

ILLINOIS FAMILIES Now and Forever

Families by Foster Care, Adoption and Guardianship™

Illinois Department of Children and Family Services©



From the DCFS Director

Bryan Samuels

This year marks the 40th anniversary of DCFS as a state department dedicated to protecting children and nurturing families. Caring for children in crisis is not a new concept. However, in the 40 years of DCFS history, societal pressures have had devastating effects on some families and jeopardized the safety of many children.

DCFS has been there to step in. For four decades, the overall mission has remained the same, but the department has had to shift strategies in response to the needs. Now we serve children with more complicated challenges. That means everyone from executive management to direct service staff to hands-on caregivers will need to employ new resources.

As you will see in this “Back-to-school” edition, education is going to be an important tool as we fight for children’s futures. DCFS is working to create better links with educators. We are examining what children need to progress. I believe an emphasis on education will help prepare youth for victories while in care and beyond.

Aging out of DCFS is tough, but youth remain hopeful

A study conducted by the University of Chicago found the child welfare system that is designed to help youth can sometimes limit well being in education, employment and mental health. Youth aged 17 to 21 in Illinois, Wisconsin and Iowa participated in the study to gather information on services provided to youth in foster care and to report on their outcomes as adults. The first part of the study used individual interviews and records that spotlighted the troubled backgrounds that led them to state-provided care and outlined the obstacles many face upon leaving care. Yet, 92 percent of the youth said they still were fairly or very optimistic about the future.

The children are not the only ones to be optimistic. DCFS is working closely with the University and other child welfare experts to determine action steps from the initial findings. The study will help DCFS develop new plans and programs for older youth in foster care.

“Preparing young people for their life after care has to be a priority,”

said Director Samuels. “While there is a large number of children who will leave the system through reunification, adoption or guardianship, we still have to support and parent those who will not.”

The best means to serve youth who grow to become adults while in state care has been debated for years. Independent Living programs were designed to meet the needs of teenagers who likely would not return home or be adopted. Federal funds for independent living services were made available in 1985, but were initially prevented from covering a young person’s room and board costs. Currently, the John Chafee Foster Care Independence Program offers states more flexibility to help youth transition to adulthood, allowing 30 percent of funds to be applied to room and board and extending Medicaid coverage for those formerly in care to age 21. The University of Chicago study was developed to see how independent living programs in three Midwest states are working, based on the success outcomes of the youth aging out of care.

Continued on Page 2

Aging out, con't.



The first phase of the report focused on the “point-in-time” well being of young people ages 17 to 21 who had been in care for at least one year before their 17th birthday. The researchers will track the youth and reinterview them on their 19th and 20th birthdays. The pool of respondents included 474 young people. Of those, approximately one third lived with relatives in foster care. Just under one third lived in traditional foster homes and the remaining were split

mainly among group homes, independent living and emancipation. More than 40 percent of the youth in foster care experienced four or more placements. Only 20 percent of the youth had been in just one placement since entering the foster care system.

DCFS already has many initiatives and services in place to help teach life skills to youth in care. However, the experience of the youth in the study was that they personally had not received enough training to prepare them for living on their own as an adult. Of six broad areas ranging from educational assistance to leadership, less than two-thirds of the young people reported that they had received support.

With the information from this study, programs are being re-

evaluated to ensure they are effectively reaching young people. After publicly releasing the study results, Director Samuels, members of the DCFS management team, and many national and local child welfare experts met to begin making plans.

This renewed focus should mean that caregivers can look forward to receiving more support in helping youth reach their goals. Foster parents and other providers will expand their focus in working with this population as they age out. The foster parent role is particularly important because the relationships with substitute caregivers continue to be significant. Ninety percent of youth living in foster care said they felt very close or somewhat close to their foster family. About 70 percent of the young people living in foster care agreed “foster parents have been a help to me.”

