



A Publication of the Alabama Foster & Adoptive Parent Association

Connections

Summer/Fall 2008

AFAPA BOARD

William "Buddy" Hooper,
President

Grace Wood,
VP, Foster Care

Mary Smith VP,
Adoption

Libby Gay,
Treasurer

Brenda Caudle,
Secretary

Members At-Large:

Martha Hooper
Julia Ann Hyde
Barbara Lawrence
Leroy Smith
Joette Vick
James Wood
Gina Nixon
Linda Williams

SDHR

Liaisons:
Connie Rogers
Marie Youngpeter

Regional Reps:

Joe Anthony Region 1
Dollie Mims Region 2
Shirley Merrills Region 3
Mary Smith (acting)
Region 4
Ida Ellis Region 5
Grace Wood (acting)
Region 6
Sue Thomas Region 7
Martha Hooper (acting)
Region 8
Doris Wise Region 9

Regional Map page 15

AFAPA IN ACTION SUPPORTING FOSTER & ADOPTIVE FAMILIES ACROSS THE STATE



Two tables full of socks for DeKalb County Foster Children



Delivering more than 1600 pair of socks to Montgomery County July 24th.

Calhoun Interim Director Larry Ayers thanks AFAPA President Buddy Hooper for delivering School Supplies for more than 300 children in Calhoun County on July 22nd.



Calhoun DHR workers help unload School Supplies from Kids to Love Foundation.

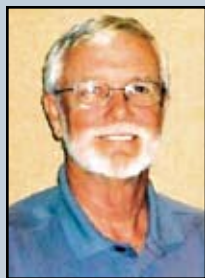


Taking school supplies to Kids to Love warehouse.

"Sock It To Us" project comes to an end August 14th, 2008 almost 6 months after it began. It was a marathon finish with sock deliveries to Marshall, Jackson, Cherokee, Calhoun, and Etowah counties on 8/13 then Buddy Hooper and Linda Williams met at the Trussville Day Care center where the socks were being stored on 8/14. We were down to 2 counties Shelby and Jefferson not bad so we load up a load of school supplies and socks to take to Jefferson county then back to Trussville for another load this time we pick up Shelby county socks and more Jefferson county socks and school supplies so off we go again to deliver.

Now we are down to one last load for Jefferson county and we are met with enthusiastic workers who immediately start sorting and getting them ready to distribute to the children of Jefferson County. Altogether AFAPA was able to distribute more than 30,000 pairs of socks and several truck loads of school supplies.





From the President of AFAPA

It has been a long hot Summer and I'm sure by the time you receive this newsletter school will be back in session in your area. AFAPA worked very hard over the past 6 months collecting school supplies and socks for foster children. AFAPA, Kids to Love, and State DHR worked in partnership to provide help as you prepared children for school. I know all counties did not participate in the project as they had other resources available to them to help. I just want to say thank you to all of those who donated their time, money, and energy to help with this project. I especially want to thank Linda Williams past president of AFAPA and her mother for all of their hard work. Linda and her mother were responsible for all of the sorting and packing of socks for each county. This was very hard and time consuming work. I also can't say enough about the help of Lee Marshall and the KidstoLove Foundation and all the many volunteers who worked in the hot hot warehouse to put together the school supply packs for more than 4000 children in Alabama, and volunteers who helped with the distribution. As I write this we are still working to distribute school supplies and socks to all the counties which participated. We look forward to working with all of you next year on what ever project we have to help foster & adoptive children and parents.

It was another great AFAPA annual conference this year. The numbers were down some from last year, still more than 300 foster, adoptive, kinship care parents, and social workers were able to attend this years conference. Make plans now to attend next years conference which will also be an election year for AFAPA officers. The conference will again be at

Shocco Springs May 14 and 15th, 2009. The evaluations received overwhelmingly requested the conference again be held at Shocco. The location may not be as convenient for everyone and I'm sure the officers elected next year will listen to the members of the association about the location for 2010. To help those that might not be able to attend the annual conference AFAPA has planned for 4 regional mini conferences over the next few months. Each mini conference will be held on a Saturday and provide at least 6 credit hours, lots of good networking with other foster and adoptive parents, and lots of good food. Check out another page in this newsletter for more information about the mini conferences and how to register.

