

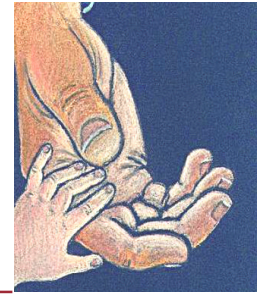


MARIN FOSTER PARENT ASSOCIATION

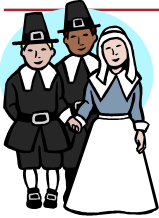
P.O. Box 6726, San Rafael, CA 94903

(415) 507-0557

www.mfpa.net



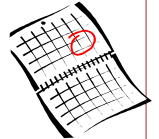
Issue 85
November 22, 2010



MFPA November 2010 Newsletter

November's Meet and Eat featured Dr. Meghan Harris who gave an informative and, at times humorous, presentation on how children experience loss and grief. Children in the foster care system inherently experience more loss and grief than their peers. Her 'take home, take to heart' messages are that everyone, including children, experience grief in their own very personal way. There are no timelines. In fact, no one ever 'gets over' a loss, but with time most of us accept, cope and live with our losses. Grieving is a cyclical process, waxing and waning with days, seasons, years, and life transitions. Most important for children is to have the close adults in their lives 'be there' for them through their grieving and healing process. Depending on age and stage of their development, that might mean watching them process grief through play, listening to their story again and again, or just being quiet but ready to talk when they are. Helping children grow and heal from loss will be a feature article in next month's newsletter. Thank you to Dr. Harris for bringing her expertise and lightness to this deep subject and empowering us to help our children heal from their losses. Our next Meet and Eat will be held on January 19th featuring a presentation by Seneca. Stay tuned next month for details. On behalf of the Marin Foster Parent Association Board, we wish a wonderful, fulfilling Thanksgiving! *-Linda Gregory, MFPA Board Member*

Upcoming Events



- ❖ **November 30:** The Cost of Caring: Secondary Traumatic Stress, Santa Rosa, 9-4
 - ❖ **December 2:** Annual Holiday Party, Strawberry Rec Center, 6-8 PM
 - ❖ **December 2:** MFPA Board meeting, San Rafael, 10-12
 - ❖ **December 8:** Sally Clapper of the Independent Living Program and Transitional Housing Program Presentation, San Rafael, 11-12:30
 - ❖ **December 12 & 13:** Marin Ballet Nutcracker, San Rafael, 1 and 5 PM
 - ❖ **December 18:** Marin Dance Theatre's Sophie and the Enchanted Toy Shop, San Rafael, 1 and 5 PM
 - ❖ **January 11:** Youth Leadership Institute presentation, San Rafael, 4:30—6:30 PM
 - ❖ **January 16:** MFPA Annual Planning Retreat, Place and Time TBA
 - ❖ **January 19:** MFPA Meet and Eat, San Rafael, 6:00—8:30 PM
 - ❖ **January 26:** MFPA Fundraiser night at California Pizza Kitchen
- For information on any of the above events, contact Carol Ihlenburg or go to our website at www.mfpa.net.*

2011 MFPA Elections

Elections for MFPA Executive Board positions is fast approaching. If you, or any members of the association whom you know, are interested and willing to be nominated for President, Vice President, Secretary or Treasurer positions please contact us. There are two vacant at-large board member positions we are looking to fill as well. Nominations are due by December 15th, and ballots will be mailed to all members no later than December 20th. As in all elections—Your Vote Counts, so please take the time to complete and mail back your ballots. If you are curious about the association and would like to contribute in any way, consider joining us at our annual planning retreat/brunch on January 16th.

.....
• Marin Foster Parent Association memberships are renewable on a calendar
• year basis... that means, if you are currently a member, your membership re-
• newal time is in January. There is a membership application on the last page of
• the newsletter for your convenience. If you are not a member and would like
• to support our association and the programs we offer, don't wait any longer—
• now is the time to join!
.....