Funds available for youth after adoption and guardianship

The John H. Chafee Independence Facilitation Grant was designed to help children who gain permanency through adoption or subsidized guardianship prepare for adult life. In the months following the final subsidy payment, a youth who had previously been in foster care will receive a \$3,000 grant to assist in their transition to adulthood.

These grants are available to youth with finalized adoptions or transfers of guardianship done between March 15, 2001 and June 30, 2003. So far, 200 youth have received grants. Approximately 900 are still eligible as they approach the end of their subsidy.

The grants can help pay for education, housing, or other forms

of vocational training and/or employment assistance. As the end of the subsidy approaches, DCFS automatically sends eligible youth a letter with details about the grants. If you have questions about the program, contact June Dorn at 312/814-6858.



Youth Advisory Board picks Foster Parents of the Year

In recognition of May as Foster Parent Appreciation Month, DCFS sponsored an essay contest. Young people aged 10 years or older were invited to write a one-page essay explaining why they appreciated their foster parent. The Youth Advisory Boards in each region participated in selecting a Foster Parent of the Year from the 32 entries received. Each regional board also chose a foster parent to receive the honor in their area. More details about the regional honorees can be found in the local insert to the newsletter.

Foster Parents of the Year Robert and Robyn Harvey, Northern Region, written by Ray	Cook Central Region Anne Palmer, written by Brandon	Central Region Jerry and Sally Hampton, written by Stephanie
Cook North Region Desiree Benbenek, written by Robin	Cook South Region Phillip and Erma Lee, written by Jeremiah	Southern Region Howard and Joanne Bowlin, written by Josie

Below are highlights of the essay written by Ray, 16, in honor of his foster parents, Robert and Robyn Harvey.

“...I was living in a group home and longing to be part of a family...most people who saw my records on paper did not even want to meet me, but Robyn looked deep into who I was, overlooking a lot of my past to see me as a kid who needed a family.”

“One thing both my parents work hard at is keeping me in contact with my biological family. My Mom sacrifices one night a week to let me visit with my sister, her husband and my nephews and niece. They [Robyn and Robert] have both made me feel like my family is important and worthwhile. This has helped me with my feelings about being separated from them.”

“...The Harvey’s don’t love me like a foster kid, they love me like I belong with them, like I am their son. This alone has changed my life forever.”

“...My foster dad, Rob, is a terrific role model for me as a person, husband and Dad. He takes time after a long day at work to teach me about computers. He recently helped me build a computer from scratch, piece by piece. The project has helped me define my future education goals. I want to go to a computer tech school to get my certifications. While working on this project he taught me credit by extending it to me and making me pay it back on time.”

“...My Dad accepted me from day one and made me feel a part of the family. Another thing I want to do as an adult is foster like my Mom and Dad. I want to foster teens. Teens need families who will accept them for who they are and [parents who] will give them a chance.”



*Foster Parents of the Year
Robert and Robyn Harvey*

From grade school to graduation, help is a key stroke away

As a new school year approaches, students (and their parents) may need more tools to build skills and study habits. Illinois Families Now and Forever found many resources on the Internet that might come in handy. These are not endorsements for any product or service, so log on at home, school or at the local public library to see if these tools could work for your student.

Family Education Network

www.familyeducation.com

Family Education offers parents grade-specific information about their children's school experience, strategies to get involved with their children's learning and free e-mail newsletters about special education and learning disabilities. The website also has links to several fun teaching games. "Planet Zug," the vocabulary builder for grades 3-7, contains so many words and definitions that a billion different games can be played. Math Baseball is a popular math practice game that covers the full range of problems: addition, subtraction, multiplication, division, single numbers, and double and triple digits.

Purple Math

www.purplemath.com

Purple Math is a practical tool for tackling algebra. It contains lessons that students can select by individual topic or choose to take in order. Purple Math points out the "tricky" aspects of algebra and makes math easy to handle.



