



Connections

La Crosse County
Human Services Dept.

Volume 8, Issue 5

May is National Foster Care Month!

2006

Thank You, Foster Parents!

May is National Foster Care Month, a time to honor America's more than 142,000 foster families and over 518,000 children in foster care. Locally we have approximately 100 foster families and 130 foster children in care.

La Crosse County wants to take this opportunity to thank our foster families for the work they do caring for our children and their families.

La Crosse County foster families not only provide temporary homes, safety, and nurturing to children, but they also help birth families by ensuring that children can be safely reunited with them. And, when reunification is not possible, many of our families choose to adopt the children who have been placed in their homes, offering permanency and stability the children would otherwise not know.

The commitment of our foster families leaves an indelible mark on generations to come. They are helping to end the cycles of neglect and abuse and helping the children accomplish personal goals.

Foster parents do not get nearly enough thanks or recognition for their efforts but we appreciate all they do. Thank you for sharing your families and your homes, giving love, encouragement, and hope to children and families in need.

Please remember to mark your calendar for The Foster Parent Appreciation Banquet which will be held on September 21, 2006 at Drugan's supper club. This is our chance to say "Thank You" for your contribution to foster care.





Welcome New Foster Parents

Submitted by Will Herber

Please welcome Monika and Donald Scott to the foster care community. The Scott's live on the South side of La Crosse with their three children. Monika owns and operates a day care out of her home. She and her husband are both licensed child care providers. In her spare time Monika enjoys singing karaoke. Maybe a headliner at one of this year's foster care events? Monika comes into foster care with prior experience as a foster parent for adolescents in the state of Utah. She and her husband are interested in receiving adolescent boys into their home for ongoing foster care. The Scotts will be taking PACE in the near future so please welcome them if you should see them at that training or other future foster care events.

Please welcome Susan and Philip Clements to the foster care community. The Clements live near Bangor with their five children. They have been licensed child treatment foster care providers with PATH for the past several years and have cared for many foster children during that time. Both parents hope to continue to provide a beneficial service to the children in need of foster care. The Clements typically take in adolescent boys or girls and they hope to continue with this age range of children. Susan hopes to remain active in the foster care community as she has been in the past within the treatment foster care network. When you see these foster parents at the up-and-coming foster care events or other trainings, please welcome them.

Upcoming Training Opportunities

Foster Parent Training *Human Services Basement Auditorium*

Topic: Diffusing Crisis Safely and Sanely

Presented by Will Herber and Dawn Miller

Tuesday, May 9th from 6:00-8:00 PM.

Workshops at Family Resources *1500 Green Bay St., La Crosse*



- Things To Do Out In the Blue
The children are out of school and summer days are looming, what can we do to keep busy, stay connected and have fun? Let's discuss everything from on-the-spot activities to one-day trips around the community.
Presented by: Judy Bissen, Licensed Teacher/Child Development Consultant
Thursday, June 8th from 6:30-8:00 PM
- Shopping Smart At the Grocery Store
Choices...choices...choices! Families often feel pinched when it comes to having enough money to feed their children well. Come discover helpful strategies for finding the best prices for the healthiest meals and snacks.
Presented by: Mary Hoeft-Leithold and Kathy Gunderson, Nutrition Educators - WNEP
Thursday, June 22nd from 6:30-8:00 PM
- New Book Discussion Group
Come talk about a book on overindulgence, "How Much Is Enough?" Child care available. Limited enrollment.
Wednesdays, May 17th, 24th, and 31st from 6:30-8:00 PM.

To register for any of these workshops, or for more information, call Family Resources at (608) 784-8125.

Enclosed is a **Parental Permission for Release of Child Information** form. If any of your foster children will be participating in an upcoming parade, please remember to have this form completed.



Don't forget ~ The **Onalaska Sunfish Days Parade** is **Saturday, May 27th at noon** and the **West Salem June Dairy Days Parade** is **Saturday, June 3rd at noon.**

If you'd like to be in one of the upcoming parades, call Rhonda Rude at 789-4834.



History Of Foster Care In The United States

as taken from the National Advocate

Some of the earliest documentation of children being cared for in foster homes can be found in the Old Testament and in the Talmud. These references establish caring for dependent children as a duty under law. Early Christian church records also show children were boarded with "worthy widows" who were paid by collections from the congregation.

It was the English Poor Law, however, that led to development and eventual regulation of family foster care in the United States. In 1562, these laws allowed the placement of poor children into indentured service until they came of age. This practice was imported to the United States and was the beginning of placing children into homes. Even though indentured service permitted abuse and exploitation, it was a step forward from alms houses where children did not learn a trade and were exposed to horrendous surroundings and unsavory adults. Various forms of indenturing children persisted into the first decade of this century.

