

FAST NATIONAL Training & Evaluation Center

FAST NEWS

Your way to stay in touch!

"We can grow helping each other, cooperating side-by-side. Families And Schools Together, reaching for the skies..."

Families And Schools Together 

Volume 6 Issue 3

November 2005

FAST HITS PENNSYLVANIA:

THE PHILADELPHIA SOCIETY FOR SERVICES TO CHILDREN INITIATIVE

This fall, the Philadelphia Society for Services to Children (PSSC) expanded their FAST program to 30 elementary schools. Nine certified trainers, concentrated largely on the east coast, are involved in this initiative. PSSC started implementing FAST in the Spring of 2004 at McDaniel Elementary School in South Philadelphia, the first elementary FAST program in Philadelphia. Then in the Fall of 2004, FAST expanded to five other elementary schools. After completing seven FAST cycles at six elementary schools, PSSC had successfully graduated 108 families (82% retention rate), and had served 146 families and 280 children. This fall, PSSC embarked on a journey to expand FAST to 24 additional schools - the largest expansion of FAST in a single semester in the program's 17 years.

Under the leadership of PSSC's executive director, Mike Vogel (mvogel@pssckids.org), the FAST Program is flourishing in Philadelphia, a city long associated with brotherly love. This is reflected in their mission statement: "The services of the Philadelphia Society for Services to Children are founded upon the conviction that children are our most precious and vulnerable resource, and must be afforded the maximum opportunity to achieve their potential" (see *History* online at www.pssckids.org). For 170 years, PSSC has been committed to eliminating child abuse, neglect, and abandonment in Philadelphia; providing and advocating for services that will help each child grow up in a safe, stable, and supportive family environment; and reducing dependency on the public foster care system.

On September 13-14, 24 teams gathered in Philadelphia for one of the largest Phase I Trainings in the history of FAST. Dr. McDonald spearheaded the training for about

100 team members. Under the direction of Cheryl Lee (clee@pssckids.org), the FAST Program Administrator, all 30 Fall 2005 FAST cycles commenced in the same week, and will all graduate the week of December 12. PSSC is making preliminary plans for a large Phase III event, where they may host as many as 400 individuals. Currently, the FAST program coordinated by PSSC has served 568 children from 232 families (FAST attendance from October 17 to November 9).

Infrastructure for this large initiative is key to its success, as is support from the state, city, and local government. With regard to infrastructure, PSSC is developing seven "in-house" certified trainers. In addition, each of the five quality control managers oversees six agency partners. Each agency partner serves on three FAST teams.

With regard to support from the state, city, and local government, PSSC received a substantial grant from the Philadelphia Department of Human Services, Office of Community Based Prevention Services. Additional supporters include Governor Edward Rendell, State Senator Shirley Kitchen, former Deputy Commissioner of the Department of Human Services, David Fair, and Dr. Paul Fink Ph.D., consultant to the School District of Philadelphia.

In order to select 24 new FAST schools, PSSC opened the opportunity up to the entire school district. Then interested schools responded on a first-come, first-served basis. Interested schools needed to have a few in-kind resources to offer, such as the space for the program and a school partner for the implementation team. Currently there are five schools on waiting list to implement FAST.



FAST News is a product of The FAST National Training & Evaluation Center

Editor

Carol Johnson, MS

Program Founder & Developer

Lynn McDonald, Ph.D.

Contributing Editors

Pat Davenport, CEO

Michelle Szabo, MPA, Associate Director

Bettina Friese, Ph.D., Director of Evaluation

2801 International Lane, Suite 105 Madison, WI 53704

Phone: (608) 663-2382 Toll Free: (888) 629-2481 Fax: (608) 663-2336

fast@fastnational.org www.fastnational.org

UPDATES

Hawaii: Through funds from the Act 51 Grant, three military schools successfully implemented the FAST in the '04-'05 school year. Solomon Elementary graduate families reported that they enjoyed the structured quality time they had as a family at the FAST family sessions. The second military school, Wheeler Elementary also graduated families who benefited from a team that worked well together & had tremendous energy throughout the family sessions. The third school for



