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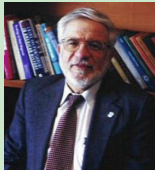
The Green Issue



The Normative Times

The NAFI/NFI Community Newsletter

Dr. Bakal's Corner



Last November, Dr. Bakal received the Juvenile Justice Leadership Award for the Citizens for Juvenile Justice., a non-profit, state-wide organization working exclusively to improve the juvenile justice system in Massachusetts. We asked him his thoughts on this recent honor and he was kind enough to share with us the speech he gave at the CFJJ awards ceremony. After being introduced by Susan Wayne, founder and member of CFJJ, Dr. Bakal shared the following thoughts:

Thank you for your kind introduction and to the board of Directors and staff of the CFJJ for this honor. I did not expect it.

In fact, when Nancy Grossman first informed me about the board decision to choose me as the honoree for this prestigious award, my reaction was one of shock and surprise. I found myself even protesting the decision: Why me? And what did I do to deserve this special tribute? I am too familiar with the saying, "No good deed goes unpunished." So I was wondering what "bad" deeds I've committed to deserve such a reward?

Being a member of the helping profession, I realized that I was basically feeling guilty to be receiving such an honor because I receive so much great satisfaction from doing what I do. Working in this field is demanding, challenging, at times even frustrating, and requires a lot of commitment. Yet it has a great many built-in rewards, rewards that come from the ability to help people grow and thrive.

The most spectacular changes

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The Community-Based Collaborative

By Kristen Taylor, Director of Evidence Based Services, NAFI Connecticut

Prior to last year's NAFI/NFI Annual Conference, a group of dedicated employees who operate a variety of home-based and community-based services across the agency's regions, began discussing how they could systematically share their approaches, experiences and outcomes. Under the leadership of Jim Isenberg, they convened at the conference and formed the Community Based Collaborative Committee to achieve two common goals. The first is to develop a day long forum to share struggles, successes and lessons learned in the implementation of community-based services. The Committee's second goal is to develop marketing strategies specific to community-based care during a time when contractors are shifting the focus from congregate to home-based care. At their kick-off meeting, they recognized that the agency's vast experience delivering outreach and tracking, wraparound, evidence-based and foster care services is well worth cataloguing and

sharing, particularly focusing on safety, training and staffing needs. In the planning and implementation of the up-coming forum, the group hopes to establish a norm of collaboration between regions, thereby sharing resources, experiences and ultimately allowing us to deliver the best services to our kids and families.

Currently, representatives from each NAFI/NFI region have been meeting monthly to plan the Community Based Forum (CBF), scheduled for September. It will offer workshops and discussions relevant to community-based care that will provide NAFI/NFI employees with a broader and deeper understanding of our approaches, including the various outcomes we are achieving across the regions. As we develop these understandings, we believe new doors will open for collaboration and marketing opportunities. Look for more details about the CBF in an upcoming *Normative Times*.

Defran EvolvCS System Set-up Stimulates Great Discussion

By Chris Gagnon, NAFI Comptroller

Progress on the Defran EvolvCS software implementation project has been steady and significant, promising a powerful tool that will improve our current practices and lead us toward increased high quality client care. In addition to all of the excitement and opportunities generated by the launching of an electronic client management and billing system, one of the most wonderful effects of this process has been the coming together of the NAFI/NFI regions to dialog, compare and discuss client treatment practices, terminology and contract obligations. People all over NAFI/NFI are talking about what they are doing, how they know what they are doing works, and how they can do that better. And, we are talking to each other. Currently, we are focused on preparing for the setup of treatment planning, case management and incident reporting modules in the system by discussing how each region undergoes treatment planning and service delivery and their practices around incident reporting. Below, is a snapshot of some other recent activities and conversations.

Critical Training

Each of the Rollout I corporations, NFI Massachusetts, NFI Vermont and NFI North, completed a 3-day, train-the-trainer session detailing the client management features of the Evolv system. The sessions were led by Ron Parks, the Training and Support Manager at Defran. Ron utilized training materials he created specifically for NAFI/NFI and took our training teams through all aspects of client management; from the basics of system navigation, through the enrollment, update and discharge process. Our training teams are using these materials and knowledge to train end users on how to enter and maintain clients in the system. Feedback for these training sessions was very positive and prompted great questions about ways to improve the system setup.

