

Advocate

News for Chicago Metro Area Foster Parents

Support Groups Help Grandparents Raising Grandchildren

Grandparents raising their grandchildren is an occurrence that is becoming more common and more challenging. The circumstances that render it necessary for grandparents to fill the gap are often unplanned and unpleasant. For the families of grandparents raising their grandchildren, there are resources to address the unique dynamics of this special situation. The Illinois Department on Aging has formed 66 support groups in Cook County and across the state, and more are coming this year.

Support groups:

- Offer emotional support to grandparents who may feel alone and isolated.
- Create a network of grandparents who are also raising their grandchildren.
- Offer guidance assistance and advice to grandparents.
- Give grandparents ideas and new ways of handling challenging circumstances.
- Offer information and resources.
- Provide advocacy tools to raise awareness about issues facing grandparents raising their grandchildren.
- Offer a safe place for grandparents to discuss the stresses and successes that go along with raising their grandchildren.



Resources:

Illinois Task Force on Grandparents Raising Grandchildren

c/o Illinois Department on Aging
412 E. Capitol #100
Springfield, IL 62701-1789
Senior HelpLine
800/252-8966

AARP Grandparent Information Center

601 E. Street N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20049
202/434-2296

Grandparents can experience a range of emotions from anger to guilt. They face issues such as educational obstacles, negative interactions with their adult children or the behavioral problems of their grandchildren. The support groups let people know that they are not alone and that there are others working through the same things successfully.

“Most grandparents never asked for this. But they do this out of a tremendous love for their grandchildren,” said Barbara Schwartz, coordinator of the Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Program for the Illinois Department on Aging.

Despite the differing circumstances that bring their grandchildren to them, Schwartz notices a common thread among grandparents. They are all parenting again with the hope that it is only a temporary situation and that their adult child will be able to take back the reins. Meanwhile, support groups can help everyone in the family work through a tough time.

For a copy of the booklet “Starting Points for Grandparents Raising Grandchildren” or for a listing of support groups in your area call the Illinois Department on Aging Senior HelpLine 800/252-8966.

Wednesday's Child Celebrates its First Birthday

In its first year on air, the Wednesday's Child broadcast on NBC5 brought to television the real lives of more than 58 children waiting for adoption. These children got to tell their stories in a sensitive and engaging way with the help of host Allison Rosati, a former foster child.



Dion received more than 30 inquiries after he appeared with host Allison Rosati.

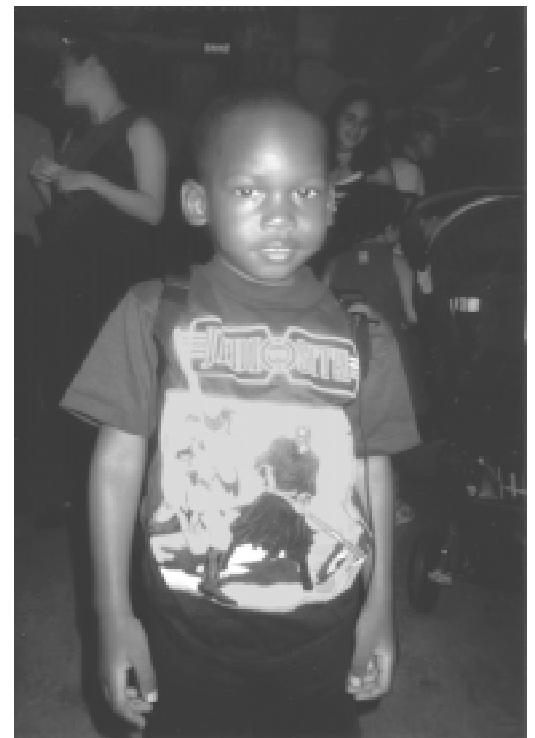
DCFS Wednesday's Child Program Coordinator Bridgette Glickman can testify to the impact and the reach that television can have. In its inaugural year, the broadcast prompted 433 telephone calls and 166 website inquiries.

The weekly segment, which airs during the 6:00 p.m. Wednesday newscast and at 6:00 a.m. on Sundays, features the children who have been waiting the longest and are the toughest to place. Older children, sibling sets and children with special needs have all been highlighted on Wednesday's Child with much success.

At its anniversary this summer, 21 children or 36.8% of those featured on Wednesday's Child since July 1999, had moved toward permanency:

- ♥ 1 child's adoption was completed
- ♥ 11 children were placed for adoption
- ♥ 7 children started pre-placement visits
- ♥ 2 children will be adopted by their current foster parents

The Wednesday's Child Program continues to have a positive effect on adoptive home recruitment. The segment consistently prompts inquiries from licensed families, families interested in becoming licensed, and those seeking information on adoption. Two families have become licensed to adopt as a result of the Wednesday's Child Program and many others are continuing through the process.



