2017: A Big Year in the Legislature for Foster Parents and Youth

The 2017 Legislature made some big changes that will affect foster parents, youth in care, kinship providers, social workers and others in the state child welfare system.

The biggest change was the creation of the new Department of Children Youth and Families (DCYF). The new department will be composed of Children’s Administration (CA), the Department of Early Learning (DEL) and Juvenile Rehabilitation Services (JRS).

“This is a lot of opportunity for us” to move forward on issues that have been discussed for a number of years by those advocating for reform of child welfare, said DEL Director Ross Hunter, who will head the new department.

The merger of the three agencies will be complete by July 2019.

The new bill is part of what State Rep. Ruth Kagi, D-Lake Forest Park, labeled “reinventing foster care.” She and others presented a package of bills to accomplish that goal. (See a partial list in this newsletter). The package was aided in large part by stories done by three journalistic organizations, InvestigateWest, a non-profit journalism organization in conjunction with Crosscut and KCTS-TV. Kagi said. People voiced their concerns at a Town Hall hosted by the three in late in 2016.

“We heard from a lot of people who really wanted to support foster care, but didn’t know how to help,” Kagi said.

The legislative session tackled issues that have been advocated for over the years – from short term respite care for foster parents, to financial help for relative caregivers, and money to provide driver’s education, as well as increases in adoption support and more.

“It really was amazing,” Kagi said.

“I have tons of hope right now,” said Mike Canfield, Executive Director of the Foster Parents Association of Washington State (FPAWS). “We’re looking forward to implementation. People are moving in the right direction.”
Advocacy by young people and others played an important role in pushing the legislation forward, said Liz Trautman, Director of Public Policy and Advocacy for Seattle-based Mockingbird Society, which focuses on youth in care and youth homelessness. Mockingbird youth lobbied the Legislature.

“There is a really good group of people who are organized and care about the system,” Trautman said. She noted that Kagi’s leadership was key: “Her leadership on foster care cannot be overstated.”

Kagi said that a “kids’ caucus has formed within the legislature, which primarily consists of lawmakers who have been in foster care or have been foster parents. They brought the kind of passion to the issues that come from those who have experienced the system personally.

“Now for the hard part,” Trautman said of putting the laws into action.

The new department holds the most promise for refocusing the work, Hunter told the Children’s Administration Foster Parent Consultation Team at its July meeting.

“The goal is to get ahead of the problem,” he said of the new department’s plans to emphasize prevention. For instance, he cited the need to put into action all the research done on brain science in recent years. By merging agencies that often overlap services among the people they serve, the new department can help insure those people get the help they need. He also said that as a member of the governor’s cabinet, he will be able to bring “all the child welfare stuff to the table,” in a way that is not now possible, since CA is only one part of the Department of Social and Health Services.

Jennifer Strus, assistant secretary of CA, said Kagi’s leadership on the issue was “the catalyst” for the new department being created. External and internal forces created an environment where this bill and others could pass.

“There was just this momentum” Strus said. “It just sort of coalesced.”

The biggest issue identified by foster parents as a source of friction over the years has been the culture of Children’s Administration, which many foster parents say translates into a lack of support and respect for what they do for the children in their care.

Both Kagi and Hunter identified it as an issue that needs to be addressed. The bill creating the new department gives a voice to “stakeholders,” including foster parents and youth directly affected by the system.

“You can’t change culture, but you can change behavior,” Hunter said.

More resources for both groups – provided in the budget and in other legislation – should help, he said.

Strus said, “I think the culture between when I came in and now is a lot different. But people are frustrated that it is still not enough. But it’s difficult to do, even for me, to get through the bureaucratic morass.”

Still, she said, little things can matter. “This is a relational business – and how hard can it be to say ‘thank you’? It takes just a few seconds and it gets you a month’s worth of goodwill.” Though the mood of those who worked on the bill was one of satisfaction, all agreed the new department and the other changes are not quick fixes.

Said Canfield: I think we’re looking at 10 to 15 years for major changes to take hold,” he said.

Strus echoed that sentiment: “I worry about people’s expectations” for immediate change.”

In the months ahead, the Caregiver Connection will highlight work on the new department and on other individual pieces of legislation from the 2017 session.

For more on how the new department will work, go to: youtu.be/UsnmpdkuSVg8
Changes Coming to Foster Care

Among bills passed by the 2017 Legislature that affect foster care are:

- Formation of the new Department of Children, Youth and Family Services that is part of the Governor’s Cabinet by creating a stand-alone agency made up of the current Department of Social and Health Services Children’s Administration, Department of Early Learning, and Juvenile Rehabilitation Services.
- Provisions for short-term respite for foster parents.
- A $500,000 sum to reimburse foster parents for the cost of driver’s education for foster youth and for the increased insurance costs they have when a teenage driver is added to their policy.
- Requirements for school districts to allow partial credits from one school to be added to classes in a new school district when foster children are moved.
- A pilot project in Grant and Lewis counties to test the effects of providing legal counsel to foster youth.
- A provision for case aides to foster parents.
- An expedited relicensing process for foster parents who have left foster care within five years. The relicensing will take no longer than 40 days instead of months, which is the case for newly licensed parents.
- Increased adoption support for some adoptive parents.
- A large budget increase for hiring more social workers and increasing their pay.
- For relative-caregivers, elimination of “means testing,” which means the caregivers’ income will no longer be included when determining how much a child in their care will receive in Temporary Assistance For Needy Families (TANF) money.

In coming months, the Caregiver Connection will highlight the work on the new department and on individual pieces of legislation.

Is your community having an event for caregivers and/or foster children? Consider inviting CC the Panda!

To see if CC is available, contact AHCC Liaison, Julie Lowery, at Julie.M.Lowery@coordinatedcarehealth.com

CC the Panda is Coordinated Care’s mascot who comes with staff to help share and promote health and wellness information with children and caregivers. CC doesn’t talk. So there is a handler who travels with the panda to help navigate crowds, interact with children and families and answer questions at events. Kids of all ages love CC! CC loves to pose for pictures, get and give hugs. Often CC is involved in games at events.

