

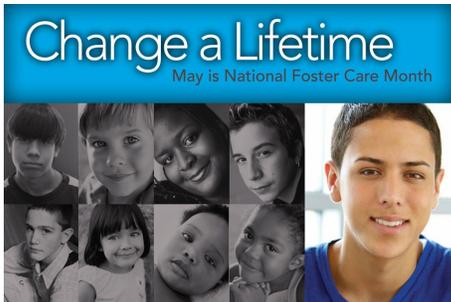


Kids & Families Together

May 2012

May: National Foster Care Month

How to help the children in your community one step at a time



On April 29, 2011, President Barack Obama issued a proclamation naming the Month of May as national Foster care Month. As you may well know, foster care is an issue at the heart of what we do here at kids and families together; as a result, national Foster Care Month holds a special place in our heart when it comes to awareness about the importance of the children placed in the foster care system and the caretakers who welcome them into their homes. There are currently 400,000 children in foster care in the United States and around 30,000 who become emancipated from the sys-

tem every year. Here at Kids and Families Together, we believe that children who are put into the foster care system thrive and grow best under kinship or relative care, but for some children that is unfortunately not possible and that is where non-relative foster parents play an important role in the development and nurturing of a child. As our Kinship Support Services Program Coordinator Sylvia Orozco explains, "Children in foster care already have the traumatic experience of entering the foster care system written into their personal history. Foster Parents help build happy memories and provide stability, love and care that children in foster care need whether they are with a foster family for a week, a month or, for some children, a lifetime; they bring hope to a child that may otherwise not know where the hope will come from. There are many wonderful reasons why a family would like to become a Foster Home, the greatest of which is to help a child find a loving and stable home. "

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Having Faith

Dear Faith,

Our adopted daughter is now 14 years old and very much an adolescent. I know that the teen years are a time of high drama but I find myself wanting to react angrily to some of what my daughter says to me. For example, when my daughter says, "I hate you! I wish you had never adopted me." I find myself instinctively wanting to yell back at her! Please help me to respond appropriately as I attempt to navigate the rocky seas of the adolescent years.

Exhausted in Camarillo

You are so right that adolescence is a time of high drama and that often adolescents frequently over react, making extreme statements. As a parent, it is your job to learn to translate the extremist language into dialogue that makes sense. It is much easier for parents to respond appropriately to hurtful comments made by their adopted teens if they understand that most all teenagers are very dramatic, and that much of the drama masks feelings of rejection and fear of future abandonment. Here are some common examples of statements made by adopted adolescents (with appropriate translations) :

Cont. pg. 3

Kids & Families Together's mission is to strengthen relationships and provide safe, supportive help and education to keep family members emotionally connected to one another.

IN OUR COMMUNITY

A look at what's happening this month



May 10, Thursday Night BBQ on the Lawn starting on May 10th from 5-8 p.m. Bring your families for BBQ and live music with "The Shoemaker Brothers" 5-8pm

550 Sanjon Road, Waterfront Contact: The Pierpont Inn & Spa Phone: (805) 643-6144 Admission: Free to Public (Food Tickets Available)

May 12, Family Festival in the Park & Kids Swap Meet in Ventura

9AM to 5PM— The 9th Annual Family Festival in the Park offers three big events in one great day for the whole family at Barranca Vista Park, 7050 E. Ralston Street in Ventura, on Saturday, May 12, 2012 from 9 am to 5 pm. The festival includes the 7th Annual Kids Swap Meet (9am to 1pm) the season opener of Fairy Tales in the Park and free Barranca Vista Creative Center performances of dance, theater, music and hands-on arts activities, refreshments and exhibits for the whole family. Admission to the full day of activities is FREE. Call 805-658-4726 with any questions or visit www.cityofventura.net. For the swap meet, call 805.654.7552.

May 12, Fairy Tales in the Park- Fairy Tales in the Park is a series of free, live theatrical performances geared toward children ages 3 to 10. John and Roxanne Diesel co-founded Gypsies in a Trunk, an all-volunteer troupe of actors performing free fairy tales for the young and young at heart. Most venues do not have shade, so sunscreen and hats are appropriate. Bring water, juice, snacks, picnics. Blankets and low-slung chairs are recommended. Please leave doggies at home (not that they don't love them). The shows are designed to run approximately 45 minutes. Ventura (Shows at 4pm): Barranca Vista Park, 7050 Ralston. (Johnson & Ralston).

