

# News You Can Use

From the Foster and Adoptive Care Coalition

Winter 2009

## Illinois Edition



### **We NEED Foster Children!**

Do you need help providing birthday presents for your foster child(ren)? FACC has a resource that could help - **The Birthday Buddy Program!**

Through the program, generous individuals in the community sign up to provide presents to a child in foster care. Foster parents give FACC general information about a child with birthday present ideas, which will be posted on our website. Generous individuals and groups visit our website and sign up to choose a child in foster care as their Birthday Buddy.

Often the donor is a child having a birthday party of his own, and he donates his presents to a foster child. Scout troops, school classrooms, and companies have also been donating to the Birthday Buddy program.

After the donated presents are purchased, the foster parent must pick up the birthday presents at the Birthday Buddy Coordinator's home in **Collinsville, Illinois.**

Only foster children (not adopted) of **ANY AGE** can request to be matched with a Birthday Buddy. Applications for **February, March, April, and May** birthdays are now being accepted.

For more information, or to request a Birthday Buddy application, please contact Bob Kime, the IL Birthday Buddy Coordinator, at 618.345.5315 or via e-mail at [mcki@att.net](mailto:mcki@att.net).

You can also contact Shelley Thomas-Benke at [shelleythomasbenke@foster-adopt.org](mailto:shelleythomasbenke@foster-adopt.org) or by phone at 800.FOSTER.3 x29. For additional information, please visit our website at [www.foster-adopt.org](http://www.foster-adopt.org).

### **Tax Time**

*The following information is not to be construed as legal advice. It is always advisable to consult a tax professional with individual questions.*

The National Foster Parent Association has published an excellent manual for the 2008 tax year: "Federal Tax Benefits for Foster, Adoptive Parents, and Kinship Caregivers." It provides a comprehensive overview of foster care deductions and credits, special exceptions for professional foster parents, the adoption tax credit, and much more. Please consider giving a copy (found at [www.nfpaonline.org](http://www.nfpaonline.org)) to your tax preparer so that you can claim the maximum benefits.

Here are some frequently asked questions:

#### **Q: Can I claim my foster child as a dependent?**

A: Yes, if:

1. the child was placed with you by an authorized foster care placement agency or by judgment, decree, or other order of any court of competent jurisdiction.
2. the child must be (a) under age 19 at the end of 2008 (there are some exceptions for full-time students), and
3. the child lived with you for more than half of the year (there are some exceptions for summer camp, school, etc)
4. You must provide more than half (50%) of the person's total support for the year. The support test can be a challenge, because all payments for cost of care reimbursement, all adoption assistance payments and TANF, SSI or other cash assistance count as support, but not support provided by the taxpayer.

#### **Q: Can foster, adoptive or relative care givers qualify for the Earned Income tax credit?**

A: Yes, if they meet the income qualifications meet the dependency criteria

#### **Q: Is foster care or adoption reimbursement considered part of my income?**

A: No, it is not. There are some exceptions for professional foster parents.

#### **Q: How much is the federal adoption tax credit?**

A: \$11,650 for the 2008 tax year. Please note that adoption of a "special needs" child does not require the taxpayer to have qualifying expenses.

To receive a tax booklet regarding **Illinois state adoption tax benefits**, call the Center for Economic Progress (formerly the Center for Law and Human Services) at 312.252.0280.

### **Upcoming Foster Parent In-Service Training**

DCFS Office of Training has many opportunities coming up for you to receive your in-service training hours. You can also view the training schedule via their website:

[http://www.state.il.us/DCFS/library/com\\_communications\\_train.shtml](http://www.state.il.us/DCFS/library/com_communications_train.shtml).

Click on "Foster caregiver in-service training" and "Class description for foster caregiver in-service training" for details regarding upcoming classes. To register, call DCFS Office of Training at 877.800.3393. If you have any additional questions about in-service training, please contact your licensing representative.

