



People & Places

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From the Executive Director's Desk...

Our newsletter mostly is about connecting us all and keeping us abreast of what's going on at People Places. The current issue is no exception. In it, you will read about some of the people who have built the agency. Some have moved on to retirement - like Jane Rutledge. Some have moved to other parts of the country - like Laurie Bonney. And some are just starting out, as you will see when you 'Meet Our New Families'. These are the 'people' of People Places. They make us stronger. They enrich our lives and the lives of the young people we serve.

Also in this issue, we offer a short overview of what we see as some of the most important aspects of service to young people who have been hurt, scared or threatened by the world they are growing up in. In our lead article, we try to offer a thumbnail of the elements we feel are most important in caring for children who have been traumatized. Each area is covered in our pre-service training for Teaching Parents: *Parenting Skills Training - Teaching and Learning with Children in Care*.

From all of us at our offices, we thank all of you for being the people who make People Places work.

-bb

Trauma-Sensitive Caring

We know a great deal more today than we did just a decade or so ago about how early trauma affects children ... their thoughts, feelings, behavior and even their brain physiology. What we know now also impacts how we care for children who have been traumatized, and how we train new Teaching Parents who have stepped forward to do this work. Here are some of the key elements we all must keep in mind when helping traumatized children heal.

Learning, Trauma and the Brain.

Caring for a maltreated child very often means exposure to extreme and upsetting behavior. An occupational hazard for caregivers is personalizing a child's behavior and reacting on impulse rather than responding thoughtfully. Information about learning, trauma and brain development can help caregivers step back from behavior to see the whole child. We have found it helpful to cover a few basics in this regard.

Specifically, it is helpful for caregivers to understand that:

1. experience shapes the brain through learning;
2. traumatic experiences affect what we learn and how our brain develops;
3. the brain develops sequentially and from the bottom to the top over time;
4. different parts of the brain are responsible for different functions;
5. when trauma compromises brain development at a lower level, it can also impede a child's ability to function well at higher levels;
6. so early trauma that affects such functions as balance and motor control, can also affect a child's ability to reason and problem-solve; which can help explain why some kids don't listen to reason or think things through like they 'should'.

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Valley Groups

People Places partnered with the Director of **Ride With Pride**, Debbie Winters (BA Sociology & Certificate in Equine Science) to offer three groups this summer: *Yoga with Horses*, *Character Building/Cowboy Poetry*, and an *Anger Awareness with Horses* group.

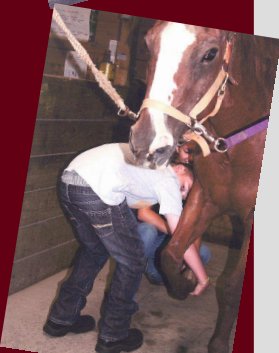


The *Yoga with Horses* group had a very successful first season. Yoga has been proven to have a positive impact on strengthening brain function, and as an effective avenue to deal with negative emotions, trauma, and depression. *Yoga with Horses* provides youth opportunities to develop their awareness of self through mind, body, and spirit. Horses are used as partners to promote the individual's experiences in reading and understanding body awareness. Specific activities concentrate on the body's muscle groups through stretching exercises, improving balance and flexibility, strengthening eye-hand coordination, and identifying and responding to stress triggers. Jerelyn Anderson, PPI Support Services Supervisor, co-facilitated this group with Ms Winters.



The *Character Building/Cowboy Poetry* group was successful last summer and was repeated this year by request. The group uses a curriculum developed by Strides for Success called "Cowboy Poetry". Through visiting the days of the "cowboy" such character skills as: courage, respect, honesty, friendship, cooperation, integrity, trustworthiness, responsibility, teamwork, determination, and others are presented. Through the classroom and horse activities these youth are involved in interactive group discussions and hands on experiences that stimulate their thinking and enhance their learning experience.

