



The Alabama Foster & Adoptive Parent Newsletter

Winter 2009

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NOVEMBER NATIONAL ADOPTION MONTH NOVEMBER 21ST NATIONAL ADOPTION DAY

Each year, November is recognized as National Adoption Awareness Month. While all adoption-related issues are important, the particular focus of this month is the adoption of children currently in foster care.

Activities and celebrations are kicked off with a Presidential Proclamation, and while efforts made at the national level certainly help build awareness of adoption, participation in local programs, events, and activities by those of us with a direct connection to adoption can often be the most effective way to promote positive perceptions, debunk the myths, and draw attention to the tens of thousands of children in foster care who wait and hope for permanent families.

On one single day for the last 10 years, the lives of thousands of children in foster care have been forever changed. That day is National Adoption Day. Thanks to the efforts of adoption advocates, policymakers, judges and lawyers, a total of more than 25,000 children have been adopted from foster care on National Adoption Day over the last 10 years. But the need extends beyond just one day. The goal is: a foster care child is placed with a forever family every day.

Governor Riley has proclaimed November as National Adoption Month in Alabama. To help celebrate there are lots of activities foster and adoptive parents can attend.

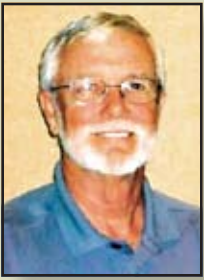
November 13th APAC will host training workshops at the Alabama Public Library on Monticello Dr. Montgomery, Al

November 14th The Alabama Foster & Adoptive Parent Association will host all day training at the Drury Inn located near exit 6 on I-85 Montgomery, Alabama

November 17th Heart Gallery exhibit and reception/program at Frazer UMC on Atlanta Hwy in Montgomery. Portraits of children will be on display the entire month of November.

Check you local community for other celebrations this month.





From the President of AFAPA

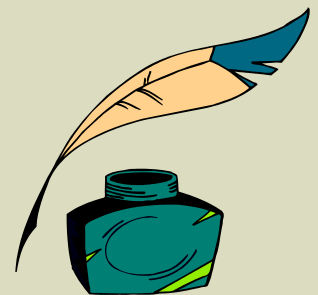
Hello everyone. Seems like just yesterday I saw many of you at Shocco for our Annual conference and now we are putting plans together for next years conference. You need to put the date on your calendar now. The conference will be May 13th, 14th, and 15th. There will be lots of training and lots of fun.

We also have training scheduled for you in the next few months. Saturday November 14th at the Drury Inn in Montgomery 9:00AM till 3:00PM. The Drury Inn is at exit 6 just off I-85. While all of you are invited to attend you need to pre-register so that we will have a count of how many to expect and how many to prepare a lunch for. The cost of this training will only be \$10 to help offset the cost of the room rental and lunch. Please see the enclosed registration form or check the AFAPA.org web site for more details on how to register. By the time you get this newsletter registering online and paying online with a credit card should be available.

Saturday January 16th there will be a training session in the Birmingham area to make it more convenient for those of you in the North and Central part of the state. The location will be in the next newsletter or check the AFAPA web site for more details.

In an attempt to better serve our local associations AFAPA has developed a plan for contacting and keeping in contact with local associations or support groups in the counties. Inside this newsletter you will find a list of AFAPA board members who will be the contact person for each county. These board members will be contacting the counties to

gather information about local associations in order to have current information in regards to the leadership in each county. Once contact is established these board members will stay in contact on a monthly basis with the counties they are responsible for and make sure the AFAPA regional rep and AFAPA president have the correct information. AFAPA believes this will help to support the counties to keep them up to date on current projects, training opportunities, and policy updates. Another way we are supporting local associations and foster parents is to offer a reward or rebate for getting people to join NFPA. If you get at least 10 families to join NFPA by November 30th AFAPA will give you a reward or rebate of \$225 to be used by you Association or your group. To participate in this you will need to send the completed NFPA membership application and check or credit card information to AFAPA 1091 Co Rd 1659, Cullman, AL 35058. Or you can fax it with credit card information to 1-775-667-8282. We are currently changing fax numbers so you can also try to fax to our toll free number 1-888-545-2372. You can also go to www.nfpaonline.org to get a membership application and you can join online. Feel free to contact me by phone or email anytime with any questions you have concerning AFAPA.



