



Midwest Foster Care and  
Adoption Association  
3210 S Lee's Summit Rd  
Independence, MO  
64055



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**FEB 2010**



Registration is now open for the MFCAA and WCUMC Adoption Resource Foundation's **Nancy Thomas Symposium on Reactive Attachment Disorder**. Children in, or adopted from, foster care, and children who've been adopted from congregate care situations have suffered multiple and complex traumas. Working with, teaching, and parenting these children is a unique challenge.

Come hear Nancy Thomas, author and renowned national parenting expert, as she provides funny, practical, real life information, skills and resources for parents, therapists, social workers, teachers and other professionals.

Place: Woods Chapel United Methodist Church  
4725 NE Lakewood Way  
Lee's Summit, MO 64064

Dates: February 22 and 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2010  
9AM-4PM

\*lunch will be provided  
\*full and partial scholarships are available

For more information or to register online please visit:  
[http://www.mfcaa.org/events\\_RADSymposium.html](http://www.mfcaa.org/events_RADSymposium.html)  
Or call: 816-350-0215



*What comes from the heart goes to the heart.*

This winter weather has delivered us with some very chilly days and cold, cold nights.

This Valentine's Day we appeal to the warm hearts of our good friends and supporters. We thank you from the bottom of our hearts for your very generous past support. You have truly made a difference in the lives of children who deserve a new beginning.

We are in especially difficult economic times. Food donations are down and requests are up. MFCAA can purchase food and fill our shelves with your help.

Please send your Valentine *gift from the heart* using the attached coupon or go to [mfcaa.org](http://mfcaa.org).

Candy Hearts Level	\$14.00	_____
Red Roses Level	\$28.00	_____
Singing Telegram Level	\$56.00	_____
Heart of Gold Level	\$112.00	_____



## Midwest Foster Care & Adoption Association Newsletter



### **Letter From the Executive Director**

#### In This Issue:

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Dear Friends,

This month a few hundred foster and adoptive parents, some from as far away as Los Angeles, along with dozens of social workers, therapists and lawyers will gather to begin to build a shared base of understanding of the impact of multiple and complex traumas on children's ability to form and maintain attachments. This training comes to the Kansas City area at the request of many frustrated and overwhelmed caregivers and professionals, who have felt for far too long as if they are swimming upstream in a system that struggles to understand and appreciate the depth and breadth of Reactive Attachment Disorder (and the related varying degrees of attachment strain). RAD is a particularly devastating condition that impacts a large number of children in the Child Welfare system.

Foster and adoptive families living with children who've experienced early life trauma and multiple changes in primary caregivers are almost always devastated to quickly find that traditionally effective parenting techniques fail to make the slightest difference in the behaviors of these children. Therapists struggling to help families to cope run into similar dead ends. And social workers find themselves in a perpetual struggle to locate a new family with the skill and tenacity to hang in there where many have failed before. Typically outside of the home, the cohesion of the family's support system or team is often shaken by the doubt created in the minds of social workers, therapists, teachers and others who observe a child who appears to be sweet and often charming in dramatic contrast to a parent who appears exhausted, over-stressed and even angry.

Reactive Attachment Disorder is a condition which develops when young children are unable to develop a core foundational relationship of trust with a primary caregiver. Research into the disorder is discovering physiological differences in neural connections in the brains of infants who have that solid core relationship and infants who have suffered the kinds of traumas and changes in caregiver that lead to this disorder. As a result of these experiences, children have extreme difficulty in forming or maintaining any meaningful relationships. Even when committed and capable caregivers are introduced into the child's life, the child makes full-time work of trying to drive that caregiver away. This type of constant rejection (by the child toward the parent) is extremely difficult for mere mortals to cope with, and frequently becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy for the child.

Nancy Thomas, in conjunction with nationally recognized experts in the field, has developed a virtual toolbox of information, strategies, techniques and illustrative experiences which have provided hope to thousands of parents and professionals over the past two decades. Where traditional parenting and therapeutic strategies have proven to be ineffective, these strategies, and the mindset which sets the tone for them, do work for many children and families.

Our hope is that by introducing our entire Child Welfare community to a shared base of knowledge about these issues, we can begin to create the kind of effective multidisciplinary teams which are capable of making appropriate placement choices at the beginning, and then committing to helping families to locate and obtain the support services necessary to do the critically important work of loving a child through and beyond his attempts to reject that love.

