

Foster/Adoptive Caregiver Connection

Real Life. Real People...

"Hi. My name is Stephanie, I am a foster caregiver. At this moment, my husband and I are fostering two teenage girls. I can't say it's always easy, but I can say it's the hardest job I have ever loved. When we first decided to become foster parents, many of our friends told us we were crazy. I admit, it took us several months to put in the call to CYFS, but we are so glad we did.

Yes, we take young people we have never met into our homes. Sound crazy? As it turns out, our friends were wrong! Yes, sometimes problems arise. But, we are not alone. We find the CYFS caseworkers, counselors, and other service workers easy to get in touch with and they are always willing to help in any way.

These kids come to us scared and confused. We've found that all it takes is a little love and compassion to let them know they're safe. If you feel you could open your heart and your home to even just one child, I encourage you to call The Center for Youth and Family Solutions. If you find you have compassion but not space visit cyfsolutions.org to learn more about donating and/or volunteering."

And from a foster youth...

"Everyone always says one second can change your life and I never truly believed it until I was 14 and my life changed forever. Going into foster care is probably the scariest thing I have ever had to do in my entire life. Even though it is scary I'm still alive and my life is better than it has ever been before because I found people who actually care.

I went into foster care after being physically abused all my life until one day someone else said something, they stuck up for me and I was taken to the ER. My step-mother and father beat me for eating food and not cleaning good enough. They hit me with a solid metal broom and broke it over my knee, kicked me in the back, threw me outside the door down the stairs, hit me with a phone in the temple, punched me in the face and so much more. My neighbor went to the ER with me where I told her that my father sexually abused me as punishment whenever he got the chance. I have been through a lot but there are kids who have and are going through so much more.

After the state took control, I will never have to live in that anymore, and I am so grateful for that. Even though I don't have to live with my biological parents anymore it's still scary, living with people you have never heard of, and there are only a few homes in the area that will take teens because everyone has this concept that teens are the worst, but we're not! I'm not saying we're the best either but we are not as bad as they show on TV. So many teens have to be put in group homes or shelters because there are not enough homes that take teens. Teens in care feel like no one cares. Like no one will even take the chance to try to help.

DCFS may be a state business, but they are here for the best of reasons. CYFS is a smaller version of DCFS that helps children like me everyday, they go out of their way to help those who don't have everything they need. They are loving and caring and I couldn't ask for anything better. So if you are reading this all I ask is that you help by becoming a foster parent, spread the word, or just volunteer. Donate today for the simple necessities that every child needs: clothes, food, school supplies, toys, gas, everything. Please become a supporter of children in foster care today. All it takes is one person to open their heart to another person to change their life forever. That person could be you!"

FosterParentCollege.com Affiliate

FosterParentCollege.com provides online self-paced training available to foster parents 24/7. The Center for Youth and Family Solutions has become an affiliate with FosterParentCollege.com so our foster parents will have information on a wide variety of trainings that will assist them in their fostering experience. The partnership should be in place by August. Anytime a CYFS foster parent completes a training from this site, they will receive a certificate. Present this certificate to your licensing worker who will give you the appropriate credit toward your CYFS and DCFS foster licensing training. For more information visit FosterParentCollege.com.



THE CENTER FOR
YOUTH & FAMILY
SOLUTIONS
cyfsolutions.org



*Many thanks for all
you do, every day,
for the children and
their families!*

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Peoria Area Foster Care- givers—Save the Date!

Saturday, August 6—School supplies give-away for foster children and youth, 11 am to 1 pm, at Richwoods Christian church on Knoxville Ave. in Peoria. Thanks to local churches and The Forgotten Initiative!



Foster/Adoptive Caregiver

The Calendar



Bloomington

Saturday, July 30, Anderson Park, west shelter, in Normal. 11:30 to 2 pm. CYFS will provide the main dishes and everyone bring a dish to pass. **CYFS Agency-wide event—see you there!**

Champaign

Wednesday, July 27, Champaign CYFS Office, 5:30 to 7:30 pm. Lisa Wade, CYFS Adoption Specialist, will present The Adoption Process. **Child care is provided.**

Monday, Aug. 8, Champaign CYFS Office, 6 to 8:30 pm, Adoption Support Group, Movie Night to watch "Adopted". Popcorn, lemonade, and child care provided.

