DHHS Celebrates Foster Families

More than 100 families turned out for the 13th Annual Foster Care Appreciation event, held on May 4th at the Spaulding Youth Center.

Sponsored Bethany Christian Services’ Community and Faith Based Initiative in partnership with the Division for Children, Youth and Families, the event provided an opportunity for foster families throughout New Hampshire to come together for a day of fun.

“At Bethany Christian Services, we believe family changes everything,” said Jan Peightell, Branch Director at Bethany Christian Services in Candia. “We want to celebrate and thank the families who have provided a safe and loving home for children through adoption and foster care.”

Families participated in a wide variety of activities across the Spaulding campus, including a bounce house, petting zoo, face and nail painting, crafts and more. Families enjoyed entertainment throughout the day, as well as snow cones, cotton candy, and lunch provided by the Franklin Elks Lodge.

The Passalong Project, Makeover Ministry, and Rise Again sponsored a clothing giveaway and many families were able to take home new jackets. The day concluded with several raffles, including tablets, new bikes, toys, games and many gift certificates.

Thank you to Bethany Christian Services, the Spaulding Youth Center, and the many businesses and community partners who helped to make the day a success. But most of all, thank you to our foster families, who make a difference in the lives of our children. Happy Foster Care Month!
Message from the Director

Dear Foster, Adoptive and Relative Care Families,

May is National Foster Care Month, a time to acknowledge the foster parents, family members, volunteers, mentors, policymakers, child welfare professionals, and other community members who help children and youth in foster care find permanent homes and connections. We celebrate and honor those who make a meaningful difference in the lives of children and families, and want you to know that we value your willingness to serve in this role every day of the year.

For those of you who attended the annual appreciation event at the Spaulding Youth Center on May 4th, I hope you enjoyed a day of fun with your children and had an opportunity to connect with your fellow caregivers. Thank you to Jan Peightell and the CFBI, Spaulding Youth Center and the many volunteers who helped make this day a success.

Summer is right around the corner! Whether you hike in the mountains, soak up the sun at a beach in your area, or just take some time to enjoy the slower pace of summer, I hope you and your families have the opportunity to take advantage of the many wonderful activities and attractions across the state.

Happy Foster Care Month and thanks for all you do!

Be well,
Joe

Granite State College CWEP Update

There have been a few changes in the Child Welfare Education Partnership at Granite State College (CWEP). Sheryl Tedford has retired from her position. We are very thankful for her 19-year dedication to foster families in New Hampshire and wish her well. We would also like to introduce you to April Campbell who will be the new Foster and Adoptive Parent Training Liaison at Granite State College. April is an adoptive and foster parent in New Hampshire. She has a long history working in education and providing and facilitating trainings, and working with special needs children. We are excited to have her in this role and look forward to her enthusiasm for the foster care system.

Save the date for the Youth Voices Summit on August 1st at New England College in Henniker. The theme this year is Positive Influence on Rap Music with rapper “Six 8” Ethan Birch. Ethan is a former youth in care who will bring a message of self-reliance and hope.

The New Hampshire Foster, Adoptive, and Relative Caregiver Conference is set for October 19 at Plymouth State University. Stay tuned for more information.

We have had a large increase in the number of registrations for the Caregiver Online Training classes. If you are registering for a CWEP online class and aren’t receiving the emailed instructions, please add gail.thomas@granite.edu to your “safe senders” or “white” email list.

Did you know we have a Facebook page? To stay on top of new training information, upcoming conferences, and events, like us at https://www.facebook.com/cwep.staff.9485.
Foster Care Event - more photos

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Waiting Children

Issaiah is a funny, witty, and athletic 9-year-old boy. In his free time, he wants to be running, playing catch, shooting hoops or throwing a football around. He also enjoys interacting with others while playing board games.

Issaiah likes to joke around and can be quite quick with witty remarks in a playful manner. Since being placed at Spaulding Youth Center, his peer relations have improved greatly and he likes to joke around with adults.

When talking about adoptive homes, Issaiah says he wants a Dad to wake up and shoot hoops with. He would prefer older siblings that he can play sports with. He has a younger sister that he maintains contact with, and would need a family who is willing to keep this connection.

In school, Issaiah does really well in math and science and struggles with languages and reading, but has been making big strides in those areas. A foster/bridge home for Issaiah needs to be patient and able to help him channel his emotions to process them. Issaiah will do well in an active home that can provide structure and routine.

AdoptNH Update

Happy Spring to all! Things have been very busy since our new website, ADOPT NH, launched in November. The website has had nearly 1000 unique visitors, and more than 5000 page hits!

More than 80 families, both licensed and unlicensed, have inquired about New Hampshire’s waiting children, and we have 17 new families who have started the licensing process.

We currently have 50 children listed on the website, but in recent weeks and months, 11 of those children have either been matched or are currently in the matching process. This is wonderful news for those children!

But that also means we still have 39 children on the site who are waiting for their forever families, with more being added every week. If you think you could be the forever family one of these children is waiting for, or if you know someone else who does, please reach out at www.adoptnh.org.

Don’t forget - the website also lists some wonderful resources for foster and adoptive families.

And let’s celebrate these children who have been officially matched with their forever families!

