



Illinois Families Now & Forever®

Families by DCFS Foster Care, Adoption & Guardianship

Students on college path with DCFS scholarship

Imagine settling into life on a college campus as a first-year student, knowing that tuition is already paid in full. That is a real life situation for the young people who are benefitting from the DCFS Scholarship Program.

Scholarship recipients can take advantage of full tuition and waivers for mandatory fees if they attend one of the nine Illinois state universities or Illinois junior colleges. They also receive a monthly maintenance grant of \$511 and continued medical coverage.

The program provides 53 scholarships to high school or college students who are in DCFS care or who moved to adoption or guardianship from DCFS. More than 250 students completed applications for the DCFS Scholarship Program, leaving the selection committee with difficult decisions among many worthy candidates. Scholarship recipients were chosen based on scholastic aptitude, a written personal statement and demonstrated community involvement.

The students selected for the 2016 scholarships celebrated at a luncheon in July. The day began with a full morning workshop on tips to successfully transition to college. They then moved to the upper level of the Alhambra restaurant for a lunch buffet and program. For many it was a second, more intimate, graduation ceremony than they had in high school. *(continued)*



53 scholarship recipients at the Alhambra Palace, Chicago.

2016 SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS

Madison Angel	Abigail Gound	Chelsea Prather
D'Angelo Baker	Shakira Govan	Mary Ann Rasmussen
Matthew Baranowski	Unique Grissom	Hope Rush
Gregory Baseley	Gabriel Guzman	Rachel Satterwhite
Cassie Berman	Maria Hill	Christopher Schmidt
Jeffrey Board	Taylor Isaak	Kisha Schuler
Kayla Burke	Treyton Jansen	Jerrold Shaffer
Justin Coyle	Kyle Johnson	Travis Simmons
Ciera Dantzler	Keith Jones	Katie Smith
Jason Ditto	Joshua Kirby	Tesla Travelstead
Kierra Dowling-Garrott	Yasmine Koenig	Raven Trotter
Angela Duncan	Michelle Lewis	Emily Weeks
Kendra Escudero	Cortez Luttrell	Gabriella White
Derek Finney	Nickie Meyer	Nathaniel Whitfield
Keeley Flanigan	Cherree Miller	Czanel Wilkens-Hays
Mary Alice Ford	DonTerrance Nixon	Jarron Williams
Leyda Garcia	Trevor Page	Rashida Williams
Nicole Garth	Katherine Powell	



Message from the DCFS Director

The school year is in full swing. Our kids have

the opportunity to expand their knowledge, but new teachers, classmates and courses can bring challenges for them and all of you who take care of them. Still, there is much that we can all do to help and there is good news to report.

This fall 53 bright, hard-working students started the school year with support for tuition and fees through the DCFS Scholarship Program. At the send-off luncheon, parents, mentors and case managers sat beside them, amazed and uplifted by their stories of perseverance and academic achievement.

While these scholarship recipients are exceptional, they also prove that there is a path from DCFS that leads to “normal” milestones like high school graduation and higher education. It is a path open for all of our students, but they need your direction. Your homework comes in the form of school meetings for special services, discipline hearings and hours of advocacy. The DCFS/Northern Illinois University Education Advisors are on call for all DCFS and private agency foster parents. When advisors talk you through and walk with you to deal with school concerns, the partnership brings results.

As an agency, our mission boils down to doing what is right for the children in our care. Laying a solid foundation for education is critical. I thank you for all you are doing at home and at school to foster the big wins and the small classroom victories that add up to a successful school year.

George H. Sheldon
Director

Scholarship (cont.)

The guest speaker Rodney Walker spoke to students as one of them, a young person moving from DCFS care to a new academic setting. Walker knew the challenges, the fears and the strengths they had in common. However, he could let them know what was on the other side, having graduated and launched a successful career. As the program went on, rather than a principal handing out diplomas, DCFS Director George Sheldon congratulated each student and presented an engraved plaque to memorialize the accomplishment.

