

Illinois Families Now and Forever

Families by DCFS Foster Care, Adoption & Guardianship®

DCFS sends 48 youth to college with scholarships

Sometimes college freshmen have to contend with the nagging worry of how to pay for the next four years of school. Not so for the fortunate 48 students who received the 2011 DCFS scholarships. These students have the benefit of full tuition and mandatory fee waivers if they attend one of the nine Illinois state universities or Illinois junior colleges. They also receive a monthly maintenance grant of \$471 and a medical card for up to four years.

The scholarship program is open to high school or college students who are in DCFS care or who moved to adoption or guardianship from DCFS. More than 250 students completed applications for the DCFS Scholarship Program, leaving the selection committee with difficult decisions among many worthy candidates. Scholarship recipients were chosen based on scholastic aptitude, a written personal statement and demonstrated community involvement.



The family of Walter Payton is joined by Derrius Quarles, a 2010 DCFS Scholarship recipient and guest speaker at this year's scholarship luncheon, sponsored by the Walter and Connie Payton Foundation. Pictured l to r: Jarrett Payton, Connie Payton-Strotter, Quarles, Brittney Payton and Trisha Payton

2011 DCFS Scholarship Recipients

Breeanna Arft	Haley Johnson	Joshua Ryan
Trinity Bankhead	Shavonda Kornegay	Adrianna Savage
Kaitlin Blakeney	Brent Lacheta	Heather Sears
Kara Bland	Antonnett Long	Tasjia Shaw
Jenna Carter	Adam Looby	Sha'Relle Shelton
Shannon Ciesla	Tawni Majetic	Robert Smith
Stephanie Colletti	Vanessa Marsden	Cynthia Smith
Cetavia Crump	Kala McGee	Victoria Smith-Ellison
Montea Dominguez	Roger Murray	Andrew Sperry
Quintae Dorsey	Taylor Odisho	Kyesha Wadlington
Carmeanna Eberly	Robert Orlando	Devante Warnsby
Anthony Ehr Gott	Asilah Patterson	Amber Waters
Kaitlyn Griffin	Desiree Peete	Nicholas Webb
Sarah Hall	Alyssa Phillips	Gina Widmer
Juwan Hampton	Elizabeth Pruchniak	Laurkee Wiggins
Datrese Hearn	Isaac Puckett	Cory Winston

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From the DCFS Director

Erwin McEwen

In this issue, you will see several articles that feature the 48 DCFS scholarship recipients. I believe that it is important to devote that attention to them. First and foremost, they deserve the accolades for their accomplishments. These young people did not let circumstances stop them. They struggled and came out on top. I was inspired when I met them at the award luncheon before they left to begin their college lives.

The other reason I hope you will take time to read about the scholarship program is that we all deserve to see some good news about our children. The news outlets thrive on the shocking and tragic. However, we know that these youth and countless others, with your help, are rewriting their life stories to have a positive ending.

There are only 48 DCFS scholarships, but there are many opportunities for victories this school year. Every time you meet with a teacher to rewrite an IEP or enroll a three-year-old in Head Start, you are victorious for our children

What we do is not just “government work.” This is family work. This is community work. When we all come together to help all of our young people succeed in education, they can go on to succeed in life.

Scholarships, con’t.

When it came time to celebrate the 48 finalists at a luncheon on July 8, there was one special guest who knew quite a bit about scholarships. Derrius Quarles was invited as a speaker. Last year he received a DCFS scholarship, along with more than \$1 million in scholarship offers. After completing his first year at Morehouse College and a summer medical school internship at Boston College, he had a pertinent message for the college-bound recipients of this year. He had beaten the odds and overcome those who said he was worthless.

“Your accomplishments will ring louder than any bell of skepticism,” Quarles told the group.

The encouraging words from someone who had already walked the path set a tone for a festive celebration. The youth and their guests enjoyed a generous buffet, thanks to the contributions of the Walter and Connie Payton Foundation. Every year the foundation provides funds to send the students off in style. Moreover, Connie Payton and her children make a point to attend the luncheon each year to offer their well wishes in person.

