

FAMILY MATTERS

Published for foster and adoptive parents by the Adoption & Foster Care units of the Hamilton County Department of Job and Family Services

May 2008



From the
Desk of Moira Weir,
HCJFS Director

Foster Care Month offers chance to say “thank you” to beacons of light

It is an everyday morning ritual for parents: making breakfast, packing lunches, dressing children, checking homework, waiting on the school bus or jumping in the car for the drive to school. We’ve mastered the drill.

The difference is, many of you are doing it for a foster child. And for that, I am immensely thankful.

In a foster parent’s home, the ritual includes preparing children for visits to the therapist’s or doctor’s office, meetings with caseworkers, trips to court and reunions with biological parents. Foster parents do it all and more.

And they do it with love. Even if a child is angry and acts out; even if a child can no longer trust and retreats. Our foster parents stand strong, lending an ear, advice, encouragement and support.

They do all of this and more, knowing the child living with them may eventually leave to return to their biological family or a new adoptive one. Then, they start all over with a new foster child.

We are blessed with foster parents who open their hearts and homes to approximately 800 children a day across all of Hamilton County. These parents provide a safe and secure place our kids can call home, even if for a short time. They give children a chance to be children - maybe for the first time in their young lives.

For all of this and more, I extend my deepest and heartfelt thanks. I sincerely appreciate all of the hard, unsung time and attention you dedicate to our children. You truly are beacons of light and hope for children who really need and deserve a life free of abuse and neglect.

Warmly,

In This Issue:

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We Prize Your Thoughts

You have a world of experience in living. We invite you to suggest ideas for articles in Family Matters.

If we use your idea, you will win a special prize, a photo album.

To submit ideas, please send an e-mail to Linda Tate at tatel@jfs.hamilton-co.org, or mail it to 222 E. Central Parkway, Cincinnati, Oh 45219.

You may also drop ideas off at the desk in the lobby at the Neighborhood Center at 237 William Howard Taft.



ADOPTION & FOSTER
Care

Hamilton County Job & Family Services

May is Foster Care Month!



**DEBORAH SUE
HENDERSON-
GILMAN,**

Deborah Sue Henderson-Gilman

passed away on March 8, 2008.

She and her husband "Brian" were licensed foster parents since August 30, 2007.

Celebration of Dreams

This year's Celebration of Dreams is scheduled for June 16, 2008 at the University of Cincinnati.

It honors youth emancipating from foster care who have completed a GED program or graduated from high school.

In 2008, we will honor:

- Chinessa Bonner
- Beatrice Bell
- Amanda Calvert
- Todia Nolen
- Edward Harper
- Keisha Slocum
- LaShawnda Thomas
- DeThomas Thomas
- Brittney Motley
- Josh Clark
- Branden Clark
- Evangeline Smith
- Jack Mixon
- Chris Mills
- Xiagiagang Pouncy
- Kimberly Merritt
- Yolanda Zezima
- Alexis Steed
- Sharon Simmons
- Alisha Simmons
- Karmen Meadows
- Quatez Scott
- Brittani Williams
- Natasha Vandergriff
- Brittany Jefferson
- Demetria Turner
- Jennifer Ann Bennett
- DemarcoThomas
- Andrew Tolliver
- Lisa McJennett
- Timothy Powell

**Resource Phone Numbers
& Web Sites**

Southwest Ohio Family Care

Association (SWOFCA):

www.ofcaonline.org/pages/resources-by-region/resources-for-region-10.php

Ohio Family Care Association (OFCA):

www.ofcaonline.org

Post-Adoption Services:

Call 241-KIDS (241-5437) and request a referral

Have a resource suggestion?

Email us at familymatters@jfs.hamilton-co.org

What is
**Kinship
Care?**

Kinship Care refers to the millions of children in the United States living with a grandparent, aunt, sibling, other relative, or significant adult because their own parents are unavailable or unable to care for them.

The Kinship Care Program at The Children's Home of Cincinnati is the only of its kind in Hamilton County. The goal is to support and strengthen families in order to provide stability and prevent the need for children to enter the foster care system. Services are FREE to Hamilton County residents.

If you are a caregiver of a child other than your own, the following services are available to you and your family:

- *Monthly Support Groups for caregivers and children.
- *Workshops on topics such as Effective Communication, Linking to the Community Resources, Navigating the Educational System, and Legal Questions and Answers.
- *Individual Services available in the home or on our campus to assist in obtaining available financial resources and medical insurance, addressing difficult behaviors in children, building parenting skills, and other relevant topics.



Meals and snacks are provided during groups, and child playgroups are provided during adult group time.

DO YOU KNOW THESE FAMOUS FOSTER KIDS?