Big Dog's Guide to Grammar

www.aliscot.com/bigdog

Big Dog gives the basics of grammar in an easy to understand format that comes with self-tests. The lessons start with subjects and verbs and go on to cover dangling modifiers, parallel construction and active voice. The site also has a booklet for the official guidelines for research papers.

OnLine Writing Lab (OWL) from Purdue University

owl.english.purdue.edu

The OWL (OnLine Writing Lab) website contains workshops and subject tutorials on writing research papers, resumes, and cover letters. There is also a huge collection of links to help users find information on the Internet. PowerPoint presentations about all aspects of writing can be downloaded for use in classes or individual study. The website also has a section with nearly 200 handouts on topics including: general writing concerns, English as a Second Language, grammar, research and documenting sources, and professional writing.

GED Illinois Online

GED online is a web-based resource to help individuals continue their high school adult education by working at their own pace, without leaving the home. After paying the \$50 registration fee, students receive: a user name and password; password protected access to all GEDonline features; one printed copy of 2002 Official GED Practice Test—Form PA, U.S. edition; one copy of the GEDonline software CD; and a four-month membership to complete their studies. Users can take the official GED Practice Tests developed by the GED Testing Service and grade them online. Other features include online interactive practice lessons and answers to GED Test questions from an online knowledge base and through e-mail support.

Think College

www.ed.gov/thinkcollege

This U.S. Department of Education website has special sections for parents whose children have not yet entered high school, high school-aged youth and their parents, and adults seeking to return to school.

College Board

www.collegeboard.com

The administrator of the SAT exam has a website with study tips, college selection and financial aid advice. The site has pages for students and parents.

Helping children learn is as easy as... A-B-C

Attend parent-teacher conferences and other school events.

Build in time to talk *and* listen to your child every day.

Communicate clearly the dangers of drugs and alcohol.

Don't let your child settle for doing less than his or her best.

Establish a daily family routine that includes scheduled homework time.

Find out the names of your child's teachers and principal — and meet with them early in the school year.

Get active in your child's school. Volunteer to help in the classroom, serve on a committee or go on a field trip.

Help your child stay on track with homework daily.

Involve your child in after-school activities.

Join the PTA or another home/school organization.

Keep good books, magazines and newspapers in your home.

Limit your child's TV viewing to no more than two hours a day.

Make sure your child goes to school every day.

Notice when your child does something well and praise his or her efforts.

Organize other parents and community members to address problems at your child's school.

Pay attention to the progress your child is making in school.

Question the learning standards at your child's school. Every child has a right to a high quality education.

Read to your child every day and let your child read to you, too.

Support school efforts to develop and maintain rules for student discipline.

Tell your child stories about your family and your culture.

Understand what skills your child should be learning at each grade level.

Visit the library regularly with your child.

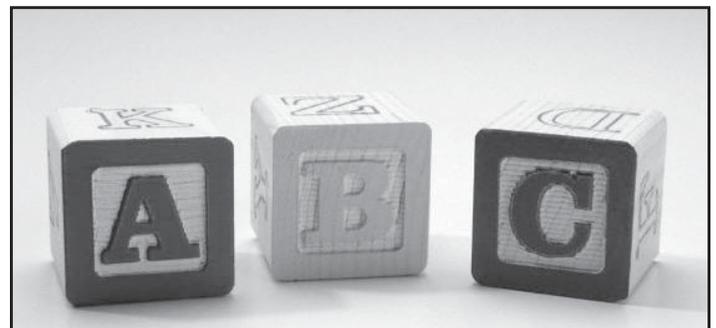
Write a note or call a teacher when something goes especially well. Don't forget to encourage your children for their efforts.

eXpect and encourage your child to take tough academic courses.

You are a role model for your child-be sure to set a good example.

Zero in on museums, free concerts and other community events to reinforce your child's learning.

