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Kathleen Dugan is a mother to 12 children — four daughters by birth and eight children who joined her family through adoption. Kathleen’s dream of adopting a child began when she was in high school and was volunteering at an orphanage. Aware of the plight of children placed in the public child welfare system, Kathleen knew that the longer children languished in foster care, the less likely they were to find permanent homes. Years later, when the time came to adopt a child, Kathleen and her husband, Mike, decided to reach out to an older child. “I wanted to embrace a child that I knew would not have a chance otherwise.” Over a short period of time, their family grew from four to 12.

Many of the children Kathleen and Mike adopted had long histories of abuse, neglect and trauma. As they grew, so did the emotional difficulties related to their pasts. Their behaviors and emotional problems became extremely challenging for the Dugans. Even so, Kathleen’s commitment was unwavering; in fact, it became a driving force. She vowed to do everything in her power to help each of her children grow to their fullest potential. At that time, Kathleen met Debbie Riley, and together, they established a parent support program for those who had adopted children with special needs. Kathleen agreed to volunteer, and that was the beginning of Kathleen Dugan’s philanthropic journey.

Kathleen believes that every child deserves a loving, permanent family, and that every child and family joined through adoption deserves qualified, adoption-competent mental health and family support services. In 1998, she approached Debbie Riley to help her create “a center” that would never tell families to institutionalize or return their children to foster care. With her own money, Kathleen established The Center for Adoption Support and Education, (C.A.S.E.). Shortly thereafter, she gifted several hundred thousand dollars to rent office space in Silver Spring, to pay the salaries of four full-time staff, and to buy everything from pens and pencils to furniture, books, and computers.

Twelve years later, C.A.S.E. is a nationally known non-profit, pre and post adoption family support center that provides adoption-competent counseling and therapy for foster and adopted children, teens, adults and their families as well as for expectant/birth parents and their families. C.A.S.E. also provides educational workshops (for parents and professionals) and adoption-sensitive books, publications and resources. Its services benefit children and families locally in Maryland, The District of Columbia, and Virginia, as well as nationally and internationally – reaching more than 400 families each year.
C.A.S.E. Mission

Provide a safe place for children, adults, and families of all foster and adoptive experiences to share their thoughts and feelings about adoption.

Promote the mental health of all families we serve through specialized counseling services.

Educate families, professionals, and the community about the unique joys and challenges of adoption.

Establish collaborative partnerships within the public and private sectors.

Participate in the national and international field of adoption study, research, and program development.

Who We Are

A non-profit organization founded in 1998

Founder: Kathy Dugan – mother of twelve (eight adopted from the child welfare system)

Focus of work: Helping foster and adopted children, teens, adults and families receive the support they need to thrive.

Completely independent, C.A.S.E. is unique because we are one of only several organizations that are not attached to an adoption placement agency.

Specialize in pre- and post-adoption support services, including counseling and consultation, training, education, publications, and advocacy.

Our staff is comprised of experienced, award-winning, and adoption-competent clinicians. We have a passion for ensuring the health and permanency of adoptive families.
Dear Friends,

Through some of the most economically challenging times, The Center for Adoption Support and Education (C.A.S.E.) rose to the challenge, overcoming fiscal obstacles to maintain its mission to strengthen the well-being of children and families from all adoptive experiences. The organization has not only continued to provide the high-quality service we are recognized for, but has made significant growth in both programming and geographic reach.

Through new partnerships and collaborations with other community non-profits and public agencies, 2009 was a year when C.A.S.E. expanded its services into the areas of school-based counseling and youth development programming. Additionally, through a federal appropriation supported by Senator Benjamin L. Cardin and Congressman Christopher Van Hollen, C.A.S.E. opened its new office in Frederick, Maryland. The funds, managed through the U.S. Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, have provided foster and adoptive families from the northern end of Montgomery County, Frederick County, and surrounding areas of Washington and Carroll Counties access to C.A.S.E. services.

In response to the growing need for services in Northern Virginia, a Virginia Advisory Council was formed, consisting of adoptive parents, professionals, and community advocates, who began their pursuit of funding for an office that would accommodate expanded clinical and educational services, more fully meeting the community need.

As C.A.S.E. continued to provide excellent clinical services and training at the local level, the national demand for our training continued to grow. In 2009, C.A.S.E. presented in 13 states, and internationally in Canada and England. And finally, CASE was pleased to begin the process of taking full advantage of today’s technology to bring our knowledge and wisdom to adoptive families around the world by launching the beginning of our webinar trainings – reaching some as far away as Puerto Rico and Hong Kong.

We are proud of the accomplishments that we have made this year, and we deeply appreciate the support and dedication of so many individuals, foundations, corporate partners and friends who recognize the value of our services. It is an honor to present The Center for Adoption Support and Education’s FY2009 Annual Report, which reflects the breadth of our reach and the impact we are making in the lives of those who have been touched by foster care and/or adoption.

