

CONNECTOR

NH DCYF'S FOSTER, ADOPTIVE AND RELATIVE RESOURCE CARE NEWS



Division for Children, Youth and Families (DCYF) - New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services

Fall 2016

NH Foster Family Day Thank You, Canobie Lake Park!

On August 14th, and for the 4th consecutive year, children and their families received the gift of fun and excitement at Canobie Lake Park. Thanks to the very generous donation from the park owners, 1700 children and families enjoyed a carefree day of summertime bliss at the park.

Mary Frances Renner, foster parent from Salem, worked diligently to make sure that the day was filled with joy for families and children in foster care, adoptive and congregate care. Governor Maggie Hassan signed a commendation for the owners of Canobie Lake Park that was presented to the staff and owners by Sen. Morse of Salem, New Hampshire.



Eileen Mullen from the Division for Children, Youth and Families (DCYF) presented a thank you card signed by all the attendees at the celebration. Eileen noted that “our agency is filled with gratitude for the generosity of the Park as well as the Salem community for always being at the forefront of kindness extended to our children and families.”



DCYF also expressed gratitude to the staff of Canobie Lake Park for their willingness to volunteer their time to make this day a success for all. Kathleen Companion, Foster Care Manager, and Chris Nicoli of Canobie Lake Park worked right up until the last minute to ensure that everyone who needed a free ticket to the park received their passes so that ALL could enjoy the day.



Pictured Left-to-Right: Mary Frances Renner, NH Foster Parent; Deb Bradley, NH Foster Parent; Max Farr, Canobie Lake Park; Anthony Berni, Jr., Canobie Lake Park; Carl Berni, Jr., Canobie Lake Park; “Patches” Canobie Lake Park mascot; Carl Berni, Canobie Lake Park; Senator Chuck Morse, President of NH Senate; Nina Berni, Canobie Lake Park; and Eileen Mullen, DCYF.

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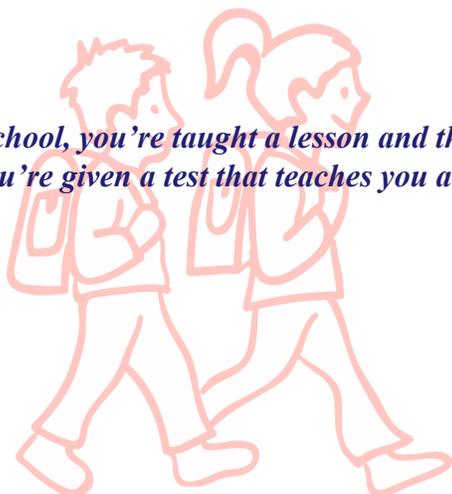
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MISSION STATEMENT

To join communities
and families
in providing opportunities
for citizens
to achieve health

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*In school, you're taught a lesson and then given a test.
In life, you're given a test that teaches you a lesson. ~Tom Bodett*



Message From The Director

Hello!



When summer time comes upon us, it's not uncommon to hear the lyrics of "oh, those lazy, hazy, crazy days of summer" ring in our heads. This summer has certainly given us plenty of heat and sun to enjoy. I hope all of you and the children you care for have found time to play, go to the lake, swim in a pool, hike in the woods or go to the ocean for a day of sun and sand. I also know many of you were managing busy schedules whether it was getting those children to day camp, day care, basketball, field hockey, Boy Scout or Girl Scout camp, the Boys & Girls Club or a summer job and driver's education classes. Of course, this is all in conjunction with maintaining connections with their parents, attending FAIR meetings/court hearings and managing your own personal and professional lives. Certainly not lazy days! Despite all of this, I trust you all found time to enjoy the good weather and some good times before we head into another school year.

School days, school days... a new school year brings change, challenges and opportunities for the children and parents we all work with and for. Children need to get back to the routine of a regular bed time and being involved in getting ready for school, scheduling time for homework and all of those after school activities. Their parents need coaching and support to stay the course of their case plan to succeed in achieving reunification while others will be stepping onto another path of permanency. The love, patience, kindness, goodness and commitment each of you makes to the children you are caring for on behalf of these parents is always appreciated. I would be remiss in my responsibilities as the Director if I did give out a shout of thanks to all of you on behalf of the agency.

THANK YOU!!! Here's looking forward to cooler temperatures, local fairs, apple picking, pumpkin carving and staying the course of success and safety as we head into the fall.

LORRAINE BARTLETT

DCYF Director



“Bells are ringing and children are singing, time for back to school again”

“Bells are ringing and children are singing, time for back to school again” This is a quote from a ditty advertising for Robert Hall Clothing Department Stores, popular in the 1960’s and 70’s. My mother would sing the little song repeatedly as we prepared for the opening of school doors for the first day of school, (which by the way was inevitably the hottest day of the season!). The first day of school usually occurred morning after Labor Day, a holiday that I always thought was appropriate to mark the beginning of the academic year ahead. It wasn’t until later in life that I understood that Labor Day celebrated the American labor movement and is national tribute to the contributions workers have made to the strength, prosperity, and well being of our country. Not only do we celebrate that children are back in school, but also that they have the opportunity to attend school in safe communities and nurturing and loving homes. You are the laborers who strengthen the child welfare and juvenile justice systems and improve the well being and prosperity of our State and our Country.