CC also has some favorite books called Healthy Adventure Books. They help kids ages 12 and under learn about getting healthy and being kind. Here is where to find CC’s favorite books: www.coordinatedcarehealth.com/members/medicaid/resources/healthy-kids-club/free-books.html
A young camper bounds out of the car that brought him to Camp To Belong Washington (CTB).

Spying his sister from whom he has been separated because they are in different foster homes, he rushes toward her and they hug, jumping up and down as they anticipate spending the next few days together.

This family reunion and many more among campers mark the mission and passion of the camp: rebuilding bonds for brothers and sisters separated by foster, relative or adoptive care.

Camper Seth Miller, 14, has been coming to camp for four years to spend time with his brothers Logan and Christopher. For him, camp has become a family.

“In the car, coming to camp, I’m really anxious – not in a bad way – I’m just really excited to be there,” he said. “I wait all year for this.”

The feeling of family reunion actually begins the Friday before campers arrive. Counselors – many of who have been coming for years – receive three days of intensive training and prepare for the fun and challenges ahead.

Like the campers, counselors were excited to see each other again, embracing, catching up on their lives and welcoming new counselors to the CTB family.

They come, many say, because they have witnessed siblings play, laugh, squabble and encourage each other in ways large and small all week long and find it rewarding.

They come because they have seen lives change for the better.

“We are the good part of foster care,” camp Co-director Deb Kennedy tells the counselors about camp. “We are the bright light.”

Deb co-founded the camp with co-director April VanGesen and now-retired Children’s Administration Program Manager Bob Partlow in 2009. Camp is supported by CA and by money and donations throughout the year from individuals and groups.

The camp reinforces important concepts for campers, all of whom have faced many challenges. “You are stronger and tougher and bolder than foster care,” April told the campers. She added: “I am the mom of six. But every year, I feel like I am the mom of 100 more.”

About 100 campers attend each year, and since the Washington branch of CTB was founded in 2009, almost 1,000 campers have become part of the CTB “family.”

Deb and April are real-life examples of the camp’s “family” foundation.

Among the 10 other Camp To Belong camps held around the country each summer, they are unique in having adopted three sibling groups. Between them, they have 14 children.

And they both laugh that camp has become “the family business.” April’s husband Jon VanGesen, a Kitsap County sheriff’s lieutenant, is the camp’s safety officer. Her older children, Sheridan and Ian VanGesen, are counselors, as is Ian’s wife Makayla. Deb’s daughter Shannen has been camp photographer during the nine years camp has been at Miracle Ranch in Port Orchard.

Counselor Guillermo Mendoza put the feeling of family this way during an evening campfire, when he told the gathering: “We are your brothers and sisters. And that’s what you are to me, my brothers and sisters.”

One camper said, “Thank you for letting us be here and learn things, like how my 11-year-old sister is braver than I am. She went all the way up the rope swing, and swung high in the air, George-Of-The-Jungle-style.”

Of such moments is Camp To Belong made:

• A camper enthusiastically showing off the yellow band on his wrist, signifying he had passed the test to swim in the deeper part of the Horseshoe Lake swimming area – after three tries and with everyone on the dock cheering him on as he succeeded.

• A camper trying repeatedly to hit the archery target with his bow and arrow – finally smacking it dead-center.

• One camper, close to tears, talking about “coming together with a group of people who have been where she has been,” saying, “You don’t have to explain foster care to them. Everybody knows.”

• Counselor “Big John” Tilly swimming around the lake with several squirming, squealing kids trailing behind him like a train on the “seahorse express.”

Continues on next page
Tough Goodbyes: Saturday at Camp to Belong Washington

By Bob Partlow—Counselor, Camp To Belong Washington

Anyone who wants to witness the strength of the bonds between brothers and sisters should be at Camp To Belong Washington during the last day of camp on Saturday.

For 5 ½ days, siblings separated by foster, relative or adoptive care are happily reunited at Miracle Ranch on Horseshoe Lake in Port Orchard.

Laughter spreads across the camp as together, they take part in summer camp activities, swimming, boating, horseback riding and other familiar things.

But they also participate in activities specifically designed to help reconnect them and strengthen their bonds.

They choose birthday gifts for each other, exchanging them at an all-camp birthday party. They dress up for Formal Night, sitting together for an elegant meal. They raucously participate in rodeo games. They write messages of remembrance or love on quilts and pillows their siblings will take home. They work together to create memory books. They encourage each other to be hoisted on a rope harness and then swing high through the forest. They share their stories around the campfire.

It is an emotional, almost magical, week…and then comes Saturday morning.

The campers have to separate again, many not knowing when they will see their siblings again. On some occasions, the home where they have been living has been changed during the week; they will be leaving to go to yet another new home with people they’ve never met.

They exchange emotional hugs with their siblings, with friends made at camp – who, they’ve learned, share stories very similar to their own. They often hug counselors, people who have poured out their passion to make the week as safe and fun for them as possible. They sign each other’s memory books and sorrowfully say goodbye.

Tears flow like no other time during the week. The scene can be heartbreaking and gut-wrenching, as the kids leave with their caregivers.

If all of us who work, laugh and play with those young people could wave a magic wand, we would hasten the day when these kind of painful goodbyes were no longer necessary because every one of these kids would have a home where they could live together. We would all wish that we no longer needed a sibling reunification camp.

But until that glorious day arrives, all who are committed to this camp will keep it alive, keep reuniting, keep creating positive memories for these kids.

Camper Brad all dressed up for Formal Night at Camp To Belong Washington.

Counselor Joshua (Private) Ryan holds a tired young camper during Camp To Belong 2017.

Cam to Belong continued

These kids are like family to him, he says. During campfires over the years, he has shared the story of his young years, which is similar to theirs.

Another feature of the Washington camp is how kids who are campers often grow into counselors. “This camp means so much” said Chantal Grothen, a former camper who has been a counselor for six years.

