

AAAC

African American Advisory Council Newsletter • Winter 2009



Black History and Making History

From The Chairperson...

Unity In 2009

By Michael D. Burns

Black History and Making History" is the theme selected for this edition in recognition of President Barack Obama. When I think of President Obama, I think of someone who seeks to bring the country together rather than to divide the citizens of this great nation. Some of his slogans or statements are applicable to DCFS. The one that comes to mind is "There is no red or blue America but the United States of America."

How many times have we heard someone say DCFS is different downstate than in upstate or Cook County? They do things different in this region than in that region. Quite naturally there are demographically differences that have to be taken into account in how we service children and families. But in reality, there is not a downstate or upstate DCFS, there is only one DCFS. Therefore policies and practices should be consistent throughout the state. In my role as Chairman of the AAAC and Statewide LAN Coordinator, I have had the opportunity for years to travel all over the state. What I have witnessed on many occasions is a staff that is concerned about serving children and families to the best of their ability in all regions of the state.

I am not naive to the point where I think there are not those individuals who harbor the feelings that divide us based upon region work locations. But I can say there is evidence that we are moving in the direction where people are displaying the attitude of it being one DCFS and not an upstate or downstate agency.

I see this evidence through the Permanency Enhancement Initiative/Action Teams. Individuals from DCFS, private agencies, community-based agencies, judicial system, educators, foster/birth parents, community advocates and activists, other state agencies and others have come together at the local level to help meet the challenge of improving permanency outcomes for children throughout the entire state of Illinois. While the emphasis is on improving outcomes for African American children, all children will greatly benefit from this local collaborative effort to keep children safe at home, return them home faster, achieve adoptions within appropriate time frames and the overall issue of the disproportionate number of African American children in the child welfare system.

These action teams are coming up with new ideas and strategies

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Michael Burns

Thank You

The African American Advisory Council is very pleased to present this special edition newsletter in honor of Black History Month for 2009.

Before I turn to the focus of this article, I would like to thank all of my friends, family, fellow co-workers, AAAC members, and colleagues from the private sector or other governmental agencies/institutions that sent cards, flowers, visited and called me during the time that I was hospitalized and while at home recovering from a gunshot wound after being robbed.

I also give thanks to Director Erwin McEwen and Assistant Chief of Staff, Eugene Grandberry for being at the hospital with my family while I was going through surgery. I would be remiss if I failed to acknowledge the support given to my family from Metropolitan Family Services. Audrenna Spence, Executive Director, Calumet Center, delivered food to my home from individuals she had asked to prepare dinner for the days leading up to New Year's Day. My wife was extremely appreciative of not having to cook for the family during those days.

Naturally, this was a very frightening experience for me, but all of the people that were praying for me really made me feel assured that I was in good hands and would be okay. I received a call from two siblings that were in my caseload when I was a case worker many years ago. It was great to hear their voices and to also speak with their foster mother, Mrs. Magdalene Helms. Mrs. Helms is now 94 years old and I learned a great deal from her as a young caseworker.

You know, you don't really think about how many people care about you, but there were so many people that demonstrated how much they cared about me until sometime I felt overwhelmed with emotions. I will forever be grateful for the love I received to help me stay positive during this difficult period of my life. I was truly blessed and very fortunate to be alive and to not have a severe injury to my body.

**Happy New Year
Michael Burns,
AAAC Chairman**

AAAC

African American Advisory Council • Winter 2009

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At The Helm...

African American directors have steered the ship of DCFS

The Illinois Department of Children and Family Services has its "A" list of African Americans that have been at the helm as Director for this agency. We can be proud knowing Illinois is one of the largest child welfare systems in the United States that has been favored with capable African Americans in the leadership role. While African Americans are overwhelmingly involved in this system across these United States, Illinois has been fortunate to have individuals that have played and continue to play a formidable role in shaping the lives of children and families. This article will provide a very brief overview of four such people.

Jimi Ann Lawrence was the first female African American Director from 1972 until 1973. While she only served nine months in this role, she was responsible for strengthening licensing rules/procedures, promoting the growth of child care providers and recruiting foster homes in underserved areas of Illinois.