In 1636, less than thirty years after the founding of the Jamestown Colony, at the age of seven, Benjamin Eaton became this nation's first foster child.

In 1853, Charles Loring Brace began the free foster home movement. A minister and director of the New York Children's Aid Society, Brace was concerned about the large number of immigrant children sleeping in the streets of New York. He devised a plan to provide them homes by advertising in the south and west for families willing to provide free homes for these children, whether for charitable reasons or for whatever help these children could be to them. In many cases these children were placed in circumstances similar to indenture. However, Brace's daring and creative action became the foundation for the foster care movement as it exists today.

As a result of the New York Children's Aid Society's placements, sectarian social agencies and state governments became involved in foster home placements. Three states led the movement. Massachusetts, prior to 1865, began paying board to families who took care of children too young to be indentured. Pennsylvania passed the first licensing law in 1885 which made it a misdemeanor to care for two or more unrelated children without a license. South Dakota began providing subsidies to the Children's Home Society after it was organized in 1893 for its public child care work.

During the early 1900's, social agencies began to supervise foster parents. Records were kept, children's individual needs were considered when placements were made, and the federal government began supporting state inspections of family foster homes. Services were provided to natural families to enable the child to return home and foster parents were now seen as part of a professional team working to find permanency for dependent children.

Let me introduce myself...

My name is Sharon McHugh and I will now be doing Bev Trussoni's job as she has moved to a Social Worker position in Clinical Services. I'm originally from Hartford, WI and graduated from UW-L in December 2005 with a degree in Psychology. During my last semester, I did an internship in the Alternate Care Unit and got to experience many aspects of the foster care system. Some of you may know me from the PACE classes I attended Tuesday nights. During my internship, I also took over putting together these newsletters and will continue to do so in my new position.

I'm quickly learning that Bev really had her hands full with all the things she had been involved in, but so far I'm enjoying the experience and the challenge.. In addition to the newsletters, I will be working with the respite homes, doing respite re-licensing, and tracking respite hours used (so please send your respite forms to me from now on!) For those of you who do emergency foster care, you may be hearing from me when I put together the monthly schedule. I also work with social workers and supervisors from other units doing a variety of duties such as receiving reports of child abuse and neglect, taking referrals for children with special needs, participating as a member of the Drug Endangered Children's committee, and updating the Family & Children's Section website.

I'm looking forward to working with you and seeing you at upcoming events; I think the care you all provide for the foster children in our community is really inspiring!

Is there anything you'd like to contribute to our newsletter?

Parenting tips or advice?

Ideas for fun family activities?

News of upcoming trainings or special events?

Recipes?

Poems?

Quotes?

Personal experiences?

Inspirational stories?

Interesting articles you've come across?

Book or movie recommendations?

If there's anything you feel is worth sharing with the rest of the foster care community, please submit your ideas by mail, phone, or email to:

Sharon McHugh

La Crosse County Human Services

300 N. 4th St.

La Crosse, WI 54601

mchugh.sharon@co.la-crosse.wi.us

(608) 785-6056

Help educate, support, and encourage each other!

BARNES & NOBLE has invited us to be a part of their summer reading program. Enclosed is a reading journal with instructions on how to participate. If you need more journals, you can photocopy a blank form or pick some up at Barnes & Noble on Hwy 16 in La Crosse.



**Foster Care & Adoption
Resource Center**

Looking for information on Foster Care or Adoption? Visit us at our webpage:

www.wifostercareandadoption.org

or you may feel free to contact the resource center at our toll free number: 1-800-947-8074

or via email:

info@wifostercareandadoption.org



All I Ask

The phone call came...a child needed me.....
could we bring him right over...he's right here you see.
His mother and father have left him alone.....
they've been gone for two days and haven't come home.
Or, they're drunk and fighting or have hurt him somehow.....
it doesn't matter to me, just bring him right now.

The door bell chimes and I open it wide.....
as I see his brave face and the fear he can't hide.....
I reach into my heart to that special little place,
where I've saved love not spent, compassion and grace.
I kneel down and meet him eye to eye,
you're safe, you're not alone, it's OK to cry.

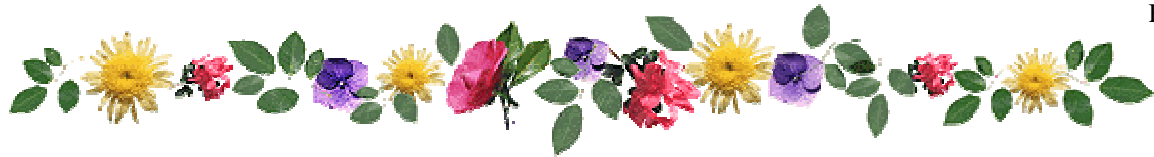
When the worker left and the door gently closed.....
I looked at this child in my arms as he dozed.
All worn out from the chaos of his day.....
we'll work it all out, for his sake, some way.
I laid him gently down on a soft, clean bed.....
I put a freshly washed teddy right next to his head.

