MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Becky Weichhand
Executive Director, Congressional Coalition on Adoption Institute

The Congressional Coalition on Adoption Institute (CCAI) is entrusted with the great privilege of bringing voices of experience and expertise – from foster youth in the United States to children living in orphanages around the world, from brain scientists to psychologists – to the very active membership of one of Congress’ premier caucuses, the Congressional Coalition on Adoption (CCA).

Created by the leadership of the CCA as their non-profit partner in 2001, CCAI continues to play a critical role in bringing objective information about children in need of families to Capitol Hill and elevating the voices of those still waiting to experience the power of family and adoption.

Voices like Sophia’s, a young woman we met in Port-au-Prince, Haiti on a congressional delegation. Many of her childhood years were stolen by her nation’s defacto “restavek” slavery system, but after being rescued by an organization that works to end child slavery in Haiti, we listened as Sophia shared with a bright smile about her future plans to be a diplomat.

And voices like Amnoni Myers’, one of CCAI’s all-star Foster Youth Internship Program™ interns who channeled some of the disappointments of years spent in U.S. foster care into federal policy recommendations about the need for foster children’s caregivers to be trained in trauma-informed care of the children placed in their homes.

Sophia and Amnoni have overcome many challenges in their lives and now they both want to use their history to positively impact policy. What an honor it is for CCAI to give them the opportunity to speak directly to Members of Congress.

As you turn these pages, please keep Sophia and Amnoni in mind. Their stories embody those of millions of children and youth around the world still awaiting the love and security of their forever families.

CCAI’s global, national and local impact in fighting for all children to have a safe, permanent and loving family would not be possible without the extraordinary support of the members of our Board of Directors and Advisory Council, as well as our financial partners and countless volunteers. Thank you for partnering with us as we seek to bring the power of family in all its fullness to every child.

Best wishes,

Becky Weichhand
Knowledge is power. CCAI’s programs provide Members of Congress and policymakers the knowledge they need to use the power they have to make a difference on behalf of children in need of a loving family.
JANUARY 23
CCAI hosts a Russian child welfare delegation in discussions on adoption and foster care

JANUARY 28
CCAI co-sponsors the National Working Group on Foster Care Congressional Briefings

JUNE 09
The Foster Youth Interns meet with Representative Karen Bass to discuss foster care reform

JULY 23
CCAI hosts a conference call with U.S. prospective adoptive parents adopting from the Democratic Republic of the Congo with Senators Roy Blunt, Al Franken, Jim Inhofe, and Mary Landrieu. Foster Youth Intern, Wilo Muyoma, shares from the perspective of a Congolese refugee

JULY 29
The Foster Youth Interns brief both the White House Domestic Policy Council and Congress with their research and recommendations on child welfare reform

SEPTEMBER 15-17
CCAI celebrates the 15th annual Angels in Adoption™ Program and Gala with honorees Dr. Jennifer Arnold and Bill Klein of TLC’s The Little Couple and screenwriter, Shonda Rhimes
MAY 01
CCAI presents on adoption policy at the Christian Alliance for Orphans Summit

JUNE 11
CCAI co-hosts a briefing on Adults with Disabilities as Adoptive Parents with the Disabilities Caucus and National Council on Disability

MAY 21
CCAI co-hosts a Roundtable Discussion on the Federal Role in Child Welfare with Casey Family Programs and honorary hosts Senators Chuck Grassley and Mary Landrieu

JUNE 16
Foster Youth Intern, Kaylia Ervin, shares her story at the Senate Caucus on Foster Youth and Financial Literacy Caucus’ Roundtable on Financial Literacy for Foster Youth

JULY 30
The Foster Youth Interns share their recommendations at a dinner with 18 Members of Congress in the Congressional Caucus on Foster Youth

AUGUST 21-26
CCAI visits Haiti for a 20/20 Vision Program Delegation with CCA Co-Chair, Representative Michele Bachmann and Dr. Karyn Purvis

NOVEMBER 17
CCAI celebrates National Adoption Day with the New Orleans Saints and Senator Mary Landrieu

NOVEMBER 22
CCAI and the National Adoption Day Coalition celebrate National Adoption Day where more than 5,000 children in U.S. foster care find their forever families
The 20/20 Vision Program is a public-private partnership model designed to build relationships among Members of Congress, foreign and domestic government officials and private sector leaders to allow them to share information and better serve children in need of families. In August, CCAI traveled to Haiti with U.S. Representative Michele Bachmann, Dr. Karyn Purvis, Director of the Institute of Child Development at Texas Christian University, and CCAI Advisory Council Member and founding Executive Director Kerry Hasenbalg. The delegation met with IBESR (Haiti’s institute of child welfare), USAID and UNICEF officials to identify Haiti’s child welfare needs and opportunities. As a result of the trip, CCAI helped to connect private funding with an excellent partner organization in the nation’s inaugural foster-to-adopt program. This means that the capacity of Haiti’s child welfare system will be strengthened through partnership, and a model program will be established that will move children out of orphanages and into families.

