

News You Can Use

From the Foster and Adoptive Care Coalition

Volume 9, Issue 1

Eastern Missouri Foster and Adoptive Care Resource Center



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Financial Literacy Workshop & Job Fair

Does your teen need a Summer Job? Thanks to Citigroup, youth ages 16-20 can participate in a day of Financial Literacy Workshops and an afternoon Job Fair! The Workshop will take place during the March Training Extravaganza on Saturday, March 21, 2009 from the hours of 9:00 a.m. till 4:00 p.m.

Interactive activities and individualized instruction will include topics such as:

- **Banking:** What are debit cards and how do I use them wisely?
- **Budgeting Income:** Telling my money where to go before it's gone!
- **Credit Basics:** Why is my credit score important?
- **Jobs:** Create your resume and practice interviewing skills.
- **Employers Expectations:** I got the job! Now what?

Participating Employers include:

- Mark Twain Community Resource Center (Construction Field)
- St. Louis Artworks
- Schnucks
- And more!

Please ensure that your teen is dressed to impress with **Business Casual Attire** (Khaki pants or dress slacks with belt, polo tops or button down shirts).

To register, fill out the form on Page 2 and make sure to check the box stating, "Yes, I have ____ (number) of Teens attending the Financial Literacy Workshop & Job Fair." After you complete, send registration form to: FACC, ATTN: Training Extravaganza, 111 N. 7th Street, Suite 402, St. Louis, MO 63101, or fax to 314.241.0715. **No phone registration accepted.**

For more information, please contact Kimberly Like at 800.FOSTER.3 x35, or kimberlylike@foster-adopt.org.

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 this program, generous individuals in the St. Louis community sign up to provide presents to a child in foster care. Foster parents give FACC with general information about the child and birthday present ideas, which will be posted on our website. Generous individuals and groups in the St. Louis area 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 Buddies 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 in St. Louis County.**

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 Debbie Schoemehl, the Birthday Buddy Coordinator, at 314.223.5723, or debbiewho2003@yahoo.com. You can also contact Shelley Thomas-Benke at shelleythomasbenke@foster-adopt.org or by phone at 800.FOSTER.3 x29.



314-FOSTER-3 or 1-800-FOSTER-3
www.foster-adopt.org



Parent Support Groups

All Upcoming Groups are held:

6:00 - 8:00 p.m.

God's Grace Church

10308 Lackland Road, 63114

Dinner & child care provided.

Must be registered to attend.

02.17.09 - A Team Effort

Recognize everyone's role on the team, how to manage conflict and advocate for children.

March - No support group due to Training Extravaganza.

To register, please contact Kimberly Like at 800.FOSTER.3 x35, or kimberlylike@foster-adopt.org.

Youth Support Groups

Youth Support Groups are for Older Youth to help them gain a better understanding of adoption and discuss their unique concerns.

All Upcoming Groups are held:

6:00 - 8:00 p.m.

God's Grace Church

10308 Lackland Road, 63114

Dinner provided.

Must be registered to attend.

02.17.09 - Me and Antwone

Fisher Wrestling with the desire to know and find biological parents.

03.03.09 - What's race got to do

with it? Identifying and understanding racial and cultural identity issues when the race of the adopted family differs from their adopted child.

To register, please contact Kimberly Like at 800.FOSTER.3 x35, or kimberlylike@foster-adopt.org.

Parents: Become a Media Representative!

FACC is often approached by the media about foster care and adoption issues.

If you feel you have a story to share with the Foster and Adoptive Care Coalition or the media, please contact Heather Kemper, Director of Public Relations, at 800.FOSTER.3 x36, or heatherkemper@foster-adopt.org.

Subscribe to e-News You Can Use

A lot happens between newsletters... If you would like to be included in the e-News You Can Use, a bi-weekly update sent directly to your e-mail account regarding workshops, free community activities and more, send an e-mail to heatherkemper@foster-adopt.org or sign-up through the FACC website at www.foster-adopt.org.

