Ten-year-old David has been living with his Aunt Karen since August 1997. David’s mother was addicted to crack cocaine, and his father’s whereabouts were unknown. David needed physical and speech therapy because of cerebral palsy, which has limited David’s use of his right arm and leg. David was also experiencing emotional problems related to his feelings of abandonment and loss. David waited months to receive the physical therapy and counseling he needed because the local services provider refused to treat David without the notarized signature of a parent.

Happily, there is a solution to this problem. Pennsylvania Act 52, the Medical Consent Act, which allows a parent to authorize a caregiver to consent to medical and mental health care for his or her children, was signed into law on Nov. 24, 1999 and became effective on Feb. 22, 2000. If this law had been in effect when David’s mother asked her sister Karen to care for David, David’s mother could have signed a consent form permitting Karen to authorize all of David’s medical and mental health care needs.

Aunt Karen is a kinship caregiver. Kinship care is the full-time care, nurturing and protection of children by relatives or family friends. An alternative to traditional foster care, kinship placements prevent the trauma of separation, maintain the children’s family ties and traditions, and place children in familiar communities. According to a 1994 United States Census update, 5.3 million children in the United States are living in non-parent headed households. In Pennsylvania, the number is approximately 230,000 children. Children live in kinship care as a result of a variety of parental difficulties: substance abuse, mental or physical health problems, death, incarceration, abuse and neglect, unemployment, and teen pregnancy.

Kinship caregivers often face tremendous obstacles in accessing medical and mental health treatment for their kin. All too often, obtaining consent from a birth parent is difficult if not impossible because parents have abandoned their children, their whereabouts are unknown, or they only visit the home sporadically. Kinship caregivers are often forced into court to obtain legal custody in order to obtain medical and mental health care for their kin. After filing their petitions, caregivers must wait months for their day in court because of high caseloads. Adam, a baby who only weighed seventeen pounds at twenty-seven months of age, waited weeks for an operation until a court order was finally obtained granting his grandmother legal custody.

The Medical Consent Act would allow kinship caregivers to give birth parents or legal guardians a simple form to sign which would empower

(Continued on page 9)
The start of a new year always brings with it some reflection on past actions and future hopes. While child advocates have been laboring for decades on behalf of children in the Commonwealth, the PBA Children’s Rights Committee did not exist a decade ago. Yet, in our short history, we have made significant strides in identifying the issues and concerns of Pennsylvania’s children and making child advocacy a point of convergence for legal discourse in the state.

1999 Committee Activities

During this past year, we have established our spring seminar as an important component of legal training for child advocates. A program of varying topic areas shows steadily increasing appeal to practitioners statewide and compliments those programs which exist in Philadelphia and elsewhere. Additionally, an exciting new coalition was forged with the Legal Services to Exceptional Children Committee in the presentation of a CLE program during the mid-year meeting in Orlando. Most significantly, through a forum on standards of practice we thrust ourselves forcefully into the discussion of how to best represent the legal interests of children which has been fomenting in the legislature for several years. Lucy Johnston-Walsh, Director of Public Policy for Pennsylvania Partnerships for Children, will be heading a permanent subcommittee to assure that standards are promulgated which best serve lawyers and children.

2000 Child Advocate Award

Our third Child Advocate of the Year award will be made this coming spring. By highlighting the accomplishments of an individual child advocate, we promote the standing of all those who labor on behalf of children. It has been particularly poignant to read the nominations submitted each year and to realize the wonderful work that is being done in all corners of our 67 counties. A review of this work also reveals unique and creative solutions to many problems encountered in daily practice.

Committee Newsletter

Perhaps the most important Committee effort to enhance communication among child advocates has been this Newsletter. While having the potential to link practitioners to what is currently happening for children and children’s rights outside of their own limited sphere of influence, we have fallen short by not meeting our goal of producing a regular publication. Nevertheless, it remains our goal to publish this Newsletter four times a year to provide information cogent to individual practice, public policy, appellate process, and jurisprudence to as many child advocates as we can identify.