#### **Attachment Disorder Symptoms**

- Superficially engaging & charming
- Lack of eye contact on parents' terms
- Indiscriminately affectionate with strangers
- Not affectionate on Parents' terms (not cuddly)
- Destructive to self, others and material things (accident prone)
- Cruelty to animals
- Lying about the obvious (crazy lying)
- Stealing
- No impulse controls (frequently acts hyperactive)
- Learning Lags
- Lack of cause and effect thinking
- Lack of conscience
- Abnormal eating patterns
- Poor peer relationships
- Preoccupation with fire
- Preoccupation with blood & gore
- Persistent nonsense questions & chatter
- Inappropriately demanding & clingy
- Abnormal speech patterns
- Triangulation of adults
- False allegations of abuse
- Presumptive entitlement issues
- Parents appear hostile and angry

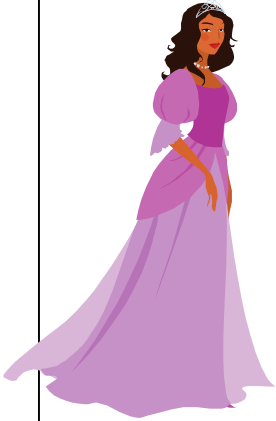
With cohesive teamwork we can reduce and overcome a large percentage of the placement instability which plagues children in foster care, and largely eliminate adoption disruptions.

Most importantly we can provide these children, the children who are the most hurt and damaged children in our system, an opportunity to someday feel what it really means to love and be loved.

I hope you will find the time to take advantage of this amazing opportunity. Details are available in this newsletter and online at [www.mfcaa.org](http://www.mfcaa.org).

*Lori Ross*

Lori Ross  
Executive Director



### Prom Boutique

Friday, March 26th from 1:00 pm to 8:00 pm and Saturday, March 27th from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm

Woods Chapel  
United Methodist Church  
4725 NE Lakewood Way  
Lee's Summit, MO

The boutique is open to all young women in need of a prom dress. There will be hundreds of dresses to choose from at no cost.

If you have questions, please contact  
Becky Hughes (816) 350-0215 or  
[becky@mfcaa.org](mailto:becky@mfcaa.org)



Over the past two years, Bob Allison has made and donated more than 50 beautiful wooden dollhouses to the children of Kansas City foster and adoptive families. MFCAA has had the pleasure of distributing these dollhouses at our family events, trainings, and through our Christmas program. It would be wonderful if we could show our appreciation for this generous donor's kindness. If a child in your home has been lucky enough to receive one of these dollhouses, please send a picture and/or thank you note (those from kids are the best) to our office. We will forward the notes to him. Thanks!

Mail to: MFCAA  
Becky Hughes  
3210 S Lee's Summit Rd  
Independence, MO 64050



**ARKING**



Friends, members and visitors, please use caution when driving on the Drumm Farm campus. There are always children at play close by. The speed limit on campus is 15 mph. Also, please always use the parking lot when you are attending meetings or trainings. It is a short walk to the dining hall or the administrative building.

Stay to the right when coming onto the campus. The parking lot is in the back on the right. The left side of the campus is a residential area with many young children. Parking on that side is reserved for Drumm Farm families only.



The Nancy Hodge Shy and Jay W. Jensen Run/Walk

**Saturday, June 26th.**

The 2009 Run/Walk raised \$21,621.78.  
\$7207.26 for each of the three organizations that  
were near and dear to Nancy and Jay's life:

Midwest Foster Care and Adoption Association,  
Northland Health Care Access, & Synergy Services

## Seventh Annual Ribs for Kids

**Date: May 1st, 2009**

**Time: 7:30 a.m. till 6 p.m.**

**McGonigle's Market**  
**1307 West 79<sup>th</sup> Street**



**Calling for Volunteers**

### **MFCAA Offers A Heartfelt Thanks!**

Thank you to the community organizations and foundations that helped to support the efforts of MFCAA in 2009. Thank you for sharing our dream. We will continue to work "To provide foster and adoptive children the opportunity of a stable, caring and nurturing family environment by recruiting, training, supporting and providing advocacy for foster and adoptive parents." You are truly making a big difference in many young lives











Allied Refrigeration Co.  
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Care Dynamics  
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Drumm Foundation  
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Hallmark Corporate Foundation  
Helzberg Foundation  
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Krigel & Krigel, P.C.  
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Moms Club of Independence  
Mos Family Foundation  
R.F. Fisher Electric Company, L.L.C.  
Rosemary M Laing Living Trust  
Second Baptist Church  
Sosland Foundation  
Summit Lodge - No 263 A.F. & A.M.  
Sutherland Lumber Company  
The Coda Company  
Sisters of Loretto  
Wal-Mart Foundation  
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Support Kansas City, Inc.  
Tension Envelope  
Truman Heartland Community Foundation  
UMB Bank  
Watco Manufacturing, Independence

**Many thanks to our 2009 donors!** It was a wonderful and exciting year for MFCOA and a banner year for community support! We applaud you all and we are truly grateful. Thank you for investing in the future of some very special children.

