



Program on Social Enterprise Hosts

“Entrepreneurial Solutions to Child Welfare Challenges” Conference

On October 25th and 26th, over 70 leaders from the child welfare, business, and academic fields gathered on the SOM campus to learn and collaborate at the “Entrepreneurial Solutions to Child Welfare Challenges” Conference.

Hosted by the Yale School of Management’s Program on Social Enterprise in partnership with Stewards of Change™ (led by alumnus Daniel Stein, SOM '87) and the New America Foundation (led by Mary Bissell, Yale College '90), the conference was an unprecedented event: it marked the first time such a diverse group of stakeholders (including judges, corporate leaders, policy gurus, foundation directors, professors and both public and private non-profit child welfare leaders) gathered together to work on creative solutions to long-standing problems in foster care and related family services.

Specifically, the focus of the conference was to explore how greater innovation and business sector involvement could be used to solve challenges in the child welfare field.

Key issues that surfaced during the two days of discussion included:

- How child welfare organizations and businesses can form successful, mutually beneficial and long-lasting public-private partnerships
- The ways in which privatization can or cannot be used to improve services for children and families
- The critical impact that businesses can have on reducing the risk of abuse and neglect by implementing family-friendly business policies, including but not limited to emergency leave, maternity/paternity leave, health care, child-care, psychological health, substance abuse recovery, or other policies
- The need for prevention-focused solutions in addition to (or instead of) foster care-focused solutions
- The possibility of improving program effectiveness by utilizing traditionally private sector marketing and quality-management techniques
- The need for improved management training for leaders in the child welfare field, and
- The extent to which innovation can or should be pursued in a social services field constrained by legal decisions, nationally fragmented policies, and high risk aversion.

Participants in the conference ranged from John Pepper, former CEO of Procter & Gamble and current Vice President for Finance & Administration at Yale, to John Mattingly, the Commissioner of the New York City Administration on Children’s Services, to William O’Leary, the Director of Microsoft’s Health and Human Services Division. Students participating in the event included Amy Blankson (SOM '06), Lillian Lo (SOM '06), Rochelle Mackey (SOM '06), Vipin Nikore (SOM '06), and Mary Elizabeth Rehm (Yale College '06). Yale faculty participants included Dr. Sharon Oster, Dr. Jonathan Feinstein, Dr. Heidi Brooks, Mr. Steven Hudspeth, and former faculty member Dr. Kathy O’Regan.

“By bringing these various groups together, the conference opened up a productive dialogue regarding how we can best leverage business capabilities in order improve the lives of children and families,” shared Mackey, who also helped to plan the conference. “I was really excited to be a part of what hopefully will be just the start of significant progress in the field.”

Funding for the conference was generously provided by the Annie E. Casey Foundation and Casey Family Programs.