



Connections



SPRING 2011

La Crosse County
Human Services

Volume 13, Issues 4–6

Apr. — Jun. 2011



Inside this issue:

Mark Your Calendar 2-5
Lots of upcoming events and trainings!

La Crosse Area Youth Advisory Council 6

Fostering Perspectives: 6-7
Book Reviews

April is National
Child Abuse
Prevention Month!



May is National
Foster Care
Month!



Mark Your Calendar!

SPECIAL EVENTS FOR FOSTER FAMILIES

Foster Care Picnic

Thursday, May 26th
Myrick Park



UPCOMING COMMUNITY EVENTS

Public Health Week

Monday-Friday, April 4-8th | La Crosse County Health Dept. Laboratory (300 N. 4th St., La Crosse)
Get a FREE nitrate water test with each paid bacteria water test. Save \$23. Sterile sampling bottles and instructions can be picked up at the La Crosse County Health Department Laboratory, 8:30am-5:00pm.

5th Annual Teddy Bear Clinic

Saturday, April 9th | 10:00am-1:30pm | Children's Museum of La Crosse (207 5th Ave. S.)
Are your kids nervous about going to the doctor? Help ease their anxiety by bringing your children and their teddy bears to the Teddy Bear Clinic. There will be fun, hands-on stations for your child and teddy to learn more about what happens during a check-up, what it's like to get a cast, how x-rays are used, and much more! The Children's Miracle Network will provide a free teddy bear to any child who doesn't have one. Admission is FREE.

Hippity Hoppity Easter Boppity

Saturday, April 16th | 10:00am-11:00am | YMCA-North (400 Mason St., Onalaska)
Children ages 3-10 are invited to celebrate Easter at the YMCA by participating in the annual run and Easter Egg Hunt. Registration is \$5 per child (or \$8 after April 9th) which includes a t-shirt and prize. Register at either YMCA location or visit www.laxymca.org.

Join us for Healthy Kids Day from 11:00am until 1:00pm at the Y-North right after the Hippity Hoppity Easter Boppity. There will be FREE activities for children of all ages.

FREE Family Fun Day at the Museum

Sunday, April 17th | 12:00pm-4:30pm | Children's Museum of La Crosse (207 5th Ave. S.)
Free admission today thanks to the Coulee Region Child Abuse Prevention Task Force. Includes crafts, refreshments, and loads of fun.

FREE Bowling at Pla-Mor Lanes

Saturday, April 23rd | 12:00pm-4:00pm | Pla-Mor Lanes (807 S. 4th St., La Crosse)
One free game of bowling (including shoe rental) in honor of Child Abuse Prevention Month.

Riverfest 2011

Thursday, June 30th—Monday, July 4th | Downtown La Crosse
Music, entertainment, crafts and family fun each day!

Mark Your Calendar!

TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

2011 IN-HOUSE ONGOING FOSTER PARENT TRAINING

Enrollment is needed for all participants. If low number enrolled by deadline noted we will cancel the training, so vital that participants enroll, in case of a cancellation, we can get a hold of you. Contact Rhonda Rude at 789-4834 to sign up.

Development of Preschool/School Age Children

Saturday, April 16th | 9:00am-3:30pm | La Crosse County Human Services—basement auditorium

Training developed by Norma Ginther, specific to maltreated youth

Trainers: Foster parent Suanne Kraft and social worker Richelle Zimmerman

Deadline to enroll: April 11th, 2011

Fostering the Sexually Abused Child

Sunday, April 17th | 1:00pm-5:00pm | La Crosse County Human Services—basement auditorium

Trainers: Foster parent Suanne Kraft and social worker TBA

Deadline to enroll: April 11th, 2011

Placement Decision: Understanding CANS and the Foster Care Level Structure

Tuesday, May 10th | 5:30pm-8:30pm | La Crosse County Human Services—basement auditorium

