Kinship Care Month
September 2015
Strategies for State Action

Why pursuing state recognition of Kinship Care Month is an important step in engaging policymakers and the community, and how to successfully advocate for legislative and executive proclamations.

Brought to you by:

[Logos for CWLA, New York State Kinship Navigator, and National Kinship Alliance for Children]
**Introduction**

**Kinship Care Month** is both a celebration and an advocacy strategy. It is a well-deserved opportunity to hold events that acknowledge the tremendous contributions of kinship families and to provide outreach to the kinship community. It is also an opportunity to educate policy makers. There is a great need for more programs and policies that support children being raised in kinship families, especially informal kinship families. Promoting September as Kinship Care Month is a marketing opportunity for educating legislatures and governors about kinship families and their needs.

Action by state legislatures and state governors is a simple measure that costs no money nor requires complicated legislation. Supporting proclamations in honor of kinship families opens the door for the dialogue that must begin. A dialogue that begins with the premise that children raised in kinship care must be afforded the supports and services they require to live safe and fulfilling lives. A proclamation is a way for legislators and governors to say they are listening and that the citizenry of their state appreciates and honors the commitment and sacrifices of kinship families. A simple voice vote in the legislatures can yield a proclamation or the stroke of a pen can create a gubernatorial executive proclamation.

We will show you how to approach your legislators and Governor and the materials you will need to convince them of the importance of joining other states in a national movement to proclaim September as National Kinship Care Month. By approaching them with concise information about demographics, kinship stories, and famous kinship caregivers, it is relatively easy to gain their support.

*We hope that you’ll agree that this approach can move the cause of kinship families forward, and that you’ll join the movement.*
If you’re interested in partnering with us, we’d like to know! Use the resources in this booklet to start effecting change in your state, and we will do whatever we can to support your efforts. Upon request, we can send printed copies of this booklet, a pdf file or an e-file. Also available is a version of this booklet entitled, “Kinship Care Month: Celebrating a National Resource”, which is suitable for presentation to legislators, policy makers, and others. Printed copies and ribbons are available in limited quantities. Let us know about other ideas or suggestions you’ve found to be helpful in your pursuit of this goal, and we will pass it along. Contact us at kinshipcaremonth@gmail.com.

To support your work,
we've put together a brief guide, along with supporting documents:

1. How Virginia and New York worked to get their resolutions/declarations
2. Suggested action steps
3. Sample fact sheet profiling kinship families
4. Estimated number of kinship families in each state
5. Example of a kinship family story
6. Three Sample op-eds
7. Ways to engage social media for promotion
8. Sample resolution/declaration
   Links to state resolutions
   • Virginia
   • New York
   • South Dakota
   • Vermont
9. Famous kinship caregivers and kinship children
10. Kinship Month web sites, link to listserv, contact information
10. Selected Bibliography
The strategy for securing a Governor’s proclamation is about relationships. In Virginia, we have usually worked through the Virginia Department of Social Services. We send them the proclamation about 4-6 months in advance, because there are multiple layers of approvals that the proclamation must go through to be sure the data is correct, the message is politically appropriate, and the administration supports the proclamation. We have utilized data from the most recent census reports and find it helps to attach that actual report to the requested proclamation. Here in Virginia we have a Program Manager responsible for Kinship so we start there. In some states, you may need to contact your Department of Child Welfare’s Division responsible for Family Preservation, Foster Care, or Kinship Care.

This past year, we embarked on a different strategy. It is our overarching goal to secure greater support from the General Assembly, our legislative branch, for kinship care. As in many states, our General Assembly has long taken the position that funding for kinship care is not a priority, because it is the family’s role to support the children of the family. We are working to change that mind set by working with targeted legislators with a high population of kinship caregivers. This year we engaged a legislator in the proclamation, because we needed her to have a legislative success for kinship caregivers. We believe that legislative success gathers more supporters for our issues. She was pleased to secure the Governor’s Proclamation for us and is now asking us what more can she do legislatively to address the needs of kinship caregivers. It is important to note that she has a district with an active kinship caregiver presence and she herself is very committed to the issue.

The other bonus is she is of the same party as our Governor and has some influence within his office.

We are now working with her to develop focus groups in her district to enlighten her on the full breadth of the kinship issue for her constituents. In addition, we have asked that she help us engage her legislative caucus in meeting with kinship caregivers in their districts. Our end goal for this involvement, other than to enhance kinship caregiver support, is to develop the kinship advocacy network so that we will have a large constituency willing to participate in a Kinship Advocacy Day next legislative session.

Lesson from us: A Proclamation is only a vehicle for raising awareness, but it is an important first step in coalition building.
In New York State, the goal was to raise the awareness of the community as well as policy makers to the great work being done by kinship caregivers and start advocating for needed reforms to support them in their work. The NYS Kinship Navigator and its director led the effort to declare September as Kinship Care Month.

Since 2006, the Navigator had provided leadership for the NYS KinCare Coalition, and their joint efforts resulted in numerous statutory changes, as well as child welfare and temporary assistance regulator and policy directive changes. With this experience in dealing with the legislature, the NYS kinship community felt confident that they could approach the legislature with this simple request. With the help of a federal Children’s Bureau demonstration project grant, the Navigator was able to spend time coordinating and spearheading the effort. This grant provided funds for numerous coalition building and advocacy efforts.

