

NOVEMBER 2016

# Caregiver Connection

A monthly resource for family caregivers, and foster and adoptive families in Washington state

## November: A Special Month to Create Forever Families



**“About 200-300 bears are sent for those events, and the kids really love them.”**

**Lorrie Thompson refers to National Adoption Day ceremonies**

National Adoption Day is November 19. In Washington, no specific day has been set aside to celebrate adoption finalizations, however events are scheduled throughout the month.

Check out events in your area through this link, administered by Washington’s Administrative Office of the Courts, which partners with Children’s Administration to recognize the day and the important ceremonies: [www.courts.wa.gov/newsinfo/adoptionDay/?fa=adoptionDay.home](http://www.courts.wa.gov/newsinfo/adoptionDay/?fa=adoptionDay.home)

Radio station WARM 106.9, another partner, collects teddy bears all year long and distributes them to police stations, hospitals and other locations where children might be in distress, said Lorrie Thompson, who is with the Office of Communication and Public Outreach.

They also distribute bears to local Children’s Administration offices for children adopted during National Adoption Day ceremonies. “About 200-300 bears are sent for those events, and the kids really love them,” Lorrie said.

Data on Washington’s foster care system shows 8,796 children were in foster care on September 15, 2016; of those children, 1,556 children were legally free. Many are now placed with their adoptive family waiting the finalization of their adoption. Yet many of these children continue to wait for an adoptive family - could that family be yours?

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Transforming lives

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# A Unique Adoption Journey: Allison, Brian, Luna, Rachel and Thatcher



Brian and Allison Vance with their children (l-r) Luna, Thatcher and Rachel

**“After your parents, your siblings are your most important support system. It was really important to keep them together.”**

**Allison Vance**

Adoptive families form in many different ways. Certainly the path to the five-member family headed by Brian and Allison Vance of Woodinville is quite unusual, traveling through three states and including the adoption of an embryo.

In 2005, Allison and Brian were living in Massachusetts, where Allison, who worked at a residential treatment center for boys, realized the importance of families to the boys. The boys’ situation made her think about becoming a foster parent.

“I realized I really wanted to be a foster parent.” Although Brian was more reluctant at first, she and Brian became foster parents, taking in about 10 children, include three drug-affected babies, during their first year.

“I had no idea how challenging they were,” she said.

Having moved back to Washington where she grew up, Allison became a “stay-at-home foster mom,” while Brian worked at his job for Google.

She and Brian had never considered adopting children out of foster care even though they had no children of their own. Then Luna came into their life. “We were just fostering, but we were open to adoption,” she said. So when the opportunity came, they adopted Luna. Luna’s biological mom also had another child, Rachel.

“We said ‘yes’ to having her sister.”

Allison gave a couple of major reasons for adopting Rachel.

“We realized we didn’t like a whole lot of turnover – kids coming in and out,” which is the kind of life that comes with being a foster parent.

They also realized the importance of the sibling bond, she said.

“The trauma these kids go through – how scary that is for them,” she said. “After your parents, your siblings are your most important support system. It was really important to keep them together. Otherwise, they miss out on the memories and moments of other families.”

Rachel and Luna have three other siblings, two in foster care and one who is adopted. Brian, Allison and the two girls have a relationship with the families of two of the other siblings.

When Brian and Allison moved back to New York for a two-year work assignment, they heard about the process of adopting an embryo. They learned of a couple in California who had some of their embryos frozen and began their own family. When they were done having children, a number of embryos remained.

“At that point, you can do one of three things: Destroy them, donate them for research or have them adopted,” Allison said. The family wanted them adopted.

“We decided to honor what they wanted.”

The implantation process, started in New York, also had some failed attempts, but Allison finally gave birth to one of the transferred embryos after they moved back to Washington.

When they were deciding to adopt an embryo, they decided they wanted a child who would fit with their mixed-race home, since Luna and Rachel are African-American and Brian and Allison are Caucasian. Their newest addition, Thatcher, is a bi-racial child.

The Vance family wanted an open adoption, as did the family in California, so the families stay in touch regularly.

They got hooked into the Mockingbird Society through a state social worker and were part of a constellation – a group of foster parents who work together to support each other and the youth in their care – in Kirkland.

Allison found the support they received from the constellation was important in helping them along their journey.

“I think fostering can be very intimidating,” Allison said. “It’s very isolating – it’s like being a foster kid. It’s nice to have a group of people who are going through the same thing. Our hub family was fantastic. It’s great having that support and community.”

## Commission to Recommend a New Agency for Children and Families

Ruth Kagi, Co-chair

### Blue Ribbon Commission on Children and Families



The Washington State Governor’s Blue Ribbon Commission on Children and Families will recommend the Legislature merge Children’s Administration with the State Department of Early Learning, says State Representative Ruth Kagi, the commission’s co-chair.

The legislative bill she is drafting would also consolidate into the new agency various programs scattered throughout state government and aimed at preventing child abuse and neglect, she said.

Children’s Administration is now part of the huge Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS). Under the proposed legislation, the new agency would be

broken out from DSHS and would become part of the Governor’s cabinet.

“We have made a decision to do this,” she said of the commission. “This would help both in terms of visibility for the issues of children and families and in accountability for what is happening to children.”

As one part of a large agency with many missions, the issues of children and families can get lost as legislators set program and budget priorities, she said.

“CA will definitely pull out of DSHS and become its own agency.”

The price tag for the proposal is still being calculated, she said. And any plan to bring in other child abuse and neglect prevention programs has to consider where those programs get their money and the possible difficulty of separating those programs from others that might be connected to them,” she said.

The Legislature would have to approve any plan, but she said she believes

support exists in the Legislature to take this step, which has been discussed for many years.

“I am very optimistic it will become law,” says Kagi, who had opposed past attempts to create a separate department, fearing it would disrupt the work of the agency.