Graduate FAST family at Wheeler Elementary School

military families, Wheeler Middle graduated families through the support of dependable volunteers who were recruited by the team. All three schools enjoyed strong support for FAST from their principals, who attended the training and family sessions, arranged for an informational session on FAST for the faculty, and provided funding for FASTWORKS. Congratulations to these three schools for successfully completing FAST, and for the promise of future funding as the Act 51 Grant monies are available for another cycle of FAST! Thanks to Kalen Kitagawa, Certified Trainer, for this update!

North Carolina: A big thank you goes out to the Home Depot in Wilmington for partnering with the Fall FAST programs to host kid's time for one week. The FAST programs will likely do fun and simple projects, like building a birdhouse, tool box, or small planter garden. Thank you to Home Depot for your involvement in community development, and thank you to Pam Johnson, Certified Trainer, for coordinating the partnership with Home Depot.

Oregon: *The Register-Guard* in Eugene included FAST in an article entitled "Programs help teens to reject drug use" published in the October 11 issue. Mary Jean Knoll, a Certified Trainer and prevention specialist with Lane Educational School District, was interviewed for the article that highlighted FAST as a family-based, federally funded prevention program, that's quite popular in participating schools.

Virginia: The Child and Family Services of Eastern Virginia, located in Norfolk, implements FAST in Portsmouth and was recently featured in their local newsletter and television news program. Tonya Pass, Certified Trainer, was interviewed for the article and noted that "FAST empowers parents to make a difference in their children's lives. The parent learns to go to school and be involved *before* their child is in trouble."

Virginia: On October 8, the Seatack Elementary School FASTWORKS families gathered at Virginia Beach to participate in "Walk for Hope" on the boardwalk. This annual event is held in conjunction with National Mental Illness Awareness week. It serves to bring awareness to the specific needs of the mentally ill and boosts fundraising efforts. The oppressive blustery winds and torrential rains took their tolls, but in no way dampened spirits as families cheerfully supported this worthwhile cause! Thank you to Carolyn Decker, FAST Coordinator for the City of Virginia Beach for this update and picture.



Would you like to share your FAST news & updates? Just e-mail your contact information and attach your story (Word doc) and picture (jpg or tif) to cjohnson@fastnational.org. Questions? Call Carol at (608) 663-2382 x303.

Requirements for stories:

- Maximum of 500 words
- Tell the story of a real person (pseudonyms are OK)
- Encourage the FAST network

Requirements for pictures:

- Either print or digital pictures are fine
- Digital pictures must be high resolution (300dpi) or as close as possible

WHAT YOU ARE SAYING ABOUT FAST

Dear FAST Community,

Our real (FAST) experience was that a father of one of the families passed away after week 6. Completely unexpected. Was sick with vomiting, didn't come to FAST because of it, though mother and daughter did. He died of complications early the following morning. Mel (team member) called me at home to let me know, and basically everything was already under control! Families rallied together, the family in question sought out Tim, our Uniting Church minister on the team, who was marvelous. Phil, our Indigenous partner was there for them, this family ties



It's easy to see that the program was instrumental in supporting this family...

to Indigenous culture being much stronger than we realized, as evidenced by the funeral where about half of those attending were Koorie/Aboriginal.

Our team were troupers, all of us were shocked but we decided on our course, which was to continue to be a stable part of this family's routine. Mother and daughter, 6 years old, attended the next week (the day before the funeral, which most of us attended) and for Graduation. They are doing great. It has been a surreal experience. It's easy to see that the program was instrumental in supporting this family, and the mother even identifies that it was wonderful that Dad had been a part of it and had such fun.