Jarquize is with a new family found through Wednesday's Child

Children Waiting for Adoption in Cook County



Cook County Listed Children: 1008

Gender

Males: 592 (59%)
Females: 416 (41%)

Race

African American: 929 (92%)
Caucasian: 31 (3%)
Latino: 44 (4%)
Other: 4 (<1%)

Age

0-5 192 (19%)
6 - 11 636 (63%)
12+ 180 (18%)

Legal Status


Parental Rights Terminated: 414 (41%)
Termination Pending: 594 (59%)

Sibling Information


447 (44%) are members of 241 sibling groups and wish to be adopted together

Sibling groups of two children: 179
Sibling groups of three children: 47
Sibling groups of four children: 13
Sibling groups of five children: 2

Source: Adoption Information Center of Illinois, 10/2000



Wednesday's
Child



Leanna's adoption was completed in July after she appeared on Wednesday's Child.

Foster Parent Appreciation Day

Cook North caseworkers, supervisors, administrators and foster parent support specialists were asked to submit the names of foster parents who they thought were doing an exceptional job for the region's children. The region received many nominations. Award winners were selected by a panel that included licensing, caseworkers, supervisors and foster parents. Unfortunately, we could not give all of the nominees an award, but all received a certificate and honorable mention!

FOSTER PARENT APPRECIATION DAY AWARD WINNERS

PLAQUES

ANTIONETTE ANANIA
ANTHONY ARNOLD
GARY & JUDY BERMAN
KATHLEEN BOLDUAN & TERRY TINCHER
MARYANN BROWNSTEIN
RAQUEL & DAVID CICHY
REGINA & GARY CORKILL
RUTH DABNEY
CAROL DURAN
EILEEN FRAZIER
BESSIE GRANT
KATIE GREEN



Judy Berman congratulates a surprised Mary Hopkins on receiving her award



Flossie Smith proudly shows off her raffle prize

MARY HOPKINS
YOLANDA KEITH
SUSAN & KIERAN KIRBY
CHARLES KRIKORIAN & KATHLEEN RUSSELL
GILBERTO & MARIE MARTINEZ
ELEANOR & EDMOND MIX
JACALYN & JAMES NURNBERG
SHIRLEY OSBORN
GLORIA & LARRY
PATTERSON
BRIAN & ANNETTE
RICHTER
WILLIAM & GLORIA
RUTH
LUIS & AIDA SOBERAL
KAREN THARP
PATRICIA WILBORN
MARY LEWIS-ZAJDEL
& STANLEY ZAJDEL



Workers, administrators and foster parents all enjoyed good food, entertainment and company

Foster Parent Appreciation Day



The region also took time to show their appreciation to our Cook North Foster Parent Support Specialists (first row l-r) Edith Cruz, Mattie Brown, Idalyia Jones, Kathy Bilbo, Molly Donohue, (second row l-r) Donsetta Blakely, Crystal Perdue and Jack Myles. Awards were also given in absentia to Desi Benbenek & Karen Callahan

HONORABLE MENTION CERTIFICATES

MARY BOWDEN
CONCITTA BROWN
THERESA BRYANT
ANDREW BUTLER
PAULA FERGUSON
DEBRA GADSON
JENELLE HENDRIX
ALICE HICKMAN
ANNIE HURN

LAURA JONES
NORMA LAWRENCE
ARETHA McGHEE
ERMA MINOR
PAM PADUCH
DONNA QUINLAN
DORA RICHARDSON
DARLENE SIMS
KIMBERLY WATSON



Foster Parents proudly show off their awards (left-right) Kathy Russell & Charles Krikorian*, Katie Bolduan & Terry Tincher*, Antoinette Anania, Mary Zjadial-Lewis and Gary & Judy Berman

*not pictured



LAN Cluster Supervisors (l-r) Carolyn Griggs, Dorothy Jarrett and Peggy Bosell

Up Close in LAN 40...

DCFS Local Area Network (LAN 40) serves the Evanston Township community. The monthly steering committee meetings occur the 4th Tuesday of every month, at 8:30 a.m. at Evanston High School.