Jean D. Ortega-Piron, the DCFS Guardian, served as the mistress of ceremony. In her official role, she is ultimately responsible for the

youth in care. At the luncheon, she was as proud as any of the parents there. The peak of excitement came when Director McEwen was able to present each scholar with the award certificate. He said he looks forward to this event every year. He also encouraged the management team to come and witness the payoff of the hard work the students put in to reach their goals. Additionally, most of the staff from the DCFS Division of Service Intervention was able to see the culmination of their efforts in conducting the scholarship program and the other programs that support it.

As it should be, the students didn’t have to think about the behind the scenes work. They left the event laden with gift bags and prizes from an exciting raffle. Some won new essentials for their dorm rooms and all had college funding assured as they headed off to campus.



The DCFS Youth in Scholarship Program is available to youth currently in DCFS care and to 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 are routinely available in January with a deadline of March 31. 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.

Adults stop bullying with practical plans for home and school

In June 2010, Governor Pat Quinn signed Public Act 3266, a law that is aimed at reducing bullying in schools.

The law expanded the definition of “bullying” to include any communication made through writing or electronic means such as text messaging, e-mail or social networking websites. Anything from race, gender, religion, a physical disability or sexual orientation can be targets for school bullying.

With the new law, each school district and private school is required to develop and maintain a policy on bullying that must be updated every two years. Public schools were already required to have such policies in place. The new law also requires school districts and private schools to develop plans for bullying and gang prevention.

Additionally, the legislation created the School Bullying Prevention Task Force. The Task Force has the goal to investigate the causes and consequences of bullying in schools and recommend prevention strategies. The initial report to the Governor was submitted as of March 1, 2011. The executive summary and more information is available at www.isbe.state.il.us/SBPTF.

Three Step Plan to Stop Bullying

Discovering that your child is being bullied can be devastating. You may feel bewildered, scared, sad, guilty, angry, or helpless. You may even feel like a target yourself. While it is important to recognize and acknowledge all those emotions, remember that feelings alone will not change the situation. The most effective thing you can do is focus on the issue and develop a plan.

Here are tools, strategies, and tips that can help you develop successful short-term and longer-term plans for protecting your child from bullying.

1. **Make sure that the issue is bullying and not routine childhood conflict.**

It's bullying if the action is hurtful, intentional, and repetitive, and there is a power imbalance between children. Sometimes children are afraid or embarrassed to talk about bullying. Ask and listen for the answers to questions like: Did someone hurt you on purpose? Is the other person bigger than you or scary to you? Did the child know you were being hurt?

Watch for signs, such as suddenly wanting to be driven to school instead of taking the bus; unexplained stomachaches or headaches; or changes in sleep routines or temperament.

2. **If your child is being bullied, you can take action at home to help your child learn how to respond more effectively.**

Teach direct and indirect techniques for dealing with bullies. You may want to encourage your child to avoid situations where bullying occurs. She can hang out with classmates, friends, peers, or siblings. He may tell the child who

is bullying to stop. Encourage group involvement, as children who interact with peers are less likely to be bullied.

3. **If your child is being bullied at school, you can work with teachers and administrators to create a safe environment.**

Meet with your child's teacher:

- Discuss what is happening to your child using information from Step One.
- Ask what can be done so your child feels safe at school.
- Keep a written record of what happened at this meeting, including names and dates.
- If your child has disabilities, you can build bullying prevention goals into your child's Individualized Education Program (IEP)

Make an appointment to meet with the principal to discuss the bullying situation:

- Share information from Step One.
- Mention your work with your child regarding the situation.
- Share the outcome of your meeting with the teacher.
- Mention how the situation is impacting your child.
- Ask if school has a written policy on bullying and harassment. If so, ask for a written copy.
- Ask what the school can do to keep your child safe at school, on school bus, etc.

Caregivers can also consider joining the PTA and raise awareness of bullying as an issue.

Three Step Plan to Stopping Bullying was reprinted with permission by the PACER Center. Visit PacerKidsAgainstBullying.org for more information.

