

## Eagle Scout Donates Bicycles for Foster Children

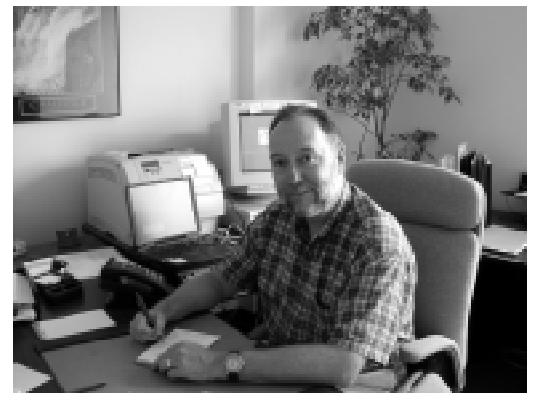
Foster parents in the Winnebago/Boone area will be able to have bikes for their foster children this Christmas, thanks to the efforts of Jonathan Decorie. Jonathan is the son of Catherine and Stephen Fedor who have been foster parents for DCFS since April of 1999. Jonathan is working on his Eagle Scout award. His project has been to collect old bikes and fix them up to donate to foster families in the area. So far he has finished 30 bikes and is working on the 100 that are still at his home. The bikes will be available to foster homes in the Winnebago/Boone area on a first come basis until all bikes are gone. Thank you, Jon for a great project to help our foster families.



## Meet Russ Ellsworth...

### Northern Region's Resource Manager

As the Department of Children and Family Service's Northern Region Resource Manager, Russ is responsible for efforts to retain and recruit present and new foster families in all twelve field offices. He has been with the Department of Children and Family Services for more than 30 years and held various supervisory positions before being selected as the Northern Region's Resource Manager. Although this position requires a great deal of travel, he always seems to have the energy to handle his many challenges. His managerial style is based on "cooperation and guiding." He works very closely with his three LAN (Local Area Network) Cluster Supervisors who are responsible for the licensing and retention of foster homes. It is a good feeling to know that the individual responsible for retention and recruitment of foster homes is a person who will listen to, guide and support those with whom he works. There is no one who supports our foster families more.



While it is true we are in need of new resources for children who come into care, Russ' philosophy is that DCFS and private agencies should always be working with and supporting our active foster parents. When a foster family knows that every avenue of support will be explored and that they have someone who believes in them, they then become the best recruiters.

He thoroughly believes that all foster parents should receive every support available to them while working within the system. But one will seldom hear him use the word "system"; he feels strongly that while it is necessary to work with certain guidelines and parameters, it is critical to remember that we are working with both children and their families. Russ has often said, "foster parents are our most important resource so we must respect them and try to offer every support needed to make their job easier."

# Adopt-An-Angel Christmas Gift Drive Always Delivers

“Corporations Care Task Force” is gearing up again for the tenth “Adopt-An-Angel Christmas Drive” for Winnebago and Boone counties. Each year more corporations, businesses and/or volunteer groups seem to join in on this greatly appreciated support to our foster families and intact families during this upcoming holiday season. The gifts are meant to help foster families offset the financial burden at Christmas time. When the caseworkers deliver the gifts to the homes, it is made clear to each of the families that this is a gift from the community and is meant to be from Santa.



This is how it works...in September every caseworker from each of the foster care providing agencies in Winnebago and Boone counties made their list (and checked it twice). Every child was listed on an Adopt-An-Angel form. These forms have the **child's first name, age, ethnicity** (to be culturally sensitive, if necessary), **three gifts the child would like** and the **caseworker's assigned code**.

In the beginning years, local foster youth were the only recipients of the gift program. But over the years it has expanded to all foster youth and to all intact family youth. A master file is kept so that no child is left out at this special time of year. This information is then transferred onto a color-coded “Adopt-An-Angel Tag” which is given to approximately twenty-five different businesses and organizations. Groups receive on average 50-100 tags. In 2000, 1,700 youth received gifts through the “Adopt-An-Angel” drive.

