



Fostering Across Wisconsin

Volume 1, Issue 1

Welcome!

Welcome to the first edition of *Fostering Across Wisconsin*, a publication of the Foster Care and Adoption Resource Center. The goal of *Fostering Across Wisconsin* is to provide information about foster care and special needs adoption resources; spotlight current issues or events related to foster care and adoption; and develop a forum to share positive stories from foster and adoptive families, youth, and staff throughout Wisconsin. We plan to distribute this newsletter four times a year in February, May, August and November. We hope you enjoy our first issue, and thanks for all you do for the foster care and adoption programs in our state. For more information, visit our web site at www.wifostercareandadoption.org

What is the Foster Care and Adoption Resource Center?

Championed by Governor Doyle as part of his KidsFirst Initiative, the Foster Care and Adoption Resource Center (FCARC) serves as a centralized statewide resource for information about foster care and adoption in Wisconsin. The Resource Center has recruitment tools, information about training opportunities, best practice ideas, and videos, books, articles, and other research about topics important to foster and adoptive families. Services and information provided by staff at the Resource Center are available to anyone involved with or interested in learning more about foster care and adoption.

Who are the staff?

The Resource Center has four staff – a Program Manager, a Resource Librarian, and two regional Resource Specialists. **Oriana Carey, Project Manager**, and **Linda Kuzma, Resource Librarian**, work out of the Adoption Resources of Wisconsin office in Milwaukee. **Barbara Utschig Brown**, the **Resource Specialist** who serves the Northeastern, Southern and Southeastern regions of the state, works out of the St. Aemilian-Lakeside office in Sheboygan.

Michael Heath, the **Resource Specialist** who is responsible for the Western and North Central

regions of the state, works out of PATH Wisconsin's office in Eau Claire.

What can the Resource Center do for you?

The Resource Center provides the following services:

- A toll free information line at **1-800-947-8074**. Hours are between 8:00 a.m. and 9:00 p.m. Monday through Friday and 9:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. on Saturday.
- A website at: www.wifostercareandadoption.org
- Information about becoming a foster or adoptive parent.
- A resource lending library containing books, videos, articles, trends and best practices in foster care and adoption, lists of support groups or associations, and other topics.
- Outreach activities through attendance at conferences, foster care coordinator meetings, foster and adoptive parent support meetings, foster and adoptive parent training sessions, and meetings with tribes throughout the state.
- Recruitment resources and activities
- Links to training opportunities and resources
- *Fostering Across Wisconsin* newsletter.



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More Information about the Foster Care and Adoption Resource Center...

1. What would I call the 1-800 number about?

There have been some questions about why a foster parent, adoptive parent, or professional would call the Resource Center. The Resource Center staff are here to answer questions, find publications or videos about specific topics, connect you with foster parents or other professionals in your area, and provide other information you might need. The toll-free phone number is answered by social work professionals from 8:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. Monday through Friday and from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. on Saturdays. However, we are not crisis workers or mediators, so our staff may refer you back to your agency or local after-hours emergency number if you need specific or immediate help.

2. How do I use the Resource Library?

A link to some of our library resources can be found on our website at www.wifostercareandadoption.org under the resources tab. If you are not an Internet user or simply want to discuss our materials with us, call us at 1-800-947-8074. We can either suggest some specific resources or send you a library listing in the mail. We currently coordinate library requests by phone but hope to have the capacity to facilitate on-line requests in the near future. Every person who uses the library is required to fill out a library registration form and sign guidelines for borrowing materials. The postage is free both ways, but we do appreciate donations to help us pay for postage.

As a part of the check-out process, we request a credit card number to make sure that materials – especially the more expensive ones – get returned to us. Your information is kept in a locked file and only used if, after SEVERAL reminders, you have not returned an item to us. We encourage you to use the library and make continued suggestions for items for us to add.

3. Can I visit the Resource Center?

Yes, we welcome visitors to our offices. Adoption Resources of Wisconsin offices in Milwaukee are open from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Thursday and 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. on Fridays. If you wish to visit either the Eau Claire or Sheboygan offices, we recommend calling in advance since our regional Resource Specialists are often traveling. Resource Center staff can also make themselves available at support groups or other meetings to talk about our services. We want the Foster Care and Adoption Resource Center to be available to reach foster and adoptive families and agencies throughout the state. So come visit us, or we will gladly come to you.

4. What if I have suggestions or recommendations for the Resource Center?

We are always looking for input from those who use the Foster Care and Adoption Resource Center. Call or e-mail any comments or concerns to Oriana Carey, Project Manager, at 1-800-947-8074 or ocarey@wiadopt.org

Our Recommendation...

Maybe Days

By Jennifer Wilgocki and Marcia Kahn
This book was designed for foster parents to read with children in foster care, with a focus on children aged 4–10 years old. It addresses the thoughts, feelings and concerns foster children most often face. It provides basic information that children want and need to know, including the roles of various people in the foster care system and whom to ask for help. It is available for check-out through our library or at many bookstores for under \$9.



