



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



MAR 2010

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U.S. POSTAGE PAID
INDEP, MO
PERMIT NO. 535

Thank You

Many thanks to Michael Klein of U.S. Toy for his amazing Christmas gift to the children of MFCAA. Three trucks each containing several pallets of toys and games from U.S. Toy, helped provide many of our kids a very special Christmas.



U.S. Toy is located just west of State Line Road at 2008 West 103rd Terrace in Leawood, Kansas. US Toy/Constructive Playthings is a

family owned business. The [U.S. Toy Company](http://www.us-toy.com) sells educational toys, games, stuffed animals, novelty toys as well as affordable carnival/party and seasonal decorations.

MFCAA sends out a special thanks to our good friends at the Space Center for once again proving a great space for our



SPACE CENTER®

Christmas distribution program. Toys and gifts for over 900 children begin arriving in October. Thanks to their generosity we have a great area to store sort and distribute

gifts for children and their families. The Space Center allows us to bring a little part of Santa's workshop to Independence.



Amber Post of **Just Between Friends** deserves our thanks for her generosity.

Just Between Friends donates hundreds of gently used clothing items, shoes, coats and children's toys to our Kids' Clothes Closet. Amber also donates a portion of the proceeds of two major sales.

Just Between Friends is a the nation's leading children's and maternity consignment sales and event franchise. Check them out at jbfsales.com

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



Midwest Foster Care & Adoption Association Newsletter



Letter From the Executive Director

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Dear Friends;

Earlier this week, more than 300 child welfare team members came together to devote two days to learning about Reactive Attachment Disorder. At a systemic level the symposium was designed as a response to a need identified in the Kansas City child welfare community for information and assistance on the very special needs of children who have experienced multiple complex traumas and losses. These are the children who have suffered so much pain at the hands of their caretakers that they cannot allow themselves to love or trust again. They are the children who chalk up placement move after placement move; children who are completely comfortable with strangers and completely on edge with people who dare to try to love them. These are children who have no conscience and hurt others without any hesitation. Sometimes, in the most extreme situations, they are children who kill.

On a personal level, the Nancy Thomas Symposium on Reactive Attachment Disorder was the amazing and inspiring culmination of two years of struggle and effort by a team of grieving foster care parents. A few years ago, a little boy in foster care died a few days short of his twelfth birthday. He had a pretty awful life story that involved too many moves, too much rejection, and more pain than any human being should have to absorb. But only part of that had happened before the good people of the child welfare system came into his life.

This particular little boy had spent several of those pain-filled years in the care of a system of people who were charged with the adult responsibility of 'protecting him' and making sure that his needs were appropriately met. Those needs extended beyond a roof over his head and food in his belly. Those needs absolutely included the opportunity to be planted in a stable home, nurtured, and allowed to grow and develop as a human being must, with a sense of identity and belonging that comes from knowing who you are in relation to who loves and cares for you.

But this little boy's needs were not met. While he was fed and housed, the system of adults who were charged with meeting all of his needs absolutely failed to meet his most basic of emotional needs. He literally died of a broken heart, when he committed suicide before he'd even had a chance to really live.

For many children in the foster care system, like the little boy I've discussed above, what they need the most in the world is what they fight the hardest to push away. And in the middle of a big system of adults who are all doing the best they can to contribute their piece of the puzzle, often the big picture is lost.

Nancy Thomas, with humor, wit, grace and brilliant parenting ideas, spent two days this week reminding us of that big picture. Children who have Reactive Attachment Disorder can heal. If we can all come together to support the 'mom' (or whatever brave caregiver it is who is willing to take on the challenge and step up to the plate), then outrageous behaviors can be diminished, children can begin to trust again, and hearts can heal. It is not enough to equip the caregiver with the tools and techniques.



We must also recognize the signs and symptoms of children with these issues, and we must wrap ourselves as professionals, social workers, therapists, friends, teachers and neighbors around the parents as a system of support for them as they do this difficult, time-consuming and emotionally draining work.

I challenge you to continue your education on this critical topic by finding and purchasing one of the books on our resource list, and learning more about it. I challenge you to identify a child that you work with, who likely suffers from the effects of early life trauma and loss, and find some way that you can extend yourself in support to the family that is struggling to meet that child's extensive needs today. I challenge you to find ways to stabilize, rather than change children's foster care placements.