The corporation then distributes the tags to their employees, on a volunteer basis. The price range for the gifts is \$20 - \$25 per child. Each individual employee can choose the tag and the gift to purchase (many buy more than one of the gifts listed). They then wrap the gift(s) and bring them back to their respective place of employment, making sure the tag is securely attached to the present. During the week of December 10<sup>th</sup>, we pick up all of the gifts from each of the corporations. It takes two full days to do this...a local moving company donates a driver and semi-truck. Even the location for distribution is donated. On the third day, volunteers separate the gifts by agency and then by caseworker. And then they check the *master file* to make sure every child has a gift. If one is left out or lost, the organizers purchase one of their suggested gifts for them. Some of the financial donations that the “Adopt-An-Angel Project” receives are used for this purpose. On the fourth day, the caseworkers gather all the gifts, which are now in large bags. (They often cannot get them in their cars in one trip.) What a sight!

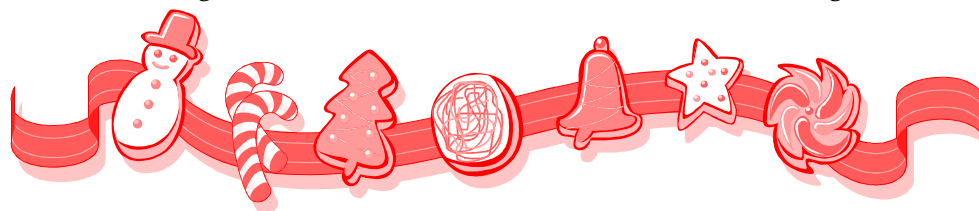
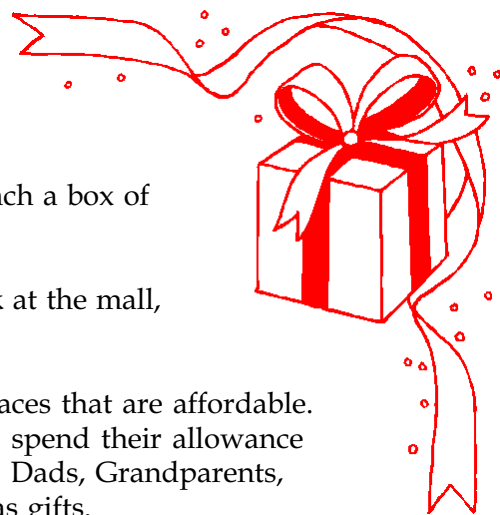


Santa's Elves (caseworkers) deliver the presents to the foster parents and intact family parents, hopefully, while the children are not around. Everyone looks forward to this home visit because they know that the “Adopt-An-Angel” gifts will help to make many children's holiday season bright. Our caseworkers enjoy this visit with their homes...gifts, good thoughts and cheer.

# Tips and Tricks to Surviving the Holidays...

The holiday season is to be full of love and joy. However, between shopping, sending cards, parties, decorating, excited children...the stress level goes into overdrive. Here are some tips that might bring back the love and joy and decrease the stress:

- **Delegate Holiday-Related Responsibilities:** Use kids to the fullest extent—they enjoy the responsibility. Kids can decorate the house and tree, wrap presents, etc.
- **Marathon Bake Session:** Rather than coming up with small gifts for teachers, babysitters and friends, why not give them each a box of fudge?
- **Shop by catalogue or on-line:** In less time than it takes to park at the mall, you can order gifts through easy, time-saving methods.
- **Christmas Shopping:** Take children Christmas shopping to places that are affordable. *Remember that giving is as important as receiving.* Allow them to spend their allowance on gifts for those people that are important to them, i.e. Moms, Dads, Grandparents, etc. Remind them now that they should be saving for Christmas gifts.
- **Shop during the week:** Try to shop mid-week and avoid the weekend crowds.
- **Trade watching kids with another foster parent:** While you watch her kids, she can shop. Meanwhile, you can have a baking session with the kids. They love to decorate the cookies with sprinkles.
- **Christmas Cards/Letters:** Make a list, figure how many cards and stamps you will need. Start this right after Thanksgiving. Have the children place the stamps on the envelopes, they will love to help.
- **Prepare food ahead of time:** Many foods can be prepared weeks ahead of time. By planning ahead all you will have to do is pull it out of the freezer, and bake. Just think of all the good smells, with almost no mess.
- **Bored kids:** If you own some holiday videos, this is the time to dig them out. Swap out with other foster families. You can even rent them for little cost. Or if you would prefer something more hands-on, set-up a small craft area. Stock it with all the basic supplies: white paper, construction paper, scissors, glue, colors, pipe cleaners, scraps of fabric, those old Christmas cards, scraps of wrapping paper, and if you dare...glitter. You will get a little peace, and the kids will have something to be proud of.
- **Have a Holiday Cookie Swap:** Invite some foster friends over for coffee, they each bring 3-6 dozen cookies of one kind and go home with 3-6 dozen assorted. Makes baking much easier.



