



CHEROKEE COUNTY FOSTER AND ADOPTIVE PARENT ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

From The President

Stay tuned for our 2009 new Association meeting location. We are anticipating a great year. Your support and participation is greatly needed. The membership dues for the 2009 year is \$10 per person. Those interested in obtaining training hours only will be charged a \$2 fee per meeting prior to start of meeting.

We would really like to see all foster families involved with our association but we know that scheduling can sometimes be a problem. I would like to get your input on what day you would prefer the monthly meetings to be on. Depending on the facility we will try to accommodate the majority if possible. We are also looking for donations from local businesses so if you are able to help let me know. We are considered a non-profit and donations are tax deductible. If you have any suggestions for our association, web site or training topics let me know we will consider all comments.

We have created a link for all Cherokee County Foster & Adoptive parents to get county specific information the link is www.fosteroradopt.org/cherokee.htm. We are always updating the DFCS organization chart with emails and phone numbers and any county specific forms will be there as well. If there is something you would like to see let me know. The calendar is constantly being updated so you may want to bookmark it.

Cherokee County Foster
Adoptive & Parent Assoc.

December 2008
Issue 42

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Julie's Corner

HAPPY HOLIDAYS!!! I want to wish all of you a very happy and safe holiday season! Please remember that your training hours must be completed by 12/31/08!

Elizabeth McCauley will return toward the end of January, and will begin taking over Pat's cases. We appreciate your patience in this transition time for Resource Development! Please let Linda, Tinika, or me know if you need anything before Elizabeth returns!

I would like to take the opportunity to let you guys know that the past few months have been "slow" in terms of taking children into custody. We want to reiterate that this is actually a good thing, in light of the economy, that families are banding together to care for their children. I've received a number of calls from foster families asking if the Department is upset with them, or if something is wrong that they don't know about. I want you all to know that we value each and every one of you and the commitment you make to our children. We have to make sure we find families for children, not children for families. Each child we bring in presents different needs and we are trying to ensure that your home is the best, first, and hopefully, the only placement the child will have while in custody. Please don't feel that we are skipping over you because of some past issue or hard feelings. We all truly admire and respect what you do and we will call you when the child that is the "right fit" for your family comes into care.

Thank you for the love, nurturance, guidance, and time you give to all of the children in your home. Have a very Merry Christmas--I hope Santa is good to all of you! Thanks,

Julie M. Evans, SSCM Cherokee County Department of Family and Children Services

Message from D'Anna

This is the season of light, a time when hearts are aglow with the anticipation and hope for a joyous Holiday season. This is also a time to look back and review the events of 2008 to ascertain if we have made a difference in the lives of those around us. As the Director for Cherokee County DFCS, I am most proud of the many accomplishments we have achieved this year. In regard to our retention of foster parents, we began this year with an initiative, Embrace, which was one of the First Lady's Children's Cabinet goals for Georgia this year. In the 6-month period, before we introduced the concept and strategies of Embrace, Region 17 (Cobb, Cherokee and Douglas Counties) had an 86.3% retention rate among its foster parents. In the data from January 2008-June 2008, our Region retention rate increased to 90% and when we removed the homes that closed due to for "good cause", such as in finalized adoptions, the 6-month rate rose to 95%. In Cherokee County, we approved 25 new homes and saw a new gain of 13 homes from the 67 active homes in January 2008 to 80 active homes in October, 2008 despite 12 closures. This is a county specific retention rate of 95.5%, the highest in our Region.

We have also seen an increased community awareness and support demonstrated this year through several area churches, community groups and businesses resulting in our ability to meet children's needs in foster care at Christmas as well as through the year in celebrating events such as birthdays, high school graduations and college plans.

We have seen the number of children in care fluctuate from month to month ranging from a record high number in January 2008 of 29 children to a low number of only 8 children this past October. We feel we are able to locate and secure more relatives than in previous months and work within the family unit to the safest extent possible as we work under a family centered social work practice. In November, we placed 17 children in foster placements.

