

## Make plans now for summer fun in Central Illinois

It won't be long before children start clamoring with questions about how you plan to keep them entertained during their free time. Below are just a few of the low-cost, high-fun attractions in Central Illinois.

### Wildlife Prairie Park

Located 10 miles west of Peoria, this state park offers 1,850 acres of grazing land, lakes and forests for the preservation of Illinois animal and prairie life. A self-guided nature walk offers visitors the opportunity to view bison, cougars, timber wolves, bears, waterfowl, bald eagles and other native Illinois wildlife. The park also features a visitor center, museum, pioneer farmstead, country store and railroad. The park will be open beginning March 8, 2003. Costs are: adults \$5.50, children ages 4 - 12 years \$3.50 and children 3 years and younger are free. For more information, call 309-676-0998.

### Miller Park Zoo

Located in Bloomington, this well maintained city park and zoo offers swimming, boating and picnicking. Miller Park Zoo is the only zoo in Illinois featuring Sumatran tigers. There are twenty species of exotic birds, an outdoor exhibit with majestic snow leopards, a carousel, a petting zoo and a water show. There is a "zoovenier" shop as well. Costs for adults are \$3.50, children ages 3 - 12 \$2.50, and children under age 3 years are free. For more information, call 309-434-2250.

### Decatur Children's Museum

This museum is packed full of good things designed for children ages 3 years and up. It is a place for families to play and explore together. The museum provides "hands-on" learning for children. The exhibits are designed to encourage creative expression and stimulate thoughtful thinking. Located in Decatur, the museum is open year-round. Currently, hours are 9:30 - 4:00 Monday through Friday, 10:00 - 4:00 Saturdays, 1:00 - 4:00 Sundays. Cost is \$3.50 for adults, \$3.00 for children ages 2 - 16, free for children under two years of age. For more information, call 217-423-5437.



### Prairie Farm

The Champaign Park District's Prairie Farm has been delighting children and their families for more than thirty years. It is a scaled down model of a real central Illinois farm and offers an opportunity for children to view farm animals up close and personal. This site also offers special classes pertaining to farm life as well as group tours and other special occasions such as birthday parties. Admission is free. Donations accepted. For more information, call 217-398-2583.

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## Summer fun (con't.)

### \*Rockome Gardens

Rockome Gardens is located on 12 acres of landscaped gardens featuring some of the most unique rocks in the state of Illinois. Within the garden is Old Bagdad Town, a recreated frontier village with several specialty shops such as a bakery, candy shop, Quilts and Things, and Sugar and Spice Doll Shop. Rockome Gardens offers many festivals and entertainment including an Indian Pow Wow, Quilt Auction and Horse Farming Days. For \$5.00 per person you can take an Amish buggy ride, tour a haunted cave, tour an Amish home-site and take a train ride. Entrance into the park is free. For more information, call

## Central Connections

### Sponsor

Deborah Kennedy, DCFS  
Central Regional Administrator

### Regional Reporter

Mary Katherine Dixon  
DCFS Child Welfare Staff  
Development Coordinator  
1806 Woodfield Drive  
Savoy, IL 61874  
Phone: 217-278-5300  
Fax: 217-278-5323  
E-mail: Mdixon@idcfs.state.il.us

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.

## Central Region Administration says, “Thanks To You...”

**To all of you...** who are so deeply concerned for the welfare of children and their families in central Illinois, we extend our sincere appreciation. To you, who go beyond pondering just how it is you can help, to the ultimate sacrifice of giving all that you have to give...and then some.

**To those of you...** who take the time to complete the plentiful paperwork required for licensure. Who venture back out into the night after a long day of work to attend PRIDE training. Who willingly offer up to a Family Development Specialist your family history, and take the time to think about how your past may impact in the life of child today.

**To those of you...** who say, “yes, you can bring that child here” at three o’clock in the morning and whose hearts are touched by the innocence of this tiny spirit who has now moved into your heart. And for those of you who remain fearless and committed in the face of angry, troublesome children.

**To those of you...** who support these children through an endless array of appointments and meetings. Who are there for them after visits with their biological family. Who are there to comfort their hurt and confusion. Who cheer them on from the sidelines.

**To those of you...** who commit yourselves forever to the life of a child through adoption. To the biological family who take their kin and offer up the hope of family preservation. To the boys and girls who willing decide to share their bedrooms, their toys, their moms and dads to help a foster child feel connected and important. To the grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins, neighbors who support these foster families in their efforts to make a difference in these children’s lives.

**To All Of You** We  
Extend Our Utmost  
Gratitude And Respect  
For The Incredible Work  
You Do.

Thank you to Central  
Illinois foster parents  
and their families.