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Norman and Lorraine Martin	Joseph Matye	Frances Mayer

Continued on page 8

sunday	monday	tuesday	wednesday	thursday	friday	saturday
<b>FEB</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2 Dental Van* At MFCAA</b> 	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>  	<b>6</b>
<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b> 	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b> 	<b>13</b>
<b>14</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>16</b> 	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b>  	<b>20</b>
<b>21</b>	<b>22</b> <b>Nancy Thomas RAD Symposium</b>	<b>23</b> 	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>26</b> 	<b>27</b>
<b>28</b>						

NOTE: On the first Friday of each month, the Food Pantry is available to those who attend Training (in the evening). It is not open 9a-2p on this day.



Clothes Closet  
10a-2p



Food Pantry  
9a-2p



First Friday  
Training  
6:30p



Third Friday  
Training—7p  
(6:30p dinner)

\*For Dental Van Appointments:  
Bobbie Mitchell/ 816-889-3512

### Attention Foster Parents!

Are you interested in helping children in foster care to become resilient? If so, consider signing up for Project **SPARK** (Study of Pathways to Adjustment and Resilience in Kids)!

The **SPARK** project is seeking foster parents and children in foster care to participate in a research project on what makes kids resilient. By participating, you will be able to help professionals know more about the needs of children in foster care and how to better serve them. Participating in this project means completing surveys several times over the course of the year. You will get paid each time you participate, and your child will receive a reward for his or her participation.

If you would like more details about participating in the **SPARK** project, please call Dr. Yo Jackson and the **SPARK** project team at (913) 897-8454.



# Monthly Reminders

Foster Parents are required to maintain a certain number of training hours in order to keep their licenses, and ALL parents can use additional tools to care for the children in their homes. MFCAA provides two great resources for “parent training.”

## **Resource Library**

MFCAA has a lending library with video tapes, dvd’s, cd’s and books that can be checked out and used for outside training hours. Call Tammy at 816-350-0215.

**On-site Training**—On-site Trainings are held at MFCAA, in the 2nd building on the far LEFT of the drive. Please park in the paved lot (continue past the training building, and follow the drive as it curves right), then walk to the training building (for more info, call Justin @ 816-350-0215). Childcare is provided, during both training sessions, for children ages 3 and older.

## ON-SITE TRAINING SCHEDULE:

### **Feb/6:30p – How to parent a child that has experienced trauma—Joseph Beck**

Many parents have the idea that parenting children in foster care will be just like parenting you own children. In fact, they are told to do that while they prepare for the first placement. But parenting children that have been subjected to abuse/neglect bring some new challenges to parenting. Especially, those that are new foster parents. It is very different and you need to be prepared to do a great job with and for these children. Many tips and techniques will be shared to make sure you have all your bases covered.

### **Feb 19/6:30p Dinner (RSVP only if attending dinner-tammy@mfcaa.org) 7p meeting**

#### **Educational Advocacy 101—Sue Hines**

Children in care often have difficulty being successful in school. With all the moves in their placements they are often at least 6-12 months behind in their school work. From grades to school suspensions our children have lots of obstacles for success in school. Special education services are often the answer to our children’s issues, delays, and aids in their progress. How do you get that to happen? Added Bonus: Get information on the new Missouri Foster Child’s Educational Bill of Rights, and what that means for your kids.

## **Clothes Closet & Food Pantry**

MFCAA’s Clothing Closet provides clothing, shoes, coats, toys, high chairs, car seats and more, free of charge, to all MFCAA Members. In addition, our Birthday Closet offers parents the opportunity to choose a gift for each of their children. Clothing Closet hours are 10a-2p on Tuesdays and Fridays. Call Becky for special appointments (contact info below).



### THANKS

We would like to take a moment to thank everyone who thought of us over the last month, when deciding where to donate the items their children no longer use.

We appreciate your generosity!

MFCAA’s Food Pantry provides basic food items, free of charge, to all Members, and is open Tues and Fri from 9a-2p. In addition, the Food Pantry offers extended items, such as canned goods and hygiene products. These items are available to each member monthly, by appointment. Contact Becky for an appointment at 816-350-0215 or becky@mfcaa.org.



## **HELP OUT AT THE MFCAA OFFICES**

We can always use an extra hand cleaning up after Clothes Closet days, and cleaning around the office in general (any day or time—vacuum, sweep, etc).

Contact Becky (becky@mfcaa.org or 816-350-0215).

## Many thanks to our 2009 donors!

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