

**CYFS**

# Foster Caregiver Adoptive Parent Connection

Issue 1  
Volume 9

January 2020



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## Time to Heal, Time to Grow!

**F**or the kids in foster care who have given up, who believe nobody cares, who see themselves as completely unattached and unlovable, who have no idea who they are...these words are for you...

We are foster caregivers and adoptive parents who know everyone deserves and needs a family. Everyone, all ages, finds themselves through their connections, in the values, morals, and ideas which breathe life into our souls, through living together as family, something that is much more than flesh and blood, much deeper and broader than DNA. We are educated foster caregivers and adoptive parents who understand what can happen to children who grow up in and through the experience of trauma, and how those events challenge everything we thought we knew about parenting, about infant, childhood, and adolescent development. And we are committed to help these young, beautiful spirits heal and grow by devoting ourselves, our time and talents, and our wisdom and resources to seeing change, renewal, and discovery blossom in the hearts of the broken and forgotten.

We are growing in experience every day. We know you, a foster youth, might wonder if we are your “last” chance,

or how long you’ll be with us, in our home. We don’t know your story, but we know you have one like nobody else’s. A story that breaks hearts, but hearts can heal, too, with time, much effort, critical intervention services, and finding there’s someone in your life who cares 100% about you, about your dreams and failures, your passions and your quirks. Who is hoping you’ll give us a chance, that you’ll begin seeing what each of us want to see, a person of value, of potential, a diamond in the rough waiting to be smoothed, polished, encouraged, and lifted up to greet the rest of your life filled with vision, determination, and courage. We would love to be right beside you, because we know you can do this, you are capable of healing and second chances, and there’s no coincidence that at this time we share a home together.

In the meantime, we are looking for more foster caregivers ready for the challenge and eager to make a difference—foster caregivers who remind themselves daily, sometimes hourly, that the struggle we face is not about “us”. It’s about the history you bring with you, and the trauma you have endured. But this does not define you or limit you. They remain a part of your story, yes. But look at what you have survived. Look at how far you have come, If you decide to trust me, to give me a chance, together we can begin once more, to heal and to grow. You are far more than worth it!

## BLOOMINGTON

### FOSTER CAREGIVER SUPPORT GROUP

Wednesday, January 29 5:30–7:30 pm  
Investigations Training

## DANVILLE

### FOSTER CAREGIVER SUPPORT GROUP

Tuesday, January 28 5:30–7:30 pm  
Investigations Training

### FOSTER FAMILY SWEETHEARTS DANCE

Saturday, February 22  
Located at The Assembly, 428 N. Walnut St., Danville  
Dressy attire, RSVP to Jasmine

## LINCOLN

### FACB

Tuesday, February 11 5:30–7:00 pm  
Lincoln CYFS Office

## PEORIA

### UPDATED PST

February 3, 10, 17, 24 and March 2, 9, 16, 23, 30  
2 sessions, choose 10:00 am–1:00 pm or 5:30–8:30  
Participants register through their licensing worker  
at 309.323.6600. Participants manuals provided.

### FOSTER CAREGIVER SUPPORT GROUP

January 21 6:00–8:00 pm  
Peoria CYFS Office, RM 144  
Skin and Hair Care presented by Cindy Skaggs, one  
of our very own experienced and gifted foster  
caregivers, sharing from her hands-on care of  
children of color. Please call your licensing worker  
to register and to indicate whether or not you need  
child care—we hope to provide child care.

### FOSTER CAREGIVER SUPPORT GROUP

February 18 6:00–8:00 pm  
Peoria CYFS Office, RM 144  
Special Guest Speaker, Tiffany Nolan, sharing  
her experiences as a foster child. We hope to  
provide child care—please call your licensing worker  
to register.

# Calendar

## ROCK ISLAND

### UPDATED PST

January 23, 30, February 6, 13, 20, 27  
and March 5, 12, 19 10:00 am–1:00 pm  
Participant's manual provided. Please call Aimee or  
Elaine at 309.786.0770 to register. PST is postponed  
at this time but will be scheduled once a group is  
identified and ready to begin.

### FOSTER FAMILY SWEETHEARTS DANCE

Saturday, February 22 6:00–8:00 pm  
Located at St. Mark's Anglican Church

### FOSTER CAREGIVER SUPPORT GROUP

Friday, March 6 9:00–10:00 am  
Located at Milltown Coffee

### ADVOCATING FOR ANSWERS TRIVIA NIGHT

Saturday, March 21 7:00–10:00 pm  
Located at Heritage Hall on The Arsenal

## SPRINGFIELD

### FOSTER CAREGIVER SUPPORT GROUP

Tuesday, January 21 5:30–7:30 pm in Springfield  
Self care/seeking support. Call your CYFS Licensing  
Worker to RSVP.