Galesburg—support groups as follows:

Wednesday, July 20, 301 N. Broad St., First Christian Church, Galesburg. Drugs, Brains, and Behavior: the Science of Addiction presented by Brittany Ott, Institute for Addiction Recovery. 10:30 am to 12:30 pm, **Child care provided.**

Saturday, July 23, Trivia Night at the Monmouth VFW. Doors open at 6, Trivia begins at 7. FCAB Fundraiser for the Holiday Party, other planned events for the foster families.

Monday, July 25, Maple Ave. Christian Church in Macomb. Caseworker Question and Answer presented by CYFS Caseworkers Misty Malda and Taryn Dunlap. 1 to 3 pm.

Wednesday, July 27, Covenant Community Fellowship Church, 2075 N. Main St., Canton. Self-Care—A Necessity!, presented by CYFS Foster Caregiver Trainer Carol Bennett-Barker. 10:30 to 12:30 pm. No child care provided.

Monday, August 1, Community Bible Fellowship Church, 1109 SE 3rd St., Aledo. What Happens at Court? Presented by CYFS Caseworker Lindy Shaw. 6 to 8 pm. No child care provided.

Saturday, September 24, Cherry Street in Galesburg. Fundraiser—Art Defined (painting, wine drinking). Ask your worker for details.

LaSalle

Thursday, July 14, LaSalle CYFS Office, 6 to 8 pm, DCFS Trauma Training. **Child care provided.**

Preparations Begin for 2017 Foster Parent Law Implementation Plan

As you may recall, the Foster Parent Law is an official public policy, established by the Illinois General Assembly to recognize the integral role of foster caregivers on the child welfare team. The Foster Parent Law requires agencies such as The Center for Youth and Family Solutions to develop and annually review an Implementation Plan of the Foster Parent Law. In the past four years, we at CYFS have been impressed with our foster parents who stepped up to help design our Implementation Plan. Through feedback and discussion with our foster parents, we were able to put together a plan that incorporated foster parent needs, rights and responsibilities with our child welfare practices so the children we collectively serve can have the best possible foster care experience.

We have learned over the years the involvement of our foster parents in reviewing the existing Implementation Plan and crafting the plan for the upcoming year is critical. During the next few months, we will be holding special FCAB (Foster Caregiver's Advisor Board) meetings and/or support groups to discuss the 2016 plan. This information will then help us write the 2017 Implementation Plan. Please take some time to review the current 2016 Implementation Plan. Your licensing worker can provide you with a copy of the plan or you can find it at any of our offices or on our Foster Parent Resource page, using your secure login on our website, <http://cfsolutions.org/services/foster-care/foster-parent-resources>. Provide any feedback to Mary Kay Collins at mkcollins@cfsolutions.org. Your feedback will be instrumental in designing our 2017 Foster Parent Implementation Plan. The 2017 Implementation Plan will be available in late October. We will post it on our website and Facebook for your approval.

Thank you for partnering with us to help the children we serve and thank you in advance for assisting in designing the 2017 Implementation Plan.

Peoria

Tuesday, July 19, Peoria CYFS Office, 6 to 8 pm. Jennifer Durbin, CYFS Foster/Adoption Conversion Worker, will present about the foster/adoption conversion process.

Saturday, July 30, The Dream Center in Peoria, 9 am to 2 pm, **Backpack Peoria.** 2,500 backpacks will be given away.

Tuesday, August 16, Peoria CYFS Office, 6 to 8 pm. Dr. Dawn Michaud, Knox-Warren Special Education Director, will present Foster Care and Special Services in the Public Schools.

Tuesdays, Aug. 30, Sept. 6, 13, 27, Oct. 4, 11, 25, Nov. 1, 8, Peoria CYFS Office, 5:30 to 8:30 pm, Updated PST Training for Foster Caregivers. Call Carol at 309.323.6529 to register.

Tuesday, September 20, Peoria CYFS Office, 6 to 8 pm. Lynda Sharp-Lower, Easter Seals, will present information on the Autism Spectrum.

