



Rhode Island Foster Parents Association
55 South Brow Street
RIFPA East Providence, RI 02914

NON-PROFIT
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
PROVIDENCE,
RI
02904
PERMIT NO.
3056

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 Rita at 401.475.7707 ext. 250 or email rboie@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



fostering **FUTURES**

No. 8 - Issue 7 - September 2009

stepping out together

ASPIRE Program Helps Foster Youth Prepare for Success

For most American teenagers, their eighteenth birthday is a big event. It's a coming of age, milestone birthday when a teen steps into adulthood. However, the steps are usually small. Most eighteen year olds do not wake up on their birthday fully responsible for their finances, living arrangements, health and education. As a matter of fact, most are still dependent on their parents for three to five more years. Others are nicknamed "boomerang kids" because of their tendency to return home after an unsuccessful attempt at independence.

But for hundreds of Rhode Island teens in state care, taking small steps is not an option. On their eighteenth birthday, they take a giant, uncertain step into adulthood. Even with access to after-care services, many youth still struggle to find housing, secure jobs, save money, and establish permanent adult connections. They have no safety net. No solid plan.

"Planning is bringing the future into the present so that you can do something about it now." - Alan Lakin

Fortunately, youth in Rhode Island have access to a plan with proven results - the ASPIRE Program. ASPIRE, which stands for Aligning Savings, Permanency, Information, Resources and Empowerment, is a program that offers foster youth a continuum of services. It is a resource for youth ages 14 to 24 who have spent at least one day in the state's foster care system.

ASPIRE is truly an innovative program. It assists youth in the transition from state care to self-sufficiency by providing real-life experience and support that teaches them to think like adults.



The program is built upon the notion that it takes more than a living skills class to be successful. One of the key elements of ASPIRE is a 12-hour financial literacy class offered over a four week period. Youth learn how to manage their money and cover a variety of topics such as wants vs. needs, banking basics, credit scores, identity theft and smart consumerism. "With everyday living, there are short term needs and wants, and there are long term financial goals. We try to help youth strike that balance between the present and the future, so they can be financially successful," said ASPIRE Program Director, Kat Keenan.

*"Good fortune is what happens when opportunity meets with planning."
- Thomas Edison*

Armed with financial literacy training, youth also qualify for an Opportunity Passport.™ Victoria Ferrara, ASPIRE's Employment and Education Coordinator, likens this part of the program to a literal translation of the words "opportunity" and "passport." She explains to youth, "You'll have a chance to do something (the opportunity) and to go somewhere (the passport)."

continued on page 3



Rhode Island Foster Parents Association

inside this issue

- 10 Reasons to Sign Up For the ASPIRE Program.....page 3
- What Teens Want From Foster Parents.....page 4
- Parent News.....page 6
- Youth News.....page 7
- Spotlight on RIFPA's Tara Albury.....page 8
- Dr. Day Care & Money Lessons.....page 9
- Over 75 Job Ideas for Teens.....page 10

new season, new look!

I have never been one for New Year's resolutions; I prefer to make a fresh start in the fall. To me, the back to school season feels far more invigorating than the cold, gray days of January. September, on the other hand, is crisp, bright and full of promise. This is especially true of families with school-age children. There is nothing better than the sound of the school bell and an upcoming report card to launch plans into action.

Speaking of action...did you know that Citizens Bank and NBC 10 recently named the ASPIRE Program at RIFPA their 2009 Champion in Action? As part of the award, we receive a \$25,000 grant, media coverage and extensive volunteer and promotional support for our work. Now that's a good report card!

Here at RIFPA, we are continually striving to innovate and use new research and best practice to drive award winning program design and service delivery. This is also true of *Fostering Futures*. As you will see, we have undergone a mini makeover. You'll notice more in-depth articles, monthly themes, and with your help more personal stories. Don't worry...your favorite Dr. Day Care is still here, just on a new page.

Please let us know your thoughts. We are always eager to hear back from our foster families and youth in care regarding what they want from the Association. Our resolution is to make *Fostering Futures* a forum for and about you! We are also working to use social networking technology via our website and Facebook to develop an online community of foster parents and youth in care to: develop mutual support opportunities, share information about resources and upcoming events, and coordinate more formal supports such as a caregivers' respite network.

