Illinois Families Now and Forever

Families by Foster Care, Adoption and Guardianship®

DCFS awards 48 full-tuition college scholarships

Thanks to the DCFS Youth in Scholarship program, 48 young people are now attending classes with a full tuition waiver at participating state institutions. They also will have continued medical coverage and a $458 monthly stipend to help with expenses. These students, who were still under DCFS care or who left through adoption or guardianship, rose to the top during the selection process. The selection panel considered their academic achievement, community service and other accomplishments.

The annual DCFS Scholarship Luncheon was a wonderful send-off for the 48 award recipients now attending college.

One member of the panel was a scholarship recipient herself in 1997. Nancy Murrah remembered being a teen in foster care. She was uncertain of her future, but had adult mentors who saw things differently.

"They wanted me to get an education. They had more faith in me than I did," she shared during this year's award luncheon on July 7.

Their faith was well-placed, because she went on to graduate, earn an advanced degree and build a career in social work.

In addition to the 48 scholarships, several students were surprised that day to receive additional awards. Kristen Green discovered she had won the Deborah Flowers Award for achieving the highest score on the selection criteria. Deborah Flowers, before her passing in 2005, was a key individual in administering the scholarship program, as well as other programs in the DCFS Division of Service Intervention. Ret. Col. John R. Shunick also added to the excitement for four youth who earned the veteran's awards. These youth are children of individuals who served in the nation's armed forces. Amber Balster, Jasmine Banner-Hubbard, Mallory Bingham and Amy Jachna each received an additional $500 scholarship.

The scholarship luncheon is an annual event that is always high-energy and inspirational. Members of the DCFS executive team and staff from the Division of Service Intervention all contribute to the festivities. The event gets an added layer of special attention because, for nearly a decade, the Walter and Connie Payton Foundation has supported the luncheon with DCFS. This year, Brittney Payton, a college senior, shared her words of encouragement and a favorite saying of her father, a legendary Chicago Bear.

"The definition of a winner is someone who has given their best, tried their hardest and given every ounce of their strength, not that you won or failed," she said.

This year's recipients will learn more about their internal strength

Continued on page 2

Erwin McEwen

From the Acting Director

If your family is like mine, you are coming down from a busy summer. I spent a great deal of time in Springfield during budget negotiations, working on behalf of the families we serve. Even with the marathon meetings, I fortunately never missed a game as head coach for my son's Little League team. More importantly, on the baseball diamond I came to a decision about ways that DCFS will support children in your care.

A 10-year-old boy showed me how something as simple as a neighborhood ball team can be a therapeutic and developmental intervention, along with having fun. This young man first looked like just another ball player. But when I put on my "social worker hat," I saw our kids. I saw trauma, disassociation and inattention. I saw a family working hard to stabilize him.

I kept my eye on him through weeks of practices, and watched him change. I knew baseball was making a difference during one game when the score was 7 to 6. We were in the field against a power hitter. This very special child, who would never chase down a ball, snagged a deep hit and clinched the victory for us. Yet, the real victory was when his teammates cheered him, then the crowd cheered. This young man cried joyful tears for two innings.

Little League helped normalize this child. He made friends. He learned cooperation and self-confidence. I encourage caregivers to get the youth in their care involved in more community activities. I have directed the private agencies to work with the Department to fund these activities in a way that does not place undue burden on families. I hope you will make the commitment to help your kids find a sport or activity that is exciting, challenging and positive.

Scholarship recipients, con't.

along with their academic studies. At the luncheon, they eagerly accepted their awards and all of the accompanying accolades. Now they are off to substantiate the faith that their caregivers, parents and supporters have placed in them.

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The DCFS Youth in Scholarship program is available to youth currently in DCFS care, or those who left Department guardianship through adoption or private guardianship arrangements. The purpose of the program is to ensure that those selected have the opportunity to earn a bachelor's degree in four years or less. Scholarship Program Student Applications (CFS 438) are routinely due March 31 and award announcements occur by mid-May. Applicants must have a high school diploma or GED by the end of the current school year. Contact the Office of Education and Transition Services at 312-814-5959 for more information.

