due to its mandate to prevent and control the spread of communicable disease</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abortion services:</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Minors may receive an abortion and abortion related services at any age without the consent of a parent, guardian or the father of the child. RCW 9.02.100(1); State v. Koome, 84 Wn.2d 991 (1973)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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**Quote of the Month**

"Freedom is actually a bigger game than power. Power is about what you can control. Freedom is about what you can unleash."

- Harriet Rubin

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**Creative Corner**

**SHARINA**

**Remember This**

A sad and twisted thought came upon my mind
Something so sadistic that should be left behind
I thought about those who have died so soon
And what I was doing when they met their doom
And I thought about myself, about my blood and my tears
Living with nothing but pain and my tormented fears
And I noticed something that just didn’t seem right
Something to make you cry and shiver in the night
Every time you smile, another child cries
Every time you’re happy another person dies
When everything’s going right and it’s the best day of your life
Someone out there has had enough and is picking up that knife
Every time you have someone another person is alone
Every time you feel loved another child is on their own
When your parents are hugging you and showering you with kisses
Some child out there is being beaten by parents who are making death wishes
Every time you see the light another child only sees the dark
Every time you’re healthy another person is cutting a fresh mark
So remember this next time you’re having a good day
Another someone out there is dying in some way.

**One More Chance**

One more chance to be free
One more chance so my family can look beyond all the hatred and what I should be
One more chance to love
One more chance to be hugged
One more chance to show I could do right
One more chance to kick it all night
One more chance to get my life on track
One more chance to sit back
One more chance is all I need

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**Cool Opportunity: Make It Happen, The College Experience!**

The Washington Education Foundation (WEF) is pleased to announce that applications are now available for our statewide summer program, Make it Happen, the College Experience! This brand new program will be held July 19-22, 2005 at the University of Puget Sound, to help foster youth prepare and plan for their post-secondary education.

All Make it Happen applicants must be in Washington State, tribal or federally recognized out-of-home care; interested in higher educational opportunities; and be either a junior in high school or eighteen or younger and enrolled in or graduated from a GED program.

**Make it Happen** participants will:
- Experience life on a college campus by staying in the residence halls at UPS for 4 days and 3 nights.
- Meet other amazing students from foster care who are in college now or who plan to go to college.
- Learn about the college admissions process.
- Learn how to apply for financial aid and other scholarships.
- Hear from the captivating speaker, author, and former foster youth, Regina Louise (visit her website to learn more about Regina: http://www.reginalouise.com).
- Participate in fun recreational and entertainment activities.
- Receive a $50 stipend if they complete the program.

**The application (postmark) deadline is April 4, 2005. For more information, please visit our website at www.waedfoundation.org or contact Mareesha at mbackman@waedfoundation.org or 1-877-655-4097.**

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**Draft Continued from Page 1**

in finding living-wage jobs, affordable housing and access to financial aid for college. According to The American Friends Service Community, “Overall, the Pentagon spends over $2.5 billion a year targeting high-achieving low-income youth with commercials, video games, personal visits and slick brochures.”

Lessin also described two other ways that the draft is already here. You can find out more about the U.S. Military’s use of “Stop-Loss” (extending Military Duties in Iraq against an individual’s will) and the National Guard’s use of “Stop-Loss” (extending Military Duties in Iraq against an individual’s will) and the National Guards and can be read at www.RollingStone.com.

**“We are interested in hearing from you about your perspective on the war in Iraq and the possibility of a draft. Please send us your thoughts at newspaper@mockingbirdsociety.org.”**