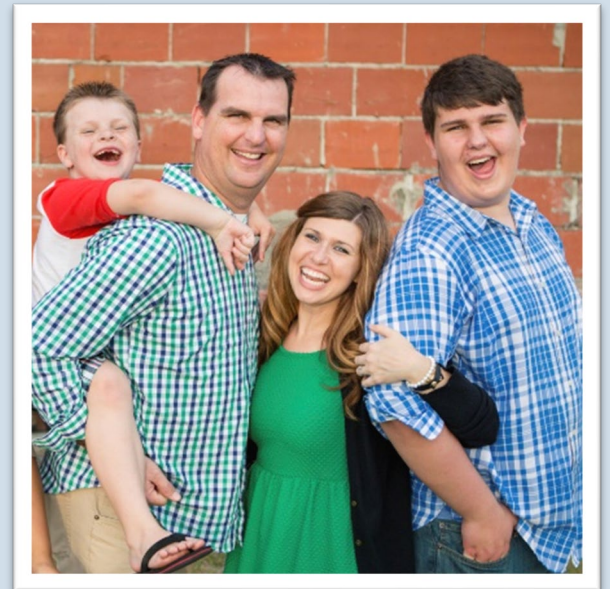


Adoption Commitment Through the Eyes of Adolescents: “The Follow the Love” Approach.

**Raise the Future - Virtual Training -
Thursday February 18th, 2021 - 10am to 12pm (PST)**

Presented by: Pat O'Brien, Executive Director



First, about the Coalition:

- Founded in the 1960s. Incorporated in 1975.
- Founded by adoptive parents to support one another and advocate on behalf of children and families. Foster parents became part of “the family” soon thereafter.

Our Goal:

Support, information and
advocacy for foster, adoptive and
kinship families.

Our Vision:

No foster, adoptive or kinship care family in New York State will feel **alone or unsupported** and that **all such families will have the tools, support and community they need** to nurture their children and be role models for others.

Start out with ELI story – Trauma and FIBS.

What We Do: Seven Areas of Service

The HelpLine – 888-354-1342 – or 888-Eli-1-Fib

Foster and Kinship Care Support – Have parents call us with problem.

PSP: Parents Supporting Parents – we are their umbrella

Training: Annual Conference – in Albany – And Training like today.

Adoption and Guardianship Assistance Program for Everyone (AGAPE)

Advocacy/Outreach – issues like raising board rate and OBC and supporting upcoming Kinship legislation. Also fighting forced legal contact after adoption. Foster Parent Vaccinations.

“After the Kids Move In” a live radio broadcast every Sunday evening from 6:30pm to 7pm on WGBB – 1240 on the AM dial. You can also listen live at am1240wgbb.com You can also listen from our website a couple of days after the live broadcast at www.affcnny.org/radio.

The Conference: Save the Date



32nd Annual New York State Foster Care and Adoption Conference will be virtual again this year.

DATES: Friday May 21 and Saturday May 22.

Who Am I? – Pat O’Brien – A Practitioner of Serving Families by Finding Permanent Homes for Teens.

- 25 Years of serving families who received the permanent Placements of Teens and Pre-Teens by Founding and leading You Gotta Believe.
- 4.5 Years as a Consultant for the Quality Improvement Center for Adoption & Guardianship
- 2.5 as a Wendy’s Wonderful Kids Recruiter directly working with families after permanent placements.
- 3 years as start up Director of two post-adopt/guardianship programs for AFFCNY.org in Southern Tier of NYS and on Long Island.
- Past year serving as the Executive Director of AFFCNY and overseeing all four regions of post adoption services.

FOLLOW THE LOVE

**A Strategy for Finding a Permanent
Parent and Family for Every Youth
before they Leave Our Care**

**I will ask for your participation on
certain exercises
When I do okay to unmute.**

A Self-Assessment Survey

Learn what your greatest gift is in your call to be of service to children. We are going to do these directions below together to assess which activity, skill, decision, or role in life is your greatest attribute in your ability to be of service to a child or children. I am going to ask you to use a finger or a pen as I move my mouse. Whatever box your finger or pen ultimately lands on will be the area where you can offer a child your greatest gift. Now I ask you to keep your mind open, suspend judgment and enjoy this self-assessment and you will learn a great deal about your individual greatest strength as it relates to serving children.

1. Place your finger on any **gray or shaded** box
2. Move your finger **left or right** to the nearest **white** box
3. Move your finger **up or down** to the nearest **gray or shaded** box
4. Move your finger **diagonally** to the nearest **white** box
5. Move your finger **left or right** to the nearest **gray** box
6. Now, remember your greatest strength to serve a child (which is the box your finger is on right now). Concentrate on the strength in that box.

See Below!

Teach	Advocate	Mentor	Coach
Befriend	Act Silly& Playful	Listen	Adopt A Teen
Show Empathy	Enhance Self- Esteem	Unconditional Commitment is love	Prevent Homelessness

Congratulations!

Your finger landed on

Adopt-a-Teen

U-D (Up-Down)

D (Deficit)

D (Disorder)

L-R (Left-Right)

D (Deficit)

D (Disorder)

D (Diagonal)

D (Deficit)

D (Disorder)

So, please consider how signing up for an interesting, informative, and even fun, therapeutic parent preparation class experience to learn about how to become a permanent parent to an older teen or youth adult, might become your greatest calling in your service to a child on the verge of aging out of the foster care system.

For instance, when you learn about parenting teens who need a person like you to become a permanent presence in their lives you will learn that your new *role* in life can become that of a:

TEACHER ADVOCATE MENTOR COACH FRIEND

to a child through the final stages of childhood and throughout young adult and adulthood as well.

The therapeutic parenting learning experience will also show you how to create a bond with this wonderful young adult or older teen through teaching and/or enhancing your *skills* to:

ACT SILLY & PLAYFUL, LISTEN, SHOW EMPATHY, ENHANCE SELF-ESTEEM.

Combine your newfound *roles* and *skills* with:

UNCONDITIONAL COMMITMENT

(Which we define as your decision to love)

And you will go a long way in helping to:

PREVENT A CHILD'S HOMELESSNESS

Tell Your Gotta Believe story and why you started it.

NYC Homeless Statistics

- **60%** of homeless living in NYC municipal shelters grew up in foster care as children.
- **50%** of youth surveyed in NYC study of runaway and homeless youth programs reported growing up in foster care.
- **70%** of youth residing in New York City's Covenant House reported having been in foster care: 27% with a foster parent, 43% in foster group homes.

Nationwide

Homeless Statistics

- **46%** - almost half – of all youth in shelters across NJ had been in DYFS's care the previous year before arriving in the shelter.
- **56%** of all young adults accessing federally funded youth shelters had previously been in foster care.

Nationwide

Homeless Statistics (cont.)

- 49% of youth in a national survey of runaway and homeless youth shelters conducted by NASW spent time in out-of-home care *in the previous year alone*; 38% in foster care, 11% in another shelter.
- 61% of homeless youth under 20 years of age reported having been placed in foster care, group home or institution before the age of 18.

What about the next Generation?

Difference between homeless
parent who **did and did not** grow
up in foster care.

- **27%** of the homeless who did not grow up in foster care have children living in foster care.
National Alliance to End Homelessness
- **77%** of former foster children who are homeless have children living in foster care.
- **29%** of NYC homeless parents who **did not** have a history of foster care had active cases with CPS. Institute for Children & Poverty survey of nearly 400 homeless parents in NYC.
- **73%** of NYC homeless families who **did** have history of foster care had active CPS cases.

What is the cause of homelessness?

Unmute and Shout Out a Cause

Common Wisdom – Okay to shout:

1. Poverty
2. Unemployment
3. Addiction
4. Mental Illness

Real Reason

Lack of any functional human relationships and connections on the day one becomes homeless.

The Major Culprit!

*A Child Welfare
Permanency
Planning Goal*

The Major Culprit?

*A Child Welfare Permanency
Planning Goal*

George Carlin Quote

EMANCIPATION

(1 word)

INDEPENDENT LIVING

(2 words)

**ANOTHER PLANNED PERMANENT LIVING
ARRANGEMENT**

(5 words)

The Effect of All Three:

*Discharging a youth to no one but **him or herself.***

Why is this absurd?

- Where do you think most 22-year old college graduates, who come from fairly well-off one-or two-parent families, go after graduating with a 4 year bachelor's degree? **(FOUR CLICKS)** Give Jeopardy answer.
- **The Average Age is 26**
 - o What is the average age that a young adult raised in his or her own family leaves their home of origin to set up a home of their own? **Three Clicks.**
 - o I did not get discharged to Independent Living until I was 43 years old and there was no time before that that this was even a practical consideration for me.

