



Newsletter

Fall 2010

A Publication of the Alabama Foster & Adoptive Parent Association

41st Annual Education Conference

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Foster Care: The Road To Permanency



June 25 - June 27, 2011

Renaissance Mobile Riverview Plaza Hotel
Mobile, Alabama



A Message from the President of **AFAPA**

Just a brief note so as to make room for all the other important information in the newsletter. We have many of you on our email list but because of some computer problems several emails were deleted. If you are not on our email list and would like to be please contact Sue Thomas AFAPA Secretary by email suthomas@centurylink.net. Sue does not show your email when she sends stuff but uses blind copy to protect your privacy. There are currently 408 who have made The Alabama Foster Parents as a friend on Face Book. We would like to have 1000 friends by the end of the year. If you are on face book and would like to be a friend just search for Alabama Foster Parents or the email is buddy@afapa.org. Please look at the dates for upcoming training. I hear from foster parents all across the state about needing training hours to meet the requirement for 15 hours of training annually. Over

the next 9 months there will be several opportunities to attend training not only to get hours you need, but to gain much needed skills and knowledge about how to care for yourself and the children in your care.

The Alabama Foster & Adoptive Parent Association is very honored to have been chosen to host the National Foster Parent Association Conference for 2011. This is a once in a life time opportunity for most of you to be able to attend a National Conference. AFAPA will do all we can to assist the parents in Alabama so you will be able to attend. Alabama Parents will need to register through AFAPA as we will be seeking scholarships for our Alabama Parents to attend. More information will be in upcoming newsletters and on the www.afapa.org and the www.nfpaonline.org websites about the conference.

KIDS TO LOVE FOUNDATION

Thousands of foster children are equipped for a new school year courtesy of the Kids to Love Foundation. Kids to Love, a 501(c)3 non-profit organization, commits two programs to education each summer: a school supply drive and a college scholarship banquet. This year's school supply drive provided school supply packs, many including brand new backpacks, to 3,313 children across Alabama and Tennessee. Bags are filled with pencils, notebooks, crayons and other classroom necessities to put foster children on an even playing field with their peers. The average school supply list can cost \$50.00 per child. Kids to Love aims to ease that expense for foster families, while giving foster children the self-confidence they need to succeed.



"We know giving a child a back pack and school supplies, gives them the tools they need to learn, and it puts a foster child on a level learning field with their peers." Lee Marshall, Founder and Executive Director of Kids to Love"

The school supply drive counts on donations from generous individuals and businesses. Corporate partners for 2010 include Woody Anderson Ford, WAAY 31 News, The Boeing Company, State Farm, Crestwood Medical Center, Hudson Alpha, Two Men and a Truck, and Willowbrook Baptist Church.

Kids to Love works with the Alabama Foster and Adoptive Parent Association. Joette Vick and Buddy Hooper have played a critical role in getting the supplies in the hands of children once Kids to Love fills the bags!

Since 2005, Kids to Love has provided 17,349 school supply packs to children from kindergarten to college.

The Kids to Love college scholarship program provides financial aid to foster children who want to further their education. Each summer, Kids to Love awards scholarships in the amount of \$1,000.00 to graduating high school seniors. The scholarships are renewable for up to 4 years and are based on grace, not grades. Some students choose to attend college or university; others apply the money toward a trade school. Success stories include a young woman who is working on her Master's degree in business and another who became a certified nurse's assistant.

Kids to Love has awarded 276 college scholarships in the past 5 years.

If you would like to donate to the Kids to Love school supply or scholarship program, visit www.kidstolove.org <http://www.kidstolove.org> or contact kidstolovefoundation@yahoo.com.

NEW PARTNERSHIP

The Alabama Access to Justice Commission announces a new partnership with the Alabama Department of Human Resources to assist foster parents in filing petitions to adopt children.

The Alabama Access to Justice Commission was created by the Alabama Supreme Court in April 2007 to serve as a coordinating entity for the legally underserved, the legal community, social service providers, and the private and public sectors.

The commission's mission is to coordinate resources to expand and promote legal services for economically disadvantaged citizens in need. Thus, this partnership brings together the Alabama State Bar and the Alabama Department of Human Resources to help foster parents with the legal procedures in adopting children.