**SEEING IS BELIEVING.**
CCAi is committed to educating U.S. and international policymakers about the crucial role a family plays in the life of a child, as many policies and systems around the globe do not yet effectively protect a child’s basic human right to a family. The 20/20 Vision Program congressional delegations are fact-finding missions central to CCAI’s international education and advocacy efforts.

**WHY HAITI?**
CCAi and Members of the Congressional Coalition on Adoption have been closely connected to child welfare efforts in Haiti since the 2010 earthquake. Haiti is currently under consideration by USAID and private foundations as a potential pilot country for the United States Government’s National Action Plan on Children in Adversity, and its
“I BELIEVE THAT IT IS IMPORTANT FOR MEMBERS OF CONGRESS TO SEE FIRSTHAND, TO HAVE OUR HEARTS BROKEN OVER THIS ISSUE [AND] TO BE A PART OF RESCUING THESE CHILDREN.”

Representative Michele Bachmann
intercountry adoption program transitioned to Hague Convention on the Protection of Children and Co-operation in Respect of Intercountry Adoption (Hague Adoption Convention) processing on April 1, 2014. In early 2014, the U.S. Department of State worked with Haiti to verify the Convention requirements were met and Haiti was able to process adoption cases to the U.S. while transitioning to the Convention process. For all these reasons, CCAI designed this delegation led by CCA Co-Chair Michele Bachmann.

ON THE GROUND.

Joined by brain science and child attachment expert Dr. Karyn Purvis, CCAI’s delegation met with government leaders and international non-profit organizations serving Haiti’s children to discuss challenges, solutions and opportunities for Haitian children living without families. The meetings specifically promoted the strengthening of child welfare systems and increasing the number of quality social workers to help vulnerable children, as well as improvements to both the domestic and intercountry adoption processes. The delegates also used their influence to spotlight the human rights violation of “restavek” (where children living in poverty or without the protection of families are taken into the homes of Haitian families and used as child labor) and offered positive family solutions for the care of these children.

IMPACT.

The delegation brought together funders, experts and policymakers. As a result, the Haitian government has been connected with best-practice program implementers and funders to develop a domestic foster-to-adopt program in Haiti, is in discussions about potential partnerships to build social workforce capacity, and continues to work with child welfare advocates on strengthening domestic and international adoption procedures.
From your unique perspective as a child development specialist, what is the importance of CCAI’s 20/20 Vision Program?

There is a tremendous value in CCAI’s delegation program. This is real time, real life information. This is not an inflated report, inflated in either direction. Eyes and feet on the ground with informed individuals from the country give us our best hope of bringing aid and resources that truly make a difference.

What advice do you have for Members of Congress and policymakers about permanency and families?

If I were to make an appeal to Members of Congress, I would remind them that we know current research on trauma — relationships are key. So I can give all the money, I can give all the food, I can build all the wells I want to, but if they are not relationship-based gifts and the facilities serving vulnerable children around the world are not relationship-based, there is not long-term, lasting change. I can tell you that I work with difficult traumatized children from literally around the globe. I have worked with very hopeless looking children, violent children, and I can tell you that we know that there is great hope for every child. Every child can heal, if they come to a relationship-based environment that is informed and prepared.
CONGRESSIONAL RESOURCE PROGRAM

BRINGING EXPERTISE TO CAPITOL HILL

The Congressional Resource Program is CCAI’s primary means of sharing objective, educational information with the 150 Members of the Congressional Coalition on Adoption. Briefings, reports, focus events, roundtables and legislative alerts all provide opportunities for CCAI to bring experts and advocates with firsthand experience and relevant information to federal policymakers, with the goal of identifying and removing barriers that hinder children from realizing their basic right to a family. One key 113th Congress legislative victory for children was the passage of the Preventing Sex Trafficking and Strengthening Families Act (PL 113-183) that corrected the overuse of the permanency loophole “APPLA” for foster children under age 16.

