

Spring 2005 Update

“Taken all together, findings show that **significant accomplishments** have taken place. The classes helped parents and children **learn and apply new skills**, such as, identifying issues of chemical dependency and understanding how these issues affect their families. Parents learned how to set goals for themselves and how to gain more control of their lives. Qualitative data from the focus groups, demonstrated that parents recognize that the program has been a tremendous help to them in becoming closer to their children and in assisting them in their efforts for family reunification.”¹

Friends,

Interest in *Celebrating Families!* is exploding – bordering on beyond our capacities – with many promising endeavors underway. I am able to slow down to write this update (promised for several months) only because **PPI** staff has grown with the additions of Makenzie Harris-Brown, Assistant Director; Cari Santibanes and Pat Heller, Clinical Support for local sites; and Linda Sibley, Clinical Support for other sites.

- Year II results from the Family Treatment Drug Court evaluation are staggering! (Full report on **PPI's** website. Evaluator's summary following 6 month Focus Groups quoted above.)
- Under the leadership of Judge Len Edwards, Supervising Judge of Dependency Courts Santa Clara County, Social Services is in the process of approving *Celebrating Families!* as the mandated parenting program for *all* families with substance abuse.
- Judge Sharon Chatman, Supervising Judge of Santa Clara County Domestic Violence Courts wants families with plans to reunify to attend *Celebrating Families!*
- Foster Family agencies want to add *Celebrating Families!*
- Other sites want to adapt *Celebrating Families!* for use in the schools.
- Outside of Santa Clara County, El Dorado and San Luis Obispo counties are contracted for training in *Celebrating Families!*
- Outside California, *Celebrating Families!* is being replicated in Indiana; professionals from Idaho, New Jersey and Georgia are trained.
“This is very exciting - if all goes smoothly, they may be contracting with us to set up all drug courts with *CF!* - that's 21 drug courts in New Jersey... pretty amazing.”
- All local *Celebrating Families!* replication sites are up and running: House on the Hill, Friends Outside, and EMQ Children & Family Services. Today we met with all sites to solicit feedback:
 - A Mom from a family with domestic violence, said “I never told my children ‘I love you’ because I was always angry. Now I tell them ‘I love you’, even when I’m angry.”
 - A son (age 12) of a woman in treatment told his granddad after group that “he had made a commitment to come for 15 weeks”. Granddad who had been resistant to coming, said “I teach on Thursdays, but I will change my class because this is too important to you.”

¹ Jrapko, A., Ward, D., Leakey D., Hazelton, T. and Foster, T. *Family Treatment Drug Court head Start Program, Annual Report October 1, 2003- September 30, 2004*. Center for Applied Local Research.

And then there is **Russia**: OPORA, our partner, was asked by the Ministry of Education this year to also provide prevention training for all Moscow orphanage directors, psychologists and other orphanage staff. ("Of the 15,000 orphans who 'graduated' Russian orphanages in 1993, one in three become homeless, one in five committed a crime, and one in ten committed suicide in the first year out of the orphanage (Annual State Report on Childhood in the Russian Federation, 1993, Ministry of Labour and Social Support, page 51.) In 2004, OPORA trained 817 Russian professionals, including 29 people from 19 cities outside of Moscow and 25-30 professionals from Moscow Social Services who have implemented *Keys to Healthy Living* (our prevention program) in shelters for street children.

Besides the addition of staff, Shirley Sparks (Adjunct faculty - Santa Clara University and FAS published author) and Stephanie Brown, Ph.D. (a nationally recognized pioneer on Adult Children of Alcoholics) have joined **PPI's** Advisory Committee. My focus beyond trainings and meetings is evaluation (and more evaluation!): the selection of a nationally recognized evaluator and evaluation instruments. There is a pressing need for evaluations of best practices in family-based approaches. *Celebrating Families!* evaluation will be **the first large-scale effort** to determine the actual efficacy targeting children of alcoholics/addicts. Foundations and governmental organizations are extremely interested in and have stated that funding may be available *only* because of this level of assessment.

There is tremendous need for our programs.

