

ILLINOIS FAMILIES Now and Forever

Families by Foster Care, Adoption and Guardianship[®]

Department of Children and Family Services[®]



From the DCFS Director

Bryan Samuels

The new school year is here, but summer memories linger. Younger children were focused on summer fun or some spent time shoring up skills in academic programs. Many of our older youth were readying themselves for the next phase. I had an opportunity to meet many students whose tenacity and determination propelled them to graduation and on to further studies and employment.

There are many reasons to be proud of so many young people. You will read more about the 48 students who bring the DCFS Youth in Scholarship Program to a total of 188. DCFS also matched 32 college students with 10-week, paid professional jobs in their fields of study through the Find Your Future internship program. We are assisting another 434 students in the Youth in College program and 139 are pursuing careers with the Employment Incentive Program.

We are proving that parents' involvement with DCFS does not have to deter a child from accomplishing future goals. Using a "lifetime approach" to prepare our youngest and oldest children for the rest of their lives, professional staff and committed caregivers can help youth turn an adversity into an advantage.

DCFS awards 48 full scholarships New \$80,000 award helps more students

Forty-eight students have found that it is much easier to carry a backpack of college textbooks without the burden of tuition to weigh them down. Thanks to the DCFS Youth in Scholarship program, the 2006 recipients are now attending classes with a full tuition waiver at participating state institutions, medical coverage and a \$458 monthly stipend. These students rose to the top during the selection process, which considered their academic achievement, community service and other accomplishments.



The 48 students had an opportunity to celebrate at the awards luncheon on July 7 at the Columbus Park Refectory in Chicago. Director Bryan Samuels, members of the executive team and staff from the DCFS Division of Service Intervention all contributed to the festivities. Guests also included the perennial favorite speaker Mrs. Connie Payton of the Walter and Connie Payton Foundation, sponsor of the luncheon with DCFS.

This year there was an additional scholarship track to celebrate. Guy Goren, President of Midwest Generation, announced a new \$80,000 corporate scholarship fund. Ten students will receive \$2,000 annual scholarships during their four years of academic studies.

The award recipients and their family and friends were joined by another special guest this year, First Lady Patti Blagojevich came to wish the young scholars well.

"As college tuition costs continue to rise, scholarships like these can mean the difference between being able to attend college or having to sacrifice your dreams,"

Continued on page 2

Scholarships, con't.

she said. "I want to extend my congratulations to all of this year's scholarship recipients."

The DCFS Youth in Scholarship program is available to youth currently in DCFS care, or those who left Department guardianship through adoption or private guardianship arrangements. The purpose of the program is to ensure that those selected have the opportunity to earn a bachelor's degree in four years or less. Scholarship Program Student Applications (CFS 438) are routinely due March 31 and award announcements occur by mid-May. Applicants must have a high school diploma or GED by the end of the current school year. Contact the Office of Education and Transition Services at 312-814-5959 for more information.

DCFS Scholarship Recipients

Annie Abram
Judeka Adams
Nicholas Alfonso
Ana Banda
Henderson Banks
Robert Barkulis
Stacy Boeck
Theresa Bryant
Shanicka Burdine
Charity Burgos
Jamaal Cooper
Tamara Dodd
Misty Forwe
Jessica Foulkes
Sharon Gaspar
Alana Grandau
Melanie Harrison
William Hayes
Ericka Hill

Dominique Hodges
Candace Hosier
Holly Hunter
Beatrice Johnson
Betheny Johnson
Orthell Jones
Terrell Kimmons
Albert Kuo
Tania Lawless
Shannon Leonard
Taylor-Imani Linear
Mylan Luu
Lauren McBride
Krystal McDonald
Sharlyce McKinnie
Heather Nast
Rachel Owen
Tiffany Powell
Christina Ray
Candra Reed
Desiree Sandfrey
Brienna Silver
Kimberly Steele
Sophia Thompson
Tiffany Wells
Roderick Williams
Mattie Wilson
Brandon Woods
Frank Yost

Midwest Generation Scholars

Antoinette Adams
Lovette Barnett
Jasmine Burleson
Anna Eggers
Debonna Harper
Violet Pazdell
Luvenia Sims
Alexandra Smith
Veronica Vorbau
Todd Whitney

Movin' On UP

For youth transitioning to adulthood

Change to Community College payment

Youth who are still under the guardianship of DCFS have an opportunity to participate in The Community College Payment Program. This could mean four semesters of education with tuition, fees and books paid. However, recently there have been important changes to the program.

