



Foster Parent Cluster Newsletter

Summer 2008

Summer's Here!

Congratulations - you've made it through the school year! Now you can sit back and enjoy the heat.

What sort of things do you have planned this summer? A trip to the beach? Maybe a day at a water park? Are your kids attending summer camp? Whatever you're doing - have fun doing it!

This summer's newsletter is packed with information to help make your summer a great one! Please take some time to read about swim safety, the DFS recruitment contest, the 21st Century Fund, and so much more.



As always, keep the comments and suggestions coming!

Have a great summer!

-Kate

302-633-2643

katherine.russell@state.de.us

"A perfect summer day is when the sun is shining, the breeze is blowing, the birds are singing, and the lawnmower is broken."

-James Dent

Recruitment Contest

Remember, foster parents that refer a new foster parent to DFS will receive a \$100 bonus once the new foster parent has been approved and provided one month of satisfactory service as a foster parent.



The Cluster with the most referrals and the person with the most approved referrals will win a prize.

The Foster Care Unit has come up with a great new recruiting tool for foster parents! Ask your Coordinator for a stack of new recruitment cards. Then start handing them out to potential

foster parents. You have the option of jotting down your name and phone number (if you feel comfortable) or just referring the person to the Helpline. It's so easy, you can start today!!

The contest deadline is December 31, 2008. Winners will be chosen at that time.

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**THINK OF
THE CHILD
FIRST.**

DELAWARE CHILDREN'S DEPARTMENT

National Foster Care Month Recap

Please read the articles over the next few pages to catch up on what happened during National Foster Care Month!



Recognition Day

Over 150 foster parents came together to celebrate Foster Parent Recognition Day on April 26, 2008. Staff from DFS and private agencies facilitated the fun at the Modern Maturity Center in Dover.

The day began with a continental breakfast and a game to play tableside. Foster parents were encouraged to mingle with staff and other foster parents while the jazz quartet, Born Again, played upbeat tunes. Emcee and Division Executive Assistant, Joe Smack entertained the crowd with a running commentary of the event. Division Director Carlyse Giddins greeted the foster parents and recognized them for their continued efforts. Adrienne Roach, daughter of DFS's own George Roach sang two beautiful songs in honor of the foster parents. Deputy Division Director, Laura Miles awarded the foster parents years of service awards. Those foster parents who

have provided five, ten, and fifteen years of service were awarded appreciation certificates. Foster parents Gary and Diane Seldomridge and Karen Towson were awarded twenty year service awards and foster parents Leo and Elizabeth Menard were honored for thirty-five years of service! Volunteer Services Administrator, Kate Russell presented a special awards booklet, honoring foster parents for their personal achievements. The main event was Foster Care Program Manager, John Bates' speech, entitled, "Serving Your Purpose as a Foster Parent with a Lite Heart." John encouraged foster parents to continue serving their purpose and to obtain satisfaction from fostering. A delicious buffet luncheon followed John's speech. Door prizes were awarded to guests and gifts were distributed to all in attendance. The day was enjoyed by all!

Special thanks to Nicole Cunningham, Kate Russell, and Marvette Smith-Dunbar for planning the event. Karen DeRasmo and Kellie Rigney from Prevent Child Abuse Delaware (PCAD) deserve kudos for coordinating the event. The Foster Home Coordinators from New Castle, Kent, and Sussex Counties also deserve to be honored for their volunteer efforts on the day of the event. Thanks to everyone else that contributed to making the day a great one for foster parents!



Pinwheel Event

The rain stayed away long enough to hold the Foster Care pinwheel event, encouraging Delawareans to "give foster parenting a whirl!" The event was held on May 8 on Legislative Mall in Dover. Over 900 pinwheels (one to represent each child in foster care) were spinning in



the wind as Division Director Carlyse Giddins read the Foster Care Month proclamation, signed by Governor Minner. Local news media and DFS staff attended the event to raise awareness of the need for additional foster parents in Delaware. Thanks to everyone in attendance – especially those of you who helped "plant" the pinwheels. Special thanks to John Bates, Kate Russell, Nicole

Cunningham, Joe Smack, Heather McCleery, and Megan Cathey for planning and organizing the event.



Cluster Parties



New Castle County

New Castle County foster families spent a day at the pool to celebrate

National Foster Care Month. Kids and parents alike enjoyed an early summer kick-off in the heated pool at the Cerebral Palsy Center on River Road. Swimming and splashing led to a barbeque before the day was through. A great time was had by all!