Gordon Johnson, began working with DCFS in 1979 as a Deputy Director. He received the honor of serving as the second African American Director from 1983 until 1990. Many of the "old timers" remember Director Johnson because those were the days that employees were empowered through the use of all staff conferences. Those all staff conferences were wonderful opportunities to share ideas and learn new and creative ways to engage children and families. At least once a year, staff from every Division of the Department would come together and gain more knowledge of the latest child welfare studies and were provided with an opportunity to network with their co-workers.

Director Johnson was responsible for a budget of \$500,000,000 and 3,000 employees, 80 statewide offices and providing serv-

ices to 650,000 children under DCFS care, child care in foster homes, group homes and institutions; adoptions, day care, assistance to teen parents, troubled youth and adolescents and the licensing and monitoring of 20,000 child care facilities. He is most noted for founding and administering the nationally recognized One Church, One Child Program that was able to successfully place 5,000 children in adoptive homes. Additionally, he designed and implemented the first statewide child abuse death reviews.

Bryan Samuels became the third African American director after a 10-year tenure of his predecessor. Director Samuels was 36 when appointed by Governor Blagojevich on April 28, 2003. He was working as a policy expert with Metropolis 2020 prior to this appointment.

Director Samuels' uniqueness was qualified by his own early childhood experiences. He frequently gave personal accounts of having a mentally ill and drug addicted mother who placed him and his brothers in the care of Glenwood School for Boys. It was felt that based on his experiences he was equipped with a unique understanding of the Department's problems and could develop a blueprint for change.

He often stated that "For too long, child welfare systems have treated children coming into care as if their stays would be short. Research shows, however, that the average child in Illinois remains in care for 4.5 years. We must work to move a child forward or we risk missing critical developmental opportunities - years that can never be regained,"

Director Samuels can be remembered for instituting the Integrated Assessment program(IA), child and youth investment teams (CAYIT), redesign of transitional and independent living programs,

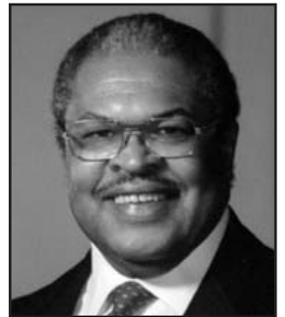
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McEwen



Samuels

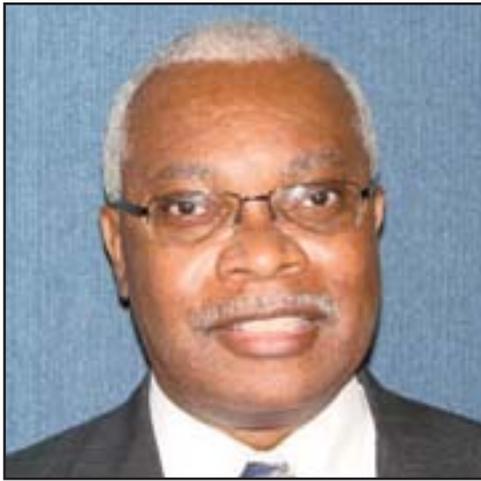


Johnson



Lawrence

Someone You Know



Grady

Matthew A. Grady, III has been appointed Deputy Director of Budget and Finance.

With more than 30 years of financial experience in the Public and Pri-

Matthew Grady III

ivate sector, he brings 14 years experience as the Finance & Budget Director for the cities of Flint, Michigan and Evanston, Illinois. He also served the City of Detroit for 3½ years, as the

Deputy Director of Finance and ultimately as Acting Chief Financial Officer for six months.

Mr. Grady also served as Adjunct Accounting Professor at the University of Michigan in Flint for five years. He holds a Masters Degree in Business Administration with a concentration in Finance and a Bachelors Degree with a major in Accounting from Wayne State University located in Detroit, Michigan.

Slavery legacy a part of White House history

WASHINGTON -- In January, President-elect Barack Obama and his family will make history, becoming the first African-American first family to move into the White House -- a house with a history of slavery. In fact, the legacy of American presidents owning slaves goes all the way back to George Washington.

Twelve American presidents owned slaves and eight of them, starting with Washington, owned slaves while in office. Almost from the very start, slaves were a common sight in the executive mansion.