Camp To Belong Founder Lynn Price, who started the first camp in 1995, goes by the camp name “Ripple” because of the ripple effect she has had on so many lives. She delivered this message to camp this year.

“You are part of a bigger family,” she said “It may have been my idea, but a lot of people came along beside.”

She also delivered a message of empowerment: “I want you to see yourselves as victors, not victims – not bitter, but better. Use your voice to let people know that you matter. You are all my heroes. Make the difference in the world I know you can.”
New Policy Information for Caregivers

New policies have been put into place that affect foster parents and relatives with state-dependent children.

Schooling policy
State policy requires all children in out-of-home care to attend public school unless they are court-approved for home schooling, private school or participation in an Alternative Learning Experience (ALE), a form of public education that provides instruction in an online, remote or site-based setting. The curriculum being used by the instructor must be developed, approved and monitored by the school district. Instruction is conducted 100 percent online in the child’s placement setting under all three alternatives.

Children placed under a Voluntary Placement Agreement only require CA approval, not court approval, for the three alternatives to public education.

The revised policy requires annual approval to be obtained by the caregiver for each child placed by CA in their home. Contact the child’s assigned caseworker when requesting that a child placed in your home be approved to participate in any of the above-mentioned settings to start the approval process.

If the request is for the 2017-2018 school year, caregivers should contact their caseworker immediately to allow enough time for the approval process.

Smoke detector policy
Smoke detectors are now required to be installed both inside and outside of all bedrooms in foster homes to comply with state-adopted building codes. Most structures, especially newer ones, already have them inside and outside bedrooms, said Krissy Wright, program manager for Children Administration’s Division of Licensed Resources.

New weighted blanket policy
Weighted blankets may only be used “upon the advice and training from a licensed health care professional for children over the age of three years who do not have mobility limitations” according to the new policy in the Washington Administrative Code (WAC). Weighted blankets are never to be used for children under age three.

The blankets have not been shown to have any positive effects and can create problems such as lack of mobility, Wright said.

Microwave Oven Policy
Microwave ovens may not be used to warm breast milk or formula. A microwave can distribute the heat unevenly, so a parent may test the milk and it feels warm but another part of the bottle may be very hot and could burn a baby’s mouth, Wright said.
Getting Ready to Go Back to School

By Tamarack Randall and Judy Yasutake—Treehouse program managers

(This article first printed in the August 2016 Caregiver Connection, used with the permission of Treehouse)

September is a time of new beginnings.
Changes in the season mean new classes, friends and routines.

For youth in foster care who have often been uprooted, changed home and school placements, and are already in a state of emotional upheaval, the excitement of starting a new year is all too often overshadowed by anxiety of the unknown. Youth in foster care count on those that know them best to help support and prepare them to start the school year strong.

Caregivers know more about a youth’s experiences and needs than anyone else, so it’s crucial to become involved in your student’s academic journey as early as possible.

Here are some tips to help you build the most successful learning environment possible for your youth throughout the year.

Help your student feel prepared:
Tour the school so she/he feels comfortable in a new environment. Have your youth meet key school staff and the principal. Talk about the rules and expectations of your student’s school. Discuss issues that may arise or questions they may receive from classmates and how to respond.

Require proper attendance:
Make sure your student gets to school (and on time!) each day. When unavoidable absences come up, make sure to call the attendance hotline and follow up on missed school work and activities with your student’s teacher. Poor attendance can have a negative, rippling effect on academic performance, so getting them there is extremely important.

Monitor homework and assignments:
Try to set a regular homework routine for your student, with set expectations for when work needs to be completed. Missing assignments can negatively impact a youth’s grades, so keeping youth accountable for turning in work is especially important.

Advocate for the resources your student needs to succeed:
Talk to your student’s teachers about special needs accommodations, English as a Second Language (ESL), Individualized Education Plan (IEP), and/or tutoring programs. Learn more about how to best advocate for those needs by taking one of our online educational advocacy trainings today!

Talk about educational goals:
Empower your student to be a part of his/her own educational process. Support your youth through highs, lows and plateaus in learning. Be realistic with your expectations of both your youth and their teachers.

Build relationships:
Communicating regularly with your student’s teacher and school staff will help you understand what is being taught in the classroom, as well as give you an opportunity to make the teacher aware of your student’s specific needs. If your youth is working with a Treehouse Education Specialist, keep in contact with them throughout the year and inform them of any changes or challenges facing your student’s educational progress.

Spend time at school:
The best way to know what is going on at your student’s school is to spend time there. Research shows that caregivers attending school events can make a significant difference in student success. We wish you and your family a great 2016-2017 school year!

For more information, go to www.treehouseforkids.org/or speak with your child’s social worker
Foster Parent Consultation Team Celebrates 10th Anniversary

October will mark the 10th anniversary of the Children’s Administration Foster Parent Consultation Team, informally known as the “1624 Committee,” after the number of the House bill that created it in 2007.

The law required Children’s Administration management to meet with foster parent representatives to discuss and hopefully resolve issues between caregivers and the child welfare system.

The statewide committee consists of 14 foster parent representatives and top leaders of CA. Usually, the assistant secretary of the Department of Social and Health Services – the top person in CA management – attends.

The committee has worked largely without public notice, but it can be and has been a great way for foster parents to bring their concerns to people within the system who can do something about them. Issues crop up all the time, including those posted on the Facebook pages overseen by the recruitment and retention contractors.

The law also established regional consultation committees, and individuals can often make their concerns known there. If individual issues are broader than just one region, they can be brought to the statewide committee.

“We’ve discussed a lot and gotten a lot of issues resolved over the years,” said Mike Canfield, executive director of the Foster Parents Association of Washington State, who is a member of the statewide committee.

A list of the foster-parent members of the team and their contact information is included toward the end of the Caregiver Connection.

Below are the meeting dates and places for regional team meetings. Foster parents are encouraged to use this consultation process to bring their concerns to the attention of decision-makers and policy makers.

