

Scheiblys look forward to adoption after 25 years of foster care

In 1987 (when gas was 89 cents a gallon) Bob and Linda Scheibly of Decatur were about to become licensed foster parents. Twenty-four years later, 47 children have been in their care; most have had special needs that required intense levels of care.

Now Bob and Linda are preparing to adopt a second child. Some people think they are “crazy” to adopt a three-year old when they are ages 68 and 66. The Scheiblys, however, started laying the groundwork years ago and have the support of their family. One of their daughters by birth is also licensed for foster care and agreed to be a back-up resource. In fact, that same daughter adopted one of the children that had been in Bob and Linda’s home. So they are now the grandparents of a child they had in foster care.

Bob and Linda were formally introduced to foster care as relative caregivers. Before they married, they each had three children. Soon after, they gained custody of their

seven-year-old granddaughter. Foster care was, for them, a logical progression. Almost a quarter century later, they are still aboard ship despite some turbulent times.

Bob is retired and is a big help caring for the children. He finds it hard not to get attached to them and it is hard on him when they leave. Most of the children that Bob and Linda have taken in came as babies. Consequently, they were still young when they would leave foster care to go back home, to a relative or to an adoptive home. Due to their young age when they transitioned, the follow on contact was somewhat limited. The Scheiblys came to understand that missing the children is one of the “downs” that they have to deal with to get to the “ups.”

However, they can attest that through the extreme difficulties, there can be rewards. Working with infants with special needs calls for a lot of hospital visits, including driving to Springfield to take care of their children’s



After 25 years, when many would look to retire, Bob and Linda Scheibly are looking forward to completing another adoption.

medical needs. Despite this, they have had the satisfaction of proving the doctor wrong after he said a child they cared for would never walk.

Even with the complications that they encounter, Bob and Linda believe they get enough support from DCFS and the community. The Scheiblys do recommend that new foster parents get involved in a support group or network with other caregivers, because it can be

rough at times. Linda remembered having to work through new issues when they adopted a child of another race. “With perseverance, you can overcome those issues,” she said.

She advises that caregivers will find success if they love kids and have patience. Being able to work with the parents was also high on their list of essential qualities they feel every good caregiver should possess.

Breakfast Club helps struggling LAN 18 students get back on track

DCFS LAN Liaisons

In every Local Area Network (LAN), there are more programs to ensure academic success. To find out about community programs for all families, contact a DCFS LAN Liaison.

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Springfield area:

Kip Smith
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Peoria and Quincy areas:

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The Local Area Network (LAN) team is at work to benefit children who are in foster care, adopted, in guardianship or at home with their family. LAN services are developed by community organizations, the Illinois State Board of Education and DCFS to address children's needs that are specific to a locale. DCFS works with LAN service providers specifically to focus on children who are at risk of truancy, suspension, or expulsion and are struggling with school concerns that impact their academic performance.

In LAN 18, which serves Fulton, Henderson, Henry, Knox, McDonough and Warren counties, Churchill Junior High students have a unique opportunity to improve at school. The LAN members and other Galesburg community partners provide a Breakfast Club for approximately 15 weeks.

This wraparound plan assists with mentoring, tutoring and transportation. Students meet 45 minutes before the beginning of the school day. Any teacher at Churchill Junior High School can recommend a student to participate in the Breakfast Club. Youth who are chosen are at risk socially and academically. Two teachers are available at the school to supervise the students and to assist with homework and mentor the participants.

Participation in the program is voluntary. Once students start attending, they tend to continue because it is led by adults who they can trust and it is a safe, nurturing place. Early on students were being dropped off outside and were coming to class hungry, cold and frazzled. Some walked or rode their bikes in the winter to attend. The program met their need by providing transportation.

