

# **AGING OUT National Outreach Campaign Highlights**

## **Outreach Extensions**

### **Introduction**

A compelling documentary by Roger Weisberg and Vanessa Roth, AGING OUT chronicles the daunting obstacles that youth often encounter as they “age out” of foster care and try to fend for themselves. A production of Public Policy Productions, the show was broadcast on PBS in May 2005.

An extensive AGING OUT National Outreach Campaign was funded by the Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative, a national foundation whose mission is to help youth in foster care make successful transitions to adulthood. The Annie E. Casey Foundation provided targeted funding to specific sites that are part of *Making Connections*, a long-term effort to improve the life chances of vulnerable children by helping to strengthen their families and neighborhoods. As part of its involvement in the outreach campaign, the Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative designated local organizations to partner with stations in conducting their projects.

Outreach Extensions designed and managed the AGING OUT National Outreach Campaign.

### **Station / Site Projects**

Local stations and their community partners created high impact campaigns, engaging service providers, child welfare officials, policymakers, civic and business leaders, teens in foster care, and the general public. Together their projects illustrate the range of what can be done to engage communities in solution-based activities – providing workshops for foster parents and teens, developing local resource guides, building partnerships and networks, illuminating policy issues and diverse perspectives, and working to create policy change. Participating public television stations/sites were: Atlanta; Chicago, Detroit; Des Moines; Denver, Hartford; Indianapolis; Kansas City, Los Angeles, Louisville, Louisiana, Nashville, New York, San Antonio; San Diego; San Francisco; St. Louis, Providence; and Washington, DC. Project highlights are described below.

#### **Indianapolis, IN**

For nearly two years, public television stations WFYI and its partners were engaged in work on AGING OUT. A new partner, the Lumina Foundation for Education, was connected to the project by the Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative.

An event in April served stakeholders and direct service providers of the Guardian Scholars at Ball State University and the ESP! Scholars at IVY Tech Community College and Indiana University Purdue University at Indianapolis. Funded by the Lumina Foundation, these local campus programs offer a constellation of services for enrolled former foster youth. Lumina Foundation also used AGING OUT for staff orientation and to inspire an alliance of grantmakers to support foster care reform in the state.

On May 5, WFYI partnered with the United Way of Central Indiana to present a public forum at the North United Methodist Church. The 140 guests included program officers from six foundations, state agency leaders, college professors, front-line child welfare workers, foster parents, and youth. Guests at the forum heard from Daniella Rin Hover after viewing her story in AGING OUT. The panel presenters included Gary Stangler, executive director of the Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative; James Payne, head of the newly-created Indiana Department of Child Welfare; Dan Carmin, director of the Marion County child welfare office; and Christine Glancy, vice president for planning and program at United Way.

The event was used to unveil county-wide planning efforts for *Connected by 25*, which will result in better services for youth in foster care as they age out. In addition to the Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative, the Lumina Foundation is a key partner in this work.

Working with Mentoring Children of Promise, the Indiana Women's Prison, United Way, and the local Information and Referral agency, WFYI produced three PSAs to promote mentoring of youth whose parents are absent.

## **Louisville, KY**

Kentucky Educational Television (KET) estimates that its outreach campaign reached almost 1.45 million people. *Making Connections* Louisville recommended that KET approach the Coalition for the Homeless, which helped the station convene a working group of service providers. Key organizations involved in the working group were Buckhorn, Home of the Innocents, Maryhurst, YMCA Safe Place Services, The Cabinet, Bellewood, and Boys Haven. Committed to securing State policy changes, the group invited Bart Baldwin, president of the Children's Alliance of Kentucky, to join them.

Among the special events were a screening for policy leaders and a sneak preview for former and current foster youth and service providers. A community event included a resource fair that offered information to help youth improve their lives -- from mentoring to education and employment.