As the articles in this issue suggest, there are many venues for advocating for children and their rights. While a new millennium prompts us to broaden our forward looking perspectives, we must also remember that critical changes for many children have been and will continue for some time to come to be realized in small steps, in little courtrooms, in hidden venues. The Bar Association stands ready to help each of us do our job better and I urge your participation in Committee programs. But further, I hope that the sphere of our influence as child advocates will continue to grow for the benefit of the profession and the children we serve.

PBA Children’s Rights Committee
Joan M. Smith, Chair
Lucy Johnston-Walsh
Mary Jo Kishel
Co-Vice Chairs
Hon. Cynthia A. Baldwin
PBA Board of Governors Liaison
Doreen M. Graziano
Newsletter Editor
Louann Bell, PBA Staff Liaison
Jill E. Gouse
PBA Newsletter Liaison

To Submit Articles

The Children’s Rights Committee Newsletter invites members to send articles, submissions for Departments or letters to the editor for publication in the Newsletter.

Please contact Doreen M. Graziano at 120 Corcoran St., Old Forge, Pa 18518; (570) 451-1860; Fax (570) 451-1870. We invite your comments and/or suggestions.
After-school Programs a Proven Crime Fighter

By Lucy Johnston-Walsh, Esquire

At 3 p.m., the end of the school day, any child whose parents are not home and who is unsupervised could be heading for trouble. The U.S. Justice Department says:

- About 29 percent of all juvenile offenses occur between 3 p.m. and 8 p.m. on school days.
- The majority of violent juvenile crimes occurs on school days, and the 3 p.m. peak occurs only on school days.
- The most dangerous time of day for children ages 6 to 17 – the time when they’re most likely to be victimized -- is 3 p.m.
- The nation’s 5 million “latchkey” children are at a substantially higher risk for truancy, poor grades, and risky behavior involving drugs, alcohol and sex.

Just as alarming, the journal Pediatrics reported that eighth graders unsupervised for 11 or more hours a week are twice as likely as their supervised peers to abuse drugs or alcohol. Clearly, the empty hours between school dismissal and dinner-time offer temptations that can lead children astray, not because they are bad, but because they are bored.

In Pennsylvania, the custodial parents of an estimated 1.2 million Pennsylvania schoolchildren work, and their children risk encountering the hazards of unstructured after-school time. So, to expand after-school alternatives in more Pennsylvania neighborhoods, state Sen. Frank Salvatore and Rep. John Taylor, both Philadelphia Republicans, have each proposed the Youth Development Safe Communities Act, Senate Bill 765 and House Bill 194.

Everywhere they are implemented, structured after-school programs are proven to unearth children’s potential and keep them safe – essentially, the flip side of the unsupervised child’s aimless afternoon. In cities nationwide, students in after-school programs showed measurably better achievement in math, reading and other school subjects. Plus, juvenile crime rates, drug activity, and school vandalism and antisocial behavior all declined in areas with structured after-school activities. Other studies show that:

- 86 percent of U.S. police chiefs believe that expanded after-school programs, plus educational child care programs, “would greatly reduce youth crime and violence.” (George Mason University)
- After-school programs improve school attendance by contributing to youths’ confidence in their academic abilities. (University of New Hampshire)
- Dropout rates for participants in programs where older kids tutor younger students is 1 percent, compared to the national average of 14 percent. (U.S. Department of Education)

But despite the proven value of after-school programs, funding is scarce. The David and Lucille Packard Foundation recently reported that 86 percent of daily after-school program funds come from parent fees, and that city programs for low-income children are forced to rely on donated space and “creative juggling of expenses” to stay afloat.

The proposed Youth Development Fund offers financial incentives to encourage establishment of more after-school programs. Under both S.B. 765 and H.B. 194, counties could apply for base grants of $50,000 from a $15 million fund and allocate the dollars to public or nonprofit organizations that run afternoon (and during summers and holidays, full-day) programs for children ages 6 to 16. Eligible programs could offer homework tutoring and academic enrichment, arts and cultural activities, recreation and sports, science and math enrichment, computer and technology skills, and life skills training. The grants would require a 20 percent local match, and counties could receive additional funds based on their child population and poverty levels.

