



FOSTERING OUR FUTURE
Our Journey

2016-2018 Proof of Concept Report

FOSTERING OUR FUTURE

OUR JOURNEY: introduction to faith-community based innovation

Fostering Our Future (FOF) has completed a two-year, two county proof of concept phase for with Grace Landing, Inc. in Osceola and Orange Counties, Florida we are now ready to go to scale. Over these two years FOF has shown that with its professionally managed, volunteer driven, community-based family wrap-around programs, that it can attract and retain quality foster families at a fraction of the cost of professionally run child placement agencies and/or case management companies.

From 2016 to 2018 Fostering Our Future engaged 12 churches and certified 75 dedicated family wraparound volunteers. In that period FOF added 17 public/private quality foster homes and served 52 foster and aged-out children. Four foster children were adopted. Since inception, there is still a 100% foster parent retention rate with zero cases of substantiated child maltreatment. All of this was achieved *at no cost to the state of Florida* nor the local Lead Agency, Community Based Care of Central Florida. The entire proof of concept period was implemented with a staff of two full-time employees; one full-time career child welfare professional and a local social impact entrepreneur serving as founder and executive director.

Research-Based to Evidence-Based Program

The FOF Model was informed by and adapted from the work of FaithBridge Foster Care's Community of Care[®] Model in Atlanta, Georgia. It was adapted to Central Florida by FaithBridge founder Bill R. Hancock, who served as president and CEO of Faithbridge from 2006 to 2016 (faithbridgefostercare.org). He is widely considered a thought leader in the field of community-based, church-led, volunteer-driven, child welfare practice from a Christian worldview. This Community of Care[®] Model has supportive data that stretches over a decade of data collection from 2007 to 2018 and has been shown to be an effective, professionally managed volunteer wraparound model for recruitment and retention of foster parents.

How It Works: One Model - Three Integrated Strategies

The FOF Central Florida model is driven by three integrated service delivery strategies: 1.) The Wraparound Model; 2.) Four-Phase 17 Step Implementation Plan; and 3.) The KPI Scorecard

1.) Wraparound Service Model for Families

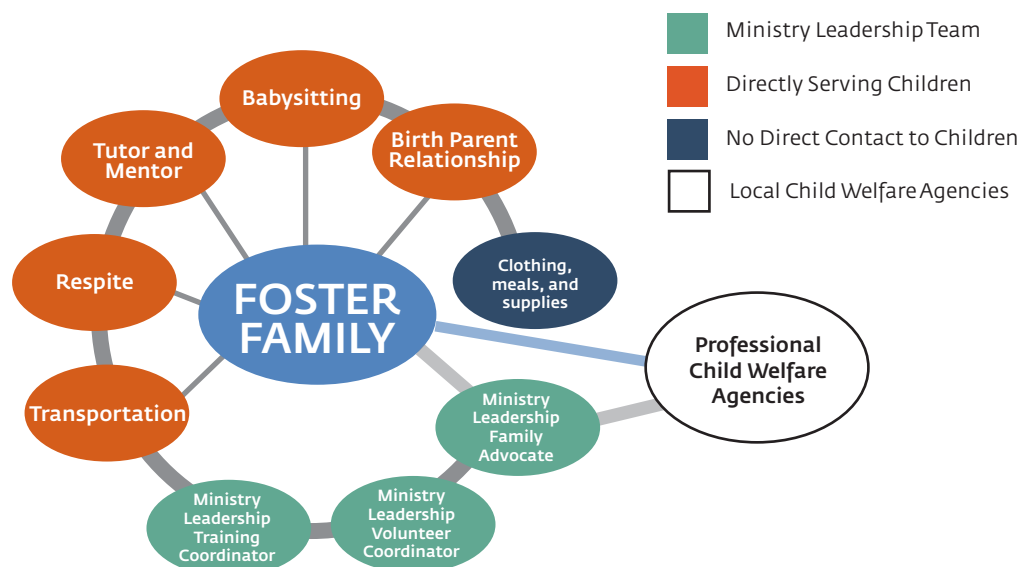
The first strategy is developing wraparound services through professionally managed faith community-based volunteer mobilization. FOF recruits churches and trains and equips them to recruit families to foster, and church members to wraparound then as mentors, volunteers, babysitting caregivers, suppliers of meals and a variety of sought after services foster families need to be successful.