See, fall resolutions are good. Stay tuned for more exciting developments!

Sincerely,



Lisa Guillette
Executive Director

our mission:

The mission of the Rhode Island Foster Parents Association is to provide education and other forms of support to families that provide substitute care, and to the community at large, in order to further the cause of children who cannot live with their parents.

Rhode Island Foster Parents Association Board of Directors

Jacqueline Dowdy
President

Michelle Saunders
Vice President

Linn Freedman
Secretary

Eloise Ricci
Treasurer

At Large:

Peter Slom

Adam Harvey

Rob Degnan

Dorothy Fields

Bruce Perreault

Lisa Guillette
Executive Director



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.

Joseph A. Palmieri, Esq.* Adoption Attorney

OVER 1000 FOSTER PARENT ADOPTIONS HANDLED SINCE 1990

Termination of Parental Rights?

Direct Consent Adoptions?

Mediation?

Open Adoption Agreements?

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.*

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.*

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

Robbins, 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
---------------------	----------

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



top jobs for teens

Jobs For Younger Teens

- Baby sitting service
- Car-detailing service
- Catering service
- Cleaning service
- Educational tutoring service
- Errand, messenger service
- Freelancing service
- Online Web business
- Painting service
- PC tutor
- Pet sitting service
- Yard maintenance service

Typical Teen Employers

- Assisted Living Facilities
- Clubs
- Corporate Offices
- Fast Food Restaurants
- Grocery Stores
- Hotels, Resorts
- Lawn/yard maintenance Services
- Local Government Summer Programs
- Movie Theatres
- Municipal Park & Recreation Services
- Retail Outlets
- Retail Stores
- Small Businesses
- Summer Camps
- Tourist Attractions

Typical Teen Jobs

- Administrative Assistant
- Amusement Park Attendant
- Baby-sitter/Nanny
- Bellhop
- Busboy/Busgirl
- Camp Counselor
- Counselor-in-Training
- Carpenters Helper
- Cashier
- Computer Programmer
- Construction Helper
- Copy Machine Operator
- Counter Attendant
- Data-entry Person
- Daycare Assistant
- Delivery person
- Dispatcher
- Dog Walker
- Electrician Helper
- Factory Assembler
- Farm Worker
- Gas Station Attendant
- Grocery Bagger
- Grocery Stocker
- Groundskeeper
- Home Companion/Caretaker
- Host/Hostess
- Hotel Desk Clerk Assistant
- Janitor
- Kennel Attendant
- Kitchen Helper
- Lawn/Landscape Worker
- Library Assistant
- Lifeguard
- Maid
- Mail Clerk
- Maintenance Helper
- Masonry Helper
- Messenger/Courier
- Movie Theatre Attendant, Usher
- Packer/Mover
- Painters Helper
- Parking Lot Attendant
- Photographer's Helper
- Plant/Nursery Assistant
- Plumbers Helper
- Receptionist
- Retail Clerk
- Swimming Instructor
- Vehicle washer/detailer
- Veterinarian Assistant
- Waiter/Waitress
- Warehouse person
- Word Processor

Where to Find Teen Jobs

- Talk with your family, family friends, and neighbors
- Review postings at your high school
- Check local newspaper/pennysaver help wanted want ads
- Pound the pavement around town or the mall and look for help wanted signs in store windows



Reasons To Sign Up for the ASPIRE Program

10

Friendly, helpful staff make enrollment easy

9

Quick, convenient, informative financial literacy training

8

\$100 seed money to open a bank account

7

Work readiness & employment opportunity assistance help you earn money to save

6

\$40 incentives 2x/year to complete surveys

5

Opportunity to join "The Voice" youth board and become a leader & advocate for youth in DCYF care

4

Exclusive "door opener" opportunities to get ahead, gain valuable information or learn new skills

3

Participate up to your 24th birthday

2

Did we mention the wonderful staff?