In May, at the annual Foster and Adoptive Parents Association Conference, Alabama Department of Human Resources Commissioner Nancy Buckner announced the coordinated effort to "sustained applause of appreciation and a few tears of joy". This initial focus on services to help foster parents with legal issues regarding adoption is "Phase I".

The Alabama Access to Justice Commission and the Alabama Department of Human Resources' partnership has future plans for assisting with legal issues regarding children.

MEET CORINNA

Corinna born in September, 1994, has been in foster care since she was ten years of age. During her time in foster care, she has had several placements. However, what she would really like is a forever family. Corinna is a very bright teenager. She has an engaging smile and has a good sense of humor. She enjoys traveling, eating out and roller skating. Like most teenage girls her age, she especially enjoys shopping for clothes.



Corinna also has a serious side and she is concerned about her future. She does well in school and she especially enjoys reading. Her least favorite subject is Math. Her desire is to go to college. She often thinks about what she would like to do when she finishes school.

Corinna has a twin sister. Currently, they are not together, but they have a close attachment with one another and both girls are available for adoptive placement. Corinna participates in counseling on a regular basis to help her deal with the separation from her sister as well as other issues in her life.

FOSTER CARE RESPITE POLICY IN ALABAMA

Respite is viewed as a valuable service to provide temporary relief to foster parents and related caregivers with the benefit of improving satisfaction and retention of approved foster homes. Respite care is a right of foster parents as supported by the Foster Parent Bill of Rights, enacted into Law, July 1, 2004. The respite care program is initiated to meet the needs of the caregivers of these children for temporary, trustworthy alternate care. The Alabama Foster And Adoptive Parent Association and the Department of Human Resources have worked together to develop this policy.

Any vision for respite care emphasizes a desire to promote a team approach to providing complete services for the wellbeing of the child, caregivers, and family. The team consists of the foster child/ren ISP team including the primary caregivers, the respite care provider, birth family and foster child or children, and the Department of Human Resources. With a team approach, the respite care program can provide high-quality, professional respite care services and support.

What is Respite Care?

Respite care is a support service for caregivers which:

- provides a scheduled period of rest and relief from ongoing parental responsibilities
- allows for planned care of children in the custody of the Department by alternative providers with no disruption to the foster parent's reimbursement
- assists in the retention of foster homes and better safety for the children
- can be provided in the caregiver's home or in the respite provider's home, if the home has been approved.

Respite care is limited to seven days, taken consecutively or separately during a calendar year.

Respite care is not:

- for emergency care*
- for foster parents to attend out of town funerals or family emergencies
- part of a visitation plan designed toward achieving a permanency goal

*Counties may provide substitute care when there are emergency situations, but this should not count against allowable respite days. Those emergency situations should be considered on a case by case basis.

Respite care is strictly to provide the foster parents a break from the responsibilities of childcare so that they can have some rest and relaxation.

Respite care providers are:

- someone who is known to the child (preferred)
- foster parents who do not have a placement or who are not at their maximum approved capacity
- a relative, friend, adoptive parent waiting for a placement, or other individual approved by the child's Social Worker
- a person who provides overnight respite in the approved foster parent's home, after that person has been approved by the county DHR worker as a respite provider for this foster family.

The DHR Resource Worker is a designated Social Worker in each county who:

- receives a respite request
- determines a foster family's eligibility to receive respite care
- facilitates a match, if the foster family has not identified a respite care provider
- maintains a log of requests
- documents and tracks the number of days used to assure compliance with eligibility requirements (each family is eligible for 7 days respite annually @ \$20 per day for traditional foster care or \$35.00 per day for a medically fragile child).

Notification to Foster Parents regarding the availability of Respite Care

- the county DHR worker shall notify foster parents at the time of approval and again at re-approval about the availability of respite care

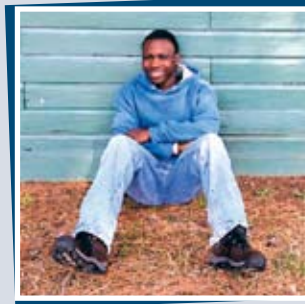
Eligibility includes:

- approved traditional foster parents and medically fragile foster parents who are in good standing with the Department are eligible for up to seven (7) days of respite care annually. Note that therapeutic foster parents currently receive respite as arranged and paid by their approving agency.
- Related caregivers providing care for children in DHR custody
- others who on a case by case basis are determined to need the service, and are approved by the Social Worker and Supervisor monitoring the case
- **Note:** One day of respite care covers all foster children in the foster home on that day, regardless of whether those children were previously involved with respite care in another foster home.