In October 2013, the Navigator hosted a statewide KinCare Summit, and published a report making recommendations for further improvements. One recommendation was the establishment of September as Kinship Care Month and included a sample resolution that you can see in the following pages.

Beginning in January 2014, the Navigator and KinCare Coalition members met with legislative leadership. In both the Assembly and Senate, representatives listened and soon agreed to pass resolutions in both house. Resolutions were passed in March and the Navigator’s director and invited kinship caregivers received an ovation on the floor of the legislative bodies.

In August 2014, the Navigator’s director met with the state child welfare (Office of Children and Family Services) commissioner and later that month with senior representatives of the Governor, and on September 2, Governor Cuomo declared September as Kinship Care Month. Soon afterwards, the Office of Children and Family commissioner and senior staff attended a celebration of Kinship Care Month. OCFS purchased and handed out over 5000 yellow ribbon pins that said “Kinship Care Month” on them – and the kinship community was able to wear them proudly as a method to start conversations with others and raise awareness.

Over fifteen events were held across the state by local kinship care organizations. Ranging from picnics to celebration events, local kinship groups promoted the passing of kinship care month in style. Later that month, at the Child Welfare League of America National Kinship Conference, leadership agreed to work nationally to have other states pass resolutions, with the ultimate aim of a national proclamation.
1. Participate in the CWLA Webinar on Kinship Care Month
   This webinar presentation describes how Virginia and New York kinship advocates succeeded in getting proclamations declaring September as Kinship Care Month, and offers sample resolutions and strategies for similar efforts in other states. CWLA, the National Kinship Alliance for Children, the NYS Kinship Navigator, and others are working to create a grassroots campaign where more states declare September as Kinship Care Month, with the eventual goal of a national declaration.

   Given the need to increase the recognition of kinship families in order to gather support for policies/practices that remove barriers to successful outcomes for kinship children, this webinar fits into a larger effort aimed at promoting Kinship Care Month as a vehicle for greater public attention to kinship families.

   Join Cate Newbanks, director of the National Kinship Alliance for Children, and Gerard Wallace, Esq., director of the NYS Kinship Navigator and public service professor at the University of Albany School of Social Welfare for a "how to" session about state action promoting Kinship Care Month.

   Date and Time: February, 2015

2. Join CWLA Monitor to receive updates on CWLA actions
   The Children's Monitor, a public policy update published by CWLA, has moved to a blog format. At its inception the Monitor was a printed piece, but for most of the last decade has been an electronic newsletter, delivered weekly while Congress is in session. In order to provide more timely updates to our readers—who are legislators and aides, leaders of think tanks and child-serving agencies, frontline workers and everyday advocates—the Monitor will now publish as a blog. Subscribers will receive weekly e-mails with Monitor headlines and links to full articles from CWLA on Friday afternoons.

   New subscribers can send an email to ChildrensMonitor@cwla.org to request the Friday digest and periodic policy alerts. You can also visit the new Monitor page to read recent posts. On the right-hand column of the page there is an option to subscribe to the Children's Monitor blog updates as they are posted, directly from Wordpress.com.

3. Join kinship supporters on a national listserv to receive updates from communities across the nation
   By joining the national listserv, you will immediately be connected to the largest nationwide network of Kinship supporters and stakeholders, receiving monthly updates and relevant information about issues concerning Kinship Care. Hear news and stories from around the country on the actions and successes of other programs, and even share your own report to the listserv or to CWLA on your region’s updates.

   You can sign up for the listserv here: http://web.wnylc.com/cgi-bin/mailman/listinfo/kinship

4. Engage kinship advocates, legislators, and governors
   Identifying and engaging kinship advocates is an important step toward reaching your goal. Be sure to engage kinship families by giving them a platform to tell their stories and share their voice. Once you’ve gotten advocates on board, do some basic research of your state’s local government and decide which members of the legislature to contact. You can also contact the
to go, be sure to be prepared with information specific to your state about kinship care, and help your advocates prepare for what they want to say as well.

5. Present materials to your target legislator or governor
Being prepared to present your materials to your target legislator and their team is an important step in getting your cause heard correctly and accurately. Using some of the tools in this booklet can be useful to your presentation, so be sure to look through all of the resources we’ve compiled for you as you are preparing. It’s also important that you do research that’s relevant to your state and region. We will have links to resources you can look at for specific facts related to your region on another page in this booklet. As stated above, we also recommend that you include grandparents and other kinship caregivers in your presentation when possible, as it provides legislators with an opportunity to put a face to the numbers and facts we present. Utilizing the listserv and other resources to exchange ideas for your presentation is highly encouraged!

If you prefer, feel free to use other titles for Kinship Care Month that you feel reflect your state. For example, you could call your campaign “Kinship Care Month for Children” if you felt that was more specific and clarified your message.