2017 regional 1624 meetings

All meetings are at DSHS Children’s Administration offices unless otherwise specified

**Region 1 North**  Questions: Contact David Needham: needhDA@dshs.wa.gov  (509) 363-3559

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Location</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>August 15</td>
<td>CA office, Spokane 1313 N. Atlantic St., Suite 2000</td>
<td>Call-in number: (641) 715-3580 PIN: 608-862</td>
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<tr>
<td>1 p.m.-3 p.m. 1624 meeting</td>
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| Nov. 14    | CA office, Spokane 1313 N. Atlantic St., Suite 2000 | Call-in number: (641) 715-3580 PIN: 608-862 |
| 1 p.m.-3 p.m. 1624 meeting |  | |

**Region 1 South**  Questions: Contact Denise Hannon: hannoDE@dshs.wa.gov  509-496-4182

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<th>Date</th>
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<td>Sept. 11</td>
<td>DSHS building, Yakima 1002 N. 16th Ave., 2nd floor conference room</td>
<td>Conference call number: 712-775-7031 Meeting ID number: 301-747-890</td>
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<tr>
<td>10 a.m.-noon</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Richland CA Office, 1661 Fowler St. Columbia Conference Room  A</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Toppenish CA Office, 4 East 3rd Ave.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Ellensburg CA Office, 100 E. Jackson St., 2nd conference room (Check-in on 3rd floor, DCFS Suite 301.)</td>
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# 2017 regional 1624 meetings continued

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| Dec. 4   | Yakima DSHS building 1002 N. 16th Ave., 2nd floor – conference room 5 | Conference call number: 712-775-7031  
Meeting ID number: 301-747-890  
- Richland CA office, 1661 Fowler St.  
Columbia Conference Room A  
- Toppenish CA Office, 4 E. 3rd Ave.  
- Ellensburg CA Office, 100 E. Jackson St., 2nd conference room (Check-in on 3rd floor, DCFS Suite 301.) |

## Region 2 North  
**Questions:** Contact Jean Hopper: Hoppeje@dshs.wa.gov 360-631-8134

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<th>Date</th>
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| Sept. 8  | Location TBD                      | Phone: 515-604-9849  
PIN: 764796# |
| Dec. 8   | Location TBD                      | Phone: 515-604-9849  
PIN: 764796# |

## Region 2 South  
**Questions:** Contact Joyce Thomas: ThomaJA@dshs.wa.gov 206-639-6205

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<tr>
<td>Sept. 8</td>
<td>CA’s Martin Luther King, Jr Office 3600 S. Graham Street, Seattle</td>
<td>Not available</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dec. 8</td>
<td>CA’s Martin Luther King Jr. Office 3600 S. Graham Street, Seattle</td>
<td>Not available</td>
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## Region 3 North  
**Questions:** Lynn Robinson, RobinLM@dshs.wa.gov 253-753-8384

*1624 meetings and Recruitment Development & Support (RDS) meetings are held the same day in the Tacoma Office.*

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<th>Date</th>
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| Sept. 12 | CA’s Tacoma office 1949 S. State St., Room 390 Tacoma, WA 98405 | Phone: 712-775-7031  
PIN: 982-043-425# |
| Dec. 12  | CA’s Tacoma office 1949 S. State St., Room 390 Tacoma, WA 98405 | Phone: 712-775-7031  
PIN: 982-043-425# |

## Region 3 South  
**Questions:** Peggy Devoy DevoyPR@dshs.wa.gov 360-852-5209

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<th>Date</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Satellite locations and call-in information</th>
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| Sept. 5  | CA’s Vancouver office, 907 Harney St | Kelso, Centralia, Aberdeen, Tumwater, Port Angeles  
Phone: 712-775-7464  
PIN 258052# |
| Dec. 5   | CA’s Tumwater Office, 6860 Capitol Blvd SE | Kelso, Centralia, Aberdeen, Tumwater, Port Angeles  
Phone: 712-775-7464  
PIN 258052# |
Care coordination is provided to children in out-of-home placement to:

- Assure that gaps in health care services are identified and met.
- Ensure that referrals and specialty care continue for a child regardless of changes in placement and worker assignments.
- Assist caseworkers and caregivers to manage the complex nature of Medicaid and health care systems.

There are two ways that care coordination services are provided to children in out-of-home care:

1. **Most** children in out-of-home care are enrolled in Apple Health Core Connections (AHCC: www.coordinatedcarehealth.com/members/foster-care.html). Care coordination is a benefit of the health program designed specifically for children in out-of-home placement.

2. Children who are not enrolled in AHCC are in fee-for-service Apple Health (Medicaid). These children receive their care coordination from the Fostering Well-Being Unit (FWB: www.dshs.wa.gov/sites/default/files/SESA/publications/documents/22-1512.pdf). While most children in out-of-home placement are enrolled in AHCC, FWB continues to serve some children and youth* in out-of-home placement to age 18 and occasionally to age 21 with appropriate consents.

* Fee-for-service children/youth are primarily Native American, undocumented, or in the Medically Intensive Children’s Program.

Caseworkers and caregivers may not decline care coordination when contacted by either AHCC or FWB. Care coordination is part of the child’s case plan and is key to ensuring the health and safety of the children and youth we serve.

If you have questions regarding care coordination, call:

**AHCC:** 1-844-354-9876  
**FWB:** 1-800-422-3263, ext. 5-2626

The Apple Health Care Coordination Program is run under a contract with Coordinated Care.

That organization will provide information through the Caregiver Connection to inform caregivers about medical issues. (See their information provided below).

Learn more about Coordinated Care’s program for foster care by linking to this video: [youtu.be/5ANln64GFOQ](https://youtu.be/5ANln64GFOQ)
A Key Back-to-School Task: Immunizations

Did you know that because of childhood immunizations, diseases like polio are almost gone in the United States? And now is a great time to make sure kids have the immunizations they need, before heading back to school.