The “3-3-3-6” (3 Foster Families, 3 Respite Families, 3-Family Advocates, 6- Wraparound Family Support Volunteers (Volunteers) strategy helps quantify the scope of ministry for a church partner. Each strategic church partner recruits three (3) foster families, three (3) respite families (3) family

advocates, and six (6) family wraparound team volunteers annually. The three respite families, family advocates and six wraparound volunteers are professionally trained and intentionally integrated into the local Florida Lead Agency system of care and its mission to “protect and inspire every child very day. They are assigned and dedicated to serve their families on their foster care journey.

In the second year, as the ministry matures, the “Ministry Leadership Team” continues to add foster families and family support team members and family advocates to their foster care ministry year-over-year. Some families are recruited to foster, and others will support those who foster. Everyone will do something to assure that every child has a safe, stable, and loving Christian family as they walk through a very hard place in their life.

Ministry Model



Professionally managed wraparound support for birth families and foster families is critical to the success of helping vulnerable families and children in every community. The role of family support is not secondary to child welfare work, but essential to safety, permanency, and well-being of vulnerable children and families to succeed.

2.) 4-Phase, 17-Step Implementation Plan

The second service-delivery strategy is the 4x17 Implementation Plan, an annual business planning and management process. It structures a series

of phases and steps for the local church to achieve maximum success based on the decade of evidence that was gathered at FaithBridge. It provides the church-led foster care leadership team to predictably move from startup to scale over a specified period of time. The Plan encompasses the intentional application of attitudes, knowledge, systems, processes, and tools to achieve maximum success in implanting best practice for responding to the local foster care need through mobilizing and equipping church volunteers.

PHASE 1	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3
Pastoral Endorsement	Gain Lead Pastoral Endorsement	Assign Pastoral Oversight	Appoint Foster Care Ministry Advocate

PHASE 2	Step 4	Step 5	Step 6	Step 7	Step 8
Team Development	Recruit 2 Ministry Leaders; One Training Event Coordinator and One Family Support Coordinator to work alongside the Ministry Team Leader.	Ministry Team Attend "FOF Connecting Families Leadership Bootcamp"	Present & Gain Pastoral Approval for Annual Ministry Plan	Setup church software for Volunteer/small group Management	Implement Church Communication/Social Media Plan

PHASE 3	Step 9	Step 10	Step 11	Step 12
Church Launch	Launch Foster Care Ministry Awareness Campaign	Host FOF Connecting Families Orientation	Foster Families attend agency training complete approval process	Family Wraparound Support Volunteers attend FOF Connecting Families Wraparound Support Training

PHASE 4	Step 13	Step 14	Step 15	Step 16	Step 17
Team Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Social Media posts Church media updates Church database Attend Community Group Meetings 	Care Families and Wraparound Volunteers connect monthly in small group support environments	Coordinate Care Family Support Plans; respite schedule, clothes, food, services to families	Attend Qtly FOF Ministry Leader's Online Community Conversations and complete Qtly Plan To Actual Progress Report	Attend Annual FOF Connecting Families Conference

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3.) Scorecard: Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

The third strategy is a Scorecard, a specific set of metrics that identifies what is measured and how the data is collected. The Scorecard is a set of quantifiable measures that represent our Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). KPIs are metrics used to track and assess the status of specific service delivery processes, management systems, and tools to help the executive management and operational teams of the church to understand how they are doing compared to their annual objectives and goals. These KPIs provide the teams with timely, actionable information to make informed decisions in a dynamic human service work environment. KPIs equip leaders and managers to set achievable goals with a reasonable sense of accuracy and manage expectations.

