

Illinois Families Now and Forever

Families by DCFS Foster Care, Adoption & Guardianship®

DCFS sends 48 students to college with scholarships

Of all the staffings, screenings and status hearings that bring caregivers, caseworkers and children together, there is one meeting that everyone wants to attend. The annual DCFS Scholarship Luncheon is a time to celebrate the accomplishments of the 48 scholarship recipients.

“I never want to miss this event,” said Director McEwen. He arrived late from a previous press conference, and he had to leave early. “But I made it there. It’s important to let these students know they are important to us.”

The luncheon was in Chicago on July 16, as students were looking forward to starting a new academic challenge. For many, the road to college included obstacles and unexpected curves. Yet, with supportive adults, numerous resources and their own perseverance, the path to their college degree is much clearer. The 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 receive a monthly maintenance grant of \$471 and a medical card for up to four years.

More than 250 students across the state completed applications for the DCFS Scholarship Program, giving the selection committee many viable candidates. Scholarship



The torch passed to the next generation when Patrick Hutsona, a 1986 DCFS scholarship recipient stood with LaTanya, his daughter by adoption, and wife Tracye. LaTanya is using her DCFS scholarship as a student at the University of Illinois.

recipients were chosen statewide on the basis of scholastic aptitude, a written personal statement and demonstrated community involvement.

The 48 finalists enjoyed a festive event luncheon thanks to the generous contribution of the Walter and Connie Payton Foundation. The DCFS Division of Service Intervention, which administers the scholarship program, had a full slate of activities for the recipients. They spent the morning before lunch

getting briefed on college life. Next, they broke into groups based on the schools they planned to attend, giving them an opportunity to make acquaintances before getting to campus. Then, after wise and well-wishing remarks from the featured speakers, they each had a moment in the spotlight to receive their plaque from the “dean of students for the day” Director McEwen. Finally, laden with gift bags and prizes from an exciting raffle, they were set to head off to campus.



From the DCFS Director

Erwin McEwen

Long before I was named Director of DCFS, I served families as a caseworker. I talked to ordinary people, living in ordinary houses who happen to do extraordinary work for children. We lost one of the ordinary, but incredible, people in July when Adrienne Welenc passed away.

Adrienne was chair of the Statewide Foster Care Advisory Council for four years and a member for eight. We served together when I was an agency representative to the council. Adrienne always looked at policy with an eye for the practical, and she spoke up whenever necessary. Even after I held the title of Director, Adrienne was still “directing” me.

I welcomed input from Adrienne and her husband Jerry. Together they championed the cause for all foster caregivers. Their testimony in Springfield helped bring about the Foster Parent Law. They spearheaded the public hearings that resulted in the most recent increase to the board rate. Their advocacy efforts led to programs that changed child welfare in Illinois.

Adrienne’s reputation reached far, but she never forgot her purpose. When honored with a federal volunteer award, she challenged President George Bush to become licensed for foster care. For Adrienne, it was the underserved and overlooked who mattered most. As a Lead Foster Parent Support Specialist in Cook Central, she never put down her pager. Caregivers could always call on someone who had walked the same path. Every year, I could count on seeing her handing out gifts at the holiday parties or pouring coffee at the Caregiver Institutes.

None of this is a secret to her family of nine children by birth and adoption or the nearly 100 who came to call the Welenc house a home through foster care. All caregivers should know of her service, her legacy and the debt that we who care for children owe to Adrienne Welenc.

