

Establishing and Sustaining Community Partnerships for Outreach and Continuity

Brandi Black Thacker: We're here to talk about not only establishing but sustaining community partnerships for outreach and continuity, and as already mentioned, specifically in service of families experiencing homelessness. This is the third webinar in a series of three, so we're going to review that here in just a little bit.

Right away, I have so many great folks for you guys to be introduced to. I want to just get right to it. If you didn't recognize the country accent already [Laughing] this is Brandi Black Thacker. I'm so glad to be back with you guys. I'm the director of T/TA and collaboration for the National Center on Parent, Family, and Community Engagement. And I'm with one of my most favorite folks and if you've ever met her, I'm sure yours too, Dr. Jennifer Olson, and she is going to say hello as well.

Jennifer Olson: Hello, everybody, this is Jennifer Olson, and I'm a senior training specialist at the National Center on Parent, Family, Community Engagement, and it's a mutual admiration society. For me, Brandi, I hold you in such high esteem, and I'm so excited to be part of this webinar today with our incredible colleagues from Hawaii and going to share all their marvelous, marvelous suggestions for us. Larae, how about you? You want to introduce yourself?

Larae Balag: Hi, I'm Larae Balag. I am located on Maui, in the state of Hawaii. I am the director for Early Childhood Education for Maui Family Support Services, and this is my first webinar. I'm excited, a little nervous, so I hope to provide you folks with resources or some ideas to strengthen your programs as well. And I'm here with two of my amazing colleagues. Ben?

Ben Naki: Hi, I'm Ben Naki. I'm with Parents and Children Together on Oahu. I'm the vice president of Early Childhood Education Programs that oversee all of our Early Head Start and Head Start programs, and also, this is my first webinar as a presenter. I'm excited, and just so you guys know, I'm a little under the weather here, so this is not my normal voice. Chris?

Chris Jackson: Aloha everyone. This is Chris Jackson. I'm the headset collaboration director for the state of Hawaii, and I get to work with Ben and Larae, and another four grantees in Hawaii. It's such a privilege to be able to do that, and we're all very excited to be able to share some things that we're doing here in Hawaii and hope that you will take some good ideas back with you after today's presentation. Brandi?

Brandi: Thank you so much, Chris. I also have the distinct honor and privilege to bring into the space some of my most favorite folks, and we have the honor to know them as our federal leaders. I'm going to kick it off with, you know her, you love her, the one and only, Kiersten Beigel from the Office of Head Start everybody.

Kiersten Beigel: [Laughing] Oh, Brandi. Hi everybody. Welcome. I'm so excited to be here also, I work at the Central Office of Office of Head Start, the lead for the office on all things family related, and I get to work with the National Center on Parents, Family, and Community Engagement. I'm going to be hanging out here and participating in the background. Look

forward to hearing from our grantee partners. Also look forward to hanging out with some of my federal friends. Speaking of my federal friends.

Rachel Gannon: Hello everyone. My name is Rachel Gannon, and I've been working with Kiersten, and her team, on some of our efforts this year on bringing more information to you all on families experiencing homelessness and how to set you guys up for success when working with this population. We are going to continue our efforts into the new year. So continue to look for some fun things from us. And I'm a program specialist in Region 9, and I'm going to introduce my colleague who's in the room with me. Here you are Bernie.

Bernard Lagud: Hi everybody, this is Bernie Lagud, program specialist in Region 9. I have programs assigned in Hawaii, and graciously Larae and Ben have graciously accepted our offer to share their presentations today, and also in Los Angeles, so good morning and good afternoon to everyone. Brandi?

Brandi: Thank you so much Bernie, Rachel, and Kiersten. I can't tell you guys what it means for all of us when you spend time with us in this dedicated space, and certainly the opportunities that we've had a really focused on families experiencing homelessness as a priority with your guidance of leadership, it's – it's really been an incredible experience. And I think that today is just going to add to all of that. So I just wanted to review our event because I want to check in. How many of you, I feel like drumroll moments, have been here for all three. We started in October, and we brought to you in the first part of this ...

We started this conversation with related performance standards and regulations that we could really lean into, to make sure that we're using all of the resources that we have in our fingertips, specifically through those standards to make sure we have the flexibility necessary to honor families where they are, and certainly their readiness. And the second conversation that we had was about just that, conversations with families, how to have that in a respectful way with no judgment, no stigma. We came up with a bunch of strategies together about, like a before, during, and after.

You guys really shared a lot of richness with each other in this community, and we heard from a lot of you that that part, specifically, was super valuable. And today, where we're going is really about connection to community. And if I'm being honest, you guys know I've grown up in Head Start, I think we do this better than anybody else. And I also think that we have been getting more sophisticated with the ways in which we apply our existing community partnerships in ways that we're expanding them in outside of the box ways to really not only celebrate with our families in the spaces where that's happening, but also to wrap around them in the timing that they deserve as they run into resources that are needed.

So I just wanted to say thank you guys so much for all that good, hard work that you've done, not only in this arena with the focus on families experiencing homelessness, but how you do what you do, with and for everybody. And one other quick thing – welcome for those of you that it's your first one. We're so glad you're here. You came right on time. And if you want to go back to the last two, they're archived on the ECLKC as well. So no worries, we'll catch you up as you're ready. And also we're going to be hanging out after the webinar.

These times of course, as you can see, are Eastern time, so after we finish the webinar at around 4:30, we're going to hang out for at least 15 minutes after just in case you guys have extra questions. I mean, this is a cool opportunity not only to learn from each other as part of this Think Tank, but also to learn from the guests that you just met on the line. With that, there are a couple of things that we want to offer. You guys know how we do this. We offer these learning objectives because we built this experience before we met you, we will follow your interest.

So where you have questions, we're going to pause there. But these are a few highlights that we proposed for our time together today. Making sure that we have an increased knowledge of outreach efforts, and this is not only to identify families experiencing homelessness, but to make sure that we're reaching out to them and that, let me just be honest, that we are as accessible as we need to be. A whole big part of this is understanding and really thoughtfully applying that McKinney Vento act definition.

And for those of you that are joining us for the first time, not only can you hear a little bit more about that in the first two, but we have a whole set of modules that are dedicated to that specific topic. And we'll show you where to find that at the end. We also want to pull apart what I call the multi-layered opportunity [Laughing] from how we go into this space at the local level, the state level, and certainly how that outreach can be connected across each of those. And then you guys are going to hear, from our panelists today, some incredible practices for how they coordinated outreach.

And I have to say to you guys, one of my favorite parts is not only what they've done that's been incredibly successful and impactful, but there's real along the way, right? There are probably challenges. There are stumbling blocks, there are hurdles, but what I love about our community so much is that we persevere. We keep working at it, and we figure out ways to get around through and under those in service of what we're, you know, here to do, in service to families and their little ones. With that notion, you guys know how we come into this conversation.

