



# Five-Year Report



**2002-2007**

**AFCC**

**Association of Family and Conciliation Courts**



AFCC is an interdisciplinary and international association of professionals dedicated to the resolution of family conflict.

#### **Mission**

To improve the lives of children and families through the resolution of family conflict.

#### **Vision**

A justice system in which all professionals work collaboratively through education, support and access to services to achieve the best possible outcome for children and families.

#### **Values**

- Collaboration and respect among professions and disciplines
- Learning through inquiry, discussion and debate
- Innovation in addressing the needs of families and children in conflict
- Empowering families to resolve conflict and make decisions about their future

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Erin Sommerfeld, B.A.

### **Chapter Services and Development Consultant**

Leslye Hunter, M.A., LMFT, LPCC



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report chronicles the development of AFCC for the fiscal years 2002-03 through 2006-07, the first five years of the current administration. It addresses AFCC initiatives and special projects, organizational development, membership, conferences, resource development, publications, administration and finance, Web site, technology and collaborating organizations. Comparative data and narrative are offered to provide historical context.

### AFCC Initiatives and Special Projects

Between 2002 and 2007, AFCC initiatives and special projects played a growing role in the day to day activities of the association. Eight special projects were initiated between 2002 and 2007, funded through a mix of contracts, small grants, the operating budgets of AFCC and its collaborating organizations and participating individuals and organizations.

- (1) Connecticut Family Civil Intake Assessment Screen
- (2) Guidelines for Parenting Coordination
- (3) Court Services Task Force
- (4) Model Standards of Practice for Child Custody Evaluation
- (5) Family Law Education Reform (FLER) Project
- (6) Educator's Guide to Working with Separated and Divorcing Parents
- (7) Domestic Violence and Family Courts Project
- (8) Developing Nations Libraries Project

The Family Law Education Reform Project and Domestic Violence and Family Court Project were anchored by the first two AFCC-sponsored conferences at the Johnson Foundation's prestigious Wingspread Conference Center.

### Organizational Development

AFCC completed three major projects in the area of organizational development:

- A five-year strategic plan
- An organizational effectiveness project, funded by the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation
- Identity branding

### Membership

AFCC membership experienced significant growth between 2002 and 2007.

- Numerous new benefits were added, with a focus on electronic communication and access to information
- Overall membership increased by 94%
- Five chartered Chapters were added and AFCC designated a half-time staff position to support the growth and development of Chapters

## Educational Programming

- Annual conference attendance and revenue increased steadily with the first sell-out in AFCC history taking place at the 2007 Annual Conference in Washington, D.C.
- A new Regional Training Conference model was implemented in 2005.
- The Symposium on Child Custody Evaluations continued its strong performance.
- Attendance and revenues for the Congress on Parent Education and Access Program continued to decline.
- A new model of two-day training programs was implemented in partnership with academic institutions.

## Resource Development

- The Resource Development Committee refocused its efforts in order to increase the number of scholarships and the amount of overall giving.
- Three mini-grants and 64 scholarships were granted, including international scholarships with travel stipends.
- The number of scholarships granted annually grew from 3 to 25.

## Publications

- Six AFCC-produced publications were added to the library and sales skyrocketed due to *Planning for Shared Parenting*.
- Pamphlet revision and redesign were completed however sales have declined.
- Blackwell Publishing was contracted to publish *Family Court Review* and posted *FCR* archives online for members.

## Administration and Finance

- Staff increased from 3.6 to 6.63 FTE.
- Improved return on investments.
- Annual budget increased from \$623,000 in 2001-2002 to more than \$1.1 million for 2007-2008.
- Restricted reserves increased to \$285,000.
- Job-cost accounting procedures to provide more accurate reporting on the cost of programs.

## Web Site and Technology

- Redesigned Web site to enhance usability and member benefits.
- Google grant increased average monthly Web visits from 16,500 to 42,700.
- The bi-monthly *AFCC eNEWS* debuted in February 2006 and now has more than 10,000 subscribers.
- Parenting Coordination Network (group email) implemented.

## INTRODUCTION

Since 1963, the Association of Family and Conciliation Courts has grown from a small group of volunteer judges and court counselors to a robust professional association. AFCC now has more than 3,300 members representing more than a dozen disciplines from more than 20 countries, full-time professional staff, an annual budget of more than \$1.2 million and a wide variety of programs, products and services. Although AFCC is comparatively small in size when compared with other national and international organizations, it has made its mark as one of the leading organizations for family law, mental health and dispute resolution professionals.

This report chronicles the development of AFCC for the fiscal years 2002-03 through 2006-07, the first five years of the current administration. It addresses AFCC initiatives and special projects, organizational development, membership, conferences, resource development, publications, administration and finance, Web site, technology and collaborating organizations. Comparative data and narrative are offered to provide historical context.

## AFCC INITIATIVES AND SPECIAL PROJECTS

Between 2002 and 2007, AFCC initiatives and special projects played a growing role in the day to day activities of the association. During the strategic planning process the Board of Directors decided to pursue projects that benefit members and the field of practice with no anticipated direct financial benefit to AFCC. There were several reasons for this decision.

- After several years of focusing on organizational assessment and change, there was desire to make a more substantive contribution consistent with the AFCC mission.
- Initiatives were viewed as an opportunity to exhibit the strength of AFCC's intellectual capital and bring attention to the innovative work of the association.
- Initiatives could raise awareness of AFCC in professional communities.
- Initiatives could be a vehicle for involving a greater number of members in endeavors that created energy, collaboration and commitment to the field and to AFCC.
- Initiatives created opportunities to collaborate with like-minded organizations, creating value, new relationships and further serving many of the goals above.
- It was hoped that the impact of special projects would be to increase the number of professionals who viewed AFCC as a vibrant and relevant organization, thereby increasing the number of members.

### AFCC Wingspread Conferences

The **Family Law Education Reform Project** and the **Domestic Violence and Family Courts Project** were anchored by the first conferences hosted by AFCC at the Johnson Foundation's prestigious Wingspread Conference Center. Located in Racine, Wisconsin, Wingspread was designed by Frank Lloyd Wright in 1936. Wingspread is known for its interactive meetings, including those that led to the establishment of National Public Radio, the National Endowment for the Arts and the International Criminal Court. Wingspread participants have included Eleanor Roosevelt, Al Gore, George Will, George McGovern, Ralph Nader, Rev. Jesse Jackson, Warren Burger and Sandra Day O'Connor. A limited number of conference proposals are accepted.

