



Foster Family Service Newsletter

National Foster Care Month

Tuesday, May 1st from 10:30 am to 5 pm will be the **3rd Annual California Capitol Event**. Music will be played from 10:30 to 11:15, followed by legislative office visits from 1 to 5.

May is National Foster Care Month, the perfect time to thank you for everything you do year round on behalf of California's children and families.

As you know, foster families, relative caregivers, mentors, advocates, social workers and volunteers provide safe, stable and nurturing environments for children and youth in foster care until they can either safely reunite with their parents or establish other lifelong family relationships. Your caring commitment is critical for ending the cycles of neglect, abuse or other fam-

ily crisis issues that often prevent a child from reaching his or her full potential. We truly appreciate your dedication and hope you recognize, as we do, the valuable role you play in building brighter futures for America's next generation.

Thank you for your continuing support. It is through the positive efforts of people like you that we can Change a Lifetime for a child in need.



May 2007

Wendy Knutson, Editor

*The Delora Corporation
dba
Foster Family Service
&
**Adoptions by
Foster Family Service***

*Executive Director
John Johnson M.S.W.,
Psy.D*

Board of Directors

*Arthur Magaña, Ph.D.
On Sabbatical*

Barbara Hoffman

Sue Roberts, MSW

Dave Soper, MA

Steven Shortes



*Just in time for **Foster Parent Appreciation Month** we received this heartfelt drawing from the Abers Family in Santa Rosa whose child has just officially entered "Adoption Placement."*

"To: Mom and Dad I love you, you're one of the best things that ever happened to me."



Monterey Bay Aquarium ~ Free To Learn



The “**FREE TO LEARN**” program at the Monterey Bay Aquarium is designed to provide **FREE** admissions to people who cannot otherwise afford to pay the price of admission. At this time we have used all but 10 tickets, but if there are requests for more, they have assured us they would do their best to meet our needs. If you have an approximate date in mind and know that you will need tickets, please contact your FFS worker with your request. Include the number of people in your household that are attending and the date of your trip. We will work on getting tickets for any of our families that would like to go. **ENJOY!**



Foster Family Mentoring Program

Led by current FFS foster parent Sandy Hankins and former FFS foster parent Cathy Ciampa, we are kicking off the Foster Family Mentoring Program. Mentors will be experienced, successful foster parents, initially from only the Placerville area, with plans to expand to all other service areas by 8/07. Foster parents that are either new to fostering or who are dealing with a particularly difficult placement will be paired with a mentor for up to three months.

Through the mentor relationship services including but not necessarily limited to the following will be delivered:

- i. Newcomers packet filled with information and resources
- ii. In addition to the regular support by agency social workers, weekly contact for ongoing support
- iii. Availability of Mentor during evenings and weekends for non-urgent concerns
- iv. Help with organizing and maintaining the foster care home files
- v. Individualized help with specific needs or placement, enrolling children in school, obtaining medical appointments, and ILP

Community Care Licensing (CCL) has released a list of inspections you can perform to keep your area safe. The checklist includes weekly observations of the following items:		
Weekly Observation	Yes	No
Rain gutters, downspouts clogged		
Roof top air conditioners cleaned periodically		
Flower pot trays, buckets contain standing water		
Discarded tires contain standing water		
Window/door screens missing or torn		
Ornamental ponds/fountains drained and cleaned weekly		
Pool/Hot tub covers contain standing water		
Not over watering landscape		

West Nile Virus Facts

from: WWW.WESTNILE.CA.GOV

What are the symptoms?

- Most people who are bitten by a mosquito with WNV will not get sick. People who do become ill may experience mild to moderate flu-like symptoms like fever, headache and body ache. It is estimated that less than 1% of the people who are infected with WNV become severely ill and require hospitalization.
- If you have symptoms of West Nile virus, call your doctor



How can people protect themselves?

- Avoid spending time outside at dawn and dusk when mosquitoes are active. They are especially active for two hours after sunset.
- Apply insect repellent containing DEET according to label instructions.



More info on California and the West Nile Virus at:
WWW.WESTNILE.CA.GOV

We Are Proud To Say... We Have Great Kids & Great Parents Too!

The **Lefteroff Family** of Tahoe went to the Bay Area for spring break. They got to go to the Monterey Bay Aquarium and the Jelly Belly Factory. The kids in the family continue to excel: **Jordan K.** graduated from his level 2 swimming class. **Josh K.** and

Vincent L. just enrolled in a level 4 swimming class. **Jeremy K's** teacher reported that he is doing great in school.