6. Promote events in September
Important to having a Kinship Caregiver’s month is celebrating it! You want people in your state and region to know about it, so promote it! As a part of your planning and presentation process, be sure to include the events you have planned for the month of September to celebrate the hard work and effort that kinship caregivers put into raising children every day! We recommend writing op-ed articles for your local paper recognizing kinship caregivers, offering to attend press-conferences, setting up stories with your local television stations, and planning events like recognition picnics and other events to celebrate kinship caregivers. Ideas and successes can be shared through the listserv with others, and promotional materials are available for reproduction in this booklet. Be sure to see the social media page for ideas and graphics to support your cause on Facebook, Twitter, and other social media outlets.
Who are Kinship Families*?

Caregivers
- 2.7 million grandparents are primary caregivers for children living in their homes (Ellis & Simmons, 2014)
- The number of grandparent headed households has doubled since 1970 (Ellis & Simmons, 2014)
- Grandparents make up approximately 60% of all non-parent caregivers of children (Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics, 2013)
- Kinship caregivers are more likely to be:
  - poor
  - single
  - older
  - less educated
  - unemployed
  than families with at least one parent present in the household. (Annie E. Casey, 2012)
- Stress of caregivers - One study found close to 40% of caregivers have clinically high levels of stress (Center for Human Services Research, University at Albany)

Children
- One in ten of all children will live with a grandparent or other relative caregiver during their childhood (Annie E. Casey, 2012)
  - About 4% of minors (3 million), nationally, are cared for by grandparents (Livingston, 2013)
  - Children younger than 6 are the most likely to be in their grandparent’s care (Livingston, 2013)
- One in five of all Black children will live with a grandparent or other relative caregiver during their childhood (Annie E. Casey, 2012)
  - About 8% of all black children are cared for by grandparents (Livingston, 2013)
  - About 4% of all Latino children are cared for by grandparents (Livingston, 2013)
  - About 3% of all white children are cared for by grandparents (Livingston, 2013)
  - About 2% of all Asian children are cared for by grandparents (Livingston, 2013)

Despite challenges, kinship children do as well or better on many well-being measures in comparison to foster children (Annie E. Casey, 2012)

*Sources listed in Select Bibliography.
An analysis of the 2011-2013 ACS Census report

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* Estimates made based on how many grandparents were primary caretakers of grandchildren and multiplying that number based on data that suggest that grandparents make up 60% of kinship caregivers.
In 2012, Sandra was 48 and had raised two children of her own when, in spite of her better judgment, she allowed her step son Paul and his eight year old daughter Alyssa to move in with her. They had planned to stay with her for a few weeks while Paul searched for a job and an apartment. But a few weeks turned into four months, during which time Paul would leave home for days at a time leaving Sandra in charge of Alyssa. Sandra enrolled her in school and after-school activities. She made sure she did her homework and she assumed a caretaker’s role. Alyssa is diabetic. Her medication, which had been poorly monitored up to now, required constant attention as her insulin levels were completely out of control. Sandra enrolled Alyssa in Child Health Plus, got her to the doctor, and attended to her medication and diet – even making sure her school monitored her glucose levels during the day.

Alyssa’s health had improved, and she was doing better in school. As time passed, Alyssa and Sandra were growing attached to one another. Then Paul decided to take Alyssa to live with her mother in the Dominican Republic – and Alyssa was gone from Sandra’s life.

Sandra had no intention of interfering with Paul’s decisions. In the Dominican Republic, Alyssa’s mother, who had walked out on her once before, refused to take the child. A month later, Sandra got a call from an airline stewardess asking her to pick the young girl up at the airport. She called Paul and he plainly told her he was done being a parent and he wanted Alyssa to go into foster care unless Sandra would agree to care for her.

There were no other relatives willing to take Alyssa. Sandra felt manipulated and used by Paul, and contemplated turning Alyssa over to the foster care system.

But she didn’t. Instead she contacted NYC’s Family Center and with their help she petitioned Family Court for guardianship over Alyssa.

Alyssa was just one phone call away from entering foster care. A conservative estimate of what her care in the child welfare system would cost is $21,535 a year. Considering her significant health issues, that estimate could easily skyrocket. By contrast, the kinship staff attorney spent less than 20 hours, from intake to judgment, on Sandra’s application for guardianship. Additionally, Sandra has refused to apply for temporary assistance or any other subsidies.
New York has between 150,000 and 250,000 children living full time with kin. As many as 7,900 of these families reside in Monroe County. Kinship care, as it’s commonly termed, refers to caregiver grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins, adult siblings and even family friends. Nationally, more than 2.7 million children live with relatives. Most of these children are not in foster care; they are being cared for by non-parents outside the “formal” system. Almost all have suffered the loss of parents and homes.

This is the first year that New York will celebrate September as Kinship Care Month. The Legislature and the governor have issued proclamations marking September as the time to praise the virtues of kinship families and recognize their importance to New York’s vulnerable children.

September is also the month when National Grandparents Day is celebrated. Since about 60 percent of kinship caregivers are grandparents, the month is now a double celebration for many families with grandparent caregivers.

