



# Connections



## OCTOBER

La Crosse County  
Human Services

Volume 11, Issue 10  
2009

### HALLOWEEN COSTUME DRIVE

La Crosse County Human Services and Midwest Family Broadcasting are sponsoring a Halloween costume drive for any family or foster parent working with the Family and Children's Section. On **Monday, October 12th** families are invited to come in and select a costume at no cost for the children. Costumes will be available first-come-first-serve from 9am - 5pm in the basement auditorium of the La Crosse County Human Services building.

If you have any new or gently used costumes or accessories that you would like to donate they can be delivered to Rhonda Rude on the 3rd floor of the Human Services building (through October 8th).

If you have any questions call Rhonda Rude at 789-4834.



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**KUDOS** goes to Jenny Sovereign and Denise Green for accepting the challenge of organizing the clothing closet in September. It looks FANTASTIC!!!! Thank you so much for your time and effort.

# Mark Your Calendar!

## SPECIAL EVENTS FOR FOSTER FAMILIES

### Holiday Open House

Thursday, November 19 | Children's Museum, La Crosse

## UPCOMING COMMUNITY EVENTS

### Hmong New Year Celebration

Saturday-Sunday, October 10-11 | Veteran's Memorial Park, Hwy 16, West Salem  
Come celebrate Hmong culture with traditional games, sports tournaments, cultural performances, and food & clothes booths. For more information call (608)781-5744.



### Enchanted Forest

Saturdays & Sundays, Oct. 17, 18, 24, 25 | 12:00-3:00pm | Myrick Hixon EcoCenter

A magical trick-or-treat hike where storybook characters come to life. Hans Mayer will provide entertainment after the hike. Reservations are required. Cost is \$6 per child, \$2 per adult. Call (608)784-0303.

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### Halloween at the YMCA

Sunday, October 25 | 1:00-3:00pm | YMCA-La Crosse, 1140 Main St.

Interactive games, costume contest, crafts, and more. Fun for the whole family. Call (608)782-9622 for more info.

### Safe Trick or Treat

Sunday, October 25 | 3:00-6:00pm | Amie Mathy Center, 811 8th St. S., La Crosse

Games, snacks, a haunted house, and trick-or-treating through Viterbo's dorms. Free. (608)344-0900.

### Ghoulees in the Coulees

Thursday & Friday, October 29 & 30 | 5:30-9:00pm | Norskedalen, Hwy PI, 3 miles north of Coon Valley

1/2 mile hike through pumpkin-lit trails. Fun for kids of all ages (earlier hikes recommended for younger children). Reservations required. \$7 per person (\$8 after Oct. 20). Call (608)452-3424.

### Boo-seum Non-Scary Halloween Party

Friday, October 30 | 5:30-8:00pm | Children's Museum, La Crosse

For ages 2-9 with adult. Register by calling (608)784-2652. \$5 for members/\$7 non members (adults are free).

## TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

### FOUNDATIONS

#### Fall 2009 Session

Saturdays: October 17 | 9:00am-3:30pm | La Crosse County Human Services building—basement auditorium

October 24 | 9:00am-3:30pm

November 7 | 8:30am-4:00pm

November 14 | 8:30am-4:00pm

Trainers are Mike Heal, Suanne Kraft and Richelle Zimmerman. Call Rhonda Rude at (608)789-4834 to sign up.

### LA CROSSE COUNTY FOSTER PARENT TRAININGS

↩ **RSVP for these trainings by calling Rhonda Rude at (608)789-4834.** ↪

#### Working with Challenging Behaviors

Wednesday, October 21 | 6:00-8:00pm | La Crosse County Administrative Center—basement auditorium

This training will provide an overview of services and support provided by La Crosse County's Children with Special Needs Unit, Crisis Intervention Services, and other community resources for children with special needs.

