

New sYouCanUse

From the Foster and Adoptive Care Coalition

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TRAINING EXTRAVAGANZA!!! Register TODAY!!!

FACC will host the next Training Extravaganza on Saturday, March 24th, from 8:30 AM—4:00 PM. The Training Extravaganza is an all-day training that allows foster/adoptive/relative caregivers to receive 7.5 in-service training hours in one day, and you can bring the kids, too. As an added bonus, youth ages 13–18 who attend will participate in support groups that focus on teenage issues. In order for you and your child(ren) to participate, **you must agree to attend all workshops, complete the registration form (below), return it, and receive verification from FACC that you are registered.** Space is limited to 200 adults and 100 children. We will process registration forms in the order they are received.

March 24, 2007 Training Extravaganza Agenda Theme: Strengthening Relationships

Interacting with Birth Families: Cynthia Williams, Assistant Director of the George Warren Brown School of Social Work (Wash U) AND a very seasoned foster parent, will discuss ways to nurture the relationship between foster/adoptive families and birth families. You wanted her back, so here she is! You don't want to miss this one!

Innovative Ways to Understanding Our Children and Youth: Because parents don't always understand the way children behave or have all the answers, interaction between parents and children can be challenging at times. Kathy French, LCSW and Brain Gym Specialist, promises to provide alternative techniques and skills for parents to use that will help to bring about dramatic improvements in children's behavior.

12:30-1:30 Lunch & Resource Tables: The resource area will: 1) provide caregivers useful community information; and 2) create an opportunity for parents to network with each other. Lunch will be provided. **If you have special dietary needs please feel free to bring a sack lunch.**

Did You Hear What I Said?: Communication is such an important part of our daily lives. In order to have successful relationships, whether it's with our employers, family members (children, too), children's school or case managers, effective communication is essential in creating and maintaining a healthy relationship. Aaron Layton, one of our most popular presenters, will identify several ways participants can use basic communication skills to influence others, change behaviors, diffuse conflicts, and respect others.....tools that we all need to maintain and strengthen all relationships!

Children's Agenda: The staff of FACC have planned a fun-filled day packed with all sorts of activities for the kids. Children and youth will create arts and crafts, watch a movie, and attend a book fair where they can pick out 3 new books from Barnes and Noble. Financial literacy training will be provided for the 6—18 year olds (they learn about the value of money, saving, budgeting, and much more). In addition, the teenagers will participate in their own support groups which will also focus on healthy communication and strengthening relationships. The registered children and youth will be safe, be busy, and most importantly, be happy!

PLEASE PRINT

	Child's First Name	Age
Date: _____	_____	_____
Name: _____	_____	_____
Name: _____	_____	_____
Address: _____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
Zip code: _____	_____	_____
Day Phone #: _____	_____	_____
Home #: _____	_____	_____

Send registration form to: **FACC, ATTN: Training Extravaganza, 111 N. 7th Street, Suite 402, St. Louis, MO 63101** or fax it to 314-241-0715. No phone registration accepted.

SAVE THE DATE! 2007 Training Extravaganzas: 05/19, 08/04 and 10/27.



CD Policy You Need to Know

Reimbursement for Childcare

In an effort to comply with Federal guidelines, the Children's Division has recently enforced the requirement for all child care providers that receive payment from the State to be licensed or registered. This includes providers who are being reimbursed by parents.

A letter was sent to parents receiving adoption subsidy daycare explaining the changes and what steps could be taken if their child care provider was not licensed or registered. If you have adopted a child from foster care, receive daycare subsidy, and have not received a letter from the Children's Division specifying these changes, call Denise Kelley, FACC's Director of Family Advocacy, at 314-FOSTER-3 or 800-FOSTER-3.

Need Help Finding Child Care?

Missouri Child Care Resource and Referral Network Can Help

No matter where you live in Missouri, Missouri's Child Care Resource and Referral agencies ("CCR&R") can help find and select child care, provide helpful tips to find quality child care, and suggest specific services based on your family's special needs.

The mission of the Missouri Child Care Resource and Referral Network is to provide coordinated, statewide child care resource and referral services that promote a high quality child care system. The Network's primary task is to coordinate the activities and services of the seven (7) CCR&R agencies in Missouri.

The Network office works closely with each local CCR&R to ensure high quality of service delivery and accountability. Local CCR&R agencies:

- Help families find child care and provide them consumer education materials.
- Provide technical assistance, training, and loan opportunities to child care providers.
- Serve employers with consulting assistance and child care benefits for their employees.
- Help families and providers care for children with special needs.

