



CHEROKEE COUNTY FOSTER AND ADOPTIVE PARENT ASSOCIATION

From The President

Cherokee County Foster
Adoptive & Parent Association

August 2009
Issue 50

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Last month we learned about the dark world of internet predators. All parents should know the acronyms that children use and be aware of what goes on online now a days. We learned that its not just internet use at home its cell phones, IPods, text messaging and video chats that can be dangerous to our children. It was recommended that your computer have monitoring software if not for keeping track of what they are looking at then to give a road map to the police incase something does happen. "Child Sex predators not only invade our homes and our lives, they trample on our most important and basic virtue - the innocence of our children." Our children are vulnerable enough and have been through so much already so shouldn't we protect them from this rising epidemic as well?

I will be posting a section on our website with links for parents to educate yourselves on internet safety. I will post Alicia Kozakiewicz story so that you can hear from her words what happened to her. The program we use is "Spector Soft", it doesn't cost much (around \$100) and you can tailor the program according to what you want to know. The program will even email you based on the parameters you set. You can buy any kind of software you like this is just the one we use at work and I have used in my home and it works and it is not expensive. Once the information is available I will send you a notice.

This past spring we submitted an application for a respite grant. I was informed last week that Cherokee County Foster Parent Association was awarded this grant. This grant comes with strict rules on use. Once I get all the particulars I will explain how the funds are to be used. I will say that the funds are for Kinship and relative parents. This is very exciting for us. This grant is a one time only grant so we will not be able to apply for it again. I want to thank AFPAG for there help. We will be doing more with them as we grow in the upcoming future.

Bring a covered dish to share with everyone. It doesn't have to be fancy. We will have pizza for the kids. You will get 2 training hours for this month.

Make sure to check out page 3, this will be our new logo and we are going to be looking for a company to print T-Shirt's for us to put the poem on and sell as a fundraiser.

We are on our way into the 3rd quarter of the year and we wanted to get some feedback from everyone on how you feel the association is doing. The association is here to help you as foster parents, we have made many improvements but we have a long way to go. Go to the survey link on the [home page](#) to fill out the questionnaire.

Note: Club Z! In-Home Tutoring Services works with any student from Pre-K to Adult in all types of academic situations. They use the school's curriculum which has helped students do well with their grades. The best part is they go to your home. They will continue to waive the registration fee and keep the lowered tutoring rate for all students under DFCS care. This would be \$36 per hour for K-8 and \$39 for 9-12 grade. Club Z! has been in Cherokee for over 4 years and they have been recognized by the School District and Cherokee Chamber as Partner of the Year 3 years and they have given over \$4,000 in scholarships to HS seniors.

Featured Speaker for August 20th Meeting, 7pm - 9pm

Our speaker for this month will have Tony Blash, AFPAG President. He will be discussing "Communicating As A Team in Your Foster Home". This is geared towards the adults and how to better communicate as a couple/team. I'm sure with the everyday things we all have to take care of, we sometimes forget to communicate with each other. Tony will help us with this.

Announcements & Congratulations!



We had two families finalize their adoption this month. Please join us in congratulating Buck and Kristen Irwin and their adoption of Christen Wright and Jennifer and Sergio Ruiz on their adoption of Dakota Parsons. Congratulations to both of these families for their commitment in being a forever family to the children in their home!

Julie's Corner



Congratulations to our Director, D'Anna Liber! D'Anna received the Director of the Year Award for Region 17! We are all so happy for her!

Some of you may not be aware that Permanency Point of Contact worker Shana Wheeler will be leaving the agency on Friday 8/14. They are hopeful to fill her position by allowing an in-house transfer. We will keep you updated on any news regarding the point of contact so you will be aware of who to call (and who will be calling you) when you get a new child in your home. Good luck to Shana as she moves forward to the next phase in her life!

I can't believe it is already the month of August! Hopefully, you have most of your training hours completed! Please remember you can complete 8 hours of online training. You also **MUST** remain current on CPR/First Aid and Water Safety.

The adoption videoconference and gathering will take place on Saturday, August 22, 2009 from 9:30-12:30 at Macon State College. If you are interested in attending the gathering, please notify your RD worker so they can reserve a spot for your family. If you would like a brochure about the conference, please notify me.

We began a new IMPACT class last Thursday, and what a great group it is!!

Thank you for assisting us in placing all of the children that came into care in July! I know almost all of you received a phone call for placement, at least, and you allowed us to keep most of the kids in the County!

Thanks,

Julie M. Evans, SSCM
Cherokee County Department
of Family and Children Services
770-720-3650



Hope Came

I'm with someone that I don't know.
I'm not sure why I had to go.

I grip my bag, not much inside.
It's all that's left, besides my pride.

We pull in to a winding drive.
She lets me know that we've arrived.

I see you there, up by the door.
A person I've not seen before.

You smile at me, but I'm afraid.
My world's apart! I've been betrayed!

I look away, but you don't mind.
You know what I have left behind.