Rather than stepping back away from work that is hard, dirty, painful and sometimes ugly, families caring for kids with attachment issues walk into the fray. They love children who remind them daily that they are not loved back. They live with behaviors which are unmanageable in congregate care settings, and yet manage somehow anyway. I lift those families up as child welfare warriors. They are the front line soldiers in the fight to save the most damaged victims of child abuse.

Let's continue to find ways to take the tragedy of our collective failures, and use that as a constant inspiration to do better...for the children who we still have a chance to help.

Sincerely



Lori Ross
Executive Director

FOSTER PARENTS BILL OF RIGHTS



The Foster Parent Bill of Rights training is an excellent way for you to empower yourselves and to truly be a part of the professional team.

The Bill of Rights was passed into law in 2008 and we are anxious to make everyone aware of its content, bringing respect to our common mission of helping heal and finding permanency for the abused and neglected children we care for everyday. Joint training sessions have been designed to bring workers and foster parents together to become aware of these laws and to put them into practice here in Jackson County.

The training dates are:

March 26th, 9-11 and 1-3 North KC Hospital
May 14th, 9-11 and 1-3 MFCAA
September 24th, 9-11 and 1-3 North KC Hospital
October 22, 9-11 and 1-3 Dolir Building, KC

This training is 2 hours and you can sign up by calling Tammy Merriman @ 816 889-2380. The Children's Division have filled their portion of the March 26th trainings but to be successful we need to fill the foster/adopt portion of the training. PLEASE CALL TODAY TO SIGN UP FOR ONE OF THESE 2 HOUR TRAININGS!

It was designed with YOU in mind



Let's get together. Join Team MFCAA
The Nancy Hodge Shy and Jay W. Jensen Run/
Walk

Saturday, June 26th

www.nancyrunjaywalk.com

The 2010 Run/Walk will benefit 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**



**Mark your calendars
7th Annual Ribs for Kids**

May 1st, 2010

McGonigle's Market

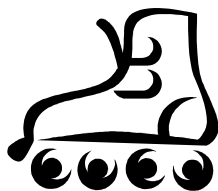
1307 West 70th Street

K.C., MO 64114

The Children's Orchard



The Children's Orchard and MFCAA believe all children have the right to a loving family and the joy of childhood hopes and dreams. In support of Midwest Foster Care & Adoption Association they are offering a **10% Discount Card** to MFCAA members while supplies last. You may pick-up your card from Becky Hughes at MFCAA. We want to extend a BIG THANK YOU to our friends at The Children's Orchard for this gracious offer.



MFCAA Members Skating Party

Dust off your roller skates and mark your calendars for :

Sunday April 18th from 3:30-5:30.

Winnwood Skating Rink/4426 NE Winn Rd/KC,MO

Cost: \$5 for the entire family!

(includes admission, skates, & admission to the Bounce House).

We have reserved the rink for 125 skaters, so please RSVP as soon as possible to reserve your spot. Because we have a limit on our number of skaters, please bring only members of your family currently living in your house. If you have family or friends who would like to come just to watch, that is fine, as we do not have to include non-skaters in our 125 count.

RSVP to fran@mfcaa.org or 816 350-0215. Please include the number of skaters, and the number of non-skaters.



Some great opportunities for training are coming in the next couple of months!!!!

YOU, ME & THE KIDS

This training was held in September of 2009 and proved to be a very enjoyable positive experience for all involved. We had foster parents together with Division staff and worked on common issues that we shared, first recognizing they are a problem and then jointly coming up with solutions that are attainable.

The trainings are scheduled before school lets out on 3 consecutive Fridays. They are held at Drumm Farm, 3210 Lee's Summit Rd, Independence, Mo, in the Dining Hall. Each session is 3 hours. We do ask you to invite your favorite division staff member to accompany you, but it is not mandatory.

Training dates:

Session 1 – Here We Go Again, 4/16/10, 9AM-12PM. We give you this topic and let you discuss with your table what this means to you.

Session 2 - Tick, Tock, 4/16/10, 1PM-4PM. This section is centered on juggling our very busy schedules vs. responsibilities.

Session 3 – Staying Put, 4/23/10, 9AM-12PM. This session discusses placements, re-placements and two week notices.





Session 4 – Mission Impossible, 4/23/10, 1PM-4PM. At this session we talk of challenging cases and children, how to handle hotlines and high profile media cases.

Session 5 – Let's Make Some Plans, 4/30/10, 9AM-12PM. We talk of permanency for children in these sessions.