AS A FORMER HILL STAFFER, I HAD THE PRIVILEGE OF WORKING WITH CCAI FOR NEARLY A DECADE. THEY WERE THE RESOURCE TO USE FOR ALL THINGS RELATED TO ADOPTION AND FOSTER CARE. CCAI PLAYS AN UNIQUE ROLE IN HELPING MEMBERS OF CONGRESS AND THEIR STAFF UNDERSTAND THE POLICY AND REAL-WORLD IMPLICATIONS OF CURRENT FEDERAL AND INTERNATIONAL POLICIES. THROUGH THEIR CONSTANT CONTACT WITH MEMBERS AND STAFF, CCAI HAS DEVELOPED LONG-TERM RELATIONSHIPS THAT HAVE RESULTED IN SIGNIFICANT BIPARTISAN LEGISLATIVE ACCOMPLISHMENTS.

Brian Sutter, Former Congressional Committee Staff Committee on Ways and Means

NATIONAL ADOPTION DAY

CREATING FOREVER FAMILIES

On November 22, National Adoption Day celebrated its 14th year finalizing adoptions throughout the nation. That day, the dream of a loving family was fulfilled for more than 5,000 children in the U.S. foster care system. CCAI was proud to lead the National Adoption Day Coalition’s engagement with Members of Congress, state elected officials, celebrities and two NFL teams — the New Orleans Saints and Minnesota Vikings. Both the U.S. Senate and U.S. House of Representatives introduced National Adoption Month resolutions, while President Obama and 48 states issued Proclamations recognizing this special day.

“NATIONAL ADOPTION DAY ALLOWS US THE CHANCE TO CELEBRATE BECOMING A FAMILY. IT ALSO GIVES US THE OPPORTUNITY TO SHARE OUR STORY AND SPREAD AWARENESS OF THE MANY OTHER CHILDREN CURRENTLY AVAILABLE FOR ADOPTION, WAITING FOR THEIR FOREVER FAMILIES.”

Melissa Groves, adoptive mother of eight and Angels in Adoption™ awardee
This summer, CCAI hosted 12 talented young adults, who spent their formative years in foster care, in our ten-week Foster Youth Internship (FYI) Program™. Throughout this professional internship experience, the youth worked in U.S. Congressional offices and were given opportunities to share with Members of Congress and their staff about real-life challenges children face in U.S. foster care. At the end of the summer program, CCAI’s Foster Youth Interns presented their carefully researched policy report, Shaping Tomorrow with Today’s Minds, at a standing room only Congressional briefing. They also briefed White House Domestic Policy Council’s Deputy Assistant Roy Austin and his team on their report and recommendations. The interns’ report will be used by Congress, the Administration, and the adoption and foster care community as a resource to improve child welfare policy. Since the inception of the FYI Program, almost 160 current and former foster youth have made their mark on Capitol Hill, and several of the interns’ recommendations have been and are being drafted into legislation.

“ALL TOO OFTEN, FOSTER AND ADOPTIVE YOUTH BELIEVE THAT THEIR EXPERIENCES HAVE LITTLE IMPACT AND THAT THEIR VOICES ARE NEVER HEARD. I THINK THE GREATEST VALUE OF THE FYI PROGRAM IS THAT IT MAKES THE IMPORTANT STEP TO CONNECT YOUNG ADULTS WHO HAVE ACTUALLY SPENT TIME IN THE FOSTER CARE SYSTEM WITH MEMBERS OF CONGRESS.”

Sam Leiva, 2014 Foster Youth Intern
Describe your time in foster care.

I became a ward of the state the day I was born, addicted to drugs and abandoned in the hospital as a result of my parents’ involvement with drugs, criminal activity and poverty. I encountered trauma at a very young age resulting from various types of abuse and neglect. Not being raised by my biological parents was extremely difficult as I did not have a natural support system throughout my life. At the age of 10, I was reunified with my mother but after two short years, my mother voluntarily returned my siblings and me back to the state without notice. I was placed in foster homes and continuously moved around from home to home until the age of 18. When I aged out of the foster care system, I had little support and stability and concluded that foster parents seemed more interested in the economic benefits of caring for me, rather than loving me as if I was one of their own.

Describe your experience with the Foster Youth Internship Program™.

Every summer, the Foster Youth Internship Program™ provides young adults like me an opportunity to give perspective and voice to the challenges that foster youth face by sharing our personal experiences within the system to Members of Congress and their staff. I was often told that my experiences would never be used for good, but being an “FYI” with CCAI changed that. As a Foster Youth Intern, I interned last summer for Senator Grassley. When he highlighted my life story on the U.S. Senate Floor, I quickly realized that my story had significance and understood that Congress does care.