Tickets for Foster Families to Local Holiday Performances

The Marin Dance Theatre has generously offered to donate tickets for foster families to attend this year's performance of "Sophie and The Enchanted Toy Shop." The performance date is December 18th at 1:00 and 5:00. The Marin Ballet has also offered to provide tickets to their performance of "The Nutcracker" being performed on December 11th and 12th at 1:00 and 5:00. All of these performances will be held at the Marin Civic Center. If you would like to attend one or both of these events, please contact Carol Ihlenburg at 507-1822 or via email at marinfosterparentassociation@yahoo.com and include the performance you would like to attend (including date and time). We are very fortunate to live in an area that provides such great opportunities for our families.



Funding for Tutoring and Afterschool Enrichment Programs



Thanks to a grant from the Marin Charitable Association, the Marin Foster Parent Association has funding available to assist foster families with tutoring and afterschool 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. If, at the end of the year, there is still funding remaining, families may reapply. 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. Funding will be distributed to foster families through an application process on a first come/first serve basis with a combined monthly maximum amount of \$400.00 to be distributed amongst all approved applicants. Requests must be for a foster child or child in the dependency system, and the funding will benefit him/her educationally. Once approval is obtained, receipts or an invoice for the cost of services must be submitted within one month of application approval. 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!

Foster A Dream's Holiday Wonderland Invitation

Foster A Dream, an organization located in Martinez whose mission is "to provide programs and resources that build the hopes, dreams and futures of Bay Area foster children; and be a guiding source for successful transition into the adult world" has invited Marin County foster children to participate in their annual Holiday Wonderland. This event features a walk through "wonderland" with activities and giveaways for all ages. The dates and times available for our county are December 4th at 5:00 or 5:30 and December 12th at 1:00. It is located in Benicia. If you would like to attend this event, please provide the following information via our email address (marinfosterparentassociation@yahoo.com): your name, your phone number, city, child's name and age, no later than November 29th.

Licensing Corner

Changes in Overall Capacity: As you all know by now, the State of California has revised our licensing regulations to include some major changes around the Prudent Parent Standard and Foster Family Home capacity (among others). You should have all received a copy of the new regulations in the mail, along with a summary of the changes. We'd like to take this opportunity to highlight the changes in capacity. Formerly, capacity was determined purely by the space and composition of the home, along with the preferences and abilities of the foster parent(s). Using that information, we were able to determine a home capacity for foster children that could not exceed a total of six foster children living in the home at any time. The revised regulations not only consider the number of foster children in the home, but the total number of children in the home, including birth, guardian and adoptive children. Whereas before it was possible to have a number of birth, guardian and adoptive children in the home and still have up to six foster children (space permitting), now the TOTAL number of children in the home cannot exceed six. Of course, the one exception to this is a situation in which a sibling group needs to remain together. If that's the case, it's possible to increase total capacity to eight (but only for that placement). I know you may be thinking that this is as clear as mud. Like all regulations it can be very confusing so we're here and happy to answer any questions for you. Fortunately, this change only impacts a few of our foster families and should not impact our overall ability to place children in our wonderful Marin County homes. Thank you again for all the wonderful work you do! -Julie Lenhardt

Social Worker Profile



Social Worker Profiles is featured to help familiarize foster parents with the social workers they have or may work with. Anyone with a suggestion of a social worker to be interviewed can contact Annette Venables at aagativen@sbcglobal.net.

Social Worker: Marvin Urroz, MSW
Position: Child Welfare Worker II—Bilingual

Why did you choose to work in the field of social work?

When I was in my twenties, I adopted my two children from Solano County CPS. It seemed like such a pleasant, wonderful place and our situation was such a happy ending. I wanted to work in a job where I could provide happy endings to others. Even after I learned more about the job and everything it entailed, I still believed in this kind of work—work that could help families.

What is your background and history as a social worker? How long have you been doing this work?

In 1989, I started working as a Medi-Cal eligibility worker. During my employment there, I was assigned to a special project which was my first experience with social services. I then became a holistic worker and went back to school to earn my college degree. In 1995, after I earned my Bachelor of Arts in Human Development (with an orientation in child behavior), I worked as an employment social worker for 2 years. From 1998 to 2007, I was an SSI advocate, working to win Social Security benefits for the mentally disabled. During this time I also earned a Master's Degree in Social Work. In 2007 I came to Marin County and began working as an ongoing caseworker, and just a few months ago, I moved to emergency placement.

