

metro connections

Covering Essex, Union, Middlesex and Somerset Counties

www.fafsonline.org

STAY RIGHT HERE...I'LL BE RIGHT BACK

by Janis Nietzer, *President*

Every year as summer slips away and the days grow cooler, I find myself thinking again of Nate and the Halloween he spent with my family.

Nate arrived at my door full of energy, spunk and attitude. All of 4 years old, and pint-sized at that, he projected a 'tough guy' image. Nate had been through several moves in his young life and knew how to protect himself, both physically and emotionally. Don't get too close, don't ever let your guard down, strike out when necessary. Nate was a handful, and challenged me at every turn.

He spent three weeks with our family and was still awaiting a pre-adoptive placement as Halloween arrived. True to form, he wanted to be the toughest thing he could think of -- a football player.

On the big day, he eagerly joined my daughter at trick-or-treating. As I walked along with the baby in a stroller, he would stop at each house and order me to, "stay right here, I'll be right back." He never missed saying it, and I, amused, stood right where he told me as he strode up to each neighbor's door to receive his allotment of candy.

Finally, at one of the last houses, he repeated yet again, "Stay right here, I'll be right back..." but added softly "...else I will be lost." My heart broke as I realized that this little guy didn't only mean lost in my town, he meant lost in the world. He had learned enough in his short life to realize that there was no guarantee that a caregiver would be there waiting for him when he returned. After all, so many people had already disappeared with little warning. Repeating those

words was his way of dealing with that uncertainty.

I understood then that Nate's toughness was his way of protecting himself from grief. Although he remained challenging, I had a new understanding and respect for this tough and scared little boy.

Children in out-of-home placement face many issues: loss, grief, and much more. It is important that we, as foster, adoptive and kinship caregivers, learn as much as we can about the issues affecting our children and the resources available to help them. I urge you to look over the in-service trainings listed in this issue and take advantage of the opportunities offered to gain information and support that will help you better advocate for your child's needs and guide you in helping your child become the best he or she can be.

Please turn to page 2 of this newsletter for more information about county meeting and training dates for November 2009 and January 2010. Holiday party information for December 2009 will come via the mail.

The next newsletter, detailing meeting schedules for February/March/April, should arrive in homes around the week of Feb. 1.

Please visit our Web site, www.fafsonline.org, and click on 'Services' then click on either 'Support' or 'Training' for further information on our training opportunities and support services. You also can click on 'Ways to Help' or the 'Please Donate' button for ways to support FAFS or visit the FAFS Foundation Web site, www.fafsfoundation.org.

OUR mission

The mission of Foster and Adoptive Family Services (FAFS) is to provide support, training and advocacy to meet the special needs of foster, adoptive and kinship families, who provide safe, stable, and nurturing homes for children in foster care.

MEETING INFORMATION: NOVEMBER '09 & JANUARY '10

HOLIDAY PARTY INFO FOR DECEMBER 2009 WILL COME VIA THE MAIL

Essex County (Newark): Co-Chairs, Michael Moore and Henry Wright

Date: November 24, 2009
Location: Community Hills; 85 Irvine Turner Blvd.; Newark, NJ 07103
Time: 7 p.m.
Speaker: Barbara Rall, NJ ARCH
Topic: From Termination of Parental Rights to Adoption
Amount of In-Service Hours: 1.5 hours

Date: January 26, 2010
Location: Community Hills; 85 Irvine Turner Blvd.; Newark, NJ 07103
Time: 7 p.m.
Speaker: Sgt. Brian Miller, New Jersey State Police
Topic: Bullying Among Children and Youth
Amount of In-Service Hours: 1.5 hours

Suburban Essex: Co-Chairs, Barbara Womelsdorf and Stacey Cooper

Date: November 18, 2009
Location: West Caldwell Civic Center; 1 Fairfield Ave.; West Caldwell, NJ 07006
Time: 7 p.m.
Speaker: Barbara Rall, NJ ARCH
Topic: From Termination of Parental Rights to Adoption
Amount of In-Service Hours: 1.5 hours

Date: January 20, 2010
Location: West Caldwell Civic Center; 1 Fairfield Ave.; West Caldwell, NJ 07006
Time: 7 p.m.
Speaker: Sgt. Greg Williams, New Jersey State Police
Topic: Bullying Among Children and Youth
Amount of In-Service Hours: 1.5 hours

Union County: Chair, Vacant

Date: November 19, 2009
Location: Plainfield YMCA; 518 Watchung Ave.; Plainfield, NJ 07060
Time: 6 p.m.
Speaker: Dennis White, New Jersey State Police
Topic: Bullying Among Children and Youth
Amount of In-Service Hours: 1.5 hours

Date: January 28, 2010
Location: Plainfield YMCA; 518 Watchung Ave.; Plainfield, NJ 07060
Time: 6 p.m.
Speaker: Office of Licensing Representative
Topic: Office of Licensure - New Licensing Requirements for Resource Parents
Amount of In-Service Hours: 1 hour