Sherrie Coote, Coordinator FAST International-Australia
(letter printed with author's permission)

FAST MEETS LONG DISTANCE LEARNING

INTRODUCING THE FAST EDUCATIONAL SERIES: TALK TO THE FOUNDER

In a unique marriage of technology and social services, the FAST Research and Program Development is using the internet to train administrators and team members who are disseminating the FAST program throughout the United States. This new internet technology called a webcast provides a way for the program founder and staff to communicate new information with those on the "front lines" who are delivering the FAST program or to inform agencies across the U.S. who may want to start FAST in their community.

"I'm excited to try this new technology...it gives us a chance to answer important questions from those delivering FAST across the country."
~ Dr. Lynn McDonald

These webcast sessions will include live video of Dr. Lynn McDonald, FAST Program Founder and Pat Davenport, Executive Director FAST National, discussing the latest information about FAST program models, implementation issues, and new research results. The webcast technology allows slide presentations, video clips, audience-presenter interaction, and audience polling.



Left to right: Karen Barnes (team member), Dr. Lynn McDonald (Program Founder), Sharie Cantelon (OJJDP Grant officer), Africka Pettaway (team leader) at the New Concepts FAST Babies site in Milwaukee.

You may register for the **free** webcasts by visiting www.wcer.wisc.edu/fast. All you need to participate is Internet Explorer and Windows Media Player, 9.0 or newer. These webcasts are made possible by a grant from the U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention.

The 1st one-hour webcast was held November 18, 2005 and introduced *FAST Babies: A Multigenerational Approach to Supporting Teen Parents*. The 2nd webcast is scheduled for **February 1, 2006 from 2:00-3:00 pm** (Central Standard Time) and is entitled *Program Drift: Why It's Important to Stick to the Program*. This session will feature a discussion of core components and why they are important to program effectiveness. Dr. McDonald & Ms. Davenport will also discuss common examples of drift that affect outcomes, describe examples of successful local adaptations, and facilitate a discussion of common concerns of the audience.

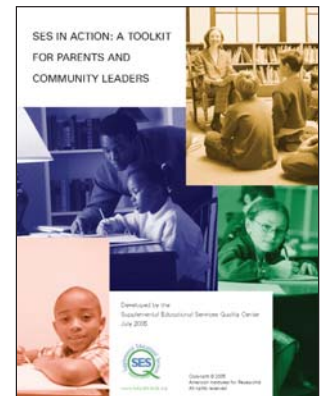
~Article and photograph submitted by Phyllis Scalia, Media Specialist, FAST Program Office, Wisconsin Center for Education Research at the University of Wisconsin-Madison

RESOURCES

SES in Action: A Toolkit for Parents and Community Leaders

A new, free resource is available to help parents and community leaders build excitement about and understanding of Supplemental Educational Services (SES) in their communities. The SES in Action Toolkit offers community leaders tips, tools, and strategies for helping parents learn about SES, sign up for services, and pick a quality SES provider for their children. The Toolkit was developed by the Supplemental Educational Services Quality Center, funded through a grant to the American Institutes of Research from the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Innovation and Improvement. You can download a free PDF version of the toolkit at:

<http://www.tutorsforkids.org/ToolkitDownload2.asp>



Evaluation Reports from the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention

Evaluation reports of five OJJDP-funded gang programs via the National Criminal Justice Reference Service are now available online:

“Bloomington-Normal Comprehensive Gang Program” (NCJ 209186): www.ncjrs.org/pdffiles1/nij/grants/209186.pdf

“Mesa Gang Intervention Program” (NCJ 209187): www.ncjrs.org/pdffiles1/nij/grants/209187.pdf

“Riverside Comprehensive Community-Wide Approach to Gang Prevention, Intervention and Suppression” (NCJ 209188): www.ncjrs.org/pdffiles1/nij/grants/209188.pdf

“San Antonio Comprehensive Community-Wide Approach to Gang Prevention, Intervention and Suppression Program” (NCJ 209189): www.ncjrs.org/pdffiles1/nij/grants/209189.pdf

“Tucson Comprehensive Community-Wide Approach to Gang Prevention, Intervention and Suppression Program” (NCJ 209190): www.ncjrs.org/pdffiles1/nij/grants/209190.pdf