Jennifer Strus, assistant secretary for Children’s Administration, said the proposal was one of three originally considered by the commission.

If the plan moves forward, she said, it must be done carefully.

“If it is done, it has to be done in a well thought out way,” she said.

With the “chronic underfunding of child welfare,” enough money must be found to make it work, she added.

“Improvements can’t be made without more money,” she said.

The commission will hold one more meeting before the Legislature meets in January.



# Mockingbird Society: Supporting Foster Parents and Foster Youth

A message of support and hope for youth in foster care and for those who care for them and about them was delivered to a packed crowd at Seattle's Westin Hotel in late September.

The message – primarily centered on the idea that one caring adult can make a difference in the life of a child – was delivered by Annie Blackledge, executive director of the Mockingbird Society and by youth who have benefited from the organization's programs.

Annie herself had a troubled childhood and was placed in the foster care system in New York. Unlike many other young people, she connected with one caring adult, a nun named Sister Peter, who believed in her and helped push her forward.

**“The one thing that separated me from (other youth) was her presence in my life,” Annie said. “She fostered resilience in me.”**

While so much recent research has focused on “Adverse Childhood Experiences” (which we refer to as “ACES”) and how to build resilience to overcome them, Annie said, Sister Peter “couldn't have possibly known those things then. She just loved me. She saw me for what I was, good and bad, and loved me anyway.”

For all youth, “that one significant adult is the central part around resilience,” she said.

Attending the event was Sabian Hart-Wall, 19, who came to live with his aunt, Karina Hart, in Olympia when his biological mom could not take care of him and his sister. Karina changed the entire trajectory of his life, he said.

“I went from living with an adult who was a friend to living with an adult who was a parent. Karina, he said, “tried harder than anyone I have ever seen to be a good parent,” even though she had no parenting experience when he and his sister arrived.

“I just love her so much,” said Sabian, who is now a Mockingbird chapter leader.

Mockingbird began around 2001 with two missions: To build a world-class foster care system and to end youth homelessness. Its founder, Jim Theofelis, retired in 2015 and Annie took the reins early this year.

Mockingbird's mission to help young people in care is built on three main pillars.

- Building “constellations” of foster families who work together to support each other and the youth in their care.
- Organizing and training youth across the state so they can become their own best advocates for improving the foster care system.
- Giving youth a chance to express their experiences through the Mockingbird Times, a newspaper written entirely by youth working with Mockingbird.

## Constellations

Think of a constellation like a wheel with a hub and spokes connected to the hub. There is a hub family in the center connected to six to 10 other foster families.

The hub family helps coordinate activities for hub members, and is a respite provider for others in the constellation. Last year, about 20,000 hours of respite care were provided

through the constellations, Annie said. Currently, there are 14 constellations statewide; nine in Pierce County and five in the areas from King County north. About 114 families are currently part of constellations and are caring for more than 230 children.

The constellation model has traveled overseas. About 20 constellations are active in the United Kingdom, Annie said, with plans to expand to other countries.

The constellations are paid for both with state money and fundraising, such as that done at the Seattle luncheon. Each hub family is paid about \$1,800 per month.

Because the families are tied together as a unit, the young people in their individual homes know the adults and youth in the other homes.

“It's like an extended family,” Annie said. “All families really do know the other kids.”

The training adults receive “pertains to the kids in their care,” she said.

Annie says the constellation model is a way to improve a child welfare system that has remained basically the same since the 1980s.

“We think this is less about the child welfare system and more about the welfare of children,” she said of the new way Mockingbird is helping caregivers and youth.

## Advocacy

Youth who become part of Mockingbird are organized into chapters around the state. They learn about issues and how to advocate for changes they want. Annie says the youth have been instrumental

in making changes to law and policy, including the new “Prudent Parenting Law” that makes lives of youth in care more normal.

An often-heard saying among youth who advocate for improvements is “nothing about us without us.”

Luncheon speaker Kim Hines, was honored by Mockingbird as its Advocate of the Year. She grew up in Bellingham and is now a Mockingbird chapter leader. Kim said, “We build relationships with people who actually know what I am going through ... We just don’t sit on the fence and complain. We learn from each other. Mockingbird is a place for new beginnings. When my peers become their own advocates, amazing things happen.”

Youth in the state’s six chapters meet monthly, and youth leaders across the state meet regularly to receive updates on issues and plan what actions to take next and what laws they want to promote. They hold an Advocacy Day each year in Olympia during the legislative session.

This legislative session, it will be on February 10.

But they also keep an eye on how laws that are passed are put into action. And they appear before the State Supreme Court Commission on Foster Care to talk about their issues and get feedback.

“We really do believe youth know their own situations across the state,” Annie said. “We create the space for them to have their voice – we provide the platform.”

### **Mockingbird Times**

Mockingbird Times, the organization’s newspaper, has been a staple of Mockingbird from the beginning of the organization’s existence.

Youth write and help produce the paper, which is read by 22,000 people monthly. Annie said that makes it the largest youth-produced publication of its kind in the country.

Part-time paid staff help the young people, who write stories, essays and poetry and create artwork. Seattle Times reporter Jonathan Martin also provides guidance to the young people.

Annie, who has worked within the system for Children’s Administration, the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction and the federal Department of Education, says she wants Mockingbird to help lead the way to making lives better for the youth in care and their caregivers.

“I love that so many of us aren’t walking away anymore,” she said. “Why can’t we do this work differently?”

For more information about Mockingbird: [www.mockingbirdsociety.org](http://www.mockingbirdsociety.org)



# Sabian and Karina: The Power of One Caring Adult



Karina Wall and her nephew Sabian Hart-Wall

**“Circumstances change. Love and caring never do.”**

**Karina Wall**

It was hard to do, but when 16-year-old Sabian Hart-Wall picked up the phone to call Child Protective Services, it turned out to be a call that changed his life – and that of an aunt he barely knew.

