



CHAPTER 9

MARIN FOSTER PARENT ASSOCIATION

P.O. Box 6726, San Rafael, CA 94903

(415) 507-0557

www.mfpa.net



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MFPA March 2008 Newsletter

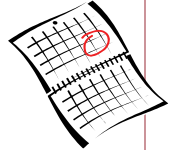


The Marin Foster Parent Association's meeting this month, "A Successful Reunification" was presented by Micki Carter and her daughter Tony. Micki struggled for years with a methamphetamine drug addiction. Having gotten into trouble, she delivered her third child in jail. This child was placed into foster care at birth. Nine month's later, she was reunified with her child. She said that since they had taken her child from her at birth she missed an essential bonding period built

between a mother and child at birth. She worked hard to regain that bond. At that point, she struggled with her drug addiction, using drugs on and off and spending time in and out of jail. All along she could not manage to kick the habit. Finally, she made the decision to quit once and for all. She was determined to discontinue using drugs, and she voluntarily placed her children in the foster care system for six months, which was all the time they would allow for voluntary placements. She didn't think six months would do it, since it had been many years of abuse. After the six months, she felt she needed more time and the children became wards of the court. She completed her program after nine months and was reunified with her children. She is now a Dental Technician and works with Marin Services for Woman. We also heard from her daughter, Tony. Mother and daughter have managed to work through much of the anger and abandonment issues. It was very difficult for Tony and her sister when they were taken from their mother and placed in the foster care system. Coming from an unsupervised and unstructured environment into a home (Mimi Katz's home) that was structured, supervised and filled with kids. The sisters shared a room and fought like cats and dogs. They were both very angry. Taken from their mother and placed in an environment with structure and demands and feeling abandoned. It took quite a while for them to warm to their new environment. Mimi provided a stable and stimulating environment for the girls taking them on excursions and showing them a world of balance and love. By the time it was time to go back to Mom, they wanted to stay with Mimi. Back with their mother, a different struggle took place. Once again the anger and abandonment issues arose. Of course, the kids never let their mother forget what she had done. The kids acted out and got into trouble. It has not been an easy journey. Tony seems to be on the right track now. Micki has stayed clean and deals with the guilt regularly. Although it was quite a struggle for all, the journey has been long and hard and the wounds are healing. It's good to know that there is light at the end of the tunnel for those few that have the strength to work it through. *-Andrea Pino, Co-Secretary*

In April, there will not be a regular MFPA meeting/training. Instead, we will be hosting our annual Social worker—Foster Parent Meet and Greet. Please see the attached flyer for details and plan to join us for this fun time of getting to know the social workers!

Upcoming Events



- ❖ **March 28:** Soup Group at Mimi's, San Rafael, 12—2
- ❖ **March 30:** MFPA Picnic Planning meeting, 4-5 PM, San Rafael
- ❖ **April 2:** Help! He's Driving me Crazy with Sylvia Stowell, San Rafael, 7-9 pm
- ❖ **April 3:** MFPA Board Meeting, San Rafael, 10-11:30AM
- ❖ **April 16:** Meet and Greet—Foster Parents and Social Workers, 4-5:30 pm, San Rafael
- ❖ **April 22:** Language Development with Susanne Kreuzer, San Rafael, 7-9 pm
- ❖ **April 25:** Engaging Native Communities in Child Abuse Prevention, 9-4, Redding
- ❖ **May 10:** Marin Human Race, San Rafael

For information on any of the above events, contact Carol Ihlenburg (507-1822).

Funding for Tutoring and After School Enrichment Programs

There is still funding remaining from last year's tutoring and after school enrichment grant from The Marin Charitable Association in addition to a new grant in the amount of \$5,000 for 2008. This funding is available to assist foster families with tutoring and after school enrichment costs for foster children or children in the dependency system. If you have a child who needs additional academic assistance, PLEASE APPLY FOR THIS FUNDING!! There is a cap of \$500/family per year for this funding. If, at the end of the year, there is still funding remaining, families may re apply. This is to assist as many children and families as possible. The goal of this grant is to provide foster children with the extra educational assistance they need to be successful in school and in life. By providing funding to cover the cost of tutoring or other educational after school programs for these children, they will receive the benefit of being able to excel in school while they are a part of the foster care system. Funding will be distributed to foster families through an application process with the only requirements being the request is for a foster child in need of tutoring or an after school enrichment program. Funding will be granted on a first come first served basis with a combined monthly maximum amount of \$400.00 to be distributed amongst all approved applicants. Once your application is received, it will be submitted to the MFPA board at the monthly board meeting for approval. Once approved, receipts or an invoice for the cost of services must be submitted within one month of application approval. If you can benefit from this financial assistance, we encourage you to apply! If you are interested in applying for this funding, contact Carol Ihlenburg at 507-1822 or via email at cihlenburg@comcast.net. We are excited to offer this assistance to foster families!



