

# Cook County Advocate

News for Chicago Metro Area Families

2008 • Vol. 3

## PACT Clinic fills in gap for psychiatric services

The need for psychiatric services, particularly among youth in care, is high and the availability of expert providers for youth is low. Illinois is below the national average of 8.67 providers per 100,000 children. That can create undue delays for some children in the child welfare system who need services right away.

In response to the need, DCFS established the Office of Psychiatric Services (OPS) to provide quality, timely psychiatric healthcare to the children and families receiving services through DCFS. A key part of that strategy is the PACT Clinic. PACT stands for Psychiatry for Adolescents and Children in Transition. The PACT Clinic serves children with acute psychiatric needs by offering initial evaluations, medication monitoring and assessments.

For example, a child could come into care, and the Integrated Assessment may show that he is severely depressed. He should have access to care, without being held on a waitlist. The PACT Clinic can fill in the gap so the youth and caregiver have a resource ready.

The need for expedient care and information was the impetus for

creating a clinic that could serve as a bridge to address immediate issues until transitioning to a regular community provider. The PACT-South Clinic was established in February 2006 and has provided more than 575 appointments.

As of February 2008, children are seen at the new location for the PACT-South clinic. The PACT-South Clinic is located within the Diversified Behavioral Comprehensive Clinic (DBCC) at 1140 E. 87th Street in Chicago. Dr. Darrell Troupe of the DBCC provides clinical services for children and will meet with their families and their caregivers. PACT Clinic-Cook North and PACT Clinic-North in Northbrook are planned to come online in the next fiscal year.

The Office of Psychiatric Services coordinates the PACT Clinic with other programs offered by the DCFS Division of Clinical Services and Professional Development. In order to provide youth and their families with continuous service from the DCFS PACT Clinic, the Clinic Coordinator will contact the caseworkers or supervisors of children receiving clinic services to schedule or confirm appointments for medication management or consultation.



*Dr. Darrell Troupe provides psychiatric services for youth at the PACT Clinic South.*

In addition to expanding the psychiatric services at the new location, DCFS and LaRabida Hospital (the site of the first PACT Clinic) continue working together to offer additional services through flexible schedules at the hospital. This effort by the Department and LaRabida is intended to meet the varied needs of the children and the busy schedules of their families.

Questions about clinic issues or referrals for services should go to the Clinic Coordinator at 312-328-2879.

## Juvenile Court helps “almost” adults

In Cook County, most cases with a permanency goal of independence stay open past a youth’s 18th birthday until age 21. Yet, even with the extra time, young people may not be prepared for life without the supports and services of DCFS. The Benchmark Permanency Hearings at the Juvenile Court can become a launching pad to make that transition smoother.

The young adults face Judge Sybil Thomas, one-on-one, to talk about their future. But rather than standing before a bench, they sit at a conference table in her office where they can have a discussion about what needs to happen to make their plans move toward reality. The youth sign a contract for the action steps he or she will take. Judge Thomas has the power of the court to call upon for services and resources. This personal attention is often helpful in motivating youth to make the most of their remaining time in DCFS care. While caregivers and caseworkers can intercede, ultimately it is the young person who is accountable for making the most of the opportunity.

The DCFS Office of Legal Services and the Juvenile Court will host a Benchmark Youth Day on July 18 with fun events so young people can see the program firsthand. The event starts at 9 a.m. at Cook County Juvenile Court Center, 2245 W. Ogden Ave in Chicago. For more information, call Jacqueline Johnson at 312-633-3207.

## Foster Parent Appreciation Month events

Many DCFS offices have planned events to honor the families who serve in DCFS-supervised foster care programs. DCFS homes will receive invitations to the appreciation events; however, the list below can help families make plans to enjoy the events. Scheduled events may change. Go to the DCFS Web site at [www.state.il.us/dcfs](http://www.state.il.us/dcfs) for updated calendars, or call the contact listed. Families served by private agencies can contact their agency for information on foster parent appreciation events that may be planned.