Fall is the time to prevent flu with vaccinations and careful hygiene

Influenza, more commonly referred to as the flu, is a respiratory tract infection that is typically caused by the influenza virus. The flu season typically runs between November and April. The outbreak of the H1N1 strain of flu, also called “swine flu,” adds another level of concern. Even though the World Health Organization (WHO) declared the H1N1 pandemic to be over. Yet, it stated in released remarks that this does not mean that the H1N1 virus has gone away. Based on experience with past pandemics, the H1N1 virus may take on the behavior of a seasonal influenza virus and continue to circulate for some years to come.

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. The WHO is recommending that H1N1 be included in the seasonal vaccination.

A flu vaccination can lower the risk of a bothersome and potentially serious bout of the flu. Some of the symptoms associated with the flu are fever, headache, cough, sore throat, chills and fatigue. The symptoms for H1N1 are similar, with some people reporting diarrhea 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.

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.

The flu shot is the first step toward prevention. Additionally, everyone can take everyday actions to stay healthy. Remember to teach youth to cover their mouth and nose when they sneeze or cough, and remind them to wash their hands frequently. They also need to remember to

avoid touching their eyes, nose and mouth, since that can spread germs. Additionally, they should try to avoid close contact with sick people.

For more information about the upcoming flu season, go the website to www.flu.gov or contact the Illinois Department of Health at 217-782-4977.

STAY HEALTHY BY FOLLOWING THE 3 Cs

CLEAN – properly wash your hands thoroughly

COVER – cover your cough and sneeze

CONTAIN – contain your germs by staying home if you are sick

School physicals are required for students:

- *entering an Illinois school for the first time at any age*
- *starting kindergarten*
- *entering the sixth grade*
- *entering the ninth grade*

Proof of school physical and shots due by Oct. 15

Students in public and private schools must show proof a current school physical and up-to-date immunizations by October 15. According to state law, children who do not have a current physical or shots by October 15 will not be allowed to continue attending school until the record is updated.

Original copies of the Certificate of Child Health Examination, completed and signed by the physician, should be given to the school nurse where the child is enrolled. Caregivers can also request a blank form from the child’s caseworker (form CFS 600) or download it from the DCFS Web site at <http://www.state.il.us/DCFS/docs/cfs600.pdf>.



Government deems drop-side cribs unsafe, bans manufacture or sale

Despite the convenience of a drop-side crib, they have been deemed unsafe, and they can no longer be manufactured or sold as of June 2011. The Consumer Product Safety Commission outlawed drop-side cribs after more than 30 infants died in them and millions were recalled.

A unanimous vote banned the sale and resale of cribs with a side rail that moves up and down, allowing parents to more easily lift their child from the crib. The commission's move also prohibits hotels and childcare centers from using drop-side cribs,

though those facilities have a year to purchase new ones.

Drop-side cribs have come under scrutiny in recent years because of malfunctioning hardware, sometimes cheaper plastics, or assembly problems that can lead to the drop-side rail partially detaching from the crib. When that happens, it can create a dangerous "V"-like gap between the mattress and side rail where a baby can get caught and suffocate or strangle. As children get older, they can apply more force to the crib by shaking or

jumping. The new crib standards include tests that aim to make sure the cribs can take that kind of pressure.

Crib makers were already phasing out drop-side cribs because of the increasing number of problems with them. Parents who still are using drop-side cribs are advised to check the hardware to be certain it is working properly and to make sure their crib has not been recalled. The Juvenile Products Manufacturers Association said properly assembled drop-side cribs that haven't been recalled can be safely used.



Infant Sleep Tips

- Place infants to sleep on their backs.
- Place infants to sleep in a baby bed with a firm mattress. There should be nothing in the bed but the baby - no covers, pillows, bumper pads, positioning devices or toys.
- Keep baby's crib in parents' room until at least 6 months of age.
- Do not place a baby to sleep in an adult bed. Do not fall asleep with the baby on a couch or in a chair.
- Do not over-clothe the infant for sleep. Use enough clothes to keep the baby warm without having to use covers.

