



Connections

A Publication of the Alabama Foster & Adoptive Parent Association

Fall 2006

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Contact info on page 11



Harriet Parr is presented the first "Harriet Parr Advocacy Award" by Aunita Keith AFAPA Board member This Award will be given annually at the Alabama Foster & Adoptive Parent Association Conference

Harriet Parr Special Recognition Day August 25th, 2006

*Harriet is married to Ed Parr instructor at E.H. Gentry/AIDB
The Parrs have lived in Talladega, AL since 1998 before that
they lived in Troy, AL.
They have 7 children and 17 grandchildren living in different
states around the South.*



The Journey Begins

In 1987 Harriet contacted Pike County DHR and asked if there was any training available, as she had a new daughter-in-law who was reared in foster care. She was looking for information which would help her to understand foster care and improve her communication with her daughter-in-law. The Parrs began fostering in the 1980's as house parents with the Alabama Baptist Children's Home. They were first approved as traditional and therapeutic foster parents in 1989. In 2001 they gave up their foster care license because of health reasons and Harriet's position with AFAPA. In 1994, God gave her the desire to advocate statewide for children in the state's custody and the foster parents who serve them. As she continued to advocate her advocacy broadened to the concern and welfare of all children and families in the state. Harriet & Ed continued as members at large with the AFAPA and both are members of the National Foster Parent Association. In 2006, God gave her the desire to leave the public and government areas of advocacy and return home fulltime as of keeper of her home, so Harriet resigned as a member of the AFAPA Board in 2006. Service to Foster Care More than 12 continuous years of service to the Alabama Foster Parent Association and the Alabama Foster & Adoptive Parent Association. Harriet was the last president of AFPA as it was changed to AFAPA after her tenure as president in 2001. Harriet served as Regional Rep, Vice-President and President of AFPA. Over the years Harriet has also served as Corresponding Secretary of the National Foster Parent Association, Chairperson of the AFAPA Advocacy, Legislative, and Policy Committees. She served on the board of VOICES for Alabama's children as Community Development Chairperson. For 3 years Harriet advocated in the state legislature for the passage of the Foster Parent Bill of Rights (Act 2004-257). Other committees Harriet has served on include the State QA committee, Pike & Talladega QA committees, DHR Project Respect Committee, State Mediation Team, and QA Policy Review Sub-committee. Harriet was a GPS co-leader and Ship Co-leader in April 1994 & August 1995 respectively with Pike County DHR, Talladega DHR and TFC UMCH in Anniston 8 years. she currently serves on the Policy Advisory Committee of Children's First Foundation.

From the President of AFAPA



Hello to all,

Hope you enjoy and get good information from this issue of Connections. We have tried to put together an issue that you as Foster and Adoptive Parents will be able to use as you advocate for the children in your home.

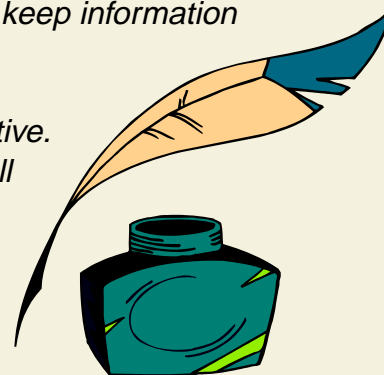
Our Board members have had the opportunity over the past several months to attend many training conferences not only here in Alabama but other states as well. The information that we get from these conferences and workshops will help us as we prepare training for you. Several attended the NACAC Conference in California and brought back very good information on Adoption issues. There were 18 foster & adoptive parents who attended the conference in Nashville in July. By attending this conference we were able to get more information on training for the Foster Parent Bill of Rights and how to start an Advocacy Program. Alabama's Foster Parent Bill of Rights was patterned after Tennessee's FPBR. AFAPA Board members also attended the Permanency conference in Tuscaloosa. NACAC gave scholarships to foster parents to attend a Parent Leadership conference in Orlando Florida.