As I have mentioned AFAPA will be electing new officers and regional representatives at the annual conference in May 2009. Officers include President, 2 vice-presidents, Secretary, and Treasurer. The officers are elected by majority of eligible voters present at the business meeting held at the conference. Elections of Regional representatives for each of the 9 AFAPA regions will also be held. Regional representative are elected by the majority of votes within their respective regions during the regional caucus meetings also held at the conference.

I hope this issue of Connections will help you understand what AFAPA is about and the articles presented will help you and give you more information as you care for your children. I have included articles which have appeared in some of the national newsletters which I thought would be helpful to you. Any comments or suggestions about future newsletters may be sent to the AFAPA address or by emailing to afapa@afapa.org.

Contact information for AFAPA. Phone 1-888-545-2372 or email afapa@afapa.org



Pictured on this page are several workers who took delivery of the socks on 8/13 and 8/14. The picture of the Tennessee River was taken near Section Alabama as I was driving from Jackson County to Cherokee County. This is very near where the AFAPA Network Training meeting will be September 20th in Rainsville.



MEET SAMANTHA

Samantha, born October 1990 is a very loving young lady. She has been in foster care since June 2001. She has spent most of her childhood being a "foster kid". She has bounced around from placement to placement. She's learned to test those who get close in order to determine if they're really committed to her. She has a very deep desire to have a family of her own.



Samatha

She is a hard worker and is very goal oriented. She responds best to goals with specific steps and outcomes. Samantha hopes to one day attend college and some days is not sure what she'd like to do. There are days that she thinks she'd like to be a nurse. If she's going to achieve this goal she needs a family that can help support her in catching up in school and provide her the extra help that she needs in some core subjects.

Samantha enjoys attending church and especially assisting with the nursery and pre-school aged children.

Samantha makes friends easily and is respectful of others. She also loves sports and participating in outdoor activities. She has a kind heart and can have a quick fuse. She has a great sense of humor and a smile that can brighten up any room. All she needs is for someone to give her a chance.

Samantha is in need of a family that can provide the extra attention she desperately desires. She wants to belong to someone, somewhere. Being part of a family is the most important thing in the world to Samantha. She may be able to fill the void in a family's life that they didn't even know was there.

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



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

MEET CHRISTOPHER

Christopher, born September 2005, surprises us each day with a new word, expression or action. This last year has been a joyous awakening of Christopher's abilities and development. He loves to eat, take a bath, play outside with the cats and play on his drum. Music brightens his day and he listens carefully to all that occurs around him. He is very social and greets each family member by his own version of their name. He gives hugs and learned to say "hold you", when he wants to be held.



Christopher

As part of his social development Christopher attends a day care three days per week. He enjoys his time there and walks with support to his classroom. He is learning to color, paint, play rhythm games and to share!

While Christopher's days are busy his nights are quiet and long. He sleeps at least twelve hours each night. He is slow to wake and is particularly cuddly in the morning. But within a few minutes, he tells us he wants to eat. After his morning routine of diaper change, water through the G-tube, teeth brushing, lotion application, help with dressing, and a quick breathing treatment, Christopher either crawls or walks with support to the kitchen.

Christopher eats finger foods and is fed soft foods with a spoon. He loves to eat!!! He has progressed from total tube feeding a year ago, to regular foods. He has trouble swallowing thin liquids so he receives water (60 cc's) directly into his stomach through a G-tube. He's fairly cooperative and seems to accept this part of his day. Hopefully, Christopher will be able to drink from a cup soon with "play" practice.

Christopher wears small braces that fit inside his shoes and eyeglasses that wrap around his head. Both come off fairly easy and is a challenge to keep him dressed. Because of his developmental delays he receives three types of therapy twice a month. These sessions are very helpful and will help train his new parents about the use of the G-tube. The therapists currently work with Christopher at the day care center about half of the time.

Speech is an area that has shown rapid improvement this past year. Christopher tries to mimic everything we say. he names objects and actions. He can tell us when he is hungry, happy or sleeping; he says "wow" "woa" and "uh-oh". He is learning to identify body parts, but will forget if he's not reminded periodically. His laughter is contagious, but he has a grumpy side, too, particularly when his nap time is cut short.