- **Module #4: The Sexual Development of Children and Responding to Sexual Needs**  
**Thursdays / March 12th, 19th and 26th / 6:30 p.m. - 9:30p.m.**  
(9hrs), Trinity United Church of Christ, 47 N. Douglas Ave., Belleville, IL 62220
- **Module 12: Understanding and Promoting PreTeen and Teen Development**  
**Thursdays / May 14th and 21st / 6:30 p.m. - 9:30p.m.**  
(6hrs), Trinity United Church of Christ, 47 N. Douglas Ave., Belleville, IL 62220
- **Module 5: Supporting Relationships Between Children and their Families**  
**Mondays / June 15th, 22nd and 29th / 6:30 p.m. - 9:30p.m.**  
(9hrs), Illinois Mentor, 791 Wall Street, O'Fallon, IL 62269



314.FOSTER.3 • 800.FOSTER.3

[www.foster-adopt.org](http://www.foster-adopt.org)



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111 N. Seventh Street, Suite 402  
St. Louis, MO 63101

800.FOSTER.3 • fax: 314.241.0715  
www.foster-adopt.org

For Every Child... a Place to Call Home

### MISSION STATEMENT

The Foster and Adoptive Care Coalition is a not-for-profit agency which strives to create permanency in every foster child's life by recruiting and supporting foster/adoptive homes in the St. Louis metropolitan community.

### Tom Kircher

Co-Director of Illinois Recruitment  
tomkircher@foster-adopt.org

### Jan Joeckel

Co-Director of Illinois Recruitment  
janjoeckel@foster-adopt.org

### KidStore Happenings

The KidStore is a resale shop open exclusively to foster/adopt, relative/kin caregivers, caseworkers and GALs/CASAs.

#### February Special:

- Any sweater, buy one get one free!

#### March Special:

- Dresses \$.50, suits \$5.00, dress pants and shirts for \$1.50; just in time for Easter!

**Hours:** 1st and 3rd Wednesday; All Saturdays / 9:00am - 12:00pm

**Located 10 Min. from Poplar St.**

**Bridge Directions:** From IL, cross the Poplar St. Bridge. Take the 2nd exit to I-55/I-44. Take I-44 West to Grand, Exit 288. Take the exit, then turn left on Grand and travel south. Take the first right onto Shaw. Turn left on 39th, left on Flora, and left on Spring. It is located at 2109 South Spring, on the second floor of Tyler Presbyterian Church. Our entrance and parking are at the back of the church.

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### FACC Training Extravaganza March 21, 2009: 6.5 Training Hours

#### THEME: Parenting the Traumatized Child

FACC will host a Training Extravaganza on **Saturday, March 21st, from 8:30am – 4:00pm**. The Extravaganza allows foster/adoptive/relative caregivers to receive 6.5 in-service training hours in one day, and allows you to bring the kids. Space is limited to 200 adults and 100 children. Because childcare fills up in the first few days, we use a lottery method to process registration. View the agenda, find out more information on Teen Job Fair, or download a registration form at [www.foster-adopt.org](http://www.foster-adopt.org). In addition to registering with FACC, you **MUST** also register with the [DCFS Office of Training](http://www.dcf.ms.gov) by calling 877.800.3393. **SAVE THE DATE:** Next TE is May 30

#### PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY

	Child's First Name	Age/Gender
Date: _____	_____	_____
Name: _____	_____	_____
Name: _____	_____	_____
Address: _____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
Zip code: _____	_____	_____
Day Phone #: _____	_____	_____
Home #: _____	_____	_____
E-Mail Address: _____	_____	_____

#### REGISTRATION CLOSING MARCH 10, 2009

- Yes, I am still able to attend if childcare is unavailable.
- Yes, I have \_\_\_\_ (number) of Teens attending the Financial Literacy Workshop & Job Fair.

In order for you and your child(ren) to participate, you must agree to attend all workshops, complete the registration form, return it, and receive verification from FACC that you are registered.

**Send registration form to:** FACC, ATTN: Training Extravaganza, 111 N. 7th Street, Suite 402, St. Louis, MO 63101, or fax to 314.241.0715. Please call 800.FOSTER.3, if you need to cancel your registration. No phone registrations accepted.