

**MISSION:** The Service Excellence Committee will support member agencies in developing high quality, culturally competent organizations that are responsive to the ever changing needs of families.

### **Cultural Wellness + Quality Assurance = The Service Excellence Committee**

By

Joan Margolis, Jewish Family Services Greater Hartford

Since 2003, the Council has facilitated a Cultural Wellness Committee to help member agencies develop best practices around cultural competency and deliver direct services that are culturally well. In recent years, the Council also convened a Quality Assurance affinity group. The affinity group was not a Council Board-approved committee, but rather an opportunity for those who work in QA to get together, share ideas and experiences and help improve the QA process at all Council member agencies. In 2009, these two groups merged after exploration of the benefits involved and in an effort to meet a Board request to consolidate committee activity wherever reasonable and feasible.

Since Cultural Wellness and Quality Assurance both permeate every part of what we do at our agencies, it only makes sense that these important areas add up to Service Excellence. The Committee is committed to the continued promotion of cultural wellness, maintenance of high standards for the Council and its membership and the development of personnel within our organizations to preserve and grow quality programming. The new Council Board-approved Committee is co-chaired by Jonathan Garfinkle, Executive Director of Jewish Family Service of New Haven, and Michael Tintrup, Vice President of Compliance & Quality Assurance at Catholic Charities Fairfield County. Jonathan formerly was co-chair of the Cultural Wellness Committee. Michael served on Cultural Wellness and was a member of the Quality Assurance Affinity Group.

If these areas are important to you personally and professionally, please join us. We can all serve our Council as volunteers and bring our own expertise and the experiences of our agencies to the table to help our sister agencies. Please contact Tracey Walker at the Council for further information and a meeting schedule.

This newsletter is distributed by the Service Excellence Committee, formerly Cultural Wellness, of the Connecticut Council of Family Service Agencies. The Committee hopes to have this newsletter become a tool for exchanging information, sharing success stories and educating ourselves on quality services. Contributions to this newsletter are welcome. Please send materials to Tracey Walker at [twalker@ctfsa.org](mailto:twalker@ctfsa.org) or fax (860) 571-0118.



## **WORKING WITH HAITIAN FAMILIES ....**

### ***Understanding Trauma and Resiliency***

By Paula Mann-Agnew,  
Catholic Charities Archdiocese of Hartford

In (recognition) of Black History Month, Catholic Charities hosted a powerful Cultural Competency seminar entitled “WORKING WITH HAITIAN FAMILIES ...Understanding Trauma and Resiliency”. The presentation had a threefold purpose- (1) to increase knowledge about the rich legacy of Haitian culture and history, (2) to increase knowledge of trauma informed work in light of the horrific earthquake and its impact on Haitian families and (3) to facilitate a collective community response to aid Haitian relief efforts.

Integrated into the seminar were many aspects of the Haitian culture including traditional drumming, Haitian Poetry, Haitian Cuisine as well as Haitian Art and Song.

The keynote address was given by Marlene Jacques, a Haitian Clinical Manager from DMHAS. She provided interesting facts about Haiti’s history. She described the wealth that Haiti possessed for many generations and how the series of invasions from the by Spain, France and eventually the USA resulted in the poverty-stricken nation that currently exists. She detailed the cultural perspectives, traditions and practices of the Haitian people. In addition, Dr. Carl Jarda, a Haitian Forensic Psychologist, delivered an informative presentation on trauma and treating the Haitian people in a culturally competent manner.

The community call to action was powerful as organizations offered opportunities for the audience to get involved. Archbishop Henry Mansell shared that over 2 million dollars has been collected through Catholic Relief Services. Father Ridley a Haitian Priest shared the news from the orphanage in Haiti that he directs. Yvon Alexandre, a

Haitian Businessman, had just returned from Haiti on a medical mission that he coordinated through the Connecticut Haitian American Association. During the mission over 30,000 pounds of supplies were given to earthquake survivors and over 1000 were provided with medical, prosthetics and psychological treatment.

“Konfyans yo vle di evidans nan figi dezèspwar ak dezaz”. (Their faith stands prominently in the face of hopelessness and disaster.) This sentiment in Creole was offered by a prominent Haitian family man who eloquently described the resiliency of the Haitian people after acknowledging the death of several family members to the earthquake. This resiliency and faith became the evident central theme throughout each aspect of the seminar. The event ended with a full course Haitian meal donated by Imperial Caribbean Restaurant. All of the proceeds from lunch directly benefited Haiti Earthquake survivors.

#### **Newsletter Committee**

Joan Margolis  
Jewish Family Services of Greater Hartford  
(860) 236-1927 [jmargolis@jfshartford.org](mailto:jmargolis@jfshartford.org)

Sybil Cole  
Oak Hill  
(860) 769-3817 [coles@oakhill.org](mailto:coles@oakhill.org)

Paula Mann-Agnew  
Catholic Charities, Arch. of Htfd  
(860) 522-8241 [pmann-agnew@ccaoh.org](mailto:pmann-agnew@ccaoh.org)

Laurie Reisman  
Family Services Greater Waterbury  
[lreisman@familyservicesgw.org](mailto:lreisman@familyservicesgw.org)  
203-756-8317

Jessi Zeigler  
Newtown Youth & Family Services  
[jzeigler@newtownyouthandfamilyservices.org](mailto:jzeigler@newtownyouthandfamilyservices.org)  
203-270-4335