

fostering FUTURES

Rhode Island Foster Parents Association

No. 8 – Issue 4 – May/June 2009



Foster Care Month... You Can Change a Lifetime!

May is National Foster Care Month. Every day in this country, there are more than 500,000 children and youth living in foster care due to abuse and neglect in their family of origin. Rhode Island alone has 2,700 children and youth residing in homes other than with their biological parents. Without the love and support of foster parents, Rhode Island would not be able to serve 52% of foster youth in family settings. Because of you, we are able to address the needs of these children, who need a stable and secure home until they can either return to their parents or achieve a permanent connection with a loving adult.

This month also provides an opportunity for people to get involved, whether as foster parents, mentors, employers or donors. This issue highlights many ways to support kids in care. Here are some ideas:

- Got a minute? Sign up for the email version of this newsletter and help us save money...page 7.
- Got 5 minutes? Register your Shaw's/Star Market Rewards Card and earn FREE money for kids in care...page 6.
- Got 10 minutes? Check out our Annual Report Section and use the enclosed envelope to mail your tax deductible donation.
- Got a few hours? Be a Real Connections mentor and help a youth reach his/her goal...page 5.

In addition to promoting involvement, National Foster Care Month is also the perfect opportunity to show our appreciation for Rhode Island's foster families. You are making a difference 7 days a week, 24 hours a day. Thank you for your dedication and for all you do!

Inside this issue:

Dr. Day Care and Father's Day for Foster Dads—page 2

Summer Jobs for Youth—page 3

RIFPA Annual Report—Special Section

FREE Handbook for Youth & Families—page 5

Easy Steps to Register Your Shaw's Card—page 6

Dr. Day Care

Dear Dr. Day Care,

My 11-year-old foster child has been away from his parents for five months. He sees them twice a month. This is my first foster child and he is a great fit to our family. My husband and I have three sons who are all about our foster child's age. I am confused on how to celebrate Father's Day with my foster son. Typically I take the three boys shopping and they buy their dad a present. My sons also make individual homemade cards. This is a special and fun day for my children and me. Should we continue this tradition or stop it because I do not want to hurt our foster son's feelings?

Signed,
Happy First Father's Day

Dear Happy First Father's Day,

May I suggest continuing your family tradition for Father's Day? It sounds to me like the shopping and homemade cards are a special, fun part of your family celebration. I would suggest including your foster son in the family day of shopping and card making. Explain the Father's Day family tradition and let him know that he is invited to go with his foster family.

He can make a decision to go or stay home. Please respect his decision and do not try to change his mind. Also, keep the option of going or staying home open, as he might change his mind at the last minute. He also may choose to make a card and not shop or vice-versa, but either way you should respect his decision.

May I also suggest the following: Ask him if he wants to remember his dad and/or other significant men in his life, such as an uncle or grandpa. He may want to give them a gift and card also.

Enjoy your tradition and Happy Father's Day!

Dr. Day Care is actually Mary Ann Shallcross Smith, Ed.D., owner of Dr. Day Care Enterprises which encompasses Kids Klub, Inc., Dr. Day Care's Child Development Center for Learning and Play, Comprehensive Child Care Services of Rhode Island Women's Business Talk Show. She is also co-founder of Child Care Connection. Dr. Day Care welcomes your questions as they relate to child care. Please contact her at 1.877.333.1393 ext. 222 or email her at drdaycare@kidsklubri.com.

DCYF Tuition Assistance Application Deadline—June 1

The RI General Assembly and Congress both recognize the importance of providing post-secondary educational opportunities for youth at risk of "aging out" of foster care and those who have already aged out of foster care. The General Assembly, through the DCYF Higher Education Opportunity Grant Program, and Congress, through the John H. Chafee Education and Training Voucher Program (ETV), each have set aside money to fund tuition assistance programs which DCYF has combined into the **DCYF Post Secondary Tuition Assistance Program**.

The DCYF Higher Education Grant Program can be used for eligible youth attending the Community College of Rhode Island (CCRI), Rhode Island College (RIC) or the University of Rhode Island (URI) on a full-time basis. The ETV Program can be used for eligible youth attending any program or school which meets the federal government's definition of an Institution of Higher Education, but each student can receive no more than \$5,000 per academic year.

Applications for the DCYF Post Secondary Tuition Assistance Program are due no later than June 1 of each year for the following academic year.

For funding purposes, DCYF defines the academic year as the Fall Semester through the Summer Sessions. For more information and to download an application, go to www.dcyf.state.ri.us/.

Joseph A. Palmieri, Esq.* Adoption Attorney

**OVER 1000 FOSTER PARENT
ADOPTIONS HANDLED SINCE 1990**

Termination of Parental Rights?
Direct Consent Adoptions?
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DCYF Subsidy?

