



Kids & Families Together

December 2012

Having Happy Holidays

Staying stress free during the most wonderful time of the year



The Holiday season is upon us and gift buying, holiday decorating and keeping up with the daily routine are just a few of the many tasks that lie ahead for many of us this holiday season. In this flurry of activity, many of us forget that the holidays are about

spending time and making memories with the ones we love and not spend time feeling stressed out or overwhelmed about what “needs” to be done. Here are a few tips from happiness-project.org to help you make this holidays season more calm and in turn a more enjoyable time with your family.

- **Take your time; plan ahead.** Hurrying to pack, rushing through stores, sprinting to make a flight – these are sure to put you in a bad mood. Try to give yourself plenty of time to do what you need to do.
- **Make time for real fun.** Sometimes holiday vacations, which are supposed to be “fun,” are actually a huge hassle. Figure out ways to have fun. In my family, we decided to reduce gift-giving. All the adults “draw” for each other’s names, and we each buy stocking presents for just one other

person. Also, include time for things YOU like to do: going to a movie, taking a nap while everyone else goes skating, going to the gym. I plan to spend a lot of time drinking coffee with my sister.

- **Get enough sleep.** Sleep deprivation is a major disturber of people’s moods. Jet lag, traveling, parties, and over-excited children all make it hard to get your usual number of hours. Making an effort to get to bed at a decent hour really pays off.
- **Get moving.** Perhaps one of the best ways to overcome stress during the holidays or any other time is to exercise regularly. Research shows that physical activity boosts your fitness and energy levels and can also elevate your moods.
- **Be generous.** One of the best ways to stay calm, content and cheerful this time of year is to act generously with your loved ones, co-workers and friends. This doesn’t have to mean you’re spending a lot of money. You can be generous with your compliments. You can generously offer to do a loved one’s dreaded errand. You can generously write a fun, short poem. When you are creative with your gifts and thank you’s, people will appreciate your real, heartfelt sentiments.

Have a wonderful and Happy Holiday Season!

Having Faith

Below is a letter that I printed a year ago for the holiday season. I have decided to print it again as I think it eloquently speaks about how stressful the holidays can be for anyone who has experienced trauma within their lives. As you go through this season of hustle and bustle, be sure that you take extra good care of yourself and your other family members, since this is often a time for more meltdowns for children as well as for adults.

Dear Faith,

My name is Tina (name change), I am now forty years old, and I lived in an abusive home until I was 16, when I finally managed to get into a caring foster

family. Many children become more excited with the approach of Christmas, but you might notice other reactions in an abused or otherwise traumatized child. The child might appear to be depressed, short tempered, or both, the child might struggle with insomnia at night and then have little or no energy during the day, all of this is a normal reaction to having experienced trauma. Below I have written my own story and why this continues to be true for me.

Tina

When I was an abused child, my safety came from leaving the abusive home and going to school. At school, I had teachers who adored me and friends who really cared about me. I was safe. Then, school would close for the five-day weekend at Thanksgiving, and that was the painful reminder that I had two full weeks of being away from the safety of school Cont. on 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

Dec 13 Art Lab: Edible Architecture 2.0

Thursday, December 13, 4-6 pm \$5 / museum members free Create a 3D graham-cracker house and decorate it with sweet treats! Recommended for ages 6 to adult. Space is limited reservations required. Carnegie Art Museum 424 South C Street Oxnard, CA 93030 805.385.8158 www.CarnegieAM.org

Dec 14-15 Ventura Harbor Parade of Lights Holiday Celebration

The Ventura Harbor Village is wild with excitement over the 36th Annual Ventura Harbor Boat Parade of Lights and Fireworks, Friday and Saturday, December 14 & 15, at 7 pm and Winter Wonderland and Holiday Marketplace on Saturday, December 15 from 1- 5 pm. Decorated boats and holiday décor throughout the Harbor kick off this year's "Jingle Jungle" theme! The two-day celebration features a Parade of Lights Carnival on the Ventura Harbor Village Main Lawn, visits by Santa & Mrs. Claus for last minutes gift requests at the Carousel Stage and delicious harbor-front dining. A fireworks display lights up the night following the Parade of Lights each evening with Santa and his sleigh crossing the sky on Saturday evening courtesy of Aspen Helicopters.