### Cook South Coffee and a Movie

Thursday, May 8  
10 a.m.  
6201 S. Emerald, Chicago  
Contact: Adrienne Taylor at  
708-210-3578

DCFS Office  
2550 W. Bradley Place, Chicago  
Relaxation techniques, luncheon and prizes.

### Cook North Caregivers Movie Day

Friday, May 9  
10 a.m. to 12 noon  
1911 S. Indiana, Chicago  
Featuring: Akeelah and the Bee and The Great Debaters. Popcorn and other light refreshments served.

### Cook South Night at ETA Theatre

Thursday, May 22  
7 p.m.  
“Check Mates”  
7758 S. South Chicago Ave., Chicago  
Contact: Elise Worrell at  
773-371-6114  
Reserve tickets in advance at regional meetings.

### Cook South Coffee and a Movie

Saturday, May 15  
10 a.m.  
DCFS Office  
15115 S. Dixie Highway, Harvey  
Contact: Adrienne Taylor at  
708-210-3578

### Cook Central Shopping Spree

Tuesday, May 20  
10 a.m. to 3 p.m.  
DCFS Office  
3518 W. Division, Chicago  
Contact: Adrienne Welenc at  
773-292-7879

### Cook South Grand Bazaar

Saturday, May 17  
10 a.m. to 3 p.m.  
DCFS Office  
15115 S. Dixie Highway, Harvey  
Contact: Adrienne Taylor at  
708-210-3578

### Cook Central Appreciation Luncheon

Tuesday, May 27  
9:30 a.m.  
Advisory Council meeting, followed by lunch  
DCFS Office  
3518 W. Division, Chicago  
Contact: Adrienne Welenc at  
773-292-7879

### Cook North “Reinvigorating Your Body and Soul Day”

Thursday, May 22  
10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

## Mentors aid youth with parents in prison

Project LEAP is a comprehensive youth mentoring program serving the needs of youth in foster care who have an incarcerated parent. LEAP stands for Lending Experience and Promise to Children of Prisoners. Project LEAP is run by Passages Alternative Living Programs. It serves families living in Chicago and in the South suburbs. Children must be between 8 and 16, with a parent currently in prison.

Nationally, the Bureau of Justice reports, as of 2005, 3.5 million parents were supervised by the correctional system. Of these numbers, 64 percent of female prisoners and 44 percent of male prisoners lived in a household with their children before their incarceration. The children left behind when a parent goes to prison may suffer academically and exhibit emotional trauma.

Mentoring has been proven to be an effective means of helping kids cope with the unexpected absence of their mother or father. Benefits of mentoring include:

- Improved self confidence
- Increased motivation
- Increased self advocacy
- Improved academic performance
- Less likelihood to engage in at-risk behavior
- Increased involvement in the community
- Fun activities for the youth

The objective of Project LEAP is to connect youth in one-on-one relationships with positive adult mentors and engage them in interactive self-improvement and esteem-building activities that will assist them in becoming productive contributors to society and avoiding the pitfalls that led their parents into anti-social behaviors. Mentors will model successful behavior. They will engage youth in cultural enrichment or sports activities. They accompany youth to entertainment venues and other fun events.

For more information about project LEAP, contact Olivia Grady of Passages, at 312-225-3800.

## Passages provides mentors for teen girls

Passages Alternative Living also conducts a mentor program for older girls. Girls in Action is designed for girls 13 to 17 years old.

Young women will receive: group counseling, job readiness, academic enhancement, writing workshops, enrichment activities, field trips, and cultural activities.

This program is free for DCFS youth.

- Location: Passages Alternative Living Program Inc., 10 West 35th St. - 3rd Fl.
- When: Saturdays, 10 a.m - Noon

For additional information, call: 312-225-3800.

## Youth Summit clears path to adulthood

Youth from all three Cook County DCFS regions are gearing up for the Youth Summit on June 19. This event will be "one-stop shopping" for information to help them prepare for life as adults.

