



Newsletter

September 2012

A Publication of the Alabama Foster & Adoptive Parent Association



Vote Yes September 18th

Stand up for the Children!!!

Together We Can!! Make a Difference in the lives of children

A rejection at the polls of a proposal to divert money from a state trust fund to the General Fund would have an adverse affect on the children of this state in many ways.

Voters will decide Sept. 18 whether to transfer \$145 million a year for three years from the Alabama Trust Fund, which holds offshore drilling royalties, to the General Fund, where it can be used to pay for state programs. The \$1.6 billion General Fund budget for next year was written under the assumption the referendum will pass, so if it fails many government agencies would face major budget cuts. Across-the-board cuts of nearly 12 percent could be ordered to make up the shortfall.

Alabama Department of Human Resources could see double digit cuts in services and programs. It could be devastating to foster care programs including board payments for foster care which have not seen a raise of any significance in 10 years.

Medicaid would also be one of the programs hit hard if the referendum fails to pass. The program covers care for about 900,000 people in Alabama.

Please go to the polls and vote yes don't assume it will pass. You have to get out and vote on September 18th!!!!





A Message from the President of AFAPA

If you have internet and are on facebook please go to the Alabama Foster Parent Page to be a friend, if you would prefer you can go to the Alabama Foster & Adoptive Parent Association Page and like it. This is a great way to keep up with what is going on and to find information that is helpful to you.

We will be posting on Facebook and the afapa.org website about the training that will be taking place in the next few months.

Please support our Walk Me Home events this year. Mobile County needs your help for the Walk September 29th and AFAPA would like to invite you to attend the Walk November 3rd in Montgomery.

The AFAPA Advocacy program has been helping lots of foster families over the last few months. Our advocates have been called to assist in lots of different ways. Most of them have been called to attend ISP meetings with foster parents. There have been several Conflicts written by foster parents and most have been settled at the local level. If you need assistance don't hesitate to call for help. It is better to nip it in the bud and not let things get worse.

AFAPA is looking for volunteers. We need a people who would love to help with the newsletter, facebook page, and the AFAPA web site. The right person might be asked to Chair the AFAPA Communications Committee others would be on the committee. Please contact me if you are interested in helping in anyway.

Buddy Hooper

MEET ALEXIS



Alexis is a cute, active girl. She is very smart and can have an intelligent conversation with you. She does well in school when she chooses and has been tested as gifted. Alexis has a very charming and friendly personality. She can appear shy when first meeting someone but is usually fairly outgoing, especially when comfortable. She is a very "girlie girl" and enjoys feminine pursuits

like dolls, make-up, playing dress-up, etc. Alexis often needs encouragement to maintain daily personal habits.

Alexis has a younger brother that she needs to be allowed contact with on an ongoing basis. Though she sometimes

needs reminders about requirements for his special needs, she is loyal and protective of him.

Alexis has endured much in her young life. She has a difficult time with trusting people and will continue to need ongoing skilled therapy as well as medication management for her diagnoses and difficult behavior at this time. Alexis needs to know and experience a family that will be there for her on a permanent basis no matter what. She craves and requires much individual attention by a caretaker, and jealousy or feelings of rejection can be an issue for her without it. Positive attachment to a new family, utmost tolerance and patience by someone who will stick with her through any challenge would be essential keys to a successful placement.

*Photograph provided by
www.heartgalleryalabama.com*



Peoples Bank of Alabama Giving Back Contest

This contest ran from July 11th to August 8th, 2012. The Alabama Foster & Adoptive Parent Association received the most votes and shared \$35,000 with the other top two organizations. Money from this contest will benefit the AFAPA Scholarship Fund.



Thanks to all those who voted for AFAPA on facebook during this contest.

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ALABAMA WALK ME HOME EVENTS

Walk Me Home....to the place I belong

Walk Me Home is a National Fund raising event for foster care. Sponsored by the National Foster Parent Association. This event held in states all over the nation is entering it's 7th year. AFAPA held the first walk in Alabama last year in Montgomery, Al and had more than 100 to participate in the event. For more information about Walk Me Home visit the website walkmehome.org.



Alabama is one of the top fundraising states for the Walk Me Home event sponsored by the National Foster Parent Association. After this year we hope to be able to claim to be the top State in fundraising for Walk Me Home. Last year Tennessee held Walks in 4 major cities and raised over \$44,000.

Let's show our neighbors to the north that we can do something other than have the best football teams in the nation. These events not only raise money to help with the needs of foster children but help raise awareness in the community of the needs for more foster and adoptive homes. There are many children in group homes because of the lack of foster homes. There are sibling groups split up because of the lack of foster homes to take all the children. There are hundreds of children waiting to be adopted because there are not enough adoptive homes to take them. Please help us support these walks in the coming months with your financial support and help us get the word out by telling your friends and family.