When a foster parent requests respite care:

- the foster parent/care giver shall provide reasonable notice (at least seven days) to the Child's Social Worker
- the Child's Social Worker shall make a referral to the County's resource worker (person assigned by the County Director to manage respite care activities)
- the resource worker shall log all requests for respite care
- the Child's Social Worker shall maintain a copy of the request form in the child's file
- the resource worker shall consult with the foster parent and the Social Worker to determine if a specific provider is preferred.
- If there is not a request for a specific provider, the Resource Worker will match the child or children with a provider who is a licensed foster parent; or, the child's Social Worker may approve another respite provider
- The social worker for the medically fragile foster child shall assist the respite provider in obtaining any necessary training for the special care of the specific medically fragile child
- **Note:** If the respite provider is not another approved foster parent, the respite provider shall stay in the foster parent's home if overnight respite is provided. This person must

MEET JERRY



Jerry, born June 1992 is described as a friendly young man with good manners. He enjoys playing video games and hanging out with his friends. He's very good at video games. His eyes simply lit up at Christmas this year when he had the money to buy a couple of games he'd been wanting.

Jerry's favorite subject in school is history. He's not currently a member of any clubs, teams or groups at school. He does go to church on the weekend. His favorite (school) holiday is Spring break -- because he's out of school for several days and gets to have fun. His favorite restaurant is Chick-Fil-a.

When he has time to spend with his friends he just enjoys hanging out and talking. Jerry says he has a pretty good sense of humor and that is the thing about himself that he is the most proud of. He says he'd like to be a movie star when he grows up.

**Photo provided courtesy of
www.heartgalleryalabama.com**

be at least 19 years of age, be cleared through the Central Registry, and be cleared through the Criminal History Unit at DHR's expense.

- Consideration is being given to a new resource category of "Respite Provider." If someone only wants to be a respite provider, whether for a specific child or any foster child, their home would have to be approved, but new standards will have to be developed. This is in the planning stage at this time.

When making arrangements with the Respite Provider the foster parent/care giver shall:

- contact the approved respite care provider
- make all the arrangements for the child to go to the provider's home or for the provider to come into the foster home, if appropriate
- provide detailed care instructions, particularly for medically fragile children
- provide contact names and telephone numbers of the foster parents, the DHR worker and after hours system and any other number that may prove helpful to the respite provider
- facilitate the placement, or request the Social Worker's assistance, when needed
- supply the provider with the medical card, pertinent information including any safety concerns or restrictions on contacts or visits, and provide all supplies necessary for the child's care; e.g., diapers, special formula, clean clothes, car seat, portable crib, favorite toy, etc. including the child's routine and/or schedule.

Documentation of respite care shall be maintained by the resource worker by:

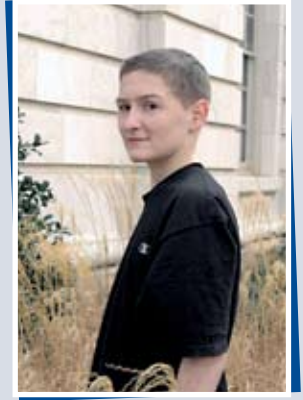
- documenting in the foster parents' record the number of respite care days utilized each year
- notifying the child's Social Worker
- the child's Social Worker shall document the use of respite care in the child's file

Payment to the Respite Provider shall:

- be authorized by the child's Social Worker
- be paid to the respite provider at the rate of \$20 a day for each child. An example would be if a child begins respite on Friday after school and returns to the foster home on Sunday evening, that would count as two days of respite and cost \$40.00 total per child.
- **Note** that income for respite services is taxable.
- be paid at the rate of \$35 per day for each medically fragile child.
- until the automated payment system can be modified, counties may either use FLEX Funds to pay the \$20 per day per child for respite care or over-ride the ACWIS on the "Add Adjust" screen. Respite must appear as part of the ISP (Individual Service Plan) for each child. It is expected that the necessary modifications can be made and the automated payment system will be operational by January 1, 2005.
- There may be unusual circumstances in which more than seven (7) days of respite are needed by the foster parent. If more than seven (7) days of respite are needed by the foster parent, this request should be discussed in the ISP and, if considered appropriate, the additional days may be paid by the foster parent.