Teens who participate in the Youth Summits will obtain the educational and survival skills needed to successfully achieve self-sufficiency and independence. The DCFS Division of Service Intervention sponsors this event and works closely with young people to be certain it meets their needs. The Youth Advisory Boards helped to plan workshops covering financial planning, life skills, employment training, academics, nutrition and health.

Youth will co-facilitate sessions to keep the discussion relevant and interesting. They have also injected some fun with food and prizes at each event. Youth (and their caregivers) should make a point of attending the Youth Summit.

Thursday, June 19  
8 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Malcolm X College

1900 W. Jackson, Chicago

Contact: Lynda Swan-McClendon  
at 312-814-5991

## From the Cook North RA



Jackie Bright

The month of May is designated to give thanks and acknowledge our foster parents. I would like to give a special thanks to the Cook North

Region foster parent community for your hard work, support, and services you've provided to our children and youth in care. We have been faced with numerous challenges over the years due to the shift to a much older population, and children with special needs. However, without hesitation, you've continued to work with regional staff to ensure that our youth/children receive the care and nurturing offered in a family setting.

Foster parents will always have a significant role in child welfare practice as we continue to ensure that children in care are placed in a healthy and safe environment. As foster parents you have provided our children and youth with positive role models that they can reflect on throughout their life's journey, and you have also continued to provide direction and inspiration by staying in their corner. On behalf of the staff of Cook North Region, you are indeed a part of our team and WE APPRECIATE your commitment to our children and youth in care.

*Jackie Bright, Cook North Acting Regional Administrator*

## Immigrant youth can get legal status

Life for a child with a troubled home situation is complicated. It gets more complicated if the child is also an undocumented youth in this country. This means that they cannot get a social security number or an official identification card (except for school), and they are also prohibited from taking employment in this county.

Fortunately for youth receiving DCFS services, the picture is brighter. Any child born outside of the United States, who has not gained lawful status in the United States, and "for whom the Department has been granted full custody and guardianship through juvenile court" could be eligible for "Adjustment of Status," under the provision of the Immigration Act of 1990 (IMMACT 1990).

The Act allows, "Children defined as 'special immigration juveniles' to petition for adjustment of status. This means being able to change from unlawful resident to lawful permanent resident and subsequently to citizen of the United States of America.

"In accordance with federal provisions, an undocumented child may be for eligible for legal status adjustment when he/she:

- is under 21 years of age;
- is unmarried;
- is declared dependent on a "juvenile court" in the United States while the child is in the United States and under the jurisdiction of the court;

- is deemed eligible for "long-term foster care"; (permanency goal other than return home)
- continues to be dependent on the "juvenile court" and eligible for "long-term foster care"; and
- has been the subject of judicial proceedings in which it was determined that it is not in the best interest of the minor to be returned to his or her country of nationality or country of last habitual residence."

For children who are adopted before they are 16, the adoptive parents can file an I-130 petition, which is a Petition for Alien Relative, with the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS). According to the federal policy, "undocumented children who are in pre-adoptive placements should be given priority referral for legalization services in an effort to seek an adjusted status for the child prior to finalizing the adoption."

Once the youth is identified as an undocumented person living in the United States, the primary case worker must refer the case to the Immigration Service Coordinator. Foster caregivers who have concerns about their foster children's status in this country should address those concerns to their primary caseworkers and/or the supervisor.

## Cook South support groups tackle tough issues of race and family

Foster caregivers in Cook South Region are receiving valuable assistance from DCFS to handle concerns that may arise as they care for children. The Region sponsors two support groups where caregivers can receive information about DCFS initiatives and address their issues. Participants also can earn training credit hours when they attend. The Chi City Foster Parent Support Group meets the second Tuesday of each month at 6201 S. Emerald at 10 a.m. At a recent meeting, Michael A. Holmes, Deputy Director of the Office of Affirmative Action and Rochelle Crump, Chief of the Office of African-American Services joined with foster caregivers as guests.

