



Foster & Adoptive Care Coalition  
FOR EVERY CHILD... A PLACE TO CALL HOME

# News You Can Use

## Illinois Edition



Winter 2010

### Birthday Buddy

Do you need help providing birthday presents for your foster child(ren)? The Coalition 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 the Coalition 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 **Sunset Hills, MO**.

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

For more information, or to request a Birthday Buddy application, please contact **Debbie Schoemehl**, the Birthday Buddy Coordinator, at 314.223.5723, or via e-mail at [debbiewho2003@yahoo.com](mailto:debbiewho2003@yahoo.com).

You can also contact Shelley Thomas-Benke at [shelleythomasbenke@foster-adopt.org](mailto:shelleythomasbenke@foster-adopt.org) or at 800.FOSTER.3 (314.367.8373) x29. For more information, visit [www.foster-adopt.org/birthdaybuddyapp](http://www.foster-adopt.org/birthdaybuddyapp).

### 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 **Federal Adoption Tax Credit** is available to families who adopt a child from foster care without needing to incur or document their expenses, like the Illinois Adoption Credit. This tax credit is based on an individual's tax liability. The North American Council on Adoptable Children (NACAC) has additional information on the Federal Tax Credit available on their website: [www.nacac.org/postadopt/taxcredit.html](http://www.nacac.org/postadopt/taxcredit.html).

There are also various tax considerations for foster parents and relatives foster parents. The National Foster Parent Association has produced a booklet that further provides tax information for those individuals. The booklet can be downloaded from their website, [www.nfpainc.org](http://www.nfpainc.org).

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.

### Free Application for Federal Financial Aid (FAFSA)

Don't forget... This is the time to complete the Free Application for Federal Financial Aid (FAFSA). Students should complete the FAFSA as soon after January 1, 2010 as possible, and by midnight **June 30, 2010**. Some of the applications for scholarships and vouchers require the FAFSA to be completed. In addition, the FAFSA considers students for grants and work study programs on a first-come, first-served basis. Visit [www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov) for more information, or to fill out the form electronically.

For more information on scholarships, loans, financial aid assistance, or any educational need, please contact: Leslie Lewis, Co-Director of Educational Advocacy, at 800.FOSTER.3 (314.367.8373) x37, or [leslielewis@foster-adopt.org](mailto:leslielewis@foster-adopt.org).

### 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.

### Children's Home & Aid Adoption Services

Difficulties can arise any time after an adoption takes place. **Children's Home and Aid (CH&A)** provides services to adoptive families who are experiencing adoption-related difficulties. Services can include in-home and office based assessments, and counseling.

All therapists have a Master's degree and receive ongoing training in adoption related issues. The following counties are served by CHASI: Bond, Clinton, Jersey, Madison, Monroe, Randolph, St. Clair, Washington, and portions of Calhoun and Macoupin. Services are funded by the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services. Persons in need of services or interested in further information can call Jan Gann at 618.452.8900 x147.



314.FOSTER.3 • 800.FOSTER.3

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





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**111 N. Seventh Street, 402  
Saint Louis, Missouri 63101**

800.FOSTER.3 • 314.367.8373

FAX: 314.241.0715

www.foster-adopt.org

### KidStore Happenings

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

#### February Special:

- Half off on all red clothing

#### March Special:

- Buy one sweater or coat, and receive the second one free

#### April Special:

- Half off on all special dresses and dress pants

*On your first visit, please bring proof of foster/adoptive parent status. Acceptable forms of identification include: foster parent ID, copy of your foster parent certificate/license, or CD / DCFS check stub.*

### Classifieds

Check out the Coalition's Online Classifieds ([www.foster-adopt.org/classifieds](http://www.foster-adopt.org/classifieds)). The Parent to Parent Trade Classifieds is a free section that allows parents to post items they no longer need, and also see what other parents have to offer. The KidStore Classifieds is a section that allows foster parents to see what we have to offer at our KidStore.

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

#### **Located 10 Minutes 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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### Coalition Training Extravaganza: 6.5 Training Hours

#### **THEME: Overcoming Barriers**

The Coalition will host a Training Extravaganza on **Saturday, March 6th, 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. Download a registration form at [www.foster-adopt.org](http://www.foster-adopt.org). In addition to registering with the Coalition, you **MUST** also register with the DCFS Office of Training by calling 877.800.3393.

PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY			Child's First Name	Age/Gender
Date:	_____	_____	_____	_____
Name:	_____	_____	_____	_____
Name:	_____	_____	_____	_____
Address:	_____	_____	_____	_____
Zip code:	_____	_____	_____	_____
Day Phone #:	_____	_____	_____	_____
Home #:	_____	_____	_____	_____
E-Mail Address:	_____			
o Yes, I am still able to attend if childcare is unavailable.				
o Yes, I have _____ (#) of teens attending the Financial Literacy Workshop & Job Fair.				
<b>REGISTRATION CLOSSES FEBRUARY 24, 2010.</b>				
In order for you and your child(ren) to participate, you must agree to attend <u>all workshops</u> , complete the registration form, return it, and receive verification from the Coalition that you are registered.				
<b>Send registration:</b> Foster & Adoptive Care Coalition, ATTN: Training Extravaganza, 111 N. 7th Street, Suite 402, St. Louis, MO 63101, or fax to 314.241.0715.				
Please call 800.FOSTER.3 (314.367.8373), if you need to cancel your registration.				
<u>No phone registrations accepted.</u>				