

Advocate

News for Chicago Metro Area Foster Parents

Mother and Daughter Make Fostering All In the Family

Reneé Hayden remembers when her mother, Verna, first got licensed for foster care in 1997. "She tried to talk us into it then, but we thought we would have problems with getting attached and then having kids leave," Reneé said.

But after seeing her mother open her home to two girls, Reneé and her husband André realized it was something they could do, too. André shuffled his work schedule so they could get training, and in 1999 the Hayden family was licensed and ready for their first placement. With three sons by birth, they were looking forward to parenting a little girl. Nicole (name changed to protect privacy) came to their family at eight years old with a goal of return home.

"We originally thought of adopting, but we saw fostering as a way to get our feet wet and to help this sweet little girl. Now she is at home with her Mom, but she is still a part of our life," said Reneé.

That bittersweet feeling is what made the fostering experience so rewarding to the Haydens. After a year of living with Nicole, the family became very attached. Nicole also was feeling quite at home.

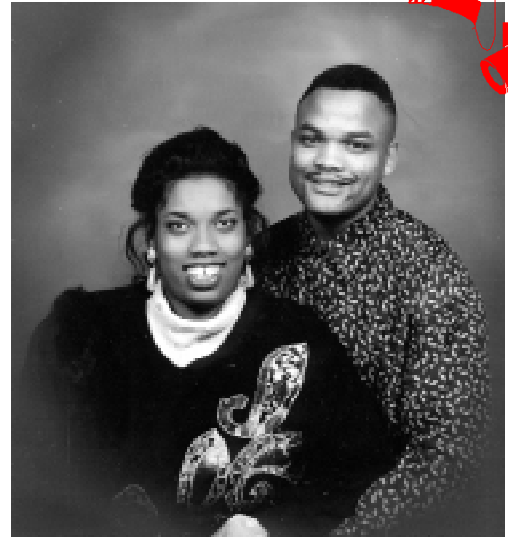
"At first Nicole was not attaching very well to her birth mother. But when her mom started making serious changes, it got better," Reneé said.

The Haydens spent a lot of time supporting Nicole's mother. They coordinated weekly visits and sometimes drove more than 40 miles to take her back home on winter days. The Haydens, the caseworkers from the Jewish Children's Bureau and Nicole's mom worked together as a team, always staying in contact with each other.

"Things were difficult at times, but because everyone was always informed of what was going on, we were well prepared for whatever happened," Reneé said.

When the time for returning home came, the Haydens were sad, but happy that everything had worked out. In the months that followed, Nicole settled in to her new environment. She called the Haydens frequently and came for a visit.

"Now she doesn't call as much, so we take that as a sign that everything is going smoothly," Reneé said.



Reneé and André Hayden

The impact that the Hayden family had did not go unnoticed. The Jewish Children's Bureau selected them as one of the Foster Parents of the Year, largely due to how supportive they had been to Nicole's birth family. While that award was appreciated, the Haydens were more concerned about the influence they could have on other families who could also be foster parents.

Since Verna started the trend, Reneé's sister has also become licensed. In addition, André's sister and her husband are currently considering becoming foster parents. The Haydens are also working hard in their church to recruit future foster and adoptive parents to provide homes for children in need.

Cure the "Gimmies" During the Holidays

If your kids' wish lists just won't quit, here are helpful tips:

Start small. We can't simply say, "Okay, only one present this holiday," when they're used to lots more. Trim some each year.

Talk it up. Explain that Mom and Dad have done some thinking and have decided that this Christmas there is going to be less emphasis on stuff and more on having fun as a family.

Play together. What kids really want, deep down, is your undivided attention. Play cards with them, go sledding or bring out the checkers.

Top the list. Often there are one or two things kids have their hearts set on, and when they get those items, they feel satisfied. But if you just can't afford your child's ultimate dream gift, don't be afraid to say so.

Donate. Ask your kids to select a new toy for a needy child, maybe even to buy it with their own money. You might also request that generous relatives give a modest gift, plus a contribution to a worthy cause in your child's name.

Ban ads. Throw out toy catalogs before the kids see them. Restrict commercial TV, especially in December. Rent videos instead.

Do it yourself. Encourage kids to create presents for their family. They'll see that time can be more valuable than money.

Be kind. Make it a holiday tradition that each person in the family performs one act of kindness a week. Go over your good deeds at dinner.

Stand firm. Kids will always come home saying how much their friends got. Point out that everyone does the holidays differently and this is how your family does it. Don't allow others to dictate what you do.

