

Fostering Communications

Building a Network of People in the Foster Care System

November 2016

"They may not have my
eyes,
They may not have my
smiles,
but they have all my
heart!!!"
~Author Unknown



National Adoption Awareness Month

November is National Adoption Month, which is a wonderful time to bring attention to the children and youth in ND that are waiting for their permanent home as well as recognize and thank all of the amazing families who have chosen to open their hearts and families to adoption. The dedication and unwavering support for children by adoptive families is more than appreciated by CFSTC. Within North Dakota Governor Jack Dalrymple's proclamation, it is noted that 365 adoptions were finalized last year, including 147 children whom were adopted from foster care. The number of children adopted from foster care increased from last year by 23 children!!! The following link shares the remainder of Governor Dalrymple's proclamation for Adoption Awareness Month:

[ND Adoption Awareness Month Proclamation](#)

President Barack Obama released the following statement within his proclamation .

"One of the most important jobs many of us will ever have is being a parent. Throughout National Adoption Month, we celebrate all those who have invited a child in need into their hearts and into their homes, and we express our profound appreciation for all who help make adoptions possible. Let us continue strengthening the adoption process so that all children can learn, grow, and thrive with the support of a devoted and permanent family. "

The following link has the full Proclamation:
[2016 Adoption Month Presidential Proclamation](#)

Heart Gallery

The North Dakota Heart Gallery has recently released new pictures and stories of 33 youth that are awaiting their forever homes. The ND Heart Gallery is a non-profit organization that was started in 2008 with a mission to reach out to the public and encourage the adoption of children waiting for forever homes. In honor of National Adoption Month, we encourage you to consider opening your hearts to one of the many wonderful children awaiting a family to call their own.

[ND Heart Gallery](#)



ND Post Adopt Network

We shared in our March Newsletter that North Dakota had launched the ND Post Adopt Network. Again this is a program that offers crisis case management, advocacy and referral to service providers, phone and face-to-face support, parent and youth support groups, mentorship for youth and families, among other supports after the finalization for adoption. Check out the following link to learn more about what they offer.

[ND Post Adopt Network](#)



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Upcoming Conferences

North Dakota Family Based Services Association Conference, Fargo, ND
April 5-7, 2017

North Dakota Children and Family Services Conference, Bismarck, ND
July 24-28, 2017

Festival of Training Dates to Remember

March 3-4, 2016
Grand Forks

March 10-11, 2017
Bismarck

Registration available this spring through CFSTC



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PRIDE Link

The PRIDE Model we follow highlights the competency of “**Supporting children’s relationships between children and their birth families.**” When working with birth families of the children in your care, it is important to recognize that just as the child has experienced trauma in their life, it is likely that their parent has as well. Many parents have their own history of childhood trauma which can be compounded by the trauma of having their own children removed from them. Due to these traumas, it can be hard for birth parents to work effectively with case workers and foster parents. The following link offers insight into how this trauma may impact the birth family, ideas on how you as a caregiver can help to assist the birth family, and then stresses the need for self-care throughout this process.

[Birth Parents with Trauma Histories and the Child Welfare System](#)

Mealtime Dilemmas

One main parenting responsibility to make sure the children in their care get adequate nutrition and are offered food on a consistent basis. Children in foster care often have experienced times of hunger and fear of when the next meal will come. This can be a confusing feeling to put into words when you are young, so often this fear is expressed in overeating, hoarding, or having a general obsessive behavior regarding food. The following article is written by adoptive parent, Bob DeMarco from North Carolina. He shares the reality of what he has experienced with the youth in his care, and how they have learned together how to manage the challenges that comes while balancing fear with food.

[Conquering Food-Related Fears and Behaviors](#)

According to Dr. Ken McCann “foster children may exhibit feeding issues as part of the “invisible suitcase” they bring with them. Issues such as hoarding or gorging food are about comfort and security”. In the following video, Dr. McCann provides information as well as tips and strategies for handling food concerns.

[Food/Eating Issues and Children in Foster Care](#)

Learning through a Trauma Lens

Our education system today often offer new and impressive material for our youth, which for many is just what is needed to challenge them in a positive way. However, for some youth who have experienced trauma in their lives, such as the youth we meet through foster care, concentrating and learning such material can become an unrealistic expectation if not managed appropriately. The school year is approaching the halfway mark, which means that most classes are moving quite fast with what is being offered. If the youth in your care is struggling in school, we encourage you to share the following article with your child’s school team to see if any of the suggested ideas fit for them.

[Ways to Calm a Young Brain in Trauma](#)



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ONE....



One tree can start a forest;
One smile can begin a
friendship;
One hand can lift a soul;
One word can frame a
goal;
One candle can wipe out
darkness;
One laugh can conquer
gloom;
One hope can raise your
spirits;
One touch can show you
care;
One life can make the
difference;
Be that ONE today!!

~Author unknown



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Teen Connectedness

Being a teen today is harder than ever. There is so much to balance between educational needs, peer stressors, and often extra curricular participations. We are encouraged to foster a youth's independence, which can be difficult when we also are trying to model what a healthy bonded relationship is. Michael Riera states in the following article that "we need to rethink the old metaphor of separating from our teens and replace it with the concept of extension. That is, during adolescence, teenagers need to extend away from their parents, all the while staying connected to their parents. Their job is to extend; your job is to connect". As caregivers, it is our responsibility to help the youth in our care move forward in life by meeting their emotional needs as they advance through the stages of development. Aha Parenting.org offers a number of great suggestions on how we can continue to connect with our youth as they "extend" into the real world.

[Staying Connected to Your Teen](#)

Holiday Blunders

Holiday celebrations can be wonderful and hard all at the same time. For children in foster care, the holidays can bring to the surface a number of emotions, including uncertainty and grief. Many of us can easily understand the notion of grief as the holidays are usually a time that most spend with those we love; sadly, the youth in our care do not have the opportunity to spend holidays with their parents and other loved ones for a variety of reasons. For some of our youth, holidays may trigger emotions from past trauma, which may be exhibited through some unpleasant behaviors. While keeping all of this in mind, we need to approach our celebrations with care. This requires us as caregivers to be very intentional with our planning. The following link shares some insight from foster parents, Dr. John DeGarmo on how to prepare for your upcoming holiday celebrations.

[Foster Care and the Holidays](#)

Another great resource in helping offer insight comes from FosterClub. The following handout offers perspective from youth that have been in foster care over the holidays as well as tips for both caregivers and the youth themselves.

[Helping Young People in Foster Care Through the Holidays](#)

CFSTC wishes everyone a joyous holiday season, safe travels out of town celebrations, and hope for the wonderful new year.

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