



Foster Family Service Newsletter

National Adoption Day Next Month!

This will be our first year participating in National Adoption Day as an agency! Foster Family Service will be part of a large adoption ceremony on Wed, Nov. 14, 2007 at El Dorado County Supreme Court

On National Adoption Day 2007 – **Saturday, November 17** – an unprecedented number of courts and communities across the nation will come together to finalize thousands of adoptions of children from foster care and to celebrate all families who adopt. The Day brings together hundreds of judges, attorneys, adoption agencies, adoption professionals, and child advocates who are dedicated to creating forever families for waiting children.

National Adoption Day 2007 builds on incredible efforts over the last seven years by The Alliance for Children’s Rights through the generous support of the Freddie Mac Foundation, the Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption, and others. In November 2000, National Adoption Day sponsors worked with law firms, foster care departments, child advocates, and courts to complete hundreds of foster care adoptions in nine jurisdictions across the country. In just six years, National Adoption Day has truly grown into a national celebration, with 3,300 adoptions finalized in 2005 as part of more than 300 events in all 50 states and the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico.



TRICK OR TREAT...

For most children, **Halloween** means dressing in costume and going **trick-or-treating** for candy. While this is certainly a common occurrence throughout California, some families don’t support this activity—due to religious beliefs, safety concerns, or fear of the dreaded “**sugar rush.**” We strongly recommend that foster parents give thought to this, and take in

to consideration not only their own family beliefs but those of the biological families for their foster kids. It may be in a foster child’s best interest to trick-or-treat even if it’s outside your family’s norms. Or, it may be appropriate for a family to start a new tradition and **treat** everyone to a **scary movie** night on Halloween in lieu of trick-or-treating.

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Wendy Knutson, Editor

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Setting Rules With Teens

What's Happening

Teens may look (and think that they are) full grown, but their brains are still growing and their hormones are changing. This can affect:

- **Decision-making**—Teens make mature decisions at times, and childish ones at others.
- **Risk-taking**—Brain immaturity can result in impulsive or risky behavior.
- **Relationships**—Teens move a little further away from family and a little closer to friends.

What You Might Be Seeing

Normal teens:

- Crave independence
- Question rules and authority
- Test limits
- Can be forgetful
- Have good days and bad days
- Drive you crazy and make you proud



What You Can Do

As a parent, you want to set rules to keep your teenagers safe and healthy and to teach them to get along in the world. While it may be tempting to keep your teen in line by setting strict rules and harsh consequences, your teen is likely to respond by becoming angry and more defiant.

Tips to keep in mind:

- Involve teenagers in setting the rules. They may be more likely to follow them.
- Talk about the reasons behind the rules and what you expect from them.
- Choose your battles, and try to provide choices in the matters that are less important. For instance, you might let your daughter pick her own hairstyle if she comes home on time.
- Make sure your teens understand the consequences ahead of time. What will happen if they break the rules?
- Set consequences that are related to the behavior, and be consistent in following through. Ask teenagers to help decide what the consequences will be if they break the rules.
- Do not make consequences so harsh that you or your teen can't follow through. Consider taking away privileges, limiting time with friends, or assigning extra chores.
- Allow your teens to gradually earn more freedom.
- Get to know your teen's friends and their parents, and let them know your rules and expectations.

Cheer your teens on when they follow the rules! And make sure they know you love and accept them, even when they're not perfect.

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

Social Worker, Megan Ciampa of So. Lake Tahoe wishes **Good Luck** to all the students who bravely started the new school year!

Ginny S. of the *Wells CFH* hasn't let the weather slow her down. She plays soccer and scores in the hot sun and the rain!

Conrad H. of the *Hankins CFH*, as made a supreme effort in both his behavior and studies this semester. Congratulations

on getting **Straight A's** Conrad!

A Fun Time was had with the *Huber CFH*. This past month they piled all their kids and foster kids and a few former foster kids into the SUV and took them all to the Circus! Everyone had fun!

Daniel A. and the *Clingman CFH* has been doing well in Cross Country. Most recently he placed 16th in a group of 60+ children in a ¾ mile run. **Way**

to go Daniel!

Thank you to the Cruz CFH for taking such great care of Danielle and helping her transition back home.

