



Resource Family Connection

News, Events and Information Benefiting
the Children of Waukesha County

May 2013



May Is National Foster Care Month

Here are ten ways you can mark the occasion with your family.

1. Thank your foster children for the opportunity to be parents to them.
2. Give an appreciation card to your caseworker.
3. Tell five friends about the rewards of fostering.
4. Make copies of your favorite *Fostering Perspectives* article to pass along.
5. Send an encouragement card to another foster parent having a tough time.
6. Make plans with another foster family to trade an afternoon watching the other's kids. Take the time to refresh yourself doing something you like.
7. Establish May as the month for an annual outdoor family photo.
8. Browse the Internet for foster care sites to see what is new in other areas of the country.
9. Join a foster parent association or support group.
10. Plan a celebration party with your foster parent association.

Adapted from Fostering Illinois newsletter, May 2001

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The Balance Beam: Caring for Yourself, While Caring for Your Kids By: Adoption Resources of Wisconsin/The Foster Care and Adoption Resource Center

Life, work and family commitments take a toll on all of us. We all have responsibilities that pull us in countless directions, making us feel stressed out, short-tempered and overwhelmed.

It's hard to prioritize all of these responsibilities - our own and those of our kids. Well-meaning friends and coworkers pull out the casual phrase to "take care of" ourselves, but that is often more easily said than done - especially for parents of children who have experienced trauma.

Self-care becomes especially important when you are an adoptive parent. Parents who have a commitment to their own needs and well-being, as well as to their child's needs, will remain effective for the long haul.

Finding that balance between taking care of your kids, your coworkers, your boss and yourself will ultimately make a huge difference in all of the roles you play.

Key to Self Care

The key to good self-care is coming to terms with one fact: the importance of taking care of yourself. Once you have done that, you can work on building good self-care into your daily routine. You are worth taking care of and your good parenting depends on good self-care.

In Her Own Words

Wisconsin foster and adoptive mom Peg Cadd and her husband have been providing care for kids for around 30 years. The years and their experiences have taught them a lot of lessons - some good, some more difficult to take.

"When parenting a traumatized child with attachment issues, it's easy to be sucked in by them," Peg said. "At times, it can feel like

you're continuing to pour love and caring into a cup that cannot be filled."

Peg shared more about her family's journey in the Summer 2010 issue of ARW's *Partners* newsletter, talking about one particular day when she reached her breaking point with her daughter.

Reluctant to engage with her daughter's behavior, Peg knew she was either going to do or say something that she would regret or she would need a break - and quickly.

She let her husband know that she was leaving to take a walk and let herself cry and calm down away from the situation with her daughter. An hour later, her daughter was doing better; more importantly, Peg realized that she had "refilled her own cup."

"It was a real turning point for me as a mom because I had always felt it was my job to make everything better," she explained. "Even when we can't and especially for our children who come to us already hurt."

Since that day, Peg has found many other ways to refill her cup when she needs it.

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Local Activities

Waukesha Public Library

Teen Manga Festival

When: Sat, May 4, 1pm – 4pm

Where: Waukesha Public Library, 321 Wisconsin Ave., Waukesha, Wisconsin 53186

Description: Community Room. Join us for an afternoon of manga celebration! Guest artist Nick Katzfey will be teaching us how to draw in the manga style, and there will be games, crafts, and food afterwards! Come dressed as yourself or as your favorite manga character for the Cosplay contest! Teens in grades 7-12 are invited.

Teen Zombie Prom

When: Tue, May 14, 3:30pm – 5:30pm

Where: Waukesha Public Library, 321 Wisconsin Ave., Waukesha, WI 53186

Description: Community Room. Drop-in after school for the ZOMBIE PROM! Bring old clothes to zombify or come dressed as a zombie! Horrific snacks and games will be provided. Teens in grades 7-12 are invited.

Milwaukee County Zoo

May 12

Mother's Day

Share in Mom's Day with a trip to the Zoo! All moms are admitted free on their special day!

May 18 & 19

Party for the Planet

Sponsored by American Transmission Company (ATC)

"Go Green" and enjoy Zoo activities spotlighting the importance of preserving our resources.