Youth must first apply for financial aid through FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) and designate the college they will be attending. If financial aid grants are secured to cover tuition, fees, and books; the student is not eligible for the DCFS Community College Payment Program. Secondly, requests for out-of-district and prior fiscal years' tuition will not be approved.

Students still in DCFS guardianship who wish to apply for the program must complete a service agreement with their caseworker. To be eligible the student:

- Must be accepted for enrollment by an in-district community college
- Must not have used his/her four semesters of payments
- Must complete and submit a request form prior to 21st birthday
- Must apply for financial aid through FAFSA and designate the community college to receive funds

Questions about the program can be directed to the DCFS/OETS Business Office at Phone 309-693-5150.

DCFS reaches out to parents in effort to rebuild safe families

Foster parents may soon notice a different approach from DCFS and the agencies working with the children in their homes. It will be much more of a “family affair” as the Department re-energizes its work with the parents of children in care.

“We are partnering with parents to ensure that separating families is the decision of last resort and reuniting families is the preferred goal whenever possible. It’s the right way to do this job,” said Deputy Director Velma Williams.

Under her leadership, the Division of Clinical Services and Professional Development is spearheading the initiative to emphasize the “Family” in the Department of Children and Family Services’ mission. This renewed effort entails:

- Developing new policies and social work practices to support families of origin with appropriate services
- Training DCFS and private agency staff on a new approach to permanency planning with a special focus on reunification
- Creating more avenues for parents to give direct input to department decisions
- Involving foster parents and other substitute caregivers to contribute to the reunification effort

There are several reasons for this renewed emphasis on reunification. From a professional perspective, it is good social work

practice. It also meets the community’s expectations about the role the agency should play in serving and preserving families. Additionally, the state and federal laws around child protection outline very clear objectives for helping families to stay together or come back together safely. The recent Federal Review of all state child welfare programs showed that even with significant progress in many areas of permanency, Illinois came up short in reunifying families.

As part of a Performance Improvement Plan (PIP), the Department is putting into policy many things that were already being done in practice. For instance, many foster parents who recognized the importance of maintaining family connections have actively supported visits between their foster children and birth parents. That type of involvement will be encouraged even more, so that foster parents and the child’s parents can work with each other to prepare for reunification.

While these scenarios may be familiar, they will require some shift in attitudes and expectations. The invisible barrier between foster parents and birth parents is already coming down. For example, with the Integrated Assessment (IA) program, both parties can offer their insight when a child is placed outside of



Cook South’s Jacquie Johnson (left) answered a parent’s questions at the Partnering with Parents Info Fair.

the home. Both also can be at the table during the Family Meeting to discuss the assessment’s final report, sharing information to help the child, the parents and the new foster family navigate the transition. It is also anticipated that the role of foster parents for children who enter the system will evolve. Foster parents will have a key role at the quarterly Child and Family Team meetings. In some cases, they will be like “mentors” to parents.

“The dynamics of how the caregivers and the child’s parents interact along the path toward reunification will be different,” said Williams. “We will give everyone a voice so that we can ultimately make good decisions for the children.”

Several divisions within the Department are collaborating to solidify this approach in the coming months and to train DCFS and private agency staff.

Parents can get in front of risk to kids who go on-line

It used to be that a parent calling on a child to program the family VCR might cause just a chuckle. However, now the technology-smarts of today's youth can also be dangerous. Young people are so adept with telephones, text messaging and Internet communications that they often leave their "older, wiser" parents completely clueless. Unfortunately, tech-savvy does not equate to mature decision-making. This means our youth are extremely vulnerable to those who would prey upon their innocence.

Joshua Skule of the Federal Bureau of Investigations says, "Sexual predators are just using a different tool. They don't have to go to the playground because they can get the same satisfaction off of using the Internet."

