



Presidential Proclamation National Foster Care Month

Progress in America can be measured by the opportunities we pass on to our children. For nearly half a million youth in foster care across our country, the best path to success we can give them is the chance to experience a loving home where they can feel secure and thrive. During National Foster Care Month, we renew our commitment to ensuring a brighter future for foster youth, and we celebrate the selfless individuals who make a meaningful difference in their lives.

Young people in foster care are in the system through no fault of their own, and each of our Nation's children deserves a stable home and a devoted family. Strong support structures provide children with the environment needed to learn, grow, and reach their greatest potential. Permanence is critical to the future success of foster youth and must be a key component of foster care initiatives.

My Administration is committed to achieving security for every child and supporting adolescents in foster care as they transition to adulthood. The Permanency Innovations Initiative, spearheaded by the Department of Health and Human Services, is providing support to public-private partnerships focused on decreasing the number of children in long-term foster care. Over the next 5 years, this program will invest \$100 million in new intervention strategies to help foster youth move into permanent homes, test new approaches to reducing time spent in foster care placements, and remove the most serious barriers to finding lasting, loving environments. Over 110,000 children in foster care today are waiting to be adopted. Across America, there are families who need these children as much as these children need families. I encourage those interested in adopting a child in need of a home to explore the life-changing resources available at www.AdoptUSKids.org.

We are also investing in the health and well-being of our young people in foster care. Through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, we have significantly increased funding for the Title IV-E adoption and foster care assistance program to provide safe and stable out-of-home care for children. As a result of the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act I signed into law last year, all children enrolled in foster care automatically qualify for free meals in all Department of Agriculture child nutrition programs. Additionally, beginning in 2014, the Affordable Care Act will require States to extend Medicaid coverage up to age 26 for all youth who have aged out of the foster care system.

As a Nation, we all have a responsibility to remain persistent in the charge to provide the best care possible for children when they cannot remain in their own homes. During National Foster Care Month, we recognize the efforts of foster families, social workers, faith-based and community organizations, and others that are improving the lives of young people in foster care across our country, and I encourage all Americans to partake in efforts to serve these children in the year ahead.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, BARACK OBAMA, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and the laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim May 2011 as National Foster Care Month. I call upon all Americans to observe this month by taking an active role in activities across our country that recognize not only these cherished children

Upcoming Events



May 24th: Annual Meet and Greet
San Rafael, 4:00-5:30PM

June 1st: Caregiver Advocacy Network Meeting
Sacramento, 1:30PM-3:30PM

June 1st: Strengthening Families Overview & Program Assessment Tool
San Rafael, 9:00AM-12:00PM

June 2nd: MFPA Board Meeting San Rafael 9:30-11:30AM

June 7th: Picnic Committee Meeting
Mill Valley 7-8:30PM

June 7th: College Resources for Foster Youth
San Rafael, 10:00-11:30AM

June 14th: Marin Kinship Tribute Dinner San Rafael

June 17th: 9th Annual MFPA Picnic
McInnis Park, San Rafael 12:30PM-3PM

July 13th: Quarterly Policy Meeting,
San Rafael 10:00AM-12:00PM

For information on any of these events, contact Carol Ihlenburg or visit our website at www.mfpa.net.

and youth, but also the commitment of so many that touch their lives at a most challenging time.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this twenty-ninth day of April, in the year of our Lord two thousand eleven, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and thirty-fifth.

BARACK OBAMA



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 per 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-served basis with a combined monthly maximum amount of \$400, to be distributed amongst all approved applicants. Requests must be made for a foster child or child in the dependency system, and the funding must benefit him or 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 Marinfosterparentassociation@yahoo.com. We are excited to offer this assistance to our foster families!

In 2011, Marin Charitable granted an additional \$3,500 to be distributed to children ages 11-18 for tutoring and educational needs.



Noteworthy

The Marin Human Race

The Marin Human Race on Saturday, May 7th, was a great success! Our small but mighty team of runners and walkers managed to raise \$2500. Thanks to Carol Ihlenburg, Linda Gregory, Cesar Lagleva, Pam Salvadore and their families for fundraising and coming out to participate.

Thanks Enterprise Mini Storage!