New law requires Sudden Infant Death (SIDS) training

In July, Governor Pat Quinn signed a law to reduce the number of child deaths in Illinois. The new law requires child care providers in Illinois to have training on Sudden and Unexpected Infant Death (SUID), Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) and safe sleep. Experts believe this legislation may result in fewer babies dying in child care and in their own homes.

Quinn said that knowledge is vital to protecting children. "This legislation ensures that child care workers in Illinois will be able to continue providing the highest standard of care. It is important that those who work with our children possess the most up-to-date health and safety information," he said.

Beginning January 2012, all licensed caregivers who care for newborns and infants will be required to complete training every three years on the nature

of SUID, SIDS and safe sleep, following the recommendations of the American Academy of Pediatrics.

According to a press release from the Governor's Office, 20 percent of SIDS-related deaths happen while children are in day care, said registered Nurse Nancy Maruyama, executive director of education for SIDS of Illinois. Her own son died after he suffocated against the bumpers inside his crib.

Giovan Cullotta and his wife Robin contacted their state representative after their daughter died while at a caregiver. He feels the law requiring continuing education in sleep concerns "will honor the life of my daughter and save babies' lives," he said.

Information about the new law and training can be found at the website www.sidsillinois.org.

MOVIN' ON UP:

For youth transitioning to adulthood

Most youth who still have open DCFS cases will qualify for financial aid. When students choose an in-district community college, they find that most expenses are covered. However, some courses the community colleges offer do not qualify for financial aid.

Students who enroll in vocational programs such as Certified Nursing Assistant, or phlebotomy certification or forklift driving, can take advantage of the Community College Payment Program. This allows youth under DCFS guardianship to have their in-district tuition, fees, and books paid by DCFS, if they are not paid by financial aid grants.

Payments can be made for up to four semesters.

Eligibility:

- Must be a youth for whom DCFS is legally responsible (post-adoption not eligible)
- Must be accepted for enrollment by an in-district community college
- May not have used four semesters of payments
- Must maintain a "C" average
- Must apply for financial aid through FAFSA, designating a community college to receive funds, and complete all the documentation required by the school's financial aid department.

The youth's caseworker can help with completing the school enrollment, FAFSA and financial aid paperwork. The student must also complete the Service Agreement and DCFS form CFS 407-3 and submit it directly to the community college with a letter verifying DCFS guardianship. Payment requests can be submitted for vocational training programs that are part of the community college curriculum. Students whose income may have made them eligible for less financial aid may also apply to this program.

Contact Patricia Palmer with questions at patricia.palmer@illinois.gov or by phone at 847-888-7637.

DCFS launched a Web site specifically to prepare youth for adulthood.

At www.youthincare.illinois.gov, young people and caregivers can find information on DCFS programs for:

- Education
- Housing
- Money Smarts
- Healthy Living
- Life Skills
- Teen Parenting
- Legal System

The site is geared to assist youth as young as 8 and up to 21. Using the theme "Get Goal'd," young people can explore the different paths to adulthood and make informed decisions.

DCFS offers families savings and old-fashioned fun at both state fairs



Attending the state fair in Springfield and in DuQuoin has become a long-standing tradition for foster, adoptive and guardianship families. In Springfield, typically the last Friday of the fair is designated Children's Day. Families receiving DCFS support

come in droves. Many Chicagoland families boarded buses early in the morning on August 19 so they could spend the day in Springfield. In addition to reduced rate parking and admission to the fair, DCFS provided each eligible family member discounted carnival rides and \$3 in free meal tickets. Staff and other volunteers faithfully worked in the DCFS tent throughout the ten-day event, doing family pictures and providing child welfare resource information.

At the DuQuoin State Fair, families gathered on Saturday, August 27 for a picnic-setting that included rides, games and food. Local organizations made contributions, and DCFS staff volunteered weekend time to ensure everyone had fun.

This year, DCFS sent out tickets to more than 1,000 foster, adoptive and guardianship families for Springfield. More than 150 families requested tickets to the picnic at the DuQuoin fair.