“This group proves that with support and encouragement, our kids in care can go on to accomplish all the goals they set. I see their courage, applaud their effort and look forward to witnessing their future success,” Sheldon said. ♡



Kyle Johnson (left), Keith Jones and all students left the ceremony loaded down with new book bags and items for their dorm rooms.

THE DCFS YOUTH IN SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

is available to youth currently in DCFS care and to 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 are routinely available in January with a deadline of March 31.

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.

Adoption Advisory Council News



Pamela Mills

The September meeting of the Illinois Adoption Advisory Council took place in Springfield.

Scott Cameron, a DCFS permanency achievement specialist in the Central Region, described how the statewide team can partner with a caseworker to address barriers that slow the move toward permanency. The specialists initially focus on family finding. They search deep and wide to identify members of the child's family who can be consistently involved with the child on a level

that ranges from phone calls to a formal placement. The permanency achievement specialists also help the caseworkers find creative solutions to work through other issues so that children can be successfully settled in an acceptable time frame.

The DCFS statewide administrator for adoption, Pamela Mills, discussed the role that adoption specialists fill when the permanency goal is adoption or guardianship. She heads a team of adoption specialists who are located in each of the DCFS regions. The specialists were recently matched with private agencies to be a resource to help cases move to adoption. The specialists will review the list of cases where adoption or guardianship is the goal. They will provide technical assistance to the caseworkers to help get the subsidy written correctly and submitted properly. This added level of service and attention is expected to shorten the timeframe leading up to the adoption or guardianship finalization. ♡

Statewide Foster Care Advisory Council

The Statewide Foster Care Advisory Council held its September meeting in Fairview Heights.

The new fiscal year brought many new members to the council.

Gwenn Eyer of DCFS conducted a training to acclimate the new members and refresh returning members on the responsibilities related to the Foster Parent Law Implementation Plan review and scoring. Each foster care program is required to submit a plan to the council by November 15. Council members will score the plans based on how they reflect the rights and responsibilities outlined in the Law. The final scores are due in February.

The DCFS Guardian, Debra Dyer-Webster gave an update on the legislation Governor Rauner signed specific to foster care and related to child welfare.

After committee updates, the foster care council developed the agenda for the upcoming joint meeting with the Illinois Adoption Advisory Council on November 18 in Chicago.

For more information, contact DCFS Foster Parent Support at 217-524-2422. ♡

Illinois Adoption Advisory Council

The Illinois Adoption Advisory Council meets six times a year to discuss issues and make recommendations to DCFS regarding the concerns of adoptive and guardianship families. The council is made up of parents, professionals in the child welfare field and adopted individuals.

THE NEXT MEETING

of the Illinois Adoption Advisory Council will be Friday November 18 in Chicago.

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

New Members

FOSTER PARENTS:

Southern Region
Kassie Johnson
Frankfurt, IL

Cook County
Trina Rizzo
Chicago, IL

AGENCY PROFESSIONALS:

Juan Carlos Arjona
Lutheran Social Services

Katy Cotts
Children's Home and Aid

Keep an eye on new policies that impact foster care families

At the Illinois State Fair in August, Governor Bruce Rauner conducted a bill signing ceremony where he enacted several pieces of legislation that directly affect youth in foster care and their families, both current and prospective.

HB 5551 – DCFS Fictive Kin

Expands the definition of “fictive kin” to include any individual, unrelated by birth or marriage, who is the foster parent of a child in the custody or guardianship of the DCFS, has established a significant and family-like relationship with the child and has been identified by the department as the child’s permanent connection.

HB 4590 – Adoption Info Disclosure

Amends the list of disclosures required to be made to the adoptive parents, to add facts and circumstances relating to the nature and cause of the adoption, information regarding how adoptive parents were identified and whether a request or efforts were made regarding continued contact or an open adoption.

Executive Order—Eliminate use of “ward” for youth in care

Governor Rauner signed an executive order that states:

- DCFS shall refrain from using the term “ward” except in situations required under Illinois statutes. DCFS shall instead use the term “youth in care” and other terms that show respect and encouragement to youth who are in state care.
- DCFS shall review and revise its administrative rules to accomplish the purpose of this Executive Order.
- DCFS shall work with the General Assembly to review all statutory references to youth as “wards” and support legislation replacing the term with “youth in care.”