2007 DCFS scholarship recipients

Mauriell Amechi
Katheryngrace Anczer
Amber Balster
Jasmine Banner-Hubbard
Nathan Baxter
Timeica Bethel
Mallory Bingham
Shayna Bowlin
Michael Cordero
Sophia Davis
Whitney Donley
Alex Gahan
Alex Garcia
Kristin Green
Dominique Hall
Javia Harris
Kamill Holmes
Crystal Hoornstra
Leslie Hunter
Amy Jachna
DeAndre Jackson-Richmond
Christopher Johns
Brad Johnson
Christopher Kammerer
Ryan Kastel
Shawanda Kornegay
Ashley Lepse
Vivian Mack
Lisa McClendone
Markeutta McCollough
Megan McKenna
Camille Mendoza
Aneisha Newell
Sabrina Owens
Jason Pruitt
Christina Richards
Constance Ruholl
Alexandra Smith
Dominica Sorensen
Percy Stewart
Kathryn Tamburini
Claudia Taylor
Anthony Teague
Christopher Toni
Katalina Vercler
Julian Vojensky
Teresa Washington
Bianca Williams

Flu shots can make a difference

The flu season typically runs between November and April. Influenza, more commonly referred to as the flu, is a respiratory tract infection that is typically caused by the influenza virus. Getting the flu vaccination is the primary tool for preventing influenza. Most people over the age of five months can get the flu shot, including breast-feeding mothers. The normal period for getting a flu shot is during October through December each year.

A flu vaccination can lower your risk of a bothersome and potentially serious bout of the flu. Some of the symptoms associated with the flu are fever, headache, cough, runny nose, nausea, and vomiting. Some people are at higher risk of complications from having the flu, such as developing pneumonia. Those people who may be at higher risk for complications are children between six months and five years, pregnant women, people 50 years or older, and those with chronic illnesses.

Discuss with your child's primary care physician whether your child (or you) should receive the flu shot. The flu vaccination is available at no charge through the Vaccination of Children Program for those children enrolled in Medicaid, children with no health insurance or children whose health insurance plans do not include vaccinations.

Also remember to model other healthy habits to help protect all from getting or spreading illness. Teach youth to cover their mouth and nose when they sneeze or cough, and remind them to wash their hands each time.

Please contact your child's primary care physician if you have questions or to get further information about obtaining a flu shot for your child.

Hand-washing tips to stop germs

- The Illinois Department of Public Health recommends frequent hand washing with soap and water, for at least 20 seconds. The scrubbing action will remove most germs from your hands.
- One way to help children wash their hands long enough is to have them sing "Happy Birthday" while hand washing.
- Germs easily collect under long fingernails. To avoid this, keep fingernails trimmed short or use a nailbrush to clean under them.
- Liquid soap is considered more hygienic than bar soap. Liquid hand sanitizers (e.g., those containing alcohol) and disinfecting wipes kill most germs and can be handy when soap and water are not available.

–DCFS Office of Health Services, 217-557-2689

Movin' on Up

News for youth transitioning to adulthood

According to new procedures announced in June, youth launching into adulthood can now be even more prepared. Within 30 days of a youth's 18th birthday, he or she should receive information about the post-adoption search and reunion services. This program can help connect family members that were involved with DCFS. When youth reach the point of service termination, they also will receive a copy of their health and education records, at no cost. The caseworker should also help compile other documents that are necessary for life as an adult, including:

- ID card
- Social Security card
- Driver's license
- Certified copy of birth certificate
- Documentation of religious background
- Immigration, citizenship or naturalization documents
- Medicaid card
- Life book
- List of known relatives and contact information (if they give permission)
- List of schools attended, previous placements, clinics used
- List of community resources with self-referral information

Caseworkers should also notify youth of any benefits that might end as they transition, along with services they may be eligible for when they emancipate.

Understand learning disabilities to help children cope

Caregivers may hear a lot about learning disabilities from teachers or caseworkers. Yet, it can be difficult to know what is a learning disability and what it could mean for the child in your care. A learning disability affects the way the brain manages one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using spoken or written language. With learning disabilities, there is a breakdown in how that individual child processes the information coming in to his or her head. The disability can show up as a reduced ability to listen, think, speak, read, write or do math computations, depending on the type of disability.