Springfield

Tuesday, July 12, Reception for all Springfield CYFS Families Who Have Adopted during FY '16. Springfield CYFS Office. 5:30 to 7:30 pm. **RSVP required.**

Tuesday, July 19, Springfield CYFS Office. Advisory Board/Support Group meeting, 5:30 to 7:30 pm. **Pizza and child care provided.**

Tuesday, August 16, Springfield CYFS Office. Advisory Board/Support Group meeting. 5:30 to 7:30 pm. **Pizza and child care provided.**

Tuesday, September 20, Springfield CYFS Office. Advisory Board/Support Group meeting. 5:30 to 7:30 pm. **Pizza and child care provided.**

ALSO—Informational meetings about adoption and fostering are held at each branch office on the second Tuesday of each month, starting at 5:30 pm.

DCFS is offering several trainings across the region this summer and fall. Please call your licensing worker for information regarding training topics, dates/times, and locations, as well as information on how to register. This information can also be found online at www.DCFSTraining.org.





Mary Kay's Corner



Yes, it is amazing to already be full swing into summer. As many of you know our CYFS fiscal year begins in July. This makes July a special time for us as it is a time to review the past year and plan for the upcoming one. Again this year, it has also been very exciting to have you, our foster parents help us in identifying ways we can continue and improve our support of the work you do with the children who come through our doors.

In looking back at the last year, we learned a great deal. For one, we were reminded our foster parent are busy and active people. Not only do our foster parents care for children, they are also active in many events that encourage and support the fostering effort. For example, in FY 16 many foster parents participated in the Parent Skills Training which offers practical parenting tools to help build opportunities for "healing and trust" with foster children. Foster parents also participated in support groups and trainings on such topics as trauma, life books and investigations. Then on a lighter side, foster families came out to celebrate with each other at such events as annual foster care picnics or the Chief's game in Peoria. This continues as we enter FY 17. Already, on July 3rd our **Galesburg Foster Caregiver Advisory Board** along with staff and community members gathered to bag groceries and have an informational table to increase community awareness. This team also raised funds to support the Galesburg foster care holiday party. How awesome is that?

One final note, in reviewing this past year we learned we need to continue to strengthen the relationship between our foster care staff and our foster parents. One foster parent said it well when she stated, *"Sometimes we (the team) are so involved with the day to day care we forget to take time to know or understand each other. Foster parents and staff need an opportunity to learn more about each other. This will help us understand our job and how to make to best of it for the kids."* No truer words have been spoken in regards to the importance of good relationships between our staff and our foster parents. While working in foster care is very rewarding for both foster parents and staff, it is also very difficult work. Foster care staff could not do their work without committed foster parents AND foster parents need the staff to help them care for children who are wards of the State of Illinois. In the upcoming months we will be offering opportunities for foster parents and staff to meet to learn more about the work each of you do. This will be a great way to come together and learn from each other. We will also be increasing our joint training opportunities so foster parents and staff can grow more in their understanding of child welfare issues as well as strengthen their professional working relationship.

Looking ahead in FY 17, we have a few initiatives we are excited about. In FY 17 we want to grow our **Specialized Foster Care** program. There are many children in the state who need homes that can provide for them as well as assist with their behavioral and medical needs. We need more homes that are willing to take on the challenges of a child with special needs. SPEC foster parents receive more training and have support put in place to help them as we all work to stabilize the child's trauma experience. If you are interested in becoming a Specialized foster parent or know someone who is may be interested, please contact your licensing worker.

Another initiative we are looking forward to is our partnership with the **FosterParentCollege.com**. CYFS is in the process of becoming an affiliate with FosterParentCollege.com to help our foster parents by providing them with opportunities to learn more about the children who come into foster care. The college offers online classes 24/7 in areas that are specific to fostering. Their trainings are evidence based and practical. See **FosterParentCollege.com Affiliate** in this newsletter or on our website for more information.

Emergency Foster Care parenting is also a new initiative for CYFS. DCFS has put together an effort to keep children out of shelters and we are seeking foster parents who may be interested in providing short term foster care for children with challenging behaviors. See **Emergency Foster Care Foster Parents Needed**. In this newsletter and on our website for more information.

Finally, please remember to check out your **Foster Parent Resource Page** on our website. It is a good way for you to stay in contact with your child welfare team, learn about upcoming events and provide input into your fostering experience.