News from DCYF...

We are in the process of developing and planning for enhanced hours of our agency. We have been directed to be available to the New Hampshire citizenry 24 hours per day, seven days a week. These new hours of operation will allow our communities access to the services and supports of our agency at all times during the day and night. We will continue to keep you posted as these plans roll out. We are forecasting that these new hours of operation will be of great benefit for families and communities and will create a greater need for emergency placement options. Please let Kathleen Companion, Manager for Foster Care Services, know if you are interested in serving our agency in this capacity.

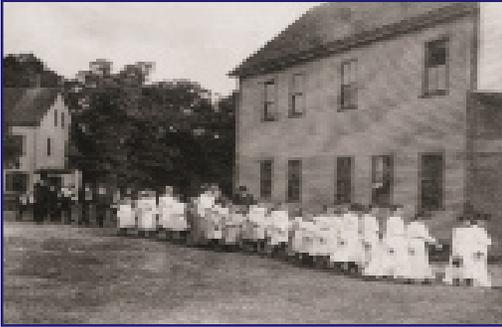
Through the efforts of DCYF, DHHS’ Division of Public Health Services, other state agencies and providers, Senate Bill 515 was passed and became legislation effective on July 1st. This law gives DCYF the ability to intervene to provide services for families with children whose parents may be struggling with substance use disorder. Through this legislation, it is our intent to ensure that children are safe and that their parents receive the services and supports that they need to be able to provide safe and nurturing environments for their children. In light of this legislation and improved community-based treatment options, we anticipate offering enhance training and education for out of home care providers who may be called upon to care for children with Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome (NAS) and their families.

I have tried to briefly outline some of the changes that DCYF is facing this fall. We are embarking on new ways of doing business and as always continue to need your help and support to ensure that our children are safe and well care for. Congratulations to NH FAPA for their recent award from Wendy’s Restaurants and WMUR *Home at Last Series*. This incredible business partnership has made a world of difference for many children and families in our State.

Eileen Mullen, MSW
DCYF Administrator

A History of Caring

For more than 140 years, Ascentria Care Alliance, formerly Lutheran Social Services of New England, has been committed to caring for and lifting up children in need and helping them to grow into healthy adults. Ascentria is here today because of the foresight and generosity of a pious brewer, Gottlieb F. Burkhardt, whose summer farm in West Roxbury was put to use as the Martin Luther Orphan's Home in 1872.



Now in its 144th year, Ascentria employs more than 1,600 individuals who touch the lives of 5,000 individuals daily with 45 program locations serving children, youth and families, refugees and immigrants, adults with disabilities, mental illness and deafness, economically disadvantaged families, older adults, and families affected by disaster. Ascentria was accredited by the Council on Accreditation in 2011 and maintains its corporate offices in Worcester, Massachusetts.

Over the years, Ascentria has grown and expanded, but has never wavered from its original purpose to provide quality, life-changing services for minors who require additional supports to thrive.



Ascentria
CARE ALLIANCE
Formerly Lutheran Social Services of New England

Today, Ascentria offers the following programs for children and youth:

Foster Care, Brockton, MA and Concord, NH – Ascentria provides highly personalized supports for foster children and families with the ultimate goal of helping children reach their full potential by learning positive skills to increase their self esteem, restoring their trust in other people and helping them to build and maintain lasting relationships.

Ascentria has offered specialized foster care in New Hampshire since 1991 through its Therapeutic Family Connections (TFC) program. TFC provides a variety of home-based and specialized foster care services designed to serve New Hampshire children in need of intensive level supports. The program focuses on developing the strengths, interests and abilities of every child and provides clinical support, case management, ongoing training and social opportunities for its foster families. Currently more than 700 children in New Hampshire are in need of a foster family.

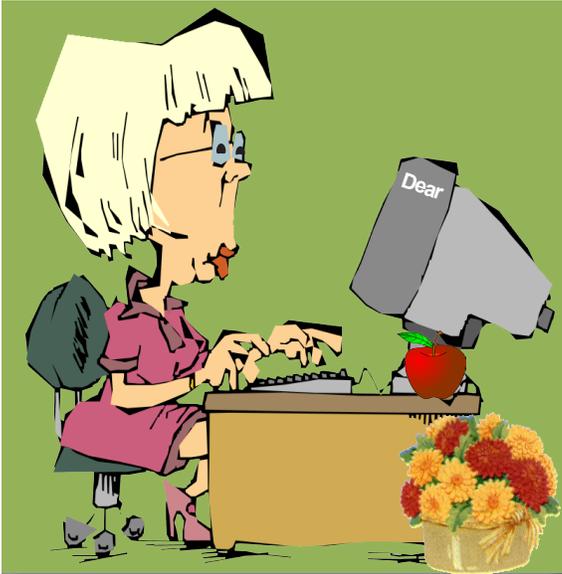
Adoption Services, Worcester and Springfield, MA – Ascentria Adoption Services is a full service licensed non-profit adoption agency serving children and families in Massachusetts.

