

# Central Connections



2002 Vol. 2

For Heart of Illinois Foster Parents

## Three generations make fostering a family affair

You don't find a lot of mother-daughter pairs who willingly travel together. Perhaps even fewer would do it in order to spend two days talking about kids. But this Spring Pat Dvorak and her daughter Erika looked forward to attending the DCFS Foster and Adoptive Parent Conference together. For them foster parenting and adoption have always been part of the world they share.



Pat's mother, Helen King fostered 42 children as Pat and her brother grew up. In turn, Pat adopted four children and fostered six children, along with raising her birth daughters Trischa and Erika. Erika, joined the chain and is currently a foster mother to two children. She and the children live with Pat and enjoy having a grandmother on the premises.

When Pat is asked why she started fostering she answers, "it just seemed like a natural thing. It is what I knew."

For Pat, serving children is an answer to a higher calling. Her religious beliefs run deep and, despite a quiet demeanor, her actions speak volumes.

At one point Pat and her husband David had decided to stop adopting. Then, they got the call from the hospital. A baby had been born and could not go home with the mother. Pat saw it as a sign, but David was not so sure.

"When my husband said no, I just told him that I would leave it to him and God to figure out...We brought the baby home," she remembers with a knowing smile.

The principal of reaping what you sow is bearing fruit in the Dvorak home. Erika is hoping to adopt the children she is fostering. Pat's other birth daughter Trischa is waiting to add to her family by adopting. Even Maria, who herself was adopted by Pat, is planning to adopt one day.

"As a mother, there isn't anything that makes me feel better than to see my children want to continue to help other children," Pat says proudly.

As these women go on to plant seeds of love, they hope to see more children grow strong and healthy, and perhaps continue the chain.

## Teen support group on the move in Rock Island

The Bill of Rights Committee in the Rock Island Field Office has created a coed teenage social support group for area youths age 14 and older who are currently in foster care. This group has been developed by TEENS for teens and has been self-governing. Adult guidance has been established only in an effort to ensure a healthy, safe and fun social environment with a focus on education.

The purpose of this group is to assist youth in developing interpersonal social skills; to encourage community involvement and leadership skills; to promote team efforts and to increase acceptance of others.

The educational component addresses issues that youth have selected for themselves that they view as problematic in their teenage years (i.e., conflict resolution, problem solving and peer pressure).

Since the group became active last summer, it has sponsored several mixers at the Cellar, (an area club for teenagers) planned a hayrack ride and enjoyed a barbecue cook out. At Christmas the teen group was very involved with the planning of the DCFS Foster Children's Christmas party. The group participated as volunteer workers before, during and after the event, and are credited along with others at making it successful.

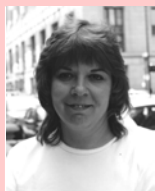
Teens in foster care have much to offer in terms of their unique perceptions of the foster care system. This group allows them to serve as a catalyst for change. The youth are currently developing ways to coordinate activities with the Youth Advisory board.

Questions about the Teen Support Group can be directed to Steve Dickens at 309/794-3500.

### Central Connections

#### Sponsor

Deborah Kennedy, DCFS  
Central Regional Administrator



#### Regional Reporter

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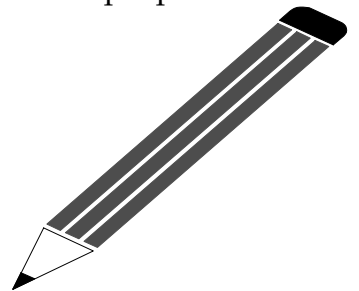
Fax: 309-523-3360

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Call with foster parent association news and schedules of local training, features on foster families and community members working for children, photos and news articles and supports all foster families can use.

## A Child's Basic Rights

- ✓ The right to be protected against neglect, cruelty, abuse and exploitation.
- ✓ The right to safe housing, healthcare and education that prepares them for the future.
- ✓ The right to be a unique person whose individuality is protected from violation.
- ✓ The right to prepare for the responsibilities of parenthood, family life and citizenship.
- ✓ The right to maintain relationships with people who are important to them.
- ✓ The right to a stable family.
- ✓ The right to safe, nurturing relationships intended to last a lifetime.