William Buddy Hooper
Co Chair of Walk Me Home Committee for National Foster Parent Association

Mobile County Walk – September 29th, 2012 9:00 AM at Medal of Honor Park (Cottage Hill Park) in Mobile, Alabama. Sponsored by Mobile County Foster Adoptive Parent Association. Check out the fundraising page at www.firstgiving.com/walkmehome/mobile

Alabama Foster Adoptive Parent Association Walk – November 3rd, 2012 at Huntingdon College located at 1500 Fairview Avenue, Montgomery, Al. The Event will also serve as the Alabama Foster & Adoptive Parent Association Recognition of November as National Adoption Month. There will be games for kids to play, vendor booths set up, and entertainment. Money raised for this walk to help support Foster Children Student Scholarship Fund. Sponsored by AFAPA. The fundraising page for this Walk is www.firstgiving.com/walkmehome/alabama2012

TEENS NEED FOREVER FAMILIES TOO...

I have the chance to meet a lot of teenagers who have been adopted and lots who are waiting to be adopted. One young lady I met at the NACAC conference a few years ago had just turned 18 and she had just been adopted. It is always such a blessing to talk to these young adults and hear what they have to say about foster care and adoption and how they feel about the whole system of Child Welfare. I'm always left with a thought of why? Why has not someone made a connection with this child that would lead to a forever home for them and why does it take so long. When you stop to consider a 16 year old who has been in care 4 years has spent 25% of their life in foster care. In this case it may have been even more. I would like to share just a short note that Jessmynda sent me recently. "It is very uplifting to see people like you and your wife, and so many other wonderful people at NACAC working so hard to not only find homes for children, but taking the time to educate people about what we really need. Over time, I have come to the conclusion that the beauty of mine and so many adopted children's lives is that we have

experienced the worst of the world, not because the world is terrible, but because God cared enough to help us see the beauty of something that people take for granted every day: a **family**. I have 100% faith in the fact that He never gives us more than we can bear. And every adopted child, is blessed with a knowledge and understanding of the world that too many people don't ever have the chance to get".

For those children who have not found that forever home. Many youth 14 and over may not be found by a family. For them there is some help available through the Independent Living Program (ILP).

Children's Aid Society of Birmingham has developed a new website as a resource to Foster Youth in Alabama. It is call ILConnect and can be found on the web at www.ilconnect.org. They also have a facebook page that you can go to and like. I urge you to visit them. You can also get the link by visiting the Alabama Foster & Adoptive Parent Association Facebook page.

Each of the features below are for children that we want specifically placed in Alabama – either because they need to maintain contact/connection with birth family or because they have sibs that have or are being adopted by other families or have a goal of APPLA.

MEET ELIZABETH & BRITTANY



Elizabeth is the oldest and a talkative, energetic girl who describes herself as a “tomboy”. She enjoys roller coaster, swimming, boat riding, scary movies and rock music. She aspires to join the military one day, attend college for photography and then eventually join a

band. She says she wants to learn guitar and drum playing although she has never done either one. She loves animals of any kind and would be fine with family pets. She says Halloween is her favorite holiday because she loves to dress up in a costume. Steak and baked potatoes are her favorite meal! She is attending the 9th grade for the 2012-2013 year as she failed 1st grade due to family turmoil. She tries hard in school and does her best. She receives minimal outside assistance and test taking is her biggest challenge.

Brittany is the youngest and is also a bright, fun girl who has a lot of energy as well. She loves swimming, art, gymnastics, and horses. She is an animal lover and would be fine with any family pets. Christmas is her favorite holiday because it is the birthday of Jesus and also because she gets presents! Her favorite food is a burger and fries! She aspires to be a masseuse when she grows up and is described as a “girly girl”. She says she is a country girl, loves country music, mud riding and the quiet.

Both of these girls attend church and enjoy it. They desire to continue church attendance upon adoption and hope to have a two parent family or a single mother with no other children in the home. This request is made by the children specifically, and not due to behavior. They currently live in a group setting and want desperately to be in a calm atmosphere where they are the only children. They want a forever home and with proper guidance will flourish into lovely women. They are a joy to be around, friendly, interactive and open to change.

MEET JESSE & CAMERON



The sibling group being recruited for includes two bothers. Jesse born April 1998 and Cameron, born April 1999. They have a sister who was recently placed for adoption in our state. Therefore, we are particularly interested in finding permanent family for Jesse and Cameron in Alabama.

The children are very creative, imaginative and outgoing. Each child is full of enthusiasm and a joy to be around. Both Jesse and Cameron have expressed that they would love to live in the “country” in a home with lots of land and grass where they can explore nature and get dirty.

Jesse is average height, brown hair and eyes, enjoys new things like cars. Jesse is also athletic and loves Alabama football. Jesse is very knowledgeable on his interest and will take out time to research interesting and unique facts about them, He is an average student in the 7th grade for the 2011-2012 school year.

Cameron on the other hand, average height, has blonde hair, blue eyes likes animals and exploring the outdoors more. Cameron has had a fish, hermit crab and guinea pig as pets. Cameron is an overall academic achiever, he is in the 6th grade for the 2011-2012 school year. Cameron also enjoys photographing nature and fishing.

