

## DCFS and Chicago Public Schools target education

Last winter DCFS tried an experiment that worked so well it will happen again this year. Nearly 50 participants attended the DCFS Education Fair for Eighth Graders, which gave them and their caregivers a chance to learn about the Education Opportunities Program for schools that use selective enrollment. DCFS Educational Liaisons were on hand with a wealth of information on CPS small schools, magnet schools and charter schools.

“Some people might think that kids involved with DCFS would not qualify for these programs, but that is not true. We just have to help make the right match and our kids can do well,” said Cynthia Moreno, Deputy Director for Service Intervention.

The fair was a new way to provide caregivers with information that could directly help meet educational needs. Many schools were represented and applications were available to turn in right there. The department even had the test scores for each child on hand to make the application process go smoothly. The event this November is expected to be even more successful. Foster parents can expect notice by mail.

The current CPS administration is very willing to work with DCFS, which meshes with Director Samuels’ emphasis on education for all children in DCFS care. More department resources from the Fiscal Year 2005 budget will be devoted to education. The objective is to make sure that youth

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*Cynthia Moreno  
Deputy Director  
Service Intervention*

have a firm educational grounding to prepare them for their life after foster care.

“It is good to move children to permanency through adoption. But DCFS also has to be a parent to the children who remain in the system. We have to do a better job of making sure they learn what they will need to know as adults,” said Samuels.

The department is doing an assessment of eighth and ninth graders. Staff will review factors such as a student’s grade versus age, educational attainment and success factors for high school. It turns out that there are 35 eighth graders who will turn 16 before September. Being older than the expected age for a grade level is a major factor for early dropouts. The department and the schools are looking at ways to offer remedial classes within the youth’s home school, which is seen as a better alternative to sending them to a separate school where they can feel disconnected or fall through the cracks.

This is not the first outreach to the Chicago Public Schools, but it is a renewed focus that should yield positive results. It will be coupled with internal work to ensure that casework includes a higher level of attention to education. To that end, the Division is also creating a database to track educational records, milestones and information such as the need for glasses or a hearing aid. This record will follow the child and make it easier for foster parents to support the educational goals. For more information, contact the Division of Service Intervention at 312-814-5959.

## Cook North spreads news from the Regional Advisory Board



*Ellen Kazaras*



*Jim Lane*

The Regional Advisory Board for Cook North meets on the first Tuesday of each month to discuss DCFS policy changes or to address concerns regarding foster care or adoption. Regional Administrator Chris McGrath attends each meeting along with key staff members and foster

parent support specialists. The Advisory Council is an excellent way to stay involved, build relationships with other foster parents and problem solve with DCFS staff.

All caregivers with DCFS or private agencies who live in the Cook North Region are invited and welcome to attend the meetings at 1911 S. Indiana at 10 a.m. Council members are also making plans to attend trainings and other events at the three offices. Don't be surprised to get a Regional Council update as a prelude to a future training.

Additionally, the Cook North Regional Advisory Council serves as a conduit to the Statewide Foster Care Advisory Council. The regional council is important because local issues and solutions can often have an impact on other families in the state. Conversely, there are also many statewide policies that come to bear on the regions. The Cook North representatives to the statewide council are Ellen Kazaras and Jim Lane. Questions about the Cook North Regional Advisory Council can be directed to Sari Rowitz, DCFS Resource Development Manager at 312-328-2484.

## Cook Central explores options for youth after high school

The Education Advisors in the Cook Central region teamed up for a very informative presentation at the February meeting. The group learned about many options for young people after they finish high school.

The Education Advisors can help families investigate college, financial aid and career training. In Cook County there are many scholarships and programs to help prepare youth for their transition to adulthood. At the training advisors made available forms for the DCFS Scholarship and the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) form, along with many useful

brochures and handouts. Those who attended also received two hours of training credits.

The Cook Central Advisors are:

- **Christine Feldman** (773-292-7731) for Cook Central city homes
- **Charles Ingram** (773-854-0605) for Cook Central Suburban homes
- **Wanda Hendley** (773-407-4575) for information about vocational programs to Chicago families

The Education Advisors work under a contract with Northern Illinois University to support DCFS-supervised foster homes.



*Cook Central Education Advisor Christine Feldman (right) talks with agency staff at a recent training.*

They also provide services to youth after adoption or guardianship. Private agencies each have an Educational Liaison who can provide their foster families with similar information.

## Cook South Foster Parent Support Group turns one year old

“Informative,” “helpful,” “supportive,” “an opportunity to network,” “a chance to share ideas,” were terms used by foster parents at the Cook South Foster Parent Support Group meeting to describe their feelings about the group. January’s meeting was a chance for foster parents to provide feedback on the group’s activities so far, and decide what

future topics should be on the agenda.

The Support Group has tackled many subjects in its first year, including summer activities and programs for children, Educational Advocacy, Stress Management, being advocates for children, and the Foster Parent

Implementation Plan. And let’s not forget about the “WDCFS” and the “Kids on the Block”, the fictional radio presentation that

presented factual information on the cause and effects of Child Abuse and Neglect. The foster parents were pleased with the performance of the group so far, and suggested many topics for the future.



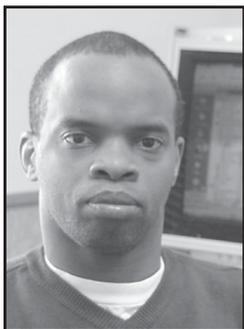
*Trina Brown, a caseworker from ChildServ and Larry Davis from the Chicago Public School won Foster Parent Choice awards for advocating for children with special needs. Bill Travis (right) served as co-host of the award presentation.*



*Judy Reno (right) was nominated for a Foster Parent Choice Award by her adopted child. The awards were given at a celebration during the Cook South Support Group’s December meeting.*

All Cook South foster parents are welcome to join the group on the second Tuesday of each month at 10 a.m. For more information about the Cook South Foster Parent Support Group, please call the Support Group Information Line at 773-371-6113.

