

Illinois Families Now and Forever.®

Families by DCFS Foster Care, Adoption & Guardianship

DCFS Scholarship Helps 53 Students Attend College

The annual tradition of sending DCFS youth to college with scholarship support continued for its 51st year. The difference this year is that the total of scholarships jumped to 53, up from 48.

The DCFS Scholarship is one of the hallmark programs that the department offers to ease the transition to adulthood for young people who have an open DCFS case or moved to adoption or guardianship. The scholarship provides them the opportunity to advance their education with a much lighter financial burden. The 53 scholars headed to school with a waiver of tuition and mandatory fees that they could use at one of the nine Illinois state universities or an Illinois community college. They also receive a monthly maintenance grant of \$511 and a medical card.

The road to higher education with the DCFS Scholarship began in January when the application process opened. More than 200 students submitted grades, test scores, letters of recommendation and personal essays. A committee of DCFS staff combed through each application multiple times before settling on the final 53 recipients.

DCFS Guardian Debra Dyer-Webster said, "Sometimes we start reading applications out loud because we are just so impressed. I get so excited imagining their future accomplishments and contributions to the world. This is one of the most rewarding DCFS experiences."



DCFS sent 53 students off to college with scholarships and a celebration lunch held in Chicago for them and their families.

2015 DCFS Scholarship Recipients

Sheridan Atwater	Christian Grills	Kyle Paulsen
Jasmine Babers	Breanna Hale	Shruthi Ramachandran
Adam Batton	Diane Hardy	Debrae Richter-Shea
Anthony Bendy	Tiana Haynes	Tai-Leigh Schlaich
Corrine Berardi	Edward Hogan	Katherine See
Karlyn Boens	Anita Jackson	Jacqueline Sparnicht
Timothy Budzileni	Jessica Jones	Khari Sulton
Kayla Carr	Akeem Kennedy	Amanda Summers
Caitrin Clute	Michael King	Sarah Szremski
Ciaran Clute	Vincent LaPage	Christopher Tsiapas
Thomas Craig	Lorenzo Lawson	Jaelyn Vickers
Chlotte Crim	Sarah MacTaggart	Erika Waldsmith
Thomas Dabney	Sophia Maynard	Melanie Whittington
Sarah Fied	Jeong-Mee Mok-Morrison	Jarvell Williams
Bethany Fosler	Alyssa Moore	Shakendra Williams
De'Von Fulton	Erica Mueller	Charles Williams
Jessika Gaughan	Crishawna Nash	Jessica Williamson
Gloria Gordon	Tony Newell	



Message from the DCFS Director

Dear foster families,

I hope you are having a great fall

and that the school year is going well so far.

Congratulations to all of our scholars, especially the 53 youth who were awarded scholarships from the department. They stepped onto new campuses full of hope and some uncertainty, but knowing they have the financial support of this important program and the backing of the adults who walk with them. I wish them good luck and thank those who had a hand in their accomplishments so far.

Part of making a school year successful for youth in care is allowing those youth to be as “normal” as all of their classmates, ensuring that they aren’t singled out or prohibited from participating in what would be viewed as normal school activities. Sometimes this is easier said than done. I am committed to ensuring that youth in foster care are given the opportunity to have as normal of a childhood as they possibly can, despite the challenges they have and continue to face.

Our goal is to allow foster families to empower our youth to live life like their classmates, neighbors and friends, whenever possible. We are reexamining our policies and our practices to make sure that what we ask of you is reasonable and effective. As one example, now you as a foster parent can sign the permission slip for the school soccer team, rather than going to the DCFS Consent Unit.

There is a lot more ground to cover. My team and I always open to new approaches and fresh ideas and we are having discussions across the state to hear more voices. Thank you for remaining committed and for all that you do for the children of Illinois.

George H. Sheldon
Acting Director

Scholarships (cont.)

The DCFS Scholarship program does even more for students than cover costs. Staff from the DCFS Office of Education and Transition Services brought the recipients to Chicago on July 17 for a morning of workshops to launch their college experience successfully. They explained the ins and outs of the program and the requirements to keep the scholarship benefits each year. Students must maintain at least a C average, carry a full load of courses and provide documentation each semester. They don’t have to do it alone. At the



Guest speaker
Steve Pemberton

luncheon, youth connected with others heading to the same campuses. They also joined a network of nearly 300 current students benefitting from the scholarship. Perhaps most importantly they have the support of family and other adults who helped lay the educational and emotional foundation for their college career. Many of those important people came with the students for the celebratory luncheon.