MEET TAMARA, TIARA AND KENNETH



Tamara, born July 1997 is in the 6th grade (2009-10 school year). She enjoys arts and crafts, singing and listening to music and hanging out with a few special friends. Tamara is a well-mannered and respectful child. She is a very sensitive girl whose feelings can be easily hurt. She tries very hard to keep up the good grades. She is a clean and very organized young lady, who enjoys doing chores around the house. Tamara wants to become an artist or a model when she grows up. She's fun-loving and energetic. She's a lot of fun to be around.

Tiara, born November 1998, is in the 5th grade (2009-10 school year). She enjoys playing with her Nintendo DS and her dolls. Tiara appears to be very quiet and shy around most adults. However, she is totally opposite around other children. She really takes up a lot of time with smaller children and babies. Tiara generally needs a little extra help with her school work. She loves her sister and brother very much. She loves to laugh. She keeps her room clean and she can do general house cleaning activities. She loves playing games.

Kenneth, born February, 2001 is in the 3rd grade (2009-10 school year). He loves school and his friends. He enjoys sports, drawing and any activity that is physically or mentally challenging. He likes to be first at everything and sometimes gets upset if he's not. He enjoys family time like Bible study lessons, board games, watching T.V., etc. Kenneth is somewhat shy, but likes to laugh once he gets to know you. He loves his sisters even though they sometimes argue and pick at one another. Kenneth will eat anything except turnip greens. He keeps his own bathroom and bedroom clean. He can make his own bed and he picks out his clothes for the day. He is a very loving child.

photograph provided courtesy of www.heartgalleryalabama.com



REMINDER TO POTENTIAL ADOPTIVE FAMILIES

If you are interested in being considered as a potential adoptive resource for children you may find on one of the four photo listing web sites that feature Alabama's waiting children remember you must have an approved adoptive home study on file at the State DHR Offices. County DHR resource staff may approve families as foster families and then if children already placed in your home become available for adoption, the county may approve you to adopt that child or sibling group. Having the county's approval for foster care does not automatically approve you as an adoptive family at State DHR. If you want to know if you have an approved adoption home study on file with the State DHR Office send an e-mail to adoptions@dhr.alabama.gov and ask that the adoption intake specialist to clear the file room for your adoption study. You may also call the state office at 334-242-9500 and ask for adoption intake.

AFAPA SPONSORS RESPITE DAY FOR ADOPTIVE PARENTS AND KINSHIPS PARENTS

September 12th was a day of respite for 18 Adoptive and Kinship Families living in North East Alabama. AFAPA was given a mini grant this past year from The AdoptusKids Organization to look at ways of helping adoptive and kinship parents by offering information about respite available to them and also a pilot project to actually offer a day of respite. The name of the project was Give Me A Break.

These parents brought their children to this day of respite at 2PM. The 55 children were divided into age groups and each group had 2 or 3 workers to help them with projects. The children were also entertained by The Kingdom Kids group as seen in some of the pictures. There were snacks during the afternoon and a meal of Pizzas just before the parents returned at 7PM to pick them up.

So what did these parents do with these 5 hours without their children? One parent told me it was the first time she had been anywhere without children in over 5 years. Another couple said they went and washed the van and bought groceries. The idea was they could do what ever they wanted. Each family was given a gift card to local restaurants many of which were donated for the occasion.

All in all it was a great success and we hope to duplicate this in other areas of the state this year if funding is available. Thanks to one of our new board members Darla Works for helping put all of this together along with more than a dozen child care providers and many volunteers. It took everyone to make this a success.