The *Anger Awareness with Horses* group continues to be popular. Horses are used to give youth an experiential dimension to understanding the difference between passive, aggressive, and assertive communication and the skills of listening, relaxation, empathy, problem solving. Staunton counselor, Sally Koch, Ed.S., L.P.C. co-facilitated this group with Ms. Winters.



The **Independent Living Services Group Training Program** began in the mid-1980's in response to the need to prepare youth in therapeutic foster care for eventual emancipation and independence. As the program has grown and developed a myriad of groups are offered to help youth heal from their past abuse and/or trauma, be productive members of today's community, and prepare for future independence.

Groups are offered on a three semester basis from September through December, January through May, and June through August.



One or two "Free Slots" are offered to community agencies when a group has 6 participants. A referring agency may purchase a group for 6 to 8 youth to be offered at their site.

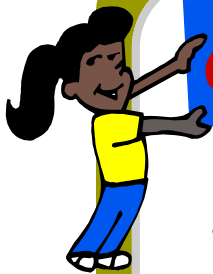
This fall PPV will be offering a *Money Management* group (based on results from the Ansell Casey Life Skills Assessment), *It's A Girl Thing* group to help pre-adolescent girls understand their changing bodies, and a *Social Skills* group to help youth develop socialization skills, conflict resolution, and peer relationship skills.

Valley Family Mentoring Services Program Update

The Valley Family Mentoring program has successfully served eight families in the first year of its inception. Family Mentors provide support, guidance, and facilitate the integration of recently acquired skills to an identified family. This service is provided as a part of the comprehensive service plan to either prevent placement in TFC, or during the reunification process, and support adoption placements.

We are proud to have family mentors who are experienced in understanding children and behavior modification techniques, offer effective parenting skills, and develop strong relationships with the families they serve. Families served this year include: one child in therapeutic foster care returning home, one child transitioning from a residential facility to therapeutic foster care, one young adult in an Independent Living setting needing additional support, one family needing guidance with their adolescent girl with attachment issues, one child in the adoption process, and three families received post-adoptions services to prevent adoption disruption.

To make a referral to our "Family Mentoring" program, please contact Tina Bosserman at 540-885-8841.



GIRL'S NIGHT OUT

On Monday, September 21st, we welcomed a small but spirited crowd to the quarterly meeting of our Girls Night Out group. Moms and daughters met to talk about the realities of being a pregnant teen and a teenage mother. In addition, we discussed the role that parents and caregivers play in educating their children to make risk-reducing choices when it comes to sex.

Did you know that:

- 3 out of 10 girls in the U.S. will get pregnant by age 20.
- The U.S. has the highest rate of teen pregnancy in the entire developed world.
- Babies born to teen mothers are more likely to grow up poor, have health problems, be abused and neglected, and eventually become teen parents themselves.

Summer Training Program 2010

On August 12th, our Charlottesville office wrapped up its 13th year of the Summer Training Program. Thirteen youth participated during our 2010 summer. STP youth were assigned to job sites at various locations in the community. The participants were supervised/coached by trained aides under the direction of People Places' Independent Living Program. Job sites Included:

Charlottesville Quality Community Council Inc.
City of Charlottesville Parks and Recreation
Tonsler Park
Jefferson Area Board for Aging
People Places Inc.
Thrift Store
SPCA
Fluvanna County
Adopt a day --Front Desk
Partners Allied in Teaching Community Horticulture (PATCH)--Haven Garden

Garrett Square and West Street City Garden
River Bend Park
Hinton Avenue United Methodist Church
Mary Williams Senior Center
Salvation Army - Charlottesville
Thomas Jefferson Coalition for the Homeless
The Haven at First and Market
Kay's Kitchen

In addition, our youth were exposed to several new experiences. Successful professionals from the area took time away from their busy schedules to come talk to our STP group about their personal and professional experiences. We also explored some local businesses/services during "field trips" on our experiential days. We are thankful to the following individuals for being a part of STP:

Cathy Harding, Editor C-VILLE Weekly
Martha Jefferson Hospital's Health Care Camp
Wendi Woodson, Educator, Clear Point Credit Counseling
Elizabeth Morris, Detective, Albemarle County Police Department
Trudi Goodwin, People Places Inc. Family Consultant and Art Therapist
Jason Burch, Charlottesville Albemarle Airport
Barb Ciambotti, Registered Dietician
McGuffey Art Center
Susan Northington, Watercolors
Rick Weaver, Sculpture and Portrait painting; Angie and Jonathan
Renee Balfour, Oil painting
Richard Doyle, People Places Teaching Aide
Moxie Hair Lounge

Throughout the summer, we encouraged our participants to be mindful of broad work-related concepts like work ethic, delayed gratification, making a great first impression, and planning for the future.

STP will begin its 14th summer June 2011. Most youth participate for the entire 8-week STP program. To accommodate summer schedules and budgets, however, youth may be enrolled for two-week intervals if that arrangement is best for caregivers and sponsoring agencies.

Permission to participate in STP is required from a youth's Social Worker, Family Consultant and Teaching Parent or guardian. For further information, contact Douglas Johnson at our Charlottesville office at (434) 979-0335 or email him at Douglas.Johnson@peopleplaces.org.

We're Gonna Miss Ya!!

It was early 1977. People Places was but a 4 year old toddler when Ms. **Jane Rutledge** began her 33 year career with the Agency. Her office was up two mammoth sets of stairs in a warehouse of a building in downtown Staunton.



Jane and Vera

Bookkeeping then was done by hand. The electronic calculator was queen. There were no PCs, no accounting software. Those were the days before the CSA, before Medicaid, before VALCPA & FFTA, and before the VEMAT. It would be another 10 years before our term "Specialized Foster Care" gave way to "Treatment" or "Therapeutic Foster Care" in the wake of the formation of the national FFTA. It was the time of caseload sizes that averaged 20 children (even then about a third the size of our public agency colleagues).

Six months after Jane came aboard, Ms. **Vera Travis** joined her. Vera began her PPI career when many might think of retirement. For the next 20 plus years Jane and Vera were our Business Office. Vera retired in 2002 and Jane is only our second employee to actually 'retire' from People Places. Together, Jane and Vera ran a tight and efficient Business department that was also known for its customer and employee friendliness. Jane continued those traditions when Vera left, and today, **Vikki Christian**, our new Business Office Manager, veteran

Debbie Rexrode and new part time bookkeeper, **Frankie Waalewyn** further continue those values. Frankie is a native of Staunton and has lived and worked here all of her life. She brings a lot of office experience with her. She's very detailed and a stickler for accuracy as well as a great sense of humor. She fits right in.



Vikki, Frankie and Debbie

Jane, we thank you for your dedication and professionalism all these years in taking People Places through the many changes that came our way. Though your unique style can never be replaced, your strong values and vision do live on.

We promise!

Staff News

In March, we said a fond farewell to **Pam Lawson** who had faithfully served as our Administrative Assistant for over 6 years. With her departure, we examined how to best support our office staff, and decided to re-define the roles of our support staff. **Michele Freeman**, our long-time Office Manager, was moved to the position of Operations Manager. We are pleased to have **Kimberly Johnson** join us, filling the position of Office Manager. Kimberly most recently was the Charlottesville-Albemarle FAPT coordinator, and prior to that worked for the Health Dept for almost ten years. She will be the friendly voice you hear most frequently when you call the Charlottesville office.



Pam



Kimberly



Laurie

On September 15, we said good bye to **Laurie Bonney**, LCSW, and wished her all of the best as she begins a new journey in upstate New York. Laurie has worn many hats in the Charlottesville office since her arrival in 2002, when she became the coordinator of our Emergency Program. Since that time, she served as therapist, parent trainer, and most recently, was instrumental in helping the Charlottesville office develop its Family Services program and procure a Mental Health license in order to provide in-home services. Equally important, Laurie was always willing to pitch in and help wherever she was needed--a wonderful quality that will be greatly missed by all of us.