Bart Baldwin led members of the project working group who informed Kentucky legislators about the need for a bill that would allow youth more time to decide on recommitment to the state's care. House Bill 186, submitted by Joni Jenkins increased the decision time available to youth, from six months to two years. While HB 186 lacked the necessary funding for passage, the group believes the legislation was a success in bringing the issue of aging out to the attention of state legislators. Working group members have committed to raise the issue again in next year's legislative session.

The NBC affiliate, WAVE3, dedicated a half-hour episode of its weekend teen program *It's Your Life* to the topic of foster youth emancipation.

Through an AGING OUT radio grant, KET partnered with the Public Radio Partnership in Louisville. Radio station WFPL produced four eight-minute news segments on foster care issues that aired during local newsbreaks in NPR's Morning Edition. Working with KET, WFPL developed a special broadcast of its public affairs call-in program *State of Affairs*. Broadcast before a live-studio audience, the hour-long program on aging out issues was videotaped for subsequent broadcast on KET

## **State of Louisiana**

Louisiana Public Broadcasting (LPB) joined forces with Capital Area CASA to host three major AGING OUT events, which were designed to engage key stakeholders in meaningful discussions about emancipation. The first event brought together CASA volunteers from three South Louisiana chapters. After viewing the full documentary, the group discussed solutions to assist youth who are aging out of foster care. Youth shared their experiences in foster care as well as their fears about emancipating.

The second AGING OUT screening, which the station dubbed the "movers and shakers meeting," was held at LPB. Those in attendance included U.S. Senator Mary Landrieu; State Representatives Diane Winston and Cheryl Gray; Office of Community Services Assistant Secretary Marketa Garner Gautreau; Family Court Judge Kathleen Richey; and representatives from the East Baton Rouge Parish District Attorney's Office, Metro Council, and School Board. Representative Diane Winston wants to eliminate barriers to adoption as well as begin life skills training earlier to help prepare teens for independence. Representative Cheryl Gray has asked for a complete audit of the foster care system and will propose legislation to improve every aspect of the system.

LPB's weekly newsmagazine *Louisiana: The State We're In* featured interviews with many of the stakeholders, including Senator Landrieu, who attended the station's screening event.

The final screening was held at LPB in May for employees of the State Office of Community Services. AGING OUT resources will be shared with OCS offices in all 64 Louisiana parishes.

LPB's project and the AGING OUT film started a dialogue and process that will lead to change in Louisiana's foster care system.

## **San Francisco/Oakland, CA**

KQED successfully raised community awareness about key foster care issues that can lead to community organizing and action. The station worked with two organizations, Honoring Emancipated Youth (HEY) and Alameda County Foster Youth Alliance (FYA), to organize two large community screenings of AGING OUT at the Parkway Theater in Oakland and the Delancey Street Theater in San Francisco. Each screening was followed by a powerful panel of emancipated youth, strong facilitation by a community partner, and a reception. The Charles and Helen Schwab Foundation, the project partner recommended by the Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative, also supported KQED in these events.

Over a ten-month period, through 13 events and workshops, KQED successfully achieved two core outcomes it had developed with the Lower San Antonio (Oakland) Collaborative and *Making Connections*. These outcomes were:

- Core outcome #1: *Increase civic engagement of families and youth*
- Core Outcome #2: *Increase informal support networks for families and youth*

The screenings, workshops, and town hall meeting reached audiences that have a direct impact on employment, education, health, and housing for youth who are aging out. Venues included colleges, youth centers, a courtroom, and a town hall meeting. By bringing youth and young adults together with neighborhood residents, the project built a greater sense of connectedness in the community.

Another partner was the Alameda County Social Services Agency "Family to Family Community Partnership Workgroup," which is made up of organizations that serve foster youth, including Alameda County Individual Living Skills program, CASA, and Casey Family Programs. The result was a Youth Town Hall in collaboration with the Alameda County Superior Court.

Funded by the AGING OUT campaign, and hosted by Michael Krasny, KQED Radio's live public affairs talk show produced a two-hour show that captured first hand experiences as well as the legal, health, and housing issues that face young people aging out of foster care. Reaching 108,000 listeners, the *Forum* broadcast was produced live from the courtroom of Judge Trina Stanley, a former foster youth, at the Alameda Superior Courthouse.