SCENES FROM THE SEPTEMBER 12TH RESPITE DAY



REBATE OFFER TO LOCAL ASSOCIATIONS AND FOSTER PARENT OR ADOPTIVE PARENT GROUPS TIME FRAME FOR THIS OFFER NOW UNTIL NOVEMBER 30TH, 2009

Get at least 10 families to join NFPA and receive \$225 to be used by your county association or group. In order to help recruit new members for NFPA the Alabama Foster & Adoptive Parent Association is making an offer to help NFPA and Foster and Adoptive Parent Groups in Alabama by offering this rebate on new memberships.

Your county can use this money however your decide. Just some examples, this would pay for your Chapter membership fee to AFAPA with \$75 left over, for those who charge a fee for foster parents to join the local association the local could offer them free membership to the county association if they join NFPA with the understanding the local must get at least 10 new members before you could do that. That would mean for \$35 a year you would be member of your Local Association, your State Association, and the National Association, or the money could be used to help buy Christmas Presents for foster children, this would be up to each group how they use the money. Anyone can join NFPA, foster parents, adoptive parents, kinship parents, social workers, county directors ect. If you send in a separate application please indicate the group you would like to get credit for you joining. March 1st a drawing will be held for a \$1000 scholarship to attend the NFPA Conference in Baltimore May 29th -- June 2nd. You must be a member of NFPA to be eligible for the drawing. In order for AFAPA to keep track of this please mail or fax these memberships to AFAPA 1091 CO RD 1659, CULLMAN, AL 35058 OR FAX 1-775-667-8282

REASONS FOR JOINING NFPA

1. By joining NFPA you become part of a professional national organization. There is strength in numbers and every new member helps to make NFPA stronger.
2. You will have access to support and resources at the National level.
3. You are able to network with other foster parents and professional on a National level.
4. There are many Scholarship opportunities for foster parents and their children through the scholarships awarded by NFPA annually. You must be a member for the Scholarships Awards from NFPA
5. Become part of a National Legislative/Collaboration effort on behalf of foster parents.
6. By joining NFPA you have access to training and products. The Products & Services committee has collaborated with National agencies to bring them to foster parents nation wide.
7. Receive reduced registration at the NFPA national conference.
8. Receive support on fundraising activities from NFPA such as the Walk Me Home project.
9. A great idea is to give NFPA membership to a friend or relative as a birthday present or Christmas present. Great for those who have everything and you don't know what to get them. We could make up a special certificate to present to them along with the membership. They could proudly display it in their office or home.
10. Helps support your local and state association.

NFPA MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

- New
 Renewal: Member#: _____

Membership level:

- Individual/Family (\$35) Local Association (\$50)
 State Association (\$75) Agency (\$100)
 Lifetime (\$1000)

- 1-year 2-year 3-year (4th year free!)

Payment method:

- Check #: _____
 Money Order #: _____
 Purchase Order (include copy of purchase order)
 Credit Card (check appropriate):
 VISA MasterCard American Express Discover
 Card #: _____

Expiration: _____ Billing Zip Code: _____

Signature: _____



2313 Tacoma Ave S
 Tacoma, WA 98402
 (800) 557-5238
 info@nfpaonline.org
 www.NFPAonline.org

Membership Information

Name(s): _____

Address: _____

City/State: _____

Zip Code: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

NOTES FROM APAC...