## Survey Results

As part of the on going effort to provide and improve quality service delivery to children and families, the Central Region released the results of the most recent consumer satisfaction survey of foster parents. The survey allows the Region to hear from foster parents about their experiences in fostering DCFS children. The information gathered from the annual surveys is used to assist the region in reviewing how it delivers services and identifying practice areas that need improvement.

This past year the Central Region sent out more than 1,000 surveys and had an approximate 30 percent response rate. Following are the results of the Central Region Foster Parent Survey.

Foster child's caseworker provided foster parents with relevant information about the child's past and problems that exist.

*50% frequently                      44% sometimes                      6% never*

Foster child's caseworker encourages foster parents to participate in Administrative Case Reviews, staffings or court when possible.

*67% frequently                      26% sometimes                      8% never*

The foster child's caseworker assists foster parents in obtaining needed services for the foster/adoptive child.

*56% frequently                      38% sometimes                      6% never*

The foster child's caseworker seeks information from the foster parent regarding case planning and the child's future.

*52% frequently                      37% sometimes                      12% never*

The office staff is available for assistance if the child's caseworker is unavailable.

*41% frequently                      47% sometimes                      12% never*

The agency provides helpful services if there is a crisis in the home or with the foster/adoptive child.

*50% frequently                      39% sometimes                      11% never*

The foster parent feels like a member of the team.

*34% frequently                      48% sometimes                      18% never*

The experience as foster/adoptive parents has been such that they would recommend other families consider becoming foster or adoptive parents

*51% frequently                      36% sometimes                      13% never*

Central Region wants to thank all of the foster parents who responded to the survey, especially those who wrote in specific feedback. All of the input was reviewed. Overall, the Region found that the responses were favorable. For the areas that need more attention or improvement, Regional Administrator Deb Kennedy has formed teams to develop solutions. One area of focus will be on teamwork between the foster parents and the staff.

Foster parents are encouraged to get involved in discussions with the regional staff and to participate in the teams charged to address areas needing improvement. To join a team or to get more details on the survey, foster parents can contact Lynda Petrick at 217/278-5300.

# Central Region Training Calendar

## FosterPRIDE In-Service Training

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)

### Peoria Area 888-507-7433

	Module
<b>LA SALLE - Catholic Social Service</b> September 16, 23 & 30 (Tues) 6:00-9:00 p.m.	3&4
<b>OTTAWA- First American Title</b> June 18 & 25 (Tues) 6:00-9:00 p.m.	9
<b>PEORIA - Lutheran Social Services</b> Aug 27, Sept 3 & 10 (Tues) 6:00-9:00 p.m.	6
<b>QUAD CITIES - Black Hawk College</b> Aug 29, Sept 5 & 12 (Thurs) 6:00-9:00 p.m.	3&4

### OTHER In-Service Training

**Transracial Parenting Training (9 hrs.)**  
**CANTON - Wesley United Methodist Church**  
 September 14, 21 & 28 (Sat) 9:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.

### Springfield Area 888-817-1825

	Module
<b>JERSEYVILLE - Super 8</b> August 1, 8 & 15 (Thurs) 6:30-9:30 p.m.	8
<b>LITCHFIELD - St. Francis Hospital</b> July 23 & 30, August 6, 13 & 20 (Tues) 6:30-9:30 p.m.	10
<b>QUINCY - Days Inn</b> June 3 & 10 (Mon) 6:30-9:30 p.m. September 9, 16 & 23 (Mon) 6:30-9:30 p.m.	7 3&4

### OTHER In-Service Training

**Transracial Parenting Training (9 hrs.)**  
**SPRINGFIELD - Lincoln Land Community College**  
 September 14, 21 & 28 (Sat) 9:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.

