

## 2009 News Archive

- December, 2009 - Nearly ninety students were scheduled to graduate from the Fall Session of the Truancy Court Program. Graduates demonstrated at least a 75 percent reduction in unexcused absences and/or tardies along with improved academic performance and classroom behavior.
- December 7th - December 10th, 2009 - The University of Baltimore School of Law Center for Families, Children and the Courts, in partnership with the Association of Family Conciliation Courts, sponsored two two-day workshops. Dr. Joan Kelly presented *Parenting Coordination: Helping High Conflict Parents Resolve Disputes* and Ms. Mindy Mitnick presented *Advanced Issues in Child Custody: The Child's Perspective*.
- November 30, 2009 - Truancy Court Program (TCP) Manager Leigh Dalton spoke about the TCP at a town hall meeting in Severn, Maryland convened by "Beyond the Boundaries," a group dedicated to removing barriers faced by low-income and minority people in Anne Arundel County.
- October - November, 2009 - CFCC hosted Family Fun Nights in every school participating in the Truancy Court Program. The University of Baltimore School of Law Family Law Association assisted with several events.
- October 30, 2009 - The University of Baltimore School of Law Women's Bar Association sponsored a Fall 2009 "Read Aloud" for children participating in the Truancy Court Program at Harlem Park Elementary/Middle School.
- September 21, 2009 - CFCC hosted an informational session for members of the University of Baltimore community, including faculty, administration, and staff, interested to serve as volunteers for the Truancy Court Program. Volunteers act as mentors and tutors, among other possibilities. In addition, volunteers donate goods and services for the student rewards aspect of the program.
- September 2, 2009 - CFCC hosted a stakeholders' meeting for the Anne Arundel County Truancy Court Program at Anne Arundel Community College. CFCC explained the TCP to representatives from the judicial and legal communities, service providers, schools, and agencies in an effort to form partnerships with agencies, groups, and organizations interested in school attendance in Anne Arundel County.
- July 27, 2009 - The *Daily Record* published in its issue an article about the TCP's expansion to elementary and middle schools throughout Maryland. The article, **"TUB Law Gets \$500K in Federal Funds to Expand Program,"** featured interviews with CFCC faculty and staff and focused on the TCP's replication as a result of the \$500,000 Omnibus Appropriations Act federal grant for the TCP. According to the principal of a TCP school quoted in the article, the TCP "was one of the most organized and structured programs that has performed with my students. Children and parents realize we're all here

to support them.”

- August 20, 2009 - CFCC presented a workshop on the Truancy Court Program (TCP) process to teams of schools selected for participation in the 2009-2010 TCP. The workshop provided technical assistance and guidance on establishing the TCP, selecting appropriate students, collecting necessary data and information, and collaborating with CFCC.
- August 13, 2009 - Professor Barbara Babb, CFCC Director, presented a program on unified family courts (UFCs) to the Louisiana judiciary in New Orleans. The presentation educated participants on a UFC's structure, theoretical underpinnings, advantages, concerns, assessment, and many other issues.
- June 18, 2009 - CFCC presented a workshop for all Baltimore City elementary, elementary/middle, and middle school principals and assistant principals. The workshop, "A Truancy Court Program for Baltimore City: Positive Results for Children, Families, Schools, and Communities," provided an overview of the Truancy Court Program planned for the 2009-2010 school year and explained the application process for principals interested to establish the program in their schools.
- June 2, 2009 - Professor Barbara Babb gave a presentation about Unified Family Courts at the Family Division of the Circuit Court for Baltimore City to six visiting Egyptian family court judges. The judges' visit was sponsored by the U.S. Agency for International Development and was part of a two-week study visit by the judges to various courts, including Miami, the District of Columbia and Baltimore.
- May 22, 2009 - CFCC presented a workshop on the Truancy Court Program (TCP) at the Maryland Association of Pupil Personnel Spring Conference. The workshop provided an overview of the TCP and information about CFCC's new initiative to replicate the TCP in Baltimore, Anne Arundel, Prince George's, and Montgomery Counties and to expand the program in Baltimore City. The presentation generated great enthusiasm and excitement among participants, who were interested to identify ways in which they could establish the TCP in their schools.
- May 19, 2009 - The Hon. Catherine Curran O'Malley, First Lady of Maryland and Associate Judge of the District Court for Baltimore City, hosted a reception at the Government House in Annapolis for the 2008-2009 Truancy Court Program graduates and their families. This is the third such reception for TCP graduates hosted by Judge O'Malley, who has served as a volunteer TCP judge since its inception in 2004. Over 100 students, family members, school administrators, and faculty attended the reception, which featured the presentation by Judge O'Malley of congratulatory certificates to each TCP graduate in attendance.
- April 25, 2009 - Professor Barbara A. Babb, CFCC's Director, and Gloria Danziger, CFCC's Senior Fellow, presented a workshop on substance abuse and addiction during the American Bar Association Family Law Section's Spring Continuing Legal Education

