

Cook County Advocate

2011 • Vol. 4

News for Chicago Metro Area Families

Cook County events help youth move toward adulthood

Cook County Youth Summit brings together workshops and resources

Nearly 200 young people gathered at Malcolm X College for the Youth Summit on June 23. The theme this year was “Never Back Down, Never Give Up!”

The youth enjoyed workshops on education, employment, health and sexuality, domestic violence and money management. DCFS Director McEwen and Daniel Fitzgerald, the Deputy Director for Service Intervention, were there to inspire and congratulate the young people on the bright futures ahead of them.

“This event is so important because it brings together ideas and resources that will help our youth succeed as adults,” said Fitzgerald.

As they learned, they also had time for some fun. The youth were especially excited about the raffle and giveaways that included a DVD player, flash drives, MP3 players and prepaid cell phones.



Staff from the DCFS Division of Service Intervention greet young people at the 2011 Cook County Youth Summit.

Cook graduates celebrated in style with banquet, gifts and music

The Cook County Graduation celebration was held June 24. Graduates from all three Cook County DCFS regions were invited to the European Chalet Banquet Hall for a luncheon. Nearly 200 graduates participated this year.

These young people, served by DCFS and private agencies, celebrated the accomplishment of earning a high school diploma or GED or graduating from college. The graduation celebration was sponsored by the Cook County regional administrations. The Youth Advisory Board and the DCFS Office of Education and Transition Services spearheaded planning the event.

Students could each invite a guest to share in the celebration. At the end of the afternoon they did not leave empty-handed. All of the graduates received goody bags that included gifts cards to local retailers. They could use the funds to purchase items for their next phase of school, for living expenses or just for enjoyment.



DCFS prepared gift bags and other treats for graduates at the 2011 Cook County Graduation Celebration.

Cook Central & South picnic promises fun and info for DCFS families



On August 4, the Cook Central and Cook South Regions will come together for a Back to School Picnic at Central Park in Park Forest. Hundreds of children, caregivers, youth who are in care, siblings, parents, and staff

will gather for a day of fun. The picnic is a combined event for families who are part of the DCFS-supervised foster care programs.

Staff and caregiver volunteers have served on numerous committees for months to produce a relaxing event for families. They will fire up the grills and fill the tables with burgers, hot dogs, side dishes, desserts and drinks. There will be children's games with

prizes, face painting and a DJ.

In addition to the fun, it will also be a practical picnic. DCFS licensing staff will be on hand to answer caregivers' questions. Many community service providers will come to host resource tables, bringing families important information about education, housing and health.

Staff from the DCFS Office of Education and Transition Services will attend to answer questions. They will be joined

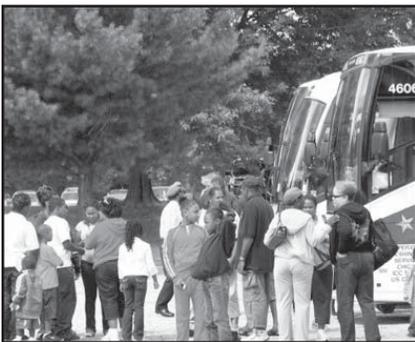
by representatives of area colleges who encouraged youth to consider higher education.

Caregivers who would like more information about the event can contact the foster parent support specialists at the regional offices for additional information or handouts.

Cook Central
Denise Spires
773-292-7879

Cook South
Carole Lucacek
773-371-6119

Caregivers can travel together on free bus to Illinois State Fair



The annual Illinois State Fair is a family-friendly event that DCFS makes extra special with free admission and discounts for food and carnival rides. Among the three DCFS regional foster care programs in Cook County, there

has been a tradition of traveling by bus to Springfield on the last Friday of the fair. Plans are underway for the tradition to continue this year on August 19.

Transportation can't be guaranteed for everyone who might wish to ride the buses. However, in the past the buses have accommodated the DCFS families with licenses supervised by Cook South, Cook Central and Cook North offices, plus some families from private agencies when there has been room. The invitation also includes parents with children in foster care.

Foster care providers, adoptive parents and guardianship families must first request tickets to the state fair by completing and mailing the form included the last issue (Volume 3 of this newsletter.)

