

COMMUNIQUE

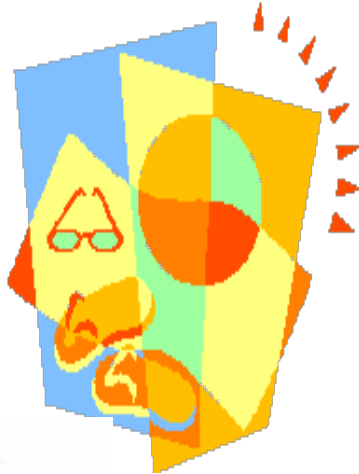
A resource for the Connecticut foster, adoptive and kinship care community.

Summer 2014

A quarterly publication of the
Connecticut Association of
Foster and Adoptive Parents, Inc.

Happy Summer!

The board of directors and staff at the Connecticut Association of Foster and Adoptive Parents, Inc. would like to wish you and your family a happy and safe summer!



Are you an Experienced Foster Parent?

Are you an Experienced Relative Foster Parent?

When you were newly-licensed, do you remember all the questions you had when your first foster child came into your home?

Do you remember wondering what resources were available to you?

Do you remember thinking “if I only had another foster parent to talk to who has shared the same experience”?

If you remember all of these times, then you might enjoy being a buddy!

Support newly licensed families!!

BE A BUDDY!

Training and stipend provided.

Call Wendy Sander, Buddy Coordinator at
1-800-861-8838 at CAFAP or email
wendy.sander@cafap.com

Foster Care Awareness Month

There were many events throughout the month of May for “Foster Care Awareness Month” not only for foster/adoptive families but open to the community as well in order to raise awareness.

Some of the activities enjoyed were:

- Stepping Stones Museum
- New Children’s Museum of West Hartford
- Nomads Adventure Quest
- Moneta Moments
- Sonny’s Place
- Ashley’s Ice Cream
- Laser Planet
- Parents’ Day Out at Mohegan Sun
- Mini Golf & Bumper Boat’s at Berlin Batting Cage
- Rock Climbing at Central Rock Gym

Are you interested in being a Foster Parent? An Adoptive Parent? Know you could become a Kinship Family? Call 1.888.KID HERO for more information!

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From the Desk of the Executive Director

Happy Summer! Did we think it would never arrive?

We had a fabulous CAFAP Spring! We educated and “glammed” 150 foster & adopted teens at our 5th Annual Avenue of Dreams/ Prom Dress Giveaway event at The Riverhouse (beautiful venue!) in Haddam. We also had a very successful 2-day, 19th Annual, CAFAP Conference at the opulent Omni Hotel in New Haven, where we honored 14 special families and 14 DCF social workers for their outstanding efforts this past year in serving our children and youth. (See Pages 4-5) We also distributed Connecticut State Park passes to those families that DCF identified as eligible for the seasonal passes. Several staff and CAFAP board members attended the bi-annual New England Foster Parent Association conference in Burlington, VT. We also had a number of families take part in various “Tons of Fun” events in honor of May being national Foster Care Awareness month. Another fun event was our night with the Connecticut Sun WNBA team to witness their first win of this year’s season at the Mohegan Sun Arena. Go Sun!! Needless to say, we’ve been busy!!

CAFAP linked our web page to the DCF Foster Parent Manual. Check it out! Inform yourselves!! From our Home Page, click on the Resources button at the top right. Then scroll down to Foster Parent Manual.

Stay tuned for information out soon about the Brownstone Water Park in Portland, CT!!



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Communiqué is published in both the English and Spanish language four times a year by the Connecticut Association of Foster and Adoptive Parents, Inc. CAFAP is a non-profit organization devoted to the strengthening of foster, adoptive and relative care providers through support, training, and advocacy with the aim of nurturing child safety, well being and stability in partnership with child welfare professionals and the entire community.

If you would like to contribute information for the next edition of **Communiqué**, Fall 2014, the deadline is September 6, 2014.