Taking a Closer Look: A Guide to Online Resources on Family Involvement

The Family Involvement Network of Educators (FINE), part of the Harvard Family Research Project, recently published a resource guide for family involvement. The document is a guide to what national organizations are currently doing in family involvement in education. It contains web links to research, information, programs and tools about parenting practices to support children's learning and development, home-school relationships, parent leadership development and collective engagement for school improvement and reform. The resource guide can be used to find out what's new in the field, locate national organizations that support family involvement and inspire new ideas. You can download a PDF version of the resource guide at:

www.gse.harvard.edu/hfrp/projects/fine/resources/guide/guide.html

Dr. Joyce L. Epstein to Speak in Chicago

The Academic Development Institute is hosting their 4th Annual Research Dinner. The speaker will be Dr. Joyce L. Epstein, Director of the Center on School, Family, and Community Partnerships and the National Network of Partnership Schools; principal research scientist at the Center for Research on the Education of Students Placed at Risk (CRESPAR); and professor of sociology at Johns Hopkins University. Dr. Epstein is a leading researcher in the field of parent involvement in education. This event will be held Tuesday, April 25, 2006, at the Hotel Monaco Chicago. For more details about this event, visit www.adi.org

Resources Continued on Page 6

FAST NEWS

1st Annual Holiday Card Decorating Contest



Congratulations to the winner of our 1st annual holiday card decorating contest! Destiny Richardson is from Brookfield, Illinois, where she participates with her family in Congress Park School's FAST program. Destiny, age 8, is in third grade and loves to sing and dance. In addition to being on the cover of our card, Destiny will receive a gift card as a reward for her drawing.

Congratulations also to Saffron Maasz, also from Brookfield, Illinois' Congress Park School's FAST program! Saffron, age 5, is in kindergarten and our runner-up. She will also have her drawing on the cover of our holiday card.

As a thank you for participating and to recognize the entire FAST cycle, Congress Park School will also receive a 5% discount off their next evaluation report.

Congress Park School is a K-6 school that has completed six FAST cycles including two early childhood, two elementary, and two middle school FAST cycles. Thank you also to Desiree Valadez for submitting the drawings! Desiree is the school partner for the FAST team at Congress Park and has taught as the bilingual paraeducator to the ESL students for eight years.



A Note to Certified Trainers:

This is a friendly reminder that if you attended a Pre-Certification Seminar (PCS) in January 2004 or earlier, your recertification time is quickly approaching. Please make sure you check our News & Events webpage at www.fastnational.org/news.asp for the information about our January 23-27, 2006 PCS, which will be held in Albuquerque, New Mexico and our June 19-23, 2006, which will be held in Madison, Wisconsin. We look forward to seeing those of you who will be updating their training so that you may continue training FAST teams, both locally and nationally.

How can FAST be adapted to address the special interests of your funder?

Funders frequently have a particular problem or interest that they want to address. Because FAST sites receive funding from many different sources, it is important that FAST implementations have some flexibility in addressing funders' special interests. While FAST affects a broad range of protective and risk factors that are related to many different problems ranging from academic failure, child abuse, alcohol, tobacco and other drug use as well as parenting issues, funders sometimes want to see a stronger emphasis on their issue.

There are a number of ways in which FAST can be adapted to meet the funder's requirements while maintaining the integrity of the program:

- 1) Tailor the special presentation during the 5th week to address the funder's special area of interest.
- 2) Provide related materials for the resource table for the duration of the program.
- 3) Use Kids' Time to implement a topic related curriculum. For example, if your funder is interested in preventing tobacco use among children, you could implement a smoking prevention curriculum during Kids' Time. It is important that any curriculum used, is age- and culturally appropriate.
- 4) Use FASTWORKS to work with parents towards a related goal. For example, parents and children may use FASTWORKS to work towards a reduction in the accessibility of tobacco in the community, to practice refusal skills with their children, or hear lectures from invited speakers about how to reduce youth smoking.