Eight special projects were initiated between 2002 and 2007:

- (1) Connecticut Family Civil Intake Assessment Screen
- (2) Guidelines for Parenting Coordination
- (3) Court Services Task Force
- (4) Model Standards of Practice for Child Custody Evaluation
- (5) Family Law Education Reform (FLER) Project
- (6) Educator's Guide to Working with Separated and Divorcing Parents
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- (8) Developing Nations Libraries Project

These projects were funded through a mix of contracts, small grants, the operating budgets of AFCC and its collaborating organizations and participating individuals and organizations.

The accomplishments of the projects described below were the result of an investment of significant resources by AFCC, other organizations and many individuals. The benefits appear to be significant including: actively involving more than 135 people in the work of the association; guiding professional practice; providing new content and disseminating new information through *Family Court Review*, other publications and conferences; and developing opportunities for collaboration. The projects appear to have helped to elevate the AFCC profile as an innovative, collaborative organization and a major force in the field.

## Connecticut Family Civil Intake Assessment Screen Project

In the summer of 2002 AFCC was awarded a \$50,000 contract with the Connecticut Court Support Services Division (CSSD) Family Services Unit to develop a research-based screening instrument for the Family Services Unit. The project team conducted site visits; direct observation, review and assessments of services; focus groups with stakeholders; and a literature review on screening protocols. CSSD revised its menu of services on the recommendation of the project team. The screening protocol was developed, training conducted and the screen was first piloted, and then rolled out statewide. The instrument was presented at a pre-conference institute at the 42nd Annual Conference in Seattle in May 2005 and for the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges in October 2005. An article on the project was published in *Pace Law Review* and a chapter is forthcoming in AFCC's *Innovations in Court Services*. The project team was Peter Salem (Project Director), Robin Deutsch, Andy Schepard and Janet Johnston, working with CSSD staff members Steve Grant, Debra Kulak, Kathryn Cerrutti and Joseph DiTunno. In 2005, AFCC was awarded a second contract of up to \$50,000 per year to evaluate the instrument over a 3-year period. Marsha Kline Pruett is the principal investigator. As of this writing, the project has reached the semi-finals of the Kennedy School of Government (at Harvard University) Innovations in American Government Awards.

## AFCC Guidelines for Parenting Coordination

In 2003, AFCC President George Czutrin appointed a Task Force to develop Model Standards of Practice for Parenting Coordination, following the first Task Force on Parenting

Coordination that conducted research and published the 2003 Report on Parenting Coordination Implementation Issues. The Task Force determined that the Parenting Coordination process was too new to use the term “Model Standards” and, in May 2005, proposed to the Board of Directors the AFCC Guidelines for Parenting Coordination. The Guidelines passed unanimously and are available on the AFCC Web site at [http://www.afccnet.org/resources/standards\\_practice.asp](http://www.afccnet.org/resources/standards_practice.asp).

**AFCC Parenting Coordination Task Force:** Christie Coates, J.D., M.Ed. (Chair), Linda Fieldstone, M.Ed., (Secretary), Barbara Ann Bartlett, J.D., Robin Deutsch, Ph.D., Billie Lee Dunford-Jackson, J.D., Philip Epstein, Q.C., Barbara Fidler, Ph.D., Jonathan Gould, Ph.D., Hon. William Jones (ret.), Joan Kelly, Ph.D., Matthew J. Sullivan, Ph.D., Robert N. Wistner, J.D.

## AFCC Court Services Task Force

The AFCC Court Services Task Force was appointed by AFCC President George Czutrin in 2003 to examine the challenges faced by contemporary court service agencies and to conduct a review of initiatives and best practices in service delivery. The Task Force held an open forum at the AFCC Regional Conference in St. Louis in November 2003 and then conducted a survey of court service agencies to assess their challenges. Survey findings were presented at AFCC’s 41st Annual Conference in San Antonio in May 2004. The Task Force also disseminated a call for nominations for exemplary family court-related programs. Task Force members selected 69 programs, edited the entries and featured them in the 2005 AFCC publication *Exemplary Family Court Programs and Practices: Profiles of Innovative and Accountable Court-Connected Programs*.

**AFCC Court Services Task Force:** Barbara A. Babb, J.D. (Chair), David Hodges, M.A., (Vice Chair), Stephen Grant, M.A., (Vice Chair), Phil Bushard, D.P.A., Pamela Cardullo Ortiz, J.D., Hon. Leonard Edwards (ret.), George Ferrick, Ph.D., Judith Moran, J.D., Jan Shaw, M.P.A., Risa Sheriff, LL.B., Robert Smith, J.D., M.Div.

## Model Standards of Practice for Child Custody Evaluation

AFCC President Leslye Hunter appointed the Task Force on Model Standards for Child Custody Evaluation in 2004. The Task Force was charged with revising AFCC’s 1994 Model Standards. Over a two-year period the Task Force held open meetings at AFCC conferences in Nashville (2004), Seattle (2005) and Breckenridge (2005) and posted two drafts for public comment (August and December 2005). The Task Force received more than 600 comments from the public postings and the Model Standards were not without controversy. Some psychologists were concerned about the Model Standards’ specificity and the implications for potential Board complaints. The Task Force was responsive to comments from members and revised the drafting process to accommodate additional feedback. The Model Standards were adopted by a unanimous vote of the AFCC Board of Directors in May 2006 and are posted at [http://www.afccnet.org/resources/standards\\_practice.asp](http://www.afccnet.org/resources/standards_practice.asp).

**AFCC Task Force on Model Standards for Child Custody Evaluation:** William G. Austin Ph.D. (Co-chair), Lorraine Martin M.S.W. (Co-chair), David Martindale, Ph.D. (Reporter), Leslie Drozd, Ph.D., Dianna Gould-Saltman, J.D., H.D. Kirkpatrick, Ph.D., Kathryn Kuehnle, Ph.D., Debra Kulak, M.S., Hon. Denise McColley, Arnold Shienvold, Ph.D., Jeffrey Siegel, Ph.D., Philip M. Stahl, Ph.D.

## Family Law Education Reform Project

The Family Law Education Reform Project (FLER) is a collaborative endeavor between AFCC and the Center for Children, Families and the Law at Hofstra Law School. The goal of FLER is to close the gap between the teaching and practice of family law. The project gathered information and ideas through a combination of a series of open meetings at AFCC annual conferences (San Antonio, 2004; Seattle 2005; Tampa Bay 2006), with think tanks of invited family law professors (Hofstra Law School, November 2004) and representatives of family law and related professional organizations (Wingspread, March 2005), research conducted by law students at Hofstra and Northeastern law schools and an Internet survey of interdisciplinary practitioners. The final report, commentaries and related articles were published as a special issue of *Family Court Review* in October 2006. Stage two of FLER began in September 2006 with a meeting to plan for the development of curricular modules designed to support the FLER Report's recommendations for family law teaching. The plan is for the modules to be posted online and made available for no charge to family law teachers.