The Governor said he was moved to enact this order after many discussions with young people who told him they wanted to be recognized as regular kids.



Governor Bruce Rauner signed new legislation at the Illinois State Fair.



Original artwork by youth at the Illinois State Fair.

DCFS Policy Updates

All DCFS policy guides, rules and procedures are available on the DCFS website at www.dcf.illinois.gov in the *About Us* section.

Here is a list of recent policy changes that may affect foster families.
For more information online: cfpolicy@idcf.state.il.us

RECENT POLICY GUIDES

Policy Guide 2016.09 Changes to Eligibility Criteria for the State Funded Option of Subsidized Guardianship, effective August 24, 2016. Children who are 12 years of age or older and placed with a licensed or unlicensed relative caregiver are now eligible for the state-funded option of subsidized guardianship.

Policy Guide 2016.10 Safety Plans

Provides updated forms outlining the rights and responsibilities for parents, caregivers, investigators, caseworkers and other safety plan participants. Details the content, modification and monitoring of safety plans.

Education Advisors help students in foster care thrive at school

With the school year under way, caregivers can now examine the transition to new teachers and assignments to see how students are progressing. Foster parents have a powerful resource ready to help with education issues. Through a partnership with Northern Illinois University, the DCFS/NIU education advisors advocate for youth in care.

The education advisors can assist with the assessments and Individualized Education Plans (IEP) for special education. When there are behavioral issues, they can work out an intervention with the school. They can answer caregivers' questions and attend school meetings with them. They will help caregivers and caseworkers obtain appropriate educational services for the children. They also will help caregivers plan for education after high school.

With the background of working in or with schools before joining DCFS, education advisors know how to navigate the system. They understand school issues including special education, attendance policies, discipline and a host of other concerns. Working with an education advisor can be very positive and gratifying. They identify with and highly value caregivers and the children in their homes. They recognize and empathize with the frustrations and needs of both the education and child welfare systems, making them invaluable advocates.

The advisors are each well-versed in the federal and state education laws and DCFS Rule 314 concerning education services that must be provided to children in DCFS care. Since every school can have a slightly different way of doing things, it helps to have an education advisor sitting beside the caregiver as both advocate for the student. ♡

Education Advisors

NORTHERN REGION

Diane Fitzhugh

(Will, Kankakee counties)

708-210-3050

diane.fitzhugh@illinois.gov

Aundrea Nabors

(remaining counties)

815-967-3750

aundrea.nabors@illinois.gov

SOUTHERN REGION

Bessie Peabody

618-583-2141

bessie.peabody@illinois.gov

COOK NORTH/CHICAGO AND NORTHERN SUBURBS

Donnis Briscoe

312-328-2551

donnis.briscoe@illinois.gov

COOK CENTRAL-CHICAGO AND WESTERN SUBURBS

Yasmina Sefiane

708-338-6641

yasmina.johnson@illinois.gov

COOK SOUTH-CHICAGO AND SOUTHERN SUBURBS

Arlecia Brown

773-371-6479

arlecia.brown@illinois.gov

CENTRAL REGION CHAMPAIGN AREA

Ann Wells

217-875-6797

ann.s.wells@illinois.gov

CENTRAL REGION SPRINGFIELD/PEORIA AREAS

Mary Chepulis

309-671-7952 or 217-557-3985

mary.chepulis@illinois.gov

Fresh Start donates life-changing corrective surgeries for kids



The DCFS Office of the Guardian has entered into a partnership with Fresh Start, a California-based nonprofit that provides free reconstructive surgery and related healthcare services to infants,

children and teens with physical deformities caused by birth defects, accidents, abuse or disease.

Fresh Start has expanded into Illinois. Fresh Start sponsors surgery weekends three times each year for multiple children. There is room to assist more children in what could be life changing surgeries that could be impossible to obtain without

Fresh Start.