Calls have been increasing over the past several months from foster parents with questions and requests for information. We are currently developing a stronger network of people to assist you with issues that you have. I will keep you informed as we move forward with this program. I want to encourage all of you to contact your regional rep for information about upcoming training opportunities in your region and around the state. If you are unable to make contact with your regional rep please don't hesitate to contact me or one of the vice-presidents. All contact information is on the web site www.afapa.org.

We have had phone calls from foster parents saying they have not received a copy of our newsletter in the past. We do send this as a non-profit mailing and we want to hear from people who do not receive it. I would ask that Presidents of local Associations take a copy to your next meeting and ask if everyone received a copy.

Local Association Presidents please contact me either by phone, letter or email your correct contact information. We have a local presidents committee and want to keep information updated and correct.

Please continue to remember Brenda Bivens our Region 2 Representative. Brenda's husband Joe Bivens passed away August 30th. Joe was a well respected member of his community, his church and will be dearly missed by his family, friends and fellow foster parents.



William "Buddy" Hooper President of AFAPA

FOSTER PARENT BILL OF RIGHTS

It has been two and a half years since the Foster Parent Bill of Rights was established by the Alabama State Legislature. AFAPA has gone around the state training foster parents about FPBR and it is on our web site. I wanted to take time in this issue to ask the question **“Has the Foster Parent Bill of Rights helped you as you take care of foster children in your home”**

1. Have you been treated with dignity, respect, trust, value and consideration as a primary provider of foster care and a member of the professional team caring for foster children?
2. Have you received information about the Foster Parent Bill of Rights?
3. Have you received a concise written explanation of your role as a foster parent?
4. Have you been offered training and support to improve your skills to care for your foster children?
5. Have you received training on foster care policy, foster parent handbook, foster family homes minimum standards, the Therapeutic Foster Care Manual, and the mediation process?
6. Have you had the opportunity to provide input to the department in identifying the types of resources and services that would meet the needs of children in your care and have you been able to advocate for these services without threat of reprisal?
7. Have you been given current and accurate information about the children who are placed with you?
8. Have you been given written explanations of the plan for the placement of the children in your home? Have you been given information that would allow you to determine if this is a proper placement for your family?
9. Do you have a staff person representing the department on call 24 hours a day seven days a week to aid you in receiving departmental assistance?
10. Do you receive a fair and equitable board payment?
11. Have you felt like you could refuse placement in your home without threat of reprisal?
12. Have you received information about meetings and appointments concerning your foster child? Have you been able to give input to the ISP team to be used in the case planning and decision-making process? Does the ISP work for you?
13. Have you had the right to request an advocate be present with you at all meetings with the department, including, but not limited to, ISP's, administrative hearings, the grievance process, the adoption process, and allegation process?
14. Have you received notice and an opportunity to be heard concerning all court hearings?
15. Have you had the right to communicate with professionals who work with the foster child?
16. Have you had the right to communicate with the child's birth family, other foster parents of the child, and prospective and finalized adoptive parents of the child with ISP approval and without threat of reprisal?
17. Have you received necessary information relevant to the care of the child?
18. Have you been given the first consideration as a resource as an adoptive parent for the child?
19. Have you been given respite when requested?
20. Have you been given information about any allegations of children in your home? Have you been given information about the allegation process? Were you given a written report within 5 days of allegations that were found to be not indicated on the county level?
21. Have you been given the right to have copies of all information relative to your family and services contained in the personal foster home record?
22. Have you been offered the right to a mediation process when a grievance has gone unresolved?
23. Have you been given the right to appeal the closing of a foster family home by the department in accordance with the appeal procedure without threat of reprisal?

If you can answer no to any of these questions we would like to hear from you. Email your response to afapa@afapa.org

Remember these rights are not just policy but they are a **law.**

ISPs

For the full text on ISPs the web address is <http://afapa.hypermart.net/ISPs.html>

What is an individualized service plan?