Illinois Statewide Foster Care Advisory Council Bulletin

The council held its first meeting of fiscal year 2012 on Friday, July 15th at Fairview Heights. The council spent some time organizing their committees and deciding the work they need to perform during the coming year. Chair Angela Barber worked with members to make sure that committee chair positions are filled and committees clearly understand their mission.

Parent Certification

The council heard about an interesting program that involves training and credentialing parents. Penny Weedon, Chair of the Family Driven Care Commission, and Judy Hutchinson, Family Consumer Specialist in Region 5, spoke to the council about the program and explained how it benefits all types of parents, including foster parents. The new credentialing program is for Certified Family Partnership Professionals (CFPP). CFPPs are

individuals who have been trained to leverage the unique life experiences they gained from parenting a child whose emotional and/or behavioral challenges required accessing resources, services and supports from multiple child-serving systems. These parents, once credentialed, can be assigned to work with other parents, including foster parents. The presenters will follow up with details at a future meeting.

New Learning Collaborative Curriculum

Council members have recently worked with professionals from Northwestern University to assist in developing the next learning collaborative for child welfare staff. This collaborative will focus on helping families achieve and maintain stability. Council members who recently participated in the expert review panel and the field review discussed their

experiences and noted how the topic will better assist staff in fostering stability with substitute care homes, intact families, and children in other living situations. The learning collaborative is set to roll out for staff this fall.

Joint Meeting with Youth Board

This year, the upcoming annual meeting with the DCFS Statewide Youth Advisory Board will occur in Bloomington, changing the recent tradition of meeting in Peoria. The chair reminded council members that the council meeting will begin at 3:00p.m. on Friday, September 16th and following tradition, members of the youth board will join the council for dinner and a joint meeting that will go into the evening. Barber noted that she will be working with leadership of the SYAB to plan the agenda for the joint meeting.

Caregivers can assist with implementation plans

Each year the Statewide Foster Care Advisory Council must review each of the foster care programs' Foster Parent Law Implementation Plans. The public period for review and comment begins in September. Typically the DCFS and private agency programs take any public input into consideration as they prepare the plans for 2012. The new plans will be due to the council by November 30.

The Foster Parent Law stipulates that agencies demonstrate that caregivers participated in creating the implementation plan. Typically they announce meetings in the fall to discuss the previous plan and changes for the new plan. The implementation plans must clearly describe how each foster care program upholds the foster parent rights and responsibilities in the Law.

All caregivers can review the previous year's plan. Some programs mail the plan to licensed homes. Others may have copies available at the administrative offices. If a foster caregiver needs more information about the actual plan or the process for drafting the new plan, each program has a Foster Parent Law liaison. The liaison is the primary contact for matters concerning the Law. Caregivers can also contact the DCFS Office of Caregiver and Parent Support at 217-524-2422 for assistance.

The Statewide Foster Care Advisory Council was founded in conjunction with the Illinois Foster Parent Law. Membership consists of caregivers, agency representatives and other experts in child welfare, who are appointed by the DCFS Director. The mandated positions for caregivers are spread among the DCFS regions.

The council holds open meetings at least six times a year, and more as needed, in locations around the state.

The next meeting of the Statewide Foster Care Advisory Council will be on September 16 at 3 p.m. in Bloomington. Call the Office of Caregiver and Parent Support at 217-524-2422 for details.

Adoptive families can find more info from closed files with MAC

Sometimes, adoptive parents find that there is a lot about their child's history that they don't know but wish they did. There are many reasons you might want to know more. Your child may be asking questions to which you have no answers. He or she may begin to talk about vague memories. You may need information to assist in treatment planning by a health care provider. Files that you had may have been lost. Midwest Adoption Center (MAC) is under contract to help adoptive and guardianship parents obtain information from DCFS closed files.

At the request of the adoptive parent or guardian, MAC will attempt to locate all of the files in the DCFS system that pertain to the child and prepare a

written report. Information about events in the child's family history and more detailed health history may be found in Department files—including the child's own file, birth parent files and even sibling files. Caregivers will receive all information found in the available files that is specified by law to be provided, at no charge.