Grant Funding From Marin First Five

The Marin Children and Families Commission Small Grants Program selected the MFPA's grant proposal for assistance with monthly trainings/meetings/get togethers for foster families with partial funding. The original proposal requested \$ 2,870.00 to support the monthly soup groups, trainings and events that the MFPA hosts. The amount funded by Marin First Five is \$ 520.00. This funding will be used to provide assistance with child-care for children ages 0-5 at special trainings and events. Thank you to Marin First Five for their support of foster families in Marin County!

Welcome New Foster Parents

Marin Children and Family Services is happy to introduce our newly licensed foster parents:

Donna Ritchie is our newest foster parent, and she is ready for placement. She will welcome a single girl or boy (or, possibly two siblings) between the ages of eighteen months to six years old. A creative, kind, big-hearted person, Donna has thirty years of experience as an elementary and preschool teacher and she currently teaches kindergarten at a private, Catholic school. Having volunteered with Big Brothers/Big Sisters, Special Olympics and Meals of Marin, Donna has a great deal of compassion for others and, as a teacher and an involved aunt, she has a wealth of experience from which to draw. Donna possesses a very positive outlook and enjoys many outdoor physical activities including running, bicycling, playing basketball and softball, camping and gardening. Central to her sense of self are her faith and her relationships with her immediate and extended family (two of her siblings are educators as well). Donna's three-bedroom home is entirely child friendly. Donna looks forward to sharing it and her life with a child who needs her.

Janet and Simon Boddington are also interested in foster-adoption. Licensed and working with an adoption worker toward that goal, they will welcome a boy or girl age ten or older. The Boddingtons have a great deal of parenting experience. Simon has raised three daughters who are now grown. He and Janet have raised her two sons, one of whom still resides with them. The successful way in which the couple has blended their families helps prepare them to welcome another child to the fold. Having had two successful careers, first in the textile industry and then as a woodworker, Simon is recently retired. He works part-time managing a yoga studio which the couple just purchased, but his schedule remains flexible. A woman of many talents, Janet is a paralegal and she works full-time. Her first priority has always been to be a thoroughly engaged parent; both parents are very family-oriented. Together, the family celebrates one another's accomplishments, rights of passage and milestones; theirs is a life rich with tradition. Reuniting with all their children to play croquet in the backyard, dine al fresco then spend the evening playing pool ranks among their favorite things to do. The Boddingtons are bee keepers; their award winning honey is produced by Italian honey bees (which, they emphasize, are not aggressive the way yellow jackets are). Janet also enjoys hiking, running and swimming. A writer of poetry, songs and a pending cookbook, she loves music and singing (many of the family members are musical). Simon's interests include rowing, bicycling and working around the house and yard. He is also a travel enthusiast. Their home, located in Terra Linda, is rustic and comfortable. This is a fun family who has a great deal to offer another child.

A Fond Farewell to Elinor Marcelous

After nearly 14 years of service to the County of Marin, Program Manager **Elinor Marcelous** will be retiring and leaving Children & Family Services. We wish her a very fond farewell—her contributions and leadership will be sorely missed. Upon Elinor's departure on March 31st, her duties will be reassigned to Paula Robertson and Marty Graff. Paula (499-7125) will assume management of Intake, Emergency Response, and Differential Response while Marty (499-6733) will take on managing the Adoptions, Licensing, and ICPC functions.

Children and Family Services to Move in October

Children & Family Services will be moving to the Marin County's new Health & Wellness Campus in late October. The new location will be at 3250 Kerner Blvd. in San Rafael. More information about the new campus can be found at http://www.co.marin.ca.us/depts/HH/Main/campus/Vision_brochure.pdf More details about the move will be shared in future newsletters.

Help Schedule a Training on Substances

Megan Chesnut, Program Director at St. Vincent's and College of Marin's Foster and Kinship Care Education would like to schedule a training with Dr. Douglas Quiet which would be a 1.5 to 2 hour presentation on drug issues, drug treatment, and answer questions foster parents might have on this subject such as: "What would my child look/act like on ecstasy?, What are the dangers of this type of drug use?, How can a foster parent intervene when drug testing isn't always possible with personal rights? Megan would like to get feedback from you on the best time for this presentation—a weekend day? Mornings? Evenings? Please contact Megan at 972-1222.

The Marin Human Race Is Coming Up

Spring is coming and so is the Marin Human Race. This is our biggest fund raising event. To keep it a significant event we need everybody's participation. Make it a fun family event! There is something for all ages. Give your family and friends the opportunity to sponsor you as you raise funds for MFPA. It will be on Saturday May 10, 2008 at 7:00AM at the Marin Center Fairgrounds and Lagoon. Please contact Carol McKenna for more information.