Middlesex County: Chair, Mary Engelmeyer

Date: November 19, 2009
Location: Middlesex West Local DYFS Office; 53 Knightsbridge Rd.; Piscataway, NJ 08854
Time: 7:30 p.m.
Speaker: Lillian Brennan, Deputy Public Defender
Topic: What is a Law Guardian?
Amount of In-Service Hours: 1 hour

Date: January 21, 2010
Location: Middlesex West Local DYFS Office; 53 Knightsbridge Rd.; Piscataway, NJ 08854
Time: 7:30 p.m.
Speaker: Officer Jennifer Hammill, Rutgers University Police Department
Topic: Car Seat Safety
Amount of In-Service Hours: 1.5 hours

Somerset County: Chair, Roberta Hester

Date: November 16, 2009
Location: Franklin Township Library; 485 Demott Lane; Somerset, NJ 08873
Time: 6:30 p.m.
Speaker: Sgt. Greg Williams, NJ State Police
Topic: Bullying Among Children and Youth
Amount of In-Service Hours: 1.5 hours

Date: January 11, 2010
Location: Somerset Local DYFS Office; 92 East Main St., Suite 101; Somerville, NJ 08876
Time: 6:30 p.m.
Speaker: Veronica Jones, Clinical Nurse Coordinator
Topic: Child Health Unit Service Overview
Amount of In-Service Hours: 2 hours

FAFS will award a \$200 honorarium to any licensed resource parent who recruits someone to become a licensed resource parent. A \$400 honorarium will be awarded if a newly licensed family takes a sibling group of three or more. Just call 1.800.222.0047 for more information.

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• **Important Training Note:** These are all very short trainings - please arrive promptly in order to receive the training hours.

• All meeting/training information is provided by each county and is accurate as of October 1, 2009. In the event that dates, times or locations change, FAFS will contact you through the mail to alert you of these alterations.

• Pre-registration is not required for these trainings/meetings, unless it is specified. If you have any questions please contact FAFS at 1.800.222.0047.

• Those interested in becoming the Union County Volunteer Committee Chair call FAFS at 1.800.222.0047.

• Due to budgetary constraints, FAFS will no longer be able to reimburse licensed resource parents \$20 at a county-based workshop. However, FAFS is increasing training opportunities in order for you to meet licensure requirements.

• Our Volunteer Committees/Affiliate often receive donations of non-cash items (such as backpacks, tickets, clothing, etc.). We encourage you to attend your local meetings to learn of any donated items.

• FAFS thanks the FAFS Foundation for hosting the second annual 5K fund-raising walks. FAFS is equally grateful for its walk sponsors: Lenox, Attorney Doug Pine, Hilton Realty and North Jersey Media Group Foundation.

• FAFS has partnered with One Simple Wish, a wish-granting organization in NJ that grants simple wishes to children in foster care and impoverished families. This partnership will help fulfill wishes for children in foster care that exceed the reach of FAFS' Fostering Wishes For Children program, which is limited to a \$75 annual wish. Through One Simple Wish, foster, adoptive and kinship families experiencing hardship may apply for a family wish and/or apply for wishes for some or all of the individual children in their family. Wishes can range from \$5 to \$500.

To qualify you must be currently caring for a child in foster care and/or you must be experiencing a hardship such as a job loss, natural disaster or illness. Families experiencing hardship must provide an explanation of the hardship for those children not in foster care and/or a wish for the entire family to be considered. For more information please visit www.fafsonline.org/onesimplewish.html.

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Toll-Free Hotline
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Web site: www.fafsonline.org

FAFS Partners With United Way

FAFS is able to receive donations through United Way. You can donate to FAFS by either listing our name -*Foster and Adoptive Family Services* or our United Way number- 715170 on the donation form. United Way's annual community campaign in the workplace is an effective way for you and your employer to help improve the community that you live, work and do business in. If your employer participates in the United Way's annual community campaign, when you give, please don't forget to list FAFS as your charity of choice.



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THE NJ FOSTER CARE SCHOLARS PROGRAM CELEBRATES SIX YEARS OF SUCCESS

by Ross Losapio, FAFS Staff



The New Jersey Foster Care (NJFC) Scholars Program closed its sixth successful year in June 2009. Although the program was signed into existence in 2003, its first sizable student population occurred during the fall 2004 semester.

Since then, 78 students have completed degree or certificate programs as NJFC Scholars at accredited colleges, universities, and trade/career schools.

The 2008-2009 academic year resulted in 29 graduates, the most in any single year of the program.

Foster & Adoptive Family Services would like to congratulate those graduates and encourage its current NJFC Scholars in the pursuit of their goals.

For more information about the NJFC Scholars Program, please call 1.800.222.0047 and ask for the Scholarship Department or send an e-mail to scholarships@fafsonline.org.