



# Newsletter

November 2010

A Publication of the Alabama Foster & Adoptive Parent Association



## Proclamation By the Governor of Alabama

*WHEREAS, the State of Alabama recognizes the importance of giving children permanent, safe and loving families through adoption; and*

*WHEREAS, the State of Alabama recognizes the diligence and hard work that adoption professionals display everyday in identifying forever families for its children for foster care; and*

*WHEREAS, the State of Alabama recognizes the partnerships of many agencies and groups in making adoption for children in foster care possible; and*

*WHEREAS, The State of Alabama and the Department of Human Resources is celebrating the finalized adoptions of nearly 500 foster children during fiscal year 2010; and*

*WHEREAS, there are approximately 6,300 children in the care or custody of the Department of Human Resources; and*

*WHEREAS, there are more than 600 children who are legally available for adoption in Alabama; and*

*WHEREAS, there is need to raise awareness about the needs of children in Alabama's foster care system and for more permanent families for these children:*

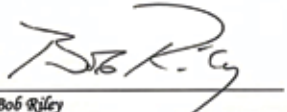
*NOW, THEREFORE, I, Bob Riley, Governor of Alabama, do hereby proclaim November 2010, as*

## National Adoption Month

*in the State of Alabama.*



*Given Under My Hand and the Great Seal of the Office of the Governor at the State Capitol in the City of Montgomery on the 29th day of October 2010.*

  
Governor Bob Riley

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## *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](mailto: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](mailto: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](http://www.afapa.org) and the [www.nfpaonline.org](http://www.nfpaonline.org) websites about the conference.

## TAX CREDITS

### **Adoption Tax Credit for Special Needs Adoptions Finalized between 2003 and 2009**

The health care reform bill made the U.S. federal adoption tax credit refundable for 2010 and 2011. New guidance from the IRS states that adoption tax credits carried forward from previous years will also be refundable, which means that families who adopted as far back as 2005 but who didn't have enough tax liability to use the credit in the past can take full advantage of the credit with their 2010 return.

Most families that adopted foster children who receive adoption assistance between 2005 and 2009, and a few who adopted earlier, should be able to take advantage of the federal adoption tax credit, even if they had no expenses related to the adoption. A new law and guidance have now made the tax credit refundable for the first time.

[For non-special needs adoptions (except step-parent adoptions, which do not qualify for the credit), parents can claim the credit with the same rules as below, except that they have to document qualified adoption expenses.]

### **Adoption Tax Credit for Special Needs Adoptions Finalized 2010**

Families who adopt a child with special needs from foster care can claim a federal adoption tax credit without needing to incur or document expenses. [For non-special needs adoptions (except step-parent adoptions, which do not qualify for the credit), parents can claim the credit with the same rules as below, except that they have to document qualified adoption expenses.] The per-child tax credit is \$13,170 for adoptions finalized in 2010, and the credit is now refundable for the first time.

For more information visit [www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov), [www.nacac.org](http://www.nacac.org), or [www.nfpaonline.org](http://www.nfpaonline.org)

## PRESIDENTIAL PROCLAMATION--NATIONAL ADOPTION MONTH

Giving a child a strong foundation -- a home, a family to love, and a safe place to grow -- is one of life's greatest and most generous gifts. Through adoption, both domestic and international, Americans from across our country have provided secure environments for children who need them, and these families have benefited from the joy an adopted child can bring. Thanks to their nurturing and care, more young people have been able to realize their potential and lead full, happy lives. This year, we celebrate National Adoption Month to recognize adoption as a positive and powerful force in countless American lives, and to encourage the adoption of children from foster care.

Currently, thousands of children await adoption or are in foster care, looking forward to permanent homes. These children can thrive, reach their full potential, and spread their wings when given the loving and firm foundation of family. Adoptive families come in many forms, and choose to adopt for different reasons: a desire to grow their family when conceiving a child is not possible, an expression of compassion for a child who would otherwise not have a permanent family, or simply because adoption has personally touched their lives. For many Americans, adoption has brought boundless purpose and joy to their lives. We must do all we can to break down barriers to ensure that all qualified caregivers have the ability to serve as adoptive families.