RESOURCES (Continued From Page 4)

Do you know all the ways in which No Child Left Behind involves parents?

No Child Left Behind (NCLB) was enacted in 2001 and requires that states meet academic content and student achievement standards, administer academic assessment, show yearly progress, as well as meet minimum qualification for teachers and fiscal requirements. What may be less well known is that NCLB has extensive requirements concerning parental involvement and considers parents important stakeholders in their children's education. Do you know how states/Title I schools are required to involve parents? Here are some requirements:

- 1) State agencies and schools must communicate with parents in a language that parents can understand, this includes, translating materials when applicable and providing information in alternative formats, if required, such as Braille or large print.
- 2) Because information is power, states and districts are required to provide parents with annual "report cards" detailing the success or failure of each Title I school. If a school is identified as being in need of improvement, information must be provided to parents about how they can become involved in addressing the school's academic problems and what the school is doing to address the problem.
- 3) In order to provide parents with timely information about how their child is doing in school, each Title I school is required to provide parents annually with information about the child's level of achievement.
- 4) Parents have a right to know who is teaching their children. Title I schools must notify parents at the start of each school year that they have the right to request information about their child's teachers. If information is requested by a parent, the school must report at a minimum: whether the teacher has met the state qualifying and licensing criteria, degrees and degree majors, and whether the child is provided services by paraprofessionals, and if so, their qualifications. In addition, parents must be notified if a child is taught by a teacher who is not highly qualified for four or more consecutive weeks.
- 5) Schools are required to establish a written district parent involvement policy and distribute the policy to parents. In particular, this policy must specify that the school will convene an annual meeting to explain the Title I program to parents, involve parents in the planning and improvement of Title I programs, and provide parents with an opportunity to disagree with the school's school-wide program plan.
- 6) Each Title I school must also strive to build parents' capacity to help their children achieve high standards. For example, schools shall provide reasonable support for parent involvement activities as parents may request, and integrate parental involvement program with Head Start, Even Start, and other preschool programs. Schools may implement model programs designed to improve parental involvement and may train parents to enhance the involvement of other parents.
- 7) Local educational agencies (LEA's) receiving at least \$500,000 in Title I funds are required to set aside 1 percent of that amount, of which 95 percent have to be used for parent involvement activities, including family literacy and parenting skills. LEA's have considerable flexibility in allocating this money to schools and may base distribution on the school's improvement status, or calculate a per-pupil allocation. Parents of Title I students must be involved in how these funds are spent on the school or district level.

Source: Cowan, Kristen Tosh (2005). *The New Title I: The Changing Landscape of Accountability*. Thompson Publishing Group, Inc. Washington, DC.

FAST NEWS Information

Subscriptions

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Do you need extra copies for a graduation or fundraiser? If so, call the FAST National office. There may be a charge for copies in excess of 10.

Submissions

FAST News is published 4 times a year. Deadlines are:

March Issue: February 15

June Issue: May 15

September Issue: August 15

December Issue: November 15

Interested parties should submit stories or articles to cjohnson@fastnational.org. Articles should not be longer than one page in length and there is no minimum size. All articles and stories will be edited for spelling, grammar and space and become the property of FAST National. Originals will not be returned unless specifically requested at the time of submission. High-resolution photos will be printed as space allows.

GRANTS

White House Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives

On October 20, the White House held a regional conference on Faith-Based and Community Initiatives in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. This free conference, the first of the series, covered the basics of the initiative as it relates to federal funding. The next regional conference is scheduled for **December 8 in Nashville, Tennessee**. One funding opportunity of particular interest to FAST sites is the **Compassion Capital Fund (CCF)**, which is designed to help faith-based and community organization maximize their impact as they provide social services. Part of the CCF is a demonstration program, where intermediary organizations provide sub-awards to local agencies. A complete list of the regional CCF intermediaries is available online at www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ccf. Beyond capacity building, attendees have the opportunity to learn about federal funding for at-risk youth; community development, home ownership, and homelessness; international programs and HIV/AIDS; and workforce development and ex-offender issues. Attendees also learn about state-administered federal grants covering topics like substance abuse and youth development. To learn more about the regional conferences, visit www.fbc.gov