DCFS Presentation

On November 14, 2000 from 9:00 a.m. until noon, the Cook North Region will meet with the LAN to discuss resources and services from the Department of Children and Family Services. The LAN is interested in hearing more information on how the region operates and learning about the different divisions within the region. This meeting will occur at Evanston High School located at 1600 Dodge Avenue in Evanston. We encourage foster parents who want to meet regional staff or who are also interested in learning more about the region to attend this meeting. For more information, please contact either Peggy Bosell at (773) 866-5706 or Tarsha Walton at (312) 328-2481.

Resource for Youth Services

Y.O.U., otherwise known as Youth Organizations Umbrella, is an agency located in Evanston that provides community-based youth services. This includes tutoring, parent education/training and counseling. They are also the DCFS contracted agency that provides placement stabilization services to DCFS or private agency foster families in Evanston when they are in crisis and there is a risk of placement disruption. Referrals for the Placement Stabilization Program can be made by contacting the Placement Stabilization Hotline or by contacting Alison Kramme at Y.O.U. at (847) 866-1200. Y.O.U. is there for you!

New Foster Parent Advisory Board Officers

| | |
|----------------|-----------------|
| President | Belinda Coleman |
| Vice President | Jerry Welenc |
| Secretary | Louisa Flowers |

For information on the Foster Parent Council or to reach the officers, call 773/292-7879

DCFS joins the Latino Book and Family Festival

DCFS took the recruitment message out to the community once again. Staff had an information booth at the Edward James Olmos "Chicago Latino Book & Family Festival". The fair was held on Saturday, November 11, from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. and Sunday, November 12, from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. at Sportsman's Park, 3301 S. Laramie Ave., Cicero.

Cook Central Region staff was on hand to answer questions and share information about foster parenting and adoption within the Latino community.



Congratulations to Special Olympian *Priscilla Russ*

Priscilla Russ, 16, is a foster child with a proven track record for winning. This summer, she won two medals in the Special Olympics competition in Chicago. Priscilla placed third in the standing long jump and ran away with the first prize in the 100 meter run.

Priscilla qualified for the state competition held at Illinois State University. There she took home another gold medal for finishing first in the 100 meter run.

This active youth is a student at Northside Learning Center, where she also participates in the glee club and the choir. For three years, foster mom Shirley Stewart has been Priscilla's biggest fan. Congratulations to both of them for this Gold Medal accomplishment.



Cook South's New Program Manager



Foster parents have someone new to turn to when things get tough. Cook South welcomed our new Program Manager, Lorne Garrett, on August 1, 2000. In that role, his responsibilities include oversight of the case workers, their supervisors and field service managers. When you've gone through all the channels and feel you are at the end of the line, Lorne Garrett is ready to step in to help resolve the issue.

Garrett, who has a Masters in Guidance and Counseling, brings to this position experience from the private sector as well as his experience with the Department of Children and Family Services. He started work at the Department in 1993 as a Child Welfare Specialist I. He has worked as a Child Welfare Specialist II and III. He was a supervisor of a follow-up team prior to becoming a Field Service Manager for our Cook North region. He held the position of Field Service Manager for two and a half years before being selected a program manager.

Garrett states that he looks forward to working with the Cook South staff, the foster parents and the Cook South partner agencies toward the well being of our children and families. He sees his role as collaborative and supportive of the other managers at Cook South, as well as the other support staff. He is glad to have the opportunity to work with the staff and foster parents of Cook South.

Timothy Snowden, Cook South Regional Administrator, states that Garrett accomplished a lot in his previous position as Field Service Manager. As our new Program Manager, he feels that Garrett's "leadership, organizational skills and commitment to public service" will be an asset to the management team here at Cook South.

Health Extravaganza 2000

To help children prepare to start school in good health, the Cook South Region held an all day Health Extravaganza at the office at 6201 S. Emerald. The purpose of this event was to provide foster parents and birth parents an opportunity to bring their children's medical records up to date.

This was a Quality Improvement activity developed by the DCFS office staff.

The event was sponsored by Southside Health Consortium Healthworks of Cook County and co-sponsors, Managed Care Dental Systems, the Illinois Eye Institute of Chicago, Englewood District Health Council and the Department of Children and Family Services (Cook South's clinical unit).

Medical doctors and Health Care Specialists provided health information, health screenings and free

immunizations. The atmosphere was fun and festive with food, entertainment, games and raffles. The children who participated were rewarded with toys after their checkups. For the foster parents and parents, there was also a workshop on zero to three early intervention.



More than 100 children and parents attended the health fair including foster parents and families from the Englewood community. Although the children were not as happy as their parents were about getting immunizations and visual and hearing screenings, they did enjoy the fun and entertainment.