DHR must develop ISPs for all children and families for whom it is providing on-going child welfare services and foster care.

Individualized:

The ISP builds on the family's strengths and addresses the family's unique needs.

Service:

The ISP identifies specific services that will be provided to the child and family so the safety and well-being can be achieved.

Plan:

The ISP identifies the goals for the family, identifies the steps to be taken, and identifies who is responsible for each step or service.

Who writes an ISP and who attends?

The ISP is written at an ISP team meeting. The ISP team members should be partners in developing the ISP. The ISP team should include the child if age appropriate usually 10 years old or older, the birth family, foster parents, DHR worker. Others who may be included in an ISP meeting are the child's teacher, family pastor, relatives, therapists, attorneys for the child or family, another DHR staff involved with the child or family, and an advocate requested by the foster parent.

What does the ISP contain?

1. The child's physical and mental health, safety, education, and social needs.
2. Additional assessments needed to help identify the strengths and needs and time frames for obtaining those assessments
3. Immediate steps that are going to be taken to meet the child's safety needs.
4. Visitation for child
5. Outcomes or permanency goals for the child and when it's expected these outcomes will be achieved.
6. Steps to promote a timely return home or placement with relatives, if this is the child's permanency goal.

When is the ISP Written?

An initial ISP meeting must be held within 30 days of when DHR determines that a case will be opened for the child for on-going child welfare services. An ISP must be held within 72 hours of removal from the home followed by an update within the next 30 days.

Where are ISPs held?

Any mutually agreed upon location

ISPs Continued

Will I be notified about the ISP meeting?

All team members should be notified of the date, time and location of each ISP meeting to allow time to prepare for and participate in the meeting. Parents, foster parents, pre-adoptive parents, and relative caregivers must be provided written notice about any ISP meeting. The remaining team members may receive either verbal or written notice.

What if there are problems with the ISP?

The DHR worker is responsible for addressing concerns about how well the ISP is being implemented. Minor issues that can be resolved without the full team involvement may be dealt with informally. Any issues that are controversial or complex should be handled in a team meeting.

Will I receive a copy of the ISP?

You must be given a written copy of the plan at the end of the meeting. If this is not possible, then you should receive a copy at least within 10 days of the date the meeting was held.

When will the ISP be reviewed? Can you call an ISP?

An initial ISP must be reviewed within 30 days of the date it was developed. After that, the team must review ISP's at least every 6 months from the date of the initial ISP and more frequently as needed. Any team member can call for a meeting to review and revise the ISP. Contact the DHR caseworker if you want to have an ISP meeting. ISP's must be reviewed and revised when any of the following occur:

1. At your request or at request of other team members
2. When there are changes in the families circumstances
3. Prior to the decision to remove a child from home
4. After an emergency change in a child's out-of-home placement
5. When a change in an out-of-home placement is anticipated
6. When the ISP is not adequately managing risks or new risks are identified
7. When you or another team member feels that the child or family is making little or no progress toward the established goals
8. When any judicial or administrative review recommends or direct that changes be made to the ISP
9. Within 30 days of the case being closed
10. When Medicaid rehabilitation services have been authorized and a treatment plan review is required.

The DHR caseworker and other team members must make good faith efforts to achieve the goals and objectives of the ISP

The ISP must be realistic and appropriate, with goal and steps that fit the child's present placement and level of functioning.