We have made a very intentional decision to really use people first language because we want to make sure that no matter what situation any of us, or our families, found themselves in, that we defined them first as the human being that they are, and not by the situation that they are experiencing. It's a situation, it doesn't define them and they're being, so we want to make sure you'll hear us very intentional saying families experiencing homelessness instead of homeless family.

And what we found is that really honors where folks are in their journey and God knows many of you have come up with other language that feels to fit like in your communities, for instance, like you'll hear some of this later, I'm thinking of Larae, some language, for instance, that folks have chosen – like houseless, or in transition, or living situation, for instance. So we just wanted to start there and make sure that we all hold hands together in honoring the family culture, language, their experience, and where they are in their journey. I always feel vulnerable saying that to you guys, because I feel like it's part of our bones.

[Laughing]

But we want to make sure that it's given voice in the context of this conversation for sure. So before I turn it over to Bernie to give us some specific context of some Region 9 information, specifically some Hawaii-focused data, here's what we know, and one of the many reasons why we prioritize this population as – as one of intense focus as usual, right? I mean, we know that the number of little ones experiencing homelessness has reached a historic high. You guys can see these statistics on the screen here.

More than a million children under the age of 6 were identified as experiencing homelessness. Several children who experience homelessness have more developmental challenges than their peers. And you can see what those are: developmental health, emotional, behavioral. And we know how homelessness can create barriers for them to participate, not only in our early childhood arena, but even for the children that we're supporting into transitions for the LEA, you can imagine if you don't have a home address right this moment, there's a lot of complication that could happen in the way of making sure that families have what they need to get the required documentation to get, you know, enrolled in, specific ways that are required by not only us, but also our community partners in our school system of the receiving schools.

So with all that before it turns to Bernie, the last thing that I would like to say to you guys is we always want to start these conversations with the acknowledgement of the real of what's happening. But the thing that I appreciate so much about our communities across this country is that we leave these conversations with inspiration and hope, because given this information, what we've been able to do is acknowledge and hold that, but also lean into the resilience pieces. And you guys have been building roadways and pathways for and with families as they're ready, you know, to travel a journey that they have in front of them. So I just want to thank you, again, for doing that.

I am ever proud to be part of Head Start, and that's one of the thousand reasons why. With that, I'm going to pause, believe it or not, [Laughing] and I'm going to look over to Bernie to give us some information specific for Region 9.

Bernard: Thanks, Brandi. I just wanted to share a little bit of PIR data. This is program information report that our grantees share with us every year. And so this data shows that just over 3,600 more children from families experiencing homeless were served nationwide last year, compared to the year prior. So a pretty significant jump, and we're – we're excited to see that. In Region 9, we saw 882 more children served with our Head Start programs.

So given the increase in families experiencing homelessness and with Dr. Bergeron's Home at Head Start campaign last year, we're hoping to see a larger increase in the number of families served next year, as programs strengthen their outreach, their recruitment, community partnerships, and intake processes. And in Hawaii, you can see that we've got a steady 6% going. We did see that big jump from 2015 to 2016. And even with the reductions, enrollment reductions, and also conversions from Head Start to Early Head Start, we were able to maintain that six, that steady 6% over the last few years, so. I can now turn it over to Chris Jackson with the state collab in Hawaii who will give us a little bit more information about the Hawaii State data.

Chris: Thanks Bernie. In addition to the data slides that Bernie just shared, we wanted to also provide a few more slides to help paint a picture of the landscape in Hawaii, as context for the homelessness situation in our state. Hawaii's distinction as having the highest rate of homelessness per capita in the nation until just recently, is evidence of the disproportionate percentage of individuals and families experiencing homelessness here. Given that we are a small island state, with a population of less than 2 million individuals statewide, New York has now surpassed Hawaii as having, the highest rate of homelessness per capita in the nation. It's also well known that the high cost of living, and you've all heard this before, in Hawaii contributes to the issue of homelessness.

A 2015 report issued by our Aloha United Way, describes the economic challenges faced by hardworking Hawaii families and individuals. ALICE families, A-L-I-C-E, which is an acronym for Asset Limited Income Constrained and Employed, have incomes above the poverty – federal poverty level – but not high enough to afford a basic household budget. That includes housing, child care, food, transportation, and health care. Thirty seven percent of what Hawaii families are ALICE Families, and another 11% of Hawaii's families, live below the federal poverty level. This means that in total, 48% of Hawaii's households are ALICE families and below.

The same at AWE report also shows that the household survival budget in Hawaii is about \$28,000 for single adults, which translates to earning about \$14 an hour, and \$72,000 for a family of four, which translates to earning \$36 an hour for one parent, or \$18 an hour if both parents work. And in Hawaii, our minimum wage is currently at \$10.10 an hour. The cost of housing also contributes to the problem. As you can see in the slide here, median rent for a one bedroom is \$1,600 a month, and \$2,100 for a two bedroom.

The median sale price for a single-family home was \$789,000 in 2019. So when we talk about affordable housing, it's – it's really a goal that is very unattainable for a lot of our families. A recent poll in March, this is not – this is not on the slide, but a recent poll in March indicated that some 45% of Hawaii voters live in homes where someone is considering moving away or has actually already left the islands, typically because of the cost of living here. High construction costs are further factor with materials having to be imported and a skilled labor force shortage. So as an island state situated in the Pacific Ocean, Hawaii has its shares of natural disasters, which can result in loss of homes.

And while we don't have tornados or cyclones, we do experience hurricanes and tropical storms, which we saw in heavy rains and flooding, as well as occasional volcanic eruptions as occurred in 2018, which destroyed 700 Hawaii island homes and displaced many more families, which is a little bit unique to our state, I'm sure. Requests from our Aloha United Way's 211 referral line indicates that the number one request was for food assistance, followed by housing and rental assistance. And let's see ...

Finally, when we talk about numbers of children, for children under the age of 5 as collected through the Homeless Management Information System, or HMIS, and reported in our Hawaii 2017 homeless service utilization report, approximately 1,622 children under the age of 5 access outreach or Shelter Services in fiscal year 2017. Demographic data in this report also indicates that nearly half of these children were Native Hawaiian, and or other Pacific Islander

by ethnicity. So a disproportionate number of our kiddos from the islands, and some of the Pacific, unfortunately are experiencing homelessness.

This number does not include the numbers of children living in doubled up situations, which we know from Hawaii Dealy youth experiencing homelessness data could be as high as an additional 60% more children living in double-up situations due to economic hardship. And finally, a recent 50 state 2019 profile, which includes 2017 data from the USDOE reports that Hawaii had an estimated 2,865 children under the age of 6 experiencing homelessness – or one in 38 children. Oh, sorry.

So clearly you can see — this is fine — clearly you can see that even in a small state like Hawaii, which is often referred to as paradise, we have our own tremendous burden of addressing the needs of our vulnerable families with young children. So the second slide on Hawaii landscape shows that in Hawaii, as is probably true in many other states, there's no one data source to access the number of young children experiencing homelessness, birth to 5 being served by early childhood programs and settings. Instead, we need to rely on our state and community partners to share their data with us. And in some cases, we know that our partner data systems do not actually collect data on the numbers of young children — birth to 5 — experiencing homelessness, but rather just collect data on the number of adults.