We will complete local replication with evaluation of *Celebrating Families!* in December 2005, including editing curriculum. In July we train more US sites and in August we travel to Russia to train people from cities outside of Moscow in working with children of alcoholics/addicts and chemically dependent families. This fall we plan to write the pre-school component for *Celebrating Families!* (L. Packard Foundation pending grant).

Due to your support the results of our work are far greater than could have been predicted or hoped and they continue! Many of these efforts are leading to new opportunities and the possibilities of major funders.

Thank you for your support!

Sincerely,

Rosemary Tisch, Director

Don't Miss



Emerald Yeh's 30-minute, award-winning documentary *Lost Childhood: Growing Up in an Alcoholic Family* of the lives of several children of alcoholics over a 17-year period, following two of them from elementary school age into adulthood.

Airing Thursday, June 2 at 10:30 p.m. KTEH San Jose, California

Half of U.S. Kids Face Parent Substance Abuse – (Reuters) - Half of all U.S. children live in a house where a parent or other adult uses tobacco, drinks heavily or uses illegal drugs. These adults are three times more likely to abuse their children and four times more likely to neglect them than parents who do not abuse alcohol or drugs or use tobacco. "Children of alcohol and drug abusers are at increased risk of accidents, injuries and academic failure. Such children are more likely to suffer conduct disorders, depression or anxiety; conditions that increase the risk children will smoke, drink and use drugs. If substance abusing parents are not concerned about what drugs, alcohol and tobacco are doing to themselves, they should be concerned about the ill effects they have on their children," Joseph Califano, Columbia University, National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse.

Responses in Family Treatment Drug Court Focus Groups (held six months after completion of *CF!*)

What have you learned from this class?

Many of the women felt that the greatest thing that they had learned from their participation was the ability to communicate, both with their own children as well as with other women and their children. Women commented that they had learned how to "ask for support" and how to be more open about their feelings and needs. As a result, they have improved their communication with others as well as communicating with their therapists. Other women felt that they had learned to be more humble and "appreciate the little things," such as "kisses and hugs from their children."

Participants also mentioned a series of skills they have learned including:

- Talking to their children in a meaningful way;
- Understanding that children are not extensions of them but that they are their own "little people";
- Learning how to really be present with their children and feel and give love;
- Learning respect for themselves and their children;
- Learning how to forgive themselves;
- Setting goals for themselves;
- Learning a few stress reliever tips, such as prayer, meditation, and baths;
- Setting examples for their children; and
- Reading to their children and observing warning signs when they are in trouble.

Has your life changed as a result of your participation in this class? How?

Most women agreed that as a result of their participation in the classes and their ability to apply what they have learned, their lives have positively changed; particularly in reference to their relationships with their children. Participants reported that they feel very proud that they now have the ability to teach their children the new skills that they themselves learned in the classes. These classes have helped the women to think about and understand identity issues, i.e. they learned that children have their own identity, and that they themselves had other identities in addition to being a child's mother. As an example, one participant said that these classes had been very helpful in discovering who "I am and that I can be a single mom, I don't need a man to complete me."

Other participants said that they felt humbled, and because of the Family Night program are now able to accept who they are – and can be a good role model for their children and family.

I can't change the past, but I can make a better future

Another client said that before she used to care a lot about her appearance, but since her participation in the program she now spends less time caring about her appearance and what other people think about her and puts more energy towards her children. In her words, "Now it's all about the kids."

How has your relationship with your children changed as a result of your participation in this class?

Overall, participants agreed that love; respect and patience now characterize their relationships with their children. The women feel that they are doing a better parenting job. They said that they have learned how to give their children choices, so that they develop their own decision-making skills, which will help them later in life when they need to make their own decisions and choices. Participants also learned how to respect their children's feelings. For example one client said, "That it is fine if my child is angry. It is better to understand how to accept that anger instead of trying to diffuse it."

Another participant said that the classes have taught her how to understand the different stages of child development and this has helped her to set boundaries and limits for herself and her children.

If I can be a good single mom and if my kids are happy with me, that's all that matters