Once at the fair, families have a chance see and pet farm animals. They can try tasty treats in the Dairy Barn, which is also home to the life-size butter cow sculpture. There is a vast midway with carnival rides and games. The DCFS tent serves as a home base for a cool drink, popcorn and a free family keepsake photo.

Caregivers who are interested in traveling together by bus should call the lead Foster Parent Support Specialist in their DCFS regional office. They can provide specific details on transportation, including when and where the buses will load.

Cook Central: Denise Spires - 773-292-7879
Cook South: Carole Lucacek - 773-371-6119
Cook North: Edith Cruz - 312-328-2572



Cook Central's foster care advisory council discusses trauma and education

The Cook Central Foster Care Advisory Council offered a training session on how trauma can affect children's education. Yasmina Sefiane, one of the Cook Central Education Advisors, delivered the insightful presentation. She defined trauma as the development of symptoms after experiencing or witnessing an event that involves: actual or threatened death; serious injury to self or others; or a threat to the psychological or physical integrity of self or others. Sefiane set the stage by playing a recording of an actual 911 emergency call made by a six-year-old girl witnessing her father attacking her mother and her infant sister. She asked the caregivers

to imagine this same child later sitting in a classroom.

All members of the child welfare team should realize that removing a child from his or her home can be so traumatic that a child may always be influenced by it. When adding in the actual abuse or neglect that prompted the child's removal, it is clearer that a child's traumatic reactions could surface in negative behaviors at school. Sefiane helped caregivers understand the children in their homes and taught them how to be an advocate at school.

Throughout the course of the year, guest speakers at the council cover a variety

of programs and activities that are of interest to foster families. In the past, members of the Chicago Fire Department taught fire safety, Chicago Police Department representatives talked about community safety, accountants gave information on tax preparation for foster parents and Chicago Park District representatives have presented information on getting our children into day camps for the summer.

No matter what topic is presented, each meeting holds that special benefit of giving caregivers an opportunity to share and learn from each other and the guest presenters.

Join the Cook Central Regional Advisory Council

The Cook Central Regional Advisory Council welcomes all caregivers who live in the area (both DCFS and private agency supervised homes) to join the council's monthly meetings.

Last Tuesday of the month
9:30 a.m.
3518 W. Division
Chicago

Contact:
Denise Spires
773-292-7879

Cook Central Region staff thank families for another year of giving

Each year in May, Cook Central schedules events hosted by Department staff to acknowledge and celebrate the region's caregivers. This year, staff planned two appreciation events: a Family Fun Night for caregivers and their children and an evening dinner for caregivers only.

The Family Fun Night event was held May 6 at the 3518 W. Division Street office. The evening was filled with a variety of children's games, face painting and raffle prizes. Participants feasted on hot dogs, chips, juice, cookies and ice cream. Young children, teens and their parents alike enjoyed the different activities and prizes.

The Foster Parent Appreciation Dinner was held at the Maywood office on the evening of May 20. The food was

catered by The Meal of the Day Café and included oven-fried chicken, meatloaf, macaroni & cheese, mashed potatoes with gravy, greens, corn bread, rolls, salad and cake. Entertainment was provided by a group of children receiving DCFS services who conducted a live music, singing and dance performance. The evening included a slide show of photos from past year's events and concluded with raffle prizes and gift cards.

The region can never extend enough appreciation to its caregivers for their role, but each May gives Cook Central an opportunity to bring foster parents together to celebrate and offer them gratitude on behalf of the Department.

Cook South Support Groups

Foster Parents, Our Greatest Resource Support Group

Contact:
Elise Worrell
773-371-6114
Info line at
773-371-6113

Meets 2nd Tuesday from 10 a.m. to Noon DCFS Office, 6201 S. Emerald, Chicago

For DCFS and private agency families. Training credits offered.