A study announced by child advocate John Walsh revealed that one-third of teens surveyed said they were considering a face-to-face encounter with someone they met on-line, and 14 percent already had met a virtual stranger in person. Moreover, nearly 40 percent of the teens said they were "not very concerned" or "not at all concerned" about someone using personal information in a way they had not approved. This is especially problematic, because the Internet can mask the identities and intentions of those who wish to do harm.

Prevention First

Considering the increased emotional vulnerability of youth who have been involved in the child welfare system, the stakes are higher. Caregivers must quickly come up to speed with the technology and the on-line cultural landscape in order to teach children to be on-line safely. Between open communication and employing some grown-up technology tools, parents and youth can deal with the threats, while using the computer for positive and fun activities. These recommendations come from www.CyberTipline.com.

Talk with your teens about what they can and cannot do online. Also encourage them to come to you if they encounter a problem online. Parents will do well to learn everything you can about the Internet and the available safety features. Check out blocking, filtering, and ratings applications.

When suspicions arise

- Consider talking openly with your child about your suspicions. Tell them about the dangers of computer-sex offenders.
- Review what is on your child's computer.
- Use the Caller ID service to determine who is calling your child or to block broadcasting of your home number. Telephone companies also offer an additional service feature that rejects incoming calls that you block.

- Devices can be purchased that show telephone numbers that have been dialed from your home phone. Additionally, the last number called from your home phone can be retrieved provided that the telephone is equipped with a redial feature.
- Monitor your child's access to all types of live electronic communications (i.e., chat rooms, instant messages, Internet Relay Chat, etc.), and monitor your child's e-mail. Computer-sex offenders almost always meet potential victims via chat rooms. After meeting a child on-line, they will continue to communicate electronically, often via e-mail.

Immediately contact your local or state law enforcement agency, the FBI, and the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children IF:

- Your child or anyone in the household has received child pornography;
- Your child has been sexually solicited by someone who knows that your child is under 18 years of age;
- Your child has received sexually explicit images from someone that knows your child is under the age of 18.

If one of these scenarios occurs, keep the computer turned off in order to preserve any evidence for future law enforcement use. Unless directed to do so by the law enforcement agency, you should not attempt to copy any of the images and/or text found on the computer.

LMIRL: (Let's Meet in Real Life) and other scary phrases

There is a brand new language springing up in the virtual world of text messaging and on-line chats. The short-hand lingo makes the fingers fly on the keyboard, but can confound adults. That is exactly what children are banking on. Fortunately, parents can catch up using several cheat sheets available on-line at netsmartz.org. Below are definitions of the basic entry points for on-line communication.

Blog: An online journal. You can post stories about yourself or thoughts just like you would in a personal journal. These have become more and more popular with teenagers. The Internet is a very public place and teens need to be reminded of the dangers of posting personal thoughts and information for anyone else to see.

Chatroom: An interactive forum where you can talk in real-time. The chatroom is the place or location online where the chat is taking place. Many chatrooms are established so that people can discuss a common interest like music or movies.

Chat: Real-time text conversation between users in a chat room with no expectation of privacy. All chat conversation is accessible by all individuals in the chat room while the conversation is taking place.

Instant messaging: A service that allows people to send and get

messages almost instantly. It is the on-line version of passing notes in class. To send messages using Instant Messaging you need to download an Instant-Messaging program and know the Instant-Messaging address of another person who uses the same Instant-Messaging program.

Social networking site: The Internet invention that is a combination of a yearbook, personal diary and social club. Popular among youth are MySpace.com and Xanga. These sites allow users to post pictures and invite others to join their circle of "friends." They have some protections. However, predators are posing as young people and looking for victims on these sites.

Where to get help Illinois State Police

The Illinois State Police's sex offender site is located at www.isp.state.il.us/sor. People can search the site by last name, county or city. The offenders' vital statistics and address, along with a photo and conviction information, are on the site.

i-SAFE

i-SAFE provides local and on-line education for students and parents on how to avoid dangerous, inappropriate, or unlawful online behavior. The web site is www.isafe.org



National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC) CyberTipline

The NCMEC's CyberTipline at www.cybertipline.com allows parents and children to report child pornography and other incidents of sexual exploitation of children by submitting an online form. The NCMEC also maintains a 24-hour hotline of 1-800-THE-LOST and a web site at www.missingkids.com.