	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mail Your Good News to:	
wendyk@fosterfamilyservice.org	

Referral Program

For 2007 our policy provides a **financial bonus** to our Foster Family Service Foster Parents who successfully recruit new homes or if we conduct a 'meet & greet' with a potential family you referred. This is a great program and many of you have already received **\$300** from a single referral!

\$35 for the CFH when they refer a potential family and we conduct an initial 'meet & greet.'

\$100 for the CFH that refers a new family, and that family takes their first placement.

\$200 for the CFH, when the new family they referred has a placement for six months.

Oroville is a FUN Group

April 5th Oroville Foster Parents and Children joined in with Gina, Kathleen and Shereley for a fun filled day of Decorating eggs, Pizza, Games and the Easter Bunny came early and hid eggs at the park for them to find! Gina conducted a Sack Race and then Balloon Popping. The children sat on balloons and had a lot of fun trying to pop them... there was lots of laughs, giggles and shrieks when they popped!

The Welcome Mat Is Out For...

The Thomas Home

The Vidal Home

We are always interested in certifying new homes. If you know of anyone who may be interested have them call their local office.

Potential Foster Parents can call one of our offices or find a Pre-Application at our website:

www.fosterfamilyservice.org

Foster Family Service Office Numbers:

Sacramento (916) 487-2111

Placerville (530) 621-2110

Lake Tahoe (530) 544-2111

Stockton (209) 644-8631

Santa Rosa (707) 528-2115

Oroville (530) 533-1576

Notes From Our Director

I want to thank those families that took time between the months of March and April to write their legislators requesting a foster care rate increase. Unfortunately, I have just learned that the CA legislature has determined that even a 5% increase is not feasible for 2008. Moreover, CA Assembly Bill (AB 324) proposed by the County Welfare Directors Association only dealt with a rate increase for county foster care licensing, to primarily target administrative costs for training and recruitment. I am exploring the possibility of a coordinated rally at the Capital for the fall of 2007, to raise awareness for a rate increase in 2009. It is so important that we all recognize the importance of a rate increase to California's foster family agencies, as the last increase was back in 2001!

I also wanted to take this opportunity to provide a brief update as to CA child welfare redesign's current impact on our Agency. Our caseload low point was seen in February and March of this year, with agency-wide case counts at 134 and 133 respectively. The last time we saw such low caseloads was prior to 2003, and are a direct result of counties placing children with relatives or in county-licensed homes rather than with foster family agencies. The month of April has actuated a significant caseload increases for FFS, in spite of several children being adopted, reunified, and emancipated. We are attributing this increase to several factors: children placed with relatives (referred to as Kinship) are often found to have more special needs than relatives can work with; counties are having difficulty maintaining an adequate number of county-licensed foster homes; and counties are becoming increasingly interested in placing potentially adoptable children with our foster families.

This caseload volatility has the potential to impact the Agency's cash reserves, where we have traditionally strived to maintain up to three months of operating costs in the event a county couldn't reimburse us timely or if the State budget was put on hold. As of this writing we have reserves of approximately 2.5 months worth of operating costs, and the Agency has no debt. In other words, FFS is financially healthy, and we are constantly evaluating ways to improve our program. We are also very blessed with fabulous foster families, who are supported by well-trained social workers and an enthusiastic, visionary Board of Directors.

Please accept my deepest appreciation to everyone who helps make Foster Family Service a wonderful place!

John C. Johnson, M.S.W., Psy.D., Executive Director

Compliance Corner... How HOT Is It?

*Even on a mild day at **73 degrees** outside, an SUV can heat up to **100 degrees in 10 minutes**, to **120 in just 30 minutes**. As the outdoor temperature rises, so does the buildup of heat within a vehicle. At **90 degrees** outside, the vehicle can heat up to **160 degrees** within just a few minutes.

***Cracking the window** to let air in **does very little** to protect kids from the effects of heat buildup in a parked car. When the outside temperature is **93 degrees** with a window down 1 inch, the temperature inside a car may reach **125**

degrees in just **20 minutes** and approximately **140 degrees** in **40 minutes**.

***Heat exhaustion** can occur at temperatures above 90 degrees and **heat stroke** can occur when temperatures rise above 105 degrees. If not treated immediately, heat exhaustion can lead to heat stroke.

Never leave a child alone in or around cars: Your child can set the car in motion or Your Child Can Be Abducted!



Tahoe Training

The next training for **SLT foster parents** is **Monday, May 7th from 5:30 to 8:30 p.m.** at Al Tahoe Elementary School. **Childcare provided** by Foster Kinship Care Education for potty trained children. The presenter is Sheila Silan (a dynamic speaker!) and the topic is **Foster Youth and Education. See you there!**