Did You Know?

- 85% of College graduates, 22 years of age and older, return home to their parents after they graduate college with a college degree?

4 click back (Then start with Jeopardy answer)

[http://money.cnn.com/2010/10/14/pf/boomeran
g_kids_move_home/index.htm](http://money.cnn.com/2010/10/14/pf/boomerang_kids_move_home/index.htm)

Did You Know?

- Nearly 23 million adults between the ages of 18 and 34 lived with their parents in 2012?
This is 32% of all people in that age range.

Did You Know?

This is up from 18 million, or 27%, 10 years earlier --- 2002.

- <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424127887323699704578326583020869940.html>

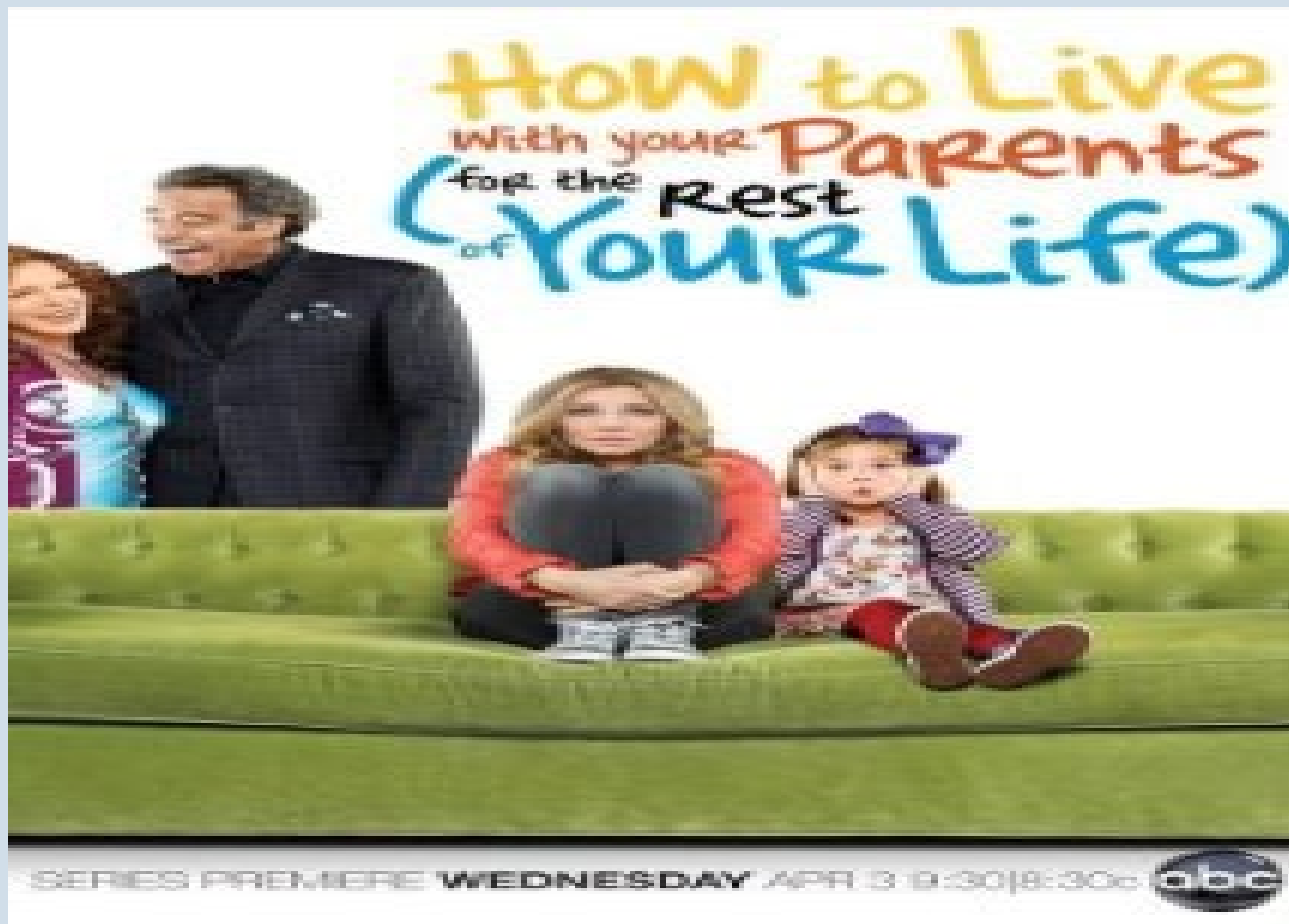
Did You Know?

- And 56% of all young adults between 18 and 24 live with their parents.

<http://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2013/08/01/a-rising-share-of-young-adults-live-in-their-parents-home/>

And Did You Know?

- That some kids plan on never leaving home and that this could actually be a good thing both for them and their parents?
<http://www.forbes.com/sites/financialfinesse/2012/08/16/boomerang-children-living-at-home-may-not-be-such-a-bad-thing/>



What is Your Independent Living Story?

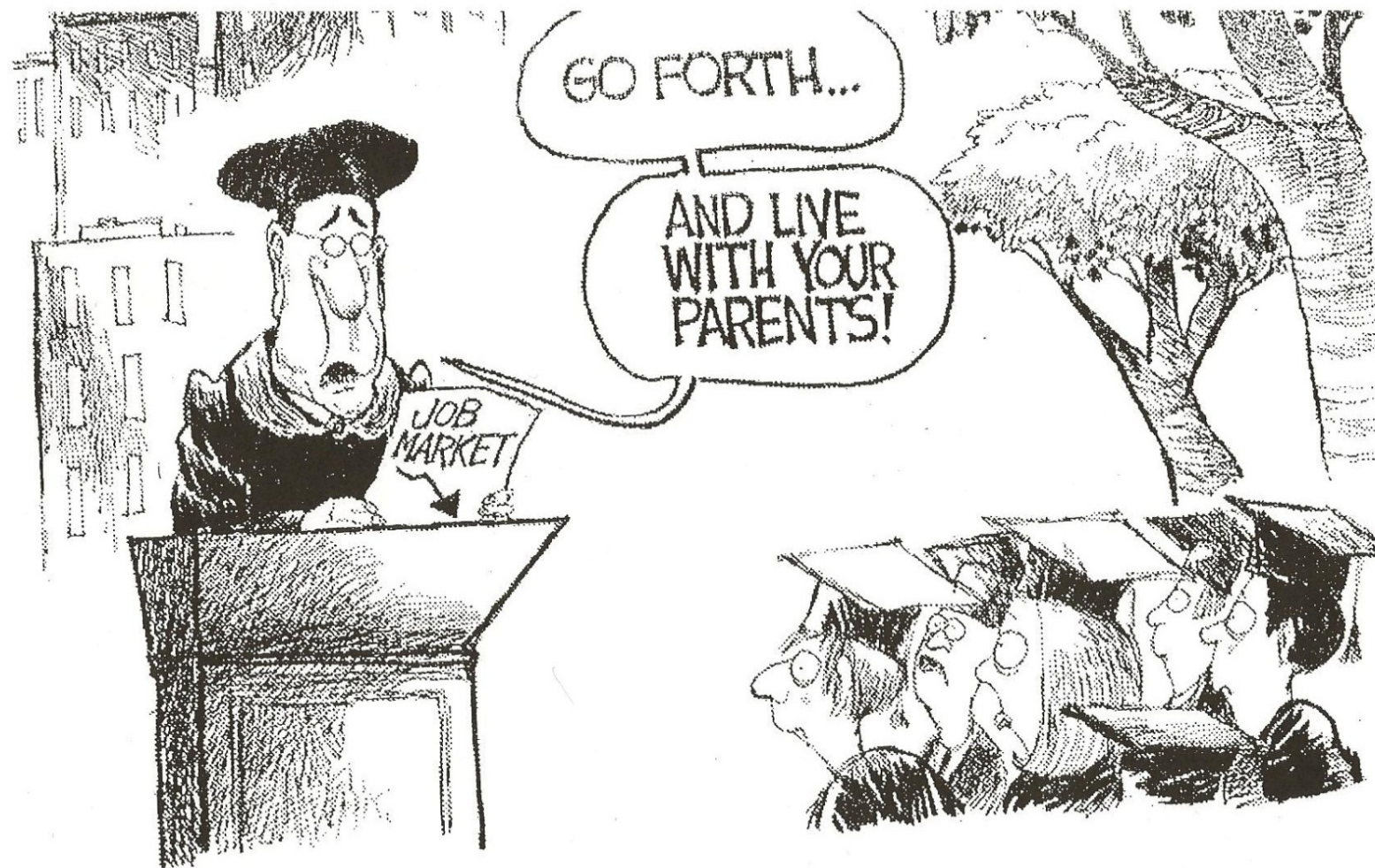
- I did not get discharged to Independent Living until I was 43 years old and there was no time before that that this was even a practical consideration for me.