EvolvCS and HIPAA

One of the most important aspects of any electronic record containing client information is to ensure proper use and security of the

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Defran Stimulates Great Discussions *continued from page 1*

information. We purchased EvolvCS with utmost confidence about its HIPAA compliance, but, ensuring that we use it appropriately and establish appropriate policies is a critical task for our team. For this reason, Dan Nakamoto called a meeting of the NAFI/NFI Privacy Committee to discuss any concerns about access and security safeguards and what role the Regional Privacy/Security Officers will have with the software. In addition, Mary Thornton, our HIPAA consultant, attended the meeting and provided her expertise on the subject. Many ideas were generated about how to ensure agency-wide HIPAA compliance, prompting the formation of a workgroup to continue the discussion and begin creating solutions. The workgroup will begin meeting at the end of March.

EvolvCS and CP&I

The Crisis Prevention and Intervention (CP&I) Standing Committee is comprised of representatives from all NAFI/NFI regions who meet periodically to provide oversight and support to our organization's crisis prevention and physical management prac-

tices. Among other things, Committee members review our curriculum to ensure consistency across regions, share best practices, approve any changes or additions necessary to serve special populations and ensure each region has an adequate number of trainers. A key objective is to have a strong crisis management program capable of reducing and ultimately eliminating the need for physical restraints in our programs. The CP&I Committee recognized that the EvolvCS system had the capacity to track physical management activities across all NAFI/NFI regions, thus providing new opportunities to analyze data, look at trends and, moving forward, implement measures that will improve performance across regions. At a recent CP&I meeting, Kristina Boldebeck, Director of Research and Quality Management for NFI Massachusetts and an Evolv Implementation Project Leader, joined the group to demonstrate the system's functionality and begin the work of choosing design options that will help the Committee in its work.

Rollout II Preparation

The Rollout II corporations, NAFI and NAFI Connecticut, have begun prepara-

tions for the launch of Rollout II, scheduled for the end of March. Each Regional workgroup, which include CT, RI, FL, NY and MD/VA, have begun reviewing training materials provided by Defran, that provide the system knowledge required to make informed decisions about system setup. The NAFI corporate workgroup here in Danvers has met several times already and has more sessions scheduled. The group learning atmosphere has provided us with a safe environment to ask questions and navigate around in the system. The time spent on these exercises not only improves our software skills, it strengthens our working relationships. Even at this stage of the implementation, I have learned a lot from the questions and insights by our workgroup members.

Each day seems to bring to light a new connection or opportunity for thoughtful discussion and a chance for improvement in our client care. I look forward to continuing these discussions and helping each region maximize the benefit of this new software.

Dr. Bakal's Corner *continued from page 1*

that occurred in Massachusetts happened in the 1970's when the institutions were closed and we ushered in a new era of working with youth. No longer were we preoccupied with merely controlling and confining young people away from their home communities. The Massachusetts reform was hailed a great success by supporters and condemned by those who predicted that all hell would break loose and that youth violence would increase dramatically. These were challenging times, confusing times, and despite the predictions of doom, the Massachusetts Experiment became a shining example of

reform that succeeded.

My commitment to deinstitutionalization continued throughout the 1980's and 1990's in the form of combating institutional abuse and the reckless disregard for children at-risk. I've collaborated with other leaders in the field on the national level through class action suits and court proceedings to change these juvenile justice systems. On another level, through the NAFI/NFI organization, I've also worked to enrich the level and breadth of community-based programming as an antidote to confinement. My hope is that we have encouraged reform-minded indi-

viduals an opportunity to provide a more effective and humane approach for youth in trouble.

Looking back at the years since the closing of institutions and the work that I have been associated with, I would like to make the following observations:

Despite changes and progress, we still see widespread institutional abuse in many states. There are many large institutions where youth are being warehoused. For example, while the large institutional system in California is on its way out, you still find plenty of prisons for youth in Florida, Texas, and many other

states. As a nation, we are still enamored with building large facilities that are essentially confining youth. Despite good intentions, these places turn into places of neglect where cycles of violence occur at the hands of staff who only wish to control the behavior of their residents. I visited many of these facilities as an expert witness during the 1980's and 1990's. Too often, these institutional systems became abusive. The preoccupation with order and control overtook the mission to rehabilitate them.

In today's juvenile justice world, we are too focused on creating labels and diagnoses. These labels end up becoming

Dr. Bakal's Corner *continued from page 2*

an instrument of control that reduces the capacity to intervene and understand peoples' problems. Terms such as sex offenders, super predators, fire setters, etc. become frightening, only reducing our ability to connect. The label and the diagnosis become a self fulfilling prophecy for the youth, but also for those whose role it is to help them.