## **Providence, RI**

The State of Rhode Island offers a comprehensive network of programs and services that help emancipating youth acquire important life skills and pursue higher education. For its outreach campaign, the station and its partners wanted to share local success stories with the public.

For its campaign, Rhode Island PBS (RIPBS) partnered with Casey Family Services, Rhode Island Department of Children, Youth and Families (DCYF), Rhode Island Foster Parent Association (RIFPA), and Rhode Island Council of Resource Providers for Children, Youth and Families (RICORP). Group meetings resulted in activities and strategies to support local and national campaign goals.

With additional support from Gateway Healthcare, Inc., RIPBS produced a one-hour, live, call-in program called "Aging Out in Rhode Island," hosted by DCYF. The program featured four emancipating youth who told their personal stories including challenges facing them. The second segment presented a panel

comprised of the directors of DCYF, an employment program, a college mentoring program, the medical director of children's services, and a foster mother. Volunteers from the partner agencies and youths in foster care staffed the twelve off-camera phones, taking calls during the broadcast from viewers who asked for information or offered job and mentoring opportunities. Partners received additional calls at their agencies in the days following the broadcast.

To fulfill a specific need for jobs and mentoring, DCYF staff and emancipating youth are making presentations to Rotary Clubs as a way to engage business leaders.

2005 Update: Rhode Island PBS has maintained a relationship with Adoption Rhode Island, its partner from the AGING OUT campaign. The station reports that Adoption Rhode Island has been participating in The Heart Gallery, a photography exhibit that raises awareness about adoption on a national level. Photographs of more than 100 foster youth from the state of Rhode Island were taken, 21 of which were on display at the Rhode Island State House. The exhibit is now touring the state. The first stop, Trinity Repertory Theater, will display the photos during its run of *A Christmas Carol*. The exhibit will also be featured at Cardi Furniture, a retailer known for its charitable work. RIPBS is also working with the Warwick Mall to host an event for children; the station has suggested presenting the exhibit at this event. According to Adoption Rhode Island, the goal of the project is for this exhibit to visit every city and town in Rhode Island so everybody can see the children who are waiting for adoption. *The Providence Journal* recently published a feature article about the Heart Gallery in Rhode Island. The Heart Gallery was founded by the New Mexico Children, Youth and Families Department in 2001 as a unique way to help children in foster care who are waiting for adoptive families. Stirring portraits, which reveal the children's spirits and individuality, have helped many find permanent, loving homes.

## **Atlanta, GA**

Georgia Public Broadcasting (GPB), The Community Foundation for Greater Atlanta, the Georgia Department of Human Resources, and Georgia's First Lady Mary Perdue partnered to create an outreach campaign on the pressing needs of the state's children and youth in foster care. The campaign emphasized that individuals can make a difference in the lives of these young people through mentoring as well as through helping emancipating youth with the transition to adulthood.

GPB built a special night of programming, branded "Foster Care: Making A Difference in Georgia," to enhance the national broadcast of AGING OUT and acknowledge May as National Foster Care Month. The programming raised awareness of foster care issues in Georgia, including challenges to young people such as higher education, employment, healthcare, and financial independence.

The evening began with the broadcast of *Fostering Hope: A Call To Care*, which offered stories on foster parenting and presented ways individuals and corporations in Georgia are providing needed resources.

In a special edition of GPB's weekly public affairs program *Georgia Week in Review*. Georgia's First Lady Mary Perdue, who is a former foster parent, discussed the work of The First Lady's Children's Cabinet to improve the lives of Georgia's foster children. BJ Walker, Department of Human Resources (DHR) Commissioner, discussed her department's partnership with The First Lady's Children's Cabinet in creating "Teen Work." This statewide project pairs foster teens with employers so they can gain experience and start the transition to independent living. Lesley Grady, Vice President of Community Partnerships for The Community Foundation for Greater Atlanta, commented on the Metro Atlanta Youth Opportunities Initiative (MAYOI), a local pilot program of the Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative.