NetSmartz

The web site www.netsmartz.org by the NCMEC offers youth and parents information on web safety including advice, true stories of victims, discussion points and on-line use "pledges."

Safety Monitor: How to Protect Your Kids Online

This book by Detective Michael Sullivan is a hands-on guide for parents to protect their children from exploitation, sexual predators, adult-only content, pornography, and other harmful content that comes with computer and Internet access.

News from the Statewide Foster Care Advisory Council

Implementation Plan Monitoring

The Statewide Foster Care Advisory Council continued its work to refine procedures for monitoring the Foster Parent Law Implementation Plans, which are submitted annually by all DCFS regions and private agency foster care programs. The Council members each conduct in-person interviews and work with DCFS monitoring staff to determine if agencies' practices align with what they write in their plans. The Policy Committee made progress on polishing the measurement tools they use in the reviews.

New members

The membership of the council reflects foster families across the state, professional experts and prominent advocacy organizations. Several terms expired at the end of the fiscal year in July, so the Council is pleased to welcome five new members appointed by Director Bryan Samuels.



Northern Region:

Debbie Freke, and husband David, have been foster parents for 20 years. They have six children,

three of whom they have adopted. She worked as a Foster Parent Support Specialist for 10 years in the Northern Region, and was the Lead Foster Parent Support Specialist for DuPage, Will, Grundy, and Kankakee Counties for four years. She has

been a PRIDE Trainer through the College of DuPage for the last six years.



Southern Region:

Tonya Duke, and husband Robert, currently parent five children. They have been fostering for

five years and were drawn to fostering by the desire to help hearing-impaired children. Tonya has been a deaf educator at East St. Louis School District for 13 years. She formerly served on Illinois Teachers of the Hearing Impaired.



Cook Central Region:

Birdia Jenkins, and husband Calvin, have been licensed foster parents for

nine years. They currently have four children in their home, through adoption and subsidized guardianship. They also have three adult children by birth. Birdia is a pastor's wife and is very active with the church and all of their auxiliaries. She attends the local Cook Central Regional Advisory Council meetings. She also is a former member of the No Child Left Behind Board through the local school.



Foster Parent/Child Welfare Advisory Council Representative:

Mercedes Ball is a DCFS foster parent with nearly 20 years experience

caring for adolescent males with special needs. Mercedes is dedicated to maintaining relationships with her children after they have aged out of the DCFS system and transitioned out of her home. Mercedes has been a Harold Washington College Trainer for more than 11 years. She is currently a Foster Parent Support Specialist with DCFS.

Foster Care Professional/Child Welfare Advisory Council

Nancy Hughes serves as President & CEO of Volunteers of America. Prior to VOA, she served as the Senior Vice-President of General Operations for Kids Hope United. Throughout the past decade, Nancy has been an active member of various regional and statewide committees and workgroups. She has direct services experience working with at-risk children, domestic violence victims and developmentally delayed children and young adults.

The September 8 meeting was a special joint session with the Statewide Youth Advisory Board. The adults and the young people meet once each year to discuss the issues that impact both groups. The next meeting of the Statewide Advisory Council will be on November 17 at 160 N. LaSalle in Chicago. The meetings are open to the public, and are conducted between 9 a.m. and 3 p.m. Questions can be directed to the Office of Foster Parent Support Services at 217-524-2422.

November marks National Adoption Awareness Month. Plan to celebrate!

The roots of National Adoption Awareness Month go back to Michael Dukakis, who as governor of Massachusetts in 1976 set aside a week to promote adoptions from the foster care system. As the idea spread to other states, President Gerald Ford made the week a national event. Finally, to accommodate the broad schedule of local events, the week became a month in 1990. Among the activities and events, many courthouses observe National Adoption Day to finalize adoptions in special Saturday sessions to make it a true family affair.