Although he does well at day care and they are meeting his socialization needs, we do not feel like this will be a good full-time resource for him. Therefore, we hope to find a two-parent family for him where one parent can stay home with him. The family will need a good support system -- both of therapy services as well as friends and families who can be an emotional and social support. In his current foster home there are several older children that he truly loves. Therefore a family with children older than Christopher would be great. Although Christopher may need some level of life-long supports (supported employment, supported living, voc rehab, etc. he needs a family that

National Foster Parent Association Interim Executive Director's Report July 2008

Good day everyone;

As I sit in my office composing this report to you I am humbled by the responsibility that the leadership of NFPA has entrusted to me. I pledge to carry out the duties of this position to the best of my abilities. That being said I am also truly excited about the opportunity facing NFPA and all of our State and Local Affiliates. I have managed to travel and work within many of our United States with NFPA over the last 18 months and enthusiastically say that wherever I go I am greeted with a can-do spirit and an infectious passion for caring for and serving the children in our care.

Since my inaugural experience at helping with the development of a state association by driving through the open plains of South Dakota with Pat Llewellyn discussing the future of NFPA; to our inaugural Hill Day in Washington, D.C. in May of 2007; to the creation of Walk Me Home...to the place I belong (thanks for creating the name Maine); to the completion of the first 15 of over 50 Walks nationwide; to the development of Strategic Plans and annualized objective setting at the state level; to the partnerships with Casey Family Programs and Freddie Mac to assist with specific localities and with the University of Phoenix in offering 50, full ride, First Chance Scholarships (25 for the fall semester and 25 for the spring semester) I have been overwhelmed by what can be accomplished when we work together. Our possibilities are limitless when we focus on our prime objective – the CHILDREN.

As we move forward in achieving our goals we need to remember that while we are separate and independent parts of this nationwide organization we will always achieve more by working together as a single voice for foster parents and the children we serve. Let me say, at this point, how in awe I am of the positive, professional and humble foster parents I have met throughout our country. You may be reimbursed for some of the funds you expend on the children in your care (not all, I know), but you can never be reimbursed for the 24-hour-a-day care you give to them. You are truly VOLUNTEERS in this great cause. I am inspired and humbled every time I am around you. Whenever I need a boost after I have put in a 12-16 hour day I need only to think of you and the additional 8-12 hours you put in a day to care for our children. No, you can never be repaid for what you do, but please know that you inspire hundreds of thousands of non-foster parent citizens across this country.

NFPA has just completed its Annual Education Conference and with it the end to an era at NFPA and the beginning of a new one. Our Immediate Past President, Marvin E. Freneau, Jr. has just completed his term of office and is taking some, well earned time off and Karen Jorgenson, the only Executive Director NFPA has known has retired. They both will be spending some quality time with their grandchildren as well as getting reacquainted with their spouses, I'm sure. Our current Board of Directors and Executive Committee, led by Mel Gravely, President are cognizant of the responsibility they have to lead our organization to its next level of professionalism. They will hit the ground running this month to make sure that the NFPA does not skip a beat in the achievement of its Strategic Plan. They have pledged to continue to promote a positive, progressive agenda for NFPA and its State and Local Affiliates. I pledge to serve them and you in this regard as well.

Carl D Jones
**Interim Executive Director/
Director, Field Operations & Resource Development**
cjones@nfpaonline.org

MEET BROOKE

Savanna "Brooke", born September 1991, is a charming young lady. She describes herself as pretty and talented. She loves sports and is an avid softball player. She wants to be a cosmetologist when she grows up. She's in the drama club at school. She says she likes acting because she can be herself or she can act goofy or in a way that is totally different.

She has sisters who have been adopted by other families. If she could go anywhere she'd like to be able to visit her sister who is living in another state. She would also love to go to New York to go shopping and see all of the buildings.