Video profiles of two MAYOI Youth Board members, Priscilla Harris and Jeremy Middleton, were featured as part of the special. AGING OUT culminated the programming. A series of broadcast interstitials encouraged viewers to call the phone bank GPB had set up in its studios. Early feedback indicates that interested employers have become involved with both Teen Work and MAYOI.

As a result of the programming and phone bank, early feedback indicates that interested employers have become involved with both Teen Work and MAYOI. The First Lady's appearance on *Georgia Week In Review* emphasized how all Georgians should be concerned with foster care issues and that there are many ways they can become involved. MAYOI is continuing to use the program to recruit new employers and expand its services.

## **Chicago, IL**

Working with its primary community partner, Chapin Hall Center for Children at the University of Chicago, public television station WTTW developed an ambitious outreach plan. Three events were conducted:

A two-day national outreach conference was held in November 2004 at the University of Chicago for an audience of 300 policymakers and administrators of child and human service organizations. Attendees learned about current research on youth in foster care from a study just released by the Chapin Hall Center for Children. Its director, Mark Courtney, commented on study results. The conference concluded with a screening of AGING OUT.

An event in March 2005 brought together over 700 representatives from agencies such as the Chicago Department of Children and Youth Services, the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services, and the Illinois State Office of Region 5 Administration for Children and Families. Panel participants included: Malia Arnett, Director of ChildLink; Mark Courtney, Director of the Chapin Hall Center for Children; Bryan Samuels, Director of the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS); and Thomas Hudson, whose Chicago-based story of emancipation is featured in "With No Direction Home," a companion video to AGING OUT. Sylvia Ewing, a producer and host for Chicago Public Radio moderated the discussion.

In May, an outreach event in partnership with the Department of Children and Family Services brought youth together for a motivational event. More than 400 youth from organizations in and around Chicago convened at Northwestern University. The event featured a motivational presentation by ZONE COACH Jim Fannin, and a screening/discussion of Risa Bejarano's story from AGING OUT. The majority of youth attending the event were in their first year of college or final year of high school.

The radio initiative on Chicago Public Radio brought together Chicago area youth professionals to expand discussions about issues facing youth. Tune in spots ran on WTTW and Chicago Public Radio to promote the broadcast of AGING OUT and the companion radio special entitled *A Dangerous Disconnect*. This one-hour special focusing on youth aging out of the foster care system aired on Eight Forty-Eight, one of Chicago's premiere local morning public affairs programs.

## **San Diego, CA**

KPBS reached more than one million people through its extensive outreach project. The station's primary partner was ACCESS, Inc., which manages the local Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative program.

Project activities included numerous screenings and workshops, using AGING OUT, that were designed to improve outcomes for youth in foster care.

- A kick-off event co-hosted by ACCESS, Inc.'s Youth Empowerment Services (YES) program for youth in and emancipated from foster care.
- Workshops conducted by KPBS' *Ready To Learn* project in partnership with the San Diego Foster Parent Association.
- Ongoing CASA training conducted by Voices for Children.
- Screening and discussion with juvenile court judges and attorneys as part of their continuing education program.
- A pilot training program of the San Diego County Health and Human Services Child Welfare Department that brought foster parents together with social workers.

A community screening for local youth organizations and group homes featured Daniella Rin Hover who sought to empower youth to be active in their emancipation. A panel discussion featured representatives from the Child Abuse Prevention Foundation, ACCESS Inc.'s YES program, YMCA Youth and Family Services, as well as Vanessa Roth, the co-director of AGING OUT.

KPBS expanded partnerships from its earlier foster care pilot project and **2002** local television documentary *Emancipation Day*, and formed new alliances. Among its many project partners were Casey Family Programs, San Diego Workforce Partnership, and the National Association of Former Foster Care Youth. To facilitate the station's ongoing commitment to foster care, KPBS serves on the Foster Care Community Coalition Board.