This sibling group is very attached to each other, have a strong sibling bond and desire to be placed together in the same home. Jesse and Joseph have a maternal great grandmother who has been a constant in their lives whom they would love to remain in contact with.

*Photograph provided by
www.heartgalleryalabama.com*

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MEET KORENSHIA “KK” & KARLESHIA



Korenschia “KK” was born in May 2000. Korenschia is very excited about being adopted. She would prefer that her forever family have a mother and father. Korenschia wants her parents to be young and able to do fun exciting things with her. She has traveled to Disney Land in California and wants to travel more. Korenschia enjoys camping, playing school and reading. She would like to have a pet, particularly a dog. Korenschia is enthusiastic, loving and affectionate. Korenschia has an older brother and sister. It is important that she maintain contact with her siblings. Korenschia is slow to warm up to people but when she does, she talks incessantly! She is very inquisitive.

Karleshia, born July 1998 has big brown eyes and beautiful smile. She likes to read but really loves watching High School Musical and Hannah Montana. She is very much a "tweener." She loves to watch television shows that feature kids close to her age. She is very fashion conscious and loves to feel glamorous. Karleshia likes to play dress up and make believe. She loves to dance and listen to music. A family interested in Karleshia would need to be patient and kind hearted. Karleshia has an older brother and a younger sister and it is important to her to maintain relationships with them.

*Photograph provided by
www.heartgalleryalabama.com*

MEET QUINTISHEYIA “TISH”

Quintisheyia (nick name "Tish"), born July 1996, is often found to be a leader with children her age and younger. She enjoys music, dancing, singing, reading, puzzles, fixing hair, church activities and being in the spotlight.



She wants to be a hair stylist when she gets older and dreams of owning her own shop.

She is very guarded and does not let others in easily. As with any adolescent, she attempts to find her boundaries and assert her independence. She is a strong advocate for herself and is tenacious in getting her needs met. She enjoys playing sports, talking on the telephone and spending time with family and friends. She is a HUGE University of Alabama fan.

She has shown a caring and nurturing spirit, especially when it comes to her brother. She loves her younger brother and is very protective of him. Tish needs a forever family who is willing to fight for the privilege of being her family and show her trust and understanding as she struggles to realize that she deserves such a family.

*Photograph provided by
www.heartgalleryalabama.com*

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



FREE YEAR SUBSCRIPTION

Special offer to Presidents of County Foster/Adoptive Parent Associations. AFAPA needs to hear from you and have your contact information. Beginning September 1st we will offer to each Local County President a free year subscription to *Fostering Families Today Magazine*. This is a bi monthly magazine filled with great articles to help foster families. All you have to do as a local president is send your contact information to AFAPA and keep AFAPA updated to contact information for you county. You can do it by email afapa@afapa.org or regular mail to AFAPA 1091 County Road 1659 Cullman, AL 35058.

You say your county doesn't have a local association and you want a free subscription. AFAPA would be happy to come to your county to help start an association or a local support group.

Foster Families Today Magazine features news and articles on Foster Care. Want to receive this magazine at home.

You can subscribe online at fosteringfamilies.com or call 1-888-924-6736

On the cover Kassidy Lacole Hooper is the granddaughter/adopted daughter of Buddy and Martha Hooper. She will be 3 years old October 9th.

She loves putting puzzles together and playing games on her Nook. Kassidy avoided going into foster care when she was born by going into kinship care.

After a year and a half she was adopted by her grandparents.

Kassidy has an older sister Sidni Dunn who is 11 and a younger sister Kaylee Faith Hooper who is now 9 months old and lots of cousins who live next door.

Photo courtesy of Kassidy's Aunt Katie Raburn

FOCUS: Nurturing the Identity of Children in Foster Care

Fostering FAMILIES TODAY

A Foster Care and Adoption Resource for America

September/October 2012

WHO AM I?
Foster families work to nurture the identity of children growing up in the foster care system

THE LANGUAGE OF FLOWERS
Best-Selling Author Shares the Story of Foster Care, Launches Network to Make a Difference in the Lives of Children in Care

THE MEDIA DEBATE
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AFAPA NEWSLETTER INFO:

Articles can be submitted to Buddy Hooper, Editor. E-mail submissions should be addressed to afapa@afapa.org. Otherwise, mail to AFAPA 1091 County Road 1659 Cullman, AL 35058. Deadline dates fall the first of the month in February, May, August, & November.

TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES FOR FOSTER & ADOPTIVE PARENTS

AFAPA will be hosting one day Training meetings beginning with the first one in the North West part of the State October 20th, 2012. At press time a location had not been selected. Be sure to check afapa.org website and Alabama Foster & Adoptive Parent Association Facebook page for an update on location.



We are looking at January 26th for a training day in Tuscaloosa and February 23rd in Mobile. The next newsletter will have more information on these meetings.



AFAPA is available to come to County Foster Parent meetings or to Local DHR offices to do training for foster parents and or DHR Staff. We have conducted training for several county DHR Staff on Foster Parent Bill of Rights and how to make the ISP process work better. Just call 888-545-2372 to schedule training.

Let us know what type training you want and we will get someone to come to do it.