If she could plan her perfect birthday party she says it would be "on beach in Miami, she'd invite everybody and she'd get a BMW." Her favorite subject in school is math because it's fun. Brooke would love to be a big sister and to be part of a family. When you ask her to describe her adoptive family, she'd like a Mom and a Dad. She'd like brothers and sisters. She says being adopted means finally having someone to call Mom and Dad forever. She says she wouldn't be called a "foster child" anymore."



Photo provided Courtesy of Heart Gallery Alabama

MEET MERCEDES, MONTELL, SHIMECK, AND SAVANNA



Mercedes, born December 1999 favorite thing to do is play with her computer and her dolls. She is very helpful around the house and assumes a lot of respon-

sibilities including helping fold and put up clothes and helping clean up the table after meals. She enjoys the role of "big sister" but also enjoys snuggling in the lap of her foster mother. She was lagging behind academically until she was prescribed medication for ADHD. Since getting on the ADHD medication, her grades have improved to A/B Honor Roll except for a C in Math and an S in handwriting.



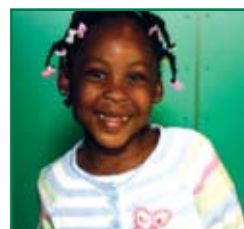
Montell, born September 2000 is the oldest male child in this sibling group. He has some learning difficulties (IQ 74) but works hard to keep up with his classmates. He receives assistance with speech at school. He loves dump trucks and working in the yard. Montell hopes

to drive a dump truck when he grows up.



Shimeck, born March 2002 is a very loving, energetic young man. He will be in the 1st grade this coming year (08-09)

and although he was behind his classmates in kindergarten, he did advance to the 1st grade. Shimeck enjoys riding his bike, playing outside on the trampoline and is also a very affectionate child who enjoys extended doses of "lap time," with his foster mother.



Savanna, born June 2003 is exceptionally bright and she is all girl! Savanna enjoys dolls, playing house, her play cell phone and helping her foster mother around the house. Savanna is very compassionate toward others.

Photo provided courtesy of www.heartgalleryalabama.com

All of these children have wonderful manners and are a joy to travel with. They are fascinated with everything going on around them and appreciate everything you do for them. All of these children except Montell are currently residing in the same foster home and have been together since coming into care. These children are all in need of an energetic adoptive family to love and care for them forever.

CAMP BELONG TO

This article appeared in the National Advocate Summer 2008 edition

There are almost 600,000 youth in foster care in the U.S., with 75% separated from at least one sibling when placed in care. Add to that the numbers from other countries including youth separated by adoption and kinship care, and we have countless brothers and sisters grieving their birthright, their sibling.

CTB is not about finding a brother or sister. It is about reuniting siblings that may live in the same town, maybe even go to the same school, but live in separate homes.

WHO WE ARE

CAMP TO BELONG, (CTB), an international non-profit 501 (c) (3) organization, has been actively reuniting brothers and sisters placed in separate foster, adoptive or kinship homes through Summer Camp Programs and year round events since 1995.

Siblings may not have the opportunity to read bedtime stories together at night, have breakfast together, cheer for each other at school functions or share precious holidays – all the things that typical siblings get to do each day. Siblings are often taken for granted. Yet, the sibling relationship can be our longest relationship in life.

Our primary goal is to provide a sense of belonging to youth as individuals, and as siblings, giving them opportunities to share childhood memories together and among other youth in the same situations.

WHAT WE DO

Our flagship events are our Summer Camp Programs during which we reunite brothers and sisters in a safe, neutral, week-long camp environment to create childhood memories together that they would not have otherwise due to living in separate homes.

Signature Programs

Each Summer Camp Program provides intentional programming designed to strengthen sibling connection through our Signature Programs, including the Art Therapy, Sibling Enhancement, Life Seminar and Mentoring Programs, and the Birthday Party Event.

For more information the web site is
www.camptobelong.org

On a personal note. More than 15 years ago one of the children we were fostering had a sibling who did not live with her and she had not seen in more than a year. We got a call that her brother was being adopted and would be able to come visit her for one day before he was placed in his new home. It was a special day that I'm sure neither of them will ever forget. It was heartbreaking to know they might never see each other again.