The DCFS Scholarship luncheon highlighted the determination, perseverance and achievements. DCFS acting director George Sheldon congratulated the youth on their hard work. He reminded them that despite the special circumstances that brought them to DCFS, they can now move toward better outcomes, just like “normal” college students. The audience got a glimpse of the future from Steve Pemberton, an executive from Walgreens. The same start to life that he shared with the students eventually led journey from foster care to the corporate boardroom. He described his journey in a way that was inspiring and made their own dreams seem attainable. ♡

APPLICATION PERIOD: JANUARY 1 – MARCH 30

The DCFS Youth in Scholarship Program is available to youth currently in DCFS care and to those who left Department guardianship through adoption or guardianship arrangements. Applicants must have a high school diploma or GED by the end of the current school year. Contact the Office Education and Transition Services at 312-814-5959 for more information.

Illinois Statewide Foster Care Advisory Council Bulletin

The Statewide Foster Care Advisory Council held its July meeting in Joliet. In addition to the standing items and updates, the council had several invited speakers to discuss new initiatives that DCFS has launched.

CIPP (Clinical Intervention for Placement Preservation)

Lee Annes of DCFS provided an update on the CIPP program. CIPP emphasizes supportive interventions to stabilize foster care placements and maintain relationships. The goal is to reduce changes in living arrangements and moves to residential and group home settings.

In times when a situation escalates to where it seems like a move to another home must be considered, the first step is a CIPP Child and Family Team Meeting. CIPP facilitators work with the family (including children over 12) on concerns and problems with the current family setting. They will help identify new services or other resources to fill in gaps. The trained facilitators will work with caregivers and other adults important in the child's life to create a plan that will address the issues and preserve the placement, when possible.

Facilitators are also very involved with the youth who are transitioning to adulthood. They conduct



Lee Annes, statewide administrator officer CIPP & D-CIPP

discharge-CIPPs (D-CIPPs) to help young people establish a foundation for when their DCFS case closes. These meetings are set for when the youth is 19 and again at three months before discharge.

Caregivers can request CIPP involvement through the caseworker or by contacting the CIPP Intake line at 312-814-6800. The council members suggested that Annes reach out to the management teams at private agencies so they can also encourage CIPP participation for agency-supervised homes as well as those in the DCFS regional programs.

Foster Parent Law Update

The council members prepared for the upcoming round of Foster Parent Law Implementation Plan scoring. The implementation plans must clearly describe how each foster care program upholds the foster parent rights and responsibilities in the outlined in the law.

Gwenn Eyer reported that the "Tips and Tools" emails were sent to the liaisons at each agency and DCFS foster care program. They also discussed strategies to employ so that agencies actively participate in

preparing the plan and sharing the information with caregivers routinely throughout the year.

Add your input to new Foster Parent Law Implementation Plans

The Foster Parent Law stipulates that the implementation plans demonstrate that caregivers participated in creating it. Typically DCFS and agencies announce meetings in the fall to discuss the previous plan and changes for the new plan, which is due to the council by November 30. The public period for review and comment is underway as of September. DCFS and private agency programs take any public input into consideration as they prepare the plans for 2015.

All caregivers can review the previous year's plan. Some foster care programs mailed the plan to licensed homes. Others may have copies available at the administrative offices or on their websites. If a foster caregiver needs more information about the actual plan or the process for drafting the new plan, each program has a Foster Parent Law liaison. The liaison is the primary contact for matters concerning the Law and how it is enacted at that agency or DCFS region.

The Statewide Foster Care Advisory Council was founded in conjunction with the Illinois Foster Parent Law. Membership consists of caregivers, agency representatives and other experts in child welfare, who are appointed by the DCFS Director.

The council holds open meetings at least six times a year, in locations around the state.