You take me in, show me my room.
It's not at all what I'd assumed.

You care for me day in, day out.
You show me love, remove my doubts.

Now I'm not scared! I stand up tall.
I know that you won't let me fall.

Through your support, I am not alone.
Hope came to me, inside your home!



Written By Shannon Griffis © 2009 - Hope Begins In Your Home

Message from D'Anna



"If your actions inspire others to dream more, learn more, do more and become more, you are a leader." - John Quincy Adams, 6th President of the United States

This quote reminds me of our daily efforts to create hope and inspiration for others as you continue to "serve the common good". You are all leaders in this respect no matter what role you have. I appreciate the hope and inspiration that you provide to the children and families in Cherokee County each day.

As the summer season ends and school begins, we remain in an unsettled economic time for our agency and the customers we serve. It is also a time of restructuring within our State Office. As many of you know, effective July 1, 2009, The Georgia Department of Human Resources (DHR) became The Georgia Department of Human Services (DHS). This change in name represents a major organizational restructuring as well as significance for us. Commissioner B.J. Walker will be leading our agency along with our Asst. Commissioner Mark Washington; they are very interested and supportive of our performance in meeting the needs in Cherokee County. The mission of DHR is to provide Georgia with customer-focused human services that promote child and adult protection, child welfare, stronger families and self-sufficiency. DHS includes the Division of Family and Children Services (DFCS) the Division of Aging Services (DAS), the Office of Child Support Services (OCSS), the Office of Residential Child Care (RCC) and various support offices. Additionally, as you may be aware, Governor Perdue recommended on July 21, 2009 that state agencies plan to furlough employees for three work days to assist in addressing the state's continuing budget shortfall. A careful review of the budget in view of the continuing revenue shortfalls and the Governor's recommendation led to a conclusion by the DHS Leadership Team that a DHS FY2010 Furlough Plan is necessary.

The DHS FY2010 Furlough Plan will entail three work days, and will affect all regular, salaried employees of the Department of Human Services, without exception. In order to maximize the economic benefit of the furloughs, **DHS will completely close its operations on the three furlough days, which will occur on the following dates: Friday, September 4, 2009
Wednesday, November 25, 2009
Thursday, December 31, 2009**

These days precede State Holidays which give a benefit to employees and will send a consistent and universal message across the State that all county offices are closed. Of course, Compass Online (food stamp) applications will continue as well as the need to secure social service availability through On-Call.

My goal is to share this information and dates with our community partners so the Juvenile Court, schools and others we partner in are aware of these dates and that our offices will be closed. Please let me know any agency you feel would benefit from a communication of this nature and I will contact them.

We also received additional budgetary information in late July. The State Office must again re-work the previously submitted and approved budget for FY 10. On Monday, July 20th, the state Office of Planning and Budget (OPB) issued a communication to all state agencies regarding additional budget reductions to the FY2010 budget (see attached memo from OPB). Beginning August 1, 2009, budget allotments for state agencies will be reduced by 5% through June 30, 2010.

Given this additional 5% reduction, program budgets will be reduced. Program budgets such as Wrap around Funds in Permanency and in the CCFA (Child and Family Comprehensive Assessments) program budget and in Pup, Parent Aide and Homestead. Social Services staff must be more diligent in the selection and approval of these services to families this year.

I have shared before, or agency is not unique in this uncertain economy. I continue to advocate for you and the care you provide to the children and families in this county. I continue to have hope of an economic rebound within our State to improve State revenues and thus positively impact the State Budget. I sincerely believe the work you do has had significant impact in ways you may not ever realize.

Despite increases in volume in OFI, food stamps, Medicaid (family and ABD), TANF, timeliness and accuracy have remained above state benchmarks. Food stamps applications and case loads have increased in Cherokee County as much as 74% since July 2008. Current ongoing caseloads are now averaging 1000 cases per worker. Congrats to the following for correct Medicaid cases back from quality control review:

Despite resignations in CPS and Permanency, children, parents, foster parents are being seen and visited to ensure child safety. Response times are 93.3% in July and we had no pending cases beyond 45 days.



We did have more children enter our custody in July. We took custody of 17 children; 7 girls and 10 boys. 11 of these children were ages 0-5; 2 were from 6-12; and 4 were 13 years and over. 7 children were white; 5 were Hispanic; 4 were bi-racial, and 1 was Asian. 15 of these children were placed in Cherokee DFCS foster homes. 1 child was placed with a relative and 1 was placed in a hospital setting. There were 3 separate sibling groups (1 with 2 children, 1 with 3 children, and 1 with 5 children). There were not any reentries into foster care, which is an important fact as we don't want children that we have returned home, re-entering foster care due to disruptions. Not having any children return to foster care speaks to our efforts to return children safely. 12 of these children came from CPS Investigations, and 5 children came from Family Preservation. 2 children were returned at the 72-hour hearing and none were returned at the 10-day hearing. We currently have 81 approved family foster homes in Cherokee County and have a new Impact class that started August 6.

