

Caregiver Connection

May 2009

A monthly publication for Washington state foster and adoptive families and relative caregivers



National Foster Care Month

CHANGE
A LIFETIME

Dear Foster Parents and Kinship Caregivers,

May is National Foster Care month. Each May, Children's Administration salutes the compassionate people who make a difference by serving as foster parents, kinship caregivers, mentors, advocates, social workers, medical professionals, educators, and volunteers.

Children and youth in foster care require safe, stable, and nurturing environments until they can safely reunite with their parents or establish other permanent lifelong family relationships. Thanks to these unsung heroes, many formerly abused or neglected children and teens will either safely reunite with their parents, be cared for by kin, or be adopted by loving families.

Like all young people, youth in foster care need enduring, positive relationships with caring adults. Permanent connections do not come from just the child's foster parent, kinship caregiver or social worker; these important connections come from many different people in our communities. With guidance and support from nurturing adults, children and youth in foster care are capable of overcoming the effects of previous abuse and neglect or family disruption.

Children's Administration would like to thank each and every one of you who dedicate yourselves in some way to ensure children in care have a safe, nurturing and successful journey into adulthood.

"As You Light the Path for Others, So Is Your Path Lit"

– Author Unknown

1624 Statewide Regional Foster Parent Representatives

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LEFT TO RIGHT: Haley, Samantha (seated on floor), Austin, Allyson, Larry and Janie Reynolds, little Jaxon, Bryan and Alicia



Photo by Michael Luque

TELL US YOUR FAMILY STORY

The feature families you are meeting are your neighbors and community members. Just like you, they are making a difference in the lives of children throughout Washington State. If you are a foster parent, guardian or relative caregiver and would like to share your story, please contact Dinah Martin 360-902-0740 or email madi300@dshs.wa.gov.

Meet the Reynolds Family

Meet the Reynolds Family Janie and Larry Reynolds are the proud parents to Bryan, Allyson (birth children), Haley, Samantha (adopted daughters), and Austin (recently legally free and to soon be adopted by the Reynolds). The Reynolds are also celebrating their role as first time grandparents with the arrival of little Jaxon.

Before becoming foster/adoptive parents the Reynolds family was an average two-parent household with two children, and two pets living in the sleepy town of Puyallup. Janie was a Para educator in the Puyallup School District and Larry has been employed with Camping World for 25 years.

Little more than two and half years ago the family decided to become business owners and with the help of their birth children, the Reynolds family opened Ports of Coffee Company.

Before becoming foster and adoptive parents the Reynolds' birth son, Bryan had experienced his own personal struggles that challenged the family. The Reynolds family and their community circled the wagons to support Bryan...the outcome for Bryan and the Reynolds family was very positive

After facing their own personal challenges, the Reynolds family decided they wanted to give back to their community. They began researching all options of volunteering that would fit their family. What they found was the need for

homes for "harder to place" older youth in the foster care system.

They had also read an article about adoption fairs, one specific story that touched hearts and opened their home was about a young man who missed his ride with a social worker to the adoption fair. The young man was so desperate find a "forever family" and to feel valued, he rode his bike to the adoption fair.

They began the licensing process in 2001 and Samantha was placed into their home in 2003. Since 2003, the Reynolds' have adopted Samantha, Haley, and will be adopting Austin soon. The Reynolds' state that "there are great rewards from feeling exhausted at the end of a day when they see the fruits of their labor." They get a sense of purpose by being part of breaking the cycle of abuse and neglect for high risk youth.

The Reynolds' are grateful for the support and training they have received from Children's Administration and the community of Puyallup. They believe the support and training they have received has provided them with the necessary skills to care for their children and make a difference in their lives.

The Reynolds family recognized how overcoming their own challenges could help benefit other children in care.

You can too.

Educational empowerment workshops for foster and relative caregivers

Treehouse educational advocates are experts who work with schools, social workers, foster families, and students to resolve difficult issues and remove barriers to foster kids' school success. Treehouse believes all children deserve a childhood and a future.

In 2009, we are holding trainings for foster, relative, adoptive and birth parents to advocate for their children's educational needs. The Educational Advocacy Peer Training project will hold community-based workshops throughout Washington State.

Why is this knowledge so important?

- Infants and young children are the fastest growing population in need of foster care.
- Children and youth in out-of-home care are 2-3 times more likely than are other students to have disabilities that affect their ability to learn.
- More than 60% of children in foster care drop out of school before graduation, which is more than twice the dropout rate for all students.

The workshops are designed to help parents and caregivers to:

- Understand their critical role as Education Advocates for their children.
- Gain knowledge of key educational rights and laws.
- Increase their ability to access resources and programs for their children.
- Learn practical techniques that support children's learning.

Treehouse offers three workshop options. Each workshop focuses on a specific age group; early childhood (birth through 5), school age (6-12) and youth and young adults (12-21). All participants will take home comprehensive resource materials. Workshops are provided at no cost.