Currently, SB 765 is in the Senate Rules and Executive Nominations Committee, while HB 194 is in the House Appropriations Committee.

Pennsylvania Partnerships for Children, a nonprofit, independent organization advocating policies that benefit children’s well-being, and Philadelphia Citizens for Children and Youth are mobilizing support for the measures. Pennsylvanians are being encouraged to voice their support to lawmakers and legislative leaders. On Oct. 24, 1999, the Pennsylvania Bar Association endorsed the plan, joining more than 75 state, regional and local organizations that support the plan’s proven crime-fighting and children’s development benefits.

For further information, contact Lucy Johnston-Walsh, Pennsylvania Partnerships for Children, (717)236-5680, lucyjw@papartnerships.org.
On Dec. 2, 1999, the Children’s Rights Committee of the PBA hosted a forum for discussion on the standards of practice for attorneys that represent children in Pennsylvania. An historical perspective of relevant statutory and case law was given by Scott M. Hollander, Executive Director of Legal Aid for Children in Pittsburgh. Susan A. Snyder of the Juvenile Law Center in Philadelphia then presented results of a recent statewide survey of child advocate attorneys. The survey examined the method of appointment, rates of compensation, caseload averages, etc. The morning program ended with a panel of practitioners who highlighted the multitude of issues which affect both GAL’s and counsel alike. Panel members included Hon. Penny L. Blackwell (York County), Shawn M. Lacy (Child Advocacy Unit of Philadelphia), Christina Lane (Legal Aid for Children in Pittsburgh), Janet Ivanier Neuman ( Luzerne County), Robert Schwartz (Juvenile Law Center, Philadelphia), and J. Marie Webb (Greene County).

Because standards are implemented differently throughout the country, Eva Klain of the American Bar Association Center on Children and the Law presented a review of other states’ initiatives on the representation of children. Frank P. Cervone of the Support Center for Child Advocates (Philadelphia) gave an overview of the American Bar Standards of Practice for Lawyers Who Represent Children in Abuse and Neglect Cases. The day long CLE event ended with a very lively discussion, facilitated by John Bradley, member of the Children’s Rights Committee. Forum participants debated pending legislation which addresses the role and obligations of a guardian ad litem. Lucy Johnston-Walsh is heading a subcommittee to discuss appropriate next steps in promulgating standards of practice in Pennsylvania.

Adoption and Foster Care
The Joint State Government Commission Advisory Committee on Adoption Law expects to produce a report this coming spring. As they welcome comment, Jim Flower has forwarded our concern over the seemingly excessive waiting period of 40 days between the signing of a consent and the filing of a petition to confirm it and our recommendation that the expenses paid the birth mother be increased in line with those of contiguous jurisdictions. Of primary concern in our Committee deliberations was the welfare of a child who has established a bond with an adoptive family.

Law for Kids
Under an initiative begun by Lou Teti to focus attention on children during his tenure as PBA President, we have assumed responsibility for two projects. Project P.E.A.C.E. has identified one school in each PBA Zone in which a peer mediation program will be established. Lawyers will help with training and will act as resources. Also, a web site contest will be announced later this spring to involve children in better understanding how the law affects their daily lives. Anyone interested in helping as a resource for the peer mediation program or in establishing the parameters of the contest should contact Grace Schuyler at (717) 783-2500.

Family Court Reform
As part of a comprehensive review of the family court system in Pennsylvania, a survey of family court clients has been completed. A report of the survey has been provided to the co-sponsors of this project, the Family Law Section and the Commission on Women in the Profession. At our spring seminar, John Bradley will present his full summary which he reports indicates that litigants are satisfied with the operation of their family courts.
Children Detained by the INS

By Jo Becker, Advocacy Director for the Children’s Rights Division of Human Rights Watch

Every year, some 5,000 unaccompanied minors are detained by the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS). Some children come to this country seeking asylum, others hope to be reunified with family members already in the United States, many are simply seeking a better life for themselves and their families. Ultimately, many are deported or voluntarily return to their countries of origin.