It is undeniable that the history and presence of adoption is a tightly woven thread through our society and definition of family. From the religious adoption account of Moses to our favorite hero Superman, our society's acknowledgement and reverence of adoption is deep rooted. Adoption is a common everyday occurrence with reportedly 1 in every 25 American households having an adopted child (census 2006). Yet many neighbors, teachers, family, and potential adoptive parents remain curious about the adoption experience. To get an inside glimpse into adoption, four Alabama adoptive mothers were independently consulted to see what they considered their most prominent benefit and challenge related to adoption. Their specific responses to the major challenge were; lack of medical history, lack of baby photos, encouraging the children to realize their worth and value, and re-parenting to break old habits. The greatest benefit, however, was the same for each mother. Stephanie Whyte of Elmore, Alabama, perhaps summed it up best with her comments. "Seeing them go from the scared, timid, non trusting children to confident, loving and giving children is like watching the most beautiful butterfly being hatched from a cocoon. To see them with hope and a place to belong makes all the other challenges seem so unimportant. To know they are still a part of me, maybe not of my womb, but certainly of my heart, is one of the most awesome gifts a mommy can ever experience. I am blessed more than any words could describe, it is an amazing gift to be an adoptive mom!!!!!"

APAC (Alabama Pre/Post Adoption Connections) recruits, prepares, and supports adoptive families in Alabama. If you or anyone you know is interested in adopting an Alabama "waiting child" (a child who is available for adoption but has no current identified adoptive family resource), please call us at 1-866-4AL-KIDS. We need you!

MEET JENNIFER



Jennifer born January 1992 would be a warm addition to a family that is willing to assist her with her needs. She is an affectionate young lady that bonds easily with others. Her kindness and compassion for others is felt by those her get to know her.

Jennifer enjoys spending time with friends and uses both verbal and nonverbal communication to express herself. She is expected to receive an augmentative device in the near future that will assist her with communication. She requires some assistance with daily tasks and may need support as an adult.

She was born prematurely and has Cerebral Palsy. Jennifer enjoys cheering and being outdoors. She uses a walker to assist her with mobility. Jennifer also enjoys helping out with household chores and shopping.

Jennifer has a strong desire to have a family and a permanent home. She needs a family that will be patient and understanding of her needs and be committed to her for a lifetime.

Photograph provided courtesy of www.heartgalleryalabama.com



SPOTLIGHT ON AN AFAPA REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVE

These are a few pictures from Ida Ellis the Regional Rep for Region 5 which covers Tuscaloosa, Pickens, Greene, Sumter, Hale, Perry, Bibb, and Marengo Counties. One of the pictures shows Ida with foster parents from Greene County during their Foster Parent Appreciation day. In the picture with Ida are Tommie Mae Edmond, Catherine Bell, and Fannie Smith. Another picture is of Ida at the AFAPA conference with Tonea Stewart.



The group picture was taken at Lake Tahoe during a break at the National Foster Parent Conference at Reno, Nevada. In this picture with Ida are some other AFAPA members, James & Grace Wood, Joette Vick, Libby Gay, Linda Williams, and Mary & Leroy Smith. Thanks to Ida and all her hard work.



ARE YOU INTERESTED IN ADOPTION THROUGH STATE DHR?

County DHR offices may approve families to adopt, only if the family is going to adopt a foster child placed in their home by their county department.

If you have applied to be an adoptive parent and have completed GPS and the home study process, the Office of Adoption can verify that you have an adoption home study on file with the State DHR office. Having a study on file with our office is the only way that you are considered as a possible resource for any/all of Alabama's waiting children. If you want to verify your approval status, you can e-mail Families4ALKids@dhr.state.al.us. Give us your name and birth date (for both parents if a two-parent household) and your county of residence and the name of your county resource worker. If you don't have access to e-mail (preferred method of contact) you may call and leave this information on the Recruitment hotline at 1-866-425-5437 (1-866-4AL-KIDS).

MEET J. MICHAEL



J. Michael, born in January 1999 is in the 4th for the 2009/2010 school year. He makes A's and B's in school in grades and conduct. In the past he has received special assistance at school for a reading disability but he is on grade level in his reading. His favorite subject in school is math, especially doing division. He thinks he wants to be in the military when he grows up.

