



## Running the Numbers for 2006 – People Places’ Year in Review

Numbers don’t tell all the important elements of our children’s stories. But they can help us get a closer grip on the basics of what we do and how we do it. Here are some of the numbers that help tell the People Places story for 2006...

**Whom Do We Serve: Gender.** People Places admitted 66 children in 2006, a rather dramatic increase of 22% (12 children) over 2005. There were significant differences between our Valley and Charlottesville Regional offices both in terms of numbers and characteristics of these children. Of the 44 children placed through the Valley office, 26 (59%) were boys and 18 (41%) were girls, although girls represented a slight majority of all Valley referrals for the year. Referrals of girls have continued to be relatively high in the Valley where in 2005, they represented a significant majority (63%) of all children admitted. In Cville, on the other hand, of the 22 children placed in 2006, 10 (45%) were boys and 12 (55%) were girls - reflecting the relative gender balance for referrals overall to the Cville site last year.

**Ethnicity.** The majority of children referred and placed through the Valley office in 2006 were white (26 or 59%). Nine African-American children (20%) and seven (16%) identified as “multi-ethnic” were placed through the Valley office in 2006 as well as two children of Hispanic background (4%). Given the growth in the number of

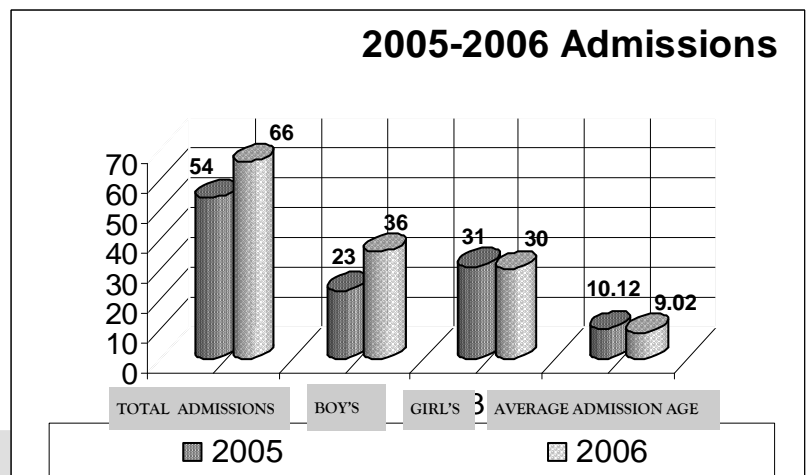
Hispanic families in the area in the past decade, the extent of our services to Hispanic children and families in 2006 likely does not reflect the level of need. To become better able to address that need, we hired Jeannie Lockinger as a bilingual Family Consultant a year ago. Jeannie, also a licensed counselor, now will move into a supervisory and clinical role with the Valley office where we hope to recruit an additional Spanish-speaking Family Consultant in the year ahead. A portion of Jeannie’s new job responsibilities will be to recruit and train Spanish-speaking Teaching Parents for our therapeutic foster care and special needs adoption services.

A larger proportion of children placed through the Cville office in 2006 were African American (9 or 41%). Half the children (50%) placed there were white, while two (9%) were identified as of multiple ethnic backgrounds. No children of Hispanic background were placed through the Cville program in 2006, despite an increase in recent years in the number of Hispanic households in that area as well. We expect the need for bilingual staff and families to in-

crease in the Cville office as it has in the Valley.

**Admission Age.** 2006 continued to see a decline in the average age of children at admission. The decrease was less dramatic in the Valley where the average admission age decreased sharply from ’04 to ’05 (from 11.9 to 9.2), but dipped only slightly to 8.9 years in 2006. In Cville, the 2006 decrease was steeper, from more than 11 years old in ’04 and ’05 to 9.2 years in ’06. Several dynamics appear to be operating here. For several years now, People Places has accepted accelerated or emergency referrals requiring rapid placements. A significant proportion of such referrals are of younger children – often sibling groups – removed from their homes for the first time. In 2006, we admitted 15 sibling groups of two to four children. When we began in 1973, referrals of sibling groups were rare in any given year as therapeutic foster care served primarily older youth at risk of or returning from residential placement.

