



From the
Desk of Moira Weir,
HCJFS Director

Community Recruitment Reaches Out For Your Thoughts

Earlier this year, HCJFS stepped up efforts to recruit new foster and adoptive parents for children in our care. We launched our "Everyday Heroes" campaign with advertisements on television, radio and billboards throughout Hamilton County. Several of our partner agencies in the community came aboard to help. I am happy to report the campaign is showing results, with more than 400 inquiries to date.

Everyday Heroes was a nice addition to our Community Recruitment efforts. We have a wonderful team that continues to work incredibly hard, finding innovative ways to reach out to prospective foster and adoptive parents.

And we have also added a new Child-Specific Recruitment unit. Child Specific recruiters each handle a caseload and comb records and other resources to find permanency for children waiting to be adopted. They are looking for someone from a child's past to step in and play a key part in his or her future.

We are very pleased with our increased recruitment efforts so far, but we would like to take it a step further. You - our current foster and adoptive parents - are a key to our success. Your thoughts and ideas on finding more foster and adoptive parents will be a huge help toward shaping our recruitment efforts for the remainder of 2008 and into 2009.

We would like your input. Please take a few moments, if you have not already, to visit www.hcadopt.org or www.hcfoster.org (licensed foster parent page) and click the link to the survey. It will stay open until 5 p.m. on Friday, September 12.

We appreciate your help. And thank you again for everything you do to provide stability, caring and consistency for the children we entrust to your care. You are truly valued each and every day!

Warmly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Moira Weir".

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House of Representatives Takes Action on Foster Care Reform

The U.S. House of Representatives recently passed a foster care reform bill, H.R. 6307, which, if passed by the Senate, would improve key areas of the child welfare system. The bill would create a federally subsidized guardianship program, providing financial support for permanent kinship placements when they are in a child's best interests. (Although federal law supports permanently placing children with relatives, Congress has never approved funding to support those families.)

The bill also grants American Indian tribes direct access to Title IV-E funding. Currently, federal law makes tribes ineligible for federal foster care and adoption assistance supports unless they enter into agreements with states. H.R. 6307 passed the House by unanimous consent, showing strong bipartisan support for the issue. It remains unclear, however, whether the Senate will take action this year on this bill or a similar measure.

For more information, please contact Martin (Marty) McOmber at MMcOmber@casey.org.

- from *Casey Announcements*, August 2008

Nominations Now Being Accepted for the 2008 Ruth Massinga Awards


The Ruth Massinga Awards are bestowed annually on constituents of the foster care system who have provided outstanding support to their constituency group through distinguished professional work, exceptional leadership, and relentless dedication to volunteer service.

The Ruth Massinga Awards are given in four categories: foster parents, alumni of foster care, kinship caregivers, and birth parents. The awards celebrate the legacy of Casey Family Programs' former president and CEO, Ruth Massinga, a tireless advocate on behalf of constituents of the child welfare system, particularly youth in care and alumni.

Submit an online nomination now. For more information, please contact RuthMassingaAwards@casey.org.

I WANT TO CHANGE

By: My'lika L. Dean



I ask the Lord to forgive me
I asked him to change me.
I want to change my ways
I just need help these days.

I want to be stronger
I want to live longer.
I want to ask for help,
But I'm scared.

I want to be loved now
I just don't know how.

When that change comes
I'll no longer run.
Run away from myself,
Nor anyone else.

I can say now
I will and want to change
Just don't know.

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 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.

angel food ministries can help stretch your food budget

Angel Food Ministries is a non-profit, non-denominational organization dedicated to providing grocery relief and financial support to communities throughout the United States. The program began in 1994 with 34 families in Monroe, Georgia, and has grown to serve hundreds of thousands of families every month across 35 states. Angel Food Ministries crosses denominational lines and has spread the good news of the gospel of Christ through salvation tracts that are placed in each food order.

Blessings by the box

Angel Food is available in a quantity that can fit into a medium-sized box at \$30 per unit. Each month's menu is different and consists of fresh and frozen items with an average retail value of approximately \$60. Comparison shopping has been done across the country in various communities using a wide range of retail grocery stores and has resulted in the same food items costing between \$42 and \$78.

Generally, one unit of food assists in feeding a family of four for about one week, or a single senior citizen for almost a month. The food is the same high quality one could purchase at a grocery store. There are no second-hand items, no damaged or outdated goods, no dented cans without labels, no day-old breads and no produce that is almost too ripe.

Also offered are specialty boxes such as steaks, chicken and pork. Additionally, there is no limit to the number of units or bonus foods an individual can receive, and there are no applications to complete or qualifications to which participants must adhere. Angel Food Ministries also participates in the U.S. Food Stamp program, using the Off-Line Food Stamp Voucher system.