- **SO, WHAT IS YOUR
INDEPENDENT
LIVING STORY?
GO HOME AND
THINK ABOUT IT.**

Harvard University Press

Published a book by Christopher Jencks simply entitled The Homeless, which reported nothing about the foster care system's contribution to creating half the homelessness in our culture, but nonetheless concluded the following:

“When unmarried adults get into economic trouble, parents are usually their first line of defense against homelessness. 5.6 million unmarried working age adults had incomes below \$2,500. 42% of them lived with their parents, compared to only 9% of the unmarried adults with incomes above \$30,000. The contrast leaves little doubt that the main reason unmarried adults live with their parents is economic. It also shows how important parents are in keeping young adults off the street, especially today when the income differential between the young and their elders is widening.”



Gary Markstein The Milwaukee Journal-Sentinel, Creators Syndicate

THE NEW YORKER



SHAS

maxell

Questions

?

What Is a Parent?

*At least one adult
who makes a unilateral
decision
to unconditionally
commit to a child's
well-being
for a lifetime.*

A PARENT

(who happens to be doing fostering)

*At least one adult
who makes a unilateral
decision
to unconditionally commit to
a child's well-being
& permanency future.*

WE STILL HAVE NEED FOR TEMPORARY PARENTS WHILE WE RECRUIT PERMANENT ONES

We will still need families for youth to live while we are bringing new and permanent families into our system on their behalf. Family's First Legislation is demanding that we place all kids in families and not in RTC's, hospitals, group homes or other forms of group care while we look for life long families for them.

So we must continue to recruit some "temporary foster resource families" on their behalf while they wait. So let me say a few words about how we must recruit the new and improved temporary families for our aging out teens simultaneous to our developing life long parents for them.

- **H**urt
- **A**bandon
- **R**eject
- **T**raumatize
- **V**ictimize
- **A**bused
- **N**eglect

A working definition of the word

FAMILY

Is often a place,
but always a safety net
with at least one parent, that provides a
youth and/or young adult
with the opportunity to **not** succeed
(or perhaps even fail) until he or she
can succeed.

**SO, WHERE
ARE THE
FAMILIES?**

Questions

?

*(Where are the parents who will
parent all children including youth
16, 17, 18, 19, 20 and above
permanently for the rest of their
lives?)*

Spell out ISNOWERE

Count of 3

**A
FAMILY
IS NOWHERE**

**A
FAMILY
IS
NO
WHERE**

**A
FAMILY
IS
NOW
HERE**

**A
FAMILY
I
SNOW
HERE**

**If you think you can,
you can;**

**If you think you can't,
you can't;**

You're always right!

**If you believe a family is now here,
A family is now here;**

**If you believe a family in no where,
A family is no where;**

You will always be right!

YOU ARE NOW
HERE!

**AND WE NEED A
MIRACLE TO
GET EVERY KID
A PERMANENT
FAMILY**

**DO YOU KNOW A
child who needs a
miracle?**

A MIRACLE

A miracle is just a shift in
perception;

It is a shift in how we perceive a
situation.

“Our greatest tool for
changing the world is
our capacity to
change our mind
about the world.”

--Marianne Williamson
A Return To Love

**WHEN YOU CHANGE THE
WAY YOU LOOK AT
THINGS,**

**THE THINGS
YOU LOOK AT CHANGE.**

Final Stat of the Day:

Washington State Aging Out Survey:

What % of Youth 17.5 years old about to age out reported having a close positive relationship with at least one adult?

97% of 302 17-year old youth “preparing” to emancipate from long term foster care in Washington State reported having a close positive relationship with at least one adult.

Questions

?

And Now . . .
On To Finding the
families for the kids in
our care not currently
living in a relative or
fictive kin family.

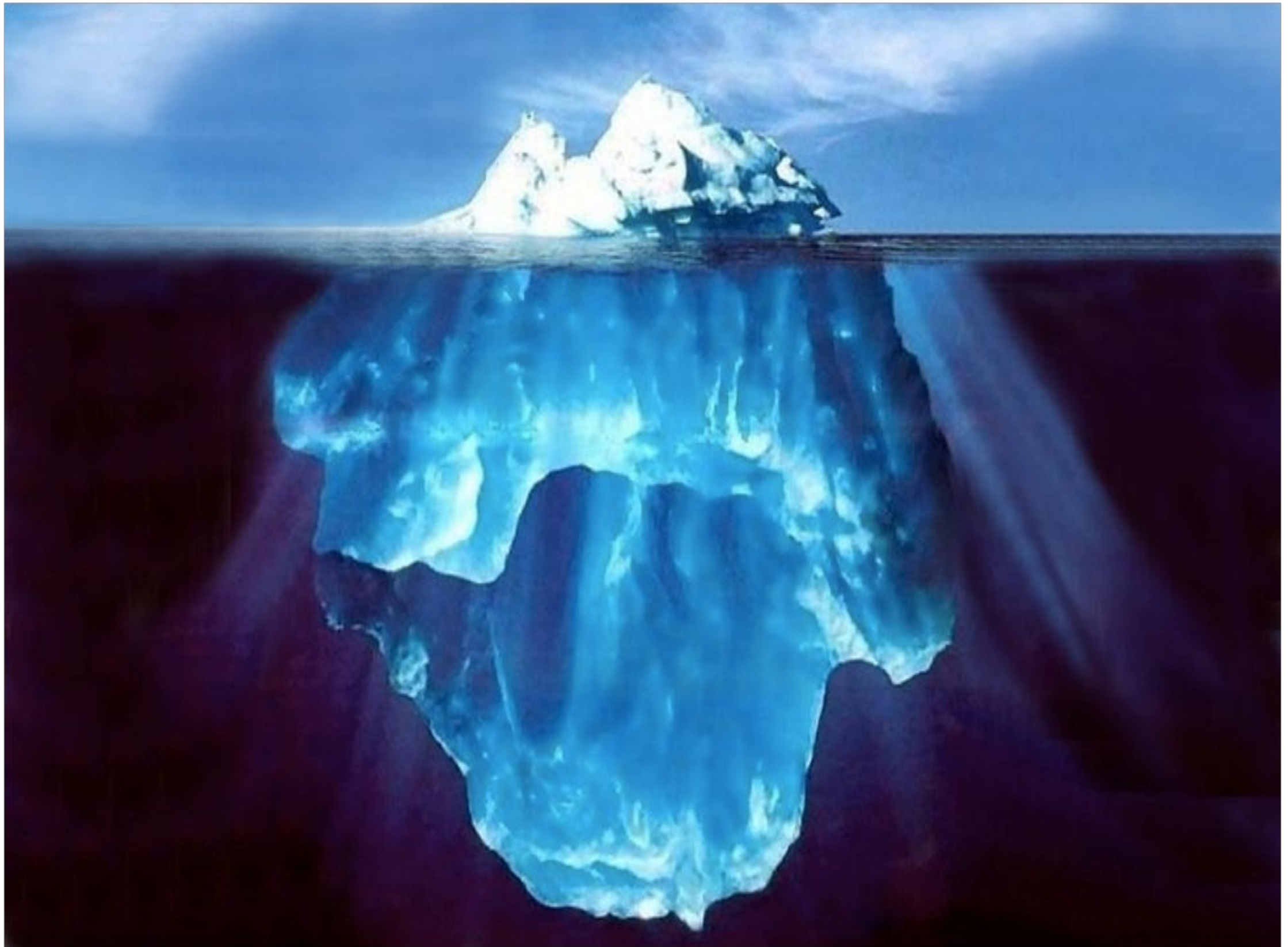
I call our approach . . .

