

News You Can Use

From the Foster and Adoptive Care Coalition

Volume 10, Issue 1

Equal member of

United Way
of Greater St. Louis



Eastern Missouri Foster and Adoptive Care Resource Center



Melanie Scheetz
Executive Director
melaniescheetz@foster-adopt.org

Dawn Belizaire
Director of Major Gifts
dawnbelizaire@foster-adopt.org

Gayle Flavin & Ian Forber-Pratt
Extreme Recruiters
gayleflavin@foster-adopt.org
ianforberpratt@foster-adopt.org

Debbie Genung
Director of Development
debbiegenung@foster-adopt.org

Jan Joeckel & Tom Kircher
Co-Directors of Illinois Recruitment
janjoeckel@foster-adopt.org
tomkircher@foster-adopt.org

Liz Johnson & Dawn Milburn
Wendy's Wonderful Kids Recruiters
lizjohnson@foster-adopt.org
dawnmilburn@foster-adopt.org

Barbara Kane
Outcome Specialist
barbarakane@foster-adopt.org

Denise Kelley
Director of Advocacy & Recruitment
denisekelley@foster-adopt.org

Heather Kemper
Director of Public Relations
heatherkemper@foster-adopt.org

Nickie Steinhoff
Dir. of Training & Community Support
nickiesteinhoff@foster-adopt.org

Marco Lester & Carlos Lopez
Special Investigators
marcolester@foster-adopt.org
carloslopez@foster-adopt.org

Leslie Lewis & Delbrica Vinson
Co-Director of Educational Advocacy
leslielewis@foster-adopt.org
delbricavinson@yahoo.com

Sheila Suderwalla
Director of Specialized Recruitment
sheilasuderwalla@foster-adopt.org

Rossi Summers
Director of Operations
rossisummers@foster-adopt.org

Shelley Thomas-Benke
Director of FosterServe Volunteers
shelleythomasbenke@foster-adopt.org

Cindy Ysaguirre
KidStore Manager
kidstoremanager@yahoo.com

Job Fair for Teens & Young Adults

Is your teen thinking about his/her future? Does your teen want a summer job? Thanks to Citigroup, youth ages 16-20 can participate in the Coalition's Second Annual Job Fair including a variety of financial literacy workshops. The Fair will take place during the next Training Extravaganza on **Saturday, March 6, 2010** from 9:00 a.m. till 4:00 p.m.



Interactive activities and individualized instruction will include topics such as:

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

Participating Employers include: McDonalds, St. Louis ZOO, Schnucks, Six Flags St. Louis, St. Louis ArtWorks & many more!

Representatives from St. Louis Community College will also be available to discuss the admission and financial aid process for prospective students.

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." Send completed registration form to: Foster & Adoptive Care Coalition, ATTN: Training Extravaganza, 111 N. 7th Street, Suite 402, St. Louis, MO 63101, or fax to 314.241.0715.

No phone registrations accepted. For more information, please contact Nickie Steinhoff at 800.FOSTER.3 x35, or nickiesteinhoff@foster-adopt.org.

Take Advantage of our Birthday Buddy Program

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

Foster parents provide the Coalition 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. 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 **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



Support Groups Older Youth Support Groups

Olivette Community Center
9723 Grandview Dr., 63132
Dinner provided.

02.23.10 / 6:00 - 8:00 p.m.

*A Whole New World—
Acceptance into new family
dynamics*

03.23.10 / 6:00 - 8:00 p.m.

*This is Me—Identifying and
understanding personal and
cultural identity issues*

Parent Support Groups

Olivette Community Center
9723 Grandview Dr., 63132
Dinner and childcare provided.

02.23.10 / 6:00 - 8:00 p.m.

*Strengthening Your Relationship
by Building Special Times*

03.23.10 / 6:00 - 8:00 p.m.

*Unique Opportunities to Make a
Difference in the Life of a Child*

Must be registered to attend. To register, please contact Nickie Steinhoff at nickiesteinhoff@foster-adopt.org, or 800.FOSTER.3 x35.

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 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.