- Mary Kay

Important Phone Numbers

Child Abuse Hotline

800.252.2873

Missing Child Helpline

866.503.0184

Advocacy Office

800.232.3798/217.524.2029

Foster Parent Hotline

800.624.KIDS/800.624.5437

Adoption Hotline

800.572.2390

Inspector General

800.722.9124

Daycare Information

877.746.0829/312.328.2779

Youth Hotline

800.232.3798

CALLING ALL FOSTER PARENTS! WIN \$50.00

Just a reminder, any *current* foster parent who helps us find a new foster home will be eligible for a thank you 50.00 gift card. If you know someone who would make a great foster parent, have them contact your licensing worker. When that foster parent is approved and accepts their first placement CYFS will send you a 50.00 gift card. So consider the experience you have had helping children. Reach out to your friends and family to see if they too would like to step up to provide a safe and nurturing home for a foster



The Center for Youth and Family Solutions

2610 W. Richwoods Blvd.
Peoria, IL 61604

Branch offices in Bloomington, Champaign, Danville, Galesburg, LaSalle, Lincoln, Macomb, Rock Island, and Springfield

Phone: 309.323.6600
Website: www.cyfsolutions.org

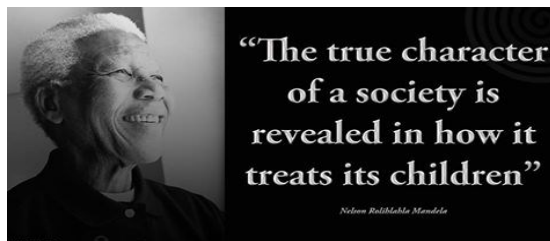
Achieving Solutions
Together



*On July 1, 2016, The Center for Youth of Illinois, with the help of more than 900

Branch Offices

Bloomington—Center	309.829.6307	LaSalle	815.223.4007
Bloomington—Morris	309.820.7616	Lincoln	217.732.3771
Champaign	217.352.5179	Macomb	309.833.1791
Danville	217.443.1772	Peoria	309.323.6600
Galesburg	309.342.1136	Rock Island	309.786.0770
		Springfield	217.528.3694



and Family Solutions served 1,066 children and youth for the state licensed traditional and relative, unlicensed relative, AWC, and

Emergency Foster Care Foster Parents Needed.

DCFS is implementing an Emergency Foster Care (EFC) Program. The mission of this program is to provide a nurturing and safe environment temporarily to children and youth, including sibling groups whose placement has disrupted or for children and youth who have been taken into temporary custody. Only children and youth with no other placement options will be admitted. The average length of stay will be 0 to 14 days and then up to 30 days with two extensions. EFC providers would receive a salary plus board rate.

To qualify for an EFC parent, foster parents must:

Be licensed and in compliance with Rule 402;

Attend a mandatory 15 hour EFC training curriculum and take the Adverse Childhood Experience Survey. Additionally, EFC providers will need to participate in ongoing monthly trainings as recommended by the training department;

Support Shared or Co Parenting Model and be open to parental and sibling visitation;

Have the ability to accept 2 slots and have no other foster placements;

Agree to terms and conditions of Emergency Foster Home Program for one year, including:

No reject policy OR notice of removal for children except in the most extreme circumstances involving violence, suicidal ideation or medical or developmental complexity.

Move requests must be an agreement with DCFS Regional Administrator Agency, Departmental Liaison and Foster Parent;

Have access to reliable transportation and show proof of automobile insurance;

Ensure that all required medical, mental health and developmental screening, diagnosis and treatment are provided;

Commitment to transport the children and youth to all medical, educational, recreational, life skills, and training and employment activities;

Ensure that school enrollment and attendance continues, which must include transporting the child/youth to their home school if it is within 45 minutes of the Emergency Foster Home;

One parent must be devoted full time to fostering and may not work outside the home;

Two parent EFC providers require that one parent remains in the home while the other may work outside of the home;

Committed to work with each niche/specialty group population in addition to any other child or youth who needs emergency foster care (see below);

Have an email address with access to the internet for purposes of required continuing education/training;

Provide a training transcript and/or verify completion of Trauma 101;

Provide three references: two personal and one professional (preferably a child welfare case manager, licensing representative or another professional that can speak to one's skill set in caring for children and youth).

If you are a CYFS foster parent interested in learning more about the EFC program email Mary Kay Collins at mkcollins@cyfsolutions.org.