DCFS Offers Family Options to Help HIV Affected Families and Children

Family Options supports the emotional needs of the HIV/AIDS affected family and helps parents develop a care plan for their children in the case of a critical illness or death. In the Chicago area, an estimated 30,000 people have HIV/AIDS. Between 4,400 and 5,500 of these cases are women living in Chicago and approximately 80 percent of them are mothers. Thus, more than 10,000 children of all ages will be affected by their parent's illness.



Michelle Wimberly

By working with families early, Family Options can help keep children out of the throes of the child welfare system by making arrangements for legal guardians in advance of the need. For example, if a foster child's birth mother is HIV positive, the foster parent could be named legal guardian of a younger sibling who was not in care. Then in the event of a medical setback or even death, the siblings could be together in a smooth transition.

"We've also had children who were reunited with their birth parents then later be adopted by their former foster parents after mom's death. That familiar setting can provide stability for kids going through multiple losses due the parent's illness," said Elizabeth Monk, Director of the DCFS AIDS Project.

Family Options helps parents think through these scenarios to develop a permanency plan and a course of legal action. Based on the needs of the family, short-term guardianship, stand-by guardianship, private guardianship, testamentary guardianship, stand-by adoption or adoption are all considered. Social workers and attorneys will make arrangements to provide legal services to go over the various permanency options, document the arrangements and secure public resources for the family. The program also offers counseling to the adults and children as the plan comes together and after implementation, if desired.

Questions about the Family Options program can be directed to Michelle Wimberly at 312/328-2290.

African-American Family Commission Helps Families Help Children

Next month the African-American Family Commission will host a workshop on Making Permanency Decisions and Available Resources. The session is designed to help caregivers learn about adoption, guardianship and independent living options for children after foster care. They will also discuss resources for families and children after permanency has been achieved. All foster and potential adoptive parents, whether licensed or not, are invited to attend the workshop. Case managers will receive CEU credits and foster parents will also receive training credits for the workshop.

**December 6, 2001
10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.
Juvenile Court Building
2245 W. Ogden**



*Terry Solomon,
Executive Director*

The African American Family Commission was created to assist DCFS in developing and implementing programs specific to African-American families. African-American children comprise more than 70 percent of the child welfare population but account for fewer than 20 percent of children in the state. The community leaders, child welfare professionals, parents, ministers, business leaders and activists on the Commission are dedicated to decreasing the number of children in the system and lessening the chances of other children having to enter it.

“The best way to help children is by helping their parents. If children are to move out of poverty and the child welfare system, their parents must have the resources and skills for that to occur,” said Terry Solomon, executive director.

The mission of the African-American Family Commission is: To advocate for and develop governmental policies, plans and programs that promote family preservation and strengthen the African-American communities.

The Commission has several responsibilities to help families and children, including:

- ❑ Assisting DCFS to develop placement and program strategies, designing culturally specific programs, and formulating policy and legislation on behalf of African-American children and their families.
- ❑ Serving as a resource for input to legislative strategies.
- ❑ Providing networking assistance to existing child welfare coalitions and facilitating their interaction with other state agencies.
- ❑ Helping to develop community-based resources to prevent unnecessary placement of African-American children in the child welfare system.
- ❑ Advocating and promoting family-centered and community-based responses.

To register for the workshop or for more information, contact Wasi Young at 312/326-0368.

Cook South Annual Book Fair

This year Cook South and the Englewood Police Department combined its annual Book Fair with the Englewood Back-to-School Parade. The DCFS office at 6201 S. Emerald is located in the Englewood community.

August 25th was a rainy day, but that did not stop the parade. Despite the rain, there was a large turnout of foster families and other children from the community. The parade ended in Ogden Park at 67th and Racine. Staff from Cook South and the Police Department had tables set up in the park to distribute books and back-to-school supplies. There was a table set up so that children could apply for a library card. There were also games and raffles, so that children could win educational games.







Approximately 300 new books, which were donated by Cook South staff, the Police Department, the Walter Payton Foundation and the Chicago Library were given out.

We'd like to thank the Annual Book Fair Committee and the Cook South foster parents for a job well done.



