



Legacy Project Focuses On Finding Permanency for Children

Written and approved
by Peggy Slater.

Despite the significant progress that the Department has made in establishing permanent homes for children, there are children who still wait. The Legacy Project is a three-year federal Adoption Opportunities grant to serve children who are at particular risk of growing up in foster care without a "forever" family. The "legacy" children are those who have an adoption plan or a goal of independence but do not have a permanency resource.

The first job of the Legacy Project was to identify those children in need of a family. Private agencies and DCFS regions identified over 200 such children. From there, the Legacy Project's objectives are to:

- Assess the organizational, child and family related barriers to permanency
- Develop and implement a model for overcoming the barriers
- Develop a curriculum to train public and private adoption and permanency staff to find appropriate homes and place children

"The Legacy Project is working with adoption personnel and

caseworkers for these children in a series of workshops to support their efforts to move the children to permanency," said project director Peggy Slater.

Since August more than 150 professionals have been involved in the workshops, which cover topics from working with the child's current caregiver all the way through supporting the new family after an adoption or guardianship is final. Caseworkers, adoption specialists and workshop leaders address each topic together to define barriers to permanency and methods to overcome them.

The workshops emphasize developing and implementing individualized adoption recruitment plans and matching children with the right family. Participants receive training tools to enable them to take what they have learned back to colleagues in their agencies and regions. Project leaders identify and present system changes that could benefit children.

"Working together with the professionals who serve the children every day, we can nurture the practices and skills necessary to find a family for every waiting child. Every foster child who needs a family should benefit from the work of this project," Slater said.

The Legacy Project will use the tools developed in these workshops as the basis for a curriculum offered to all caseworkers and adoption personnel across the state.

Questions about the Legacy Project can be directed to Peggy Slater at 312/814-6861.



Family Traditions

The holiday season presents the perfect opportunity to create new traditions with your family. Children who have not had much stability or continuity may have had little experience with “traditional” holiday celebrations. Make sure you get their input on what traditions they bring with them from their birth families or other foster homes. Let this be a time for your family to create new, lasting memories that you can build on from year to year. Here are some examples from other families to get you started...



Every child gets their own Hanukkah menorah. As we light the candles each night, rather than exchanging gifts, we exchange family coupons. The coupons can be for a free night off chores or a movie pick or a “get out of jail free card” that can eliminate a grounding.

Sharon and Steven Wiseman
Adoptive parents and guardians

Before our nieces came to us, they had never trimmed a tree. Now each year we trim the tree together. Then on Christmas Eve the girls join me in the kitchen to help prepare Christmas dinner.



Howard and Darlene Randall
Relative foster parents

On Christmas we take turns opening our stockings one at a time so everyone can watch. We start youngest to oldest.

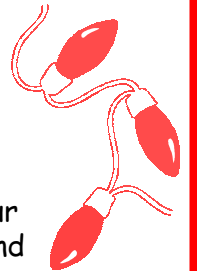
Jane Elmore
Foster and adoptive parent
DCFS Deputy Director



What's Your Family Tradition?



We plan a shopping day where I take the kids to pick out presents for their birth family. Then we have a wrapping party. Our family will go out and put decorations on the entire block to decorate the trees with lights and bells.



Jennifer Baker
Foster parent

Each year on Christmas Eve, the kids get a new pair of pajamas. They look forward to having a special gift to open early, and I can guarantee that we will have good looking photographs on Christmas morning. After the season, I put the pajamas away as a keepsake to chronicle their time with our family.

Vanessa James
Foster and adoptive parent
Fostering Illinois Editor



My extended family has always embraced my adopted daughter. So each Christmas Eve, we spend the night with Grandma and Poppy and Santa Clause comes to visit there. Later, the rest of the family comes with more presents for the kids.

Pamela Blackwell
Adoptive parent



Start a “New” Tradition with a

KWANZAA Celebration



Kwanzaa is an African American and Pan-African holiday which celebrates family, community and culture. Celebrated from December 26 through January 1. Its origins are in the first harvest celebrations of Africa from which it takes its name. The name Kwanzaa is derived from the phrase “matunda ya kwanza” which means “first fruits” in Swahili, a Pan-African language which is the most widely spoken African language. Kwanzaa is celebrated by an estimated 26 million people around the world.

