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

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.)

Guest speaker Steve Pemberton

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 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 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.

Lee Annes, statewide administrator officer CIPP & D-CIPP

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.

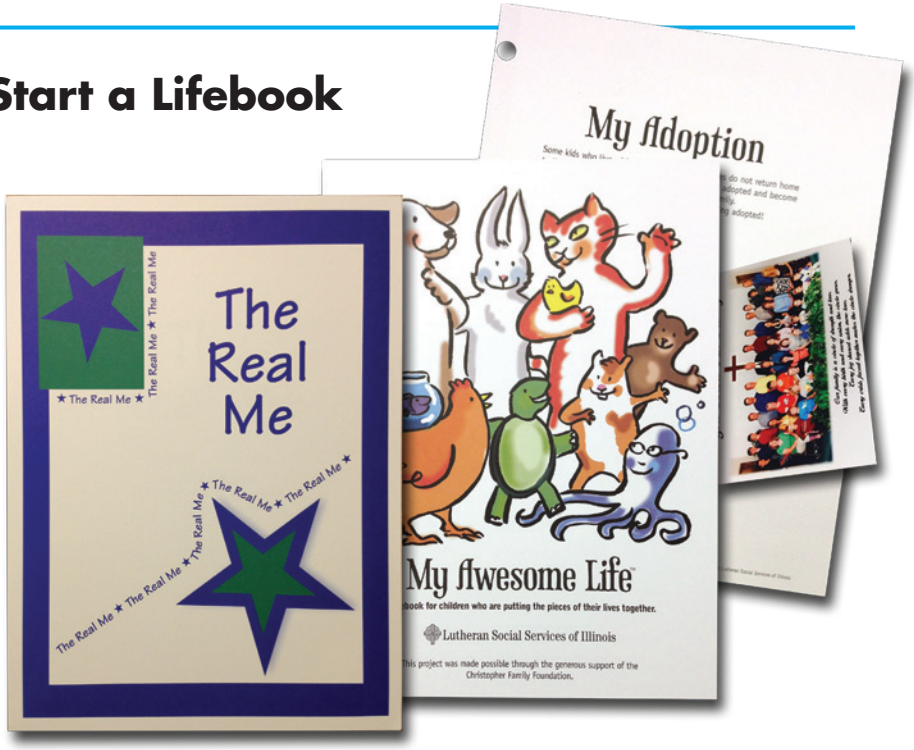
UPCOMING MEETING

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 scrapbook 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.

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

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.

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
Celebrating a Family for Every Child

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

Our Kids

News for Southern Region Families

2015 • Vol. 5

Southern Region Sends 3 Off to College with DCFS Scholarships

This year, three students whose cases were served by programs in the DCFS Central 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.

Sophia "Sasha" Maynard, from Centralia, graduated from Salem Community High School where she earned a 3.78 GPA on a 4.0 scale. She served as the president of the National Honor Society, president of the student council and editor-in-chief of the yearbook team. Sasha was a member of the tennis team, basketball team, mock trial, Peer Helpers, and Future Business Leaders of America. She was on high honor roll all four years of high school and was also named Student of the Month. Sasha volunteered at her church, with Youth Invasion and at Royal Family Kids Camp. Sasha is now a student at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, majoring in political science.

Alyssa Moore is a graduate of Alton High School. She participated in the Big Brother/Big Sister mentoring program, writer's club, Anime Club, chess club, and Piasa Martial Arts. She earned honor roll recognition all four years of high school and a 3.62 GPA on a 4.0 scale. Alyssa enjoys volunteering her time with children. Alyssa attends Western Illinois University and has plans to major in social work and writing.

Melanie Whittington graduated from Frankfort Community High School with a 4.95 GPA on a 5.0 scale. She participated in FFA, National Honor Society, science club, French club, First Priority, and volleyball. She was recognized in the Academic Hall of Fame, at the Bob Gower banquet, in the Top 10 of her class, and she received awards at her job. Melanie volunteered with Special Olympics and Operation Christmas Child. Melanie is studying social work at Southern Illinois University at Carbondale. ♡

SOUTHERN REGION YOUTH ADVISORY BOARD

The youth who are most affected by DCFS policies can have a voice. The Southern Region sponsors a Youth Advisory Board with members age 14-21 who are in currently care or who were involved in the child welfare system. The YAB meets monthly to discuss issues and give advice to the Director's Office.