Learning disabilities typically have nothing to do with intelligence. A bright child might not be able to perform a task that would normally be expected at their age. To make things more complicated, there is often an unevenness, where you might have a child who is good at math and science but struggles with reading. Below are signs and symptoms of several learning disabilities. The accompanying strategies can help students cope with a disability that can't be "cured," but can be managed at home and in the classroom. Talk to your child's caseworker and teacher if you think you notice something. By identifying the concern, you can work together with other specialists to develop a plan to help.

Dyslexia

A language and reading disability; difficulty processing and remembering language-related tasks

Signs and symptoms

- Reads slowly and painfully
- Shows wide disparity between listening comprehension and reading comprehension of some text
- Has trouble with spelling
- May have difficulty with handwriting
- Has difficulty with written language
- May experience difficulty with math computations

Strategies

- Provide a quiet area for activities like reading and answering comprehension questions
- Use books on tape
- Use books with large print and big spaces between lines
- Don't count spelling on history, science or similar tests
- Allow the use of a laptop or other computer for in-class essays
- Teach students to use logic rather than rote memory

Language disorders (aphasia/dysphasia)

Trouble understanding spoken language; poor reading comprehension

Signs and symptoms

- Has difficulty gaining meaning from spoken language
- Demonstrates poor written output and reading comprehension
- Shows difficulty expressing thoughts in verbal form
- Has difficulty labeling objects or recognizing labels
- Is often frustrated by having a lot to say and no way to say it
- Can describe an object and draw it, but can't think of a word for it

Strategies

- Speak slowly and clearly and use simple sentences to convey information
- Refer to a speech pathologist
- Provide support person or peer tutor
- Use visualization techniques to enhance listening and comprehension
- Use graphic organizers for note taking from lectures or books
- Use story starters for creative writing assignments

Dyspraxia

Problems with motor coordination

Signs and symptoms

- Exhibits poor balance; may appear clumsy; may frequently stumble
- Demonstrates inability to coordinate both sides of the body

- Exhibits weakness in the ability to organize self and belongings
- Shows possible sensitivity to touch
- May be distressed by loud noises or constant noises like the ticking of a clock or someone tapping a pencil
- Has difficulty with fine motor tasks such as coloring between the lines, putting puzzles together, cutting accurately or pasting neatly

Strategies

- Prepare students for touch with verbal prompts "I am going to touch your right hand."
- Avoid touching from behind or getting too close, and make sure peers are aware of this
- Provide a quiet place without auditory or visual distractions for testing, silent reading or work that requires great concentration
- Whisper when working one on one
- Allow the child to use earplugs for noisy school events like assemblies
- Be cognizant of light and light sources that may be irritating to the child

Central auditory processing disorder

Difficulty processing and remembering language-related tasks

Signs and symptoms

- May process thoughts and ideas slowly and have difficulty explaining them
- Misspells and mispronounces similar sounding words or omits syllables; confuse similar-sounding words (celery/salary; belt/built)
- Often is distracted by background noises or sounds
- Finds it difficult to stay focused on or remember a verbal presentation or lecture
- May misinterpret or have difficulty remembering oral instructions
- Has difficulty comprehending complex sentence structure or rapid speech

Strategies

- Show rather than explain
- Supplement with more intact senses (use visual cues, signals, and handouts in classroom)
- Reduce or space directions; give cues such as "ready?"
- Vary pitch and voice tone, alter pace and stress key words
- Ask specific questions to find out if they understand
- Allow 5-6 seconds of "think time" before the child responds

Dysgraphia

A writing disorder resulting in illegibility

Signs and symptoms

- May have illegible printing and cursive writing (despite appropriate time and attention given to the task)
- Shows inconsistencies: mixtures of print and cursive, upper and lower case, or irregular sizes, shapes or slant of letters
- Inconsistent spacing between words and letters
- Exhibits strange wrist, body or paper position
- Copying or writing is slow or labored
- Has cramped or unusual grip/may complain of sore hand

Strategies

- Avoid chastising student for sloppy, careless work
- Use oral exams
- Allow the use of a notetaker
- Provide notes or outlines to reduce the amount of writing required
- Reduce copying aspects of work (pre-printed math problems)
- Allow use of wide-rule paper and graph paper

Excerpted from the LDA California and UC Davis M.I.N.D. Institute "Q.U.I.L.T.S. Calendar" from 2001-2002. Learning Disabilities Association of America, Pittsburg, PA (phone) 412-341-1515.

