



FOSTERING

Linking Families Together for

Fall 2002 Vol. 4

ILLINOIS

Children's Futures

DCFS Scholarship Winners Working Hard in College



Angel Johnson (left) and Jeremy Harvey share the excitement of earning a DCFS Youth Scholarship with Director McDonald and Mrs. Connie Payton at the awards ceremony held in July.

Years of hard work in high school paid off for 48 students who were awarded DCFS Scholarships. These students are attending college with up to four consecutive years of tuition and academic fee waivers that can be used at participating state universities. They also receive a monthly maintenance stipend of \$444.85 and a medical card.

The DCFS Scholarship winners were required to submit transcripts of their grades, ACT or SAT scores and three letters of recommendation. A selection committee of high-level child welfare experts appointed by Director McDonald evaluated the applications before the winners were selected.

The excitement came to a head at the Annual DCFS Scholarship Award Ceremony held before school started. With the high-stepping, precision moves of the acclaimed

South Shore Drill team as a warm up, the college-bound students sat back to enjoy their celebration. The Division of Education and Transition Services staff coordinated the luncheon program to show these students how special they are. Director McDonald was on hand to congratulate the winners. Connie Payton, of the event's sponsor The Walter Payton Foundation, offered inspiring words from her husband's life to encourage the students to reach their full potential at school.

While in school, students must maintain at least a C-average with a full-time course load. They must also maintain contact with their caseworkers and the DCFS Division of Education and Transition Services. The students' families and the staff that support them are eager to see how far these students will go with the resources that are available to them. The 2002 DCFS Scholarship winners are:

Amanda Alsop	Salt Lake City	Julianne Heniff	Park Forest	Joseph Robinson	Addison
Diamond Archibald	Chicago	Shelly Hoskins	Galesburg	Jamaal Ross	Rock Island
Austin Baitman	Janesville	Selena Hoskins	Berwick	Courtney Rucker	Wheaton
Danielle Baugh	Maywood	Arthur Hunter	Champaign	Siohvan Sanders	Chicago
Rebekah Beachey	Mahomet	Angel Johnson	Dolton	Tika Shelby	Chicago
Jessica Bingenheimer	Elgin	Mary Jude	North Chicago	Sabrina Smith	Bloomington
Michelle Carlson	West Chicago	Danielle Lavallais	Chicago	LaTanya Snowden	Chicago
Amanda Carlson	Moline	Kashawna Lee	Chicago	Kyna Starks	Dolton
Cheri Cochren	Macomb	Holly Loy	Port Byron	Nikki Thigpen	Hazel Crest
Autumn Dunham Neubert	Byron	Kara Maglio	Glendale Hts.	Theresa Thompson	Chicago
Amanda Fitch	Rockford	LaTonya Morris	Hazel Crest	Joseph Wenskunas	Macomb
Shanika Galloway	Chicago	Laura Mruk	Gurnee	Joshua White	LeRoy
Tiarra Garner	Chicago	Ellayna Powell	Rockton	Anna Wilson	Danville
Andrea Graebe	Chicago	Jolene Pritchard	Granite City	Jacquelyn Wolski	McHenry
Alicia Harper	Norris City	Tyler Proctor	Greenville	Symone Young	Chicago
Jeremy Harvey	East Dundee	Quinika Purifoy	Loves Park	Adam Zuercher	Port Byron

Getting The Most Out Of Therapy, Right From the Start

Abuse and neglect of children can result in many behavioral and emotional issues. Children involved with DCFS may be referred for intervention services from a mental health provider, including therapy. As a caretaker, you play an important role in this process. When the child is first referred to have therapy, you should clarify with the caseworker or supervisor the issues to be addressed. Also discuss whether the behaviors need an evaluation for medication from a psychiatrist. If you have questions about medications and their side effects, talk to the prescribing doctor.

At the start of the therapy, the therapist should present their clinical background, credentials and expertise to you. You can also ask questions. For example, it is important to know that the therapist has experience working with children in foster care or adoptive families and the issues that may arise. Together, go over the schedule of sessions, covering the frequency (weekly, twice a week, etc.), length of the sessions (45 minutes, one hour, or more) and the format (individual, group or family). Throughout the therapeutic process you should always expect that there would be:

- 1) an assessment phase
- 2) a treatment plan developed and presented to you
- 3) an adjusted treatment plan as therapy progresses and
- 4) a termination phase in which there is closure in the relationship and progress is reviewed.

