



JANUARY 2012 NEWSLETTER

Issue 98 - January 20, 2012



# Happy New Year by Linda Gregory

It is going to be an exciting year for MFPA! Our two wonderful interns, Nancy Gordon and Rachelle Wright, are helping us do many important tasks such as updating our phone tree, assisting with the newsletter (enjoy Nancy's photo collage inside), and donation pickup. We are in negotiations to rent a space in San Rafael for a Distribution Center to better serve you and your foster children; by early spring our doors will open!

Thanks to Marin Charitable who believes 'all kids deserve to shine', we just received \$5,000 to disseminate to foster youth for sports, drama, ballet or whatever your foster child is excited about diving into.



Back by popular demand we'll have another fabulous spring fundraising concert, our June picnic, and monthly 'Meet and Eats' where you can eat, learn and get your recertification hours.

Our board is strong, motivated and always willing to have your participation. Please join us at California Pizza Kitchen this Thursday to celebrate a New Year and support Marin Foster Families!

# Meet & Eat Overview by Annette Venables

Would you believe me if I told you a bunch of high school seniors could teach you the key to achieving lasting happiness? Well, see for yourself.

Project Happiness is a 60-minute documentary that is the passionate expression of the wish of local mom, Randy Taran, to help her family be happier. In 2007, Randy's daughter sat at the dinner table and complained about being stressed out and unhappy. Randy realized that she didn't even have a language for talking about happiness. And as she looked around at other stressed-out families, skyrocketing depression and suicide rates worldwide, rampant social isolation and widespread political violence—

it didn't seem like anyone else did either.

But then Randy made several key connections and brought together 3 groups of high school seniors: one in Santa Cruz, one in Nigeria, and one in India. With a little help from the Dalai Lama, one of the world's foremost neuroscientists, and a couple of big-time Hollywood stars, the journey of these incredibly open, doggedly curious young people will fill you with a pure and simple hope that you may not have been in touch with for a long time.

Project Happiness is hard to talk about—it has to be experienced.

(continued on page 2)

## Upcoming Events & Trainings

January 24th: **Understanding Grief and Loss** - Marin Justice Center, San Rafael, 1:00 - 2:30 PM

January 26th: **MFPA California Pizza Kitchen Fundraiser** - Corte Madera Town Center. Bring flyer on back of newsletter!

February 2: **MFPA Board Meeting** - 555 Northgate Drive, San Rafael, 9:30 - 11:30 AM

February 8: **MFPA Meet & Eat** - BayMarin Community Church, 150 N. San Pedro Road, San Rafael, 6:00 - 8:30 PM

February 15: **Marin Advocates for Children Overview of Special Education** - Marin Justice Center, San Rafael, 9:30-11 AM

For more information on any event listed in this newsletter, contact MFPA at 507-0557 or visit our website at [www.mfpa.net](http://www.mfpa.net).



## Meet and Eat Overview (continued)

And for the approximately 20 foster parents who attended our first 2012 “Meet and Eat,” the Sol Food-donated meal and warm popcorn were just the prelude for their heart-warming experience of the Project Happiness screening. I was personally overwhelmed by the number of people, many of whom I had never met, who hugged me and thanked me for sharing the film with the group. There wasn’t a dry eye in the house by the end of the movie and everyone wanted to know more about how to spread this powerful message.

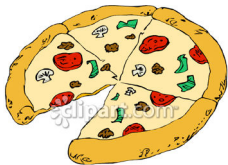
Luckily, we had Joan Roane, MFT—whom many of you know from your foster parent training—to help us make connections between the powerful messages of the film and our unique role as foster parents in helping to “plant the seeds of happiness” in the lives of the children and young people that we affect for only a short time. And Randy Taran herself was on hand to tell us about her incredible, continuing journey.

If you missed our showing, don’t despair. Go to [www.projecthappiness.org](http://www.projecthappiness.org). The \$20 investment for the DVD will be worth it as I guarantee you will watch it again and again.

## Noteworthy

### **2rd Annual Pizza Fundraiser**

Eat delicious pizza while supporting the Marin Foster Parent Association! All day Thursday January 26, California Pizza Kitchen in Town Center, Corte Madera, will donate 20% of your entire



eat-in or take-out tab to MFPA! Be sure to bring the attached flyer and give to your server. Please copy and share it with your pizza-loving friends, family and co-workers! If you’d like to join other MFPA families and friends please join us between 5:30 and 7pm.

### **Welcome Back!**

We are pleased to announce that Julie Lenhardt, Intake and Licensing Unit Supervisor, has

decided to stay with Marin County’s Children and Family Services. The MFPA is looking forward to continuing to work with Julie far into the future.

### **Donation Update**

The FunRazor Committee from the Marin County Assessor’s office donated funds to be used for foster children’s extracurricular activities. The FunRazor’s realize how important it is for all children to feel like they are a part of something and they know that nothing compares to being part of a team. Many of their employees are involved in sporting teams with their own children. When some people think of Marin County they only think of multi-million dollar homes and the FunRazor’s wanted to bring an awareness to the fact that there is still a need everyone’s backyard.