For more information, please contact the CCR&R Network at 314-531-1412, 800-467-2322, or <http://www.moccrn.org>. You can also contact the Child Daycare Association at 314-531-1412, 800-467-2322 or <http://www.childcarestl.org>.

Federal and Missouri State Adoption Tax Credit

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

Federal Adoption Tax Credit

Beginning in tax year 2003, families adopting a child with special needs from foster care were allowed access to the special needs tax credit without needing to document expenses. For tax year 2006, the tax credit is \$10,960 per child and you have this year and up to the next five years in which to use it.

The first question many people ask, or are asked by their tax preparer is, "**How do I know if my child is considered to have special needs according to the IRS?**" The North American Council on Adoptable children interprets the Instruction to say: if you receive an adoption subsidy (assistance) for your child, that means the state that provides the subsidy has determined your child has special needs. Your adoption subsidy agreement is the evidence that the state has determined your child to have special needs. Note: This information is contained in the Instructions for Form 8839, found at www.irs.gov/instructions/i8839/ch02.html#d0e285 which is quoted below:

Column (d): A child is a child with special needs if all three of the following apply:

1. The child was a citizen or resident of the United States or its possessions at the time the adoption process began.
2. A state (including the District of Columbia) has determined that the child cannot or should not be returned to his or her parents' home.
3. The state has determined that the child will not be adopted unless assistance is provided to the adoptive parents.

If you check the box in column (d), be sure to keep evidence of the state's determination in your records.

The second most common question is, "**What does this mean to our family?**" You or your tax preparer are the only individuals that can answer this question. However, following is additional information to help you figure it out.

Many people believe the Federal Adoption Tax Credit won't help them because they get a refund every year, but that isn't necessarily true. A refund means you have overpaid what you owe in federal income tax, so the IRS refunds you the amount overpaid. The tax credit is applied against what you owe, and could reduce it to \$0, which would increase your refund. The amount that you owe is the number you come up with from the tax tables (or the number in line 28 of the 1040A, or line 46 of the 1040). Examples of how a tax credit is obtained are available at www.nacac.org/subsidyfactsheets/taxes.

Information for filling out Form 8839: Qualified Adoption Expenses If you do your own taxes, you may have a couple questions when you fill out Form 8839. What do you do when they ask for qualifying expenses on line 5 and you didn't have any? Go to page 4 of the instructions for form 8839, which can be found at www.irs.gov/instructions/i8839/ch02.html#d0e640. But, if you adopted a child with special needs and the adoption became final in 2006, enter \$10,960 on line 5. This means that you do NOT have to document qualifying expenses to take the credit.

What if the tax you owe is less than \$10,960? Then you will also need to fill out the Credit Carryforward Worksheet on page 4 of the instructions for 8839. This is how you are able to carry the remaining credit forward for up to the next five years or until it is used up. Finally, if you receive adoption subsidy (assistance) for your child and have questions on whether it is taxable income or if you can claim that child as a dependent, read NACAC's fact sheet at www.nacac.org/subsidyfactsheets/taxes.html.

If you have questions on the adoption tax credit, contact the North American Council on Adoptable Children 651-644-3036 or adoption.assistance@nacac.org.

¹If you can claim the child tax credit (see IRS publication 972) or other credits, you should claim them. This article was reprinted with permission from the North American Council on Adoptable Children.

Missouri Tax Credit

As part of Missouri's enacted legislation, HB 1453, \$2 million in adoption tax credits are set aside for the adoption of children who are wards of the state. You may even be able to claim the credit for adoptions that occurred in previous years.

Before proceeding, let's review what a tax credit is. According to IRS Publication 968, "The adoption credit is the amount that you subtract from your tax liability." The following information summarizes the information on the Missouri Department of Revenue website, <http://dor.mo.gov/tax/misc/taxcredit/atc.htm>.

Special Needs Tax Credit

Purpose: Provides a credit to assist in the non-recurring adoption expenses for a special needs child.

Eligible Applicants: Any person residing in this state that legally adopts a special needs child is eligible to receive a MO tax credit up to \$10,000 for non-recurring adoption expenses (i.e. home study, legal fees, travel) for each child.

Eligible Activities: The child must be a special needs child as determined by the Children’s Division, a child-placing agency licensed by the state, or by a court of competent jurisdiction.

How the Program Works: To claim the MO Adoption Tax Credit, parents must complete Form MO-ATC. A copy of the completed Form MO-ATC must be attached to the tax return the first year the credit is being claimed. Effective January 1, 2000, up to 50 percent of any tax credits earned for adoptions finalized after that date may be claimed upon placement of the child and the remaining 50 percent claimed after the special needs adoption is final.