Kent County



Xbos Family Fun Center in Smyrna was packed on May 23, with Kent County foster families celebrating National Foster Care Month. The younger kids really enjoyed the soft play area of the funhouse, while the older kids (and parents!) enjoyed more than an hour of free bowling. Both children and parents had a wonderful time!



Sussex County



The Sussex County Clusters celebrated National Foster Care Month with a bowling party in Milford sponsored by DFS and the Sussex County Foster Parent Association. Foster families enjoyed free bowling while having a chance to mingle with other area foster families. Sussex Foster Home Coordinators attended and provided party favors and stuffed animals for all the children. As the children were leaving they were heard saying they had a great time and look forward to doing it again!

Chick-fil-A Spirit Night

A giant cow encouraging diners to “eat more chicken!” greeted customers at Foster Care Spirit Night on May 14, at Chick-fil-A on Pulaski Highway in Bear.

The event, organized by Foster Care intern Megan Cathey, encouraged diners to learn more about foster care and raised over \$280 for children in foster care!

Tons of balloons, give-aways and brochures were handed out to Chick-fil-A customers.

Thank you Megan for your hard work! Special thanks to DFS staff John Bates, Nicole Cunningham, Kate Russell, Bob Levesque, Joyce Webb, and Karen Watchorn for your participation!



Shop-Rite’s Owners (and Foster Parents) Donate \$5000 to Foster Children

Thirty-six years ago, Bernard and Margaret Kenny decided to open their home and their hearts to children in need. Throughout the years, the family has seen children return home or become adopted. Peg is a strong advocate for the babies that enter her home. She wants to make sure the children are going to be well cared for, wherever they go.

The Kenny's passion for foster care has gone beyond their home. The family owns all of the Shop-Rite stores in Delaware. Their stores donated \$5000 this

year to the foster care fund. They have donated more money, goods, and time throughout the years than we could ever count. They are always the first to donate supplies for events and helped raise funds and awareness by selling blue ribbons during National Foster Care Month. We want to say a special thank you to the Kenny family. Your support is greatly appreciated!

**Please support your local
Shop-Rite and tell them
foster care sent you!**

All Kids Need:

By: Zimmy Zimberg

A Peaceful Home ♥ Acceptance ♥
Art, Dance, Music & Drama ♥
Bedtime Stories ♥ Caring Adults ♥
Celebrations ♥ Communication ♥
Community ♥ Compliments &
Praise ♥ Discipline ♥ Education ♥
Encouragement ♥ Family ♥
Forgiveness ♥ Freedom for
Creativity & Imagination ♥
Gentleness ♥ Goals ♥ Good
Medical Care & Treatment ♥
Healthy, Nutritious Food ♥
Healthy Self Esteem & Self Worth
♥ Help with Homework ♥ Honesty
& Integrity ♥ Hope for a Bright &

Beautiful Tomorrow ♥ Hugs ♥
Individuality ♥ Joy & Laughter ♥
Kindness ♥ Life Skills ♥ Listening
♥ Motivation ♥ Mourning Losses ♥
Nature ♥ No Abuse, Neglect,
Maltreatment or Manipulation ♥
Non-judgemental Validation of
Emotions & Feelings ♥ Nurturance
♥ Opportunities to Make Mistakes,
Fall & Get Back Up ♥ Patience ♥
Personal Space & Privacy ♥ Play ♥
Positivity ♥ Protection ♥ Quality
Time ♥ Quiet Time ♥ Respect ♥
Responsibilities & Rules ♥ Role
Models & Ethical Heroes ♥ Safe,

Secure Homes & Schools ♥
Spirituality ♥ Sports & Exercise ♥
Structure & Order ♥ Sufficient
Sleep ♥ Support ♥ Togetherness ♥
Tolerance & Understanding ♥ Toys
& Treats (...but not too many
sweets) ♥ Trust ♥ Unconditional
Love ♥ Values, Ethics & Character
♥ Wholesome Friends ♥ X-tra
Loving & Attention ♥ Yes More
Than No ♥ Zany Zebras with
Purple Polkadots & Lots of Other
Silly Things to Laugh About
Together!

Intern Runs for Foster Care

Foster Care Intern Heather McCleery competed in her first marathon on May 18 in Wilmington. Heather, a recent Central Michigan University graduate, has been interning with the foster care unit since September 2007. She participates with the Mission Year program which sends students across the country to live and volunteer in inner-city communities.