Session 6 – Let's Talk, 4/30/10, 1PM-4PM. How can we do a better job of working together for our common goal...the child?

These sessions spark lots of great conversations between the worker and foster parents. By working together on these topics, we can send our UNITED message to Jefferson City to create change where it is needed. We are happy to send our creative solutions as our message, but we need YOU to come share your ideas.

Please call Kim at 816 350-0215 to reserve your spot. You may also email her at kim@mfcaa.org

sunday	monday	tuesday	wednesday	thursday	friday	saturday
MAR	1	2 	3	4	5  	6
7	8	9 	10	11	12 Dental Van at MFCAA* 	13
14	15	16 	17 	18	19  	20
21	22	23 	24	25	26 Prom Boutique*  1PM-8PM	27 Prom Boutique* 10AM-2PM
28	29	30	31		* Woods Chapel United Methodist Church 4725 NE Lakewood Way Lee's Summit, MO	

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:

March 5/6:30p – How to tell if your child is bullying or being bullied

Taunts, rumors, whispers, and cyber-bullying is enough to push any child over the edge! For our children that have already experience trauma, its enough to make them make worse choices. Foster children already have so much on their plates. We will present ways to identify and problem solve for interventions for our children whether they are perpetrators or victims. Protect and nurture, building connections meant to last a lifetime, and working as a member of a professional
Presenter: Kealey Williams—Licensed Therapist

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

What do I do with the Hair?

Foster parents that open their hearts and homes to children of different cultural backgrounds often find themselves asking this question. What do I put on it? How often do I wash it? Why are their legs and arms so dry? Often the answers to these questions are hard to find without someone being made uncomfortable. We are bringing in a licensed cosmetologist to address these and many other questions on how to comb the hair and manage the skin. She will give suggestions and demonstrations to get foster parents up to speed so they can enhance their children’s appearance and self-esteem.
Presenter: TBA-Licensed Cosmetologist

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.



CAN YOU HELP ?

We are in need of book shelves. If you’ve gone digital with your book reading and have an extra book shelf or two, please call our office on 816 350-0215 and speak with Linda or Fran.

NANCY THOMAS: A RADical SYMPOSIUM

Nancy Thomas arrived in Kansas City on one of our crazy snow days and well over 300 people showed up!!! We received three pages of comments saying things like, “This changes everything, I was ready to relinquish him,” “Amazing fresh ideas to brighten up our worn-out minds,” and “Makes us feel not alone. There is hope!” It goes without saying we have many requests to “Bring Nancy back!!!”

Based on the evaluations we received, we realized how much Nancy Thomas was needed and appreciated in Kansas City. On a scale of 1-5, 5 being the best, not one category averaged less than a 4.80...the majority hitting a 4.98. Parents of children with Reactive Attachment Disorder and other difficult diagnoses couldn't wait to get new ideas.

Nancy described children with Reactive Attachment Disorder as those whose needs were disregarded the first three years of life and, therefore, never learned to trust adults to care for them. When these children come into our homes they fight to be in control of not only themselves, but also their environment. We parents need to teach the children to trust in that we will guide them safely through life. The biggest struggle is doing this work with loving eyes and a loving spirit. The team members who came to hear Nancy can be very instrumental in keeping that loving spirit alive. When we have a child, especially a child with these characteristics, we all need to be supporting the Mom. The Mom, as Nancy referred to as the primary caregiver, could even be the father of the home.

In addition, families need a great therapist that will not do individual therapy with the child, but family therapy to help that child attach to the family as a whole. They also need educators who will address the individual needs of a particular child and work closely with the parents to meet them. The Children's Division staff must listen to the parents and allot those services to the family that are so often promised. Finally, they need respite!!! “Sweetums” will need to go to a properly trained RAD respite provider in order to allow love and patience to replenish the hearts of the caregivers.

Most importantly, we all need to get the children into a “forever” home from the start. When the children come into care, we as a team need to work harder to keep siblings together. For example, if a newborn comes into care and the family who has his/her siblings won't take him, have the parents sign a document which states that they will not disrupt the newborn's attachment at a later time. More placement stability meetings need to happen when a family is ready to move a child. As Nancy said, “Every move is a trauma.”

At MFCAA we have mentors and advocates that are more than willing to help with ideas to stabilize placements. Our library at MFCAA has books, CDs and DVDs available when you need a refresher on anything Nancy talked about. We are happy that so many of you found this training helpful. Thanks for persevering. There is hope!



Sincerely

Mary