

FALL 2025

COMMUNIQUE

CONNECTICUT ALLIANCE OF FOSTER & ADOPTIVE FAMILIES



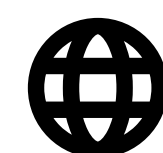
Contact Us



(860) 258-3400



info@cafafct.org



<https://cafafct.org/>



2189 Silas Deane Highway, Suite 2
Rocky Hill, CT 06067

Communiqué is published in both English and Spanish language four times a year by the Connecticut Alliance of Foster and Adoptive Families, Inc.

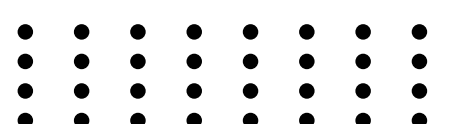


Table of Contents

Page 2- From the Desk of the Executive Director

Page 3- Support, Training, Advocacy, Retention, and Recruitment (STARR)

Page 4- Become a Buddy

Page 5- Advocacy & Support services

Page 6- CAFAF 2026 Avenue of Dreams

Page 7- CAFAF Outside the Office

Page 8- National Night Out 2025

Page 9- In the Community

Page 10- A Journey of Love and Resilience: Emilio Vargas Shares His Story

Page 11- CAFAF Events

Page 12- Donations

Page 13 & 14- Cake4Kids

Page 15- Bikes For Kids

From the Desk of the Executive Director



Fall 2025

Happy Fall! Where did the summer go?

CAFAF continues to celebrate our 30th birthday throughout the year. We had a terrific turnout for our 2025 annual conference in May at the Mystic Marriott and splurged with a delicious meal, great music and dancing and a successful silent auction with the proceeds going to our Children's Hope Fund. The Hope Fund is a 100% donor-driven fund to defray the cost of expenses for non-DCF reimbursed activities that children thrive upon. Current foster, adoptive and relative caregivers are welcome to apply.

We hope that many of the families that we serve were able to get to Milford this summer for the Fun-Box bounce extravaganza! Our thanks go to the owners, staff and volunteers with Fun-Box for giving foster and adoptive families a dedicated day to enjoy the fun!

We've begun planning for our 2026 prom-readiness event known as Avenue of Dreams. We will be back at Mystic Marriott on March 14, 2026. Please mark your calendars. Also, if you know anyone who is proficient in hair styling (including barbers), make-up, alterations, please suggest that they contact Krystal.Hernandez@cafafct.org.

Krystal has organized several activities for families this fall. Please watch your email for upcoming details.

We've almost landed a venue for our May 2026 annual conference on May 1-2, 2026. Stay tuned!

We hope that you and your families enjoy the fall weather as long as it lasts, enjoy the outside and prepare for the changing weather.

Margaret Doherty
Executive Director

2 Fall 2025

Board of Directors

President

Joseph Montalvo

Vice President

Cathy Gentile-Doyle

Secretary/Treasurer

Michael Burns

Director

Kally Moquete-Gonzalez

Director

Preston Oliver

Director

Miranda Davis

Are you
interested in
joining our
board of
directors?

Visit [this link](#) to
learn more!

Support, Training, Advocacy, Retention, and Recruitment (STARR)

CAFAF Staff

- Margaret Doherty | Executive director
- Astrid Turmeque | Executive Administrative Assistant | Office (860) 258-3400 | Cell (860) 822-9191

Intake, Outreach, & Training

- Vanessa Williamson | Program Director | (860) 882-3917
- Rochelle Callender | Training Program Coordinator | (860) 882-9708
- Krystal Hernandez | Outreach Coordinator | (860) 882-8134
- Jennifer Rivera | Retention Specialist | (860) 882-9063
- Ebony Mitchell | Kid Hero Program Assistant | (860) 882-9718
- Amarylis Rodriguez | Kid Hero Program Assistant | (860) 882-2976

Advocacy & Support Services

- Diane Orlando | Program Director
- Sheree Breeden | Regional Liaison-Bridgeport | Work (203) 384-5602 | Cell (860) 882-9923
- Dora Poma | Regional Liaison-Danbury | Work (203) 207-5270 | Cell (860) 882-8470
- Lisa Ortiz | Regional Liaison-Harford | Work (860) 418-8209 | Cell (860) 882-9031
- Debbie Candelora | Regional Liaison-Merriden | Work (203) 238-8502 | Cell (860) 882-8226
- Kyle Ohlund | Regional Liaison-Manchester | Work (860) 533-3631 | Cell (860) 882-2940
- Brian Candelora | Regional Liaison-Middletown | Work (860) 638-2138 | Cell (860) 882-2011
- Marian Russo | Regional Liaison-Milford | Work (203) 786-0681 | Cell (860) 882-9075
- Sheyla Ortiz-Caraballo | Regional Liaison-New Britain | Work (860) 832-5466 | Cell (860) 882-3103
- Samantha Heltke | Regional Liaison-New Haven | Work (203) 306-5325 | Cell (860) 882-2511
- Leslie Reyes | Regional Liaison-Norwalk | Work (860) 899-1419 | Cell (860) 882-2164
- Deanna Martinez | Regional Liaison-Norwich | Work (860) 885-2418 | Cell (860) 882-9202
- Jennifer Bellamy | Regional Liaison-Torrington | Work (860) 496-5767 | Cell (860) 882-7814
- Emilio Vargas | Regional Liaison-Waterbury | Work (203) 759-7009 | Cell (860) 882-2412
- Emily Churchill | Regional Liaison-Willimantic | Work (860) 450-2052 | Cell (860) 882-7107
- Wendy Sander | Peer Network/Helpline Coordinator | Work (860) 258-3400 | Cell (860) 882-9944

BECOME A BUDDY!