KPBS Radio News & Public Affairs broadcast two features on aging out. The highlight of its programming was a two-hour remote broadcast for *These Days* that was broadcast live from San Pasqual Academy, a residential high school for foster teens. KPBS estimates that it reached 145,000 listeners

## **Detroit, MI**

Detroit Public Television recruited 165 mentors through its primary outreach activities – a major screening event and live call-in phone banks. Viewers could call in during a two-hour programming block, beginning with a local production *Foster A Future: An American Black Journal Special* and culminating with the broadcast of AGING OUT. *Foster A Future* presented the experiences of foster youth in Detroit and the role of the Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative in assisting young people who are aging out of the system. In addition, the station produced and broadcast interstitials featuring five mentors whose messages helped to dispel some of the myths associated with youth in foster care and encouraged viewers to become mentors. Youth in foster care played a prominent role in all aspects of the project.

The major screening brought together 300 state, local, and community leaders; representatives from mentoring and other service organizations; foster youth; and mentors of youth. The reception, emceed by Youth Board Member Jessica Lindsey, featured speakers Marianne Udow, Director of the Michigan Department of Human Services; Maura Corrigan, Michigan Supreme Court Justice; and Dan Mulhern, Michigan's First Gentleman.

DPTV's lead partner was the Department of Human Services in Wayne County, the Wayne County site of the Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative. Additional partners were Blue Cross/Blue Shield of Michigan, Winning Futures, United Way, Mentoring Solutions, Metro Detroit Mentor Collaboration, and Big Brothers Big Sisters.

## **San Antonio, TX**

For its AGING OUT campaign, KLRN conducted two primary events along with other smaller events, as well as created a local transitional living resource toolkit called *Aging Out: What's Next*. All events showcased resources available to youth before and after they age out of care.

The first event focused on obstacles youth in foster care face as they complete high school, and what school personnel can do to help these students graduate and become successful adults. Following the screening of Risa Bejarano's story in AGING OUT and five youth profiles produced by KLRN, Dr. Debbie Staub, manager of K-12 education, Casey Family Programs, Seattle, WA, facilitated a panel discussion. Panelists were Stephanie DeLeon, social worker for Judson Independent School District; Linda Kappus, education specialist, Casey Family Programs, San Antonio; Wendy Lorenzi, program director, Youth Advocates in Action and a former foster youth; and Luis Rigal, a foster parent.

The second event, hosted by KLRN and the University of Texas (UTSA) at San Antonio Department of Social Work, was a luncheon, panel discussion, and resource fair for foster youth who are emancipating or have already emancipated from the foster care system were: Norma Davila, president, Education Source; Rebecca Durand, director of support service, Roy Maas' Youth Alternatives, Linda Kappus,

education specialist, Casey Family Programs, San Antonio; Randy McGibney, aftercare coordinator, Preparation for Adult Living Services, Baptist Child & Family Services; Margaret L. Quintanilla, off-site coordinator, Eastside Community Education Center, Alamo Community College District; Jennifer Talley, school to career facilitator, Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative; and Cheronda M. Tillman, Youth Advocates in Action and a former foster youth. The discussion was moderated by Rhonda Dyer, Director, Methodist Children's Home.

The event's resource fair attracted 20 local youth-serving organizations, which set up displays and offered resources. In addition to benefiting youth, the fair allowed these organizations to network with each other and make connections to improve their services. The *Aging Out: What's Next* toolkit was handed out along with a health/hygiene kit.

KLRN produced a series of five profiles, called *Aging Out in San Antonio*, of individual youth who are aging out or recently emancipated. The profiles were broadcast as interstitials on KLRN, presented at a screening, and can be viewed on KLRN's Web site.

KLRN's lead partners were the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services and Methodist Children's Home. Other partners who played important roles were Casey Family Programs and Baptist Child and Family Services. All aspects of the project brought the community together, and youth, foster parents, and social service agencies worked together on each activity to make it a success.

