



Fostering Across Wisconsin

Volume 1, Issue 2



Celebrating National Foster Care Month

In celebration of National Foster Care Month, the Foster Care and Adoption Resource Center would like to begin this issue with a note of appreciation to all the foster families who have offered their hearts, home, and time over the past year.

Throughout the first year of the Foster Care and Adoption Resource Center's existence, we have had the pleasure and opportunity to meet and serve many dedicated foster families from across the state. We know that many times the only thing we can offer is a person willing to listen, but please know that we take your voices and concerns and share them with those in positions to make changes in foster care policies and practices.

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In addition to hearing from foster families directly, we have also had the opportunity to hear from county, tribal, and private agency case workers that interact with foster families regularly. We want you to know that there is a great level of appreciation for all that foster families do and continue to be asked to do.

Here are some examples of the impressive things we heard about foster families in Wisconsin...

- Taking in a foster child or children at 4:59 p.m. on a Friday with little notice or information.
- Driving children more than 100 miles one-way for dental or mental health care services.
- Providing transportation for and assisting with complicated family interaction schedules.
- Participating in many meetings with multiple professionals and birth families while trying to provide a safe and stable home environment.
- Hanging in there and working through problems with the foster children in your home on really tough days when you may have considered quitting.

Your hard work and dedication does not go unnoticed. In fact, we all know that we could not provide the safety and stability children who come into care need without dedicated and caring foster parents.

**THANK YOU FOR FOSTERING WISCONSIN'S
CHILDREN!!!**



Fostering Across Wisconsin

Journey Home to Clark County The journey begins on May 12th, 2006...

“Journey Home to Clark County” was created to increase awareness and emphasize the need for foster care providers. As participants travel along this interactive and educational journey guided by child welfare staff, they will have the unique opportunity to view the experience of being in foster care through the eyes of a foster child.

Participants will learn about the foster care program in the Clark County Department of Social Services and how social workers and the Juvenile Court System provide supportive and protective services for youth and families who reside in Clark County.

“It’s important for community people to know what our children go through when abuse occurs in their life and for them to know that there are excellent people working to keep our children safe, everyone from our courts to our clinics. Foster/adoptive parents truly are ‘angels’ and those who do this job answer many people’s prayers.”

~ Wendy Harter, Social Worker

Dedicated, devoted foster parents are the key ingredient to the success of foster care. The “Journey Home to Clark County” project will highlight the importance of and the continuing need for foster parents. This special program will also dispell the negative stereotypes that are often attributed to youth in care.

Communities like Clark County and others throughout Wisconsin owe a great deal of thanks to foster parents who are committed to enriching and empowering the children and youth who are entrusted to their care.

For additional information, please contact Tammy Karlen, Foster Care Coordinator for Clark County Department of Social Services at: (715) 743-5233.

Other Foster Care Month Events Across the State

Throughout the state, foster care agencies and foster parent associations are planning events to recognize National Foster Care Month.

Some agencies this year are hosting ribbon tying ceremonies to represent the number of foster children in that county, tribe or agency. Other agencies host recognition dinners, brunches, or picnics. Below are examples of events that were shared with us.

Winnebago County

- Ribbon Tying Ceremony

Portage County:

- Ribbon Ceremony
- Appreciation Event with Local Elks

Sauk County (Children’s Service Society)

- Annual Appreciation Banquet for Foster Families and Foster Children

Rock County

- Second Annual Ribbon Tying Ceremony
- Solicitation of local businesses to offer discounts to foster families during May

Ozaukee County

- Appreciation Letter to Foster Families
- Community Signs Acknowledging the Contribution of Foster Families

Many other events have been organized state wide. Contact your foster care coordinator for information about events in your area, or contact us at 1-800- 947-8074 or www.wifostercareandadoption.org.



Fostering Across Wisconsin

In celebration of National Foster Care Month, we looked for positive stories about foster care. Below is an excerpt from a story written by a foster brother for a 5th grade English assignment. Jacob is a talented young writer, and his story highlights some of the positive effects fostering can have on the family.

Sensational Sisters By Jacob Scobey-Polacheck

In the past year and a half, my parents have had five kids, but now there are only three. Know why? It's because I have one brother and had three foster sisters. Our family adopted one of the foster children.