Are you an experinced foster parent?

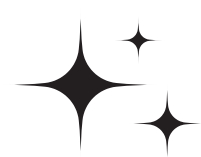
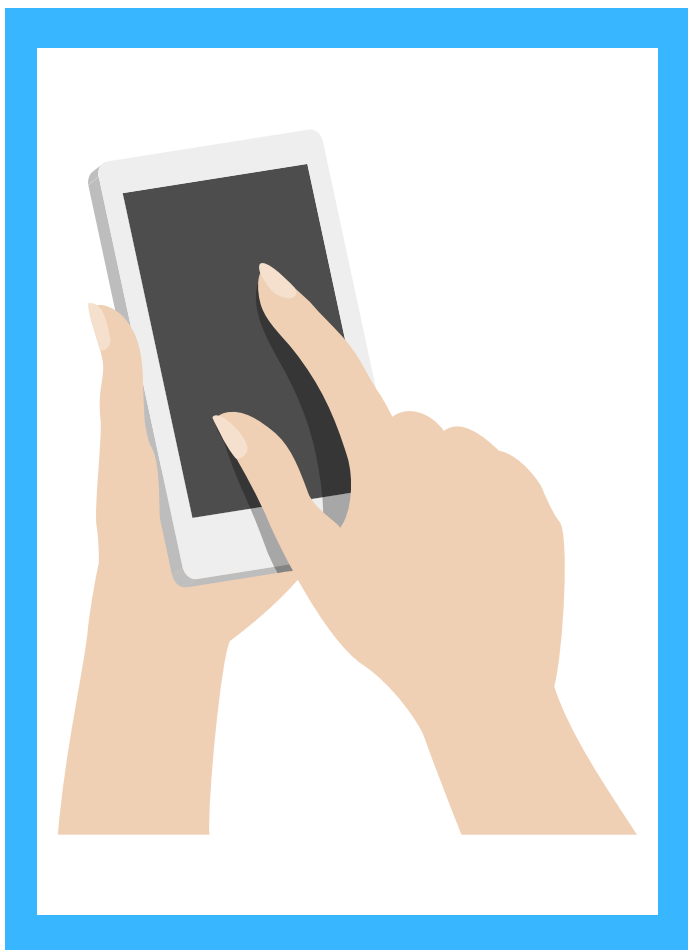


When you were newly-licensed, do you remember all the questions you had when your first foster child came into your home?

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 experinces as me?”

If you remember all these times, then you might enjoy supporting newly licensed foster parents.



To learn more about becoming a **CAFAF Buddy**, call the Buddy Coordinator at the number below! (Training and stipend are provided)



Do you feel like you need the support from a CAFAF Buddy?

You can call the Buddy Coordinator at the number below to ask about getting a CAFAF Buddy assigned to you for support.

Call Wendy Sander
Buddy Coordinator
(860) 258-3400



4 Fall 2025



CAFAF Liaisons with
Program Director Diane
Orlando

ADVOCACY & SUPPORT SERVICES

Do you know who your CAFAF liaison is?

Our CAFAF liaisons are
located in each of the
DCF offices around the
state of CT

You can find their contact information
on our website:

<https://cafafct.org/about-us/board-staff/>

- Bridgeport
- Danbury
- Hartford
- Meriden
- Manchester
- Middletown
- Milford
- New Britain
- New Haven
- Norwalk
- Norwich
- Torrington
- Waterbury
- Willimantic

CAFAF 2026 Avenue of Dreams



Avenue of

Dreams 2026

March 14, 2026

Mystic Marriott



Prom Dresses & Tuxedos

Shoes & Accessories

Professional Hair & Make-Up



Krystal.Hernandez@cafafct.org

860-882-8134

6 Fall 2025

CAFAF Outside the Office



CAFAF Liaisons Dora Poma and Leslie Reyes attended the 1st Annual Love our Community Event in Danbury hosted by Nees Enterprise!



CAFAF Liaison Deanna Martinez at the Meetinghouse Rocks Fair in Norwich!



CAFAF Norwich Liaison Deanna Martinez in the concourse of CT Sun (Mohegan Sun Arena) for their Hometown Heroes Game on July 6th 2025!



CAFAF attended the CREC back to school bash



CAFAF staff Diane Orlando and Deanna Martinez representing CAFAF at the Family Focused Treatment Association (FFTA) conference in New Orleans!



CAFAF Liaisons Leslie Reyes and Emilio Vargas at the Healthy Kids Day in Waterbury!