Trainers: Social workers Kay Collister and Richelle Zimmerman

Deadline to enroll: May 5th, 2011

Development of Teens

Monday, June 13th | 9:00am-3:30pm | La Crosse County Human Services—basement auditorium

Training developed by Norma Ginther, specific to maltreated youth

Trainers: Foster parent Rita Wolcott and social worker Richelle Zimmerman

Deadline to enroll: June 8th, 2011

Discipline in Foster Care

Tuesday, July 19th | 9:00am-3:30pm | La Crosse County Human Services—basement auditorium

Trainers: Foster parent Rita Wolcott and social worker TBA

Deadline to enroll: July 12th, 2011

Working with Schools and Advocating for Foster Youth

Tuesday, September 13th | 5:30pm-8:30pm | La Crosse County Human Services—basement auditorium

Trainers: Foster parent Suanne Kraft and social worker Tracy Puent

Deadline to enroll: September 8th, 2011

Legal Risk Adoption Case Planning

Sunday, October 23rd | 1:00pm-5:00pm | La Crosse County Human Services—basement auditorium

Trainers: Foster parent Rita Wolcott and social worker TBA

Deadline to enroll: October 17th, 2011

Culture of Birth Parents

Tuesday, November 8th | 5:30pm-8:30pm | La Crosse County Human Services—basement auditorium

Trainers: Foster parent Suanne Kraft and social worker Will Herber

Deadline to enroll: November 3rd, 2011

Mark Your Calendar!

You See Policies, We See Values

Saturday, November 19th | 8:30am-12:30pm | La Crosse County Human Services—basement auditorium
Trainers: Foster parent Suanne Kraft and social worker TBA
Deadline to enroll: November 14th, 2011

Co-Parenting

Sunday, November 20th | 1:00pm-5:00pm | La Crosse County Human Services—basement auditorium
Trainers: Foster parent Suanne Kraft and social worker TBA
Deadline to enroll: November 14th, 2011

COMMUNITY TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

NOTE TO FOSTER PARENTS...please remember that 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.

What's Family Resources All About?

Wednesday, April 6th | 8:30am-9:30am | Family Resources (1500 Green Bay St., La Crosse)
Come to this quick-paced overview of all the services that Family Resources offers to the La Crosse area and how participants can take advantage of using them. Registration is appreciated. Call Fran at (608)784-8125.

Stewards of Children: Training for Prevention of Child Sexual Abuse

Tuesday, April 12th | 12:00pm-3:00pm | Family Resources (1500 Green Bay St., La Crosse)
This nationally acclaimed training opportunity is designed to educate adults to prevent, recognize and react responsibly to child sexual abuse. This workshop is highly recommended for all adults who work with children and youth—including teachers, parents, volunteers and other interested adults. For more information or to register call (608)784-8125.

24th Annual Together for Children Conference

Tuesday-Wednesday, April 12-13 | Marriot Madison West

This conference will feature keynote presentations from:

- Darrell Armstrong, founder of the National Association of Foster Children, Inc. Armstrong is a former foster child who graduated from Stanford University and is the author of several books, including *Snapshots of a Foster Child*, which chronicles his time in foster care in Los Angeles.
- The Foster Youth Advisory Council, with former foster kids discussing their personal experiences within the Wisconsin foster care system.
- Barbara Bartlein will provide a funny, inspirational presentation touching on her experiences as an adoptive mother of an abused child.

There will also be a screening of the documentary film *Playground*. Produced by George Clooney, Grant Heslov, and Steven Soderbergh, and punctuated with poignant animation by Japanese pop artist Yoshitomo Nara, *Playground* illuminates the sinister industry of sexual exploitation and abuse of children.

Full and partial scholarships are available for those who would otherwise be unable to attend the conference. For more information, or to register for this conference visit www.preventchildabusewi.org.

Mark Your Calendar!

Create Your Family Values and Mission Statement

Thursday, April 14th | 9:30am-11:00am | Family Resources (1500 Green Bay St., La Crosse)

Come explore what is important to you and your family and learn how to create your own Family Values and Mission Statement. Presented by Stacy Shapiro, President—Shapiro Strategies. For more information or to register call (608)784-8125.