1

\$1 for \$1 match up to \$1,000 per year towards asset purchases



The Opportunity Passport is a promising tool with several components:

1. A personal debit account for short-term expenses
2. A savings account through Citizens Bank with \$100 of seed money
3. Matched savings via ASPIRE of up to \$1,000 per year for a specific asset; such as education expenses, housing payments, school expenses, and more
4. Door Openers - a set of special opportunities designed to expedite access to resources and services like employment training, housing subsidies, and low-cost health insurance

As of today, 261 youth are holding Opportunity Passports. Since inception, \$180,000 has been matched, helping to purchase 230 assets ranging from laptop computers to first homes!

"Mentor: Someone whose hindsight can become your foresight."

Studies of foster teens have shown that many "become depressed and struggle with loneliness as they attempt to become self sufficient without the safety net of a caring family." ¹ Julie DiBari, Deputy Director of RIFPA, said "the single biggest predictor of success for youth in care is the consistent presence of a caring adult." Historically, teens are aging out of the system without adult supports. "Mentors matter. They are not simply *important* or *nice to have*. They are absolutely critical." said DiBari.

No one at age 18, 19, 20 or even 21 should have to navigate a complicated and competitive world on their own. It is for this reason that the ASPIRE Program works in conjunction with another nationally recognized RIFPA program – Real Connections. 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. This is achieved through the identification of mentors either within a youth's existing network or from a cadre of community volunteers.

The combined forces of Real Connections and ASPIRE reinforce better outcomes for foster youth in Rhode Island. Youth in the ASPIRE program who are aging out without an adult relationship are referred to Real Connections; all participants in Real Connections are enrolled in the ASPIRE Program.

"When it is obvious that the goals cannot be reached, don't adjust the goals, adjust the action steps."

Lisa Guillette, Executive Director of RIFPA, is passionate about ASPIRE and Real Connections. She is not surprised that the dynamic combination of stability and opportunity yields results. "The programs are designed as a two-pronged effort to address inequities created by the system and to work within the system to breakdown barriers and move forward," said Guillette.

RIFPA tracks participants via semi-annual surveys and the results for youth are impressive. Guillette proudly refers to better education and employment outcomes, improved mental and physical health, higher self esteem, and a dramatic increase in the percentage of youth with an adult they can rely on.

In conclusion, RIFPA's goal is to make sure policies and practices are in place to promote stability for youth every step of the way. Reaching this goal requires more than aligning program components. We need to take a holistic approach and be keenly aware of connections and consequences in policy and practice.

In doing so, many programs and services will ultimately be replaced by loving, caring and stable families.

That's a step in the right direction.

¹www.nhi.org/online/issues/125/fostercare.html



What teens want from foster parents

by Joan McAllister and Nancy Carter

Many teens in foster care are placed in group homes and residential facilities. This isn't surprising, if you consider that many families recruited to foster or adopt are not interested in teens.

But it would be wrong to assume that, based on this, there are no families interested in caring for teens, or that teens themselves don't want to live with families.

True, being a foster parent for a teenager or a young adult is very different from being a foster parent for a younger child. But for the most part the difference lies in the normal challenges of adolescent development, not in the young person's foster care status.

Teens and young adults are literally adults-in-training. They need—and want—life models, life coaches, and opportunities to develop into the people they can be.

Perhaps the real problem is that we haven't made a strong enough effort to recruit foster families specifically for teens and young adults. Who knows? Perhaps we should even ask teens to help us.

As a first step in that direction, we'd like to share with you the things some teens we know say they need in a foster parent.

Someone who will make you a part of their family.

Teens don't like to be singled out as "different." This is especially true in the foster family, where fairness is key: if a foster youth is the same age as another child in your home, she wants to be treated as the other child would be treated. If rules are different for them, the reasons should be fair. Opportunities must exist for the foster youth to earn the same privileges as other youth.

Someone who has a good attitude about being a foster parent.

While every parent has frustrating days, a successful foster parent enjoys his or her role most of the time.

Fostering teens is an opportunity to provide youths with a "toolkit" of skills that will help them survive in the real world. Having a "good attitude" means allowing youths to practice those skills—even if it means the kitchen is a mess. In fact, a messy kitchen is really an opportunity to teach cleaning and organization while reinforcing the teen's desire to make his snack. Coming home and saying "Wow, you must have enjoyed



your afternoon snack. Looks like it's time to get moving on a cleanup," can go a lot further than, "What happened to MY kitchen? You are never to use it again! Do you understand me?"

