

Our Kids

2000 Vol. 5
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For Southern Region Foster Parents

FOSTER PARENT SPOTLIGHT:

Lawanda Logan is mentoring and ministering to Murphysboro children

As far back as she can remember Lawanda Logan has loved working with children. Lawanda, a recently licensed DCFS foster parent, is eager to make a difference in the life of a child.

She remembers being involved with children throughout her life. As a teenager, she worked with children of all ages at a day care center. She also worked with the Cedar Point Program. Now Lawanda is in her seventh year as a mentor at the Murphysboro Middle School.

She loves the fact that one day the example she sets could possibly affect a child. If she inspires just one child she would then know that she had done something positive in her life, as well as for the child's life.

"The major thing that children need today is a positive role model. I will be there for each and every one of them, in any way that I can. I want them to feel as if they can come to me for anything. I will help them any way that I can," Logan said.

She loves spending as much of her time with the children as possible. Lawanda has worked with the school for many activities, including assisting in the coordination of all of the Black History Programs held at the middle school. One of her favorite projects was to help coordinate the 1999 talent show, which was held in Murphysboro. That gave her the chance to help children do the things they enjoy and showcase their talents. Lawanda's impact can be felt throughout the community. She is very active in the Human Relation's Task Force, a group that gets many

"I will be there for each and every one of them, in any way that I can."

activities started for the children to do outside of school. These activities range from dances to planting trees.

She is also the assistant pastor at the Lighthouse Fellowship Church, where she is very active with the children in the ministry. Lawanda sees herself as a person of guidance, a friend, and even a mother figure for the children she works with. She thinks that when children trust you they are more comfortable with coming to you for advice when they have a problem.

"I think it is easier for a child to go to someone outside of their family when they have a problem," she said. "They know that they will get advice instead of a lecture. I feel it is important for the kids to see me as a friend," Lawanda stated.

Her goal is to help children see that growing up in today's society is not going to be easy. She knows that peer pressure is having a tremendous negative impact on today's children and the only way to handle it is to keep your mind focused on the right thing to do.



Foster Parent Advisory Council



Congratulations to the new co-chairs of the Foster Care Advisory Council, Carol Aubuchon and Cindy McCleary. Carol is the lead support specialist housed in the Granite City field office. Cindy is a Family Development Specialist in the Olney office.

The council would like to thank Dock Conner and Judie Fairchild for their outstanding efforts during their tenure as co-chairs of the council.

If you are interested in attending a council meeting, please contact Carol at 618-876-8985 or Cindy at 618-393-2979.

OUR KIDS

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

Supporting Relationships Between Children and Birth Families

Our PRIDE training teaches that respecting and supporting a child's connection to his or her birth families and previous foster families are competencies required of foster parents. As many newly licensed foster families may be somewhat uncomfortable with this, here are some tips to gradually enhance the relationship between foster and primary/birth families.

- ◆ *Ask for pictures of the child's birth family to display in the child's new room.*
- ◆ *If the caseworker did not bring many personal items, ask the parents for a few of the child's favorite toys from home.*
- ◆ *Give the parents school pictures and pictures you have taken of the child.*
- ◆ *Exchange letters (through the social worker) with the family.*
- ◆ *Host or arrange sibling visits (in consultation with the caseworker).*
- ◆ *Request cultural information from the birth parents.*



Remember to always talk positively about the family to the child and encourage them to talk about their family.

As you feel more comfortable with the relationship that is developing, you may advance your relationship in the following ways:

- ◆ Transport the child to and/or from visits. Meet the parents and talk to the parent about their child. Brag about the child to the parents.
- ◆ Be an active member of the child/family team. Attend staffings and case reviews. Maintain a non-threatening attitude.
- ◆ Invite the child's family to attend a church service with your family, or take the child to meet them at their church.
- ◆ Invite the child's family to attend a sporting event or school activity that he/she is participating in.

Many foster parents have welcomed the child's family for activities in their home such as birthday parties, holiday celebrations, etc. This is a wonderful opportunity for you to model or share parenting information. Continue to support the reunification process and assist in planning the child's return home. Offer to provide respite care for the family once the child has returned home. These are just a few ideas that have worked well for others and have resulted in easier transitions and, in many cases, lifelong relationships for the child.

Kids Receive Suitcases Through DCFS Quality Improvement Project

Earlier this year, Team 4A02, East St. Louis field office, conducted a Quality Improvement project to provide suitcases for 150 foster kids. So often kids are placed without a bag or suitcase to call their own, so this was a very significant and touching project. It was also timely with summer vacation travel coming up for many of the families, and in particular for the foster parents/foster child trip to Los Angeles, CA.

Team members worked with Laurene Smith, DCFS Special Events Coordinator, in securing and delivering the suitcases. Team 4A02 is comprised of Joanne Woods, Public Service Administrator, Deadra Humphrey-Vinson, clerical support and Virginia Hufker, Enrique Howell, Ella Lee and Melanie Allen, caseworkers. This project was truly a team endeavor with support from our managers and the community personnel. Foster parents were appreciative and the distribution event allowed staff and foster parents to talk together, take pictures and to enjoy leisure time with each other. This was a very rewarding experience and a benefit to our wards!