Training Extravaganza: Saturday, March 21, 2009

FACC will host the next Training Extravaganza on **Saturday, March 21st, from 8:30 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.** The Extravaganza is an all-day workshop that allows foster/adoptive/relative caregivers to receive 7.5 in-service training hours in one day, and you can bring the kids! This year we have also started a Financial Literacy Workshop and Job Fair program just for our Teens (ages 16-20) that will take place during our Training Extravaganza. Look for information regarding this workshop on page 1.

Please see below for additional information and registration form. You may also download the form at www.foster-adopt.org. For more information, please contact Kimberly Like at 800.FOSTER.3 x35, or kimberlylike@foster-adopt.org. Thank you to the **North American Council on Adoptable Children (NACAC)** for their special support for this Training Extravaganza.

Extravaganza Agenda

THEME: Parenting the Traumatized Child

- **Understanding Childhood Trauma:** Traumatic experiences can have a devastating impact on children. Discuss the variety of ways children may be traumatized and how they view themselves and relate to others.
- **Parenting for Best Outcomes:** How we talk about and to our children has lasting effects – on them, on us, on their status in the community, even on the likelihood of finding an adoptive family. Get renewed, recharged and refocused as you learn the power of the “reframe”. Nationally renowned speaker, Kim Stevens, Project Manager with the North American Council on Adoptable Children presents.
- **Discipline for the Traumatized Child:** Implementing effective, respectful and positive discipline strategies is an essential task for any parent. We'll explore what motivates children to behave appropriately, the difference between punishment and discipline and a variety of positive discipline tools.

Children's Agenda: Children will enjoy an educational day packed with fun! In the morning children will participate in Financial Literacy Training thanks to Citigroup. Teens will participate in a gender based support group. Afternoon activities include a Barnes & Noble Book Fair, spring egg hunt and creating lifebooks!



Childcare Lottery: Spaces for the Training Extravaganza are limited to 200 adults and 100 children. Registration forms must be received at FACC by **March 10th** to be included in the childcare lottery. It does not matter if your form is received by mail, e-mail or fax, on February 1st or March 1st—**ALL** requests for childcare received by **March 10th** will be placed into the same lottery pool. Registration forms will be drawn at random until the 100 childcare slots are filled. All families who register will be **notified by mail**. If childcare is full, adults are still welcome to attend the workshops and receive 7.5 training hours.

UPCOMING TRAINING EXTRAVAGANZAS: MAY 30 • AUGUST 15 • OCTOBER 17

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.

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) 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.

Dear Denise,

A friend told me that adoptive parents in Missouri can get a state tax credit in addition to the federal tax credit. When I called my subsidy worker he said I didn't qualify. Who is right?

Credit Confusion

Dear Credit:

Both are right. Any person who lives in Missouri **and** has non-recurring adoption expenses can receive a tax credit when filing their state taxes. Since families who adopt a child from foster care typically have all of their non-recurring adoption expenses paid for by the state (i.e. home study, legal expenses) there is nothing to claim. However, if you adopted a child from foster care and had expenses related to the adoption that were not paid for by the state (i.e. travel) talk to your tax preparer or check out the links below.

Additional information on Missouri's Adoption Tax Credit is available from the Missouri Department of Revenue (<http://dor.mo.gov/tax/taxcredit/atc.htm>) or from the Children's Division (<http://www.dss.mo.gov/cd/info/cwmanual/section4/ch30/sec4ch30attachd.htm>). For tax year 2008, the federal tax credit is over \$11,650 per child. Instructions for the federal tax credit can be found at www.irs.gov/instructions/i8839/ch02.html#d0e284.

For more information or questions regarding tax credits, you can visit www.nacac.org/postadopt/taxcredit, contact the North American Council on Adoptable Children (NACAC) at 651.644.3036, or adoption.assistance@nacac.org. If you have any further questions regarding this topic or another, please contact me at 800.FOSTER.3 x 25 or denisekelley@foster-adopt.org.