The MFPA would like to thank Josh and Susan Roberts, managers of Novato's Enterprise Mini Storage, for their donation of 2 storage units to the MFPA. Josh and Susan are foster-adopt parents, so they are invested in the foster community. These storage units are a remarkable asset for us, allowing for the collection and distribution of all the donated items received throughout the year.

Membership

Three new members joined us this month, bringing our total membership up to 57! This is the highest our membership has been since 2002, and we'd love to reach 65 by the end of the year. If you, or anyone you know, are interested in supporting foster children in Marin County this is the place. There is a membership application on the back page of this newsletter. Only \$35 for individuals and \$50 for a family goes a long way to helping fund our programs and solicit donations and grants.

Thank You Oakland A's!

The MFPA partnered with the Oakland A's and Bank of America to participate in this year's Little A's Program. As part of the program, MFPA members and their foster children were invited to attend the Saturday, May 14th game against the Chicago White Sox. In addition, all of our "Little A's" received a free admission Child Guest Pass to the Oakland Zoo and a souvenir key chain. We anticipate receiving tickets to two more games this summer, so watch for the email announcements to spend a fun day at the ballpark with your kids! Thank You Oakland A's and Bank of America!

Dunk Tank Volunteers Needed!

Can you volunteer for a 15 minute shift in the dunk tank? You'll be the coolest person at the picnic! Shifts begin at 12:30 - the first to sign up get the time slot of their choice. Contact Carol at Marinfosterparentassociation@yahoo.com.

New Arrivals

Long time foster parents, Roy and Claudia Asprer welcomed Elias Zeke on Mother's Day to their every growing family. Elias weighed in at 5.4 pounds. Mom and baby are doing great!

Congratulations also go out to Jolie Clark at Children and Family Services on the arrival of her newly adopted two year old daughter, Liyon, in late January. Liyon is originally from Ethiopia, so this was a long and involved process with lots of traveling and waiting. Jolie is THRILLED to finally have her home!



Fire Squirts Camp of Marin

Week of June 27-July 1, 2011 (Monday-Friday 8:30AM-4PM). Open to all kids ages 10-14 years old, Fire Squirts was originally started by the Novato



Fire Department for CASA kids. Fire Squirts offers an opportunity for kids to spend one week with local firefighters, doing activities such as rappelling from the drill tower, cutting apart a vehicle using the Jaws of Life, climbing an aerial ladder, learning how to use a fire extinguisher and more. Fire Squirts strives to provide children with a fun and safe environment to build trust, teamwork, self-confidence, and discipline, helping them reach their full potential. If you are interested, please contact Marin Advocates for Children at 415-507-9016.

Quarterly Policy Meeting Summary

This Quarter's Policy Meeting between foster parent and Children and Family Services' representatives took place on April 27th. The foster parent representatives requested information on how to access help if there is conflict or an emergency with a foster child when CFS is closed (i.e. in the evening or on the weekend). The topics of compensation, changes to Medi-Cal coverage and the Carol McKenna Award were also discussed.

Foster Parent Emergencies

The Marin Foster Parent Association requested information regarding what resources foster parents have if an emergency occurs and the CFS is closed. Calling 911 is always an option, but if the emergency doesn't rise to that level, then calling the child abuse /neglect hotline may be appropriate. Children and Family Services designates a social worker and a Program Manager to respond to emergencies at all times. While the intent of this service is to respond to new allegations of child abuse and/or neglect, this is the only way to be absolutely sure you reach someone from CFS after hours. Due to limited resources, the response they are able to provide after hours may be limited, but CFS will always do all they can to ensure that children are safe. The phone number to the hotline is 415-473-7153.

Foster Parent Compensation Rates

A discussion about the current foster care compensation rates was held in regard to the tiered system the Department has used in the past to determine foster parent payment rates.

The Department has historically used a system that determines the rate at which a foster family will be paid for any given child, by the qualifications of the members in

the home. For example, a home in which a family member has special medical training and in which there is a full-time at-home parent may receive a higher pay rate than a home without those qualifications. The difficulty with this system is twofold: 1. caregiver qualifications may change with time; 2. not every child requires these higher level attributes. In nearly every other county in the State, compensation is largely determined by the needs of the child. Here in Marin, the Department anticipates moving toward a similar system in which foster parents are given a base rate for all children, that may be increased using what they call special care increments for children with special needs who require additional care. The Department has not yet made the transition to the child-based payment option. They are currently gathering data from the State and from other counties to ensure that the transition is done in a way that is fair and responsible for the Department and foster parents.