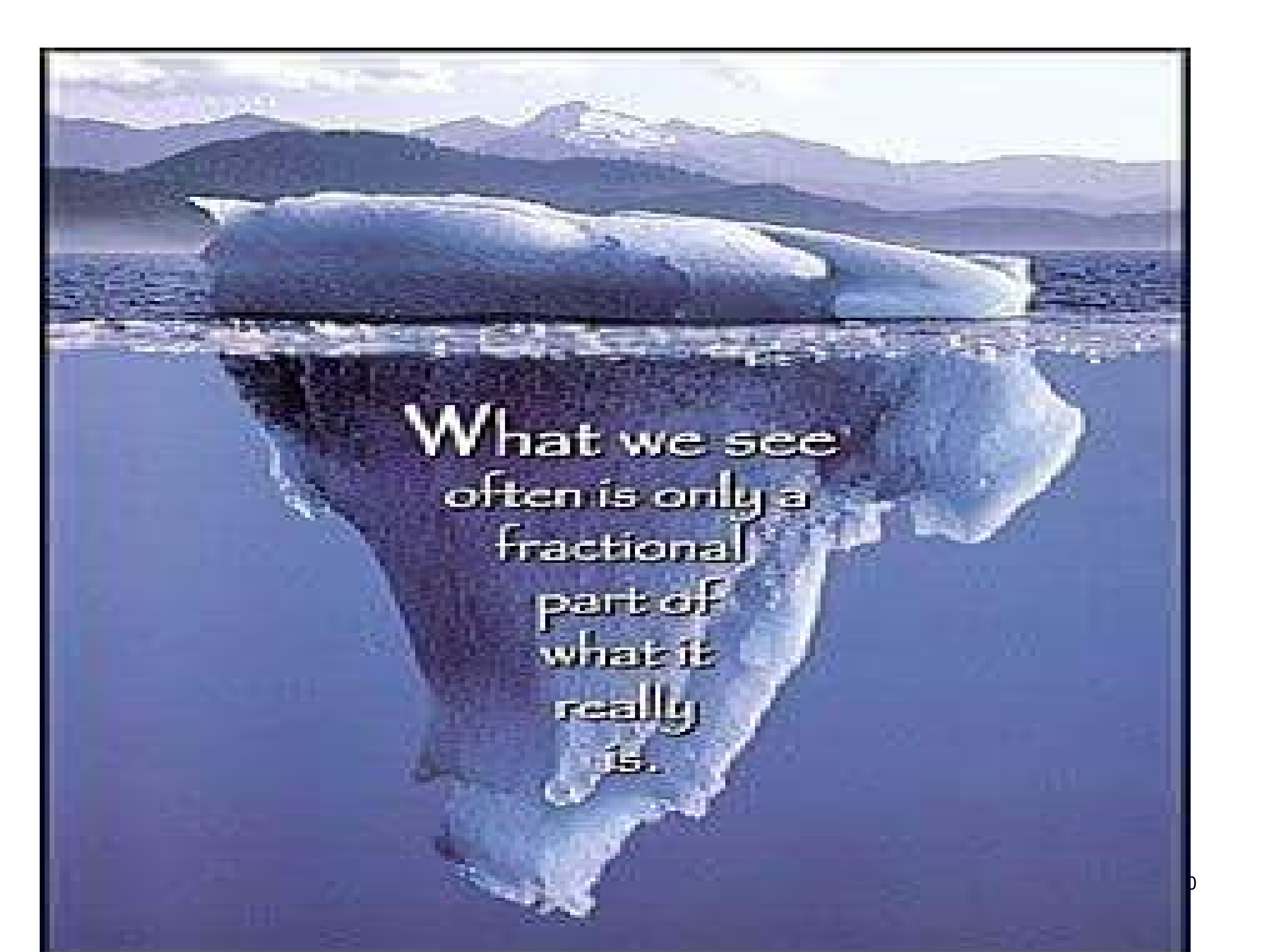
“The Follow The Love”

**Approach to finding every
youth a permanent family**

For remaining time ask everyone to think of a kid they know who does not currently have a permanent family to walk through the rest of their life with.

The rest of this workshop is dedicated to that kid.



A photograph of a large iceberg floating in the ocean. The tip of the iceberg is visible above the water, while the much larger base is submerged. In the background, there are mountains under a cloudy sky. The text is overlaid on the submerged part of the iceberg.

What we see
often is only a
fractional
part of
what it
really
is.

Finding Families.

- Tell How You Became a WWK Worker – Sabbatical.
- Look Beyond the obvious such as: visit both mother and father in jail if they happen to be there.
- Enlist help (CASA, attorney, deputize your foster parent)
- Always think of Fictive Kin (Show YGB Stats - **Six**)
- Always talk about the urgency of learning trauma informed parenting, even when, and especially if, one knows the youth they are coming forward for.

Case examples from Work with WWK.

- Ilyana, 17, Story – Using Mapping to lead to FFM and Sister's adoptive mom named Nancy.
- Jaheem, 14, Story - M/g/g/m – Developed Relationship – fear of unknown Foster Parent.
- Hunter, 17, Story – Summer Camp Best Friend Family
- Kennedy, 18, Story – Guitar Teacher at Church
- Jessica – RTC – Cousin – Grandpa Funeral

Case examples from Work with WWK.

- Audbry's, 16, Story – Group Home Manager
- Tammy's, 15, Story – Imprisoned Birthmom's poverty stricken best friend.
- Wilfredo's, 13, Story – Reframing Permanency as Therapeutic.
- “Failure”, 18, Story – Youth needed mental health residence as young adult. i) father's side, ii) child care

Questions

?

If there is time for a case
example exercise now
would be the time.

Why Do Kids even 18 and Over Need Lifelong permanent parents?

- Want to finish High School and Higher Education w/o the stress of a deadline.
- Want Grandparents for your Children.
- Want someone to walk down the aisle with.
- Want someone to throw them a housewarming party.
- To Celebrate significant life events like graduations
- Rely on in times of crisis (flat tire, hospitalizations, etc)
- Trusted person to talk to for advise any time of day.

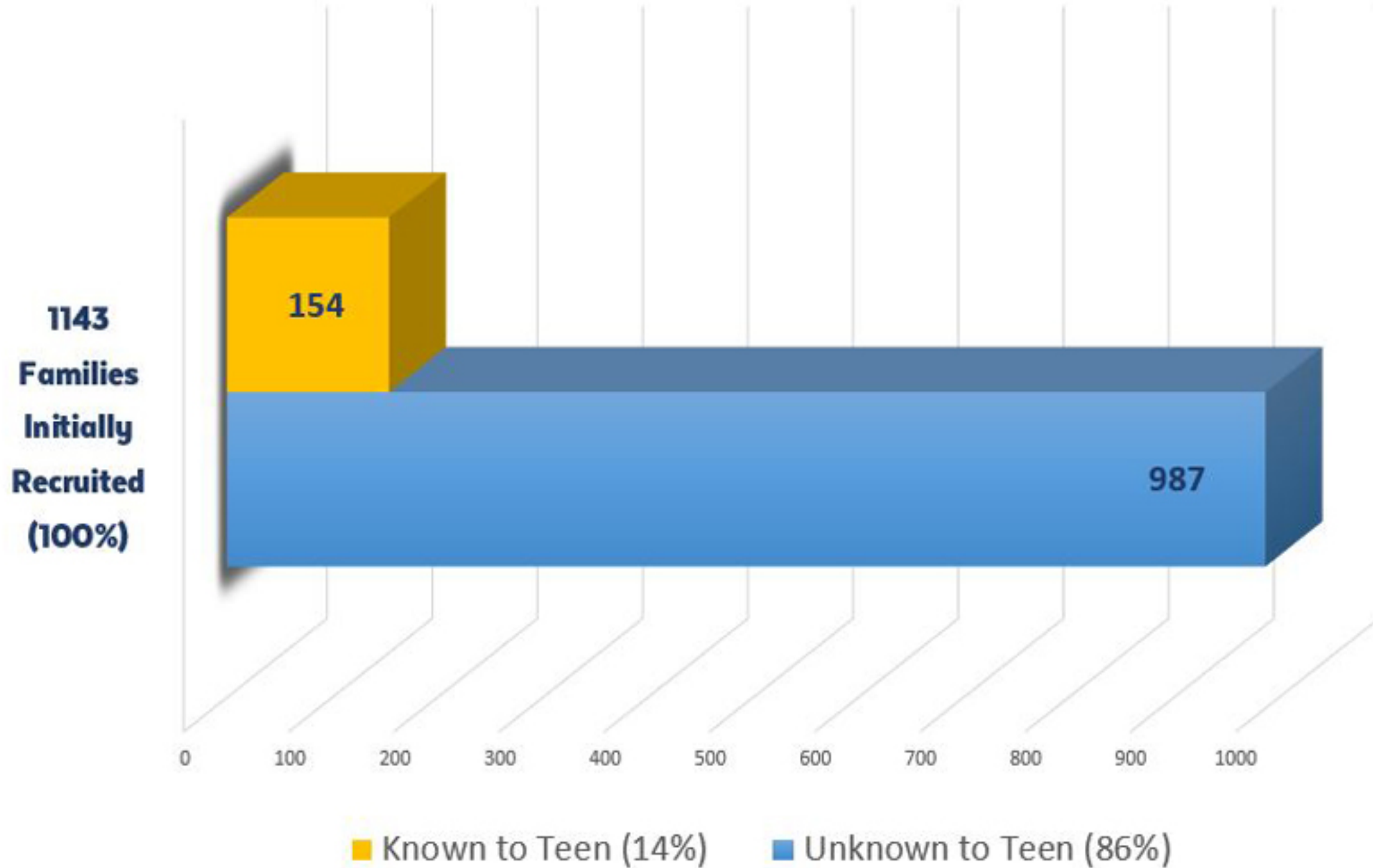
General Recruitment Vs Recruiting People Known To Youth