At any given time, hundreds of these children are detained by the INS. Bewildered and frightened, these children are often kept in jail-like settings, and systematically denied rights that are fundamental under international agreements and under the U.S. Constitution and statutory law.

Human Rights Watch has investigated conditions for children detained by the INS in Arizona, California, and most recently, at the Berks County Youth Center (BCYC), a Pennsylvania facility that the INS claims is one of the best in the country. Our investigations found that all too often, children in INS detention are denied due process, access to legal representation, humane living conditions, personal privacy, and meaningful opportunities to understand what is happening to them and why. Denial of such crucial rights would be disastrous for any group, but it is particularly disastrous for children, who are at a uniquely vulnerable stage in their lives.

“Xiao Ling”* is one former detainee interviewed by Human Rights Watch. Detained at age 15, she was sent to BCYC, where she was placed in a secure detention wing with juvenile offenders. This particular facility houses violent offenders, including children accused of murder, rape, and drug trafficking, and has a reputation for taking “out of control” juveniles from other county facilities which cannot control these youth. Despite having no criminal record Xiao Ling was kept in this facility for several months, and assigned a small concrete cell, completely bare except for bedding and a Bible in a language Xiao Ling could not read.

Xiao Ling was forbidden to wear her own clothes, or keep any personal possessions in her cell. She was even denied jewelry, hair ties, perfume and deodorant. Her prospective foster mother reported that when she brought a child’s storybook to the facility, the staff “acted like we’d brought a weapon.” Although many unaccompanied children detained by the INS are kept in secure detention facilities, children in secure detention at BCYC are subjected to strip searches. They are often forbidden to laugh or speak their native language, and may even be required to ask staff for permission to scratch their nose. Not surprisingly, Xiao Ling says that during her detention, she cried every day.

A class action suit initiated in 1985, ultimately known as Flores v. Reno, challenged the INS Western Region’s blanket detention policy for minors and the prison-like conditions of detention. The INS settled Flores in 1997, and issued new regulations that permit secure detention only in limited circumstances, require written notice to the child of the reasons for such placement and stipulate that INS detainees are to be segregated from juvenile offenders. However, the INS regularly violates these regulations. Children are often placed in secure detention for seemingly arbitrary reasons, are seldom notified of the reasons why, and are often forced to share rooms and have extensive contact with convicted juvenile offenders.

Human Rights Watch has found that children detained by the INS—whether in secure detention or less restrictive settings—often have great difficulty obtaining information on their legal rights, and access to meaningful legal representation. None of the children that we interviewed during our 1998 investigation of BCYC reported receiving any information about their rights or available legal services from either the INS or facility staff. Neither could local INS nor facility staff identify a clear mechanism by which children received this information.

The vast majority of children are unrepresented when they first appear before an immigration judge. Because few children have the means to pay for attorneys, most depend on pro bono representation. Children are denied due process, access to legal representation, and meaningful legal representation. None of the children that we interviewed during our 1998 investigation of BCYC reported receiving any information about their rights or available legal services from either the INS or facility staff. Neither could local INS nor facility staff identify a clear mechanism by which children received this information.

* Xiao Ling is a pseudonym used to protect the identity of the complainant.
expansion caused great concern among local attorneys and prompted several non-profit agencies to establish a program to provide legal representation for the children. However, in other parts of the country access is still problematic.

Unaccompanied children in INS detention are subject to transfer to other facilities by the INS. Such transfers are often to other states thousands of miles away, and made without notification to the child’s attorney or family members. In one case, the INS transferred four boys from Pennsylvania to California on the same day that papers had been approved authorizing the boys’ release to guardians living in New York City. The INS refused to transport the children back to Pennsylvania, forcing their guardians to travel to San Diego and arrange return transportation for both themselves and the children, at considerable personal expense and delay.