May 25 through Sep 2

Sting Ray & Shark Bay

Sponsored by Sendik's Food Markets

Splash into this hands-on exhibit featuring non-aggressive sting rays and sharks! (\$2.50 per person)

Waukesha County Museum

Museum Explorer's Summer Camp

Looking for something fun and educational for your child this summer? The Waukesha County Museum has designed a summer camp especially for children **6-10 years old** that is exciting and engaging as campers explore all the hidden secrets the museum has to offer. Each week is developed and facilitated by the museum's education director and staff, and each day has a full schedule of games, experiments, artifact handling, I-Spy challenges, and craft projects. Each week will end with a special family presentation in which campers will put all the week's fun on display to celebrate!

★ **July 22-26:** Decade Discovery

★ **July 29-August 2:** Myths and Legends

Each week has a schedule of **9am – 4pm**, with early drop-off at 8:15am and late pick-up at 5pm available for an additional fee. Children can be registered for 1, 2, or all 3 weeks. Fee per week is \$130 for members and \$140 for non-members. Sign up for all three weeks and receive \$30 off! Early or late time options are \$10 each per week.

Spaces are going fast! To register, registration forms can be found at <http://www.waukeshacountymuseum.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/2013-Camp-Registration-Forms.pdf>

Or call (262) 521-2859, ext. 224. Spaces are filled on a first come, first serve basis, and payment is due when registering. Registration deadline is July 5. We hope to see your camper this summer!

Changes in the Permanency Services Unit!

2013 has already proven to be a year of changes! Not only are we looking forward to the new building and moving, we have had some exciting developments within the Permanency Services Unit. Cindie Remshek has taken a new and exciting position within the FITT Team in the Adolescent and Family Division where she will be working with families that have been exposed to interfamilial sexual abuse. In addition, Bob Alioto has accepted a supervisory position with the Adolescent and Family Division where he will be supervising delinquency and court intake staff. Although we are sad to see them go from our unit, we are extremely excited for them and their new adventures! We'd like to thank them for their years of dedication and service to our families and know that it will continue in their new roles.

Licensing Tips

With the recent fire deaths in the area I wanted to review this requirement with you.

Did you know the batteries in your smoke detectors are to be checked on a monthly basis?

According to DCF 56.07(7)(b) Smoke detectors need to be checked monthly and shall immediately be repaired or replaced if any part of the detector found to be inoperative. For single-station battery-operated smoke detectors, the battery shall be placed at least once a year.

Your fire evacuation plan needs to be written with a diagram of your home showing exits from each level of the home.

The place away from the foster home at which all evacuated members of the household will meet so they can determine if all persons are out of danger.

The plan should also assign responsibility to each foster parent and other caregiver for each foster child to avoid confusion in midst of an emergency.

The means by which foster children that are non-ambulatory will be assisted in evacuating the home.

Foster parents shall review the fire safety evacuation plan with all household members at least once every three months and immediately following a placement of a new foster child in the foster home.

The fire evacuation plan shall be posted in the home and its location made known to all family members.

The plan should be posted on each level of the home and foster children should be quizzed periodically on the content of the plan.

Thank you,

Shari

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How to Take Care of Yourself

All people have their own preferred ways and methods of caring for themselves and making "me time" a priority. However, the following are some tips that might help keep you calm and grounded - and get you pointed in the right direction of finding what will work for you.

- Honor yourself by acknowledging that this work is hard and, if it was easier, more families would be adopting and fostering.
- Ask for and seek out help when you need it.
- Take breaks. Respite care is handled in many ways. It's important for you to build your support system of caregivers who can step in when you feel that you're at your breaking point.
- Network with other adoptive families.
- Attending training and workshops; never stop learning.
- Keep it simple. Choose an activity that fits with your lifestyle and your family.
- Stop comparing yourself to other people. There is only one you in all of the world and you have no comparison.
- Seek out and join a support group - either in person or online
- Keep your sense of humor.
- Try to find one-on-one time with each of your children.
- Consider talking to a counselor with experience in adoption issues.

Foster and adoptive families take on one of the most challenging but essential jobs in our society. It's not an easy journey. All of us have our own journey in life, our own needs and our own wants. The key in caring for yourself is remembering that your life is valuable.