So there's a lot of guesswork involved here, but the numbers listed here are our best guesstimate based on partner reporting of the numbers of children receiving services in school year 2018-19, and to which service provider. So you can see that with Head Start programs, it's a little over 220 partners in development.

Capilano is a locally based nonprofit that has a mission of deliberately or intentionally, serving families who are homeless and their young children. This number ... They only ... They count each child who attends, even if it's only one time a year as part of their service delivery. So 572 doesn't necessarily tell us how often those children were attending the program: Our Department of Health, Early Intervention Programs, about 42 children; our Department of Health MIECHV, or Maternal and Infant Early Childhood Home Visiting Programs, about 44; and then our Department of Education Special Education, Pre-K Programs, another 56 or so.

What these numbers don't really tell us is the intensity, frequency, and duration of the services children receive. From these providers, other than those that we know from Head Start and Early Head Start, and the data that we also don't have a firm grasp on, includes where children birth to 5 are actually living across the state — both sheltered and unsheltered, and whether there are early childhood service providers in those areas, knowing that would better inform our outreach efforts, and help us more efficiently and effectively connect children to existing services and supports, or to inform where we might need to expand services and/or to start up new services in order to address the needs in these families. I'd like to turn this over to Jennifer now to set more of the context for today's presentation.

Jennifer: Oh, thank you, Chris. Thank you so much. I'm doing my arrows at the same time as Brandi is there. We have it now. And Chris, you were bringing up some of these very challenges as you spoke, and that was such a good entry into what we're going to talk about on this slide. What are the major challenges that families experience when accessing quality programs? And

the first thing we got to talk about is families may actually not disclose their living situation. They may be keeping this situation hidden from friends, providers, and teachers. They could fear child welfare involvement, but they also may not see themselves as homeless because, as you mentioned, the doubling up, multi-generational living opportunities, cultural decisions regarding housing can all come into play when we're thinking about applying the McKinney-Vento definition.

So it's really important to have those sensitive conversations that we talked about last time, and as Brandi referred to how we talked about homeless circumstances, or house ... Excuse me housing circumstances. So we begin to introduce the idea of one of the opportunities that families can have, even if they don't see themselves at this time as homeless or experiencing a housing crisis. They may not know what services they qualify for or where they're located. You know, each community has this unique patchwork of programs and services Head Start, Early Head Start, family care, public pre-K, and sometimes that gets confusing for families, and if they're in a crisis, they may have moved to a different community or they may be moving around, and that may be just too confusing for them to access services.

They can be invisible in communities, which means the typical recruitment and outreach efforts may not reach them. Again, we have these many, many families who are not living in shelters. They may seek resources, support to meet their basic needs in motels, food pantries, soup kitchens, thrift stores, and the typical outreach efforts may not reach them. Here's a couple of other challenges that families are experiencing. They may not be able to take advantage of typical parent information and enrollment services because they don't have a stable address, and so many of our outreach materials say, you know, we need your address, we need this information for application, and that may — it may be a deterrent to them accessing quality programs.

And finally, they face barriers to enrolling and participating in early childhood programs because there's no accommodation or they're not aware of the accommodations they may have word of mouth from others about Head Start and Early Head Start, and they may think that they have to fill out a whole packet of information and the income eligible for Head Start, again because of word of mouth and lack of clarification, you know, on where to apply and how to apply and who they're talking with.

So we know here you are. We are here as Head Start, just as Dr. Bergeron says, Home at Head Start with her wonderful challenge to the nation is to enter territories to reach out and say, here we are, here we are, here we are as Head Start and Early Head Start, and we have these incredible programs. So I know I don't need to tell you that quality early childhood programs and school care programs offer children family services to grow and thrive. And of course, we're guided by our federal regulations as well, and those regulations require that we ensure that more children are enrolled in quality programs and it ensures that children and their families receive the very, very best services as they support your success.

And we're coming back to that whole opportunity to collaborate with our community partners and provide a whole net of resources and services to families who are experiencing homelessness. So when we think about that outreach being so key, it doesn't just occur at one level. It really occurs at so many levels. It can occur at the grantee or program level, a local

community level, and of course, the state level. And this is just a perfect slide for us because of what we're going to be talking about today and these incredible colleagues from Hawaii, because they're really going to kind of talk about the grantee level. Larae is going to start there, and then Ben's going to move to the local, and then, Chris, of course, will talk about some state activities that are happening. So I live with that. I'd like to turn it over to Larae.

Larae: Thank you, Jennifer. And welcome all for joining us today. So I'll share a little bit about my agency and our program. And then some activities to sustain these partnerships that we've done throughout the last two years that we've maintained these partnerships. So Maui Family Support Services is located on Maui; however, we do provide home-based services on Molokai. Molokai — the island of Molokai — is also part of our Maui County right now. And so Wailuku, which is the dark pink of the island, and then we also have services in Waiale, which is also located in Wailuku, who is also the dark pink of the island. Lahaina has a center, and that's the yellow shade that you're seeing, and then our home-based services are provided on both islands of Maui and Molokai.

Our enrollment is 119 currently, with 75 home-based flats, and 44 for Center B slot. Transportation between the island of Maui and Molokai is a 20-minute flight on a small eight-seater commuter plane. For the demographics of our participants for this webinar, you'll see the different ethnic backgrounds that we provide services to, as well as our sheltered and unsheltered participants. Unsheltered participants is at 39% for this year. During last year's program, we noticed that 2% of our families experienced two separate situations of being houseless within a six-month period, and I know Chris has shared earlier the cost of living in Hawaii is extremely high.

I do want to share that a lot of our families are working or they are in some type of in or outpatient program within the community, just that the cost of living for housing is very high right now in Hawaii. And so for us, child care and being in a center is a very large need for our population that we're serving. So one of the partnerships that we have is that our local homeless shelter, Ka Hale A Ke Ola, which means the House of Life. It is the only homeless resource center on our island for families. There's one in Wailuku, which we consider our town population, and there is also one in Lahaina, which is about 32 miles out of town — one road in, one road out, and each of those classrooms take eight children each.

I know we are talking about maintaining enrollment for these families that are attending the program. For our — for our families we provide transportation on a case-by-case manner. We work with the families on maybe sustaining public transportation. We do have a small public bus system, and we do assist with maybe gaining bus passes or maybe sending out referrals to other agencies within our community that can assist with transportation. So that's kind of how we work with our families on a case-by-case situation.

We also have created some clear MOAs, so memorandums of agreements, with our Ka Hale A Ke Ola homeless resource center, and so that's kind of how we started with our partnership. We first started out in Lahaina, and then now we moved into the Wailuku, more town side of the island. Some of our other outreach efforts is our one and only hospital that we have here on the island that assists with new deliveries. So for agency, we have three ladies who go into the hospital seven days a week. They provide screening resources to each newborn child and

the new mother, and then they provide those referrals to our department for follow up. And so we usually are able to contact them within seven days and maybe possibly enroll them into our program for either home base or center base.