Sabian made that call fearing that his mother could no longer care for him and his younger sister. CPS investigated and removed both children, who went to live with a grandparent for a short time.

But when Children’s Administration searched for other relatives who might care for the children, they found Karina Wall, their maternal aunt.

Ironically, the call came to her as she was answering calls at a crisis clinic: “I got my own crisis call.”

She was present when Sabian was born, but was mostly in and out of his life. When she was asked to be the caregiver for two children, she faced the task with some trepidation, having no children of her own.

“I was thinking ‘this is overwhelming,’” said Karina, now 35. “I never identified myself as somebody who was good with kids,” she said. It was her then-partner who talked her into making the effort. But as it turned out, “I found out I am good working with kids.”

Sabian, now 19, said his life was completely turned around by living with Karina, now a licenser with Community Youth Services in Olympia. In a video produced for the Mockingbird fundraising luncheon in September, Sabian described the change this way: “I went from failing the majority of my classes to having a 3.3 GPA my junior year and 3.2 my senior year.” And he received a Governor’s Scholarship that will be there when he is ready to attend a college or university.

He described the power of having that one caring adult this way: “My aunt – I’ve never looked up to someone so much in my life and I’ve never been able to trust an adult as much as I trust her.”

The path was not always smooth, of course, even for someone whose job with Community Youth Services was as a therapeutic foster care case manager working with adolescents and advocating for them.

“Both kids had no social skills – more like anti-social skills,” Karina said. But she believed in them.

For Sabian, “believing in him was a big part of making him succeed,” she said. She provided the discipline and structure the kids need so much. While

Sabian could read, he didn’t want to do it, so she began a grade-based payment system that rewarded him with money for good grades; he paid her for less stellar academic performance.

“And I showed up for all their events, and praised them for their efforts more than their results.”

Sabian became involved in marketing and business, working with the DECCA program in high school. He gained the confidence to teach about sex education, consent and gender issues through Planned Parenthood.

And Karina listened to them. “Ask the kids. It’s amazing what kids tell you. And if what they want to do is reasonable, why not let them do it?”

“She has a very unique and very effective way of parenting,” Sabian said.

Sabian said he got hooked on the Mockingbird Society because the chapter meetings are held where Karina works. Now a chapter leader helping train other youth, he loves that he can talk to policy makers who listen to what he has to say.

He is living with his aunt under a special state program that is similar to adoption. He wants to work for a while before he continues his education.

One parenting style does not necessarily work for every child. Sabian's sister needed something different than Karina could offer and is now living in a group facility, where she is doing well, Karina said.

But Karina said her feelings for the kids that she never knew she could parent are now deeply rooted. She places a lot of value in giving kids the support they need, regardless of their backgrounds or life journeys.

"Circumstances change. Love and caring never do", she said.

To watch the video "One Caring Adult," go to <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6aan8Sjmiy8&feature=share>

1

A RESOURCE GUIDE FOR CAREGIVERS

## The Impact of Trauma and Ongoing Mental Health Screening

Provided by DSHS Children's Administration  
in partnership with Behavioral Health and  
Service Integration Administration  
and the University of Washington



## 2

### What is Trauma?

*Trauma is an emotional or physical reaction to an event that is witnessed or experienced by a child/youth that is scary, intense, and/or disturbing. Trauma can result from a variety of situations including, but not limited to:*

- Witnessing violence within the family or community
- Experiencing neglect or abandonment
- Being a victim of physical, emotional, or sexual abuse
- Natural disasters
- Loss of a loved one due to accident or violence

Sometimes when a child/youth is exposed to one or more traumatic experiences over the course of their lives, they develop reactions that interfere with their daily lives. Children/youth may think about or relive a frightening event from their past. Certain places, objects, sounds, smells, words, or people may act as trauma reminders or 'triggers'.

#### A child/youth may:

- Feel scared and less secure
- Experience depressive symptoms
- Appear anxious, sad, angry, frightened, or hyper vigilant
- Not want to participate in regular activities
- Experience behavioral changes such as difficulty sleeping
- Feel aches and pains with no other indications of illness or injury
- Exhibit rebellious or risky behaviors.

Children/youth can react to trauma differently depending on age, AND not every child who experiences trauma will develop symptoms. Factors such as a child's age, development level, and supportive resources can affect how a child experiences traumatic stress.



# 3

	Developmental Causes for Concern	What You Can Do to Be Supportive
<b>All Ages:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Problems sleeping</li> <li>• Night terrors</li> <li>• Physical complaints</li> <li>• Obsessive or Hyper Vigilant behavior</li> <li>• Exhibiting inappropriate sexual behavior</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintain usual routines for meals, sleep, play, school</li> <li>• Spend time together</li> <li>• Be a good listener</li> <li>• Be validating and reassuring</li> </ul>
<b>Ages:</b> <i>Birth to Toddlers</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regularly cries or hard to soothe</li> <li>• Overly fearful</li> <li>• Reliving trauma during play</li> <li>• Little or no reaction when familiar people enter or leave</li> <li>• Returns to an earlier developmental level</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide a predictable environment by maintaining routines</li> <li>• Reassure safety and belonging</li> <li>• Be consistent about expectations</li> <li>• Encourage them to play or talk about feelings and thoughts</li> </ul>
<b>Ages:</b> <i>Pre-School to School Age</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Behavior problems at school</li> <li>• Aggressive/hostile towards others</li> <li>• Fearful with familiar adults or too friendly with strangers</li> <li>• Returns to an earlier developmental level</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage them to play or talk about feelings and thoughts</li> <li>• Give simple and realistic answers to questions</li> <li>• Set gentle but firm limits for 'acting out behavior'</li> <li>• Decrease stimulating tv, movies, video games</li> </ul>
<b>Ages:</b> <i>Pre-Adolescent to Pre-Adulthood</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Feels hopeless</li> <li>• Withdrawn from friends and family</li> <li>• Violent or abusive behavior</li> <li>• Increased conflicts</li> <li>• Difficulty managing emotions in a healthy way</li> <li>• Use of alcohol or drugs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage them to discuss the trauma with a professional or someone they trust</li> <li>• Answer questions directly</li> <li>• Encourage participation in routine</li> <li>• Set clear limits</li> <li>• Address reckless behavior</li> </ul>