2010 DCFS Scholarship Recipients

Lindsay Anderson
Kara Atkins
Cody Baker
Lillie Blackmon
Dexter Burns
Michelle Crayton
Jamie Crockett
Amber Doherty
Ashley Dorsey
Thomas Drey
Joseph Ehrich
Kaitlyn Ellis
Sara Fiorenzo
Jakob Francis
Elizabeth Freeman
Robert Glassner
Carolita Holmes
LaTanya Hutsona
Hao Yang Jiang
Reginald Jones
Ashley Jones-Phillips
Colleen Leonard
Joshua Lettner
Kevin Logan

Joshua Majerus
Ruth Manns
Tevin Marbeth
Leekita McCorker
Charles McGuire
Tomi Mick (Wall)
Mariah Miller
Timothy Moore
Shanita Mullen
Abelia Perez
Antionette Randle
Jessica Richey
Crystal Spruiell
Tessa Stephens
Sa’Rah Stroud
Raelene Struckmeyer
Whitney Taylor
Bianca Taylor
Carter Tindell-Hall
Steven Tyler
Chaunte Wilder
Derrick Wright
Brittany Young
William Zavorski



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.



Statewide Foster Care Advisory Council Update

The Statewide Advisory Council had a July meeting in Carbondale. The Southern region was the local host. Valda Haywood, assistant regional administrator, reviewed the recent closing of local offices and informed the council of the plan to keep Southern Region caregivers connected through the regional council.

The first meeting of the fiscal year typical is devoted to planning and “housekeeping” items. The council checked on all committees and subcommittees to gauge membership and progress on the stated tasks. Members also set their calendar for milestone activities.

Lastly, the council prepared for the annual meeting with the Statewide Youth Advisory Board in September. The groups will meet in East Peoria to go over a joint agenda. Ways that caregivers can support the youth board’s recruitment efforts will be one major topic.



Edith Cruz



Irma Jean Dixon



Cathy McCoy

New Members

Edith Cruz joined the council to represent the Cook North Region. Cruz is a long-time caregiver who has adopted twice. She is President of the Hispanic Foster Parent Association. Irma Jean Dixon will also represent Cook North. She was licensed in 2003 and has focused on reunification foster care. She is certified in sign language and cares for children with special health needs. Cathy McCoy is representing the Northern region. She has been a foster caregiver for seven years. McCoy also served as a Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) for 24 children.

Council announces new top officers for FY 2011

The Statewide Foster Care Advisory Council recently announced the results of the elections for the new fiscal year. Angela Barber will serve as chair and Heather Schumacher is vice chair. Their terms will be for one year.



Barber, of Chicago, is a foster caregiver and adoptive parent of two daughters. She has represented the Cook South region for three years, where she is also chair of that regional council.

As chair, Barber’s responsibilities will include conducting the council

meetings, preparing reports to the Director and setting the regular agenda and overall direction of the council.



Schumacher serves on the council as a professional with child welfare expertise. She has been a Statewide

member for four years, most recently serving as chair of the policy committee.

“The Statewide Council is important for caregivers. We have a stake in the Department’s decisions, so we should have a voice,” said Barber.

The Statewide Foster Care Advisory Council was founded as part of 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 6 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 October 15, beginning at 9 a.m. in Waukegan. Call the Office of Caregiver and Parent Support at 217-524-2422 for details.

Vaccinations and good hygiene protect against flu

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. Last year's outbreak of H1N1 strain of flu, also called "swine flu," added another level of concern. In August 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, we expect the H1N1 virus to 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 for the current year.

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 each time. They need to remember to avoid touching their eyes, nose and mouth, since that can spread germs. They should also try to avoid close contact with sick people.

For more information about the upcoming flu season, go 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 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 due by October 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>.

Be watchful for young love that carries risk of teen dating violence

It is easy to gloss over teen relationships as just as “puppy love” or sweet romances. Yet, young love in its intensity can also lead to abuse. Teen dating violence is a pattern of behavior used by one adolescent intimate partner to gain power and control over his or her partner. According to the National Teen Dating Abuse Hotline, 1 in 5 teens who have been in a serious relationship report being hit, slapped or pushed by a partner. Caregivers to teens who already must cope with the trauma that brought them into the child welfare system may need to be extra vigilant. It is important to know what to look for and how to help teens avoid additional trauma from toxic relationships.