The FLER Project has been a unique undertaking for AFCC and in many ways has been a model of collaboration. The project was primarily funded through the budgets of AFCC and Hofstra, as well as small grants from the JAMS Foundation (\$8,000), the Johnson Foundation (estimated \$14,000 value for Wingspread Conference) and the Seedlings Foundation (\$15,000 for modules planning) and participating law schools, organizations and individuals.

FLER has met with widespread enthusiasm and has been the subject of numerous articles in family law newsletters and blogs. Endorsements have come from the American Bar Association Section on Dispute Resolution, Association for Conflict Resolution, International Academy of Collaborative Professionals, National Association of Counsel for Children and the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges. Additionally, the Minnesota Chapter of the American Academy of Matrimonial Lawyers has independently worked in conjunction with William Mitchell and Hamline Law Schools to develop and offer a family law course based on FLER report principles and recommendations.

**FLER Steering Committee:** Andrew Schepard (Co-chair), Peter Salem (Co-chair), J. Herbie DiFonzo (Co-reporter), Mary E. O'Connell (Co-reporter), William Howe III, Leslye Hunter, John Lande, Jennifer Rosato, Hon. Hugh Starnes, Tom Fee (Facilitator), Greg Lampe (Curriculum Advisor).

**FLER Think Tank Participants:** Phyllis Bernard, Elizabeth Brandt, Iris A. Burke, June Carbone, Michael Dale, Barbara Glesner Fines, Marsha Freeman, Martin Guggenheim, Hon. William Jones, Mary Kay Kisthardt, Kelly Browe Olson, Twila Perry, Stacey Platt, Catherine Ross, Jana Singer, Barbara Stark, Nancy Ver Steegh, Janet Weinstein, Elissa Benedek, Lisa Berman, Hon. Susan Carbon, Hon. Dolores Carr, Alexis Collentine, Howard Davidson, Otis Dean, Linda Elrod, Robert Emery, Stephen Erickson, Susan A. Hansen, Karen Jick, Kris Koeffler, Forrest Mosten, Paul D. Pearson, Peggy Podell, Marsha Kline Pruett and Andrea Schneider.

## An Educator's Guide to Separating and Divorcing Parents

In 2004, an AFCC workgroup was appointed to develop guidelines for educators on how to work with separating and divorcing parents. The workgroup is working on a wide range of

issues, from how to structure parent-teacher conferences to how to deal with requests for information from child custody evaluations. The workgroup draft document was completed in the spring of 2007 and is expected to be reviewed by the AFCC Board of Directors in the spring of 2008.

**Educator's Guide Workgroup Members:** Barbara F. Steinberg (Chair), Deborah Datz, Jake Jacobson, Naomi Kaufmann, Hon. Emile Kruzick, Nancy Olesen, Shelley Probber, and Gary Rick.

## Domestic Violence and Family Courts Project

The Domestic Violence and Family Courts Project is a collaboration endeavor, co-sponsored by the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges. The project included AFCC's second Wingspread Conference in February 2007. The think tank focused on issues of differentiation in domestic violence and participants included leading judges, legal and social science scholars, domestic violence advocates and interdisciplinary family court and family law practitioners. The Wingspread Conference led to a commitment of participants to continue working together in groups on issues related to terminology, screening and assessment, interventions, outcomes (i.e., parenting plans) and education. A special issue of *Family Court Review*, featuring articles co-authored by writers from different professional backgrounds, is scheduled for publication in July 2008. This collaboration presents an opportunity for two organizations, that have frequently been on different sides of a difficult issue, to join together.

**Planning Committee Members:** Hon. Karen Adam, Hon. Sue Carbon, Billie Lee Dunford-Jackson, Loretta Frederick, Janet Johnston, Hon. William Jones (ret.), Mary Ferriter, Bernie Mayer, Peter Salem, Hon. Hugh Starnes, Nancy Ver Steegh (co-reporter) and Lonnie Weiss.

**Wingspread Participants:** Hon. Carl Ashley, Daniel Bloom, Hon. George Czutrin, Kelly Browe Olson, Firoza Dabby, Clare Dalton (co-reporter), Robin Deutsch, Richard Ducote, Desmond Ellis, Hon. William Fee, Loretta Frederick, Richard Gelles, Susan Hanks, Hon. Scott Jordan (ret.), Joan Kelly, Kris Koeffler, Lorraine Martin, Nadine Neufville, Jeremy Nevilles-Sorrel, Hon. Victor Reyes, Arline Rotman, Robin Runge, Andrew Schepard, Maureen Sheeran, Sujata Warriar, Hon. Frances Wong.

## Developing Nations Libraries Project

AFCC partnered with the Asia Foundation's Books for Asia Program in 2006-07 to help establish collections of family law, dispute resolution, mental health and social science publications in developing nations. Five libraries were selected in the Philippines, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Mongolia. AFCC asked members who have written or edited a book to help by contributing to the project. AFCC donated a full set of its publications to each library and thirty-five members participated. Nearly 300 books were donated. The Asia Foundation collected the books and delivered them to the libraries.

**The following AFCC members contributed to the project:** Constance Ahrons, Jane Appell, Nicholas Bala, Allan E. Barsky, G. Andrew Benjamin, Susan M. Boyan, Christine A. Coates, Robin M. Deutsch, Leslie Drozd, Robert E. Emery, James Flens, Jay Folberg, Larry Fong, Richard J. Gelles, Jonathan W. Gould, Gregg Herman, Carolyn Harris Johnson, Barbara Landau, Daryl Landau, Sy Landau, Caryn S. Lennon, Ann Milne, Forrest Mosten, Diane

Neumann, Allison Quattrocchi, Isolina Ricci, Peter Salem, Andrew Schepard, Robert Smith, Philip M. Stahl, Ann Marie Termini, Elizabeth Thayer, Shirley A. Thomas, Jeffery Wittmann, Jeffrey Zimmerman.

## ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

During the late 1990s AFCC invested considerable resources in organizational development including a comprehensive organizational assessment, a member survey and a task force to address the relationship with Chapters. Between 2000 and 2002, AFCC reviewed and overhauled significant components of governance and administration. The administrative transition occurred in the midst of a strategic planning process and during a major fiscal downturn following the 911 terrorist attacks, including the cancellation of an AFCC Regional Conference in New York in September 2001. The administrative transition left AFCC short staffed and uncertain about its finances and strategic planning was subsequently deferred until the organization could regain its financial footing. Ultimately, a strategic plan was developed and it was supplemented by an Organizational Effectiveness Report conducted under a grant from the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation.