Charlotte Ayanna, Miss Teen USA and Actress
Tom Monaghan, Super successful businessman
Eddie Murphy, Movie Star and Comedian
Victoria Rowell, Actress
Daunte Culpepper, NFL Quarterback
Superman, Comic Hero
Allison Anders, Film maker
Carl Hancock Rux, Musician
Anthony "Cos" DiCosmo, Pro Football Player
Marilyn Monroe, Movie Star Legend
Tommy Davidson, Comedian & Actor
Dr. Ruth Westheimer, Psychologist and Author
Dan O'Brien, Olympic Gold Medalist
Alonzo Mourning, NBA Basketball Player
Cher, Musican/Actress
Ice T, Musician and Movie Director
John Lennon, Rock & Roll Legend - the Beatles
James Dean, Rebel and Actor
Billy Mills, Track & Field Athlete
Wayne Dyer, Writer and Self-empowerment Speaker
Dave Thomas, Founder of Wendy's

Ghetto Times

by My'Lika L. Dean, Foster Child

As I walk down the streets
I hear my peeps
Sayin' my name
Tryin' to spit game

I walk with my head held high
Thinkin' 'bout me
Not them guys
They look at me like I'm crazy

Then I see a girl walkin' with a baby
She cryin' 'bout the pain she in
I went to tell her
Your life has just begun
I told her life is hard
Goin' through so much pain
Don't have no one to blame
But yourself
No one else

But God is here!
Just pray
Everyday
You'll be all right

Online Training Opportunities!

Interested in earning training credit hours from the convenience of your home? Foster parents can use "outside" offered trainings as one-third of their overall training credit. Online training is a great way to accomplish this. Below you will find three commonly used foster parent training websites:

www.fosterparentcollege.com - online training for foster, adoptive, kinship and birth parents. These interactive courses provide valuable information, insights and advice from experts on dealing with serious child behavior problems. Two types of courses are available:

- * *Instructor Led* - more in-depth and allows for interaction between online participants and instructor. Length of this course is several hours over three weeks. Completion of this workshop is worth six training hours. Participants will use a discussion board and complete a questionnaire, complete exercises and email their final assignment.
- * *Self-directed* - focuses on a specific behavioral problem or emotional disorder. Participants can complete the course at their own pace, within 30 days. Course will take about two hours and will provide two hours of training credit. Discussion board is optional in this course.

www.fosterclub.org - The Foster Club Training Library is designed to offer free CEUs (continuing education credits) in a convenient manner that fits your own schedule. Free to registered participants.

www.fosterparents.com - FCAC Online Training offers 95 courses (2 interactive) with new topics added continuously. Each course is available for a fee ranging from \$4 and up.

Mark Your Calendars for These Upcoming Events!

Sat., May 3, 2008
Foster Care Month Open House
Great Commission Bible Church
10200 Hamilton Ave.,
Cincinnati 45231

Foster and adoptive parenting can be rewarding - not just for the child in your care, but for you, too.

In celebration of Foster Care Month, we invite you to drop by anytime between 11am and 3pm. Hear from a foster and adoptive parent, and talk with workers to learn about the process of becoming a foster and/or adoptive parent.

From 1-1:30pm: Hear Kenny Smith with his Gospel group "Peace and Serenity Ministries," of Team Cincinnati, winner of "Clash of the Choirs."

Door prizes for the first 100 visitors!!

Light snacks will be provided, and there will be balloons and facepainting for children.

For more information, call Karia Korra at 513.946.7434.

Wed., May 14th, 2008, 3pm - 5pm
Butterflies & Blue Ribbons
for Foster Care
Krohn Conservatory, Eden Park

Plans for this event include the following:

- * Special butterfly showing for foster, adoptive and kinship families at 5:15pm
- * Displays by public and private foster/adoption agencies
- * Food by JTM Food Group & Trauth Dairy
- * Clown, Face Painting, Stilt man, Juggling, Balloons, Activities
- * Adoption recruitment

This event is presented by Southwest Ohio Family Care Affiliate (Ohio Family Care Association), and sponsored by Krohn Conservatory, Mathis Foundation for Children, JTM Food Group and Trauth Dairy.

Fri., May 16 & Sat., May 17
2008 Foster & Adoptive
Parent Training
Conference
Holiday Inn, Eastgate

"Would we make good foster or adoptive parents?"

Participants will have the opportunity to attend multiple workshops on a variety of topics essential for foster and adoptive parents.

Trainers from all over Ohio will be on hand to provide practical training for your work with your children.

Fourteen hours of training credit are provided for attending the entire conference. Meals provided!!