Kinship care isn’t a picnic. It’s a loving chore. Children live with their kin because of unfortunate circumstances. At the NYS Kinship Navigator, which is based in Rochester but serves the entire state, we hear from caregivers in New York City, Plattsburgh, Buffalo, and all points in between. Their stories are remarkably similar. Parents cannot parent, often because of drugs and alcohol, and family must step in quickly.

But the families are remarkably successful. A result that we credit to the determination and unconditional love of caregivers.

To meet kinship caregivers and to hear their stories is an altogether different thing, an incredible experience. The best of human nature is on display. Kinship advocates constantly talk about the near sainthood of caregivers. Just imagine a distressed and hurt child, who has been abused and neglected, coming suddenly into your home. And no special resources or help. Would you have the courage and perseverance to accept the challenge?

Well, if it was your kin, I’m confident you would. That’s the story of kinship care. And it’s a great story, filled with love and sacrifice. This month we can all remember someone who has volunteered to be a child’s caregiver and go thank them. That’s a common cause worth celebrating.
Our Nation’s Father and Our Foremost Kinship Caregiver

Kinship care isn’t new. It’s as American as apple pie. And there’s a good reason to make a commitment to recognizing kinship caregivers now, in conjunction with our first president’s birthday: because George Washington was a kinship caregiver.

The Father of our Nation had no children of his own. A fact interpreted in his lifetime as divine intervention, saving the young nation from a hereditary monarchy. However, he and Martha were not childless. George and Martha were caregivers to many orphaned nieces and nephews, and most notably to Martha’s grandchildren (and George’s step-grandchildren), Eleanor Parke “Nellie” Custis and George Washington Parke “Washy” Custis.

Martha’s first marriage to Daniel Parke Custis, a wealthy Virginian plantation owner, ended with his death in 1757, leaving Martha to raise their two children. Martha soon remarried to George Washington. Martha’s son John Parke Custis later became a Virginia state legislator and an officer in the Continental Army. At Yorktown, he died of “camp disease” (probably typhus) just after British General Cornwallis surrendered.

John Parke left behind four children. The two youngest, Nellie, two years, and Washy, seven months, were informally adopted and raised by George and Martha. George doted over Nellie, a vivacious and bright child but worried about Washy, who seemed to favor his undisciplined and spoiled father’s habits (Incidentally, years later Washy’s daughter, Mary Anna Custis, married General Robert E. Lee).

In 1789, both children came with the Washington’s to New York City, the nation’s first capitol, and lived in the first presidential manors on Cherry Street and then on Broadway near Trinity Church. When the capitol moved to Philadelphia, the kinship family lived in a mansion on Hill Street.

George and Martha were our first “first family” and foremost kinship family. Like other kinship families, then and now, they became caregivers because of tragedy - not uncommon in their times when so many now curable diseases cut short the lives of so many.

Today, kinship care is an indispensable ally of our child welfare system. Yet, these families face daunting obstacles, with very little supports. Their children have many of the same problems faced by foster children, including developmental disabilities, maltreatment, trauma, and loss. Additionally, the caregivers are older and poorer, and they must manage the intergenerational issues associated with the parents’ failure to parent successfully. Despite these obstacles, studies conclude that kinship homes provide as good if not better outcomes for children than foster care placements in the homes of strangers.

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Support of Kinship Care Vital

Imagine getting a call from the local social services department asking you to immediately become the caregiver for your 4-year-old granddaughter. Her mother’s been arrested, or the parent’s on drugs, or worse. What would you do? You would say, “Yes. I want my grandchild.” Because that’s what families do — care for their own.

Often the family makes the placement with no contact from social services. Contact or no contact, the circumstances are similar. Children who’ve suffered loss, who are injured in body, mind, or spirit, now need their kin to act as their parents.

Kinship care refers to the more than 150,000 New York children who live full time with grandparents, relatives and family friends. Their caregivers, who are frequently at or near income poverty levels, have multiple challenges — the additional costs of bringing children into their homes, the endless search for services, the fight to keep a family together, their own health needs, and planning a future for their children.

As shown by the well-known Adverse Childhood Experience (ACE) Study, multiple stressors in childhood can lead to crippling lifetime social, health and economic problems. Many kinship children, like most foster children, have experienced multiple stressors. They need special supports that reduce stress and address mental health needs. While kinship caregivers are determined and resilient, they shouldn’t have to do the job alone.

More than 95 percent of New York’s kinship children are not in foster care, although the reasons for their care are frequently similar to the reasons children enter foster care — parental abuse, neglect,

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Additionally, as the Adverse Childhood Experience study translates into increased policy attention on the destructive lifetime consequence of multiple childhood stressors, policy makers must pay greater attention to kinship children, who are quantitatively among the largest populations of children who’ve experienced multiple stress factors. Particular attention must be paid to their mental health needs and to assisting caregivers in reducing stress factors.

The New York State Kinship Navigator in partnership with local kinship programs provides support that helps to reduce these adverse factors. Local kinship programs provide a variety of direct services, focusing on advocacy, case management, support groups, and education, while the Navigator provides legal referral, information, virtual advocacy, and agency collaborations.