### Strategic Planning

The strategic planning process was revived with meetings in St. Louis (November 2003) and San Antonio (May 2004). An ambitious strategic plan was approved by the Board of Directors in October 2004. It included new mission, vision and values statements for AFCC and five goals:

- I. Lead the effort to improve justice systems and practice.
- II. Develop and disseminate knowledge of value to the field.
- III. Increase the number of family law leaders who support the mission and values of AFCC.
- IV. Increase financial stability and sustainability.
- V. Strengthen organizational structure, management and governance.

**Strategic Planning Committee:** Phil Bushard (Co-chair), Cori Erickson (Co-chair), Maureen Robinson (consultant and facilitator), George Czutrin, Leslye Hunter and Peter Salem.

### Hewlett Organizational Effectiveness Project

In 2004, the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation awarded AFCC a \$34,000 grant to assess organizational capacity and effectiveness. The project enabled AFCC to build on its strategic planning process by focusing on three key aspects of long-term effectiveness: (1) increasing capacity to provide meaningful and innovative programs and services to AFCC members and others in the field; (2) building organizational and financial sustainability; and (3) leveraging the association's influence and impact.

The benchmarking process included a review of finances and services as well as interviews with leaders of other organizations in the field. AFCC was reported to be among the largest and most robust of stand alone organizations and viewed by many as a "best practice" organi-

zation. Colleagues described AFCC conferences and publications as “state of the art” and expressed considerable admiration for AFCC’s revenue model and how much AFCC accomplishes with limited staff and resources. AFCC was described as “the best managed national organization in many respects.” Nonetheless, the consultants were able to identify several long term strategies and areas in which performance could be enhanced.

The report provided a comprehensive set of recommendations addressing key issues including: membership growth, leadership, management, staffing, chapter development, financial management and how to raise AFCC’s profile and level of influence.

**Project Team:** Maureen Robinson, Richard Moyers and Glenn Miller (Consultants); Mary Ferriter, Leslye Hunter, Hon. Hugh Starnes and Peter Salem.

## Identity Branding

AFCC launched an identity branding project in 2003, resulting in a new logo and new look for the association, as shown in the brochure to the right. In January 2005, the new brand was rolled out with a new Web site, membership brochures, letterhead, newsletter, publications covers, business cards, conference banners and a new cover design for the *Family Court Review*.

## MEMBERSHIP

### Member Benefits

Some benefits of AFCC membership are intangible, such as networking and camaraderie, leadership in the field and intellectual capital. Others are more concrete, like the *Family Court Review*, newsletters and registration discounts. Both are highly valued by members. In an effort to increase the value of membership and expand the association’s reach, AFCC made a concerted effort to increase member benefits over the last five years. New member benefits added include:

- AFCC eNEWS bi-monthly electronic newsletter (also provided to non-members upon request)
- Online access to FCR (beginning with the first issue in 1963)
- Discounts of 15% on all AFCC publications
- AFCC PC Network group email list for parenting coordinators

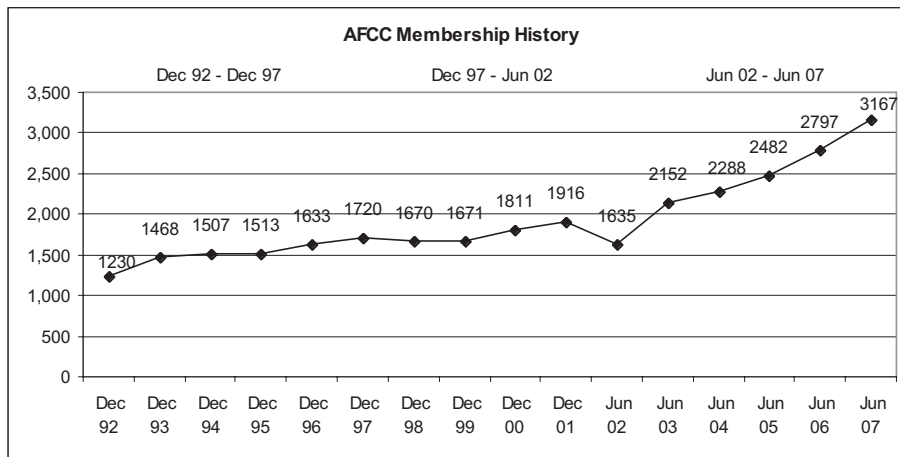


- Conference audio downloads of select conference sessions
- AFCC member bookstore
- Online publications (available for purchase in hard copy).
- Discounted registration on new AFCC training programs
- Discounts (25%) on J.M. Craig Press electronic abstracts subscription
- Discounts (20%) on products from Blackwell Publishing
- Discounted rates for advertisers and exhibitors

## Membership Growth

At the conclusion of June 2002, the number of AFCC members had dropped to 1,635 from an all-time high of 1,930 in November 2001, coinciding with the slumping economy following 9/11. This occurred following the 2001 transition from calendar-year dues (January-December memberships) to anniversary dues (where members renew one year from the date they become a member) and a 2001 dues increase, the fifth in seven years. In the fall of 2002, the association implemented aggressive membership retention strategies.

Between June 2002 and 2007, AFCC membership has increased nearly 94%, from 1,635 to 3,167, with an average annual increase of 306. This compares favorably with previous five year periods as shown below.\*



\*AFCC membership was historically tracked on a calendar year basis ending in December. Beginning in 2002 membership has been tracked consistent with the AFCC fiscal year, ending in June.

As of this writing, the growth trend is continuing with membership increasing to 3,361 between July and December 2007.

## AFCC Chapter Development

AFCC Chapters have played a significant role in the association, reflected by the growing number of chapters and the fact that seven present or former Chapter Board members are among the 19 parent organization Board members.

The AFCC Chapter Task Force Report issued a report in 2000 recommending new policies and procedures to address growing interest in developing AFCC Chapters. At the time, AFCC had active chapters in California, Arizona and Massachusetts and a dormant chapter in Kansas that was deactivated shortly thereafter. Between 2002 and 2004, AFCC Chapters were chartered in New Jersey, Florida, Texas, Missouri and New York. Colorado was granted Provisional Chapter status in 2006. In 2007, 15 states and 2 Canadian provinces made inquiries about forming Chapters. Serious efforts are presently underway to form Chapters in Ontario, Georgia, Minnesota and Louisiana.

The AFCC parent organization increased administrative support to Chapters significantly beginning in 2002, including (1) sponsoring continuing education for psychologists for Chapter conferences; (2) developing online downloadable membership reports to facilitate membership communication and recruitment; (3) creating a Chapter resource page of the AFCC Web site; and (4) partnering on member recruitment and conference marketing.