WCER RESEARCH NOTES

Multi-Hub FAST: A New Model

The FAST Program office at the Wisconsin Center for Education Research at the University of Wisconsin Madison has a mission to figure out what works for the FAST program and use that knowledge to develop new FAST models. One new model that we have had some early success with is called multi-hub FAST. This new model was developed in collaboration with FAST National Training and Evaluation Center, Cooperative Educational Service Agency #2, local law enforcement officers, and in partnership with 20 Wisconsin schools.

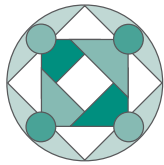
FAST for elementary school is an eight-week, early intervention/prevention program designed to build protective factors to enhance resistance against school failure, juvenile delinquency, and substance abuse during adolescence. The program targets the whole family and participation is strictly voluntary. The multi-hub adaptation of the FAST program is based on the key concept of "social capital." Social capital is defined as the presence of relations of trust, mutual expectations, and shared values among members of a social network. Communities with high social capital, where there are many connections between many families who are then able to provide reciprocal support to each other tend to have lower crime rates as well as better mental and physical health. The new multi-hub model can work with as many as 60 families at a time thereby changing the school climate and potentially the social capital for all families at the school.

The multi-hub FAST program involves recruiting from entire grades (e.g. all first grade students). This means that the multi-hub FAST model has the capacity to become a school reform model in which families from an entire school eventually participate in the program. In the multi-hub FAST pilot project, retention rates were comparable to those for the regular elementary FAST program. In addition, the new model reduces the cost of program delivery by reducing the number of professionals on the team and increasing the number of parents and volunteers.

There is some evidence to suggest that the multi-hub adaptation of the evidence-based Families and Schools Together (FAST) program tested by this project achieved all the desired FAST objectives of improving family functioning, social connectedness, the target children's behavior, and parental involvement with the school. Parents who completed pre- and post-program questionnaires reported statistically significant improvements in all social relationships as well as a 35% increase in scores indicating support provided to other parents, and a 38% increase in scores showing support received from other parents. These wide-ranging improvements in parents' social support network are likely to help parents deal more effectively with stress in daily life.

~Submitted by Gail Coover, Ph.D., FAST Program Office, and Martin Santos, Research Assistant, Wisconsin Center for Education Research (WCER) at the University of Wisconsin-Madison

"The multi-hub FAST model has the capacity to become a school reform model..."



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UPCOMING EVENTS

January 23 - 27, 2006 Albuquerque, New Mexico

- Pre-Certification, Secondary Certification, Recertification, & Administrator training
- FAST Babies, Early Childhood, Elementary School, Middle School, & Administrator tracks

February 1, 2006 2:00-3:00 Central Standard Time

- FREE webcast! *Program Drift: Why It's Important to Stick to the Program*. Register online at www.fast-program.org

March 26 - 29, 2006 Chicago, Illinois

- The FAST National Parent Leadership Conference is being held in conjunction with Family Support America's annual conference. Visit www.familysupportamerica.org for conference details.

June 19 - 23, 2006 Madison, Wisconsin

- Pre-Certification, Secondary Certification, Recertification, & Administrator training
- FAST Babies, Early Childhood, Elementary School, Middle School, & Administrator tracks

Trainings are presented by:

FAST National Training & Evaluation Center, an affiliate of:
Edgewood College Graduate Program In Family Therapy, &
University of Wisconsin-Madison: Wisconsin Center for Education Research

Instructed By:

Dr. Lynn McDonald - FAST Founder
Pat Davenport - CEO, FAST National

Please go to our News & Events page at www.fastnational.org/news.asp for more information and registration forms for our January and June training seminars.