With Sincere Gratitude,
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President, Board of Directors

Debbie B. Riley
Chief Executive Officer
Board of Directors

Founders
Michael and Kathleen Dugan
Laurel, MD

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Chief Financial Officer
1. Daisy, age seven, was adopted from the Philippines at the age of two, following two foster care placements. When Daisy was 5 years old, her parents sought psychiatric help because Daisy was pulling her hair out and having violent temper tantrums which involved throwing objects, screaming, and banging her head on the floor. The psychiatrist’s treatment plan directed Daisy’s parents to discipline her in a very strict, harsh manner. When this approach proved completely unhelpful, the psychiatrist recommended psychiatric in-patient hospitalization for 30-45 days. Unable to imagine putting a five year old in a hospital, Daisy’s parents decided to find another therapist and were referred to C.A.S.E.

“We were in such despair when we called C.A.S.E. We thought that no one could help our family. Right from the start, we knew we had found the right place”, said Daisy’s parents. “We were stunned that the therapist was willing to see us so quickly and accommodate our scheduling needs. The C.A.S.E. therapist quickly intervened to help us respond more appropriately and effectively to Daisy’s out of control behavior. She has also worked with Daisy to help her express her feelings about adoption and understand what makes her so angry. Within months, Daisy became much less angry and is now a happy, healthy, bright little girl. We feel so fortunate and so grateful for the help we have received. Because of C.A.S.E., we are a happy family.”

2. La Shawn was three years old when she came into foster care because of abuse and neglect. Ms. Jones, her foster mother, knew she needed guidance in order to parent this frightened, grieving child, and she called C.A.S.E. Working closely with the therapist to learn appropriate and effective parenting strategies, La Shawn’s tantrums and sleep difficulties began to lessen as her attachment to Ms. Jones grew. Two years later, Ms. Jones was able to adopt LaShawn. Ms. Jones came back to CASE to consult with her C.A.S.E. therapist around concerns related to sharing difficult birth family history with LaShawn. Ms. Jones notes, “It is such a comfort to me to know that C.A.S.E. is there whenever I need advice or support. I deeply value all that I have learned from C.A.S.E. and I know I have more to learn.”

3. Mary and Jim’s dream to become a family came true when they adopted two children. Annie was an infant and Tom was placed from foster care at the age of eight. When Annie was 14 and Tom was 10, Mary and Jim turned to C.A.S.E. to assist them with the complexities surrounding having two children with very different adoption “stories”. Both children have contact with their birth families, and these unique, important relationships present many challenges. Mary and Jim say they were “so underprepared for this job! C.A.S.E. helped us to understand the hearts of our children and their feelings for their birth families, which helped us to expand our concept of family. Because of C.A.S.E., we were able to open ourselves to new ideas and become much more flexible. We feel much more confident as parents.”
Launched Adoption Competency Certificate Course

The Center for Adoption Support and Education’s Clinical Competent Adoption Training (TAC) is a training that has been developed over a three-year period to provide licensed mental health professionals with the knowledge, skills and values they need to provide adoption competent mental health services. This standardized, manualized training curriculum has been developed in collaboration with national experts in the field of child welfare, adoption, and mental health. This training is designed to provide professionals in the mental health and child welfare fields with the clinical knowledge and skills that they need to effectively serve the adoption kinship network. The long term goals of TAC are to enable prospective adoptive parents, adopted individuals, adoptive families and kinship families to have greater access to adoption competent mental health professionals; to provide adoptive families with the mental health services they need to be stable and healthy; to reduce rates of adoption disruption and dissolution; and to strengthen the post-adoption services offered by the mental health and child welfare systems nationwide.

TAC is a 13-session competency-based training program for licensed mental health clinicians who provide pre- and post-adoption services to prospective adoptive parents, birth parents, adopted persons, and adoptive and kinship families. Eleven sessions are classroom-based; one session is an online course; and the final session provides participants with an opportunity to integrate learning. Each session combines information sharing, written handouts and resources, and experiential learning, including case studies, role plays, and introspective work.

W.I.S.E. Up!sm in England!

The popularity of C.A.S.E.’s W.I.S.E. Up!sm program for parents and children has grown to such an extent that C.A.S.E. was invited to present W.I.S.E. Up!sm and other workshops for OASIS, an adoptive parent organization in England. C.A.S.E. CEO, Debbie Riley and therapists, Sean Delehant and Mari Itzkowitz spent two consecutive weeks in the spring of 2009, training first in London and then in Birmingham. While Debbie taught W.I.S.E. Up!sm to the parents and addressed their important questions and concerns about raising adopted children, Sean and Mari enjoyed talking with their children about the many questions and comments they get asked about adoption. Debbie, Sean and Mari were overwhelmed by the gratitude of this group, hungry for the knowledge that C.A.S.E. was there to share.
W.I.S.E. Up! Train-the-Trainer

To increase access to W.I.S.E. Up!sm, a nationally acclaimed empowerment program that C.A.S.E. developed for children and teens to respond to questions and comments about adoption, C.A.S.E. launched the W.I.S.E. Up!sm Train-the-Trainer program. This initiative provides certification to professionals and organizations across the country to teach W.I.S.E. Up!sm in their home states. Participating states include Connecticut, Illinois, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin, as well as Canada.

