



## Midwest Foster Care and Adoption Association

Providing foster and adopted children the opportunity of a stable, caring, loving and nurturing family environment by recruiting, training, developing, supporting and motivating foster and adoptive parents.

Dear Friends,

It's been a whirlwind year of growth and progress for Midwest Foster Care and Adoption Association. As we approach the end of 2011 we're reflecting on what we've accomplished this year, and planning for another year of incredible positive movement in 2012.

This year we've grown our licensing program. We've helped to recruit, train, support and retain dozens of foster families. We've seen 30 children adopted by families we've developed in 2011, and we know we'll increase that number next year. Additionally, we've retained more than 95% of the foster homes we've licensed, an outcome that we're very proud of. We believe that we provide excellent service to our foster and adoptive families (they tell us we do), and our goal is to continue to expand the pool of qualified loving families available for Kansas City area kids as we move into 2012.

This fall we've added an exciting new program to help the kids most at risk of aging out of foster care with negative outcomes. Extreme Recruitment uses an innovative approach to exploring a child's background and extended family in order to identify healthy members of the family who can provide the child with connections and, in most cases, with permanency that would otherwise have been out of reach. Our new private detective, John Ecklund, and recruiter, Marcella Gladney-Lee, are just gearing up to tackle their first two cases as I write. I can't wait to report on the amazing outcomes that I'm sure we'll find for the kids lucky enough to be chosen for this program.

Our work in providing post adoptive services has expanded this year. With the help of some additional funding we've tackled the respite challenge from a new direction. This year we were able to provide small grants to 6 support organizations all across Missouri so that they could provide a group respite activity to benefit their local foster and adoptive families. These events were held in St. Louis, St. Charles, Columbia, Joplin, Springfield and Jefferson City and served 429 kids and 178 families. MFCAA was so pleased with our experience in the Kansas City project that we've scheduled a second date to allow parents to do holiday shopping in early December.

Our support groups have increased this year, with the provision of a new group for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgendered foster and adoptive parents funded through a grant from AdoptUSKids, the federal partner of the United States Children's Bureau.

We're also connecting with already established parent groups across Missouri. Our recent foster and adoptive family support effort in Joplin following their devastating tornado, which we did in conjunction with the Southern Missouri organization (the other MFCAA), was a gift to both of our organizations in that it allowed for mended fences between our two organizations and created the opportunity for mutually beneficial activities in the future.

Our BIST (Behavioral Intervention Support Team) project, funded by grants from several Kansas City area charities this year, has allowed us to train 60 people in behavioral management techniques which have given them the opportunity to upgrade their fostering licenses to care for children with higher levels of needs. In addition, through that partnership we've been able to provide individual behavioral consultation in several families homes in order to help them address the behavioral challenges their children were facing.

Our fall conference this year, in partnership with Cornerstones of Care, UMKC School of Social Work and the Children's Division is going to be the biggest conference we've ever hosted with more than 400 people in attendance. We're thrilled that several new families and many child welfare workers will benefit from the incredible learning opportunity afforded by this event.

We were also honored this year to receive two special recognitions for the work we're doing in the community. The Horace Mann Friend of Education Award was presented to us by the Missouri branch of the NEA this spring for the work our advocates do in assisting foster and adoptive families in navigating the special education process to assure that our kids receive appropriate services in their schools. And the Human Rights Campaign, a national LGBT advocacy organization, recognized MFCAA and its staff for achieving substantial compliance with their national standards

of performance in working with LGBT foster and adoptive families. We were the first Missouri agency to receive the All Children-All Families seal of recognition.

While we're very proud of these, and many other accomplishments in 2011, we're already hard at work establishing goals and moving towards exciting new opportunities in 2012. This fall we've added Joe Beck, LCSW, MSW, to our staff. Many of you have met Joe as you've attended trainings provided at MFCAA over the past several years. For quite some time Joe has served in a volunteer capacity to assist MFCAA with pretty much anything we've asked of him. This fall he takes on the role of Vice President of Operations and Programs at MFCAA. He shares a leadership role at MFCAA with Jennifer Johnson, our wonderful licensing supervisor, who steps up this fall into the role of Vice President of Personnel and Programs. Jennifer remains responsible for our licensing program and our new Extreme Recruitment program. She's also working to develop a mentoring program for foster youth.