In 2005, President Hugh Starnes charged the AFCC Chapter Committee with examining possibilities for increasing services to existing Chapters and developing new Chapters as a membership growth strategy. Chapter committee members interviewed Chapter leaders, studied other associations and conducted additional research before submitting the following recommendations to the AFCC Board of Directors in October 2006:

- Create dedicated staff support to AFCC Chapters to provide guidance and oversight and serve as a conduit between Chapters and the parent organization.
- Development of a leadership institute for Chapters to help them deal with governance and management issues.
- Rebate 100 percent of dues to Chapters (beginning in 2000, 10% of dues were retained by the parent organization as partial payment for administrative services).

AFCC subsequently contracted with former AFCC President Leslye Hunter as part-time Chapter Services and Development Consultant. Current initiatives include chapter outreach and acknowledging/honoring Chapter leadership, facilitating communication and sharing of ideas among Chapters, developing a chapter charter and reviewing and updating all print and web based Chapter-related materials.

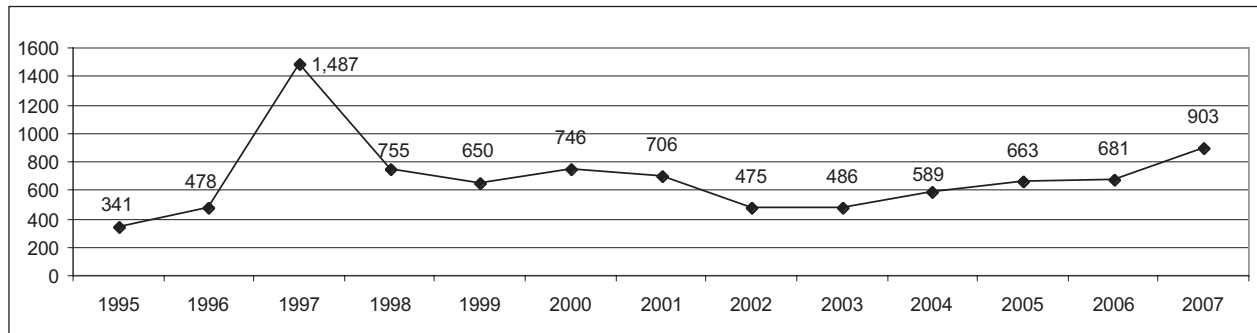
### AFCC Chapters

- Arizona
- California
- Colorado
- Florida
- Massachusetts
- Missouri
- New Jersey
- New York
- Texas

## AFCC CONFERENCES

### Annual Conference

The AFCC Annual Conference is the association’s hallmark event and top non-dues revenue producer. The conference both survived and thrived between 2002 and 2007. Historically, AFCC conferences grew throughout the mid to late 1990s. Attendance and revenues peaked at special events such as the first centrally managed conference in New Orleans (1993) and the Second World Congress on Family Law and the Rights of Children and Youth (1997). Between 1998 and 2001 annual conferences averaged more than 700 attendees. The 2002 Annual Conference on the Big Island of Hawaii dropped to 475 as many members, especially those with government agencies, reduced travel expenditures. In 2003 the annual conference in Ottawa contended with the SARS outbreak and the beginning of the war in Iraq. In 2006 the conference was moved to Tampa from New Orleans due to Hurricane Katrina. Nevertheless, between 2003 and 2007, numerous marketing and administrative initiatives were implemented, and after a record-breaking 903 registrants in 2007, average attendance climbed to 665 participants over five years compared to 666 between 1998 and 2002. The cost of conference registration for AFCC members between 2003 and 2007 increased only 2.3%, an average of less than half a percent annually. Annual conference growth is illustrated in the graph below.



Annual Conference Attendance History

### Regional Conferences

AFCC Regional Conferences were originally designed as an economical regional alternative to the annual conference as well as a site to hold fall meetings of the Board of Directors. At times local organizers played a greater role than with annual conferences. In some cases, the parent organization and chapters collaborated. Regional conferences have historically created challenges: (1) collaboration between the AFCC administrative office and local volunteers often required more work than a centrally planned and organized conference and at times have created strained working relationships; (2) the growth of independent chapter conferences often held in the fall (and typically modeled on AFCC conferences) created potential timing conflicts; and (3) the AFCC parent organization in some ways competed with itself by offering a smaller scale version of its annual conference. Since the advent of the Symposium on Child Custody

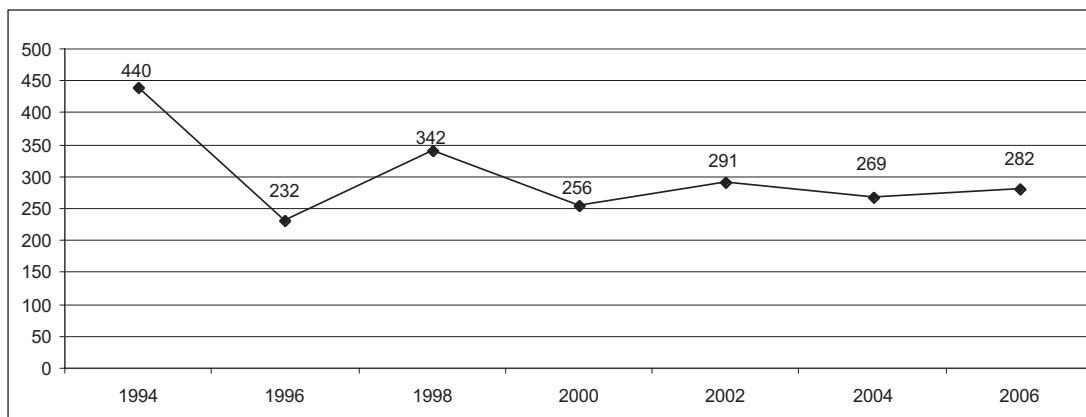
Evaluations and Congress on Parent Education Programs in 1994, AFCC Regional Conferences have been generally held in alternate years.

Regional Conferences have produced varied results, ranging from a break-even conference in 1995 at the Skamania Lodge outside of Portland, OR, to a net income of approximately \$34,000 shared with the Massachusetts Chapter at the Boston conference 1996. Attendance has ranged from below 150 (Toledo 1993) to the Boston conference of nearly 400.

In 2005, AFCC moved from the traditional model to a new Regional Training Conference format. The new format replaced the traditional plenary sessions and 90-minute workshops with three-hour "training workshops" to provide more in-depth coverage of specific topics. This resulted in fewer presenters and reduced the workload for AFCC staff. The first such conference was held in Breckenridge, CO in 2005. Two hundred and fifteen registrants attended. The second Regional Training Conference, cosponsored by the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges, took place in September 2007 in Columbus, OH and registration exceeded 300.