Do Not be Uninformed!! Do Not Be Misinformed!!

Before you go to court, call an experienced attorney who can answer all of your questions and vigorously represent your interests.

**ALL LEGAL FEES COVERED BY ADOPTION SUBSIDY.
THERE WILL NEVER BE A CHARGE TO YOU!!**

CALL 1-401-258-3371

**The RI Supreme Court does not license or certify any lawyer as an expert or specialist in any field of practice.*

Looking For A Summer Job? Contact Your Local Youth Center Today!

The bad news: The economy is still struggling and jobs are hard to find. The good news: Stimulus funds will **open up 1,000 jobs for youth in Rhode Island** and youth in foster care will have a priority status for getting them.

Part-time or summer jobs can provide youth with great opportunities for learning life skills and acquiring hands-on experience—while at the same time earning some spending money.

If you're interested in summer employment for foster youth, please contact your local Youth Center or go to www.dlt.ri.gov/youthworks411/.

Finding employment is just the beginning; Youth Centers can also help you with the following:

- Work on your resume
- Learn job readiness skills
- Gain leadership skills
- Enroll in GED classes
- Obtain occupational skills training
- Discover your skills and talents
- Explore careers
- Improve your grades

Contact your Youth Center today if you are:

- 14–24 years old
- In school or out of school
- Ready to make the commitment

Please Note: Youth need a letter from their caseworker stating that they are in DCYF care. If you need assistance getting the letter, please contact Kate Bronner (Real Connections) 401.438.3900 x108 or kate.bronner@rifpa.org.

Rhode Island Youth Centers

Bristol/Warren Youth Center

Mt. Hope High School
199 Chestnut St., Bristol
401.808.9578

contact: Nicole Ferreira

Charlestown Youth Center

South County Community Action
4350 South County Trail
Charlestown
401.789.3016 x330

contact: Jaclyn Altieri

East Providence Youth Center

East Providence Boys and Girls Club
115 Williams Ave., East Providence
401.383.0366

contact: Lisa Maduro-Perkins

Johnston Youth Center

Tri-Town Community Action
1126 Hartford Ave., Johnston
401.519.1929

contact: Jamie Sisto

Newport Youth Center

Newport Boys and Girls Club
95 Church St., Newport
401.619.2759

contact: Steve Dolce

Pawtucket Youth Centers

netWORKri
175 Main St., Pawtucket
401.305.5919

contact: Lizette Fuentes

Woodlawn Community Center

210 West Ave., Pawtucket
401.475.7968

contact: Melissa Orpen Tuz

Providence Youth Center

netWORKri
One Reservoir Ave., Providence
401.228.8350

contact: Ellen Pettit

Wakefield Youth Center

South County Community Action
1935 Kingstown Rd., Wakefield
401.789.3016 x330

contact: Jaclyn Altieri

Warwick Youth Center

CCAP
Buttonwoods Community Center
3027 West Shore Rd., Warwick
401.921.5907

contact: Deana Pecchia

Westerly Youth Center

South County Community Action
34 Pond St., Westerly
401.789.3016 x330

contact: Jaclyn Altieri

West Warwick Youth Center

CCAP
222 Washington St., West Warwick
401.615.7690

contact: Deana Pecchia

Woonsocket Youth Center

55 Main St., Woonsocket
401.235.6011 or 401.235.6059

contact: Mark Foley

Questions and Answers

About the Fostering Connections to Success & Increasing Adoptions Act and how it can increase educational opportunities for older youth in foster care:

Q. Does the Fostering Connections Act have any provisions related to the education needs of children and youth in foster care?

A. This Act includes important provisions requiring DCYF to maintain assurances in their case plans of the child's/youth's right to remain in their original school. If not in the child's best interest the child/youth is entitled to immediate enrollment in a new school.

Q. How does Fostering Connections improve the financial ability of older youth to pursue post-secondary education?

A. The law makes youth who entered kinship guardianship arrangements from foster care at age 16 or older eligible for federal Education and Training Vouchers that provide up to \$5,000 for the cost of attendance at post-secondary or vocational programs.

Q. How does Fostering Connections improve the ability of a youth in foster care to pursue postsecondary education?

A. The Act permits states, at their option, to receive Title IV-E reimbursement for the cost of placement and services for youth until the age of 19, 20, or 21. In order to remain in care, youth must be attending school, working, or involved in a program designed to remove barriers to working or education. **Please note that to date, Rhode Island has not exercised this option.*

Q. How can the new transition plan requirement in the Fostering Connections Act improve a youth's educational status and opportunities?

A. The law requires that at least 90 days before a youth is discharged from care at age 18 or older, a transition plan is developed with the youth. The plan must be directed by that youth and include specific options on housing, health insurance, education, local opportunities for mentors and continuing support services, and work force supports and employment services.