As the treatment progresses, your relationship with the child's therapist and/or psychiatrist will help facilitate the therapy and/or medication management. Caregivers can help by making sure children keep their appointments, planning transportation with the caseworker or attending some sessions with the child. Foster parents and other caregivers may be asked to be actively involved in the therapy, depending on what is called for. There may also be things that you could do between sessions. For instance, you might need to create a star chart to encourage positive behavior at home or talk to a teacher about a school-related concern. Therapy has been found to be most effective if it is consistent, predictable and all the participants are working together on the issues that brought the child/family into therapy so that positive outcomes occur.

Those outcomes can be achieved using different approaches. As a consumer, it is important that your child and you feel comfortable with the approach the therapist uses. Ask the therapist to explain their approach to doing therapy, and if you have concerns discuss these with the therapist and caseworker. Therapists and psychiatrists also may have many areas of expertise including:

Play Therapy
Art Therapy
Family Therapy
Addictions
Sexual Abuse
Domestic Violence
Couples Counseling

Mental Illness/Chronic Mental Illness
Child and Adolescents
Sexually Problematic Behaviors
Learning Disabilities
Behavior Analysis
Developmental Disabilities



Make sure to ask questions about the therapist's expertise so it can mesh with the child's needs. Some treatment agencies use interns (individuals who are in graduate school programs) to deliver treatment services. If your child is assigned an intern, it is important to clarify the length of time they will be working with the child (most internships are nine months). Interns should be receiving ongoing supervision with a therapist who has the expertise to supervise the treatment.

If you or your child does not feel comfortable with a provider, you do have options. First, discuss what your concerns are with the provider. He or she should be comfortable discussing the therapeutic relationship. If you continue to have concerns, talk to the caseworker or supervisor and continue to advocate for a change if things cannot be worked through.

Therapists have many different specializations and credentials. Here are some of the titles and qualifications you may come across.

- M.D.:** (*Psychiatrist*) A medical doctor. Can prescribe medication and do therapy.
- PH.D.:** Doctor of Philosophy (should have a degree in Psychology or a related field). Can do therapy, psychological testing and assessments.
- PSY.D.:** Doctor of Psychology. Can do therapy, psychological testing and assessments.
- LCSW:** Licensed Clinical Social Worker. Licensed to do therapy (*must practice for two years post master's degree to be eligible for license*)
- LSW:** Licensed Social Worker (*can receive license right after graduate school*). Can do therapy but is not licensed to do so.
- MFT:** Marriage and Family Therapist. Has completed a training program in marriage and family therapy.
- LMFT:** Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist. Licensed in the state to do marriage and family therapy.
- MSW:** Master's in Social Work (an academic degree)
- MA:** Master's in Counseling (an academic degree)
- LCPC:** Licensed Clinical Professional Counselor. Licensed in the state to do therapy (ask what type of degree they hold)
- LPC:** Licensed Professional Counselor. Can get directly after master's degree in counseling (not licensed to do clinical work)
- CDAC:** Certified Drug and Alcohol Counselor. Has received training in drug and alcohol counseling
- BA:** Bachelor's degree: Earned 4 year college degree (should be in psychology or a related field)
- BSW:** Bachelor's in Social Work: Earned 4 year college degree with specialty in Social Work.

DCFS Clinical Division Makes Sure Education Starts Early for Children Under Five



It is never too early to prepare children for learning. Foster and adoptive parents to even very young children can start building a child's foundation for education. By focusing on early childhood education, children can be prepared for the kindergarten environment. They can grow emotionally and behaviorally so they can form positive relationships with other children and other adults. With early childhood education, children can begin to learn to solve problems and accept new skills. In short, they can set a stage for a lifetime of learning.

"While caregivers have a great influence on encouraging these skills or recognizing when children have not attained the expected skills, they don't have to work in a vacuum," said Andria Goss, Early Childhood Director.

The DCFS Clinical Division's Early Childhood Education Unit is there to help families and child welfare staff make sure that children between the ages of zero and five years old can be assessed and serviced so they can start school strong. To do that, DCFS coordinates with several educational initiatives that help meet the education needs of young children.

Child Find

A statewide project to identify, locate and evaluate all children who are disabled, regardless of the severity of their disability, and who are in need of special education and related services. Child Find provides public awareness materials for school districts and early intervention programs, as well as publishing a schedule of Chicago screening dates and locations. Through Child Find, all children aged zero to five will be assessed for early childhood educational needs.