Carol McKenna Award

The 2nd annual Carol McKenna Award will be presented on May 24th at the annual Meet and Greet at the Marin County Health and Wellness Center Building, 3240 Kerner Boulevard, Room 110, from 4:00-5:30PM. One foster parent and one social worker will receive the award. Please join us for a nice afternoon.

Changes in Medi-Cal Coverage in Marin County

Public Health Nurse Nita Lagleva-Gibson gave a presentation regarding upcoming changes in Medi-Cal coverage in Marin. Look for Nita's article in this newsletter describing all the changes. Also, foster parents with eligible children in their home will be receiving information via letters from the State offering further explanation.

Licensing Corner

A Reminder for Summer Travelers

by Julie Lenhardt, MSSW
With summer on the horizon, it's time to start preparing for those

wonderful vacations you've been looking forward to through our extra long winter. In honor of these well deserved trips, we've decided to publish a few reminders to help you get ready.

1. Start early. Depending on where you're planning to go, the Department may need extra time to ask the Court for the permission necessary to take children in foster care out of the state or to re-arrange visits (if possible) while you're gone.
2. If you're planning a trip without the kids, please discuss this with your social worker as soon as possible. As a reminder, the State regulations regarding respite care have changed and your social worker can talk with you about your options.
3. Always provide a detailed itinerary for your trip to the Department. If the child is coming with you, we may need this for travel approval from the Court. The itinerary must include the dates you intend to be away from home, the name of the alternate care provider or the names and locations of where you will be staying if taking the child with you, and emergency phone numbers.
4. Remember, State regulations dictate that caregivers must receive prior approval (the earlier, the better) from the Department for any absence that exceeds 72 hours.
5. If the children are staying with a respite provider or alternative caregiver, remember to provide all necessary information about the child's emotional, behavioral, medical and physical condition(s), and ensure that the temporary provider has all necessary information to provide medication consistent with physician instruction.

If you would like more information regarding State regulations on respite care, you can find the chart on our website at www.mfpa.net, or you can request it from licensing.

With all of the details out of the way, we hope you have a wonderful summer!

Social Worker Profile

Issue 91 May 20, 2011

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: Michael Coleman

Position: Senior Support Services Worker



Why did you choose to work in the field of Social Work?

I love working with children and I always knew that is what I would do "when I grew up". This particular area of providing services to kids has always drawn my attention. The children I work with come from all different economic and ethnic backgrounds. I enjoy being with them. It gives me a great deal of satisfaction.

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

As soon as I left high school, I started working with kids. My first job was with the Marin City Recreation Center, where I worked as a recreational aid and then later as a program coordinator. At the same time, I was attending Sonoma State where I earned a Bachelor of Arts in criminal justice. Then I started working at Sunny Hills, a 24-hour group home that provides services to many foster children moving out of the system. This is how I became connected with CPS. I'm coming up on my ten year anniversary at CPS.

Additionally, for the last six years, I've been working at Marin County Juvenile Hall, where I am currently a group counselor.

What are the most rewarding and most challenging parts of your work as a social worker?

The most rewarding part of my job is the relationships I develop with the children. It is so satisfying to know that you have been a positive influence in someone's life. I have run into kids/parents who thanked me for being there for them - that's the best.

The most challenging part of the job is the politics and social dynamics. Many of the recent changes in the law and shifts in the court system make me feel like it is hard to provide all the services that are required for parents and still do right by the kids. Sometimes parents don't or can't follow the directions/programs in place even with all the services we provide, and that's so sad for the kids.

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

You do a great job! I appreciate your flexibility and the many ways you support my work and the Department in doing the best we can for the kids.

Our Story of Celebration and Resilience Cherry Jones, MFT

We each have our own poignant story to share and understand. Here is mine.

When we arrived home from China and the front door to our home finally closed, my daughter and I were left to begin our lives together. I was both scared and excited. Those of you who have been through this, know what I mean. Adoption is certainly not for the fainthearted but it is definitely the right decision for a lot of people. It can be very rewarding to both parent and child, when given time, patience and love. However, initially, it can be a shock to the system! I think about those parents who have adopted older, school-aged and teenage children. This arrangement is often a collision of worlds, histories, rhythms, cultures and, sometimes, fully formed personalities.

