



Strengthening Families Newsletter November 2009

Welcome to Strengthening Families!

As a part of the Strengthening Families Program, you will receive a short monthly newsletter. This newsletter will offer special tips and information from our Executive Director, geared specifically toward helping new foster parents tackle their new role. In addition, we'll include a calendar of upcoming events, reminders about the services we offer at MFCAA, and any other special information we'd like to share with our Strengthening Families participants!

It's beginning to look a lot like Christmas....

At MFCAA, and all around us, people are anticipating the holidays and trying to prepare for the approaching celebration. For those of us who are new to fostering, we are especially anxious to provide our children with the kind of a holiday experience that we suspect they've never had before. Despite our good intentions, it's important that we slow down and remember that because we are not parenting our own children, we are not really sure what the memories of these children are from holidays past. For children in



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Calendar - NOV



Nov 20
Third Friday
RSVP for Dinner/
Training - 6:30p

Nov 26 and 27
MFCAA CLOSED

Get more info on all events.

Dental Van at MFCAA
Dec 9
For appointments:
Bobbie, at 816-889-3512

Reminders



Website
You can get full information
on all MFCAA services and
programs on our

foster care, the holidays may have been a very scary time of year, or a very sad time of year.

When I look back to some of my own past experiences with kids in our home, we were amazed that the first sibling group we had did not EVEN CARE about what Santa brought them. They opened a gift under the tree, threw it aside and asked "What's next?". Our hearts were shattered that year. We just knew that we were providing these children with probably the "best" Christmas they ever had. Maybe in our world it was true, but not in theirs.

Over the years we realized that the holidays are very hard for some children. They may have experienced important family traditions and close feelings as a family in their birth homes. Or, they may be overwhelmed around the close feelings (the sense of belonging) shared by your family, which only makes them feel more disconnected. They may also be unprepared for the unmatched expectations of what it should be. Nevertheless, we need to be patient with our children. Having realistic expectations may save you some holiday grief in the long run. Experienced foster parents may try to incorporate some of their foster children's family traditions into their own celebrations. Others may try to keep that first holiday fairly low key or not have too many expectations on what the holidays should look like.

MFCAA strives to help make the holidays easier through our Adopt a Family Christmas program that is going on right now. Hopefully you have received the newsletter and have filled your forms out for your adopted, kinship, and biological children. If you've missed that opportunity, you can also print the sign up forms on our website (www.mfcaa.org). Most Jackson County foster children are served through the Children's Division's Red Bag program, however we're here to fill in the gap for those who aren't. Look for pick up times in our November and December 2009 newsletters.

Also, please plan to attend our huge Foster and Adoptive Family Christmas Party on Friday, December 11th at The American Royal. It begins at 6:00pm and will be a great time for families to get to know one another. Santa will be there to visit with each child (and you'll get pictures to take with you). Families will enjoy the delicious turkey dinner planned (with all the trimmings). A juggler, a magician and crafts galore will entertain the children all evening. This is a great, fun, no-pressure way for kids to discover that there are lots of kids out there who are in the same boat they are this holiday, and the holidays can still be fun no matter where you celebrate them! Watch the website and the regular MFCAA newsletter for information on making your reservation for the holiday party.

SOMETHING OLD, SOMETHING NEW...

website: mfcaa.org.

Christmas Dinner

*Dec 11, 2009 Please RSVP
no later than Dec 3, 2009*

MFCAA Directions

3210 S Lee's Summit Rd/
Independence, MO/64055
· From I-70, take the Lee's
Summit Rd Exit and go
North
· Drive for a little over a
mile, (the last intersection
you'll go through is for Kiger
Rd-we are just past that)
· We are on the left side of
the road (across from a
park), on the Drumm Farm
campus...The sign where
you turn in says Drumm
Farm. We are part of a
collection of "houses" set
back from the road. Stay to
the right of the drive;
MFCAA is the 2nd building
on the RIGHT.

Trainings are held in the
Dining Hall/Gardner Hall -
the 2nd building on the far
LEFT drive. On Training
nights, please park in the
gravel lot (just past the
MFCAA offices, on the
RIGHT drive)

[Join Our Mailing List!](#)

The Strengthening Families (SF) program just completed its first year and continues to grow stronger as we begin another. During the past year I served as a mentor to two wonderful foster families through this program. Since I have recently joined the staff at MFCAA, I'm excited to share that I have been given the privilege of taking over the management of our SF program. Over the course of the past two weeks, I've made an effort to contact all participating mentors and families. I've been pleased to confirm what I had suspected all along. We have some great resources out there! The SF foster/adopt parent mentors that have offered their time and expertise, are here to help guide you along this very important path you are taking. They know the system and will help you navigate through it. They also know the children. Children in foster care often present behaviors that sometimes seem impossible to handle, yet these families have been successful using their behavior management skills for years, keeping children stable in their homes. They are anxious to share their skills with you so that you too can find peace with these children that have suffered abuse, neglect and disruptions in their lives.

To sign up for Strengthening Families, or if you've previously signed up and I haven't spoken with you yet, please feel free to contact me anytime at Mary@MFCAA.org or call me at (816) 350-0215. I am here to serve.



MFCAA Services

Reminder

We'd like to remind you all that as new foster parents you may need some extra help, and we are here to support you! MFCAA

Services are available from 8a-5p, Mon-Fri (and you can always contact us after hours in an emergency).

Clothes Closet -

gently used clothes available Tues & Fri, 10a-2p (or by appointment) - [contact Becky](#)

Food Pantry -

basic items available every Tues & Fri, 9a-2p (or by appointment)/ extended items (such as canned goods and frozen items) available once each month - [contact Becky](#)

Advocacy -

experienced foster and adoptive parents are on staff at MFCAA, and can answer questions, address concerns, accompany you to meetings/court dates or help in any other way necessary - call us at 816-350-0215

Training -

as foster parents, you will have to complete training

hours each year to maintain your license - we offer training on the 1st and 3rd Fridays of each month -

[get more info](#)

Special Events -

several times each year we hold Family Events, such as our annual Christmas party, at little or no charge to our members - please join us!

Respite -

MFCAA has a list of Respite providers that we will contact when you need respite care - [contact Suzen](#)

Special Programs -

we offer programs to help with School Supplies, Christmas and other seasonal needs - watch the website and newsletters for announcements

Licensing Workers - please feel free to forward this newsletter to your new foster parents. All foster parents who have been licensed for five years or less are eligible to be part of the Strengthening Families program.

[Get more info](#) (including a registration form).