Deputy Director Holmes explained his role and the role of his office. Then he and Crump had a question and answer discussion with the caregivers. The two not only took on the problems that were within the scope of their office, but also connected foster parents to other individuals at DCFS who could assist. Their openness and commitment to follow up still has caregivers talking about the meeting with surprise and gratitude. Deputy Director Holmes can be reached at 312-328-2493.

The South Suburban Support Group meets at the DCFS Harvey Office, located at 15115 Dixie Highway, on the fourth Thursday of every month at 10 a.m. Recently, Peggy Slater from

the DCFS Division of Placement and Permanency came to speak to the group about the Reunification Initiative. She handed out literature, shared valuable information and answered questions about the Reunification program. She discussed the importance of supporting reunification and how it benefits caregivers. She also addressed their concerns about safety and explained the expectations and resources available to caregivers working with parents on reunification.

The discussion touched on the questions that licensing will be asking of caregivers to determine who may want to do reunification support with parents. Slater agreed to come back to a future meeting to continue the dialogue. Further information on reunification support can be found in the main section of this newsletter on page three in the regular "Home-ward Bound" feature. Caregivers with additional questions about reunification can contact Slater by e-mail at [peggy.slater@illinois.gov](mailto:peggy.slater@illinois.gov).

### **Chi City Foster Parent Support Group**

*Meets the second Tuesday of each month at 6201 S. Emerald, Chicago at 10 a.m.*

### **South Suburban Support Group**

*Meets the fourth Thursday of each month at 15115 Dixie Highway, Harvey at 10 a.m.*

## From the Cook South RA

Marian Wright Edelman, founder of the Children's Defense Fund, ended a speech I heard with this prayer. In honor of Foster Parent Appreciation Month, I offer this with my thanks:

*"We make so many excuses about what we can't do. And we don't use and do what we can do. We keep saying that we can't preach like Dr. King. Or turn a poetic phrase like Maya Angelou. You may not be able to, I can't. But I can care. Each of us can say that I can care and I'm willing to serve and I'm willing to stand up and make a difference...to raise my voice with others for children. Not holy like Archbishop Tutu or forgiving like President Mandela or disciplined like Ghandi, but I can care and I am willing to sacrifice to help build our children a better future and make a difference around me and in my community."*

*"Ask God to use us as God will and make sure that we do what we need to do, so that no child is killed by a gun, no child is left uneducated, that no child is left in poverty, that no child is unable to see their future or see the future only as prison or death...that we will do whatever we have to do to see that no child is truly left behind and...if we come together as people who care, we can transform America and that is our challenge and that is our opportunity."*

*Michael Byrd, Cook South Regional Administrator*

## From the Cook Central RA



The Cook Central Region is glad to participate in several Foster Parent Appreciation Month activities.

As the Regional Administrator, I am pleased to recognize the caregiver community that nurtures and supports our children who deserve so very much. I consider it to be an honor to acknowledge our caregivers who give so much and go so far to meet the needs of the families that we serve.

Our foster parents do an exemplary job of meeting the needs of children in foster care, and many times don't receive the applause they so richly deserve. The month of May is respected as a time set aside to do just that: recognize and acknowledge the hard work put forth by our caregiver partners in Illinois child welfare.

We in the Cook Central Region salute you and wish the best for you, our partners, during these special days in May, 2008.

