In 2013, there were 402,378 children in foster care with almost one-half with foster parents and the other with relatives. Of the 402,378, over 26% of children who are in foster care have lived with multiple families (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, [USDHHS] 2014).

Children who are in foster care or with relatives can sometimes experience further hardship and trauma because of multiple placements and this can affect every aspect of their lives, including their chances of graduating high school (Haugland, Dovran, Arefjord, & Winje, 2012).

There are numerous educational challenges for youth in foster care, risk factors for youth in foster care who do not graduate from high school, such as, lower educational experiences (Sheppard, 2012), placement instability (Cox, 2013), unattended mental health problems (Krinsky, 2010), special education (Hudson, 2013), grade retention (Scherr, 2007), bullying (Esbensen & Carson, 2009), and untrained school staff (Gallegos & White, 2013).

With the considerable documentation of poor education outcomes, the child welfare field has endeavored to find interventions to increase the likelihood youth in foster care will graduate high school. These include, reducing placement trauma (Mitchell, Kuczynski, Tubbs, & Ross, 2010), having safe places to go after school (Krinsky, 2010), role models and mentors (Leone & Weinberg, 2010), and a support system (Hudson, 2013).

Purpose

The purpose of this project was to create a grant proposal to fund the development of resource materials that could be used by foster parents, kinship caregivers, and child welfare workers to help the youth in their care graduate from high school and increase opportunities for higher education or vocational training.
This program is relevant to social work because it helps youth in foster care, foster parents, and kinship caregivers understand the importance of graduating high school and possibly seek higher education.

This program is consistent with the NASW Code of Ethics (2008) because it underlines the importance of dignity and worth of the person. It seeks to enhance chances of successfully graduating high school and reduce their chances of ending up in the criminal justice system, gangs, with addictions and possibly other maladaptive activities and behaviors.

This program aims to be culturally competent because it seeks to serve as many youth as possible regardless of their age, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, socio-economic status and different cultures.

Youth in care, especially sexual and ethnic minority youth are particularly vulnerable.
Children of all different backgrounds and ethnicities come to the attention of the child welfare system (USDHHS, 2014).

In California, African American children were more prevalent than White or Hispanic children for being removed and placed in foster care (USDHHS, 2014).

This project will be implemented in Los Angeles County specifically in the, which has a population of diverse ethnic backgrounds.

This project Identifies resources that can help families outside the workshop experience, such as individual and family therapy, support groups, places where young people can find support with other youth in care who may desire to graduate from high school.

This project aims to improve the likelihood of children of color to graduate high school.
Target Population:
*The target population for this project are the foster parents, kinship caregivers, and child welfare workers who are responsible for meeting the developmental needs of the children and youth in their care, especially academic achievement. The secondary target group would be the young people themselves. The project’s goal is to help foster parents, kinship caregivers, and child welfare workers develop or enhance their strengths, skills, and supports so the youth in their care or caseloads can graduate from high school or obtain a GED, and transition into their communities as productive young adults.

Strategies Used to Find Funding Source:
*Several methods were used to locate a funder for the development of necessary resource materials. Foundation, state and federal grants were investigated by utilizing the Internets and databases. Also, this grant writer’s thesis advisor provided him with information about organization and programs that supported and funded the development of potential resource materials.
Methods

Funding Source
* Stuart Foundation: This foundation was chosen based on its interest and commitment to helping vulnerable youth in the child welfare system.

Sources Used for Needs Assessment:
* The grant writer did extensive research using scholarly journals, books, and reports and searched for the most current data on children entering into the foster care system. The literature focused specifically on effects on children in multiple placements and the long-term effects children experienced after being removed from their homes.

Projected Budget:
* Salaries and Benefits
* Direct Program Costs
* In-Kind Expenses
* Total Amount Requested: $213,670
Program Summary and Description
* The goals of this proposed program are: to help foster parents, kinship caregivers, and child welfare workers develop or enhance their strengths, skills, and supports so the youth in their care or caseloads can graduate from high school or obtain a GED, and transition into their communities as productive young adults.

Population Served
* The target population for this project are the foster parents, kinship caregivers, and child welfare workers who are responsible for meeting the developmental needs of the children and youth in their care, especially academic achievement. The secondary target group would be the young people themselves.

Sustainability
* The Program Director will seek potential funding sources throughout the year.
Grant Proposal

Program Objectives

* Document the emotional, social, and cognitive stages of adolescent development, which is complicated by the circumstances that caused separation from their parents and placement with relatives or foster parents.
* Explore ways to help youth in their care overcome the obstacles to completing high school, especially when trauma is involved.
* Demonstrate how higher education can be beneficial for better jobs and style of living.
* Identify risk factors associated with dropping out of high school.
* Demonstrate how foster parents and kinship caregivers can be advocates in empowering the children in their care to successfully complete high school and promote higher education.
* Identify resources that can help families outside the workshop experience, such as individual and family therapy, support groups, places where young people can find support with other youth in care who may desire to graduate from high school.

Program Evaluation

* A Project Evaluator, with a PhD/DSW degree and child welfare research experience, will be hired to supervise all facets of the evaluation process. The purpose of the evaluation would be to measure the effectiveness of the guidebooks. There are four options for evaluation, based on the Kirkpatrick approach: Level 1, Participant Satisfaction; Level 2, Pre-post Test; Level 3, Impact; and Level 4, Outcomes (Rajeev, Madan, & Jayarajan, 2009). It is recommended that Level 1 evaluation be used. Level 1 is efficient, and can be used immediately to obtain Likert scale information regarding how much participants valued what they learned. It would be the responsibility of the Project Evaluator, in collaboration with other members of the team, to create the research design, methods, instruments, data collection, and analysis approach. A Level 3 evaluation would be ideal to assess impact of the Guide, but would require extending the project time frame beyond 12 months so participants could be contacted six months later, for example, to assess the impact of what they had learned. A Level 4 evaluation would require project expansion beyond a year or more to assess if youth in care of the participants actually had graduated from high school.
Lessons Learned/Implications for Social Work

Lessons Learned:
* Grant Writing process
* Learned about the importance of flexibility when it came to feedback and being open to suggestions in making adjustments to the initial proposed center.
* An intense examination of the target population helped the grant writer learn about the gaps and services that currently exist and are offered to this population.

Implications for Social Work Practice:
* Social workers should advocate for better services and programs for the most vulnerable individuals.
* When social workers have the abilities to write grants they are ensuring that funds are allocated to many agencies in the community in order to remain open.
* Social workers should have the abilities to write grants because they can contribute to further research on social conditions and issues affecting vulnerable populations.
References


Sheppard, W. N. (2012). An ecological approach to understanding physical child abuse and the impact on academics: Differences between behaviors in physically abused and non-abused children regarding parental disciplinary practices, family interaction and family events and their effects on social interaction and school success. (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). Ohio State University, Columbus