## Special Topic Conferences

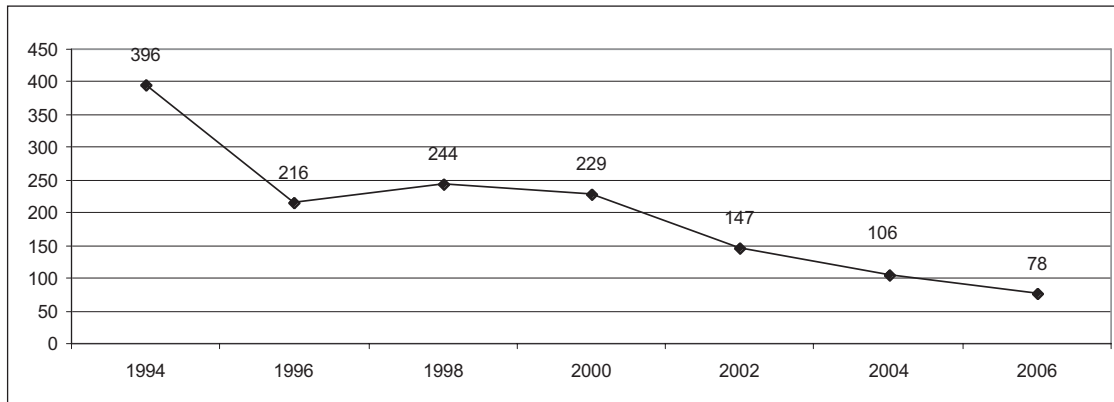
In 1994, AFCC introduced two Special Topic Conferences: The Symposium on Child Custody Evaluations and the Congress on Parent Education Programs. Both were well received and very well attended with nearly 400 registrants at the first Parent Education Congress in Chicago, and 440 at the Custody Evaluation Symposium in Tucson. Since then the programs have been held consecutively in the same cities: Clearwater, FL (1996); Breckenridge, CO (1997); Kiawah Island, SC (2000); Tucson, AZ (2002); Nashville, TN (2004); and Atlanta, GA (2006).



Child Custody Evaluation Symposium Attendance History

Registration and revenues decreased significantly for the second Custody Evaluation Symposium; however, as indicated in the graph above, numbers subsequently increased and leveled off over several years. Recently, there has been a slight downward trend in revenues which is likely attributable to increasing costs without a corresponding increase in registration fees.

Parent Education Congress attendance numbers have dropped steadily, in part due to a format change in 2004 that reduced the number of presenters and workshops. Following the 2002 conference, the program was scaled back, in part to avoid repetition from previous programs and in part because the ratio of fully paid registrants to presenters at the 2002 Congress was only 2 to 1.



Parent Education Congress Attendance History

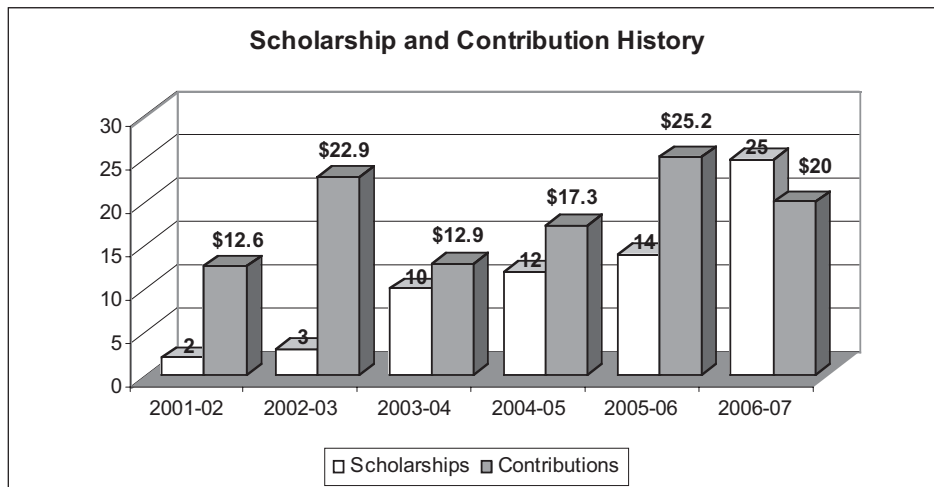
## RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

The AFCC Resource Development Committee was appointed in 1998 to spearhead a 35th Anniversary Campaign. Originally, a long-term goal of raising a \$500,000 endowment from which to fund AFCC projects and activities was articulated. Funds were generated through AFCC's annual appeal, silent auction and an annual \$2.50 per member transfer from membership dues to the resource development fund. In order to give something back to the community, the committee annually presented a \$2,000 award to a deserving program serving children and youth in the host community of the annual conference.

In 2001-02, the conference scholarship program was introduced. In May 2004, the AFCC Board approved the recommendation of the Resource Development Committee to focus on ongoing use of funds rather than reaching a pre-determined goal. In order to accomplish this, scholarships were increased and a mini-grant program was added while (1) limiting the resource development funds to those raised by the annual appeal; (2) eliminating the fundraising goal of \$500,000; (3) terminating the practice of transferring a portion of dues to the fund; (4) earmarking silent auction proceeds to special projects in the operating budget; and (5) eliminating the local community award, as nominations were scarce.

Since 2004, the number of scholarships awarded has increased and the contributions have grown, albeit unevenly. Silent auction proceeds have helped fund the AFCC initiatives identified in Section II of this report.

With the change in policy in 2004-05, the Resource Development Fund continued to increase but at a slower rate. That year, AFCC donated also \$5,000 to New Orleans Area Habitat for Humanity. More funds are now being disbursed through the scholarship and mini-grant programs.

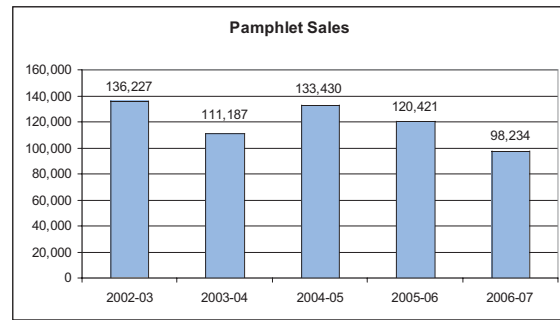
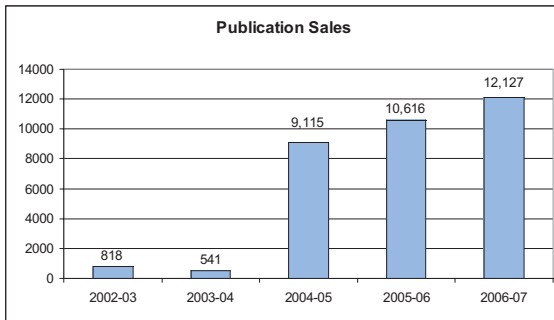


## PUBLICATIONS AND PAMPHLETS

AFCC publications and pamphlet sales have historically fluctuated, often based on the introduction of one or more new publications. Between 2002 and 2007, a three-pronged strategy was developed to bolster AFCC publications including: (1) the completion of the pamphlet revision and redesign; (2) a short term strategy of publishing compilations of existing materials in *Essays from Family Court Review*; and (3) the development of new publications. Sales for pamphlets continued to fluctuate following the revisions, however publications sales increased dramatically due to the Planning for Shared Parenting booklet, introduced in 2004-05. The booklet was developed by members of the AFCC Massachusetts Chapter. They are printed in large quantities and sold in bulk orders to allow for a price of \$2.20- \$3.00, depending on the discount.