Cook South Workers Get Ready With Educational Training

During September, Cook South's Educational Advisors, Marguerite Chapman and Yasmina Sefiane-Johnson, provided training to all direct service staff. The goal of the training was to enhance workers' knowledge and skill level in dealing with the educational needs of children. Its focus was on "how to get things done." The topics discussed were:

-  Enrollment of children in school
-  Transportation
-  Tutoring Services
-  Getting Special Education Services - IEP
-  Dealing with Suspensions and Expulsions
-  How to Promote Educational Success



Caseworkers are partners with foster parents in making educational decisions for the children in their care. They, along with the foster parents, are the advocates for our children. This training was geared towards making workers better advocates. According to Regional Administrator, Timothy Snowden, "education and treatment are the only ways to guarantee our children a chance at success in life." For information on the above subjects, you can contact Marguerite Chapman at 773-371-6029.

Upcoming events:

On November 16, 2001, the Cook County Foster/Adoptive Presidents Council will hold its annual fiesta at the Markham Field House in Markham, Illinois. The guest speakers will be Jane Elmore and Legertha Barner from the DCFS Division of Foster Care and Permanency Planning.



Foster Children Can Travel in Style

There is no need for foster children to pack their belongings in plastic bags. Cook Central has suitcases available to accommodate our youths' traveling and transition needs. DCFS or private agency staff and foster families in the Cook Central region may contact Lead Foster Parent Support Specialist Adrienne Welenc at 773/292-7879 or 773/292-7700.

Welcome Back FPSS Rosie Fluker

Foster Parent Support Specialist Rosie Fluker left DCFS in 1997 after eleven years as a FPSS due to health issues. After a kidney donation from her husband of 25 years, Rosie has been cleared to return to work. The Fluker family is thankful for everyone's prayers and good wishes. Rosie is looking forward to serving DCFS-supervised homes in zip code 60644 of LAN 67. For specific information on reaching Rosie, contact Adrienne Welenc, lead foster parent support specialist, at 773/292-7879 or 773/292-7700.

Congratulations Cook Central's New Statewide Council Representatives

Congratulations go out to Adrienne Welenc and Jerri Thurman Green, as the newly appointed Statewide Foster Parent Advisory representatives for Cook Central Region. They bring a wealth of knowledge and experience to the Advisory Board. Foster parents are sure to benefit from their appointment as they will both advocate strongly for foster families.

Employment Opportunities For DCFS Youth

Are you working with youth between 17-21 years old? Do they need a job? Do they live in Cook County, either in the city or suburbs? Illinois Employment & Training Center, located at 2238 S. 61st Ct., Cicero, IL 60804, offers the following services for Cook County youth:

- Job placement assistance
- On -the job training
- Local job openings
- Car fare for transportation will be provided as needed.
- Job counseling
- Pre-employment skills training
- Math and reading skills training



For more information, call Kim Jackson at 708/222-3100 ex.38

Cook Central Families Learn about Wraparound Services

The Cycle 1 and 2 Wraparound training conducted by Cook Central LAN Liaison, Loretta Brown, was a huge success! Foster parents that participated in the class were inquisitive and enthusiastic about using a team approach and improving community-based services to the children we all serve. The foster parents who participated in this training learned about:

- the wraparound movement at a national and state level
- the community approach of this strength-based system of care
- the core elements of wraparound planning (including life domains across home, school and community)
- specifics about the wraparound process
- the elements of an effective team and specific tools for practice
- the importance of evaluation and monitoring of outcomes

Cook Central foster parents will be notified by mail of future wraparound trainings.

People you should know....

The region has selected two new representatives to the Statewide Foster Care Advisory Council, to replace Pam O'Grady and Idalyia Jones, whose terms expired at the end of June. Jim Lane and Ellen Kazaras, as the regional representatives, are expected to participate in statewide council committees, the regional Foster Parent Council and the Foster Parent Resolution Panel (for grievances).

Jim Lane has been a foster parent for over 15 years, primarily working with teens. His family is now fostering a second generation of foster children (a child of one of the youth that they previously fostered). He currently works for the Chicago Public Schools as an attendance officer. He is the coach of the high school softball team. He has been the president of his church board of trustees, worked with a youth ministries program and has served on various committees.