Forms of Teen Dating Violence

Teen dating violence takes on many forms. Physical abuse consists of an abusive partner pushing, shoving, slapping, kicking, punching, choking, or restraining the victim. Physical violence also includes an abuser throwing objects at the victim, abandoning the victim in a dangerous place, and preventing the victim from seeking medical assistance after being injured by the abuser. An emotionally-abused teen may experience his or her abusive partner ignoring the teen’s feelings, making all the decisions for the teen, or humiliating the teen in front of others. A teen victim may also be continually criticized and ridiculed by the abuser, called names or spoken to in a profane manner. Teens that are sexually abused by their boyfriends or girlfriends are often forced to have sex, are called insulting sexual names, or are accused of having sexual activity

with others. Abusive teens may also threaten to hurt or spread false rumors about the victim, if the victim refuses to engage in sexual activity with them.

Why leaving isn’t easy

One could ask, “why doesn’t the victim just leave?” However, it is more enlightening to ask, “what is making the victim stay?” That is less blaming of the victim, and better lends itself to exploring the dynamics of abusive relationships. The Illinois Center for Violence Prevention describes many barriers to leaving an abusive relationship. Some reasons are due to simple logistics. An abused teen may have to see the abuser in school, and as a result, be afraid to leave for fear of retaliation. Some teens, especially those whose partners isolate them from peers may be led to believe that they are “unlovable.” They may experience low self-esteem; and as a result, decide that they cannot have a better relationship. Teen victims may also deny the abuse, because their abusive partner has minimized the abuse or has put blame on the victim for making it happen.

How to help the situation

When warning signs are observed, it is important to engage in safety planning with the teen victim. Make sure the youth’s caseworker is aware of the concern. A conversation should always begin by telling the victim that the violence is not their fault, and that they do not deserve to be treated in an abusive manner. Ask about the pattern or cycle of violence the youth has experienced, and what happens within the abuse. Ask the teen victim about the abuser – how dangerous is he or

she? It is imperative to remember that the victim may be in the greatest danger when she or he tries to get away from or terminate the relationship with the abuser. Map out a plan for an emergency situation, for example saving money in safe place, calling or going to the police station or hospital. It is also important to discuss who the teen can turn to for emotional support. This could be an understanding foster parent, caseworker, teacher, counselor, relative or friend.

Caregivers who need more information can contact Nisha Patel, of the DCFS Domestic Violence Prevention Program, at 708-338-6691 or by email to Nisha.Patel@illinois.gov.

Warning signals

- *Partner acts jealous or possessive*
- *Tries to control his/her partner*
- *Tries to isolate the victim*
- *Makes threats*
- *Uses verbal or physical abuse*
- *Loses his/her temper quickly or acts violent*
- *Blames the victim and others for their problems*
- *Pressures his or her partner for sex*
- *Thinks they have the right to control the other partner*
- *Becomes serious early into the relationship*

IFAPA/DCFS conference instructs, refreshes and unites caregivers



IFAPA President Gladys Boyd thanked individuals for their effort in planning the conference.

For a weekend in August, 500 caregivers devoted themselves to learning more about children and how to meet their needs. The Illinois Foster and Adoptive Parent Association with DCFS developed the conference under the theme Fostering Positive Outcomes for Children.

Through collaboration between the DCFS Office of Caregiver and Parent Support and the DCFS Office of Training, the conference presented a slate of more than 50 workshop selections. Foster, adoptive, guardianship and relative caregivers could earn up to 14 training credit hours. The workshops were designed to be interactive and engaging, covering a range of topics. There was a track for post-adoptive families, courses on children's mental health and classes on positive discipline, among many other offerings. Unlicensed relatives had an opportunity to fulfill licensing requirements as part of the conference.

"I am grateful that IFAPA and all the state's caregivers had the support of DCFS for this conference. It was

such a success because it was put together with love. When we come together, we learn what we need to keep going and we learn from each other," said Gladys Boyd, president.