Children do not have to live in Chicago to be eligible for the program. If you would like to refer a child to Fresh Start or have questions about the application process, including completing the application, available online at freshstart.org or ask your caseworker for more details. ♡

College financial aid application period moved to October

The door to financial assistance for college opens with the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) form. The federal government recently announced a change in the due date to apply for funds for the 2017-18 school year. The application period now opens in October, not in January 2017.

The October 1, 2016 date was selected as a way to allow families to have information about potential financial aid earlier in their decision process. By submitting the FAFSA in October or soon after, the expected family contribution (EFC) will be known in the fall during the time that high school seniors typically apply to schools. Since

families would have a clearer picture of what amount they might have to cover, they could avoid applying to a school that would be too costly to attend.

Financial aid for incoming and returning students is often awarded on a first-in, first-out basis, so it is important to stay ahead of deadlines. Most schools require incoming freshmen to commit to attending by May 1. The October start to the financial aid process should result in financial aid offering letters going to families sooner. Thus, families could have more time to weigh packages and make decisions.

Youth applying for financial aid while still under the care of DCFS typically receive substantial assistance based on their status as independent students. Youth who were adopted or moved to guardianship may be eligible for aid, based on their family income. Many private schools and scholarship programs request students file a FAFSA for consideration. The FAFSA has essentially become a requirement, so be sure to get it in as early as possible. ♡

Details at www.fasfa.gov.

Be sure to get and keep a fresh copy of the Health Passport

The DCFS “Health Passport” is a paper copy summary of a child’s health records and history, as recorded by the health care providers who have examined the child.

Caregivers must take the Health Passport to all medical appointments and have medical care providers update it with current regular immunizations and other relevant health information.

The child’s caseworker is responsible for printing out and providing the foster parent a current Health Passport, at least every year and when asked. Additionally, at each Administrative Case Review (ACR), the child’s most recent Health Passport entries will be entered for the child’s case file. Caregivers must bring the Health Passport and related health documents to each ACR.



If a child moves to a new foster home placement, the Health Passport moves with the child. Foster caregivers are responsible for sending the Health Passport with the caseworker when the child leaves. Youth in care who are 14 years old and older should also receive a copy of their Health Passport.

Caregivers without an updated Health Passport for a child in their home should request a copy from the caseworker. Call the DCFS Office of Health Policy at 217-557-2689 with questions. ♡

GET YOUR FLU SHOT

Getting the flu vaccination is the primary tool for preventing influenza, during the upcoming flu season. A flu vaccination can lower the risk of a bothersome and potentially serious bout of the flu. 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 old, pregnant women, people 50 years or older, and those with chronic illnesses.

Most people over the age of five months old can get the flu shot. The flu vaccination is available at no charge for those children enrolled in Medicaid.

For more information about the upcoming flu season, go the website www.flu.gov or contact the Illinois Department of Public Health at 217-782-4977. ♡

Our Kids

**News
for Southern
Region Families**



2016 • Vol. 4

Southern Region sends 9 DCFS scholarship recipients to college

This year, nine students who come from communities in the DCFS Southern Region or have cases served by programs in the region headed to college with the benefits included in the DCFS Scholarship program. The scholarship includes a waiver of tuition and mandatory fees when attending 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 for more information on the scholarship program.

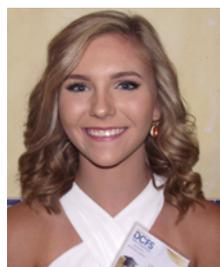


D'Angelo Baker

graduated from O'Fallon Township High School where he earned a 3.55 GPA on a four-point

scale. Throughout high school, he participated in cross country, track, ultimate Frisbee, wellness club and leadership council, and he was inducted into the National Honor Society. D'Angelo also volunteered his time at the local pet kennel and worked for The Tub Doctor. He is studying at Southern Illinois University at Edwardsville as a business major.

National Merit Scholar and received an academic letter for high honors. As a member of Future Business Leaders of America, Jason earned third place in Cyber Security and first place in Computer Problem Solving. He volunteered his time helping his grandfather and working concessions at high school games. Jason is studying at Southern Illinois University Carbondale, majoring in computer science and physics.