We are very fortunate, however, to have **Nancy Strang**, LCSW, join us. She replaces Laurie as the Family Services Coordinator, and she will head up our in-home program. Many of you probably already know Nancy in her most recent capacity as Adoption Coordinator for UMFS where she has worked for the past four years. Before that, she served in numerous direct service and administrative positions during her nine years at Childhelp, where she was instrumental in starting up Childhelp's therapeutic riding program.

David Spencer joined People Places in April, and since then he has jumped right in and been able to immediately help out with the work load in our IT department. Combined with his educational background in psychology, David's skill in computer programming has already made him an incredibly valuable member of the People Places family.



David

And finally, we give a warm welcome to **Susan Porter**, recently retired from the City of Charlottesville, and her long-term stint with CAFF, who joins us on a part-time basis. Susie, as she is known to many of you, will become one of the trainers for our Parent Skills Curriculum, providing training for our foster parents.

Meet Our Newest Families

Jean Johnson is a divorced African-American female residing in Buckingham County. She shares her home with her elderly mother. She works for Central Virginia Community Health Center as a Dental Assistant. She has one adult daughter and a 11 year old granddaughter. Jean Johnson enjoys going to movies, going out to eat, shopping, spending time with family and friends and attending church. She attends Union Branch Baptist Church in Arvonnia where she serves on many committees including Pastor's Aid, Usher Board and Welcome Ministry. She is interested in providing treatment foster care services for school age children of all races between the ages of 5-17. She would be interested in working with teens needing IL support.



Frances and Steven Beasley are a married Caucasian couple residing in Grottoes. They have a two year old son. Steven works at Good Printers making daily deliveries to Northern Virginia. He also has a part-time job with Grottoes Pharmacy delivering medication to local nursing homes. Frances works Saturdays and weekdays as needed as a rural mail carrier. She is in the home much of the time to provide supervision. The Beasleys have a desire to share their home with a child in need. They are open to considering adoption of a younger Caucasian child. They are recommended for a treatment foster care/adoptive placement of up to two Caucasian children, age birth to 12.

Wayne and Doresa Howard are a married African-American couple residing in Stuarts Draft with their 11 year old daughter and 7 year old son. Wayne is building a catering business. Doresa is a Tupperware Consultant, volunteers at their church and the rest of the time is at home to meet their children's needs. The Howards are motivated to work with children because they see a need to provide love and help to children. They believe they could offer a stable home life and provide new opportunities for a child. They believe they can offer a child an atmosphere of open communication as a way of building trust and helping a child feel comfortable in their home. They are approved for the foster and/or adoptive placement of one or two African American children, age 5 - 12.



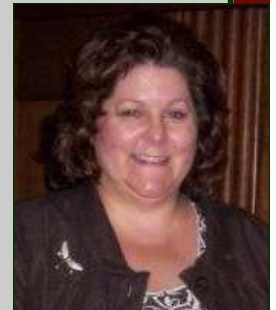
for girls ages 4 and older and boys under the age of ten of all races. They are willing to provide short-term care for children of all ages and races, and are interested in working with sibling groups.

Robin and Frank Chapman are a married Caucasian couple residing in Greene County. Robin, 38, works for the Department of Agriculture/Farmer's Home Administration as a loan processor while Frank, 46, works the University of Virginia as a Fire Technician. They enjoy shopping, reading, playing basketball and tennis, walking, hiking, spending time with family and friends and attending church. Frank is the associate pastor at Nortonville Pentecostal Church. He has been an ordained minister for 15 years and an associate pastor for eight years. The Chapmans are interested in providing foster-to-adoption services for boys from infant up to age. They are willing to provide short term care for children of any gender, age or race, and are very interested in working with sibling groups.



