

Foster Parent Quarterly

Did you know April is Child Abuse Awareness and Prevention month and May as Foster Care Appreciation – we appreciate each you for the work you are doing . Did you also know the strongest foster families are many times those who are referred by another family of ours.

If your club, or social organizations, places of worship, workplaces would be interested in us providing information about foster care as an option please don't hesitate to contact Terri (terrip@ysbiv.org) or Ann (annp@ysbiv.org). Thank you!

Foster Parent of the Quarter:

Meet our latest foster parent of the quarter Levi and Courtney Fritts. This couple has been nominated for all the devotion they have provided to their foster children and biological parents. Levi and Courtney have been foster parents for three years and they have fostered five children. Three of the five children returned home to their mother. Levi and Courtney have been successful in building a relationship with their biological mother and continue to be a part of the children's lives as a support to the family.

Levi and Courtney welcome children in their home and provide them with just more than love and support. They make great efforts to meet the children's needs that are above and beyond what is expected. Levi and Courtney make it their mission to advocate for foster children in their home. They continue to help foster children have life experiences that they might otherwise not have. Levi and Courtney state that it is wonderful watching children experience things for the first time like swimming in the ocean or going to watch a movie in the movie theatre. They are a couple who strive to keep children active and ensure that they are cared for in all aspects of their lives.



“Like” the agency wide Facebook page or visit our agency website at www.ysbiv.org.

- If you would like to join our Foster Parent Facebook page please contact Kelley Lumpkin for an invite. She can be reached at kelleyl@ysbiv.org

APRIL

Springtime is right around the corner. Time for Spring cleaning, changing the clock and other such things. Don't forget to look around your house for licensing standard updates too. Call your license worker if you need to for help answering these questions. Let's spring clean your foster parent file.

- Do you remember to test your smoke and carbon monoxide detectors monthly? Did you change the batteries in each of them? Have you changed addresses and need a new fire escape plan? Remember that your license needs to be amended for address changes too.

- Did you talk to your pet's vet about medical needs like heartworm medications and/or updates on shots? Does your license worker have the updates on your pet?

- Are your child car seats in need of being tossed? Check their "expiration date" stamped usually on the back of the car seat.
- Are your smoke and/or carbon monoxide detectors more than 10 years old? If so, you need new ones. One fire department states they prefer people to change detectors every 8 years to be safe. Be sure to check this and other items in your home for age and other reasons to replace them.

Are the children safe with the outdoors? It has been a very wet and warm(ish) winter. It will be a very soggy spring. One of the memories of one of the license workers is the story of neighbors hearing a small child's voice calling from their back yard, "Help!" They looked around their house and found all of their children and were confused. When they looked out the window, they saw a neighbor boy sunk up to his knees in the mud (they were working on re-sodding their back yard). Apparently, this little boy thought that looked like a fun place to walk in his new rain boots. They still laugh about that incident all these years later. Please also note that the allergies are expected to be stronger as well. Talk to the doctor about needs to care for yourself and the children.





SOME REAL LIFE STORIES SHORTENED

In a book called, Castaway Kid, Mr. Rob Mitchell tells his story of being abandoned by his mother at a group home and his experiences growing up in the child welfare system (in a Princeton Illinois orphanage). At one point, he talks about the bullies (from town and living with their parents) picking on all of the children from the children's home. He writes ... "We were easy targets. Eventually they got to me, too. ... 'What's wrong with you Robby? Why you got no parents?'" ... Mr. Mitchell states that he started fighting back with his fists. "... buying me a ticket to the principal's office. When I got there, the frowning principal would ask, "What's wrong with you, boy?" (Rob thinking to himself) "*What's wrong with me? What's wrong with you, Mr. Principal? It's not me, the other kid started it! I didn't know there was anything wrong with me until I came here!*" Mr. Mitchell continues to talk about being lonely even though he was in a herd of 60 children at the children's home ... he had no dad to do guy stuff with ... he had no mom to kiss his hurts and tuck him into bed ... he decided, like many kids decide, that it is somehow his fault ... the reality is it is the fault of the adults for poor choices and decisions that endanger their children ...

A second story would be the story of the younger (adopted) sister of a Teacher or how the Teacher had to wait 23 years to get a sister ...

The Teacher grew up as the oldest child and the only girl of 7 children. Then when she was 22 years old she worked at a group home for teen-agers. There was one teen with whom the Teacher connected with as friends ... her name was Julia (Spanish pronunciation/she is Puerto Rican) ... many of the other kids would go home for weekend visits ... Julia could not ... her parents and older brothers and sisters were hurting each other and the younger ones which included Julia ... The Teacher started bringing her to her home ... The Teacher's mom and dad fell in love with Julia and decided that they found their second daughter ... so they started the adoption process ... by this time, the Teacher is 23 years old and Julia is 15 years old ... Julia felt a lot like Mr. Mitchell in that she felt that she was unloved, unlovable and everything was her fault, somehow ... she says that her workers would ask for her opinion but never seemed to value her opinion ... her last worker Miguel told her that she would still be a failure as a grown up because she was so old by the time she was adopted ... today she is a wife, a mom to 4 children and a business owner. Oh, and she loves God ... very much!

Hope is the key. No matter what happens in life ... one must always have hope to get through the roughest of times in life.

Workshops

Aurora/Glyn Ellyn:

Disciplining Techniques April 26 at 5:30 p-7p

Ottawa:

Disciplining Techniques May 17 at 5:30 p-7p

Rockford:

Therapeutic Crisis Intervention Training April 1st from 9a-2p

Informational Meeting Rockford Public Library off of Perryville Rd. April 22nd, 12:30 p-1:30 p

Disciplining Techniques June 20 at 5:30 p-7p

Recruiting:

If you know of someone who might want to be a foster parent, call Kelley at 630-820-6303 ext 114.

Parenting Corner Discipline Techniques

Do you ever just sit and wonder why kids do the things they do? Did you know that there are 4 goals of a child's behaviors? Do you know the difference between discipline and punishment? Lastly, do you know the definition of behavioral management?

Over the next few months our Parenting Program at Youth Service Bureau will be holding workshops in the different areas to identify and be able to carry out some techniques that will help you with managing difficult behaviors.

The goal is for parents or caregivers to feel empowered and leave this workshop with realistic actions, options and solutions.

Changing inappropriate Behaviors to desired behavior addressing issues such as:

Managing Tantrums

Whining, Biting

Arguing Battles

power struggles

Reducing Sibling Rivalry

This enjoyable, interactive workshop will provide you the opportunity to socialize with other parents and address many of the specific challenges facing families. During this workshops, you will learn about the styles of parents, discipline methods that work or don't and why and what is considered effective discipline techniques.

OTHER THINGS TO NOTE:

To get out of the house with the children, check out the local area resources for family events and fests. In one town in northern Will County, there is an Easter Egg Hunt on the weekend of Palm Sunday through a local church and on Easter weekend through the local township.

There are also Fish Fry events in some communities now that it is Lent season. Come the end of April through May, some groups will be having Biker events or rides, Spring Fling events, and historical re-enactment events (Redbud Rendezvous in Indiana from the pioneer days). This could be fun learning for the children and even you.

May is Foster Care Appreciation Month

YSB truly appreciates all that our foster parents do. Have you told each other that you appreciate the support? YSB also appreciates the service providers (therapists, counselors, school personnel, and support groups who also come along side of you and the children (and their parents). We really love to see what great things happen when the team really is able to come together. Thank you for the care of the children and for working with us.



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