As the students built trusting relationships with the mentors, the ground was cleared for academic success. Fifteen students were involved in the Breakfast Club last year. One student had missed school 18 times previously, but after joining the Breakfast Club he did not miss another day of school the rest of the school year. Fourteen out of the 15 students did not receive another F in their classes for the remainder of the school year. One student came in with failing grades and raised them to all A's and B's.

These success stories are remarkable, but also expected given the program's approach of looking for the student's strengths and developing a plan to work with the school and home. Caregivers to students at Churchill can refer students to the Breakfast Club program by contacting the school or the DCFS LAN Liaison.

Youth Summit offered fun, information to youth approaching adulthood

The Youth Summit in Bloomington was an all day event on June 23, 2011 held at Miller Park Pavilion and Zoo. Members of the youth advisory board helped plan a day full of options for learning and fun.

The focus "Youth Help-

ing Youth in a Diverse World!" played out in three workshops: 1) Tolerance for Cultural Diversity Issues; 2) Tolerance for LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Transgender and Transsexual); and 3) Zero Tolerance for Bullying Behaviors. Young adults presented all of the work-

shops. They were interactive and informative.

In addition to the learning, youth enjoyed the zoo, a scavenger hunt, fishing, karaoke and miniature golf. A local photographer took pictures that youth could use to create a scrapbook

page in the "make & take" craft workshop, where the youth were able to make pillows to take home. Many youth won high-end prizes like digital cameras, iPods, DVD players, and MP3 players. Most had the opportunity to receive Wal-Mart and Subway gift cards.

Customer Service Line always answers caregivers

The number for the DCFS Central Region Foster Parent Customer Service Line is 866/368-5204. This toll-free line is operational Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m., excluding state holidays. The line is equipped with voice mail. The goal is to have a response time of 24 to 48 hours for all calls. This is not set up to be an emergency response line. If a caregiver has an emergency or urgent request, it is best to call the field office.

The Customer Service Line was developed to take calls from foster families whose licenses are supervised by DCFS Central Region. The calls can be about issues or concerns that caregivers have not been able to resolve through normal channels. These could be

questions about business issues, respite, licensing, investigations or case management. One exception would be that issues appropriate for a service appeal should be handled through that process. Also, callers who wish to file a Foster Parent Grievance will be sent the Foster Parent Grievance Form and asked to complete it and mail it in.

As a benefit to caregivers who would face long-distance charges to call DCFS sites, they may use this line to have non-urgent messages forwarded to DCFS personnel via e-mail. In addition, this line can be used as the RSVP line for Central Region Foster Parent Council meetings.

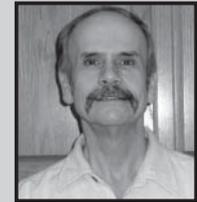
Regional administration established a “point-per-

son” to be responsible for this line. The point-person fields the calls and routes them to the appropriate person for follow-up. The point-person will also check on the resolution by the fifth business day or until resolution. Messages should be left for Marsha Jones.

This line was not designed to handle calls from caregivers with private agencies. Those calls should instead go directly to the agency that supervises that home’s license. If a caregiver with a private agency leaves a message on the line and feels they have exhausted the chain of command within their agency, they will be referred to the DCFS agency monitoring team if appropriate.

Central Connections

Robert Blackwell,
DCFS Central Regional
Administrator



Regional Reporter:

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Anyone can call the regional reporter with story suggestions about:

- news and schedules from foster parent organizations
- local training notices
- features on foster families and community members working for children
- ideas for articles or services that would be helpful to caregivers

Peoria field office serves families at luncheon



On May 25, foster parents and their children shared a feast with DCFS staff at the Peoria Field Office. In honor of Foster Parent Appreciation month, staff organized a banquet with donated

gift baskets, entertainment for their children and cookies and cake from Trefzger’s Bakery in Peoria. The original plan was to picnic outside, but weather brought the celebration indoors. That change allowed for a useful training on earning foster parent education hours delivered by Jean Maher. Forecasted thunderstorms held off until the event was over. However, the clean up crew did get caught in a downpour.