It's both a Bargain and a Blessing! Sample Menu:

4 lb. IQF Leg Quarters, 4 oz. Beef Back Ribs , 1 lb. 80/20 Lean Ground Beef, 2 lb. Breaded Chicken Tenders, 1.5 lb. Bone in Pork Chops (4 x 6oz.), 1 lb. Ground Turkey, 18 oz. Stuffed Manicotti (Cheese), 12 oz. Smoked Sausage, Betty Crocker Seasoned Potatoes 7 oz. Cheeseburger Dinner, 16 oz. Green Beans, 16 oz. Baby Carrots, 2 lb. Onions, 1 lb. Pinto Beans, 1 lb. Rice, 7 oz. Blueberry Muffin Mix, 10 ct. Homestyle Waffles, Dessert Item

There are currently twelve (12) host sites in the Cincinnati area.

Visit their website to locate a site near you. www.angelfoodministries.com

*The Staff of the HCFIS Community Recruitment
and Foster Care Support Units cordially invite you to attend*

Foster Parents Have Big Hearts:

A Recruitment and Recognition Event for Foster Parents and Friends

WHEN: Saturday, September 20, 2008, 10:30 a.m. - 1 p.m.

10:30 a.m. Registration and Food

11:15 a.m. Program Begins

WHERE: Riverview East Academy

355 Kellogg Ave

Cincinnati, OH 45226

COST OF ADMISSION:

A friend interested in learning more about fostering, or becoming a foster parent.

Bring a friend for some light food, fun and friendship as we celebrate your hard work and dedication to the children we entrust to your care. You will receive one hour of credit, while your friend learns more about foster parenting.

You will hear from Cedric Riley, a former foster child adopted in 2004, here in Hamilton County. Cedric will share his experiences that are sure to inspire licensed and potential foster parents alike!

Call Angie Mitchell no later than Friday, September 12, to RSVP at 513.946.2032.

Due to planning needs, we cannot accept reservations after this date.

**Certified foster parents will receive 1 hour of credit toward re-certification

Things to do with your Adoptive or Foster Children: Fun with the Kids

By Carrie Craft, <http://adoption.about.com/od/fostering/a/activities.htm?nl=1>

About to go crazy with all the kids home for spring break? Having a list of things to do with the kids can be a great help. Being a foster parent has been one of the most rewarding experiences of my life, but it has also been one of the toughest. Breaks from each other can prove to be beneficial to both the foster family and the foster child. We all need a break once in awhile, so take one! Here are some ideas of things to do with and for the kids this spring break or upcoming summer break.

Library Reading Programs

Many libraries offer great reading programs for the summer. Many also have craft days, discussion groups, and parties. Get your kids in on the fun! Watch for sign up times in your area. If you don't want to get out, check out these ideas of activities you can do with your kids that fit with the theme of the book. Here are several craft projects and recipes to go along with adoption themed books and for your older readers the Young Adult Summer Reading List (visit www.about.com and search for the Children's Book section) may just fit. If you want to keep up on what wonderful books your children are reading let Elizabeth Kennedy, Children's Book Guide, lead the way.

Get together with another family

Find another family with kids that range in the same age bracket as your kids. Host a child(ren) from the other family one afternoon and on another day have your children go to their house. This will give one mom a chance to get things accomplished without the kids or at least take a nap!

What about a lawn mowing service?

Of course this option will be for the older children in your home and will have to be O.K.'d by your agency if the child is in a foster care situation. This option gives the child extra spending money and out in the great outdoors, not inside with YOU!

Summer Jobs

Another option for the older kids, but a great opportunity. Even a paper route will teach the kids about being on time, service and responsibility.

Walk for Charities

Get the kids involved with an activity that not only promotes physical well-being, but also the importance of helping others. During the summer are many opportunities to walk for various charitable events. There is even a new one that benefits foster children, Walk Me Home.

Lessons or sports?

How about swim lessons? Dance? Soccer? Art? This will teach the kids skills and give you a break. These options may need to be approved by birth family or your foster care agency.

Scouting

Scouting can be a great activity with plenty of learning and fun. There may be day camps available as well as over night activities. Again approval from your agency is a must.

Cultural Activities

Get the kids excited about learning about their culture. Many ideas can be found in this article: Focus on Culture.

Crafts

Family Crafts guide Sherri Osborn (at www.about.com) has literally hundreds of craft ideas to keep your kids busy for three summers!

Life books

What a great time to focus on updating or completing the children's lifebooks. Working on their lifebooks may be a learning activity that they may be able to do with little help, depending on the age of the child, from you.

Day Camps

YMCA offers a great kid's day camp. Check with your agency for other options in your area. There may be a discount or even a waived fee for children in foster care.

...and for bigger breaks:

Over Night Camps

Many children look forward to camp all year long. There may be options available for your foster children. Check with your agency and again, they MUST approve any overnights. There is a camp called "Camp to Belong" for children in care, adopted, or in a kinship placement. Here they focus on the sibling bond and bring all the children's siblings to camp at the same time. What a wonderful opportunity.