In honor of National Foster Care Month, Heather chose to represent foster care while running the marathon. With the help of homemade shirts and signs, Nicole Cunningham, Kate Russell, and Heather's family from Michigan cheered her on to finish 26.2 miles! The slogan on her shirt? "Catch Me if You Can and I'll Tell You About Foster Care!" Congratulations Heather!

Sussex County Coordinators are superb!

By: Norma Larrimore,
Sussex County Foster Parent & Cluster Facilitator

My wish is that the Foster Care Coordinators of Sussex County be recognized for going above and beyond the call of duty everyday.

On any given day, you can find at least one of these wonderful and caring ladies supporting us foster parents in many ways. Whether it be on the phone fixing a crisis, out and about delivering clothing

to newly placed children (who come without anything), visiting foster parents homes, or after hours and weekends at Cluster meetings and events.

These women deserve to be recognized along with their foster parents. Without their love and guidance, foster parenting in Sussex Counties wouldn't be as

successful as it is. Thank you, Robin, Missi, Trudi, and Letoya!



Swimming Safety

When you think about summer I bet you also think about swimming. Whether you prefer the pool, lake or ocean, chances are you and your children will spend time in the water sometime this summer.

While swimming can be great fun, it can also be dangerous - especially for children.

Having your kids follow these rules from www.kidshealth.org could save a life!

In the Pool...

- Make sure you are being monitored by an adult at all times
- If pool gates are closed, don't go in
- Obey all pool rules
- Swim with a buddy
- Walk, don't run around the pool
- Don't push others into the water
- Only dive off of diving boards, not the side of the pool
- Don't chew gum or eat food in the pool - you could choke
- Make sure you know where the deep-end of the pool begins



In the Lake or Ocean...

- Never swim alone
- Always swim where the lifeguard can see you
- Don't swim out too far
- Never pretend to be drowning - you could turn the lifeguard's attention away from other swimmers
- Don't swim close to piers
- Face the waves instead of turning your back on them - then you'll know what's coming
- Don't swim at night or when the lifeguard is off-duty



To find swim lessons in your area, contact:

The American Red Cross - 302-656-6620

The YMCA - 302-571-6908

Boys & Girls Clubs of Delaware - 302-658-1870

21st Century Fund

School is out and summer is here! Wouldn't it be great if your foster child was able to attend a special day camp or take karate lessons this summer?

With the help of the 21st Century Fund, those dreams are possible! This fund provides experiences that help children define their strengths, improve their self-esteem and build a sense of hope

for the future.

The goal is to help a child achieve their potential in a particular talent or interest otherwise not affordable or available to them. And the best part is - ALL foster children are eligible!

If you're interested in obtaining these funds for your foster children, please contact your worker to complete the necessary form.



more information.

Requests of up to \$100 will be considered. Make your child's request today!

Visit <http://kids.delaware.gov/information/donate21stcenturyfund.shtml> for

Carolyn & Phillip Williams, Foster Parents Going Above and Beyond!

By: Vera Greenplate, NCC Foster Home Coordinator

My foster parents, Carolyn and Phillip Williams, provide thirty day shelter care for teen females. They have been doing shelter care for one year now. They were regular foster parents prior to doing this and are also adoptive parents. They are wonderful people and provide excellent care to every child that enters their home. One child that they fostered, Marlena, was placed with them from 6/8/07 to 8/16/07. After their home she moved on to a Child, Inc. foster home. They remained close with Marlena and often had

her over for visits and other family gatherings. In December 2007, they found out that in order for Marlena to begin weekend visits with her mother she would need a bed to sleep in at her mother's home. Her mother was unable to provide a bed due to financial issues. Carolyn and Phillip took Marlena out shopping and purchased a mattress, box spring, bed frame, and dresser. Phillip and Marlena took it to her mom's house and set it up. Carolyn then took Marlena out shopping and let her pick out additional needed

items. They purchased a bed in a bag set, mattress cover, sheets, pillows, and towels. The child was then able to begin weekend visits and is still doing this. These foster parents were concerned when they heard a bed was the only thing preventing this child from returning home and did not want this mother's financial hardships to prevent the move. Marlena is still visiting with her mother and has remained close with the Williams family.

I love this family!

Paul & Dan Somerset, honored publically!

Paul and Dan Somerset, Sussex County foster parents, were recently featured in the May edition of the *Episcopal Life Communion Newsletter*. The article details the Somersets' dedication to DFS and their foster children. Congratulations Paul and Dan on your newfound fame!

Here's an excerpt from the article:

What has been the best part of the fostering experience?