Sleep Train also donated funds to be used for extracurricular fun AND some “after Christmas” toys.

The John Burton Foundation donated Safeway gift cards.

Girls’ size 10/12 coats and youth size small ski pants are available, donated by a community member.

Applications for enrichment funding are found on our website under ‘programs’. Call or email MFPA to inquire about receiving donated items.

### **Well Said!!**

Congratulations to Mary Melville whose Sleep Train Calendar Quote appears on the month of April! Mary said, “A new pair of shoes makes a foster child feel good from the ground up!”



The MFPA Holiday Party  
Photo Album

\*\*\*

We Thank Roberta  
DiPrete  
For Making Spirits Bright  
with  
Fabulous Food, Fun,  
Caroling and Frolic!

\*\*\*\*\*



## Five Minutes Peace for the New Year

by Cherry Jones, MFT

In my work, I meet many parents and I have known for a fact myself, that as parents we often place self-care at the bottom of the "to do" list. Even mentioning it here, some may consider it an impossibility given the many necessities of caring for family, and some may consider it a luxury. I have also seen, and know this also for a fact myself, that, without some kind of self-care, a parent can easily become tired, irritable and depleted and certainly not fun to be around! When stressful situations and difficult behaviors of a child are added to the mix, then your child can start believing that they are to blame for all the suffering. Self-care for a parent is not a luxury; it is a necessity. It is also a great, healthy survival skill to pass on to your child.

So.... Now the holidays are done and the children are back in school; maybe it is time to clean out the old and prepare for new beginnings! But wait! Before I do any of this I need to give myself a pause and rest, even if it is for five minutes. Even if it is just for the time it takes to read the words on this page! I need time and space for me to do absolutely nothing but breathe and feel myself fully! To be a human being with needs, as well as a parent!



When my daughter was young, we both enjoyed reading a book called *Five Minutes Peace* which was about a mother elephant who needed just five minutes to herself to pause and recharge her battery. Of course it never happened as the baby elephant did not understand why her mother would need time alone! Sound familiar? So making intentional time alone to be creative or just be, each day, is my number one goal in 2012. It does not have to be a lot of time, but it does need to be consistent. I am hoping that in achieving this generous gift of self-compassion daily, I will also be giving to my daughter.

By seeing me value and experiencing me having quiet time, my daughter will be encouraged to learn to be comfortable being by herself. She can begin to understand her own physiological and psychological needs for quiet reflection, as well as outside stimulation. This is the work of all parents to help our children know how to be secure with their internal thoughts and feelings and respond positively and skillfully to the barrage of external stimulation. My hope is that I can teach my daughter to move more fluidly between times of quiet and stillness and times of activity and movement, and most importantly, recognize the value of both. The hope is that the quiet moments alone come to feel as safe to her as those moments being rocked in my arms when she was a baby.

My hope is that when she reaches that age when she can be left alone at home that she is confident and I can trust her to be alone. The hope is that she can delve into her own creative resources and not experience boredom with her own company as a problem! The hope is that my limit-setting, although annoying at times, is internalized to make her feel safe. So, that in the future she knows when it is safe to take risks and safe to walk away. And my hope is that she will be as comfortable with silence as she is with the resonating sounds of Lady Gaga! Happy New Year!

Cherry Jones, LMFT, is beginning a foster/adopt parent support group in her office on Thursday evenings in Mill Valley in January 2012. Call 415 381 5889 for information or visit [www.cherryjonesmft.com](http://www.cherryjonesmft.com). Cherry is an adoptive parent herself and says that it would have helped if someone had said, "I know this must be hard for you."

## MISSION STATEMENT/BYLAWS

The mission of the Marin Foster Parent Association is to achieve consistent, safe, quality care for the well being of all foster children by providing support services and advocacy to Foster and Adoptive Families, Relative and Non-relative caregivers.

The Marin Foster Parent Association is a nonprofit, volunteer run organization. We provide educational trainings, distribute monthly newsletters and host events to bring foster parents and their families together to provide support and exchange information. We work and communicate directly with the Department of Health and Human Services, Children and Family Services division and in partnership with the entire community we serve. We actively advocate for foster children and their caregivers. We obtain and distribute donations and necessities for foster children.

Our primary objectives and purposes are as follows:

- 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 set forth below.
- To promote the general welfare of children and youth that need protective care (out of home placement) everywhere: at home, in the communities, in institutions and in public, private and religious schools.
- To promote cooperation, communication and understanding between those providing care for children and the general public and all organizations/agencies involved in the lives of children in the dependency system by encouraging and maintaining communications, and the interchange of ideas and cooperation between the caregivers, county agencies and communities.
- To cooperate, advocate and take actions necessary to improve foster care services.
- To encourage community involvement and offer training and education of those who provide care to children in the dependency system.
- To inform the foster care community of the current information pertaining to the welfare of children.
- Notwithstanding the above statements, the chapter shall not, except for insubstantial degree, engage in any activities or exercise any powers that are not in furtherance of the primary purpose.