The FOF Scorecard KPIs were informed by The FaithBridge Community of Care®. The FaithBridge practice model provided sufficient data to support the assertion that a professionally run volunteer wraparound service can significantly increase the quality of foster care placements by attracting and retaining quality foster parents, and create

a sustainable capacity through a research-based building, training, and support methodology (see www.faithbridgefostercare.org). In a ten-year period, from 2008 to 2018, this Atlanta, Georgia-based program introduced an estimated 10,000 individuals to the US/Georgia foster care need, formally engaged 71 churches, and certified and professionally managed 1302 volunteers to serve in the program.

In that period, FaithBridge licensed and retained 554 foster homes for a total of 1114 foster care placements. This represents 249,313 days of family care for foster children. A total of 492 children were reunited with their families and 189 were adopted, and when last reported in 2017 there were zero (0) substantiated cases of maltreatment.

In 2013, over 150 current and former Christian foster families were asked to complete an online survey to help better understand their experiences, needs, and perceptions about the volunteer support they received as foster parents. The qualitative data from this survey further provides evidence for the effectiveness of the Model (survey available upon request).

This model was initially managed through a professional child placing agency (FaithBridge) but has now shown similar positive measurable outcomes when applied within a community-based, volunteer driven wraparound format at a fraction of the cost of the professional service delivery format.

THE FOSTERING OUR FUTURE DIFFERENCE

10 Key Differentiators

1. Scalable and sustainable system of foster family support called the Fostering Our Future Ministry Model providing unparalleled stability and foster parent retention.
2. Reduce workload for Florida Department of Children and Families and Lead Agencies while increasing placement stability and quality permanency outcomes.
3. Accessible 24/7 foster family support from FOF professional and para-professional child welfare team members.
4. Built-in, consistent and relationally enhanced FOF trained respite care.
5. Built-in, consistent and relationally enhanced FOF trained in-home child and out-of-home child care and babysitting.
6. Web-based professional foster parent training and coaching.
7. Reduce the number of moves for children in care.
8. Advocate for all children in care through local, state, and national public forums.
9. Full-time, paid professional for volunteer family support and church ministry team leadership development.
10. Accessible and ongoing research-based competency foster parent and family support team training.

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COMMUNITY MOBILIZATION AND CAPACITY OUTCOMES

- 12 Strategic Church Partners in 2 counties...growing in Central FL.
- 52 children served in first 27 months of operation
- Sibling groups living together represent approximately 67% of the children we serve
- 9 approved foster families/11 host families for 18-23 year old youth
- Fostering Our Future has a 100% foster family retention rate at 27 months

FOSTER CHILDREN STABILITY AND PERMANENCY OUTCOMES

- Average length of stay is approximately 279 days
- Positive Permanency for children in care – data not available at time of report
- Percentage of Placement Disruptions for period – 14%
- Percentage of children reunited with biological family within one year – 32%
- Percentage of children whose parental rights are terminated have resulted in adoption by Fostering Our Future family – 10.7%
- Total number of children entering the child welfare system are now in permanent families through kinship care, guardianship or adoption – 4

FOSTER CARE QUALITY AND CHILD WELL-BEING OUTCOME

- 0 substantiated maltreatment in FOF care since inception
- 100% of our foster families have access to volunteer support through their FOF Foster care Ministry Community
- 100% of our foster families received help from their FOF family support community in the past 60 days

Reporting Period 1 October 2016 through 31 December 2018

The COMPACT Arkansas Model

In 2017 the Arkansas Department of Human Services for the first time contracted with private service agencies to recruit, train, prepare, and support foster parents for the formal licensing process that the State retained. COMPACT Family Services, which had a residential presence in the State, tendered for such a contract and used the FaithBridge/FOF research and expertise to inform its implementation process.

The contract was awarded on July 1, 2017 and the organization began from a “dead start” with the appointment of a single contract coordinator. The strategy involved:

1. Building relationships with the faith-based community
2. Recruiting local churches to embrace the challenge of caring for the foster children of their county
3. Training local church leaders to manage the awareness and recruitment strategy within their local church and deploying Family Advocates to liaise between foster parents and the volunteer services of the community
4. Recruiting and training foster parents, respite families and volunteers
5. Providing New Generation PRIDE training for potential foster parents
6. Doing Safe Home Studies for approved foster families
7. Submitting the documentation and reports to the State for the formal licensing of the parents
8. Coordinating the placement of children in approved homes
9. Providing wrap-around support to foster families through the ministry of the Family Advocates
10. Quarterly inspections and professional, 24-hour on-call support to foster families

Although implementation of this strategy took several months to the point of the first formal placement of a foster child, the systematic repetition of the process creates a funnel for potential future placements. New churches are recruited through a peer-to-peer process within the ecclesiastical fraternity. As more volunteers become involved, and casual volunteers and respite families interact with foster children at church, they are more readily recruited to become foster parents themselves. Once firmly established in the faith community, the funnel will consistently and reliably produce the number of foster parents that are needed in a community.