All youth in the AHCC program are covered for no-cost well-child check-ups annually or as often as needed, for example when a child changes placement. Youth playing school sports can also use well-child check-ups. Simply ask the doctor to do a well-child/EPSDT.

EPSDT stands for “Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnostic and Treatment (EPSDT).” These visits provide preventive healthcare services for children under age 21 who are enrolled in Medicaid. EPSDT is key to ensuring that children and youth receive proper preventive dental, mental health, and developmental and specialty services.

Crucial Information about Food Thickeners Used for Infants with Dysphagia

By Lily Koblenz, M.D., Regional Medical Consultant, Region 3 South

Some infants have a difficult time feeding early in life because their mouth and throat are not adequately developed and they are unable to manipulate liquids. “Dysphagia” is the medical term for this type of feeding problem.

Some signs that an infant may be experiencing dysphagia include coughing or choking while feeding, noisy or wet breathing during and after feedings, color changes (turning blue) while feeding, cessation of breathing, increased breathing rate and repeated, unexplained respiratory illness.

Traditionally, formula was thickened with infant cereal or other pureed baby foods. However, over the last 10-15 years, commercial thickeners such as: Simply Thick, Thick-It, Gel-Mix, Hydra-Aid, Carobel, and others have been increasingly used for infants. These commercial thickeners are made of gums and/or starches. In 2011, the federal Food and Drug Administration (FDA) became aware of an association between the use of commercial thickeners in infants and the development of a life-threatening intestinal condition called Necrotizing Enterocolitis (NEC).

Commercial thickeners may cause a health problem

In 2012, the FDA and the American Academy of Pediatrics warned against the use of Simply Thick for infants less than 12 months of age because there is concern that other gum-based thickeners may also increase the risk of Necrotizing Enterocolitis.

Medicaid (Washington Apple Health) no longer covers commercial thickeners for children under one year of age.

A foster parent may not consent to the use of commercial thickener for a foster infant in their care and may not independently purchase or feed the thickener.

Instead, foster parents need to work with the child’s medical provider, nutritionist and feeding therapist to come up with a plan for using foods to thicken formula. Typically, infant rice cereal, oat cereal, potato flakes or pureed fruits can be used.

Treating dysphagia in infants

There are multiple strategies that should be used to treat dysphagia in infants. Working closely with a feeding therapist and a nutritionist is crucial. Due to the possible life-threatening Necrotizing Enterocolitis associated with commercial thickeners, health care providers are advising against their use in children under one year of age.
Children Share Their Experiences in Annual Voices of Children Contest

What does it mean to a child who can’t live with their parents to know he or she is safe, loved and has a place to belong? Some answers to this question are offered in the winning entries submitted to the Kinship Voices of Children Contest. The contest was initiated by the Statewide Kinship Oversight Coalition and is now coordinated by Family Education and Support Services in collaboration with Aging and Long Term Support Administration/DSHS, Lewis-Mason-Thurston Area Agency on Aging, and by Kinship Navigators and advocates across Washington. The annual event is sponsored by TwinStar Credit Union in collaboration with the Great Wolf Lodge.

In addition to being honored at a ceremony at the Washington Governor’s Mansion in May, each winner received $100 and their family received a free night at Great Wolf Lodge.

Two winners were selected in each of three age groups. Half the winning entries were displayed in last month’s Caregiver Connection. The other three are displayed here, exactly as submitted.

**Hi am here to tell you about why I love living here with my grandma and grandpa and how it has made a positive difference in my life. When I’m feeling sad and I want to give up they come and help me. When I get mad they don’t get mad and don’t hurt me. They are the best grandma and grandpa I could ever have. Even though I make mistakes sometimes, they still think I am the best star; and this is why I love them. They are nice to me and they are kind. They got me a new back pack because I tore my old one. Even though I get angry and hurt them they never hurt me and be mean to me. I love my grandma and grandpa!**

Thomas, 10, Port Townsend

**When I was eleven up until thirteen, I would have to protect my sisters. I didn’t have time to hang out with friends because I was scared of what would happen when I’m not home, although, it didn’t always when I was there, it just made me feel better knowing I can protect them. My parents were either gone or in their room with their friends doing drugs. There was a time when someone fired a gun out and the ambulance had to come. After making sure my sisters were safe, I went to my parents room and saw them doing whatever they could to save his life. Living with my aunt and uncle was love and teach us right from wrong is amazing. They have created a stable life style for my sisters and I, and have persuaded me to participate in sports, which I have qualified for State. However, even though we say it’s great we still miss our mom and hope one day she will realize when she grow up on. I am very thankful for my aunt and uncle who took us away from the drug abuse we had been living with.**

Brittany, 15, Cashmere

**I Love you because you protect me!**

Casey, 7, Roy
A Summer Carnival – In Your Backyard!

By Deanna Partlow

A homemade outdoor carnival is an entertaining way to banish the summer blahs, and if your kids are old enough, they can take a big role in the planning as well as the good times. One of the best things about a homemade carnival is that it takes some planning and preparation, so the excitement builds. If your children are a certain age, the preparatory work can be as much fun as the actual event. You can keep the carnival as simple as you want or make it very elaborate, depending on your time. Here’s the plan:

First, talk with your kids about their school or church carnivals and some of the games they most enjoy taking part in. Make a list, then try to duplicate a few of the best games for your family carnival. Some easy ideas include these:

Ping Pong Ball Toss. Using an indelible marker, mark plastic cups with a score. Fill cups with water and place on a flat surface. From a starting line a few feet away, kids toss a pre-set number of ping pong balls into the cups to see who can get the highest score.

Water-bottle bowling. Fill 10 disposable plastic water bottles with colored water (just for fun) and set them up in the traditional bowling pattern on a flat surface. Use an old softball for the bowling ball, then have each child bowl a certain number of frames to determine a winner.

Fishing. The kids can cut and decorate some fish and sea creatures from construction paper. On the back, mark a number or the name of a prize and also glue a magnet on the back of each fish. Make a pole from a dowel or a stick and a length of string, then tie a large metal paper clip at the string’s end. If you have a wading pool, it’ll make an ideal fishing hole. If not, the top of an outdoor table will work. Kids go “fishing,” then get a prize corresponding to the fish they catch.