My experience on Capitol Hill through CCAI’s Foster Youth Internship Program™ was maximized because I had the opportunity to not only intern on Capitol Hill, but to write a report on federal child welfare policy and brief both Congress and the White House Domestic Policy Council on issues that I care deeply about. Never in my life did I imagine I would be afforded an opportunity such as this. CCAI helped me grow in my confidence and, even today, the caring CCAI staff gently push me to reach my potential, both personally and professionally. I am really thankful I decided to intern with CCAI, because they opened a window of hope for me and so many others.
What impact do you think you have made for children and youth currently in the foster care system through CCAI’s Foster Youth Internship Program™?

You never really know the impact you have on a person, place or even an entire system in the moment. Last summer was all about planting seeds that will take shape and grow for the next generation of foster youth. You don’t always see change happen immediately, but if you continue to fight for justice and persevere, transformation happens.

Just recently, I met two young girls who are in the foster care system. After sharing my story and the work I did this summer with CCAI, they immediately thanked me for fighting for them. Conversations like this are when I realize the work I was doing as a Foster Youth Intern made a difference. Striving to make an impact on someone’s life goes far beyond just doing what seems good. It is doing good in the face of adversity and having the perspective that one day it will produce results, even if you can’t see it right away.

What are you currently up to?

I recently began an internship at the White House with the Domestic Policy Council on Urban Affairs, Justice and Opportunity. This would not have been possible without the support and encouragement of CCAI’s staff and the opportunity to brief this same office during the Foster Youth Internship Program™. After completing the FYI Program last summer I was really nervous and anxious about pursuing the White House internship. The CCAI staff were some of my biggest cheerleaders through the application process. CCAI has become more than a place I interned with. They have become my family. The Foster Youth Internship Program™ helped instill confidence in me, and has given me the tools necessary to continue on the journey of advocating for foster youth and helping to raise up the next generation of leaders.
In September, CCAI’s signature public awareness program, Angels in Adoption™, celebrated its 16th year honoring deserving individuals, families and organizations. One hundred twenty four Members of Congress commended their constituents for enriching the lives of foster children and orphans through families. More than two-thirds of the Angels in Adoption™ awardees traveled to Washington, D.C. for three days of specially designed educational and congressional events including tours of the nation’s capital, a congressional pinning ceremony and meetings with Members of Congress to share their experiences.

The program culminated with the annual Angels in Adoption™ Gala commemorating National Angels in Adoption™ awardees Bill Klein and Dr. Jen Arnold, stars of TLC’s *The Little Couple*; screenwriter and creator of ABC’s *Grey’s Anatomy* and *Scandal*, Shonda Rhimes; and CEO of Jockey International Debra Steigerwaldt-Waller.

The Angels in Adoption™ Program has now honored over 2,100 awardees from every state and the District of Columbia. After the events in Washington, D.C., awardees return home with a renewed excitement and greater commitment to helping orphaned and foster children and youth.
“[I]n all my experiences, I can honestly say that the most fulfilling moments are when I see ordinary people doing extraordinary things... I’ve had the privilege of selecting a Nebraska family to be honored as Angels in Adoption™ each year during my time in the Senate and each year their stories of unconditional love show the limitless capacity of the human heart.”

Senator Mike Johanns
Foster youth have a platform to speak to the nation’s most powerful legislators about their experiences in foster care.

Vulnerable children can know the safety, security and love that only a family provides.

Members of Congress are given experiential knowledge to make objective decisions benefiting orphaned and foster children.

CCAI receives donations from generous individuals, organizations and foundations throughout the year. We appreciate your support of our mission and the core belief that every child deserves a loving family.

Thank you for partnering with us to make 2014 an incredible year!
## 2014 FINANCIAL STATEMENT

### STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

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| Total Liabilities & Net Assets | **$249,527** |

### STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES

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| **Total Expenses**            | **$1,017,198** |
| **Change in Net Assets**      | **$89,729**    |
| Net Assets, Beginning of Year | **$115,491**   |
| Net Assets, End of Year       | **$205,220**   |

This report is a summary of the financial statements incorporated in the annual audit report issued by Councilor, Buchanan & Mitchell, P.C. for the year ended December 31, 2014. The complete financial statements and notes are available upon request from CCAI. Please contact info@ccainstitute.org to receive the full set of audited financial statements.
As a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, we rely on the generosity of our partners to accomplish our mission. We would like to thank the following individuals, organizations and foundations for supporting us as we work to ensure that every child’s basic human right to a safe, permanent and loving family is realized.

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Comstock Homebuilding Companies • Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption • Dieter M. Hugel

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Thank You

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Victoria Rowell (Rowell Foster Children’s Positive Plan)
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EVERY CHILD
DESERVES A LOVING FAMILY

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