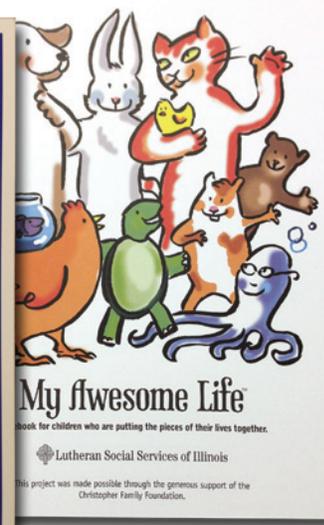
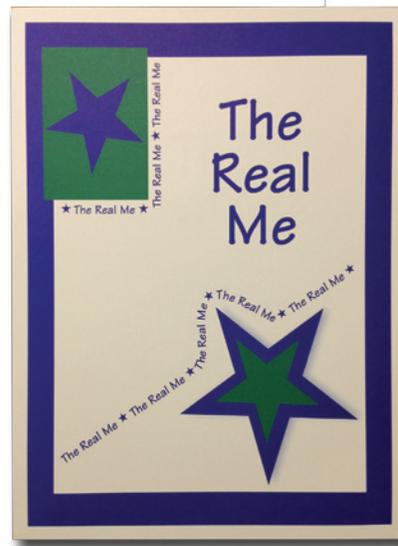
UPCOMING MEETING

The Statewide Foster Care Advisory Council meets on **November 13** in Lisle at 9 am.

Call DCFS
Caregiver and Parent Support at **217-524-2422** for details.

It's Never too Late to Start a Lifebook

Lifebooks are a source of healing. They can help children reconnect with people and fill in the gaps of their personal stories.



DCFS recently announced that it will supply lifebooks to support the policy requiring every child in foster care to have his own lifebook. Thousands of lifebooks have been ordered and are now available. Now caseworkers can ensure that this personal token will also be a tool that helps in the transitions through foster care.

A lifebook is a like a living scrap-book but much more. It outlines a child's life with pictures, vital records, mementos and personal expressions. It also has an important therapeutic value for a child while in foster care or when preparing to move to a new placement or adoptive home.

For example, children in the foster care system will often have many questions about how they came into the system. There are often gaps about their birth families and fuzzy recollections of previous placements. Many times they haven't had the simple pleasure of holding on to scrapbooks and memorabilia from childhood. A lifebook can address those needs and also be a therapeutic way to build a stronger emotional foundation for them while in care

and for their future after DCFS care. They provide the framework for filling in relevant details or identifying new questions and child might have.

The lifebooks available through DCFS come in different versions:

- The Guide for My Awesome Life for ages 0 to 12; The Real Me for ages 13 to 18
- Going Home for youth 0 to 12 who are preparing to return home
- My Adoption for youth 0 to 12 who are preparing to be adoption.

The books come with a three ring-binder and pages that can be inserted. For newly opened cases, the permanency worker will introduce the lifebook concept and begin adding to it within 45 days of placement. Caseworkers can help gather the elements that a child might like to include. They can facilitate discussions with the birth family to capture information. Therapists can assist in sorting out questions and potentially troubling answers. Foster parents can be involved in adding photos, mementos and recording events. Often the caregiver is best able to accurately

recount day-to-day events and emotional experiences. As children work through trauma and sort out their lives before and during foster care, caregivers can provide crucial support while developing and updating the lifebook.

Ultimately this book is a "work in progress." The caseworker will make copies of pages and critical documentation to serve as a backup. However, the book belongs to and stays with the child. The goal is to create a collection of information that the youth feels is important and preserve it. Caregivers should help keep it in a safe place or explain why or when a child might want to keep it private. This book be should follow the child if there is a move. Meanwhile, adding to it or flipping through it can and should be a regular activity that has long-term benefits. ♥

Fall Flu Season Calls for Flu Vaccination



Getting the flu vaccination in October through December is the primary tool for preventing influenza. Most people over the age of five months can get the flu shot. Some of the symptoms associated with the flu are fever, headache, cough, sore throat, chills and fatigue. Some people are at higher risk of complications from having the flu, such as developing pneumonia. Those people who may be at higher risk for complications are children between six months and five years, pregnant women, people 50 years or older and those with chronic illnesses.

The flu vaccination is available at no charge for children enrolled in Medicaid; children with no health insurance; or children whose health insurance plans do not include vaccinations. For more information about the upcoming flu season, contact the Illinois Department of Health at 217-782-4977. ♡

NEW Requirements for Meningococcal Disease Shot

Schools are requiring proof of immunization to combat meningococcal disease. This contagious bacterial infection can result in neurological disorders, loss of limbs or hearing or death.