Someone who isn't "in it for the money."

It's hard to believe, but some teens think some people provide foster care for the money. Part of the problem may be that teens don't understand what things cost. While we don't recommend that foster parents constantly emphasize how much they pay out of pocket to care for the teens in their homes, taking the teen shopping for groceries, having discussions of household bills and budgets, giving the teen responsibility for purchasing some of his own necessities, etc., can help him or her get a better sense of the cost of living. This is, of course, an important life skill in itself.

Someone who shows they care about your feelings; someone who is nice, respectful, and loving.

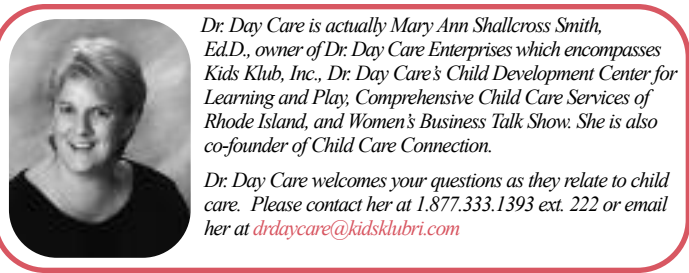
Many teens in foster care come from backgrounds in which both positive and negative emotions were often expressed in extreme, inaccurate, or inappropriate ways. Youth need to know how to express emotions appropriately. They need to feel the joy of knowing that a respected adult cares about them and how they feel. Developmentally, teens are often on a rollercoaster ride of emotions. Having someone who can model a caring, calm, and respectful response enhances teens' positive development.

Someone who sets rules but isn't obsessive about them.

Be fair about rules and guidelines. Make sure you understand why they exist and communicate those reasons clearly to teens. Developmentally, teens are trying to discern moral reasoning, so it is realistic to expect teens to ask "why?" Indeed, you should encourage them to do so. It is equally realistic to expect adults to respond appropriately, calmly, and with respect. Being overly dramatic about rules will only reinforce inappropriate ways of expression.

continued on page 5





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, and 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 drcare@kidsklubri.com

Dear Dr. Day Care,

Back to school season is a very expensive time of year for our family. Our list includes backpacks, clothes, school supplies, bus fees, school pictures and that is just the beginning! On top of everything else, our 16 year old foster son is nagging us to buy him a computer. He definitely would benefit from having a computer, but we don't have the money. He does earn a weekly allowance, but he always seems to spend it.

My husband and I feel strongly that we should teach our foster son the value of a dollar. We also want to teach him how to set a goal and achieve it. He is a good student and helps around the house. Should we just put the computer on a credit card and let him pay us back over time? Or do we simply tell him we don't have the money?

Signed,
Money Doesn't Grow on Trees

Dear Money Doesn't Grow on Trees,

September is always an expensive month for families with school age children. And with the current economic crisis household budgets are stretched even more. Your foster son's request for a computer presents a perfect opportunity to have a family discussion about money.

A Penny Saved is a Penny Earned!

First, congratulations on your desire to teach your son the value of a dollar. Ben Franklin once said "a penny saved, is a penny earned." Unfortunately, in today's society of instant gratification and mounting credit card debt, this is a lesson that is not always learned. Financial security is an important part of independence, and your son is at an ideal age to learn what money is all about. Your question is more complex than whether or not to buy a computer. Getting your son in the right lane of the financial highway at an early age may lead to smart financial choices when he is an adult. ¹

Second, I would advise against putting the computer on your credit card and letting your foster son pay you back over time. For starters, it doesn't appear he has a good track record of saving money. In addition, teenagers often think of credit cards as 'free money.' Brette Sember, author of "The Everything Kids' Money Book" says "It just looks too easy to a child when you make the purchase – they don't see all the thinking you've done to get you to the point where you do whip out the plastic."

Third, rather than telling him you can't afford it; you should use this opportunity to teach financial skills and engage him in the process.

ASPIRE is the Answer!