Statewide Foster Care Advisory Council bulletin

The Statewide Foster Care Advisory Council started the new fiscal year by convening in Bloomington for the July meeting. The council welcomed three new members and held an in-depth discussion about the DCFS Advocacy Office, along with its regular business.

New members

Rolinda Robinson

Rolinda Robinson will represent Cook Central region. In addition to being a licensed foster parent, Robinson also works as a licensing representative for Jewish Child and Family Services. Her family includes one child in foster care, two by adoption and one child by birth.

Debra Harris

Foster parent Debra Harris represents the Central region. She lives in Hamilton with six children by birth, two children in guardianship and one child in foster care. Harris also works as a DCFS Foster Parent Support Specialist.

Angela Barber

Angela Barber is a foster parent licensed with Lawrence Hall Youth Services. She is mother to one daughter who was adopted in June and another daughter through foster care. Barber represents the Cook South region.

Using the DCFS Advocacy Office

Kathy Herrick from the DCFS Advocacy Office came before the council to answer questions about the role of the office and how it serves caregivers. Herrick explained that the Advocacy Office responds to complaints, concerns, inquiries and suggestions about the Department or its contracted agencies. The staff provides referrals to appropriate DCFS staff. It also makes suggestions to executive staff for improvements and changes to the Department, based on the calls it handles.

Nine advocates answer the calls to the Advocacy Office. They are all child welfare specialists with experience in working with families. Herrick stated that the advocates will take the time to listen to the caller's concerns. By working together, the advocate and the caller will be able to determine the specific issues, then steps that can be taken toward a resolution.

Herrick assured the council that the advocates strive to be customer friendly by addressing issues in a timely manner and maintaining an impartial viewpoint. She explained that many issues can be resolved even before calling the Advocacy Office. She recommended that caregivers talk first with the caseworker and then the supervisor, going further up the chain at DCFS or a private agency as needed. The advocate will also take those steps. Herrick pointed out that her office might have more leverage because personnel are required by DCFS policy to respond to its inquiries. The advocates also have to track the results of their work with a status report every 30 days.

Anyone can call the Advocacy Office. It receives calls from foster parents, birth parents, adoptive parents, service providers, DCFS and private agency staff and even youth. Some issues are outside of its limits. The Advocacy office does not help with:

- actions that do not involve DCFS or one of its contracted agencies
- acts or decisions of courts, judges or their judicial staff
- the Public Guardian or Attorney General
- agencies of the federal government
- a report of child abuse or neglect that should go to the hotline

Herrick pointed out that the outcomes may not always be what the caregiver desired. However, the Advocacy Office is there to ensure that the decisions and actions of the Department and its agents are guided by concern for the child's best interests. Several council members shared varying experiences with the Advocacy Office. Herrick answered their questions and invited them to write a synopsis of the good and bad so she could address each item.

Caregivers who have questions or issues for the Advocacy Office can call 800-232-3798 (toll-free).

The Illinois Adoption Advisory Council update

Expanded Post-adoption Services

At the council's August meeting, Acting Director Erwin McEwen and June Dorn, DCFS Statewide Post-Adoption Administrator, spoke to the Adoption Advisory Council about new services for families that move to adoption and guardianship. A pilot is underway in Cook, Kane, Kendall, Grundy and Will counties. Several agencies are now under contract to reach out to post adoption/guardianship households with 13 and/or 16-year-old youth. Service providers will contact homes with children at those critical developmental ages about conducting the annual subsidy recertification in person, at the home. The providers will do a brief assessment with parents to see if these families may need any further supports or services. The Department also announced that five agencies serving Cook County and the Aurora area have come on board to provide services that go beyond existing post adoption resources. McEwen also announced that he has made resources available to fill more post-adoption positions in the DCFS regions.

National Adoption Month Celebration

Several members of the council are spearheading a committee to plan for November's annual celebration. Plans are underway to promote the benefits of adoption, coinciding with the release of a major motion picture from New Line Cinema. "The Martian Child," starring John and Joan Cusack, is the poignant story of a single man who adopts a young boy with special needs. The committee is open to seeking volunteers who would like to participate in local adoption month activities. Contact Brian Hall or Gwenn Eyer through the Office of Foster Parent Support Services at 217-524-2422.