A list of construction workers building the White House in 1795 includes five slaves - named Tom, Peter, Ben, Harry and Daniel -- all put to work as carpenters. Other slaves worked as masons in the government quarries, cutting the stone for early government buildings, including the White House and U.S. Capitol.

According to records kept by the White House Historical Association, slaves often worked seven days a week -- even in the hot and humid Washington summers.

In 1800, John Adams was the first president to live

in the White House, moving in before it was finished. Adams was a staunch opponent of slavery, and kept no slaves.

Future presidents, however, didn't follow his lead. Thomas Jefferson, who succeeded Adams, wrote

that slavery was an "assemblage of horrors" and yet he brought his slaves with him. Early presidents were expected to pay their household expenses themselves, and many who came from the so-called "slave states" simply brought their slaves with them.

Martin Van Buren, William Henry Harrison, Andrew Johnson and Ulysses S. Grant all owned slaves but not during their time in office. James Madison, Jefferson's successor, held slaves all of his life

including while he was in office. During the war of 1812 Madison's slaves helped remove material from the White House shortly before the British burned the building.



This story originally appeared on the CNN website.

CELEBRATE BLACK HISTORY MONTH

Black History and Making History

Obama election brings change to America

Many people will remember Tuesday, November 4, 2008 for years to come. Some thought they would never live to see history unfold with the election of an African American while others felt it could not happen. Well, it happened. Yes, I'm referring to the election of our 44th President of the United States of America, Barack Obama, a proud man of African ancestry.

Whether you were among the thousands who descend upon Grant Park or you had a ringside seat in front of the television, you watched history being made. It has come to fruition that indeed in the American dream can be achieved to the highest level, regardless of the color of one's skin.

Change has come to America. "We are no longer red states or blue states but rather the United States." These are the words which resonated from Barack Obama during one of his campaign speeches. As African Americans we can be deeply proud of this sensational accomplishment. History books everywhere will now have the face of an African American as the leader of the free world.

On election night, President Obama said, "If there is anyone out there who still doubts that America is a place where all things are possible; who still wonders if the dream of our founders is alive in our time, who still questions the power of our democracy, tonight is your answer." (www.barackobama.com/speeches/index.php) We must, however, be careful not to make the broad assumption that all is well. It will be necessary for us to keep working in making our nation a better place for all people.

The African American Advisory Council is proud to announce that Barack Obama was our very own keynote

speaker at an annual conference during the years he served in Illinois Senate. His speech was inspiring as well as motivating and at the conclusion the audience gave him a standing ovation.

It is noteworthy that many are posting photos of Obama with the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King. He has truly helped us to know, dreams come true.

Yes, Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King's dream has come alive.

"I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed: 'We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men are created equal.'"

I have a dream that one day on the red hills of Georgia the sons of former slaves and the sons of former slave owners will be able to sit down together at the table of brotherhood.

I have a dream that one day even the state of Mississippi, a state sweltering with the heat of injustice, sweltering with the heat of oppression, will be transformed into an oasis of freedom and justice.

I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character."

This is our hope. This is the faith with which I return to the South. With this faith we will be able to hew out of the mountain of despair a stone of hope. With this faith we will be able to transform the jangling discords of our nation into a beautiful symphony of brotherhood.

With this faith we will be able to work together, to pray together, to struggle together, to go to jail together, to stand up for freedom together, knowing that we will be free one day.



And if America is to be a great nation this must become true. So let freedom ring from the prodigious hilltops of New Hampshire. Let freedom ring from the mighty mountains of New York. Let freedom ring from the heightening Alleghenies of Pennsylvania!

When we let freedom ring, when we let it ring from every village and every hamlet, from every state and every city, we will be able to speed up that day when all of God's children, black men and white men, Jews and Gentiles, Protestants and Catholics, will be able to join hands and sing in the words of the old Negro spiritual, "Free at last! free at last! thank God Almighty, we are free at last!"

Indeed, African Americans are continuing to make history. This should be a lesson to all of us. We should encourage our children (biological and those on our case loads) to live their dreams because they can make history.