Michael is a very active, energetic child. He likes to stay busy. He enjoys swimming, baseball, and riding his bike and scooter. He participates in a local boxing gym with his therapeutic foster family and really enjoys this. He has also participated in taekwondo in the past. He also likes to play video games. When he's with his friends he says he likes to play legos, watch television and ride bikes or swim. His sister says he is very inquisitive and she thinks that he is good that he wants to know "why" about certain things.

Because of a history of asthma he cannot be placed in a home where smoking occurs, although he can be around some smoke without incident.

Michael has two biological sisters that he maintains contact with. He is currently placed with one of them. He would like to remain in contact with both sisters. He attaches to caregivers easily but he is not a very affectionate child. Michael has expressed that he wants a family that has fun together.

INDEPENDENT LIVING SERVICES FOR YOUTH IN CARE

The Independent Living Program provides states with funding in order that they may develop programs and provide services that will help youth in foster care make a successful, self-sufficient and productive transition into adulthood. This may be done through services to assist with education such as paying for tutoring or testing fees, employment such as job training programs or transportation cost, programs to help youth avoid homelessness, dependency or high risk behaviors such as youth camps, apartment seeking, or extra curricular activities and avoidance of incarceration which may include participation in positive organized activities.

The Independent Living Law was established in 1986 after a former foster youth sued the State of New York on the basis that the system had failed to prepare him to live independently. Since that time, the law has evolved and is now the John H. Chafee Foster Care Independence Program. The new act provides more services and extended the age group. The law also required the U.S Department of Health and Human Services through Administration for Children and Families (ACF) to develop a data collection system to track the Independent Living Services states provided to youth and develop outcome measures that could be used to assess the states performance.

In order to meet the law's mandate, ACF published in the Federal Register a proposed rule on July 14, 2006 and a final rule on February 26, 2008. The rule established the National Youth in Transition Database (NYTD). NYTD requires states to not only collect information on Independent Living Services that are provided to all youth but states must also collect demographic and outcome information by conducting a survey of youth in foster care on or around their 17th birthday and then complete a new outcome survey on these same youth at age 19 and at 21. States will begin collecting the required data on October 1, 2010 and submit this information to ACF no later than May 15, 2011. The whole purpose of the Independent Living Funds states receives is to help youth in foster care transition into adulthood successfully. It is hopefully that with the NYTD rule, states will have concrete indications on whether the services being provided to youth in foster care are yielding positive outcomes.

Should you have questions regarding Alabama's Independent Living Program you should contact Wanda Davidson, Independent Living Program Coordinator by calling 334-242-9500 or emailing Wanda.Davidson@dhr.alabama.gov.