~Karen Savage, Project Manager, ADOPT NH
Adolescent Program Update

https://www.dhhs.nh.gov/dcyf/adolescent.htm
https://www.facebook.com/NHYouthVoices

Annual DCYF Youth Summit
The 15th Annual DCYF Youth Summit will be held on Thursday, August 1st at New England College in Henniker. More details to follow.

Housing Resources
DCYF, in partnership with New Hampshire Housing, has received 64 Family Unification Program (FUP) Vouchers through the Department of Housing and Urban Development. The program, which started in February of 2019, allows eligible families and youth to receive a Section 8 housing voucher that they can use to obtain an apartment. For more information, please talk to your CPSW or JPPO, or contact Robert Rodler.

Post-Secondary Education Resources
The DCYF Aftercare Services Program can provide up to $5,000 per year for eligible youth going to college or attending a career training school. For more information, please visit: https://www.dhhs.nh.gov/dcyf/aftercare.htm.
Young adults attending college or a career training school can now receive funds until they turn 26. The previous age limit was 23.


The program provides a limited number of tuition and fee waivers to eligible young adults attending the University of New Hampshire, Keene State College, Plymouth State University, Granite State College and the Community College System of New Hampshire.

If you have any questions about the DCYF Adolescent Program or need assistance accessing any of our resources, please contact the Adolescent Worker in your area.

You can also contact me directly at 419-0312 or rrodler@dhhs.nh.gov.

Robert Rodler
DCYF Adolescent Program Administrator
Ask Auntie Ann

Dear Auntie Ann:
I've been a foster parent for a year or so, but my schedule makes it difficult to accommodate a full time placement. Making time for team meetings, court, and various appointments can be challenging. I still want to continue to help out in some way – are there other options for me? - Curious Casey

Dear Casey:
The answer is yes! If you are finding full time fostering to be too much for you at this time, you can talk with your resource worker about helping with respite care or with crisis placements. With respite care, you would be assisting another foster family with care of children placed in their home for a short period of time. Children in foster care are able to receive up to 14 days of respite a year. Sometimes finding a respite home can be a challenge, so having licensed foster parents who can provide this service is great! For crisis care, you would be helping with after-hours, weekend, or emergency placements. A child can stay in a crisis home up to five days and is then moved to another selected placement. In order to be considered as a crisis home, you should plan on taking Emergency Foster Care Training, a one-day class offered through Granite State College. As with respite care, crisis homes are much needed and a valuable resource for DCYF.

Dear Auntie Ann:
I would like to get involved more with our local foster parent group, but am hesitant to offer ideas. How can I go about sharing my thoughts without ruffling any feathers? - Shy Sue

Dear Sue:
Local support groups are a great way for foster, adoptive, and relative providers to share ideas, seek guidance, or just spend time with other people who are living a similar experience. It can be a little intimidating to be the new person in the group, but it's always great to have fresh faces and new perspectives. You could talk with your facilitator, if your group has one, about ideas you have – whether it is topics that you'd like to discuss, or topics that you think would enhance the meeting for participants. The more you attend the meetings, the more comfortable you'll feel with your fellow placement providers, and the more input you'll be able to provide.

Dear Auntie Ann:
I've received paperwork from my Resource Worker for my foster home license renewal. It definitely hasn't been 2 years since our initial licensing. Why am I receiving this early? - Pondering Paul

Dear Paul:
This is a common question around license renewal times. There is certain paperwork completed where the specific completion date is taken into account when your license is issued. For example, if you completed your criminal record forms right away, but your fire inspection wasn’t completed until two months later, the date range of your license would be the date of the last completed paperwork to the earliest completed paperwork two years later. Therefore, it isn’t unusual to see a foster home license is valid for 20 or 22 months instead of the full 24 months. Those dates should get a little closer together at relicensing, as the time frame to get things completed is shorter. Hope that answers your question!
Guest Poet: Foster Parent Perspective

Changing One Little Life
by Valerie Busic

The phone call comes in, “Do you have enough room?”
For one more young child....He needs a home very soon.
He comes to your door, tattered and bruised,
His clothes are all dirty; he’s wearing no shoes...
You welcome him in with a smile on your face,
He’ll have to adjust at his very own pace.
His life has been a hard, rocky road.
Somehow you must help to lighten his load.

He is going to need you to care for him now,
So deep in your heart you silently vow
To make his life better than what he has now,
to again make him smile, though you’re wondering how.

Each new day brings anger, sadness, and joy,
You pray that your love can help this young boy.
Sometimes it seems that you’re getting nowhere,
and you wonder why God said, “Send this child there.”

After an especially trying day, when you’re sure
There must be an easier way
Into the room, his footsteps now come.
With a shy hug, he whispers, “I love you, Mom”

With tears in your eyes, you know just what to say,
You’ve waited and waited for this very day.
“Remember this, honey, and no matter what,
You’re special. I love you. You just hold on to that.”

And then the day comes when you answer the phone...
They’re sending “your” little boy back to his home.
You think of the work that may be undone
When they do send him back, to the very same one.

He’s much different today then he was, way back when.
Your hard work has paid off; you can see it in him.
You hope and you pray he’ll remember your love
But you can’t help but wonder, will it be enough?

To carry him through what may lie ahead
You try to be strong to cover your dread.
Your head says you must get through the good-byes
But the weight in your heart feels like part of it died.

Later, you learn he’s doing quite well.
He comes over to visit and you really can tell.
His life isn’t perfect but... it’s turning quite nice
So you have made a difference in one little boy’s life.