The following new publications have been developed since 2002 while dated products were been eliminated:

- Overnights and Young Children - Essays from the Family Court Review
- Domestic Violence - Essays from the Family Court Review
- Mediation - Essays from the Family Court Review
- Planning for Shared Parenting
- Exemplary Family Court Programs and Practices
- Parenting Coordination: Implementation Issues



The AFCC Publications Committee is presently working on the *AFCC Innovations Series*, a collection of books featuring innovations in court services, legal services and high conflict interventions.

## FAMILY COURT REVIEW

*Family Court Review* has experienced a major transformation between 2002 and 2007.

Highlights include:

- A new contract with Blackwell Publishing signed in 2005. Blackwell has since merged with John Wiley and is now Wiley-Blackwell.
- Editor in Chief Andrew Schepard developed special issues of FCR linked to outside initiatives such as ABA Summit on Unified Family Court, the ABA Youth at Risk Initiative, and the World Congress on Family Law and Rights of Children and Youth.
- Ongoing coordination between AFCC and *FCR* with special issues that focus on AFCC projects (e.g., the Family Law Reform Project; Wingspread Conference on Domestic Violence) and highlight other AFCC initiatives.
- Dr. Janet Johnston joined *FCR* as associate editor.
- Extensive marketing efforts and strong production support were put into place by Blackwell.
- All issues (and archives back to the first issue in 1963) are posted online on Blackwell-synergy.com and available to AFCC members as a benefit of membership.
- *FCR* readership (as measured in downloads from Blackwell-synergy.com) has exploded, growing from zero online presence in 2004 to more than 32,000 downloads in 2006.
- *FCR* graphics were redesigned to carry the AFCC brand.

## AFCC NEWS

The AFCC Newsletter was re-designed and renamed as part of the branding initiative and in 2005 the *AFCC NEWS* debuted. The quarterly newsletter expanded from 12 to 16 pages. Editorship of the newsletter passed from Peter Salem to Candi Walker, then Dave Vigliotta. Design and layout responsibilities were brought in house and taken over by Nola Risse-Connolly.

## TRAINING PROGRAMS

In December 2003, AFCC launched a new training program model. Previous training programs offered by AFCC were largely contracted mediation trainings conducted by AFCC staff. These contracts brought in up to \$20,000 annually in net revenue; however they were not a consistent or predictable source of revenue. They also typically resulted in two senior staff members being out of the office for a combined 20 days or more during the year.

The new training model provides back-to-back two-day training programs on a variety of topics and have been offered in partnership with academic institutions including the University of Baltimore School of Law, Loyola University Law Center, Chicago, Loyola University New Orleans College of Law, University of South Florida Conflict Resolution Collaborative and the University of Wisconsin-Madison Division of Continuing Studies. AFCC contracts with members to provide training, and they do so at well below market rates as a way of giving back to AFCC. Topics have included parenting coordination, working with children, advanced mediation, advanced custody evaluation, father involvement, and advanced issues in child custody, including domestic violence and alienation.

Revenues and risk have been shared equally with our partners. Financially, the programs have achieved a modest level of success. On-site expenses are managed by AFCC partners and therefore can flux quite a bit. Total staff time is estimated at approximately forty hours per training. Importantly, the training programs fill a need for reasonably priced training outside of AFCC conferences. We have had requests for more training programs and are exploring ways to expand the program.

## ADMINISTRATION AND FINANCE

AFCC has expanded administratively in order to keep pace with the growth of the association. In 2002, AFCC moved from a contractual to an employer-employee relationship with staff, so significant time was initially spent developing and implementing administrative policies and procedures, establishing employee benefits and developing an administrative infrastructure.

After beginning 2002-03 with a 2.6 FTEs and one administrative temp, new staff was slowly added, including a full-time Program Director and Marketing and Development Manager, .5 FTE Chapter Services and Development Consultant, .5 FTE Business and Administrative Director and .63 FTE Administrative Assistant, bringing total staff to 6.63 FTE. AFCC has been fortunate that in the last five years there has been no turnover at any position other than the part-time administrative assistant.

Additional administrative changes included:

- Addition of a more comprehensive employee benefits package.
- New office space in the building next door, reducing rent by 35% for approximately the same square footage.
- Upgraded computer hardware and software.
- Job-cost accounting procedures to provide more accurate reporting on the cost of programs.

- Streamlined budgeting process and financial reporting documents.
- Improved internal cash flow and financial control systems.
- Re-bid AFCC insurance coverage for a 33% savings.
- Improved return on investments.
- Annual budget increased from \$623,000 in 2001-2002 to more than \$1.1 million for 2007-2008.
- Restricted reserves increased to \$285,000.

## WEB SITE AND TECHNOLOGY

Between 2002 and 2007, AFCC made great strides in the use of electronic technology, including expanded use of the AFCC Web site, new electronic marketing strategies, the development of an e-newsletter, hosting a parenting coordination listserve and online conference audio as a benefit of AFCC membership.