## **Nashville, TN**

In early November 2004, Nashville Public Television held a Youth Leadership Summit. Through this event, the station was able to brainstorm with youth organization leaders about forming an outreach action plan for AGING OUT. The station's lead partner for its campaign was the Child & Family Policy Center at the Vanderbilt Institute for Public Policy Studies, a grantee of the Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative.

In consultation with its partners, NPT produced a 30-minute documentary that was broadcast immediately following AGING OUT. "Avenues of Hope" presented a brief summary of aging out issues; organizations, corporations, and individuals making a difference; and finally, what viewers could do to help youth aging out in the Nashville area. The program featured interviews with Dr. Viola Miller, Commissioner of the Tennessee Department of Children's Services; Keith Bullock, Linebacker for the Tennessee Titans and former foster care youth; and community advocates from the Oasis Center, Vanderbilt Child and Family Policy Center, and the Tennessee Youth Advisory Council.

The station plans to create three interstitials from footage in the film that will air in prime time to keep the issue of aging out before the public.

Tipper Gore moderated the panel discussion at the public screening of AGING OUT at the Downtown Nashville Public Library.

## **St. Louis, MO**

For KETC, its innovative AGING OUT project offered a new way for the station to create connections to the community through using production, broadcast, and outreach to effect change. KETC collaborated with community agencies on a project that focused attention on young people leaving foster care. The overall goal was to expand public awareness and dialogue and to broaden the network of participation among caring adults who can become involved in the lives of youth in foster care.

The centerpiece of the project was the broadcast of AGING OUT, along with a 1/2 hour KETC special production. *No Sweet Home: Aging Out of Foster Care*, profiled two local young people – Yolanda Brown, who is preparing for independent living through the Evangelical Children's Home's Stepping Stone program, and Michael Martin, who has been on his own for a year. The program includes a studio

discussion with Judge Thomas Frawley, former chief judge of the Family Court in St. Louis; Harry Harrell of the Evangelical Children's Home; and Donna Bernsen of the Missouri Department of Social Services, Children's Division.

On the same day as the broadcast, KETC hosted a community screening and discussion for people who are involved in foster care issues. Daniella Rin Hover, one of the young women from AGING OUT, addressed the gathering. To continue the momentum of the project and increase awareness of the problem, KETC will provide lawmakers with resource packets and DVDs of the programs.

KETC's lead partner was Transitions-St. Louis System of Care which helped fund the project along with BJC Behavioral Healthcare. Organizations in the planning coalition were: Marygrove, Missouri Mentoring Partnership, Children's Division (St. Louis City and County offices), Evangelical Children's Home, National Association of Social Workers-Missouri Chapter, and Epworth Children and Family Services.

One of the most important project outcomes is the communication that is now taking place among agencies serving emancipating youth.

## **State of Connecticut**

In association with Connecticut Voices for Children and the Connected Youth Opportunities Initiative, Connecticut Public Television (CPTV) produced three 30-second vignettes motivate the public to care about children in the state's foster care system. In addition to broadcast, the vignettes are being used as a tool in outreach sessions conducted by local agencies and organizations to heighten awareness, identify issues, and spark discussions that may enable advocates to effect change. The vignettes were also streamed on the Web sites of CPTV and organizations serving youth and families in foster care.

CPTV is also using the vignettes to seek funding for a one-hour documentary entitled *The Children Left Behind*, which will consider the state of foster care in Connecticut as well as highlight promising efforts to improve foster care adoption. Both the vignettes and planned documentary are part of an initiative to focus public attention on foster care over an extended period of time. The station and its partners hope is to reach professionals, advocates in the field of foster care, policymakers, youth, and the general public in order to communicate personal experiences of what happens when children enter the foster care system.

Connecticut Voices for Children, CPTV's partner for the campaign, is working as a community partner with the Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative.