Another problem identified repeatedly by detained children is the unavailability of staff with appropriate language skills. Although the largest number of children detained at BCYC last year were Chinese, until recently the facility had no Chinese-speaking staff. Facility rules and medical intake forms may be translated into Spanish or Chinese, and computers with bilingual language programs are sometimes available. However, on a day to day basis, children often find themselves completely isolated, and unable to communicate their needs or questions. Some children have been detained for months at a time without a single person with whom they can converse. In other instances, children detained with others from their country of origin are forbidden to speak to each other in their native language.

The INS claims that translation services can be made available on request, and are available 24 hours a day by telephone. However, many facility staff are unaware of this option, and only one of the children we interviewed had been told that telephone translation services were available if needed.

Many of the problems encountered by children in INS detention stem from the INS’ troubling conflict of interest: the children are arrested, imprisoned and frequently deported, all by the same agency that is charged with caring for them and protecting their legal rights. We have recommended that the United States solve this problem by reassigning responsibility for the care of unaccompanied children from the INS to appropriate child welfare authorities, which is the practice in countries like Britain, Canada, Denmark and the Netherlands. As a uniquely vulnerable population, children are entitled to receive care from individuals or agencies which will act in the best interest of the child and are capable of protecting children’s rights. The INS is not such an agency.

Until such a reassignment of care takes place, children’s advocates must continue to monitor conditions and to press the INS to bring its practices in line with accepted international standards that respect the rights of children. Individuals in the legal community can also help by offering pro bono representation to children who need it. For more information, please see the contacts listed below.

“Detained and Deprived of Rights: Children in the Custody of the US Immigrations and Naturalization Service” is available from Human Rights Watch. The following are willing to provide additional information or accept offers of pro bono representation.

Jo Becker (212) 216-1236
Human Rights Watch
350 Fifth Avenue, 34th Floor
New York, NY 10118
(212) 290-4700

Ann Carr
PAImmigration Resource Project
2555 Kingston Road, Suite 260
York, PA 17402
(717) 840-8740

Cherylle Corpuz
Nationalities Service Center
1300 Spruce Street
Philadelphia, PA 19107
(215) 893-8400

Juanita Kirschke
Detention Resource Project
924 Cherry Street, 5th Floor
Philadelphia, PA 19107
(610) 525-7559

Wendy Young
Washington Liaison
Women’s Commission for Refugee Women and Children
(304) 876-1320

* Not her real name
Recent Changes in Asylum Law

By Joan M. Smith, Esquire

In the spring of 1997, Committee member, Lynn R. Miller, Esquire visited Berks County Youth Detention Center to determine if refugee children who were not delinquents were being housed there. She writes:

What I was able to see and learn greatly distressed me. Most of the children who had fled or left other countries were being held in the children’s shelter in the lower part of the building. Some of these children were being held in the upper detention center with far less freedom than is granted to their adult counterparts detained in the nearby Berks County Prison. Whereas the adults were basically left on their own within the prison compound for refugees, these children were constantly watched and monitored, mixed with violent juvenile delinquents, and denied all sorts of liberties that other children certainly take for granted. It was like a boot camp. They had to get up at 5:15 a.m. to begin physical training, and had little, if any, freedom of movement. When I arrived, I saw children lined up all the way down the hall waiting for what seemed like a very long time just to go to the other side of the building. The children were not allowed to talk, and if they had an itch, they had to receive permission to scratch.

Fortunately, since Lynn’s visit, things are improving for young immigration detainees. In 1998, the Children’s Rights Project of Human Rights Watch investigated the Berks Center (see accompanying article by Jo Becker). Today, there is a special wing available where children may be housed in a foster-care model setting. Juanita Kirschke of the Detention Resource Project reports that local refugee programs and attorneys are making efforts to work with the INS to solve such problems as those identified at the Berks Center. But, she points out that specific criticism of local programs is problematic because it may serve to damage relations with the INS and may cause the transfer of children to other facilities without notice. However, Juanita acknowledges that advocacy on the national level concerning proposed legislation or efforts to get Health and Human Services to take on the supervision of children detainees, rather than keeping them incarcerated, is entirely appropriate and is important toward making real changes for all children.