With this school year all sixth graders will have to show proof of one dose of the MCV (Meningococcal Conjugate Vaccination) immunization and 12th graders will need to show proof of two doses, unless the first was after their 16th birthday.

Find details at the Department of Public Health website www.dph.illinois.gov.



Illinois State Fair Continues Tradition

DCFS once again offered discounted tickets for entry, food and rides during the Illinois State Fair. DCFS provided \$3 entry and other specials to 830 households. It is one way of showing appreciation to the families who are doing foster care or who have moved to adoption or guardianship.

Families in the Southern part of the state also received invitations to attend the 30th Annual Foster and Adoptive Family Picnic at the DuQuoin State Fair. There, families enjoyed rides, lunch and a relaxing family time with DCFS support staff volunteering to make everything smooth. ♡



The Levengood family gets ready for take-off at the Illinois State Fair in Springfield, Illinois

GET DIGITAL DELIVERY

Many caregivers have decided to skip the paper and request electronic versions of the newsletter, *Illinois Families Now and Forever*.

When you move to the online version, you still receive all the same valuable information with more benefits. It comes faster, is easier to file, saves money and protects the environment.

To make the switch, send an email to vanessa.james@illinois.gov (there is a dot before "james") Be sure to include your name and mailing address. We will stop the hard copies and send you an email each time a new issue is ready to read online.

Illinois Adoption Advisory Council

The Illinois Adoption Advisory Council met in September in Bloomington. Council co-chair Elizabeth Richmond led a discussion of the council's priority issues for this fiscal year. Key initiatives include 1) building links to mental health services after adoption 2) increasing training opportunities for adoptive families and 3) closing gaps in services and resources as adoptive youth approach adulthood. The council updated committees to tackle these issues and made plans to have topic experts present at upcoming meetings.

The council is going to work closely with the the DCFS Post Adoption Unit to coordinate services with the Department of Healthcare and Family Services to better coordinate care using the state medical card. Many caregivers have reported gaps

in coverage as youth approach 18. There have also been difficulties connecting to other public agencies for SSI eligible services.

The Illinois Adoption Advisory Council meets six times a year with the mission to advise DCFS on all matters involving or affecting adoption and guardianship services. The council addresses ways to preserve and expand funding for post-adoption and adoption preservation services, and to improve the permanency outcomes for teens and other children.

Council members are all appointed by the DCFS director. Membership includes adoptive parents and adopted persons, as well as experts in child welfare and adoption from DCFS and other agency partner organizations. All meetings are open.



Ruth Jajko, of LSSI, will be leaving the council after two terms.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Illinois Adoption Advisory Council will be **Friday, November 13** in Lisle at 9 am.

Call DCFS
Caregiver and Parent Support at **217-524-2422** for details.

Consent Policy Update: Foster Parents Can Sign for Sports Activities



DCFS recently announced a policy change that allows foster parents to consent for a child's participation in athletic programs. This is a change from the requirement to contact the Consent Unit. This change was made to normalize the foster care experience and to make it easier for children in care to join in activities, like baseball or soccer that are

typically part of a youth's social and physical development.

Caregivers are expected to use "reasonable parenting standards" to give permission for athletic programs. This includes considering if the activity is appropriate for the age and development of the child in their home. Caseworkers can be consulted and should be kept informed about the child's activities.

This policy change was announced September 4 in DCFS Policy Guide 2015.14 and went into effect immediately. The full text (and all policy and procedure documents) can be found on the DCFS website at www.DCFS.Illinois.gov under the *About Us* tab.



National Adoption Day November 21

Celebrate your special family and let the broader community know about the joys and importance of adoption.

For resources and ideas to go to www.nationaladoptionday.org

Cook County Region Boasts 24 DCFS Scholarship Recipients

This year, 24 students whose cases were served by programs in the DCFS Cook County region headed to college with the benefits included in the DCFS Scholarship program. The scholarship includes a waiver of tuition and mandatory fees at one of the nine Illinois state universities or an Illinois community college, a monthly maintenance grant of \$511 and a medical card.

Scholarship recipients were chosen statewide on the basis of scholastic aptitude, a written personal statement and demonstrated community involvement. Next year's scholarship application process begins in January and ends in March. Contact the youth's caseworker or the DCFS Office of Education and Transition Services at 312-814-5959.