Pre-Kindergarten programs by the Illinois State Board of Education

Pre-Kindergarten programs are developmentally appropriate education programs that serve children ages three to five years. These programs are provided by school districts at their discretion. Children served by Pre-Kindergarten programs exhibit at-risk conditions or behaviors that jeopardize their potential for successful school performance, but are not eligible for public pre-school special education programs.

Head Start Programs

Head Start is a federally funded, comprehensive child development and family-focused program for children ages three to five. The program's overall goals are to enhance the physical, cognitive, social, and emotional growth of low-income infants and children, and to support parents' efforts to fulfill parental roles and move toward self-sufficiency.

Special Education Programs

Public schools directly provide or contract for the purchase of special education services for children ages three to 21 years, who meet specific eligibility criteria. Eligibility is determined at a multi-disciplinary conference (MDC) of school personnel. If the child is determined eligible for special education services as a result of the MDC, an individualized education plan (IEP) must be developed to identify the specific services and supports the child will receive as part of a free, appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment.

Q: *How do I learn about early childhood education services?*

A: The caseworker is the first point of contact to provide families with information about early childhood education. There are also trainings available through DCFS on issues concerning children under five. Additionally, foster parents can get valuable information at the Early Childhood Screenings, at doctor's appointments or from WIC offices for children enrolled in public assistance programs.

Q: *A 2-year-old just came to my home. How will I be involved in the early education process?*

A: Every new case that comes into the DCFS system involving a child under five is required to have an initial early childhood screening. In cases supervised directly by DCFS, the Early Childhood Unit notifies the caseworker's supervisor that the child requires an assessment. Private agencies will receive notification through their education liaison. After that point, the foster parent will be involved by taking the child to the screening and advocating for any services that may be needed.

In cases where a child is new to your home, but has already been in DCFS care, foster parents should be sure to ask if the initial screening has been completed and what services may be required. For example, this could mean enrolling the child in a center-based day care program near your home. In addition to completing the paperwork, if the screening indicates further evaluation is needed, you would sign for and participate in the evaluation process.

Q: *My caseworker says my 4-year-old needs a screening. What has to happen?*

A: If you live in Chicago, the Early Childhood Unit will provide the caseworker with a schedule of Child Find screenings in your area. If you live outside of Chicago, caseworkers or foster parents should contact the local school district to arrange a screening. These are typically conducted at the local elementary schools for children age three to five. Screenings for children younger than three are conducted at the DCFS regional offices.

In the case of a 4-year old, no appointment is necessary. The caseworkers can assist the foster parent in choosing a Child Find Screening location from the calendar sent by Early Childhood. The foster parent should make arrangements to bring the child in for the screening which takes between 20-30 minutes. The foster parent should expect to engage in the screening process and answer questions pertaining to the child's development.

Q: *What happens if my 3-year-old child receives a 2 or a 3 on the Child Find screening?*

The screenings are scored on a 3-point scale. If your child receives a 2 on the Child Find screening, then the results revealed that your child would benefit from some early childhood enrichment services. Because the child is three years old, she or he would be referred to the public school system for Head Start or Pre-K. If a program is available in the child's community, a representative from the school will contact the foster parent at home.



If your child received a 3 on the Child Find screening results revealed that your child appears to be significantly delayed or disabled and needs to have a developmental evaluation immediately. A referral will be made to begin a Case Study Evaluation. The local school will contact the foster parent at home to make arrangement. If eligible, the local school will enroll the child in services within 60 days.

Q: *What happens if my child is not eligible for special education?*

A: The Department of Children and Family Services' Early Childhood Unit will ensure that the child be enrolled in Head Start or Pre-K programs. The Chicago Public School system has agreed to prioritize enrollment for DCFS wards. Additionally, Chicago Public Schools are expanding the Head Start and Pre-Kindergarten programs. There are (31) additional classrooms that will operate within Head Start and Parent Child Centers, offering full-day programs all year from 7 a.m.-6 p.m. There will also be (50) additional classrooms that will operate within the regular school setting, from 9:00 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. during the regular school year.

For information about Early Childhood Education Programs or Services, contact Andria Goss at 312/814-5988.