Let me share a story that illustrates this point. In one of these states whose practice of locking up kids in institutions was being challenged, I visited a newly built, 80-bed secure facility for violent juvenile offenders. I was there in the capacity of an expert witness. After evaluating the profiles of these residents, it became evident to me that they were warehousing young people with only minor offenses. Nevertheless, they were proud of the building which was a state-of-the-art facility with a very sophisticated alarm system and all kind of electronic monitoring devices. During my visit, and to the chagrin of those in charge of the facility, they discovered that two 16 year-old boys were missing. After a search, the institutional staff realized that these youth had escaped by essentially outwitting their highly sophisticated and expensive security system. I must say that while they looked shocked and bewildered at how this AWOL occurred, I found myself secretly admiring the ingenious methods these young people used to break out. I learned later on that they had carefully studied the institutional

structure, the staff routine, the head counts, and discovered the weaknesses in the administrative tactics.

They discovered that they could hide in the dropped ceiling and then sneak out in an area that was not supervised, running away unnoticed. And again, while the officials were fretting about the evil acts of these young perpetrators, I was secretly admiring the cleverness of their plan. But most of all, I was saddened by the senseless cat and mouse game played by the officials and the youth. In the process, the institutional staff completely underestimated the young people's ingenious way of tackling the puzzle of this prison. It would have been so much more beneficial if these efforts had gone into building relationships and helping these young people find a better way to use their intelligence for their own personal growth and development.

I have another short story to share with you, a story that helps to remind me of the purpose of our work and give me hope. This is a story about John. One early morning in 2003 I was in Boston having a quick breakfast before a meeting when I was approached by a person in his early 40's, asking if I was Dr. Yitzhak. After acknowledging that I was, he immediately reminded me that he had been in our agency's care almost 25 years earlier. Once he told me his name, a flood of memories came back. I remembered a troubled delinquent teenager, 16 years of age, with whom

we had worked very intensely. He was a homeless youngster, who was constantly running from the foster homes we placed him in, engaged in stealing cars, breaking into homes, drinking and drug dealing. I remember that despite all our efforts to help him change his ways, he was determined to get into trouble, again and again. It was as if we were in a race against time. Could we save him from a life of crime before the police convicted him? Since he was still young, we were able to convince the courts to be patient but it was to no avail. One day he disappeared. We assumed that we had failed.

As I struggled to link the face of this now middle-aged man to the 16 year-old I so vividly remembered, he told me what had happened to him since he left our agency. Listening to his account, it was obvious to me that this was not a clear-cut success story: he had been arrested a number of times and served jail sentences. He had gotten married, and then divorced, twice. But then things changed. He proudly explained that he had been in a stable job for the last eight years, working as a chef at a small restaurant at the airport. Although he still struggled from time to time, he hadn't had any major conflict with the law. When I asked why he wasn't at work, he said that he'd taken the day off to go to a Red Sox game with his 16 year-old son. He was proud of his son's accomplishments and said he talked to him regularly about his schooling, and staying away

“Even when we think we've failed, the impact of what we do can emerge years later.”

from negative crowds. He told me that he cherishes spending time with him. He reminded me of the talks we had those many years ago, and how instructive they were. And then, with a smile on his face, he said that now he talks with his son the same way.

This story illustrates to me how, even when we think we've failed, the impact of what we do can emerge years later, and disrupt the intergenerational cycle of neglect and delinquency. This is what sustains me in my work with young people and what makes the work of those of you in this field so important. Thank you.



Notes From All Over—GREEN ideas, tips and stories from across the NAFI/NFI Landscape

April 22 is Earth Day and in honor of that and our agency's commitment to treating our planet with the same dignity and respect we afford each other, we are using this issue's Notes From All Over column to share with you some green tips and strategies sent in by various members of the NAFI/NFI community. Thanks to everyone who responded to our request for Going Green stories!