There are so many personal and public ways to ensure that November becomes a special time to consider the difference that adoption makes. Within your family, you can set aside an evening to update your child's lifebook or rent adoption-themed movies. Support groups and associations can sponsor marches or "hands-around-the-court-house" events to raise awareness. Parents can donate adoption-related books or education materials to their child's school library. You might even raise your pen to submit a letter to the editor of your local newspaper, and spread the word about adoption.

DCFS would like to encourage adoption month activities by publishing an online calendar of local events. Please send an e-



mail describing the event and its intended audience, including details on date, time and location, to Terry.McGlothlin@illinois.gov in the Office of Foster Parent Support Services. The deadline is October 20. The calendar will be posted on the DCFS web site at www.state.il.us/dcf. Call the office at 217-524-2422 with questions.

For ideas that could work in your home and community, take a look at these web sites to review 2005 calendars that are full of creative ways to celebrate adoptions every day of November:

- Adopting.org
- NACAC.org (North American Council on Adoptable Children)
- Rainbowchildren.org

Institutes are coming

The third annual Caregivers Institutes will be here again before you know it. Make plans now to attend this hugely successful event coming to a nearby community. The DCFS Caregivers Institutes offer a day packed with information on the latest developments in child welfare and practical advice on how they make a difference for youth and the adults taking care of them.

In 2007, the Caregiver Institutes will again take place on nine Saturdays between February and April. To make it more convenient for foster, adoptive and guardianship parents to attend the course, the events will be offered in locations around the state.

Central Region

- Bloomington
- Charleston
- Rock Island

Cook County

- 1701 S. First St., Maywood
- 6201 S. Emerald, Chicago

Northern Region

- Kankakee
- Rockford

Southern Region

- Fairview Heights
- Rend Lake

More information on dates, locations and the registration procedure will be announced in upcoming issues of the newsletter.

Respite: Get a break before it is too late

The decision to care for a child comes with many emotional costs that adoptive and guardianship parents willingly pay. However, the cumulative toll of meeting high-end, special needs can mount over time. At some point, parents may feel they need a break, or a period of respite, without the constant responsibility of day-to-day parenting. A study of post-adoptive families by the Center for Adoption Studies at Illinois State University confirmed that some families experience feelings of desperation and made recommendations to address it with effective programs.

The study found that adoptive parents were coping with children who had severe and unrelenting problems, including ADHD (attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder), ODD (oppositional defiance disorder), RAD (reactive attachment disorder) and mental illness. Most children had more than one diagnosis to complicate matters. All totaled, it made quite a difference on how the family could function.

“We were prisoners in our own home. His aggression and other behaviors are so bad we can’t go to the park, the movies or what other parents get to do,” said one participant in the study.

In 2002, DCFS won a grant to develop a model respite care program. It began with serving families that were caring for children with high-end, medically-

complex needs. Next, it expanded to include children with behavioral issues. The research clearly showed that a segment of families was on the brink and that periods of respite could bring them back from the edge. The study found that three to six hours of respite once or twice a month went a long way. It called for the providers to be trained and experienced in working with children with special needs. The care also needed to be consistent and predictable.

The grant period is complete; however DCFS continues to fund respite programs through the Adoption/Guardianship Preservation Programs. Several community agencies also provide some form of respite. Agencies have learned to “creatively” stretch the limited funds and still meet a pressing need. In central Illinois, The Baby Fold sponsors Camp Take-a-Break, a weekend camp for children staffed by teachers from a local therapeutic day school. In southern Illinois, Matthews and Associates will arrange to take children out on field trips, so they can have “normal kid” social experiences.

Families who feel they could benefit from a brief stint of respite service should contact the Adoption Preservation Program contracted for their area or another community provider from the list. The agency will do an assessment and determine eligibility and availability.