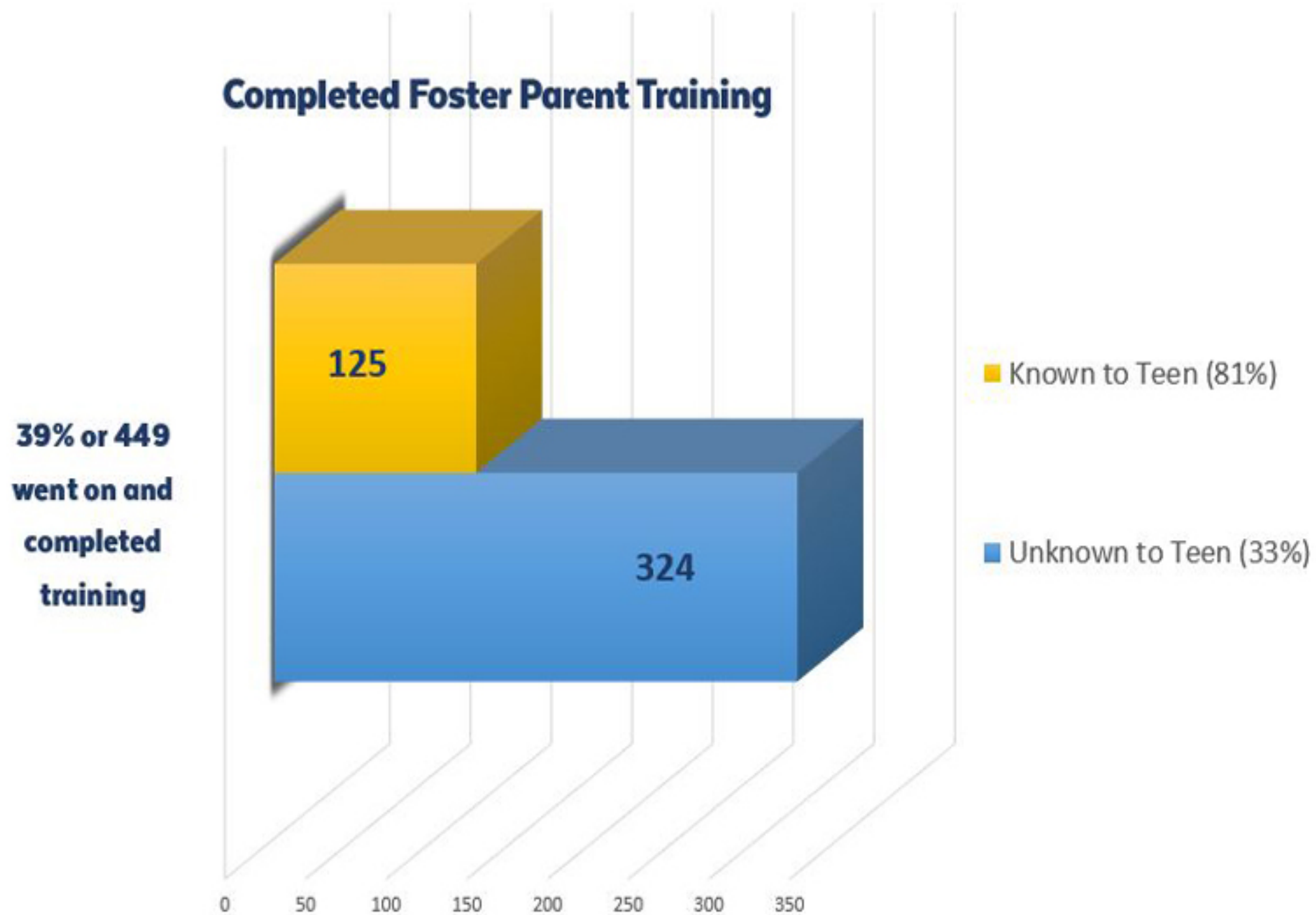
General Recruitment Vs Recruiting People Known To Youth

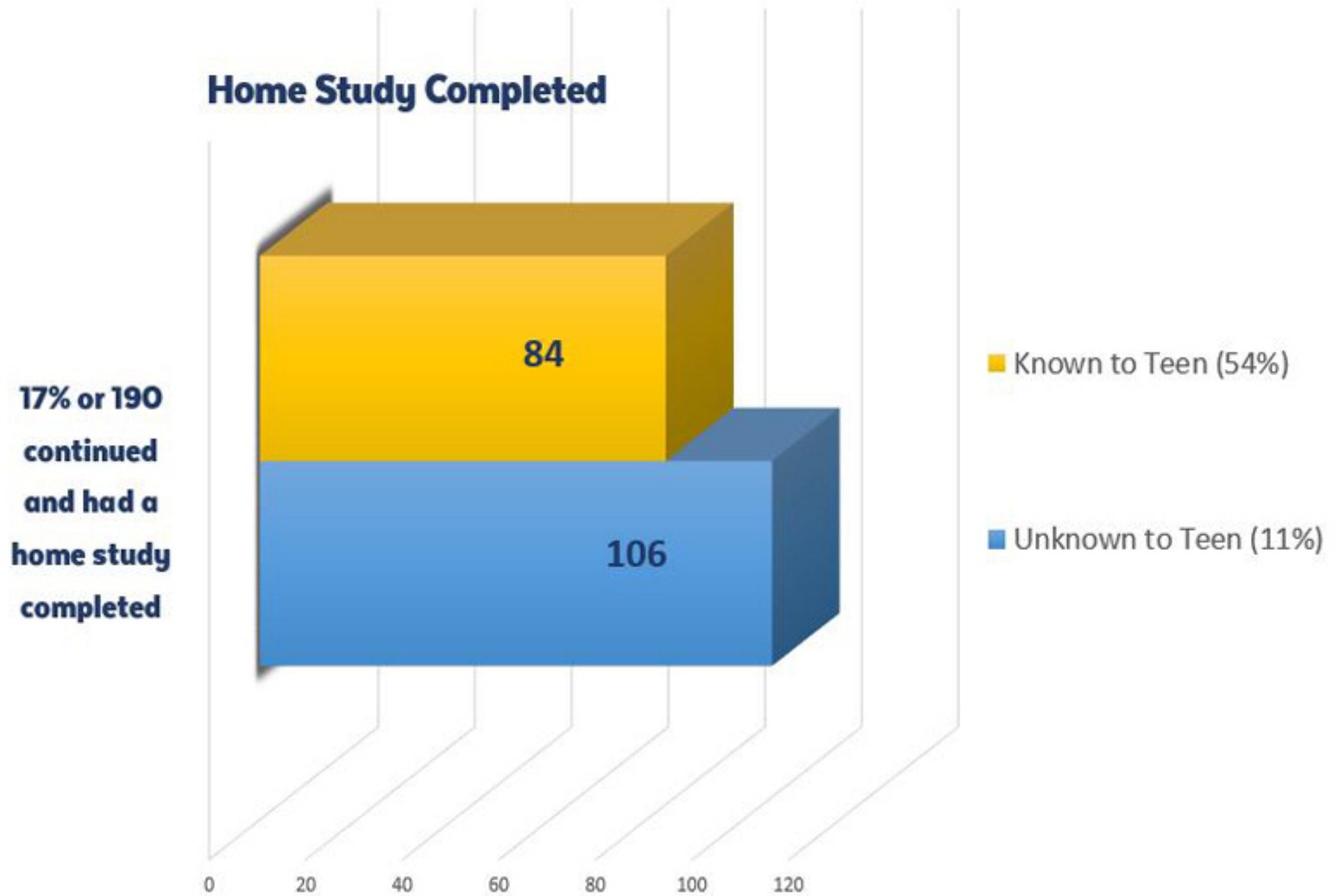
	# of Entrants	Completed Training	HS Done	Teen Placed	% HS plus Placement
TOTAL	1143	449 (39%)	190(17%)	120 (10.4%)	63%
Did not Know Teen	987 (86%)	324 (33%)	106 (11%)	37 (4%)	35%
Did Know The Teen	154 (14%)	125 (81%)	84(54%)	83 (53%)	99%

This information taken from article "An Examination of Theory and Promising Practice for Achieving Permanency For Teens Before They Age Out of Foster Care" by Rosemary J. Avery Published in Children and Youth Services Review 32 (2010) Page 406.