Kwanzaa was created in 1966 by Dr. Maulana Karenga, professor and chair of the Department of Black Studies at California State University, Long Beach. Kwanzaa is a cultural holiday, not a religious one. It is centered around the Nguzo Saba (The Seven Principles) as developed

by Dr. Karenga to help strengthen and reaffirm the family. Each of the seven days of the Kwanzaa celebration focuses on one of the seven principles.

To celebrate Kwanzaa, a central place in the home is chosen for the Kwanzaa Set, the symbols of Kwanzaa. A table is then covered with a beautiful piece of African cloth. Then, the mkeka (mat) is placed on the table. Next the Kinara (candle holder) is placed on the mat and the Mishumaa Saba (seven candles) are placed in the kinara (candle holder). They represent the seven principles. The black candle represents the first principle, Umoja (unity) and is placed in the center of the kinara. The red candles represent the principles of Kujichagulia (self-determination), Ujamaa (cooperative economics) and Kuumba (creativity) and are placed to the left of the black

Seven Principles of Kwanzaa

Umoja (Unity)

Kujichagulia (Self-Determination)

Ujima (Collective Work and Responsibility)

Ujamaa (Cooperative Economics)

Nia (Purpose)

Kuumba (Creativity)

Imani (Faith)

candle. The green candles represent the principles of Ujima (collective work and responsibility), Nia (purpose) and Imani (faith) and are placed to the right of the black candle.

At the evening meal, the family members light one of the seven candles to commemorate the principle of the day. The black candle is lit first on the first day of the celebration. And the remaining candles are lit afterwards from left to right on the following days. This procedure is to indicate that the people come first, then the struggle and then the hope that comes from the struggle. While the candle is lit the principle of the day is discussed. Everyone explains what the Nguzo Saba principle of that day means to them and how they have practiced it during the day. After

the discussion, a commitment is made by all to practice and promote the particular principle throughout the year. To close, seven “Harambee” (Swahili for “Let’s all pull together”) are called out. Also various other activities are organized to practice and promote the principle of the day. These include working together on projects, studying and learning more on African culture, sharing narratives and other literature, poems, dance and drama, and making Kwanzaa items as symbols and/or gifts. All of these activities are to celebrate the holiday and reaffirm and reinforce family, community and culture.

Adapted from the Official Kwanzaa Website. For more information about the Kwanzaa celebration visit the Web site at: www.OfficialKwanzaaWebsite.org

From The Editor



Even though the year is almost over, things never seem to wind down in November. Rather it is a time to gear up for the year's biggest holiday happenings in a short span of about six weeks. I hope this Holiday Issue will give you some ideas to make this time with your children memorable and help everyone to take things in stride.

Next year, Fostering Illinois will bring you special features on parenting teens, health issues, options for children after foster care, along with regular updates on DCFS policies and services. Local input is also important so please stay in touch with the regional reporters who work hard to make sure you get the news you need. Their contact information is listed in each regional section.

Thanks for another year of Fostering Illinois. I appreciate the letters, calls and emails with your comments and critiques. Together we are making Fostering Illinois an important vehicle for sharing information and ideas to better serve our children. As a FAB-parent (Foster/Adoptive/Birth) to four kids from age one to 17, I know I need all the help that's out there.

Best wishes to you and your families for this holiday season and the year ahead.

Sincerely,

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DCFS Sponsors Family Fun at the State Fair

Once again foster and adoptive families were able to enjoy the Illinois State Fair, compliments of the Department. DCFS provided families with discounts for admission and carnival rides, as well as food coupons. At the new DCFS tent, families could talk to agency staff and get information about foster care and adoption. To capture the memory of their time at the fair many families posed for a free picture taken by DCFS staff.



The Bruckner family of Aurora took a break from the fun in the DCFS tent.

Approved by Gwenn Eyer.