Unaccompanied Refugee Minors Foster Care, Worcester, MA – is the only program in New England that exclusively assists refugee and migrating youth. The program is responsible for refugee asylee and trafficked young people under the age of 18 who are in the U.S. without a parent or guardian. Ascentria has placed more than 500 unaccompanied minors with foster families since 1978.

Teen Parenting Programs, Brockton and Worcester, MA – Ascentria directs two programs for single teenage mothers and their children. Both the Ruth House and Florence House offer transitional living in a supportive environment, who with the help of staff, gain the skills necessary to manage life successfully when they leave. Children receive early intervention, healthcare and specialized services.

Ascentria's Therapeutic Family Connections is located at 261 Sheep Davis Road in Concord, New Hampshire. For more information, contact Jessica Bond at 800-224-8119 or jbond@ascentria.org. For additional information on all of Ascentria's programs, visit ascentria.org.

Ask Auntie Ann...



Have a Question?
Need Some Answers?
Submit your questions to
Foster Care Attn: Auntie Ann
DCYF 129 Pleasant Street
Concord NH 03301

Dear Auntie Ann:

My resource worker just came for our license renewal home visit and requested that my wife and I complete these questionnaires with some pretty personal questions. We've been licensed for 10 years and have never had to do this before. Why?

Perturbed Pete

Dear Pete:

Over the past year, DCYF has been converting the home study process to the Structured Analysis Family Evaluation (SAFE) format. New foster parents, as well as already licensed foster parents, will be completing questionnaires that are designed to help identify areas of strengths and challenges within the family unit. Families that are renewing their license are issued a questionnaire that is designed to see if there are any areas of concern that have arisen since the previous report. If there are areas of concern, there would be further discussion on how the concerns have been or will be addressed. Some of these questions may seem nosy. Please remember that the information is part of helping make suitable matches for children coming into care.

Ann

Dear Auntie Ann:

My mother is getting to an age where we are worried about her living alone. We'd like to have her move in with us. What do we need to do in terms of our foster care license?

Dutiful Debbie

Dear Debbie:

Your resource worker will have your mother complete a criminal record form and a local police check form. The worker will also check the Central Registry to insure that your mother hasn't had a finding of abuse and neglect against her. A home visit would be conducted so that the worker can meet and talk with your mother. As your mother will now be a household member in a foster home, her thoughts and feelings need to be taken into consideration.

Ann

Dear Auntie Ann:

One of my friends who is also a foster parent gets occasional calls during evening hours or on weekends to take an emergency placement. I am interested in helping out in this way – what should I do?

Helpful Helen

Dear Helen:

I'm excited to hear that you are interested in becoming a crisis home! Crisis homes are licensed foster homes that have completed the one day Emergency Foster Care training and have chosen to be on a call list for after hour emergency placements. These placements may come from your district area, or another area of the State. Children are placed in your home for up to five (5) days. You should consult with your Resource Worker regarding your interest, and if appropriate, the worker will pass your information along. Remember, once you are on the crisis list, you'll need to keep in mind the number of children in your home when considering taking the emergency placement.

Ann



*Dear Ann
continued on page 7*

Dear Ann
continued from page 6

Dear Auntie Ann:

Although we're enjoying being foster parents to the child in our home, we're having a hard time maintaining a positive connection with her birth father. He's done some pretty awful things in the past, and we're worried about his ability to ever be a safe parent. He's working on his case plan and meeting some of his goals, but we feel like he's pulling the wool over everyone's eyes! What can we do?

Panicking Paula and Tim

Dear Paula and Tim:

This is the challenging part of being foster parents. You are asked to provide a safe, loving home for your foster child and yet you have little control over the decisions that are made regarding the case. It is understandable that you are feeling protective and worried. What was once theoretical in FACES training is now a reality for you and your family. And the reality is that while some of the parents that DCYF is working with have created an unsafe environment due to drug usage or untreated mental illness, there are others who have histories of violence and significant criminal actions. DCYF is charged with working with all of them. In almost all circumstances, a parent is given the chance to show that he or she can make the changes necessary to reunify with their child. DCYF monitors their progress, consults with professionals, oversees visitation, celebrates successes, and reports to the Court. It is not just compliance that is looked at, but a change in behavior. And if that change is recognized as being substantial enough, then the parent will likely be given the opportunity to regain custody of their child.