*Joyce E. Hall, LCSW  
Cook Central Regional  
Administrator*

## Cook Central Advisory Council addresses issues at all ages

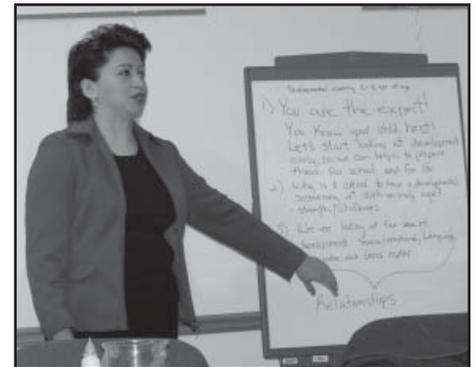
The Regional Foster Parent Advisory Council meets each month to discuss DCFS programs and how they can help caregivers. At a recent meeting, caregivers learned about early childhood development, summer camp opportunities for older children and plans to celebrate the adult caregivers during foster parent appreciation month.

Rosie Ruiz does early childhood development screenings at the Cook Central office at 3518 W. Division, and other DCFS locations. She reminded caregivers how important it is for them to "trust their gut" if they sense something might be a concern with the development of a child three years old or under.

"You are the expert. You know your child best. We have to look at development early to prepare them for school and for life," said Ruiz.

All children age zero to three in DCFS care should have a developmental screening. Ruiz examines language development, physical traits and emotional well being. It is crucial to identify problems early. Yet even if a child is on target, it is also important to check back as he grows older. Ruiz will often schedule follow-up appointments and caregivers can call her at 773-292-7884 if they want to initiate a screening.

With summer swiftly approaching, the council turned to the needs of school age children. Seneca



*Rosie Ruiz explains early childhood development to the Cook Central Advisory Council.*

Ruiz of the Chicago Park District presented numerous free, or low cost family events at parks in the region. In April, the DCFS office was the information hub to distribute vouchers for free summer camp programs with the park district. Children age 6 to 12 in foster care, and in adoptive or guardianship homes, are eligible for free camp programs in Chicago and in many suburbs. Contact Adrienne Welenc at 773-292-7879 for more details.

The grown-ups were not left out at the meeting. Plans are underway to celebrate Foster Parent Appreciation Month. On May 20, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., caregivers are invited to a "Shopping Spree" where they can browse and make selections from donated items. The following week, caregivers will receive their due honors at an appreciation luncheon that will follow the advisory council meeting scheduled for 9:30 a.m. Both events will take place at the DCFS office located at 3518 W. Division.

## Cook Central youth can have options for summer sports, activities and tutoring

**Baseball back in Garfield Park** First Round Baseball Academy is sponsoring the return of Little League Baseball to Garfield Park, 100 N. Central Park Ave. in Chicago. This program is for boys and girls from ages 5 to 16. The cost of \$80.00 per child will cover insurance, uniforms, trophies, equipment, and registration fees. Training and workouts began in March but players are still welcome to register. No youth will be turned away according to Shawn Walker, who is spearheading the return of youth baseball at Garfield Park.

Many of the coaches have played high school and college baseball. They hope to see the six underused baseball fields in the park full of active children. Teams will have up to 15 children each. There will be four divisions. Youth ages 5 to 8 play in the T-ball Division; 9 to 12 year olds play in the Junior Division; 13 and 14 year olds play in the Senior Division; and 15 and 16 year olds play in the Major League Division. The goal for the first year is to enroll 350 players.

This program is part of the Little League Charter which means the teams can qualify for tournaments and play other official Little League Teams. The season will consist of about 20 games throughout the summer. The games will be played on Tuesday through Saturday. At the end of the season they will have a banquet and awards ceremony.

Shawn Walker stated that the First Round Baseball Academy also focuses on mentoring the boys and girls in education as well as sports. They want to hone their kids' educational skills as well as their athletic skills. For more information contact Walker at 312-719-4442 or Garfield Park at 312-746-5092.

Baseball will also be offered in Amundsen Park, located at 6299 W. Bloomingdale, 312-746-5003, for youth age six to 14. Players in the 12 to 13-week program take the field for two games per week. Contact Victor Davis at 312-746-5003. LaFollette Park, at 1333 N. Laramie, also hosts a baseball program. Call 773-287-0541 for details.