Respite Care Resources

Cook County

- Catholic Charities, 312-655-8430
- Chicago Family Health, 773-768-5417
- Little City Foundation, 773-265-1539
- Metropolitan Family Services, 708-974-5815

Northern Region

- Catholic Charities, 815-223-4007
LaSalle, Bureau, Putnam, Marshall and Stark counties
- McHenry County Mental Health Board, 815-455-2828
McHenry County
- Metropolitan Family Services, 630-784-4861
DuPage County

Central Region

- Cornerstone, 217-222-8254
Adams, Brown, Calhoun, Hancock, Pike and Schyler counties
- Counseling and Family Services, 309-682-4621
Peoria, Tazwell and Woodford counties
- Family Service Center, 217-528-8406
Sangamon, northern Maucoupin, Montgomery, Christian and Menard counties
- Kids Hope United, 217-345-6554
Coles, Cumberland, Clark, Douglas, Edgar, Shelby and Moultrie counties

Respite Care Resources

Central Region, con't.

- Lutheran Social Services of Illinois, 309-671-0300
Bureau, Fulton, Henderson, Henry, Knox, LaSalle, Logan, Marshall, Mason, McDonough, Mercer, Peoria, Putnam, Stark, Tazewell, Warren and Woodford counties
- Project Success of Vermilion County, 217-446-3200
Vermilion County
- The Baby Fold, 309-454-1770
Champaign, DeWitt, Douglas, Ford, Livingston, Macon, McLean, Moultrie, Piatt, Shelby counties

Southern Region

- Matthews and Associates, 618-988-1330
Alexander, Clay, Crawford, Edwards, Effingham, Fayette, Franklin, Gallatin, Hamilton, Hardin, Jackson, Jasper, Jefferson, Johnson, Lawrence, Marion, Massac, Perry, Pope, Pulaski, Richland, Saline, Union, Wabash, Wayne, White and Williamson counties
- CHASI-Granite City, 618-452-8900
Bond, Clinton, Madison, Monroe, Randolph, St. Clair and Washington counties

Illinois Adoption Advisory Council news

The Illinois Adoption Advisory Council met in August to welcome several new members, make plans to mark National Adoption Awareness Month, map out upcoming legislative outreach, and discuss needs for respite services.

New members

The Adoption Advisory Council membership is made up of adoptive and guardianship parents, adopted individuals and professional experts. Director Samuels made the following recent appointments:



Alan Marcus and his wife, Marcie, live on the Lake County side of Buffalo Grove. They are adoptive parents of a 5-year-old boy from Guatemala. Alan is also an adopted person. He serves as Board Chair of Stars of David, Inc, a support group for Jewish adoptive parents and adoptees.



Betty Johnson is parent to six boys and one girl - five of the boys are adopted. She is also a licensed foster parent. Betty is active in her Local Area Network, community, and church; She is also a Foster PRIDE Trainer.



Mark Werner lives in the south suburbs of Chicago with his wife Kelly, son Joshua and daughter Addison. They

adopted Joshua as a 12-year old through DCFS, and he is now 19 years old and attending college. Mark currently works as a supervisor in the Juvenile Probation Department for the Circuit Court of Cook County. He also serves as the liaison to DCFS and is a member of the Dependency Pilot Project, which is run in coordination with DCFS. Previously, he was a police officer and juvenile officer for the Crestwood Police Department for 10 years.

The next meeting will be on October 6 at the Springfield Signature Inn, located at 3090 Stevenson Drive. The meeting begins at 10 a.m. and ends at 3 p.m. The planned agenda will include progress on the Family Connections grant and implementation of DCFS training courses. Contact the Office of Foster Parent Support at 217-524-2422 for more information about the Illinois Adoption Advisory Council.

Who do you call when...

A child in your home is having a psychiatric crisis that may require hospitalization?

Call the CARES line at 800-345-9049. However, if a child is a danger to himself or others, call 911 first. The CARES line is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

...You feel you aren't being treated fairly by DCFS or a private agency?

After you've tried to resolve the issue with the caseworker and supervisors, then call the Advocacy Office at 800-232-3798.

...You need to report a child missing or have information about a youth who has run away?

To report information on missing youth call 866-503-0184, 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

...You have questions about your board check?

Call DCFS Central Payment Unit at 800-525-0499 if your check comes from DCFS. For other checks, contact your private agency.

...You have questions about your child's medical card?

Call 800-228-6533.