The Rhode Island Foster Parents Association's ASPIRE Program is the perfect solution to your problem. The financial literacy training component will teach your son crucial information such as the difference between a want and a need, banking skills, and how to save money. In addition, upon completion of the 12 hour training, he can identify an asset and commit to a savings plan. I am certain the \$1 to \$1 match will motivate him to save and help fund the new computer in no time!

Also, ASPIRE can assist him with job readiness skill development and connect him with youth centers that can help find and secure part time jobs.

In conclusion, the combination of your example and ASPIRE will lead your foster son down the right financial path. He will learn first hand that **"a dollar saved, is a dollar earned!"**

¹<http://www.preteenagerstoday.com/resources/articles/dollar.htm>



**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.





From New Providence Island to Providence, Rhode Island An Interview with RIFPA's Tara Albury:

It is no surprise that Tara Albury spent the first fourteen years of her life in the Bahamas. The moment you speak with her you experience a comfortable ease, an instant sense of belonging, much like the Bahamian Islands themselves. Caring and genuine, Tara spends much her time actively listening to and connecting with youth in care. She has a busy social life typical of a recent college graduate and loves stepping outside of her comfort zone.

Tara graduated from Providence College in 2009. She joined the RIFPA team in the spring of this year as a key member of the ASPIRE Program.

FF: How did you become interested in social work?

Tara: It's funny because I didn't even know what it was. I was a freshman at Providence College and I was talking to a hall mate about career choices. She listened to me and my interests then suggested I check out the social work department. I decided to give it a try and it has been a perfect fit.

FF: How did you get involved with RIFPA?

Tara: I interned with RICORP during my junior year and became familiar with RIFPA because the offices are in the same building. Also, the director at RICORP was helping me with my job search and she pointed me in the direction of RIFPA. To be honest, I had a completely different life plan in place and thought interviewing at RIFPA would be a good experience. I never expected to get the job offer.

FF: What was your other plan?

Tara: I planned to move to New York in the fall to live and work with my uncle who runs a youth center upstate. I also had plans to spend the summer with friends traveling and volunteering in South America. I had saved up money earned from waitressing. My plans were set.

One day, while driving with my friends to Maine; I found out I got the job at RIFPA. It was a difficult decision to make. In the end, I decided to cancel my summer plans and accept the job. My friends were very understanding. They knew this was my calling.

FF: What is your current role at RIFPA?

Tara: My role with the ASPIRE Program has many different aspects. I have a large caseload and spend time organizing cases, contacting youth, making referrals, enrolling youth... basically tying up loose ends. I also teach the financial literacy trainings on Tuesday afternoons and I am an adult supporter for the Youth Board.

FF: How do youth respond to the ASPIRE Program?

Tara: One of the biggest challenges is tracking down the youth. I'm working with a transient population of youth who move often. Once I establish contact, I am often met with nonchalance - like I'm just another caseworker in their lives. But, the dollar for dollar match gets their attention! I love letting youth know that the \$1,000 match is annual - something they can take advantage of every year they're eligible. Many youth are under the false assumption they can only get one match.

FF: What is the biggest challenge facing foster youth in RI?

Tara: Jobs. It is hard for anyone to get a job today. Imagine facing that challenge without a college degree, without transportation, and without a consistent place to call home. You could find the right job, but then the bus schedule dictates you spend two hours commuting. Or you have a job, but then are forced to move because of a personal crisis.

FF: How have youth in the ASPIRE Program made a difference in your life?

Tara: They are an inspiration. I am lucky that I can connect with youth individually. So many are in tough situations and have to jump through hoops to get from "point A to point B." I've recently had some personal issues that seem like nothing in comparison. I should never complain. It is an eye-opener seeing the daily challenges youth in care face. Youth are forced to leave their home, their parents, and their friends. They often live in group homes, with strangers as housemates and strangers as staff. Their ability to stay positive and overcome a situation is tremendous!

FF: One more question. You've lived in New Providence Island in the Bahamas and in Providence, Rhode Island... is it really "Better in the Bahamas?"

Tara: Everyone asks me that! Growing up, I always knew I would be coming to the United States for my education. It's hard to believe I have already been here for nine years. Someday, I would like to go back to the Bahamas and improve the place that I call home. It is such a small country with such huge needs. But for now I want to gain life experience, learn and grow.



continued from page 4

Someone who is a good listener.