We continue to grow as a foster parent population and currently have 80 approved homes. As we begin the New Year, I would like your input on the following areas as we strive toward improvement in our support of you.

- What's working for you as a means of our support toward you and what would you like to see more of?
- What is not working which demonstrates a lack of support toward you?
- What data matters to you in your relationship to us?
- Would you like to receive more statistical information on a monthly basis? (i.e. # of children in care, age range, # of approved foster homes each month)

As you reflect on whether you feel you have made a difference in someone's life this year, please know you have in the lives of the children and families you have cared for. This is a time of insight, radiance, and joy. I thank you for your love, sharing, and guidance to our children. You are able to let your own inner light shine brightly in the lives of children. With wisdom and kindness, you make a difference in the lives of many each day.

Do all the good you can, by all the means you can, in all the ways you can, in all the places you can, at all the times you can, to all the people you can, as long as ever you can. -John Wesley

Thanks again for your valuable service to the children and families of Cherokee County. Happy Holiday and Merry Christmas!

D'Anna Liber, Director
Cherokee County DFCS

Up Coming Events or Classes



Me & Mommy Georgia Aquarium Tickets for only **\$20** - Blackout dates apply. Blackout dates are Nov. 28, Dec. 26 and Dec. 29-31. You only have a few more weeks left to take advantage of this offer. Ticket includes Aquarium admission for one adult, free admission for children 5 and under and free parking (\$10 value). This offer is valid Monday-Friday, - Dec. 31, 2008, and can only be purchased online at www.georgiaaquarium.org/visitus/meandmommy.aspx



AFPAG has announced its 2009 annual conference on Jekyll Island, Feb. 26, 27, 28 and March 1. up can download the booklet on our website under the Calendar area. You can registration on their web site or through the mail. If you have any questions, feel free to contact Vala Peyton, AFPAG Secretary at vala@bellsouth.net or 404-428-2104.

Secret Santa volunteers are calling foster parents to pickup their toys. If you get any children before Christmas call the team to see if they have any extra's that they may be able to give. Cherokee County Secret Santa Volunteers - Gwen, Charlene, Molly, Fran & Ann. Phone: 404-435-9775, www.cherokeesanta.org.

CPR & FIRST AID CLASSES AVAILABLE

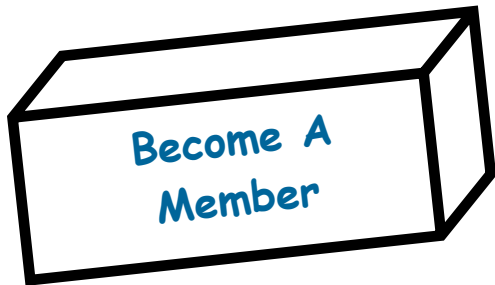
Please contact **Jeff Blackwell** at jblackwell@firstactioncpr.com or 770-652-9051 to register for either an individual class or group training. Foster parent should look for the Heart Saver CPR Course, he uses the AHA curriculum. For those who need specialized training he offers a wide variety of classes, 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 3 training hours for this class.

Cherokee County Foster Adoptive & Parent Assoc.

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



Location to be Announced!

Check out our web site at www.fosteroradopt.org for upcoming events and announcements. If you would like to receive the newsletter via email go to our web site and signup.

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

Phone: 770-378-0759
E-mail: mblackwell@fosteroradopt.org

Board Members

PRESIDENT

Marie Blackwell

VICE PRESIDENT

Jimmy Duncan

SECRETARY

DEBBIE EARLE

TREASURER

Mary Duncan

Other Associations or Support Foundations

Foster Care Support Foundation

located on Alpharetta Hwy in Roswell, 770-641-9591

Email: Rachel Ewald racewald@hotmail.com or visit www.fostercare.org.



Contact Laveda Moore Doxey or Beverly Miles at 404-929-0401 or visit www.familiesfirst.org.

Embrace Cherokee

Foster Parent Liaison Amy Blanton @ info@embracecherokee.com.