Our first foster child was a little girl who was 14 months old. She loved blocks, and could crawl as fast as a rabbit. She stayed for only two weeks and went to her grandma's house with her three brothers and sisters. Our next little foster girl was the same age. She learned to walk and talk at our house. She stayed with us for over a year. She never really learned to talk whole sentences, though. The best she could say would be like, "I wa eat." After a while, her dad did the stuff he needed to do to have her. He took classes and he promised he would be a good parent. After she visited him for a few days, she was given to him. When she left I was so sad. She had been part of the family, and I loved her so much!

Our third and final (for now) foster child had been in foster care for a year and was one and a half when she came to our house. She became our foster child in October of 2004, and then, in January of 2005, our family figured out she needed to be adopted. So, on April 28, 2005, we went to Children's Court to adopt her. The judge asked my mom and dad loads of questions and asked the social worker questions, too. She also asked Liam (my brother) and me questions, and we read our welcome letters to our sister. At the end of the time in court, the judge asked Liam and me to come up with her to the bench. She whispered to us to hit the gavel and declare, "This adoption is final!" I was very excited and relieved. Afterwards, the judge gave Liam and me Harley Davidson art kits and our sister a Harley Davidson teddy bear.

I am so glad that my parents participated in the foster care program. I still wish my other foster sisters were in my family too, but I'm satisfied with the brother and sister I have right now. Who knows? I might get another foster brother or sister.

Recommended Resources

In his story, Jacob shares his sense of loss when his foster sisters were reunited with their families. The Foster Care and Adoption Resource Center has the following books to help children cope with issues of grief and loss:

- *Helping Children Cope with Separation and Loss* by Claudia Jewett
- *Thirsty Moves to a Foster Home* by Kathleen Olmstead
- *Finding the Right Spot – When Kids Can't Live with Their Parents* by Janice Levy
- *Nathan's Sometimes Excellent Adventure* – Douglas Califano
- *The Star – A Story to Help Young Children Understand Foster Care* – Cynthia Miller Lovell

The following resources are also available:

- National Adoption Information Clearinghouse (NAIC) - The Sibling Bond: It's Importance in Foster Care and Adoptive Placement
http://naic.acf.hhs.gov/pubs/f_siblin.cfm
- Helping Foster Parents Cope with Separation, Loss and Grief. By Edelstein, S.B., Burge, D. and Waterman, J. Child Welfare 2001.
- "Why Separate Siblings?" and "Affects of Attachment and Separation: Helping a Child Through a Permanent Solution" Children's Services Practice Notes, Vol. 2 No 4.
http://ssw.unc.edu/fcrp/Cspn/vol2_no4/why_separate_siblings.htm

For additional information, call Linda Kuzma, Resource Librarian at 1-800-947-8074



Fostering Across Wisconsin

Focus on 56 – Foster Parent Insurance

As required in s. 56.04(4)(a)9.b., Adm. Code, licensing agencies must provide all foster parent applicants with a brochure that explains the Foster Parent Insurance Program. Foster parents are required to have homeowner's or renter's insurance as stated in s. 56.04(4)(a)2. Adm. Rule; however, sometimes homeowner's insurance may not cover certain damages. The Foster, Treatment Foster and Family-Operated Group Home Insurance Program was established in s. 48.627, Stats. to help reimburse a foster family's damage or loss caused by foster children that is not covered by private insurance.

It is very important to contact your licensing worker right away after your family experiences loss or damage caused by a foster child, either on purpose or by accident. Taking pictures is a good idea, too, to show proof of the damage.

The Foster Parent Insurance program brochure explains further details of the program. To obtain a copy of the brochure, contact your licensing worker or the Foster Care and Adoption Resource Center.

Check It Out!

The Foster Care and Adoption Resource Center website is in the process of upgrading from its original format!

There are still many pieces of the site that are under construction, so be sure to check it out regularly for information, resources and support for you and your family.

www.wifostercareandadoption.org

Foster Parent Support Resources in Wisconsin

We encourage foster parents to find and utilize supportive resources to help them with the challenges of fostering. The following listings include foster parent associations available to foster parents in Wisconsin.

A key statewide association for foster parents in Wisconsin 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. To find out more about WFAPA, visit their website at 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 support groups, associations and resources available in Wisconsin in addition to these listed. If you give us a call at 1-800-947-8074, we can locate others for you.

Summer Activities

Need something for your kids to be involved with this summer? There are a host of resources and activities available to parents and kids at the Resource Center. If you'd like more information, give us a call or drop us an e-mail.

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