Everyone likes to be heard. Yet teens are not known for being the “let’s sit and talk” population. In fact, they have a reputation for limiting their communication with adults.

The best way to get teens to talk to you is to involve them in something or, better yet, get involved in something they are doing. For instance, get them involved in helping with dinner. While you both have your hands busy, ask about their day. Mention a show you saw and why you think they may like it. Ask if there’s something they’ve heard about that you might find interesting.

Once you get involved with teens the communication becomes much easier, AND you learn a thing or two about their strengths and interests.

Someone who believes “real love” can overcome many struggles.

Does anyone really know what “real love” is? Maybe this is a starting point for a dinner conversation. There’s no right or wrong answer, so the person asking for “real love” is the only one who can define it. Typical responses may include “loving me even when I do the wrong thing,” “will never leave me,” “someone I can’t wait to see each day,” etc.

The real message in this statement is, “I need hope that things will be better.” Young people in foster care continue to seek hope in a better day, a better time, a better age—something better than what is available to them right now.

Real love offers real hope. And with real hope a young person can get through today and reach for tomorrow. Foster parents can offer that hope and give young people a reason to reach for tomorrow.

Joan McAllister coordinates the NC LINKS program for the NC Division of Social Services. Nancy Carter is the Executive Director of ILR, Inc.

Reprinted with permission, from Fostering Perspectives (Vol. 12, No. 1, Nov. 2007). www.fosteringperspectives.org. Copyright ©2006 Jordan Institute for Families.

Site of the Month

Looking for a Job?

If you are a youth looking for a job be sure to check out the RI Department of Labor and Training's Youth Portal - **YouthWORKS411**

It's the fast track to education, training and employment opportunities in the Ocean State.

Take a look at
www.dlt.ri.gov/youthworks411/

H1N1

Emergency Management Plan

WHAT?

Help Rhode Island develop a mass email list, mass text list, and phone trees in order to prepare for the upcoming flu-season

WHO?

ALL FOSTER PARENTS

HOW?

Call Linda at the Association (401.438.3900 x100) with your name, cell phone number and email address

WHEN?

TODAY!

RI Foster Care FACTS

In January 2009:

- There were **745** children ages **14-17** in care
- Over **60%** of these teens were placed in non-family settings (i.e., group homes, residential facilities, medical facilities or shelter care)
- In contrast, during this same time only **7%** of foster children age **0 to 5** and **27%** of foster children age **6 to 13** were placed in non-family settings



Real Connections: Adult Mentor Training

October 21 from 6:30pm – 8:30pm
October 24 from 10:00am – 2:00pm

November 18 from 6:30pm – 8:30pm
November 21 from 10:00am – 2:00pm

Please join us for our next two-day training session to learn about becoming a mentor to a teen in care.

Trainings held at the RI Foster Parents Association, East Providence. To register or for further questions, please contact Emily Buckbee at 401.438.3900 x103 or Emily.buckbee@rifpa.org

Fall 2009 Adoption & Foster Care Certificate Workshops

October 16 *Clinical and Medical Implications of International Adoptions*

November 6 *Meeting the Needs and Addressing Service Gaps for LGBTQ Youth & Families in Adoption and Foster Care*

November 20 *Ethical Issues in Adoption (Admission Free)*

A RI College School of Social Work certificate program with CEU's that provides advanced clinical training for working with families and children whose lives are touched by issues in foster care and adoption. You can take any workshop in the program, even if you do not want to earn a certificate and are not a mental health professional.

Registration required. Contact Betsy Singer Cable at 401.456.4625 or bcable@RIC.edu

Parents Helping Parents Support Group Bradley Hospital

October 8 from 6:30pm – 8:00pm at Bradley Hospital, East Providence

Support group for parents, families and others concerned about children with emotional, behavioral, or developmental challenges. Parents Helping Parents is free, open to the public and held on the second Thursday of each month in the Pine Room.

