



Newsletter

March 2013

A Publication of the Alabama Foster & Adoptive Parent Association

Alabama Foster & Adoptive Parent Annual Conference



**SHOCCO SPRINGS
BAPTIST CONFERENCE CENTER
SHOCCO SPRINGS, ALABAMA**



Come join us for 3 days of fun, relaxation, and good workshops

**This is for Foster parents, Adoptive parents,
Social Workers, and others interested in
foster care and adoption.**

May 9th, 10th, and 11th, 2013

**Register now by calling Shocco at 1-800-280-1105 or
contact Buddy Hooper, buddy@afapa.org**



A message from the President

We have had some very successful mini conferences this year. Thanks to all of you who came to Lauderdale County in October, Tuscaloosa in January, and Mobile in February. There was lots of good training at each of these.

We now focus on our Annual Conference at Shocco Springs May 9th, 10th, and 11th. You can register now by calling Shocco at 1-800-280-1105 and tell them you want to register for the Alabama Foster Adoptive parent conference. You will have a choice of spending the night Wednesday the 8th and Thursday the 9th or you can choose to spend Thursday and Friday nights. If you want to spend 3 nights you will be responsible to the 3rd night.

The cost to you to register is \$35 registration fee. If you want a private room to yourself you must also pay \$20 extra per night. Shocco can tell you the cost if you want to spend a 3rd night. Everyone who comes must be registered even if they are not attending workshops. This includes anyone who will be eating meals there.

Reminder from last newsletter that this is election year for AFAPA officers. The election and business meeting will be on Friday morning May 10th. A slate of officers will be presented by the nominating committee and at that time nominations from the floor will be accepted. Anyone nominated must accept the nomination which means only members present can be nominated. Each person nominated will be given opportunity to speak to the membership. Voting will take place and only AFAPA members are allowed to vote.

Please support our Walk Me Home events this year. Shelby County Foster/Adoptive Parent association will be holding their second annual 5K Walk/Run, the Greater Birmingham Walk Me Home Event. Mobile Foster/Adoptive Parent association will hold their 2nd annual walk end of September. Plans are under way for AFAPA to host another walk in the Montgomery area. Place and date to be decided. You can visit www.firstgiving.com/walkmehome to see all walks scheduled and to get more information about each one.

Buddy Hooper
President AFAPA

Greater Birmingham 5K Run/Walk for Foster Care

Saturday, April 27, 2013
Veterans Park
Hoover, Alabama

Join us for the 2nd "Walk Me Home...to the place I belong" 5k Run and Walk for Foster Care on April 27th, 2013, in Hoover at Veterans Park. Help us support foster children and youth throughout the Greater Birmingham Area! Registration for 5K run begins at 7:00 a.m. Registration for the 5K Walk begins at 8:30 a.m. ***Rain or Shine***

There are more than 400,000 children in foster care across the country. Approximately 5500 of these children reside in the State of Alabama and approximately 500 foster children live in the Greater Birmingham area.

The Walk Me Home 5k event was developed in order to bring awareness to foster care, promote fostering, and raise funds needed to support the programs and services directly benefitting the Greater Birmingham foster children and youth.

This is the sixth year in which a nationwide event of this magnitude has been organized with specific focus on foster care. Please join us in Veterans Park and walk for a terrific cause. With your help we can make a lasting, positive impact in the lives' of Birmingham's foster kids!

All participants are asked to pay a \$30 registration fee or to collect at least \$30 in pledges to receive free registration. Participants will receive a free t-shirt and blue wristband. Blue ribbons will be given each walker to hang on our Blue Ribbon Tree! Registration must be completed by April 13th, to receive a t-shirt on the day of the race. Additional pledges may be turned in the day of the event. Cash, checks and check/credit cards will be accepted. Checks should be made payable to GREATER BIRMINGHAM WALK ME HOME.

For More Information Contact:
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THE VALUE OF FOSTER & ADOPTIVE PARENT SUPPORT GROUPS

I know there are many local Foster & Adoptive Parent Associations around the state and are doing some wonderful projects that are helping foster & adoptive families. There are also a few groups who are meeting just for support. I would like to speak about the value of forming support groups.

Adoption brings special issues to a family, and adoptive parents often seek other people who understand their children, their families, and the unique challenges and rewards that adoption has brought to their life. Parents know firsthand the problems that families and children face, the support needed, and the structures and relationships that can help. Parenting children whose lives have been affected by neglect, abuse, institutional care, separation and loss, and multiple moves is like no other kind of parenting. Families may have to draw on skills they never knew they had or needed. They may need to turn to others who have experienced similar challenges.

By bringing together people who have been touched by adoption, a parent support group can:

- Validate parents' experiences and frustrations
- Celebrate the joys and triumphs unique to adoptive parenting
- Enable parents to share resources, suggestions, and success stories
- Identify and solve problems
- Guide parents to a better understanding of adoption's impact on child development
- Reduce feelings of isolation and self-doubt or guilt when problems arise in the family

Most importantly, parent groups offer encouragement and hope.

There is no clear and absolute definition of adoptive family support. It is what-ever any group of adoptive parents needs in order to be empowered and further enable them to parent their children. It's a place to go and not be judged. Sometimes it's an organized group; sometimes it's simply a list of people to call for help. It can also take the form of on-line support, for families who can't leave their children for the time it takes to go to a meeting away from home. Mutual support is therapeutic – but not therapy – and often is the very factor that keeps a family together and averts disrupted adoption.

Not only are support groups needed and helpful to foster and adoptive parents but as more and more children are being placed with families in out of home care situations. These kinship care providers also can look to find support in groups with other families in similar situations.

AFAPA members are available to assist Foster, Adoptive, and Kinship care providers with help in starting a support group.

For the complete fact sheet which was developed by the North American Council on Adoptable Children contact AFAPA or NACAC.





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AFAPA NEWSLETTER INFO:

Articles can be submitted to Buddy Hooper, Editor. E-mail submissions should be addressed to afapa@afapa.org. Otherwise, mail to AFAPA 1091 County Road 1659 Cullman, AL 35058. Deadline dates fall the first of the month in February, May, August, & November.

MEET TY



Ty is a charming, talkative red headed, blue eyed boy born in April 1997. Ty loves playing video games and watching cartoons and also gardening. He also loves his computer and plays games on it as well. He has tried his hand at growing a watermelon patch in the past and enjoys gardening. He loves to be outdoors working in the garden but is not into athletic outdoor games. He has taken some karate/taekwondo and enjoyed that. Ty is a giving child and likes to take pride in the things he does. Ty likes to draw and his favorite subject is science. For the 2012-2013 Ty is attending 9th grade and is doing very well in high school. Ty says that he wants to learn how to swim and enjoys the beach. He enjoys all you can eat buffets and is not a picky eater. Happy Hour at Sonic is one of his favorite things to do when his adoption worker visits. He loves to be on the go. Ty thinks that he may want to be a mechanical engineer or scientist when he grows up. He is very environmentally conscious and believes we should all recycle and take better care of our planet.

Ty needs a strong family who can be consistent with limits and rules. He needs support in the school setting, socially and needs a family who will help him reach his goals in a positive way. He needs help learning to be responsible for his actions and to give respect in order to get it. He needs a family who will understand his losses and help him work through those in a positive way. He needs connections that are life long and a family willing to stay with him, even through the bad days.

Photo provided courtesy of www.heartgalleryalabama.com