This year, on November 20, families, adoption advocates, policymakers, judges, and volunteers will celebrate the 11th annual National Adoption Day in communities large and small. National Adoption Day is a day of hope and happiness when courthouses finalize the adoptions of children out of foster care. Last year, Health and Human Services Secretary Kathleen Sebelius was honored to preside over a ceremony celebrating two foster care adoptions as part of my Administration's support for this important day.

Adoptive families are shining examples of the care and concern that define our great Nation. To support adoption in our communities, my Administration is working with States to support families eager to provide for children in need of a place to call home. The landmark Affordable Care Act increases and improves the Adoption Tax Credit, enabling adoption to be more affordable and accessible.

As part of the Adoption Incentives program, States can also receive awards for increasing adoptions and the number of children adopted from foster care. AdoptUsKids, a project of the Department of Health and Human Services, offers technical support to States, territories, and tribes to recruit and retain foster and adoptive families; provides information and assistance to families considering adoption; and supports parents already on that journey. I encourage all Americans to visit [AdoptUsKids.org](http://AdoptUsKids.org) or [ChildWelfare.gov/Adoption](http://ChildWelfare.gov/Adoption) for information and resources on adoption, including adoption from foster care.

As we observe National Adoption Month, we honor the loving embrace of adoptive families and the affirming role of adoption in the lives of American families and our country. Let us all commit to supporting our children in any way that we are able -- whether opening our hearts and homes through adoption, becoming foster parents to provide quality temporary care to children in crisis, supporting foster and adoptive families in our communities and places of worship, mentoring young people in need of guidance, or donating time to helping children in need. Working together, we can shape a future of hope and promise for all of our Nation's children.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, BARACK OBAMA, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and the laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim November 2010 as National Adoption Month. I call upon all Americans to observe this month by answering the call to find homes for every child in America in need of a permanent and caring family, as well as to support the families who care for them.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this first day of November, in the year of our Lord two thousand ten, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and thirty-fifth.

BARACK OBAMA

## MEET VICTORIA

**Victoria**, born in February 1999, is a pretty, sweet and funny young lady. She is currently in a structured program to help her address her loss issues. She is smart and has a wide array of interests. She loves Hannah Montana. She also likes being physically active.



Victoria has won awards for academic success in areas such as spelling. For the 2010-2011 school year she is in the 6th grade. She wants to be a veterinarian or a meteorologist when she grows up. Victoria has the potential to be educationally successful. She is very personable and interacts well with others.

She needs a family that is patient and can provide structure for her. Victoria will need on-going supports and services to help her address the major loss in her life and maintain the skills that help her manage her grief. Victoria understands about adoption and wishes to be part of a forever family.

## MEET JABRIA

**Justin** was born in December 1998. Because he was held back in the first grade, Justin is one year behind in school and will be entering 5th grade for the 2010-2011 academic year. He has a few close friends and can be somewhat shy initially. He would benefit from modeling of appropriate social interactions.



Justin is often quiet and should be asked for his input or opinion and encouraged to respond to questions or participate in conversation. He enjoys playing video games and watching SpongeBob. He also likes superheroes such as Batman, Superman, and Spiderman. He seems to enjoy indoor play, such as playing on his Nintendo DS, over outdoor activities but has expressed an interest in football. He hopes to one day play on a team.

Justin also likes to travel with his current foster parent. Justin has a sister, April, and aunt with whom he would like to maintain consistent contact. He should be heavily supervised around younger and/or smaller children including his sister but would do well in a home with an older sibling.

Photograph provided courtesy of  
[www.heartgalleryalabama.com](http://www.heartgalleryalabama.com)

## MEET TANISHA, LADERRICK & QUINDERICKA



**Tanisha**, born January 1997, is the oldest of the sibling group and is a responsible young lady. She is very helpful in the home, and completes her chores without complaint. She loves playing basketball and likes to cheer. She plans of trying out for the squad. She attends church and enjoys church activities with her foster family.

**Quindericka**, born August 1999, loves to go shopping and play dress up. She is very fashion forwards and matches from her head to her toe, which she mentions is an everyday thing for her. She enjoys traveling as well as attending church and playing with her friends.

**LaDerrick**, born 1998 is a very sweet boy who loves his sisters and is very protective of them. He loves playing sports, especially football and he loves to swim.