Continued on page 4



## What's New In the Valley

**People.** Good people make good programs. We are delighted to welcome two very good people to the Valley staff.

**Donna Schindler** joins us as a Family Consultant with rich experience in the child welfare and social work fields, including tenure at both Western State Hospital and the Commonwealth Center. **Tina Bosserman** joins our Family Consultant team after 11 years with Harrisonburg-Rockingham Social Services – serving 4 years as a Foster Care and Adoption Worker and 7 years as Supervisor of that unit. We know Donna and Tina will be missed at the Commonwealth Center and Harrisonburg-Rockingham DSS. Many



thanks – and apologies – to both agencies for sharing them with us. Also in keeping with the good people make good programs theme, congratulations to **Melissa Blinn** who will complete her M.A degree

this spring and has begun to add supervision to her daily TO-DO list at People Places Valley. Her husband and our brilliant ITguy, **Michael Blinn**, will receive his B.A. at about the same time after years of fulltime work and part-time study.

Welcome also to two new Pygmalion School staffers – **Carla Kline** and **Joel Kennedy**. Carla began last year as a practicum student and hopes now to complete a master's degree in education and continue to work in the special ed

field. Joel also mentors several children and in his spare time also manages to be both a portrait artist and a working musician.

Finally, a fond – but not final – farewell to **Molly Pallavicini**, who has moved from the Valley Region to our Cville-Albemarle regional office. Molly continues as a Family Consultant in Cville, bringing more than 12 years of experience in that position with her.

**Services.** Teaching Parent Support Groups continue in the Valley with **Ted Teachey** joining Melissa Blinn to facilitate. The group meets on the last Thursday of each month from 6:00-8:00 PM with dinner and childcare provided. In Harrisonburg, Family Consultants **Marie Hartley** and **Jeannie Lockinger, MA, LPC** lead a similar group meeting from 6:30 to 8:30 PM on the third Tuesday of every month with childcare and dinner or a snack provided as well. Sessions include both a sharing and a "teaching" time focused on a specific topic. If you are a Teaching Parent interested in attending, contact any of the support group facilitators or your own Family Consultant.

For youth, the 2007 Spring Group schedule includes a variety of topics. Contact your Family Consultant to learn more about group offerings and how they may relate to your child's needs and interests.



## What's New In Cville

**People.** We have two types of new arrivals to announce in Cville. First, a warm welcome to **Molly Pallavicini** joining the Cville Family Consultant crew from the Valley office (see above). Second, congratulations – and welcome – to newly arrived Grady Kyle Rajagopalan and mom **Emily Umberger**, our Independent Living Program Coordinator. Both Grady and mom are doing fine. And welcome back to Emily, who returned in early February to help with IL training and program development. Finally, a fond farewell and good fortune to **Donnell Smith** leaving the Cville office after more than 10 years' service in several capacities. People Places will miss Donnell's special ability to connect with and inspire young people.

**Services.** Many thanks to Albemarle County DSS Supervisor **Phyllis Coleman** for leading a parent in-service on permanent foster care for our Teaching Families. Phyllis was ably assisted by two families experienced with the ins and outs of permanent foster: **Queen** and

**Gary Anderson** and **Danny and Karen Kline**. Emily Umberger joins **Douglas Johnson** to plan our spring schedule of independent living group training for older youth. Contact your Family Consultant about topics and schedules for the Spring. Emily and Douglas also will manage the Summer Training program (STP), which will get a bit of a facelift this year. The program will run Mondays through Thursdays beginning each day at 7:45 a.m. and ending at 3:30 p.m. Formal group training in vocational social skills and other job readiness areas will be integrated into the



STP experience as a daily, rather than periodic activity. Thursdays will be our "Experiential Day" in which STP youth help out with other community services, participate in team-building exercises and other IL-related events.

# New Foster & Adoptive Families:

We have recruited and trained more than a dozen families since the Fall and are working with a dozen new applicant families now in all three People Places locations: Staunton, Harrisonburg and Charlottesville. Meet a few of our recent “grads”...



**Karen & Will** are an African-American couple with three adult daughters and two grandchildren. Karen is an instructor for the Charlottesville Police Department while Will is a Resource Officer at Charlottesville High School. Will was in the military for many years. The couple mentored youth and adults wherever they were based. Both are ministers and Will is the pastor of the Courts of Praise Christian Fellowship Center in Palmyra. They enjoy going out to eat, shopping, attending sporting events, playing basketball, mentoring adults and youth, spending time with family and friends and attending church. They have two dogs and two cats that live outside. They are interested in

## People Places in C’Ville

working with children of all ages, of either gender and any race. Karen & Will are especially interested in working with teenagers.

**Kim & Brad** are a Caucasian couple living in Louisa with their blended family of three children. Kim’s son is bi-racial. Brad is co-owner of a small hauling company with his sister and drives for the business. Kim works at a local business part time. They enjoy going out to eat, going to movies, attending track races, going to the beach and amusements in the area. They attend church and their children participate in the church’s youth group. They have three dogs and three outdoor cats. Kim and Brad are interested in working with children of Caucasian or bi-racial ethnicity between the ages of 4-12. They would consider adoption in the future.