NAFI Connecticut:

Running major appliances (dishwasher, washer, dryer) after 8 p.m. can really save money in electricity costs. - Suzanne M. Beaudoin, Individual Support and Tress Road Group Home

Check out **ChangeTheMargins.com**. Change your default margins on your computer to .75 in to save paper, money, trees. - Ann Naughton

Our science class is doing a community service project on recycling and went to a third grade class here in town to teach a lesson on environmental concerns and recycling. It was a great success. These students are now also circulating a petition on campus to have a recycling bin brought here. - Marilyn Robinson, Touchstone

Use the 2-1 setting on all copying projects and use 50% less paper, saving a ton of trees. Also, using a washable cup/mug/glass instead of individual plastic water bottles is an easy change to incorporate. - Amy Lefebvre Director of Training and Development

Amy Lefebvre has asked us in CT to put this phrase on all of our emails. Perhaps this could be an agency wide suggestion:  Please consider the environment before printing this email. - Hildy Paris, NAFI CT

NFI MA:

Please log on to learn more about conserving and recycling rain water for household uses:

www.rainbarrelguide.com/
Tracy Strykowski, Systems Admin

In 2006, a few months after I started working at **Northeast Diversion**, I implemented a recycling program and we now recycle all sorts of things: paper, plastics, glass and cans! Also, just recently one of the program nurses (Ilana Boyd) has begun to use washable cups when giving out meds. Go Diversion! - Patti Wong, Northeast Diversion

The residents of a small town called Williams, AZ, with a population of less than 2,000, saved 10,000 gallons a year by simply shutting the water off after dampening their toothbrushes and brushing their teeth with the water off. - Paula Buckley

At **45 Broadway**, we have begun **recycling** all our paper, cardboard, plastics, and ink cartridges. We return them to Staples for \$3 coupons, which we use to buy discounted supplies. We also use **energy saver light bulbs** whenever possible. I also try to make sure we buy recycled copier paper whenever we can. We encourage clients to return cans. Our director, Dawn, arranged for all of our clients to go to the psychiatrist on the same day and now we **carpool** rather than make 16 separate trips to the doctor. We also encourage clients to use public transport. - Grace Humphrey, 45 Broadway

Alliance House has and will continue to recycle. We have the town recycle bins for plastic as well as cans. - Jennifer Safran, Alliance House

Shelter Care will be starting a school paper product recycling project. We will start with 72 milk cartons a day. My hope is that as we incorporate other paper items, we can track the weight, etc. to make a determination of monetary savings, etc. through math class. We already recycle soda cans and have for as long as I can recall. - Melisa Whithed, Shelter Care

Here are a few things I do/try to do to help keep our planet sustainable: **Less Plastic!** Plastics are forever and accumulate all over the planet. According to articles such as <http://www.mindfully.org/Plastic/Ocean/Ocean-Plastic-Landfill-Algalita1nov02.htm>, "For the last 50+ years, every piece of plastic that has made it from our shores to the Pacific Ocean, has been breaking down and accumulating in the central Pacific gyre." I try not to buy anything in plastic bottles-- I re-use glass ones instead, and bring my own container for morning coffee, etc. I try to purchase things with as little plastic packaging as possible, and re-use all the plastic bags and containers I can; when shopping **use cloth bags**-- you'd be surprised, but 1 cloth bag can save up to 5 plastic ones, and they're very durable and convenient; **carpool**, walk or bike, and take public transportation whenever possible; **Plant a garden** and grow your own vegetables in the summer and in the winter buy produce that is locally grown; try **making your own compost** and use it as fertilizer, and don't use pesticides. Chemical fertilizers and pesticides are pretty horrible for the environment, and for your body; try to **'flush selectively'** at home to minimize water consumption. Not recommended for the faint of heart, but it does help the planet!;

shut off the lights and turn off power strips when not in use. Even appliances on 'stand-by' can waste a lot of energy; be mindful of **water usage** when washing the dishes, brushing teeth, etc; **use vinegar** instead of chemical cleaners! Go to <http://www.vinegartips.com/> for some of the 1001 awesome and inventive uses for vinegar; **use as little paper as possible:** sticky notes, selective printing, use re-usable sponges, rags and cloth towels rather than paper towels; **Air-dry clothes** in the summer; **use rechargeable batteries;** I minimize my beef consumption as it's neither good for me nor for the environment (see <http://www.emagazine.com/view/?142>); And of course, try to remember to **recycle**. - Marsha Gershon, Respite Care

NFI North:

Bridge Crossing has always recycled our returnable cans and bottles and have added newspapers, computer paper, any non-shredded paper and ink cartridges. We use plastic shopping bags to line bathroom and hallway waste baskets. We have recycling bins for cardboard and plastics or for cans that are not returnable, we send to the recycling center. We also send all of our old quilts and blankets to a local animal shelter to be re-used. - Jennette Lyons, Counselor, Bridge Crossing