Plan Now for the Spring Foster and Adoptive Parent Conference

The 2002 DCFS/IFPA Spring Foster and Adoptive Parent Conference will be held March 8 and 9 at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Springfield. The theme for the upcoming conference is, "Every Child Is A Success Story." To help children be successful, participants will be able to choose from 27 workshops on topics ranging from Instilling Discipline in Young Children to Teen Issues, Services and Supports.

The registration form for the conference is on the next page. The process has changed for 2002 and DOES NOT include an advance interest form. All foster and adoptive parents who wish to attend the conference should clip the registration form, complete both sides, sign and return it by January 25. Confirmation letters will be sent when the registration has been accepted. Conference-related questions may be directed to Gwenn Eyer at 618/462-9728, ext. 2.

The 2002 DCFS/IFPA Spring Foster & Adoptive Parent Conference
 March 8 & 9, 2002 ~ Crowne Plaza Hotel, Springfield

Every Child is a Success Story
Registration Form

Please complete the form - both sides - and print clearly. If faxing, remember to fax BOTH sides of the form. A confirmation letter will be sent to you when your registration has been accepted. The confirmation letter guarantees your registration to the conference. Thank you.

Foster/Adoptive Parents Complete This Section: Couples need to EACH complete a registration form. Please make additional copies as needed.

Social Security # _____ Are you an adoptive parent? Yes ___ No ___
 Relative caregiver? Yes ___ No ___ Foster parent? Yes ___ No ___
 License #: _____ Exp. Date: _____
 Name of Fostering Agency: _____
 Last Name _____ First Name _____ MI _____
 Home Address _____ City _____ Zip Code _____
 Home Phone # _____ Work Phone # _____
 Caseworker/Regional Administrator Signature of Approval: _____

DCFS or Private Agency Staff Complete This Section:

Social Security # _____ Job Title: _____
 Last Name _____ First Name _____ MI _____
For DCFS: Work Address _____ City _____ Zip Code _____
For POS: Agency Name _____
 Agency Address _____ City _____ Zip Code _____
Both DCFS & POS: Work Phone # _____ Fax # _____
 Region: Cook North ___ Cook Central ___ Cook South ___ Northern ___ Central ___ Southern ___
 Are you an adoptive parent? Yes ___ No ___ Relative caregiver? Yes ___ No ___
 Are you a foster parent? Yes ___ No ___ License # _____
 Supervisor or Upper Level Management Signature of Approval: _____
 DCFS Professional Development Coordinator Signature of Approval: _____

ALL must complete the rest of registration form, including the back.

Lodging: (Please Check All That Apply)
 DCFS Division of Training and Development Services will coordinate all lodging for eligible participants.

I will need a sleeping room Friday March 8th
 Yes ___ No ___

Smoking Room ___ Non-Smoking Room ___

I prefer to room with:

 A roommate will be assigned to you if one is not specified.

Male ___ Female ___

Americans with Disabilities Act or Special Needs? _____

Meals:
 I will be attending –
 Dinner, March 8 _____
 Breakfast, March 9 _____
 Luncheon, March 9 _____
 Vegetarian Meals? Yes ___ No ___
 ◇◇◇◇

Cook County Bus Service:
Pre-Registration on this form is required.

Your name must be on the list in order to board the bus. Cars may not be parked at either site, so please arrange for a ride to meet the bus. **Please check the boarding site you will be using.**

Site A DCFS, 6201 S. Emerald: _____
 Site B DCFS, 3518 W. Division: _____

PLEASE NOTE: Registered participants who do not attend the workshop sessions will be billed for their hotel room costs and other conference expenses.

Name _____

WORKSHOP SELECTIONS

You may attend a total of FOUR workshop slots, two on Friday afternoon and two on Saturday. Foster parents will be eligible to receive DCFS Training hours credit for each completed workshop. Please note that Friday afternoon you may attend ONE 3-hour workshop OR TWO 90-minute workshops. Please check the workshops you want to attend from the list, and list your top 2 choices for each slot in the blanks below. We will do our best to honor your requests.