If available, the following types of information are included in the written report:

- Placement summaries
- Family background information about birthparents and grandparents
- A description of the circumstances at the time he or she came into care
- General medical information as required by law (This includes

the child's own medical information as well as birth relatives' conditions that could have a genetic component such as alcoholism, mental health diagnosis, and other health problems such as cardiac disease.)

- Child's birth history
- Educational history

In addition, reports, medical records, and other material that may be found in the files that contain significant information will be redacted (provided with certain parts blacked out for confidentiality) then copied and attached to the standard format.

In general, any reports which could reasonably be assumed to be helpful to the adoptive parents, to a therapist or other

health care provider will be copied and included.

Families have said that learning about the child's past has helped them to understand current behaviors. Acquiring expanded health data allows for early diagnosis, and possibly treatment and interventions for developmental problems and conditions. Having this information aids the individual, as a child and later as an adult, to develop an accurate picture of the parts of himself that came from his birth family and those that were developed and nurtured in the present family.

For more information about the DCFS Closed File Information and Search Program, contact Midwest Adoption Center at 847-298-9096

Search and reunion services can find ways to reconnect family members

Adoptive parents may decide to make an outreach to a birth relative for a variety of reasons. A child may have a strong desire to contact siblings or other birth family members. You may need information to facilitate medical care or other professional services or to respond to questions the child is asking. In some situations, adoptive parents need information that was not found in the agency files. Attempting to locate and contact a birth family member to obtain the needed information may be a good option.

If your child was adopted through DCFS, Midwest Adoption Center is under contract to provide search service statewide. If the birth relative is located, MAC staff will attempt to facilitate any communication you both desire. Anonymous communication by letter through MAC is often the first step allowing both you and the relative to make a more informed decision as

to how to proceed. If both the adoptive family and the 'found' birth relative choose to have direct contact, consents will be signed allowing MAC to release identifying information. Another option is to continue corresponding through MAC indefinitely. In most cases, the person being sought is located. Every attempt will be made to negotiate an arrangement that is comfortable for everyone.

There are many things for each family to consider when thinking about making an outreach to the birth family. But the possibilities are also many, and include potential benefits for you and your child. Caregivers can learn more about these issues by reading, using your adoptive parent networks and working with adoption professionals to make the best possible decisions for your family.



Questions about adoption or guardianship subsidies find answers from the right regional contacts

The Cook County Post Adoption and Guardianship Unit has a new phone number. Caregivers should call 855-548-5505. This is the number to use with questions about the subsidy, to get approval for additional services and to provide updates to contact information or other changes. The new phone number is maintained by staff at a central location who can track the caller's request, ensure it goes to the appropriate individual and track the responsiveness.

Contacting Subsidy Workers at the Cook County Unit

Call new toll-free number
855-548-5505

DCFS Northern Region

Supervisor Don Vasich 630-844-8496
Joliet: Norma Napper 815-730-4086

Aurora: Deirdra Davis 630-844-8966

Rockford: Jennifer Zaluckyj 815-967-3763

DCFS Central Region

Supervisor: Kevin Hauser 217-278-5535

Peoria: Deborah Hawkins 309-671-7944

Springfield: Carla Robinson 217-557-2668

Urbana: Elois Drake 217-278-5417

DCFS Southern Region

Supervisor Bernice Stallings 618-583-2184

East St. Louis: Carol Teague-Douglas 618-583-2189

Mt. Vernon: Wendy Manna 618-244-8424



Plan now for November Adoption Month activities and raise awareness of foster care adoption in communities

What started as a weeklong celebration of adoption in Massachusetts, blossomed into an entire month of activities that has been nationally recognized since 1990. One special highlight of the month is National Adoption Day when courts and communities across the country will come together to finalize thousands of adoptions of children from foster care and to celebrate all families who adopt.

