

## The “mystery” of being foster parents to young children keeps life interesting for the Rosselots

Foster and adoptive parent Tom Rosselot says that being a foster parent definitely has a mysterious side. “When you arrive home from work, you never know for sure who is living at your house,” he good-naturedly remarked.

Unexpected phone calls are also a part of the package. Tom remembered getting a call at work from his wife, Nancy, asking him to bring home some rug cleaner. It turned out that their artistic bunch of preschoolers decided to finger paint on their beige carpet using catsup! According to Nancy, a good sense of humor is essential to survive the trials of fostering.

It was back in 1988 that Nancy and Tom Rosselot decided they wanted to become foster parents. At the time, they had only their son Timmy, and believed they could provide a stable and loving home to more children. Even with the addition of David and Megan, the desire to help other children was still in their hearts. Since then Nancy has lost count of the number of children that have been a part of their family through foster care, but still has memories to treasure.

She was teary eyed as she recalled a letter from a 12-year-old boy. “He actually thanked me for allowing him to eat and have snacks,” Nancy remembered. “Things other kids take for granted really mean something to the kids we have had placed with us.” The letter touched Tom and Nancy deeply and strengthened their commitment to help. The Rosselots have developed a definite expertise for caring for children with developmental challenges.



*Tom, Nancy, Tim, Megan and David Rosselot*

“We have been trained in infant CPR as well as in giving breathing treatments. It seems like we have been to every clinic learning how to help these kids through physical and occupational therapy, and even feeding therapy. Riding bikes, bouncing balls, stacking toys and walking steps are all part of the regimen to help with their recovery,” said Nancy.

In addition to education, Nancy believes in being part of the team to help foster children and their birth families. She has supervised visits between birth mom and child while a mother was in drug rehabilitation program. Some parents have come to the Rosselot home to pick up their children for visits. Tom and Nancy have instructed young mothers on how to care for their children. The Rosselots and the caseworkers have arranged for

## Mystery (con't.)

some parents to accompany Nancy to medical appointments for their children. Some birth parents have been given their phone number so they can check on their children. Each case is different and the caseworkers have helped the Rosselots find ways to work with parents as they strive to regain custody of their children.

Until that can happen, the Rosselots devote a lot of time and energy to assure that they are improving both the developmental and educational growth of the children placed in their home. They have worked with numerous medical and educational professionals. They also brainstorm with DCFS caseworkers to find ways to bring about positive outcomes for the children.

But, perhaps more important than the professional work is the personal impact they can have. The Rosselots are most proud of the sense of family they have shared with the children in their home. Any child that comes into the home soon knows Grandma Wiegers and all their new aunts and uncles. The Rosselots attribute their success in fostering to the help and support they receive from their own family and other team members.

## Say “NO” to biting with advice from Mount Vernon foster parents

Bev Rightnowar, a caseworker in the Mt. Vernon field office, recently faced a placement challenge. She needed to find foster homes for two young children who communicated by hitting, yelling and biting each other. The children, ages two and three, were both very aggressive biters. Rightnowar was aware that their behavior would be challenging to most foster parents. Today, Rightnowar is pleased to report that the children’s behavior has improved significantly and they are in stable placements. Here’s what their foster parents said made the difference.

Teresa Brown said that she watched for triggers. She became very aware of when her two-year-old foster son was preparing to bite. She would calmly remove him from the situation and firmly tell him “no biting.” She was happy to report that his biting has markedly decreased and he is becoming more accustomed to socializing appropriately with other children.

Foster mom Janet Glenn, who fostered the three-year-old girl, said that her behavior has improved tremendously. “It wasn’t magic, I just removed her from the play group when she was hitting or biting. She loves to play with the other kids, so it really didn’t take to long to correct the behavior.”

Prevention is definitely the key to stop biting. Here are a few helpful tips:

- Never tolerate your child’s biting
- Firmly tell your child “No biting”
- Help your child express his wants and feeling with words
- Watch the child who may bite closely. Intervene at the first sign of trouble.

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## Things to know for Kindergarten

When your child goes to school, it will be helpful for him to know:

- His or her full name, address, foster parents’ name and telephone number.
- How to dress himself, especially zippers and buttons. He or she should know how to tie shoes as soon as possible.
- How she will get home and how to cross streets safely.
- How to care for toilet needs.
- How to use a tissue when he or she coughs or sneezes.
- How and when to wash his or her hands.