In Joe's new role, he is developing a landmark program for MFCAA which will work intensively with foster children and their birth families as they first enter the foster care system. Our goal is to respond to the dramatic increase (estimates are between 31% and 45% in the last two years) in the number of children in foster care in the Kansas City region by providing intensive front end services which we hope will result in diverting many of the children from needing to remain in foster care for a long period of time. Joe will also directly oversee our individual advocacy and training programs.

Another article in this newsletter provides information about some legal systemic advocacy we're pursuing over the next year, to increase the rates provided to foster parents for caring for Missouri's abused and neglected children. The rates lawsuit filed on November 16, 2011, is the culmination of several years of effort to improve foster care rates working within the system. We'll hope, along with all of you, for a positive resolution to this case within the next several months. Our foster children deserve to be adequately supported by the state of Missouri.

This winter we will expand our support group offerings yet again, by providing a group specific to families who are struggling with children who have Reactive Attachment Disorder. We are well aware that kids with this diagnosis have issues which are exceedingly difficult for families. This group will allow those families to find the kinds of support and resources they need in a mutually supportive environment.

Next June we'll work with our Southern Missouri (other MFCAA) partners to host a statewide conference at Tan-Tar-A for foster and adoptive families. This conference, aptly titled "All Together Now", will be the first collaborative conference held in Missouri in decades. Our goal is to involve all support groups and foster parent organizations in the state, and to include all of the Child Placing Agencies as well. We'll provide additional information on how you can register, accessing scholarships and other details of the event in the February newsletter.

This winter, as we approach the holiday season, we feel good about the work we're doing here at MFCAA. We feel honored to be witnessing the work that all of you are doing in your homes each day with the children you love. And we feel blessed to have the opportunity to contribute in a small way to the hope of positive futures for the kids who deserve that hope more than anyone else.

On behalf of the Board of Directors, the Staff and the Volunteers at MFCAA, please accept our wishes for a Happy and Healthy Holiday Season,



Lori Ross

## **MFCAA Office Holiday Closure**

The MFCAA office (including the clothing closet and food pantry) will be closed December 23rd to January 3rd. We will re-open on January 4th. If you have an emergency during this time, please call the office phone, 816-350-0215, and leave a message on the emergency voice mail and we will get in touch with you. Have a happy holiday season!

# Buy your friends, family and clients Christmas presents while supporting the mission of MFCAA!

2012 MFCAA calendars on sale NOW – Calendars feature art created by YOUR children.

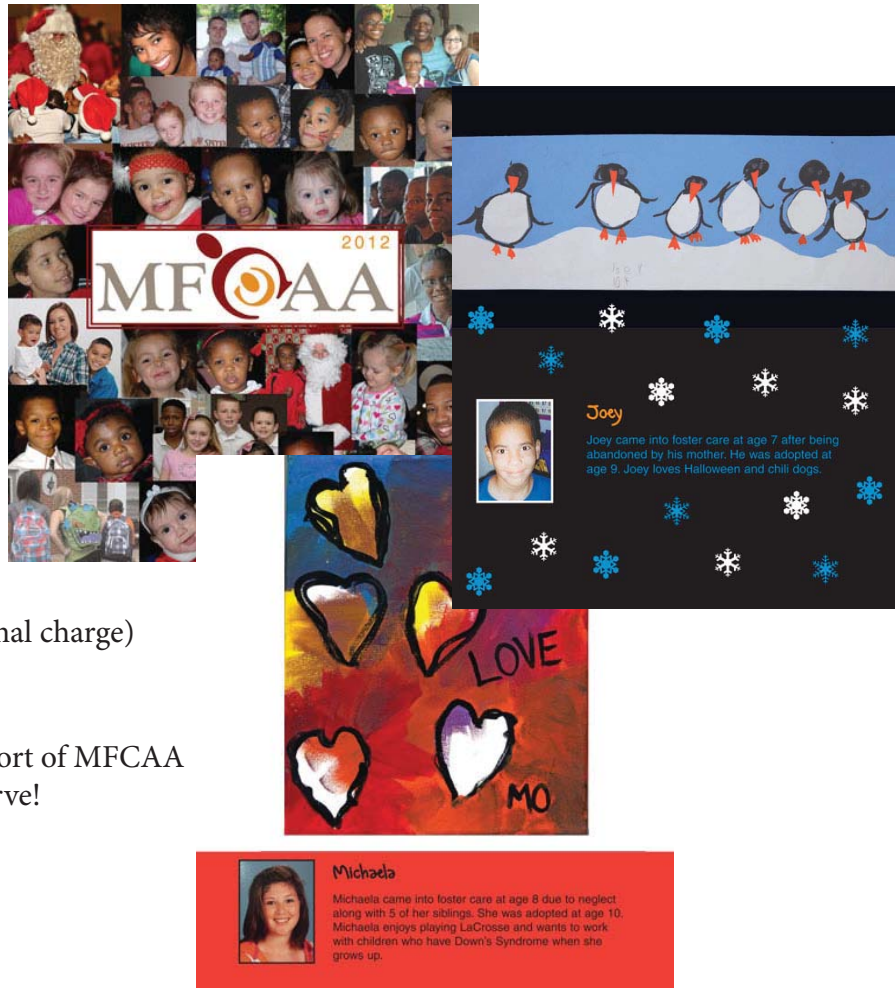
\$10 per Calendar (plus \$1.50 for shipping per calendar or pick up here at our offices for no additional charge)