The **Contoocook School** has been recycling for well over a year. Our PE instructor, **Carlie Wardell**, also arranges the community service schedule, and makes sure the recyclables are taken to the transfer station. This includes plastics, papers and cans. We also strive to use environmentally friendly cleaning products.- Rita M. Blanchard, RN, Contoocook School

Notes From All Over—GREEN ideas, tips and stories from across the NAFI/NFI Landscape

NAFI Rhode Island:

At ACE, there have been numerous efforts being made towards "going green." In conjunction with the Educational Coordinator, [Maryanne McIntyre](#), I taught a lesson on climate change and global warming with my students. We watched the movie *An Inconvenient Truth* and the students became aware that even simple, everyday changes will, in fact, make a difference. I also attended a seminar at the Rhode Island Recycling Center along with [Julie Henry](#), teacher at [Oakland Beach](#). Together, we learned about energy saving strategies and projects, such as making solar heated ovens with our students, as ways to conserve energy and have fun at the same time! ACE also began recycling cans and plastic bottles - [Danielle Jackson](#), [Alternatives](#)

Some people at [Alternatives](#) laugh at the ways I try to save the environment. I use real dishes rather than styrofoam or paper products for food and drinks at work. I try to use both sides of paper whenever possible whether I am copying documents or even printing out originals. Often other people in my program give me paper (which has been printed on only one side) that they are going to throw away. I use this "recycled" paper multiple times a day, for example, when I print out documents that only I will be using or need paper on which to write. I bring home shredded paper, small cardboard items (e.g., paper towel tubes), and even the small paper envelopes protecting tea bags in order to recycle them. If I notice that our program is receiving multiple (as many as a dozen!) copies of the same brochure, I call up the company that sent out the brochure and request

that the names of those people who no longer work at [Alternatives](#) be removed from the mailing list. Currently, I am bringing my empty yogurt containers to work (which my home town does not recycle), which will be used as plant pots for a program fundraiser later this year. - [Lynne Belle](#), [Alternatives](#)



One person can make a small dent in the overflowing landfills without an enormous effort. Once you establish a system it is pretty effortless. Reusing various items that would be otherwise thrown away can work in conjunction with recycling to effectively manage paper and other items that can then be kept out of landfills. In the office or home, reuse a box or carton that contained office supplies such as folders, or paper, etc. to hold clean, non-confidential paper waste. Use the cover of the box or wrap with twine to keep the paper from flying around if you put it out on the curb for collection. A shredder can be used for junk mail, envelopes, credit card receipts and confidential materials which can then be emptied into paper grocery bags and tied with twine or placed in a carton. Bind newspapers with twine or place in a paper grocery bag for recycling. In the car, use a small or medium size paper envelope for paper waste. In the trunk of the car, place a bag or box to hold empty cans or bottles.

Cloth shopping bags are inexpensive and sturdy for carry-

ing groceries or other items. Keep some in the house and some in the car and office to have them available for use. Kitchen recycling can be as simple as having a brown paper bag in a cabinet or closet. Inside a bathroom cabinet, use a small or medium brown paper gift bag with twine handles for recycling items such as toilet paper tubes, wrappers, toothpaste boxes, toothbrush package cardboard, etc. Gather everything up once a week and place it on the curb. - [Susan Giblin](#), [MA, LMHC, NAFI RI Network](#)

NFI Vermont:

In order to conserve paper, I try to make 2-sided copies whenever possible. - [Krista Reincke](#), intern at the [NFI VT Family Center](#)

NAFI Corp:

NAFI/NFI does not have a recycling program available here in Danvers for anything other than paper. I volunteered to take the recyclable products to my home on recycling day (every two weeks or so) and recycle them with my own recycling. I have been recycling for many years now. I have brought up my children to know the importance of recycling and to respect the earth we live in. At home, we have changed from using styrofoam plates to biodegradable paper plates, we rinse out the cups (the red plastic ones) from parties, along with plastic utensils (if possible) and recycle those also. We recycle the grocery store bags and any other plastic bags we can by taking them back to the store and putting them in the recycling container they have available. I have purchased the cloth grocery bags from the grocery store to carry home my groceries to cut down on the use of plastic. As part of trying to conserve en-

ergy, we have changed 85% of the lighting in my home to energy saving light bulbs. Not crazy about them, but again, every little bit helps! - [Sharon Bogdan](#), [Human Resources](#)

During after hours, if you don't need to work on your computer put it on standby or hibernate mode. If you are going out for lunch or a meeting, make sure to turn off your monitor as well as put your computer in sleep mode, standby or hibernate mode. - [Arjun Vyas](#), [IT Manager](#)

I founded an organization that recycles used and surplus building materials for low income families in the Greater Boston area. - [Dan Nakamoto](#), [Exec Director of Admin & Finance](#)

"One person can make a small dent in the overflowing landfills without an enormous effort. Once you establish a system it is pretty effortless."