### Creamy Chicken and Mushrooms

Combine 4 cups chicken broth, 2 cups water, 1/3 cup chopped onion, 3 thyme sprigs, and 1 chopped celery stalk in a saucepan. Add 4 skinless, boneless chicken breasts. **Simmer** gently for 15 minutes or until chicken is done. Remove chicken from pan; cool and shred. Strain cooking liquid through sieve and reserve 1 cup liquid; discard solids. **Heat** a skillet over medium-high heat and add 1 Tbsp olive oil, ½ cup thinly sliced shallot, and 2 tsp. minced garlic; sauté 1 minute, stirring constantly. **Add** 8 oz sliced crimini mushrooms, ½ tsp kosher salt, and ½ tsp black pepper; sauté 3 minutes. **Add** ½ cup dry white wine; cook until liquid nearly evaporates. Stir in 2 tsp. flour; cook 1 minute. Stir in reserved cooking liquid; bring to a boil and cook 1 minute. Remove from heat; stir in chicken and ½ cup crème fraiche. Serve over toasted whole grain bread slices. Serves 6.

**Note: Mimi will convene a Leap Year Soup Group Friday, February 24th! Until then, happy cooking!**

## 2012 MPFA Board Members

### Executive Board

**Linda Gregory, President**

479-8702, grey\_gregory@att.net

**Barbara Sabido, Vice President**

479-2042,  
barbarasabido@yahoo.com

**Annette Venables, Secretary**

272-5187, aagativen@sbcglobal.net

**Carol Ihlenburg, Treasurer**

507-1822, cihlenburg@comcast.net



### Members At Large

**Mimi Katz**

492-0207

**Kathryn Jordan-Whittle**

898-5677,  
kathryn@fishpondrecruiting.com

**Cesar Lagleva**

846-3789, giaclay@yahoo.com

**Jonathan Toste, Phone Tree Chair**

jjtoste@gmail.com

### Newsletter Crew

**Nancy Gordon**

**Linda Gregory**

**Carol Ihlenberg**

**Barbara Sabido**

**Paula Starrett**

Special thanks to College of Marin's Foster and Kinship Education Program and Children and Family Services for making the printing and distribution of this newsletter.



Join us at

# California Pizza Kitchen

for a flavorful FUNdraising event!

**Just bring in this flyer**, present it to your server, and **20%** of your check will be donated to our organization. Purchases include dine-in, take-out, catering and all beverages!

Fundraiser in support of

## Marin Foster Parent Association Thursday, January 26, 2012

(All Day)

### California Pizza Kitchen

347 Corte Madera Town Center  
Corte Madera, CA 94925  
415.945.0401

Go to [cpk.com](http://cpk.com) to view our pizzas, pastas, salads, appetizers & desserts. You can even order online!

Join the **CPK Adventure Club** at [cpk.com](http://cpk.com) and receive **\$5** off your next visit!



Eligible groups include non-profit schools and 501c organizations. Donation amount excludes proceeds from tax, gratuity, gift card and retail purchases. Valid for dine-in, take-out, online orders, catering or curbside service. Alcoholic beverages included. Not valid on delivery. Event proceeds void if flyers are distributed in or near the restaurant. Manager, please attach this flyer to the guest check.

The Marin Foster Parent Association, in collaboration with  
College of Marin's Foster and Kinship Care Education Program, offers:

## **The Power of Play**

The Important Role of Play in Parenting and Child Development

### **PRESENTED BY**

Robynne O'Byrne, Ph.D.  
Licensed Clinical Psychologist

### **WHEN**

Wednesday, February 8, 2012  
6:30 – 8:30 pm\*

\*A social/dinner time will be hosted from 6:00 – 6:30 pm.  
To insure there is enough food and drink available, please RSVP to 479-8702 by February 6, 2012  
if you are interested in attending this portion of the meeting.

### **WHERE**

BayMarin Community Church  
150 N. San Pedro Road  
San Rafael, CA 94903

### **QUESTIONS & RSVP**

Call Linda Gregory at 479-8702

### **CHILDCARE**

Childcare is available during the meeting (6:30-8:30 PM). Those using the childcare will be responsible for paying the provider, completing a reimbursement form and getting reimbursed by DHHS. The cost of childcare is \$5.00/hour per child with a cap of \$10.00/hour – i.e. the most you will need to pay is \$10.00/hour regardless of number of children. **Please RSVP to 415 479-8702 if you will need childcare with the number and ages of the children you will be bringing. If the childcare is full, and you did not RSVP, your child/ren may be turned away. You must RSVP by Monday, February 6th; if there are no RSVPs by this time, the childcare provider will be cancelled.**

This meeting qualifies for required annual training hours for DHHS

MARIN FOSTER PARENT ASSOCIATION

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

(415) 507-0557

www.mfpa.net



---

**M F P A M E M B E R S H I P A P P L I C A T I O N**

---

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