Eligible Use of Tax Credit: The credit may be carried forward four (4) subsequent years. During the year of adoption, or any year in which the credit is carried forward, the credit will be reduced by the state’s cost of providing care, treatment, maintenance, and services when the child is placed, with no intent to return to the adoptive home, in foster care or residential treatment licensed or operated by the Children’s Division, the Division of Youth Services, or the Department of Mental Health, or when a juvenile court temporarily or finally relieves the adoptive parents of custody of the child.

Authorization: This tax credit may be applied to adopting parents’ state income tax. This credit may be assigned, sold, or transferred.

Funding Limits: The adoption tax credit is limited to four million dollars per fiscal year. Two million is allocated for Missouri resident special needs children, and two million for non-resident special needs children.

Questions? Contact Missouri Department of Revenue, Division of Taxation and Collection at taxcredit@dor.mo.gov or 573-522-2089.

Claiming Your Foster Child

One of the most authoritative source for information on whether foster parents can claim a foster child is IRS publication 501, Exemptions, Standard Deduction and Filing Information. The document can be found on-line by going to www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/p501.pdf.

“There Is A Family for You.”

Project Teen Plus’ mission is to help facilitate the successful adoption of older youth who are in foster care. During this past year 70% of the participants were matched with adoptive families!

Project Teen Plus facilitates monthly teen support groups where the participants can share their experiences and learn from each other in regards to foster care and adoption. The groups are aimed at helping the youth prepare for a forever family. During a recent teen support group, one participant who had been waiting for a forever family for him and his brother shared his experience and knowledge with the other youth. He encouraged the other waiting kids that “there is a family” for them and not to lose hope. This teen and his brother were recently matched and placed with an adoptive family, whom they say is exactly what they had been waiting for.

As we have seen first hand in Project Teen, there are families waiting to be matched with an older child. We celebrate with many of our youth who have found their forever family. Project Teen Plus knows that there is a family for **Jelende** who has been waiting for a forever family of her own.

Jelende has a sparkling smile and an outgoing personality to match. This active teen loves dance and tennis. Jelende has a good sense of humor and is fun to be around. She is a very friendly, social girl who has great self-esteem. Her foster parent describes her as being a “good friend” who “loves to help others.” Jelende is an intelligent and motivated girl who enjoys school. She does best with one-on-one instruction, which has contributed to her recent academic improvements.

For more information on Jelende please call Sheila Suderwalla, Director of Project Teen Plus at (314) 367-8373 or sheilasuderwalla@foster-adopt.org.



Jelende, age 13

Senate Interim Committee Studies Adoption Issues

Senate President Pro-Tem, Michael Gibbons, established a Senate Interim Committee to study the recruitment and retention of adoptive homes in Missouri. Last fall, the committee traveled the state to gather the ideas of foster/adoptive parents and child welfare professionals.

In January, the Committee released their report. Thirteen recommendations were made, however the following are of particular interest to foster/adoptive parents.

- Explore funding for post-adoption resource centers
- Provide foster parents with more thorough information regarding children’s medical, behavioral, or psychological background
- Review the laws that protect the identity and privacy of foster parents
- Ensure that policies and paperwork are standard statewide, and do not differ from county to county
- Provide foster/adoptive parents with adequate time to renew their contracts with the State
- Require that each subsidy agreement adequately provides the services needed by that child, including respite care
- Provide after-school programs for teenagers in foster care who need constant supervision

We want to extend a special thank you to all the parents and child welfare professionals that attended the committee hearings. Many shared their personal stories and provided suggestions on how the system can support and maintain children in their adopted families.

In the coming months, we will let you know if there is progress on any of these recommendations. If you haven’t already, this would be an excellent time for you to sign up for our *News You Can Use* eUpdates. This services provides you an opportunity to stay up-to-date on community events, news related to foster care/ adoption, policy changes, and much more. To join this free services, e-mail denisekelley@foster-adopt.org.

FACC News

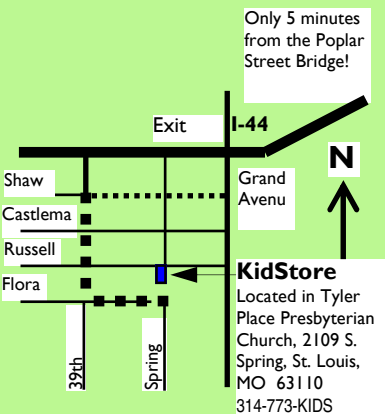
The KidStore would like to welcome our New Volunteers: Manager—Jean Danzler; Asst. Manager- Kay Schecther, Cindy Heathman and Arlena Thomas.