## Southern Region scholars win at college

Families Now and Forever congratulates the Southern Region graduates on the double accomplishment of attending college and receiving a DCFS Scholarship. These young people stood out in their schools and in their communities as examples of what hope and hard work can bring about. Right about now the reality of college life is probably sinking in for these students. There remains plenty of road ahead of them, but with perseverance and the help of dedicated caregivers, caseworkers and many others they are on the right path.

### Tara Craig

Tara Craig, 18, of Christopher, is a graduate of Christopher Unit School District #99. In high school, she was a member of the volleyball team, Homecoming Float Committee, Drama Club, Newspaper, and Yearbook staff. She also stayed active within her community. Tara now attends Rend Lake College where she will pursue a major in Elementary Education and Social Work.



### Deana Cruthis

Deana Cruthis graduated as an honor student from Highland Community Unit School District No. 5. She was a member of several clubs including Ecology Club, Spanish Club, Future Medical Careers Club,

several band groups (jazz, pep and symphonic), and a traveling softball team. Additionally, Deana was involved within her community working blood drives, Adopt-A-Family, Special Olympics, and at a nursing home. Deana now attends Southern Illinois University at Carbondale as a Pre-Med major.

### Amanda Judkins

Amanda Judkins, of Dongola, is a 2003 graduate of Dongola High School with a G.P.A. of 4.63 on a 5.0 system. She won first place in a WYSE Chemistry competition. Amanda now attends Southern Illinois University at Carbondale and is considering a career as a teacher.

### Kalei Stanley

Kalei Stanley of Murphysboro, graduated from Murphysboro High School. Kalei won the Silver Certificate, which is an art award from the Scholastic Art Writing Awards. She also was employed at Wal-Mart located in Murphysboro. She now attends John A. Logan College and will major in Business Management.



### Melissa Vaughn

Melissa Vaughn, 18, of Mulkeytown, attends Southern Illinois University at Edwardsville and plans to major in Theater and teach at the high school and collegiate levels. In high school, she ranked

18<sup>th</sup> out of a class of 58 with an overall G.P.A. of 4.4 out of a 5.0 system. Melissa was a scholar, athlete, and the co-editor of the high school newspaper. She was also a cheerleader and Girl Scout, sang in the chorus, and belonged to the Math Club.

## OUR KIDS

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Call with foster parent association news and schedules; local training; features on foster families and community members working for children; photos; and news articles and support all foster families can use.

## Southern Region Training

### FosterPRIDE In-Service Training

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Marion**  
**618-536-7751**

**East St. Louis**  
**618-650-3213**

Module

Module

**SALEM - Township High School**  
Dec. 3, 10, & 17 6:30-9:30 p.m. 5  
(Wed)

**FAIRVIEW HEIGHTS - Ramada Inn**  
Nov. 6, 13 & 20 6:30-9:30 p.m. 4  
(Thu)

**Pre-registration is required for all classes!**  
**Call the number listed for your area.**

## Educational Advocacy

Two 3-hour sessions = 6 training

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

**Marion**  
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**East St. Louis**  
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**ULLIN Shawnee College**  
Nov. 8 (Sat) 9 a.m.-4 p.m.

**BELLEVILLE Catholic Social Svc.**  
Nov. 8 & 15 (Sat) 9:30 a.m.-12 p.m.

**SALEM Salem Township Hospital**  
Dec. 1 & 8 (Mon) 6:30-9:30 p.m.

**EDWARDSVILLE Comfort Inn**  
Dec. 10 & 17 (Wed) 6:30-9:30 p.m.

**FAIRVIEW HEIGHTS DCFS Office**  
Nov. 11 & 18 (Tues) 6:30-9:30 p.m.

## What's your best kid tip for parents?

Put the toys in time out if used improperly. Young children usually understand time out better than to just have the toy taken away.

**Sandy Blanchard,**  
**Waterloo**

Spend as much time with them as you can and love them.

**Wanda Hawkins,**  
**Sparta**

When a young child tries to get out of their seat belt or doesn't want to wear one, you simply tell them it's the law.

**Ken Falkenheim,**  
**Steeleville**

Be the one in control so children understand boundaries.

**Sharon Butler,**  
**Schuline**

Catch those kids doing good, and give them lots of praise, they love it.

**Pat Crokarell,**  
**Troy**