Source: The Family Connection of St. Joseph County Inc. for Indiana Center for Family School & Community Partnerships





Statewide Foster Care Advisory Council Bulletin

New officers

The Statewide Foster Care Advisory Council begins the fiscal year with two new officers in July.



Adrienne Welenc was elected to chair the council. She is a Lead Foster Parent Support Specialist out of the

Cook Central Region. She and her husband Jerry have been foster parents to more than 100 youth. She has been involved with Statewide for many years.



Claudia Dancy-Davis of Belleville now serves as vice chair to the Council. She and her husband Ronald

have been foster parents for 20 years. Davis has been very active in local foster parent groups and also serves on the Illinois Adoption Advisory Council.

Jim Lane, immediate past chair, will continue to represent Cook North after serving the maximum two terms as chair. **Donsetta Blakely**, former vice chair, continues to represent Cook South.

Other changes to the council:

- Gladys Boyd, new chair of the Illinois Foster and Adoptive Parent Association
- Sylvia Flory, of Catholic Charities, serving a joint appointment on the Child Welfare Advisory Council
- Judith McAtee, foster parent from Northern region

The Statewide Foster Care Advisory Council set its schedule for the fiscal year with more meetings in locations outside of Springfield and Chicago. By meeting in more communities, the Council hopes to interact with more foster parents and get a better understanding of regional concerns.

2004-05 Meeting Schedule

Friday, July 30, 2004

Chicago, 160 N. LaSalle, Rm 505

Friday, September 10, 2004

Peoria (with Youth Advisory Board) 3 - 9 p.m., location TBA

Friday, October 29, 2004

Effingham (location TBA)

Friday, November 19, 2004

Champaign (location TBA)

Friday, January 28, 2005

Springfield, 227 S. 7th St., 1st Fl.

Friday, February 25, 2005

Bloomington, Hawthorne Suites, 1 Lyons Court

Friday, March 18, 2005

Fairview Heights (location TBA)

Friday, April 22, 2005

Joliet, DCFS Office, 1619 W. Jefferson

Friday, May 20, 2005

Chicago, 160 N. LaSalle

The meetings are typically held from 9 a.m. until 3 p.m. Questions about the Council's schedule can be directed to the Office of Foster Parent Support at 217-524-2422.



When It Works!

Teens connect with long-lost relatives

The Intensive Relative Search project is changing the outlook for youth in Cook County who were approaching life truly on their own, with no family ties. Nearly 30 cases were selected by workers to test out a model designed to establish family connections for youth with an independence goal. These youth had been in the system for an average of 10 years, had gone through termination of parental rights and faced leaving the system without links to any family members.

Using the methods developed by the Catholic Community Services of Western Washington, relatives have been found for most of the youth. In one case, a 16-year-old discovered that he was living within walking distance of his grandmother. Now she comes to his group home and cooks for him and the other boys. He also has connected with 33 other relatives and his father, whom he had not seen for 14 years.

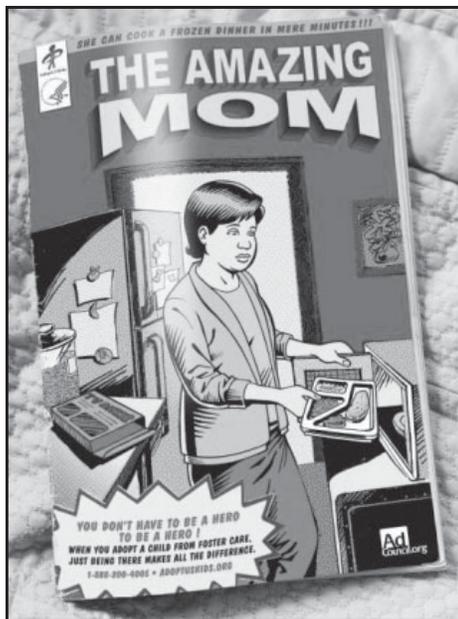
The goal of the program is not placement or permanency, although that can happen. Rather, the young people are establishing positive family connections that they previously thought were lost.