WORKSHOP A

- (1) 1-2-3 Magic – Instilling Discipline in Young Children
- (2) Cross-Cultural Hair & Skin Care
- (3) Levels of Care
- (4) Finding and Keeping Families for African American Children
- (5) Psychotropic Drugs
- (6) Success Stories – Panel presentation spotlighting young adults who have grown up within the child welfare system

WORKSHOP B

- (1) 1-2-3 Magic (Repeat of A-1)
- (2) Administrative Case Reviews
- (3) Fetal Alcohol Syndrome and Older Teens
- (4) Managing Your Child’s Allergies and Asthma
- (5) Resources for Children who are Aging Out of the Child Welfare System
- (6) Supporting Relationships Between the Foster Family and the Child in a Psychiatric Ward or Residential Placement

3-HOUR WORKSHOPS A-B – Limit 1

You MUST record both numbers separately to register

- (7) – (8) Attachment Disorder
- (9) – (10) Behavior Management/Discipline Within DCFS Guidelines
- (11) – (12) Listening to Children: A Support Program for Foster Parents
- (13) – (14) Parenting Children With Sexual Behavior Problems
- (15) – (16) Strategies for Parenting Sexually Abused Children

WORKSHOP C

- (1) Adoption Search Issues
- (2) Beyond Educational Advocacy
- (3) Finding and Keeping Families for African American Children (Repeat of A-4)
- (4) Levels of Care (Repeat of A-3)
- (5) Meeting the Needs of the Physically Disabled Child
- (6) Psychotropic Drugs (Repeat of A-5)
- (7) Resources for Children who are Aging Out of the Child Welfare System (Repeat of B-5)
- (8) Runaways
- (9) Self Esteem
- (10) Success Stories – Panel presentation (Repeat of A-6)
- (11) The Kids Have Returned Home to their Birth Families... Now What? (Examining transitions, grief and loss issues)

WORKSHOP D

- (1) Adoption Search Issues (repeat of Session C-1)
- (2) Cross-Cultural Hair and Skin Care (Repeat of A-2)
- (3) FAS and Older Teens (Repeat B-3)
- (4) Kinship Care – Advocacy and Support
- (5) Managing Your Child’s Allergies and Asthma (Repeat of B-4)
- (6) Post Adoption Services and Supports
- (7) Self-Esteem (Repeat C-9)
- (8) Teaching Children Responsibility
- (9) The Kids Have Returned Home...Now What? (Repeat of C-11)
- (10) Teen Issues – Services and Supports (including the Chaffee Act)
- (11) Working with Birth Parents

Directions: Place the number of your workshop session choices in the blanks below. Your second choice will be used if your first choice of session is already filled.

	1st Choice	2nd Choice
Session A (Friday)	_____	_____
Session B (Friday)	_____	_____
Session AB (optional) 3-hour workshop	_____	_____
Session C (Saturday)	_____	_____
Session D (Saturday)	_____	_____

If you have any questions about this registration form, please Call 1/877-800-3393 and select Option 1

**REGISTRATION DEADLINE IS
JANUARY 25TH**

MAIL TO: DCFS Division of Training
406 E. Monroe, Station 122
Springfield, IL 62701

OR FAX TO: 217/557-4349

Medical Insurance Answers

DCFS Deputy Director of Health Policy JoeAnna Sullivan answers common questions about medical insurance coverage for foster children and children in adoptive or guardianship families.

Q: *Are all foster children covered by Medicaid?*

Yes. DCFS has made special arrangements with the Department of Public Aid (DPA) for all foster children to receive health coverage under the Medicaid plan. A temporary medical card is immediately issued to each child when they enter foster care. The ongoing medical card is mailed once a month to the foster family, replacing the temporary medical card, within 10 days. The ongoing card lasts for one month.

Foster parents should remember that the card must move with the child if the child moves to another foster placement. If you did not receive a medical card when the child was placed with you, contact your worker or the Department's Medical Card Hotline at 800-228-6533. If you received a medical card for a child not living with you, do NOT throw it away. Notify your worker immediately so the card can be delivered to the correct foster parent.