## **Kansas City, MO**

KCPT worked extensively with its primary partner, the Local Investment Commission or LINC, attending meetings with community partners, planning and conducting screenings, and working with three youth advisory boards, which were combined into one called "Voices of the Century."

The Community Partnership Board met monthly and worked directly with the Voices of the Century youth board. These meetings provided opportunities to discuss the needs of foster youth in addition to planning project activities, which included three community events and three workshops. The station worked with coordinator Kathy Prell of LINC, a grantee of the Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative.

On May 23, LINC hosted a screening of AGING OUT featuring Daniella Rin Hover and including a graduation celebration for Youth Advisory Board members. In October, 2004 KCPT participated in a book signing for *On Their Own* by Martha Shirk and Gary Stangler, executive director of the Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative.

In conjunction with Voices of the Century, KCPT produced outreach messages that aired before and after the broadcast of AGING OUT. Two of the youth board members told viewers that Kansas City youth in

foster care face the same challenges they'll find in the film. The telephone number of Voices of the Century was provided so viewers could take action.

## **New York, NY**

Working with the Administration for Children's Services (ACS), Office of Youth Development, Thirteen/WNET was able to raise awareness regarding the many challenges youth face as they age out of foster care.

Three screenings of AGING OUT featured trained peer facilitators who led group discussions to motivate youth to prepare for their transition to independence. Four screenings were held for youth development staff, foster care professionals, foundation professionals, and policymakers to explore ways to meet the needs of young people leaving care.

ACS and Thirteen/WNET also held a screening at Hunter College School of Social Work in partnership with the Independent Living Resource Center to engage its 30 different agencies. A screening at the New York City Consortium for Youth Development brought together staff from its contract agencies. A partnership with Youth Advocacy Center recruited Thirteen/WNET employees as informational interviewees for teens.

Thirteen/WNET's local production, *New York Voices: Fixing Foster Care* highlighted recent city efforts to restructure the foster care system to encourage family preservation. John Mattingly, Commissioner of Children's Services, was interviewed about the plan, called "Protecting Children and Strengthening Families," which was released in February. The program also interviewed Nanette Schrandt, director of Juvenile Services at Legal Aid Society, which provides legal representation to over 30,000 kids a year.

In addition, a special edition of *Inside Trenton*, a half-hour news and public affairs program produced jointly by WNET and New Jersey Network, covered the Department of Human Services new plan to reform New Jersey's child welfare services. Hosts Rafael Pi Roman and Steve Aduato, Jr. discussed the issue with Kathi Way, Deputy Commissioner for the Office for Children's Services, and Susan Lambiase, director, Children's Rights, Inc., which had filed a lawsuit against the state and the Department of Youth and Family Services in 2003.

## **Los Angeles, CA**

KCET engaged 16 local foster care and community based organizations in promoting the broadcast of AGING OUT and conducting discussion groups among their constituents. The station provided copies of the video and print resource materials to help agencies increase public awareness and understanding of foster care issues, related challenges, and possible solutions. Partners included Alliance for Children's Rights, Casey Family Programs, Children's Law Center Los Angeles, CASA, Families in Transition Community Services, Foster Family Agency, Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services, Los Angeles County Probation Department, and Los Angeles Youth Network.

For its principal screening and discussion event, KCET convened an audience of foster care agencies, service providers, child advocates, foster parents, and youth. Facilitated by Lynne Christian, KCET, and Flora Rostamian, a school psychologist and education specialist, the event served as a catalyst for further dialogue and community action. Guest speakers included Vanessa Roth, co-producer, AGING OUT; Tim Mayworm, Journey House (who appears in AGING OUT); Brenda Parks, President, Carson Foster Family Association; and several foster youth from the Journey House program.

Evaluations completed for the event by 97% of respondents rated its Overall Quality as Excellent. When asked if they would like to conduct an AGING OUT screening/discussion for their constituents, 96% answered "Yes." Actions to which participants committed themselves included:

- Listen to youth; work *with* them, not just *for* them.
- Further advocacy on behalf of youth.