APAC

If you are a foster or adoptive parent, TAKE NOTICE! Children's Aid Society provides pre and post adoption services FREE to you through APAC (Alabama Pre/Post Adoption Connections). A toll-free information and help line (866-803-2722) and web-site (www.casapac.org) can direct you to people or places you need to know about. The APAC Lending Library has over 6,000 adoption-related resources available for your free check-out by phone or web (BTW – foster parents can receive CEUs for most of the library items!) APAC staff can be scheduled to attend some of your county or regional AFAPA meetings to provide trainings on adoption-related topics. Adop-

Children's Aid
Society provides
pre and post
adoption services
FREE

tive families can attend support groups and also receive free individual counseling. Families wanting to adopt "waiting children" can work with APAC staff to plan toward that goal (866-4AL-KIDS). For these and other services, please contact us!

APAC has enjoyed partnering with AFAPA in various efforts this year. We were proud to join AFAPA in support of the **Sock It To Me** event and the AFAPA Annual Conference. AFAPA has in turn partnered with APAC's "Forever Family Fairs" and trainings. We look forward to a growing partnership this upcoming year!

NATIONAL FOSTER CONFERENCE IN ATLANTA, GEORGIA, MAY 13TH



FOSTER CARE MONTH CELEBRATION & AFAPA ANNUAL CONFERENCE



May Foster Care month celebration held in Montgomery, AL May 1st, 2008. Socks were placed on the Capitol grounds representing 7000 foster children



AFAPA annual conference Shocco Springs May 8th & 9th, 2008



FOSTER CARE MONTH CELEBRATION & AFAPA ANNUAL CONFERENCE



AFAPA annual conference
Shocco Springs
May 8th & 9th, 2008



Nathan Cleek speaking
at Local Foster Parent
Association Workshop



IMPROVED ADOPTION INCENTIVES AND RELATIVE GUARDIANSHIP SUPPORT ACT

This Act would Help More Foster Children Find Permanent Homes through Adoption, Guardianship

On Tuesday May 20, 2008, Senator Charles Grassley (Iowa) introduced the Improved Adoption Incentives and Relative Guardianship Support Act of 2008. This new legislation champions permanency for children in foster care by reauthorizing the successful Adoption Incentive Program that encourages states to finalize more adoptions from foster care, ensures that all foster children with special needs can receive vital federal assistance, and provides federal guardianship support for grandparents and other relatives who want to provide a permanent home for the children they are raising.

"Although foster care is an important safety net, children often languish for too long in our system," said Marci McCoy-Roth, Officer, The Pew Charitable Trusts. "When reunification with their parents isn't possible, we should be doing all we can to help these children leave foster care through adoption or guardianship. We applaud Senator Grassley's efforts to ensure that more of the half million children in foster care will find the stable families they deserve."

The Improved Adoption Incentives and Relative Guardianship Support Act of 2008 supports an important pathway to permanence by allowing states to receive federal reimbursement for payments made to legal relative guardians caring for children for whom reunification with their birth parents or adoption are not options and who would otherwise remain in foster care. The measure establishes a broad range of information and notification requirements for relatives once a child has been placed in care and allows funds from the Adoption Incentive program to be made available to states that successfully help children leave foster care for permanent homes with relatives.

ABOUT THE KIDS ARE WAITING CAMPAIGN: Kids Are Waiting: Fix Foster Care Now is a national, nonpartisan campaign dedicated to promoting foster care reform. Led by The Pew Charitable Trusts, an ever-growing number of local, state and national partners are working together so that our most vulnerable children don't spend their childhoods waiting in foster care for the families they deserve. For more information visit: www.kidsarewaiting.org

MEET ANTONIO AND ROBERT



Antonio, born May 1998, was in 4th grade for the 2007-08 school year. He is known to be a good student. His favorite subject in school is science because he likes "the stuff" (experiments) that students perform. In his previous school he was in classes for "gifted" students and he is on an advanced level at his current school. He loves the outdoors. Antonio can be described as somewhat "stand-offish" or "independent. He is less affectionate than his younger brother who tends to love to cuddle and praise his older brother.

