

Adoptive Family Support Network

PARENT TO PARENT

Parent to Parent (P2P) provides a listening ear, knowledgeable guidance and community connections to any adoptive family living in Michigan at no charge. Services are provided through trained staff and volunteer parent leaders located throughout Michigan and offering a wide variety of personal adoption experience.

WHEN SHOULD YOU REACH OUT?

Contact us anytime 24/7 if you have a question or want to connect, such as:

PEER SUPPORT Is there an adoptive parent leader or a support group near my county?

REFERRALS Can you help me find a therapist or other specialists with experience in adoptive issues?

RESOURCES Are there supports available in my community for my adoptive family? I would like to request a resource from AFSN's lending library.

ADVOCACY How do I obtain the help my child needs in school? I want to attend a P2P leadership training.

BEHAVIOR What can I do when my child is exhibiting difficult behaviors (mood swings, temper, etc.)?

GRIEF & LOSS How can I navigate this difficult time for myself and my child?

IDENTITY How do I answer my child's questions about his/her identity at different stages or ages?

COMMUNITY CONNECTION How do I get more information about upcoming fun events and trainings for my family?



For more information, visit dabsj.org and search "P2P".



ADOPTIVE FAMILY SUPPORT NETWORK

PARENT TO PARENT

Fiscal Year 2018-2019 Annual Report

Through your support, Adoptive Family Support Network's (AFSN) Parent to Parent (P2P) Mentor Program has been providing statewide support to any Michigan adoptive family since 2015. P2P has a specialized focus on supporting adoptive families with children who may be impacted by the trauma from early childhood abuse and neglect. AFSN provides peer mentoring, support groups, education and advocacy to create a community that supports the lifelong wellbeing of adoptive families. The P2P Program's goal remains to be limiting out of home placements (residential treatment), disrupted adoptive placements and dissolved adoptions; supporting children to continue their healing at home.

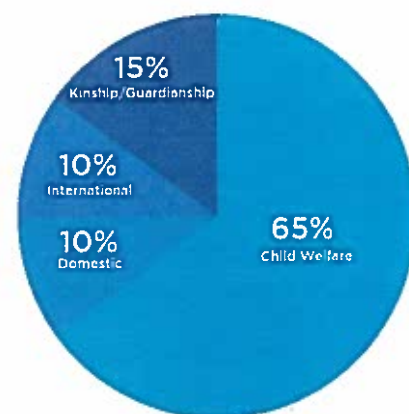
We are pleased to report that in 2018 AFSN and the Parent to Parent Mentor Program gained accreditation through the National Council on Accreditation (COA) for Counseling, Support and Education Services! COA has been a nonprofit accreditor of human services since 1977. Counseling, Support, and Education Services are community-based, prevention-focused programs and activities to help families and individuals of all ages cope with the stresses of daily living. Services emphasize personal growth, development, and situational change. This accreditation signifies that an organization or program, such as AFSN, is effectively managing its resources and providing the best possible services to all of its stakeholders.

Families utilizing Parent to Parent are provided an organic community of peer support, education and leadership training that helps keep parents strong and families intact. Parents supported in their own community have reported feeling more empowered to learn new approaches and skills needed to help abused children heal their emotional wounds. The program's staff and 96 volunteer parent mentors are located throughout Michigan and are well connected to resources in their communities. This promotes their ability to support, coach and advocate for the services families need in their communities.

IN FISCAL YEAR 2018-2019 (OCTOBER 1, 2018 – SEPTEMBER 30, 2019):

ADOPTIVE/KINSHIP/GUARDIANSHIP FAMILIES SERVED

- 2,127 unduplicated Michigan families served impacting 5,505 children
- 845 new families
- 8,732 individual contacts (averaging 4 hours of support per family)
- 76 (96%) Michigan counties served



PARENT/CLIENT SATISFACTION SURVEY HIGHLIGHTS

- 98% reported all adopted children under 18 remained in their home.
- 99% reported being highly satisfied or satisfied with their P2P support.
- 97% reported feeling more able to access support and resources since connecting with AFSN.