We have many ancestors that have shown we can

become history makers. There are many others like James Weldon Johnson, George Washington Carver, Rosa Parks, James Baldwin, Andrew Young, Harold Washington, and others.

Let's renew our rededication to work to the best of our abilities to improve the lives of those we come in contact.

Let's share with our adolescent population that they have much to look forward if they would only apply themselves and take advantage of the programs and services that are available.

Let's muster that extra effort in supporting the children and families we serve.

Our names may not be written in history books but if the work you do is with commitment and true dedication, your name will be on the hearts and minds of those we serve as child welfare professionals.

We Must Do Better By Our Children

by Oronde A. Miller
Executive Director and Founder
Institute for Family and Child Well-Being

I need to be completely honest as I start this essay. I haven't always had much sympathy for or a solid understanding of the trials and tribulations of social workers working in public child welfare agencies. My introduction to public child welfare was really through the experiences of African American adoption agencies, many of which have endured their own share of struggles partnering with these large bureaucratic and frequently culturally unresponsive systems. I guess it's also safe to say that some of my initial perceptions and perspective was based on my own personal experience with public child welfare systems.

My birth mother was pressured to give my brother and me up for adoption during pregnancy and up until birth. After being placed voluntarily by our birth mother, our birth father and his family were turned away from the public child welfare agency after attempting to get my brother and me out of foster care. All of this I am sure contributed to my lack of compassion for and appreciation of the struggles of these systems, as well as the individuals working within them. As far as I was concerned they were the heartless and oppressive enemy – tearing African American families apart with no care or concern.

In my current job I am responsible for working directly with public

Reflections on another child fatality: First of a two-part series

child welfare agencies to achieve better outcomes for children and families, specifically providing support and technical assistance for their system improvement efforts. Whereas I once critiqued the work of these agencies looking in from the outside, I am now responsible for supporting the system transformation efforts they are all engaged in. Now critiquing from a distance isn't an option. I have to be a part of the solution or be out. How interesting, given my own personal experience and previous perspective.

In my professional work over the last several years I have had an opportunity to work closely with social workers and child welfare administrators as they have attempted to transform their child welfare systems. In doing so I have gained a much better appreciation for what individuals working in these systems struggle against every day. These are large and complex bureaucratic systems. As a parent of two wonderful children I can assure you that actually caring for children is pretty easy compared to transforming these huge systems. At no time do I personally appreciate these dynamics more than when a child dies.

A few years ago I was involved in an on-going project working directly with child welfare administrators, social workers, community partners, as

well as youth and birth parents that were themselves involved with the child welfare system. During that period one of the state systems we were working with experienced a child fatality. A young child had been removed from her family and placed in foster care. After a short period of time in care, the young girl was reunified with her birth parents. She was killed within weeks of being reunified.

Everyone involved with this child's case was in strong agreement about returning this child to her parents. When they heard the child had been killed by the step-father, everyone was devastated. To ensure their safety, the siblings were immediately removed from the home and placed in foster care. The media raked the agency over the coals about the tragedy, calling for accountability, independent investigations and massive agency reforms, all the while demanding that the workers and administrators be fired.

I followed the media reports closely while also talking with the staff and administrators about some of the dynamics surrounding the incident. The supervisor shared with me the daily struggles they were trying to get through as the media continued to pile it on. She described to me the general fear they live with on a daily basis, knowing that every decision they make could be one of a child's life or death. She talked about hearing the media reports during that evening the

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Should Black History Month continue to be celebrated?

by Rochelle Crump,
Chief, Office of African-American Services

There are those who suggest that there is no longer a need to celebrate Black History Month. After all we have our first African American president, therefore we have "made it".

The dream has been realized but I believe we should commemorate Black History Month and its importance of raising the awareness of children and youth.

- Children of color and those not of color can learn significant history and the accomplishments of African-Americans through school and community programs.
- Children can better understand the courageous acts of African-American men and women that risked their lives and those that broke through barriers like,

Dr. King, Rosa Parks, Harriet Tubman, W.E.B. Dubois, Frederick Douglas, Sojourner Truth, Harold Washington, Jackie Robinson and the list goes on. Children should read about the historical struggles of African-Americans.