The entire sub-region deserves thanks for the time and effort they put forth to make families served by DCFS in the Peoria area feel special.

Central Region Caregiver Training

DCFS Office of Training has scheduled sessions of in-service training modules and other courses in locations across the Central Region. The listing below can help caregivers plan for their training needs. To get specific dates and locations, visit the on-line Virtual Training Center (VTC) anytime at www.DCFStraining.org or call the DCFS Office of Training at 877-800-3393 during regular business hours. In addition to classroom courses, caregivers can also take advantage of videos, books and online training.

Central Region (Peoria Area)

August

Adoption Certification (Worker referral required)	Quincy
Reunification for Caregivers	Peoria

September

Adoption Certification (Worker referral required)	Peoria, Moline
Child Trauma	Galesburg
Educational Advocacy	Macomb, Peoria
Module 12	LaSalle, Peoria

Central Region (Champaign & Springfield Areas)

August

Adoption Certification	Bloomington, Springfield
Educational Advocacy	Bloomington, Danville, Decatur, Jacksonville
Child Trauma	Bloomington

September

Reunification Training	Champaign
Adoption Certification (worker referral required)	Champaign, Decatur Springfield
Educational Advocacy	Springfield, Urbana

In-service Training modules (scheduled periodically in classroom sessions or available on DVD)

Module 1 - Foundation for Meeting the Developmental Needs of Children at Risk (12 hours) The focus of this module is how to build self-esteem in children; how kids act when they need recognition, power, freedom, enjoyment and to belong; and how to listen to what kids say and not what we think they say.

Module 2 - Using Discipline to Protect, Nurture and Meet Developmental Needs (9 hours) This workshop provides practical information to foster parents about how to use effective discipline techniques such as I-messages, natural and logical consequences, time out; how to catch kids being "good" and what to do to encourage positive behavior.

Module 4 - The Sexual Development of Children and Responding to Child Sexual Abuse (9 hours) Participants learn to differentiate normal from problematic sexual behaviors in children and youth, signs and symptoms of sexual abuse and ways to help sexually abused children recover.

Module 5 - Supporting Relationships Between Children and Their Families (9 hours) This training focuses on helping foster parents learn how to help kids

attach to caregivers and at the same time stay loyal to birth families. Caregivers learn about how to prepare and support children before and after visits with the birth family and how to share the parenting role with birth parents.

Module 6 - Working as a Professional Team Member (9 hours) Foster parents learn everyone's role on the team, when and how to be an advocate for children, what conflict is and their own personal style for managing it, and how conflict can be a "win-win" situation for everyone involved.

Module 7 - Promoting Children's Personal and Cultural Identity (6 hours) Culture includes traditions, values, customs and history. What "culture" means to a child's self-esteem, how to manage cultural diversity in a foster home, how to discuss sensitive issues with children and how to help a child record his or her history are topics covered in this module.

Module 8 - Promoting Permanency Outcomes (9 hours) The focus of this training is on families who have children in care and supporting reunification of the children and parents.

Module 9 - Managing the Impact of Placement on Your Family (6 hours) In this training caregivers learn how fostering children can affect family relationships, how to minimize stresses that can result and how to find available supports.

Module 10 - Understanding the Effects of Chemical Dependency on Children and Families (15 hours) Foster parents will study the risk factors for chemical use, abuse, and dependency. They will understand relapse and recovery and be able to acquire skills necessary to be an active member of the team to support parents' recovery.

Module 12 - Understanding & Promoting Pre-Teen and Teen Development (6 hours)

This course will assist caregivers to identify developmentally appropriate ways to best promote healthy development for preteens and teens who have experienced abuse, neglect and trauma. This module will help foster/adopt caregivers to understand teen brain development and the impact of trauma and loss on preteens and teens. Participants will learn specific strategies that caregivers can use as fostering teenagers in the day-to-day life of the foster family.