**Mary** is an African-American woman residing in Louisa County. She has an adult daughter. Mary works for Keefe Commissary at the Fluvanna Women’s Correctional Center. She enjoys attending church, collecting porcelain dolls, watching television and spending time with family and friends. She is active in her church where she serves as president of the usher board and as a youth advisor. She is interested in working with a child of either gender and any race under the age of 14. She would be interested in adoption in the future.



## People Places in the Valley

(Staunton ,Waynesboro, Harrisonburg)

**David & Lori**, a Caucasian couple living in Port Republic, previously worked as therapeutic foster parents with the Mentor organization in another state. They are an active, fun and nature-loving couple. They are



currently renovating their home near Port Republic where they plan to raise goats. Lori does vascular ultrasounds. David is a computer technician. He likes to play music. Lori has an adult daughter. They have worked with adolescents in the past, have expressed particular interest in working with boys, ages 8 – 12, and would also consider adolescents. David and Lori are open to considering adoption.

**Sondra**, an African-American living in Staunton, has two grown sons. She is employed as an Operations Analyst with Sub-

way Corp. She is a very active, involved parent. Now that her sons are grown she wants to continue parenting through work with children in foster care. Her sister and niece are both Teaching Parents. Sondra has helped her family in parenting the children in their homes. Sondra is a highly motivated, child-oriented person. She has an inner strength that she believes enabled her to become a cancer survivor. She would prefer a younger girl.

**Ria & Stephen**, a Caucasian couple living in Staunton, are very motivated to work with chil-

dren and possibly adopt. Born in Cyprus, Ria has her own home-based business - the “European Market” – cooking gourmet Greek dishes for local sale. Both she and Stephen have experience working with special populations. Stephen has worked at VSDB and is now employed at Woodrow Wilson Rehab Center. Ria & Stephen look forward to sharing their home with one or more children.



# Serving Virginia's Families and Youth

## PEOPLE PLACES UPDATE



### STAUNTON

1215 N. Augusta Street  
Staunton, VA 24401  
(540) 885-8841

### CHARLOTTESVILLE

1002 E. Jefferson Street  
Charlottesville, VA 22902  
(434) 979-0335

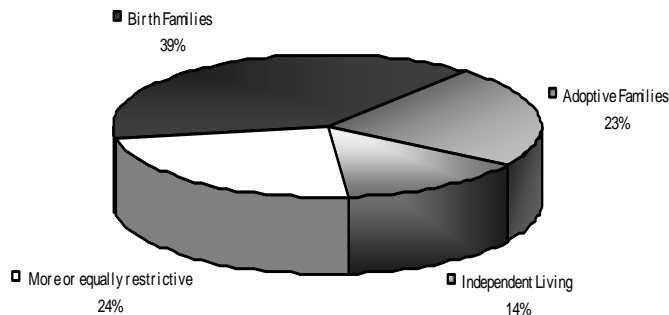
### HARRISONBURG

Shannon Hill Office Complex  
737 E. Market St.  
Harrisonburg, VA 22801  
(540) 437-1857

[www.peopleplaces.org](http://www.peopleplaces.org)

## Running Numbers for 2006 – People Places' Year in Review...Continued from page 1

### Discharges in 2007



Federal legislation pushing permanence has driven an increase in adoption numbers. The majority of children adopted in Virginia in the past year were adopted by their foster caregivers. As a group, children who are eligible for adoption tend to be younger than the population of early adolescents served originally in therapeutic foster care. Our success in finding adoptive homes for

children with special needs has tended to increase referrals of younger children eligible for adoption.

*Outcomes.* While the number of children admitted rose significantly in 2006, so did the number of those discharged. In 2005, a total of 50 children were discharged from People Places - the majority (76%) to less restrictive settings including birth family, adop-

tive homes and independent living. In 2006, 62 children were discharged from People Places, again with three out of four (76%) leaving the program to less restrictive settings. These included: 24 to birth families/relatives (39%), 14 to adoptive homes (23%), and 9 (14%) to independent living and other less restrictive settings such as permanent foster care. Fifteen children discharged in 2006 (24%) left to hospital or residential facilities or entered equal or less restrictive settings as the result of a disruption in their placement with us.

The overall average length of stay for children discharged in 2006 was 1.85 years compared to 2.2 years in 2005. This shortened length of stay is not surprising given the rather large numbers of children we have discharged to permanent family settings and mounting public policy pressure to achieve such results quickly.