As a newly adoptive parent in 2001, there were no post-adoption professionals to help support me on this journey. The adoption agency had been supportive on the road to adoption and, except for the final check-up visit from the social worker, that was it. I started out by reading books about adoption and what comes next. I stopped reading almost as quickly as I started, because the books all scared me with worst-case scenarios. I found that the books that were the most important to read were the books about Chinese history and culture, because those were relevant to my child. I did not have someone to give me reassurance when I had questions or fears about my baby's development or the possible impact of her first months of life in the orphanage. The best advice I was given was by one of my friends, who had also adopted. She told me to follow my daughter's lead and not impose on her whom I think she is or want her to be. So I decided to just begin, by closely following the non-verbal cues of my daughter and responding the best way I knew how, in turn, becoming her parent. She taught me to slow down, deal with my anxiety and trust my instincts. We got to know other adoptive families and we joined a nursery school co-op. Professionally, I became an advocate and therapeutic support resource for foster/ adopt children and their families in hopes that I could provide the support to them that I never had. Cherry Jones, MFT, has a private practice in Mill Valley: www.cherryjonesmft.com

Collaborative Problem Solving

Issue 91 May 20, 2011

A Day with Ross Greene

By Jonathan Toste



A more active, compassionate, productive understanding of (and approach to helping) behaviorally challenging kids.

“Kids want to do well; they just lack the skills to do it,” said Dr. Ross Greene at a seminar at St. Vincent’s School for Boys on Friday, April 29th. St. Vincent’s brought together a packed house of foster parents, St. Vincent’s staff and child behavioral specialists from around the Bay Area. Dr. Greene’s Collaborative Problem Solving is just the ticket for dealing with a problematic child.

Collaborative Problem Solving (CPS) is a model for understanding and helping kids with social, emotional and behavioral challenges. The CPS approach sets forth two tenets. First, challenging behavior in kids is best understood as the result of lagging cognitive skills (in the general domains of flexibility/adaptability, frustration tolerance, and problem solving) rather than as the result of passive, permissive, inconsistent, non-contingent parenting. And second, the best way to reduce challenging episodes is by collaboratively solving the problems setting them in motion in the first place (rather than by imposing adult will and intensive use of reward and punishment procedures).

Dr. Greene’s feeling is that the old “reward and punishment” system is like adding gasoline to a bonfire. Dr. Greene prefers to sleuth out the root of the challenging behavior and then collaborate with the child on solutions. Once you follow those solutions, adjusting along the way, with the child...problem solved.

It’s a straightforward approach, but often not as easily practiced as it is preached. Even with a full day

seminar and face time on his website, I still find the methodology to be a bit elusive. It takes a keen understanding to change one’s focus from the old method of “reward and punishment” to the new “collaborative plan”. As Dr. Greene puts it, “reward and punishment” causes challenging behavior in challenging kids. The key to change is holding on to the belief that kids are challenging because they lack the skills to not be challenging. One must believe that the child is delayed in the development of crucial cognitive skills - often including flexibility, adaptability, frustration, tolerance and problems solving.

One of the key factors to Dr. Greene’s approach is that you must focus on changing only two or three, at most, of the unsolved problems at a time. He recommends putting the other issues “away” or “dropping them for now”. Dr. Greene stresses that if you can solve only two of the key problems, typically 60% of the other issues will automatically disappear. Only then, do you pull out the other “dropped items” and begin to work on them.

Collaborative Problem Solving begins by clearly identifying the “lagging skills” versus the “unsolved problems” in the child’s life. Then, choose only three issues, at most, to work on. If that means that tooth brushing will not be on the list, you can save it for later.

First we engage the child in the “Empathy Step”. This is where you gather information directly from the child so as to achieve the clearest understanding of his or her concern or perspective on a given unsolved problem.

Next you “Define the Problem”. Here is where you have the opportunity to put your (the adult’s) concerns on the table.

Finally, both you and the child move to the “Invitation Step”. The Invitation Step requires the adult and child to actively brainstorm solutions so as to arrive at a plan of action that is both realistic and mutually satisfactory...in other words, a solution that addresses the concerns of both parties and that both parties can actually perform.