They also — the hospital also adopts a family during the holiday season. This year, they were able to adopt 40 families; last year, they did 20. And so this year they did 40. And so we try to keep our partnerships going and participate in other efforts, rather, it be something that maybe the hospital wants to start a program, or we want to start an event. So we kind of attempt to build our relationships outside of just recruiting families. Another outreach effort that we have is Malama Family Recovery Center. Malama Family Recovery Center is the only rehab center for females, and they also take children along with their parents.

During our 18–19 program year, 22% of our center-based enrollment were children that their families were enrolled with Malama Family Recovery Center. This family recovery center has a great partnership with us. We've built it over the years together, having ... Inviting them to our events and then them inviting us to their events just to kind of build the relationship. Our next step for outreach is working with our Maui Police Department. We would like to get in and maybe do some sharing of resources prior to the officers going out on the road for their shifts. We've experienced a great jump in our families living on beaches, living at the park, and so usually MPD is called, and they're the first ones to respond.

And so we would like to be able to provide and educate the police officers so that they can possibly help these families and give them a resource instead of just kind of moving them to the next part or the next parking lot with their family. And so that is part of our — that's our next step for reaching out with MPB.

Brandi: And before we move from the slide, I'm seeing that Danette is getting a little encouragement with her great question, so I wanted to pause here quickly and see if you would be open. Danette was wondering how the hospital outreach role was designed from your Head Start program. You can see, or maybe, do they carry caseload? Are they part of your ERSEA process? Could you say a little bit more about that?

And then Ramona is following up with and more about the police department, and before you answer, I want to say to you guys, we're tracking your questions. We're holding them off to the side — some of them, though, not only will we try to sneak in the end, just like I'm doing now, and we'll also get to hang out after the webinar, so keep them coming, and thank you for those. All right. All right. Larae, interest in the hospital connection and police department.

Larae: OK. So for the hospital outreach, the partnership we have there, it was actually started, I want to say like 20 years ago, before the agency actually even had a Head Start program, and so I'm a little unsure of exactly how it started, but our governing board president is actually one of the doctors up there. So I am assuming he assisted with that dialogue, but I can look into that with my CEO and follow up maybe with an email to share how that exactly was started. But it's actually ...

The ladies that go into the hospital, they will screen for an Early Head Start program, as well as two other home visiting programs that our county has, and so I would have to go back and check. Did I answer that?

Brandi: Yeah. Perfect. I mean, that's exciting in and of itself that look at two decade old partnership. That's pretty impressive in and of itself.

Larae: They're just — they're just referring to our program, so they do a general screen, and then the mom or the resource caregiver, if that is the situation happening, they select the different programs that they would like someone to follow up with them.

Brandi: Thank you, Larae. Go ahead, Rachel.

Rachel: I was just going to say, and then could you talk about the police department?

Larae: Oh, so the police department so, you know, we in Head Start world, right, we figure everybody knows about Head Start, you know, they see our classrooms, but actually we've had some run-ins with, you know, the police department, and even the fire department here, within our ...

On our island, and they were unsure of who and who can attend our program. Some individuals thought that there was a charge for our program, and so that kind of got us thinking, if our police department, and even our fire department aren't familiar with our services, yet they are the first ones to respond for the population that Head Start targets for, then there's — there's a gap that we need to fill. And so we have started to slowly work our way into talking to the officers on a larger scale instead of the individual small scale.

I would like to get in there and speak, you know, do more presentations so that they're familiar with us and their resource, because every officer has a resource kit within their squad car. They can provide our resource or our number or a brochure to the families that they're responding to.

Chris: This is Chris. Can I just jump in real quick to add to what Larae has said?

Larae: Of course.

Chris: OK. So, so on Oahu, a fairly recent initiative in terms of a partnership with our police department is called LED — or LEAD, L-E-A-D, and it stands for, I think, Law Enforcement Assistance and Diversion Program, and so there's been a concerted effort to get the police department to partner with nonprofits to help with this whole issue of not just arresting — arresting individuals on the sidewalks or, you know, being seen more as a punitive or a negative influence, but really to be seen as partners in support and assistance. And so they have been doing this collaborative partnership on Oahu in different communities, and so I'm excited to hear that Libby on Maui will be partnering with MPD as well. Thanks.

Brandi: Thank you for that addition, Chris, and I do want to hold Ramona, your question has a lot of energy behind it, and if it's all right with you guys, I'd like to hold that one, but I think this is a critical part of what we want to continue to unpack. I'll say it out loud here, and then we want to come back to this, because I'm guessing that we can apply this community of the partnership that we hope to facilitate — facilitate and sustain.

But Ramona's question was about the local police department having a lot of contact with folks who experience homelessness, and her curiosity really is about how you envision a partnership

with the police department that doesn't erode trust in your program by association. And we have these conversations and get them out, because when we trust ... When our families trust us and we start to trust the community partner, it's important for, Ramona, exactly all the things that you're alluding to here, to make sure that they operate in similar ways that we do and how we can maintain and ensure that families can, you know, continue along that journey with the help and support in the ways that we would reverse where they are and where they're going.

So I'm going to hold that one because Larae, I know you have a few more things and I know that Ben and Chris have other things to share, so we're going to put a pin in that one and bring it back. Thank you, Ramona, for that one. All right Larae back to you.

Larae: Oh, OK. So sustaining relationships with our partners. So any time that I mean ... A partnership is like a relationship, right? So you have to do things outside of the norm, and for our program, you know, besides our memorandums of agreement, you know, that state what our agency is responsible for and what the other agency will be responsible for. You also want to invite them to events that your program is having, rather it be an anniversary event, rather it be a policy council meeting, rather it be a survey about services or a project that you're working on. You want to be sure to kind of you know, add them in anytime that you can, and we found that that really builds the relationship.

They'll also start to be a little bit more flexible, maybe, where they can with their programs, and so that's something that we continuously are working on. Again, it's just like, you know, a real relationship, except for it's called a partnership. We do have check-in meetings that we do ... That are not structured. So instead of the yearly MOA meeting, you know, how did things go last year? We actually do every other month. Just a quick email like, "Hey, how are you?" We've even started to take some artwork from our children in the classroom, and I just kind of drop it off at the office, you know, just kind of randomly, as I'm, you know, attending my meetings, and that gives that partnership a feeling of trust, of love, and of care.

And so for us, we found that by building and doing those small little movements, it's easier to talk to our partners when there is a large challenge or if there's a rule that has changed, it's a lot easier to kind of have that dialogue than if you just have the MOA and you only meet once a year. And that's something that works for our program and the personalities in the various agencies that we work with.

Another big thing is keeping your partners in the loop about any changes to your program that could affect them. And that even means if you're a contact person leaves, if you're ERSEA manager leaves, the director leaves, it's important to let them know and let them know who they can contact in place of that. It can be very frustrating if the contact person leaves and nobody — nobody has reached out and shared with them, and then there could be a situation that comes up and then it'll be difficult for that agency to get in contact with the correct person. So keeping them in the loop about contact person change is very, very important that we have found to be something that we try as much as possible to update our staff listing to our partners just so that they know who they can contact. And I think, I think — I think that — that's the end. Now it's Ben.