Dec 22 A Fairgrounds Christmas at Ventura County Fairgrounds

Save the date of Saturday, December 22 from 10am to 6pm for lots of family fun and holiday cheer at "A Fairgrounds Christmas" at the Ventura County Fairgrounds. Santa will be there and he is bringing his reindeer (bring your camera)! There will be gourmet food trucks, Christmas shopping, children's activities and much more! Call 648-3376 x 0 for more information. Free admission. \$5 parking.

Dec 25 Free Conejo Community Christmas Dinner at Thousand Oaks High School

Temple Adat Elohim of Thousand Oaks will host its Annual Conejo Community Christmas Dinner at Thousand Oaks High School from 11:30 until 4 p.m. on Christmas Day,, December 25. There is no cost to attend the dinner. Local area business donate food for the dinner, which is open to anyone. For more information or to donate food or time, please call the Temple at (805) 497-7101 . Thousand Oaks High School is at 2323 N. Moorpark Rd in Thousand Oaks.



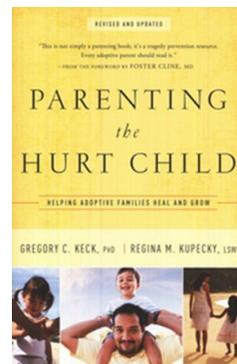
Keeping up with Kids & Families

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

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.



Book of the Month: December



Parenting the Hurt Child: Helping Adoptive Families Heal and Grow

By: Gregory Keck, PhD and Regina Kupecky, LSW

Sadly, the world is full of children who have been hurt by someone they should have been able to trust. If you've chosen to bring one of these children into your family, you likely have hopes, dreams, and images of success- dreams and images that might look dark and hopeless.

The authors share valuable suggestions to help your hurt child heal, grow, and develop. You'll learn what works and what doesn't, as well as stories from those who have been there. The best hope for parenting a hurt child is knowledge.

Parenting the Hurt Child and other books are available for check-out at our Lending Library located in the Kids and Families Center. Call Karina at 805-643-1446 extension 133 if you have questions.

Come visit our Lending Library!

Cont. from Pg. 1

school and two weeks in my scary home environment as I entered winter break.

I have been through years of therapy, cut off contact with all abusers, and have not been abused during the holidays in decades; Nevertheless, the holidays continue to be extremely triggering to me. I have a deep-seated fear of being "abandoned" during the holidays because I felt "abandoned" by my teachers and friends as an abused child. . Even after years of therapy and safety, this continues to be a battle for me. I know in my head that I have a safe family now and that I have many friends who care about me, but all it takes is one canceled plan or one canceled regular scheduled gathering to trigger that fear of abandonment in me. My reaction to this triggering can be anything from a deep dark depression to irritability. I have a difficult time sleeping during this time of year because I don't feel safe.

If you consider that I have not been abused for decades and still react this strongly to the approach of Christmas, consider the strength of the emotions that could be affecting your traumatized foster or adopted child since he or she has only

been safe from the abuse for a few months or years. It is going to take lots of time, therapy, and safety to bring your child to a place where the holidays are no longer traumatizing; this might not even happen during their childhood. If it doesn't, having your love to help them through it and continually reminding your child that he or she is safe will do wonders to help your child get through this painful time of year.



Having Faith

Ventura City Firefighters Auxiliary Presents

Casino Night

To Benefit

Ventura City Firefighters Auxiliary and Alice's House

Date: February 23, 2013

Time: 6pm-10pm

Tickets: \$40.00

Place: Museum of Ventura County
100 East Main St., Ventura, Ca

For more information, please call 805-402-6135 or visit vdfauxiliary.com

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.