Adam Batton, from Markham, graduated from Bremen High School. He earned a 4.64 GPA on a 5.0 scale and was a member of the National Honor Society, Physics

Club, Code of the Braves and several sports teams. Adam also volunteered with the Hazel Crest and Midlothian Park Districts, United Way, Youth Instructional Soccer Coach and Bremen High School and South Side Church Food Drives. Adam attends University of Illinois at Chicago and will major in business.



Karlyn Boens of Bellwood is a graduate of George Westinghouse College Prep where she earned a 4.02 GPA on a 4.0 scale. She was a member of the poetry

team, book club, and National Chinese Honor Society in which she served as President. Karlyn was named Employee of the Month twice while employed with Walgreens and recognized by the NJROTC for her community service. She has written and published her first chapter book of poems about her identity crisis as a child in foster care

and received numerous recognitions for her poetry. Karlyn is studying at Trinity Christian College to major in social work.



Timothy Budzileni graduated from Nicholas Senn High School in Chicago, where he earned a 2.68 GPA on a 4.0 scale. He was a member of the football and

wrestling teams and received the honor of most valuable player in both sports. He also volunteered his time at Catholic Charities and at Nicholas Senn High School as a training wrestler. Timothy is now a student at the University of Illinois at Chicago and has plans to major in either criminal justice or biomedical engineering.



Kayla Carr, from Chicago, is a graduate of Michele Clark Academic Prep Magnet High School where she earned a 3.67 GPA on a 4.0 scale. She was a member

of the National Honor Society, debate team and the decathlon. She received various awards for her accomplishments on the debate team. Kayla served as the chairman for the Thanksgiving

food drive at her school and mentored three freshmen. Kayla is studying film production at the Southern Illinois University at Carbondale.



Chlotte Crim, a resident of St. Louis, graduated from Nerinx Hall High School where she earned a 3.13 GPA on a 4.0 scale. She was a member of cooking club, fitness club,

diversity club, pep club, spirit squad and the mock trial group. Chlotte earned Second Honors and Excellence in Writing for American Literature as well as receiving her pharmacy technician license through Walgreens/St. Louis College of Pharmacy Explore Program. She participated in volunteer activities through her school, church and community. Chlotte attends University of Missouri at Columbia and is majoring in biomedical engineering/pre-pharmacy.



Sarah Fied is from Brookfield and graduated in 2014 from Lyons Township High School, where she earned a 2.57 GPA on a 4.0 scale. She participated in the cross country

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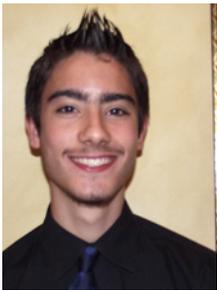
Scholarships (cont.)

team, Spanish club, “Teen Trendsetters” and JROTC camp and competition. Sarah earned the American Legion School Award and JROTC ribbon N-3-15 as well as high honors for academics. She is continuing her studies at College of DuPage. She is a nursing major and is a member of the Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society.



Jessika Gaughan, from Chicago, is a graduate of Whitney M. Young Magnet High School where she earned a 3.28 out of 4.0 GPA. She was a member

of Stand Up to Hunger school club, robotics team and track team. She was on the honor roll and won many awards including: Principal’s Scholar, ACT Gold National Career Readiness, PSAE Award of Excellence and Illinois State Scholar. She volunteered her time helping special needs children. Jessika is now studying biomedical engineering at the University of Illinois at Chicago.



Christian Grills is a graduate of Buffalo Grove High School. He was a member of the cross country and track and field teams. He earned a 4.39 GPA on a 5.0 scale. Christian

was named to the honor roll for his academic excellence. He volunteered as a teacher’s assistant at his synagogue, at a soup kitchen, playing violin at a nursing home and fund raising for his

younger cousin who has leukemia. Christian attends Illinois State University as a geology major.



Diane Hardy graduated from Chicago

Vocational Career Academy High School where she earned a 3.85 GPA on a 4.0 scale. She was a member of the student council and cheerleading team. She earned a place in the National Honor Society and was part of the top 10 of her senior class. Diane interned at Trinity Hospital on the labor and delivery floor. Diane is a pre-med student at Eastern Illinois University.