The conference drew caregivers from all six DCFS regions. In between workshops there was time to meet each other in the exhibit center and during meals. Conference evaluations showed that it is a benefit to see other families and learn how others were working through similar situations.



Director McEwen greets caregivers after delivering the keynote speech.

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

DCFS foster, adoptive and guardianship families again took advantage of the opportunity to attend the Illinois State Fair in Springfield and in DuQuoin.

Attending the state fair has become a long-standing tradition for families. In Springfield, the last Friday of the fair is typically designated Children's Day. Families receiving DCFS support come in droves. Many Chicagoland families boarded buses early in the morning 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 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 28 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 more than 1,000 tickets to foster, adoptive and guardianship families for Springfield. More than 200 families attended the picnic at the DuQuoin fair.

Homeward-bound

When return home is the goal

Family visits are critical to successful reunification

Child welfare research identifies family visits as a critical factor in the achievement of early, safe and stable family reunification. Continued contact with parents increases the probability that children will return home. As partners in the reunification effort, caregivers have an essential role in visits between the children in care and their parents. That role can encompass scheduling, supporting, providing transportation or hosting visits.

Family setting works best

Family visits are most effective when they take place in a relaxed and private setting, ideally, a family setting at home. This is where the caregiver can have a real, lasting impact. Visits in a family setting allow children to see the caregiver and their parents being cordial and cooperative. Then they know they have two sets of adults pulling for them, rather than pulling them apart. It creates opportunities to mentor and to demonstrate parenting skills. In a family setting, parents can also show their parenting strengths. For example, a young girl might wear her hair in cornrow braids, but the foster caregiver may not have the time or skills for such a complicated hairstyle. On one of the visits, her mother could do the braids. Simple, natural parenting tasks allow the bond between parent and child to remain in place, even under strained circumstances of substitute care.

Deciding visitation

How and where visits will take place will be carefully thought out by the caseworker, caregiver and parent. Safety is always a priority—the safety of the caregivers and their children as well as that of all of the children in care. No one is asked to enter a situation in which he or she feels in danger. Background checks, in-depth assessment, and many experiences with the parent will be the guide to safety.

Visits are not supervised by a caregiver, or held in a caregiver home, until:

- A good working relationship is established between the parent(s) and caregiver
- Caregiver agrees and worker approves.

Caregivers count

Whether visits happen at the caregiver's home or the parent's home, the caregiver's approach and attitude can keep things on a pointed in a positive direction. Leading up to the visit, the caregiver can make sure the child is ready and knows the plan. Answering the door with a friendly greeting sends a positive message. Even when visits don't go well, the caregiver can help children talk through their feelings, calm their fears and gain perspective. By working closely with the caseworker and the parents, foster caregivers can help visits accomplish the goal to keep connections strong while reunification work progresses.

Movin' on UP

For youth transitioning to adulthood

The Community College Payment Program allows youth under DCFS guardianship enrolling in an Illinois community college the opportunity 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, designate 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. Together they can also complete the Service Agreement and DCFS form CFS 407-3 and submit it 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.

Questions about the program can be directed to the Office of Education and Transition Services:
Chicago 312-814-5959
Aurora 630-801-3453
Springfield 217-557-2689



November's National Adoption Month activities can 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 20, 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 1999, more than 30,000 children have been adopted from foster care on National Adoption Day.

The goals of National Adoption Day 2010 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

Individuals and organizations can plan events, letter writing campaigns, community marches and countless other activities for November. To find out more information about National Adoption Day activities, events, templates and resources go to www.nationaladoptionday.org.

National adoption statistics show broad scale adoption gains and needs



Every year, more than 100,000 children in foster care are available for adoption. Many spend more than five years waiting for permanent, loving homes.

- More than 26,000 children reach the age of 18 without ever finding a forever family.

Who are the waiting children?