What is the most rewarding and most challenging part of your work as a social worker?

As an ongoing caseworker, the most rewarding part of my job was helping to rebuild families so that they could reunify. Knowing that the family had gained the skills necessary to stay together and keep the children safe was

the best part of my job. And I did have some very successful stories. Three times I've had to terminate parental rights. This is the most difficult part of the job even though you know that you're working in the best interest of the child.

Is there anything in particular you would like to share with foster parents?

It's an incredible calling to be able to offer a child a home when they have nowhere else to go. Social workers know that and respect and appreciate you so much more than we can express. We know that we would not be able to do our job without you. It may not seem that we appreciate you because we are always juggling lawyers and deadlines, etc... We have to do what we have to do, but we need to hear you! You are key because you are with the child all the time. It's so valuable to get feedback from you.

Welcome New Foster Families

Marin County Children and Family Services is happy to introduce our two newest foster families. **Perfecta and Bruce Baffer** reside in Hamilton in Novato, with their four children, ages 2-13. Their other four children, ages 18-24, are no longer living at home. Perfecta and Bruce have provided foster care in Hawaii and in San Diego, and have fostered 10 children (mainly siblings) over the course of a few years. The Baffer family just moved to Marin last August. Bruce is a career military officer with the U.S. Coast Guard, and Perfecta is a stay-at-home mom who homeschools their children. Bruce and Perfecta are both professionally trained engineers. The Baffer children enjoy swimming (most compete) and many in the household are musical.

The family's home is spacious, and they look forward to sharing it with boys and girls, ages 4-13 or so; they are licensed for two. Perfecta is bilingual (English and Spanish). She and Bruce are very familiar with the way things work in foster care and they have a wonderful track record of interacting productively with children as well as with their biological parents. This is a stable, experienced family with a great deal of warmth and love to offer. They are a great addition to our wonderful community of licensed foster parents.

Diane and Peter Oser live in Novato with their 17 year old son, Rob. Their eldest son, Kenneth, age 20, is a student at the University of the Pacific and does not live at home. This is a warm, insightful and compassionate family. A natural caretaker, Diane is a stay-at-home mother who has experience as a formerly licensed daycare provider. Peter has worked as an insurance agent and broker for 28 years and he owns his own business. Rob's interests include psychology and Spanish; he especially enjoys participating in the mock trial team, a group that stages trials, held before a judge, in competition with other schools. He is very supportive of his parents' decision to foster children, and he looks forward to helping. Licensed for two, the Osers will welcome boys and girls ages 5-18. They are equipped to care for children with mild to moderate special needs, and their pragmatic approach to parenting, combined with their strong analytical skills and sensitivity to the needs of others, will serve them well as they guide and nurture children in their care. This agency is very fortunate to be working with the Osers.

Chronicles of Adoption by Jonathan Toste

Chronicles of adoption was created to present the gnawing questions that haunt the lives of children, adolescents and adults of broken homes. It is an attempt by the MFPA to outline the issues that children battle with, in order to create better foster parenting.

Interviewer: Jonathan Toste

Interviewee: Terrance Quinton

What history do you know about your biological family?

Seventeen years ago, at age 24, I looked up my biological parents. I located my birth mother about three counties away in Northern California. She was an artist. She told me artists were prevalent on both sides of my family for several generations. I also found out I had been breastfed the few months that my mom raised me and that I have a half sister on my mom's side and a half brother on my dad's side. My bio-dad had no interest in meeting me, but my mom has continued minimal contact. I have met my half brother. My birth mom was 30 when I was born, and my bio dad was 40, so I imagine their issues of giving me up to be more relevant to personal choices than to poverty or immaturity.

At what age and for how long were you in adoption or foster care?

I was put into foster care at about three months old and, after two foster placements, I was transracially adopted into the home of the most perfect family I think I could have ever wished for. I must say, however, that even with all the normalcy I was raised with, there

was always a thread within me that sensed the world not to be a safe easy place to be. I trace that feeling to early broken bonds and four totally different mothers before the age of one.

What was the most comforting thing your guardians or other adults in your life did for you regarding the issue of adoption?