The preceding content was taken from a publication of ADAP. You may view other publications on the ISP process at <http://www.adap.net>

\$1000 AFAPA Student Scholarship Application

I. **Personal Information**

Social Security Number: _____

Name (last, first, middle): _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____

Date of Birth: _____

High School: _____ Years Attended: _____

Have you been notified that you will receive any other financial aid? _____

If so, please detail: _____

Do you plan to work part time while attending college/vocational school? _____

II. **Family & Worker Information**

Foster Parent's or Guardian's Name: _____

Address (if different from above): _____

Case Worker: _____ Phone: _____

III. **Academic Record** (to be completed by counselor or principal)

High School GPA: _____ Date of Graduation (or GED): _____

Course of study (college prep, vocational): _____

IV. **Leadership Activities** (please use extra sheet if needed)

V. **Applying for** (circle one) **College, University, or Vocational School**

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

VI. **Consideration for Scholarship - Requirements**

- Be a child in the state custody whether living in a foster home, group home, independent living placement, etc. Birth and/or adoptive children of foster parents are also eligible.
- If chosen to receive scholarship, provide proof of acceptance into a college/university/trade or vocational school.
- Fill out all the questions on this application.
- Submit with this application three (3) letters of recommendation. Letters can be from foster parents, case workers, teachers, principals, guidance counselors, employers, pastors, etc.).
- On a separate sheet of paper and in your own handwriting, make a brief statement of why you are applying for this scholarship. Include your hopes for the future and what you expect to contribute to society.
- Be no older than 22 years of age.

VII. **For Your Information**

- Unused portion or appropriate percentage of funds must be returned if recipient withdraws from school or does not maintain grade point average required by institution to remain in school.
- Scholarship funds may be used for tuition, maintenance fees, books, and/or school supplies.
- Funds will be paid directly to the college/university or vocational school -- not to recipient.

All information contained in the above application is true and correct to the best of my knowledge.

Signature of applicant _____ Date _____

Mail completed form to Brenda Caudle 115 Caudle Road, Eva, AL 35621

The Deadline to apply is March 20th, 2007

Training Opportunities for Your Foster Parent Meetings

The Alabama Foster/Adoptive Parent Child Health Training Network Provides Free and Accessible Education and Training

The Alabama Foster/Adoptive Parent Child Health Training Network joins the Alabama Foster and Adoptive Parents Association (AFAPA) in recognizing the importance of making education and training easily accessible and free to parents and others working with children and families in foster and adoptive care. Mary Scisney, network coordinator, states "I know that foster parenting is one of the most demanding jobs a person can assume. Moreover, better education and training will enhance the experience of foster and adoptive parents and motivate them to continue to serve." Ms. Scisney is excited to have the opportunity to move into this area and make a positive difference in the lives of children and the foster/adoptive parents that care for them. Some of the classes offered include CPR training and other health related topics. For a complete list contact:

Mary Scisney, RN, MSN, PNP, Coordinator

Foster/Adoptive Training Network

Phone: (334) 206-2975/Fax: (334) 206-2950

email mscisney@adph.state.al.us

Educational Trainings

APAC offers opportunities for families and professionals to increase their knowledge of adoption-related subjects. Educational Training services are available to all adoptive families, all foster families, all professionals serving adoptive families, kinship care families, and DHR waiting families. To schedule a presentation for your group or organization, contact the APAC Warm Line at 1-866-803-2722. www.casapac.org

Alabama Foster & Adoptive Parent Board

Many of AFAPA board members are available to doing training for your Local Association meetings. You may send an email to afapa@afapa.org for a list of the training sessions we have available in your area or you may call 1-888-545-2372.

Attachment Disorders
 Foster Parent Bill of Rights
 What is AFAPA
 Allegations & Documentation
 ISP's
 Health Issues for Foster Families
 Working with Difficult People
 Cultural Diversity
 Why Parents Abuse
 Working with Birth Parents
 Transracial Adoptions

CASA Conference November 2nd, 2006

"It Takes a Village" has been approved for 7.5 training hours for foster parents. The conference is Thursday, November 2, 2006 at the Carraway-Davie House and Conference Center just off I-459 in Birmingham. The registration forms were mailed last Thursday to the regional foster parents groups and it will be on our own website by mid week. Our website is www.alabamacasa.org

Liz McCormick
 Alabama CASA Network, Inc
 2806 Ruffner Road, Suite 111
 Irondale, AL 35210
 Phone: 205-833-1135
 Fax: 205-833-1165
 E-mail: acasanet@bellsouth.net

Quotes I have read or been given recently

Child Welfare **Ought** to be the most exciting, rich, complex intellectually stimulating, emotionally powerful work that anyone could do.

