



# Resource Family Connection

News, Events and Information Benefiting  
the Children of Waukesha County

September 2013



## What Do Teens Want from Foster Parents?

By: Joan McAllister and Nancy Carter

Many North Carolina teens in foster care are placed out-of-county in group homes and child care institutions. This isn't surprising, if you consider that most of the families we recruit to foster or adopt are not interested in teens.

But it would be wrong to assume that, based on this, there are no families interested in caring for teens, or that teens themselves don't want to live with families.

True, being a foster parent for a teenager or a young adult is very different from being a foster parent for a younger child. But for the most part the difference lies in the normal challenges of adolescent development, not in the young person's foster care status.

Teens and young adults are literally adults-in-training. They need - and want - life models, life coaches, and opportunities to develop into the people they can be.

Perhaps the real problem is that we haven't made a strong enough effort to recruit foster families specifically for teens and young adults. Who knows? Perhaps we should even ask teens to help us.

As a first step in that direction, we'd like to share with you the things some teens we know say they need in a foster parent.

### **Someone who will make you a part of their family.**

Teens don't like to be singled out as "different." This is especially true in the foster family, where fairness is key" if a foster youth is the same age as another child in your home, she wants to be treated as the other child would be treated. If rules are different for them, the reasons should be fair. Opportunities must exist for the foster youth to earn the same privileges as other youth.

### **Someone who has a good attitude about being a foster parent.**

While every parent has frustrating days, a successful foster parent enjoys his or her role most of the time.

Fostering teens is an opportunity to provide youths with a "toolkit" of skills that will help them survive in the real world. Having a "good attitude" means allowing youths to practice those skills - even if it means the kitchen is a mess. In fact, a messy kitchen is really an opportunity to teach cleaning and organizing while reinforcing the teen's desire to make his afterschool snack. Coming home and saying "Wow, you must have enjoyed their afternoon snack. Looks like it's time to get moving on a cleanup," can go a lot further than, "What happened to MY kitchen? You are never to use it again! Do you understand me?"

### **Someone who isn't "in it for the money."**

It's hard to believe, but some teens think some people provide foster care for the money. Part of the problem may be that teens don't

understand what things cost. While we don't recommend that foster parents constantly emphasize how much they pay out of pocket to care for the teens in their homes, taking the teen shopping for groceries, having discussions of household bills and budgets, giving the teen responsibility for purchasing some of his own necessities, etc., can help him or her get a better sense of the cost of living. This is, of course, an important life skill in itself.



### **Someone who shows they care about your feelings; someone who is nice, respectful, and loving.**

Many teens in foster care come from backgrounds in which both positive and negative emotions were often expressed in extreme, inaccurate, or inappropriate ways. Youth need to know how to express emotions appropriately. They need to feel the joy of knowing that a respected adult cares about them and how they feel. Developmentally teens are often on a rollercoaster ride of emotions. Having someone who can model a caring, calm, and respectful response enhances teens' positive development.

### **Someone who sets rules but isn't obsessive about them.**

Be fair about rules and guidelines. Make sure you understand why they exist and communicate those reasons clearly to teens. Developmentally, teens are trying to discern moral reasoning, so it is realistic to expect teens to ask "why?" Indeed, you should encourage them to do so. It is equally realistic to expect adults to respond appropriately, calmly, and with respect. Being overly dramatic about rules will only reinforce inappropriate ways of expression.

### **Someone who is a good listener.**

Everyone likes to be heard. Yet teens are not known for being the "let's sit and talk" population. In fact, they have a reputation for limiting their communication with adults.

The best way to get teens to talk to you is to involve them in something or, better yet, get involved in something they are doing. For instance, get them involved in helping with dinner. While you both have your hands busy, ask about their day. Mention a show you saw and why you think they may like it. Ask if there's something they've heard about that you might find interesting. Inquire whether they've ever considered working in the food industry. You might even try asking them if they could teach you some easy ways to navigate a website, do searches, format a document, create a power point presentation, etc.

Once you get involved with teens the communication becomes much easier, AND you learn a thing or two about their strengths and interests.

Continued on Page 2

## What Do Teens Want from Foster Parents? Continued from Page 1

### Someone who believes “real love” can overcome many struggles.

Does anyone really know what “real love” is? Maybe this is a starting point for a dinner conversation. There’s no right or wrong answer, so the person asking for “real love” is the only one who can define it. Typically responses may include “loving me even when I do the wrong thing,” “will never leave me,” “someone I can’t wait to see each day,” etc.

The real message in this statement is, “I need hope that things will be better.” Young people in foster care continue to seek hope in a better day, a better time, a better age - something better than what is available to them right now.

Real love offers real hope. And with real hope a young person can get through today and reach for tomorrow. Foster parents can offer that hope and give young people a reason to reach for tomorrow.