My parents are Quakers and were very active in this amazing spiritual community that I grew up in. My whole life I was raised in a community that included many adopted children and several races - so I never felt odd or marginalized. As a matter of fact my parents had a biological daughter about four years after they adopted me and at one point I remember my sister feeling she was odd because she was not adopted like me! I believe it is key that neither parents, schools nor children's service agencies create programs or policies that segregate bio kids from fostered or adopted children. In fact, efforts should be made to bring "normalcy" to the many types of family and child relationships.

What kind of "fantasy option" (not totally unrealistic) do you wish was available to you to solve the biggest issues you faced growing up?

I felt so "normal" growing up, that I never really longed for anything different. My adoptive dad was a social worker and after retirement pursued a PhD in Social Work and was one of the key innovators of the process of foster

placement called parallel planning in the foster care system. My parents have been my "standard for integrity" my whole life - they were always TOTALLY reliable. After undergraduate work in theater and acting, I pursued a Masters in Social Science and am now in a chaplaincy program in the metropolitan area where I have settled.

What ability of yours best helped you to achieve the success you have found in your adulthood?

I am inquisitive. I have always felt the need to ask questions, especially questions about - why can't the world be a better place for all of us? The questions have always changed through the periods of my life. My question during my graduate work in social science was "What is the key for creating the will for society to understand a responsibility towards its dependence on nature?" After teaching high school for four years, my question changed to: "what is the nature of being - what is the process to open a persons soul into becoming one with the positive consciousness of society".

** The above story is true; some names have been changed to protect identities. We are looking for other, over 30 year-old, fostered or adopted adults to participate in telephone interviews. If you or someone you know would be willing to share his/her experience, please contact Jonathan Toste at*



Although we did have one fost-adopt parent offer to host an annual holiday event (thank you, Wendy!), it is with regret we inform you there will not be an annual holiday event hosted by MFPA this year. The MFPA will be hosting popcorn and "give away" stations at this year's annual Holiday Party at the Strawberry Recreation Center, so be sure to pack up the kids and attend this super fun event. If you haven't RSVP'd yet, please help Mollie out and do so ASAP!

Letter From Kelly Reiter, Attorney At Law

Happy Holidays to all the wonderful foster parents of Marin. I wanted to take a moment to first thank each and every one of you who have either opened your home to a foster/adoptive child or have been a part of working with the foster children of Marin. It has been a privilege to work with such an amazing group of people. I have dedicated my legal career to fighting for the rights of foster children and am honored to have worked with each and every one of you.

As most of you know by now, as of July 1, 2010, I am no longer representing foster children under the contract set forth by the Administrative Office of the Courts. The contract was put out to the general legal community and the firm Wasacz, Hilley and Fullerton won the bid. The new attorneys have promised to continue to provide the same

level of representation that I worked so hard to provide for our most fragile youth.

While I am saddened for the loss to the kids, it is an incredibly exciting time for me. After ten years in the non-profit community, I have opened my own law firm. I will continue to dedicate my practice to the representation of children and families in the areas of dependency, family law, guardianships, adoption, emancipations, education and any legal issue that involves a child. I have expanded my practice to include San Francisco, Sonoma and Marin and look forward to continuing to support the Foster Parent Association including being available for trainings and support to anyone who might need some advice, guidance, or just an ear.

Please do not be strangers and feel

free to contact me for any reason or to forward my information to anyone who may need assistance. I will miss working so closely with all of you and hope that Marin continues to see the incredible dedication of the members of this organization and continues to support those who have opened their homes and their hearts to our most vulnerable population.

I can be found at: Law Offices of Kelly Y. Reiter, 1401 Los Gatos Drive, 2nd Floor, San Rafael, CA 94903, phone: 415-457-0700, fax: 415-446-2999.

On behalf of all of the foster children of Marin and myself, I hope you all have a very safe, happy, and healthy holiday season. -*Kelly Reiter, Attorney at Law*

Free Classes Through Marin County Volunteers

Free classes are available through The Marin County School Volunteers. The schedule can be found on their website www.mcsv.org under Workshops. There are parenting workshops as well as workshops on teaching children different skills. Anyone who is interested in attending any of these classes just needs to call to put their name on the list. This is important because with our budget crunch, classes are not held unless we have a minimum number registered. If there are not enough people by a couple of days before, the class is cancelled. There will be just as many classes taking place in a new schedule in the New Year. That ought to be on the website by early December.