New System of Care Serves Children With Special Needs

In May, DCFS announced a complete redesign of how the Department delivers services to meet children's needs. The result is a Children's Mental Health System of Care designed to be community-based, flexible and targeted, while helping a child to thrive within the current placement. The Department's goals in this new system of care are to:

- Support children in placement
- Improve foster care stability and reduce disruptions
- Serve children in home-like, community-based settings
- Improve the clinical capacity of foster care agencies and organizations at the Local Area Network (LAN) level
- Effectively treat serious behavioral issues

"I started by looking at the best of what we had to see how the pieces could fit into a complete system of care," said Director Jess McDonald. "In the end, I wanted a system that would be flexible enough to meet needs and fairly distribute resources around the state."

The System of Care (SOC) will provide services for children in traditional and relative caregiver foster homes. The 26 new SOC providers are, with few exceptions, former Intensive Therapeutic Services (ITS) providers. They were selected because of their proven track record in providing clinically strong services in regions across the state. The SOC providers will be assigned by Local Area Network (a defined geographic area of community resources). The SOC providers are responsible for coordinating comprehensive services for regular foster care and relative care placements, including wrap-around planning service delivery and placement stabilization services. The number for the placement stabilization service remains 800-345-9049 for crisis interventions. When a child requires services beyond what the agency provides, the System of Care provider will work in partnership with the assigned foster care agency and/or DCFS region to ensure that services can be accessed and delivered in the community.

For children who require intensive, specialized care, there were further changes. As of May 2, Level of Care reviews are no longer used to determine "specialized" needs. However, those children whose cases had been reviewed under Levels of Care prior to May 2 or had reviews scheduled after May 2 and were qualified as Specialized I or II will maintain that status as long as they remain in their current placement.

For other cases that require specific programmatic services, primarily those children "stepping-down" from residential placements, the Department has established a centralized gatekeeper. The gatekeeper will determine if it is appropriate to refer the case to a specialized foster care program that will be best able to meet the child's needs. However, if case management changes, there would be no need for the foster family to transfer its license, unless by choice.

The result of these changes is intended to provide foster parents greater supports closer to home and with minimum transitions. For children, the outcome will be a service plan that is coordinated between the caseworker and, when necessary, the SOC provider with enough flexibility to meet the individual needs of that child.

Foster parents with questions can call the Regional System of Care liaison at the number below.

Cook North Region	Michael C. Jones	312-328-2494
Cook South Region	Ramona Milam	773-371-6303
Northern Region	Jane Kelly	630-801-3400
Central Region	Anne Bergstrom	309-693-5451
Southern Region	Brice Bloom-Ellis	618-583-2169
Cook Central	Carmen Velazquez	773-854-1737

Statewide Foster Care Advisory Council Bulletin

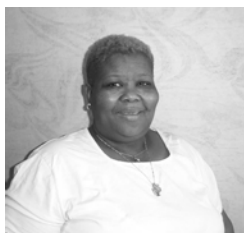
The Statewide Foster Care Advisory Council works with DCFS to ensure Department policies reflect the interests of foster children and their foster parents. Following is an update on recent activities.

Council elects new chair and vice chair

James Lane now serves as the new chairperson of the Statewide Foster Care Advisory Council. Jim joined the Council as the representative from the Cook Central Region. He and his wife, Amy, have been foster parents to many children since they were licensed in 1985. Jim also works as a truant officer/attendance officer at Flower Career Academy High in Chicago.



James Lane



Donsetta Blakely

Donsetta Blakely, new vice-chair, is a veteran foster and adoptive parent with more than 20 years of experience. Donsetta was appointed to the Council as the Cook South representative. She has been a foster parent to more than 100 children, while primarily doing emergency care, and has adopted four children. Donsetta also serves as a Foster Parent Support Specialist in the Cook North region.

Youth Board Joins Foster Parent Council Meeting

The Statewide Youth Advisory Board (SYAB) began what will become an annual joint meeting with the adults on the Statewide Foster Care Advisory Council. Representing their peers in foster care, residential facilities, adoptive families, guardianship arrangements and independent living, the youth board outlined its agenda to the Council. Their major focus will be to develop recommendations for preserving relationships among siblings. The SYAB is also developing policy initiatives to protect children's belongings between moves and ways to recruit more foster homes for teens.



Cook North Youth Advisory Board representatives Betty McLaughlin and Melissa Perez talk with Statewide Council member Andrea Miller.

The discussion between the two groups was quite lively as each put forth their perspective. By the end of the meeting, both groups agreed that since they have the same goal of working on behalf of children, it was important to keep the dialogue going on a regular basis.