Self-care is critical to being the best person - and parent - that you can be.

Resources

What Do You Do to Keep Your Emotional Well from Running Dry?

http://www.fosteringperspectives.org/fp_vol8no2/well.htm

Summer 2010 Partners Newsletter: Caring for Yourself

<http://wiadopt.org/Portals/WIAdopt/Adopt%20&%20Partners/summer2010.pdr>

Wisconsin Foster and Adoptive Parent Association, Inc.

<http://wfapa.org>

Foster/Adoptive Families and Extended Families Facebook Group

<http://facebook.com/groups/257004707644669/>

Connecting Bridges Facebook Group

<http://facebook.com/groups/208378199276317/>

Reaching Your Boiling Point

<http://wiadopt.org/Portals/WIAdopt/Tipsheets/TakingCare/ReachingYourBoilingPoint.pdf>

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From the Perspective of a Foster Parent Karen and Steve Vacek

Karen & Steve Vacek have been foster parents for 8 years. Some rewards they find in being foster parents are seeing the progress that the children make. When the children are placed in the Vacek's home the children don't have to worry about everything else in their

lives they just have to worry about being kids. One of the children that Karen & Steve were foster parents for was incredibly delayed and now that he is 9 he is almost at the same level as all the other 9 year olds are. The Vacek's find it rewarding to see the progress the children make mentally, physically and emotionally while in their care. Karen said that it is so incredible to see them grow as an individual. Karen stated that foster kids affect you in such a positive way that you would never expect. She said there are many hidden treasures in being a foster parent and that is the biggest reward.

There are also some challenges that come along with being a foster parent. Karen feels that educating people around the children such as friends, family, school, and birth parents is the biggest challenge. Karen feels that everyone thinks they know the child but they really don't. She feels that it is important educate everyone in contact with the child, that this individual is not the same as other children even if they try and treat them the same they aren't the same. Their life experiences are different, what they have been exposed to is often different than other kids their age. It's important to educate teachers about expectations as a child may be 8 but their ability to learn may be that of a 5 year old. This may be due to the lack of exposure. It's important to educate other people on how to work with the children as they are sometimes different in how they relate to people. She feels it's important to remember that nobody can change the child's past but you can find things from their past that are beneficial.

Karen feels that foster parents need understanding what you have done for that child can't be taken away and the benefits of it are everlasting even if the child can't remember you. She stated that even if you've only had a child for a week it's important to understand the impact you've had on that child's life because you were there when they needed someone the most. You give the children and parents the stability they needed at a time they needed it the most.

Another challenge that Karen had was accepting birth parents for who they are and not second guessing their life because nobody can know exactly what they've been through.

A challenge that nobody could have warned Karen about was the laundry, cooking and homework. Karen and Steve went from one child to seven children in a short amount of time and all of the sudden it was mass quantities of everything. Karen stated that sometimes it can be overwhelming but she wouldn't change it for the world.

When asked how being a foster parent impacted the rest of her family, Karen stated that to this day all of her kids, birth and adopted have accepted all the foster children. She stated that becoming a foster family has to be a family decision because your own children are accepting a lot. Karen continued by saying their own children are having to share and losing a lot, but at the same time gaining a lot. Karen said looking back they would do it all again. It helps the children to realize what they give to another child. It helps opens the kid's eyes to what is going on with others.

Karen likes to explain to her own children and her foster children that you don't have to stop loving someone to love someone else. People can love a lot of people.

Karen's advice for people who are becoming foster parents is to really examine why you're becoming a foster parent. Karen would also like future foster parents to accept that all children no matter what, are benefits to your life. She also would like people to let children know that they can love lots of people and not have to choose who to love. The children can love you and their parents and that is okay. Finally she would like people to know and understand that all children even your own are temporarily in your home.

Training and Events



Training Offered By Waukesha County

SAVE THE DATE

Parent Café

May 14, 2013

5:30 PM

Center for Excellence

N4W22000 Bluemound Road

Waukesha

To register for childcare, RSVP or for questions call, 262-548-8080.



Waukesha County Foster Parent Required Pre-Placement Training

Prospective Foster Parents need to do Part 1 of the training on the following website: <http://www.wcwts.wisc.edu/foster-parent-training> (Please bring your training certificates to the class)

We will then meet to discuss the learning points and answer your questions.