### AFCC Web Site

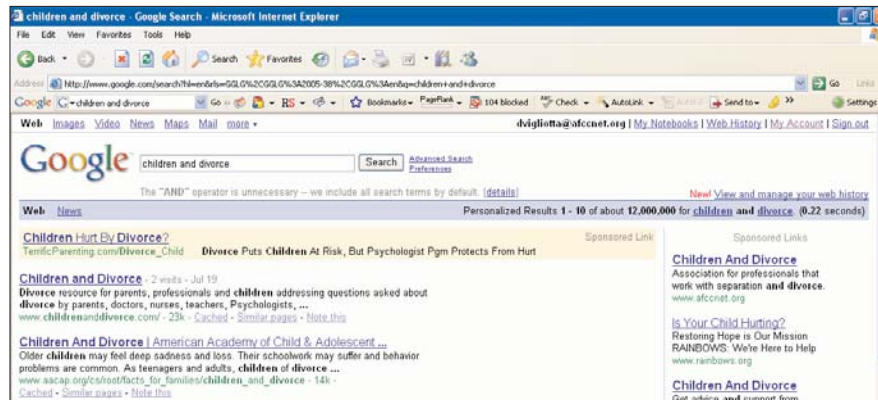
The AFCC Web site was redesigned during the branding initiative and the new site was rolled out in January 2005. The site includes several new features that enhance member benefits, improve access to information and add efficiency to AFCC operations. These include:

- Online password protected customized membership reports for Chapter leadership in multiple formats and downloadable in excel spreadsheets.
- Access to *Family Court Review* archives.
- Online audio of AFCC conference plenary and select sessions available at no charge in the AFCC Member Center.
- Resource pages for professionals and parents.
- Online AFCC member bookstore in affiliation with Barnes & Noble.
- AFCC online Membership Directory.
- Archives of the *AFCC NEWS* and *AFCC eNEWS*.
- Online conference registration.
- Online membership application.

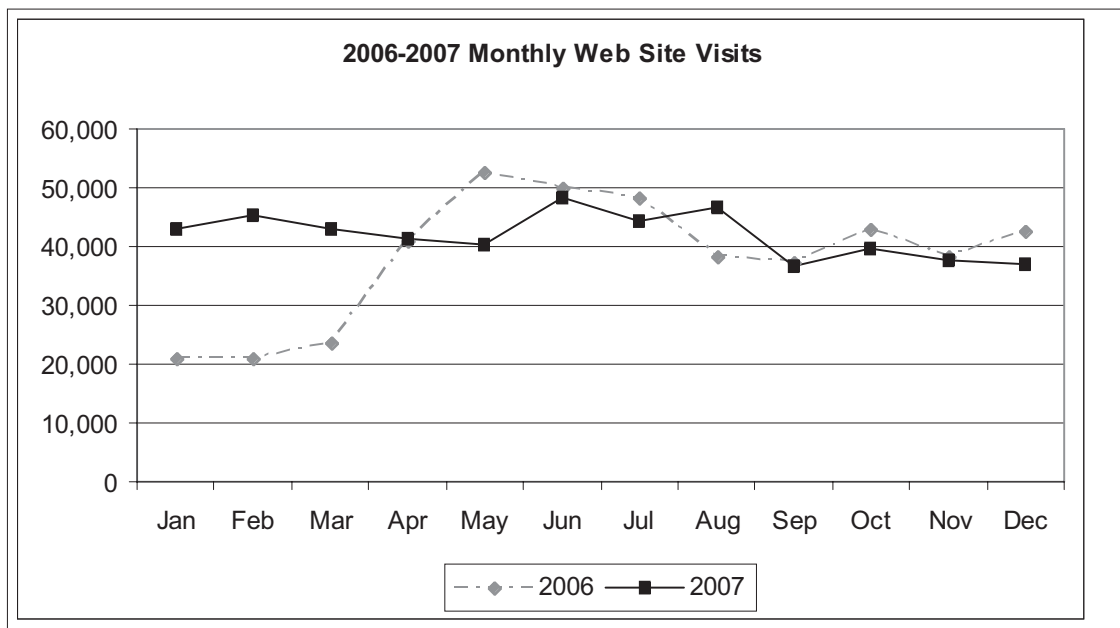
### Google Grant

Web traffic has increased dramatically since the new site debuted in 2005 and, in particular, since AFCC was awarded a Google Grant in the spring of 2006. The Google Grant provided AFCC with unlimited free sponsored link clicks for three months. AFCC continues to receive up to \$10,000 worth of sponsored link clicks per month — about 520 clicks per day — from the

grant. The graphic below shows the AFCC sponsored link on the right side of the page for the sample search “children and divorce.”



In the twelve month period prior to the Google Grant, AFCC averaged 16,529 monthly visits to the web site. During the three-month unlimited period (April-June 2006) an average of 50,250 visited the site monthly. As illustrated below, Web visits increased during the initial months of the Google grant and have stayed near or above 40,000 per month since.



Nearly 290,000 visitors came from the United States in the last year, followed by the United Kingdom with 48,000 and Canada with 26,500.

## AFCC eNEWS

The *AFCC eNEWS* debuted in February 2006 and is distributed bi-monthly to more than 10,000 subscribers. The *eNEWS* provides both substantive articles as well as announcements about AFCC and AFCC Chapter events. The *eNEWS* receives several regular contributions from AFCC members: research articles from J.M. Craig Press; case law updates from the Family Law Prof Blog; mediation articles from mediate.com; international articles from AFCC International Committee members; and various submissions from AFCC's collaborating organizations. The *AFCC eNEWS* is provided to all AFCC members and is available at no charge to non-members.

## AFCC Parenting Coordination Network

The AFCC Parenting Coordination Network is a Yahoo Groups email list for AFCC members interested in parenting coordination. The Network allows members to ask questions, disseminate information, share referrals and network with one another. The Network went online in April 2006 and has been used actively throughout its existence and now has 264 members.

## COLLABORATING ORGANIZATIONS

The growth of AFCC and its activities would not have been possible without partnerships of several collaborating organizations. For some, the relationship is relatively limited while others have engaged more fully in projects and programs. These collaborative endeavors have enabled AFCC to accomplish a great deal, and this report would not be complete without acknowledging their participation and contributions.

American Bar Association Section of Dispute Resolution  
American Bar Association Section of Family Law  
American Bar Association Center for Children and the Law  
American Bar Association Pro Bono Custody Project  
American Psychological Association  
Asia Foundation  
Association for Conflict Resolution Family Section  
Canadian Judicial Council  
Complete Equity Markets, Inc.  
Connecticut Judicial Branch – Court Support Services Division  
Family Law Prof Blog  
Federal Office of Child Support Enforcement, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services  
Freedom 22 Foundation  
Hofstra School of Law Center of Children, Families and the Law  
International Academy of Collaborative Professionals  
J.M. Craig Press  
JAMS Foundation  
Johnson Foundation (Wingspread Conference Center)  
Loyola University Chicago Law Center

Loyola University New Orleans Law School  
Mediate.com  
National Association of Counsel for Children  
National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges  
National Institute of Trial Advocacy  
Our Family Wizard  
Seedlings Foundation  
Supreme Court of Ohio  
University of Baltimore Center for Children, Families and the Court  
University of South Florida Conflict Resolution Collaborative  
University of Wisconsin-Madison Continuing Studies Division  
Werner Institute for Negotiation and Conflict Resolution  
Wiley-Blackwell  
William and Flora Hewlett Foundation  
World Congress, Inc.