Thank you to the Hankins CFH for supporting Christian and his mom during his transition home.



Mail Your Good News to:
wendyk@fosterfamilyservice.org

We appreciate all our families and whenever we have space we like to send a Big Thank You to the many families taking emergency placements this past month.

Cruz, Nelson-Blue, Meza, Dillon, Huber, McArthur, Musil, Alberts, Alvarez.

Just to name a few!



Congratulations to Brian and Leila Rosner.

Their son, Judah William, was born on Sep 13th. He is 7lbs, 2 ounces and 20in.

Leila was our FFS Social Worker in Lake Tahoe.

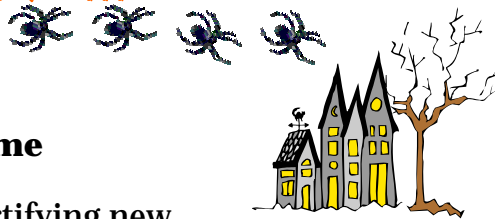
The Welcome Mat Is Out For...

The Smith Family Home
The Pruitt Family Home
The Bergstrom Family 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

Cameron Park (530) 676-6226

Lake Tahoe (530) 544-2111

Stockton (209) 644-8631

Santa Rosa (707) 528-2115

Oroville (530) 533-1576

Notes From Our Director



In past newsletters I have described California's efforts to 'redesign' child welfare, emphasizing all 58 county's intentions to place children first with relatives and to expedite either reunification services at the front end or adoption services at the tail end of a child's CPS case plan. As a result, placements with foster family agencies have been on the decline for the last two years. In an ideal world, these systemic changes would mean fewer of California's children need foster care. However, in reality this has translated to at-risk children moving from home to relatives, back home, back to relatives or in to foster care. We have actually seen many foster care placements come to us from failed relative and/or reunification plans. Alarmingly, Sacramento County saw a dramatic increase in child deaths related to maltreatment in 2006, and asserted: "It appears [increase in child deaths] to stem from a priority change within CPS to keep families together rather than remove children from homes where they may be in peril."

In spite of these changes our Agency continues to thrive. Across the Agency we have experienced about a 30% caseload reduction, but we've adjusted staff levels accordingly. We have an amazing array of gifted foster families, who collectively have delivered 31,899 days of care to children between 1/1 and 8/31/07 ("day of care" = each 24-hour period that one child is in foster care placement). Along with quality foster care, we've pursued other services we can offer to referring counties such as: family resource centers, foster parent mentoring, and assessment/therapeutic services.

My perspective is that times of change bring opportunities. I encourage readers of this newsletter to ask us about how specific offices are responding to changes in the child welfare system, to inquire as to new services we're developing, and to consider becoming part of something within our Agency that interests or excites you.

Blessings for a Happy & Healthy Fall!

John

Training Corner YES, I'm BACK!! Just like an old penny that keeps ending up back in your pocket, I've returned to Foster Family Service after being gone for the past year and a half. Although I took a break from foster care to try out some new career options in January 2006, teaching and training is too much in my blood to be away from here for long. In addition to my foster parent certification and training duties with FFS, I am also teaching at Folsom Lake College. A position I have held for the past five years, the agency has been gracious enough to allow me to continue with my college classes as I enjoy working with students of all ages and backgrounds.

To be sure, I am excited to be back and am keeping PLENTY busy getting new foster parents up and going. Although my duties are primarily working with and certifying new families, I will also be directly and indirectly involved with putting together post-certified foster parent trainings. As I have always gotten much of my training material from the foster parents I have worked with over the years, I am always open to hearing from our foster parents regarding your training needs and ideas for future trainings. So please leave a message with your social worker regarding your ideas and have them email them to me so I can begin to formulate some trainings for the 2008 season.

For those of you who have been with the agency for some time, do not be surprised if you see my familiar face walking into your training room in the near future. *Mardi*

Cameron Park	TBA
Sacramento	TBA
So. Lake Tahoe	Foster Kinship Care Education Training on Oct 22 nd . GLBTI issues in foster care; taught by Moirhian Martin
Stockton	TBA
Santa Rosa	TBA
Oroville	Wednesday, October 24th Dianne O'Malligan, CSD Placement Specialist will be presenting Intake/Needs and Services , including the child's Health and Education County Binder.