**Summer camp for older youth** Youth Outreach Services (YOS) will have a six-week summer program called Youth On Summer, beginning after July 4. The cost is \$60.00 per child. A lower rate will be charged for added siblings. The camp will meet Monday through Thursday from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. with lunch provided.

The camp serves youth ages 10 to 17 years old at 5910 W. Division. Along with arts and crafts, the program will feature an educational component. They will teach:

- alcohol and substance abuse prevention
- life skills training
- improving communication skills



- effective decision-making
- conflict resolution and anger management

This year, field trips will include fun outings such as a visit to the Mexican Fine Arts Museum and the DuSable Museum; swimming at a Chicago beach; a Downtown treasure hunt; and a bowling outing. Contact Ayesha Jaco or Tamitra Griffin at 773-261-3333 for more details.

### Free tutoring

Circle Family Care is offering an on-going free tutoring program, which will continue throughout the summer months. The tutoring is offered at their office at 4909 W. Division St. It is available on Thursdays from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. This Reading Lab program is for children for ages 7 to 18. It focuses on phonetics, oral reading, and story-telling skills. Brenda Gerald can be reached at 773-921-8100 for questions and enrollment.

# Cook Region Training Calendar

## Foster PRIDE In-Service Modules

All caregivers are welcome to attend PRIDE In-Service Training. Advance registration is required. Training dates, times and locations are subject to change.

### **Module 1 - Foundation for Meeting the Developmental Needs of Children at Risk** (12 training hours)

*This module focuses on building self-esteem in children. It will cover how kids act when they need recognition, power, freedom, enjoyment, and a feeling of belonging. Caregivers will learn how to listen to what kids say and not what we think they say.*

**Chicago** **Hull House**  
June 9, 11, 16 & 18 9:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.  
(M/W)

### **Module 9 - Managing the Impact of Placement on Your Family** (6 training hours)

*In this training, caregivers learn how fostering children can affect family relationships and how to minimize stresses that can result. They also learn about the supports that are available.*

**Chicago** **UCAN**  
June 17 & 24 (Tue) 6:30-9:30 p.m.

### **Module 11 - The Teen in Foster Care: Supporting Attachment** (6 training hours)

**Oak Park** **Hephzibah**  
June 28 (Sat) 9:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m.

### **Module 12 - Understanding and Promoting Preteen and Teen Development** (6 training hours)

*This new 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 six-hour 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 while fostering teenagers.*

**Chicago** **UCAN**  
June 3 & 10 (Tue) 6:30-9:30 p.m.

**Oak Park** **Hephzibah**  
June 21 (Sat) 9:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m.

## Educational Advocacy

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.

**Chicago** **Association House**  
June 7 (Sat) 9:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m.

**Harvey** **DCFS Office**  
June 28 (Sat) 9:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m.

## Child Trauma

This four-hour course helps caregivers recognize the signs of trauma and understand how to work with children who have experienced trauma.

**Chicago** **DCFS, 6201 S. Emerald**  
June 28 (Sat) 9:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m.

## Cook County Advocate reporters

**Cook South ~ Rod Mulford**  
773-371-6350 office  
773-371-6065 fax  
Rod.Mulford@illinois.gov  
6201 S. Emerald, Chicago, IL 60621

**Cook North ~ Amie Joof**  
773-866-5522 office  
312-328-2688 fax  
Amie.Joof@illinois.gov  
2550 W. Bradley Pl. Chicago, IL 60618

**Cook Central ~**  
**Merrylee Guge-Jorgensen**  
773-292-7700 office  
773-292-7861 fax  
Merrylee.Guge-Jorgensen@illinois.gov  
3518 W. Division, Chicago, IL 60651

Anyone can call the regional reporter with foster parent association news and schedules; local training notices; features on foster families and community members working for children; photos; and ideas for news articles or supportive services that would be helpful for caregivers to know.

**Caregivers must register to attend any of these training classes.**

**Call the DCFS Office of Training**

**877-800-3393**  
toll free