Keeping Families Together Webinar:

Can Supportive Housing Strengthen Vulnerable Families and Keep Their Children Safe?

Nancy Barrand, Robert Wood Johnson Foundation
Connie Tempel, Corporation for Supportive Housing
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Purpose:

To share the very promising results of a groundbreaking, 3-year pilot designed to address the needs of New York City’s most vulnerable families.
Corporation for Supportive Housing

CSH brings people, skills and resources to help communities create permanent housing with supportive services to prevent and end homelessness.

- Make loans and grants
- Provide guidance and expertise
- Strengthen the supportive housing industry
- Reform public policy
Overview of Keeping Families Together

Alison Harte, Corporation for Supportive Housing
Webinar Agenda

I. Overview of Keeping Families Together  
   Alison Harte, Corporation for Supportive Housing

II. Keeping Families Together Results  
   Stan Schnieder & Rebecca Swann, Metis Associates

III. Child Welfare Response to Keeping Families Together  
   Eric Nicklas, Forestdale Inc., formerly of NYC’s Administration for Children’s Services

IV. Cost Implications and Next Steps  
   Richard Cho, Corporation for Supportive Housing

V. Questions and Answers
What is Keeping Families Together?

Keeping Families Together is an innovative attempt to more intentionally use supportive housing as a vehicle for preventing family disruption and child welfare system involvement:

• Keep children in vulnerable families safe.
• Prevent the need for child welfare removal and foster care placement.
• Keep vulnerable families together and reunite those that have been separated.
Vulnerable Families, Keeping Families Together

- Poverty, often intergenerational
- Chronic homelessness
- Parents with mental illness and/or substance abuse
- Children at high risk for neglect, abuse, separation from their families and placement into foster care
Keeping Families Together: Jose, Destiny and Evelyn
Many Needs, Many Services

Most Vulnerable Families

- Child Welfare
- Homelessness
- Mental Health Issues
- Substance Abuse

Abuse and Neglect

Poverty

Criminal Activity

Substance Abuse Services

Family and Housing Courts

Homeless Services

Psychiatric Services and Hospitals

Hospitals/emergency rooms

Corrections

Hospitals/emergency rooms

Substance Abuse Services

Corrections

Many Needs, Many Services
Keeping Families Together: Permanent Homes, Coordinated Care
How Does Keeping Families Together Work?

- Safe, secure and affordable housing
- On-site case manager advocates for families, helps them get services and navigates the systems
- Crisis management
- Small pass-through grants to housing providers help families buy household items, school supplies, etc.
How Keeping Families Together Helped Destiny

• Instead of being placed into foster care, Destiny remained with her father.
• Her family has a safe, secure and comfortable place to live.
• Dad continues to get substance abuse treatment.
• Mom can live with them again.
• For the first time, they are living together as a family.
Keeping Families Together Evaluation Data

Stan Schneider, Metis Associates
Rebecca Swann, Metis Associates
Elements of Keeping Families Together Pilot

- Supportive housing
- Systems coordination
- Targeted recruitment
- Capacity building
- Program evaluation
Parent Profile

Primarily female-headed minority families with two children
- Average age: 39 years old (range: from 22 to 52)
- Education: less than high school (69%)
- History of substance abuse (96%)
- Diagnosis of mental illness (54%)
### Intergenerational Trauma History

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Trauma</th>
<th>N*</th>
<th>% of Total Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>As Children</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent drug or alcohol abuse</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>48.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parental death or abandonment</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>31.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victims of sexual abuse</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>27.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victims of physical or verbal abuse or neglect</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>27.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housed in foster care</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>27.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homelessness</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>17.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chronic housing instability</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>17.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housed in another informal setting</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>As Adults</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Sleep disruptions</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>89.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Depression</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>75.9%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Victims of domestic violence</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>72.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anxiety symptoms</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>62.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suicidal thoughts or actions</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>37.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victims of rape</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>27.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victims of assault</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>24.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>29</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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*Includes multiple responses.*

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History of Shelter Use

Family and adult shelter stays for Keeping Families Together families and heads of household before supportive housing:

- 17,451 total shelter days
- $1,400,237 estimated cost ($95/day/family, $64/day/single)
Keeping Families Together Children

86 minor children:

- Moved into supportive housing: 43 (50%)
  - with open ACS cases: 37 (86%)
- In foster care placement: 25 (29%)
  - Parental rights terminated: 15 (17.5%)
- In an informal placement: 3 (3.5%)
Child Welfare Status Prior to Keeping Families Together