The group meets in Marion on the first Monday of the month and in East St. Louis on the first Tuesday. Transportation is available with advance notice. Contact Primed for Life at **217-789-2980** for more details.

Lori Gray, Moves up to Regional Administrator Role

Lori Gray

DCFS Southern Region has a new Regional Administrator. Lori Gray is new to the role, but not to the region. Previously she was the area administrator for the Marion, Murphysboro and Harrisburg teams. Gray takes on the oversight for the region after Derek Hobson was named Chief Accountability Officer, part of the statewide administrative structure.

Gray began her career in child welfare in 1998 in the legislative affairs office. She has worked in the DCFS Advocacy Office, for the Director, with the Child and Youth Investment Team (CAYIT) program. She has also been a supervisor for investigations and for paired teams.

As an area administrator, Gray was able to address the needs of foster families that were served by several field offices. Now, as regional administrator, her perspective is significantly larger.

"This region spreads over 34 counties. It is important to hear from all of our families," she said.

Gray encourages caregivers to take part in the regional advisory council meetings each quarter, either by teleconference or in a local office. These are platforms for the DCFS foster care programs and private agency supervised homes. The schedule is available at DCFS field offices.

"The commitment of southern region foster families is amazing. I have nothing but gratitude for the work that families do," said Gray.

She said she looks forward to finding new ways to bring more resources to underserved areas of the region. ♡

DuQuoin State Fair Picnic Celebrated a 30 Year Traditon

The McDaniel family at the DuQuoin State Fair.

At this year's 30th Annual Foster and Adoptive Family Picnic on August 29, DCFS and co-host the Illinois Elks Association, honored Gene Ruehmkorff with a Humanitarian Award for his part in establishing this local event for foster families in the Southern port of the state.

Gene Ruehmkorff began working with DCFS in 1965 and served in a variety of capacities for nearly 35 years, including staff supervisor and manager; and as the regional administrator of the Southern Region for 17 years. Although families living in the Southern Region were regular participants in the foster parent luncheon at the state fair in Springfield, Ruehmkorff recognized the need for a more local event at the DuQuoin state fair. This would allow more foster parents, adoptive parents and youth in care to participate, many of whom could not afford to travel to the Springfield event.

After 30 years, the picnic in DuQuoin is firmly established. Foster and adoptive families look forward to the event each year. Children receive carnival rides, play games and enjoy free refreshments.

"I am glad to be here to see this tradition first hand. Building fun, family memories is invaluable for our kids," said DCFS acting director George Sheldon.

The Humanitarian Award was developed by the steering committee to recognize outstanding achievement and commitment to social services and DCFS. ♡

Advisory Council Update

Speak up at Local Foster Care Advisory Council Meeting

The Southern Region Foster Care Advisory Council meets on October 27 at 6 p.m. These meetings are open to all caregivers from the DCFS and private agency-supervised foster care programs. The advisory council is an important platform for caregivers to stay informed, and to have a say in new policies and procedures, and to discuss issues related to the foster care program.

If an issue has the potential to impact foster care homes across the state, the regional representatives can elevate it to the Statewide Foster Care Advisory Council. Administrators from the region participate in the meetings and assist in resolving caregiver concerns.

Caregivers are invited to come to the DCFS office in Belleville, Cairo, Effingham, Marion, Mt. Vernon or Wood River. Participants at each site will be connected by teleconference. To participate by teleconference, dial 888-494-4032 with access code 1884403034#

Meetings start in person at 6 p.m. with a supervisor on hand to answer caregivers' questions or discuss concerns. The teleconference opens at 6:30 p.m.

Foster Parent Law Implementation Plans Due Nov 30

The region will be finalizing the 2015 Foster Parent Law Implementation Plan. There have been several meetings to get foster parent feedback to the draft and to train field staff on how the implementation plan affects families. The DCFS plan will be submitted by November 30. Caregivers can view the final plan at any DCFS field office or request a copy. Families served by private agencies can also request to see the agency's implementation plan.

Southern Region's Statewide Influence

The Southern Region is represented on the Statewide Foster Care Advisory Council by foster caregivers Michael Simpson of Fairfield and Mark McDaniel of McLeansboro.