May 20, The 29th Anniversary California Strawberry Festival

10AM-6:30PM Strawberry Meadows of College Park (3250 South Rose Avenue, Oxnard) on Saturday and Sunday, May 19th and 20th. The event takes place on the third weekend of May each year and features live entertainment, the Strawberry Promenade, Star Berry Hunt, Strawberryland for Kids (free rides/attractions), contests, over 250 arts and crafts booths and other strawberry themed activities. Tickets are \$12 for adults, \$8 for seniors, \$5 for children ages 5-12 and free for kids ages 4 and under. Visit www.strawberry-fest.org for more information or call 888.288.9242.

Keeping up with Kids & Families

There are a number of ways to stay in loop with what's going on at Kids & Families Together. If you are reading this, you're already one step ahead!

You can also Like us on Facebook, send us a tweet on Twitter @KandFT, follow us on LinkedIn, check out our calendar on our website, give us a call or stop by our center.



But what happens to a child when they age out or become emancipated from the Foster Care system? The statistics are bleak, with high rates of incarceration, pregnancy, and homelessness; the young adults who age out of foster care have difficult hills to climb with little to no life experience, or help, for them. On September 30, 2010, the California Fostering Connections to Success Act, Assembly Bill (AB) 12, was signed into law. This legislation recognized the importance of family and permanency for youth by extending benefits and transitional support services for youth in foster care, the Adoption Assistance Program (AAP) and Kinship Guardianship Assistance Payment (KinGAP) program who enter the program after they turn 16. Effective January 1, 2012, youth are allowed to remain in foster care up to age 19, in 2013 the option is extended until age 20 and in 2014 the age www.kidsandfamilies.org

goes up to 21 (contingent upon budget appropriation by the state legislature.) Under AB 12 foster youth over age 18 are designated "non-minor dependents". While many elements pertaining to the implementation of AB 12 are in the process of being determined, this is a great first step in making sure California's at risk foster youth are able to live in a stable environment while they try to find their footing as adults in the real world. If you have questions or need additional information www.cafosteringconnections.org.

Here in Ventura we have sought to help out this population of young adults with the opening of our Alice's House cooperative living program for young women who have been emancipated from foster care. Alice's House is a program that helps these young women, between the ages of 18-24, live in a stable home envi-

ronment, learn the skills they need to eventually live on their own, and give them access to counseling and advocacy. It is the goal of the program that the young women living in the house will move out after a year or two with the knowledge and skills to successfully navigate living life on their own. If you would like more information on our Alice's house program or what you can do to help, please contact Sharon Cromartie at 805-643-1446 or scromartie@kidsandfamilies.org.

Even if you cannot become a foster home for a child in need there are many ways to help, from volunteering and donating. For more information on ways you can help, please visit foster-caremonth.org.

Dramatic Overacting	Possible Translation	
I hate you! I wish you had never adopted me.	Are you going to keep me no matter what?	Parents must learn to respond to the translations, the “real” dialogue beneath the words used by an angry adolescent. When you are finding yourself consistently reactive to your adolescent, then it is time to get support for yourself from an outside, safe and knowledgeable source that can help you navigate the high seas that come with these turbulent years.
I want to go live with my birth family	I want more info about my birth family. Can you help me find out more?	
I can’t wait until I’m eighteen and then I am out of here!	I’m afraid to leave home. Does adoption end when I turn eighteen? If I leave, can I come back?	
I don’t want to talk about adoption. Why do you always bring that up? I never even think about it!	I need to know you love me as much as a child who was born into this family. I am afraid you don’t love me, that no one loves me including my birth family.	
You can’t tell me what to do! You’re not even my real mother!	Are you really my mother? It feels really confusing inside of me right now as I grapple with my identity.	



Having Faith

Thank You!

Kids & Families Together would like to thank the wonderful and gracious people and organizations who generously helped us and our families these past few months.

Sarah C. and Family

For helping us table at the Simi Community Volunteer Fair.

Lea Cobb

Branch Director at the Ventura Boys & Girls Club for hosting our first Ventura Kinship Coalition meeting.

