

## From your Regional Administrator

The Northern Region is due to officially begin operation under the new reorganization plan this spring.

The plan has been designed specifically to enhance direct service operations in many areas, including youth in care. Previously, a single caseworker carried a variety of both intact family and placement cases (children placed in substitute care). Under the new reorganization plan a caseworker will eventually work either placement or intact family cases, not both. This specialization will allow caseworkers to devote more time to youth in care and their foster and birth families.

It is the goal of the Department to enhance the services available to our children and families. Devoting more time and focus towards this common goal can benefit youth and enhance our relationship with foster families.

As with most changes of this magnitude there will be an adjustment period; however, we are hopeful that the transition will be a seamless one, and will be noticed by its improvements.

Debbie Palmer Thomas

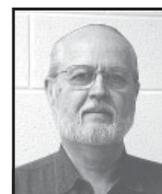
## Northern Region Advisory Councils relocate and change meeting days

The Northern Region DCFS and Private Agency Foster Parent and Youth Advisory Councils have changed their meeting days and locations. They will be meeting on the third Tuesday of each month. The meetings have been relocated to the DCFS DeKalb Field Office: 760 Peace Rd, DeKalb, IL 60115. The meeting room is located just off the main entrance lobby area. A light dinner will be provided at 6 p.m., with the meeting beginning at 6:30 p.m.

As noted, the Foster Parent and Youth Advisory Councils will continue to meet at the same time in an effort to involve both foster parents and youth. The Council looks forward to more participation and invites caregivers to join forces with fellow foster families. This is also an excellent way to lead by example and get youth involved in charting a course for policy that affects them. Your input is not only valued, it is needed to achieve common goals that will enhance foster care.

### Meeting Dates:

- April 18, 2006
- May 16, 2006
- June 20, 2006
- July 18, 2006
- August 22, 2006
- September 19, 2006
- October 17, 2006
- November 21, 2006
- Council does not meet in December



Issues that are discussed at the regional meetings that may affect other caregivers also can filter to the Statewide Foster Care Advisory Council. Similarly, the representatives from the Northern region provide updates from Statewide meetings. Northern Region representatives to the Statewide

Foster Care Council are Ray Chasteen and Judy McAtee. Jeremy Harvey leads the Youth Advisory Board.

## New steps for kids near meth

For the last two years, a committee of DCFS staff and the Illinois State Police has been working on the Drug Endangered Children (DEC) protocol. Recently the group completed a new curriculum to train officers and DCFS workers on handling situations where children may have been exposed to methamphetamine laboratories.

Training rolled out in December. Meanwhile, directors of child welfare agencies signed Memorandums of Understanding to follow the procedures included in the protocol.

Foster parents should be aware of a new form that they will receive when a minor is taken into custody and placed with them. The form is *The Caregiver's Guide for Care of Children Exposed to Methamphetamine Laboratories*. It informs the foster parent of what to do and what is expected of them as they care for a child after exposure. It also gives them the name of the caseworker, the medical facility that will provide care, and the next medical appointment date. Look for more information coming in the near future, as training in the field continues.

## Foster/Adoptive Parent Alliance

The DeKalb County Foster/Adoptive Parent Alliance (F.A.P.A) is a group comprised of foster and adoptive parents who are working together to meet the needs of foster/adoptive families. This group currently meets on the second Monday of the month at 7 p.m. for business, and 8 p.m. for support. Meetings are held at the Malta Town Hall. Even families that don't have current placements in their home can still be active with this group. Here are just some of the wonderful things happening with this group:

- DCFS-approved training credits being offered. Topics are being added as DCFS approvals are given.
- 2006 Spring Fling! Being held April 29<sup>th</sup> in Waterman. This event funds the entire year's offerings. Planning for this

event has already begun, but help is still needed with the Auction.

- Sign up for the annual Newsletter. There is often good information for everyone on the web site [www.geocities.com/fapalliance](http://www.geocities.com/fapalliance). Watch this site for upcoming events and dates.

To find out more about trainings and meetings contact Liz Elliott at 815/825-2015 or e-mail her at [tfn0205@aol.com](mailto:tfn0205@aol.com).

To receive a Newsletter via e-mail, send your e-mail address to Co-Chair Robyn Harvey at [Fapaalliance@yahoo.com](mailto:Fapaalliance@yahoo.com). The current co-chairs are Tina Moore and Robyn Harvey. Mailing address is: FAPA, PO Box 94, Malta IL 60150.

Register now for the 2006 Caregiver Training Institutes. This year's theme is ***Effecting Transitions for Youth in Care - Resources for Caregivers and Youth***. Caregivers will earn training hours as they learn about new DCFS programs, avenues for positive involvement in decision-making and resources to prepare youth for self-sufficiency.

**Call the toll-free registration number 877-800-3393 to sign up for the last session in Northern Region.**

**April 29  
8:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.  
Hampton Inn and Suites  
Aurora**

## Northern Region Early Childhood Services Coordinator



La'tasha  
Barrow

The DCFS Early Childhood Services Coordinators are available to help caregivers of children between birth and five years old identify developmental needs and services.

The coordinator for Northern Region is La'tasha Barrow. She is available to assist families providing foster care, as well as the workers who support the foster families.