Cook South DCFS Regional Foster Care Advisory Council

Contact:
Angela Barber
773-578-0079

Meets 3rd Wednesday at 10 a.m. DCFS Office, 6201 S. Emerald, Chicago

DCFS Cook South Suburban Support Group

Contact:
Adrienne Taylor
708-210-3578
Sandra Montgomery
708-210-3594
Foster Parent Info line at 773-371-6113

Meets 4th Thursday (Jan., March, May, July, Sept and Nov.) 9 a.m. to Noon DCFS Office, 15115 Dixie Highway, Harvey



SOS Village caregivers lead the way for Girl Scouts among foster care community

SOS Children's Village is a unique foster care community on the South Side of Chicago. Caregivers live in SOS Village homes on the "campus." They support each other, parents and children as they provide foster care services.

"As a new foster parent with SOS Children's Villages Illinois, I noticed that a lot of SOS children were girls of varying ages," said Kenitra Shackelford. "I was a Girl Scout Troop Leader several years earlier and remembered how much my girls developed socially from being in the Girl Scouts, so I knew it would be great for these children."

The Girl Scouts organization is dedicated to providing an accepting and nurturing environment where girls build character and skills for success in the real world. The Girl Scout program encourages girls ages 5 to 17 to develop personal leadership qualities that will serve them all their lives, social consciousness and conviction about their own potential and self worth.

Girl Scout Troop 60420 was officially established in November 2010. It has three troop leaders:



Caregivers Regina Saleem and Kenitra Shackelford lead a Girl Scout troop with girls living in SOS Children's Village.

caregivers Kenitra Shackelford and Regina Saleem; and Rochelle Ingram who is an SOS staff member. Currently, the troop has approximately 24 registered children and adult members. This mixture of Daisies, Brownies, Juniors, Cadettes and Seniors are from the SOS foster care program and from the community.

In February, the girls conducted a formal dinner for Valentine's Day. The Troop also hosted their first Spring Tea. In June, the troop set off on its first camping adventure in Wisconsin. One of this troop's greatest accomplishments (besides phenomenal cookie sales) was to see one of its Senior Scouts, Parrisha Green of Simeon High School, be selected out of 2000 applicants to serve on the

Girl Scout Council's World Forum Girl Planning Team for three years. This prestigious honor will allow her to make several international trips to discuss eradicating poverty in third world countries, and to plan and celebrate the 100th Anniversary of Girl Scouts of the USA.

Girl Scout Troop 60420 is open to any girl from Kindergarten to senior in high school. Annual membership is \$12.00 and runs from October through June. The troop meets the 1st and 3rd Saturday of each month at the Lavazzerio Community Center located at 7600 S. Parnell, Chicago. Anyone interested in learning more should contact Shackelford at kenitrashackelford@yahoo.com.

Metropolitan Family sponsors "Each One, Teach One" support group

Each One, Teach One is a South Side support group for caregivers that is conducted by Metropolitan Family Services. It is open to all adoptive, guardianship and foster families. The group meets in the evenings so that working parents can take advantage of informational sessions to help them better care for the children in their home. These sessions offer resources and network

opportunities as well as training credit hours.

During each meeting there is a brief training presented by persons knowledgeable in the field of clinical practice. Topics revolve around behavior issues that include lying, stealing and discipline, as well as parenting topics like bonding and attachment, working with birth parents, bullying, and

any issues arising from the children's past. Each month a different topic is chosen. Caregivers may attend all sessions or select those of particular interest. Child welfare experts are available to guide the discussions. Experienced parents also offer practical solutions to every day issues.

This group meets on the 2nd Tuesday of every month from 5:30

pm to 7:30 pm. at the Metropolitan Family Services Calumet office, located at 235 E. 103rd St., Chicago. Parking is adjacent to the facility.

The agency also will provide childcare during the meeting, if caregivers call ahead. For more information, contact Vivian Moore at 773-371-3611.

Cook South hosts appreciation events for families in both offices

The Cook South Region planned a full slate of events to show appreciation for caregivers in the Month of May.

On May 10, more than 60 caregivers gathered at the Emerald Street office for "Breakfast and a Movie." During the regularly scheduled meeting of the support group, staff served foster and adoptive households a full, catered breakfast. Then, together they watched the movie *Madea's Big Happy Family*. Dianne Bradie-Baskin, regional administrator, expressed all of Cook South's appreciation for the tremendous work that foster parents do. Staff attended the event to meet with families and answer questions.