This year in recognition of our first “first family” and our foremost kinship caregiver, it’s time to support these families with the help that they deserve, first by havng the state recognize them, and then through reform and practical support.

Sample Op-Ed:

Written by Gerard Wallace, Esq.
Director, NYS Kinship Navigator
(Published in the Times Union – Albany, NY, on 9/25/14)

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As shown by the well-known Adverse Childhood Experience (ACE) Study, multiple stressors in childhood can lead to crippling lifetime social, health and economic problems. Many kinship children, like most foster children, have experienced multiple stressors. They need special supports that reduce stress and address mental health needs. While kinship caregivers are determined and resilient, they shouldn’t have to do the job alone.

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abandonment, incarceration, death, alcohol and substance abuse, mental illness and similar unfortunate circumstances. Yet despite the obstacles, child welfare experts agree that kinship homes offer the best resource for vulnerable children, providing resilience, continuity and unconditional love — qualities of care that can help even severely traumatized children overcome their fears. Kinship care is indeed an indispensable part of the child welfare system.

In a happy development for Kinship Care Month, the U.S. Senate finally came together on the last day of session in September and passed H. R. 4980, which contains third year of funding for seven kinship navigator demonstration projects, including one in New York. Passage avoids ceasing operation of the projects — a bipartisan gift for New York's Kinship Care Month.

Kinship caregivers will continue to go on on, as they've always done, determined that children will have loving homes, persevering in overcoming all obstacles.

In late August, Gov. Andrew Cuomo issued a proclamation, and last March both the Assembly and Senate issued resolutions that proclaimed September as Kinship Care Month. By recognizing kinship families, New York's leaders are doing the right thing and honoring both an American tradition and a valuable ally to its child welfare system.

New York, too, will continue its commitment to kinship families. The state's Office for Children and Family Services and Office for the Aging will continue to provide specialized kinship services, including the statewide kinship navigator and local programs, as will other agencies and organizations. It's a fact that kinship care is part of how we care for children — always has and always will be.

This month, take the time to celebrate an American tradition and thank a grandparent, a relative, a family friend. They are a national treasure and deserve our appreciation.
Utilizing the social media platform to engage your community is an important piece in raising awareness about kinship care. We encourage the use of social media such as Facebook and Twitter to reach a large population, and provide you with some suggestions for engaging the online community to join in the conversation.

**Facebook**
- Be sure to post some of the graphics we’ve provided here on your Facebook page. The graphics are free for you to use and repost as often as you’d like. If you know of kinship caregivers on Facebook, encourage them to utilize these graphics as well.
- Try creating a group in which you can invite others to take part in a larger conversation surrounding kinship care month. It’s simple – on the Facebook webpage, select “+Create Group” and start inviting others!
- Groups are a great platform for brainstorming – so be sure to invite friends, family members, and others that you think could help further the conversation about kinship care month in your state.
- Groups can also be used to promote events in your area, so be sure to use the “+Create Event” tab to start scheduling promotional events in your community.

**Twitter**
- If you don’t already have a twitter account, why not try creating one specifically for your kinship program? It’s simple – go to www.twitter.com to sign up today and start tweeting!
- Utilize hashtags on twitter to start a conversation with others around the globe, we recommend:
  - #KinshipCareMonth
  - #KinshipSept2015
  - #PromoteKinship2015
- While you may not know of many grandparents who use twitter, this is a great platform for reaching out to youth who are kinship children, so be sure to post some of the graphics we’ve provided on twitter as well.
Be sure to check out the graphics we’ve made available!

Use them, re-use them, and encourage others to use them as well. If you’d like to have graphics made for your state specifically, feel free to contact our graphic artist, Matthew Wierbinski, at mwierb85@gmail.com.
Whereas, this year during the month of September, Kinship Care Month is observed, [State or locality] is proud to recognize the children and their grandparents and other relatives who raise them in kinship care and who ensure their safety, promote their well-being and establish a stable household for these young people to thrive, and

Whereas, nationally 2.7 million children are living with grandparents and other relatives in kinship care of which over [state number] of these young people reside in [state], and

Whereas, [state, ex. Arizonians] join to honor famous kinship caregivers such as President George Washington, as well those grandparents and relatives residing in urban, rural and suburban households in every county of [state or locality] who “famously” step forward out of love and loyalty to care for relatives when the child’s biological parents are no longer able to do so, and

Whereas, [state, ex. Arizonians] join to honor famous youth who were raised in kinship care such as Maya Angelou, Sandra Day O’Conner, and Barack Obama as well as those children residing in urban, rural and suburban households in every county of [state or locality] who through the unconditional support of grandparents and other relatives, have successfully addressed the emotional trauma of losing their parents, and

Whereas, the public becomes increasingly aware of the challenges faced by children, grandparents and other relatives in kinship care to work in partnership with the education, legal, social services, mental health, justice and other systems to access services that can enable kinship youth to flourish in all facets of their life, and

Whereas, one in eleven of all children and one in five Black children will live within a kinship family sometime during their childhood, kinship care provides the best opportunity to retain the child’s cultural heritage and community ties.