Jonathan Hauslaib, Behavior Analyst and So Much More

By Lynn Bishop, Assistant Executive Director, NAFI Connecticut

Jonathan Hauslaib, NAFI CT's Director of Behavioral Health Service, is a true asset to our Continuum of Services. Jonathan came to NAFI in the spring on 2004 with 30 (!) years of experience working in the non-profit field. Over the years, he has been trained as a behavior analyst and has touched and changed the lives of many utilizing his unique skills and influential personality. At the time he joined the NAFI CT team, we had a single group home for adolescent boys with developmental disabilities. Fortunately for us and those in need across the state, with Jonathan's leadership, commitment and his passionate desire to provide more services for more people, we now have four group homes, including specialty sites working with Autistic and developmentally delayed youth, and have branched out to begin working with adults in the community.

"Papa Smurf", as he is affectionately known to the rest of our team, has put us on the group home map in Connecticut as a result of his success working with very challenging individuals. His "never say no", can-do attitude has not only had a major impact on our agency's continued growth and expansion, but more importantly on the lives of many people and their families to experience life in more normative and supportive settings. We look forward to continued growth and success with Jonathan as a integral part of the NAFI Connecticut team and community.

WHAT IS THE EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT?

In future editions of *The Normative Times*, we will highlight employees who are doing extraordinary things within the NAFI/NFI community.

This month, we are pleased to feature **Jonathan Hauslaib**, NAFI CT's Director of Behavioral Health and all-around group home dynamo, as well as **Dania O'Connor**, the new, creative and hard charging Regional Director of the Mid-Atlantic region. We hope you enjoy learning more about each of these valued NAFI/NFI employees.

In future editions of *The Normative Times*, we will continue to use our undercover network of helpful "spies" to ferret out deserving individuals but would also love to hear your nominations for the Employee Spotlight section. Please email jilldichiara@nafi.com if you have a person or team of people you'd like to have *The Normative Times* recognize. Thanks!!

Mid-Atlantic's New Regional Director Comes Full Circle by Joining NAFI

By Dania O'Connor, NAFI Mid-Atlantic Regional Director

It's funny how life can come full circle. My story is this: From 1985-1987, I spent my days at the School of Social Work at Columbia University and had the pleasure of being in a class taught by Howard W. Polsky. In that class, I read the book, "*Reforming Corrections for Juvenile Offenders*" authored by our own Dr. Yitzhak Bakal. Lo and Behold, 21 years later, where do I find myself? Sitting in a job interview with a company I wished I had started!

After leaving Columbia, I worked in California at a long-term residential program for delinquent boys. During the next seven years, I met my husband, moved back to New Hampshire and had four children. It was during this time I started working for the "other side"...inpatient hospitalization for children and adolescents. Along the way, I found myself creating more and more programs that allowed kids to stay home and receive the services they needed while living WITH their families. In 2001, I left the field professionally to focus on my own teenagers and to work for my church, which brings us to the present. Now I am doing exactly what I have wanted to do all my life—thanks to the passion and commitment of Dr. Bakal—with this wonderful agency, NAFI/NFI.

I am thrilled to be a part of NAFI/NFI, working to provide alternative services for those in need, and parenting four wonderful kids of my own: Taylor is in college for psychology at Michigan State University; Sarah is graduating high school in May and will attend James Madison University in the fall to be an Elementary Math Teacher; Alex is soon to be 16 and driving, and is a serious athlete (football, wrestling and lacrosse) and Dylan is 13...meaning his main interests are still Madden 08 and playing real football. My husband, also a social worker, shares my passion and currently coaches youth football and works with chronically mentally ill adults in our community.

I have spent my first months here getting a "lay of the land", so to speak, and now as I look toward my future at NAFI, I am hopeful we will accomplish great things, including the creation of more community-based, wraparound alternatives for our Baltimore programs, establishing more NAFI partnerships in MD and VA, and even venturing into DC.



The O'Connor's in a recent family photo