

April 2016

# Foster/Adoptive Caregiver Connection

## Joy in the Morning!

Ask me when you see me—do I have a new story to share with you? The answer is “yes!” about 99% of the time. That’s because of each of you, and the mountains you have climbed, the walls you have knocked down, and your ability to encourage others to never give up—you make a difference for all the foster and adopted children and youth in our care and in our hearts. Like these families...

A young foster family recently received a teenage boy who is now looking forward to his future, beginning to see the importance of education, integrity, and his own worth and strengths. After less than 3 months, he is connecting with this family, adapting some of their traditions, and beginning to accept responsibility for his choices.

After an extended hospitalization, a young ward was released to her foster home—the foster parent immediately rearranged her schedule to assist with this transition back into the foster home which included 4 other members. And brought in the babysitter who is an important support for everyone, trying to promote the most positive return possible.

A couple who has successfully fostered many, many children and youth for decades are enjoying their time together with a young ward under the medically complex contract. They consider her the child they have been waiting for all this time.

We have several long-time foster caregivers who have raised small infants and children into adulthood, encouraging each one to discover his or her gifts, pursue education, and always “get back up after being knocked down”. To never quit, always try, always look up, always believe. Their stories into adulthood and beyond are filled with the “best” of the human spirit, along with the “worst” of individual suffering and despair.

For all these families—and for you, too, we know it is “relationship” that makes the difference. Living in family is the best way, if not the only way, to learn how to live in family. Relationship is powerful, and needs to be handled with care. For all the children and youth who were harmed in relationship by someone who should have been protecting them, we as foster and adoptive caregivers are here to provide a new, healthy experience of living in relationship that can heal, build, even excel. This kind of relationship can instill hope, repair broken hearts, and change the lense of life previously used by these amazing young folks, placing them onto a broadened horizon of expanded opportunities for their own journeys. This is our calling and privilege.

The **Updated Parenting Skills Training** by Brad Bryant and Michael Johnan, peopleplaces.org, is a powerful curriculum required of all our foster homes caring for children and youth under the specialized contract. It is also open to all of our foster homes. More information about the training is on page 4 of this newsletter. And “relationship”, presented in Session 2 of Updated Parenting Skills Training, is where healing and trust begins.

“Family is not an important thing, it's everything.”

— Michael J. Fox



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YOUTH & FAMILY  
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*Many thanks for all you do,  
every day, for the children  
and their families!*

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# The Calendar

## Foster/Adoptive Caregiver Connection

### Bloomington

**Birth Mother's Day Balloon Launch**—Saturday, May 7, 2 pm, at the Bloomington CYFS Office.

### Champaign

**Updated PST**, Friday, April 1, and ending Friday, May 27, from 10 am to noon at the Champaign CYFS Office. Harriet Kersh and Mallory Niemiec will co-train these sessions.

**Birth Mother's Day Balloon Launch**—Saturday, May 7 11 am, at the Champaign CYFS Office.

### Danville

**Sweets and Spirits with a Twist, Friday**, June 17, at the Harrison Park Clubhouse, from 7 to 10 pm. Tickets are \$15, and there will be live music, comedians, a 50/50 raffle, and a silent auction.

### Galesburg

**Aledo Fostering Connections**, Monday, April 4, at the Community Bible Fellowship Church, Aledo, IL, 6 to 8 pm. CYFS Licensing Worker Amanda Troyer will present on Licensing Investigations. No child care provided.

**Hair Care for African-American Children**, hosted by Monmouth College, Friday, April 15, 6 pm. Stockdale Center, 700 E. Broadway Street, Monmouth College, Monmouth.

**Volleyball Tournament Fundraiser**, Saturday, April 16, YMCA, Monmouth, IL.

**Canton Fostering Connections**, Tuesday, May 31, Covenant Community Church, 2075 N. Main St., (next to Walmart), topic to be determined later. 4:30 to 6:30 pm. No child care provided.