Foster Parent—Social Worker Focus Group Update

Last summer foster parents and social workers separately gathered together to discuss challenges that bring about obstacles in working together as a team. The data was compiled by the Bay Area Academy along with suggestions to develop training and workshops to promote team relationships between social workers and foster parents. On March 14th, Marty Graff chaired a meeting attended by Heather Ravani, Chua Chao, Carol Ihlenburg and Carol McKenna. We explored how to move forward and develop programs/trainings that will facilitate the goal of team work. This was an exciting meeting with lots of positive thoughts. We welcome the participation of all interested people. It was agreed a letter would be drafted explaining what was learned from the focus groups and how to go about implementing the ideas suggested. This letter should be mailed out in the next month. If you have any questions, please contact Marty Graff at 499-6733 or myself (Carol McKenna) at 479-8140.

Children's Artwork for Cards Needed

If you have children who enjoy drawing, coloring, painting, etc., please submit some artwork for our ongoing all occasion card project. You can mail artwork to: MFPA Children's Artwork, P.O. Box 6726, San Rafael, CA 94903

The Marin Foster Parent Association (MFPA) is an organization comprised of licensed foster and adoptive parents in Marin County and members of the community interested in helping to achieve the goals and purposes of our association as stated below.

The primary objectives and purposes of the MFPA, as stated in the California State Foster Parent Association, Inc. bylaws are:

- A. To establish a local chapter of the California State Foster Parent Association bringing together all foster parents, agency personnel and interested community citizens who wish to work together for the same purposes as set forth below.
- B. To promote the general welfare of children that need protective care everywhere: at home, in the communities, in institutions and in public, private and religious schools.
- C. To develop a better understanding of the problem of foster home care by the persons and agencies involved in caring for children and the general public by encouraging and maintaining communications, and the interchange of ideas and cooperation between foster parents, county agencies, and the local communities.
- D. To encourage the training and education of personnel for work in the field of foster care, and to encourage the recruitment and retention of foster homes.
- E. To inform ourselves of the current information pertaining to the welfare of children.
- F. Notwithstanding the above statements, the chapter shall not, except to an insubstantial degree, engage in any activities or exercise any powers that are not in furtherance of the primary purpose.

Thank you to MFPA's Members!

Did you know you don't have to be a foster parent to be a member of the Marin Foster Parent Association? Our membership supports the cost of printing this newsletter, monthly overhead expenses (telephone, PO Box, etc.) and costs associated with our monthly meetings and fun events for foster families. Below is the current MFPA membership. We appreciate the support of our members! If you haven't joined yet, please consider becoming a part of our organization!

*Barbara Atkinson * Christopher and Christine Andrews * Laurie Bernstein
* Annette Blanchard * Peggy Byrne * Wendy Crowell * Barbara Davis
* Loren and Gilma Edwardson * Terrie Green * Claire Horn * Carol Ihlenburg
* Mimi Katz * Cesar Lagleva * Carol McKenna * Royce McLemore
* Sandra Mikesell * Laura Paul * Andrea Pino * Vidette Poe
* Joan Roane * Stephanie and Brian Sanford * John and Paula Starrett
* Jonathan Toste * Kathryn and Toney Whittley

2007 MFPA Executive Board Members:

Carol McKenna, President
479-8140
Carol1275@comcast.net

Vidette Poe, 1st Vice President
465-4622
vpoe99@yahoo.com

Jonathan Toste, 2nd Vice President/Phone Tree Chair
258-9459
jjtoste@gmail.com

Andrea Pino, Co-Secretary
479-0357
andrapino@comcast.net

Christine Andrews, Co-Secretary
785-3316
drmrsc@aol.com

Carol Ihlenburg, Treasurer
507-1822
cihlenburg@comcast.net

Members At Large
Mimi Katz
Donna Plank

Newsletter Editors
Carol Ihlenburg
Vidette Poe



"My Stuff" Bags

"My Stuff Bags" from the My Stuff Bags Foundation are available to children entering foster care. These bags contain a handmade blanket, toys and/or books, toothbrush, shampoo, comb, brush and powder or deodorant in a duffel bag. We currently have bags for children and teens and are on the waiting list for babies. If you would like to obtain a "My Stuff" bag for a child placed with you, please call the MFPA phone number (507-0557).

MARIN FOSTER PARENT ASSOCIATION

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MFPA Membership Application

Name: _____

Complete Address: _____

Phone Number: _____

Email Address: _____

Membership Fees: \$ 35.00 for individual membership; \$45.00 for family membership

*Please mail completed form with membership fee to:

Marin Foster Parent Association, Attn. Treasurer, P.O. Box 6726, San Rafael, CA 94903

To be removed from the MFPA newsletter mailing list, please call (415) 507-0557!