The next meeting of the Statewide Foster Care Advisory Council will be on November 9 in Chicago. For details about the meeting or if you have questions about the activities of the Statewide Foster Care Advisory Council, please contact Chairperson, James Lane at 773-286-5254 or e-mail him at REDDOG6970@aol.com.

Forever Families



Midwest Adoption Center Improves Adoption File Availability

The Illinois Adoption Act states that adoptive parents of minors have a right to receive a written report of important information found in agency files concerning their child and his or her birth family. Information to be given includes medical information and physical description of the birth parents, as well as medical and developmental information about the child. DCFS contracted with Midwest Adoption Center (MAC) to respond to requests for information by adoptive families or adult adoptees.

However, providing information from the files can be a tall order when one considers that closed DCFS files have to first be located. Add to that, the fact that the birth family file(s) and sibling files are often needed, and the task grows larger. When this program began in 1994, it was not anticipated that finding these closed files would be a big problem. But, given the geographic scope of DCFS, the number of private agencies involved and the complexity of cases, locating the closed files proved difficult at best and, in some cases, was impossible.

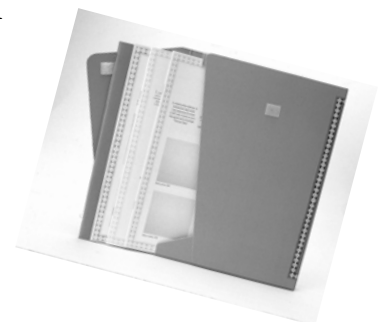
The Department, recognizing the importance of this information to families, completely overhauled the closed file storage system. After evaluating the sheer volume of files, a decision was made to contract with a large professional records management company in central Illinois. Over a period of several months, thousands of closed files were collected and moved from myriad DCFS locations to the storage facility. There, they were indexed so the names and ID numbers on each file could be searched in a computer database.

Now that the needle in a haystack approach is over, there is a much greater chance of locating the files necessary to serve families within a reasonable period of time. For example, one particularly pesky file that had been missing after three years of physical searching, was readily available in the index. With the new system, MAC can request the file to be sent from storage, prepare the packet of needed information and get it to the waiting adoption family or adoption preservation staff. Along with the improved file retrieval, recently MAC decided to include copies of significant medical reports and evaluations, rather than providing only a summary. By doing this, adoptive families could have the original report to give medical professionals important background information when they provide services to children.

For a dedicated staff that is already stretched thin to meet the many requests for non-identifying information, the system is making things easier. However, with budget constraints MAC was unable to add more casework staff, so there is a waitlist for service that could stretch to nine months.

"These are tough times on everyone's budget, so we have to work smart with our staff on behalf of our clients. Since we do have a long waitlist, the new system is the saving grace because we aren't slowed down by looking for files tucked away in a closet somewhere," said Gretchen Schulert, MAC Co-Director.

In addition to the non-identifying and medical information available to adoptive families, MAC also provides search and reunion services for adoptive parents of minors, adopted adults and birth relatives pertaining to adoptions that were handled by DCFS. For more information on any of these services, contact Midwest Adoption Center at 847/298-9096.



New On-line Adoption Education Curriculum

Prospective and present adoptive families have a new means of learning about important adoption issues. Adoption Learning Partners recently launched a new website with on-line, interactive Internet courses.

The website, www.adoptionlearningpartners.org, will offer three adoption-related courses this fall. The first course, *Conspicuous Families: Race, Culture and Adoption*, focuses on transracial adoptions and the stereotypes, perceptions and cultural issues that can arise. In addition to the practical lessons, there are more than 125 stories from adults who have been adopted and from experienced adoptive parents.

The second course comes just in time to prepare for the next tax season. *Understanding the Adoption Tax Credit* is designed to make this complicated topic understandable and to help families take advantage of the "adoption-friendly" legislation. The third course, *Talking With Your Child About Adoption*, offers insightful methods for discussing tough topics.

These on-line courses allow those interested in adoption to learn at times that are convenient to their schedules and at their own pace. If, for example, a family lives far from resources or has a demanding schedule, the Internet courses can be a helpful alternative. The courses are available whenever the family has a need. They can be accessed through the Internet by a computer from home, work or the public library.

The Adoption Learning Partners website was developed by The Cradle, a 79-year-old adoption agency located in Evanston, IL. The courses are free for those families who are adopting (or have adopted) children through DCFS. Already since the launch in August, hundreds of families have visited the website and signed up for the courses. DCFS will continue to work with Adoption Learning Partners to provide input on content and develop new courses.