No favorite blanket, no special little toy.....
how sad life must be for this scared little boy.
I said a quiet prayer as I sat by his bed.....
as a few of my own tears, quietly I shed.
Give me the knowledge, the compassion and the wisdom to do.....
what I can for this little child to help him pull through.

Life won't be easy and it can get pretty tough.....
I'm always afraid that I can't do enough.
But I'll do my best for each little child you send.....
I'll be a mother and father and sometimes a friend.
I'll cuddle, I'll listen, I'll guide and I know.....
that there'll come a time when I'll need to let go.

But while he's here in my home and my heart.....
I'll try to make it easier with his family pulled apart.
I'll show compassion to his mom and to his dad.....
I don't know what kind of upbringing they've had.
Help me to be up to each and every task.....
help me to be enough for him, that's all I ask.

Janet Gomez
Foster Parent



May 12th . . . a day to honor mothers and everything they've taught us...

How To Become An Adult

"If you don't eat your vegetables, you'll never grow up."

Justice

"One day you'll have kids, and I hope they turn out just like you."

Stamina

"You'll sit there until all that spinach is gone."

Logic

"Because I said so, that's why."

Wisdom

"When you get to be my age, you'll understand."

To Value A Job Well Done

"If you're going to kill each other, do it outside. I just finished cleaning."

Foresight

"Make sure you wear clean underwear, in case you're in an accident."

Anticipation

"Just wait until we get home."





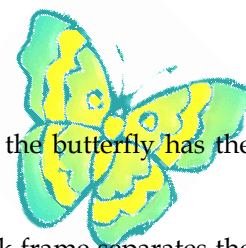
What Do You Mean By

Down Syndrome: Also known as Trisomy 21, children with Down Syndrome have an extra chromosome in every cell. The number 21 chromosome does not separate properly, resulting in Down Syndrome. It is one of the most common birth defects and affects all sexes, races, classes, and nationalities. Your child's appearance may be different from other children's, he may have unique medical difficulties and will most likely have a varying degree of mental retardation.

Tourette's Syndrome: A disorder characterized by involuntary, sudden, rapid and recurrent movement or vocalization. Common motor tics are eye-blinking, neck-jerking, shoulder-shrugging and facial grimacing. Vocal tics can include repeated coughing, throat clearing, grunting, sniffing, snorting, barking and swearing. Certain drugs have allowed dramatic improvement in some patients.

Excerpted from Adopt! January 2005. Published by Adoption Resources of Wisconsin.

Reflections on Butterflies in Foster Care (continued from back page)



Light Blue. The dreams the butterfly has and the places it wants to go and see. This is why the butterfly has the power of flight – if it did not have a vision, there would be no need to fly.

Black. The wings on the butterfly are embedded with a strong black frame and body. The black frame separates the different experiences from one another and gives the butterfly the strength to fly.

Adolescents in the foster care system are butterflies, all of whom have experienced different events in their lives to become the people they are today. All the colors of their wings, combined with the strength of their body and the support from others, creates their resilience. It is mesmerizing that there are so many butterflies flying beautifully throughout the world.

Like a butterfly's wings, the wings of an adolescent in the foster care system are very fragile. They must learn to be careful with their wings. They are susceptible to getting hurt very easily and falling. They must also remember to think situations through while allowing room to experience new things. If the butterfly does not keep going to new places, the butterfly will miss opportunities to see the greener grass, prettier flowers, and meet other butterflies.

These butterflies may fly beside other butterflies, but most are seen flying alone. Some stop and rest often, since the life of a butterfly can be very hard. It is hard work for the butterfly to fly all day searching for places to go.

The butterfly gains energy from the nectar of flowers. My hope and dream is that every foster care butterfly will find the nectar of support and encouragement that he or she needs to be successful in its flight and in its life.

Jessica Salinis, a former foster youth, is now the LINKS coordinator for the department of social services in Yadkin County, North Carolina.

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Shape up old crayons



You will need:

- Several small empty glass jars (one for each color)
- Roaster rack
- Medium-size, shallow saucepan
- Plastic candy mold tray in shapes children like (available at kitchen supply stores)

Mother's Day is May 12th!
Have you thought about something special you can do for your mom or foster mom?