Trainers: Kristi Herold and Sarah Wagner-Barton

# Mark Your Calendar!

## Topic TBA

*Tuesday, November 10 | 6:00-8:00pm | La Crosse County Administrative Center—basement auditorium*

## Foster Parenting the Juvenile Offender

*Thursday, November 12 | 9-11am and 6-8pm | La Crosse County Human Services building—basement auditorium*  
Wayde and Jim will provide a basic summary of the Juvenile Justice system, a description of the type of youth they place, and lead a discussion on roles and responsibilities of all parties involved in the placement.  
Trainers: Wayde Anger and Jim Fox, La Crosse County Juvenile Justice

## First Things First: An Introduction to Initial Assessment

*Tuesday, December 1 | 6:00-8:00pm | La Crosse County Human Services building—basement auditorium*  
This presentation will explain the role and responsibilities of Initial Assessment workers, the course of a case beginning at the point of Access, the referral screening process, screening decisions, response times, and the course of the investigation. There will also be a brief discussion on jurisdiction versus safety.  
Trainer: Serena Breining, La Crosse County Child Protective Services-Initial Assessment

## COMMUNITY TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

*REMEMBER...per policy all training hours earned from outside resources must be pre-approved and verifiable. Be sure to retain a copy of the training certificate, flyer, or agenda.*

## Misbehaving or Missing Sleep?

*Thursday, October 8 | 6:30-8:00pm | Family Resources, 1500 Green Bay St., La Crosse*  
This workshop will focus on sleep needs and offer practical ideas for helping children get the rest they need. Presented by Lois Fredrick, Family Resources parent educator. To register call (608)784-8125.

## 911...Fire Preparation Ready!

*Thursday, October 15 | 6:30-8:00pm | Family Resources, 1500 Green Bay St., La Crosse*  
October is Fire Prevention Month! Come give some worthwhile attention to keep your home and families safe and free from fire. Presented by the La Crosse Fire Department. To register call (608)784-8125.

## Midwest Autism Conference: Putting the Pieces Together — Parent Evening

*Sunday, October 18 | 7:00-8:30pm | La Crosse Center*  
"Getting It Together", presented by Craig and Alyson Beytien of Dubuque, IA.  
Maintaining a relationship can be difficult when a child is diagnosed with autism. The stress of diagnosis, creating treatment and educational plans, negotiating with systems, financial strains, parenting and communication differences, and basic sleep deprivation can impact and change the relationship between loving partners. Married for 22 years and parenting three teenage sons with autism, Craig and Alyson will share their insights, experiences, ideas for staying together, staying focused, and staying happy.  
Cost is \$15. To register or for more conference information visit [www.uwlax.edu/conted/mac/index.html](http://www.uwlax.edu/conted/mac/index.html).

## Wisconsin Foster and Adoptive Parents Association (WFAPA) 2009 Fall Conference

*Friday-Sunday, October 23-25 | AmericInn, Ashland, WI*  
This year's theme is "Back to Basics" in Foster Care. For more information or for a copy of the registration form visit [www.wfapa.org](http://www.wfapa.org). Registration is due by September 23rd. Cost is \$65 per person.

## To Pee or Not to Pee

*Wednesday, November 11 | 10:30am-12:00pm | Children's Museum*  
Learn to recognize the signs of toilet learning readiness, how to proceed, and how to avoid turning it into a major power struggle. Presented by Fran Swift, Family Resources parent educator. To register call (608)784-8125.

## Stewards of Children: Training for Prevention of Child Sexual Abuse

*Thursday, December 3 | 5:30-8:30pm | Family Resources, 1500 Green Bay St., La Crosse*  
Nationally acclaimed training designed to educate adults to prevent, recognize and react responsibly to child sexual abuse. This is recommended for all adults who work with youth. To register call (608)784-8125.

# FLU SEASON IS HERE...STAY INFORMED TO STAY HEALTHY!



The flu (influenza) is an infection of the nose,

throat, and lungs caused by influenza viruses. Flu viruses cause illness, hospital stays and deaths in the United States each year. Novel H1N1 flu is a new and very different influenza virus that is spreading worldwide among people. This new virus was called "swine flu" at first because it has pieces of flu viruses found in pigs in the past. However, novel H1N1 virus has not been detected in U.S. pigs.

The flu can be very serious, especially for younger children and children of any age who have one or more chronic conditions. These conditions include asthma or other lung problems, diabetes, weakened immune systems, kidney disease, heart problems and neurological and neuromuscular disorders. These conditions can result in more severe illness from influenza, including the new H1N1 virus.