Ben: All right. Thanks, Larae. So again, I'm Ben with Parents and Children Together. I'm going to be talking a little about our agency and our Early Head Start and Head Start program, and then diving into some — some ... An overview of a Kahauiki Village, which I'll talk about shortly, and the project that's been happening and how we were fortunate enough to be involved in that project. Parents and Children Together is a nonprofit, multi-service agency that was established in 1968. As you can see, here is our mission statement here It evolved out of the largest public housing project in the state at Kuhio Park Terrace.

Annual we serve over 15,000 individuals in the following areas: early child education, community building and economic development, child welfare, domestic violence, labor, health, and more recently poverty prevention. About 95% of our client population is living in deep poverty. So our Early Head Start program is just one of the 15 programs offered through our agency. Our funded enrollment, as you can see, is 513 center-based slots for Head Start, 289 Early Head Start home-based and center-based – it's predominantly home-based, and then we also do have a child care partnership grant and we work with a local provider to provide services, 10-hour days services for 72 infants and toddlers. Our budget is a little bit over \$10 million, so that includes, of course, federal Head Start money, some state subsidy money, and private – private funds.

We are the second largest Head Start grantee, and the largest Early Head Start grantee in Hawaii. And we're located on two islands, so as you can see on the little map, most of our Early Head Start services are located on Oahu, with some Head Start services, and then a majority of our Head Start is on Hawaii island with a very small Early Head Start program. So I wanted to talk about the Village. So I'm going to probably refer to the Village, but the name of the villages, Kahauiki Village, and as Chris had mentioned previously in the data around homelessness in Hawaii, because ...

As a result of that, the governor, in October of 2015, declared a emergency homeless proclamation, which kind of paved the way for the release of funds to contractors, or I should say service providers, who work with families experiencing homelessness. It also cleared the way for us to increase funding to programs to promote immediate housing. And lastly, it also cleared the way for a rapid facilitation of rapid construction of temporary shelters for these families.

So the actual proclamation was actually extended. I think it's — it's usually like a 90-day proclamation, but it was extended I want to say for a couple of years, and during this — this period of time that this proclamation was effective, there was a local businessman — businessman and philanthropist named Duane Kurisu, who really wanted to see how he could help utilize his resources to help address the homelessness issue on the island of Oahu. And he's a businessman, he's a part owner of the San Francisco Giants, he owns a local radio TV station, he has different holdings in real estate.

But what he did was he was able to acquire 11.3 acres of state land that the state transferred over to the county and leveraged the relationships that he had to acquire the land, and the resources, to build a small village or community. A lot of coordination had taken place between

state, county, and local officials, the different departments — Department of Transportation, Department of Planning and Permitting. Also which was interesting, is that Komatsu House Limited is a Japanese company in Japan that had built prefabricated homes for families in Japan that were displaced due to the tsunami in 2011 in Japan.

And so what he had done is he had a connection to this company, and in 2016–17, those prefabricated homes who are no longer in use, so he used his networking skills and was able to acquire the homes from Komatsu House Limited to bring it to construct his village. He also had numerous contractors that helped with the planning, donated their time, and of course, obviously private individuals and organizations that also dedicated their time not just with building infrastructure. So every ...

I'm going to show you where this is located, and it was actually a barren area with no electricity and – and no water. And so he was able to build out so that way he could build the foundation for the whole, but everything prior to building the foundation for the homes and putting up these prefabricated homes was all donated, was all at low cost. And then he leveraged his – his resources to acquire private monies to help pay for some of the costs and what not. So one thing about the Village is it is ...

This village concept and it was meant to provide long-term, permanent, affordable rental housing for families that are living in homelessness. So families that were ready to transition from a shelt — from a shelter on an island as long as they were working, this would be a place that they could live, as long as they're following the rules, as long as they're paying their rent in good standing, they could live there permanently. The Village consists of 144, one- and two-bedroom homes that are prefabricated, as I mentioned earlier, steel frame, modular units, and they're all energy efficient.

So they all have photovoltaic. They're all off the grid. It comes fully furnished for all the families, so everything that they need, it's move-in ready. And then it was a plantation-style design, and I'll talk about that in a few other slides, so this plantation style design is the vision that Duane had had for this – this Village. And lastly, I forget to mention that the families that were selected to live at Kahauiki Village were referred from other providers that serve families experiencing homelessness. They were referred to an agency to be looked at to live in this Village. Just to give you guys an idea of where the Village is located.

So this is the island of Oahu, and you'll see Honolulu is located kind of in the south eastern part of the island, kind of on the south shore. Kahauiki Village is kind of like in west Honolulu to the east of the whole international airport. You can see that there's this little peninsula that kind of sticks out right next to one of the main highways in Honolulu. And if ... You can't really see it, but the Google Maps says it's the Hawaii All-Star Paintball Games, and it was basically this peninsula where people played paintball on.

And so Duane's story is he was flying — it's next to the airport — so he was flying out to get to one of the other islands, and him and his colleague, who happens to be architecture, identified that spot and said, "Hey, you know, wonder what that spot's being used for?" Because the paintball games kind of went away. They would surface, go away and whatnot, so anyway, he was able to acquire that — that — that and secure a 10-year term lease, with a 10-year option

at a dollar for a year. So he really utilized his network. We're going to zoom in even more and see a rendering of — of this project.

So you going to see the homes, 144 homes, approximately, that are — that were built. In the top right corner, is the child care center that they built, and it was very intentional about building this onsite for the families that reside here at Kahauiki Village. You're going to notice that there's just circle here, that's right — right below in the picture of the child care center, that's a radio antenna for his radio station. So he had, kind of, a dual purpose. He needed to move an antenna out of the way for some construction because Hawaii's building a rail system, so he moved that there, and then as and also was able to utilize the land to build this beautiful facility for — for families that really needed to — to have some permanent home — housing. So just to talk a bit about this Village concept and the way it had grew up on the big island and a plantation village where everybody in the village lived together.

Everybody in the village worked together on the same plantation. Kids went to school together and everybody kind of looked out for each other, and this is a vision that he had for Kahauiki Village is to just build a small community that everybody can build social capital amongst each other, and different things are being offered there on site. So some of the things that are - that are on that site is social services, so there's an agency that works with some case management services. There's a little community store, like a Sundry store there, a laundromat.

They're able to get a post office on — onsite, so families didn't have to travel too far to mail at the post office, and that was one of the big issues because with the U.S. Post Office as far as how are they going to lay out the mail drop for this facility? So they were able to get a small little turnkey post office. The social service agency there also provides extra-curricular activities for older school age kids or elementary school age teenagers. They have martial arts and they have some other fun things that they do after school. They're also targeting to build a recreation area, kind of a blacktop where kids can play basketball or do other activities. That's still being built as part of the fourth phase.