Total Number of Families Recruited

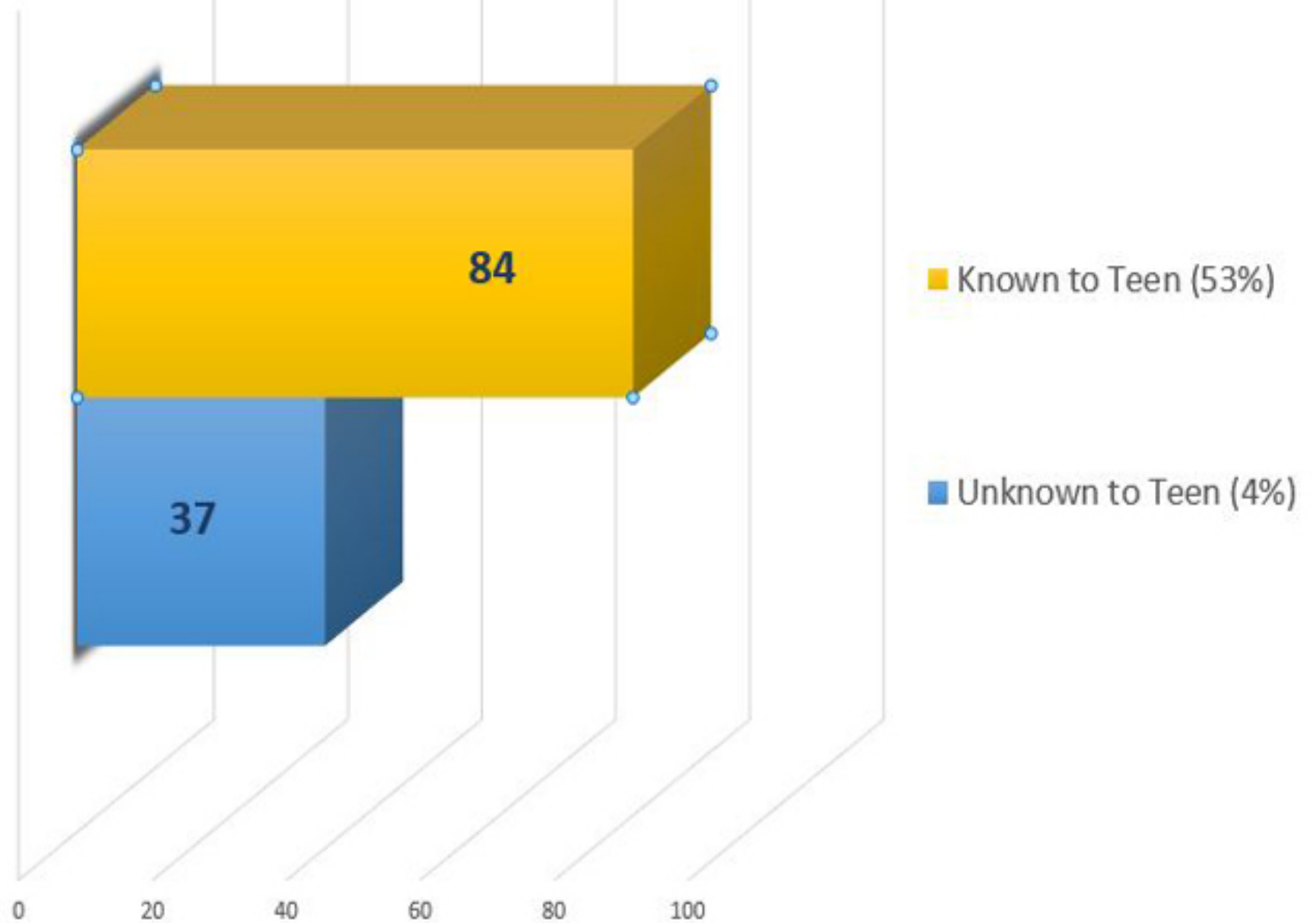




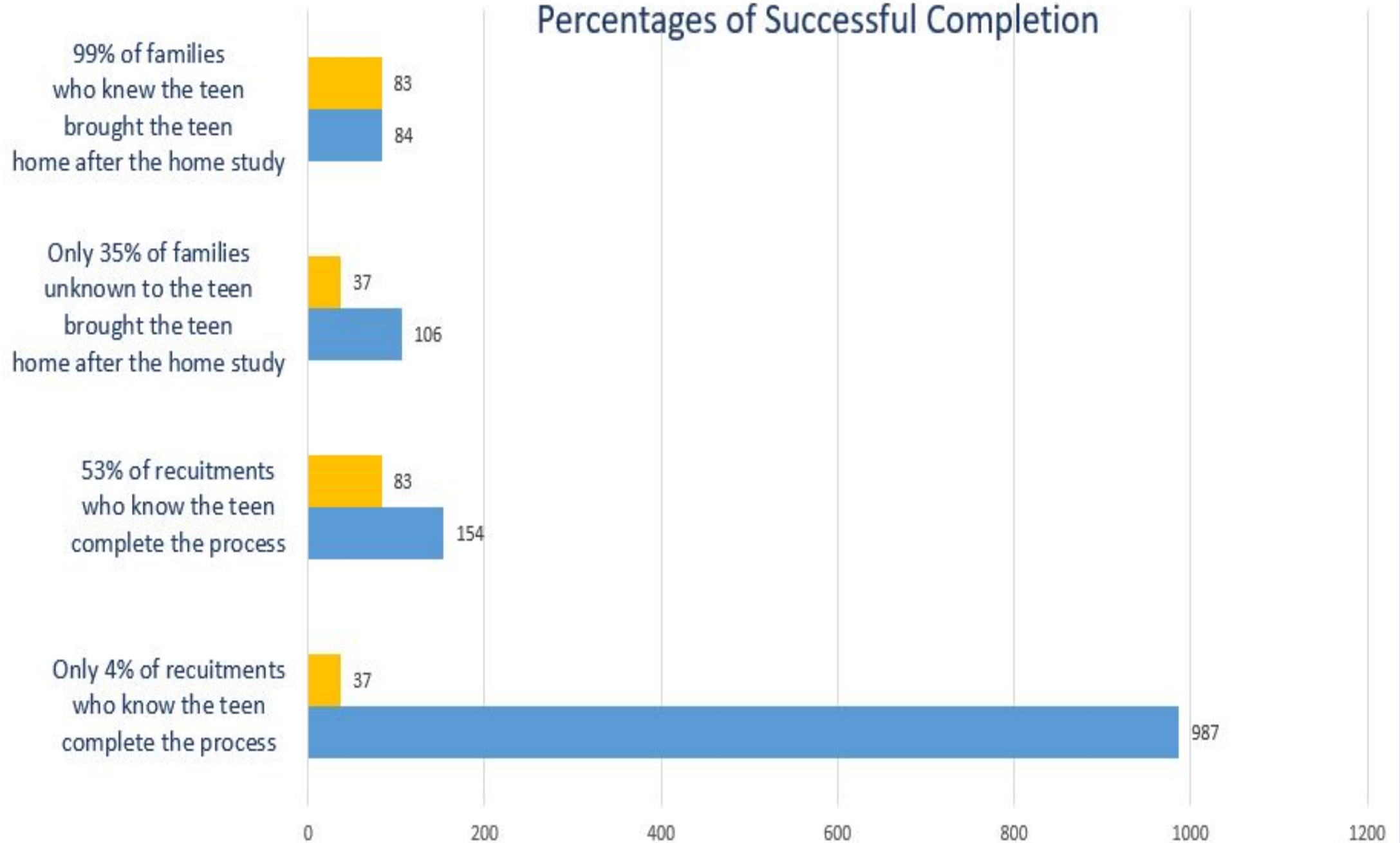


Sucessful Placement in Home

**10.4% or 120
sucessfully
brought the
teen home**



Percentages of Successful Completion



Questions

?