- 39% of children were placed in foster care
- 26% were placed in foster care
- 35% had no children placed in foster care
- All children placed in foster care
- Some children placed in foster care
- No children placed in foster care
Foster Care Duration and Cost

• 48 children had at least one foster care spell, averaging 1,244 days (3.4 years) and ranging from 35 to 5,369 days

• 14 of these children had a second foster care spell, averaging 1,284 days (3.5 years) with a range of 74 to 5,165 days

• Cumulatively, families used 75,931 foster care days from 1991-2010 (before Keeping Families Together); estimated cost of $7,365,307 ($97 per day)
Residential Stability

- 26 of 29 Keeping Families Together families achieved residential stability—tenants remained housed 10 to 31 months from move-in to end of pilot

- Two of the three families who chose to move out of the Keeping Families Together pilot returned to shelter for 503 and 19 days, respectively
Outcomes for Families: Child Well-Being

- 22 of the 37 ACS cases (61%) were closed
- 14 preventive services cases were closed
  - Average case duration: 22 months (range: 6 to 31 months)
  - Cases closed, on average, within 10 months of the family’s move to supportive housing (range of 3 to 22 months)
Outcomes for Families: Family Reunification

- All six foster children with goal of reunification were returned to their families
- As of May 31, 2010, 5/6 reunified children back for 12+ months
  - The sixth child reunified for six months, on track to meet 12-month goal
Duration of Formal Placements (Pre and Post KFT)

- Child 1: Duration from Placement to Move in = 168 days, Duration from Move In to Reunification = 469 days
- Child 2: Duration from Placement to Move in = 138 days, Duration from Move In to Reunification = 505 days
- Child 3: Duration from Placement to Move in = 138 days, Duration from Move In to Reunification = 505 days
- Child 4: Duration from Placement to Move in = 118 days, Duration from Move In to Reunification = 337 days
- Child 5: Duration from Placement to Move in = 31 days, Duration from Move In to Reunification = 775 days
- Child 6: Duration from Placement to Move in = 151 days, Duration from Move In to Reunification = 936 days

Days: -1200 to 1200

Legend:
- Duration from Placement to Move in
- Duration from Move In to Reunification
- Duration from Reunification to Present
Outcomes for Families: Child Well-Being

- Three children (ages 2, 3 and 4) have no history of ACS involvement.
- No children were removed from the home during the pilot.
- The number of indicated abuse/neglect cases decreased from pre-pilot to the end of Keeping Families Together.
- Two cases were reopened.
Cases Before and After Keeping Families Together

![Graph showing cases before and after keeping families together.](image)
Cases Before and After Keeping Families Together

• After Keeping Families Together, there were only 13 indicated abuse/neglect cases

• 14 of the 22 families had no subsequent indicated abuse/neglect cases
Outcomes for Children: School Attendance

School-age children showed steady average increases in school attendance

Average Change in ADA

Before | Move-In Year | One Year After Move-In

50.0% | 60.0% | 70.0%

80.0% | 90.0% | 100.0%

2007-08 Move-in Group (N=10)
Child Welfare Response to Keeping Families Together

Eric Nicklas, Forestdale, Inc.
Child Welfare Response

Supportive housing provides the stable home and wrap-around services that enables child welfare agencies to preserve, reunify and strengthen high need families.
The cross-system collaboration and coordination exemplified in the Keeping Families Together pilot is critical to the success of high-need families.
Cost Implications and Next Steps

Richard Cho, Corporation for Supportive Housing
Foster Care & Shelter Reductions Alone Offset 97% of Cost of Supportive Housing

KFT's 2-Year Net Cost Per Family = $2,186
The Need for Keeping Families Together

• 18% of children who become newly homeless also become involved in the child welfare system.
  o 27% for children with 3 or more stays in shelter
  o 40% for children with shelter stays longer than six months

• 24%-26% of children of homeless parents are in foster care (34 times greater than general population of U.S. children)

• One California study found 48.7% of children in foster care had homeless or unstably housed parents.
The Need for Keeping Families Together

Number of homeless children in shelters = 344,495
Number of homeless and doubled-up children = 794,600
Prevalence of foster care among homeless children = 24%
Keeping Families Together could prevent or end foster care for 82,679 to 190,704 children nationally.
Keeping Families Together

When we focus on the care of the family as a whole and provide them with essential services and support, we can keep children with their families in a safer, healthier, stable home.
For more information, please contact:

vulnerablepopulationsteam@rwjf.org

And visit:

www.rwjf.org/pr/pduct.jsp?id=71752

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