# Northern 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)

### Rock Valley Area 815-874-3000

	Module
<b>FREEPORT - Faith United Methodist</b> November 26, December 3 & 10 (Mon) 6:00-9:00 p.m.	8
<b>ROCKFORD - IETC</b> January 10, 17 & 24 (Thurs) 9:00 a.m.-12:30 p.m.	2

### OTHER In-Service Training

<b>Transracial Parenting Training (9 hrs.)</b> <b>ROCKFORD - DCFS</b> February 13, 20 & 27 9:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.
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### College of DuPage Area 630-942-2392

	Module
<b>CRYSTAL LAKE - Holiday Inn Crystal Lake</b> December 1 (Sat) & 3 (Mon) 9:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m. 6:30-9:30 p.m.	5
February 9 (Sat) 9:00-4:00 p.m.	9
<b>ELGIN - Crowne Plaza Hotel</b> January 26, February 2 & February 9 (Sat) 8:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m. 8:30-11:30 p.m.	10
<b>GLEN ELLYN - College of DuPage</b> November 7, 8 & 14 (Wed/Thurs) January 7, 9 & 14 (Mon/Wed) 6:30-9:30 p.m. 6:30-9:30 p.m.	6
<b>JOLIET/ROMEOVILLE - Country Inn &amp; Suites</b> November 15 (Thurs) & 17 (Sat) February 16 (Sat) 6:30-9:30 p.m. 9:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m. 9:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m.	3&4 9
<b>KANKAKEE - Lees Inn</b> December 6 (Thurs) & 8 (Sat) January 28 & 31 (Mon/Thurs) 6:30-9:30 p.m. 9:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m. 6:30-9:30 p.m.	8 7
<b>WAUKEGAN - Ramada Inn Waukegan</b> January 17 (Thurs) & 19 (Sat) 6:30-9:30 p.m. 9:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m.	6

### OTHER In-Service Training

<b>Understanding the Attachment Disordered Child (6 hrs.)</b> <b>AURORA - Comfort Suites City Center</b> February 9 (Sat) 9:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m.
<b>JOLIET/ROMEOVILLE - Country Inn &amp; Suites</b> November 10 (Sat) 9:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m.
<b>Transracial Parenting Training (9 hrs.)</b> <b>AURORA - Comfort Suites</b> November 7 (Wed) & 10 (Sat) 6:30-9:30 p.m. 9:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m.
<b>JOLIET - DCFS Field Office</b> November 12, 14 & 19 (Mon/Wed) 6:30-9:30 p.m.

## 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.

### College of DuPage Area 630-942-2392

<b>AURORA - Comfort Suites City Center</b> December 5 & 6 (Wed/Thurs) January 8 & 10 (Tues/Thurs) 6:30-9:30 p.m. 6:30-9:30 p.m.
<b>CRYSTAL LAKE - Holiday Inn</b> December 15 (Sat) 9:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m.
<b>GLEN ELLYN - College of DuPage</b> November 12 & 13 (Mon/Tues) December 17 & 18 (Mon/Tues) February 4 & 6 (Mon/Wed) 6:30-9:30 p.m. 6:30-9:30 p.m. 6:30-9:30 p.m.
<b>JOLIET/ROMEOVILLE - Country Inn &amp; Suites</b> November 6 & 13 (Tues) 6:30-9:30 p.m.
<b>KANKAKEE/BOURBONNAIS - Lees Inn</b> December 1 (Sat) February 5 & 7 (Tues/Thurs) 9:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m. 6:30-9:30 p.m.
<b>WAUKEGAN - Ramada Inn</b> November 17 (Sat) December 3 & 4 (Mon/Tues) January 26 (Sat) 9:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m. 6:30-9:30 p.m. 9:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m.

### Rock Valley Area 815-874-3000

<b>FREEPORT - Faith United Methodist</b> November 15 & 29 (Thurs) 6:00-9:00 p.m.
<b>ROCKFORD - Bell</b> December 8 & 15 (Sat) January 19 & 26 (Sat) 1:00-4:00 p.m. 1:00-4:00 p.m.
<b>ITEC</b> November 7 & 14 (Wed) November 27 & December 4 (Tues) 6:00-9:00 p.m. 6:00-9:00 p.m.

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

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