

## Intensive Permanence Services Anu Family Services [www.anufs.org](http://www.anufs.org)

### AT-A-GLANCE

**Initiative Start Date:**  
2006

**Initiative Location:**



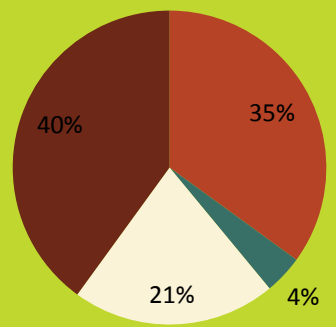
**Initiative Budget:**  
\$5,065,167

**Age Range of Youth:**  
0 – 21 years old

**Number of Youth Served:**  
200 annually

**Diversity of Youth Served:**

- Black/African American
- Latino/Hispanic
- Native American/Indian
- White/Caucasian



### ABOUT

In 2006, Anu Family Services (Anu) set an ambitious goal: to be the last placement prior to permanence for 90 percent of the youth they serve. That year, 38 percent of youth leaving Anu’s foster care services were discharged to a permanent placement. By the last six months of 2012, that percentage had almost doubled to 70 percent. Anu’s work is based on two key beliefs: 1) youth’s past trauma, grief and loss must be addressed in order for them to form lasting, meaningful relationships and 2) the search for people who youth have loved and lost should be extensive and exhaustive. Guiding all of Anu’s work is the conviction that youth are “the boss of the process.” Youth have the right to “hire and fire” their caseworker and determine the pace and content of the work such as who to reach out to and when. Anu is determined to help youth progress from “writhing to surviving to thriving.”

### KEY ACTIVITIES

- **Intensive Permanence Services** – work one-on-one with youth over nine to 24 months; permanence specialists carry small caseloads (8 or less) and use a variety of exercises and techniques (e.g., timelines, connection maps, permanency pacts, mindfulness based stress reduction and yoga).
- **Coping with Trauma** – use evidence-informed practices such as the 3-5-7 Model comprised of three tasks, five questions and seven skills to help youth understand their past, grieve losses and prepare for permanence. When appropriate, Anu works with Native American elders to help youth deal with cultural loss and reclamation.
- **Family Search & Engagement** – mine the youth’s file, talk to youth about who is important to them and find connections that were lost as a result of out-of-home placement. Family members, relatives, former foster parents, teachers and coaches are all potential candidates for permanent relationships.

### HIGHLIGHT

In 2002, a teenager in an Anu foster care placement underwent routine surgery and died unexpectedly. His funeral was attended only by his foster parent and his caseworkers. In that moment of tremendous sadness, Anu’s leadership vowed never again to be in the position of having to bury a child alone. “We knew we had to do better than that,” explains Amelia Franck Meyer, Anu’s CEO. “We committed then to doing this work differently. We can’t isolate and disconnect kids from the people who love them.”

**Youth Thrive** is a research-informed framework developed by the Center for the Study of Social Policy (CSSP) that identifies five protective and promotive factors for youth (age 11-26):

- Youth Resilience
- Social Connections
- Knowledge of Adolescent Development
- Concrete Support in Times of Need
- Cognitive and Social-Emotional Competence

The goal of Youth Thrive is to increase the likelihood that all youth are supported in ways that advance healthy development and well-being and reduce the impact of negative life experiences. Youth Thrive focuses particularly on vulnerable youth, beginning with those involved in the child welfare system.

CSSP conducted a national search to identify initiatives that provide compelling examples of programs and policy efforts that build the five protective and promotive factors for youth in the child welfare system. This is a profile of one of the 15 selected exemplary initiatives.

### **BUILDING THE PROTECTIVE & PROMOTIVE FACTORS**

The exemplary initiatives address all or most of the protective and promotive factors. Here are several examples:

**Youth Resilience:** In helping youth address and confront grief, loss and trauma and navigate the complexities of establishing relationships with adults, Anu Family Services empowers youth to tackle their own personal struggles in a supportive environment.

**Concrete Supports:** In addition to giving emotional support, caring adults are enlisted to provide concrete supports such as transportation, homework help or recreational activities. Anu also uses flexible funds for concrete needs e.g. tutoring when youth fall behind in school as a result of multiple moves.

### **USING DATA**

Anu Family Services is deeply committed to evaluation and continuous quality improvement. Measures are collected daily, monthly, quarterly, annually and on multi-year trends. Anu uses a sophisticated database tool called Evolv by Netsmart Solutions which has been in place for nearly a decade and is regularly upgraded. Anu uses the Youth Connections Scale, a validated tool, to conduct baseline assessments and measure progress over time. Results of Anu's work include:

- 100% of the youth that participated in Intensive Permanence Services for ten months or more demonstrated an increase in the quantity and quality of their connections.
- Youth who participated in Intensive Permanence Services the longest demonstrated a 413% increase in overall Youth Connections Score.
- 100% of youth have been able to create a more coherent narrative of their trauma histories which has provided opportunities to grieve their losses and form connections.
- Average length of stay for youth in treatment foster care decreased from 16 months in 2008 to 9.2 months in 2011.
- Anu increased its discharge to permanency rate from 38% in 2006 to 70% for the last six months of fiscal year 2013.