- African-American children can be proud of their cultural heritage and of people that look like them and grow with pride, no matter what their surroundings look like or what statistics say they will look like.
- African-American children can realize the persistent work they must do in the future.
- African-American children can vow to be a contributor to society and not expect contributions from society.

One of my favorites: *The quality, not the longevity, of one's life is what is important.* From the words of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Back to the Motherland

Farewell to Lawrence Kilonzo

The African American Advisory Council would like to extend a special thanks and farewell to Lawrence Kilonzo. After serving 14 years in the capacity of Child Welfare Specialist and Supervisor, he made the decision to leave DCFS. He has constantly

maintained a connection with his family, friends and fellow countrymen in Kenya and decided to return to the motherland where he can provide service and support to the many challenges faced by Kenyans. Lawrence is considered a silent force.

Through the years he has provided support to child welfare staff in the Cook North region and has served in several leadership roles that impacted positive changes in Child Welfare practice. As a fellow member, he has also supported the African American Advisory Council over the years through his willingness to work on assignments relative to African



American issues in the Department.

We will indeed miss his presence and commitment made to Illinois Department of Children and Family Services, and the African American Advisory Council.

At The Helm...

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and the major reforms in Intensive Stabilization Services, Family-Supported Adolescent Care, Life Time Approach and Residential Performance Unit.

Director Erwin McEwen returned to DCFS in 2003 as the Deputy Director for Monitoring and Quality Assurance. He assumed the role of Acting Director in 2006 and worked tirelessly in this capacity until his official appointment as Director of DCFS on December 5, 2007.

"Keep the Focus on Protecting Children by Strengthening and Supporting Families" is a common phrase stated by Director McEwen at the close of most of his speeches. This phrase can be seen on the walls and bulletin boards of regional offices and is a part of the Department's Strengthening Families Initiative.

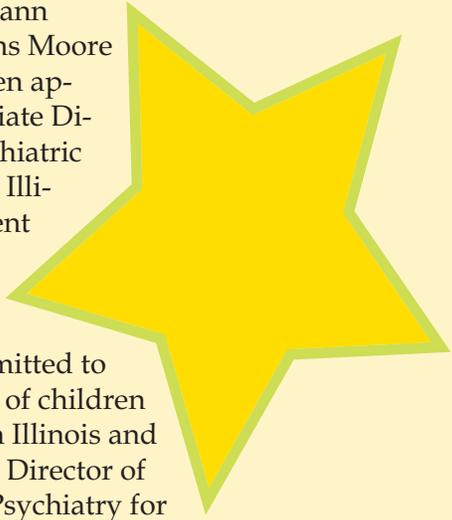
Director McEwen's commitment to protecting children by strengthening families has guided his visionary leadership of the Illinois Department of Children & Family Services as well as his implementation of innovative programs since his appointment as Director in

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Dr. Diahann Meekins Moore

Dr. Diahann Meekins Moore has been appointed Associate Director for Psychiatric Services in the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services. Dr.

Moore is committed to the well-being of children and families in Illinois and as the Medical Director of the P.A.C.T. (Psychiatry for Adolescents and Children in Transition) clinics, is working to ensure that



Biography

children in the department's care receive timely, trauma informed psychiatric care.

Dr. Moore has a BS in Psychology Pre-Medicine obtained from Xavier University of Louisiana and an M.D. from the University of Illinois at Chicago. She completed her residency training in Internal Medicine & Psychiatry at Rush University Medical Center.

Prior to her service at DCFS, Dr. Moore was the Lead Coordinator of the Childhood Obesity Prevention Project in the Chicago Public Schools. As the lead coordinator, Dr. Moore provided training for the teaching of staff on how to incorporate health and wellness into the curriculum as a means of addressing childhood obesity, as well as the psychological and physical effects of obesity.

Parents and children were educated about the psychological and physical effects of childhood obesity as well as anatomy and physiology, proper nutrition and exercise. In addition, Dr. Moore provided psychological/counseling services for kids in the Chicago Public Schools that were identified as having Behavioral Health needs.

Dr. Moore is based at 10 W. 35th, 2nd Floor, in Chicago.

Unity in 2009

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and what is pleasing is that these ideas are being shared in all six regions. This promotes unity in practices throughout the state and demonstrates that there is only one DCFS.