The primary role of the coordinator is to screen children for lapses in the expected developmental and social or

emotional concerns. Barrow is automatically notified through a "tickler" system when a Northern Region child comes into care and requires a developmental screening, outside of the Integrated Assessment Program. First, she contacts the caseworker and informs him or her of the resources available for early childhood intervention. These resources include local school districts, health departments, HeadStart programs and independent providers. Barrow has developed a resource database for most counties in the Northern Region. The caseworker then contacts the foster parent with this information so the caregiver can arrange for the screening.

Because foster parents and other caregivers have consistent contact with the children, the coordinators will work directly with families to make sure the child's needs are met. Foster parents to children in the age group who came into care before the automated screening started in July 2005 may also observe behaviors that might lead them to wonder about possible developmental delays. In that case the coordinators suggest caregivers contact their local school district to set up a screening. Barrow is also available for consultations. She works out of the Aurora field office and can be reached by phone at 630-801-3424.

## Project CHOICES helps families with preschool education needs

Project CHOICES is a "least restrictive environment" initiative funded by the Illinois State Board of Education. There are two components to the Project: CHOICES, which supports school-age children; and Early CHOICES, which supports preschool-age children.

The purpose of CHOICES/Early CHOICES is to increase the capacities of school districts and educational personnel to educate and provide supports and services to children and youth with disabilities. This includes children in preschool, school, and community environments in which

they would participate if not identified as having a disability.

Project CHOICES provides collaborative support to schools, families, children, and youth; to ensure that all learn in general education and community settings; and to address and show progress toward the Illinois Learning Standards.

Project CHOICES boundaries:

- **North Team:** I-80 on the south, east to Rt. 47 south of Lake Cook Rd, then east to the Lake, north and west to the borders

- **North Team:** From the Lake west to Rt. 47, north to Lake Cook Rd, south to I-80

- **Project CHOICES**  
1500 S. Grace Street  
Lombard, IL 60148  
Phone: 630-629-0551  
Fax: 630-620-9473  
Email:  
info@projectchoices.org

Project  
**CHOICES**

# Northern Region Training Calendar

## Integrated Assessment Training

## Educational Advocacy

Two 3-hour sessions = 6 training hrs.

### College of DuPage Area 630-942-2903

### Rock Valley Area 815-921-2010

**AURORA** *Comfort Suites City Ctr.*  
May 8 (Mon) 7-9 p.m.

**ELGIN** *Judson College*  
June 8 (Thu) 7-9 p.m.

**GLEN ELLYN** *College of DuPage*  
April 6 (Thu) 7-9 p.m.

**JOLIET** *Catholic Charities*  
April 10 (Mon) 7-9 p.m.  
May 15 (Mon) 9:30 -11:30 a.m.

**WAUKEGAN** *Ramada Inn*  
June 1 (Thu) 7-9 p.m.

**ROCKFORD** *RVC Stenstrom Center*  
April 18 (Tue) 6:30-8:30 p.m.  
May 18 (Thu) 6:30-8:30 p.m.  
June 3 (Sat) 9:30-11:30 a.m.

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.

### College of DuPage Area 630-942-2903

**AURORA** *Comfort Suites*  
May 20 (Sat) 9 a.m.-3:30 p.m.

**ELGIN** *Judson College*  
April 22 (Sat) 9 a.m.-3:30 p.m.

**GLEN ELLYN** *College of DuPage*  
June 100 (Sat) 9 a.m.-3:30 p.m.

**KANKAKEE** *Kankakee Community*  
April 29 (Sat) 9 a.m.-3:30 p.m.

**LAKE VILLA** *Methodist Church*  
June 17 (Sat) 9 a.m.-3:30 p.m.

**ROMEOVILLE** *Comfort Inn*  
June 3 (Sat) 9 a.m.-3:30 p.m.

**WAUKEGAN** *Ramada Inn*  
April 8 (Sat) 9 a.m.-3:30 p.m.

## Non-PRIDE Inservice Training

### Rock Valley Area 815-921-2015

### College of DuPage Area 630-942-2903

There are no Non-PRIDE In-Service trainings scheduled for this quarter.

*Understanding Childhood Trauma and the Implications for Education*

**ELGIN** *Judson College*  
April 20 (Thu) 6:30-9:30 p.m.

**GLEN ELLYN** *College of DuPage*  
May 25 (Thu) 6:30-9:30 p.m.

**KANKAKEE** *Kankakee Community*  
April 20 (Thu) 6:30-9:30 p.m.

## Northern News

### Regional Reporter

Catherine Johnson  
DCFS Reporter/Editor  
841 N. Lake  
Aurora, IL 60506  
Phone: 630-844-8400  
Fax: 630-844-8968

Anyone can call the regional reporter with foster parent association news and schedules; local training notices; features on foster families and community members working for children; photos; and ideas for news articles or supportive services that would be helpful for caregivers to know.

## May is Foster Parent Appreciation Month



Check the DCFS web site for a calendar of events at DCFS offices

### Rock Valley Area 815-921-2010

**ROCKFORD** *RVC Stenstrom Center*  
April 4 & 6 (Tue/Thu) 6-9 p.m.  
June 24 (Sat) 9 a.m.-4 p.m.