The system may not always run smoothly, so let's hear more good news about "When it Works!" Contact Vanessa James, Editor at 312-814-6824 or vjames@idcfs.state.il.us.



Chicago media market takes part in national recruitment campaign

Whether you log on, tune in, or turn on, the chances are high that you will come across a new advertising campaign that sounds a national call-to-action for families to adopt a child out of foster care. Last month, a media blitz kicked off in the Chicago media markets to increase public awareness about the children who wait for permanency. The Adoption Exchange Association and the Collaboration to AdoptUSKids partnered with the federal Children's Bureau and the Ad Council to produce a national foster and adoptive family recruitment campaign with public service announcements (PSAs) for television, radio, print, and the Internet.



"The Amazing Mom" comic ad should capture the imagination of prospective parents.

Audiences are directed to visit the national adoption website, www.adoptuskids.org, or call a designated toll-free number to

learn how to become an adoptive family. The Adoption Information Center of Illinois (AICI) will follow-up with interested families from Illinois, within two business days of receiving the contact information. The AICI will then nurture the family's interest and continue to make personal contact at regular intervals until the family is assigned to an adoption or foster care staff person.

The AICI also recently began a series of community education meetings in Cook County to promote the understanding of Illinois children who need permanent families. The majority of children listed with the Center as needing adoptive resources are teens and youth in grade school.

The AICI expects an across-the-board increase in the number of families inquiring about adoption and foster care because of the recruitment campaign.

The Ad Council, which coordinated the PSAs, is a non-profit organization that assembles volunteers from the advertising and media industries to deliver messages to the American public. Its past campaigns have included Smokey the Bear's "Only You Can Prevent Forest Fires," and the United Negro College Fund's "A Mind is a Terrible Thing to Waste." The media outlets donate the advertising time and space.



Superstation WGN hosts adoption forum

In May, WGN broadcast a town hall meeting on adoption and foster care. The half-hour segment featured a panel discussion with Director Samuels, Father Michael Phleger (an adoptive father), Leslie Hegeman of the Cradle, Jeremy Harvey (youth in foster care) and Vanessa James (adoptive parent and editor of Families Now and Forever).

During the live broadcast, audience members could ask questions about adoption and foster care. The questions ranged from very basic information to



Jeremy Harvey shared his life in foster care with the WGN viewing audience.

topics concerning even experienced adoptive families. The panel touched on private adoption, as well as the need to find permanent families for waiting children in the care of DCFS. Jeremy Harvey provided a unique perspective as a young man who had essentially been raised in the foster care system. He is now in college and still remains close to his foster family. The segment also included several taped vignettes of foster and adoptive families.

The Adoption Information Center of Illinois reported a spike in calls and referrals after the broadcast.



Illinois Adoption Advisory Council

Matching children to adoptive families

The Adoption Advisory Council has invited several representatives from DCFS to address the members on how children are matched to families. The Council has been very interested in how children are placed with families that have appropriate skills, resources or training to meet the child's needs. The question is also pertinent to the utilization of licensed homes, where families are still waiting for children to be placed. It also becomes important for adoptive families when a sibling to the adopted child comes into care later.

Council Input to Integrated Assessment

The Integrated Assessment Program primarily targets birth parents, children, and foster parents as cases initially enter care. However, the Adoption Advisory Council pointed out several aspects of the process that can have an impact on adoptive families as well. For example, the Council recommended that the policies include a means of making sure information gathered during the assessment is available later to prospective adoptive parents. On the other side of the coin was the need for the assessment process to protect confidential information about adoptive families if siblings later enter the system.

In general, the Council was impressed with the Integrated Assessment model and looked forward to working further with

the Clinical Division on its recommendations.