MEET JOHN

John was born in March 1994. He is an energetic young man who enjoys playing video and board games, participating in sports and other outdoor physical activities. He likes learning new skills and games. John is great at things that require critical thinking. He is very well-mannered and sociable. John has a way of being engaging during conversations and unforgettable after you talk with him.



John is a sweet boy, but often allows fun boyish horseplay to lead to fighting. He tends to get into mischief when he is bored, so he definitely needs to be in a home with a lot of fun things to keep his mind busy and occupied.

John is participating in individual therapy and is making a lot of progress in many areas of his life. John longs for a sense of belonging and hope to one day be placed with his brothers Johnathon and Jimie so that they can be a family again. He deserves a family that will love him for who he is and let him develop a sense of identify as a teenager.

*Photo provided courtesy of
www.heartgalleryalabama.com*

MEET NOAH

Noah, born November 1997 is a sweet boy who loves to smile and listen to music. He enjoys playing with toys on his own and prefers to interact with adults in quiet atmospheres. He enjoys eating at McDonald's and listening to music at school and in the car. He loves his bean bag chair and his stuffed animals. On any given day you will see him in that chair holding one of his animals, hugging it.

He understands simple communications, can dress himself and put his shoes on the correct feet. He can also feed himself. He is entering the 6th grade this year with specific IEP services to address areas of need. Noah does not do well with animals or young children. He does not understand



boundaries with either of them and tends to be too rough when he is trying to show affection and play. Noah needs an advocate for services as well as a caregiver invested in helping him learn and progress. There is evidence from professionals who have interacted with Noah that he may be capable of learning more communication techniques than what is currently believed. This will take commitment and effort on the part of the parent(s) and a willingness to help this young man achieve to his fullest potential.

Noah is diagnosed Down syndrome and displays behavioral challenges common with this genetic disposition. He is currently residing in a group setting and it is believed he could flourish with a family.

RESPIRE CARE IN SHELBY AND JEFFERSON COUNTIES

Respite care for children with special needs and disabilities has been a critical need in Shelby County for a long time. Parents, guardians and caregivers of children with special needs and disabilities serve sacrificially and frequently neglect to nurture themselves. An interval of rest and respite is needed. Unfortunately, respite care is usually limited and expensive.

Aaron's Staff is meeting this need by providing respite care on the third Saturday of each month at the Linda Nolen Learning Center in Pelham, AL. between 4:00 P.M. and 9:00 P.M. It is the only respite care service for children with disabilities in Shelby County and the program is free.

A broad range of disabilities is served by Aaron's Staff including, but not limited to, Autism, Cerebral Palsy, Downs Syndrome, Muscular Dystrophy, development disabilities and visual and hearing impairments. Medically fragile children are welcome, as medical personnel are on staff to administer medicines and to attend to medical needs.



*Douglas Tisdale,
our CPR Director*

While parents enjoy an evening to themselves, children with special needs and siblings, enjoy an evening of fun. Activities include pet therapy, which encourages responsibility and provides comfort when petting the animals. Arts and crafts are designed to bring out the creativity in each child. The music therapy program has proven to be the biggest hit with the children, as they can express themselves through music. Children play right along with the music with shaker eggs, shaker wands, triangles, bongos, handbells and jingle sticks. Free time is provided and all sorts of recreational activities are available in the gymnasium. The playground at the center was exclusively built for children with special needs. Meals are provided at no charge and at the end of the evening, movies are shown. Naturally, children are encouraged to participate

according to their abilities.