...You are having a family crisis with your adopted child

Contact the Adoption Preservation Program that serves your area. Judy Pence at 217-557-5677 can direct you to the appropriate agency.

...You are interested in adopting one of the children featured in the newsletter?

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, or see the AICI web site – www.adoptinfo-il.org.

...You have an idea for an article in the newsletter?

Each region has a reporter to help gather local news. They are listed in the regional section of each edition. Or you can contact the Editor, Vanessa James.



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Rod R. Blagojevich, Governor

Bryan Samuels, DCFS Director

Publisher:

Office of Foster Parent Support Services, Velma Williams, Deputy Director

Editor: Vanessa James

Phone: 312/814-6824

Fax: 312/814-4131

E-mail: Vanessa.James@illinois.gov

Regional Editors

Central – Mary Bullock

Northern – Frank Navarro

Southern – Michael Bollman

Cook North – Sari Rowitz

Cook Central – Joyce Hall

Cook South – Jacquie Johnson

Graphics: Jenny Florent

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Purpose: To help busy families more effectively parent children currently or formerly in DCFS care. To bring them the best information from the most knowledgeable sources. To promote statewide teamwork in finding permanency for children.

Address Changes: Families must notify their licensing representative, who will notify DCFS. Agencies should change office addresses or request staff copies through the Editor.

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Foster, adoptive and guardianship families enjoyed a great time at the DCFS tent during the Illinois State Fair. DCFS provided free family photos, discounted admission, ride tickets and food coupons to families.

A family for me

Sentoria [7571]

Sentoria, 14, is a sweet young lady with excellent communication skills and a wonderful sense of humor. She enjoys spending time with adults and does a good job of nurturing younger children. Sentoria also loves animals. She often visits the local animal shelter to play with the dogs and cats that live there.

Her foster parents said Sentoria is kind and caring. Her teachers said Sentoria enjoys the social aspects of school and has a lot of potential. The forever family for Sentoria should be patient and provide her with love and guidance. Sentoria said she would like to join a respectful family that has other children and pets. A family in central Illinois is preferred.

Charles [7561]

Charles, 11, is an outgoing young man who makes friends easily and is well-liked by others. He enjoys being active, and his favorite group activities are playing basketball and skating. When he's on his own, he likes to practice guitar.

His foster parents said Charles likes to keep his room clean, and he enjoys helping others. They said he is proud when he completes his homework and often shows them the finished papers and projects.

Parents for Charles would give him lots of love and attention. Charles said he'd like a family that helps him with his schoolwork and allows him to have play time. After he is adopted, Charles would like to maintain contact with his sister, whom he loves very much.

Crystallyn [7509]

Crystallyn, 16, loves to express herself musically. She especially enjoys singing and playing the tambourine at church. Her other favorite activities include working on coloring books and riding her bike. She also likes being near her foster mother and often helps her to prepare meals.

Her foster parent said Crystallyn can be very warm and affectionate. She likes to give hugs to the people she's closest with. The

family for Crystallyn is one that would be patient, loving, and kind. When asked about her ideal family, Crystallyn said, "I'd like them to be nice and do fun stuff."

Erica [7567]

Erica, 13, is a friendly young lady who may be a little shy at first, but really loves to socialize. She enjoys helping younger children, and among her friends, she is a positive influence who helps resolve conflicts. After school, Erica enjoys cheerleading and participating in social clubs.

Her worker said Erica loves pets, including the new puppies in her foster home. She likes to dress nicely and is very talented at doing people's hair. Erica is ready to join an adoptive family. The family for her is one that would be kind and supportive. Erica said her ideal family would be "cuddly, fair, and respectful."



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, or see the AICI web site – www.adoptinfo-il.org.

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

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DO YOU KNOW A FAMILY FOR ME?

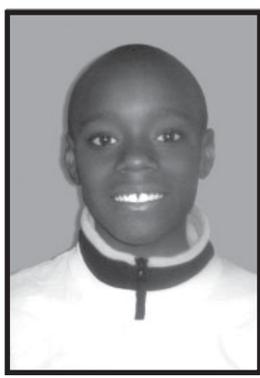
Call the Adoption Information Center of Illinois 800-572-2390.

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