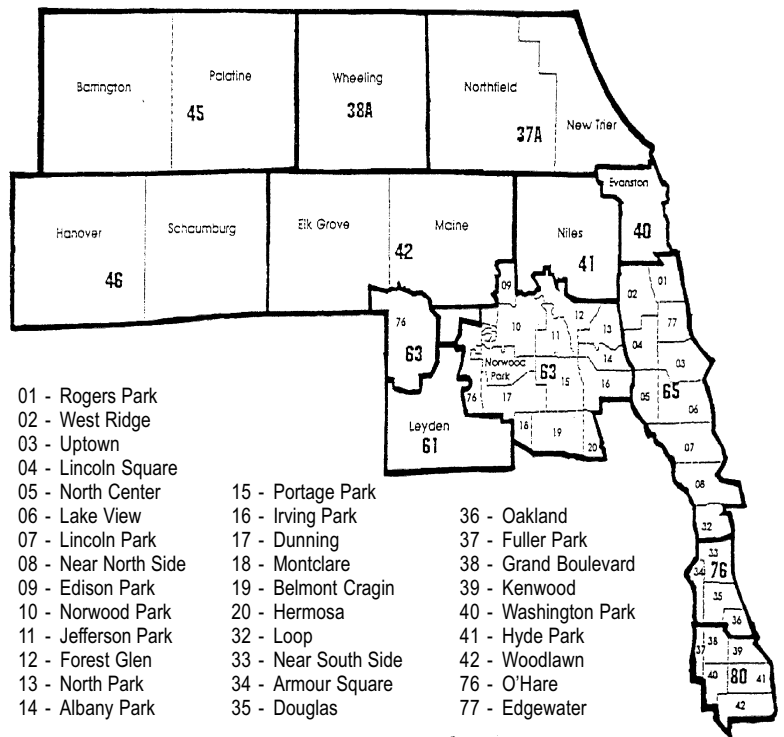
He has also served as the chairperson of the Local School Council. Previously, he was the president of the Cook North Area Foster Parents Association. Jim is very excited about his new role and looking forward to working with the region and has expressed a strong desire to be more active in the larger foster parent community.

Ellen Kazaras has been fostering for more than seven years to traditional children, a child with special needs and recently a teen. She is active in the Cook North Area Foster Parent Association. In the region, her comments were very significant in the focus groups on the region's implementation plan and the teamwork guide visitation tool that the region just developed. She has more than 20 years of experience in the corporate world and strong verbal and analytic skills. Ellen is interested in providing foster parents a voice to address issues and make changes.

The region is looking forward to working with Jim and Ellen. All foster parents are welcome to take part in regional Foster Care Advisory Council meetings. Meetings are the second Tuesday of every month from 10:00 am to noon at 1911 S. Indiana.

LANs Provide Families Community-based Services and Support

Community members and foster parents are welcome at all Cook North Local Area Network (LAN) Steering Committee meetings. Steering Committee meetings are a great way to meet other parents, hear about community agencies and issues and learn about resources available in your LAN. Below is a schedule of the regional LAN meetings. If you have any questions regarding your LAN, contact one of the LAN liaisons listed on page 7. See Cook North LAN map.



COOK NORTH LAN MEETINGS

COOK
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LAN

LAN	STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING & LOCATIONS	LAN LIAISON
37a	2 nd Tuesday of every month 9:00 a.m. to noon, Josselyn Mental Health Center, 405 Central, Northfield	J. Nett
38a	3 rd Thursday of the odd numbered months 9:00 a.m., Omni Youth Services 1111 Lake Cook Rd., Buffalo Grove	J. Nett
40	4 th Tuesday of every month 8:30 a.m. Evanston High School 1600 Dodge Ave., Evanston	J. Nett
41	2 nd Monday of every month 9:00 a.m. Location alternates between various community agencies – contact the LAN liaison for the specific monthly location	J. Nett
42	4 th Friday of every month 9:00 a.m. Maryville Academy 1150 River Rd., Des Plaines	J. Niemuth
45	2 nd Friday of Jan., Apr., July and Oct., The Bridge, 721 S. Quentin Rd., Palatine	J. Niemuth
46	3 rd Monday of every month, 3:00 to 4:30p.m., Alexian Brother Behavioral Health Hospital, 1650 Moonlake, Hoffman Estates	J. Niemuth
61	1 st Wednesday of every odd numbered month, 2:30p.m. Youth Outreach Services, 10125 W. Grand Ave., Franklin Park	J. Niemuth
63	2 nd Tuesday of every month 3:30 p.m. Youth Outreach Services 6417 W. Irving Pk., Chicago	J. Czarnecki
65	3 rd Wednesday of every month 2:30 to 4:00p.m. Uhlich Children's Home 3730 N. Mozart, Chicago	M. Cleveland J. Czarnecki
76	4 th Friday of every month 9:30 a.m. Ada S. McKinley 2900 S. Wabash Chicago	M. Cleveland
80	4 th Thursday of every month 9:30 a.m., Northeastern University Center For Inner City Studies, 700 E. Oakwood	M. Nelson

Please contact the LAN liaisons during the summer months and the month of December to see if the meetings have been rescheduled due to vacations and the holidays.

