

Recovery room recruiting leads to new family

Adoption worker Beverly Bell in the Urbana Field Office received some frightening news from her physician. She needed to have surgery. But with service plans due, pending court dates, sibling visits and all the paperwork she needed to complete, there did not seem to be time. However, Beverly realized she had to help herself in order to continue to help her clients. She had no idea that this surgery would help place a child with a forever family.

On the day of Beverly's surgery, she arrived at the hospital with the same nervousness she sees in clients. The anesthetics kept away the pain so her next memory was of a recovery nurse attempting to wake her. Beverly's woozy response to the nurse's question about her job was, "I work for the State of Illinois as an adoption worker for DCFS."

What Beverly could not have known was that Nurse Michelle Roberts had been thinking about adopting a child for some time. Michelle, like many other foster parents, began thinking about fostering/adopting about a year before taking any action to start the licensing process. When

Beverly, while still groggy from the anesthesia, heard about Michelle's interest, she started to talk about a girl on her caseload who was in need of a permanent home.

Michelle arrived home at 10:30 that night after a 100-mile commute in just one direction. After a long day at work and a long drive home, she dropped into bed and mentioned her conversation to her husband Roger. She told him the DCFS worker even had an eight-year-old girl in mind for them. The look on his face was one Michelle would not soon forget. If she could have read his mind it likely would have shrieked, "I'm a school principal who is around kids all day and when I finally get to sleep, you tell me you want to adopt!"

Fortunately, the next morning was a different story. Roger woke to tell Michelle that he had been thinking about this little girl all night long. He wanted her to contact Beverly as soon as possible to find out how to get things started. But, the next time Michelle was scheduled to work, her patient was already discharged from the hospital.

Still, the wheels were turning behind the scenes. Michelle, Roger, their son, age 17 and daughter, 12, were following their busy Saturday routine when they bumped into acquaintances who do foster care with DCFS. When the Roberts' stopped by to meet the new children who had recently come to their friends' home, they discovered that Beverly was the caseworker. With a quick call to Beverly's cell phone, they had an appointment set to meet the child that Beverly hoped to place. The next call was to a DCFS recruiter to start the application for licensing. With the support of their experienced friends, the Roberts had many of their initial questions answered. They attended the PRIDE training classes and had several visits with the little girl. Not much later, the little girl was placed in Michelle and Roger's home. As of this writing, the family is in the process of completing the adoption.



Beverly Bell

“Trippin’ List” answers questions from Central Region teens

Hey! Central Region Teenagers! We, the members of the Central Region Youth Advisory Board thought it would be cool to get some time with you in each newsletter.

During our discussions at our monthly meetings, we realized that life with DCFS most of the time means more questions than answers. So, we are going to pick some questions that we want to have answered. We’re going to research the official policy and maybe add a few of our insights too.

We call this our “**Trippin’ List**”. It is a chance to talk about the things that have us trippin’ out or trippin’ over ourselves trying to make this whole DCFS thing work. But we won’t just trip—we will get some answers.

If you have a “Trippin’ List” question or would like to become a member of our regional board, the door is always open. Ask your caseworker for information or call the Youth Hotline at 1-800-232-3798.

Can DCFS youth own a car?

Answer: There is no specific policy statement on this. A request for an answer has been sent to the DCFS Guardian’s office for comment.

Comment: This is a tricky issue because all kids want a car. We talked about this and came up with a lot of things that we might not have thought of before. Even IF we had the money for a decent car, who can afford all the costs that go with it like the title, license plates and maintenance. (We know a guy who got a pretty cool car and two months later the transmission went out. It cost \$1,800 to get it fixed and he’d used all of his savings to buy the car. Now he’s got no money AND no car!) Even if you can keep it in running shape, have you seen the price of GAS lately? Then have you heard about the big one—INSURANCE?! The law says you have to have it. It’s thousands of dollars each year and there’s no relief until you turn 21.

With a cash drain like that, an after school job is not going to cut it. Even if you could get a job that paid decent cash, you’d have to work so much that there’d be no time to drive the thing. It seems like DCFS policy is the least of our worries when you’re thinking about buying a car.

Licensing workers focus on the details to help families prepare for children

Licensing representatives are the bridge from helping a family first get licensed through making sure the home is ready for children to be placed there. The licensing rules can be complicated and often change. Likewise, foster parents’ licensing questions don’t always wait four years until the next renewal process. The DCFS licensing representatives are ready to help sort out licensing questions or complications along the way. If you need to move beyond your individual licensing worker, below are the names and phone numbers for the licensing supervisors in the Central Region.

Fae Jones~217-221-2525

Field Offices: Quincy, Jacksonville, Galesburg, Canton, Macomb, and Cambridge

Carol Lescallet~217-278-5300

Field Offices: Bloomington, Charleston, Danville, Watseka, and Urbana

James Phelps~309-671-7900

Field Offices: Peoria, Pekin, Ottawa, Princeton, and Rock Island

Jane Williams~217-782-4000

Field Offices: Springfield, Lincoln, Taylorville, Carlinville, and Jerseyville

Famous individuals know foster care firsthand

Tough times as a child did not keep these individuals from success. In some ways time in foster care taught them valuable lessons that helped them later. You can read more about the lives of these famous individuals who know life in foster care first hand at the website fosterclub.com.