Traditionally, National Adoption Day is celebrated the Saturday before Thanksgiving. This year on November 19, families and communities will be united around adoption. On that day, hundreds of judges, attorneys, adoption agencies, adoption professionals and child advocates will stand

together on behalf of forever families for waiting children. Since 2000, more than 35,000 children have been adopted from foster care on National Adoption Day.

The goals of National Adoption Day 2011 are to:

- Finalize adoptions from foster care in all 50 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico
- Celebrate and honor all families who adopt
- Raise awareness about the 123,000 children in foster care waiting for adoption
- Encourage others to adopt children from foster care
- Build collaboration among local adoption agencies, courts, and advocacy organizations
- Communicate availability and need for post-adoptive services

There are many ready-to-go resources that can help one prepare to celebrate adoption throughout the month. Individuals and organizations can plan events, letter writing campaigns, community marches and countless other activities for November.

To find more information about National Adoption Day activities, events, templates and resources take time now to visit the website www.nationaladoptionday.org.



Who do you call when...

...A child in your home is having a psychiatric crisis that may require hospitalization? Call the CARES line at 800-345-9049. However, if a child is a danger to himself or others, call 911 first. The CARES line is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

...You want information on becoming a foster parent or on adoption? The Adoption Information Center of Illinois (AICI) can answer your questions and connect you with a licensing agency. The toll-free number is 800-572-2390. AICI also maintains information about the children who are featured on the back page of the newsletter.

...You have questions about your board check? Call the DCFS Central Payment Unit at 800-525-0499 if your check comes from DCFS. If your check comes from a private agency, contact the agency.

...You feel you aren't being treated fairly by DCFS or a private agency? If you've already tried to resolve the issue by going up the chain of command with the caseworker and supervisors, then call the Advocacy Office at 800-232-3798.

...You have questions about your child's medical card? Call 800-228-6533.

...You need to report a child missing or have information about a youth who has run away? To report information on missing youth call 866-503-0184. The toll-free number is available 24 hours a day every day of the week. If you feel the child is in danger, call 911 first.

...You are having extreme family problems with your adopted child? The Adoption/Subsidized Guardianship Preservation Program can provide in-home counseling and case services to help hold a family together. To find the program that serves your area call Cook County Post-Adoption/Guardianship Unit at 855-548-5505 or the subsidy worker in nearest DCFS regional office.

...You have an idea for an article in the newsletter? Each region has a regional reporter to help gather local news. The names and contact information are listed in the regional section of each edition. Or you can contact the Editor, Vanessa James, at 312-814-6824 or send an e-mail vanessa.james@illinois.gov.

...You are having a hard time getting services for your child at school? Most private agencies have an Education Liaison, and each DCFS region has Education Advisors who can help. Call your agency or nearest DCFS office to be connected to the right educational resource for your area.

...You want to report suspected abuse or neglect? Call the Hotline at 800-25-ABUSE (800-252-2873). The toll-free number is available 24 hours a day every day of the week. All calls are confidential.

...You want to find or register for foster care training? For the most up-to-date and complete schedule information for classes offered in your area, visit the on-line Virtual Training Center anytime at www.DCFStraining.org or call the DCFS Office of Training at 877-800-3393 during regular business hours.



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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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Department of Children and Family Services©

A family for me: Call 1-800-572-2390 for more information



Amber (C7740)

Amber [7740] Amber, 13, is a smart, loving child who cares about others. Although she can be disruptive from time to time, she also responds well to structure and routine. Amber likes to stay busy. She fills her spare time with plenty of outdoor activities, including camping, fishing, horseback riding, rollerblading, and basketball. When she does settle down inside her foster home, Amber enjoys reading, playing with her collection of stuffed animals, and spending time on the computer.

Amber's foster parent says she is learning proper behavior and understands choices, consequences, and rewards. Her caseworker says she is helpful at home and well-behaved at school.