Illinois Adoption Advisory Council 2004-05 Meeting Schedule

Friday, August 6, 2004
Springfield, 227 S. 7th Street, 1st Floor

Friday, October 1, 2004
Chicago, State of Illinois Bldg., 160 N. LaSalle, Room 505

Friday, December 3, 2004
Bloomington, Hawthorne Suites, 1 Lyons Court

Friday, February 4, 2005
Springfield, 227 S. 7th Street, 1st Floor

Friday, April 1, 2005
Chicago, State of Illinois Bldg., 160 N. LaSalle, Room 505

Friday June 3
Bloomington, Hawthorne Suites, 1 Lyons Court

The Illinois Adoption Advisory Council advises the Department on policy and practices related to adoption and guardianship and supports families and children in the adoption process and after they adopt. The Council's membership includes adoptive parents, adult adoptees and other experts from all parts of the state. Meetings typically begin at 10 a.m. and end at 3 p.m. Questions about the Council can be directed to Terry McGlothlin in the DCFS Office of Foster Parent Support at 217-524-2422.

Book Review

Adopting the Older Child

by Claudia Jewett

Adopting the Older Child discusses factors to think about when considering whether to become a permanent family for an older youth. The author, a birth and adoptive mom and a child welfare professional, does a wonderful job of combining her experiences into a book that is valuable to parents and professionals.

The book provides an excellent overview of the licensing process. It explains how children and families are "matched" and also describes the preparation process for families and children from before the first meeting to becoming a "family."

Perhaps best of all, the book provides fascinating personal stories about older children and their adoptive families. They provide a realistic view of some of the issues that may need to be addressed before and after a family has already adopted.

In the introduction, Jewett says, "We didn't see adoption as a cause, although social consciousness was there; we adopted because we really like to be parents, and because we felt there was no need to reproduce ourselves again. We didn't adopt because we are noble, unusual people; we adopted in spite of our shortcomings, because we wanted each of the children who came to join us." Her book is great reading for all of us!

Review submitted by Jane Elmore, an adoptive mother in Springfield



A Memo to My Fellow Teachers

When it comes to adoption, instructors need to check their curriculum and their stereotypes.

Leonlida DiTomasso is a teacher and mother of twin daughters from Calcutta, India. This article first appeared in HCR Reporter, a newsletter from the Connecticut Education Association.

My twin daughters enrolled this year in our local public elementary school. As their advocate, I am committed to educating my fellow teachers about ways in which a positive approach to adoption can improve all children's education. Here are some of my thoughts.

As the teacher, what you believe matters. Your unconscious stereotypes will be communicated to the class. Don't assume "Sean McLaughlin" cannot be the correct name for the child who looks Asian or Guatemalan. Or that an adopted child's family of origin was impoverished or unstable. Don't assume that a child is lucky to have been adopted or say, "What would her life have been like if...?" You would not say that to a biological parent, so please don't say it to an adoptive one.

There are neither real families nor fake families. Adoptive parents are parents. In families with children through both adoption and biology, all the children are their parents' children. So don't ask, "Which are yours?"

Genetics and immigration can be taught without re-

quiring students to trace their nuclear family roots. Children can be given options for the family tree projects, such as including all the people in their lives who love them. Biology students can do genetic coding based on any given set of characteristics. Don't make kids feel different by asking them to do something they cannot do.

"Student of the week" projects can be structured to encourage students to share their lives from any age. For many children it is impossible to share details from their infancy. For those children, expecting baby pictures or descriptions of their first year of life is unreasonable.

There are many excellent children's books about adoption. Schools will want to have at least three or four per classroom and more in the library.

Intrusive questions about adoption and birthparents from their schoolmates are a fact of life for many kids, especially in the very early grades. Your attitude and the information you provide will help children in your class handle their classmates' curiosity.

Adoptive families often celebrate different family milestones. These include "Gotcha Day" (the date the child joined the family), Adoption Day, (the date



the legalities were completed), and the child's actual birthday. Some families include mention of their child's birth family in Mother's and Father's day celebrations. Teachers will want to discuss "alternative" family celebrations with parents of children in their class.