Tiana Haynes, graduated in 2013 from West Memphis High School in Edmondson, Arkansas, where she earned a 3.95 GPA on a 4.0 scale. She was a member of Beta Club and Southern Exposure choir. While studying at Arkansas State University she volunteered and participated in the “Essence Pageant.” She earned membership in National Society of Collegiate Scholars, third place in the THEA Foundation Scholarship program and second place in the Arkansas Foreign Language Talent Competition. Tiana volunteered her time assisting children and elderly in her community. Tiana is currently studying nursing at the University of Memphis.



Anita Jackson, from Pingree Grove, graduated in 2014 from Hampshire High School, where she earned a 4.98 GPA on a 5.0 scale. She was a member of student council, serving as public

relations person and vice-president. She also participated in Hampshire Junior Farmers 4-H. Anita earned the President’s Award all four years of high school and made it to the State Fair four years in a row for 4-H projects. In college, she joined Woodland Area Council and Resident Housing Association. Anita is continuing her studies in marketing at Southern Illinois University at Edwardsville.



Jessica Jones, from South Holland, is a graduate of George Washington Carver Military Academy High School where she earned a 3.78 GPA on a 4.0 scale. Jessica

was a member of the National Honor Society, track team, volleyball team and cheerleading team. She co-founded “Safe” Heaven, which provides mentoring to underclassmen. She was awarded the College Bound Medallion in addition to receiving various academic, athletic and scholar recognitions. Jessica volunteered her time assisting in an afterschool program that teaches youth the rules and foundation of various sports. Jessica now attends the Northern Illinois University and is majoring in nursing.



Akeem Kennedy graduated from Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. College Prep High School in Chicago, where he earned a 4.27 GPA on a 5.0 scale. Akeem was a member

of the National Honor Society, track team, football team, Junior National Society of Black Engineers, chess club, A1 Athletics, myth busters, I Choose Empowerment and Youth as Resources. He was on the academic honor roll, was awarded perfect attendance his sophomore and junior year, earned MVP for outdoor track and was on the conference champion football team. Akeem volunteered his time with the elderly, homeless, and children in his community. Akeem is majoring in engineering at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

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Scholarships (cont.)



Michael King, from Dolton, is a graduate of St. Francis De Sales High School where he earned a 3.94 GPA on a 4.0 scale. He participated on his school's football, baseball

and basketball teams, and was named student council president for seniors. He was a member of the honor roll and received the Fr. Timothy Sullivan Award, the President's Education Award, and was a Hugh O'Brian Youth Leadership Nominee. Michael volunteered his time cleaning playgrounds, tutoring students and assisting at his church. Michael is a student at the University of Iowa, majoring in civil engineering.

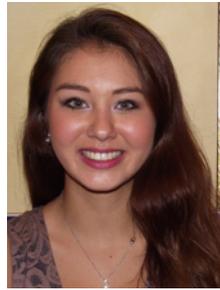
Vincent LaPage graduated from John F. Kennedy High School in Chicago. He earned a 4.35 GPA on a 5.0 scale. Vincent participated in football all four years. He was awarded Perfect Attendance and the Principal's Award, made the Honor Roll and was chosen as Student of the Month for academics and good behavior. Vincent volunteered as junior counselor at Chicago Park District and at the local animal shelter. Vincent attends the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and is a business major.



Lorenzo Lawson, from Chicago, is a graduate of Urban Prep Charter Academy for Young Men where he earned a 4.04 GPA on a 4.0 scale. Lorenzo was a

member of the National Honor Society, Brother to Brother Mentoring, Choices Robotics, Student Justice Committee and Student Government Association. He was awarded a Merit Award for exceptional work and dedication to volunteering and graduated Summa Cum Laude. Lorenzo volunteered at the Greater Chicago Food Depository, an HIV/AIDS food pantry and the

Montessori School of Englewood. Lorenzo is a student at Oberlin College where he plans to major in biology and English.



Jeong-mee Mok-Morrison, graduated from Larkin High School in Elgin, where she earned a 3.70 GPA on a 4.0 scale. She participated in cheerleading, volleyball, soccer, speech and the Ms. LHS pageant. She was on the academic honor roll, earned a summer scholarship for Speech Camp, and received various awards for speech team and competitions. Jeong-mee volunteered at the Salvation Army and at Maplewood Care assisting with activities for the elderly and tutored students in chemistry. Jeong-mee attends Northern Illinois University with plans to major in political science and journalism.