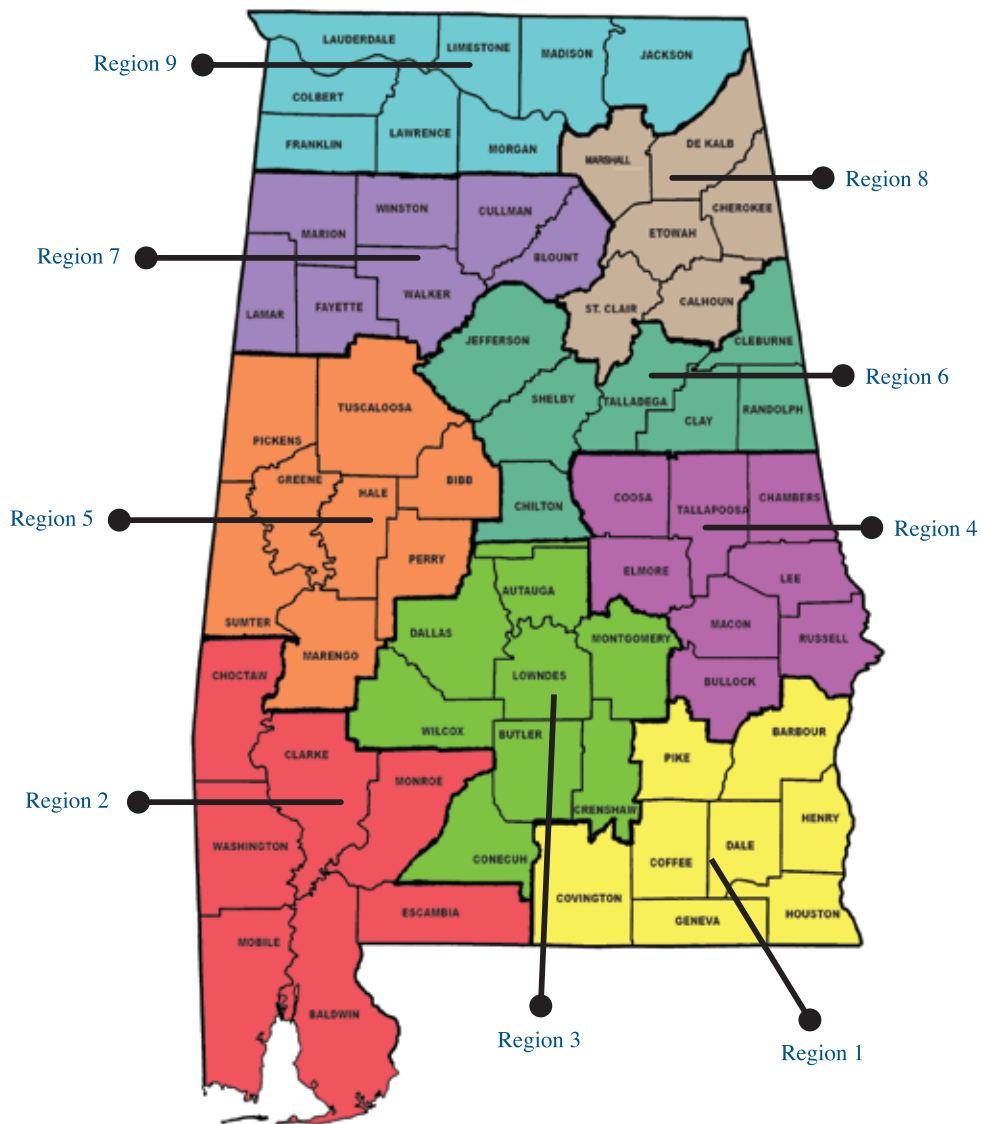
MEET TY



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 is currently trying to grow a watermelon patch. He loves to be outdoors working in the garden but is not into athletic outdoor games. 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 2009-2010 school year he is in the 6th grade. 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. 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.

AFAPA REGIONS



Who's Your Regional Rep?

REGION 1

Deloris Seay
334-886-2734 • 334-718-02440
jandcanthony@centurytel.net

REGION 2

Dollie Mims
251-604-3522 • 251-937-2336
DollBAym@aol.com

REGION 3

Aunita Keith
251-578-9964 • 251-227-1808
region3@afapa.org

REGION 4

Sharlene Casteel
334-567-4143 • 334-303-1426
star1000@aol.com

REGION 5

Ida Ellis
205-372-0247 • 205-372-7233
region5@afapa.org

REGION 6

Debra Crawford
256-488-5567 • 256-276-4377
Graceafapavp@aol.com

REGION 7

Sue Thomas
205-698-9936 • 205-712-6101
suthomas@bamacomm.com

REGION 8

Darla Works
256-796-0582 • 256-507-3274
frogmh@aol.com

REGION 9

John Potts
256-757-0308 • 256-810-0359
doriswise@peoplepc.com

Why contact your Regional Representative

- For latest info on where and when Education & Training Meetings will be held
- For assistance on who to call for guidance on specific problems/ issues you are facing
- To invite to your county association meetings to help with training and information.
- To learn more about training opportunities through out the state.



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CONNECTIONS 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.

To see more of Alabama's waiting children (and to hear their voices) please visit www.heartgalleryalabama.com