

## *The Center for Community Partnerships in Child Welfare*

On behalf of The Center for Community Partnerships in Child Welfare of the Center for the Study of Social Policy, FowlerHoffman provides communications technical assistance to four diverse community collaboratives (located in Cedar Rapids, Jacksonville, Louisville and St. Louis) on the highly-sensitive issue of child abuse and neglect. The collaboratives aim to build community support for a collaborative, community-based model of child protection. Utilizing the firm's knowledge of grassroots organizing and community-based institutions, FowlerHoffman works in each community to build their communications capacity. Key to achieving this realization is to make those involved at the site understand that communications is a strategic tool. FowlerHoffman's efforts include helping the sites identify key target audiences within each community and using focus group research findings to develop and refine program messages. The firm has worked with each site's communications team to create a set of site-specific communications strategies to be incorporated into sites' Strategic Plans, and has also provided media advocacy training.

In addition to communications capacity building, FowlerHoffman works in concert with each site to increase broad-based and visible community support for child protection reform efforts, helping them to establish key themes for their local partnerships, design outreach strategies for communications, and produce materials. FowlerHoffman not only helped the sites begin this work, but also assisted in uncovering themes and messages that would resonate with key audiences to promote the collaboratives' program and policy agenda, as well as engage communities in support of community-based child protection strategies. Three of the sites have held visible public launches of their Partnerships with media in attendance; all have successfully identified new spokespeople among professionals, parents and neighborhood residents.

Through these efforts, FowlerHoffman and the sites have been successful in moving public dialogue on approaches to child protection to include discussion of reform and a community-based, collaborative approach.

Utilizing feedback and lessons learned from the pilot sites, the project has moved toward a new phase, during which FowlerHoffman will help to spread this innovative model of community child protection into new neighborhoods, cities and states.