Reprinted with permission from Fostering Perspectives  
November 2007 - Vol. 12, No. 1  
[www.fosteringperspectives.org](http://www.fosteringperspectives.org)

## Local Activities

### Waukesha Public Library Teen Zone - Teen Clubs

<http://www.waukesha.lib.wi.us/tz/>

Check out these teen clubs offered once a month throughout the year:

- ★ Teen Manga and Anime Club  
Meets the third Tuesday of every month at 5 PM  
Come talk about your favorite manga, the ones you hate, and the ones you are interested in reading. Crafts, manga creation, and watching anime are just a few of the activities we do. New members are always welcome.
- ★ Teen Advisory Group  
Meets the last Tuesday of every month at 6 PM  
The Teen Advisory Group members are the brains behind teen events at the library. Bring your ideas for future programs you would like to see and participate in. New members are always welcome.
- ★ Teen Book Club  
Meets the last Tuesday of every month at 7 PM  
Enjoy excellent books, discussion, and snacks with friends. New members are always welcome. Pick up your copy of this month’s book at the Reference Desk.

### Teen Programs at the Waukesha YMCA

For more information on Teen Programs at the YMCA, please contact Gala Siegel, Child Development Director at (262) 409-2968.  
<http://www.ymcawc.org/programs/youth-development/teen-programs/>

- ★ Basic Teen Strength & Conditioning Program - Grades 7 - 8  
Members \$10
- ★ Advanced Teen Strength Training - Grades 7 - 8  
Members \$10
- ★ Red Cross CPR/AED Pro Training Recertification  
Member \$12 Program Participant \$62
- ★ Y Leadership  
Ages 13 - 16  
This program requires completion of 4 core courses. Each course requires 10 hours of volunteer on-the-job Y training to develop leadership skills and personal responsibility. Teens that complete all courses will be eligible for a youth internship position at the Y. Contact Gala Siegel, Child Development Director, with questions: [gsiegel@ymcawc.org](mailto:gsiegel@ymcawc.org).

## Top Ten Reasons for Adopting Teens

1. No diapers to change.
2. We sleep through the night.
3. We will be ready to move out sooner...but we can still visit.
4. You don’t just get a child, you get a friend.
5. We will keep you up-to-date with the latest fashion trends.
6. No more carpools; we can drive you places.
7. No bottles, formula, or burp rags required.
8. We can help out around the house.
9. We can learn from you.
10. We can teach you how to run your computer.

Reprinted from the Coalition for Children, Youth and Families Summer 2013 Newsletter



## Calling All Creative Kids!

Do you want to be famous?

It’s your chance to put your artwork on display

It’s not too early to begin working on your art work. The ROKs committee is having its eighth annual non-competitive Art Show on **Thursday, November 14<sup>th</sup> in the new Waukesha County Human Services Center**.

Every year we display art done by the talented kids who work with WCDHHS. Some of the artwork has included drawings, paintings, sculptures, jewelry, poems, stories and “Sculpey” figures. We have also had a flautist, poet, singer, sketch artist, guitarist, cellist and a drum circle that have performed at past Shows. If you can sing, dance or play a musical instrument, we would love to have you be part of the program on November 14. From young children to older teenagers, all art efforts are included in the Show. The committee also has some funds that can be used to purchase supplies for those young artists who need them. Please contact your social worker if you need supplies or if you are interested in performing at the Show.

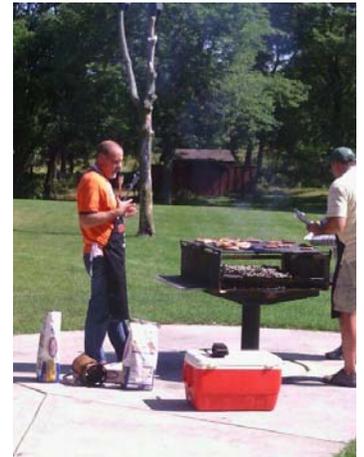


Please think about being a part of this year’s Show and mark your calendars for November 14. We’d love to have you join us. The young people who have participated in the past have enjoyed having the chance to show others their artistic efforts. We look forward to your involvement. If any young people, parents or caregivers have any questions, please contact your worker. More information about the Show will be included in future Newsletters.

Finally, as in years past, we invite any artists to create a mural to be displayed at the Agency. The theme of this year’s mural is **One Thing We All Have In Common Is That We Are All Different**. If you would like to participate in this, you need to submit to your worker by September 1 a draft sketch of what your mural will look like. The sketches will then be reviewed for approval and the mural(s) will be unveiled at this year’s Show.

Thank you.