They also were able to ... For the school aged kids, these are kids that are going to elementary school, the — the property, this Village is located on a very busy highway, and I want to say the elementary school is probably about — maybe about a quarter mile, maybe less than about a half mile, maybe not — maybe between a quarter and half mile to get to; however, because of the busy highway that — that posed an issue for these young kids walking to and from school, so what they were able to do was get an exemption through the Department of Education to provide a school bus for the school-aged kids to catch a bus from Kahauiki Village to the elementary school, which makes it a lot better for those kids. And then one of the other things I forgot to mention on here there is a 24-hour security on property, roaming security, and this ...

The security company is very much engaged in the Village, and they know the kids and they know the families and whatnot, so it's a great partnership. And then lastly, this child care — this child care piece that we were fortunate enough to — we were fortunate enough to — to be asked to — to provide the services there. We actually were approached back in 2016 about the — this Kahauiki Village, and asked to see if we would be interested in providing child care services there, and in the business world, they were just — they were calling it day care. "We

want — we need day care. We need child care for the kids. That's the only way that families are going to be able to work."

And so we talked a little bit about our program and the comprehensive services piece, I think really spoke to what they felt was something that their families would need. So it was a pretty natural fit. So in August 2018, we officially opened two Early Head Start classrooms for 16 slots, and one Head Start classroom for 20 slots, and our priority is given to Kahauiki residents that reside on the property; however, there are ... If the slots can't be filled by our county residents, there are slots that we can make available to the community, but the residents there get the priority, and it's a 10-hour day, year round. And this is ...

I want to say, this is our first, in 2018 was our first experience in providing 10-hour days for our working families, and it seems to be working out great for the families there. Just things about the funding and, you know, we've created the funding so that way Head Start could — could fund part of the day, leverage our child care subsidy money that parents, because they're all working or going to school full time, that they can have, and then also the Kahauiki team was able to identify, as well — as well as our agency — identify private foundations that wanted to provide some support for the families when it came to child care.

So the way we build it is we do have wraparound services. Parents, residents that live there do not pay more than \$100 after Head Start money kicks in, after child care subsidy money kicks in and private money kicks in. I want to say only a handful of them might be close to \$100.

Majority of them pay anywhere from \$10, \$25 a month. The onsite provider I had mentioned earlier was the Institute for Human Services, and they're a ... Also a nonprofit that specifically works and provides services for individuals and families that are experiencing homelessness on Oahu. They have a few shelters, they do a lot of outreach, and they manage the placement of the families that are coming into the Village to live permanently.

And so we have other providers out in the community that refer their families who are ready to — to live in a permanent housing, have a stable job, and are ready for that next step, they refer them to the Institute for Human Services, and then they go through a vetting process on their end as far as ... Once they do placement. At that point in time is where we work with them on enrolling the kids into our Early Head Start or Head Start classroom. It's — it's a very time sensitive. We want to make sure that we get the referral and the applications from those families while they're being referred to Kahauiki.

And, you know, it was a rocky road, I want to say, in the beginning with the Institute for Human Services understanding our needs as far as eligibility and enrollment. And then on our end part, also understanding the parameters that the Institute for Human Services was working with as they received referrals. As you all know, a lot of the families would be scheduled, perhaps, to complete an intake with the Institute for Human Services, and we have their application, but they wouldn't show up to the Institute's intake, and so they would drop the family out.

So there was a lot of shuffling of families originally when the — when it opened. The other thing is when they did the roll out of the project, they were doing it in phases, so each phase — there's about four phases — each phase was about 30 to 40 homes at a time, and so when we first started out, there were only 30, I think, 35 families, and according to the numbers, the

preliminary numbers that we had, we should have been full; however, what happened was families fell through the cracks, they didn't — they didn't comply with the intake process to get — to live on Kahauiki Village, and so we, when we intake all the residents, there wasn't enough kids to fill our — our classrooms, and as all you guys know, we want to make sure we maintain full enrollment. And this is back in 2018, so we were able to enroll some community slots. And what — what's happening now is we're fully enrolled. when we do have an opening, we — we work with the Institute for Human Services provider to identify those kids that are on the wait lists to get into our program.

We do utilize the — the performance standard of the 30-day reserve slots specifically for this site, because we do have a lot of transient applicants that want to get into the site. They may apply, get referred — they don't get in, so we really want to use that reserve slot timetable to our advantage to really make sure that we are able to pinpoint and find families that live at Kahauiki Village for this — for this for the site. So the interesting thing is right now they're in the fourth phase and building out the last of the 144 homes, and now we have this wait list of kids, predominantly infants and toddlers. We also work ... There's another Head Start provider that is located at the elementary school, which is about half a mile away. There ...

They have some of ... They may be taking on some of the kids that come to our — our ... That are living Kahauiki Village. There's also ... The elementary schools also looking at possibly opening up a pre-K classroom, so we're working, in tandem, with the elementary school to see how we can best utilize what's being built at Kahului and what is at the elementary school to — to better utilize the resources. So what's happening is, there is a need for more infant and toddler services, I want to say, and so our Kahauiki team and they're movers and shakers, so they said, "We're going to build another building for you guys. Can you guys operate that building?" So they plan on building adjacent to our infant — our Head Start building — that's our Kahauiki — they intend to build another modular unit for up to, I think it's up to three Early Head Start classrooms, or one Early Head Start and one Head Start classroom.

There's a way that they can configure these prefabricated homes. And I want to say the roll out of these classrooms really took a community effort with the Department of Human Services, which licenses our classrooms, the Department of Planning and Permitting, the fire department, everybody really came together to kind of help us open the center sooner rather than later. I want to say Duane and his — his buddies, I want to say, because they're all buddies, really put the pedal to the metal and went out and really talked to the people that, the movers and shakers, when it comes to building these — building these centers and licensing these centers to really — to really get it.

So all the — all the materials, the furniture materials in all of our classrooms was all paid for by money raised by the Kahauiki team. Private money that they were able to raise to furnish all of these — everything. And they came to us and said, "What do you need if you going to run a classroom? What do you need?" Everything, so from the toys, manipulatives, changing tables, cabinets, to computers, and everything, they supply it all for us, printers and everything. So we are very blessed that the — the private sector actually worked with us. Who's ...

Kind of the public sector in creating this — this this great facility for the community. As a result of this project and our program being on property to be the child care provider, it's really opened up a lot of relationships with other organizations. It's ...

I think it's helped reinvigorate existing partnerships and really open up opportunities to partner with different organizations. For instance, preschools have been contacting us, wanting to come and visit with their kids and do some activities. And one preschool wanted to do like a pen pal activity, and we're like, let's talk a little bit more about that and try to make a little bit more developmentally appropriate. But, you know, I think that the drive and the desire to — to be a part of it is out there. We have high schools that are visiting our campus, our little child care center here wanting to do internship programs — even with the community colleges they've come. Rotary Clubs are always looking to donate materials or — or come and volunteer. And we ...

