

# Child Welfare Policy Luncheon

## AGENDA

12 P.M. Lunch

12:30 P.M. Luncheon Keynote: "The New Federal Law: Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of "

David Laird, MSW, *Director of Government Affairs and Policy, Voices for America's Children*

Sania Metzger, Esq., *Director of Policy, The Annie E. Casey Foundation/Casey Family Services*

1:30 P.M. Panel: "How Do Vermont's New Child Welfare Laws Fit Into the Picture?"

Moderator: Sheila Reed, Esq., *Voices for Vermont's Children*

Lynn Granger, *Program Director, Vermont Kin As Parents*

Jezeræe Jackson, *Youth in Kinship Care*

Robert Sheil, Esq., *Juvenile Defender, Vermont Office of the Juvenile Defender*

Heather Simmons, *Recruiter and Permanency Planning Counselor, Lund Family Center*

Cindy Walcott, *Deputy Commissioner, Family Services Division, Vermont Department for Children and Families*

2:30 P.M. Final Remarks

Tuesday, April 28, 2009

Noon to 2:30 P.M.

Capitol Plaza Hotel - Montpelier Room

100 State Street, Montpelier, VT 05602



*Sponsored by the Annie E. Casey Foundation/Casey Family Services, Voices for Vermont's Children, and the Vermont Department for Children and Families.*



Voices  
for Vermont's Children



## PRESENTER PROFILES

**Lynn Granger** a founder of Vermont Kin as Parents (VKAP), has been involved in kinship work since 2001 and is currently a coordinator for the organization. VKAP is a grassroots nonprofit that supports kinship caregivers and their children. She taught in the Winooski, Vermont, school district for 28 years. She is the parent of two adopted children, a grandparent of six, and has been raising her oldest grandchild, Brian, for 11 years.

**Jezeræ Jackson**, 19 years old, experienced numerous foster and kinship placements, spending the last few years of her time in care with her aunt and uncle in Vermont. She is a graduate of Harwood Union High School and currently is completing her freshman year at Wheelock College in Boston.

**David Laird, MSW**, is the director of government affairs and policy at Voices for America's Children, a membership-based advocacy organization headquartered in Washington, D.C. With a focus on child welfare and juvenile justice, he develops legislative proposals and implements strategies in partnership with Voices' members and represents the organization's legislative priorities on Capitol Hill. He also mobilizes and educates Voices membership about the impact of federal proposals on children in the states. Prior to Voices, Laird was government affairs program manager at the Child Welfare League of America and previously provided direct services in a variety of child and family community settings.

**Sania Metzger, Esq.**, director of policy for the Annie E. Casey Foundation/Casey Family Services. An attorney, she serves on the Casey Policy and Communications Strategy Group, the Child Welfare Strategy Group, and the Alliance for Racial Equity. She works to influence and track child welfare policy at local, state, and federal levels. Metzger worked for the New York State Legislature for 11 years as legislative counsel to Assemblyman Roger Green, then chair of the Standing Committee on Children and Families.

**Robert Sheil, Esq.**, is the supervising attorney in the Vermont Office of the Juvenile Defender. He is a former deputy state's attorney, assigned counsel contract attorney, and solo practitioner who has been involved in juvenile cases for nearly 30 years. He is on the boards of Voices for Vermont's Children and the Washington County Youth Service Bureau/Boys and Girls Club. He also is a member of the Justice for Children Task Force and the Family Court Rules Committee.

**Heather Simmons** works at the Lund Family Center, currently as the Wendy's Wonderful Kids recruiter. With an eight-year tenure at the Center, she also works with children, ages 5 to

18, in Vermont foster care who have no identified permanency options. She currently is serving as board chair of Vermont Kin as Parents.

**Cindy Walcott**, appointed in 2005, is the deputy commissioner for the Family Services Division of the Vermont Department for Children and Families. She has served in the state child welfare office for more than 30 years, working as a child protective social worker, resource coordinator, and adoption social worker. Following her years of field experience, she moved to the department's central office in 1988, where she became the policy and planning chief. During her tenure, Walcott managed the state's first federal Child and Family Services Reviews and Program Improvement Plan.

## SPONSORING ORGANIZATIONS

**the Annie E. Casey Foundation/Casey Family Services**  
The Annie E. Casey Foundation fosters public policies, human-service reforms, and community supports that more effectively meet the needs of today's vulnerable children and families. The Foundation makes grants that help states, cities, and neighborhoods fashion more innovative, cost-effective responses to these needs. Casey Family Services, the direct service agency of the Annie E. Casey Foundation, provides a broad range of permanency-focused services to meet the changing needs of vulnerable children and families: foster care, post-adoption, preservation, reunification services, and family resource centers. [www.aecf.org](http://www.aecf.org) and [www.caseyfamilyservices.org](http://www.caseyfamilyservices.org)

### Voices for Vermont's Children

As Vermont's only independent, nonpartisan children's research and policy advocacy organization, Voices focuses the majority of its efforts on the state's most vulnerable and disadvantaged children, youth, and their families. The organization's purpose is to advance policies that support Vermont children and families, increase public awareness of their needs, and organize and work with individuals and organizations across Vermont concerned about their well-being. [www.voicesforvtkids.org](http://www.voicesforvtkids.org)

### Vermont Department for Children and Families

The Vermont Department for Children and Families – as part of the state's integrated Agency of Human Services – fosters the healthy development, safety, well-being, and self-sufficiency of Vermonters. The agency focuses on prevention and seeks to reduce poverty and homelessness; improve the safety and well-being of children and families; create permanent connections for children and youth; and provide timely and accurate financial supports for children, individuals, and families. [www.dcf.vermont.gov](http://www.dcf.vermont.gov)