### FOSTER CAREGIVER SUPPORT GROUP

Tuesday, February 18 5:30–7:30 pm in Springfield  
Foster Caregiver Law Implementation  
Plan/Grievance Plan. Call your CYFS Licensing  
Worker to RSVP.

### FCAB

Thursday, February 27 5:30–7:30 pm  
Springfield CYFS Office

### FOSTER CAREGIVER SUPPORT GROUP

Tuesday, March 17 5:30–7:30 pm in Lincoln  
Trauma Informed Parenting

## Now is the time of year ...

Applications for DCFS scholarships for our foster youth completing high school are due 3/31/2020. However, the earlier they are submitted, the better! If you have a foster youth interested in college, and if the conversation has not yet begun, talk with your foster youth's caseworker for details and any questions about the process. It's a great opportunity to attend a state college or university or local community college and earn a degree that will help our young people move forward toward success. The

application form CFS 438, with requirements, is available online at the DCFS website in the DCFS foster caregiver newsletter. 53 scholarships are awarded annually, of which 4 are required to be awarded to children of veterans. In addition, a monthly grant of \$537 is provided to the student while enrolled during the academic year. FAFSA, GPA's, and finishing strong in high school is the student who could benefit in every way from this opportunity!

Remember, if you have any questions about working with your foster teen, call **Jessica Bennett** at **217.352.5179 ext. 3217**, in the Champaign CYFS Office.



# Mary Kay's Corner



WOW! I cannot believe 2020 is here and January is almost over! Where does the time go. We have many things to share with our CYFS foster parents that I am going to get right down to it.

With the New Year, we are happy to announce The Center for Youth and Family Solutions has added a new component to our licensing program. We are very excited to welcome our Recruitment and Retention staff to the CYFS family. We are just getting this effort up and running but are very happy to provide ways to help the communities we live and work in, learn more about the need for good foster parents such as yourself. Equally important to us is the task of providing our current foster parents with some additional support and training. Check out the section of the newsletter introducing the new recruiters. Be watching for some fun and very needed events to support you and your family as you provide for our children and youth in care.

A huge thank you to our CYFS Foster Caregiver's Advisory Boards (FCAB'S). The FCAB's pushed for ways to connect foster parents in their local communities and expressed a desire to connect to other foster parents using social media. Our current FACEBOOK FOSTER PARENT GROUP pages already have over 150 CYFS members on them. They are already providing a great way to network with others who foster. Each CYFS foster parent group

has their own page so check out Peoria, LaSalle, Lincoln- Springfield, Danville, Champaign, Rock Island, Galesburg, Bloomington's CYFS Foster Parent Group for more information. Please feel free to use the page as a way to network with others in your community, learn more about resources available to you and simply meet others who love and care for children as you do. After we get the FACEBOOK pages going our next venture is to do something with Instagram or maybe even Twitter! Look at us! We are on a roll!

Continuing to move forward in 2020, be watching for many new and valuable ways to connect with others in our CYFS fostering family. As always we so very much appreciate you and all you do to help us provide care for the our children and youth in care. Because of YOU our CYFS foster families, we can ensure the children and youth in our care. Because of YOU our CYFS foster families, we can ensure the children and youth in our care receive the love and support they so deserve.

HAPPY NEW YEAR!

## Managed Care Transition Update:

Your patience is so appreciated as the state transitions to Managed Care. The latest information we have is below

**February 1, 2020**—rollout date will apply only to“former” Youth in Care. Youth Care is reportedly sending out temporary cards for proof of insurance to caregivers this week.

**April 1, 2020**—rollout date will apply to current Youth in Care. Youth who are currently in DCFS custody or DCFS has been named the guardian.

At this time any DCFS Youth in Care who qualify for nursing hours non waiver or waiver will not transition to Illini Care. These youth will be straight Medicaid.

The CYFS child welfare team wants you to know we are here if you have questions or concerns. Please feel free to email us at [YouthCarequestions@cyfsolutions.org](mailto:YouthCarequestions@cyfsolutions.org).

Re receive the love and support they so deserve. HAPPY NEW YEAR!