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Other Partners in the Project – the Post Adoption Resource Centers

The State of Wisconsin has five Post Adoption Resource Centers (PARCs) located throughout the state that serve families who have adopted children. The Foster Care and Adoption Resource Center partners with the PARCs to provide accurate information and training opportunities for families who have questions about adopting a child. Services offered by the PARCs include support groups, conferences, retreats and picnics, books and other resources in public libraries, information on the Internet, assistance in locating medical resources, and individual support and counseling. By connecting with the PARCs, the Foster Care and Adoption Resource Center is able to locate and provide many more resources related to foster care or adoption from the child welfare system that may be of interest to you. We have listed contact information for the five Post-Adoption Resource Centers below.

Northeastern Region:

Family Services of NE Wisconsin, Inc.
Green Bay
Toll Free: 800-998-9609

Andrea Huss: 920-436-4360, ext. 1264
Website: www.familyservicesnew.org

Northern Region:

Catholic Charities Diocese of LaCrosse
Stevens Point
Toll Free: 866-344-2500

Mary Grossnickle (Stevens Point): 715-344-2500
Pam Hawkins (Superior): 715-394-6617
Website: www.friendsofadoption.org

Southeastern Region & Milwaukee County:

Adoption Resources of Wisconsin
Milwaukee
Toll Free: 800-762-8063

Leann Meiners: 414-475-1246
Website: www.wiadopt.org

Southern Region:

Catholic Charities Diocese of Madison
Madison
Toll Free: 888-485-7385

Angela Bahr: 608-833-4800
Website: www.catholiccharitiesofmadison.org

Western Region:

Catholic Charities Diocese of LaCrosse
Eau Claire
Toll Free: 800-227-3002 (608 and 715 area codes only)

Mary Barnes: 715-832-6644
Website: www.friendsofadoption.org

Resources for Foster Youth

Did you know that there are groups and resources that exist specifically for foster youth? The information on the websites below provides critical connections for foster youth to help them network with other foster youth and share their experiences. Much of the information on the websites is also useful for foster parents and professionals to help them understand what it is like to be a foster child and what foster children want to know about their history, their time in foster care, and you. Please visit the following web sites or contact us for information about resources designed specifically for youth.

* Foster Club – featuring one of Wisconsin's own former foster youth Bregetta Wilson

<http://www.fosterclub.com>

* Teen Central

<http://www.teencentral.net/>

* Youth Communication

<http://www.youthcomm.org/>

We want to hear from Wisconsin's youth!

Please let the youth you work with know that we are looking for drawings, poems, thoughts, or other creative expressions they have about their experiences in foster care or adoption. Send submissions to our office or email:

info@wifostercareandadoption.org.



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Foster Parent Support Resources in Wisconsin:

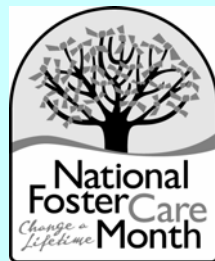
Foster parents often say that the best resources are other foster parents. Below we have included information about foster and adoptive parent associations that exist to help other foster parents.

A key statewide association for foster parents is the Wisconsin Foster and Adoptive Parent Association (WFAPA). WFAPA has a website, assists with the creation of local chapters, publishes a quarterly newsletter, hosts two conferences annually, and works hard to support and advocate for the needs of foster and adoptive families. The WFAPA website is: www.wfapa.org

At a national level, there is the National Foster Parent Association (NFPA) which has a website with a large amount of information and resource links. The NFPA website is www.nfpainc.org. Their phone is 1-253-853-4000 or 1-800-557-5238.

There are other additional support groups, associations, and resources available in Wisconsin. If you give us a call, we can locate these resources for you.

May is National Foster Care Month. The Foster Care and Adoption Resource Center will be highlighting more about this in May's issue. For more information prior to May visit the website at fostercaremonth.org.



Tax Time

As April approaches, we want to provide you with resources that can help answer questions you may have about filing taxes as a foster or adoptive parent. At the Resource Center, we have copies of documents we can send to you, so please contact us. We also suggest the following websites:

National Foster Parent Association (NFPA):
<http://www.nfpainc.org/ref/taxes.cfm>

North American Council on Adoptable Children
www.nacac.org/pub_taxcredit.html

Internal Revenue Service: www.irs.gov/taxtopics

School Days:

As we approach the spring, we thought it helpful to remind those families whose foster and adoptive children have special educational needs that now is the time to start working with the school regarding next year's plans.

Please feel free to call us for more information or use the following links:

- Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction: 1-800-441-4563 or www.dpi.state.wi.us
- WI FACETS: www.wifacets.org
- Wisconsin Coalition for Advocacy: www.w-c-a.org
- US Department of Education: www.ed.gov/index.html

Foster Care and Adoption Resource Center

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