Foster Parent Support Specialists on Call to Help DCFS Families

Being a foster parent is a tough job. Sometimes the only one you can talk to is another foster parent. A listening ear and a supportive ally can help a difficult situation become manageable. Just knowing you're not alone is often a boost.

The DCFS Foster Parent Support Specialists have accepted the gauntlet and are available to assist DCFS foster homes when needed; 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

If you need to know about a community resource, you can call your support specialist. If you have a question about training or are unsure about agency policy, contact your support specialist. If she doesn't know she will point you in the right direction for help.



Support Specialists and Family Development Specialists map out recruitment plans.

<u>OFFICE</u>	<u>SUPPORT SPECIALIST</u>	<u>PHONE NUMBER</u>
Alton	Jean Rigdon	618-254-2570 hm 618-466-7014 ofc
Belleville	Mary McHenry	618-277-6627 hm 618-394-2150 ofc
Carlyle	Sherry Cullum	618-532-0155 hm 618-594-4541 ofc
Effingham	Vicky Kline	618-245-3394 hm 217-347-5561 ofc
East St. Louis	Ethel Robinson	618-271-9437 hm 618-398-5910 ofc
Granite City	Carol Aubuchon	618-288-3615 hm 618-876-8985 ofc
Harrisburg	Beatrice Marcum	618-252-6087 hm 618-253-7604 ofc
Marion	Lori Williams	618-993-3704 hm 618-993-7100 ofc
Marion	Judie Fairchild	618-982-2375 hm 618-993-7100 ofc
Metropolis	Jeri Hileman	618-995-2834 hm 618-524-2428 ofc
Murphysboro	Sherry Rice	618-724-4022 hm 618-687-1733 ofc
Murphysboro/Marion	Beth Reed	618-439-9624 hm 618-687-1733 ofc
Mt. Vernon Olney	Dorothy Churchwell Ruth Zwilling	618-847-5001 hm 618-392-0336 hm 618-393-2979 ofc
Salem	Marilyn Albert	618-822-6523 hm 618-548-7300 ofc
Sparta	Doris Gagen	618-768-4557 hm 618-443-4317 ofc

If you are unable to reach your Support Specialist, the Lead Support Specialist can assist you. They are Carol Aubuchon, East St. Louis Area; Vicky Kline, Effingham area (Effingham, Mt. Vernon, Salem and Olney); and Judie Fairchild, Marion Area (Marion, Murphysboro, Harrisburg, Metropolis, Anna and Cairo).

Southern 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 Training offerings 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)

East St. Louis
618-650-3213

Marion
618-536-7751

	Module		Module
FAIRVIEW HEIGHTS - Ramada Inn		ULLIN - Shawnee Community College	
Dec. 2 & 9 (Sat)	6:30-9:30 p.m. 9	Nov. 18 (Sat)	9:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m. 9

Educational Advocacy

Two 3-hour sessions = 6 training hours

It is mandatory for one foster parent in each family to attend Educational Advocacy Training in order to be licensed or re-licensed. Educational Advocacy Training is offered following each Foster PRIDE/Adopt PRIDE training and many additional times. This six hour course covers information foster parents need to know so that they can advocate for their foster children's educational rights and needs.

East St. Louis
618-650-3213

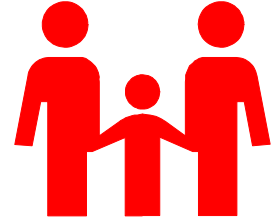
Marion
618-536-7751

EDWARDSVILLE	Comfort Inn	MARION	Marion Hotel & Conf. Ctr.
Dec. 5 & 12 (Tues)	6:30-9:30 p.m.	Nov. 18 (Sat)	9:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m.
FAIRVIEW HEIGHTS	DCFS Office	OLNEY	Rickland Memorial Hospital
Dec. 9 & 16 (Sat)	9:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.	Nov. 18 (Sat)	9:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m.

Pre-registration is required for all classes!
Call the number listed for your area.

More Specialized Foster Families Still Needed

The Southern Region continues to need experienced foster families to care for children with more serious emotional/behavioral problems. Many of these youth are "stepping down" from successful group residential placements and are ready for a family environment. Although homes are needed for children of all ages, the need is the greatest for adolescent males.



Specialized foster homes typically have more advanced skills than other foster families. Specialized foster parents:

- ❶ receive additional training prior to caring for identified youth;
- ❷ must be able and willing to actively participate in family/child wrap-around planning; and
- ❸ receive a higher monthly reimbursement than regular foster care.

Additional support services are provided to specialized foster homes.

If you are interested in becoming a specialized foster home for these youth, please call Michael Bollman at 618-394-2100.



DCFS HONORS SOUTH REGION VOLUNTEER

Congratulations to volunteer Nancy Miller who was one of 60 volunteers honored at the DCFS Volunteer Appreciation Dinner held at the Ramada Inn in Fairview Heights. Ms. Miller collected new and used clothing for the KIDS Store, which is a used clothing store utilized by foster and adoptive parents. In addition to being an agency volunteer, Ms. Miller is a DCFS licensed foster parent who focuses on children with specialized medical needs.