Training Extravaganza: Saturday, March 6, 2010

Thanks to the Daughters of Charity Foundation of St. Louis, the Coalition will host a Training Extravaganza on **Saturday, March 6th, 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 training offers participants knowledge and skills designed to help create a sense of belonging for children in foster care by providing awareness and solutions that will address a variety of issues and challenges. **All attendees will be entered into a raffle to win a SONY Cyber-shot digital camera!** Please see below for additional information and registration form. You may also download the form at www.foster-adopt.org.

Extravaganza Agenda

THEME: Overcoming Barriers

- **Helping Your Child Achieve Their Dreams:** Anjali Forber-Pratt is a Paralympic Bronze Medalist in 400m and Bronze Medalist and American Record holder for the 4x100m relay, Beijing, China, 2008. She will present the value and strategies of supporting your child to reach new heights.
- **Discover the Abilities Within:** Each of us has a different ability, here is a chance to discover yours! *Presented by Disabled Athlete Sports Association (DASA)*
- **Cultural Conversations:** Students trained by Cultural Leadership present ways to prompt and encourage discussions on tough social issues. Though difficult to discuss, it is vital that our community encourage this sensitive and crucial dialogue since a lack of conversation breeds stereotypes, exclusion, and prejudice.
- **Understanding the Powerful Effects of Culture in our Lives:** An experience that will raise awareness of the impact of cultural differences, examine biases, and rethink behavior towards others. *Presented by Suzanne LeLaurin, LCSW, Senior Vice-President for Individuals and Families, International Institute of St. Louis.*

Kids Curriculum: We have lots of fun activities planned for the kids, including wheelchair games with a Paralympics' medalist, a spring egg hunt, and Citigroup financial education. Free books will also be distributed to the kids.

Childcare Lottery: **Spaces limited to 200 adults and 100 children.**

Registration forms must be received by **February 24** to be included in the childcare lottery. It does not matter if your form is received by mail, e-mail or fax, on February 1 or February 20—ALL requests for childcare received by February 24 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.*

PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY

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

Yes, I am still able to attend if childcare is unavailable.

Yes, I have _____ (#) of teens attending the Financial Literacy Workshop & Job Fair.

REGISTRATION CLOSSES FEBRUARY 24, 2010.

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 the Coalition that you are registered.

Send registration: 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.

No phone registrations accepted.

The Network: Discover New & Improved Member Benefits!

Have you ever needed a break, but could not find a temporary caregiver? Would you like to be first in line to receive free sporting event passes, movie passes, and give-a-ways?

The Coalition's **Parent-to-Parent Network** is a temporary relief system for caregivers and families who are caring for foster and adoptive children. The Network is also a group of families who receive first dibs on exciting give-a-ways that the Coalition receives in our office.

Other membership benefits include: Free Coalition t-shirt, automatic Training Extravaganza childcare acceptance, guaranteed acceptance to respite events, free Wish-Upon-a-Star ornament, free books from Barnes & Noble, and much more!

The Network is not part of the State of Missouri's paid respite care program. Participants in the Parent-to-Parent Network must be licensed adoptive or foster parents, and have a current background check. Once you are matched with another family, then you are ready to go! Attend an upcoming **Meet & Greet** to get more information, meet other participants, and to enter a drawing to win two tickets to St. Louis Cardinals game!

Parent-to-Parent Meet & Greet

03.06.10 / 8:00 - 8:30 a.m.

Attending the Training Extravaganza? Stop by the Meet & Greet for more information and to meet others in the Network.

Parent-to-Parent Meet & Greet

03.23.10 / 6:30 - 8:00 p.m.

Olivette Community Center
9723 Grandview Dr, 63132
Dinner & childcare provided.

Must be registered to attend. To register, please contact Nickie Steinhoff at nickiesteinhoff@foster-adopt.org, or 800.FOSTER.3 x35.

Dear Denise,

I adopted my foster son who has a lot of medical appointments. I talked to a friend who told me I could get a tax credit since he could be called "special needs." Is this true?