I had the great opportunity of being there for Dr. Greene’s presentation on the 29th. If you are interested in learning more about this approach as well as other ways to handle conflict with a child, check out Dr. Greene’s website at www.livesinthebalance.org. You will find video interviews, questions, answers and approaches that go well beyond the basic theory set forth here. If for no other reason, please do visit his website to read and sign his “Bill of Rights for Behaviorally Challenging Kids”. Print a copy for yourself and your child. Together, you can solve any problem.



Have You Heard?

Issue 91 May 20, 2011

Nita Lagleva-Gibson, RN, PHN, MS

Marin Medi-Cal is changing into a managed care organization called Partnership Health Plan of California (PHC). All foster children with Medi-Cal insurance will be enrolled in PHC effective July 1, 2011. PHC sent out a notice at the end of April. A second notice will be sent in the latter part of May. The new member packet and ID card will be mailed to you in late June. These notices inform you that your foster child is a "Special Member". As a "Special Member", your foster child can be seen by any Medi-Cal certified provider.

Some important points to remember:

- Foster children will be automatically enrolled as "Special Members" by PHC. If you decide to choose a specific primary care doctor for your child, please contact PHC right away.
- "Special Member" status allows foster children to be seen by any Medi-Cal providers, in or out of Marin County.
- Marin foster children will now carry 2 insurance cards – hard plastic white/blue card for Medi-Cal, and a white paper card with red printing for PHC. Please carry both at all times. You should receive the PHC ID Card by July 1, 2011.
- Dental, vision and mental health services will continue to be offered through Medi-Cal in Marin, not PHC. For these services present the white/blue card Medi-Cal BIC card.
- **For any questions or concerns regarding PHC**, please contact Partnership HealthPlan of California's Member Services Department at **1-(800) 863-4155**. They are available Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. and they have bilingual staff ready to assist you.
- You can access a current provider directory on the website: www.partnershiphp.org Click on "For Members", click on "Medi-Cal", click on "Provider Directories", and finally "Marin County Directory".
- PHC offers an Advice Nurse to all of their members. This service is available after-hours Monday through Friday (after 5pm), and 24 hours on weekend and holidays. You can access the Advice Nurse beginning July 1, 2011. The Advice Nurse phone number is (866) 778-8873.
- Feel free to contact PHC's Member Services Department or one of the Marin County Foster Care Nurses if you are having problems accessing care:

Pamela Doerr (415) 473-6746

Monica Rosenberg (415) 473-2947

Nita Gibson (415) 473-7459

Linda Mariscal (415) 473-3703



MISSION STATEMENT/BYLAWS

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:

- 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 that need protective care everywhere: at home, in the communities, in institutions and in public, private and religious schools.
- 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.
- 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.
- To inform ourselves 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.



The 9th Annual MFPA Picnic

The Marin Foster Parent Association and the Department of Health and Human Services Children and Family Services invite you to join us for our 9th Annual Summer Picnic on Friday, June 17th from 12:30-3PM at McInnis Park in San Rafael.

Kick off school vacation with great food, drink, a bouncy house, a dunk tank, face painting, sack races, egg toss and tug of war. We have also invited a very special "orange" guest!! He'll be there to play with the kids and take photos.

Don't forget to wear comfortable clothes and bring sunscreen. Enjoy your lunch, dunk your favorite social worker or foster parent and get a chance to know others involved in foster care, in our area.

See the attached flyer for all the details.

Issue 91 May 20, 2011

2011 MPFA Board Members

Executive Board

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



Marin County Health and Human Services Children and Family Services, College of Marin Foster and Kinship Care Education Program, and the Marin Foster Parent Association invite you to a

Foster Parent -Social Worker Meet and Greet

The 2nd Annual Carol McKenna Award will be presented to a selected foster parent and a social worker!

Date: Tuesday, May 24, 2011

Time: 4:00-5:30 pm

Questions: Call Linda Gregory at 415-479-8702

Where: *Health and Wellness
Campus
3240 Kerner Blvd. #109
San Rafael, CA 94901*

*Finger food and
beverages will be
provided!*

*Children welcome. There
will be an art table set up
for the children during the
event.*



The Marin Foster Parent Association in collaboration with the Department of Health and Human Services Children and Family Services invites you to our:

9th Annual Foster Family



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