## 4

### What is the Ongoing Mental Health (OMH) Screening Program?

The OMH screening program has been implemented to support improved identification of mental health needs and access to appropriate and evidence-based mental health services for children/youth, ages 3-17, in out-of-home placement.

As part of the screening process, OMH screeners re-administer the three mental health screenings used in the CHET interview. These screens are completed over the phone at a convenient time for the caregiver and youth (as appropriate).

#### The screens include the:

- **Ages & Stages Questionnaire, Social Emotional (ASQ-SE)** for children ages 3 years to 66 months
- **Pediatric Symptom Checklist (PSC-17)** for children/youth ages 66 months to 17 years
- **Brief Assessment of Anxiety and PTSD (trauma tool)** for children/youth ages 7-17

Results of the screens will be shared with the caregiver, the youth (as appropriate) and the Social Service Specialist. The screens are re-administered every six (6) months. As of July 1, 2014, the OMH Screening team has begun re-screening children and youth who came into care as of January 1, 2014.

Berliner, L. (2013). Trauma, its impact and becoming a survivor 1-19.

Franks, Robert P. National Child Traumatic Stress Network. (n.d). Claiming Children, Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health, Special Issue on Trauma, Fall 2003. [http://www.nctsn.org/sites/default/files/assets/pdfs/FINAL\\_ffcmh\\_newsltr.pdf](http://www.nctsn.org/sites/default/files/assets/pdfs/FINAL_ffcmh_newsltr.pdf). 5-7

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#### If you have any questions about the OMH program please contact:

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[www.dshs.wa.gov/sites/default/files/CA/fos/documents/FindingEBPThx.pdf](http://www.dshs.wa.gov/sites/default/files/CA/fos/documents/FindingEBPThx.pdf)

# Help Put a Little Holiday Magic into the Lives of Kids in Care

The Holiday Magic Program, a collaboration between Treehouse and Washington State Children's Administration, helps ensure that every youth in foster care receives a meaningful gift during the holiday season.

Notices with all the details about the Holiday Magic Program are beginning to go out to state child welfare workers and will be sent out throughout October and into November. Caregivers should watch both their email and their mailbox for notice

about the children placed in their home to learn how to use the program. The caregiver or youth choose a gift from the Treehouse gift catalog, and Treehouse ships it directly to the youth's home.

**Q:** *How do you get a referral for Holiday Magic?*

**A:** Treehouse receives updated lists every other month from Children's Administration that contain the names of all youth in foster care and those entering care who are eligible for Holiday Magic. Treehouse then sends letters to all eligible youth and their caregivers.

**Q:** *What if I don't get a letter or email from Treehouse about Holiday Magic?*

**A:** If you feel you or a youth in your care is eligible, and you have not received a letter, contact your social worker to make sure the child in your home has been referred to the Holiday Magic Program.

**Q:** *Is the referral for Treehouse the same as Holiday Magic?*

**A:** No. Holiday Magic is a separate referral generated by each child's placement data.

**Q:** *What kinds of gifts are available?*

**A:** Gifts vary from year to year based upon availability. There are typically 40 different gifts available each year for various age groups. All gifts are brand new and are mailed directly to caregivers.

**Q:** *What if I receive a letter for a child no longer in my home?*

**A:** Please notify the social worker and return the letter to Treehouse promptly.

**Watch for more information to come!**

# Know Before You Say “No” to a Child’s Activities

To clarify common misunderstandings about what is allowed for youth in foster care, here are some often-asked questions and the answers caregivers need, provided by Children’s Administration.

(FYI: “To ‘know’ means knowing the policy, and it especially means knowing the child’s needs and maturity level. This document is intended to clarify existing myths relating to normal life activities for children and youth in care. The rule citations in this document are taken from the Washington Administrative Code title 388 or Children’s Administration Policy.)

**Myth:** *Children/youth in foster care may not spend the night with friends or in unlicensed settings.*

**Fact:** The caregiver may give permission for the child/youth to spend the night away from the caregiver’s home for up to 72 hours without approval from CA.

**Myth:** *Children/youth cannot travel with foster families out of their county or state.*

**Fact:** Children/youth may travel with caregivers within the United States for less than 72 hours without approval from CA. Travel to British Columbia (B.C.), territories of B.C. Rockies, Thompson/Okanogan and the Vancouver, B.C. coast and mountains are considered ‘border counties’ to Washington state and do not require out-of-country approval if the travel is less than 72 hours. All territories beyond are considered out-of-country travel and require CA approval.

**Myth:** *Children/youth in foster care (including group care) may not attend church or events on their own.*

**Fact:** The child/youth has the right to attend the church services, temple, mosque or synagogue of his or her choice. Caregivers must respect the religious backgrounds or preferences of the children under their care. Children and youth have the right not to practice the caregiver’s faith without consequences.

**Myth:** *Children/youth in care cannot have privacy.*

**Fact:** Children/youth in care have the right to privacy of personal mail and phone unless specified by a court order for the child’s safety or well-being.