Both novel H1N1 flu and seasonal flu are thought to spread mostly from person to person through the coughs and sneezes of people who are sick with influenza. People may also get sick by touching something with flu viruses on it and then touching their mouth or nose. People infected with seasonal flu and H1N1 may be able to infect others from 1 day before getting sick to 5-7 days after. This can be longer in some people with weakened immune systems and in people infected with novel H1N1 flu.

Symptoms of seasonal flu and H1N1 flu include fever, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, body aches, headache, chills and fatigue. Some people may also have vomiting and diarrhea.

If your child is 5 years or older and otherwise healthy and gets flu-like symptoms, consult your doctor as needed and make sure your child gets plenty of rest and drinks enough fluids. If your child is younger than 5, or of any age and has a chronic medical condition, call your doctor or get medical attention. You should call or take your child to the doctor right away if your child is breathing fast or has trouble breathing, has bluish or gray skin color, is not drinking enough fluids, has severe or persistent vomiting, is not waking up or interacting, is so irritable that the child does not want to be held, or if flu-like symptoms improve but then return with fever and worse cough. Any child who is sick should be kept home from school to rest and to avoid giving the flu to other children. Keep your child home from school or day care for at least 24 hours after their fever is gone. (Their fever should be gone without them having taken a fever-reducing medicine). A fever is defined as 100°F (37.8°C).

Antiviral drugs can treat both seasonal flu and the new H1N1 flu. These drugs can make people feel better and get better sooner. But they need to be prescribed by a doctor and they work best when started during the first 2 days of illness. These drugs can be given to children. The priority use for these drugs is to treat people who are

seriously ill or who have a medical condition that puts them at high risk of serious flu complications.

## Here are some tips to help protect you and the children you care for against flu:

- Get a seasonal flu vaccine for yourself and your child. A vaccine against novel H1N1 flu is being produced and will be available in the coming months (for more information about this visit the CDC website at [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov).)
- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw the tissue in the trash after you use it.
- Wash your hands with soap and running water (for as long as it takes to sing the "Happy Birthday" song twice). If soap and water are not available, alcohol-based hand cleaners are also effective.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth. Germs spread this way.
- Instruct the children you are caring for to cover their coughs and to wash their hands frequently.
- Try to keep your children from having close contact (about 6 feet) with sick people, including anyone in the household who is sick.
- Keep surfaces like bedside tables, surfaces in the bathroom, kitchen counters, doorknobs, telephones and toys clean by wiping them with a household disinfectant according to directions on the label.

*SOURCE: "Seasonal and Novel H1N1 Flu: A Guide for Parents", Center for Disease Control*

# fostering perspectives

Sponsored by the NC Division of Social Services and the NC Family and Children's Resource Program



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## Looking for Positive Intent

by Jeanne Preisler

Have the children you worked with ever displayed emotions or behaviors such as anger, sadness, confusion, or defiance? Probably. They may have even displayed all of these at once! It is natural to each of us to experience these feelings during difficult times. It is one way we process grief. But without understanding why these emotions or behaviors exist, it is almost impossible to deal with them!

It is normal to attribute intent to the behavior of others – we all do it countless times each day without even knowing it. Often, we will never find out if we were right in those assumptions. For example, if someone cuts in front of me in line without saying “excuse me,” I might conclude they are rude and inconsiderate, or I might think they have a sick child and are anxious to get home.

Most of us tend to think of the negative intent before we think of a positive one.

Have you ever wondered why your social worker hasn't called you back? Is it because they do not want to talk with you, are avoiding you, or just don't care about their job? Or is it because they just dealt with a case involving horrible abuse and they need some time to regain composure before going about their other duties?

Similarly, young people do not wake up in the morning and think, “I'm going to drive my foster parents crazy today!” They are dealing with situations and emotions they may not yet have the skills to communicate about. While shopping, your daughter may smell cologne on a stranger that triggers a memory of her abuser, causing her to behave strangely in the store. Your son may be acting out at school because a classmate is calling him names his stepfather used to call him.

The challenge is to not automatically assume negative intent behind behaviors.

*Jeanne Preisler is a former North Carolina foster parent.*

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# OCTOBER IS FIRE PREVENTION MONTH

Has it been a while since you've reviewed your fire escape plan? Here are some tips to try this month...