Children born outside the U.S. are not experts on the culture and language of their birth countries. As "American" as most of their peers, they should not be expected to serve as representatives of the cultures of their birth in the classroom.

Information on adoption is widely available in bookstores, online, and through local adoption organizations. Nowadays almost every classroom is likely to include adopted children. Search out and use information about adoption. A great place to start is by ordering a copy of *Adoption and the Schools: A Resource Guide for Parents and Teachers*, by Lansing Wood and Nancy Ng from FAIR, www.fairfamilies.org, PO Box 51436, Palo Alto, CA 94303.

Tell it like it is

Families, Now and Forever wants to hear the “real deal” on caring for children from those who know best — you!

Here is what you had to say to the question: **What was the most surprising aspect of foster care or adoption that training couldn't really prepare you for?**

Training can't prepare you for... The first time you see happiness in his eyes and less and less of his painful past. When you look back at all the hurdles you've jumped as a family to get where you are today. At bedtime when he hugs you tight, and tells you how much he loves you.

Debbie in Addison

The process of getting any money is outrageous. They didn't prepare us for what it would take. This is a discouragement.

Marcia Jones

Even with training I was surprised with the feeling when the children go back home. I wasn't prepared for not seeing the child each morning or not hearing the child's voice. Now I get a chance for the baby to call me and I am dealing with seeing the child periodically.

Edwina Roach

We took in an older child that we knew had some emotional baggage coming with her, but we took our chance with her and now she is legally ours. What we weren't prepared for was how attached to her we became. We already had a teenage son, who did not fully accept our choice but as time went on he started to acknowledge her as a sister...to this day we couldn't imagine life around our house without her being part of the family. I'm glad we got the chance to bring her into our lives and watch her grow into an adult.

Mike Wilbur

The new question is: **What is one example of a time when a child welfare professional impressed you by going above and beyond the call of duty?**

You can contact me with your response by e-mail at vjames@idcfs.state.il.us or by phone at 312-814-6824. I am looking forward to hearing from you.

Vanessa James, Editor



*Illinois Families
Now and Forever*

Rod R. Blagojevich, Governor

Sponsor:

Bryan Samuels, DCFS Director

Publisher:

Office of Foster Parent Support

Editor: Vanessa James

Phone: 312/814-6824

Fax: 312/814-4131

E-mail: vjames@idcfs.state.il.us

Regional Editors

Central — Tina Frier

Northern — Diane Mitchell

Southern — Carolyn Cleveland

Cook North — Sari Rowitz

Cook South — Bobby Evans

Graphics: Jenny Florent

Printing: 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 addresses of office locations 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, adoptive and guardianship families receiving subsidies, all DCFS staff and private agency staff as ordered. 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.

A family for me

Matthew [C4838] This talented young man is passionately interested in the mechanics of automobiles, and he likes to build things. Matthew (Matt), 14, enjoys figuring out how cars and houses are constructed. He also loves listening to music. Football and bowling are his favorite sports. Recently, Matt has become more interested in learning about saving money.

His workers said that Matt has a sense of humor, displays good sportsmanship and gets along with others. He is always willing to help out. The potential family for Matt could provide understanding and encouragement while supporting his interests. Matt wants to feel secure. He would like to have young parents and teenage sisters or brothers.

Cody [C7341] Anything to do with art interests Cody! Age 14, he especially loves to draw and also enjoys playing basketball, watching movies, and playing video games — Xbox is one of his favorites. Cody has been doing better in school and getting good grades. Cody would love to have a dog.

His worker said Cody is a friendly teenager who sometimes imitates the behavior of kids around him, but strives to do the right thing. He is able to achieve his goals as long as he stays motivated. A family could help Cody by being loving and committed to his educational and emotional needs. Cody would like a mom and a dad who enjoy spending time outdoors.