Robert, born March 2000, might be considered a "charmer" compared to his older brother. He usually appears to be somewhat shy on the surface but he can become active or busy. The boys recently changed placements and Robert had a few problems adjusting to his new school placement. He needs help dealing with major changes in his life. He needs extra help in school because of a significant language disorder. He tends to communicate through art and he has art skills that stand apart from his same-age peers. As his teacher described his work, his pictures "reach for you", i.e., his faces he sketches may show an emotion or a "stare" versus a simple smiling face. Robert also needs redirecting from time to time as he will obsess on certain issues and events.

Photograph provided by www.heartgalleryalabama.com



TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES FOR FOSTER AND ADOPTIVE PARENTS

AFAPA Announces Annual Regional Network Training Meetings

Foster, adoptive, kinship parents, and social workers are welcome to attend any of the meetings scheduled. However you should check with you county DHR or your agency to see if you qualify for reimbursement for mileage to attend. While we encourage early registration you will be able to register the day of the event. Lunch will be provided first to those who have pre-registered. Child care will not be provided and you should ask your worker to assist you in finding suitable child care so that you will be able to attend.

Workshops have not been finalized however the topics being suggested are "Surviving as a Foster Parent", "Putting the Pieces together Lifebooks", "Haircare for foster children", "Legal topics", ect.

The North Meeting will be: September 20th, 2008

This meeting is for AFAPA Regions 6,7,8, and 9 AFAPA and DeKalb County Foster & Adoptive Parent Association will host an all day training meeting in Rainsville, Al DeKalb County.

Location — Fellowship Christian Center — Located about 9 miles east of exit 218 on I-59 and 1/2 mile east of Highway 75 just off Highway 35 turn left on DeKalb Drive . Address is 114 DeKalb Dr. Rainsville, Al 35986
Time — 9:00 AM to 4:00 PM Breakfast and Lunch will be served
6 hours of training hours available

The South Meeting will be: November 15th, 2008

AFAPA & local foster parent associations will host an all day training meeting in Daphne, Al
This meeting is for AFAPA Regions 1, 2, 3, and 5 depending on which meeting is closer for you.

Location — Bayfront Park in Daphne on East side of Mobile Bay
6200 Bayfront Drive
Time — 9:00 AM to 4:00 PM Lunch will be served
6 hours of training hours available

The South East Meeting will be: October 25th in Auburn, Alabama

AFAPA & local foster parent associations will host an all day training meeting in Auburn, Al

Location the Auburn Conference Center Hotel on College Street
Time — 9:00AM to 4:00PM Lunch will be served
This meeting is for AFAPA Regions 1,3,4, and parts of 6 depending on which is closer for you.
6 hours of training hours available

Other meetings are planned for later in the year. Call or email to check on dates for one of the following meetings and locations. We are looking at the West and North West corner of the state. We will also plan for a meeting in the South East Corner of the state. These will be announced as soon as we have a date and location.

There will be a \$10 registration fee per person for these network training meetings to help with the cost of food and materials. You must register for the North Training Meeting by September 10th, 2008. Register for the South East Meeting by October 15th and November 3rd for the South Training Meeting to insure that you will have a lunch provided and that you will receive all the materials.

Each participant will receive a 176 page Daily Journal for Foster Parents along with a very nice canvass bag.

Registration for Network Training Meetings
Indicate which meeting you are registering for
Check or Money order made out to AFAPA
Send your name phone number and address to

Email: buddy@afapa.org

Or mail to:

AFAPA
1091 Co Rd 1659
Cullman, Al 35058
Phone 1-888-545-2372



THE VALUE OF FOSTER & ADOPTIVE PARENT SUPPORT GROUPS

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

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

There is no clear and absolute definition of adoptive family support. It is what-ever any group of adoptive

parents needs in order to be empowered and further enable them to parent their children. It's a place to go and not be judged. Sometimes it's an organized group; sometimes it's simply a list of people to call for help. It can also take the form of on-line support, for families who can't leave their children for the time it takes to go to a meeting away from home. Mutual support is therapeutic – but not therapy – and often is the very factor that keeps a family together and averts disrupted adoption.

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

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

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

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

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

Most importantly, parent groups offer encouragement and hope.