The following week, the Harvey office sponsored the annual Bazaar, a

unique shopping experience for foster, adoptive and guardianship families, parents and invited community members. The guests "shopped" among the many items that staff members and local organizations had donated. The 37 households that attended the event left with many of their needs met, without spending any money.

One foster caregiver said she was able to take care of her child's summer clothing. The remaining items went to a Riverdale women's shelter. Additional items will go to Belize with a foster family to aid communities there.

The entire Cook South Region also joined to honor caregivers at the Harvey DCFS Office in conjunction with the Suburban Support Group.



First, there was a helpful training covering licensing "hot topics." Answers came straight from the top, delivered by Deputy Director of POS Monitoring Miller Anderson, Acting Associate Deputy Alexis Carlisle, and Acting Associate Deputy Treva Hamilton. After tackling the questions and concerns, the speakers offered their contact information for further assistance.

After the training, Bradie-

Baskin congratulated the caregivers. She and the presenters assured them that they are first and most important in guiding, directing, and nurturing our children.

Staff and families then enjoyed a catered lunch as they watched the movie, *Lackawanna Blues*. After the movie, each foster parent was awarded a certificate of appreciation and roses.



Advisory council aims to refresh implementation plan, deliver training and increase new members

The Cook North Foster Care Advisory Council meets monthly to discuss new policies and procedures that impact foster families and the children they care for. Highlights of the May meeting include:

Implementation Plan

Members discussed the first steps to drafting a new Foster Parent Law Implementation Plan. After the summer, the administration will be meeting with caregivers for input to the plan. Notice for the meetings will

go to all DCFS-supervised homes in the region.

Training

The region included the annual plan for caregiver training in the 2011 Implementation Plan. To date, the administration has stayed on track with offering specific trainings based on the needs the caregivers expressed. The council discussed an upcoming training to cover cultural sensitivity. As the 2012 Implementation Plan comes together, they will compile a new slate of potential trainings. No-

tice of the monthly trainings is mailed to all homes in the region that are supervised by the DCFS foster care program.

Membership

The council welcomes the participation of all caregivers in the region (both DCFS and private agency supervised homes). Regional Administrator Jackie Bright also hopes that more relatives will take advantage of the council as a resource for information and peer support.

Join the Cook North Regional Advisory Council

The Cook North Regional Advisory Council welcomes all caregivers who live in the area (both DCFS and private agency supervised homes) to join the council's monthly meetings.

First Tuesday of the month
10 a.m.
DCFS Office
1911 S. Indiana, Chicago
Contact: Iris Cuevas at
312-808-5000

DCFS Cook North celebrates foster caregivers with a special night out

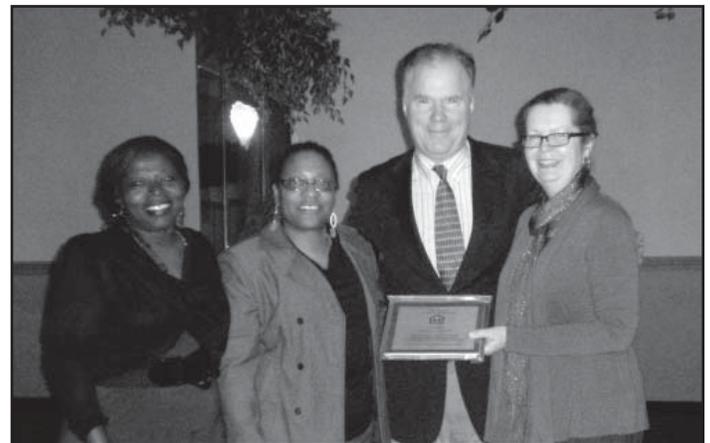
Cook North Region celebrated Foster Parent Appreciation Month by providing a dinner in appreciation of the foster parents who continue to work as part of a team to provide the best services to meet the needs of the children. The dinner was held on Thursday, May 26 at Polonia Banquets in Chicago.

The event's theme was "It's Your Night, and it's all about YOU." The intent was to provide caregivers a sit-down dinner in a fun-filled, relaxing atmosphere with music, dancing, prizes and recognition of the work they do.