~Mary Kay

# Meet our new foster caregiver recruiters!

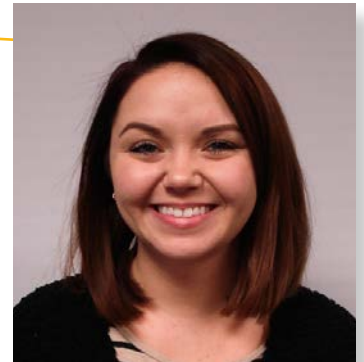


## SARAH LAWRENCE

Sarah Lawrence, our new lead foster home recruiter, attended Illinois State University where she obtained a Bachelor's of Science in History Social Sciences Education with a minor in Sociology. She has worked for CYFS for 2.5 years, first as a foster care worker and then an intact worker. Her passion has always been to help children and families. She is excited to focus her skills on recruiting new foster families to help strengthen our agency and provide the best care to the children we serve. In her free time, she enjoys crafting, going to trivia nights, and spending time with her fiancé and dog. She can be reached at the CYFS Office in Rock Island.

## CHELSIE STARNES

Chelsie Starnes is our Foster Home Recruiter for the Peoria, IL region. She works with prospective Foster Parents during the licensing process and assists with agency Communication and Development. Before coming to CYFS, Chelsie worked for a local non-profit named Best Buddies where she assisted individuals with and without Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities find friendship and learn how to advocate for themselves. In addition to her recruiting and development experience, Chelsie has a background in Special Education/Early Childhood Education. Chelsie holds a BA from WIU and graduates this semester with her MA in Executive Leadership from Liberty University. Chelsie can be contacted through the Peoria CYFS Office.



## MINDY MCBRIDE

Mindy is the new Foster Home Recruiter for the Springfield and Lincoln Offices. She will be working to recruit new foster homes and assist them through the licensing process, as well as provide support for current foster homes to improve retention. Mindy has worked for CYFS as a foster care worker for one year, and has worked in many volunteer positions throughout the community with youth and families. She obtained a Bachelor's of Science in Psychology from Truman State University, and is excited to work with our agency, the community, and other organizations in the development of recruitment programs. Mindy can be reached at the CYFS Office in Springfield.





# Recreational Cannabis Guidelines for Foster Parents

**Y**ou probably already know on January 1, 2020 recreational cannabis became legal. We understand foster families will have questions about how this new law will impact fostering. To assist you, The Center for Youth and Family Solutions wanted to clarify the following.

Possessing cannabis in a private residence that is used at any time to provide licensed or unlicensed child care (day care or foster care) or other similar social service care on the premises is not permitted.

Using cannabis in any public place is not permitted.

Using cannabis knowingly in close physical proximity to anyone under 21 years of age who is not a registered medical cannabis patient under the Compassionate Use of Medical Cannabis Pilot Program Act is not permitted.

Smoking cannabis in any place where smoking is prohibited under the Smoke Free Illinois Act is not permitted.

The Use of cannabis by any person who is not allowed to use cannabis under either the Cannabis Regulation and Tax Act or the Compassionate Use of Medical Cannabis Pilot Program Act is not permitted.

Using cannabis in a motor vehicle is not permitted.

Possessing (driver or passenger) cannabis in a motor vehicle except in a sealed, odor proof, child-resistant cannabis container is not permitted.

The information above was provided by DCFS Foster Care Licensing. If you still have questions, call DCFS 1.877.746.0829, visit [www.2illinois.gov/DCFS](http://www.2illinois.gov/DCFS) or contact your CYFS licensing worker.