Floyd and Brenda Mitchell are a married African-American couple residing in Louisa County. Floyd, 56, a former Vietnam Veteran, is disabled while Brenda, 53, works part time as an office assistant at Farmers Foods in Louisa. Brenda has one adult daughter and three grandchildren. Floyd has one adult daughter and a teenage daughter. They enjoy going out to eat, shopping, playing pool, sightseeing, traveling, spending time with family and friends and attending church. The Mitchells attend Rising Sun Baptist Church in Mineral, which has an active youth group. They are interested in providing foster care to adoption services

Joyce Cave is a divorced Caucasian female residing in Stuarts Draft with her 16 year old daughter, Brooke. Joyce is manager of an apartment complex. She is motivated by a desire to share love and a safe home environment with a child in care. She believes in creating an atmosphere of open communication. She is approved for treatment foster care and adoption. She is recommended for the placement of a Caucasian girl, age 5 - 15.



Milestone Anniversaries

The character of any agency is determined by the priorities of its staff. At People Places, our priorities were shaped by our early founders more than 35 years ago and are still evident in our staff today. We are fortunate to still have the wisdom and guidance of two of our founders. Please join us in congratulating the following staff who celebrated milestone anniversaries in 2010.

20 YEARS SERVICE

Ted Teachey J.D., *Family Consultant*

15 YEARS SERVICE

Linda Currence, M.P.A., *Charlottesville Regional Associate Director*

10 YEARS SERVICE

Juelene Brown, B.A., *Family Consultant*

Rick Cook, *Staunton Regional Associate Director*

5 YEARS SERVICE

Jay Rachmel, B.S., *Family Consultant*

Peter Bagnulo, B.S., *Family Consultant*

Jean Slaughter, *Support Services Assistant*

People Places families have amazing commitment! We would like to recognize some of the families who reached length of service milestones with us last year.

25 YEARS SERVICE

Brenda & Bill Spencer

15 YEARS SERVICE

Pat & Howard Sharp

Joann & Doug Johnson

Sheila Carr

10 YEARS SERVICE

Doris & Gerald Emmert

Kathy & Michael White

Amanda & Jerry Duncan

Ingrid & George Feggans

Lori & Mike Collier

Colleen & Michael Tuite

5 YEARS SERVICE

Joyce & John Tennies

Tiffany Morris

Tera & Michael Warf

Sally Bastian

Melissa & Ronald Michael

Shelby & Charles Lowery

Celebrating 15 years in Charlottesville

It is hard to believe that 15 years have gone by since the Charlottesville office site was opened in the Spring of 1995. We started our 'bare-bones' operation with a Program Director and one Family Consultant, a portable phone with 2 handsets, a Brothers typewriter, one desk, and a parakeet named Julio, who found his way into our office one day! Like any organization, we have had our share of bumps in the road, which have been outweighed by many successes and accomplishments. Fifteen years later, the Charlottesville office operates out of two buildings, and has 16 full time staff, 3 part-time employees, and numerous Teaching Aide/Mentors. We are proud to serve the children and families of our communities, and work collaboratively with you, our customers and colleagues, in the delivery of these services. And--we are humbled to work side-by-side with our incredible Teaching Parents who open their homes and hearts to the youth in our program.

By way of thanking all of you for partnering and collaborating with us over the past 15 years, we are hosting an **Open House from 3:00-6:00 pm on November 9th, 2010**. You will be receiving an invitation in the near future, but please save the date. Come and join us in celebration of our joint efforts on behalf of the children and families of our local community.

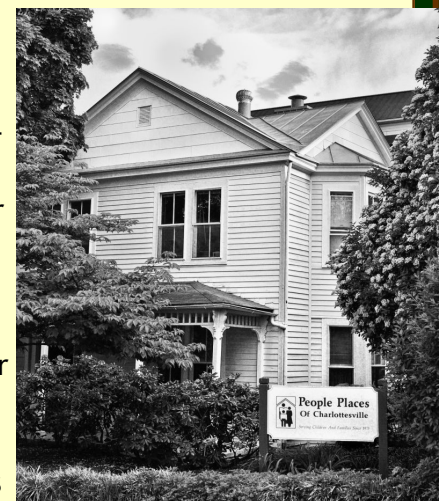


Photo Credit: Bailey Ocker

Trauma-Sensitive Caring

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Fear, Trauma Triggers and the Shape of a Child's World