Council membership changes

Several members left the council when their terms expired at the end of June. The council in August welcomed new members:

Lisa Myles, representing Cook south, has a daughter through adoption. Her parents also adopted seven children. Myles and her siblings actively support their younger brothers and sisters. She is a licensed child care provider and also works with pre-adoptive families.

Carol Sheley of Littleton represents Central region. Her family is comprised of six children of diverse backgrounds adopted through DCFS. Sheley also works as a DCFS trainer for prospective adoptive families.

Karen Wardlaw of Plainfield adopted two sons four years ago. She was adopted as an infant. She will represent the Northern region.

Judy Pence recently retired from the DCFS Post-Adoption Unit. She was often before the council as a presenter and now will serve as a professional member.

Linda Wolter is an adoptive parent who has 18 years of professional experience in the adoption field. She works with Metropolitan Family Services in the Adoption Preservation Program

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The Illinois Adoption Advisory Council meets six times each year to discuss issues that affect families formed through adoption or subsidized guardianship. The council considers child welfare policy, legislation and research to advocate for Illinois children and families. The next meeting will be Friday, October 5, in Bloomington. Call the DCFS Office of Foster Parent Support Services at 217-524-2422 for more details.

Midwest Adoption Conference

The Midwest Adoption Conference will be held on Sunday, November 4 at William Rainey Harper College in Palatine. The theme for the conference is *A Lifelong Journey*. This conference is put together by Adoptive Families Today, Stars of David and Families with Children from China.

Caregivers licensed through DCFS will find much of interest. It is a conference for those looking to adopt, adoptive families and other triad members, foster families, and professionals. The conference will offer training opportunities in many aspects of adoption including:

- General Parenting Topics
- International Adoption
- Legal Issues in Adoption
- Domestic Adoption
- Parenting Children with Challenges
- Issues Unique to Pre-Adoption
- Post Adoption Services and Resources
- Adoption and the Schools
- Race and Culture in Adoption
- Teen Issues
- Therapeutic Issues
- Single or Gay/Lesbian Adoption
- Openness in Adoption
- Advocacy and Public Policy
- Fostering
- Search and Reunion

For more information or to register call 847-934-4385 or go to www.adoptivefamiliestoday.org.

Adoption Factbook tracks trends

The National Council for Adoption (NCFA) published its Adoption Factbook IV in July. The number of adoptions by Americans has increased in six years, fueled by more adoptions of foster children and a near-doubling of adoptions of foreign-born children.

"The bulk of these adoptions were domestic and included a sizable increase in the number of children adopted from state foster care," said Thomas Atwood, president and chief executive of NCFA, a trade group for adoption agencies and other adoption organizations.

Following are a few of the adoption statistics included in the 504-page report.

- From 1996 to 2002, the total number of adoptions rose by 26.4 percent, from 119,766 to 151,332.
- The number of international adoptions soared by 86 percent, from 11,303 in 1996 to 21,063 in 2002.
- The number of domestic infant adoptions again declined, from 23,537 in 1996 to 22,291 in 2002.

For more information on the Adoption Fact Book IV, visit the council's Web site at www.adoptioncouncil.org.

Keep adoption language positive

Adoption triggers many emotions for those directly involved and those on the outside. The words we choose to speak of adoption can have a great impact. Make sure you use positive words and remind others to do the same.

Negative Language	*Positive Language*
Real Parents	*Birth Parents*
Natural Parent	*Biological Parent*
Own Child	*Birth Child*
Adopted Child; Own Child	*My Child*
Illegitimate	*Born to Unmarried Parents*
Give Up	*Terminate Parental Rights*
Give Away	*Make an Adoption Plan*
Reunion	*Making Contact With*
Track Down	*Search*
Is Adopted	*Was Adopted*

Excerpted from the National Adoption Center's Learning Center's Web site: adoptnet.org

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 requiring 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, PO Box 51436, Palo Alto, CA 94303, or visit www.fairfamilies.org.