The Phone Tree Committee Needs Your Help!!

Ring..Ring...Hi! This is Jonathan, from the Marin Foster Parent Association. I'm calling to see if you received your newsletter and... Every month, four of us call foster parents with a reminder and an outreach of kindness. Two of our volunteers have been doing this for three years and could use a break - just 12 calls, once a month- could you help us out? It's fun to check in with other foster parents. Making 12 calls is easy, but 24 is a lot harder. Please help us with this outreach. Just 12 calls. Call me now 415-258-9459!



Annual Holiday Party Volunteers Needed

The MFPA will be doling out popcorn, and, a new addition, will have a "giveaway" station at this year's annual Holiday Party at Strawberry Rec Center on December 2nd. We could use a couple more adult volunteers to help with these areas for 30 minute time slots. If you'd like to help us out, please call 507-0557 or email marinfosterparentassociation@yahoo.com. Thanks—Ho Ho Ho!

Are you on the Marin Foster Parent Association's email mailing list? We distribute lots of information this way including last minute "freebies" and upcoming training opportunities. If you'd like to be added to this list, please email us at marinfosterparentassociation@yahoo.com.

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.

The Soup Group That Took A Holiday



Soup group at my house the end of October was neither scary nor pumpkin-y and not too many witches showed up. People were maybe getting ready for the Halloween festivities and were busy putting last minute costumes together and carving pumpkins. It was a rather quiet get-together, and we enjoyed Split Pea with Ham (a classic) and Lentil, Spinach and Sausage soups. Since there were fewer slurpers than usual, everyone got a word in edgewise and there were enough seconds for me to get my kids fed that night. They always look forward to Soup Group Fridays as they love the leftovers for an easy supper. Sharon Skolnick-Bagnoli, Maxeen Olenberg, Alice Basch, Carol Ihlenburg, and Rachel Norman sat around the table as my active toddler circled 16 times and then collapsed into bed for a nap. We discussed PTSD and how attachment and rejection plays out in the teenage years. We compared notes on our own teenagers, and how to handle teens in the future.

Teens are tough anyway, and throwing in the spin of attachment issues and PTSD always makes for an exciting roller coaster of adolescence. And speaking of such, I am having a handful of kids in my home (as usual) and am feeling like pulling my energy back a bit to take a breather from Soup Group for awhile. I am going to put the luncheons on hold for awhile and spend more time taking care of these kids and myself. I am not saying I will not be doing some lunches again in the future, but just not regularly right away. I will announce in a future newsletter when I am going to host lunch, maybe 3 or 4 times a year instead of monthly. I will take some time off this winter and see you all again in the spring-time. FYI, my chickens are all well and clucking. We are getting 5-6 eggs a day and having fresh omelettes every morning. I got the giantest egg I have ever seen last week, and I even posted the picture of it on FaceBook for folks to see. I am sure it is a double- or triple-yolked wonder. I will crack it open soon and see what's inside. My hens are lovely and come running when I call them. Maybe eggflower soup in the spring time! Thanks for all your support and attendance, and have a fabulous holiday season. See you after the New Year, and may your homes ring out with the laughter of happy kids throughout the winter rain and cold! -Mimi Katz, Soup Group Chair and MFPA Board Member

Holiday Baskets From Mill Valley Middle School

Mill Valley Middle School will be putting together holiday baskets for foster children again this year. The Marin Foster Parent Association will be delivering them on December 5th. We have a list of children from CFS, but, if you would like to insure your foster child receives a basket, contact us at 507-0557 or marinfosterparentassociation@yahoo.com.



2010 MFPA Executive Board Members

Cesar Lagleva, President
846-3789
giaclay@yahoo.com

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

Andrea Pino, Secretary
479-0357
andreapino@comcast.net

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

Members At Large

Mimi Katz (492-0207)

Kathryn Jordan-Whittlely
(898-5677)

Linda Gregory (479-8702)

Annette Venables (272-5187)

Newsletter Crew

Carol Ihlenburg
Barbara Sabido
Paula Starrett



MARIN FOSTER PARENT ASSOCIATION

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

www.mfpa.net



MFPA Membership Application

Name: _____

Complete Address: _____

Phone Number: _____

Email Address: _____

Membership Fees: \$ 35.00 for individual membership; \$ 50.00 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

If you do not wish to receive this newsletter, save postage and paper - call (415) 507-0557 or email us at marinfosterparentassociation@yahoo.com to be removed from our mailing list!