In addition to Regional Administrator Jackie Bright's message of appreciation, special recognition was given to four foster parents. They were acknowledged, not only for their dedication and commitment to foster care, but also for providing unconditional support to the children in their care. The four selected foster parents overcame special challenges in order to maintain the children's culture, maintain family connections, keep siblings together and give them the tools necessary to become successful adults. Awards were given to the families of: Ellen Schumer; Eva Garfias and Cristobal

Carmona; Stephanie Russell and Alan Lindquist; and Dr. Constance Catellani.

The message delivered to all the caregivers by the Cook North administration was that even though the celebration came one day in May, they are appreciated throughout the year.



Kathy Cook, Legertha Barner and foster parents Stephanie Russell and Alan Lindquist

DCFS Education advisors stand ready to help students succeed

With the start of a new school year on the horizon, Southern Region caregivers should know they have a powerful resource ready to help with education issues. Through a partnership with Northern Illinois University, the DCFS/NIU education advisors advocate for youth in care and also work with adoptive and guardianship families.

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

With the background of working in or with schools before joining DCFS, Education Advisors know how to navigate the system. They understand school issues including special education, attendance policies, discipline and a host of other concerns. Working with an

Education Advisor can be very positive and gratifying. They identify with and highly value caregivers and the children in their homes. They recognize and empathize with the frustrations and needs of both the education and child welfare systems, making them invaluable advocates. They advocate effectively because they know what children have the right to expect from schools. The advisors are each well-versed in the federal and state education laws and DCFS Rule 314 concerning education services that must be provided to children in DCFS care.

Since every school can have a slightly different way of doing things, it helps to have an Education Advisor sitting beside the caregiver as you both advocate for the student.

Cook North-Chicago

Donnis Briscoe
1911 S. Indiana, Chicago, IL 60616
Phone: 312-328-2561
E-mail: donnis.briscoe@illinois.gov

Cook North-Suburbs

Yasmina Sefiane
8300 McCormick Blvd.
Skokie, IL 60075

Phone: 708-338-6637
Fax: 708-338-6653
E-mail: yasmina.johnson@illinois.gov

Cook Central-Chicago

Dawn Overend
DCFS, 3518 W. Division
Chicago, IL 60651
Phone 773-292-7732
E-mail: dawn.overend@illinois.gov

Cook Central-Suburbs

Yasmina Sefiane
1701 S. First Ave. S-1033
Maywood, IL 60153 (Primary Office)
Phone: 708-338-6637
E-mail: yasmina.johnson@illinois.gov

Cook South-Chicago

Diane Fitzhugh
6201 S. Emerald, Chicago, IL 60621
Phone: 773-371-6029
E-mail: diane.fitzhugh@illinois.gov

Cook South-Suburbs

Rebecca Lawrence
15115 Dixie Highway
Harvey, IL 60426
Phone: 708-210-3051
E-mail: rebecca.lawrence@illinois.gov

Cook County Advocate Regional Reporters

Anyone can call the regional reporter with story suggestions about:

- Foster parent association news and schedules
- Local training notices
- Features on foster families and community members working for children
- Ideas for news articles or supportive services that would be helpful for caregivers

Cook North ~ Iris Cuevas
312-328-2535 office
312-328-2561 fax
Iris.Cuevas@illinois.gov
1911 S. Indiana Ave, Chicago IL 60616

Katherine Cook
312-328-2511 office
312-328-2711 fax
Katherine.Cook@illinois.gov
1911 S Indiana Ave, Chicago IL 60616

Cook Central ~ Clyde Thompson
773-292-7700 office
773-292-7861 fax
Clyde.Thompson@illinois.gov
3518 W. Division, Chicago, IL 60651

Cook South ~ Elise Worrell
773-371-6114 office
773-371-6065 fax
Elise.Worrell@illinois.gov
6201 S. Emerald, Chicago, IL 60621

Cook Region Caregiver Training

DCFS Office of Training has scheduled sessions of in-service training modules and other courses in locations across the Cook Regions. 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.

August		September	
Adoption Certification (worker referral required)	Chicago	Child Trauma	Chicago
Child Trauma	Harvey	Teens in Foster Care	Harvey
Educational Advocacy	Chicago	Reunification Training	Harvey
Module 2	Chicago	Educational Advocacy	Chicago, Harvey, Oak Park

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.