Now, Therefore, _________________________________do hereby proclaim September, 2015 to be Kinship Care Month In the [state descriptive, ex. Empire, Sunshine, etc.] State.

Links
See these links for the resolutions of other states

VA: http://nysnavigator.org/pg/professionals/documents/PROC9_9_14KinshipCareMonth.pdf
Below are famous children and caregivers who have lived in kinship families.

Most of the persons below were raised by kinship caregivers – with examples of grandparents, aunts and uncles, and fictive kin being represented. There is also one story (Dwayne Wade) of a famous individual who is raising a relative as a kinship caregiver, and of course, there is George Washington. These stories may be helpful as you put together a presentation for legislators.

We also recommend making an effort to reach out to any of them who live in your local area, in an attempt to get them on board with your effort to recognize Kinship Care Month. Their influence could have a great impact on your community!

*Please note: all biographical information is taken from Wikipedia.*

**Barack Obama**
Obama was born in Hawaii in 1961 to Stanley Ann Dunham of Kansas and Barack Obama, Sr., who was from Kenya. The couple met as students at the University of Hawaii and soon married, Barack was born shortly after. However, the parents separated when Obama’s mother moved to Seattle to attend college. In 1964 the parents divorced. Barack's mother Stanley Ann remarried to Lolo Soetoro, another student from the University of Hawaii, who soon returned to his birthplace in Indonesia. A few months later in 1967, she and Barack joined him there. From the age six until he was ten, Barack lived and was educated in Indonesia. When he returned to the United States, he lived with his maternal grandparents, Stanley and Madelyn (known as “Toot” by Barack and his sister) Dunham, in Hawaii from 1971 to 1979. Barack’s father came to visit him once in 1971 and then Barack never saw him again. His father died in a car accident in 1981.

His mother and sister returned to Hawaii in 1972 and young Barack lived with them for the next three years. In 1975 his mother took his sister back to Indonesia and this time Barack chose to stay in Hawaii with his grandparents.

**Bill Clinton**
His father was a traveling salesman who died in an automobile accident three months before Bill was born. His mother traveled to New Orleans to study nursing soon after he was born. She left Bill with her parents Eldridge and Edith Cassidy. In 1950, Bill’s mother returned from nursing school and married Roger Clinton, Sr.
George Washington
The Father of our Nation had no children of his own. However, he and Martha were not childless. George and Martha were caregivers to many orphaned nieces and nephews, and most notably to Martha’s grandchildren (and George's step-grandchildren), Eleanor Parke “Nellie” Custis and George Washington Parke “Washy” Custis.

Herbert Hoover
His father died in 1880. After working to retire her husband’s debts, retain their life insurance, and care for the children, his mother died in 1884, leaving Hoover (age nine), his older brother, and his younger sister as orphans. After a brief stay with one of his grandmothers in Kingsley, Iowa, Hoover lived the next 18 months with his uncle Allen Hoover in West Branch. In November 1885, he went to Newberg, Oregon, to live with his uncle Dr. John Minthorn, a physician and businessman whose own son had died the year before.

Eleanor Roosevelt
Her mother died from diphtheria on December 7, 1892, and her brother, Elliott Jr. died of the same disease the following May. Her father, an alcoholic confined to a sanitarium, died on August 14, 1894. After the deaths of her parents, Eleanor was raised in the household of her maternal grandmother, Mary Livingston Ludlow of the Livingston family in Tivoli, New York.

Sandra Day O’Connor
She was born in El Paso, Texas, to Harry Day, a rancher, and Ada Wilkey. She grew up on a cattle ranch near Duncan, Arizona. For most of her early schooling, O’Connor lived in El Paso with her maternal grandmother, and attended public schools and the Radford School for Girls, a private school.

Jack Nicholson
Nicholson was born to June Nicholson. June had married Italian American showman Donald Furcillo six months earlier. Furcillo was already married. Although he reportedly offered to take care of the child, June's mother Ethel insisted that she bring up the baby, partly so that June could pursue her dancing career and partly because June was only 16 or 17 years old when she gave birth to Jack.

Carol Burnett
Burnett was born in San Antonio, Texas in 1933, the daughter of Ina Louise, a publicity writer for movie studios, and Joseph Burnett, a movie theater manager. Both of her parents suffered from alcoholism, and at a young age, she was left with her grandmother, Mabel White.
Willie Nelson
His mother left soon after he was born, and his father remarried and also moved away, leaving Willie and his sister Bobbie to be raised by their grandparents.

John Lennon
Born to Julia and Alfred Lennon. Julia’s sister, Mimi Smith, twice complained to Liverpool's Social Services, and Julia handed the care of Lennon over to her. In July 1946 Lennon’s father visited Smith and took his son to Blackpool, secretly intending to emigrate to New Zealand with him. Julia - his mother - followed them and after a heated argument his father forced the five-year-old to choose between them. Lennon twice chose his father, but as his mother walked away, he began to cry and followed her. It would be 20 years before he had contact with his father again. Throughout the rest of his childhood and adolescence he lived with his aunt and uncle, Mimi and George Smith, who had no children of their own.