It serves little purpose to refuse to engage with a birth parent. You may not like what they've done, you may not agree with the goal, but it benefits the child in your home for you to try and create a line of communication with the parent. Sometimes they are receptive and sometimes they are not, but at least you have made the effort. Try to concentrate on continuing to provide a supportive environment for your foster child. Try to use encouraging words around visitation, and try to ensure that your concerns are not spoken in front of the child.

You may want to consider joining one of the Better Together workshops that are held at various times throughout the State. They give foster parents and birth parents an opportunity to meet, share experiences and learn about one another. They are terrific!

Ann

It's not too early to think about the holidays...

Once again Bethany Christian Services of New Hampshire will be coordinating the Operation Christmas Joy program. This program reaches out to businesses, churches, organizations and individuals in the communities we serve to meet the wish lists of children in foster care statewide to provide them with presents for Christmas. This program complements the Operation Santa program that meets wish lists for children in state care up through September. Wish lists of children coming into care after September can be submitted to the local district DCYF resource worker prior to November 8th to be included in Operation Christmas Joy. It is planned that gifts will be delivered to the DCYF resource worker for distribution in early December. If you know of an organization, church or business that would like to participate, please have them contact Cindy Thomas at cthomas@bethany.org for more information.



DCYF Plans to Extend Hours

In response to the needs of stakeholders and an ongoing commitment to protecting New Hampshire's most vulnerable citizens, our children, DCYF plans to expand its ability to effectively respond to reports of abuse and neglect. To achieve this, DCYF is exploring ways to respond to emergencies and to reports of abuse and neglect on a 24-hour/7-day per week basis. The



Division is confident that expanding these after-hour services will expand its ability to enhance the safety and protection of children in New Hampshire.

Three components are currently being developed to make this effort possible. A Statewide Assessment Team (SAT), comprised of DCYF Assessment Child Protective Services Workers and Supervisors, will provide 12pm-8pm assessment coverage statewide. An After-Hours Child Protection Response System, also made up of DCYF staff, will provide on-call support to respond to imminent risk situations statewide after business hours. Finally, an after-hours intake unit, managed by a contracted agency, will take reports of abuse and neglect when DCYF's Central Intake Office is closed.

Workgroups have been meeting weekly to plan and build these exciting new initiatives. Discussions have been taking place around logistics, scope of work, hiring, training and a host of other topics. We expect to provide regular communication internally and externally as this continues to take shape.



Many Thanks!

Jessica Golen, an employee of Atos IT Outsourcing, has teamed with Xerox Business Systems to put together a large number of fully stuffed back-to-school backpacks for New Hampshire children in care.

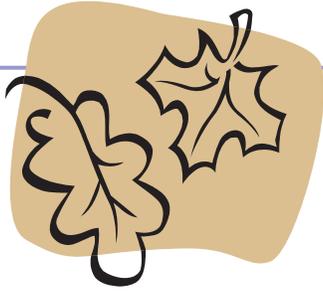
Jessica shared that she grew up in foster care and is determined to do whatever she can to make life a little more pleasant for children whose families have disrupted. Jessica counts on her co-workers to donate to her annual cause but relies mostly on the help of her two young daughters to shop for school supplies and to stuff the backpacks full. Jessica stated that it is very important to her that her daughters understand that "We give first and ALWAYS help others."



Coming soon...NH's National Adoption Day Celebration!!!

Please stay tuned for event details for the annual National Adoption Day Celebration for New Hampshire which will be held in November.

National Adoption Day is a collective national effort to raise awareness of the more than 100,000 children in U.S. foster care waiting to find permanent, loving families. This annual event is a special way to honor and celebrate our adoptive families in our State. Each year we enjoy presenting an updated slide show to celebrate all of the special adoption days that our New Hampshire families and children have experienced over the past year. If you would like to have your family photos included, please e-mail your photos to Cindy.Lamontagne@dhhs.nh.gov.



Hosted by the **Community Faith Based Initiative** along with **MakeOver Ministry** a *ministry of Orchard Christian Fellowship*



Love your neighbor

Makeover Ministry Private Free Clothing Event *Saturday October 1st 2016* *40 Ronald Street Manchester NH*

Invited guest include **Foster, relative care & adoptive families** from across New Hampshire

Free shopping & Lunch for the whole family!
Saturday October 1st
from 9 to 1pm (Lunch served)



How can I get more information? To speak to a person about the possibility of serving or donating, call our **Makeover Ministry Hotline @ (603) 553-3430**

What does the MakeOver Ministry offer

- ⇒ **LOTS** of gently used and some new clothes of all sizes...
- ⇒ **Children's & Adult Books**
- ⇒ **Linens and household items**