conference in Baltimore, Maryland. The workshop, which also included addiction experts, Dr. Stuart Tiegel and Dr. Bernadette Solounias, focused on the medical consequences of addiction and their impact on families and children, the effectiveness of treatment, and ways in which attorneys and family courts can use this information to develop a comprehensive plan that addresses both the legal and non-legal aspects of a family law case involving an addictive illness.

- April 2, 2009 - The first annual Urban Child Symposium, "Solving the Dropout Crisis: Getting the Other Half to Attend and Achieve," took place in the School of Law Moot Court Room. The symposium featured a series of panel discussions devoted to issues affecting the education of inner-city children. Panelists discussed the challenges facing urban children, the issues presented by chronic truancy, and the programs and methods that enhance a child's likelihood to complete high school. Jonathan Kozol, author of the groundbreaking *Savage Inequalities: Children in America's Schools*, was the keynote speaker. For further information, including Webcasts of the day's panel presentations, please visit our Web page on the first **Urban Child Symposium**.
- March 27-April 2, 2009 - *The Baltimore Times* published in its edition an article about the partnership between the **Friends School of Baltimore** and CFCC's **Truancy Court Program**. Friends School students collected 100 backpacks and school supplies for CFCC's Truancy Court Program students. The article reported on the discussion between Friends School students and those from Steuart Hill Academic Academy, where a backpack exchange took place. According to the article, Friends School students wanted to convey that the main social injustice in today's society, in their view, is a lack of education.
- March 24, 2009 - CFCC hosted the opening of the Truancy Court Program's (TCP) **"Kids and Cameras"** art exhibit at the University of Baltimore School of Law Gallery of Art. CFCC implemented the project at Waverly Middle School in 2008 as an after-school program for TCP and other middle school students. The ten-week program included classes on the history of photography, how to use photography to express certain emotions and themes, and basic photography skills. Students received cameras which they used to capture images that had particular meaning for them, ranging from nature to "my school." Each student selected six photographs for professional matting and framing. The photographs are on display in the Dean's Corridor in the John and Frances Angelos Law Center at 1415 Maryland Avenue, Baltimore.
- CFCC welcomed Sharon Rubinstein, a new Senior Fellow who began in September. She is working on the full range of CFCC activities, including the Truancy Court Project, Unified Family Court reform, and CFCC outreach and communications. Sharon came to CFCC from the Public Justice Center and previously from Advocates for Children and Youth.
- CFCC welcomed Andrea Bento, who joined CFCC as a consultant for the Truancy Court Program (TCP) and a writer. A graduate of Harvard Law School with a particular interest in children's issues, she is responsible for designing, writing, and editing a CFCC

blog; coordinating several TCP sessions; and writing articles for a TCP e-newsletter, among other activities.

- Thirty Baltimore City public schools applied to CFCC to establish a Truancy Court Program (TCP) after attending a June 20 workshop on the TCP. The eight schools selected for the 2009-2010 school year include: City Springs Elementary/Middle School, Harlem Park Elementary/Middle School, Hazelwood Elementary/Middle School, Steuart Hill Academic Academy Middle, Winston Middle School, Frederick Douglas High School (9th grade), Barclay Elementary Middle School, and Highlandtown Elementary/Middle School. There was a training session for the TCP teams from all selected schools on Thursday, August 20, from 8:30 am until 12 noon in the University of Baltimore Student Center.
- CFCC's Truancy Court Program (TCP) welcomed Arion Alston, who serves as a TCP mentor, and Jessica Stowell, who is a TCP coordinator. They work at Steuart Hill Academic Academy and Highlandtown Elementary/Middle School in Baltimore and in Brooklyn Park and Lindale Middle Schools in Anne Arundel County. Mr. Alston was most recently an assistant professor of acting and theater at Loyola University. Ms. Stowell worked for four years as an English teacher at Thurgood Marshall High School in Baltimore.