Trader Joe's on Victoria

For the generous donation of bags for our Foodshare pantry

Trader Joe's on Mills

For the generous donation of bags for our Foodshare pantry

Training Opportunities

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

Mandated Reporter Refresher

Facilitator: Jenifer Futvoye

Tuesday, December 11th 6:00 – 8:00pm @ Cornerstone Church (Room 9),
2080 Winifred St., Simi Valley

Jenifer Futvoye will discuss the responsibilities foster parents face as mandated reports in a relaxed and fun way. If you have any questions about being a mandated reporter or just want to learn more about it, please come join us and share your questions! Please RSVP to [Ja-son_lee5@vcccd.edu](mailto:Jason_lee5@vcccd.edu). Sponsor: Moorpark College FKCE

Icebreakers

Facilitators: Pattie Hunt & Wendy Homan

Thursday, December 13th 6:30-8:30pm @ The Day Road Center at Ventura College 71 Day Rd. Ventura, Training Room 3

This class will go into more depth on important topics you need to know more about now that you are licensed. Topics will include boundaries, assessing the needs of the child, documentation, communication and more. The class is taught by two experienced foster parents who know the system very well. Perfect class for first time foster parents! Please RSVP to debbieflowers@vcccd.edu Sponsor: Oxnard College FKCE

For more information on these classes you may call Ventura College at 805-654-6327 or Oxnard College, 805-986-5800 ext. 2018 or send an email as indicated.

K&FT Staff Spotlight: Faith Friedlander

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.



As one of the Co-Founders, what inspired you to start Kids & Families Together?

In 1998, my husband, David, and I went through a major change in our life. I had been a licensed therapist since 1992 with a small private practice in Ojai, but my main focus had been on raising our children. Once we launched our children, we moved from Ojai to Ventura, and David suggested that I consider specializing in adoption related issues. Adoption had touched my family in a variety of ways. I had been adopted shortly after birth. My sister had adopted three special needs children out of foster care in 1976. While raising them, she had many challenges, and back then there wasn't support for families post-adoption or much understanding about the specialized parenting needs of children who had experienced abuse and trauma in the beginning years of their lives. I watched my sister struggle, and I didn't know how to help her. I also had a niece who was adopted from Vietnam in 1975 at the age of 3 ½, and she and I were always emotionally close.

In 1998 and 1999, I took a 9 month Adoption Certification Training at the Kinship Center in Orange County. I found the training exciting and informative as I learned cutting-edge ideas about Adoption and Foster Care. In July of 1999, I went to the North American Council on Adoptable Children conference in Pasadena where speakers shared best practices in Adoption and Foster care from all parts of the US and Canada. This conference changed me forever. At the conference a longtime friend, Beverlee Park-Sherbo, and I began to think about opening a center that would meet the unmet needs of our county's adoptive, foster care, and kinship care families. Our goal was to reduce the number of placement changes and disruptions within the county child welfare system. With a great deal of passion and little experience, we opened the doors of K&FT in January of 2000. From that time on, my vision has always been to be a safe, supportive center that grows and changes based on the needs of our families and the needs of our community.

I was also highly influenced by Virginia Satir, a well-known family therapist who wrote the book *Peoplemaking*. Virginia Satir focused on the value of high self-esteem and authentic, congruent communication between individuals. Virginia had a way of connecting with the worth in each individual and in helping each member of the family to experience being seen and understood in a safe, nurturing, and accepting environment. Virginia's work often included play, humor, and the importance of becoming more fully human. I see the Attachment Focused Models that we use today at K&FT to illicit change in families as a continuation of the great work that Virginia did in the 1980s.

What is your role at K&FT and how does it impact the organization?

I am the Clinical Director at K&FT, and I supervise Interns as well as work with families to help build more secure relationships between a caregiver and a child who experienced early trauma in his or her life. However, I see my main role as making sure that K&FT stays true to the original vision in the midst of growth and change.

What is the best part of waking up?

The best part of waking up is starting a fresh new day. I feel grateful to have meaningful work in an environment that nourishes my soul. Every day is different and filled with opportunities to make a difference in my life as well as in the lives of others. The older I get, the more precious each day becomes to me, and I attempt not to take anything for granted. My grandchildren bring me an abundance of joy, and they have been my greatest teachers in staying present in the moment.



Kids & Families Together
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