Directions

From points North

- ⇒ **I-93 S** Partial toll
- ⇒ **293 South**
- ⇒ **Take exit 6** for Amoskeag St toward Goffstown Rd
- ⇒ **Keep right at the fork** to continue toward Amoskeag St
- ⇒ **Slight right onto Amoskeag St** (signs for US-3/Canal St/Elm Street/Southern NH University/Une Manchester)
- ⇒ **Continue onto W Salmon St**
- ⇒ **Turn right onto Elm St**
- ⇒ **Turn right onto Ronald St**

From points South

- ⇒ **I-93 N**
- ⇒ **Take the exit on the left onto I-293 N/NH-101 W** toward Manchester Airport/I-293 N/Bedford/Manchester
- ⇒ **Take the exit toward S Willow St**
- ⇒ **Turn right onto S Willow St**
- ⇒ **Slight left onto Queen City Ave**
- ⇒ **Turn right onto Elm St**
- ⇒ **Take left onto Ronald St**

Makeover Ministry

Makeover Ministry is a ministry of Orchard Christian Fellowship and the realized dream of dynamo Lisa Teague. Lisa always had a soft spot in her heart for foster children. She recognized their special circumstance and wanted to lend a hand, to help children feel *normal*. She did this by donating fashionable clothing to children in care.



It started small, in Lisa's garage. Before long she had outgrown the space and connected with the Orchard Christian Fellowship, eventually taking over the huge warehouse at 40 Ronald Street in Manchester.

Lisa and the generous people at Makeover Ministry open the doors to foster families to shop for necessities and for the extravagant. They offer free-of charge gently used clothing and some brand new clothing to foster families across the State. Occasionally they organize a full day party for foster families, as they did in April.



Makeover Ministry invited foster families to shop, have lunch and enjoy one another's company. The event was well attended. Children were thrilled to pick out their own clothes and as much as Makeover Ministry gave away, it didn't make a dent in the inventory.

If you have an immediate need, Lisa and the staff are always willing to help. The Ministry's Hotline is 603-553-3430.

Heart Gallery



Aizik (age 12) is an intelligent and witty young man. He is very artistic and absolutely loves to draw. He also enjoys origami and other creative mediums. Like most boys his age, Aizik loves to be active. He enjoys spending his free time playing on his community's soccer team, riding on his dirt bike, exploring in the woods, taking hikes, fishing and hanging out with friends. Aizik also has an impressive collection of Legos and loves to build things. In fact, he loves anything that keeps his hands busy.

Aizik is also an avid comic book lover and enjoys reading and drawing characters from the "Batman" series. He has watched all of the old "Batman" movies and TV shows and can teach you everything you ever wanted to know about the characters. He loves to dress up for Halloween, making his own costumes. He would love to find a family that shares his love of this holiday.

Aizik would like to have a family that lives in a rural area. He feels more at home in a country setting where he can have room to play and explore. He enjoys pets, especially cats, dogs and snakes, and would love to have a pet of his own. Aizik would like to have a mom and dad or perhaps just a dad and would prefer not to live in a home with younger children. He wouldn't mind having older siblings or perhaps siblings close to his own age that shares some of his passions. Aizik would do best with a family that likes to be active (go on hikes, spend family time together and who would

Aizik
continued on page 12

Adoption Corner

Congratulations to the following families and children!

February

Michelle and Steven Breault adopted Kiara.

March

Naomi and Alan Welch adopted Amira.
Candace and Craig Baker adopted Ayriana.
Guy and Cheryl Willmonton adopted Issac.
Marie and Bradford Hasty adopted Brooklynn and Josef.
Catherine and William Sweeney adopted Eloise.
Sherry and Daniel Pento adopted Sophia and Gabriel.
Dawn and Eric Berry adopted Tayja.
Tracy and Rene Rondeau adopted Cameron and Calleigh.

April

Tanya Krajcik adopted Sebastian.
Cynthia and Cossondra Vigue adopted Noah.
Cheryl and William Martin adopted Dominic.

May

Darlene and John Jeacopello adopted Oliver.
Alisa and Ian Champa adopted Stephanie.
Jessica and Matthew Cawley adopted Isaac.
Jodie and Joseph Arsenaault adopted Joshua.
Bernice and Calvin Reini adopted Liljah.

June

Rosanne Santos adopted Georgie, Fabien, Misty and Zeb.
Alison Herman adopted Leonardo.
Barbara and Allen Myers adopted Jessica.
Christopher and Tamsyn Walker adopted Christina.
Lorraine DeYoung adopted Adrianna and Adalyn.
Harry Magoon and Jennifer Eisold adopted Emma.

July

Michael and Darlene Cote adopted Michael.
Raymond and Kendra McDonald adopted Jake and Braydon.