**Questions you can ask
to identify “now here”
families in your teen’s life**

1. Who do you know loves you?
2. What person or people do you feel most comfortable with?
3. If you had a problem at 2am in the morning who would you call?
4. Who do you call for advice or to just talk?
5. Who do you turn to when you have something to celebrate?
6. Who praises you and makes you feel good about yourself?
7. Who believes in you?
8. Who do you trust?
9. Who would you call if you were in trouble?
10. Are there any neighbors or someone from place of worship (if teen is religious) who you are close to?
11. Are there friends from school you are close to? Can we be in touch with their parents?
12. Did anyone ever babysit you (or your siblings) regularly when you were a kid?
13. Is there an adult in school or after-school (teacher, staff member, coach, employer, co-worker, etc.) who you feel close to?

- Questions prepared and developed by Virginia Sturgeon

1. Are there any foster parents you live with in the past who you'd like to live with again? How about other people who lived in a previous foster parents neighborhood? **Sometimes foster parents just wanted help and treatment.**
2. If you can choose, where would you live and who would you live with and why?
3. Can you name your three favorite adults?
4. Who has treated you with some kindness and compassion in your life?
5. Who might have a picture of you hanging on their living room or bedroom wall?
6. Do you have a cell phone or Facebook? If so, can you tell us a little about the people you program in your cell phone and your Facebook "friends"?
7. Do you have any photos of people in your life you can show me?
8. Can you tell me how we might be able to reach:
 - your aunts and uncles on your mother's side?
 - your aunts and uncles of your father's side?
 - Your grown-up cousins?
 - Your grandparents?
 - Your God parents?
 - Any older brothers and sisters who do not live with you?

NOW HERE FOCUSED

RECRUITMENT (cont.)

- 3) How to approach potential life cycle resources:
- Never ask, “will you give Johnny a permanent home?”
 - Always ask if they would consider learning more about having Johnny or Janey come to live with them permanently by selling them on a learning experience, such as asking them to take a trauma informed therapeutic parent preparation classes either here with Raise the Future or a local therapeutic foster care agency in your area.
 - Always be aware most people have no idea that:
 - o This youth they know and loves needs a permanent family.
 - o They are eligible to come forward to care (singles, one-bedrooms, etc.);
 - o They can afford to do this thanks to reimbursement
 - o There is pre & post-placement process available.
 - Staff adopting kids in its care.

We must all attempt to place children into families who know and care about the children.

The trauma of removal from a biological family can be lessened by placing the child with kin (fictive or biological) - **having a history with the person has importance, someone who the child knows and trusts.**

But please set the expectation they must take a trauma informed parenting class.

Questions

?

P.E.R.M.A.N.E.N.T

P. E. R. **M. A. N. E.** N. T.

**OTHER WORDS FOR
PERMANENCY – N😊T**

1) Mentor

2) Connection or Significant Connection

3) Volunteer or Paid Volunteer

4) Permanency Resource

**WHEN YOU TAKE THE PARENT
OUT OF PERMANENT YOU ARE
LEFT WITH M.N.E. MEANING**

- 1) **Mostly Not Enough vs. The Foundation of family that springboards every child's future.**
- 2) **Commitment Light vs Unconditional Commitment**
- 3) **Round Hole (Temporary) vs. Square Peg (Permanent)**
- 4) **“In Lieu Of” Family or “Family Like” vs. Real Family**
- 5) **The Only Answer -- Second Best Not an Option.**

“Think about this. In 1865 the federal government of the country freed 4 million Blacks. Without a dime, with no property, nearly all illiterate, they were let loose upon the land to wander. That’s what begins the aftermath of slavery.”

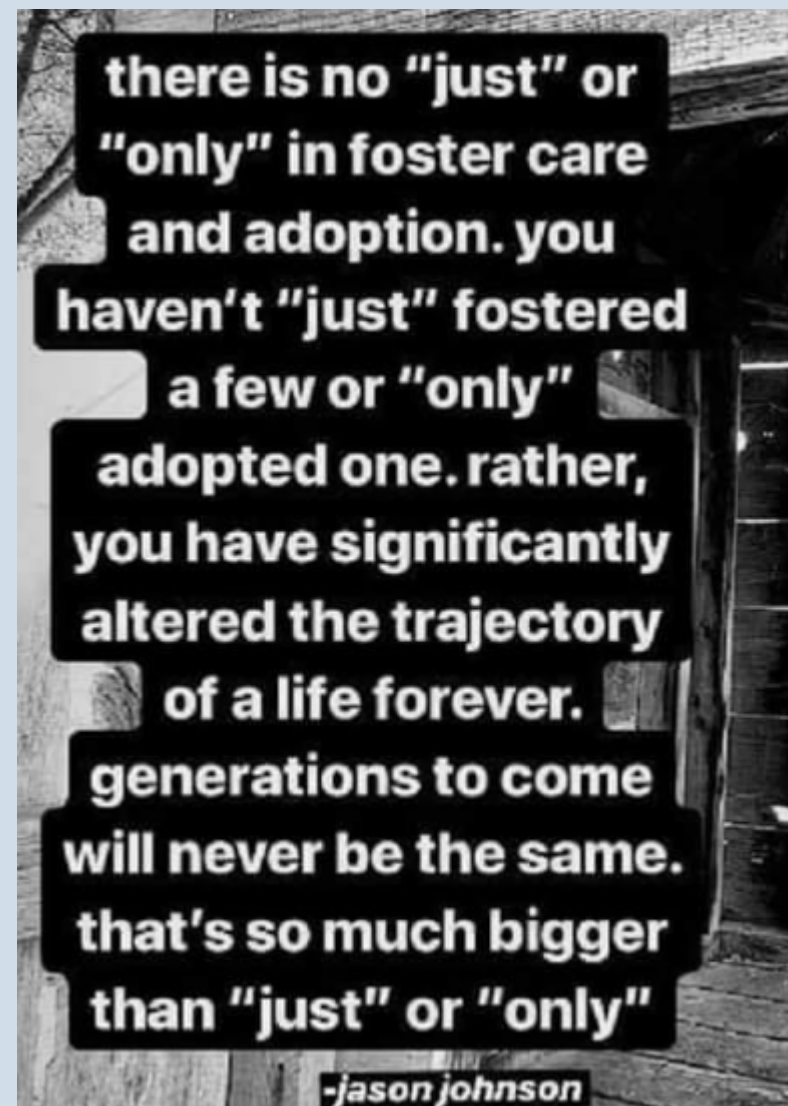
And here it is. 150 years later. And we do the exact same thing to tens of thousands of young adult and/or teen children (disproportionately African-American, Latino and LGBT) in our care every year.

We discharge them without a dime in their pockets, without any property, and rarely with a high school diploma so they might as well be illiterate. And without that unconditionally committed permanent parent in their corner they are simply being

“Let loose upon our land to wander.”

**We can absolutely do better for each
and every kid in our care.**

The “Follow The Love” Approach to Finding Permanent Homes for Teens



A Hundred Years From Now

... it will not matter what my bank account was, the sort of house I lived in, or the kind of car I drove ...

but the world may be different because I was important in the life of a child.

Pat@affcnny.org
718-570-5134

**Adoptive & Foster Family
Coalition of New York**



**“Be the change
you wish to see
in the World.”**

- Gandhi

Wendy's Wonderful Kids a signature program of the Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption at Klingberg Family Centers.

*Man's Mind, Once Stretched by a New Idea,
Never Regains its Original Dimensions*

Oliver Wendell Holmes

*We can only Hope you
will be inspired to learn
more after you think
about it.*

Questions

?

Thank you!

We're always here to help:

HelpLine: (888) 354-1342

Statewide. Free. 24/7.

Main Office: (646) 688-4321

Website: www.affcny.org

Welcome to:

There is no Safety or Well Being without
Permanency at the Exit End of the System

Pat ☺'Brien

H.A.P.P.Y Consultations

Healing **A**doptive & **P**ermanent **P**arents 4 **Y**outh

pat@affcny.org 1-718-570-5134

Producer & Co-Host of AFFCNY's

"After the Kids Move In" radio forum.

www.am1240wgbb.com

www.affcny.org

The “I Don’t Know” Youth

When the answer to the question
“Where is Johnny or Janey going to live
when he or she ages out of foster
care?” is “I don’t know.”

**Need Permanent
Parents**

**SQUARE PEG
TEENS**

**Provide Temporary
Family & Facility Foster
Care**

**ROUND HOLE
PROGRAMS**

Round Hole (Temporary) Families & Facilities

- 1) Residential Treatment Schools & Centers
- 2) Traditionally prepared foster parents
- 3) Group Homes
- 4) Therapeutic/Treatment foster homes – Non-permanent **Mary story**
- 5) Hospitals, Juvenile Justice, Drug Treatment Residential Settings.