## Cook South’s own Lorne Garrett rises to Regional Administrator



*Lorne Garrett*

Meet Lorne Garrett, Cook South’s Regional Administrator.

Garrett is not new to most in the region, because he

was Cook South Program Manager for over two years before

assuming the duties of Acting Administrator after the departure of Tim Snowden. Garrett has been in the child welfare field a number of years, moving up through the ranks as a worker, a supervisor, a Field Service Manager, a Program Manager, and now Regional Administrator.

Garrett states that he has found his new role both rewarding and

challenging. He would like to thank the Cook South staff, foster parent advocates, and especially the foster parents for the job that they do to assure that our children are safe and receive the services that they need.

Garrett is located at the Cook South Emerald office, and can be reached at 773-371-6009.

# Cook County Training Calendar

## FosterPRIDE In-Service Training

All licensed foster parents and adoptive parents are welcome to attend any or all of the PRIDE In-Service Trainings to enhance their skills and meet yearly training requirements.

**Module 1** - *The Foundation for Meeting the Developmental Needs of Children* (Four 3-hour sessions = 12 training hours)

**Module 2** - *Using Discipline to Protect and Nurture* (Three 3-hour sessions = 9 training hours)

**Module 3** - *Child Development* - New module being written

**Module 4** - *Child Sexual Development and Sexual Abuse* (Two 3-hour sessions = 6 training hours)

**Module 5** - *Supporting Relationships Between Children and Their Families* (Three 3-hour sessions = 9 training hours)

**Module 6** - *Working as a Professional Team Member* (Three 3-hour sessions = 9 training hours)

**Module 7** - *Promoting Children's Personal & Cultural Identity* (Two 3-hour sessions = 6 training hours)

**Module 8** - *Promoting Permanency Outcomes* (Three 3-hour sessions = 9 training hours)

**Module 9** - *Managing the Fostering Experience* (Two 3-hour sessions = 6 training hours)

**Module 10** - *Understanding the Effects of Chemical Dependency on Children & Families* (Five 3-hour sessions = 15 training hours)

### COOK NORTH

#### Module

#### **Irish Center**

May 10, 12 & 17 (Mon/Wed) 6:30-9:30 p.m. 2

June 5 (Sat) & June 12 (Sat) 9:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m. 4

#### **Little City Foundation**

May 11, 13 & 18 (Tue/Thu) 6-9 p.m. 5

### COOK CENTRAL

#### Module

#### **Circle Family Care**

May 26 & June 2 (Wed) 6:30-9:30 p.m. 7

June 7, 9 & 14 (Mon/Wed) 6:30-9:30 p.m. 5

### COOK SOUTH

#### Module

#### **Ada S. McKinley**

June 21, 23 & 28 (Mon/Wed) 9:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. 2

#### **Aunt Martha's**

June 7, 9, 11 (Mon/Wed/Fri) 6:30-9:30 p.m. 4

#### **Bethany Christian Services**

May 15 (Sat) 9:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m. 7

#### **DCFS Harvey Office**

June 19 (Sat) 9:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m. 9

#### **LSSI**

June 14-16 (Mon/Tue/Wed) 6:30-9:30 p.m. 4

## Educational Advocacy

Two 3-hour sessions = 6 training hrs.

It is mandatory for one foster parent in each family to attend Educational Advocacy Training in order to be re-licensed. Educational Advocacy Training is offered following each Foster PRIDE/Adopt PRIDE training and many additional times. This six hour course covers information foster parents need to know so that they can advocate for their foster children's educational rights and needs.

### COOK NORTH

#### **Irish Center**

May 22 (Sat) 9:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m.

#### **National ABLE Network**

May 6 & 11 (Thu/Tue) 9:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

### COOK CENTRAL

#### **Circle Family Care**

May 19 & 24 (Wed/Mon) 6:30-9:30 p.m.

#### **Association House (Spanish)**

June 5 (Sat) 9:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m.

### COOK SOUTH

#### **DCFS South Area Office**

May 12 & 17 (Wed/Mon) 6:30-9:30 p.m.

June 5 (Sat) 9:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m.

June 17 & 22 (Thu/Tue) 6:30-9:30 p.m.

June 19 (Sat) 9:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m.

June 28 & 30 (Mon/Wed) 6:30-9:30 p.m.

#### **DCFS Harvey Office**

May 15 (Sat) 9:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

June 1 & 3 (Tue/Thu) 6:30-9:30 p.m.

June 14 & 16 (Mon/Wed) 6:30-9:30 p.m.

#### **Church of the Holy Family**

June 3 & 8 (Thu/Tue) 9:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

## Cook County Advocate

### Regional Reporters:

#### **Cook North**

Sari Rowitz  
312-328-2484 office  
312-328-2688 fax  
SRowitz@idcfs.state.il.us  
1911 S. Indiana Ave.  
Chicago, IL 60616

#### **Cook Central**

Donna Cain  
773-292-7937 office  
773-292-7861 fax  
DCain@idcfs.state.il.us  
3718 W. Division  
Chicago, IL 60651

#### **Cook South**

Bobby Evans  
773-371-6146 office  
773-371-6065 fax  
BEvans@idcfs.state.il.us  
6201 S. Emerald  
Chicago, IL 60621

All classes are coordinated by Harold Washington College in Chicago.

Call **312-553-5821** or **-3031** to register.