Support
24/7/365

96
Parent Mentors
Located Across
Michigan

ADOPTIVE FAMILY SUPPORT NETWORK PARENT TO PARENT MENTORS

SB 848, Sec. 559 (PA 207 of 2018) Appropriations Report: Oct. 1, 2018 - Sept. 30, 2019

TOP REASONS FAMILIES CONTACTED P2P

- Seeking support group or connection to other adoptive families
- Seeking resources to assist with their child's challenging behaviors

PROGRAM ACTIVITY FACILITATED IN PERSON

- Community Presentations - 43 community groups, schools and agencies in 29 counties (39 in FY18)
- Family Engagement Events - 56 community events with families from 44 counties (72 in FY 18)
- Support Groups & Education - 89 in person events serving families from 26 counties (54 in FY 18)

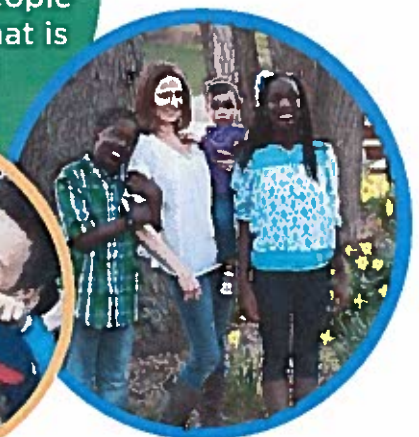
PROGRAM OUTREACH & SUPPORT MODERATED ONLINE

- Lending Library- Resources list available on our website
- Statewide Support Group Listing By County- located on our website
- AFSN Facebook Public Page- 3,797 page followers
- P2P Statewide Facebook Village- 2,756 members (6% increase from FY18)
- P2P Parent Mentor Group- 78 members
- Transracial Families Group- 585 members
- Support Groups Moderated by AFSN (3)- 103 combined members
- Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder Online Book Club- 87 members

ONLINE SUPPORT GROUP STATISTICS

- 4,688 total posts
- 391 posts per month
- 33 posts per day

"It is so wonderful to not feel alone, like we are the only ones living such a crazy life. People are very real and that is so helpful."





October 14, 2019

To: Michigan Legislators
From: Matt Gillard, President/CEO
RE: NEEDED: A Budget Supplemental for Children, Youth and Families

As you and your colleagues vote on supplemental budgets to bring back funding for programs deemed critical, and the Governor continues negotiating with legislative leaders on strategies to fully fund the state budget for the next fiscal year, funding for programs critical to the most vulnerable children, youth and families supported in legislatively-passed budgets has been left off the negotiating table.

While many necessary investments that were left out of the budget conversation altogether, or are already being discussed, Michigan's Children recommends that supplemental budgets must include the following restoration of Gubernatorial vetoes. These initiatives are not pork or partisan, and all are evidenced practice with proven impact.

Supports for children, youth and families impacted by the child welfare system.

- Adoption Supports: \$250,000 for the Adoptive Family Support Network, allowing their operations in support of adoptive, foster, kin and birth parents to continue.
- Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA): \$500,000 to begin state expansion, ensuring access in Wayne, Oakland and Macomb counties.

Supports for the most challenged youth.

- Alternative Diploma Paths: \$2.3 million for strict discipline academies and dropout prevention programs, both viable pathways to receiving a high school diploma.
- Supports for Homeless and Runaway Youth: \$800,000 increase for Runaway and Homeless Youth service providers.
- CASA Fostering Futures: \$50,000 to pilot a program targeting older youth aging out of foster care.

Supports for struggling learners.

- Afterschool and Summer Learning: \$600,000 to support wrap-around services for out-of-school time providers.
- Integrated Student Services: \$525,000 in funding for Northeast Michigan Community Service Agency's School Success Partnership Program.
- Social-Emotional Learning: \$500,000 to pilot a social-emotional learning program in at least five districts.