Register at www.ocwtp.com/swortc.htm

June 19-21, 2008
Annual Resource Conference
"Let's Do It Again"
Holiday Inn, Fort Rapids
4560 Hilton Corporate Dr.,
Columbus, OH 43232

CONFERENCE CHANGES FOR 2008:

- * Scholarships are available for foster and kinship families.
- * Youth program will be available
- * Dr. Don Bartlette is the key note speaker. (Macaroni at Midnight).
- * Pre conference Thursday night shopping by charter coach.
- * Participate in the National Foster Parent Association's nationwide "Walk me home" 5K walk.

Complete information and registration will be available on the website at www.ofcaonline.org or call the office at 614.222.2712.

HOTEL RESERVATION INFORMATION:
Rates are \$89.00 per night or \$129.00 per night with 4 water park passes. Please book your rooms as soon as possible by calling 1-877.337.7527. Rooms at this special rate are limited!!

Reminder!! Support
SWOFCA
at the Flying Pig

This spring, the Mathis Foundation for Children will partner with Cincinnati's annual Flying Pig Marathon to raise money for SWOFCA, the Southwest Ohio Family Care Affiliate.

Money raised will go toward supporting SWOFCA's mission of advocating on behalf of foster, adoptive and kinship families. SWOFCA also provides important support services to parents who open up their hearts and homes to our community's most vulnerable children.



The Cincinnati Flying Pig Marathon will celebrate its 10th anniversary weekend Friday, May 2 - Sunday, May 4, 2007. More than 70 non-profit organizations use the Flying Pig Marathon to help raise money for their cause.

Those interested in helping SWOFCA raise these important funds have several options. Individuals can enter to run in one of the Flying Pig events and collect pledges from family, friends and co-workers that will be donated to SWOFCA.

Those not interested in running can sponsor one of the SWOFCA runners. Entertainment and kids' activities will be provided at the rally. All foster, adoptive and kinship families are encouraged to attend this event and bring friends who are interested in learning more about foster care.

The OCWTP is now offering "free" classes.
Please contact Southwest Ohio Regional
Training Center at 513.946.1263
to register to take a class today!

Helping Children Understand Their Own History

Author(s): Child Welfare Information Gateway, www.childwelfare.gov; Year Published: 2005
 This is part 2 of 4 from "Helping Your Foster Child Transition to Your Adopted Child."

Parents can help children review and understand their previous life experiences to clarify what happened to them in the past and help them integrate those experiences so they have greater self-understanding. Foster/adoptive parents and children's therapists and social workers can help children in answering important questions about their lives - both to assess their readiness for and to prepare them for staying permanently in their family (Henry, 2005).

There are many ways families can help children in answering these important questions and in understanding their unique history. Lifebooks, ecomaps, lifemaps, and lifepaths are all tools used by foster/adoptive parents and children's therapists to help children of various ages understand and find ways to visually represent the answers to questions of how they came to be separated from their birth family and where they will ultimately belong (Fahlberg, 1991).

A **lifebook** is essentially an account of the child's life in words, pictures, photographs, and documents. While lifebooks can take many forms, each child's lifebook will be unique to that child. Foster parents can assist in creating a lifebook for a child by gathering information about a child and taking pictures of people and places that are - or were - important to the child.

An **ecomap** is a visual representation of a person and the important people and activities in his or her life. A child's ecomap may have a circle in the middle of the page with a stick figure of a child, along with the question "Why am I here?" Lines are drawn out from the circle like spokes to other circles representing the court, other foster families, siblings, school, or to other topics such as "things I like to do" to visually represent what and who is impor-

tant to a child and to help the child understand how he or she came to live with the adoptive family (Fahlberg, 1991).

Lifemaps or **lifepaths** are visual representations to help children understand the paths their lives have taken and the decision points along the way. They may have stepping stones to represent a child's age and a statement about where and with whom they lived at that age. They may have lines that go to a drawing of a house representing any foster homes a child lived in, the years the child lived there, and a mention of who lived with the child in that house, if known (Fahlberg, 1991).

The most important information to include in any of these tools to help children understand their past history is information about the child's birth and an explanation of why and how the child entered foster care and how decisions about moves and new placements were made. A baby picture and pictures of birth parents should be included, if possible. If no information is available, children can draw a picture of what they might have looked like. Statements such as, "there is no information about Johnny's birth father in his file," at least acknowledge the father's existence. The importance of honesty, developmental appropriateness, and compassion in any explanation of difficult and painful circumstances that bring children into care is important for children.