Bullying is NOT a “Normal Part of Life”

Thursday, April 14th | 4:30-6:00pm or 6:30-8:00pm | Lunda Center-WTC (319 7th St. N., La Crosse)

This event is free and open to the public. Join parent and educator Bill Belsey, creator of bullying.org—the world's most visited and referenced website about bullying, for two important, unique workshops:

4:30-6:00pm Stand Up, Don't Stand By — get the tools you need to stop bullying in our community

6:30-8:00pm Cyberbullying: Protecting Children Online — tackle this new and frightening challenge

No registration is required. Seating is limited. For more information contact 608-392-4172 or visit www.franciscanskemp.org.

Happiest Baby On the Block

Tuesday, May 10th | 6:00pm-7:30pm | Family Resources (1500 Green Bay St., La Crosse)

Find out how to soothe crying and colicky babies with the 5 S's: five easy techniques that will calm your baby and turn on his (or her) amazing "calming reflex"! For more information or to register call (608)784-8125.

13th Annual La Crosse Child Maltreatment Conference

Thursday-Friday, May 12-13th | La Crosse Center (300 Harborview Plaza, La Crosse)

Emerging trends in child maltreatment identification, intervention, treatment, and prevention will be explored. For more information or to register visit: www.franciscanskemp.org/childmaltreatment.

To Pee Or Not To Pee

Thursday, May 19th | 6:00pm-7:30pm | Family Resources (1500 Green Bay St., La Crosse)

Learn to recognize the signs of toilet learning readiness, how to proceed, and how to avoid turning toilet learning into a major power struggle. Presented by Fran Swift, Parent Educator. For more information or to register call (608)784-8125.

Vary Your Fruits & Vegetables For a Healthier Future

Thursday, May 26th | 9:30am-11:00am | Family Resources (1500 Green Bay St., La Crosse)

Learn about the benefits, recommended amounts, and how to include more fruits and vegetables in your daily diet. Recipes and samples will be shared for cost-effective meals that everyone will enjoy. Presented by Sheila Harding, RN—Wisconsin Nutrition Education Program. For more information or to register call (608)784-8125.

Baby Signing

Thursday, June 16th | 6:00pm-7:30pm | Gundersen Lutheran—5th floor (1900 South Ave., La Crosse)

This class will help participants understand the impact parents have on the learning and emotional well-being of their child. Learn about the importance of baby sign language and how to use it with your baby. Fee is \$20. For more information, contact Megan at 608-775-6878.

LA CROSSE AREA YOUTH ADVISORY COUNCIL

Please join us in creating a La Crosse Area Youth Advisory Council to represent foster youth in our area. We will be holding an informational meeting in April...more details on this to come.

Wisconsin Youth Advisory Council Goals:

- * Increase advocacy and outreach for youth in foster care
- * Increase educational success and support for current and former foster youth
- * Increase education and support for caregivers

Please check out the state website at <http://wi-yac.org> or contact Becky La Force 785-6180 or Linda Haller 785-6222.

fostering perspectives

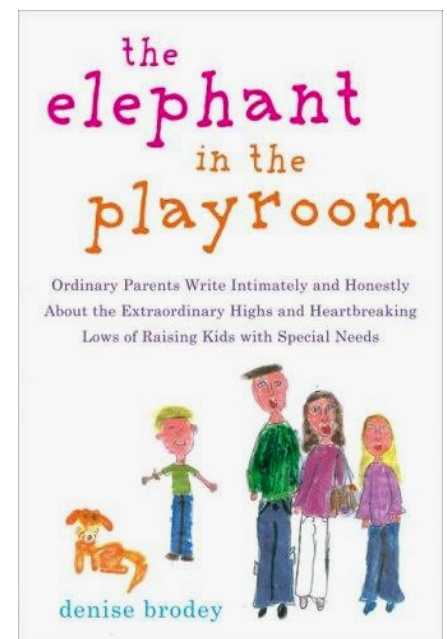
Sponsored by the NC Division of Social Services and the Family and Children's Resource Program

Book Reviews by Becky Burmester

The Elephant in the Playroom

The Elephant in the Playroom is a collection of essays written by parents and siblings of children with special needs. The book includes sections on self-care, schools, medication, "Going Public," "Seeing the Forest Through the Trees," "A View from Within the Whirlwind," and others.