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The Association would like to thank the Connecticut Department of Children and Families for the funding we receive.

Foster Care Month Events



CT Sun Basketball Game May 23rd

CAFAP partnered with DCF in being a part of the CT Sun Basketball Game for Foster Care Awareness, where foster, adoptive and kinship families enjoyed a fun-filled game. Commissioner Joette Katz did a 30 second video on National Foster Care Awareness Month that premiered at the game during half time.

Foster and Adoptive families came to the game wearing their "Keep Calm & Foster On" t-shirts in the stands, participated in the fan tunnel and they took a group photo on the court. It was a blast!

Kareemah Muhammad, CAFAP Outreach Coordinator (left) and Deb Candelora (right), CAFAP Meriden liaison, providing information at the CT Sun Basketball Game.

"Ice Cream for A Dream" event on May 9th 2014

The "Waller Family" along with Nykesha Sales from the Connecticut Sun enjoy the festivities!



Upcoming CAFAP Sponsored Summer Events



"Family Bonanza" at Brownstone Park

Saturday, July 19th 2014

CAFAP will have "Family Bonanza II" at Brownstone Exploration and Discovery Park where foster, adoptive and kinship families will receive the Adventure Sports Daily Pass which includes unlimited activities such as:

- Zip lining
- Kayaking
- Swimming
- Inflatable Obstacles
- Rock Climbing
- Waterslide
- Scuba Diving

Registration information will be e-blasted during the last week of June 2014.

Not on our e-list? Please subscribe by visiting <http://www.cafap.com>

2014 Annual CAFAP Conference



CAFAP's 19th Annual Conference "It all About You! Parents Caring For Themselves So They Can Better Care For Connecticut's Children" was held at the Omni Hotel in New Haven on May 2nd and 3rd.

Professor Richard Price (left) was the keynote speaker on Friday and Saturday. Mr. Price is a preacher and motivational speaker whose motto is: "No matter how dark the night, I still believe in the coming of the morning."

There were 368 foster parents, adoptive parents, relative caregivers, DCF staff members and community providers that attended on Friday. On Saturday there were 150 participants including our "Foster Parent Award" winners.

2014 Community Partners

The Connecticut Association of Foster and Adoptive Parents, Inc. recognizes annually several community partner organizations for an outstanding commitment and dedication to our mission. We began offering the "Outstanding Community Partner" award in 2001, and continue to expand our level of support each year. We would like to thank our community partners for their invaluable support that makes our work for children and families possible.

We would like to honor the following 2014 CAFAP Community Partners:

Sandy Marchionni from Unilever
Iron Steeds Motorcycle Club
Rich Minor
Kidsafe of Vernon

N. Windham Home Depot Diversity Action Team
Carriage House Day Care
Northern Belle, LLC – Hartford, CT
Stepping Stones Museum – Norwalk, CT

2014 Partnership Awards for Department of Children and Families Staff

The Connecticut Association of Foster and Adoptive Parent's Social Worker Partnership Recognition Award has been established to celebrate and distinguish outstanding professionals during our Annual CAFAP Conference in honor of National Foster Care Month. We would like to acknowledge DCF professionals who demonstrate their commitment to improving outcomes for children in and out of home care and their families with an emphasis on safety, permanence and well-being.

When selecting our honorees, we consider the following criteria:

- Encourages the development of working community partnerships
- Values community involvement in the decision making
- Views foster families as teammates in the caring for children
- Sees the value in strengthening families
- Understands and supports the goal to develop and maintain the bond of healthy relationships
- Promotes permanency

2014 Annual CAFAP Conference (continued)

We would like to honor the following 2014 Connecticut Department of Children and Families Professionals:

Anita Groballi
Bridgeport Area Office

Allison Alfano
Middletown Area Office

Jeanne Murphy
Norwich Area Office

Marcus Collentine
Danbury Area Office

Natalie Caban
Milford Area Office

Lisa Doran
Torrington Area Office

Glendaly Bermudez
Hartford Area Office

Roxane Charvis
New Britain Area Office

Kelly McGinley-Hurley
Waterbury Area Office

Elizabeth Ferraira
Manchester Area Office

Julie Dixon
New Haven Area Office

Nicole Rapp
Willimantic Area Office

Salvatore M. Garofalo
Meriden Area Office

Cory Bodiker
Norwalk/Stamford Area Office

2014 CAFAP OUTSTANDING FOSTER PARENT AWARDS

Each year, the Connecticut Association of Foster and Adoptive Parents, Inc. takes pride in honoring a select group of outstanding Foster Families who have made a significant difference in the lives of children. We would like to acknowledge Foster Families who demonstrate their commitment to improving outcomes for children in foster care with an emphasis on safety, permanence and well-being.

When selecting our honorees, we consider the following criteria:

- Encourages teamwork and cooperative efforts with DCF
- Views biological parents as teammates in the caring for children
- Sees the value in strengthening families
- Understands and supports the goal to develop and maintain the bond of healthy relationships
- Promotes permanency

We would like to honor the following 2014 OUTSTANDING FOSTER PARENT:

Eartha Fogle
Bridgeport

Mark & Tina Loomis
Middletown

Reginald & Pamela Henderson
Norwich

Bernie & Kara Pfeifer
Danbury

Mary Cooper
Milford

Patrick & Jean Todd
Torrington

David Laboy & Wandaly Ocasio
Hartford

Efrain & Moraima Gonzalez
New Britain

John & Cheryl Stephen
Waterbury

Eric & Linda Lopez
Manchester

Edith Peters
New Haven

Lillian Stone
Willimantic

Christopher & Barbara Jo Crowther
Meriden

Stephane & Pamela Level
Norwalk/Stamford



2014 Connecticut Legislative Session



The Connecticut General Assembly session for 2014 officially closed at midnight on June 5, 2013.

Senate Bill #43, “An Act Concerning Revisions to the Department of Children and Families Statutes” had contained a section that proposed liens on foster homes where modifications were made to house children with physical handicaps. The bill was sent to the Human Services Committee during the bill process, and CAFAP was able to convince the committee members that the lien would be very unfair to foster parents. The Human Services Committee removed the lien section. The final bill #43 did not pass this session.

CAFAP also followed **House Bill # 5224**, An Act Increasing Public Assistance to Grandparents and Other Relatives Raising Children.” This bill did not pass through Appropriations, and died early in the session.

House Bill #5144, An Act Concerning Access to Birth Certificates and Parental Health Information for Adopted Persons,” is now **Public Act 14-133**. This act had many ups and downs during the session as it is an emotional issue. It passed both Houses by large margins after a compromise to open birth certificates after October 1, 1983 when the Termination of Parental Rights Form informed the birth parents that their child could search for them after the age of 18. The initial plan was to re-open the access as it was before 1975, but the compromise will allow time to see how the transition happens. This will allow adoptees over age 18 to have access to their original birth certificates and health information. The Governor Signed the Act on 6/6/14. This Act allows the first requests for birth certificates to be issued after July 1, 2015 for the 24,000 who were adopted after October 1, 1983.

Another act of interest is **House Bill #5374** which is now **Special Act 14-8**, “An Act Implementing the Recommendations of the Legislative Program Review and Investigations Committee’s Study on the Department of Children and Families” as they relate to youth aging out of care. This new law requires DCF to submit reports to the General Assembly on the steps the Department has taken to comply with the recommendations contained in the 2014 Legislative Program Review and Investigations report on services to prepare youths aging out of care.