However, more dedicated volunteers (i.e. foster/adoptive parents) are needed to work at the store on Saturdays. For more information on how you can help, contact Shelley Thomas-Benkes, FACC's Director of FosterServe, at 314-367-8373 or shelleythomasbenke@foster-adopt.org.

We would like to thank Dannette Meier for her years of service as a KidStore manager. Her commitment and dedication is to be commended. Thank you, Dannette. The KidStore will miss you.

The KidStore is a resale shop open exclusively to foster/adopt, relative/kin caregivers, caseworkers, and GALs/CASAs. The store is open the 1st and 3rd Wednesday and every Saturday (except Holidays) from 9 am—noon. Questions are welcomed by Monyka, KidStore Manager, at 314-FOSTER-3 or 800-FOSTER-3.

New shoppers, on your first visit be sure to bring proof of your foster/adopt parent "status." Forms of identification include: foster parent identification card, copy of your license, a CD check stub, or documentation that you have physical custody of the child(ren). Your information will be kept on file for future visits.



Support FACC

Here is an easy and no-cost way for you to support the work of the Foster & Adoptive Care Coalition - just by shopping for groceries! Please visit the Customer Service Desk of your Schnuck's store and ask for an eScrip Community Card. After you receive your card, activate it by calling 800-931-6258 or visit www.escrip.com. Our group ID # is 500004839. Tell them you are supporting the Foster & Adoptive Care Coalition. Then, every time you shop, present your card. Up to 3% of your total monthly purchases will be donated to the FACC.

If you already have an eScrip card please consider adding FACC. Call 800-FOSTER-3 for more information.

A Place to Call Home

Below are two children who will be featured in the upcoming weeks on KSDK NewsChannel 5's "A Place to Call Home." The segment airs on Tuesdays during the 6 PM news, Thursdays in the 5 AM hour, and Saturdays 9 AM broadcast.



Anthony airs March 6, 2007



Anthony is a 9-year-old boy in search of a forever family. He was interested in everything--especially the big slide at our recent outing at the City Museum with KSDK. This handsome third-grader is legally free for adoption. Anthony is bright, talkative, and curious as evidenced by some great questions he asked KSDK meteorologist, John Fuller. He loves to play outdoors, to play ball, and to toss his favorite Frisbee. Anthony also enjoys building things, drawing, and playing with his toys and stuffed animals. Anthony is working hard to improve at school and he makes friends easily.

Anthony has some older siblings that are very special to him, particularly his sister. He would like to stay in close contact with his sister once adopted. Anthony really has a wonderful sense of family, and has great potential to form a strong attachment with his adoptive family.

A one or two parent family is being sought for this handsome young man. This family should be active and able to provide the structure and security Anthony needs. For more information about Anthony, contact Amy Hayibor of Missouri Alliance at 314-991-1737 or e-mail ahayibor@ma-cf.org.

Dakotta airs March 20, 2007



Fifteen-year-old Dakotta said he was a little nervous when he arrived at KSDK for his recent taping, but as soon as he got into the weather center with Scott Connell, Kodie found and instant friend. Kodie as he likes to be called, enjoys video games. His world opened up as he observed a live broadcast—the ultimate video game! Now he says he may have found his future calling. Normally a shy and sensitive teenager, Kodie's great personality surfaced with the KSDK crew. Kodie even practiced doing the weather, just like his new friend, Scott. He commented, "It's harder than it looks!"

Dakotta would like a one or two parent family who can offer him love, nurturing and structure. He would enjoy other siblings in the family, especially older brothers. Kodie is a good student with interest in technology. For more information about Dakotta, contact Jennifer Brownfield of Missouri Alliance at 573-338-3796 or jbrownfield@ma-cf.org.

"A Place to Call Home" Fun Fact

Did you know? In 2006, 68 children and youth were featured on "A Place to Call Home." 34 of those children (50%) were placed with loving adoptive families. For more information about APTCH or to refer a child, call Karen at 314-367-8373 X35 or e-mail karenmorgan@foster-adopt.org.

In the next issue of News You Can Use:

Included in the November/December edition of *News You Can Use* was a survey for subsidized adoption and guardianship parents. FACC wanted to know your experience as a parent and the supports necessary to assist your family.

We are currently working very diligently to compile all the responses and provide them to you in the March/April edition of *News You Can Use*.

Thank you to all the parents who took the time to complete the survey!