Adapted from *Federal Laws that Increase Educational Opportunities for Older Youth in Out-of-home Care*. (2008). Legal Center for Foster Care and Education. American Bar Association & Casey Family Programs.

For more information on the new law, the educational resources available to children and youth in foster care, or how to get involved in federal and state policy, please call Kat Keenan at 401.438.3900 x106 or kat.keenan@rifpa.org.



Call Neighborhood
to learn about our
many benefits!
1-800-459-6019



We are proud to partner with DCYF and the RI Foster Parents Association in supporting foster parents and the children in their care.



SHARON O'KEEFE, ESQ.

(Former R.I. Assistant Child Advocate)

Adoptions

- DCYF*
- Private
- Step Parent

401-247-1740

**Accepts DCYF subsidy as payment*

Susan M. Fink
Law Offices of Greenwood & Fink
273-8202

Adoptions and mediations
DCYF foster care licensing and placement issues*
Custody, visitation and juvenile matters
Simple estate planning

Qualified for DCYF Adoption Subsidy.

**The RI Supreme Court does not license or certify any lawyer as an expert or specialist in any field of practice.*

Real Connections Program Can Help You Reconnect with Important Adults or Identify a Mentor to Help You with Your Goals

The Real Connections program helps youth in state care connect and reconnect to important adults. The program can help youth in state care reconnect with family, friends, teachers or other important people with whom they have lost touch or would like to build a stronger connection. The goal of the Real Connections program is to ensure that all youth leave state care with positive, permanent adult connections and options for a successful future. Real Connections also engages community mentors that can help youth work on and achieve their goals including getting a GED, planning for college, getting a job, finding that first apartment and more.

If you are interested in how Real Connections can help, contact Emily Buckbee, Real Connections Coordinator at 401.438.3900 x103 or emily.buckbee@rifpa.org.

New Handbook for Youth in Care and Adult Supporters

The Real Connections program has developed a comprehensive handbook of resources for youth in care and youth transitioning out of care.

If you are interested in a copy please contact Chelsea Gunn at 401.438.3900. The handbook will also be posted online by May 30th at www.rifpa.org. DCYF also has a web page that outlines state supports for youth development at www.dcyf.ri.gov/youth_development.php



A Family Tree LLC
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visit our website at www.familytreeschoolage.com

Make a Difference. Be a Real Connection. Please join us for our next two-day training session!

Where: RI Foster Parents Association
55 South Brow Street
East Providence

When: **June 2009**

Wednesday, June 24, 6:30PM–8:30PM

Saturday, June 27, 10:00AM–2:00PM

***You must attend both days.**

August 2009

Wednesday, August 5, 6:30PM–8:30PM

Saturday, August 8, 10:00AM–2:00PM

***You must attend both days.**

To register or for further questions, please contact:

Real Connections Relationship Coordinator
Emily Buckbee, MSW, LCSW
401.438.3900 x103
emily.buckbee@rifpa.org

Directions to RI Foster Parents Association

Take 195 East to Exit 4 (Taunton Avenue), bear to the left on the off ramp (toward Taunton Avenue) Take your first right onto Cobb Street (just before the gas station). At the stop sign, take a left onto Potter St. At the next stop sign (the gas station will now be on your left), take a left onto Taunton Avenue. Follow straight. At the on-ramp to 195 West, stay to the right of the ramp and follow road straight. Look for South Brow Street on your right. Take a right onto South Brow Street. We will be the only building on the right. Parking is available in the front and to the side of the building.

Community Partners

Rhode Island Council of Resource Providers (RICORP)
Rhode Island Foster Parents Association (RIFPA)
RI Mentoring Partnership (RIMP)
Department of Children Youth and Families (DCYF)
Jim Casey Youth Opportunity Initiative (JCYOI)
Communities for People (CFP)
Child Welfare Institute
Casey Family Services
O'Halloran Family Foundation
Ocean State Job Lot Charitable Foundation
Ocean State Charities Trust

Help Us Earn Much Needed Funds—It's Easy & FREE

Earning money for the Rhode Island Foster Parents Association (RIFPA) is now easier than ever. **By shopping with your Shaw's Rewards Card on Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursday**, you can earn money for kids in care. Just shop with your registered Shaw's Rewards Card and RIFPA will receive a percentage of all the eligible purchases you make.

You don't even have to save your receipt!

Simply follow these easy steps to register your card:

1. Go to www.shaws.com/neighborhoodrewards
2. Click "Shoppers login or register with your Rewards Card first."
3. Login using your Shaw's Rewards Card# and your phone number
4. Click "Login"
5. Enter the ID # for RIFPA: 49001018910
6. Click "Add an Organization"
7. Click "Update Now"

Give back for RIFPA. One cart at a time.