Editor Denise Brodey, herself a parent of a child with special needs, introduces each section. There follow several essays by parents of children with differing special needs relating to the topic. Each essay is headed by a brief description of the child. For example, one essay states that the author is the mother of a 17-year-old diagnosed with autism at age 4. All of the authors write from the heart. The book is almost like getting hugged and being told it will be OK. Not easy, but OK.



Growing Up in the Care of Strangers

Compiled and edited by Waln K. Brown and John R. Seita, this was a tough book for me to read. It is a collection of the personal stories of 11 former foster kids, each written in the first

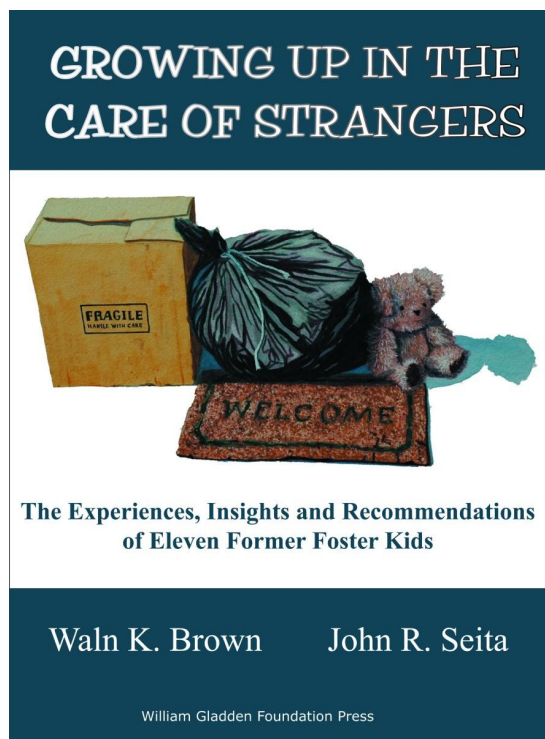
person. It was hard not because it was irrelevant or poorly written. On the contrary, I found it difficult because it was *so* personal that it both frightened and angered me. No child should have to endure the situations in which these children found themselves, nor should the foster care system that is intended to save and assist them respond in such an arbitrary manner. The good news is that, despite the trauma they faced and the subsequent failures of the foster care system, these children all survived, eventually thrived and are now contributing solutions to assist other children.

The 11 contributors describe their childhood, how they came into care, how they eventually grew into productive adults, and how they are now working to improve the foster care system that frequently failed them. Despite experiencing every type of abuse and neglect, and bouncing from family to family, these children are now all

college-educated professionals. Admittedly, they are not a random sample of children from the foster care system, but they were selected to share their stories because they have survived and can now provide insights to improve that system. Each of these amazing individuals knows more about the practical impact of the foster care system on children than most of the professionals within the system who have not experienced being a recipient of services.

While the target audience for this book is child welfare professionals and youth in placement, foster parents and others associated with children need to understand the impact they have on children in care. These stories make that impact clear. There were a few (not many) conclusions and recommendations from the contributors with which I disagreed. But the positive result was that I had to actually think about those conclusions, rather than simply carry on with no understanding of the impact on children.

Perhaps this won't be as difficult for you to read as it was for me, but I'm glad I read it. These are certainly inspirational lives, and this book is an important contribution to the appropriate understanding of anyone who cares about children in foster care. It should be required reading for the professionals who establish policy and those of us who provide services to children. The book is 175 pages long – bring a box of tissues.



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Connections



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 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