- Work harder to take care of children who are aging out.
- Promote mentoring and recruit more adults to mentor emancipating youth.

An on-air message following AGING OUT directed viewers to the L.A. Department of Children and Family Services Web site and provided relevant 1-800 numbers.

## Washington, DC

To launch its project, WETA convened a meeting of child advocates from across the Greater Washington area to discuss an outreach strategy for AGING OUT. Daniella Rin Hover, one of three youths profiled in the film AGING OUT, also participated.

WETA credits its partner organizations for taking ownership of the project and providing credibility, research, and reach into the community. Events included:

- “Movie Night” at the Child Welfare League of America’s (CWLA) annual conference in Washington, DC. Featured speakers were Daniella Rin Hover and Gary Stangler, executive director of the Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative.
- A screening event for Alexandria Department of Human Services, Department of Social Services for staff in the Permanency and Independence Unit.
- A board meeting of the Consortium for Youth Services. The board is comprised of local children’s advocates from business, government and community.

WETA also collaborated with the Children’s Law Center and The Public Welfare Foundation on a screening event in Northwest Washington. The audience of 170 was comprised of caseworkers, parents, judges, educators, policymakers, and lawyers from Maryland, the District of Columbia, and Virginia, as well as 25 teenagers living in group homes or with foster parents. Speakers included Tyra Tillman, who had aged out of foster care and is attending college; and Marilyn Egerton, deputy director of the Foster and Adoption Parent Advocacy Center. Teens were able to obtain answers to their questions from Brenda Donald Walker, director of DC Child and Family Services Agency.

Working with the Children’s Law Center, WETA is developing a guide to help youth develop a strategy for emancipating from foster care.

## Denver, CO

For its AGING OUT outreach campaign, Rocky Mountain PBS conducted *Ready To Learn/Ready To Grow* and Parenting Counts workshops for youth aging out of the foster care system who have young children. Ensuring that children are “ready to learn” upon entering school is at the heart of the program. The Human Services Department for Denver County is providing access to the foster care system to deliver the workshops.

*Ready To Learn/Ready To Grow* or Parenting Counts workshops are also being offered to students at Longmont High School, Sierra Grande High School, and Center High School through small grants offered by the schools for the AGING OUT Campaign.

Knowing that money management is an essential skill for youth aging out of foster care, Rocky Mountain PBS partnered with Mile High United Way to videotape and distribute three financial literacy workshops conducted by Young American’s Bank. All workshops focused on setting Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, and Time-bound (SMART) financial goals.

Upon completion, the videotaped workshops will be posted on the Web sites of the Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative and the Making Connections Media Outreach Initiative as well as sent to Mile High United Way and the three participating high schools. Mile High United Way is a grantee of the Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative.

## State of Iowa

Iowa Public Television and the Youth Policy Institute of Iowa (YPII) formed an outreach partnership called AGING OUT IN IOWA. YPII is working as a community partner with the Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative. The campaign began with a screening and discussion at IPTV to build community interest and involvement. Daniella Rin Hover shared her experiences and answered questions. At the Spring Training of the Iowa Foster and Adoptive Parents, keynote speaker Sue Tew from YPII informed attendees about AGING OUT. In addition to a screening, a panel discussion with the Iowa Youth Connections Council (IYCC) incorporated AGING OUT.

AGING OUT IN IOWA planned a series of activities related to the broadcast of the documentary.

- E-mail tune-in alerts for the broadcast were distributed by Chief Juvenile Court Officers, Department of Human Services, Iowa Collaboration for Youth Development, Iowa Coalition for Children and Families, and the *Making Connections*/Human Service Planning Alliance.
- Trained specialists at the Iowa Teen-line were ready to help with information about foster care and after care.



7039 Dume Drive, Malibu, CA 90265  
Telephone: 310.589.5180  
Fax: 310.589.5280  
E-mail: [Judy@outreachextensions.com](mailto:Judy@outreachextensions.com)