We are glad to provide more information about any of these initiatives, and look forward to working together to rebuild the budget for the remainder of the fiscal year.

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President and CEO



October 30, 2019

Committee meeting:

Health and Human Services subcommittee of the Standing Committee on House Appropriations, Rep. Mary Whiteford, Chair

Testimony for Continuation of AFSN's Parent Lead Support

The Adoptive Family Support Network has worked tirelessly to have ensured a well-planned statewide expansion of our Parent to Parent Program model. Our efforts have ensured direct support to adoptive families while we identified and trained parent leaders throughout Michigan. In FY18-19 alone, **AFSN supported 2,127 unduplicated families, impacting 5,505 children, from 76 of 83 (96%) Michigan counties.** Yet our work is not done.

Allow me to speak to the critical need for a supplemental bill to restore AFSN's funding lost in the Appropriation Veto. Establishing trusting relationships in communities takes time. Adoptive, kinship and guardianship families often feel isolated and alone in their struggles, leading them to wait to reach out until they are in crisis. Ever-changing agency staff, contracts, eligibility requirements, and community resources exacerbate this problem. What is unique, evidence based, cost effective and enduring about the Parent to Parent model is that we are focused on training parents to advocate, lead and support parents in their own communities with skills that cannot be taken away when the funding ends. The passion that these leaders have to support families throughout the adoption process and long after the agencies have closed their cases, cannot be replaced even by the best social work. Other adoptive parents can give hope and courage to adoptive parents who face the very real challenges that come with parenting children who have experienced trauma and loss in profound ways. While the passion and experience of the parents wasn't lost in the abrupt veto of AFSN's contract, so much was. **Our Michigan adoptive families are faced with losing two important things; increased access to services, and stability of placement for children adopted primarily from our child welfare system.**

- Voices of thousands of families
- AFSN facilitated support groups
- Coordinating and upkeep of our lending library with 1,418 resources
- Coordination and oversight of parent volunteers
- The "hub" and source of connection for families
- Six AFSN staff working across Michigan and including the Upper Peninsula

Parents tell us:

Dan Rottier and I have benefitted greatly from this organization since we became adoptive parents. We have received helpful emotional and practical advice when we felt backed into a wall. They have provided amazing trainings to help us understand trauma, relationships with bio parents, how to best parent kids of a different race, diagnosis related to our kiddos, how to meld as a family, and a 6 week parenting class on how to best help kiddos with a trauma history. Countless other things for all of our kids also! We would not be where we are without this organization!

Indeed, more than 42% of families who contact the Parent to Parent Program are seeking to join support groups and connect directly with other adoptive parents in their area. AFSN's Adoptive Parent Consultants throughout the state are reaching out to existing groups to provide support, training and technical assistance to these leaders to strengthen their efforts, while developing new leaders and groups where there is a gap. **To date, AFSN has trained 96 Volunteer Adoptive Parent Mentors located across Michigan** equipped with the tools to lead and mentor other parents for the long haul, decreasing the need for costly agency and system intervention. Yet, those strong parent leaders still need AFSN's assistance and guidance.

In 2018 our Parent to Parent program was accredited by the National Council of Accreditation for Counseling, Support and Education. This is one leap forward in allowing Michigan to be a model for peer lead support across our country. But, we need more time to continue to empower, educate and train strong community leaders in ALL areas of our state so that we can leave behind an "army" of dedicated adoptive parents. We are asking you here today to be in support of a supplemental bill to include AFSN that restore our statewide program funding. **Please, allow our Michigan adoptive, foster, kinship and guardianship families increased access to support and decreased numbers of out of home placements.**

Thank you,

Brooke Van Prooyen, MSW- bvanprooyen@dabsj.org
AFSN Program Coordinator, birthmother and child raised kinship guardianship

Shelley Garcia, LMSW- sgarcia@dabsj.org
AFSN Statewide Supervisor, Adoptive and previous foster parent