Maya Angelou
When Angelou was three and her brother four, their parent’s marriage ended, and their father sent them to Stamps, Arkansas, alone by train, to live with their paternal grandmother, Annie Henderson. Four years later, the children’s father came to Stamps and returned them to their mother's care in St. Louis. At the age of eight, while living with her mother, Angelou was sexually abused and raped by her mother's boyfriend, who was subsequently murdered by Angelou’s uncles. After his murder, Angelou returned to her grandmother's care. At the age of 14, Angelou returned to her mother's care.

Eric Clapton
Eric Clapton was born in Ripley, Surrey, England, the son of 16-year-old Patricia Molly Clapton and Edward Fryer, a 25-year-old soldier from Montreal, Quebec. Fryer shipped off to war prior to Clapton's birth and then returned to Canada. Clapton grew up with his grandmother, Rose, and her second husband, Jack Clapp, who was stepfather to Patricia Clapton and her brother Adrian, believing they were his parents and that his mother was actually his older sister. Years later, his mother married another Canadian soldier and moved to Germany, leaving young Eric with his grandparents in Surrey.
50 Cent (Curtis Jackson)
He grew up without a father and was raised by his mother, Sabrina, who gave birth to him at the age of fifteen. Sabrina, a cocaine dealer, raised Jackson until the age of twelve, when she was murdered in 1988. After her death, Jackson moved into his grandparents’ house with his eight aunts and uncles.

Jamie Foxx
Shortly after his birth, Foxx was adopted and raised by his mother’s adoptive parents, Esther Marie (Nelson), a domestic worker and nursery operator, and Mark Talley, a yard worker. He has had little contact with his birth parents, who were not part of his upbringing.

Kellie Pickler
Her mother left when Kellie was two years old. Her mother returned and took custody of Kellie for two years. After this, the court returned Kellie to her grandparents when she was 12, as her father was in and out of jail during her childhood. From this age to adulthood, she was raised by her grandparents.

Pierce Brosnan
Brosnan’s father abandoned the family when Pierce was an infant. When he was four years old, his mother moved to London to work as a nurse. From that point on, he was largely brought up by his grandparents, Philip and Kathleen Smith. After their deaths, he lived with an aunt and then an uncle, but was subsequently sent to live in a boarding house.

Ice-T (Tracy Marrow)
His mother died of a heart attack when he was in third grade. When Tracy was 12 years old, his father died of a heart attack. Following his father's death, Tracy lived with a nearby aunt briefly, and was sent to live with his other aunt and her husband in View Park-Windsor Hills, an upper middle-class black neighborhood by South Los Angeles.
**George Lopez**
He was deserted by his father when he was two months old and by his mother when he was 10 years old, but was raised by his maternal grandmother, Benita Gutierrez, a factory worker, and step-grandfather, Refugio Gutierrez, a construction worker.

**James McAvoy**
His parents divorced when he was seven, which he took hard. McAvoy’s mother suffered from poor health and subsequently decided it was best that he live with his maternal grandparents, Mary and butcher James Johnstone, who lived in a terraced council house in the nearby Drumchapel area of Glasgow. His mother lived with them intermittently.

**James Earl Jones**
Jones was raised by his maternal grandparents, farmers John Henry and Maggie Connolly. He moved to his grandparents' farm in Jackson, Michigan, when he was five, but the transition was traumatic and he developed a stutter so severe he refused to speak. When he moved to Brethren, Michigan, in later years, a teacher at the Brethren schools helped him overcome his stutter.

**Dwayne Wade**
Wade married his high school girlfriend Siohvaughn Funches in 2002. He filed for a divorce in 2007, which was granted in 2010 after a lengthy and acrimonious court battle. In 2011, Wade was granted sole custody of his two sons with Funches, Zaire Wade and Zion Wade. Wade also raises a nephew, Dahveon, who is the son of Wade's sister Deanna.

**Baron Davis**
Davis was born in Los Angeles and grew up in the South Central area. His grandmother and guardian, Lela Nicholson, was instrumental in pushing him to play basketball.

**Amar’e Stoudemire**
Stoudemire’s parents, Hazell and Carrie divorced when he was young. Together they had two sons: Hazell Jr. and Amar’e. Hazell died of a heart attack when Stoudemire was 12, and his mother was in and out of prison for crimes such as petty theft and forgery during that time. In his parents' absence, Stoudemire had other outside influences to help guide him, including a policeman, Burney Hayes, he occasionally stayed with; he also lived with his Fastbreak USA, AAU squad’s coach, Travis King, as well as a minister, Rev. Bill Williams.
Useful Webpages

See the below links that can be helpful to gather more information and data on Kinship Care.