Please let me know your issues and concerns. Please know that I value each of you and continue to value the opportunity I have as your Director. I appreciate the feedback and concerns and continue to have an open door policy. You can also email me with any suggestions you may have for our county services.

"Be thankful for what you have, and you'll end up having more. If you concentrate on what you don't have, you will never, ever have enough" ~ Oprah Winfrey

Please continue to let me know your issues and concerns. I appreciate the feedback as this information helps create a stronger partnership between us. You can email me at: dkliber@dhr.state.ga.us.

Thank you again for your valuable service to the children and families.

D'Anna Liber (Director)
770-720-3629
dkliber@dhr.state.ga.us

Up Coming Events

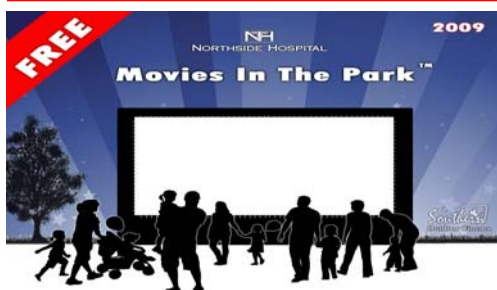


The next adoption gathering and videoconference is scheduled to be hosted in the gym at Macon State College on Saturday, August 22.

Check calendar for more details. Contact your RD Worker if interested in attending.

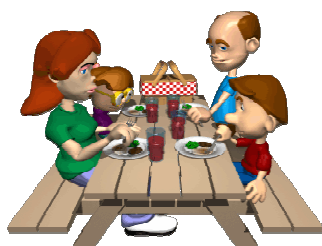


Matching Meeting for Thursday Sept 17th from 6pm - 8 pm at the Augusta Marriott Hotel. **Those interested in adopting an older child or a sibling group should plan to attend.**



Movies In The Park - Hotel for Dogs - September 5th
Hobgood Park, Woodstock

Cherokee Recreation & Park Agency together with B98.5 will host their "B at the Movies" event. An outdoor movie will be shown on a large inflatable screen. The event is free and we encourage you to bring out your chairs and picnics. However vendors will be onsite as well.



Camping Trip - Sept 24th - 27th

Trackrock camp ground in Blairsville, GA near Brasstown Ball and Vogel state park. Sites are \$30 per night. If you would like to go I need you to **RSVP** by Aug 21st so that I can get a final count. Monies will be due no later then September 7th. I will send you an email with the amount due.



Local Yard Sale - Debbie Earle needs to make room she has lots of clothes, from newborn to teen clothes. All clothes are 50 cents each. She has lots of other stuff from household item, antiques etc. I have to make room for a former foster daughter that just turned 18, she is moving back in with us. I can give you a receipt for the clothes you purchase and you can turn it in to DFCS on your child's clothing allowance.

888 Stover Drive, Canton (road is off Univeter Rd). If you have any questions call her 678-880-8523.

CPR & FIRST AID CLASSES AVAILABLE

Please contact Jeff Blackwell at jblackwell@firstactioncpr.com or 770-652-9051 to register for an individual class. Foster parents should look for the Heart Saver CPR Course, using AHA curriculum. For those who need specialized training there are a wide variety of classes, check out the web site at www.firstactioncpr.com.

CPR & First Aid Classes are reimbursable with an ORIGINAL receipt. Certification is good for 2 years. You will receive training hours for the class.



Cherokee County Foster Adoptive & Parent Association



Meetings are on the Third Thursday of each month. This month we are meeting on July 16th at the First Baptist Church of Woodstock. The meetings are from 7pm - 9pm. We meet in Bldg "A" room 250/240 on the second floor. Bring a covered dish for Potluck, drinks will be provided. We will have pizza for the kids.

Check website calendar for map and directions and other events.



Building The Future with our Foster and Adoptive Parents as they open their hearts & their homes to children.



If you would like to receive the newsletter via email go to our web site and sign up.

If your email changes let us know so that we can update our records.

Check us out on facebook, many of our foster parents are connecting via the net. Click link below or put "Cherokee County Foster" to find us.

<http://www.facebook.com/event.php?sid=9337e82e1d11a302dc6636ebf8cd44e4&eid=75644102307&ref=search>

Board Members

PRESIDENT

Marie Blackwell
770-378-0759

mblackwell@fosteroraadopt.org

VICE PRESIDENT

Jimmy Duncan

SECRETARY

Debbie Earle

TREASURER

Mary Duncan

Other Associations or Support Foundations

Foster Care Support Foundation

located at 115 Mansell Place, Roswell, Ga. 30076, 770-641-9591,
<http://www.fostercares.org>

Email: Rachel Ewald rachel@fostercares.org

Embrace Cherokee

Foster Parent Liaison Amy Blanton @ info@embracecherokee.com.
or visit them on the web <http://www.embracecherokee.com>.

AFPAG (State Foster Parent Association)

Feel free to contact them at: contactafpag@bellsouth.net

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