### Champaign Area 888-467-6065

	Module
<b>BLOOMINGTON - TBA</b> September 9, 16 & 23 (Mon) 6:30-9:30 p.m.	2
<b>DECATUR - TBA</b> September 10, 17 & 24 (Tues) 6:30-9:30 p.m.	2
<b>PONTIAC - TBA</b> September 12, 19 & 26 (Thurs) 6:30-9:30 p.m.	8

### OTHER In-Service Training

**Transracial Parenting Training (9 hrs.)**  
**BLOOMINGTON - TBA**  
 July 11, 18 & 25 (Thurs) 6:30-9:30 p.m.  
**CHAMPAIGN - II Employment & Training Center**  
 August 12, 19 & 26 (Mon) 6:30-9:30 p.m.

**Reactive Attachment Disorder (6 hrs.)**  
**CHARLESTON - TBA**  
 September 21 (Sat) 9:00 a.m-4:00 p.m.  
**DANVILLE - TBA**  
 July 27 (Sat) 9:00 a.m-4:00 p.m.

**Pre-registration  
is required  
for all classes!**

**Call the number  
listed for your area.**

## 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 relicensed. 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.

### Peoria Area ~ 888-507-7433

<b>CANTON</b> June 4 & 11 (Tues)	<b>Spoon River College</b> 6:00-9:00 p.m.
<b>GALESBURG</b> June 15 & 22 (Sat)	<b>Salvation Army</b> 9:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.
<b>MACOMB</b> June 4 & 11 (Tues) July 11 & 18 (Thurs)	<b>TBA</b> 6:00-9:00 p.m. 6:00-9:00 p.m.
<b>OTTAWA</b> June 6 & 13 (Thurs)	<b>Hampton Inn</b> 6:00-9:00 p.m.
<b>PEORIA</b> June 12 & 19 (Wed) June 25 & July 2 (Tues) July 13 & 20 (Sat) August 5 & 12 (Mon)	<b>Lutheran Social Services</b> 6:00-9:00 p.m. 9:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m. 9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. 6:00-9:00 p.m.
August 20 & 27 (Tues)	<b>Catholic Social Service</b> 6:00-9:00 p.m.
July 18 & 25 (Thurs)	<b>First English Lutheran Church</b> 6:00-9:00 p.m.
September 11 & 18 (Wed) September 26 & October 3 (Thurs)	<b>Professional Park Plaza</b> 6:00-9:00 p.m. 6:00-9:00 p.m.
<b>QUAD CITIES</b> August 5 & 12 (Mon)	<b>BHC Outreach Center</b> 6:00-9:00 p.m.
June 6 & 13 (Thurs)	<b>DCFS</b> 6:00-9:00 p.m.

### Springfield Area ~ 888-817-1825

<b>JACKSONVILLE</b> June 22 (Sat)	<b>Passavant Hospital</b> 9:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m.
<b>LITCHFIELD</b> September 7 & 14 (Sat)	<b>St. Francis Hospital</b> 1:00-4:00 p.m.
<b>SPRINGFIELD</b> June 21 & 28 (Fri) August 10 & 17 (Sat)	<b>Lincoln Land Comm. College</b> 6:30-9:30 p.m. 1:00-4:00 p.m.
<b>TAYLORVILLE</b> June 22 & 29 (Sat)	<b>St. Vincent's Mem. Hospital</b> 1:00-4:00 p.m.

### Champaign Area ~ 888-467-6065

<b>BLOOMINGTON</b> July 11 & 18 (Thurs) September 24 & October 1 (Tues)	<b>TBA</b> 6:30-9:30 p.m. 6:30-9:30 p.m.
<b>CHAMPAIGN II Employment &amp; Training Center</b> August 13 & 20 (Tues)	6:30-9:30 p.m.
<b>CHARLESTON</b> August 5 & 12 (Mon)	<b>TBA</b> 6:30-9:30 p.m.
<b>DANVILLE</b> July 16 & 23 (Tues)	<b>TBA</b> 6:30-9:30 p.m.
<b>MATTOON</b> June 13 & 20 (Thurs)	<b>Broadway Christian Church</b> 6:30-9:30 p.m.
<b>PONTIAC</b> June 3 & 10 (Mon)	<b>Salem Community Based Services</b> 6:30-9:30 p.m.