Taylor Isaak

graduated from Patoka High School where she earned an 11.21 GPA on a 12-point scale. She was a member of

cheerleading, track, volleyball, FFA, FCS, WYSE and OTSD. She participated in Math Field Day, Team Quest, art club, and prom committee. Taylor also served as class vice president, student council secretary and president. She was on the high honor roll, and was awarded DAR Award, Best in Class and Illinois Principal's Award. She was recognized as an Illinois State

Scholar and was the valedictorian. Taylor also volunteered at the food pantry and as the cheerleading coach for the elementary school. Taylor is now studying at Southern Illinois University Edwardsville with a major in biochemistry.



Treyton Jansen

from Irvington, is a graduate of Centralia High School where he earned a 3.91 GPA on a 4.0 scale. In high

school, he was a member of the football team, Spanish club, and the Federation of Christian Athletes. He participated in a trip to Costa Rica with the Spanish club. Treyton was also honored as a student athlete, received the English with accolade award, Scholastic Award, and was recognized as an Illinois State Scholar. He volunteered his time as a freshman mentor and helped troubled children through his church. As a high school student, he took classes at Kaskaskia College and was on the dean's list. Treyton is continuing his education at



Jason Ditto

is a graduate of Herrin High School. He earned a 4.17 GPA on a 4.0 scale. In high school, Jason was president of

the computer club and participated in the Future Business Leaders of America. He was recognized as a

OUR KIDS: SOUTHERN REGION NEWS

Kaskaskia College and plans to transfer to University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign to major in English literature.



Cherree Miller is a graduate of Fairfield Community High School where she earned a 3.79 GPA on a 4.0 scale. While

in high school, she was a member of cross country, bowling team, softball, indoor and outdoor track, volleyball and cheerleading teams. She also was a member of FCCLA, FCA, FCLA, SGA, Drug Free Youth, Peer Mentor, Life Savers, Young Life, Beta Club, and Froggy & Friends. Cherree was inducted into the National Honor Society and the Beta Club, and she was on the high honor roll. She also received numerous awards and recognitions for her accomplishments in sports. Outside of school, Cherree volunteered her time with Wounded Warriors, the Humane Society, a food pantry, a benefit for cancer victims and caroling events at senior homes. Cherree is now a political science major at Northern Illinois University.

Trevor Page, from Glen Carbon, graduated in 2015 from Edwardsville High School, earning a 2.9 GPA on a 4.0 scale. In high school, he was a member of the baseball, basketball, track, and football teams. He volunteered with Special Olympics, a high school blood drive, and with his church. Trevor was recognized as a First Class Boy Scout and received

a Science Achievement Certificate, B.U.G. award, several certificates for baseball, track and basketball, and YWCA certificate of Achievement, among other awards. Trevor attends Southern Illinois University Edwardsville, pursuing a degree in mathematics.

Chelsea Prather is a 2015 graduate of Highland High School where she earned a 4.48 GPA on a 5.0 scale. She was a member of Spanish club, Family Career and Community Leaders of America, and was active with her church. While in college at Southwestern Illinois College, she continued her participation with her church and worked to create a college-aged Sunday school class. Chelsea received multiple honor roll certificates, won the Young Authors Award, and received multiple awards for perfect attendance. She volunteered her time at church as lighting and sound coordinator and child care provider and assisted teachers in painting classrooms and redesigning curriculum. Chelsea also volunteered at local nursing homes, the Humane Society and fire station. She is currently a student at Southern Illinois University Edwardsville, majoring in computer management information systems.



Rachel Satterwhite, from Carbondale, graduated from Murphysboro High School, earning a 3.42 GPA on a 4.0

scale. While in high school, she was a member of student council, Beta Club, Key Club, multicultural and color guard. Rachel was on the honor roll and earned the Key Club Bronze for volunteer service. She has volunteered at her church and in activities with Key Club, Beta Club and student council. Rachel is a student at Southern Illinois University Carbondale, pursuing a degree in social work.