When we are threatened, we react immediately to the threat. If threats are repeated over time, we become hyper-sensitive to them... and anything that resembles them. Maltreated children become hyper-vigilant to threat and may react to what appear to be normal or innocent events, situations or people. Extreme behavior is often triggered this way. Even aggressive behavior may be defensive when we understand the experience that triggers it. This is another reason to step back from the behavior rather than personalizing it. When caregivers understand the concept of trauma triggers, they find it easier to back away from more reactive approaches to discipline and are less likely to rely on coercive, consequence-driven techniques for behavior change.

Coping, Defending, Surviving

Since most behavior is learned and traumatic experience shapes learning, extreme behavior usually can be understood as a response to adversity or threat. It may have 'worked' to help a child survive or cope with extreme stress. It will take a while for a child to give up a behavior that helped her cope with a traumatic threat. For caregivers, this means patience is not simply a virtue, but mandatory.

Safety

Maltreated children have learned to be afraid. They do not trust easily or quickly. Caregivers' well-intentioned attempts at nurturing may even trigger a traumatic memory and an extreme reaction. The first order of business for caregivers is to help create a sense of safety in their home. There are some concrete ways to begin this. Maltreated children may also have learned to blame themselves for what has happened to them. Shame may inspire behavior that functions to help a child avoid that deep and insidious feeling. Understanding the difference between normal guilt and profound shame can help caregivers step back from taking such behavior personally.

Relationship, Relationship, Relationship

A safe, human connection is the foundation for progress with a traumatized child. Experience in the field teaches this. Increasingly, neuroscience and clinical practice support what we have learned to be true. The brain is a social organ. Skills that support relationship-building, listening for understanding, empathy, negotiation and relationship repair all are tied to the phenomenon of healing. Such skills can be introduced using adult social learning techniques in formal training and reinforced through staff support and modeling. When a caregiver-child relationship is strong, 'behavioral' interventions are much more effective.

In the years ahead, more will be discovered about the effects of trauma and how to help those affected by it. The training we offer should build a foundation for what we know now and for what we learn. Many of the best minds and hearts in the field are coming together around the issue. Some of those minds and hearts belong to experienced caregivers. Perhaps the last word here should be to acknowledge that truth and urge us all to be mindful of the resources our most experienced caregivers represent as mentors and trainers for others who take on the incredibly challenging work of helping a child heal.





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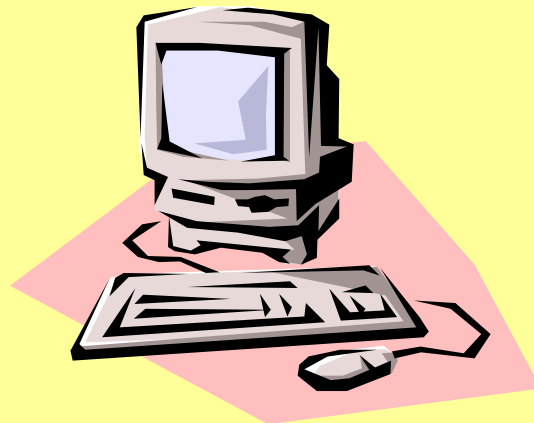
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***Mission Statement:** People Places, Inc. is a Virginia-based nonprofit child welfare agency created to make healthy family living possible for troubled children who have been removed from their own homes.*

People Places Has a Newly Revamped Website

After much work and good input from a variety of people and programs, we have revised our website to offer a more comprehensive view of the services and materials we provide. You will find a 'clickable' wealth of information here, whether you are referring a child or family, seeking to become a Teaching Parent or interested in the various curricula we have developed for therapeutic foster care and adoption.



Please check us out at www.peopleplaces.org.