**Myth:** *Children/youth cannot take personal belongings when they move.*

**Fact:** Children/youth must be permitted to take personal belongings they brought with them or acquired while in care with them when discharged (moved). If it is impossible for the child/youth to take their belongings at the time they leave, the caregiver is required to secure the child’s belongings for up to 30 days and cooperate with the child’s (state social) worker to transfer the belongings to the child/youth as soon as possible.

**Myth:** *Children/youth may not participate in extra-curricular activities.*

**Fact:** The caregiver may give approval for the child/youth to participate in routine activities without a licensed provider supervising the activity, such as clubs and social outings with classmates or friends. You do not need (state social) worker approval for your foster child’s participation in routine activities without a licensed provider supervising the activity, such as clubs and social outings with classmates or friends. You may approve normal childhood activities using a reasonable and prudent parenting standard. Overnight stays that are more than 72 hours long requires the state social worker’s approval. Any activities requiring travel must comply with WAC 388-148-1435. The Washington Administrative Code (WAC) can be accessed using this link:

[apps.leg.wa.gov/wac/](https://apps.leg.wa.gov/wac/)

**Myth:** *Caregivers can deny children/youth from having contact with parents and siblings as a form of discipline.*

**Fact:** Foster parents must support the permanent placement plan for the child, focusing first on the birth family reuniting, and then, on options leading to a permanent placement. Parent/child visits are the right of the family when visits are in the best interest of the child. Parent/child visits can only be limited or terminated when the child’s safety, health and welfare are compromised. The court must approve all changes to a visit plan if the child is dependent. Sibling contact is crucial for maintaining sibling relationships and supports their well-being while in care. The department cannot limit visits or contacts between siblings as a sanction for a child’s behavior or as an incentive to change a child’s behavior.

**Myth:** *Once placed in foster care, children/youth may lose contact with their support system making them feel alone and isolated.*

**Fact:** Caregivers must connect a child with resources that meets a child’s needs. Caregivers must be able to meet the child/youth’s basic needs regarding race, religion, culture, sexual orientation and gender identity. These include cultural, educational and spiritual activities. Caregivers must furnish children with a nurturing, respectful and supportive environment. Caregivers can also choose activities that are appropriate for foster children, but these activities must be appropriately supervised and may not interfere with visitation with the child’s parents.”

Many questions and answers above center on the Prudent Parenting Law passed by the State Legislature. If you would like more information about the specifics of the law, you can take an online training provided by the University of Washington’s Alliance for Child Welfare Excellence. Follow this link to learn about the training: [allianceforchildwelfare.org/prudent-parenting-elearning-0](https://allianceforchildwelfare.org/prudent-parenting-elearning-0)

## SAVE THE DATE: 2017's We are Family Day and the Caregivers Conference

The 9th annual "We Are Family Day," featuring a Seattle Mariners game against the Texas Rangers at Safeco Field, will be May 7 next year. Discounted tickets again will be available to caregivers and others who work in the child welfare area. We Are Family Day includes a fun-filled pre-game ceremony with lots of raffle baskets and resources for caregivers and their families.

Last year, we broke all historical records for the number attending this popular event! More details about the day will appear in the Caregiver Connection as the date nears. Watch the Connection for seat prices, event times and other information.

Also set aside May 5-7 for the annual Pacific Northwest Caregivers Conference at Great Wolf Lodge, near Olympia. Details will be posted on the Foster Parents Association of Washington State website ([www.fpaws.org](http://www.fpaws.org)) as the event grows nearer. Registration is necessary for this fun and educational conference.

## Reminder about Adoption Support Payments

Adoption Support's monthly maintenance payments should be received between the 25th and 31st of each month. You can access the Adoption Support payment calendar at [www.dshs.wa.gov](http://www.dshs.wa.gov). Once on the page, look for SSPS (Social Service Payment System), then for the Adoption Support repetitive payment calendar. If you have a missing or lost check, please contact the SSPS directly at 360-664-6161. The department can also assist with questions on direct deposit of your monthly assistance payments.

## New Adoptions Training

### Interested in adoption?

The Alliance for Child Welfare Excellence offers a new training called "Introduction to Adoptions from Foster Care."

A trainer with the Alliance and an adoption social worker co-train this three-hour in-person training, giving all the basics about adopting children out of foster care. The training helps families understand the differences between adopting from public

or private agencies as well as the differences between fostering to adopt or pursuing adoption-only licensure. The training also details the adoption process, who the waiting children are and how they become legally freed for adoption. This training is open to anyone interested, and does not require previous attendance of Caregiver Core Training.

For more information about the class, including when and where it is offered, click on this link to the Alliance's course catalog: <http://allianceforchildwelfare.org/node/12842/course-signup>

**Learn more at:**  
[independence.wa.gov/](http://independence.wa.gov/)

# Exercising Your Thankfulness

By Deanna Partlow

Preparing for Thanksgiving is a good time for sharing a craft project and talking about thankfulness and gratitude with children. Children may need help developing gratitude, since it takes learning and practice. I remember having to eat my cooked carrots because children in China were starving – you may laugh because you heard a similar story; I still do – at least until I think about all the children who are still starving. But it planted the idea in my head that I was very fortunate to have cooked carrots – and chocolate pudding, besides.

Because of the many benefits it provides, thankfulness seems like an important tool for children whose lives have been marked by trauma. Here are a few suggestions for weaving thankfulness into the day:

**Model gratitude to children in your care.** Tell them “thank you” when they do something you appreciate; talk to them when you observe a kind act someone didn’t need to perform; mention a beautiful fall tree and how much you appreciate the color it gives to a gray day or how much you appreciate the person who came to fix the shower.

**Talk to kids in your care about Thanksgiving and why we celebrate it.** Tell stories about your own ancestors and the hardships they faced and what they sacrificed to take care of their families. If you have children of other cultural backgrounds living with you, learn about their history, ask about their traditions and incorporate them into your celebrations. A visit to a history museum or a battlefield or any historic place, a trip to a fire station or a hospital, can usually lead to a discussion on the many good deeds and sacrifices people make to help other people, even people they’ve never met.