Q: *If I adopt or take guardianship, will the Medicaid coverage continue?*

Medicaid coverage will continue per the conditions described in the adoption or guardianship agreement. All subsidized adoptions and guardianships provide continued coverage.

Q: *If I have private insurance, can I cover my child under that insurance plan?*

Often the answer is yes, but each private insurance plan has its own eligibility requirements that determine whether you can cover your child under it. If you do enroll your child with your private insurance, you are responsible for paying all premiums, co-payments, etc.

Q: *Will the Medicaid coverage continue if I choose to cover my child under my private insurance?*

Yes.

Q: *If my child has both kinds of coverage, which plan pays first?*

Medicaid is always a secondary payer whenever the child also has private pay insurance. If you choose to cover your child under a private insurance plan, all healthcare bills must first be submitted to your private insurance. If your private plan denies all or some of the bill, then the bill and the Explanation of Benefits (EOB) indicating what was denied should be submitted to Department of Public Aid's Medicaid program.

Q: *Is it better to get private coverage if I can?*

There's not a simple answer to that. Private insurance may provide you with a different selection of treatment providers and benefits. However, adding your child may affect your premiums, deductibles, out-of-pocket limits, co-pays, etc. Benefits under the Illinois Medicaid program may be better than some private insurance plans. Additionally, families should consider the convenience of having one provider for the entire family and the possible emotional impact of having a different provider for a foster or adopted child. In making your decision, you should carefully review:

- your child's health status and needs
- the coverage provided under the private plan you are considering
- the possible additional premiums and other costs
- your access to and preference for using certain providers

Other questions about medical coverage can be directed to the Department's Medical Card Hotline (1-800-228-6533). This number can also be used to obtain replacement medical cards.

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**To be
Announced**

The Statewide Foster Care Advisory Council and its bylaws, including membership, are mandated by the Foster Parent Law.

The Council has two primary functions:

- 1) To advise DCFS on foster care and other matters which influence foster care in Illinois

and
- 2) To ensure the implementation of foster parents' rights and responsibilities given in the Foster Parent Law in the everyday operation of child welfare agencies and DCFS regions.

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Upcoming Meetings

January 18 - Bloomington

March 8 - Springfield
(Open Forum at DCFS/IFPA Spring Conference)

April 5 - Chicago

May 31 - Bloomington

From The Files

On-Line Club for Foster Kids and Parents

FosterClub, a nonprofit organization founded in 1999 by two sisters, has a free website (<http://www.fosterclub.com>) that provides an ongoing connection for foster children. The online FosterClub features activities, information, message boards, a questions and answers column, contests and advice columns just for youth in foster care. A Hall of Fame List has biographies of famous former foster kids. Feature columns include Stuff To Do, Talk Back, Kids Like Me, Getting a Job, Getting Educated and Living on Your Own. The website accepts no advertising and has a strict safety policy to protect identities of FosterClub members.

FosterClub for Grownups includes success stories of youth placed in foster care and information on how to help children in foster care. Adults can also nominate foster youth for the FosterClub Achievement Award. Every child nominated receives an award and special prizes may be awarded for outstanding achievements in school, sports, community service, arts and other activities.

Teens Write Book About Foster Care

"The Heart Knows Something Different: Teenage Voices from the Foster Care System" Edited by Al Desetta, Persea Books, 1996. Each chapter is written by a different teen. This book comes recommended by a foster parent who said it "helped me understand where some of the kids are coming from."



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 your foster/adoptive children refer to you? By name, mom and dad or a nickname? How did you decide?

My two foster boys call me by my first name. Because of their relationships with the birth fathers, they did not feel comfortable calling me "Dad." I'm hoping that the son we are adopting will eventually call me Dad, but for now my first name is fine.

*Bob Lundrum
Quincy, IL*

Our two-year-old grandson has lived with us since he was two months old. He refers to his birthmother as Mama. At her encouragement, he calls his grandfather Papa. He calls me, his grandmother, Mama or Mommy. Occasionally he will call me Grandma, which I encourage. But for the most part he chooses Mama or Mommy.