Multiple Calendar Discount  
5 Calendars for \$40 (plus \$1.50 for shipping per calendar or pick up here at our offices for no additional charge)

10 Calendars for \$80 (plus \$1.50 for shipping per calendar or pick up here at our offices for no additional charge)

Order online at [www.mfcaa.org](http://www.mfcaa.org)

Thank you for your continued support of MFCAA and the children and families we serve!



**A HUGE Thank you to Dr. Teresa Bradley Bays, Belton Animal Clinic, for the 102 pairs of pajamas and \$430 worth of new underwear she donated! The fundraiser at her clinic raised the money to buy these items.**

## Christmas Distribution Dates

Dec 14th 10am-2pm

Dec 15th 2pm-6pm

Dec 16th 9am-1pm

Where: Space Center Executive Park  
M291 and Independence Ave., Ste. 355S  
Independence, MO 64055.

Be sure and check your red card for the correct date and time to pick-up your gifts!



3210 S. Lee's Summit Rd  
Independence, MO 64055

NON-PROFIT ORG.  
U.S. POSTAGE PAID  
INDEP, MO  
PERMIT NO. 535

## Recipe of the Month

### Creamy Turkey Pie

1/4 cup chopped sweet onion	1/2 teaspoon coarsely ground pepper
1/4 cup thinly sliced celery	2 cups chicken broth
4 tablespoons butter	2/3 cup half-and-half
1/3 cup flour	3 to 4 cups diced turkey
1 teaspoon salt	1 tablespoon chopped pimiento
1 teaspoon Worcestershire sauce	
<b>Topping</b>	
2 cups biscuit baking mix	2 tablespoons shortening
1/3 cup milk	

**Preparation:**

Heat oven to 450°.

**Prepare filling:**

In a skillet, melt butter over medium-low heat. Add onion and celery; saute, stirring, until tender. Blend in the flour, salt, and pepper, stirring and cooking until smooth and bubbly. Gradually add chicken broth, stirring constantly. Add milk, stirring. Continue cooking, stirring, until mixture is thickened. Add remaining filling ingredients and bring to a boil, stirring constantly. Continue stirring and cooking gently for about 30 seconds. Pour filling into an 11 1/2 x 7 1/2-inch baking dish. Keep warm in the oven while making the biscuit topping.

**Prepare topping:**

In a bowl, combine the baking mix, shortening, and milk. Stir with a fork to make a soft dough. Shape into a smooth ball on a floured surface and knead about 5 times. Pat dough into a rectangle about 11x7-inches to fit baking dish. Cut 4 to 6 slits in top of the dough then carefully fit over the hot filling. Bake for about 15 to 20 minutes, until topping is browned and filling is bubbly.

Serves 6.