I want to say every month we — we have somebody touring our child care facility, as well as the whole project — the whole village, but coming to our facility just to see the work that's being done. So it's ... I think it's really helped Head Start and Early Head Start in Hawaii kind of — kind of be talked about a little bit more, which is, you know, as Larae, I talked about, some — some people may or may not know about our programs, but this, I think, give us a little bit of exposure.

Recently, we've been talking to a local mental health clinician who is partnering with the Department of Health in Hawaii on kind of creating a health and learning hub at Kahauiki Village, and she's very interested in trying to see what kind of — what kind of support she can provide, our program at Kahauiki Village, and working with these young children and addressing the needs of some of the kids that might have some challenging behaviors. So we're going to be having conversations with her around how we can get her involved. And she's already on site talking to the older kids after school, talking to families, so naturally, what she wants to do is really try and see how she can look at our kids at a very early age and see if there's anything that she can provide our teaching staff, as far as it comes to mental health and challenging behaviors.

Also, we're having conversations with Department of Health locally here around screening and follow up just to make sure lines of communication between us and the early intervention division, the Part C provider here in Hawaii, is meeting the needs of the community. We also had a child care subsidy worker come out when we first started the program, come out and talk to our families about applying for a child care subsidy, what they would need, what kind of documents they would have.

And we've, over the years, developed a pretty nice relationship with our local child care subsidy office so we can have some candid conversations around status of our — of our families and their subsidy questioning, you know, when subsidies go up and down, you know, what do we need to do to help the families to either retain their subsidy or turn in necessary documents, and so. There's also quarterly Read to Me International. Read to Me International comes quarterly to the site to do some literacy activities for all the kids, not just the young kids there, but all the kids, and they — they do it by bringing in a local entertainer. And so they had some

...

A local comedian who came in ... That the kids could identify with. Local entertainer, Jake Shimabukuro, who is a well-renowned ukulele — ukulele player, and he came in. The kids loved it. There's just been a tremendous outpouring of support and desire from the community to see how they can better be involved and impact Kahauiki Village.

And so the second to the last — so if you go to the next slide — it's just some links if people want to kind of see or take — a take a look at some video around the Village, not necessarily our child care program, but the Village. These are some links that you can go to. There's also ... The Kahauiki Village also has a web page, Kahului.org, which you will see a list of all the partners, and like I said, there was 200-plus partners, and I'm talking about state, local department heads, private — private lenders, just I mean, the local tourism community. The hotels were key in providing all the necessary furniture and materials for the homes.

So it's just been, I want to say, over the last year and a half, it's been quite an adventure, and I think we're fortunate that we can be part of this Village — Kahauiki. So the last slide ... Just to bring it home. You heard the saying, "It takes a village to raise a child," and I think this is a perfect example of the displays of that saying and Duane Kurisu's vision is — is definitely alive and continues to prosper, through partnerships and through networking and not being afraid to ask people, "You want to be a part of something," or, "Here's what we're doing," and whatnot.

And so I think that's the — the one takeaway that we, that — that I will leave you guys with, is — is nurturing the relationships. We would not have been a part of this project had the Institute for Human Services not talked to Kahauiki — the Kahauiki team about our agency, about the Head Start and Early Head Start program. So, you know, it was a natural fit, but the networking piece was a big part in being a part of this project. So that's — that's all I have. I'm going to turn over to Chris Jackson next and she has some information to share.

Chris: Thanks, Ben. And before I start my piece of the presentation, I just really need to acknowledge both Larae and Ben for all of the work and the visioning that they have for their programs and reaching out and partnering with our state and community stakeholders. Because, as you can see from the previous slides, the awesome work that's being done on behalf of our kids and families, and Head Start and Early Head Start is truly amazing. So thanks for sharing you all, and I always get, chicken — we call it in Hawaii, we call it chicken skin, but you all might call it goose bumps, whenever I hear them talk about their program, so.

My section is really to share with you a little bit about the Head Start — Hawaii Head Start Collaboration Office and some of the outreach and coordination efforts around homelessness that we are currently doing. And for those of you on our ... in our audience today who may not be familiar with the Head Start Collaboration Office role, all the collab offices were first established by the Office of Head Start in the '90s to serve as a liaison between the federal Office of Head Start and its regional offices and the local Head Start Early Head Start grantees in states.

There is a Head Start collaboration Office in each of the 50 states, as well as the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico. In Hawaii, the collab office was first positioned in the State Department of Education, then moved to the Department of Human Services, and since 2012, has been positioned within the Executive Office on Early Learning. The primary purpose of the

Hawaii Head Start collab office is to really build and/or strengthen partnerships between the six Head Start and Early Head Start grantees and state and community stakeholders.

Strategic partnerships are formalized through state level inter-agency agreements brokered by the Head Start collab office in order to access needed resources and services, coordinate services for families and children, and promote effective collaborations to enhance the early childhood system here in Hawaii. The Head Start collab office also helps to broker meetings to help problem solve issues, connects Head Start and Early Head Start grantees to state and community resources, and brings a Head Start voice, whether it's through my office or through the Head Start Association of Hawaii, to state and local level planning, policy development, and advocacy.

So as you can see, outreach for sustained partnerships is a significant part of the Head Start Collaboration directors work. So just a few activities, or strategies, that we've been doing at the state level around homelessness efforts. So in recent years, and especially with the encouragement and prioritization of enrolling more children, experiencing homelessness from the federal Office of Head Start and Dr. B, outreach efforts have included the development of a state level MOU, or memorandum of understanding, with the Hawaii DOE Homeless Concerns Office, which is the entity responsible for McKinney-Vento activities.

The club office director and the McKinney-Vento state coordinator worked with both Head Start family advocates and school liaisons to identify those areas needing to strengthen communication, coordination of service delivery, and cross-referrals between the two programs in order to serve more vulnerable children pre-kindergarten through grade 12. And I think as a result of this MOU in place, we've seen stronger partnerships in some of our districts between the family advocates and the school liaisons, and we're working to strengthen those and other districts as well.

In December 2018, the club director and the McKinney-Vento state coordinator co-sponsored a child homelessness summit entitled, "Let's Chat," to which about 75 state and county agency representatives, Head Start and Early Head Start, and community nonprofits came together to learn more about the impact of homelessness on young children, hear from a panel of providers serving this population, and then doing some preliminary regional planning together to strengthen connections in order to get more children enrolled into health and early learning services.

I think the summit helped to bring increased awareness of state and community resources, and providers with whom to partner, for better child and family outcomes within the agencies. And for the past two years, a group of service providers, health representatives, and child advocates, including Head Start and Early Head Start representatives, have been networking and having conversations around priorities needing to be addressed in order to better support our vulnerable young children. The Child Homelessness Action Team, or CHAT, as we affectionately call ourselves, developed a work plan of possible activities to engage in, but actual outcomes were limited until funding became available through an Education Leads Home grant, which we received in December 2018.