People believe that the outcomes for youth in the child welfare system should not be any worse than for other children.

A lifelong family is the only way to achieve healing. This is a lifetime connection, and it has taught me that love is never wasted.

They have taught me so much. They have shown me how to be grateful for the life that God has given us and that love is unconditional. (quote from adopted child)

Advocate: noun, one who argues or pleads for a cause or proposal: verb, encourage, support, justify, vindicate, advance, forward, promote, recommend.

Checklist for Families that succeed:
 Where love is openly evident between husband and wife.
 Where respect for each individual is insured.
 Where rules and boundaries are understood and communicated.
 Where problems are confronted openly and given proper weight.
 Where home is committed to the process
 Where Christ is at the head of not only the children, but also everybody

People say kids my age are hard to place and that time is running out for me. Please don't give up on trying. I'm already having trouble holding on to my hope.

Please don't call me a foster child. For I am a child in foster care. And I want to know if I count?

I want to go on a family vacation and laugh and play. I want other people to think this is my real family.

We believe that the best interests of children are better served by adoption — domestic or inter-country — than by nonpermanent care such as foster care or institutionalization.

Secretary of State Conoleezza Rice

GREAT TRUTHS THAT LITTLE CHILDREN HAVE LEARNED:

- 1) No matter how hard you try, you can't baptize cats.
- 2) When your Mom is mad at your Dad, don't let her brush your hair.
- 3) If your sister hits you, don't hit her back. They always catch the second person.
- 4) Never ask your 3-year old brother to hold a tomato.
- 5) You can't trust dogs to watch your food.

GREAT TRUTHS THAT ADULTS HAVE LEARNED:

- 1) Raising teenagers is like nailing Jell-O to a tree.
- 2) Wrinkles don't hurt.
- 3) Families are like fudge...mostly sweet, with a few nuts.
- 4) Today's mighty oak is just yesterday's nut that held its ground.
- 5) Laughing is good exercise. It's like jogging on the inside.



Scholarships for Foster & Adoptive Parents
NFPA conference May 23rd—27th Washington DC
and
North American Council on Adoptable Children
Conference July 26th—28th Tampa Florida
Any member of AFAPA Eligible to submit form

Alabama Foster and Adoptive Parent Association

Deadline for applying for NFPA conference April 1st, 2007 and June 16th for NACAC

Request to Attend Conference or Training

Name _____ Date _____

Conference Title: _____

Sponsored By: _____

Purpose of Attendance: _____

Location: _____

Date(s) _____

Please write a short summary of why this particular conference or training will be beneficial to you. Also explain how you will take knowledge you gain and use it in support of foster and adoptive families.

Examples: Foster/Adoptive Parent-training/ workshops, share with DHR workers etc.

Signature of Foster or Adoptive Parent

Mail completed form to
Brenda Caudle
115 Caudle Road
Eva, AL 35621

The amount of Scholarships will be determined by the number requests and money available. You will be notified if you are selected for a scholarship and the amount of the scholarship.

2006 One Day Adoption Conference

Saturday, November 11th, 2006

Samford University
Dewight Beeson Hall
800 Lakeshore Drive
Birmingham, Al 35229

This conference is for Professionals along with current and prospective adoptive parents.