C.A.S.E. Provides School-based Services in Baltimore County

In 2009, with a grant from the Maryland State Department of Education, Baltimore County Public Schools (BCPS) partnered with C.A.S.E. to provide counseling and case management for students who are living in foster care, kinship care, or who are adopted; direct support services for families of these students; and professional development and publications for BCPS staff. This program allows C.A.S.E. to reach families in need who may have difficulty accessing community-based services.

Kids Adoption Network (KAN) Conference was replicated in Kenosha, Wisconsin

Jockey Being Family, the corporate citizenship initiative of Jockey Corporation brings the Kids Adoption Network Conference and Carnival to Kenosha, Wisconsin.

In May 2009, Debbie Riley, Valerie Kunsman, and Ellen Singer traveled to Kenosha, Wisconsin to replicate the Kids Adoption Network Conference and Carnival that is held in the Washington, DC, metropolitan area in November of each year, in celebration of National Adoption Month. Through the generosity of Debra Waller and Jockey Being Family, C.A.S.E. partnered with Adoption Resources of Wisconsin staff to present the conference which was held at Jockey’s headquarters. Debbie’s keynote was titled, “Adoption Through the Eyes of Children”, and Debbie and Ellen taught W.I.S.E. Up! to two groups of parents, divided by the ages of their children. Under Valerie’s guidance, ARC staff was trained to teach W.I.S.E. Up! to children in first through seventh grades. The children and “tweens” also enjoyed special entertainment and fun carnival games at the culmination of the conference.
Major Accomplishments in 2009 (continued)

Services expanded to include Youth Development Programming with our year long Leadership, Empowerment, Action Program (LEAP)

The Center for Adoption Support and Education was the proud recipient of the first TeamUp grant, provided in 2009 by The Jim and Carol Travick Foundation. TeamUp is a funding initiative that involves Montgomery County – based nonprofit organizations collaborating to meet the needs of the middle school youth population. C.A.S.E. is the team leader and works with its partners, Interages, The Metropolitan Center for the Visual Arts, Through the Kitchen Door, and in-kind contributors known as “secondary partners”, which include The Montgomery County Department of Recreation; The Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services; The Collaboration Council for Children, Youth, and Families; and a number of private and nonprofit organizations.

The project, called Leadership Empowerment and Action Program (LEAP), serves middle school youth who have been adopted or are in foster care. It provides a year-round, comprehensive, youth development, leadership empowerment and educational support program for 20 middle school youth who were adopted or are in foster care. The program includes a family education component. Program participants build life skills in communication, leadership, nutritional diet planning, cooking, photography, and dance. Program staff creates a safe environment to foster group discussion around the experiences related to foster care and adoption.

New office opened in Frederick, Maryland

Thanks to the support given by Senator Cardin and Congressman Van Hollen, C.A.S.E. secured federal funds to expand its services in the state of Maryland, allowing the agency to open a Frederick, Maryland office in November 2009. The office is staffed by one full-time therapist who provides the entire array of C.A.S.E. services including adoption competent counseling and training.

Kathleen Dugan, Founder and Board Member of CASE, Named One of America’s Local Heroes

On October 28, 2009, C.A.S.E. Founder Kathleen Dugan was presented with the Bank of America Local Hero Award. The award is given each year to five individuals in the Washington, DC region who champion causes vital to their communities and inspire others to get involved. Ms. Dugan donated her $5,000 award to C.A.S.E.
Statistics and Numbers Served

Provided clinical service to 430 clients

**Adoption Status**
- 58% of the clients were adopted at the time of service
- 19% of the clients were pre-adopt at the time of service
- 12% of the clients were Not Applicable b/c they were parents not children
- 8% of the clients were in foster care at the time of service
- 3% unknown

**Region**
- 77% of clients lived in MD
- 17% lived in VA
- 5% lived in DC
- 1% did not live in MD, VA, or DC

**“Type” of Adoption**
- 37% were adopted internationally
- 30% were adopted from public child welfare
- 16% do not know or are not formally adopted yet
- 13% were adopted from a private adoption agency
- 4% were adopted by kin (family member)

**Age of Clients Served**
- 77% children (18 yrs. and below)
- 11% adoptive parents
- 4% adult adoptees
- 4% other
- 3% prospective parents
- 1% birth parents
COUNSELING SERVICES

Total: 3972 sessions

- 2139 family sessions
- 1646 individual sessions
- 164 group sessions
- 23 consultations

TRAINING

Reaching over 4,000 parents, professionals, and youth

- California
- Connecticut
- Georgia
- Illinois
- Kansas
- Massachusetts
- Maryland
- Minnesota
- New Jersey
- New York
- Virginia
- Washington, DC
- Wisconsin

Canada

England
Financial Position

Consolidated Statement of Activities for FY09
A BIG THANK YOU to all of our Supporters

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Adoptive Family Preservation Virginia State Grant
Anne Arundel County Department of Social Services
Arlington County Department of Family Services
District of Columbia, Child and Family Services
Howard County Department of Social Services
Maryland State of Education, Division of Special Education/Early Intervention Services
Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services, Child Welfare Services
Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services, Community Services
US Department of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention

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