AdoptUSKids



We're Just Kids.

USKids need a family to call our own.

National Adoption Month • November 2002

More than 134,000 children in the United States are awaiting adoption. Brothers and sisters, teens and children of color are too often left behind. Couples traditionally adopt, however, singles, grandparents, aunts and uncles are successfully adopting too. So, America, open your hearts, open your homes and open your families. Call one of these children your own. Adopt U.S. kids, because every child deserves a family to call their own.



www.AdoptUSKids.org

Produced by the National Resource Center for Special Needs Adoption - A Service of the Children's Bureau

From the Files

Save the Date for the Spring Conference

The Spring Foster and Adoptive Parent Conference Sponsored by the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services will be held March 21 and 22, 2003, at the Indian Lakes Resort in Bloomingdale.

As previously announced, since the Department supported foster and adoptive parent participation in the NACAC Conference in August there will be no Fall IFPA Conference this year.

Watch for the 2003 Spring Conference registration form and more information in the next issue of *Fostering Illinois*.

As the Department makes plans, readers can provide some input for future conferences.

Would you prefer the conference have one or two overnight stays? Contact Jean Maher at 217/785-5689 to offer your opinion.

Foster Parent Law Implementation Plans Available for Comment

The official period for reviewing and commenting on your agency or region's plan is each October. However, there's still time to give your input. If you would like to receive your agency or region's plan and do not already have a copy, please call or stop by their office to request a copy. If you wish to make written comments on the plan, please give them to the office from which you received the plan as soon as possible.

Tell It Like It Is

Fostering Illinois wants to hear the "real deal" on fostering from those who know best – you!

Below, readers respond to the question: ***How do you help your foster or adoptive children avoid or handle uncomfortable questions and comments about their background at school?***

I would tell my adopted son to say that was a bad time for him, that part of his life is past. He has a new life now, a happier one. You never go backwards; you go forward into the future.

Debbie Rosengren

The new question is: ***If you were "boss for a day" at DCFS, what change would you make to improve service to children?***

You can contact me with your response by e-mail at foster@chicagonet.net or by phone at 773/548-3888 or by mail at *Fostering Illinois*, James R. Thompson Center, 6th floor, Chicago IL 60601. I am looking forward to hearing from you.

Vanessa James, Editor

Photo rt: Gladys Boyd, a member of the Illinois Foster and Adoptive Parent Association (IFAPA), answers questions in the DCFS tent at the State Fair, with her daughter Yolanda as a happy helper.



Photo lt: Charlie and Barb Lashbrook, of Belleville, foster parents to more than 350 children in 34 years, appreciate the special discounts arranged by DCFS for foster families attending the State Fair.

Fostering ILLINOIS

George H. Ryan, Governor

Sponsor: Jess McDonald
DCFS Director

Publisher: Jane Elmore,
Deputy Director,
Division of Foster Care and
Permanency Services

Editor: Vanessa James
Phone: 773/548-3888
Fax: 773/548-6022

E-mail: foster@chicagonet.net

Regional Editors

Central — Mary Dixon

Northern — Diane Mitchell

Southern — Carolyn Cleveland

Cook North — Sari Rowitz

Cook Central — Carmen Velazquez

Cook South — Bobby Evans

Graphics: Robin Pelsis

Printing: DCFS Print Shop

Purpose: To help busy families handle fostering children more effectively. To bring them the best information from the most knowledgeable sources. To promote statewide teamwork in finding permanency for children.

Address Changes: Foster parents must notify their agency, who will notify DCFS. Agencies should change addresses of office locations or request staff copies through the Editor.

Fostering Illinois is published six times a year, bi-monthly, and mailed to licensed foster parents, unlicensed relatives caring for children under DCFS care, all DCFS staff and private agency staff as ordered.

Material may not be reprinted in whole, in part or in any form whatsoever without permission from the Editor or DCFS.

Opinions expressed by experts writing articles are no substitute for professional answers or opinions about a family's or child's specific situation.

Consult a competent professional for answers to your specific questions.

Do You Know A Family For Me?

[C6665] Dontae, 12, has a wonderful smile and a great sense of humor. This quiet but friendly young man takes the time to coordinate his clothes and dresses nicely. He's active outdoors and spends as much time as possible swimming and playing basketball and baseball. Dontae's foster parents and teacher said that he is energetic and adventurous. They added that he wants to be liked and is eager to please. His worker said that Dontae responds well to caring people who help him learn new skills and provide him with new experiences.