Name: _____

Title: _____

Agency: _____

Address: _____

City/State: Zip: _____

Daytime Phone #: _____

Email Address: _____

Amount Enclosed: \$ _____

**Make checks payable to:
Alabama Adoption Coalition
and mail to:
W. Laura Dinwiddie P.O. Box 745
Huntsville, AL 35804**

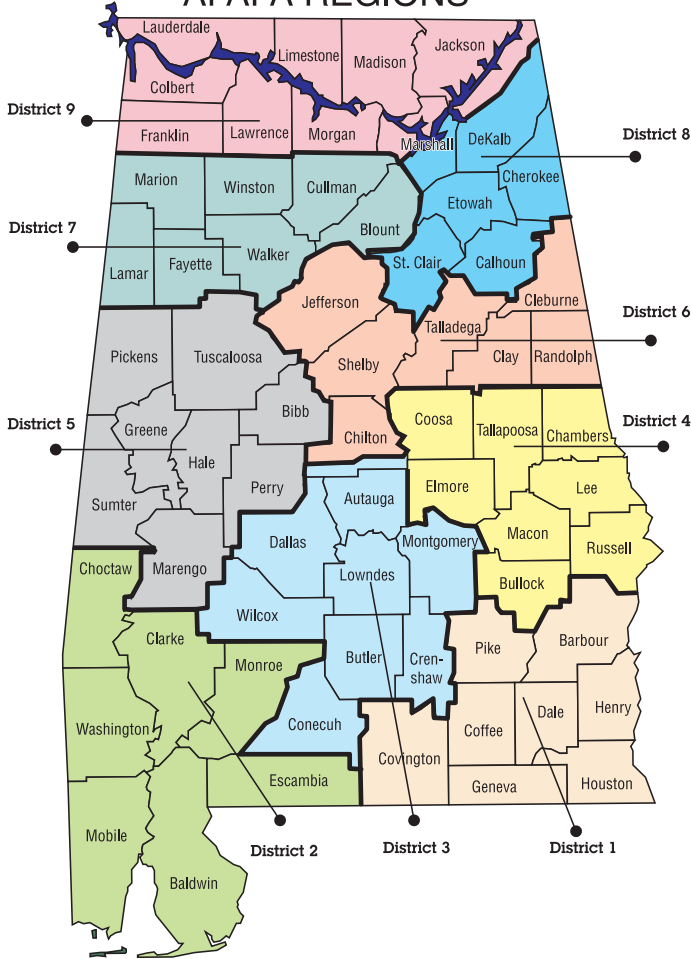
Phone 256-536-0073 or email cfshsv@knology.net to reserve exhibitor space by October 30th

Registration Fees:

Professionals: \$35
Licensed Professional \$50 if CEU
Counselors certificate requested

Families: \$10 per person

AFAPA REGIONS



Why Call Your AFAPA Regional Rep:

For latest info on where and when Regional Network Education Meetings will be held.

For assistance on who to call for guidance on specific problems/issues you are facing.

To volunteer your county association or yourself to help with regional functions.

To learn more about training opportunities through out the state.

Who's Your Regional Rep?

REGION 1

Joe Anthony
334-886-2734
jandcanthony@centurytel.net

REGION 4

Mary Smith
334-567-4143
region4@afapa.org

REGION 7

Sue Thomas
205-698-9936
suthomas@bamacom.com

REGION 2

Brenda Y. Bivens
251-777-8646
Kenya@millry.net

REGION 5

Buddy Hooper
256-796-0582
yddub84@aol.com

REGION 8

Jennifer Feazell-Edwards
256-892-1605
edwards10@cableone.net

REGION 3

Aunita Keith
334-874-4176
akeith4176@charter.net

REGION 6

James Wood
256-488-5567
jandgwood@acs-isp.com

REGION 9

Brenda Caudle
256-796-6618
bbestkids@aol.com

Items of Interest

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).

Families 4 Alabama's Kids
Have you ever considered making a difference in the life of a child?
You Can
By becoming an adoptive or foster parent
Call 1-866-425-5437 State DHR
1-888-545-2372 AFAPA
1-888-200-4005 AdoptUSkids

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.

CONNECTIONS INFO:

1091 County Road 1659
 Cullman, AL 35058
 1-888-545-2372
 www.afapa.org



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