**Think about ways to demonstrate generosity** – something like “soup day,” share an inexpensive meal,



then give a gift of food to the food bank from the money you saved; make winter bird-feeders and hang them on a tree limb; or having the kids help you adopt a Christmas child. Doing these things says more than all the words you can string together about giving.

**Encourage acts of kindness**, random and otherwise. Start by pointing out an act of kindness you observed and talking about the concept, then ask them if they can think of something they could do for someone – a friend, neighbor, teacher, a pet – as an act of kindness, unprompted and unexpected. Talk about something you’re going to do, too.

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## A Wreath of Thanksgiving

**Supplies:** cardboard or foam board, cut into a 12-14” circle with a hole (like a donut); several sheets of construction paper in fall colors; markers or crayons for writing; scissors; glue; string, masking tape, a small spool of decorative ribbon.

### Directions

- After cutting your cardboard donut for the wreath backing, turn it over and tape about 12 inches of string on the back to form a hanger. Make sure it’s firmly attached, then lay it aside.
- Cut big leaves, maybe 3-4 inches long and wide, from construction paper, alternating their size, shape and color. Kids can either draw them freehand or trace around a leaf-shaped cookie-cutter or a real leaf. You can even use real leaves if you bring them in and dry them flat for a couple days.
- Arrange the leaves, overlapping them a bit, on the non-hanger side of the cardboard donut so that the writing on each leaf is visible, then glue them down.
- Have each person in the family write something he/she is most thankful for this year on the leaf. In most cases, each person gets to make two or even three leaves to fill out the wreath.
- Make a bow from the decorative ribbon and attach it to the top of the wreath, then hang the wreath in a place where everyone can enjoy it.
- If you want to, add glitter to the edges of the leaves, or embellish them in other ways. It’s your wreath.

# Meet Our Recruitment Partners Who Support You



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),

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

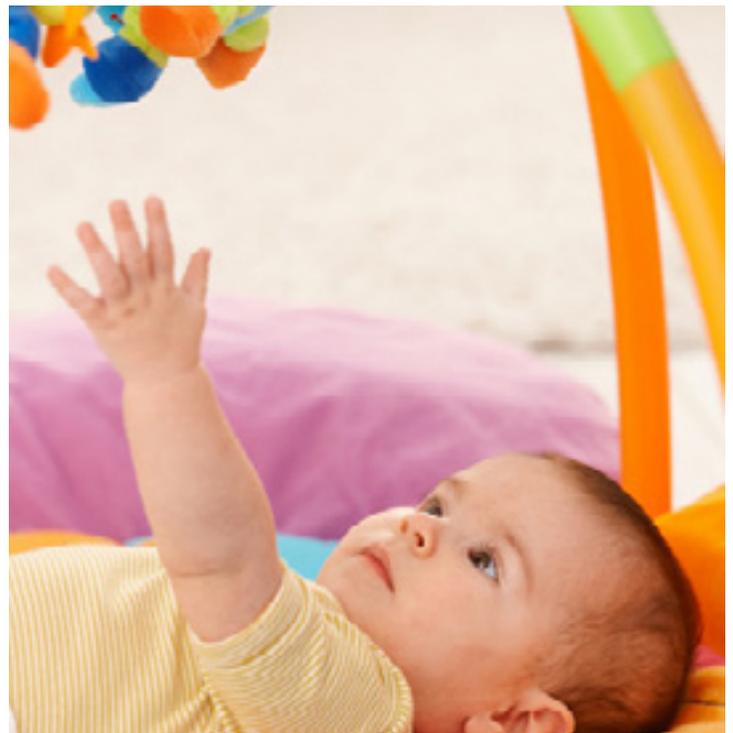
Prospective foster parents are welcome to license through either CA's Division of Licensed Resources (DLR), or any private child placing agency licensed in Washington. Our recruitment partners serve all families, regardless of where they choose to become licensed. Prospective foster parents are welcome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

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:

Last name	First Name	EWU Email	Position Title	City	County	Cellphone
Acosta	Mirna	<a href="mailto:amirna@ewu.edu">amirna@ewu.edu</a>	RPM	Yakima	Yakima	(509) 307-3628
Arellano	Cecelia	<a href="mailto:carellano@ewu.edu">carellano@ewu.edu</a>	RPM	Pateros	Okanogan	(509) 630-2602
Bilbruck	Lynsey	<a href="mailto:lbilbruck@ewu.edu">lbilbruck@ewu.edu</a>	RPM	Oroville	Okanogan	(509) 560-3423
Bludau	Melike	<a href="mailto:mbludau@ewu.edu">mbludau@ewu.edu</a>	RPM	Spokane	Spokane	(509) 714-7728
Budrow	Amy	<a href="mailto:abudrow@ewu.edu">abudrow@ewu.edu</a>	RPM	Twisp	Okanogan	(509) 846-5603
Burrer	April	<a href="mailto:aburrer@ewu.edu">aburrer@ewu.edu</a>	RPM	Spokane	Spokane	(509) 216-5571
Cammack	Heather	<a href="mailto:hcammack24@ewu.edu">hcammack24@ewu.edu</a>	RPM	Colfax	Whitman	(509) 288-0207
Conner	Stacey	<a href="mailto:sconner7@ewu.edu">sconner7@ewu.edu</a>	RPM	Spokane	Spokane	(509) 288-0207
Crossley	Cheryl	<a href="mailto:ccrossley1@ewu.edu">ccrossley1@ewu.edu</a>	RPM	Zillah	Yakima	(509) 985-7038
Farnsworth	Crystal	<a href="mailto:cfarnsworth1@ewu.edu">cfarnsworth1@ewu.edu</a>	RPM	CleElum	Kittitas	(509) 304-7000
Flowers	Meaghan	<a href="mailto:mflowers1@ewu.edu">mflowers1@ewu.edu</a>	RPM	Spokane	Spokane, Lincoln	(509) 991-9692
Fordham	Kim	<a href="mailto:kfordham@ewu.edu">kfordham@ewu.edu</a>	Director	Coeur d Alene	NA	208-659-7401
Gardee	Tamera	<a href="mailto:tgardee@ewu.edu">tgardee@ewu.edu</a>	RPM	Wapato	Yakima	(509)314-8354
Gilk	Teri	<a href="mailto:tgilk1@ewu.edu">tgilk1@ewu.edu</a>	RPM	Goldendale	Kittitas	(360)942-9001
Hancock	Windy	<a href="mailto:whancock2@ewu.edu">whancock2@ewu.edu</a>	RPM	Richland	Benton	(509)528-6392
Harris	Ruth	<a href="mailto:rharrri28@ewu.edu">rharrri28@ewu.edu</a>	RPM	Colville	Ferry, Stevens, Pend Oreille	(509) 684-5449
Holcomb	Rick	<a href="mailto:rholcom1@ewu.edu">rholcom1@ewu.edu</a>	RPM	All Regions	All Regions	(509)468-9564
Jones	Ken	<a href="mailto:kjones21@ewu.edu">kjones21@ewu.edu</a>	Fiscal Specialist	All regions	All regions	(509)359-6125
Lesley	Molly	<a href="mailto:mohallor@ewu.edu">mohallor@ewu.edu</a>	RPM	Spokane	Spokane	509-326-6250
MacNeil	Angela	<a href="mailto:amacneil@ewu.edu">amacneil@ewu.edu</a>	RPM	Ephrata	Grant	(509)750-8943
Morehead	LaDeana	<a href="mailto:lmorehead@ewu.edu">lmorehead@ewu.edu</a>	RPM	East Wenatchee	Chelan	(509)670-7270
Muse	Mon Ra'	<a href="mailto:mmuse@ewu.edu">mmuse@ewu.edu</a>	Asst. Director/ RPC	Spokane	Spokane	(509) 359-0791
Oldridge	Lynsey	<a href="mailto:loldridge@ewu.edu">loldridge@ewu.edu</a>	RPM	Walla Walla	Walla Walla	(509)240-017
Potter	Gail	<a href="mailto:gpotter@ewu.edu">gpotter@ewu.edu</a>	Program Asst.	Spokane	Spokane	(509)359-6130
Powers	Druska (Dru)	<a href="mailto:dpowers8@ewu.edu">dpowers8@ewu.edu</a>	RPM/FIRST Program	FIRST Program	R1 N & S	(509) 928-6697
Redford	Kim	<a href="mailto:kredford@ewu.edu">kredford@ewu.edu</a>	RPM	Moses Lake	Grant	(509)750-0232

# Eastern Washington University's Fostering Washington Liaisons Region 1:

Last name	First Name	EWU Email	Position Title	City	County	Cellphone
Robinson	Mary	<a href="mailto:mrobinson6@ewu.edu">mrobinson6@ewu.edu</a>	RPM	Cashmere	Chelan	(509) 393-3123
Rogers	Linda	<a href="mailto:lrogers13@ewu.edu">lrogers13@ewu.edu</a>	RPM	Spokane	Spokane	(509)389-7192
Sherman	Amber	<a href="mailto:asherman4@ewu.edu">asherman4@ewu.edu</a>	RC	Spokane	Spokane	(509) 359-0874
Simpson	Jessica	<a href="mailto:jsimpson4@ewu.edu">jsimpson4@ewu.edu</a>	RPM	Riverside	Okanogan	(928)201-6288
Slowe	Barb	<a href="mailto:bslowe@ewu.edu">bslowe@ewu.edu</a>	RPM		(509)833-6391	(509)230-4668
Stoebner	Hayley	<a href="mailto:hstoebner@ewu.edu">hstoebner@ewu.edu</a>	RC	Leavenworth	Adams, Chelan, Douglas, Grant, Okanogan	(509)322-1191
Thompson	Karen	<a href="mailto:kthomps9@ewu.edu">kthomps9@ewu.edu</a>	RPM	Spokane	Spokane Valley	(509)230-4668
Torres	Yereida	<a href="mailto:ytorres@ewu.edu">ytorres@ewu.edu</a>	RPM	Pasco	Franklin/Benton/ WallaWalla/ Columbia	(509)851-0815
Warwick	Ivy	<a href="mailto:iwarwick@ewu.edu">iwarwick@ewu.edu</a>	RPM	Clarkston	Asotin	(509)552-9927
Whitworth	Tyann	<a href="mailto:twhitworth@ewu.edu">twhitworth@ewu.edu</a>	RC	Yakima	Yakima, Kittitas, Klickitat	509-731-2060
Wilson	Danielle	<a href="mailto:dwilson21@ewu.edu">dwilson21@ewu.edu</a>	RPM	Moses Lake	Grant & Adams	(509)398-1553