Taxing Truth

Dear Taxing,

Yes, your friend is correct. There are tax credits available to families who adopt. Missouri has one of the most open definitions of "special needs" which means that most children in foster care are given this classification. The first thing to keep in mind is that there are two tax credits: **Missouri Adoption Tax Credit** and **Federal Adoption Tax credit**.

The **Missouri Tax Credit** can only be applied to non-recurring, non-reimbursed adoption related expenses. Since the State of Missouri offers adoption subsidy which covers legal fees, home study, etc., most families who adopt a child from foster care do not qualify for this tax credit. Additional information on the tax credit can be found on-line by visiting: <http://dor.mo.gov/tax/taxcredit/atc.htm>.

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 Missouri 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.

There are also various tax considerations for foster parents and relatives/kin. 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. The best advice I can give to any foster, adoptive, or relative caregiver is if you have any doubt or questions regarding your taxes, please consult with a tax professional.

If you have any further questions regarding this topic or another, please contact me at 800.FOSTER.3 x25, or denisekelley@foster-adopt.org.

Denise Kelley
Director of Family Advocacy

KidStore

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

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.

Hours (Except Holidays):

1st and 3rd Wednesday

ALL Saturdays

9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

CLOSED April 3, 2010 for Easter

ATTENTION PARENTS!

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

Half Off Clothing

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. shelleythomasbenke@foster-adopt.org.

Classifieds

Check out the Coalition's Online Classifieds (www.foster-adopt.org/classifieds). The Parent to Parent Trade Classifieds is a free section that allows parents to post items that 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.

KidStore Map



News You Can Use

From the Foster and Adoptive Care Coalition



Eastern Missouri Foster and Adoptive Care Resource Center



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

800.FOSTER.3 • 314.367.8373

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.

In This Issue:

- Job Fair—Page 1
- Support Groups—Page 2
- Training Extravaganza—Page 2
- KidStore Happenings —Page 3
- Dear Denise / Tax Credit—Page 3

If you would like to update your contact information, or if you no longer wish to receive News You Can Use, please:

Request in writing:

Foster & Adoptive Care Coalition
Attn: Heather Kemper
111 N. Seventh Street, Ste. 402
Saint Louis, Missouri 63101

By telephone toll-free:

800.FOSTER.3 (314.367.8373) x36

Or by e-mail:

heatherkemper@foster-adopt.org.

If you would like to receive **e-News You Can Use**, sign up online at www.foster-adopt.org/enews. While there, you can also find out how to start following us on **Twitter, Facebook, and Flickr.**

Nonprofit Org
US POSTAGE
PAID
St. LOUIS MO
PERMIT # 495

A Place to Call Home

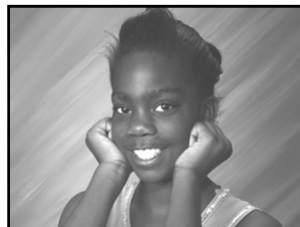


Photo Courtesy of Sears Portrait Studio

Delsheia is a beautiful girl who is looking for her forever home. She is a friendly and outgoing child who likes to play house and loves anything Disney. Delsheia, who is in the sixth grade, enjoys reading and playing freeze tag during recess at school.

Termination of Parental Rights has not yet been completed, and the judge has said he will not terminate without a prospective adoptive placement. Therefore, this will be a legal risk placement. For more information, please contact Sheila Suderwalla, Director of Specialized Recruitment, at 800.FOSTER.3 (314.367.8373) x30, or sheilasuderwalla@foster-adopt.org.



Wendy's Wonderful Kids



Photo Courtesy of Sears Portrait Studio

Ashley (14) has been praised for her playful spirit and out-spoken personality. She thrives when given positive attention, and responds by showing compassion for others and lending a helping hand. Ashley has experienced the effects of neglect and abuse; she has shown great strength in continuing to participate in treatment, learning how to live within limits and communicating effectively and respectfully with people in her life. She is easily able to express herself and has learned to advocate for her own needs.

Ashley is most successful in a family setting when caregivers communicate limits, provide positive feedback and show her respect, patience and a commitment to adoption. To learn more about Ashley, please contact Liz Johnson, Wendy's Wonderful Kids Recruiter, at 800.FOSTER.3 (314.367.8373) x31.