Denise Kelley, Director of Family Advocacy

Mental/Behavioral Health Resources

The MO Children's Division recently added new links from the Department of Mental Health Network of Care to their website. These links provide information on mental health conditions, as well as information to assist with accessing care for Mental/Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities for caregivers of foster children.

- **Mental Health Conditions:** <http://pettis.mo.networkofcare.org/mh/library/articleList.cfm?Cat=39>
- **Network of Care for Mental and Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities:** http://missouri.networkofcare.org/home_state.cfm?stateid=30
- **Working with Psychiatrists and Psychotropic Medications for Children in the Child Welfare System: A Guide for Child Welfare Professionals, Judges, Lawyers, Foster Parents, and Family Members:** <http://gwbweb.wustl.edu/cmhsr/psychotropic/index.htm>

KidStore

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

On 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.

Also, please bring documentation that you have physical custody of the child (ren). Your information will be kept safely on file for future visits.

ATTENTION PARENTS! February Special:

- Any sweater, buy one get one free!

March Special:

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

April Special:

- Sweaters and sweatshirts: buy one get one free

Hours (Except Holidays):

1st and 3rd Wednesday
ALL Saturdays
9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

Volunteer

Foster/adoptive parents make great KidStore volunteers! Become a regular once-a-month volunteer at the KidStore and get **half off** KidStore clothing for your kids.

Contact Shelley Thomas-Benke at 800.FOSTER.3 (314.367.8373) x29 or e-mail Shelley Thomas-Benke at shelleythomasbenke@foster-adopt.org for more details.

KidStore Map



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From the Foster and Adoptive Care Coalition

Eastern Missouri Foster and Adoptive Care Resource Center



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St. Louis, MO 63101
314.FOSTER.3 • 1.800.FOSTER.3
FAX: 314.241.0715
www.foster-adopt.org

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.

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Foster Parents Classifieds

Don't forget... the Foster Parents Classifieds section, found in the "Hot Links" box on the FACC website (www.foster-adopt.org) allows foster parents to help each other. Most of our foster parents are often left scrambling to find appropriate clothing, equipment, and shoes for children in care.

The Classifieds has two sections. The **Parent to Parent Trade Classifieds**, a free section that allows foster parents to post items that they no longer need, and the **KidStore Classifieds**, a section that allows foster parents to see what is in stock at our KidStore.

Feel free to browse through our categories for jolly jumper, strollers and baby bathtubs!

If you have questions or concerns, feel free to contact Heather Kemper, Director of Public Relations at 800.FOSTER.3 x36 or at heatherkemper@foster-adopt.org.

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A Place to Call Home



Photo Courtesy of Sears Portrait Studio

Jervon is a sweet, loving 15-year-old who has been waiting patiently for a forever family. This teen says that he "gets along with other people" and describes himself as "friendly." Jervon's foster parent agrees saying, "he makes good company."

NEWSCHANNEL 5



Jervon does well in school with one-on-one attention. He is described as a "laid back" kid, although he does like being active. He enjoys activities such as swimming and basketball. He also enjoys dancing and singing. Like most teenagers, he loves playing video games.

For additional information on Jervon, please contact Sheila Sudderwalla, Director of APTCH and Project Teen Plus at 314.FOSTER.3 x30, or sheilasudderwalla@foster-adopt.org.

Wendy's Wonderful Kids



Photo Courtesy of Sears Portrait Studio

Ar'Mondre is a soft-spoken 11-year old with warm brown eyes. He is initially shy around new people, but gradually becomes engaging and talkative. Ar'Mondre is artistic and creative, and likes to build things. His independence and sense of humor tend to make Ar'Mondre stand out in a group.



Ar'Mondre is intensely loyal and he is protective of the people in his life. He enjoys cooking and baking, and his favorite fast food is McDonald's. Ar'Mondre wants to be a police officer when he grows up. Ar'Mondre has been in care for eight years. He longs for a loving family to call his own, and would do best in a two parent family with a strong male role model.

For more information, please contact Connie Doty, Wendy's Wonderful Kids Recruiter at 800.FOSTER.3 x28, or conniedoty@foster-adopt.org.