Your Privacy is Important!

The only information Shaw's will provide to RIFPA or any program administrator is your name (if desired) and the quarterly contribution total. They will never provide any item-specific purchase information.



Resolve to Make A Difference in 2009

DCYF Adoption and Foster Care Information Nights

Wed, May 27 | 6:30PM–8:00PM

Wed, June 24 | 6:30PM–8:00PM

DCYF Region 3 Office
650 Ten Rod Road
North Kingstown

For more information, please call Robin Perez, DCYF Foster Parent Recruiter, at 401.528.3700

Over 2,000 Families Will See Your Ad

Do you have a product or service that directly relates to children and families? Advertising in **Fostering Futures** gives you a unique opportunity to reach a world of parents, families and caregivers who need to know about your business today! Our newsletter is published monthly by the Association and is mailed to more than 2,000 households throughout Rhode Island. In addition, each issue is emailed to 600 state employees.

Please consider advertising with us. Your ad will get noticed and you'll be helping to ensure the quality of this publication for Rhode Island's foster families.

We have a package to fit your needs. Start with an 1/8 page ad or show your support with a cover sponsorship!

Contact Kara Duffin at karaduffin@comcast.net for details.

The Department of Children, Youth and Families
B · U · L · L · E · T · I · N

Answers to your questions are a phone call away...

Keep this list of contacts on hand. Answers to your questions are just a phone call away.

FOSTER CARE UNIT

Aldridge, Don.....	528.3673
Altieri, Darlene	528.3612
Gloria, Kate	528.3623
Jordan, Mary-Ann	528.3607
Kettle, Roxanne	528.3609
Khan, Zafar	528.3617
Loungo, Laura	528.3608
Mack, Brandy.....	528.3619
St. Jacques, Sarah.....	528.3615
Administrative Assistant	528.3548

CLINICAL TRAINING SPECIALISTS

Robins, Maureen	
Supervisor	528.3799
Dybala, Margie	528.3709
Iannotti, Angela.....	528.3739
Uriati, Jennifer	528.3741
Robin, Perez	
Recruitment.....	528.3700
Harden, Antonia (Secretary).....	521.3483

ADMINISTRATOR, LICENSING AND REGULATION

Savage, Kevin	528.3629
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FIRE INSPECTORS

Lally, Steven	528.3668
Ouellette, Russell	528.3675
Rita, Richard	528.3674

DAYCARE UNIT

Almeida, Brenda,	
Supervisor	528.3605
Gagnier, Linda	528.3610
Gentile, Annette (Secretary)	528.3618
Hall, Pam.....	528.3618
Lewis, Cheryl	528.3614
MAIN LINE	528.3504
Mastrangelo, Linda.....	528.3616
Mendoza, Nelly (Secretary)	528.3621
Perez, Redentora	528.3672
Prado, Indira.....	528.3611

Save The Date!

**7th Annual
 Cheeseburgers
 in Paradise**

August 27th 2009

Auction proceeds benefit
 the Youth Enrichment
 Fund.

More information
 forthcoming!



**Isn't it worth 1 minute
 to help support
 Fostering Futures?**

Your e-mail address is all we need to help combat rising printing and distribution costs for our monthly newsletter. Please opt to receive your issues of **Fostering Futures** via e-mail and help us keep costs down. Simply send your email address to karaduffin@comcast.net and type "Save Money" in the subject line. A simple e-mail address can help kids in care. **Thank you so much.**



Rhode Island Foster Parents Association
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RIFPA East Providence, RI 02914

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web <http://www.rifpa.org>

Therapeutic Child Care for Children in Foster Care

Therapeutic Child Care is available for children from infant through middle school.

We work with area child care centers in Rhode Island where your foster child will be integrated with their typically developing peers for a fun and exciting learning experience.

For more information, please call Lisa Furtado at 401.475.7707 x260 or email to lfurtado@tccsri.com.

Foster Parent HelpLine

The Foster Parent HelpLine is a peer support service that is available statewide. It is staffed by foster parents who understand the issues and situations you face on a daily basis. Foster parents are encouraged to call the helpline with their questions or when they simply need someone to talk to.

Call the Rhode Island Foster Parents Association's HelpLine:
1.800.655.7787

Available 24 Hours. Your call will be confidential.
A service of the Mentor Program.

RIFPA STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS ARE MANDATED REPORTERS OF CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT LAWS.



Fostering Futures is published monthly by the Rhode Island Foster Parents Association, and partially funded through DCYF, to keep foster parents and others informed and aware of the issues and activities that affect them. Please send your ideas, suggestions, tips, and input via e-mail to: karaduffin@comcast.net, entering "Newsletter" in the subject line, or mail to:

RIFPA

Attn: Newsletter Editor

55 South Brow Street,
East Providence, RI 02914