Kyle Paulsen, from Tinley Park, graduated in 2013 from Victor J. Andrew High School where he earned a 3.35 GPA on a 4.0 scale. Kyle participated in swim club,

variety show, swim team, marching band, symphonic band and pep band. He earned the Outstanding Academic Achievement Award, 2013 Archdiocese of Chicago Vicariate V Leadership Award, and the Scholar Athlete Award and was named to the President's List for academic excellence at Moraine Valley Community College. He volunteered his time at the Chicago Marathon, a local retirement/nursing home and with numerous service projects through his church. Kyle is now studying kinesiology/pre-physical therapy at Eastern Illinois University.



Khari Sulton graduated from Chicago's South Shore International College Prep High School where he earned a 4.0 GPA. He participated in science club, track team, basketball

statistics and yearbook committee. Khari graduated with honors, placed first in the science fair, received perfect attendance and was enrolled in City Colleges of Chicago High School Dual Enrollment Program. He volunteered as a student aide and led program activities for grade school children. Khari attends the University of Iowa, majoring in nursing.



Jaelyn Vickers, from Chicago is a graduate of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. College Prep High School where she earned a 4.12 GPA on a 5.0 scale. Jaelyn participated in

student government association, SMILE/CLASSY club, yearbook committee and book club. She was inducted into the National Honor Society, on the honor roll and received the NHS National Induction Award. Jaelyn volunteered her time creating fliers and posters for a holiday toy drive and entertaining and singing for the elderly. Jaelyn is a student at the University of Illinois at Chicago, majoring in business administration/performing arts.



Charles Williams graduated from Johnson College Prep in Chicago, where he earned a 3.5 GPA on a 4.0 scale. Charles participated in varsity track

and field, varsity basketball, Noble Nine-nine males, student council, and AIM, *continued*

Scholarships (cont.)

in which he took college-level courses to better prepare for college. He earned the recognition of perfect attendance, student of the semester, and National Honor Society. Charles volunteered at many events and with City Year, refurbishing elementary schools around the Chicagoland area. Charles is now studying at Illinois State University, majoring in mathematics and physics.



Jarvell Williams from Skokie, is a graduate of Niles North High School where he earned a 2.56 GPA on a 4.0 scale. Jarvell was a member of the track and

field team, many theatre productions, African-American club, speech team, variety show and various musical groups. He was recognized with the Student Directors award, Christians for Excellence award and a 400-yard dash specialist certificate. Jarvell volunteered his time with many programs at his church, at a local disability home and with an annual Hunger Walk. Jarvell is now a student at Southern Illinois University at Carbondale majoring in clinical psychology and musical theatre.



Shakendra Williams graduated from George Westinghouse College Prep in Chicago where she earned a 3.6 out of 4.0 GPA. Shakendra

participated in cheerleading squad, Moving People Dance Company, student council, and After School Matters drum and dance. She earned the most improved dance award, third place in *Dancing with the Stars* Talent Show and was a member of the Spanish Honor Society. She volunteered with several organizations. Shakendra is majoring in business and psychology at Southern Illinois University at Edwardsville. ♡

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 want information on becoming a foster parent or on adoption? The Adoption Information Center of Illinois (AICI) can answer your questions and connect you with a licensing agency. The toll-free number is 800-572-2390. AICI also maintains information about the children who are featured in the newsletter.

...You have questions about your board check? Call the DCFS Central Payment Unit at 800-525-0499 if your check comes from DCFS. If your check comes from a private agency, contact the agency.

...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. The toll-free number is available 24 hours a day every day of the week. If you feel the child is in danger, call 911 first.

...Your adoption or guardianship is final but you have questions about the subsidy? Call the subsidy worker assigned to the case or the Adoption Support Line at 866-538-8892 or 312-808-5250 so you can be connected to the right individual for help.

...You feel you aren't being treated fairly by DCFS or a private agency? If you've already tried to resolve the issue by going up the chain of command with the caseworker and supervisors, then call the Advocacy Office at 800-232-3798.

...You need to seek expense reimbursement for property damage or bodily harm caused by a child in foster care? Let your caseworker know you intend to submit a claim to the Foster Child Damage Reimbursement Program. Refer to DCFS form CFS851 or contact the office at 312-814-7294.

...You have questions about your child's medical card? Call 800-228-6533.