- Have a family meeting with everyone in your household to go over your fire escape plan. Does everybody know two ways to escape each room in case of a fire?
- Set off the smoke detectors so children learn to recognize the sound.
- Test each escape route. Can doors and windows be opened easily? Are paths and exits clear of obstacles?
- If there are infants or family members with mobility limitations, make sure someone is assigned to assist them in the event of a fire.
- Once children have had a chance to practice the escape plan several times, have a fire drill at night while the children are sleeping. The objective is to practice, not to frighten, so telling children there will be a drill before they go to bed can be as effective as a surprise alarm.
- When practicing, remember to stay low and check all doors for heat before opening them.
- Use a stop watch to see how long it takes for everyone to make it to the outside meeting place.
- Make it a habit to practice the fire escape plan at least twice a year.
- Remember to go over the fire escape plan with any overnight visitors.

October is also a good time to make sure your home is free of possible fire hazards.  
Get the children involved by using this checklist.

## My Fire Inspection Checklist

**Become an official Safety Inspector!**

Make sure your home is safe and inspect for risks. Ask a grown-up for help.

If the item on your list is **SAFE**, color the circle next to it **GREEN**.

If the item on your list is **UNSAFE**, color the circle next to it **RED**.

If you are **NOT SURE** if item on the list is safe, color the circle **YELLOW**.



Electrical cords are in good condition (not damaged).



The clothes dryer has a clean vent and filter (no lint build-up).



Appliances and lights are plugged into separate electrical outlets.



A grown-up always stays in the kitchen whenever food is cooking on the stovetop.



All smoke alarms work when tested by a grown-up.



All extension cords are used safely (not under carpets or across walking areas).



All escape routes are clear of clutter and easily accessible.



Portable space heaters are 3 feet away from anything that can burn.



Curtains and other things that can burn are away from the stovetop.



The furnace has been inspected in the past year.

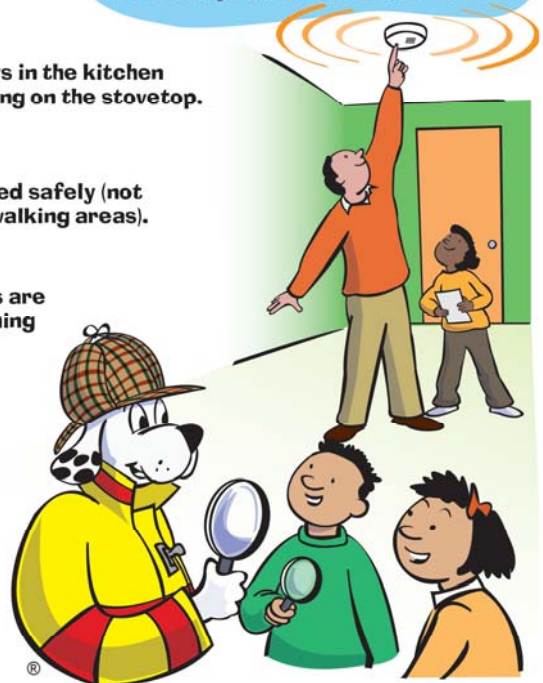


Portable space heaters are off whenever a grown-up leaves the room and goes to sleep.



The chimney has been inspected and cleaned in the past year.

If any of your circles are **YELLOW** or **RED**, ask a grown-up to make it safe.



Check out Sparky the Fire Dog® at [sparky.org](http://sparky.org)  
Sparky® is a trademark of NFPA



## OLD-FASHIONED LEAF SUNCATCHERS

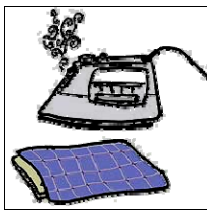
### Materials:

- Big, beautiful leaves from your yard in all colors, shapes and sizes
- Wax paper
- Iron
- Paper bags
- Yarn for hanging