## 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**

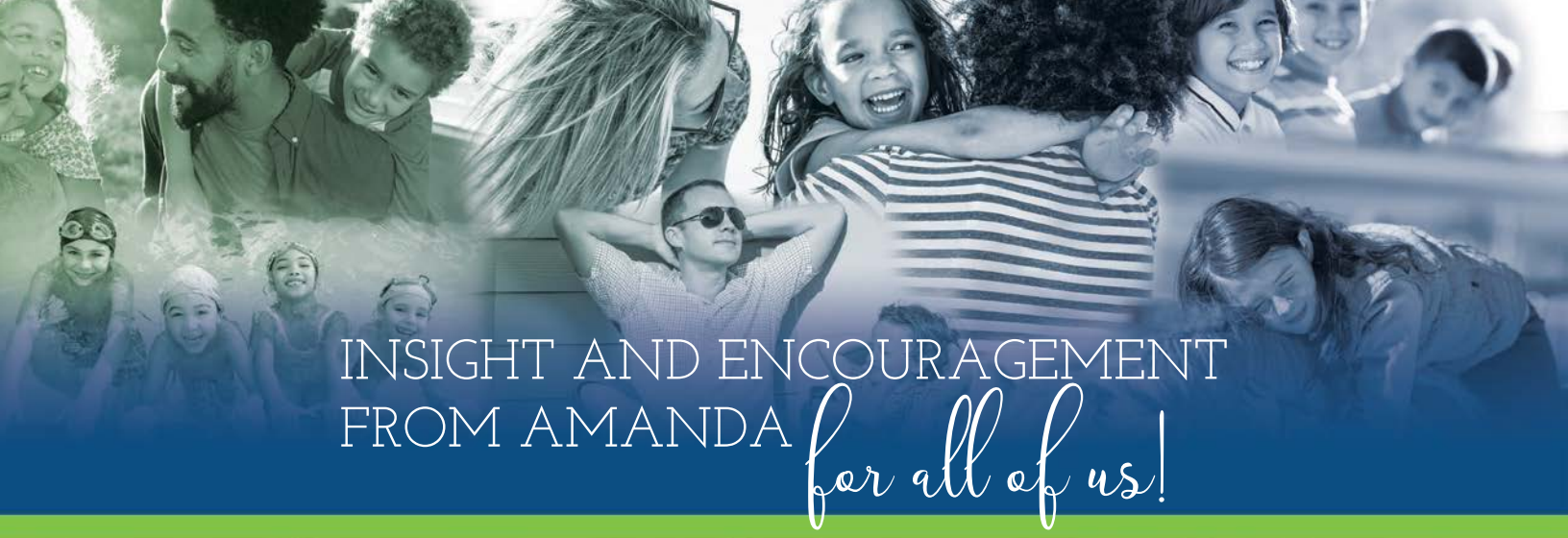
800.722.9124

### **Daycare Information**

877.746.0829/312.328.2779

### **Youth Hotline**

800.232.3798



# INSIGHT AND ENCOURAGEMENT FROM AMANDA *for all of us!*

**T**he beginning of a new year is the perfect time to analyze and assess how well you are taking care of yourself. What self-care methods are you putting into place? How often are these self-care methods occurring? Are you getting enough adult interaction? Are you sleeping well? How are your eating habits? Are you able to maintain your home effectively to ensure safety? How is your mood? Are you feeling anxious, depressed, or too stressed out? And most importantly, who can you turn to in times of need?

Just try to remember to take care of you! When you actively plan healthy self-care techniques it assures you can be a much more effective, healing parent. Please don't feel guilty for taking time away from your children. It does not make you a bad parent. Every parent needs and deserves a break! It is how we refuel and re-energize! When you take the needed time away, it allows you to be more present, loving, happy, and at your best when you are with your children. You will also be more patient and understanding. It's a win-win situation for everyone!

Self-care is not selfish. Our children and the people around us deserve us to take care of ourselves. So why is it so hard for us to do? It is imperative that we reframe our mindset and place ourselves as a priority. We owe that to the people we love the most!

So again, I invite you to figure out where you need to implement self-care. You cannot take care of anyone if you are stretched thin, sick, and mentally unwell. Find time for just you, find time with your spouse, find time with adult friends, and find activities/hobbies you enjoy. Even actively planning a family fun night can be a form of self-care while engaging with the entire family.

Choose getting enough sleep, healthy eating habits, exercise, develop a strong support system, and make sure you are going to the doctor as frequently as you need to-do not put your appointments off as less important. Utilize respite, ask friends to babysit, accept the gifts

*“You cannot pour from an empty cup.  
Take care of yourself first.”*

others want to give you, ask for a meal donation once a week/month (churches are great with meal trains), etc. There are so many forms of what you can do to lessen your load and take care of yourself. You are worth the time and I hope you do something at least monthly if not weekly!!

Remember: “You cannot pour from an empty cup. Take care of yourself first.”  
*~Amanda*

## January is Human Trafficking Awareness Month



It's warm!  
And it's easy!