MEET LASHASTA



LaShasta, born November 1997 is in the fifth grade. She is a very beautiful and creative child. She has a very strong personality and can be successful at anything she wants to do. LaShasta has worked very hard to do well in school and is always creating something unique. She is a very caring young girl.

She can be very helpful. LaShasta enjoys smaller children and babies. She does very well when provided nurturing boundaries. LaShasta is very respectful to her elders and will do what is expected of her when she is given clear expectations and directions.

LaShasta enjoys being outside and being active. She would like to play on a tennis team one day. She also enjoys art, math, and science and is very talented at drawing.

LaShasta would thrive in a family that had other children, but no more than two other children. She needs a caring family that makes her feel loved and wanted. She will be a great addition to a family looking to adopt a child that will add happiness and love in the home.

Photograph provided by www.heartgalleryalabama.com

MAY FOSTER CARE MONTH IN DEKALB COUNTY



DeKalb County foster parents and staff attended a Commission meeting proclaiming May Foster Care Month!



MEET JAMES AND ALLEN



James, born September 1992 will surprise you with his warm heart. He enjoys taking care of his pet cat (Jack) and shows responsibility in feeding and taking care of the cat daily. James rescued some kittens that had been dropped off close to his foster home. James interacts very well with small, young children. His favorite subject in school is history and he loves learning about the Civil War.

If James could visit any one place he would want to go to the beach or to Shiloh, TN and visit a Civil War museum. Although James needs to be reminded at times to improve his behavior, he is very grateful and appreciative of adults spending time with him and treating him to an activity. James would like to serve in the military or be a veterinarian when he grows up.

Delmer "Allen" (preferred name), born October 1994, is very active and loving. Allen enjoys swimming and riding his bike. He likes to read the Goosebumps fiction series. Allen also interacts very well with small, younger children. He loves receiving Pokemon cards as a positive reward for good behavior. Allen enjoys spending time together as a family and is the entertainer in the family. He has a really good sense of humor. Allen enjoys playing outside more than going to school and he needs to be reminded to complete his homework on a daily basis. Allen wants to be a fireman or a pediatrician when he grows up.

Photograph provided by www.heartgalleryalabama.com

PUTTING THE PIECES TOGETHER: LIFEBOOK WORK WITH CHILDREN

Lifebooks are a connection to the past that can provide hope and insight to the future. They are an essential tool to aid children in the child welfare system in understanding the narrative of their lives and the meaning of the changes they have experienced. Lifebooks are valuable in preserving children's life stories as well as in helping them make sense of loss, trauma and change.

Plans are to have a workshop explaining the importance of helping your child develop a lifebook of their own at the September 20th Network Training meeting in Rainsville.