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's what you had to say about the question: ***Comparing foster care to adoption or guardianship, what difference between the two has had the biggest impact on your family?***

We are very strong on guardianship. If guardianship had not been available we would not have been able to go to permanence. Our kids were older and it was important that they keep their given name. They are of the age where they should be able to make life choices like that. We had already raised our birth children when we started foster care. We felt guardianship also gave us more options for planning for our entire family's future, as we discussed things with our adult children.

Barry and Debbie Gerischer, Rock Island County

I took my three grandkids, and I went through all the training for foster care licensing. I was going to take guardianship. I believe guardianship is especially good for relatives, because it frees up the parents to do what they need to do, while the kids are safe with a family member. At the same time, guardianship can get hairy if both sides are not working together. The kids' parents stopped working. After two years there was no effort made. They looked at guardianship as free baby-sitting. Now I am going to adopt. These kids have to come first. If I am going to take care of them, it will be on a permanent basis. With adoption, my life won't be on hold any more. I will have the freedom to move forward with them.

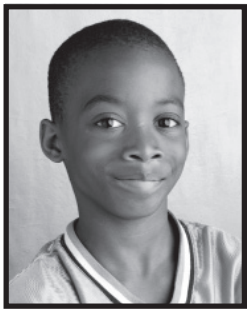
Grandfather to boys ages 6, 7, and 9

The new question is: ***What do you do to keep your child's family of origin involved in the winter holidays?***

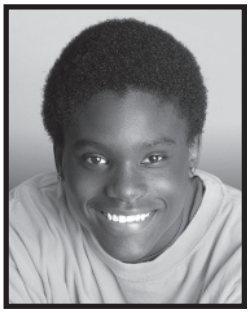
Answers will be printed in the Holiday Issue of the newsletter so please respond by October 5. You can contact me with your response by e-mail at Vanessa.James@illinois.gov or by phone at 312-814-6824.

Foster, adoptive and guardianship families enjoyed the Illinois State Fair with discount admission, ride tickets and food coupons provided by DCFS. Families visited the DCFS tent, where they received free family pictures, resource information, and refreshments.

Please call the Adoption Information Center of Illinois at 1-800-572-2390.


Denzel (7620)

Domisha (7499)


Jesse (7603)

Shanteea (7625)

A family for me

Domisha [7499] Domisha, 8, loves to laugh and can be very sweet and affectionate. She likes quiet settings, and she will often entertain herself by reading, doing puzzles, or playing with dolls. Although Domisha is initially shy, once she gets to know someone, she opens up and expresses warmth through smiles and hugs. In school, she excels at math and takes pride in doing her work correctly.

Her worker and teachers said Domisha is a likeable child and fun to be around. To be a parent to Domisha you can be patient and understanding. You can provide her with lots of love and support. You can help Domisha maintain contact with her older sister after she is adopted.

Denzel [7620] Ten-year-old Denzel is an active guy who loves to play basketball and spend time outdoors. When he comes back inside, he often plays with his foster family's computer or watches wrestling on TV. Denzel must be a brave young man, because one of his favorite activities is playing with his foster family's pet snake!

His foster parent said that Denzel can be very loving and helpful. His teacher said he is outgoing and likes to participate in class. The forever family for Denzel can provide him with love and attention, as well as consistent limits. You can be a good role model.

Jesse [7603] Jesse at 14 is a fun-loving young man who is well liked by his classmates. His passion is music, and he dreams of becoming a hip-hop star. Jesse is also very athletic and his favorite sport is football.

His foster parent and teachers said that Jesse is charming and respectful. He loves going to church each week. The forever family for Jesse would provide love and encouragement, as well as a structured daily routine. You can help him maintain contact with his birth relatives. An Illinois family is preferred.

Shanteea [7626] Shanteea, 11, is an outgoing young lady who loves to chat with friends and make them laugh. She enjoys being part of groups like the Girl Scouts, and she attends church meetings that are designed to enhance friendships among young people. Shanteea is also very active, and she loves to ride her bike in the summer.

Her foster parent said Shanteea can be very caring and loveable. She often assists the younger children in her foster home. Prospective parents would help Shanteea feel comfortable and safe as she transitions to your home. You can provide her with lots of love as well as clear limits and guidelines.

ADOPTION INFORMATION CENTER OF ILLINOIS

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

Illinois Families Now and Forever

Rod R. Blagojevich, Governor

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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 office addresses or request staff copies through the Editor.

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