***The absence
of an unconditionally committed parent
in the life of a child cannot be treated by
medication or therapy.***

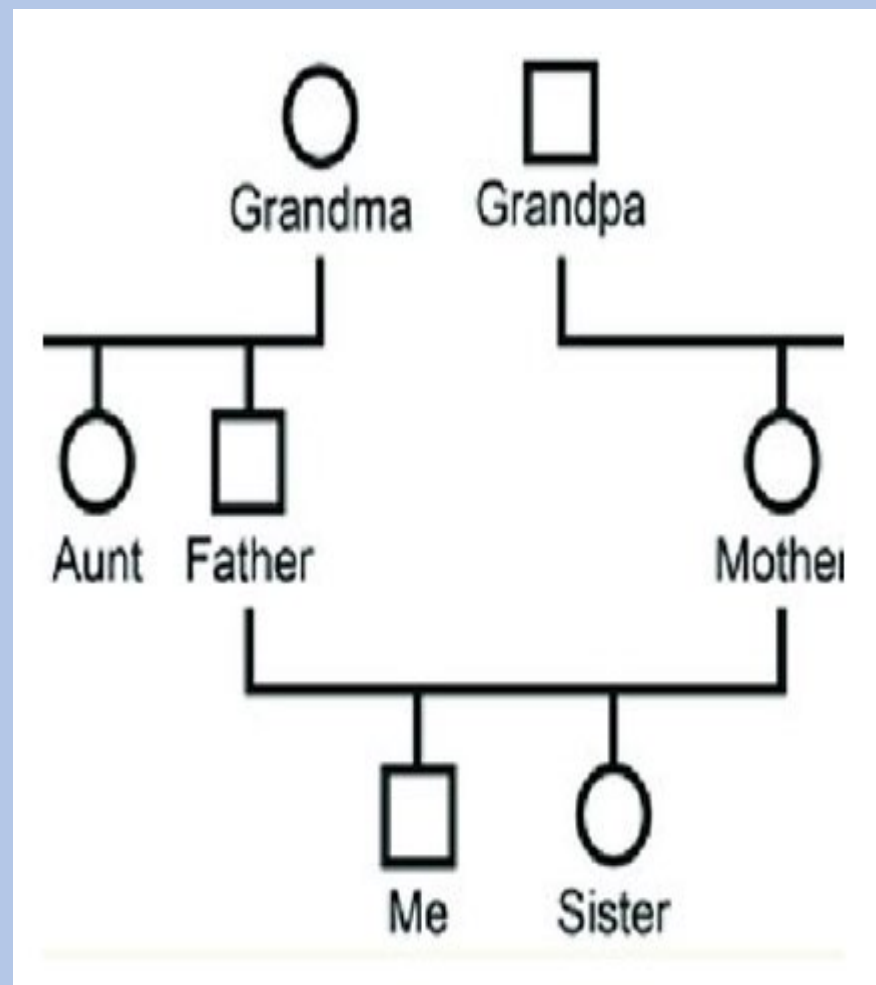
Kevin Campbell

Types of Lifetime Families Needed For Square Peg Youth Aging Out of Foster Care

- 1) Adoptive Families (Legally Adopting the Youth or Child)
- 2) APPLA Permanency Families (Morally Adopting the Youth)
- 3) Therapeutic Permanency Families
- 4) Maternity Permanency Families
- 5) LGBTQ Permanency Families
- 6) Adult Or Institutional Custodial Care Permanency Families

Tools for Permanency

Genogram



Mobility Mapping



A mobility mapping tool can serve as a guide in helping to gather critical information about safety and selecting a safe space for youth.

Mobility Mapping – Older Youth Example

DESTINATION	Have you been to these places in the last month? (y/n)	If needed, do you have permission to go? (y/n)	Alone	With Female Friends	With Family Members Only	With Male Friends	Other
Relatives' House							
Local Market							
Clothes Store/Tailor							
Health Center							
Youth/Community Center							
Religious Sites							
Recreational/sports venue							
Entertainment sites (cinema, theatre, music venue)							

(c) Population Council, 2003



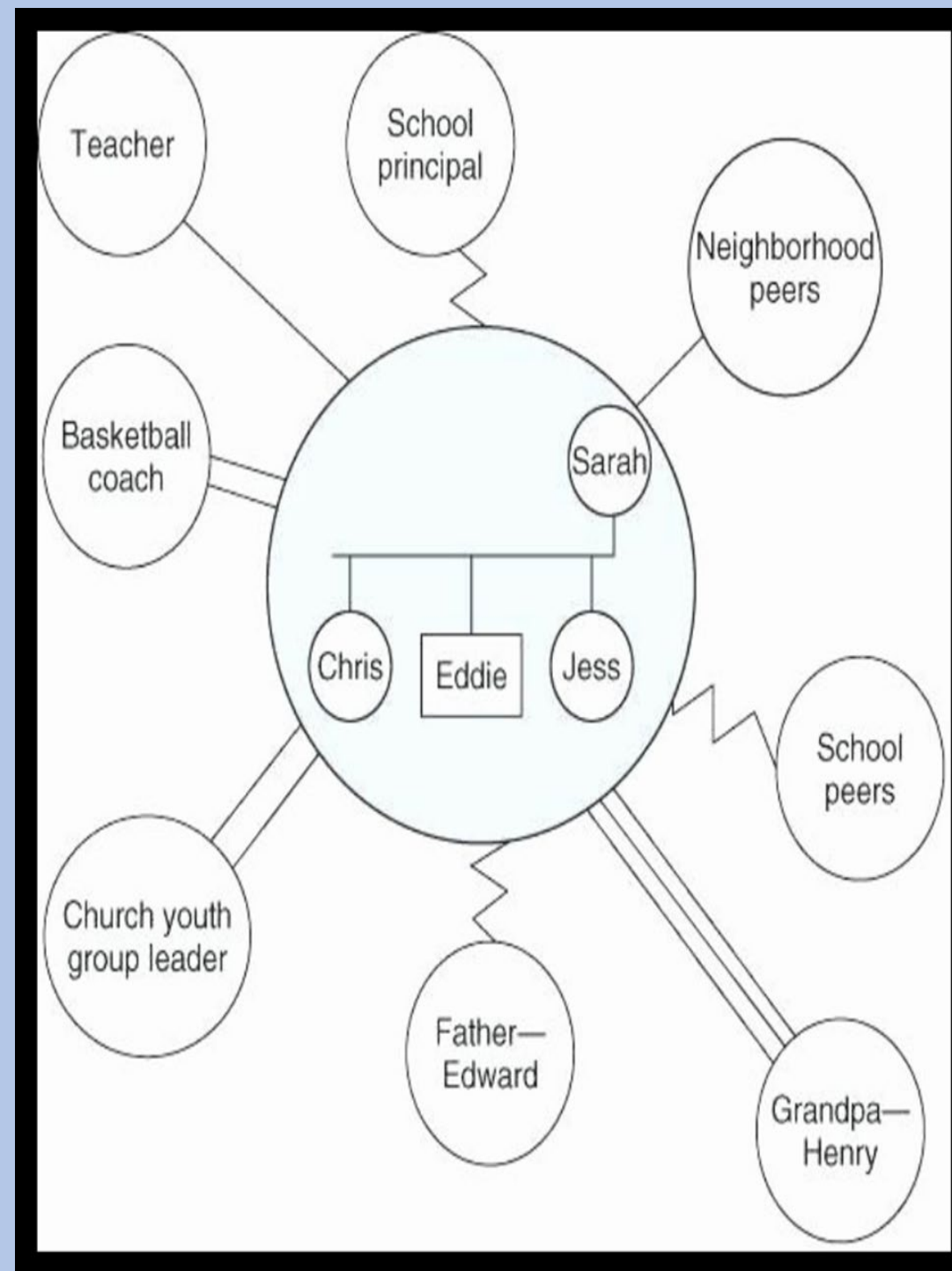
FRIENDS

EcoMap Model



ACTIVITIES

Eco Map Example



OBSTACLE

What we Think! Naysayers.

**If you think you can,
you can;**

**If you think you can't,
you can't;**

You're always right!

**If you believe a family is now here,
A family is now here;**

**If you believe a family in no where,
A family is no where;**

You will always be right!

I no longer believe there is a family for every child!

- ❖ In a city/tri-state area with
12 MILLION people
- ❖ A state with
19 MILLION people
- ❖ A country with
300 MILLION people
- ❖ And a world with
4 BILLION people...

There is not a family
for every child,
but an infinite # of families.

**There is not a family
for every child,
but an infinite # of families.**

**ONCE YOU BELIEVE,
75%
of the job of recruitment is done.**

Now for the slightly easier part!

**How can you find the first best family
For your “I don’t know” square peg teen,
youth or young adult?**