### Instructions:

1. Make sure leaves are dry and flat. Put the leaves between two sheets of wax paper with the waxy side facing in.



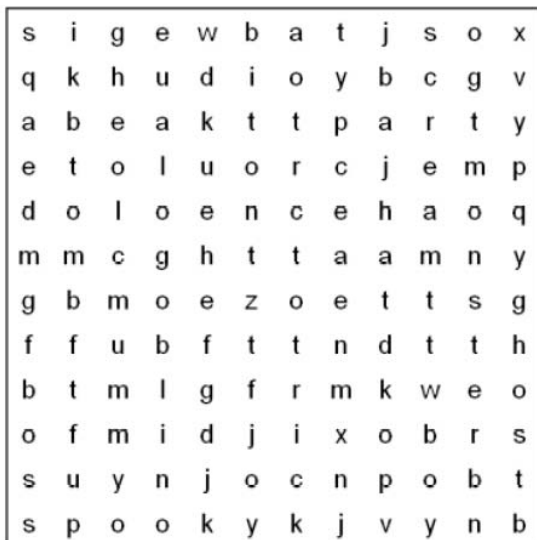
2. Set the wax paper between two paper bags and have an adult iron on the bags. (If you iron onto the wax paper, it'll burn. That's why you have the bags on top.) The wax will melt and preserve your leaves.

3. Punch a hole in each of the top corners. Tie a length of yarn around each hole to make a hanger. Hang in a sunny window and enjoy!

[www.showkidsthefun.com](http://www.showkidsthefun.com)



## HALLOWEEN WORD SEARCH

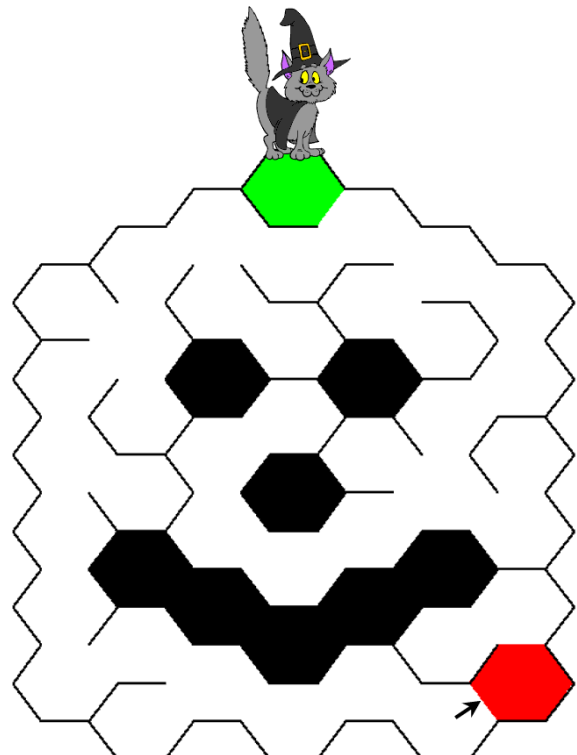


- |        |         |          |        |
|--------|---------|----------|--------|
| coffin | boo     | scream   | tomb   |
| moon   | haunted | skeleton | ghost  |
| mummy  | monster | treat    | witch  |
| goblin | trick   | cat      | spooky |
| party  | bat     |          |        |

[www.ActivityVillage.co.uk](http://www.ActivityVillage.co.uk)

## JACK-'O-LANTERN MAZE

Help the cat get to the bottom of the jack-'o-lantern.



[www.first-school.ws](http://www.first-school.ws)



LA CROSSE COUNTY HUMAN SERVICES

300 4TH SREET NORTH  
LA CROSSE, WISCONSIN 54601

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

## Pass the word on!

Do you know anyone who's interested in being a foster parent? Orientation sessions for those who'd like to learn more about the program are held the first Monday of every month from 5:30pm to 7:00pm. Those interested in attending should call Rhonda Rude at 789-4834 to sign up.

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

Please send your ideas, comments, or suggestions to:

Attn: 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



### Foster Care & Adoption Resource Center

Looking for information on Wisconsin foster care or adoption? The Foster Care and Adoption Resource Center provides the following services:

- Resource lending library
- Links to training opportunities and resources
- *Fostering Across Wisconsin* quarterly newsletter

Visit their webpage at [www.wifostercareandadoption.org](http://www.wifostercareandadoption.org) or contact them at their toll free number 1-800-947-8074 .

THIS NEWSLETTER IS ALSO AVAILABLE ON THE LA CROSSE COUNTY FOSTER CARE WEBSITE!

VISIT [www.co.la-crosse.wi.us/HumanServices/FC/docs/fostercare](http://www.co.la-crosse.wi.us/HumanServices/FC/docs/fostercare)