To register or for more information call Chris Brown at 401.432.1205

Individualized Education Program (IEP): A Blueprint for Success (Pre-school – Elementary)

October 6 from 6:30pm – 8:30pm in Pawtucket*

Each public school child who receives special education and related services must have an IEP designed to meet his/her unique needs. The IEP creates an opportunity for parents and school staff to work together to improve educational results for children with disabilities. This workshop provides an overview of IEP components as well as a walkthrough of RI's newly designed IEP form.

*Registration is required two weeks in advance. Details of location provided upon registration. To register, contact Suzanne Tobin at 401.727.4144 x123 or Tobin@ripin.org

A Rhode Island Parent Information Network Workshop

Preparing Teens & Young Adults for Healthcare Transition

November 2 from 7:00pm – 9:00pm in North Kingstown*

All young adults have healthcare needs. This workshop is a framework for parents and others to help young people with special health care needs transition to the adult system. Participants are provided with information on what healthcare transition is, why it is important and strategies for success.

*Registration is required two weeks in advance. Details of location provided upon registration. To register, contact Suzanne Tobin at 401.727.4144 x123 or Tobin@ripin.org

A Rhode Island Parent Information Network Workshop

DCYF Adoption & Foster Care Information Night

September 30 from 6:30pm-8:00pm at
DCYF Region 3 Office in North Kingstown

Do you have a lot of questions about adopting a RI child who is in state care? Are you trying to decide whether it's right for you? Would you like to begin the adoption process? If the answer is yes to any of these questions, please join us.

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



Hair & Skin Care for African American & Biracial Children

September 28 from 6:00 – 8:30pm at Independence Square, 500 Prospect Street, Pawtucket

Are you the foster or adoptive parent of an African American or Biracial child? Are you struggling with the proper way to care for their skin and/or hair? Maybe you just want some new pointers on skin and hair care. If so, please join us for an informational session and demonstrations.

For further information or to register call Bernie Hicks at Adoption RI, 401.865.6000.

Participants will receive two and a half hours in-service training credit!

Sponsored by the Adoption & Foster Care Task Force and its Member Agencies

From Foster Care to Adoption

October 5 *Clinical Issues*
October 19 *Open Adoption Issues*
October 26 *Subsidy Issues*

From 6:00pm – 8:30pm at Independence Square, 500 Prospect Street, Pawtucket

Are you a foster parent who is deciding whether to adopt your foster child? Are you a pre-adoptive family waiting to finalize? What do you need to know? What is the adoption process? How is adoptive care different from foster care? Many issues need to be considered when families move from foster to adoptive care. Presenters will discuss many of these issues, particularly those that relate to connections with birth families, "normal crises" that adoptive children may face, ongoing psychological and educational issues, and issues related to adoption subsidies and medical insurance.

For further information or to register call Bernie Hicks at Adoption RI, 401.865.6000.

Participants will receive two and a half hours in-service training credit!

Sponsored by the Adoption & Foster Care Task Force and its Member Agencies

ASPIRE Training Schedule

Take part in the ASPIRE Financial Literacy Training (formerly known as JCYOI), and upon completion youth 14-24 are eligible to receive up to \$1,000 a year in dollar for dollar matched savings toward approved purchases.

October 6, 13, 20 & 27: Tuesdays from 4:00pm –7:00pm

November 3, 10, 17, 24: Tuesdays from 4:00pm –7:00pm

Trainings held at Providence Cranston Youth Center at One Reservoir Ave, Providence (Network RI Building). Youth must attend the 4 sequential training sessions in either month.

Referral forms can be found online at <http://www.rifpa.org/files/aspire-referral-form.pdf> or contact Tara Albury at 401.438.3900 x109

Represent Teen Writing Contest

Represent is a national magazine written by and for young people in foster care. The magazine is written by a core staff of 30 teens in NYC. However, Represent also publishes stories, poems, and essays from teens across the country. Here is your chance to be heard and win cash! Any current or former foster youth age 21 or under can enter.

First Prize: \$150. Second Prize: \$100. Third Prize: \$50

Deadline: November 1, 2009

Represent Contest Question #98:

Imagine President Obama has chosen you to be his top adviser on foster care reform (improving the system). Write him a letter describing the three most important things that should be done to make foster care better, and why.

Fax or email your essay to: 212-279-8856 or Representmail@youthcomm.org. Include your first and last name and address.