Tesla Travelstead, from Equality, is a graduate of Gallatin High School where she earned a 3.83 GPA on a 4.0 scale. She

was a member of Scholar Bowl, cheerleading, FBLA, FCCLA, Beta Club and business skills team. Tesla was the secretary of her class and business club, president of Beta Club, captain of her cheerleading squad, received the Anatomy and Physiology 1 Honor Award and was on the honor guard. She also volunteered her time with the Giving Tree Room and Active Soldier Committee. Tesla is attending Southeastern Illinois College with plans to major in social work. ♡

“Immersion Site” pilots begin

A major component of the Illinois Child Welfare Transformation is the concept of the “immersion site.” St. Clair County and Mt. Vernon were selected as pilots for an approach that will push foster care decision making to the community level, instead of detouring through Springfield or Chicago. With the immersion site model, families served by DCFS will also benefit from a more comprehensive set of services that could address housing, domestic violence and mental health needs.

The St. Clair County immersion site will be led by James E. Tooles. He has nearly 30 years experience with DCFS and has also been a foster parent. In Mt. Vernon, Hope Carbonaro will be the site director. She has been a DCFS caseworker and held leadership positions at United Methodist Children’s Home and Caritas Family Solutions.

The immersion site pilots are designed to demonstrate the positive outcomes when everyone on the child and family team works together to break down barriers. ♡

DuQuoin State Fair

Last blast of summer fun at DCFS Family Day at the DuQuoin State Fair was August 27.



Speak up at local Foster Care Advisory Council

Next Meeting: January 31, 2017

The Southern Region Foster Care Advisory Council is an important platform for caregivers to stay informed, to have a say in new policies and procedures, and to discuss issues related to the foster care program. In October, the council prepared the update to the region’s Foster Parent Law Implementation Plan due in November. The council meets quarterly. These meetings are open to all caregivers from the DCFS and private agency-supervised foster care programs.

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 and 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 pm with a supervisor on hand to answer caregivers’ questions or discuss concerns. The teleconference opens at 6:30 pm.

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 in care or who were involved in the child welfare system. The YAB meets monthly in Mount Vernon and Fairview Heights to discuss issues and give advice to the Director’s Office. Contact Primed For Life at 217-789-2980 for more information.



Mark McDaniel



Kassie Johnson

NEW REPRESENTATIVES

The Southern Region is represented on the Statewide Foster Care Advisory Council by foster caregivers Mark McDaniel of McLeansboro and Kassie Johnson of West Frankfurt.

McDaniel was elected to chair the council in July. His professional experience in local elected office informed his previous contributions to the policy committee during his first term on the council.

Johnson was recently appointed to the council to represent Southern Region. She has participated in local meetings at the DCFS office in Marion. Johnson said she believes in gathering as much information as possible and sharing it with other caregivers.

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 and print your training transcript
- Register and take on-line courses



DIGITAL TRAINING NOW AVAILABLE

DCFS Training has made many PRIDE materials available online at:

www.dcfstraining.org

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 Illinois Center for Adoption & Permanency (ICAP) can answer your questions and connect you with a licensing agency. The toll-free number is 800-572-2390. ICAP 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.

... The police request to interview or a child under DCFS care is detained by police? Call the DCFS Guardianship Administrator Office at 312-814-8600 if between 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., if after 4:30 p.m. or before 8:30 a.m. call the 24-hour Child Intake and Recovery Unit at 866-503-0184 to notify DCFS and discuss possible legal assistance.

...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 the newsletter?

Email vanessa.james@illinois.gov in DCFS Communications.

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



Precious, 15, is a very likable and friendly. She enjoys staying active and participating in extracurricular activities such as playing basketball and running

track. Precious also enjoys listening to music and playing on her tablet.

Sometimes Precious can have difficulty dealing with her emotions and shuts down when things don't go her way. She may struggle with being told "NO" by those who have authority over her; however, she can be easily redirected.