Historically, the U.S. asylum system has been a one-size-fits-all process. Children have been forced to meet the same legal, evidentiary, and procedural standards as adult asylum seekers while lacking the ability to find their way through the complexity of U.S. asylum law. Leading a coalition of NGOs, the Women’s Commission for Refugee Women and Children [hereinafter Women’s Commission] approached the INS and proposed the development of children’s guidelines. Precedent existed for such a document in the procedural and evidentiary standards issued by the Canadian government in 1996 and in model guidelines issued by the UN High Commissioner for Refugees in 1997.

Taking the opportunity of the 50th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, President Clinton announced the release of Guidelines for the Adjudication of Children’s Asylum Claims by the Immigration and Naturalization Service in late 1998. The Guidelines are ground-breaking in their recognition of the special needs of children asylum seekers. They offer concrete interviewing and listening techniques that asylum officers can use to adapt the interview process to children. They also offer recommendations on sources of testimony and documentation that can be used to support a child’s claim to asylum. By suggesting that a trusted adult be allowed to accompany a child to the asylum interview, a door is opened to the use of child welfare professionals to assist children through the asylum process and to ensure that a child’s best interests are addressed. The Guidelines analyze the rights of the child in the context of U.S. asylum law and reference the Convention on the Rights of the Child as an important framework for the asylum process. Finally, they recognize the importance of legal representation to the child.

Many children go through the asylum process without benefit of counsel. Historically, immigration judges and attorneys have lacked the skills necessary to elicit testimony from young applicants. However, the INS has begun training programs for asylum officers and judges on how to use the Guidelines in interviews with children asylum seekers. Training sessions also have been held for legal representatives who serve children. Such programs provide the opportunity to strategize on how best to represent children and offer information on developmental and cultural challenges (Continued on page 8)
Recent Changes in Asylum Law

(Continued from page 7)

...enigmas in representing children seeking asylum.

Additionally, the Emergency Office of Immigration Review (EOIR) and the Justice Department are establishing a pilot program, soon to be operational in Phoenix, which will serve as a model of how unaccompanied children should be treated while their asylum claims are pending. Wendy Young, Washington Liaison of the Women’s Commission, is working on the pilot project and also with Congress. Wendy notes that both Senators Kennedy and Robb are involved in discussions of detention reform legislation that will include accommodating children’s needs. Specifically for children, serious consideration is being given to providing a person who would serve as a guardian in accompanying children in asylum proceedings. Bi-partisan support is being sought for legislative changes to solve problems encountered by asylum seekers.

Information for this article was taken from the “Women’s Commission News,” Spring 1999/Number 21 and from interviews with Ann Carr, Juanita Kirschke, and Wendy Young.

Committee Seeks Nominations for 3rd Annual Child Advocate of the Year Award

Nominations are being sought for the Third Annual Child Advocate of the Year Award. Heidi Ulrich Dennison of Dennison & Dennison received the award last year.

The award was established in 1998 to recognize the accomplishments of lawyers who are advocates for Pennsylvania children. Any Pennsylvania lawyer or judge involved with child advocacy is eligible.

To submit a nomination, call Louann Bell, ext. 2276 at (800) 932-0311 for an application form. An accompanying letter of recommendation highlighting the candidates unique contributions to and significant achievements on behalf of children and providing a chronology of the candidates involvement in child advocacy work is required. A resume, press clippings, photographs and up to three letters of support may also be included. The award recipient will be required to submit a photo to be used for publicity purposes.

Nominations must be received by Feb. 25. Send nominations to Louann Bell, PBA Children’s Rights Committee, P.O. Box 186, Harrisburg, Pa. 17108-0186.

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...for the latest information on meetings, committees and much more!

PBA Web site:
www.pabar.org

Questions? E-mail us at:
info@pabar.org

Joan Smith presents Heidi Dennison with the 1999 Child Advocate of the Year Award.
the caregivers to make medical decisions for their kinship children. These forms are similar to a power of attorney and require the signatures of two witnesses. A sample form was included in the law and is available on-line at the address below. It is hoped that these forms will be readily available at hospitals, doctors’ offices, mental health care providers, public assistance offices, etc.