Respite

Respite is always a good choice for families. Here another foster family will watch your foster children while you and your family take time to re-connect. Learn more about Preparing for Respite Care.✚

Cut-It-Out Sandwiches

Ingredients:

- 1/4 cup Hidden Valley® The Original Ranch® dressing
- 1 tablespoon sour cream
- 12 slices whole wheat bread
- 12 slices shaved lunch meat (turkey, ham or roast beef)
- 6 slices assorted cheese
- Favorite sandwich veggies

Preparation:

Combine Ranch and sour cream; spread evenly onto each slice of bread. Place 2 slices of meat on 6 slices of bread. Add cheese and favorite veggies; top with remaining bread.

Press a cookie cutter through each sandwich before serving.

Serves: 4

Prep Time: 15 min.

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

Upcoming SWOFCA Events:

Election of Board Members,
Sept., 2008

2009 Spring Luncheon & Training

2009 Foster Care Day at
Krohn Conservatory

Quarterly Training & Parent Forums

Caregiver Survey

Mark Your Calendars for These Upcoming Events!

Sept. 15, Oct. 13, Nov. 10 & Dec. 15, 2008: 6pm - 7pm

Foster Care & Adoption Open House

237 William Howard Taft, Room GN009

If you are interested in learning more about becoming a foster or adoptive parent, please consider attending one of these open houses. For more information, please call 513.632.6366.

Sept. 8, 2008: 6pm

SWOFCA Meeting

Zion Hill Community Church

6834 Parrish Avenue, North College Hill

Sept. 13, 2008

Autism Expo

Northern Kentucky Convention & Visitors Bureau

Please visit www.nkycvb.com/events.aspx and search for "autism" for more information.

Sept. 20, 2008

Praise on the Lot Affair

West College Hill Neighborhood Center

2962 Northbend Road

September 27, 2008: Noon - 5pm

Mt. Airy Festival

Mt. Airy Park

Sept. 27, 2008

Owens Chiropractic Health and Wellness Fair

7319 Montgomery Rd.

October 8, 2008: 4pm - 7pm

Forest Park Library

An informational table set up for those wishing to learn more about adoption and foster care.



WE DID IT!

With the collaboration of the Board of County Commissioners, Hamilton County Job and Family Services and the Ohio Family Care Association; Southwest Ohio Family Care Affiliates would like to announce the appointment of Debra McMullen, Program Director and the satellite SWOFCA office location at the Central Parkway location of Job and Family Services.

The mission of SWOFCA is to unite and support Foster, Adoptive and Kinship families in Southwest Ohio.

"With much work to be done, it is very exciting to have an office location with those who work countless hours supporting children and families," stated Debra McMullen, Program Director "Caregivers need to know that SWOFCA is here to share ideas and concerns and develop solutions to issues impeding the success of children in care. In order to create change, we must unite with the common goal of strengthening and supporting our children and families in Southwest Ohio."

SWOFCA meetings are held on the second Monday of the month at the Zion Hill Community Church, 6834 Parrish Avenue in North College Hill from 6pm to 8pm. The interim officers of SWOFCA are Pat McCollum, Johnnie Barmore, Sherrie Mathis and Amanda Gelter.

SWOFCA is interested in seeking new board members. If you are dedicated to attending meetings, serving on committees and following through with projects, we are looking for you! To contact SWOFCA, please call 513-946-1842.



Debra McMullen, SWOFCA Program Director

NEEDED!

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



Nikiah

born May, 1995

Nikiah is the kind of girl whose smile and energy can light up a room, especially when you get her talking about cheerleading or dancing. She also enjoys sports, like basketball and volleyball.

When there is a household project to be done, Nikiah jumps at the chance. Most recently, she has been learning about gardening and even helped patch a wall. She also really loves animals, especially dogs and cats.

Nikiah likes school, and is eager to do well in her classes. She is very social and makes friends easily. Nikiah also enjoys visiting her sister when she is able. Nikiah is eagerly awaiting her forever family.



Terrance

born June, 1991

Terrance's passion is basketball. It's what he loves to do after school, during free time and on weekends.

He plays guard on his school's team and wants to be a professional player someday. His favorite team is the Houston Rockets, and Tracy McGrady is his hero, but he loves watching any team play.

This responsible and respectful young man does enjoy a few things other than basketball. He likes playing video games, drawing, reading and making things; and like most teenage boys, he loves to listen to R&B music. Terrance, who is dynamic and strong, gets A's and B's in his classes.

Terrance would thrive in a nurturing and supportive family. He hopes to be adopted by an active family.

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

T.A.L.K. TIME

(Talk, Act, Listen,
"Konnect")

Are you looking for some time for yourself?

Do you need to get out of the house?

Then we may have a NEW opportunity for you!

**COME
EVERY MONDAY
BEGINNING
SEPTEMBER 8, 2008
6:30 - 8:00P.M.**

- Talk and connect with a diverse group of women
- Have fun and laugh
- Take time for yourself
- Enjoy light refreshments
- Child care at no cost to you

**Call Alisa for more
information at
(513) 471-HOPE (4673)**

Location:
The Learning Center
4022 Glenway Ave.
Cincinnati, OH 45205
(Parking available in rear)