*Brayden, Bradley, Aniyah Adoption Date August 16, 2016
2nd Circuit Court Judge Yazinski, Lebanon Family Division
Family in picture Brayden, Bradley, Aniyah, Amy and Alan Robinson,
Sarab, Thomas, Michael and Valerie (parents and siblings)*



*Home at Last
Adoption Date June 22, 2016
2nd Circuit Court, Lebanon Family Division. Family in picture -
Barbara and Allen Myers (adoptive parents) Jessica and her new sister Sara.*

*Celebrating the
adoption of
Cameron Scott,
Ashlynn Lorraine
and
Faith Sophia !*



like to go to watch his soccer games). Aizik needs a family that can provide clear expectations and structure. He would do best in a family that is relaxed, calm, and not easily agitated. Aizik is very sensitive to overstimulation and does not like to be in large crowds.

Aizik has a strong relationship with his previous foster home and considers them his family. It is important that he is able to maintain a relationship with them, as they are important to him.

Maintaining contact with his siblings is also very important to Aizik. He currently stays connected with them through letters. Two of his siblings have been adopted and one remains in care. The family would need to be willing to collaborate with the adoptive families in order to maintain contact with the siblings. Aizik also has a maternal grandmother in Massachusetts with whom he has day visits on occasion.

For more information, please contact Cindy Lamontagne at cindy.lamontagne@dhhs.state.nh.us



Wendy's, WMUR, NH FAPA and DCYF What a Team!

(Pictured - Left to Right) First Row: Jen Zullo, Wendy's Restaurant owner, Michelle Woltering, Pres. NH FAPA; Stephanie Sullivan, Vice Pres. NH FAPA; Eileen Mullen, DCYF Administrator; Lori Ann Pierce, Wendy's Restaurant Owner. Second Row: Cindy Lamontagne, DCYF Adoption Specialist; Deb Bradley, DCYF Foster Care Support; Catherine Meister, DCYF Adoption Supervisor; Ray Arruda, Wendy's Field Marketing; Larry Wiley, CEO Wendy's Corp.; and Tom Ribbert, Wendy's Restaurant Owner.

On August 9th, as a result of a very exciting partnership between **WMUR/Home At Last/NH Chronicle** and **Wendy's Restaurants**, a check for \$29,742.70 was presented to the NH Foster and Adoptive Family Association (NH FAPA) at the WMUR broadcasting station, to assist the organization in their development of an effective statewide association that supports foster and adoptive families throughout the state. The funds were raised by individual and enterprise donations as well as through the sale of coupon books and dollar donations to support adoption in New Hampshire.

Said DCYF Administrator Eileen Mullen, "On behalf DCYF, we extend our gratitude to Wendy's restaurants for their generosity extended not only to the NH Foster and Adoptive Parent Association but also to all of our children in need of loving nurturing placements throughout the State. The development and sustainability of a strong association will ultimately yield stronger families and communities for the children who need us most. Wendy's, combined with WMUR, *Home at Last* segment has demonstrated true leadership for the children and families in New Hampshire and for that we are extremely grateful. This gift will enable NH FAPA to employ a director who will champion and advocate to meet the needs of our children and families throughout the State. This is an exciting time to be a part of this organization and together with the DCYF, we can ensure that children and families are in safe loving homes in the communities in which they live."

Foster parent Michelle Woltering stated, "On behalf of NH FAPA, I would like to extend my endless gratitude to WMUR, Wendy's and DCYF for their outstanding support. Working together, we can continue to serve our families and children in care."

12th Annual DCYF Teen Conference

Soundtrack to Your Life

On August 11, 2016, the DCYF Adolescent Program and the UNH Center for Professional Excellence held the 12th annual DCYF Teen Conference at Southern New Hampshire University (SNHU). This year's theme was **Soundtrack to Your Life**. For the first time since DCYF has held this event, everything was completely run by youth! From hosting the entire event to hosting workshops, everything was done by youth. They did an amazing job.

Trevor P, SNHU student, started off the day by talking about his experiences in foster care and how music helped him get through his journey. Then keynote speaker Jeff Levin took the stage and rocked out with the emcee, also a former youth in care. DCYF Director Lorraine Bartlett provided opening remarks, inspiring all by creatively using song titles to convey her message. Next on the agenda was the signing of the Normalcy Bill of Rights that was created by the New England Youth Coalition, a group of youth leaders and adult supporters from all six New England States.

Throughout the day, youth were given tickets that they put into a raffle in hopes of winning a laptop or gift card. This year, seven laptops were given away!

After breakfast and the keynote presentation, attendees participated in workshops where topics ranged from getting over addiction to achieving financial success. After the workshops, there was lunch and time to relax.

After lunch, attendees split up for the fun fair activities. There was a bungee run, a velcro wall, a dunk tank and many more fun activities for youth and staff to enjoy. The fair activities are usually a favorite among the youth because it's a time where they can be themselves and truly relax.

After the fair activities, everyone reconvened to play Granite City, which is a real life simulation game where one has to pay rent, figure out what services one needs based on a life problem, and even get paid! Money earned was then used in the mall to buy things like candy, backpacks, and gift cards.