Charlie [C7258] Charlie, 10, is a pleasant young man with a wonderful laugh. He doesn't talk, but knows and responds to his name. His favorite activities include listening to music, spending time outdoors, and looking at colorful objects. Although Charlie generally uses a wheelchair or a walker to get around, he can crawl, sit, and pull himself up to a standing position.

His foster parent said Charlie has an easygoing personality and doesn't get angry. His worker said he is making progress at learning to walk. The family for Charlie could help him reach his full potential at home and at school. You can be patient and provide him with lots of love and affection. Charlie would like a family who will always love him.

Joseph [C4331] Joseph, 15, is quiet and a good listener. He collects miniature cars and enjoys video games. He likes rollerblading and riding his scooter. He would like to become an archaeologist.

Joseph's foster mom said he keeps his room neat and likes to look good. He can be very pleasant and helpful. His teachers report that he is intelligent and a good student, and he writes especially creative stories. The family for Joseph could help him by being familiar with adolescent issues and providing a lot of love and attention. Joseph will do well with a positive male role model. He would like to join a family with a mom, a dad, other children, and a pet.

Tamoi, Ty-ron, Toni and Sharonda [C4940-43] These bright brothers and sisters are ready to enrich your life! Tamoi (second from left) at 12 is soft-spoken and sometimes shy. He enjoys reading and math and likes to listen to music. Ty-Ron, 11, (far left) is also good in math, and he reads books for fun! He is a bit of a sportsman, too. Toni, 10 (far right) is a born performer. She plays the piano, tap dances, and does ballet, and is already an excellent public speaker. Sharonda, 9 (second from right) likes to succeed at everything she tries. Her favorite activities are dancing and reading.

These kids all try to succeed in their schoolwork. Tamoi's teacher said he is a "very smart" student who completes his assignments on time. Ty-Ron's foster parent described him as a well-behaved young man. Toni is an above-average student, said her teacher. Sharonda's teacher has only praise for her.

The potential family would provide love and understanding and be willing to spend time with these kids. Tamoi, Ty-Ron, Toni, & Sharonda would like their family to be interested and involved in their activities.

If you are interested in adopting one of these children or learning about other children waiting to be adopted, please call the Adoption Information Center of Illinois at 1-800-572-2390, or see the AICI web site – www.adoptinfo-il.org.

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

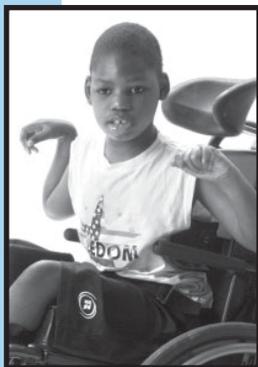
PRESRT STD
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
SPRINGFIELD, IL
PERMIT NO. 763

DO YOU KNOW A FAMILY FOR ME?

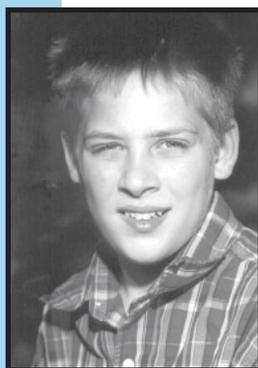
Call the Adoption Information Center of Illinois 800-572-2390.



Joseph [4331]



Charlie [7258]



Matthew [4838]



Cody [7341]



Tamoi, Ty-ron, Toni and Sharonda
[4940-43]

Inside this issue:

- Page 1 - Report on youth who age out of the system
- Page 3 - Youth boards select Foster Parents of the Year
- Page 4 - Online education help
- Page 6 - Statewide Foster Care Advisory Council update
- Page 7 - New media campaign for adoptive families
- Page 8 - Adoption Advisory Council news
- Page 9 - Memo to teachers about adoption
- Page 10 - Tell It Like It Is reader feedback
- Page 11 - Family for Me profiles

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