The budget implementer bill, **House Bill #5597**, passed the last day of the session and contained two sections related to adoption. One section has changes to adoption subsidy. This allows the subsidy to continue to age 21 under the following conditions: the child is 16 at the time of adoption and the adoption occurred after October 1, 2013. At the time the adoptee reaches 18, the parents must provide proof that the child is enrolled in a full-time post-secondary educational program. Another section set up the Baby CHET Scholars Fund for any child born or adopted after January 1, 2014. The parents must sign an agreement with the State Treasurer before the child’s first birthday for the State to establish the fund with a \$100 donation. If the parents deposit \$150 before the child’s fourth birthday, the State will donate another \$150 to the fund.

House Bill #5371 is now **Special Act #14-7**. This Act requires state agencies to make substance abuse treatment available for insured youth in the Department of Children and Families.

Senate Bill #322 “An Act Connecting Public to Behavioral Health Care Services” passed both houses. It requires the Office of the Health Care Advocate to establish an information and referral service, and to report annually to the legislature of identified gaps in services. This was signed by the Governor on 6/6/14.

2014 Connecticut Legislative Session (Continued)

House Bill #5221 “An Act to Review Sentencing of Youths” was an attempt to comply with the new federal standards for youth who are sentenced to long prison terms when under the age of eighteen. This bill was vigorously debated and did not pass.

Two bills regarding school issues that CAFAP was following were **House Bill #5355** and **Senate Bill #415**. **House Bill #5355** proposed a Memorandum of Understanding between schools and the resource officers to improve school climate by further delineating the roles regarding discipline in the schools. **Senate Bill #415** would have added more school-based health centers. Neither of these bills passed.

Federally, CAFAP supported the efforts to continue the Adoption Tax Credit, which was eliminated from proposed tax reform legislation. This issue is not yet resolved in the federal government. A recent bill was raised in the **Senate, S2390**, which would amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to create a tax credit for foster families. Another federal issue being considered for legislation is the overuse of psychotropic medications among children in foster care. We will continue to monitor these bills.

This year is an election year for Connecticut, where the Governor and the legislature will be elected. More than twenty state legislators are retiring or not seeking re-election. This year will be a great opportunity for all of us to question the candidates on their views toward foster/adoption issues, and to vote for those who will represent foster and adoptive parents and relative care-givers. Your vote will count!!

Readers who would like additional information on any of these bills may contact Carolyn Goodridge at Carolyn.goodridge@cafap.com or by calling 869-258-3400.

DCF Soon to Initiate a Quality and Satisfaction Survey of Foster Children Foster and Parents

CAFAP is pleased to announce that DCF has asked CAFAP to partner with its Central Office staff from the Office for Research and Evaluation (ORE) in interviewing children and their caregivers. Commissioner Katz established the performance expectation, improve quality and satisfaction rate of foster home placements, to achieve the goal of Improve permanency outcomes for children in placement. ORE created a survey to examine the quality and satisfaction among foster children age 8 years and older and their foster parents. ORE hopes to begin interviews during the summer. CAFAP staff will team with ORE staff to conduct these interviews. Children and their caregivers will be selected at random to participate in the survey. All individual responses will be strictly confidential; i.e., no DCF employee will identify which child or caregiver gave which answers. The sincere hope is that the experts (the children and their caregivers) will honestly share their opinions in an effort to identify levels of quality and satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the services provided by the Department and service providers. CAFAP and DCF have pledged that aggregated results will be shared statewide.

As many of our readers know, CAFAP has conducted an annual satisfaction survey for many, many years for DCF. This is the first year that DCF has endeavored to create a scientifically sound study and devoted resources to statistical analysis. CAFAP applauds the Department for this measure of support for those living in foster care.

We will update our readers on the progress of this project in our Fall newsletter. Stay tuned!

Caregiver Support Team (CST)

Goal:

To prevent disruption of placements and increase stability and permanency through timely in-home interventions.

Target Population:

Children, ages 0-18 years of age, currently in kinship, foster or pre-adoptive living arrangements and at risk of placement disruption; exceptions case-by-case for older adolescents active with DCF through age 21. Targets kinship families and replaces the Foster and Adoptive Support Team (FAST) service.

There are different providers throughout the state.