May 6, 2013

6:00 PM to 8:00 PM

Waukesha County Human Services

500 Riverview Ave.

Brookfield Room G137 - Enter Door 6.

Call Shari Rather to register at 262-548-7267.

Relative Caregivers Support/ Education Group

Third Tuesday of each month.

May 21, 2013

6:00 PM to 7:00 PM

Parents Place

1570 E. Moreland Blvd., Waukesha, WI

262-549-5575

Free childcare available. Please call Parents Place to reserve your spot.

Waukesha County Relative Resource Families

Please RSVP to Janis (262-896-8069) or Libby (262-548-7277)

Trauma Informed Parenting

For Waukesha County Resource Families

Sponsored by the Southern Partnership

Presented by Kathy Mullooly and Bob Alioto

5/11/13 Dealing with Feelings & Behaviors

5/11/13 Connections & Healing

6/1/13 Becoming an Advocate

6/1/13 Taking Care of Yourself

All classes are in the Brookfield Room at Waukesha County Human Services. Enter Door 6.

All classes are from 9:00AM to 3:30 PM.

Lunch will be provided.

Call Shari Rather to register 262-548-7267.

- Annual Foster Parent Meeting**
 May 9, 2013
 5:30 PM to 8:30 PM
 Center for Excellence, Waukesha
 Child care reservations need to be made by May 3rd.
- Annual Foster Parent Picnic**
 June 19, 2013
 2:00 PM to 8:00 PM
 Fox Brook Park, Brookfield
 Contact Shari Rather for reservations.
- Annual Relative Caregiver Picnic**
 August 17, 2013
 Noon to 3:00 PM
 Minooka Park, Waukesha

Training

Parents Place Programs
262-549-5575 www.ppacinc.org

- Teaching Cooperation and Self Control**
 Mondays, May 6 - 20 from 6:00 - 7:30 PM
- Special Workshop - Bullying**
 Wednesday, May 29 from 6:00 - 7:30 PM
- Love and Logic**
 Mondays, June 3 - 24 from 5:30 - 7:30 PM
- Kids Managing Anger**
 Tuesdays, June 4 - 18 from 5:30 - 7:00 PM
- Special Workshop - Self-Regulation**
 Wednesday, June 26 from 6:00 - 7:30 PM



Contact Numbers:

Waukesha County
Health & Human Services
262-548-7212

Rebecca Hollister, Supervisor
262-548-7271

Mary Alice Grosser, Supervisor
262-548-7272

Kathy Mullooly, Supervisor
262-896-6832

Shari Rather, Foster Care Coord.
262-548-7267

Libby Sinclair, Relative Licensing
262-548-7277

Social Workers:

Jennifer Adler..... 262-548-7265

Suzanne Arnold..... 262-548-7348

Megan Fishler 262-896-8570

Laura Jahnke..... 262-548-7359

Becca Kuester..... 262-896-6857

Maria Maurer 262-548-7345

Susan Peck..... 262-896-8574

Madeline Prange 262-548-7394

Janis Ramos..... 262-896-8069

Michael Reed..... 262-548-7347

Greg Rewolinski 262-548-7270

Elizabeth Russo 262-548-7349

Kim Sampson..... 262-548-7273

Mark Sasso 262-548-7346

Linda Senger 262-548-7698

Kinship Workers:

Linda Finn..... 262-548-7254

Deb Fosberg..... 262-548-7256

Children's Mental Health Outreach
262-548-7666

Medical Emergency: 911

Family Emergency: 211

Foster Parent Mentor

Jen Barcus..... 262-542-2926

David Mersfelder..... 262-542-2926

If an Allegation of Abuse or Neglect has been made against you, please call:

FASPP
Norma Schoenberg
920-922-9627

March 2013 Placements

Regular Foster Care:
44 Children

Treatment Foster Care:
9 Children

Group Homes:
1 Children

Residential Care Facilities:
8 Children

Relative Placements:
35 Children

Level 2 Foster Homes:
111 Homes

Level 1 Foster Homes:
45 Homes

Total Homes Assisting Other Counties
15 Homes