The kids – their smiles, the joy and watching them learn; watching the shell of a person slowly fill with the recognition that they can have hopes, dreams and aspirations.

Has it changed your life?

Completely, in the most remarkable and yet subtle ways. As adults we sort of got used to the idea that things change little, but now that we are seeing the world through the eyes of children, we notice how the world changes in extraordinary ways every day. Paul is writing a children's play that will be produced next January in Sussex County. It stems from his work with the Foster Parent Association of Sussex County. The play is based on Rapunzel, entitled "Rapunzel by the Sea." The story is about a child who is locked away in a tower and her fairy

god-mother who tries to help. Although the play is a comedy, there are lots of ways it relates to a child in foster care.

What is a Foster Parent's role beyond a parent's role?

These children have no vote, no parents, no one uniquely advocating for them – it takes the foster parent to step out in faith and fervor to protect them.

You can read the rest of the article online at:

http://dioceseofdelaware.net/communion/2008/05/2008_05communion4pp.pdf

Join the Club...



The Foster Parent Email Club, that is! DFS recently formed a list serve of foster parents so we can send out important information as soon as we get it. This could be everything from a Cluster meeting reminder to a summer camp opportunity to a free training

session. Don't miss out on this chance, send your name and email address to Kate Russell at katherine.russell@state.de.us to be added today!

DFS Staff Spotlight - Cyndi Bryant-Harrell



Cyndi is the Foster Care Coordinator Supervisor of Kent and Sussex Counties. She

has been with DFS for nine years and works out of the Draper Building in Milford.

Cyndi's favorite part of her job is interacting with her staff. She is fortunate enough to have a great team (Kenya, Jackie, Mary, Robin, Trudi, Missi and LeToya) who truly excel at their jobs. Cyndi

knows firsthand the difficult situations her staff face, as she once held the position herself. She says, "My staff depend on me for guidance and support. If an issue exists, they know I can't sprinkle fairy dust and instantly fix the problem, but they know I will listen and advocate for them."

Cyndi also enjoys attending PRIDE graduation ceremonies and meeting new foster parents. A self-proclaimed people person, Cyndi loves the communication and interactive aspects of her job.

In her free time, Cyndi enjoys playing BINGO, modeling, arts & crafts, jewelry making, sewing and shopping for clothing, shoes, jewelry and bags.

Cyndi hopes to obtain her degree in Interior Design and one day, go into business for herself.

Currently, Cyndi and her husband own All Tune DJs Inc. They oversee a staff of four other mobile entertainers. Check out their website for more information at www.alltunedjs.com.

Join Your Cluster Today!

NEW CASTLE COUNTY

Hockessin, Pike Creek, & Staton

Doris Hicks - 740-5946

North Wilmington & Claymont

Cynthia Boyd - 250-2288

South Wilmington

Peg Draper - 399-8779

Mary Bradley - 655-5421

Newark

Cheryl Hollingsworth - 454-0339

Bear

Sandra Haskins - 722-0131

Middletown, Townsend, & Odessa

VACANT

KENT COUNTY

Smyrna

Pam Barr - 659-5031

Camden

Elliot & Lela Hardin - 697-7538

North Dover

Tameka Crawford - 736-6072

South Dover

Parris & Heidi Patten - 284-7500

SUSSEX COUNTY

Seaford

Monica Sheets - 628-8900

Lincoln

Norma Larrimore - 422-0576

Greenwood

Kim Disharoon - 858-8073

Bridgeville

Toya Roberts—337-8544



Party Time in Sussex County!

Foster families from all of Sussex were treated to an evening of fun in the pool at the Frances Scott Key Resort in Ocean City, Maryland. The Sussex County Foster Parent Association covered the cost of the event on March 27. Children enjoyed a huge pool filled with lots of fun activities. Gift bags were donated by High Tide Church Youth group. Foster



Parents enjoyed the hot tub and pool activities as well as an opportunity to socialize with other foster parents. Thanks to all that made this event possible!



Thank You Young Donors!

Special thanks to **Meghan Pasricha** and her family for donating tons of wonderful toys, art supplies, clothing, and toiletries to our foster families! The Pasricha's have been avid supporters of DFS and we appreciate their continued support! Thank you Pasricha family!



Steven Stanoch, a student at Archmere Academy, collected over 40 duffel bags for children in foster care. This is Steven's second time around organizing a duffel bags for kids drive. He facilitated a similar project at his previous school in Pennsylvania. Keep up the great work Steven!