*Pat Kroyer
Elgin, IL*

My adopted son Davon calls me Mama. I did not make him call me Mama. I love my baby with all my heart and he loves me with all his little heart too.

Louise Turner

The new question is: *When outsiders ask you what it is like to be a foster parent, what do you tell them?*

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

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Vanessa". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Vanessa James, Editor

Fostering ILLINOIS

George H. Ryan, Governor

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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?

Timothy [C6027]

Timothy, 12, is a friendly child who will give you a hug in a minute! He enjoys movies, video games, and playing outdoors. He also loves performing, especially to music videos. Timothy's foster parents said he is easygoing and good-natured and is always willing to try something new. His teacher said that he is "a delight in class" and can be counted on to help out whenever he is asked.

Dion and Michael [C5252 - 67]

These brothers love outdoor activities - especially bike riding. Indoors, they enjoy any kind of battery-operated toy. Michael, 15, also enjoys sports. Dion, 12, likes pets and would love to have a dog. Their worker described Michael as independent and appreciative, and his foster parent and teacher said that he is respectful, friendly, and helpful. The worker said Dion is "very friendly and warm." His foster parent and teacher said that he loves to be around people.

Esperanza [C3719]

This young lady is loving and caring. Esperanza, 10, likes watching television, seeing movies and playing with toys. She behaves well at school and at home. Esperanza's teachers said that she is friendly and affectionate. Her foster parents said that she is a joy to be around.

Orlando and Omar [C6871 - 72]

These friendly young men really want a loving home! Orlando, 11, is respectful towards adults and gets along well with other children. He likes video games, playing ball, and riding his bike. Omar, 10, is inquisitive and cheerful, and he loves to smile. Orlando's foster parents said he is a child you can't help loving. His teacher said that he is making progress in his schoolwork. Omar's foster parents said that he is sweet natured, family-oriented and helpful. His teacher called him friendly and outgoing.

Andrew [C4972]

Andrew's favorite places are the basketball court and the soccer field. He also likes other sports and animals, especially dogs. He enjoys catching bugs, drawing, swimming, and eating at Chuck E Cheese. He is eleven years old. His worker called him charming and cooperative. His foster parent and teacher said he is determined, smart, intelligent and willing to help others.

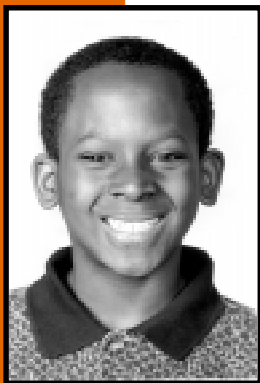
If you are interested in adopting any of these children or learning about other children waiting to be adopted, please call the Adoption Information Center of Illinois at 1-800-572-2390 (within Illinois) or 1-312-346-1516 (outside Illinois) or see the AICI web site - www.adoptinfo-il.org.

November is National Adoption Month.

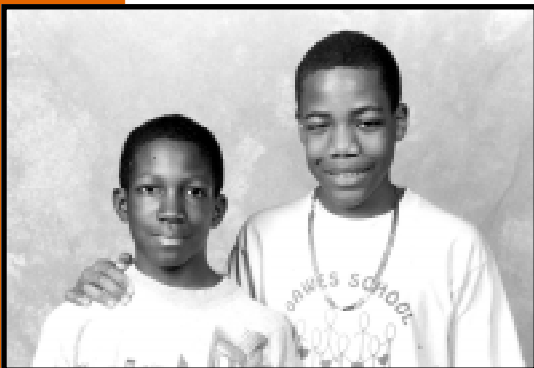
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DO YOU KNOW A FAMILY FOR ME?



Timothy (C6027)



Dion and Michael (C5252-67)



Esperanza (C3719)



Orlando and Omar (C6871-72)



Andrew (C4972)

Holiday Issue:

Establishing Family Traditions

Celebrating Kwanzaa

Legacy Project Finds Permanent Families

Spring Conference Registration

New Statewide Council Membership

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