Farm Day at Fish family Farms in Bolton, CT. Thank you to the Lutz Museum for inviting us to be a vendor at their yearly fundraiser!



CAFAF staff Deanna Martinez & Diane Orlando were apart of the Bags of Hope bike ride early August.



National Night Out 2025



CAFAF was at the National Night Out for Middlefield /Durham, Stamford, Norwich, Meriden, Willimantic and Rocky Hill.



8 Fall 2025

In the Community



Check us out on the back of the Rocky Hill High School's apparel!

We're proud to support our local teens and community!



CT Fosters held a Community Spotlight post in the CT Sun Game Day: Know Before You Go for their game on September 1, 2025. You can add that Region 3 (Norwich, Willimantic and Middletown) families attended the game for our End of Summer event.

9 Fall 2025



COMMUNITY SPOTLIGHT

CT Fosters is seeking Caregivers for children in foster care in Connecticut that are separated from their parents. The children come from every background, every community and are every age! Each child needs safe, loving, and supportive caregivers willing to provide care until they can return to their family. In some situations, if reunification is not possible, children need someone willing to permanently adopt them into their family. If you are interested in learning more about this journey visit their website [here](https://www.ctfosters.com).

A Journey of Love and Resilience: Emilio Vargas Shares His Story



Book Creciendo a la Par: Crónicas de una Familia Inesperada. The first Foster Care book written in Spanish from a father's perspective, launched August 22, with a full house book launch party and sold 397 books on its debut reaching the #6 position globally in Amazon rankings. This book will be available in English September 26, 2025.



10 Fall 2025

CAFAF Events



Nature Painting at Dino State Park! The kids had a blast!

Thank you to those who joined us at our Back-to-School event! We loved seeing the excitement and joy as families came together to kick off the school year.



Fostering Family Hope and CAFAF joint Planting a Flower event with some special guests at the Lutz Children's Museum.



Mapleview Health and Rehab Center & CAFAF intergenerational ice cream social!

CAFAF at Funbox 2025!



11 Fall 2025

Donations



Thank you to HOUZPITAL
for their generous
donation of goodies!



Thank you to the individuals
who donated these
handmade children's
blankets!



Thank you to Let's Refoster
Care and Hartford Hospital
for the kind donation of
winter gear!



Thank you to the Montage in Rocky Hill for
their creative box of donated school supplies!



Thank you to all
donors and
sponsors for the
items towards our
back-to-school
event!



12 Fall 2025



They bake cakes for the following events:

- **Birthdays**
- **Graduations**
- **Adoptions**
- **Academic Awards**
- **Biological Parent Reunifications**

Cake4Kids provides free cakes, cupcakes, cookies, bars, and brownies for foster children ages 1-24



IMPORTANT

Please note that desserts are ONLY delivered to the CAFAF office. It is up to the guardian to arrange pickup.

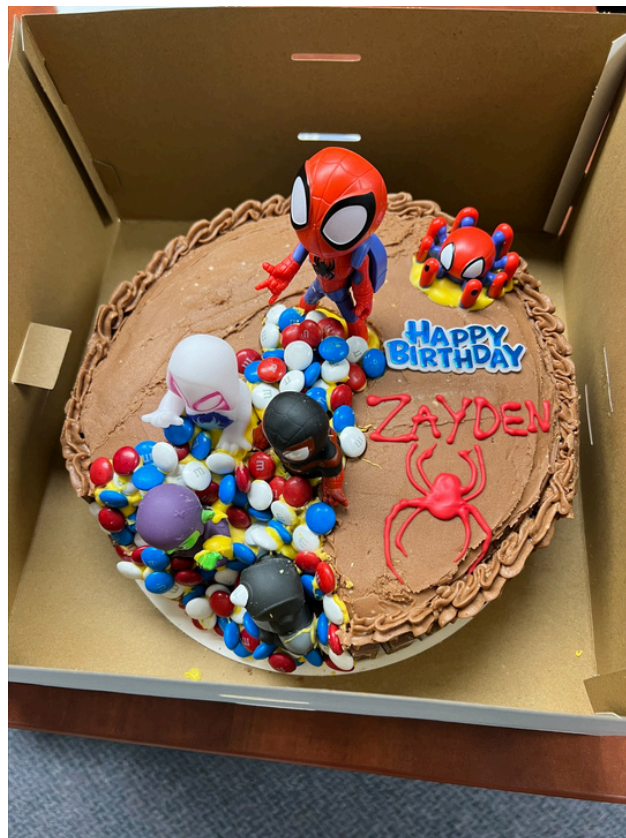
To request an order form, please contact Krystal Hernandez at:



krystal.hernandez@cafafct.org



CAFAF would like to give a huge shout out to Cake4Kids! Cake4Kids has been providing amazing cakes for our foster and adoptive families. Here is a sample of cakes they have made.



bikes for Kids

Located in Essex, CT

Learn more at
www.bikesforkidsct.org

They repair donated
bikes to later give these
bikes away with a helmet
for children



The Connecticut Alliance of Foster
and Adoptive Families thanks the
Department of Children and Families
for its suppporting and funding!



Happy Fall from the
CAFAF family!