Cher

Cher, Cherilyn Sarkasian LaPiere was born on May 20, 1946 in El Centro, California. She was an only child to an aspiring actress. When Cher was two years old, her mother was overcome by illness. At the time, she was a single mother, so Cher was sent to spend time in an orphanage. After she was able to return home, Cher spent a lot of time with her grandmother while her mother worked.

Watching her mother work instilled a love of performance in Cher. As a teen she dreamed of being a star. Her dream continues with a career in music and film.

Eddie Murphy

Comedian and actor Eddie Murphy was just eight years old when he and his brother were sent to a foster home because of his mother's illness. Although he stayed in foster care for just about one year, he credits the experience with helping him develop a sense of humor and making him realize how important it is to find something to laugh about in every situation.

Daunte Culpepper

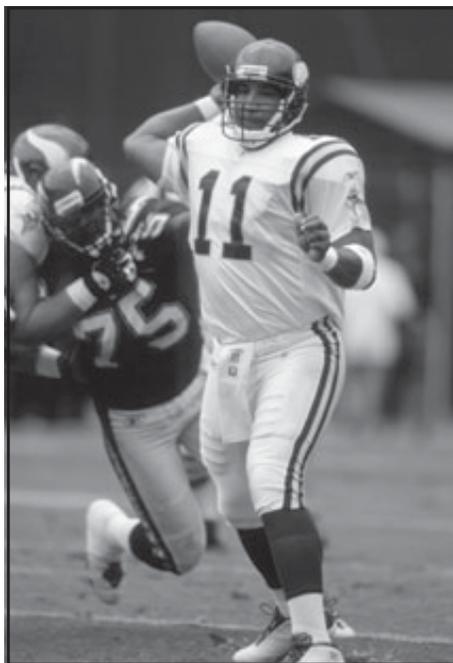


Photo courtesy of the Minnesota Vikings

As quarterback for the Minnesota Vikings, Daunte Culpepper makes quite an impact. He stands 6'4" and weighs 265 pounds. He runs a 4.6 second 40-yard dash and can jump 36 inches into the air and can throw the ball 80 yards. In 2003, Daunte signed a ten year \$102 million dollar contract with the team, the highest paying contract in team history and one of the highest in NFL history.

Culpepper gives much of the credit for his football success to his foster mother, Emma Culpepper. She raised him (and 14 other foster children) while his birth mother was imprisoned. Even after being reunified with his mom, Culpepper asked to move back to his foster mother.

Other famous foster kids

- Alonzo Mourning, NBA all star
- Anthony DiCosmo, pro football player
- Charlotte Ayanna, Miss Teen USA 1993 and actress
- Dan O'Brien, 1996 Olympic Gold Medal winner
- Esai Morales, actor
- Ice-T, rap artist and actor
- James Dean, actor
- John Lennon, musician
- Marilyn Monroe, actress
- Ruth Westheimer, psychologist and writer
- Superman, superhero
- Tom Monaghan, Domino's Pizza founder
- Tommy Davidson, comedian and actor
- Victoria Rowell, actress and dancer

Central Connections

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

Central Region Training Calendar

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)

Peoria Area
888-507-7433

Champaign Area
888-467-6065

Module

Module

PEORIA - Holiday Inn
June 7, 14 & 21 (Mon) 6-9 p.m. 8

PERU - LaQuinta Inn
May 1 & 8 (Sat) & 9 a.m.-4 p.m. 8
May 15 (Sat) 9 a.m.-12 p.m.

May 1 & 8 (Sat) & 9 a.m.-4 p.m. 10
May 15 (Sat) 9 a.m.-12 p.m.

DANVILLE - Community Church of God
June 7, 14 & 21 6:30-9:30 p.m. 4
(Mon)

Understanding risks in the community

Children in placement may become targets because:

- They are in a new environment and they want to belong.
- They may not have had consistent behavioral limits set by the adults in their lives.
- They may go through a period of testing the new foster parents or adoptive parents.

The adults in the child's life need to anticipate hazards. They must try to protect the child from situations that call for a level of behavior or maturity beyond his or her abilities.

Remember that children can be one age in years, and a much different age emotionally and sexually. Foster and adoptive parents must regard each child's strengths and needs individually.

Educational Advocacy

Two 3-hour sessions = 6 training hours

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.

Peoria Area • 888-507-7433

CANTON Wesley Methodist Church
June 21 & 28 (Mon) 6-9 p.m.

EAST MOLINE BHC Outreach Ctr.
June 26 & July 10 (Sat) 9 a.m.-12 p.m.

GALESBURG Holiday Inn Express
June 28 & July 12 (Mon) 6-9 p.m.

PEORIA Children's Home
June 8 & 15 (Tue) 6-9 p.m.
June 23 & 30 (Wed) 6-9 p.m.

Professional Park Plaza
May 22 & June 5 (Sat) 8 a.m.-12 p.m.

Springfield Area
888-817-1825

QUINCY The Crossing
May 3 & 10 (Mon) 6:30-9:30 p.m.

SPRINGFIELD Lincoln Land
June 7 & 14 (Mon) 6:30-9:30 p.m.

Champaign Area
888-467-6065

BLOOMINGTON Comfort Inn
May 4 & 11 (Tue) 6:30-9:30 p.m.

CHAMPAIGN IETC
May 20 & 27 (Thu) 6:30-9:30 p.m.

DECATUR Decatur Civic Center
June 19 (Sat) 9 a.m.-4 p.m.

Pre-Registration is required for all classes.

Call the number listed for your area for registration information.