Workshops are currently being scheduled. If you are interested in holding a workshop at your agency, support group, or other organization, please contact:

REGION 1: Renee Siers, siers2u@comcast.net

REGION 2: Cindy Hofer, coppei@yahoo.com

REGION 3: Shala Crow, fosterhearts@hotmail.com

REGION 4: Lisa Taylor, traveldiva36@yahoo.com

REGION 5: Charys Bailey, charhys.bailey@gmail.com

REGION 6: Jeanmarie Moore, jeanmariemoore@hotmail.com

TREEHOUSE: Deborah Duitch, deborahd@treehouse.org or 206-498-3910

RESOURCES

Accessing therapeutic services

You may use the child's client service card to purchase counseling from a Medicaid provider or you may use the counseling services of a provider of your choosing when such services have been pre-authorized by your adoption support program manager. Your primary insurance must be applied to first.

After you have selected a therapist call or write the adoption support program manager to ask for a pre-authorization for services form. The program manager will advise you of the adoption support rates and mail the form to you. Complete section I of the form and send it to your therapist. The therapist is required to send the form to the adoption support program manager with a treatment plan. The adoption support program manager will then send a copy back to you indicating that the service has been approved. Three sessions are pre approved to allow your child and you to get acquainted with the therapist and allow the therapist

to assess your child's needs and develop a treatment plan. The treatment plan shall be focused on addressing the child's needs, behaviors, and interaction with his or her family. Marital or individual therapy for you or other children in the family is not covered.

Therapeutic services will only be authorized for one therapist at a time unless a provider is required for a different service. For example: a child may be seeing a therapist for weekly therapeutic sessions and also seeing a psychiatrist once a month for medication management.

Regional Contacts

Region 1 – Spokane

- Jan Lammers* 509-363-3383
- Pam Copeland* 509-363-3379

Region 2 – Yakima

- Steve Bergland* 509-225-6500
- Carol Cyr 509-225-6531
(Financial Specialist)

Region 3 – Monroe

- Steve Foster* 360-805-3032
- Linda Richardson* 360-805-3030

Region 4 – Bellevue

- Aaron Washington* 425-590-3072
- Jenne Norris 425-590-3069
(Social Worker)

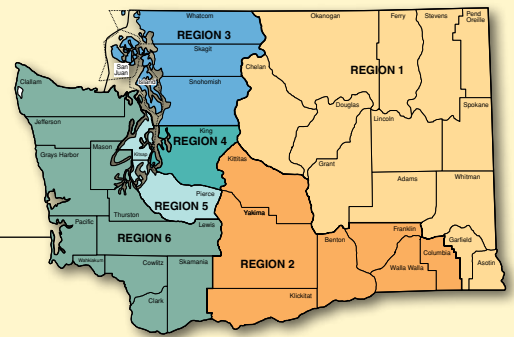
Region 5 – Tacoma

- Cindy Anderson* 253-983-6359
- Laura Davis* 253-983-6281

Region 6 – Tumwater

- Cheryl Barrett* 360-725-6758
- Kim Mower* 360-725-6778

* Adoption Support Consultants



Toll free number: 1-800-562-5682
(listen carefully to the recorded message)

Summer is almost here Washington State Parks camping!

Washington State Parks is gearing up for free camping in most Washington State Parks for foster parents and relative caregivers with a foster child currently in their care!

Foster parents and relative caregivers must still pay the reservation fees which are \$7.00 - \$9.00. The camping fees which range from \$20 - \$37.00 per night are waived for qualifying families.

When making your reservation, please identify yourself as a foster parent or relative caregiver to the state parks operator. You will need to show a photo ID upon arrival at the park.

Licensed foster parents:

- To be eligible for free camping, licensed foster parents must:
 - currently have a child placed in your care,
 - call 1-888-CAMPOUT or 1-888-226-7688 to make your reservation,
 - pay the reservation fee (\$7 - \$9),
 - provide a foster parent identification card or a foster home license,
 - provide a photo ID such as a driver's license at the entrance to the park.

Licensed foster parents can request a park identification card from your licensor.

Relative caregivers:

You may request a state park identification card by e-mailing Dinah Martin madi300@dshs.wa.gov Please include in your request:

- First and last name,
- Full address and phone number,
- Social worker's name and child's name.

To be eligible for free camping, relative caregivers must:

- currently have a child placed in your care,
- call 1-888-CAMPOUT or 1-888-226-7688 to make your reservation,
- pay the reservation fee (\$7 - \$9),
- provide a copy of your relative ID card,
- provide a photo ID such as a driver's license at the entrance to the park.