Service description:

In-home caregiver support services for DCF kinship, foster and pre-adoptive families which includes an assessment of service needs looking at:

- ✦ Dynamics of the family system and impact of placement on all family members.
- ✦ Impact of intergenerational trauma on the family system.
- ✦ Tangible supports required to facilitate placement.
- ✦ Family and child readiness for permanency including grief and loss related issues.
- ✦ Budgeting needs.
- ✦ Factors required for caregiver to successfully ensure child's participation in school, medical provider and other community settings.
- ✦ Families' understanding of the basics of department operations and other social service agencies' involvement.
- ✦ Parents' level of engagement in the placement relationship.
- ✦ Barriers to foster parents co-parenting with birth parents.
- ✦ Impact of intergenerational trauma on child's development, including behavioral implications.
- ✦ Immediate and longer-term service needs.

The service will:

- ✦ Support plan development for the child and family addressing issues identified during assessment.
- ✦ Create a sustainable plan for connection to birth parent and siblings.
- ✦ Cultivate family's continuing natural supports.
- ✦ Train caregiver to address issues identified during assessment.
- ✦ Provide monthly documentation of assessments and services to the child and family's social workers.
- ✦ Support transportation needs.
- ✦ Refer families to additional services when a particular expertise is required and/or services are required beyond the duration of this service.

Referrals are through DCF gatekeepers. The length of service is up to six months with extensions approved by FASU Program Manager for a specific period of time for no more than three months. Hours are 7:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. with flexibility to meet individual family needs, 24/7 emergency coverage.

Note: While this does replace FAST, CST is more focused on the family, while FAST was more focused on the child.

Submitted by DCF – Prepared by Wheeler Clinic

Ten Things that Youth Want Child Welfare Professionals to Know: Engaging Youth in Foster Care

Project LIFE, a partnership of United Methodist Family Services with and funded by Virginia Department of Social Services, held a state-wide conference on permanency in October 2013. During the conference, adopted youth and youth in foster care shared their experiences and developed their ideas into tips for child welfare workers. This “National Resource Center for Permanency and Family Connections” resource highlights their recommendations for workers when engaging youth in foster care.

1. It is important to me that I take ownership of my future by helping to create my case plan.
 - ✚ Ask if my plan works for me before changing to it. Allow me to be proactive and involved, using my expertise and knowledge about my own life and relationships.
 - ✚ As we work together in pursuing my goals and aspirations and make important decisions about my life together, I will learn invaluable skills that will help to ensure my success once I leave care.
2. Remember that frequent, consistent, and comfortable communication is paramount to the success of healthy relationship building.
 - ✚ If possible, plan our meetings outside of the child welfare agency office or school setting, which will allow me to feel more at ease. When you meet with me at my foster home, make time to talk to me privately and ask me about how things are going at home.
3. Please stay open minded and actively listen to my opinions.
 - ✚ Do your best to understand where I am coming from – don’t just tell me that you can’t help. Try to incorporate my ideas and opinions into our work together.
4. Show me that I can trust you.
 - ✚ Maintain confidentiality to the greatest extent possible. When you have to share information about me, talk to me about it beforehand. Keep me updated about information that affects me.
5. Understand that I make mistakes just like everyone else.
 - ✚ Remember that my mistakes don’t define me – they are a part of my learning and development process.
6. Communicate with me as early as possible about changes that will impact me (such as a stipend ending, etc.).
 - ✚ Help me to plan for how to manage those changes.
7. Talk to me and act in a way that shows me that you respect me.
 - ✚ Get to know me. Keep in mind that sometimes I feel like I am dismissed, treated like a “piece of paper”, or judged unfairly because I am in foster care.
8. Engage me in solving problems.
 - ✚ Talk about my problems with me and in front of me. Include me in the conversation. Be aware of power dynamics – avoid bribing me or overpowering me.
9. Remain genuine with me.
 - ✚ The more open, honest, and relatable you are to me, the more comfortable and engaged I will be in our work together.
10. You are not only my social worker but an adult that I consider a role model.
 - ✚ I want to learn from you and your experiences. Your advice, guidance, and feedback will help me make my own positive decisions and plans.