Working with these tools provides an opportunity for the child to experience and work through the feelings of loss; therefore, they are beneficial therapeutic methods to help children with the grieving process.✚

Possible Items to Collect or Include in a Child's Lifebook

- o **Developmental milestones (when a child first smiled, crawled, walked, talked, etc.)**
- o **Common childhood diseases and immunizations, injuries, illnesses, or hospitalizations**
- o **Pictures of a child's birth parents and/or birth relatives and information about visits**
- o **Members of the foster family's extended family who were/are important to the child**
- o **Pictures of previous foster families, their homes and their pets**
- o **Names of teachers and schools attended, report cards, and school activities**
- o **Any special activities such as scouting, clubs, or camping experiences**
- o **Faith-based activities**
- o **What a child did when he/she was happy or excited and ways a child showed affection**
- o **Cute things the child did, nicknames, favorite trends, activities, and toys**
- o **Birthdays or religious celebrations or any trips taken with the foster family**

(Fahlberg, 1991)

Look for Part 3 - Helping Children Adjust to Losses - in July.

Questions for Children to Assess where they are on the Permanency Continuum

Children's answers to these questions will change, depending on their developmental stage. Their responses can guide parents and therapists in helping the children achieve feelings of permanency.

Who am I?

(Question related to identity)

What happened to me?

(Question related to loss)

Where am I going?

(Question related to attachment)

How will I get there?

(Question related to relationships)

When will I know I belong?

(Question related to claiming and safety)

NEEDED!

Supportive, loving families for these young people (and others!)



Sasha
born August 1993

An active and energetic teenager, Sasha likes all sports, including cheerleading, soccer, basketball, ballet, gymnastics and football! When she grows up she would like to be a lawyer.

This young woman enjoys school, particularly math class, because it presents a challenge. She also enjoys reading novels, magazines and mysteries. This intelligent and courteous young woman likes to play Monopoly and backgammon, and she would like to learn how to play chess.

Sasha needs a structured environment and a family who will help boost her self-esteem and help her to realize her potential.



Michael
born June 1994

This creative and energetic teenager loves being active and busy. Michael loves his individualized and special education classes at school. He works hard to complete his assignments, although he does sometimes have a little difficulty staying on task. Reading is his favorite subject; fantasy books are his favorites.

Michael enjoys being active and would do well with a family that likes participating in lots of different activities. Being outdoors is this lovable young man's favorite way to pass time, especially with trips to the park. He has a great sense of humor and likes most types of music.

To learn more about these children or others available for adoption, call (513)632-6366 or visit www.hcadopt.org

Hamilton County Educational Service Center Early Learning Program Medicaid Dental Providers

Amazing Smiles Family Dentistry 1140 Harrison Ave. 367-9464	Clermont Pediatric Dental, Christine Apel, DDS 2400 Clermont Ctr Dr., Ste 103 732-7206	Dr. Lewis C. Brokaw 10475 Montgomery Rd., Ste 21 791-0300	Dr. Michael Gordon 3544 Springdale Rd. 385-6555
Children's Hospital Dental - Anderson 7495 State Rd. 636-6133	Crest Smile Shoppe Lewis & Nguyen, DDS 612 Rockdale Rd. 352-4072	Dr. Richard E. Bruner 2039 Anderson Ferry Rd. 451-4455	Dr. Wanda Hood 2310 Baltimore Ave. 541-5599
Children's Hospital Dental - Fairfield/ William 3050 Mack Rd. 636-6133	Dental One Avondale, Manfred Schall, DDS 3494 Reading Rd. 559-2200	Dr. Daniel Claybon 10545 Montgomery Rd. 793-0880	6409 Madison Rd. 561-1611
Children Hospital Dental Harrison/ Thomas 10450 New Haven Rd. 636-6500	Dental One Over-the-Rhine, Manfred Schell, DDS 5 E. Liberty St. 721-6060	Dr. Stephen L. Claybon 285 E. Main St 732-0541	Dr. William E. Kennedy 4903 Vine St. 242-7747
Children's Hospital Dental - Main Campus 3333 Burnet Ave. 636-4641	Dental Van 324-6500	Dr. Hewitt J. Cooper 1305 William Howard Taft Rd. 751-3384	Dr. Jon P. Larson 497 Cincinnati-Batavia Pike 528-1223
Children's Hospital Dental - Mason 9560 Children's Dr. 636-6842	Dr. Dana K. Bateman 6526 Montgomery Rd. 351-7252	Valley Family Dental, Dr. Herbert Feingold 7125 Reading Rd. 631-2224	Roselawn Family Dental, Dr. Lan Law 7540 Reading Rd. 821-3118
Cincinnati Dental Care - Sohi & Gao, DDS 4544 Montgomery Rd. 351-6600	Dr. Carolyn Bates-Cousin 8040 Reading Rd., Ste 53 948-9339	Dr. Kurt W. Ficker 5001 Montgomery Rd. 351-3779	Dr. Gerald M. Lawson 2916 Gilbert Ave. 751-1112