Washington State Parks Has Activities for Everyone

- Seventy-four places to launch your boat.
- More than 50 places to play in the winter snow.
- Twenty-one marine parks accessible only by water.
- Cabins, yurts and historic houses you can rent overnight.
- Ancient old-growth forests.
- Spectacular waterfalls.
- Unspoiled tidal marshes.
- Wide-open sagebrush desert.
- Winter recreation including cross-country skiing and snowmobiling.
- Clamming and crabbing at dozens of beaches.
- Swimming and boating at more than 30 lakeside or riverfront parks.
- Fishing on dozens of lakes and rivers.
- Rock-climbing on soaring sandstone spires.
- Windsurfing in the Columbia Gorge.
- Stargazing at Goldendale Observatory, far from city lights.
- Weird and fantastic geological formations.
- Prehistoric rock shelters and paintings.
- Pioneer homesteads, Victorian houses and fascinating old forts.

For more information about parks, visit www.parks.wa.gov or call the State Parks Information Center, 1-360-902-8844, between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. weekdays. To reserve a campsite at a reservation park, free campsite program participants need to call 1-888-CAMPOUT or 1-888-226-7688, between 7 a.m. and 8 p.m. daily.

Important numbers to know when you take care of children in out-of-home care

Foster Parent and Caregiver Crisis and Support Line: 1-800-301-1868

ON-GOING AND CRISIS SUPPORTS FOR FOSTER PARENTS

Under contracts with the state, three private agencies are working to build supports for you within the foster care community. Supports include hubs, support groups, and matching new foster parents with veteran foster parents. To get connected:

- If you live in Eastern Washington, the Olympic Peninsula down through Pacific County or from Thurston County to Clark County, call 1-888-794-1794.
- If you live in King County, call 206-605-0664 and in any county from Snohomish County north, call 360-510-7601 or 360-863-6530.
- If you live in Pierce or Kitsap counties, call 253-473-9252.
- If you live in King County, the Friends of Youth CARE program provides short-term counseling, education and support to help you care for your most difficult children. 1-888-263-3457.

Family Help Line: 1-800-932-HOPE or www.parenttrust.org. The Family Help Line is a free, statewide training and referral line for the families of Washington state. Last year, the Family Help Line received more than 5,000 calls and requests for information. Calls can last up to 90 minutes and parents can call as often as needed.

Support for foster parents under investigation for allegations of abuse or neglect: Foster Parent Investigation Retention Support Team (FIRST) 253-219-6782. Monday through Saturday, 8:00 a.m. – 8:00 p.m., or leave a message and receive a return call within 24 hours.

Foster Parent and Caregiver Crisis and Support Line: 1-800-301-1868

Mental Health Crisis Line Information: The crisis line telephone number for your county or region is available on the DSHS Mental Health Division website at: <http://www.dshs.wa.gov/mentalhealth/crisis.shtml>.

GENERAL FOSTER PARENT INFORMATION FOR THE STATE OF WASHINGTON

FPAWS: Foster Parent Association of Washington State, 1-800-391-CARE (2273) or www.fpaws.org. FPAWS is seeking new members and supporting foster parents in many ways, including referrals to local associations.

Kitsap and Pierce County information about becoming a foster parent or to receive foster parent support: Foster Care Resource Network, 253-473-9252. Monday through Friday, 9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. or leave a message and receive a return call by the next business day.

RESOURCE INFORMATION AVAILABLE STATEWIDE

Get connected to information on resources in your area by calling 211 – a toll free number.

Children's Administration Foster Parent Website:

<http://www.dshs.wa.gov/ca/fosterparents/>

Children's Administration Foster Parent Training Website – Trainings are open to all licensed foster parents, licensed relative caregivers and unlicensed caregivers. For information about foster parent and caregiver training, check out:

<http://www.dshs.wa.gov/ca/fosterparents/training.asp>

CHILDREN'S ADMINISTRATION FOSTER CARE LISTSERV

Join the 400 people who have subscribed to the List Serve <http://listserv.wa.gov/cgi-bin/wa?SUBED1=fosterparents&&A=1> for updated information on resources for the work you do in caring for children.

Family Planning Services are designed to help avoid unwanted or mistimed pregnancy and are available through your local Community Service Office (CSO). Each CSO has a full time Family Planning Nurse to help provide services to Medicaid eligible clients. There is also a Family Planning hotline number 1-800-770-4334.

More summer fun with the YMCA

2009 YMCA summer day programs and camps

The YMCA has something for everyone!

Hiking, swimming, archery, climbing, biking, adventure, discovery, and fun are waiting for your child this summer at the YMCA. For more information please contact your local YMCA for summer day camps and weeklong camps.

The YMCA strives to make all programs accessible for everyone, regardless of financial constraints. For information on financial assistance or about registering your child for contact the YMCA in your area today.

Enroll now to reserve a spot for the summer!



Opportunities

The Early Learning Community

The Early Learning Community is a free resource for families, educators and professionals to connect and discuss early learning. It is sponsored by the Foundation for Early Learning, and is a place to ask questions, share ideas and to support the learning of children birth through age five.

Please visit today!

<http://www.earlylearningcommunity.org/>