For more information visit <http://www.nrcpfc.org>

U.S. Department of Education Releases Guidance to Improve Educational Outcomes of Children and Youth in Foster Care

Washington, DC - Today the U.S. Department of Education is releasing resources to emphasize and support the needs of foster care students. In addition to new guidance, ED has launched a dedicated web page, Students in Foster Care, and issued a joint letter with the U.S. Department of Health Human Services to education authorities about increasing educational stability for children and youth in foster care.

The guidance released today will make it easier for caseworkers, child welfare agencies and tribal organizations responsible for the placement and care of children and youth in foster care to have direct access to their education records. The guidance provides states with information to implement the Uninterrupted Scholars Act (USA), an amendment to The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). It also details the amendment's impact on the confidentiality provisions in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). The guidance will help states improve educational and developmental outcomes for students in foster care by providing authorized agencies with access to the records they need to meet the early intervention or educational needs of the students.

“This guidance is part of our efforts to raise awareness of the needs of this vulnerable student population. When a child is removed from their family and placed in out-of-home care the disruption is extraordinary. Many have to change schools once or sometimes several times,” said U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan. “This guidance will help lessen the impact of these disruptions and help provide students in foster care with educational stability, by making their school records accessible to those in charge of their care. We also hope it will shine a light on the benefit of these students staying in their schools and within an education community that can support them through a difficult period.”

The USA amends FERPA in the following two ways:

First, it permits educational agencies and institutions to disclose students' education records to authorized child welfare agency representatives and tribal organizations.

Second, the USA also allows educational agencies and institutions to disclose students' education records to authorized child welfare agency representatives and tribal organizations following a judicial order, without requiring additional notice to the parent.

ED is working with the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to provide new resources to support educators and child welfare professionals in their work to improve the well-being of students in foster care. ED and HHS released a letter advising local educational and child welfare agencies to coordinate efforts to ensure the educational stability of students in foster care under the Fostering Connections Act.

ED also launched the Students in Foster Care webpage this week, which provides information on important laws, guidance and technical assistance materials.

The new guidance, letter and web page are just three of ED's continuing efforts to improve outcomes for children and youth in foster care. The Department has also worked to raise awareness of the impact of the Uninterrupted Scholars Act on the IDEA.

The Obama administration believes that if we can improve the lives of the most vulnerable students, it will lead to better outcomes for all students.

Written By: Imperial Valley News - Created on Monday, 02 June 2014 20:21

For more information go to <http://www2.ed.gov/about/inits/ed/foster-care/index.html>

Did You Know That There Is A Way For CAFAP To Benefit From Your Online Purchases?

There are currently three ways that CAFAP can receive a donated percentage from your online purchases. All three are free to sign up for. Choose The Connecticut Association of Foster and Adoptive Parents, Inc. as your charity.

Amazon Smile - <https://smile.amazon.com>

- Amazon donates 0.5% of the price of your eligible AmazonSmile purchases to the charitable organization of your choice.
- AmazonSmile is the same Amazon you know. Same products, same prices, same service.
- Support your charitable organization by starting your shopping at smile.amazon.com.



iGive.com - <http://www.igive.com>

- iGive really is as simple as it sounds.
- iGive members can generate donations by shopping at any of our 1,400+ Stores.
- Signup for the e-Newsletter that contains special deals.
- There are no costs, obligations, nor any hidden fees.



Solude Coffee - www.soludecoffee.com/cafap

- LOVE COFFEE? CAFAP has recently partnered with Solude Coffee, a coffee company based out of Norwalk, CT, making fresh air roasted coffee that is made to order. Solude Coffee is offering CAFAP 20% of coffee purchases made by customers who identify CAFAP as their cause of choice.