Director McEwen has definitely been doing his part to promote this statewide unity. I commend him for the value he's placed on the work that is taking place in the Action Teams and for his desire to meet with every Action Team in the state. He has already met with each of the Action Teams in Central and Southern Regions.

He plans to meet with Northern and Cook Regions in 2009. Additionally, he makes it a priority to regularly visit multiple sites within each region to keep everyone informed on what is taking place in the agency. He also takes the positive feedback that he receives from these meetings and implement those recommendations.

During these difficult and challenging economical hardships that families are facing, it is important that we come together as one DCFS along with our community partners to share information and resources that will support and sustain families. This is what Black History Month of 2009 means to me.

Please send us information/photos of your Black History Month celebrations. I am looking forward to the Cook County Second Annual Black History Month Celebration. See you there.

At The Helm...

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2006.

Director McEwen has sought to refocus child welfare practice on ensuring the well-being of children in addition to their safety, and to refocus the agency's priorities on providing needed support to families well before their circumstances warrant removal of a child from the home.

Director McEwen, or "Mac" as many co-workers and friends call him, is a frequent flyer because of his leadership and national recognition. He has advanced systemic change to better support families, improve mental health services to state wards and more effectively engage fathers in the lives of children.

Utilizing the creation of a statewide provider data base, a comprehensive trauma-based child welfare plan and learning collaboratives and permanency symposiums, Director McEwen continues to keep the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services on the cutting edge of child welfare.

Being Resilient During Difficult Times

By Kimberly A. Mann Ph.D.,
L.C.S.W.

Administrator, The Trauma Informed Practice Program (TIPP);
DCFS/ Chicago State University

What is your first thought when you hear the word, “resilience?” Does the term conjure up visions of superheroes that walk through battles and emerge seemingly unscathed? Perhaps you think of a child that you know that has endured far too many burdens and come through it...stronger, wiser and changed. Perhaps you think of yourself, your own story of challenges and how they have made you who you are today. Perhaps during Black History Month [and we hope throughout the year] you recall those who suffered the horrors of the legacies of chattel slavery and went on to establish great institutions, families, and communities.

The American Psychological Association (APA) defines resilience as, “the process of adapting well in the face of adversity, trauma, tragedy, threats, or even significant sources of stress – such as family and relationship problems, serious health problems, or workplace and financial stressors. It means “bouncing back” from difficult

experiences.”

“Bouncing back” is an interesting and problematic concept. It assumes that we return to our original starting point like the “Nerf” ball that is squeezed and always resumes its original shape. Bouncing back fails to account for the important ways that we have grown, changed and moved forward. Dr. Bruce Perry reminds us that children are malleable, changed and profoundly impacted by their encounters with trauma.

For those of us that devote our lives to the care and support of children and youth that have experienced significant trauma, we are challenged to find a balance between acknowledging their pain and supporting their strengths. This is the critical goal of trauma recovery. Resilience is enhanced by:

- Identifying and building upon the child’s strengths;
- Identifying key supports within the family, community and, when needed, within the professional community;
- Perseverance- hanging in there even when we are pushed away;
- Never losing faith...many sto-

ries of overcoming hinge on the people in our lives that continued to believe, in spite of the many reasons that they could have given up.

Relationships are the most essential resources for children and adults when we are faced with adversity. Knowing that others care, offer tangible support, listen, and validate that the challenge you are facing is overwhelming and yet you will come through it, becomes the protective shield that makes each of us a bit of a superhero. “I get by with a little help...” to paraphrase that old tune from the Beatles.

Director Erwin McEwen has a vision for the state-wide trauma initiative that places the strengths, well-being and the resilience of children, families and communities at the core of trauma-informed practice, curriculum development and field support activities.

Our new training curriculum launched in February, 2009 and we look forward to working with you within regional learning communities and to struggling together as we work to support our children, families and one another.

We must do better by our children

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news broke, praying that the accused family and the child that had been killed wasn’t one with which they had worked.

She described the gut-wrenching feeling that came over her when she got the call shortly after seeing the media reports, confirming her worst fears. She tried to describe the harrowing feeling, like the life had been sucked out of her, when she found out who the girl was.