Sarah Mattes, a seventh grader at the Newark Center for Creative Learning, was recently inspired by Oprah's show, *The Big Give*, to donate 22 backpacks stuffed with school supplies and toiletries. Sarah hopes to continue her project and donate more backpacks to children in foster care by the end of the summer. Thank you, Sarah!



Congratulations!



New Castle County Foster Home Coordinator *Vera Greenplate* and her husband *Mark* welcomed baby *Katherine (Katie)* into the world this May. *Katie* joins big sister *Grace* at home.

Bringing Home Baby (or Child!)...

FOR GOOD!

Congratulations to:

Parris & Heidi Patten on the adoption of *Ivy Sophia!* *Ivy* joins big sister *Brianna* in her forever home.



Faith Based Organizations Partner with Foster Care

Kent County Foster Home Coordinator *Kenya Alston's* church, Crossroad Christian Church in Dover recently allowed DFS staff to hold a recruitment event at their organization.

Foster Care Program Manager *John Bates* was invited to speak to Crossroad Presbyterian Church in Middletown. Thank you *Kenya* and *John* for helping us to further our faith based recruitment initiative!

Attention Young Artists

Would you like to see your artwork on public display? Well, now is your chance! The Department of Services for Children, Youth and Their Families has created a website to display artwork created by kids in foster care. The website is a great place to display drawings, paintings and other creations.

We don't need your original - just a close-up digital picture of your work to display online. You may email pictures to *Kate Russell* at katherine.russell@state.de.us. If you do not have access to a digital camera, but would still like your artwork included, please contact *Kate* to set-up an appointment.





Spotlight on Celebrity Foster Kids: Cher

BIRTH: Cherilyn (Cher) Sarkasian LaPiere was born on May 20, 1946 in El Centro, California.

FOSTER CARE EXPERIENCE:

Cher's mother, a struggling actress, married eight times, was overcome by illness when Cher was only two. While her mother went into the hospital, Cher was placed in an orphanage in California. Cher returned home to her mother around the age of

six. At the age of eight, Cher and her sister went to live with their maternal grandparents.

CLAIM TO FAME: Cher was attending acting classes when she met her future husband, Sonny Bono. They married when Cher was only 18 and went on the road as a musical act. Eventually, the "Sonny & Cher Comedy Hour" was aired on CBS to huge audiences. Hits like, "I've Got You Babe" and "The Beat Goes On" followed. After her musical success, Cher

again turned to acting. Movies like, "Silkwood" and "Moonstruck" followed.

FUN FACT: Cher is very familiar with both physical and learning disabilities. She overcame dyslexia in her 30's to learn her movie lines. Cher is also the National Chairperson of the Children's Craniofacial Association. Her involvement began after she starred in the movie, "Mask" as the mother of a child with a craniofacial condition.

"Deep summer is when laziness finds respectability."
-Sam Keen

Summer Word Search



| | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| S | R | L | T | N | E | E | B | N | D |
| N | E | S | H | O | V | E | L | N | A |
| A | B | E | D | A | H | S | A | B | T |
| G | O | G | G | L | E | S | N | E | N |
| S | U | N | B | L | O | C | K | A | S |
| H | W | M | A | E | R | C | E | C | I |
| E | V | I | D | R | U | C | T | H | L |
| L | S | E | M | B | O | A | L | A | L |
| L | S | U | M | M | E | R | K | L | N |
| A | A | N | N | U | L | E | W | O | T |

Word Bank

| | | |
|----------|--------|----------|
| BEACH | LAKE | SUMMER |
| BLANKET | OCEAN | SUN |
| BUCKET | SAND | SUNBLOCK |
| DIVE | SEA | SWIM |
| GOGGLES | SHADE | TAN |
| HOT | SHELL | TOWEL |
| ICECREAM | SHOVEL | UMBRELLA |

Hint - words are hidden across, down, horizontally and backward.

Summer 2008

State of Delaware
Department of Services for
Children, Youth and Their Families
Division of Family Services

Delaware Youth and Family Center
1825 Faulkland Road
Wilmington, DE 19805
370630
"Official Business, Penalty For Private
Use \$300"

[www.kids.
delaware.gov](http://www.kids.delaware.gov)

**THINK OF
THE CHILD
FIRST.**

DELAWARE CHILDREN'S DEPARTMENT

**Remember to sign up for
trainings this summer! We are
offering several new courses and
DVD based classes.**

**Refer to your training newsletter
or contact your coordinator for
more information!**