**Updated PST**, Monday, June 6, 13, 20, 27, July 11, 18, 25, August 1, 8, at the Galesburg CYFS Office, 5 to 8 pm. Carol Bennett-Barker will be the trainer. No child care provided. **Required** of all foster homes planning to care for children and youth under the specialized foster care contract. Call Amanda at 309.342.1136 to register.

**Macomb Fostering Connections**, Tuesday, June 21, 10:30 to 12:30 pm, Maple Ave. Christian Church. Child care is available.

**Foster Parent Appreciation Picnic**, Thursday, June 30, Monmouth Park in Monmouth, 5 to 7 pm. Dinner provided. Bring all the kids!

### LaSalle

**Birth Mother's Day Balloon Launch**—May 14, 11 am, at the LaSalle CYFS Office.

**Updated PST Training**, Wednesday, May 18, 25, June 1, 8, 15, 22, 29, July 6, 13, at the LaSalle CYFS Office. All sessions will be held from 6 to 9 pm. Call Brittany Shannon at 815.223.4007 to register or if you have any questions.



### Peoria

**Blues for a Cause**, Friday, April 8, 7 pm, Limelight Eventplex, Peoria. Featuring Selwyn Birchwood and Toronzo Cannon. More information, including how to purchase tickets, on our website, [www.cyfsolutions.org](http://www.cyfsolutions.org).

**Hands Around the Courthouse**, Friday, April 15, noon, at the Peoria County Courthouse Plaza.

**Parents Day Out—Stress Relief Workshop**, Saturday, April 16, at Encounter, 800 Springfield Rd., East Peoria, 9:15 am to noon. \*Doors open at 8:45 am. FREE—RSVP required by April 11. Contact Julie at [jherzog@tehc.net](mailto:jherzog@tehc.net) or 309.925.5511, ext. 266. Childcare is available IF requested when registering.

**Foster Caregiver Support Group**, Tuesday, April 19, 6 to 8 pm. ACRs and Court presented by CYFS Lead Caseworker, Shannon Doubet. Please call Carol Bennett-Barker at 309.323.6529 to register. No child care provided.

**Birth Mother's Day Balloon Launch**—Saturday, May 14, 10 am, at the Peoria CYFS Office.

**Updated PST Training**, Thursday, June 2, 9, 15, 23, 30, July 7, 14, 21, 28, at the Peoria CYFS Office. All sessions will be held from 5:30 to 8:30 pm. Call Carol Bennett-Barker at 309.323.6529 to register or if you have any questions.

**Foster Caregiver Appreciation Picnic**, Sunday, June 5, 1 to 3 pm, Fondulac Park, East Peoria. Potluck—chicken and drinks will be provided.

**Peoria Chiefs Baseball Fundraiser**, Saturday, June 18, at Dozer Field. Tickets are \$12. More details to follow.

**Foster Caregiver Support Group**, Tuesday, June 21, 6 to 8 pm. Need for Medically Complex Homes presented by CYFS Nurse Jennifer Cunningham. Call Carol Bennett-Barker at 309.323.6529 to register. No child care provided.

### Rock Island

**Trivia Night**, Saturday, April 16, 7 to 10 pm, at Culman's Hall, 1400 16th Ave., Moline. Doors open at 6 pm. \$80 per table of 8 players. Prize drawings and 50/50. Call Carmen at 309.786.0770 by April 9th to reserve your table.

**Foster Caregiver Support Group**, Tuesday, April 12, 5 to 6:30 pm at the Rock Island CYFS Office.

**Updated PST Training**, 9 am to 12 noon, Tuesday, April 19, 26, May 3, 10, 17, 24, 31, June 7, 14 at the Rock Island CYFS Office. Jennipher Estes is the trainer. Child care available. Call Christina Beam to register at 309.786.0770, ext. 4209.