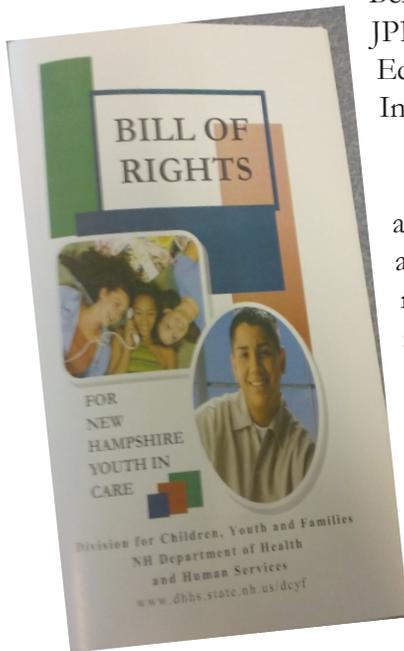
After Granite City, youth gave out awards to staff, providers and other community leaders who they believed went above and beyond on a regular basis. It was a way to show how much they were appreciated. After the awards, there was dinner and a terrific talent show. Then it was time to say our goodbyes. Goodbyes are always bittersweet, but it was hard not to be happy when it was a day filled with fun! Besides, there is always next year!

Whether talking with friends, relaxing, or eating, it's definitely safe to say that everyone had fun and can't wait for next year's conference!



Bill of Rights for New Hampshire Youth in Care

In June of this year, DCYF finalized the **Bill of Rights for New Hampshire Youth in Care**. These rights are intended to guide DCYF and its providers in the delivery of care and services to youth in out-of-home placement with the commitment to permanency, safety and well-being. These rights provide youth with a “voice” regarding their DCYF involvement while ensuring opportunities for “normal” life experiences. This Bill Of Rights was developed by the New Hampshire Youth Voices DCYF Youth Advisory Board. The areas that are covered include Case Planning/Permanency, Relationships with Family/Friends, Normalcy, Privacy/Personal Space and Belongings, Communication with the CPSW/JPP0, Personal Appearance/Expression, Education, Placement and Care, Community Involvement and Health and Well-Being.



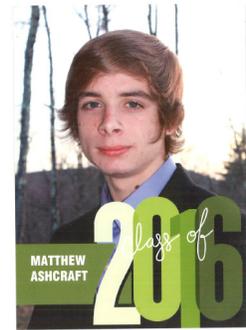
The Bill of Rights come in booklet form and are to be provided by DCYF staff to all DCYF youth in care age 12 or older that reside in foster, relative, shelter, group or residential care. Your foster child’s Child Protective Service Worker (CPSW) or Juvenile Probation and Parole Officer (JPP0) will attempt to arrange a meeting with you and your foster son or daughter youth to present and explain the Bill of Rights and have all parties sign acknowledging receipt. In the event that you are unable to attend this meeting you may still sign the acknowledgement at a later date.

If your foster child feels that their rights are not being supported, they should attempt to talk to whomever they feel is not supporting their rights and express their concerns/feelings. If they are not comfortable doing that, they can bring their concerns/feelings to another member of their treatment/case planning team or their Reasonable and Prudent Parent Advocate (if applicable). If they are not comfortable with doing any of the above, they can contact their CPSWs/JPPOs supervisor at the District Office and express their concerns/feelings to them. They also have the option of bringing the issue up at their next treatment/case planning team meeting or request a meeting if one is not scheduled for the immediate future.

If you have any questions about the Bill of Rights please contact DCYF Adolescent Program Specialist Robert Rodler at 603- 419-0312 or email him at rrodler@dhhs.nh.gov .

Congratulations!!

Congratulations to graduates



Matthew Ashcraft

and



Dakota Banfill



Why My Children Can't Enjoy "Finding Dory"

It's been 14 years since Pixar introduced us to the undersea charm of "Finding Nemo." I was really excited for "Finding Dory," and why wouldn't I be? If it was anything like "Finding Nemo" it would be an instant sensation at our house.



While the animation is stunning, filled with brilliant colors and stocked with an even better cast of characters, not all my children can enjoy this movie.

My family isn't typical, whatever that means these days. To me it means our family is a mix of biological children, adopted children, and foster children. Children in foster care often have a difficult and traumatic past. If they didn't, most wouldn't be in foster care. Even the littlest of children understand the turmoil of a difficult social situation, and may suffer emotionally as a result of trauma.

Dory has some significant memory problems, which is ultimately why she became separated from her parents. Her cognitive challenges could be considered a disability. It's not much

of a stretch to conclude (if you're a kid) that her disability and losing her family are her fault. As foster parents, we spend a great deal of time convincing children that being in foster care is not their fault.