Many community parents asked that DCFS coordinate this event again. The sponsors were pleased with the success and are considering future events.

Cook County Training Calendar

FosterPRIDE In-Service Training Call 312-553-5829 or -5830

All licensed foster parents and adoptive parents are welcome to attend any or all of the PRIDE In-Service Training offerings to enhance their skills and meet yearly training requirements.

Module 1 - The Foundation for Meeting the Developmental Needs of Children
(Four 3-hour sessions = 12 training hours)

Module 2 - Using Discipline to Protect and Nurture
(Three 3-hour sessions = 9 training hours)

Module 3 - Addressing Developmental Issues Related to Sexuality (One 3-hour session = 3 training hours)

Module 4 - Responding to the Signs and Symptoms of Sexual Abuse (Two 3-hour sessions = 6 training hours)

Module 5 - Supporting Relationships Between Children and Their Families (Three 3-hour sessions = 9 training hours)

Module 6 - Working as a Professional Team Member
(Three 3-hour sessions = 9 training hours)

Module 7 - Promoting Children's Personal and Cultural Identity (Two 3-hour sessions = 6 training hours)

Module 8 - Promoting Permanency Outcomes
(Three 3-hour sessions = 9 training hours)

Module 9 - Managing the Impact of Placement on Your Family (Two 3-hour sessions = 6 training hours)

Module 10 - Understanding the Effects of Chemical Dependency on Children & Families
(Five 3-hour sessions = 15 training hours)

COOK NORTH - Site to Be Announced

| | | |
|----------------------------------|----------------|----|
| Nov. 28 & 30 (Tues/Thurs) | 6:30-9:30 p.m. | 7 |
| Dec. 4, 6, 11, 13 & 18 (Mon/Wed) | 6:30-9:30 p.m. | 10 |
| Dec. 12 & 14 (Tues/Thurs) | 6:30-9:30 p.m. | 9 |

COOK CENTRAL - Site to Be Announced

| | | |
|-----------------------------|---------------------|----|
| Nov. 28 & 30 (Tues/Thurs) | 6:30-9:30 p.m. | 10 |
| Dec. 2 (Sat) | 9:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m. | 9 |
| Dec. 5, 7 & 12 (Tues/Thurs) | 6:30-9:30 p.m. | 10 |

COOK SOUTH - DCFS South Area Office

| | | |
|-------------------------------------|----------------|----|
| Dec. 5, 7, 12, 14 & 19 (Tues/Thurs) | 6:30-9:30 p.m. | 10 |
|-------------------------------------|----------------|----|

Module

A message every foster parent should read, because your foster children are watching you and doing as you do, not as you say...

“When you thought I wasn’t looking . . .

I saw you hang my first painting on the refrigerator and I immediately wanted to paint another one.

I saw you feed a stray cat and I learned that it was good to be kind to animals.

I saw you make my favorite cake for me and I learned that little things can be the special things in life.

I heard you say a prayer and I knew there is a God I could always talk to and I learned to trust in God.

I saw you make a meal and take it to a friend who was sick and I learned that we all have to help take care of each other.

I saw you give of your time and money to help people who had nothing and I learned that those who have something should give to those who don’t.

I felt you kiss me good night and I felt loved and safe.

I saw you take care of our house and everyone in it and I learned we have to take care of what we are given.

I saw how you handled your responsibilities, even when you didn’t feel good and I learned that I would have to be responsible when I grow up.

I saw tears come from your eyes and I learned that sometimes things hurt, but it’s all right to cry.

When you thought I wasn’t looking, I looked at you and wanted to say, Thanks for all the things I saw when you thought I wasn’t looking.”

Each of us, whether parent or friend, influences the life of a child.

Educational Advocacy

Two 3-hour sessions = 6 training hours

It is mandatory for one foster parent in each family to attend Educational Advocacy Training in order to be licensed or re-licensed. Educational Advocacy Training is offered following each Foster PRIDE/Adopt PRIDE training and many additional times. This six hour course covers information foster parents need to know so that they can advocate for their foster children’s educational rights and needs.

COOK CENTRAL

Dec. 16 (Sat)

Dec. 7 & 14 (Thurs)

COOK SOUTH

Dec. 2 (Sat)

Dec. 13 & 18 (Mon/Wed)

Dec. 19 & 21 (Tues/Thurs)

Lutheran Child & Family Services

9:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m.

Hephzibah

6:30-9:30 p.m.

DCFS South Area Office

9:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m.

6:30-9:30 p.m.

6:30-9:30 p.m.

Pre-registration is required for all classes!