**Birth Mother's Day Balloon Launch**—Saturday, May 14, 11 am, at the Rock Island CYFS Office.

### Springfield

**Refuse to Abuse Walk and Fun Run**, Saturday, April 30, 10 am to 12 noon. Call 217.528.3694 for details.

**ALSO—Informational meetings about adoption and fostering are held at each branch office on the second Tuesday of each month, starting at 5:30 pm.**

*DCFS is offering several trainings across the region this summer and fall. Please call your licensing worker for information regarding training topics, dates/times, and locations, as well as information on how to register. This information can also be found online at [www.DCFSTraining.org](http://www.DCFSTraining.org).*



## Mary Kay's Corner

Happy Spring!

Spring is off to a good start as this month the CYFS licensing team was notified that the 2016 CYFS Foster Parent Implementation Plan has been found acceptable to the Statewide Foster Care Advisory Council and DCFS.

This is wonderful news as the plan describes the way CYFS foster parents and foster care staff work together to bring services to the children in foster care. The plan is reviewed by members of the Statewide Foster Care Advisory Council which notes strengths and areas for improvement with regards to the implementation of the Foster Parent Law. Strengths noted this year included:

- CYFS use of a strength based approach when assessing foster parents

- CYFS collaboration with other service providers to provide foster parents with more training opportunities

- Establishing strategies to prevent placement disruptions

- Foster parent's participation in ongoing training.

- The use of multiple foster parent councils (FCABS) and their input into the plan and the services provided.

- Foster parent working on the plan and then approving the final draft

Suggestions for improvement included:

- Considering the use of direct deposit for foster parents

- Identifying more cultural sensitivity training for foster parents

During the next several months as we continue to work together, we will consider ways to address those areas for suggested growth. In the meantime, a huge thank you to the staff and foster parents who worked on this project.

### **FOSTER PARENT WEB PAGE! YOUR CONNECTION TO CYFS FOSTER CARE RESOURCES AND INFORMATION.**

As promised last quarter the foster parent web page is up and running. If you do not have your password, please let your licensing worker know so you can have access to the page.

We had a glitch with the Survey monkey on the CYFS foster parent resource page. It has been fixed. The Survey provides our foster parents with a quick way to help us help you. Please take a few minutes to give us some feedback. This feedback will be used to help us as we prepare for the next several months.

### **CALLING ALL FOSTER PARENTS! WE NEED YOUR HELP!**

As many of you know we are in need of new foster homes. We understand our best source for connecting with others who may want to provide foster care is our current foster parents. Beginning in April, any *current* foster parent who helps us find a new foster home will be eligible for a thank you gift card.

If you know someone who would make a great foster parent, have them contact your licensing worker. When that foster parent is approved and accepts their first placement CYFS will send you a 50.00 gift card. So consider the experience you have had helping children. Reach out to your friends and family to see if they too would like to step up to provide a safe and nurturing home for a foster child. Consider people from your church, school parenting groups, community group or employment!

### **ADOPT WAITING CHILDREN PARENT TRAINING TO BE OFFERED.**

The CYFS Adoption program will be offering the Adopt Waiting Children Parent Training free to all current CYFS foster parents.

**If you have considered adopting a child who is needing a forever home, this is your chance to learn more about the lifelong process of adoption. To learn more about this opportunity contact Kate Haskins at 217-352-5179 or [khaskins@cyfsolutions.org](mailto:khaskins@cyfsolutions.org) no later than May 15, 2016**

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### **Important Phone Numbers**

#### **Child Abuse Hotline**

800.252.2873

#### **Missing Child Helpline**

866.503.0184

#### **Advocacy Office**

800.232.3798/217.524.2029

#### **Foster Parent Hotline**

800.624.KIDS/800.624.5437

#### **Adoption Hotline**

800.572.2390

#### **Inspector General**

800.722.9124

#### **Daycare Information**

877.746.0829/312.328.2779

#### **Youth Hotline**

800.232.3798



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## The Center for Youth and Family Solutions

2610 W. Richwoods Blvd.  
Peoria, IL 61604

Branch offices in Bloomington, Champaign, Danville, Galesburg,  
LaSalle, Lincoln, Macomb, Rock Island, and Springfield

Phone: 309.323.6600  
Website: [www.cyfsolutions.org](http://www.cyfsolutions.org)