Don't throw away those broken crayons. You don't have to go out and buy new ones, you can "shape up" the old. Remove the paper wrappers from each crayon. Then, break the crayons into small pieces and put them into glass jars, separating colors. Place the jars on the roasting rack in a saucepan filled with enough water to cover $\frac{1}{2}$ " of the jars. Heat the water until the crayons melt.

Do you know the alphabet in sign language?

An adult should carefully pour the melted wax into the plastic candy mold tray. The wax will harden quickly and pop out of the mold easily. For added effect, pour a contrasting color in the mold after the first layer of wax has hardened. This will produce a two-tone crayon.

See if you can sign your own name!

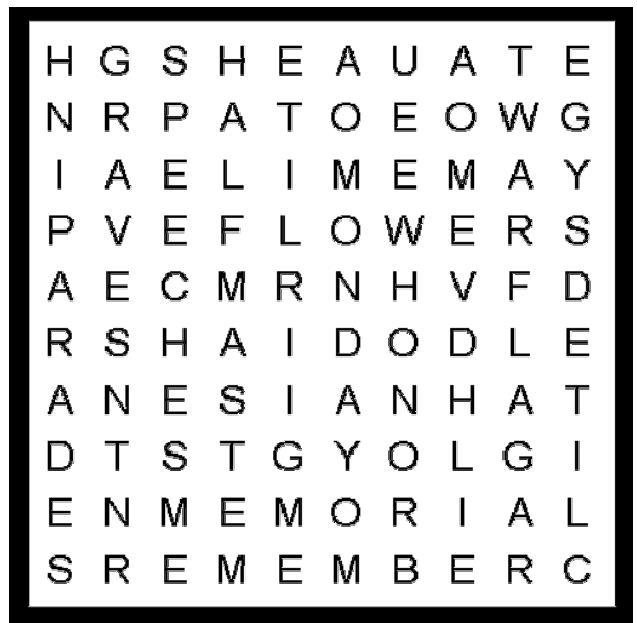
From *More Prime Time Activities with Kids* by Donna Erickson, 1992

What else can you spell?

Memorial Day Word Search

Word List

- | | |
|----------|----------|
| MAY | PARADES |
| FLAG | REMEMBER |
| WAR | SPEECHES |
| MONDAY | GRAVES |
| MEMORIAL | HONOR |
| FLOWERS | HALFMAST |



Celebrate Memorial Day on Monday, May 29th!



By Back Matter 1998

fostering perspectives

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Reflection on Butterflies in Foster Care

by Jessica Salinis



Butterflies are some of the most captivating and beautiful creatures in our environment. They start out as little caterpillars that struggle to get through each day. As nature takes its course, caterpillars develop wings and become beautiful butterflies with the freedom to fly. Adolescents in the foster care system are like butterflies that live with many struggles. The ultimate goal for them is to have a change in their life that will give them their wings of freedom.

Butterflies have many different colors. I am sure I've never seen two butterflies that have the exact same colors in the same places. Adolescents are very similar to butterflies in this respect. They all have shared some of the same experiences and feelings, but in different ways. If I envision teens in foster care as butterflies, the different colors on their wings can easily come to represent different things:

Red. When the butterfly first learned to trust and love. This moment in life is so important for the butterfly's development. Positive relationships with people depend on this experience.

Blue. The butterfly's school experiences. These experiences will mold the butterfly academically and socially for the future.

Green. The butterfly's history with his or her birth family. In my mind, green is captured mostly in the body of the butterfly, near its center. The feelings and events that the butterfly has towards its birth family will be an extremely crucial part of the butterfly's growth. The butterfly may grow and prosper immediately from the positive experiences and memories. Negative experiences, too, are the source of the butterfly's existence, but it takes a significant amount of time for the butterfly to grow from the negative experiences.

Yellow. The butterfly's feelings of loss and grief. These feelings culminate with the butterfly's experiences from its birth family. Together they ignite true growth for the butterfly. As they are very painful feelings, the butterfly learns that it must continue its purpose and continue to fly. In time the loss and grief heal and the butterfly becomes stronger.

Tan. The butterfly's experiences shared with friends. These experiences normalize the life of the butterfly. They give the butterfly the chance to reduce feelings of isolation and enable it to feel self-confident and carefree.

Orange. The butterfly's accomplishments in life. These experiences reconfirm its internal pride. With each challenge it overcomes, the butterfly develops a sense of its own strength.

Purple. The butterfly's love and support from others. The butterfly's success in flight will always depend on the existence of these feelings. The butterfly is very strong and does not depend on many things from people. However, it will always fly back to find comfort in the feelings of love and support. These feelings can easily take away the scary feelings of being empty and alone.