Precious would do best with a family that is caring and consistent. She tends to live in the moment, so having someone that is understanding and encouraging is very important. It is also important that the adoptive family for Precious respect the relationship that she has with her Grandmother and siblings. She should keep in contact with them as they are very important people in her life. Precious said that she would really love a two-parent family because she has always wanted a mom and a dad. [C8336]



Jair (Alex), who likes to go by the name Alex, is 13 years old. He likes playing outside and playing basketball. He also enjoys card games, reading,

and building things with LEGO pieces. Alex likes passing around a football, as well as practicing basketball dribbling and shooting. He also likes to watch movies and play with remote-

controlled cars. Alex stated that his favorite toys are his Batman car and his personal DVD player.

Those close to Alex say well-mannered. He like to start up conversations with 'Hello' and asking people how their day is going. Alex likes to know the schedule for his day and he likes sticking to it. He also likes to ask a lot of questions for clarification. He shares well with others and is willing to help peers or caretakers when asked. Alex proudly keeps a neat and orderly room. In school, Alex does a great job and does very well academically, getting mostly A's and B's on his report cards. He has made strong bonds with his teachers and has not received any negative reports from school.

Alex wants his adoptive family to be "smart, nice, kind, and helpful." He would like the family to have a TV, Netflix, an XBOX, and a clean home with nice rooms. He would prefer a family with a dog or a cat. Alex states that he wants "a family with no other kids or with a brother who is older." The family should also be familiar or open to parenting a child with blood-born diseases, developmental delays, fetal alcohol syndrome, and liver diseases. [C8361]



Tahjae, 9, loves to play all the time! He enjoys playing with his toy cars, electronic games, action figures and board games. He also enjoys a good

game of basketball. Tahjae has a special interest in first responders, like EMTs, firefighters, police, doctors and nurses.

The people who know him well say Tahjae will often use a "baby" voice

when talking to adults. He often fabricates situations to as a way avoid consequence. He is making progress in being cooperative even when he does not get his way.

Tahjae would benefit from a family that will be very invested in him. He needs lots of attention, love and affection. He does well in a structured home that has daily routines. He also needs to be made aware and prepared for changes in daily routines. Parents for Tahjae can work with professionals in the field to meet his behavioral and educational needs. [C8371]



Yaendi, 9, is energetic, playful and thoughtful. She is a curious child who loves to be a part of everything. She enjoys school and loves interacting with her peers.

Yaendi's teachers say she is a ball of energy and enjoys being a helper. Yaendi appreciates spending time with her sisters, friends, and family.

To be the right family for Yaendi, you can remain patient while giving her time to adjust to her new and permanent home. You can help her maintain close, meaningful relationships that are important to her. You can work with professionals to address her emotional and behavioral needs. Yaendi would like to join a family that is active and likes to have fun. [C8238] ♥

Please call 1-800-572-2390 if you are interested in adopting one of these children or learning about other children who are waiting to be adopted.



Illinois Families Now & Forever

Bruce Rauner, Governor

Published by

DCFS Office of Communications

Editor: Vanessa James

Phone: 312-814-6800

Fax: 312-814-4131

Email: vanessa.james@illinois.gov

Regional Reporters

Central: Julie Cebulski

Northern: Norm Suire

Southern: Claudia Dancy-Davis

Cook North: Edith Cruz & Desiree

Benbenek

Cook South: Angela Barber

Cook Central: Alice Couch

Production

Graphics: Bert Tijerina

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.

Material may not be reprinted in whole, in part or in any form whatsoever without permission from the Editor or DCFS. Opinions expressed by experts writing articles are no substitute for professional answers or opinions about a family's or child's specific situation. Consult a competent professional for answers to your specific questions.

Department of Children and Family Services[®]

Illinois Families Now and Forever
Vanessa James, Editor
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 recipients thrive on campus
- Page 2 Director's message
- Page 3 Foster care and adoption advisory council news
- Page 4 New policy and legislation that impacts families
- Page 5 Education advisors help students
Fresh Start corrective surgeries change lives
- Page 6 College financial aid application now open
Get a copy of the Health Passport
- 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 #281 - Oct 2016 - 3,292 copies