### Branch Offices

|                           |                     |                    |                     |
|---------------------------|---------------------|--------------------|---------------------|
| <b>Bloomington—Center</b> | <b>309.829.6307</b> | <b>LaSalle</b>     | <b>815.223.4007</b> |
| <b>Bloomington—Morris</b> | <b>309.820.7616</b> | <b>Lincoln</b>     | <b>217.732.3771</b> |
| <b>Champaign</b>          | <b>217.352.5179</b> | <b>Macomb</b>      | <b>309.833.1791</b> |
| <b>Danville</b>           | <b>217.443.1772</b> | <b>Peoria</b>      | <b>309.323.6600</b> |
| <b>Galesburg</b>          | <b>309.342.1136</b> | <b>Rock Island</b> | <b>309.786.0770</b> |
|                           |                     | <b>Springfield</b> | <b>217.528.3694</b> |

Achieving Solutions  
Together



*April—Prevent Child Abuse Month*  
*May—Foster Caregiver  
Appreciation Month*



\*On April 1, 2016, The Center for Youth and Family Solutions served 1,019 children and youth for the state of Illinois, with the help of 900 licensed traditional and relative, unlicensed relative, AWC, and adoptive CYFS homes. Many thanks to everyone for all you do, every day!

## More About Updated Parenting Skills Training

The original Parenting Skills Training (PST), by Brad Bryant, was released in 1983. This first edition was provided in 6 3-hr. sessions. 2009 saw the release of the Updated Parenting Skills Training, written by Brad Bryant and Michael Johnan, incorporating 26 years of well-documented information that simply wasn't available in 1983, including relationship and its significance in promoting healing and change in behavior, how the brain functions, childhood trauma and its impact on the developing brain, human development, the power of positive parenting—enough information that the training had to be expanded to 9 3-hr. sessions, for a total of 27 hrs. of training. The 9 sessions are as listed below:

Orientation—an overview of the entire curriculum

|           |                                     |
|-----------|-------------------------------------|
| Session 1 | Teaching/Learning Journey           |
| Session 2 | Relationship                        |
| Session 3 | Trauma                              |
| Session 4 | Strengths                           |
| Session 5 | ABC Analysis                        |
| Session 6 | ABC Planning                        |
| Session 7 | Teaching Discipline                 |
| Session 8 | Tying It Altogether—Culture, Repair |



Each session includes a power-point, video clips of “real people” (youth who grew up in the system, foster caregivers, birth parents), group exercises, role play, and weekly homework assignments, including readings from a participant’s manual provided free of charge from The Center for Youth and Family Solutions. I have been teaching this for CYFS and previously with Catholic Charities since 2010, to foster caregivers, intact families, and birth families, as well as agency staff. Ten additional CYFS staff have recently been added to our Updated Parenting Skills training team, including Carol Groskreutz, Brittany Shannon, Mallory Niemiec, Harriet Kersh, Autymne Huerta, Brittany Schmidt, Jennipher Estes, Monica Kindig, Ashley Velez, and Betty Hayes. In addition, Brenda Cotton and Linda Williams were trained with the original Updated PST Training of Trainers in 2009. Key ideas include—“the caregiver is an agent of change, and needs to be open to changes within him or herself in helping a child or youth to change his/her behaviors; discipline is about what the child needs, and NOT how the caregiver feels in the moment; punishment of and by itself cannot promote positive change in behavior; connections between a child and his/her birth family, including siblings, need recognition and support however possible by the foster or adoptive caregiver; the stronger our relationship with a child or youth in our care, the stronger we become as models for what we are teaching.

Basic tools of empathy, true listening, high praise rate, and daily connection are presented and practiced during the sessions. Several foster caregivers have completed the entire 27 hr. training more than once, using it as a review for what they have found to be so helpful with the children and youth in their care. If you are interested in completing this training, please contact your local licensing worker. Several summer sessions will begin in the month of June—hope you will join us if you haven’t yet had the opportunity to do so.