A lot of regular indoor games can adapt to your outdoor carnival – the Twister game, a matching game or Bingo, for instance. Depending on the number of kids you have or who are being invited, you could add some relays, such as an M&M relay (directions below), races or other games to the mix. Add a photo booth with a variety of silly dress-up items and props, if you want.

Next, figure out a time and day for the big event and decide on a guest list if you’re inviting others. Have the kids make homemade invitations. Plan some easy refreshments – lemonade and cookies or something similar.

Once the carnival activities have been decided, work with your kids to decide the supplies needed for each game. If your kids are old enough, each one can be in charge of their own carnival booth. Think about decorations – something as simple as balloons and crepe-paper streamers make a festive atmosphere.

Of course, prizes are a must for carnival games. If your children are planning their own booths, help them figure out how many prizes they’ll need to cover the number of guests, then give them each a few dollars for a shopping expedition at the local dollar store or thrift shop. Alternatively, they could also make their prizes, such as crafted items or baked goodies.

On carnival day, decorate, set up each game or booth in the yard, get the refreshments ready and set out a boom box or speaker for some lively background music. During the carnival, make sure each child wins a good share of the prizes. Consolation prizes and ribbons are an important part of keeping the day fun. Have fun and take lots of pictures for memory books!

M&M Relay Race. Divide kids into teams of three or four. At the starting line, fill a bowl with m&ms – one bowl for each team. Give the first child in each team a spoon, then explain how the game works. When the starters says “Go,” the first child in the team fills his spoon with M&Ms and walks/runs to a mark on the other side of the lawn, keeping as many candies on his/her spoon as possible. It’s against the rules to pick up a candy that drops from the spoon. At a line at the other end, the child places his/her remaining candies in an empty bowl, then runs back to the team and hands off the spoon to his/her next teammate. The teammate fills the spoon and repeats the process, and so on, until each teammate has added M&Ms to the bowl. The winning team is the one with the most M&Ms in their bowl. If you’re short on kids, make teams of two and have them take two turns running with the M&Ms.
### CA Foster Parent Consultation Team (1624)
**Foster Parent Regional Representatives 2017 - 2018**

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<th>Name</th>
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*Please do not distribute outside of the 1624 Team.*
Caregiver Training from the Alliance

Explore our wide variety of caregiver training options designed to increase understanding and strengthen skills. These upcoming in-person classroom sessions provide in-depth information on relevant topics for the caregiver community at convenient locations across the state.

Trainings offered in Region 1: Eastern Washington

**August**
- Caregiving for Children with Physically Aggressive Behavior Concerns
- Caregiving for Children with Sexual Behavior Concerns
- DLR/CPS Allegations: An Overview of the Investigation Process for Caregivers
- Emotion Coaching
- Introduction to Adoption from Foster Care
- Introduction to Positive Discipline
- Why Children Lie

**September**
- As They Grow: The Drug Impacted Child
- Caring for Children Who Have Experienced Trauma
- DLR/CPS Allegations: An Overview of the Investigative Process
- Identifying and Supporting Commercially Sexually Exploited Children (for Caregivers)
- Introduction to Positive Discipline
- Parenting the Positive Discipline Way
- Resilience Trumps Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACES)
- So You Have a New Placement…Now What?
- Youth Missing from Care (for Caregivers)
Caregiver Training from the Alliance continued

Trainings offered in Region 2:
I-5 corridor north of Seattle to Whatcom County

**August**

- DLR/CPS: An Overview of the Investigation Process for Caregivers
- Emotion Coaching
- Kinship 101: Information for Relatives and Suitable Others

**September**

- Parenting the Positive Discipline Way
- Introduction to Adoption from Foster Care
- Introduction to the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) for Caregivers
- So You Have a New Placement…Now What?
- Why Children Lie
- Introduction to ICWA for Caregivers
## Trainings in Region 3: Olympic Peninsula and I-5 corridor south of Seattle, (including Tacoma)

### August
- DLR/CPS: An Overview of the Investigation Process for Caregivers
- Emotion Coaching
- Kinship 101: Information for Relatives and Suitable Others
- Introduction to Adoption from Foster Care for Caregivers
- So You Have a New Placement…Now What?
- Why Children Lie

### September
- African American Hair and Skin Care
- As They Grow: The Drug Impacted Child
- Caring for Children Who Have Experienced Trauma
- Cultural Diversity for Foster Parents and Caregivers: Being Culturally Responsive to Our Children and Youth of Color
- How You Can Become An Effective Educational Advocate for Your Child (The Family Guide to Working With Schools)
- Infant Safety and Care (for Caregivers)
- Introduction to Adoption from Foster Care
- Kinship 101: Information for Relatives and Suitable Others
- Minimizing the Risks of Allegations
- Paper Trail: Documentation Training for Caregivers
- Parenting the Positive Discipline Way
- So You Have a New Placement…Now What?
- Verbal De-escalation
- Why Children Lie
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Your Registration Help Desk
Registration Help .... 866-577-1915  help@acwe.on.spiceworks.com

Join us on Social Media for inspiration, tips, trainings, the latest events and to be part of a caregiver community

Caregiver Training from the Alliance
Explore our wide variety of caregiver training options designed to increase understanding and strengthen skills.
These upcoming in-person classroom sessions provide in-depth information on relevant topics for the caregiver community at convenient locations across the state.