- There are an estimated 510,000 children in foster care in the United States, and more than 129,000 of them are waiting to be adopted.
- Through no fault of their own, these children enter foster care as a result of abuse, neglect and/or abandonment.
- The average child waits for an adoptive family for more than two years.
- 19 percent spend 5 years or more waiting for a family (24,300 children).
- The average age of children waiting for an adoptive family is 8.

Who adopts from foster care?

- Children in foster care are adopted by three types of families: former foster parents (59 percent), relatives (26 percent) and non-relatives (15 percent).
- Of the families who adopt children from foster care, 69 percent are married couples, 26 percent are single females, 3 percent are single males, and 2 percent are unmarried couples.
- A national survey in 2007 revealed that 48 million Americans have considered adoption from foster care – more so than any other form of adoption, including private adoption of an infant or international adoption. (National Foster Care Adoption Attitudes Survey, November 2007. Commissioned by the Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption and conducted by Harris Interactive.)

What happens to them?

- 51,000 children are adopted from foster care.

Schools require free and reduced meal forms for every student

Among the many forms that schools require families to complete, one that is especially important is the application for free or reduced price school meals (commonly referred to as the free lunch form). Funding from federal resources is often based on the number of students eligible for free or reduced lunch. Additionally, the income information from the applications can determine what programs a school may be able to offer.

Students who have an open DCFS case will automatically qualify for free meals. Part 3 on the form asks “is the application for a child who is the legal responsibility of a welfare agency or court?” The caregiver does not have to complete the household income information on the rest of the form. However, once a child moves to adoption, his or her case is closed; there is no longer an automatic qualification. Adoptive parents will have to complete the form to determine if the family is eligible for free or reduced lunch based on income.

Some families choose not to apply, knowing their income will not be eligible. Still, it is important to write that on the form, sign it and return it. From the school’s perspective, every form counts. Some caregivers have reported that their child received meals at a reduced rate without a form, and then received a bill at the end of the year. The DCFS Educational Advisors urge caregivers, to return the forms, take advantage of the benefits, and avoid possible problems.



Illinois Adoption Advisory Council Update

The Illinois Adoption Advisory Council met in Bloomington for its September meeting.

Bylaw amendments

The ACC is made up of adoptive/guardianship parents, child welfare professionals with adoption expertise and adopted individuals. Current bylaws call for the adoptive parents and adopted persons to represent the six DCFS regions across the state. The Council in September reviewed proposed changes to the bylaws. The new proposal was designed to allow for more adopted individuals to participate, by removing the constraint of being from a specific geographic location.

National Adoption Day

The Adoption Council is making plans to celebrate National Adoption

Day. The council will have its November meeting in Springfield on the 19th. It will include a shared agenda with the Statewide Foster Care Advisory Council. The groups will mark National Adoption Day and hold the meeting in the Governor’s Mansion.

The adoption council hopes to recognize the progress Illinois had made in the adoption arena thanks to families across the state. Many groups are planning local Adoption Day activities, as well. The Adoption Advisory Council would like to hear about those events. Contact the Office of Caregiver and Parent Support at 217-524-2422 to be included in a coordinated effort to raise awareness of adoption issues. More information about National Adoption Day and the



Elizabeth Richmond, an adoptive parent and Jim Jones, CEO of ChildServ co-chair the Illinois Adoption Advisory Council

ways caregivers can be involved can be found on the previous page.

The next meeting of the IL Adoption Advisory Council will be on Friday, November 19 at 10 a.m. in Springfield. Call the Office of Caregiver and Parent Support at 217-524-2422 for details.

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 to a licensing agency. The toll-free number is 800-572-2390. The 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 DCFS Central Payment Unit at 800-525-0499 if your check comes from DCFS. For other checks, contact your private agency.

...You feel you aren't being treated fairly by DCFS or a private agency? If you've 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.

...You are having a family crisis with your adopted child? Contact the Adoption/Subsidized Guardianship Preservation Program that serves your area. Call Christine Feldman at 312-814-1565 for more information.