...You need to find a phone number for a caseworker? Call the main switchboard in Chicago at 312-814-6800 or the State Operator at 312-793-3500.

...You are having family problems with an adopted child? Contact the Adoption/Subsidized Guardianship Preservation Program that serves your area. Call the Adoption Support Line at 866-538-8892 or 312-808-5250.

...You are having a hard time getting services for your child at school? Most private agencies have an Education Liaison, and each DCFS region has Education Advisors who can help. Call your agency or nearest DCFS office to be connected to the right educational resource for your area.

...You have an idea for an article in the newsletter? Email vanessa.james@illinois.gov at the DCFS Office of Communications.



DIGITAL TRAINING NOW AVAILABLE

DCFS Training has made many PRIDE materials available online at:

www.dcfstraining.org

A Family for Me: Call 1-800-572-2390 for more information



Marvin, 15, is a young man who is always willing to lend a hand. He is a respectful child who enjoys helping others. He is also very independent, and capable of taking

care of himself. Marvin is intelligent, but he sometimes needs to be reminded to apply himself at school. His favorite hobby is playing video games – if there's a game controller anywhere nearby, it won't be long before he finds it!

Marvin's worker says he is a loving, lighthearted child who enjoys playing games, being active, and spending time with people he knows and trusts.

The forever family for Marvin is one that can provide a loving home environment. You can spend plenty of time with him, and encourage him to form meaningful bonds with members of your family. You can also work with professionals who can help you understand, and meet, his emotional needs. Marvin says, "I want a family that likes games and is active." [8146]



Carlos If you're looking for someone to chat with, Carlos, age 14, is the one! This young man is very caring and outgoing, and he LOVES to engage in conversations

with people. Carlos is also very athletic and enjoys playing sports and participating in other activities, such as the junior high dance team and track team. He shares a close relationship with his coach and gets along really well with his teammates.

Carlos' teachers all have fabulous things to say about him. They report that they

love having him in their classes and feel very invested in him. He is bright and very articulate with details. Carlos has a lot of potential if he can be in a structured and caring environment. He works better when he is monitored and knows that someone is watching him. Carlos gets involved in whatever he is doing and always wants to do a good job.

Potential parents can provide a loving and stable home for Carlos, and assure him that he is a permanent part of your family. You can be patient with him as he adjusts to your home. Carlos needs to be able to openly communicate; the ideal family for him would be caring and willing to take the time to talk to him about how he is feeling. They will also need to allow him to be active and involved in extracurricular activities. Carlos wants to be a "normal" kid who does things that teenagers like to do, such as playing sports and going to the mall. He does not pick on kids and is never disrespectful, so he would do just fine with other children in the home. [8293]



Cam'ron Meet Cam'ron, the next American Idol! This young man loves to sing, and he is very good at it. He is a very sweet boy, with a good sense of humor. Cam'ron

does well in school, and has even made the honor roll. He is really into cars and enjoys building things using LEGO pieces. He is friendly, and makes friends easily. Cam'ron is 13 years old.

His caseworker says that Cam'ron is very loving and caring. He is very smart, and makes friends easily.

The right family for Cam'ron will show patience and understanding as he transitions into his new home environ-

ment. Cam'ron would benefit from a family that has experience working with or understanding children exposed to significant trauma. The family can also work with professionals to understand and meet his emotional, behavioral, and educational needs. Cam'ron says he would like, "a very nice family who is active." [8288]



Aaron, 15, is a very personable and intelligent young man, with a wonderful sense of humor. He enjoys writing, drawing, and listening to music.

Aaron loves action figures! Two of his favorites are Spider-Man and Batman. It has also been reported that Aaron is a huge fan of the "Star Wars" movie series.

Aaron's caregivers say he works very hard at developing and maintaining positive relationships with adults and peers. They also say he loves making people laugh.

To be a forever family for Aaron, you can provide a nurturing home environment. You can set clear boundaries, offer structure, and create realistic goals. You can also exhibit patience and understanding as Aaron gets acclimated to his new environment. Aaron would benefit from ongoing contact with his older sister, including phone calls and emails. [8283]

If you are interested in adopting one of the children featured here, or learning about other children who are waiting to be adopted, please call the Illinois Center for Adoption & Permanency at 1-800-572-2390 or visit the iCAP website at www.illinoiscap.org. ♥



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Illinois Families Now and Forever®

Bruce Rauner, Governor

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