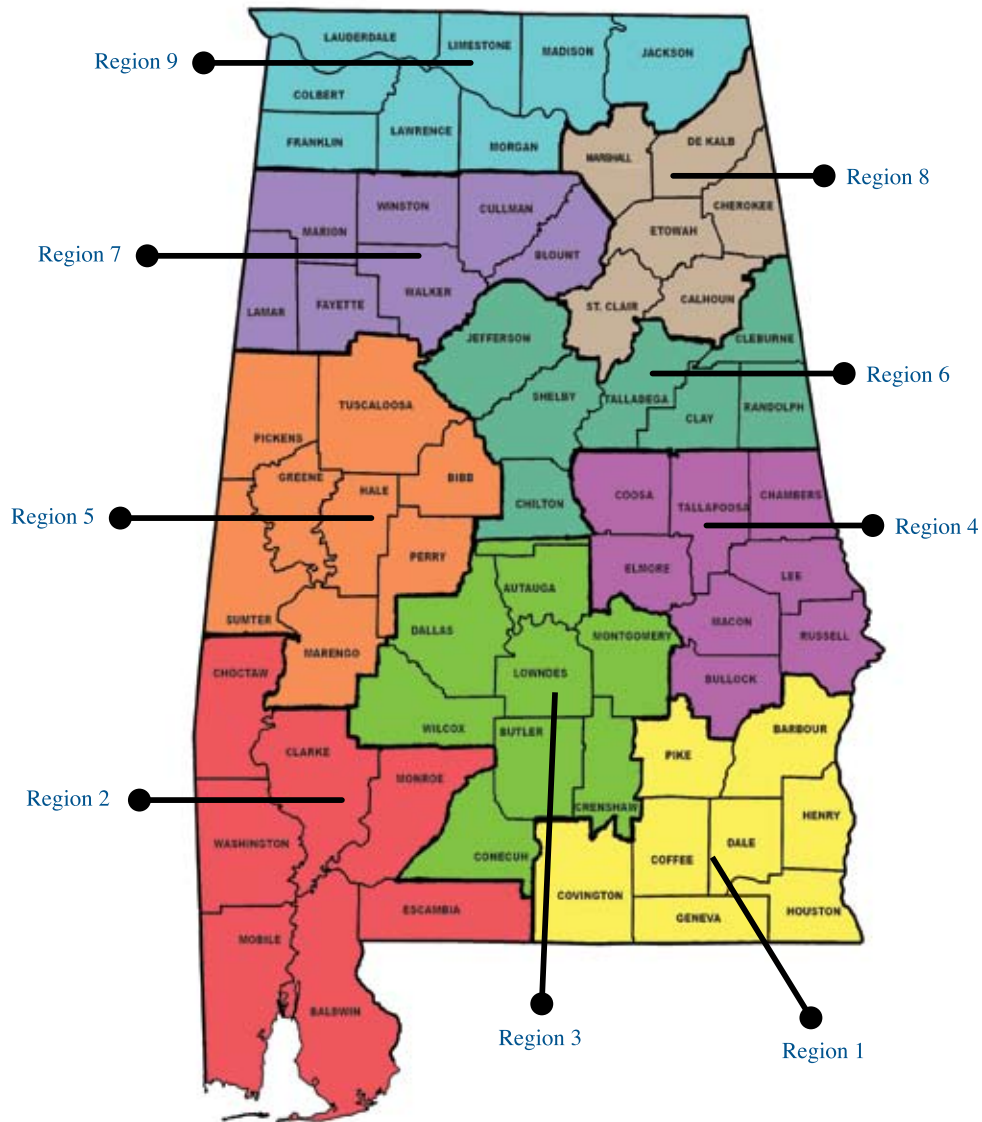
NORTH ALABAMA COUNCIL FOR ADOPTABLE CHILDREN CONFERENCE,



This conference was held in Ottawa, Canada, July 30th through August 2nd. Attended by AFAPA board members Buddy Hooper, James and Grace Wood, Leroy and Mary Smith.



AFAPA REGIONS



Who's Your Regional Rep?

REGION 1

Joe Anthony
334-886-2734 • 334-718-02440
jandcanthony@centurytel.net

REGION 2

Dolly Mims
251-604-3522 • 251-937-2336
DolIBAYm@aol.com

REGION 3

Merrill Shirley
251-578-9964 • 251-227-1808
region3@afapa.org

REGION 4

Smith Mary
334-567-4143 • 334-303-1426
star1000@aol.com

REGION 5

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

REGION 6

Wood Grace
256-488-5567 • 256-276-4377
Graceafapavp@aol.com

REGION 7

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

REGION 8

Hooper Martha
256-796-0582 • 256-507-3274
frogmh@aol.com

REGION 9

Wise Doris
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.



NON-PROFIT
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
Huntsville, Alabama
Permit #780

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

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.

ALABAMA FOSTER & ADOPTIVE PARENT BOARD TRAINING LIST

To: Local Foster Parent Association Presidents of Local DHR Resource Workers

Need training for your local foster parents. Contact your Regional Representative to arrange for training at your local foster parent meetings.

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.

Topics available for training

Putting Pieces Together, Lifebook Work with Children
Attachment Disorders
Foster Parent Bill of Rights
What is AFAPA
Allegations & Documentation
ISP's after RC settlement
Health Issues for Foster Families
Working with Birth Parents
Transracial Adoptions
Adoption Subsidy
Communicating with children

Legislative Advocacy
Understanding Cultural Diversities
Family Dynamics
Respite Care
Stress Management
Strengthening Foster/Adoptive Parent & DHR
Partnership
Behavioral Support
Hair Technique for All
IEP for your child
ILP for your child