Education Leads Home is a national initiative of agencies focused on homelessness with one of its goals being that by 2026, the number of young children — birth to 5 — who are homeless are enrolled in early learning programs at the same rate as that of their housed peers. This grant, entitled State Partnerships to Support Student Outcomes, enable [Inaudible] to do its first ever needs assessment around challenges and opportunities of connecting children to programs and services to develop some curriculum modules to support child care providers in enrolling and effectively serving this population. And we did use the ECLKC modules as a reference as well to develop these critical modules.

And it also — the grant also helped increase a number of trauma-informed care professional development offerings provided throughout the state. Recently, more intentional outreach for partnership building has been occurring with our continuum of care stakeholders. In — on Oahu, they're called Partners in Care and on the neighbor islands, they're called Bridging the Gap, which I believe is similar to the balance of states on United States continent. In order to access data around the homelessness, and families with young children be involved in planning and advocacy efforts and increase the number of champions around potential policy changes to increase access to child care for homeless families with young children, which is an issue that all service providers have expressed as a major barrier for their families in finding work, attending school, or engaging other activities to put them on a path towards permanent housing.

The chat group that I mentioned earlier has now become embedded in a backbone agency that supports cross-sector collaboration across six teams to enhance the early childhood system in Hawaii. This infrastructure support will not only help with increased capacity and sustainability of efforts, but it will also help to integrate the work of the chat group with other system building efforts being implemented in the state. A focus on child homelessness has also been integrated into both the early childhood state plan in which we developed in 2017 as part of our office — effective office in early learning, and in the recent federal preschool development grant birth to 5 needs assessment and strategic planning activities in 2019.

And finally, planning is underway to increase outreach and coordination efforts with community stakeholders in spring 2020 through the convening of groups on each island to increase community awareness of resources and enhance inter-agency connections to improve the outcomes of our keiki, or children, experiencing homelessness. These meet and greets on each island will hopefully encourage more intentional regional conversations and planning, including leveraging of resources and the implementation of place based strategies to address community needs and concerns. In summary, I guess I'd just like to say that intentional efforts to coordinate outreach and collaborative partnerships, whether at the state, local, or grantee level, is extremely gratifying because we can see the difference it makes in being able to accomplish mutual goals.

Homelessness is such a complex issue as we're all well aware, and the collective action that we can take together not only lightens the load, but brings about the outcomes we desire in a more systematic and purposeful way, and brings us more hope. An African proverb that I really like seems to be appropriate to close here: "If you want to go fast, go alone, if you want to go far, go together." I hope this resonates with all of you as well. Mahalo for the opportunity to share with you all today. Brandi.

Brandi: Chris, oh, my goodness. Guys, those of you that know me know that I'm not often at a loss for words, but I have to tell you, I'm sitting here in front of my computer leaned fully in, listened to every word and holding not only what each of our dignitaries have shared with you, but the inspiration that each of you are gifting us, too.

I, you know, I'm just so proud to be part of Head Start. I'm so grateful for each of you, and thank you to all of those who have gifted us your insights today. I know we have just a few minutes left in the official portion of our discussion, but you guys know how we do this, and we're going to hang out for a little bit longer because you have lots of questions and you have lots of curiosity. You have lots of insight. So we're going to stay on for at least 15 more minutes. For those of you who would like to continue to hang out and we're going to delve into some more, because you have awesome, specific questions for Ben about the Village, you've had curiosities about partnerships and making sure to maintain those in a positive way.

So let's look at a couple of close out activities, and for those of you that have a little extra time, which I know is super rare, please feel free to hang out. We're going to come back to some of the questions. I'm grateful, and I think Antoinette just mentioning too, you guys said that we created these homelessness modules. Chris mentioned them a little earlier. They are over on the ECLKC, and we actually gave you a shortcut. If you go to the web link portion of your screen on that left-hand side in the middle, you can click the words, "supporting children," and a button will open up that says browse two.

Now, it's going to take you away from over here, it's going to take you off to the eclipse, but that is where you'll find those eight modules. And I have to tell you guys, I don't know if I should be telling you the secret. Are you ready? Are you sitting down? Are you properly prepared? We're working on another one, one that talks about the connection of domestic violence to homelessness, so that specifically we can continue unpacking what you guys are experiencing as the real. So stay tuned for that as a new addition to that suite of eight. A couple more quick things. We've mentioned this, but we want to bring it right on back.

Dr. Bergeron gifted us this campaign of Home At Head Start. You guys have been working so hard out in the field to really honor this as a continued prioritized population for us, and we've been working with you to create a lot of resources, excitement, and continued conversation. One of you guys asked, what were the other two [Inaudible] conversation in this series? And you can see them listed here. We started off with the standards, of which we just posted one in the chat because that was a great question about verification.

We might get to go back to that one. How to have conversation that honor families experiencing homelessness, and then certainly where we went today with those connections to community. But a couple of more ways we want to stay in touch. How many of you know about MyPeers? If you're not in our MyPeers community, you're missing out on a hip-hop happening hot spot. We want you to come visit. You can go to the ECLKC, and certainly [Inaudible] there are many public groups in terms of this topic. Our city manager's coordinators, that's one of the groups that where this conversation comes up a lot. Glad so many of you know about MyPeers, and one of our colleagues who's actually on the line, Dr. Ernestine Brown, runs the PFCE

Deepening Practice community with each of you, and on our behalf, we jump in every once in a while when we can say, "Hey, we're working on this thing. You guys might be interested in it.

Though, if you're not part of that, come on over, because you guys are sharing a whole lot of good stuff — forms, policy, questions. It's just a cool way to stay in touch. Social media really for us, kind of specific to what we're doing in Head Start. And guys, do you know about this? Have you — have you heard? Have you heard about our new service, text for Family Services? I'm just watching to see because this is kinda new, so if you haven't heard about it, I want to show you how sign up, because guess what?

You get texts right to your cell phone — two of them per month. So we don't want a pester you, you know, we know how busy you are, but it's kind of like these cool little reminders about, "Hey, check out this thing. We have a resource on relationship building," or "Hey, here's some cool research that you might be interested in in all of your family expertise [Inaudible]." You can see a little bit about the things that you're going to get two times a month, and to register, check it out and we'll leave this up here. You can go do it now Text us. Am I commercial? Is this good? Bargain basement prices! Text PFCE to 2 2 6 6 0. That's all you've got to do. Come on over. Sign up.

This is one of the ways that we're trying to keep in touch as a community, share tips and tricks, and, you know, kind of hold each other up as we're doing all of this good work together, which I think is the theme of today, right? Together. We're in it together. So with that, we want to say thank you so much for spending these moments with us, and before you leave, I want to say a very, very deep and intense — I just don't even have the words — gratitude for Larae, for Ben, for Chris, our federal leaders, Kirsten, Rachel and Bernie, certainly for my colleague, Miss Jennifer. You guys, we didn't get to introduce her, but the one and only Nina [Inaudible] has been helping us stay on track with all techno issues.

So gratitude for everyone you got to hear speak today. Gratitude for each of you for choosing to spend a part of your day with us.