For the Alice’s House Curb Appeal Project

**David and Faith Friedlander
Doug Miller – A big thank you!**

Liz Kimball

Dominique Martinez

Jessica Sims

Karina Garcia

Juan Baltizar

Baron Brothers Nursery

Green Thumb Nursery

Greg Rents

Nopalito Nursery

Training Opportunities

from Ventura County Community College District’s Foster & Kinship Care Education

Fostering Attachments (series)

4 Thursdays, May 3rd – 24th 6:30-8:30pm @ Kids & Families Together 856 E. Thompson Blvd. Ventura—This series will guide you in the process of asking yourself about your own childhood – it can make you a stronger parent! Understand how your personal attachment history influences your parenting and learn how to engage in Theraplay® Please RSVP directly to K&FT/Tricia Durni @ tdurni@kidsandfamilies.org Sponsors: Kids & Families Together & Ventura College FKCE

Baby Basics and Beyond

Tuesday, May 8th 9:30-11:30am @ 63 W. Calle El Prado, Oak View
Monday, May 14th 7:00–9:00pm @ 781 Devore Avenue, Simi Valley—Are you a new parent or caring for an infant as a foster or adoptive parent? It is likely that your little one came with a host of question marks (?????) Come, bring your infant and ask some of those questions of experienced foster parents and mentors, Mariana Abarta and Pattie Hunt. Topics include: calming the crying baby, sleep issues, feeding issues, red flags and other medical issues. Learn about the expected and unique needs of each infant. Build confidence and increase your joy in nurturing your infant! Sponsors: Oxnard & Ventura College FKCE

Cornerstone Training Network: Advocating for Your Child in the Mental Health System

Saturday, May 12th 9:00-11:00am @ Cornerstone Church 2080 Winifred St. Simi Valley, Room 10– Serious emotional and mental disorders in children are real. Children who have these disabilities need to be identified early and linked with effective services and supports to avoid losing critical developmental years. Foster parent awareness of “behaviors” might be the first warning signs that mental health services are needed to help a child. This class will look at those warning signs behaviors, risks and resiliency, treatments that work and the importance of education, advocacy and support services. Please RSVP for limited childcare by calling Channel Islands Social Services 384-0983 no later than 5/7 Sponsor: Ventura College FKCE

Grupo de Apoyo (Oxnard) ****Disculpennos, no habrá cuidado de niños****

Lunes 21 de Mayo, 6:00-8:00pm Rio School District Office of Student and Family Services Building, 3300 Cortez Street, Oxnard¿Eres un padre de crianza que te gustaría conocer a otros padres de crianza? No solamente van a aprender van a compartir experiencias con otros padres. Además cada mes tendrán un entrenamiento con una instructora especializada que presentara un tema diferente. Si usted quiere registrarse para la clase, o tiene alguna pregunta por favor llame a Maria Mejia al: 832-9820. Sponsor: Oxnard College FKCE

www.kidsandfamilies.org/calendar for more information & registration

K&FT Staff Spotlight: Lynn Smith

Our staff members play a critical role in maintaining the everyday flow of Kids & Families Together. They are kind, nurturing and here to serve their community.



What is it about working for Kids & Families Together that motivates you to come in every day?

In addition to being part of the K&FT mission (which really inspires me!), it is such a pleasure to work alongside some of the most incredibly dedicated & loving individuals I've ever had the pleasure of knowing.

What is the weirdest thing you have ever eaten?

Weird? Hmmmm... don't know about 'weird.' The yukkiest thing I've ever eaten is poi, which I thought was refried beans. And WOW! What a gross surprise THAT was! I've eaten chocolate covered ants & "crispy" grasshoppers; interesting once, but no chance there will ever be seconds.

If you needed bail money, who would you call and why would you need bail money?

I have no intention of needing bail money, but sometimes life serves up some real stinkers. Should a stinker ever come my way where I'd require bail money, I'd

probably call my Legal Shield attorney immediately (I have 24/7 access to an attorney in emergencies)!

Name three things you miss about being a kid?

I had an idyllic childhood with seemingly unlimited territory to be wild within. I'd have to say I miss running with utter abandon through the orchards of fruit & walnut trees we had; perching on a favorite branch of my favorite apple tree, reading Nancy Drew books or playing cribbage with my sister (yes, we balanced the board & cards on the branch!) in the glorious warmth of a Northern California summer; building forts along the creek & drifting downstream on rickety self-made rafts; riding my horse is surely one of my fondest memories; as was just being in the company of my family!

Happy Mothers Day



Kids & Families Together
 856 E. Thompson Blvd.
 Ventura, CA 93001
www.kidsandfamilies.org
 Visit us on Facebook!