Daniel (C7808)

To be a forever family for Amber, you can provide a stable, loving home environment with clearly defined expectations. You can devote plenty of time to establishing routines and rewarding positive behavior. You can also work with Amber's current foster parents, teachers, and caseworkers to help further her development. Amber wants to live with a nice family that enjoys fun group activities as well as quiet times at home. She says she "wants the family to like me." Amber should be the only child in her adoptive home or, at the very least, the youngest child in her adoptive home.

Daniel [7808] Give Daniel a small toy with moveable parts and watch in wonder as he finds endless entertainment. Daniel, 14, is fascinated with the way things work, and loves to explore the mechanics of toy cars, trucks, and planes. Although he is autistic and struggles to communicate with others, Daniel does manage to keep himself occupied and engaged. He is especially well-behaved around adult males he knows and trusts. Daniel's foster parent says he responds positively to structure. He tends to respect the male authority figures in his life.

The potential parent for Daniel is a person who can establish himself of herself as a strong role model for Daniel. You can remain patient with him as he adjusts to your home, rewarding his positive behavior whenever possible, but not expecting him to be overly affectionate in return. You can also learn more about autism so you can become an effective advocate for Daniel.



Nicholas (C7746)

Nicholas [7746] Nicholas, 11, is a bright young man who is ready for a forever family. He enjoys being around other people and is able to develop strong relationships with adults. Nicholas has trouble socializing with his peers, but has developed several hobbies to keep him occupied, including bike riding and skateboarding. When he is not outside, he enjoys playing video games, drawing, and solving puzzles.

Nicholas' worker says he can be sweet, caring, helpful, and kind. He relates well to animals, and loves spending time with both dogs and cats. The right family for Nicholas is one that would be patient with him as he adapts. You can provide structure and discipline,

rewarding Nicholas when he makes good choices. The ideal family would consist of two parents living in a rural community, who have experience raising boys. Nicholas would prefer a family that is "fun to hang out with."

Patriana [7837] Patriana, 13, has so many interests it can be hard to keep track of them all. She is a compassionate child who loves animals and would like to have a dog. She is also an intelligent child who enjoys science and does well in school. Patriana has creative interests that include singing, drawing, and participating in a dance program. And if that weren't enough, she also hopes to join a volleyball team in the near future. Looking further into the future, Patriana hopes to be a pastry chef when she grows up.

Patriana's foster parents say she is a happy child who really enjoys spending time with her foster family. Patriana's teachers say she is a good student who gets along well with her classmates.

Potential parents for her can encourage Patriana to explore her many creative, athletic, and academic interests. You can be patient with Patriana as she adjusts to your home, working with specialists to help meet her emotional needs. Patriana is ready and willing to be adopted. She would like to join a two-parent family that already has children in the home. She would also like to maintain contact with her older siblings. A south suburban Cook County family is preferred.

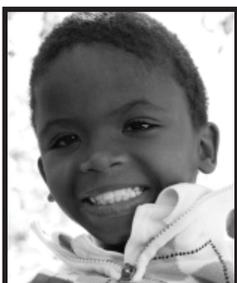
Reggie [7832] Reggie, 7, is a joyous, enthusiastic young man who loves spending time with people. He has an outgoing, "bigger than life" personality and is constantly playing, learning, laughing, and trying to engage others. Although he learns at a slower rate than his peers, he is able to grasp concepts quickly. Reggie asks lots of questions and responds very well to encouragement. When he is done with his schoolwork, he enjoys playing with stuffed animals and bath toys, keeping his room neat and tidy, and snacking on healthy foods.

Reggie's foster parent says "his laugh is one of the happiest sounds ever invented, and you will get to hear it every day when you welcome him into your family." He adds that Reggie is one of the happiest, most loving children he knows.

Reggie's forever family can encourage his love of learning by reading to him, helping him grasp concepts, and helping him apply those concepts to everyday problems. You can also monitor Reggie's behavior, and work with various professionals in order to understand and meet his emotional and medical needs. Reggie loves to be around people, and would benefit from regular, ongoing contact with the most important people in his life. The ideal family would be able to devote a large share of their attention and energy to Reggie's care, and provide supervision when Reggie is playing with other children or animals.



Patriana (C7837)



Reginald (C7832)

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