The following table traces the growth of the number of bed-nights in this community and faith-based approach. The first contracted bed-nights were only achieved after six months but growth has been exponential after the important phase of laying the foundations and obtaining community buy-in:

MONTH	BED-NIGHTS BILLED
January 2018	3
February 2018	28
March 2018	74
April 2018	159
May 2018	188
June 2018	180
July 2018	226
August 2018	232
September 2018	210
October 2018	383
November 2018	508
December 2018	537
January 2019	595
TOTAL	3323

By the end of October there were 16 placements in 11 open homes. Foster placements in a further 6 homes are pending giving a total of 20 placements. It is projected that 30 children will be placed by the end of the year, a mere 18 months since the dead start of the program.

One Model – Two Additional Service Delivery Applications for the Future

This wraparound Model that enjoys significant empirical support for recruitment and stability measures to improve quality foster care placements, has now also been adapted to serve two other applications. The faith-community wraparound has been found to be as easily deployed to serve kinship placements and biological family placements. It is envisaged that the Kinship Navigator Program will develop viable kinship placement possibilities in the community and then provide a variety of support services to help grandparents and other family members to access the services that are available for their service. The purpose is to achieve permanency plans OUT of foster care.

The faith-community wraparound can also be deployed when a family is in danger of statutory removal of their children to assist, provide support, and monitor the safety of the children on behalf of the case workers.

In summary:

1. The original wraparound model has been shown to increase stability IN foster care
2. The model has been adapted to DIVERT children FROM foster care into kinship placements
3. The model can now also be adapted to PREVENT children going INTO care by deploying the faith community to assist in maintaining the child in their biological family setting

Conclusion

FOF has now finished its proof of concept phase of operation and the concept has been replicated in a second state (Arkansas). The next phase is to push to scale in Florida in partnership with Florida's lead agencies. Working within our faith-based community, we will deliver our proven foster family and Kinship family recruitment, training, and wraparound support services. As FOF grows to scale, our unique contribution will increase quality foster care and Kinship care placements and help to assure permanency of Florida's children in loving and stable families.

Working with our national partners, FOF will share Key Performance Indicators with State of Florida Department Of Children and Families, Florida Children and Families Advocates, and Florida lead agencies to increase the body of knowledge of evidence-based results. Our desire is to align with lead agencies and Florida's State Plan to promote the highest level of collaboration, communication and cooperation with faith-based service providers, church leaders, and influencers as an integral part of the Florida State Plan.

Biography

Bill Hancock’s passion and vision is to change the way America does foster care—with the local church as the solution. With more than 30 years of child welfare and church leadership experience, Bill possesses a unique understanding of foster care, public policy, church culture, and social entrepreneurship. His career crosses disciplines with prior leadership roles in both churches and foster care agencies—and this diverse experience led him to co-found FaithBridge Foster Care, a child placing agency that partners with local churches and communities to address their local foster care crisis through the FaithBridge Community of CareSM.

Fostering Our Future is a research-based, integrated delivery system that creates local foster family capacity with built-in stability and quality through unparalleled volunteer support, competency-based curricula and certification. Fostering Our Future not only works to create localized foster care ministries in partnership with churches, but also has a national scope and reach through partnerships, research and consulting projects with national Christian denominations, state and private foster care providers. Fostering Our Future is involved in system transformation and thought leadership activities with organizations ranging from the COMPACT Children and Family Services, CompaCARE, Grace Landing, Inc., Christian Alliance for Orphans, Child Welfare League of America and more.





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