Aaron's Staff was founded by Pastor Tim and Rhoda Trimble of Pelham, AL. Shortly after their son Aaron was born, he was diagnosed with Cerebral Palsy. They know the challenges of parenting a child with special needs from infancy to death. They discovered that the availability of respite care was scarce and that

the demand for help far exceeded the resources. They believe that every life has a purpose and children with disabilities are no exception. Aaron's purpose in life lives on through Aaron's Staff, as every aspect of the program is designed to benefit both parents and the child.

Marilyn Schultz, the Assistant Coordinator of Aaron's Staff and her husband Allen, fostered children while trying to attend to the needs of her terminally ill parents. During this time they realized that trying to balance the needs of aging parents and the needs of a foster child was stressful and became acutely aware of the need for respite. The availability of respite can truly mean the difference between a successful, stable foster home placement and placement disruption.



Art Instructor Laura Kramer

Caring for a foster child with behavioral problems or with medical disabilities is challenging and demanding and no one is equipped to handle it alone. Aaron's Staff is here to help.

Reservations are required. For more information or to make reservations, contact Marilyn Schultz at (205) 620-5004 or Rhoda Trimble at (205) 261-9914

Aaron's Staff is registered with the State of Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services. All personnel are thoroughly screened, well trained, CPR certified and have clear criminal background checks. Aaron's Staff is a member of the **Sharing the Care** Initiative, which is a project of the Alabama Lifespan Respite Resource Network. For more information about Aaron's Staff visit web site www.aaronstaffrespite.com



The women with the guitar is our Music Therapist, Dee Watts, with her assistant Bree



Volunteer Noelle Formentaro

For more information about Alabama Respite Care contact:
Linda Lamberth
Program Manager
Alabama Lifespan Respite
Resource Network
1521 E 9th Street
Anniston, Alabama 36207
256 237 3683
www.alabamarespite.org



While parents enjoy an evening to themselves, children with special needs and siblings, enjoy an evening of fun.



MEET KRNDRELL

Kendrell born January 1994 is a very handsome young man. He has a great smile and a charming personality. He is currently in the 10th grade (2009-2010 school year). He has always done well academically, however, as with many teenagers, he has to be prompted at times to complete homework assignments. Kendrell's favorite sports are football, baseball and basketball but he also has a passion for playing in the band. He has played the drums in a high school marching band and likes doing this.



He can be very shy at times and somewhat quite, but is very easy to talk with. It takes a while for him to truly open up and trust new people. He has experienced a great deal of loss in his life. Kendrell has attended counseling to help him deal with issues surrounding loss and his past abuse. He has progressed very well through therapy and has really been able to address the issues and deal with them appropriately.

Kendrell needs an adoptive family who will give him praise, attention and a lot of structure while helping him see how positive life can be. Kendrell has a lot of potential to be very successful in his life and with positive encouragement and dedication, he will achieve great things. He needs positive role models who will offer him love and kindness. His adoptive family should also be patient and understanding and able to set appropriate limits.

Photo provided courtesy of www.heartgalleryalabama.com

A Special Thank You to our friends at Heart Gallery for suppling us with photos of the children in need of adoption.





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1-888-545-2372
www.afapa.org

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.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS FOR THESE TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES:

For information on how to register and the location and workshops for each Mini Conference call 1-888-545-2372 or email buddy@afapa.org

October 9th - AFAPA Mini Conference Madison, Alabama

Registration and Welcome 8:30AM

Workshops to be presented 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM

Nurturing Bonding & Letting Go • Foster Parent Bill of Rights

Nutrition & Behaviors

During Lunch questions will be answered concerning ISP's, Respite, and Minimum Standards.

Holiday Inn (near Huntsville Airport) • Huntsville-West I-565 exit #8

9035 Madison Boulevard • Madison, AL 35758 • (256) 772-7170

There is a special room rate of \$79.00 available. These rooms are limited and need to be booked soon. Call the hotel and ask for the 'Kids to Love group rate'.

October 20th - Traing in Conecuh County, Downtown Evergreen at the Depot

10:00 am - 12 noon • Training on Shaken Baby Syndrome by Kelley Parris-Barnes, Director of Department of Child Abuse & Neglect Prevention

November 6th -- AFAPA Mini Conference Mobile, AL

January 22nd -- AFAPA Mini Conference Jefferson County, AL

May 12th -- 14th, 2011 -- AFAPA Annual Conference Shocco Springs, AL