*Thank  
You*

## Central Region works to recruit more foster and adoptive homes

There is a lot of exciting teamwork occurring throughout the Central Region to recruit and retain foster/adoptive families.

### Foster families under construction

In the counties of Henderson, Henry, Knox, Warren, Fulton and McDonough, the recruitment coalition known as The Foster Family Construction Zone has established partnerships with the local school districts, public libraries, public health departments, and county human service councils to get the word out of the need for family foster/adoptive care in these areas. They also continue to present to the public the wonderful work being done by those families already committed to foster/adoptive care. The Foster Family Construction Zone is also there to support families with various informational trainings such as LAN Wrap Around procedures and the new SOC (System Of Care).

### Illinois and Iowa work together

In the counties of Rock Island and Mercer, the Quad City Foster Care Council has combined efforts with the Bi-State Recruitment and Retention Committee to recruit foster parents in Iowa and Illinois. In addition to media coverage pertaining to their work together, the collaboration is working on a “recruitment cookbook” and participated jointly in building a float together for the Bi-State St. Patrick’s Day parade.

### Media helps Open Hearts/Open Homes

Open Hearts/Open Homes recruits and supports foster/adoptive families within Adams, Hancock and Pike counties. This group is currently working with a local newspaper on a series of articles that will highlight a local foster family. The series will begin with the family’s decision to become foster parents and walk through the process until the placement of the first foster child.

### Ford County teens spread the word

In Ford County, The Coalition For Community Kids in Care is working alongside The Ford County Probation Office to distribute over 2,000 doorknob hangers in area neighborhoods to communicate the need for foster/adoptive homes for teenagers. Teenagers currently on parole assisted with the distribution of the doorknob hangers.

### Champaign County needs homes for teens

In Champaign County, Cunningham Children’s Home joined forces with Champaign First Church of the Nazarene and First Federal Bank of Champaign to publicize the need for care of teens as well. Foster/Adoptive posters, doorknob hangers, check stuffers and adoption pamphlets were distributed throughout the area.

### Vermilion County recruitment effort is on the go

If you order a pizza “to go” in Vermilion County, drop your mail at the local post-office, browse at the public library or need your car washed, chances are you will find out about the need for foster/adoptive care as well. The Community Foster Care And Adoption Committee is a coalition of local public and private agencies, churches, local citizens and public figures who all share one common goal, recruiting and retaining foster/adoptive families in Vermilion County.

In almost every county, we see DCFS, private agencies and local agency and businesses joining forces to get the word out that foster/adoptive homes are needed and that those families who are already providing care to children are doing incredible work.

# 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

**MACOMB - TBA**  
June 2, 9, 16 & 23 (Mon) 6:00-9:00 p.m. 1

### Springfield Area 888-817-1825

For the summer training schedule, please contact the number listed above.

### Champaign Area 888-467-6065

#### Other In-Service Trainings

**Transcultural Parenting**  
**DECATUR Webster-Cantrell Hall**  
June 5, 12 & 19 (Thurs) 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 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.

### Peoria Area 888-507-7433

<b>CANTON</b>	<b>Wesley United Meth. Church</b>
June 12 & 19 (Thurs)	6:00-9:00 p.m.
<b>GALESBURG</b>	<b>Salvation Army</b>
June 23 & 30 (Mon)	6:00-9:00 p.m.
<b>PEORIA</b>	<b>Lutheran Social Services</b>
June 5 & 12 (Thurs)	6:00-9:00 p.m.
<b>QUAD CITIES</b>	<b>BHC Outreach Center</b>
June 17 & 24 (Tues)	6:00-9:00 p.m.

### Springfield Area 888-817-1825

<b>SPRINGFIELD</b>	<b>Lincoln Land Comm. College</b>
June 9 & 16 (Mon)	6:30-9:30 p.m.

### Champaign Area 888-467-6065

<b>CHAMPAIGN</b>	<b>IL Empl. &amp; Training Ctr.</b>
June 7 (Sat)	9:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m.
<b>DANVILLE</b>	<b>Community Church of God</b>
June 21 (Sat)	9:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m.
<b>DECATUR</b>	<b>TBA</b>
June 17 & 24 (Tues)	6:30-9:30 p.m.
<b>NORMAL</b>	<b>The Baby Fold</b>
June 9 & 16 (Mon)	6:30-9:30 p.m.

## Things to think about...

*"Friends are angels who lift us to our feet when our wings have trouble remembering how to fly."*

*"There is no beginning or end. Yesterday is history. Tomorrow is mystery. Today is a gift."*