She and the administrator both tried to describe this scenario repeat-

edly but couldn’t get through it without breaking down and crying.

Later, this same supervisor talked about how challenging it was to explain to the remaining children what happened to their little sister. She talked about how hard it was to explain to them why they were taken away from their parents and why they were not allowed to see them.

She talked about how hard it was to get the siblings to go to school and continue with their daily routines. She talked about how hard it was to get the siblings ready for the funeral

services, with reporters and cameras everywhere.

She talked about how she couldn’t go to sleep at night since finding out about the child’s death. She talked about the relentless pressure placed on her to fire the social worker that was the primary case manager.

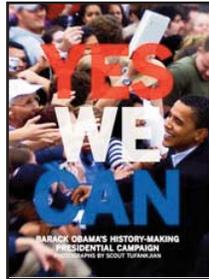
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Send comments to Amie Joof, c/o AAAC
Newsletter

For Your Reading Pleasure...

African-American Literary Suggestions for 2009

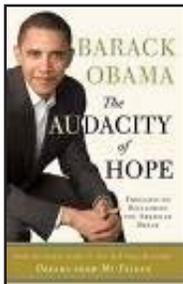
1. **Yes We Can** by Scout Tufankjian

This book captures the photography of the many miles of Barack Obama's journey to become President. Readers are offered more than 200 images captured while the photographer Tufankjian traveled with Obama.



2. **What Obama Means** by Jabari Asim

Asim cites how Obama faced the political, cultural and economic events with emphasis on his peerless eloquence, his mastery of the issues and clarity with which he presents his agenda.



3. **The Audacity of Hope** by Barack Obama

Biography

4. **The Hemingses of Monticello: An American Family** by Annette Gordon Reed

Gives the final word on the 200-year-old debate about Thomas Jefferson and Sally Hemings

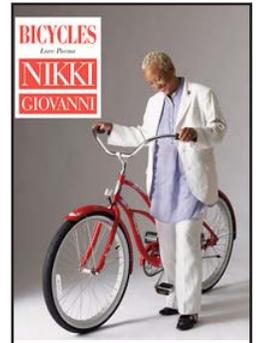
5. **Tears of the Desert** by Halima Bashir

A fearless woman speaks about Darfuri women who have no voice. She opens up about her experience and why

she feels there's still hope in her homeland.

6. **Bicycles: Love Poems** by Nikki Giovanni

Offers an ode to love distilled through trauma.

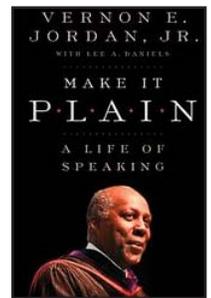


7. **Letters From Black America** by Pamela Newkirk

Presents the pantheon of the African-American experience in a unique and intimate format.

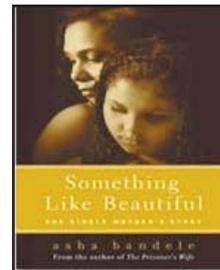
8. **Make it Plain: Standing Up and Speaking Out** by Vernon E. Jordan Jr.

Collection of stirring speeches of civil rights activist Vernon E. Jordan Jr.



9. **The Black Girl Next Door** by Jennifer Bazile

A coming of age memoir of a Black girl in a White suburb during post civil rights California.



10. **Something Like Beautiful: One Single Mother's Story** by Asha Bandele

The author recounts how she's raising her eight-year-old daughter without the presence of the father who is a convicted murderer.

SAVE THE DATE

17th Annual African American Advisory Council Conference

Yes, it's that time again. The African American Advisory Council (AAAC) is actively planning for another conference. We are especially looking for staff that has never attended a conference to come this year.

These conferences are developed to provide child welfare professionals with an avenue that will enhance understanding of the African American child and family. The AAAC is proud to be able to continue to have this forum to provide information to staff, foster

parents and service providers. We have used your comments from last year's conference to assist us in developing workshops and feel you will receive a wealth of knowledge with your active participation this year.

Space is limited so watch the D-Net for the official announcement.

When: April 23 and 24 2009

Where: Pheasant Run Resort,