...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 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.

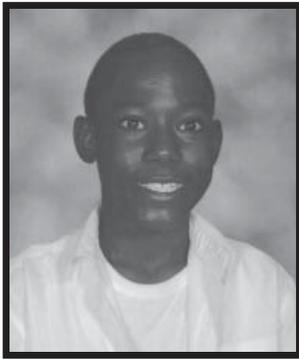
Address Changes: Families must notify their licensing representative, who will notify DCFS. Agencies should change office addresses or request staff copies through the Editor.

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Department of Children and Family Services©

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

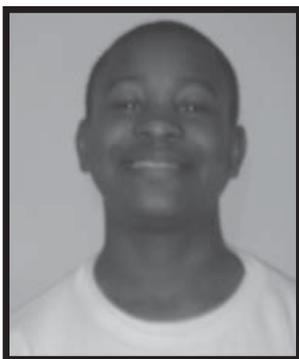


DaQuan (C7764)

DaQuan [7764] DaQuan, 13, is a friendly young man with a cheerful personality. He is very articulate, and capable of expressing his thoughts and feelings. DaQuan has trouble focusing at times, but still maintains a great many hobbies and interests. He enjoys cooking, drawing, and using the computers at the library. He also likes to play sports, including basketball and soccer. DaQuan's foster parent says he is intelligent and does well in school when he applies himself. DaQuan's teachers say he is a good kid who succeeds when he remains on task.

strengths and abilities. Other children in the home should be older than Joshua.

Mykl [7691] Mykl, 9, is a lovable young man with a positive attitude. He makes friends easily and is constantly interacting with peers, adults, and house pets. Mykl is also very bright and was nicknamed "The Sponge" at school because he soaks up information so quickly. He enjoys reading everything – including signs, posters, and books – and is always eager to advance to more challenging material.



Joshua (C7757)

The family for DaQuan would help guide him as he chooses new friends and hobbies, and matures into a young man. You can encourage DaQuan to focus on his studies and make school a priority in his life. DaQuan would like to live with a mom, dad, and siblings. Other children in the home should be older than DaQuan.

Joshua [7757] Joshua, 13, is a sensitive and inquisitive child who struggles socially at times, but still takes a genuine interest in other people. He can be reserved, but still enjoys a wide variety of activities ranging from basketball and soccer to robots and video games. Joshua loves to ask questions and delve into science-related subjects in school. He enjoys immersing himself in problem-solving activities such as playing chess, amusing himself with board games, and building things with building blocks.

Mykl's foster parents say he is very likeable and has a great smile. He's always willing to help and is interested in learning new things. Mykl's forever family is one that would be patient, teaching him to control his impulses and redirecting him when necessary. You can encourage his love of learning by reviewing his homework assignments and making sure he understands each lesson. Mykl needs help with basic tasks such as tying his shoes, picking out clothes, and preparing meals. He would also benefit from a continued relationship (and possible reunification) with his older brother.



Mykl (C7691)

Joshua's worker says he is friendly and kind, and enjoys spending time with adults and peers alike. He respects adults and responds well to their encouragement and support.

Sharon [7796] Break out the pots and pans, because Sharon is quickly becoming a culinary master. At age 10, she enjoys cooking, shopping, and watching food-themed television shows. Sharon also likes to help out around the house, and tries very hard to please others. In her spare time she likes using the computer and going on family outings. Sharon's worker says she is helpful, caring, and eager to please.

Potential parents for Sharon can be loving and patient with her as she adjusts to your home. You can establish clear expectations for her behavior at home and in school. You can allow Sharon to maintain regular contact with her previous foster family, whom she lived with since she was a toddler. Other children in the home should be older than Sharon.



Sharon (C7796)

To provide a loving, nurturing home for Joshua, potential parents can display patience as he develops intellectually and emotionally. You can also encourage his social relationships with peers, coaching him when necessary. Joshua thrives when he receives recognition of his



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.

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