# Relative Caregiver Recognition Event at Minooka Park August 17, 2013



**We want to thank all of our sponsors  
for their contributions to the  
Relative Caregiver Recognition Event!**

- Discovery World**
- Divino Gelato Café**
- Green Bay Packers**
- Harley Davidson Museum**
- Marty's Pizza**
- Milwaukee County Zoo**
- Prairieville Park**
- Signature Salon and Spa**

*Thank You*

*Merci*



**Gracias**

*Grazie*

*Dankeschön!*

# Training and Events



## Training Offered By Waukesha County

### Parent Café

September 12, 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 Information Session

Do you know someone who is interested in becoming a foster parent? We are holding an information session to provide more information about foster parenting in Waukesha County. Please pass on this information to other's who want to know more.

We suggest reviewing the online pre-placement training prior to attending an information session.

Pre-placement training is available at <http://www.wcwcs.wisc.edu/foster-parent-training>

September 9, 2013

6:00 PM to 8:00 PM

#### Waukesha County Human Services

500 Riverview Ave.

Enter Door 6 and go to Room G137.

RSVP: Madeline Prange - 262-548-7267.

### Foundation Training

Attention newly licensed, level-2 foster homes! Have you completed Foundation Training yet? Please remember that the completion of the Foster Parent Foundation Series (30 hours) is required within the first two years of your licensure in order to be eligible for re-licensure. The Southern Training Partnership is offering foundation classes this fall and sports are still available. These trainings are usually only offered in Spring and Fall. Please plan accordingly. The Waukesha Foster Parent Foundation series begins on Tuesday, September 24th through November 26th. Classes take place each Tuesday from 5:30 - 8:30 PM. Register on PDS Online for these trainings. If you have questions about what you still need to complete or how to register, please contact Madeline Prange.

|          |   |
|----------|---|
| 9/24/13  | Partners in Permanency                      |
| 10/1/13  | Cultural Dynamics in Placement              |
| 10/8/13  | Maintaining Family Connectedness            |
| 10/15/13 | Dynamics of Abuse & Neglect, Part 1         |
| 10/22/13 | Dynamics of Abuse & Neglect, Part 2         |
| 10/29/13 | Impact of Maltreatment on Child Development |
| 11/5/13  | Attachment                                  |
| 11/12/13 | Separation & Placement                      |
| 11/19/13 | Positive Guidance & Discipline              |
| 11/26/13 | Effects of Fostering on the Family          |

### Relative Caregivers Support/Education Group

Third Tuesday of each month.

September 17, 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)

## Training

### Parents Place Programs

262-549-5575 [www.ppacinc.org](http://www.ppacinc.org)

- **Uncontrollable Child**  
Tuesdays, Sept. 10 - 24 from 5:30 - 7:30 PM
- **Healthy Parenting/Strengthening Families**  
Mondays, Sept. 16 - Oct. 28 from 5:30 - 7:00 PM
- **Social Skills and Self Esteem**  
Tuesdays, Sept. 17 & 24 from 5:30 - 7:00 PM
- **Active Parenting for the Challenging Times**  
Thursdays, Sept. 19 & 26 from 10:00 - 10:30 AM
- **Special Speaker - Feingold Diet**  
Wednesday, Sept. 25 from 6:00 - 7:30 PM

### Coalition for Children, Youth & Families Formerly Adoption Resource of Wisconsin 800-762-8063

#### Handling Stress Together

August 28, 2013 from 1:00 - 3:00 PM

\$10/participant \$40/agency group

Coalition for Children, Youth & Families

6682 W. Greenfield Avenue, Suite 310, Milwaukee

Or attend via webinar

Register online at

<http://cyhandlingstress.eventbrite.com>

or call 414-475-1246

Are you stressed?!? Find out if it is good stress or bad stress and what to do about it. Taken out of the supplemental curriculum of the Coalition's acclaimed *Our Home Our Family (OHOF)* series, Handling Stress together will help participants understand the difference between healthy and unhealthy levels of stress. This training will also aid in the development skills to manage stress effectively.

### Contact Numbers:

Waukesha County  
Health & Human Services  
262-548-7212

Rebecca Hollister, Supervisor  
262-548-7271

Kathy Mullooly, Supervisor  
262-896-6832

Madeline Prange, 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

Samantha Comaris ... 262-548-7394

Megan Fishler ..... 262-896-8570

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

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

Stacy Kurkiewicz..... 262-548-7262

Maria Maurer ..... 262-548-7345

Jessica McDonald .... 262-548-7639

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

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 Mersfelder ..... 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

### July 2013 Placements

|                                    |                                       |                                   |   |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---|
| Level 2 Placement:<br>40 Children  | Treatment Foster Care:<br>11 Children | Group Homes:<br>1 Children        | Residential Care Facilities:<br>14 Children |
| Level 1 Placements:<br>40 Children | Level 2 Foster Homes:<br>100 Homes    | Level 1 Foster Homes:<br>92 Homes |   |