For every time you run out of ideas for dinner, or breakfast, and try to remember what's still in the pantry or refrigerator, it always helped us to have a basic list of meals our sons seemed to enjoy and—they were warm, and easy. Real food meant to be enjoyed, and positive ending to long days of school and work, band practice and wrestling meets, JROTC meetings and oil changes, with one quick stop at the local grocery store...if you're interested in collecting warm and easy

## Recipes Crockpot Italian Chicken

### Ingredients

- One 5 to 6 qt. crockpot
- 1 4 to 5 lb. whole chicken, cleaned and ready for the crockpot
- 1 dry packet of Italian salad dressing
- 1/2 stick of butter, cut into thin pats
- Salt and pepper to taste

### Instructions

Place chicken in crockpot. Cover with pats of butter. Sprinkle packet of dry Italian salad dressing over the top, followed by salt and pepper. Cook 7 hrs. on low. Serve with wild or white rice, green beans or side salad, and grapes. (Sliced for little ones who choke easily.)



## Recipes Cheesy Potatoes

### Ingredients

- One 30 oz. bag thawed hash browns
- 1 can cream of chicken soup
- Half onion, chopped
- Salt and pepper to taste

### Instructions

Mix thawed hash browns, cream of chicken soup, chopped onion, and salt and pepper until well-mixed. Add 16 oz. sour cream with chives, 8 oz. shredded sharp cheddar. (can be made in the morning before everyone leaves. Just cover with foil and refrigerate.)



## Cheesy Potatoes (cont.)

Spray 9"x13" pan with Pam. Pour the potato mixture into the pan. Cover with 8 oz. shredded sharp cheddar. Cover with piece of foil.

Bake at 375 degrees for 90 minutes. Remove foil for last 15 minutes.

Extremely hot—but so good! Definitely easy.



## Recipes Cherry Dump Cake

### Ingredients

- One 4 qt. crockpot
- 1 white cake mix
- 1 to 2 cans cherry pie filling
- One stick butter

### Instructions

Dump cherry pie filling in the bottom of the crockpot. Sprinkle cake mix on top of pie filling. Place stick of butter on top. Cook on low for 4 hours.

Great with vanilla ice cream. Works with any kind of fruit pie filling.



recipes, and have a few to share, please send them my way. I'd be glad to include these as one more resource for our busy families trying to finish the day on the plus side of home. For this month, please feel free to try some of these...

All 3 recipes are very easy—kids can help cook, too! Great experience hands-on—concepts of more and less, salty, sweet, savory, spicy, hot, cold, liquid, solid... don't forget to send yours to Carol and we'll see if we can use them in the next newsletter.

# Happy Valentine's Day

Not as easy as it sounds... but it's good to have a plan

**A**s a foster caregiver, Valentine's Day can be stressful. But it's supposed to be a day of love. What's the best way to celebrate this while immersed in the messiness of foster care? This is a great topic for a foster caregiver support group, but in the meantime, here's what we can do...

Talk with your foster child's caseworker, with the child. Find out if the child has any specific hopes for the day that are realistic and healthy. What can we do to support this celebration? Who does the child hope to honor? Keeping things as simple as possible always makes sense... family connections including parents, siblings, extended family, old friends, family pets, foster family members, new friends and teachers,...making Valentines from red construction paper and ribbon or doilies, glitter and stickers...make sugar cookies, either round or heart shapes, frosted and dusted with pink and/or red sugar.

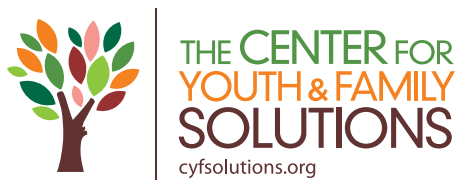
Or draw a picture, make copies of a favorite photo to share with certain individuals, gluing together a string of hearts and each heart states something the child loves about that person...

Or make a book which shows the child's pictures of what they love about that person, or of favorite memories. If appropriate, invite the child's birth family to your home for a special snack or meal, depending on the time of the visit. Or help the child prepare a snack to take to the visit—those special cookies, heart-shaped peanut butter sandwiches, red-colored fruit juice pouches, fresh

strawberries, or chips and salsa. Let the child help plan the menu and make the food items selected. Use fancy dishes for a loving presentation of these gifts. Of course, if the child is able to have a visit on this day with family, take some photos and make a little memory book for him or her to keep. Or to share with the parent(s) if they were part of the visit. Maybe even—make a tie-dye t-shirt with the child, with hearts in the design, made just for this special visit. To be remembered in the special photos.



Over the last year, The Center for Youth and Family Solutions served **1,123** children and youth for the state of Illinois, with the help of more than **616** licensed traditional and relative foster homes, and **233** unlicensed CYFS relative foster homes that provided for their placement. Many, many thanks to each of you for all you do, every single day!



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