Act 52 applies not only to families caring full-time for their kin, but to almost all relatives or family friends who are temporarily entrusted with the care of a child. An authorization may not be utilized if a child is in the custody of a children and youth agency or a court order prevents a parent or legal guardian from exercising the power that the parent or legal guardian wishes to confer. Before a parent leaves for vacation, that parent may utilize a medical consent form to ensure that his or her chosen caregiver can meet whatever medical needs arise while the parent is unavailable. The designated family friend or relative can consent to any necessary medical, surgical, dental, developmental, mental health or other treatment rendered under the supervision of a health care professional licensed to practice in Pennsylvania.

The Medical Consent Act also provides access to medical and insurance records that the parent or legal guardian is entitled to receive. The form can be tailored to grant the designated caregiver certain rights but not others. A parent may revoke the document by notifying, in writing, the children’s medical and insurance providers and the person given the power to consent to treatment. The Act’s stated intent is not to terminate or limit in any way a parent’s legal rights. Nor can the provision of medical consent forms be construed as a substitute for family reunification services, which must be provided to families by child welfare agencies under certain circumstances as described in the Child Protective Service Law. Finally, the execution of an authorization is not binding on any future custody or dependency proceedings.

The law was passed due to the efforts of an alliance of statewide supporters assembled by the Philadelphia Task Force on Kinship Care, a project of the Support Center for Child Advocates in Philadelphia. The Task Force is a coalition of advocates, agencies, and officials addressing the needs of children in kinship care and their caregivers. The bill had the support of the Philadelphia and Pennsylvania Bar Associations. The Task Force would like to thank the Children’s Rights Committee for helping win the approval of the entire Pennsylvania Bar Association. The Pennsylvania Bar Association’s Legislative Liaison Office was critical to the success of this effort. For copies of the new law, go to: www.legis.state.pa.us.

### Upcoming Conferences

- **Apr. 25, 2000**  
  Current Issues for Child Advocates at the PABar Institute Conference Center, 5080 Ritter Road, Mechanicsburg, PA. Topics include issues of ASFA implementation, representing teenage clients, appeals in dependency cases, conflicting goals in representing siblings, the role of the GAL in domestic relations, and hot topics in juvenile delinquency. For registration information, call (800) 932-4637 or fax (717) 796-2348.

- **Apr. 27, 2000**  
  Support Center for Child Advocates Volunteer Training Workshop at the Philadelphia Bar Education Center in the Wanamaker Building, East Penn Square, Suite 1010, Philadelphia from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. For fees and registration information call (215) 925-1913.

- **May 11, 2000**  
  PBA Committee/Section Day in conjunction with the annual meeting. The Children’s Rights Committee meeting will be held at 1:30 p.m. For more information call (800) 932-0311, ext. 2276.
In partnership with county bar associations across the state, the Pennsylvania Bar Association is launching its first statewide, coordinated Law Day effort titled "Celebrate Students: Judges & Lawyers Go Back to School."

Designed by a special Law Day 2000 Committee, which is composed of judges, lawyers and county bar association executive directors, the Law Day 2000 celebration will focus on getting judges and lawyers into as many classrooms as possible during the first week of May to teach a class about the law. The program’s goal is to educate children about their legal rights and responsibilities in the new millennium and draw attention to the law in a fun and informative manner.

“I’m calling on all Pennsylvania lawyers to be a partner in the first celebration of Law Day in the new millennium," said PBA President Louis N. Teti. “It will be an exciting program for judges and lawyers across the commonwealth, and one that will have a lasting impact on Pennsylvania’s children.”

To achieve these goals, the PBA, in conjunction with Temple/LEAP and several county bars, has developed the Lesson Plan & Idea Guide for K-12 Classrooms. This easy-to-use booklet provides judges and lawyers with everything they will need to visit a classroom. From actual lesson plans including directions for the presenter to ready-to-copy handouts to tips on delivery, this guide will enable judges and lawyers to step from the courtroom/office into the classroom with ease (and little preparation).

PBA members wishing to participate in Law Day 2000 are urged to call the Law Day 2000 Hotline at 1-877-329-7621 to register.