Most foster children fantasize about their birth families. While Pixar depicted Dory's family as stable, sane, and healthy individuals...er, I mean fish...many birth families of foster children struggle with mental illness, substance abuse, and a host of other roadblocks that prevent successful parenting.

Dory inadvertently creates a birth parent ideal, thereby conjuring up a fairy tale that isn't always realistic.

Children love unconditionally. Innocently. Many young foster children dream of reuniting with their birth family, regardless of the circumstances that led to their removal. It made for a heart-warming ending when Dory finds her birth parents, and they all live happily ever after. Many children ultimately reunify with loving, capable parents, but for a growing percentage of displaced children this is just not the case.

Dory as a child...or baby fish...is impossibly adorable. She is shown in flashbacks that would make even the grumpiest moviegoer crack a smile. But these depictions also represent loss and abandonment, two main triggering emotions for lots of foster children, including two youngsters currently in my care.

I'm not suggesting you (and your family) shouldn't see the movie. "Finding Dory" is a funny, witty, charming movie. I did particularly like how others learned to adapt to Dory's memory problems through kindness and acceptance. It is my suggestion that caregivers preview the movie before attending with children who have a history of trauma, loss, or a complicated social situation. "Finding Dory" might just help you talk about foster care with your own birth or adopted children, raising awareness and acceptance in your community. And that is no fish story.

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"Why My Children Can't Enjoy Finding Dory" was originally published on Seacoast Moms Blog, New Hampshire's must have parenting resource for navigating parenthood. You can find the original post, along with many other posts and resources for foster and adoptive parents here: <http://seacoast.citymomsblog.com/foster-care/children-cant-enjoy-finding-dory/>

NEWS FROM THE Education & Training PARTNERSHIP

The Education and Training Partnership is pleased to welcome Dr. Melinda Feola-Mahar in her new role as Curriculum Specialist. Dr. Feola-Mahar brings a wealth of experience to the program, having previously served as a consultant to the Capacity Building Center for the States on developing effective interventions for helping birth and foster parents navigate the child welfare system. She is the mother of four children, all adopted through the New Hampshire foster care system, and has been teaching the Foster and Adoptive Care Essentials (FACES) training for prospective foster parents for over 10 years. Melinda also served as a content expert for the FACES program, assisting in developing new curricula for the ETP. As the Curriculum Specialist, Dr. Feola-Mahar will be instructing classes, creating and developing child welfare focused curricula for both in person and online learning, and updating current curricula to ensure courses have the most recent information.

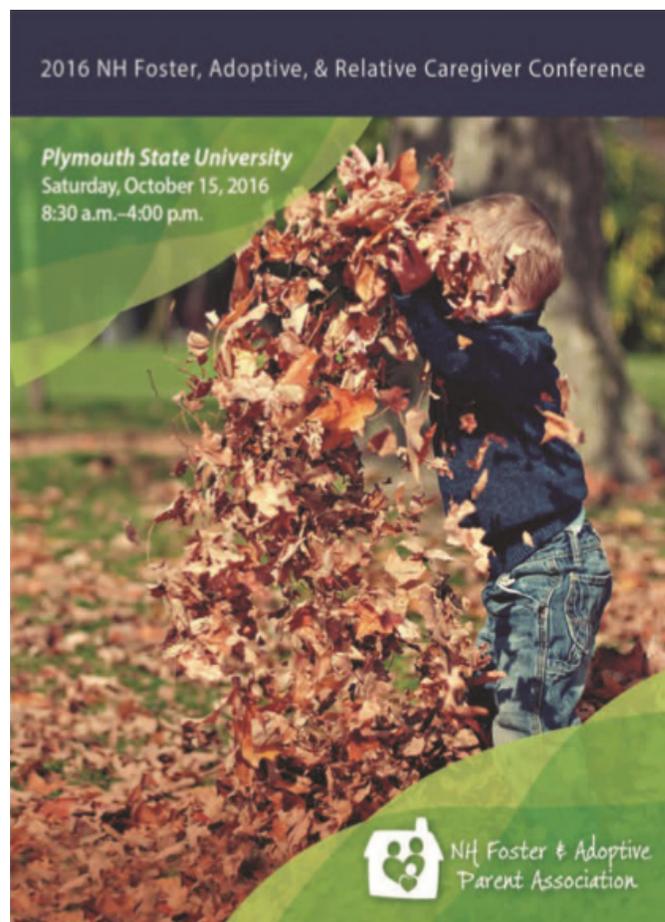


Specialized Care Series Online

The Education and Training Partnership at Granite State College is offering the six Specialized Care trainings ONLINE to meet the needs of the child(ren) in your home. If you need the “specialized” credential on your license because of the needs of the child in your care, online is a great way to complete this series. Any class can be taken by any caregiver as they are great stand alone trainings.

Please register online and register early to avoid class cancellations.

Save the Date



etp.granite.edu