Photograph provided courtesy of  
[www.heartgalleryalabama.com](http://www.heartgalleryalabama.com)





THERE WERE **676** ADOPTIONS  
IN ALABAMA IN 2009  
FROM FOSTER CARE

IN 2010 THERE HAVE BEEN OVER  
500 ADOPTIONS,  
ABOUT 90% OF THESE ADOPTIONS  
HAVE BEEN BY FOSTER  
PARENTS IN ALABAMA

*These are just a few of those who have  
been adopted over the past few years*



*How can there be too many  
children? That is like saying  
there are too many flowers"*

---Mother Teresa



*"However Motherhood  
comes to you, it's a miracle"*

--- Valerie Harper,  
Adoptive Mother



## DO YOU BELIEVE EVERY CHILD DESERVES A FAMILY?

### WE DO.

Thousands of children in America live day-to-day moving from home to home, without the love and care of permanent families. November is National Adoption Awareness Month and as we celebrate all forms of adoption as a wonderful way to create or extend families, I would like to draw your attention to a very special group of children – right here in America – who desperately need families.

Today, more than 114,000 children entered foster care through no fault of their own as victims of child abuse, neglect or abandonment and have been permanently removed from their homes. These children urgently need to move from temporary foster homes into permanent, loving, forever families. There are hundreds of Children in Alabama waiting for a family. We aren't talking about someone else's children, we are talking about children in our very own state.

The need has never been greater. More children enter foster care every year than leave the system. Sadly, these children often wait five years or more to be adopted, can move three or more times in foster care and frequently are separated from siblings. And tragically, tens of thousands of children available for adoption turn 18 and leave the system without families each year.

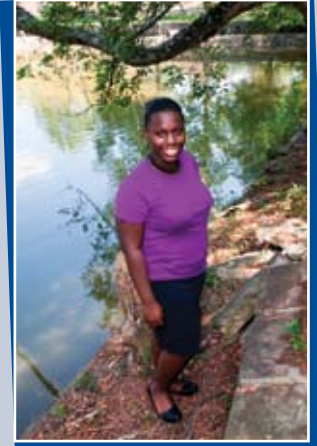
If you are willing to open your heart to a child, consider foster care adoption. Call 866-425-5437SDHR, 888-200-4005AdoptUSKids or 888-545-2372AFAPA. You can also email [afapa@afapa.org](mailto:afapa@afapa.org).

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



## MEET JABRIA

**Jabria**, born February, 1997 is kind of shy around people she does not know. She can be the nicest kid you could ever meet, depending on what mood she is in that day. Sometimes others misunderstand her demeanor to be something that it is not. She enjoys playing video games, riding bikes, skating with her friends and being in beauty pageants. Jabria says others would describe her as intelligent and creative. She also says she loves fashion. She'd like to be a hair stylist when she grows up.



Jabria is a very good student when she puts her mind to it. Jabria needs a family that can help her apply herself and dedicate herself to her school work so that she can participate in some of the extracurricular activities that she desires (i.e., dance line, etc.)

If she had three wishes, they would be: to have a successful life, wants to be adopted by a good family that cares about her and she wants to be able to trust people.

Photograph provided courtesy of  
[www.heartgalleryalabama.com](http://www.heartgalleryalabama.com)

## ALABAMA FOSTER & ADOPTIVE PARENT ASSOCIATION MINI CONFERENCE

January 22nd, 2011

Gardendale Civic Center

Across street from Gardendale High School  
Exit 171 on I-65 turn East go about 3 lights turn right