Mark McDaniel

Michael Simpson

Southern Region hosted the September meeting of the Statewide Advisory Council. Members traveled to Effingham to get a local perspective on foster care programs. Regional Administrator Lori Gray welcomed the council and gave an update on pertinent issues in the southern region. She also had staff on hand so they could hear the discussions that reflected foster care activities and policies across the state. ♡

BIRTHDAY BUDDY SPREADS LOVE IN ST. LOUIS AREA

A birthday can be an especially significant event for a child who has experienced trauma. The Foster Care Coalition helps foster families in the St. Louis area (in Illinois and Missouri) make each birthday special with the Birthday Buddy program.

At least four weeks before the child's birthday, the foster parent can provide a wish list of present ideas. Individuals can view the list on the coalition's website and make donations. This program is only open to youth in foster care. Foster parents must arrange to pick up any donated items.

For more information on the application process go to **www.foster-adopt.org**. Look under the "For Parents" tab. Or call 888-367-8373.

CPR TRAINING AVAILABLE IN O'FALLON AREA

Families that reside in O'Fallon and need to complete CPR training for licensing standards can attend a class offered on October 16, November 3 or December 1, from 6 to 10 p.m.

The cost for the course is $25 for O'Fallon residents and $40 for non-residents.

Southern Region Training

DCFS has scheduled sessions of in-service training modules and other courses in locations across the region.

To get specific dates and locations, visit the on-line Virtual Training Center (VTC) anytime at *www.DCFStraining.org*. Click on any of the links under Training Schedule to access course descriptions, in-service training and Educational Advocacy Training or call the DCFS Registration Line at 877-800-3393 during business hours.

The Virtual Training Center (VTC) is your tool to:

- See training news and general information
- Check available trainings
- View/Print your training transcript
- Register for courses
- Download course materials to use in class or to access after training
- Take online courses including all PRIDE in-service modules for licensed caregivers.

DIGITAL TRAINING MATERIALS NOW AVAILABLE

DCFS has made many PRIDE materials easily available on the home page of the Virtual Training Center at *www.DCFStraining.org*.

Anyone may print the materials or download them onto almost any electronic device and bring their device to training class. Trainees who have no digital access should speak with their trainers when they arrive in class, so we can accommodate everyone.

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.

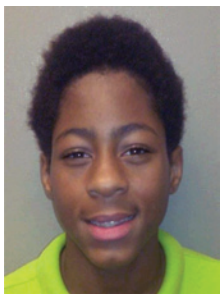
...You have an idea for an article in the newsletter? Email vanessa.james@illinois.gov at the DCFS Office of Communications.

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.

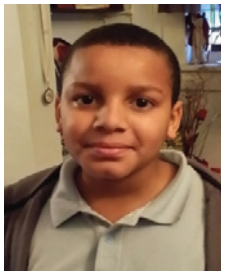
The forever family for Marvin is one that can provide a loving home environment You can spend plenty of time with him, and encourage him to form meaningful bonds with members of your family. You can also work with professionals who can help you understand, and meet, his emotional needs. Marvin says,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

ILLINOIS CENTER FOR ADOPTION & PERMANENCY

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Illinois Families Now and Forever®

Bruce Rauner, Governor

Published by

DCFS Office of Communications

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Printed by: DCFS Print Shop

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.

Illinois Families Now and Forever® is published six times a year, bi-monthly, and mailed to licensed foster parents, unlicensed relative caregivers, and adoptive and guardianship families receiving subsidies. An electronic version is sent to all DCFS and private agency staff.

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Department of Children and Family Services©

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

PRESRT STD
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
SPRINGFIELD, IL
PERMIT NO. 763

Illinois Department of DCFS Children & Family Services

Inside this issue:

Page 1-2 DCFS Scholarship helps 53 students attend college
Page 2 Message from the DCFS Director
Page 3 Statewide Foster Care Advisory Council Update
Page 4 It's never too late to start a lifebook
Page 5 Flu season calls for vaccination
New requirements for meningococcal shot
Page 6 Illinois Adoption Advisory Council update
DCFS policy update on consents for athletic activities
Page 7-10 *"Our Kids"* regional news
Page 11 *"Family for Me"* profiles of waiting children

Current and back issues of Illinois Families Now and Forever® are available online in English and Spanish at www.DCFS.illinois.gov

Printed by Authority of the State of Illinois
DCFS #000 – October 2015 – 2,995 copies