## Olive Crest's Fostering Together Liaisons Region 2:



Last Name	First Name	Email	Counties	Phone
Crow	Shala	<a href="mailto:Shala-Crow@olivecrest.org">Shala-Crow@olivecrest.org</a> Program Director	Region 2	360-220-3785
Parra	Deena	<a href="mailto:Deena-Parra@olivecrest.org">Deena-Parra@olivecrest.org</a> Staff Support	Region 2	360-572-4271
McClure	Leilani	<a href="mailto:Leilani-McClure@olivecrest.org">Leilani-McClure@olivecrest.org</a>	NE King County	425-681-2094
Smith	CeCe	<a href="mailto:cece-smith@olivecrest.org">cece-smith@olivecrest.org</a>	South King County	509-201-7069
Anderson	Maia	<a href="mailto:Maia-anderson@olivecrest.org">Maia-anderson@olivecrest.org</a>	King West County, MLK, White Center	425-346-8336
Harp	Megan	<a href="mailto:Megan-Harp@olivecrest.org">Megan-Harp@olivecrest.org</a>	Smokey Point	425-350-3839
Buckles	Summer	<a href="mailto:Summer-Buckles@olivecrest.org">Summer-Buckles@olivecrest.org</a>	Everett, Sky Valley and Lynnwood	425-830-9400
Pitts-Long	Angela	<a href="mailto:Angela-Pitts-Long@olivecrest.org">Angela-Pitts-Long@olivecrest.org</a>	Central District	425-614-6176
Uratsun	Christina	<a href="mailto:Christina-Urtasun@olivecrest.org">Christina-Urtasun@olivecrest.org</a>	Island, San Juan, Skagit and Whatcom	360-720-0969

## Olive Crest's Fostering Together Liaisons Region 3:



Last Name	First Name	Email	Counties	Phone
Marshel	Leeann	<a href="mailto:Leeann-marshel@olivecrest.org">Leeann-marshel@olivecrest.org</a> Regional Director	Region 3 Coordinator	360-909-0421
Fowler	Michelle	<a href="mailto:Michelle-Fowler@olivecrest.org">Michelle-Fowler@olivecrest.org</a>	Support Assistant for Region 3	360-772-1955
Thompson	Erika	<a href="mailto:Erika-Thompson@olivecrest.org">Erika-Thompson@olivecrest.org</a>	Pierce	206-406-2398
Johns	Jeanie	<a href="mailto:Jeanie-Johns@olivecrest.org">Jeanie-Johns@olivecrest.org</a>	Kitsap	360-265-3398
Hatzenbuehler	Niki	<a href="mailto:Niki-Hatzenbuehler@olivecrest.org">Niki-Hatzenbuehler@olivecrest.org</a>	Mason and Thurston	253-219-3355
Cortani	Linda	<a href="mailto:Linda-Cortani@olivecrest.org">Linda-Cortani@olivecrest.org</a>	Jefferson and Clallam	360-640-0869
Mitchell	Tristan	<a href="mailto:Tristan-mitchell@olivecrest.org">Tristan-mitchell@olivecrest.org</a>	Grays Harbor & Pacific	360-581-3590
Moore	Jeanmarie	<a href="mailto:Jeanmarie-moore@olivecrest.org">Jeanmarie-moore@olivecrest.org</a>	Lewis, Cowlitz, Wahkiakum	360-442-9605
Glover	Kim	<a href="mailto:Kim-Glover@olivecrest.org">Kim-Glover@olivecrest.org</a>	Clark and Skamania	360-433-7150

## Trainers in Your Region

REGION	NAME	EMAIL	TELEPHONE
R1 Spokane & surrounding areas	Jan Hinkle-Rodriguez, Supervisor	<a href="mailto:janh5@uw.edu">janh5@uw.edu</a>	509-836-5499
	Vacant		
	Renee Siers, Trainer	<a href="mailto:siersr@uw.edu">siersr@uw.edu</a>	509-363-3399
	Kebbie Green, Registrar		1-866-577-1915
R1 Yakima, Tri-Cities, Ellensburg & surrounding areas	Jan Hinkle-Rodriguez, Supervisor	<a href="mailto:janh5@uw.edu">janh5@uw.edu</a>	509-836-5499
	Ryan Krueger, Trainer	<a href="mailto:krry300@uw.edu">krry300@uw.edu</a>	509-358-3096
	Patty Orona	<a href="mailto:po5@uw.edu">po5@uw.edu</a>	509-225-7927
	Eileen Angier, Registrar		1-866-577-1915
	Maria Amaya, Registrar – Spanish (Español)		1-866-577-1915
R2 Seattle Metro Area	Yolonda Marzest, Supervisor	<a href="mailto:ymarzest@uw.edu">ymarzest@uw.edu</a>	206-923-4955
	El-Freda Stephenson, Trainer	<a href="mailto:elfreda@uw.edu">elfreda@uw.edu</a>	206-923-4922
	Cara Mbaye, Trainer	<a href="mailto:mbayec@uw.edu">mbayec@uw.edu</a>	206-923-4914
	Janice Jackson, Registrar		1-866-577-1915
R2 Bellingham, Everett, Mount Vernon & surrounding areas	Yolonda Marzest, Supervisor	<a href="mailto:ymarzest@uw.edu">ymarzest@uw.edu</a>	206-923-4955
	Joan Sager, Trainer	<a href="mailto:sagerj2@uw.edu">sagerj2@uw.edu</a>	360-594-6744
R3 Tacoma, Bremerton, Puyallup & surrounding areas.	Arthur Fernandez-Scarberry, Supervisor	<a href="mailto:sart300@uw.edu">sart300@uw.edu</a>	206-276-4549
	Gracia Hahn, Trainer	<a href="mailto:hahng@uw.edu">hahng@uw.edu</a>	253-983-6362
	Luanne Hawley, Registrar		1-866-577-1915
R3 Tumwater, Olympia, Centralia, Long Beach, South Bend, & surrounding areas.	Penny Michel, Trainer	<a href="mailto:mpen300@uw.edu">mpen300@uw.edu</a>	360-725-6788
R3 Clallam County and Jefferson County	Robert Judd, Trainer	<a href="mailto:juddre@uw.edu">juddre@uw.edu</a>	360-344-3003
R3 Aberdeen, South Bend and Long Beach.	Stephanie Rodriguez, Trainer	<a href="mailto:steph75@uw.edu">steph75@uw.edu</a>	206-321-1721