The purpose of this article is twofold; to de-mystify our (human) relationships to bacteria, as well as introduce some basic information about staph infections. The community is seeing more and more people with staph infections, which we see reflected in our own families, in addition to our clients and their children. ~Pamela Doerr, PHN

Did you know you have your very own zoo?

The human body is a veritable zoo of colonies of bacteria and other microbes. They occupy every surface of our body, including our mouths, nose, digestive and urinary tracts. They aid us in a number of useful functions; for example, they kill invading pathogens, help produce vitamins and help digest carbohydrates in our food. At any given time each of us 'wears' around 240 distinct microbes, distinct to the individual. The number hitching a ride on us (trillions) outnumbers the number of skin cells we have! We generally carry similar microbes, but our individual 'wardrobe' of bacteria is unique to each individual. Even a single individual's personal microbes fluctuate and adapt, however. When we change our soap, shampoo, or clothing from wool to cotton; our personal flora adapts.

Staphylococcus aureus prefers to colonize the nose, *viridans Streptococcus* camps out in the mouth, while another staph; *Staph.epidermis* lives on the skin. There are a virtual plethora of other interesting microbes; *Micrococci*, *Diphtheroids* and Gram-Negative *Bacilli* on us at any given time.

Although normal flora can inhibit pathogens, some of the members can produce disease; for example, *Strep. mutans* causes tooth decay. Anaerobe bacteria (ones that do not need oxygen), who normally reside in the gut can cause disease when levels shift; such as with antibiotic use. It is commonly known that antibiotics are used in for treatment of bacterial infections, but are also used in animal rearing in the food industry. If your 'resident bacteria' adapts in some way to be capable of surviving a bout of antibiotic exposure, it may become resistant to that antibiotic in the future. Increased use of antibiotics seems to increase the risk of what turns out to be bacterial genetic mutation.

In particular, the communicable bacteria *Staphylococcus aureus* seems to be genetically very 'plastic', (easily adaptable) facilitating the evolution of drug-resistant, and virulent new strains. The term MRSA (*Methicillin Resistant Staph. Aureus*) refers to strains of staph which have evolved sufficiently to be resistant to certain antibiotics, including certain penicillins (Methicillin is the name of one of first penicillins developed in the 1950's) and cephalosporins, which normally can kill off staph. The term MSSA (*Methicillin Sensitive Staph. aureus*) refers to strains of *Staph. aureus* that still respond to the more common antibiotics. Although many of these strains were initially encountered in the hospital setting, they have easily mutated and are now community-acquired as well. Both types of *Staph. aureus* can cause abscesses and cellulitis, and are communicable to self and others.

Prevention of infection is key, and easier than eradication. It is next to impossible to pinpoint a source where you might acquire staph, as it easily lives on contaminated articles and surfaces, and you could encounter it virtually anywhere. Proper use of prescribed antibiotics (completing all doses in the prescribed manner) is one method of discouraging infection. The easiest and cheapest method though, (and one we frequently overlook) is good hand hygiene. Vigorous washing of the palms, back of the hands, and the nails for 20 seconds can wash off most bacteria that you have mistakenly acquired by touching anything; be it a contaminated diaper, grocery cart, door handle, handling money, or after using the restroom. You should always wash your hands before touching another person (including foster children), and when cooking meals and prior to eating. This is also a reminder to foster parents to use basic infection control principles with all foster children, as it is impossible to tell who might be capable of transmitting a bacterial or viral infection.

If you, a family member, or anyone in your care develops symptoms such as a lesion, a reddened area resembling a large pimple, or a blister-type of wound, you should seek medical care. As these infections can enlarge, spread to different areas, and may be contagious to others, it is important to seek care as soon as symptoms present. Treatment frequently involves the use of antibiotics and cleaning and covering the wound, and you should follow the instruction of your healthcare provider.