Trainings offered in Region 1: Eastern Washington

• Caregivers Report to the Court (Coaching Session)
• Caregiver Teaming for Visitation (Coaching Session)
• Youth Missing From Care
• Cultural Diversity for Foster Parents and Caregivers: Being Culturally Responsive to Our Children and Youth of Color
• Caring for Children Who Have Experienced Trauma: A Workshop for Resource Parents from the National Child Traumatic Stress Network
• Introduction to Adoption from Foster Care
• So You Have a New Placement, Now What?
• Talking with Children About Race
• Verbal De-Escalation
• Infant Safety and Care
• Compassionate Parenting
• Emotion Coaching
• How You Can Become an Effective Educational Advocate for Your Child (The Family Guide to Working with Schools)
• Introduction to the Indian Child Welfare Act
• African American Hair and Skin Care
Meet Our Recruitment Partners Who Support You

Children’s Administration (CA) works in partnership with two separate agencies to provide foster parent recruitment and retention/support services to prospective foster parents, current foster parents and relative caregivers in all areas of Washington. Our goals are to:

- Increase the numbers of safe, quality foster families to meet the diverse needs of children and youth placed in out-of-home care in Washington State, and
- Offer support to foster parents and relative caregivers

Prospective foster parents are welcome to license through either CA's Division of Licensed Resources (DLR), or any private child placing agency licensed in Washington. Our recruitment partners serve all families, regardless of where they choose to become licensed. Prospective foster parents are welcome to license through either CA’s Division of Licensed Resources (DLR), or any private child placing agency licensed in Washington. Our recruitment partners serve all families, regardless of where they choose to become licensed.

The Liaisons or RPMs provide information, help and guidance for you from your first inquiry, through training, and throughout the licensing process to become foster parents. Liaisons and RPMs both answer questions and share helpful information during your foster care journey. They offer:

- Support at your first placement,
- Support groups, (some with training hours available and some provide a meal and / or child care)
- Mentoring,
- Training, and
- On-line Facebook groups

All supports are designed with our caregivers in mind.

Olive Crest’s Fostering Together program supports the west side of the state (Regions 2 and 3) through foster care Liaisons.

Eastern Washington University’s Fostering Washington program supports (Region 1) the east side of the state through Resource Peer Mentors (RPMs),

We want to help you connect with other caregivers, obtain additional training, and find answers to questions. Both Olive Crest and Eastern Washington University offer information and referral services to foster parents and relative caregivers. The regional liaisons or peer mentors also help resolve issues foster parents may experience in their local area. Contact the liaison or RPM listed for your area with any questions you might have.
## Eastern Washington University's Fostering Washington Liaisons Region 1:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>First Name</th>
<th>EWU Email</th>
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### Eastern Washington University's Fostering Washington Liaisons Region 1:

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<td>Position Title</td>
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<tr>
<td>Schlegel</td>
<td>Rebekah</td>
<td><a href="mailto:rschlegel@ewu.edu">rschlegel@ewu.edu</a></td>
<td>RPM</td>
<td>White Salmon</td>
<td>Klickitat</td>
<td>(509)551-7204</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slowe</td>
<td>Barb</td>
<td><a href="mailto:bslowe@ewu.edu">bslowe@ewu.edu</a></td>
<td>RPM</td>
<td>Yakima</td>
<td>Yakima</td>
<td>203-908-2779.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Torres</td>
<td>Yereida</td>
<td><a href="mailto:ytorres6@ewu.edu">ytorres6@ewu.edu</a></td>
<td>RPM</td>
<td>Pasco</td>
<td>Franklin, Benton</td>
<td>(509)851-0815</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wilkens</td>
<td>Rebecca</td>
<td><a href="mailto:rwilkens@ewu.edu">rwilkens@ewu.edu</a></td>
<td>RPM</td>
<td>Kennewick</td>
<td>Benton</td>
<td>(509)820-1090</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ferry, Pend Orielle, Spokane, Stevens</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sherman</td>
<td>Amber</td>
<td><a href="mailto:asherman4@ewu.edu">asherman4@ewu.edu</a></td>
<td>Recruitment Coordinator</td>
<td>Spokane</td>
<td>Region 1 North</td>
<td>(509) 359-0874</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burrer</td>
<td>April</td>
<td><a href="mailto:aburrer@ewu.edu">aburrer@ewu.edu</a></td>
<td>RPM</td>
<td>Spokane</td>
<td>Spokane</td>
<td>(509)216-5571</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cole</td>
<td>Kimberlie</td>
<td><a href="mailto:kcole15@ewu.edu">kcole15@ewu.edu</a></td>
<td>RPM</td>
<td>Spokane</td>
<td>Spokane</td>
<td>(509)290-6771</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conner</td>
<td>Stacey</td>
<td><a href="mailto:sconner7@ewu.edu">sconner7@ewu.edu</a></td>
<td>RPM</td>
<td>Spokane</td>
<td>Spokane</td>
<td>(509)288-0207</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flowers</td>
<td>Meaghan</td>
<td><a href="mailto:mflowers1@ewu.edu">mflowers1@ewu.edu</a></td>
<td>RPM</td>
<td>Spokane</td>
<td>Spokane, Lincoln</td>
<td>(509)991-9692</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harris</td>
<td>Ruth</td>
<td><a href="mailto:rharri28@ewu.edu">rharri28@ewu.edu</a></td>
<td>RPM</td>
<td>Colville</td>
<td>Ferry, Stevens, Pend Oreille</td>
<td>(509) 684-5449</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thompson</td>
<td>Karen</td>
<td><a href="mailto:kthomps9@ewu.edu">kthomps9@ewu.edu</a></td>
<td>RPM</td>
<td>Spokane</td>
<td>Spokane Valley</td>
<td>(509)230-4668</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adams, Chelan, Douglas, Grant, Okanogan</td>
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<tr>
<td>Stoebner</td>
<td>Hayley</td>
<td><a href="mailto:hstoebner@ewu.edu">hstoebner@ewu.edu</a></td>
<td>Recruitment Coordinator</td>
<td>Leavenworth</td>
<td>Region 1 North</td>
<td>(509)322-1191</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anders</td>
<td>Shana</td>
<td><a href="mailto:sanders@ewu.edu">sanders@ewu.edu</a></td>
<td>RPM</td>
<td>Wenatchee</td>
<td>Chelan &amp; Douglas</td>
<td>(206)250-5068</td>
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<tr>
<td>Holcomb</td>
<td>Rick</td>
<td><a href="mailto:rholcom1@ewu.edu">rholcom1@ewu.edu</a></td>
<td>RPM</td>
<td>Okanogan</td>
<td>Okanogan</td>
<td>(509)468-9564</td>
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<tr>
<td>MacNeil</td>
<td>Angela</td>
<td><a href="mailto:amacneil@ewu.edu">amacneil@ewu.edu</a></td>
<td>RPM</td>
<td>Ephrata</td>
<td>Grant</td>
<td>(509)750-8943</td>
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<tr>
<td>Morehead</td>
<td>LaDeana</td>
<td><a href="mailto:lmorehead@ewu.edu">lmorehead@ewu.edu</a></td>
<td>RPM</td>
<td>East Wenatchee</td>
<td>Chelan and Douglas</td>
<td>(509)670-7270</td>
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<tr>
<td>Redford</td>
<td>Kim</td>
<td><a href="mailto:kredford@ewu.edu">kredford@ewu.edu</a></td>
<td>RPM</td>
<td>Moses Lake</td>
<td>Adams, Grant</td>
<td>(509)750-0232</td>
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<tr>
<td>Robinson</td>
<td>Mary</td>
<td><a href="mailto:mrobinson6@ewu.edu">mrobinson6@ewu.edu</a></td>
<td>RPM</td>
<td>Cashmere</td>
<td>Chelan and Douglas</td>
<td>(509)393-3123</td>
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<tr>
<td>Williams</td>
<td>Vanessa</td>
<td><a href="mailto:vwilliams2@ewu.edu">vwilliams2@ewu.edu</a></td>
<td>RPM</td>
<td>Quincy</td>
<td>Grant</td>
<td>(509)398-7668</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wilson</td>
<td>Dani</td>
<td><a href="mailto:dwilson21@ewu.edu">dwilson21@ewu.edu</a></td>
<td>RPM</td>
<td>Moses Lake</td>
<td>Grant &amp; Adams</td>
<td>(509)398-1553</td>
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## Olive Crest’s Fostering Together Liaisons
### Western Washington Staff:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Phone</th>
<th>Email</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Shala Crow</td>
<td>Program Director</td>
<td>(360) 220-3785</td>
<td><a href="mailto:Shala-Crow@olivecrest.org">Shala-Crow@olivecrest.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leeann Marshel</td>
<td>Critical Support</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patrice Vansligtenhorst</td>
<td>Program Coordinator</td>
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<td><a href="mailto:Patrice-Vansligtenhorst@olivecrest.org">Patrice-Vansligtenhorst@olivecrest.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Megan Harp</td>
<td>FIRST Coordinator</td>
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<td><a href="mailto:Megan-Harp@olivecrest.org">Megan-Harp@olivecrest.org</a></td>
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### Region 2 Staff:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Position</th>
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<th>Email</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Shala Crow</td>
<td>Regional Coordinator</td>
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<td><a href="mailto:Shala-Crow@olivecrest.org">Shala-Crow@olivecrest.org</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Maria Sherry</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Larisa Koenig</td>
<td>Native American Outreach Liaison</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>CeCe Smith</td>
<td>African American Outreach Liaison</td>
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</tr>
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### Region 2 North Staff:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Position</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Christina Urtasun</td>
<td>Skagit, Island, San Juan and Whatcom Counties Liaison</td>
<td>(360) 720-0969</td>
<td><a href="mailto:Christina-Urtasun@olivecrest.org">Christina-Urtasun@olivecrest.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Megan Harp</td>
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<td><a href="mailto:Megan-Harp@olivecrest.org">Megan-Harp@olivecrest.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summer Buckles</td>
<td>Everett Liaison</td>
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<td><a href="mailto:Summer-Buckles@olivecrest.org">Summer-Buckles@olivecrest.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Danielle Martin</td>
<td>Lynnwood, Sky Valley Liaison</td>
<td>(864) 561-2349</td>
<td><a href="mailto:Danielle-martin@olivecrest.org">Danielle-martin@olivecrest.org</a></td>
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### Region 2 South Staff:

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<th>Name</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Angela Pitts-Long</td>
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<td>(425) 614-6176</td>
<td><a href="mailto:Angela-Pitts-Long@olivecrest.org">Angela-Pitts-Long@olivecrest.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carol Bishop</td>
<td>King South &amp; White Center Liaison</td>
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<td><a href="mailto:Carol-Bishop@olivecrest.org">Carol-Bishop@olivecrest.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maia Anderson</td>
<td>King West Liaison</td>
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<td><a href="mailto:Maia-Anderson@olivecrest.org">Maia-Anderson@olivecrest.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CeCe Smith</td>
<td>MLK Liaison</td>
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<td><a href="mailto:CeCe-Smith@olivecrest.org">CeCe-Smith@olivecrest.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ginger Finau</td>
<td>King South-West &amp; South-East</td>
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<td><a href="mailto:Ginger-Finau@olivecrest.org">Ginger-Finau@olivecrest.org</a></td>
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### Olive Crest’s Fostering Together Liaisons
#### Region 3 Staff:

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<th>Name</th>
<th>Role</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leeann Marshel</td>
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<td>(360) 909-0421</td>
<td><a href="mailto:Leeann-Marshel@olivecrest.org">Leeann-Marshel@olivecrest.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joann Elvin</td>
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<td><a href="mailto:Joann-Elvin@olivecrest.org">Joann-Elvin@olivecrest.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regina Hopkins</td>
<td>Native American Outreach Liaison</td>
<td>(253) 841-4530</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>CeCe Smith</td>
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#### Region 3 North Staff:

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<th>Name</th>
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<tr>
<td>Erika Thompson</td>
<td>Pierce County East Liaison</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jeanie Johns</td>
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#### Region 3 South Staff:

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<th>Name</th>
<th>Role</th>
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<th>Email</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Linda Cortani</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rachelle Ireton</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Niki Hatzenbuehler</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<tr>
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