[C6827] Antonetta, 12, is a creative young lady with a wide range of talents and interests! She is a good dancer, singer and cook. She loves outdoor activities, especially horseback riding, playing basketball, and jumping rope. In quieter moments, she enjoys doing arts and crafts and writing in her journal. She also likes all kinds of animals - dogs, cats, fish, horses, and even dolphins. In school, her favorite subjects are reading and gym. Her worker said that Antonetta is caring and affectionate. Her teacher said that she is doing well in school.

[C3864] Roy, 16, has the makings of a young architect! Roy loves to sketch buildings and cityscapes. By providing him with drawing lessons, you could really help his talents flourish. He also enjoys doing craft-related activities, working outdoors, and playing baseball with his friends. Roy's worker and teacher said that he is "a neat kid" who is becoming increasingly responsible for himself. His worker said that he can express appreciation and can be respectful and well mannered.

[C4524] Jeriesha. She's a talented singer and she loves to laugh! Jeriesha, 11, likes to sing, joke, and play with others. She also enjoys going to church, playing board games, and working on arts and crafts. She looks forward to taking dance classes. Her worker said that she is very personable and affectionate.

[C7123] Nathan, 17, loves to play all kinds of sports! His favorites are basketball, softball, and football. In his spare time, he enjoys singing, listening to R&B music, and playing video games. His dream is to become a professional basketball player or a teacher. His worker said Nathan is a natural leader who is polite, outgoing, and articulate. His teacher said that Nathan has made great progress and improved his grades.

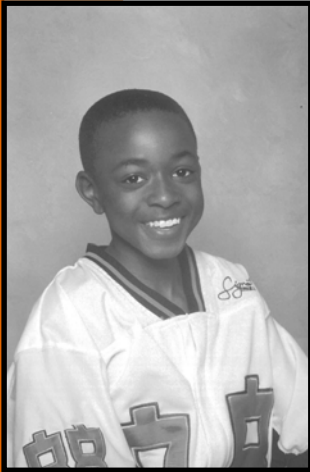
[C6428-29] Walter and LeAsha. These two charming kids will make your family complete! Walter, 10, is a friendly, happy boy who likes to draw, ride his bike, and play football. LeAsha, 7, enjoys playing house, playing with her Barbie dolls, and dressing up. Both of them enjoy going to church and singing in the choir. Walter's teacher said he is sweet and polite, and his worker described him as a "caring and loving boy." Their foster parent said LeAsha can be very cooperative and both kids are well mannered, helpful, protective of each other, and "very lovable."

If you are interested in adopting one of these children or learning about other children waiting to be adopted, please call the Adoption Information Center of Illinois at 1-800-572-2390 (within Illinois) or 1-312-346-1516 (outside Illinois), or see the AICI web site - www.adoptinfo-il.org.

Fostering Illinois
Vanessa James, Editor
Department of Children & Family Services
100 West Randolph - 6th Floor
Chicago, Illinois 60601

PRESRT STD
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
SPRINGFIELD, IL
PERMIT NO. 763

DO YOU KNOW A FAMILY FOR ME?



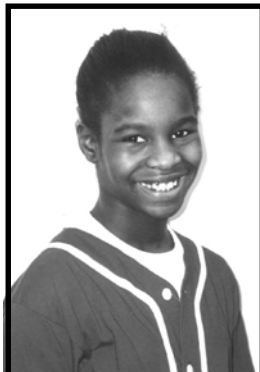
Dontae (C6665)



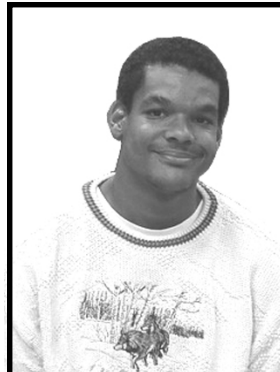
Antonetta (C6827)



Roy (C3864)



Jerisha (C4524)



Nathan (C7123)



Walter & LeAsha
(C6428-29)

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Selecting a Therapist - pgs. 2 & 3

Early Childhood Education - pgs. 4 & 5

System of Care for Special Needs - page 6

Statewide Council Bulletin - page 7

Forever Families Adoption Features - pgs. 8 & 9

Call the Adoption Information Center of Illinois 800/572-2390.