Welcome 8:30AM

Workshops begin 9:00AM to 3:00PM

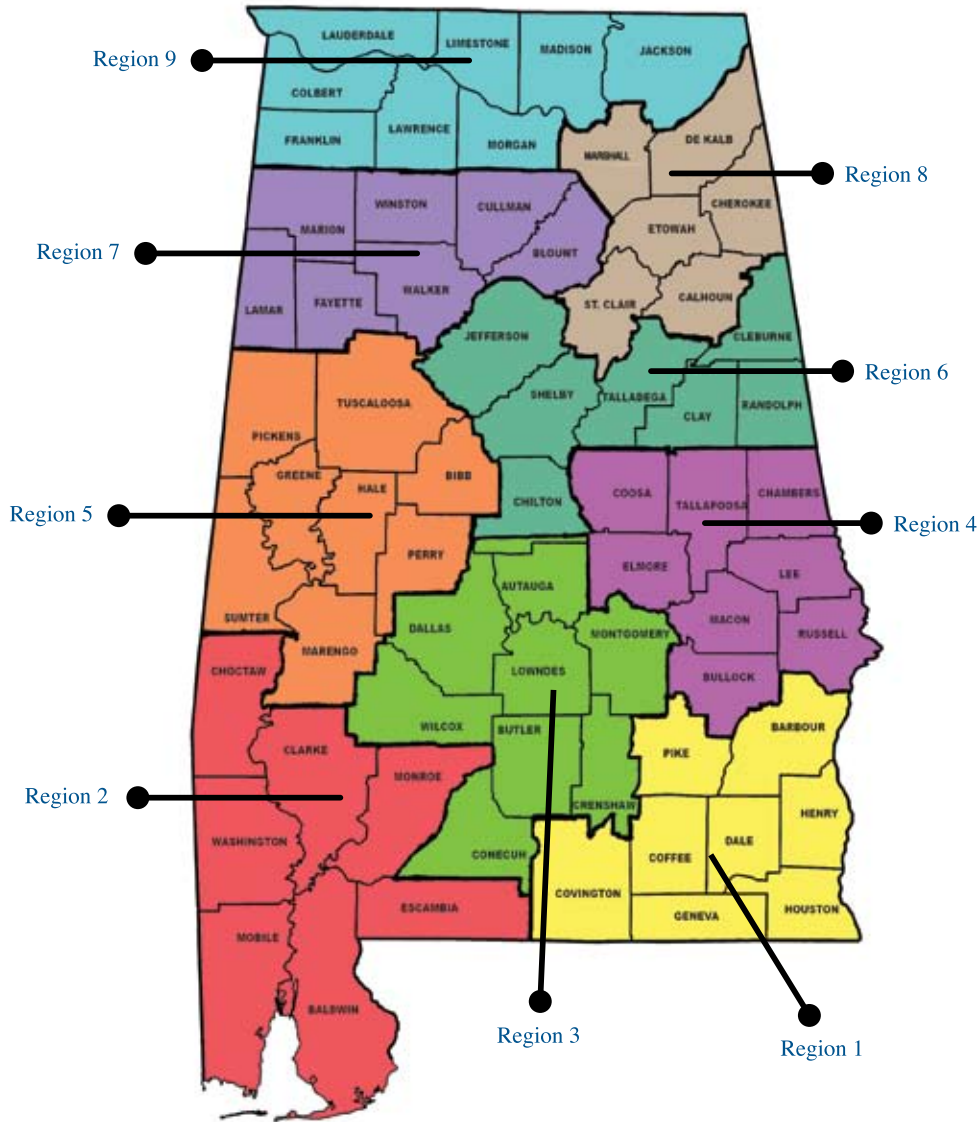
Check [www.afapa.org](http://www.afapa.org) website for updated workshops  
<http://www.cityofgardendale.com/civiccenter.php>

- Will include tax credit information for adoptive parents
- Legal Issues for Foster Parents
- Understanding Special Education
- Minimum Standards

**You must register by calling 1-888-545-2372 or email [buddy@afapa.org](mailto:buddy@afapa.org)**

**Space is limited so please register early**

# AFAPA REGIONS



## Who's Your Regional Rep?

### REGION 1

Deloris Seay  
334-983-3264 • 334-797-0624  
dseay2@sw.rr.com

### REGION 4

Sharlene Casteel  
334-214-0071  
sharlene030@aol.com

### REGION 7

Thomas Sue  
205-698-9936 • 205-712-6101  
suthomas@centurylink.net

### REGION 2

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

### REGION 5

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

### REGION 8

Darla Works  
256-659-5313 • 256-601-5631  
darlaworks7@aol.com

### REGION 3

Keith Aunita  
334-874-4176 • 334-419-3817  
mario056@charter.net

### REGION 6

Debra Crawford  
205-954-8420 • 205-807-4897  
crawfordt600@bellsouth.net

### REGION 9

Martha Hooper  
256-507-3274  
email frogmh@aol.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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1091 County Road 1659  
Cullman, AL 35058  
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](mailto: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.

*November is National Adoption Month.  
Remember the children who are looking for forever families.*  
~from Christina Robbins

Merry  
Christmas  
from  
AFAPA