Child Welfare League of America
The official page of the CWLA, here you can find policy updates, facts by state, news and media related to child welfare, and here you can sign up for the CWLA Children’s Monitor.
www.cwla.org

National Kinship Alliance for Children
The official page of the National Kinship Alliance. On this site you will find legal information, kinship reports, news, events, and advocacy links.
www.kinshipalliance.org

NYS Kinship Navigator
This is the official webpage of the New York State Kinship Navigator. Here you can find a plethora of resources, including legal facts, kinship stories, and links to a number of kinship related articles. You can also sign up for the listserv here.
www.nysnavigator.org

Annie E. Casey
An excellent resource for research and data on kinship families. Here you can search for articles and data, and find tables and graphs that can be reproduced.
www.aecf.org

US Census Bureau
On the Census Bureau Fact Finder website, you can find data on grandparent caregivers in your state, county, and even smaller municipalities.
www.factfinder2.census.gov

Minnesota Population Center
On this site you will find ways to navigate population data relevant to researchers, policymakers, and teachers – perfect for putting together information relevant to your area.
www.ipums.org

Kinship Listserv
Sign up for the National Kinship Listserv here.
http://web.wnylc.com/cgi-bin/mailman/listinfo/kinship

Grandfamilies Fact Sheets
http://www.aarp.org/relationships/friends-family/grandfacts-sheets/
Contact Information

Child Welfare League of America (www.cwla.org)
The Child Welfare League of America has a long history of supporting kinship families. In 2011, CWLA and NKAC co-hosted a National Kinship Summit in Washington, D.C., and in September 2014 CWLA hosted a National Kinship Care Conference in New Orleans to promote best practices in kinship care policies, programs, and services. At the New Orleans event, kinship advocates agreed to promote a special month to honor and bring awareness to kinship care. CWLA hopes that states will join this effort by adopting resolutions in support of Kinship Care Month. CWLA will continue to be a resource for this effort by posting information on our website. A strong show of support from states and kinship advocates will communicate to decision makers on Capitol Hill and in the White House the value and importance of establishing a National Kinship Care Month.

Donna D. Petras, PhD, MSW  Charlene Ingram, MSW
Director, Models of Practice and Training  Chair, National Kinship Care Advisory
Child Welfare League of America, Inc.  Committee
Dpetras@cwla.org                                                                                                                   Cingram@cwla.org

National Kinship Alliance For Children (NKAC)
NKAC is a volunteer support, information, and referral network for kinship families across the country. Our volunteers respond to toll-free warm line callers and support families through our FACEBOOK page and our private support chat page, Kinship Caregivers of America. Our website contains information about state supports and services as well as links to fact sheets developed by the American Bar Association. NKAC will post information about Kinship Care Month on its website and assist in the development of your state efforts to join the Proclamation Coalition.

Cate Newbanks, Executive Director  Cate@kinshipalliance.org
P.O. Box 85  www.kinshipalliance.org
Ashland, VA 23005  Toll Free 1-888-659-3745
NYS Kinship Navigator
The NYS Kinship Navigator operates a statewide information and referral network via a toll free line and a website. The website contains over fifty legal fact sheets regarding kinship law. The Navigator will post information about Kinship Care Month and can help with drafting op-ed and policy statements.

Gerard Wallace, Esq., Director
gwallace@albany.edu
87 North Clinton Avenue
www.nysnavigator.org
Rochester, NY 14604
1-877-454-6463

National Kinship Care Listserv
The NYS Kinship Navigator’s “National Kinship Care Listserv” provides a forum where professionals (academicians, advocates and service providers), who are assisting kinship caregivers or who have an active interest in kinship care services and supports, can ask questions and share information and resources in order to improve assistance for the consumers they serve. Members generate the content of the listserv by posting inquiries, comments, announcements, references to resources, and other items of professional interest by way of the National Kinship Care Listserv e-mail address. The listserv will also act as a conduit to discuss kinship policy nationwide. The listserv will also facilitate communications for the Kinship Care Month campaign.

Sign up for the National Kinship Listserv here:
http://web.wnylc.com/cgi-bin/mailman/listinfo/kinship

Copies of guide book and other materials:
For a pdf of this booklet, or for a WORD version suitable for cut and paste, please visit:
or contact kinshipcaremonth@gmail.com.

There is also a version of this booklet entitled “Kinship Care Month: Celebrating a National Resource”, which is suitable to present to legislators, policy makers, funders, and others who will be interested in helping. Also available in limited quantities are printed versions and kinship care ribbons.
Bibliography


New York City KinCare Task Force: Removing Barriers to Successful Kin Caregiving, June, 2009; available at the Kinship Navigator at http://www.nysnavigator.org


Celebrating Kinship Care:
Creating Awareness

For printed copies of this booklet, a pdf file or an e-file, which can be cut and pasted for your own use, contact kinshipcaremonth@gmail.com. Also available is a version of this booklet entitled, “Kinship Care Month: Celebrating a National Resource”, which is suitable for presentation to legislators, policy makers, and others. Printed copies and ribbons are available in limited quantities.

Awareness ribbons are worn as a way to make a statement of support for a cause or issue. Many groups have adopted ribbons as symbols of support or awareness, and as a result, many causes often share each color.

The gold ribbon has been chosen to honor the kinship caregivers in the US. Signifying the kinship caregivers in their golden years and that we consider all kinship caregivers to be as precious as gold.

We hope that by wearing this ribbon people will ask you the meaning of your ribbon and this will help us spread the word that thousands of relatives have stepped up for kids to give them love, keep them safe, and ensure they are connected to their heritage.

Wear your gold ribbon with pride.