LAN Liaison

Phone

LAN

Joanne Nett	847/745-3049	LANs 37a, 38a, 40, 41
JoAnn Niemuth	847/745-3048	LANs 42, 45, 46 & 61
John Czarnecki	773/866-5683	LANs 63 & 65
Melvin Cleveland	773/866-5684	LAN 65 & 76
Mozell Nelson	312/328-2312	LAN 80
Lucille Pearson	312/328-2313	LAN 80

Happy Holidays!!!!

As the year 2001 is coming to an end, the Cook North Region wants to thank foster and adoptive families for all of your hard work and commitment to caring for our children over this past year. We appreciate the day-to-day gift that you provide for our children – safe and nurturing families. We wish you and your families a safe and happy Holiday Season.

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 Trainings 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	Module
DCFS North Area Office	
January 28 & 30 & February 4 & 6 (Mon/Wed)	6:30-9:30 p.m. 1
Epiphany Church	
December 3, 5, 10, 12 & 17 (Mon/Wed)	6:30-9:30 p.m. 10
January 14, 16 & 23 (Mon/Wed)	6:30-9:30 p.m. 3&4
Galewood Church	
January 22, 24 & 29 (Tues/Thurs)	6:30-9:30 p.m. 5
Irish Center	
November 27 & 29 (Tues/Thurs) February 5, 7 & 12 (Tues/Thurs)	6:30-9:30 p.m. 7 6:30-9:30 p.m. 2

COOK CENTRAL	Module
Association House - SPANISH	
February 16 & 23 (Sat)	9:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m. 1
DCFS, 3518 Division	
November 13 & 15 (Tues/Thurs) November 27, 29, December 4, 6 & 11 (Tues/Thurs)	6:30-9:30 p.m. 7 6:30-9:30 p.m. 10
February 12, 14 & 19 (Tues/Thurs)	6:30-9:30 p.m. 3&4
January 29 & 31 (Tues/Thurs)	6:30-9:30 p.m. 7
COOK SOUTH	Module
Chicago Association for Retarded Citizens	
January 12 & (Sat) January 19 (Sat)	9:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m. 9:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. 2
DCFS, 6201 S. Emerald	
November 13, 15 & 20 (Tues/Thurs)	6:30-9:30 p.m. 8
December 3, 5, 10, 12 & 17 (Mon/Wed)	6:30-9:30 p.m. 10
Ivanhoe Methodist Church, 14500 S. Clark	
November 9 (Sat) December 1 (Sat)	9:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m. 7 9:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m. 9

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 NORTH	Irish Center
November 17 (Sat)	9:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m.
December 4 & 11 (Tues)	6:30-9:30 p.m.
December 10 & 17 (Mon)	9:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.
	DCFS, 1911 S. Indiana
December 12 & 17 (Mon/Wed)	6:30-9:30 p.m.
February 7 & 12 (Tues/Thurs)	6:30-9:30 p.m.

COOK CENTRAL	LCFS - River Forest
November 13 & 15 (Tues/Thurs)	6:30-9:30 p.m.
December 15 (Sat)	9:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m.
	Circle Family Care
December 8 (Sat)	9:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m.
	SPANISH - Association House
December 15 (Sat)	9:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m.
February 9 (Sat)	9:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m.
	Sequin Services
February 11 & 13 (Mon/Wed)	6:00-9:00 p.m.

COOK SOUTH	DCFS South Area Office
November 17 (Sat)	9:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m.
December 8 (Sat)	9:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m.
February 11 & 13 (Mon/Wed)	6:30-9:30 p.m.
	Harvey
December 22 (Sat)	9:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m.
February 9 (Sat)	9:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m.
	Ivanhoe Lutheran Church, Riverdale
December 11 & 13 (Tues/Thurs)	6:30-9:30 p.m.
	Church of the Holy Family, Park Forest
December 4 & 11 (Tues)	9:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.
February 7 & 12 (Tues/Thurs)	9:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

Happy Holidays

The purpose of life is to
discover your gift.

The meaning of life is
giving your gift away.

David Viscott,
psychiatrist and writer

Pre-registration is required for all classes!
Call the number shown above.