

# northern connections

Covering Bergen, Hudson, Hunterdon, Morris, Passaic, Sussex and Warren Counties [www.fafsonline.org](http://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](http://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](http://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

### Bergen County: *Chair, Arlene Hoffmann*

**Note:** There is no meeting or training scheduled for November 2009

**Date:** January 28, 2010  
**Location:** Universal Hagar Spiritualist Church; 180 Clay St.; Hackensack, NJ 07601  
**Time:** 6:30 p.m.  
**Speaker:** Lauria Venitelli, LCSW, NJ ARCH  
**Topic:** Helping Foster Parents Deal With Difficult Behaviors  
**Amount of In-Service Hours:** 1.5 hours

### Hudson County: *Chair, Martha Passantino*

**Date:** November 19, 2009  
**Location:** Hudson West Local DYFS Office; Gateway Plaza; 5th Fl.; 1 Harmon Meadow Blvd.; Secaucus, NJ 07094  
**Time:** 6:30 p.m.  
**Speaker:** Magali Francois, Law Guardian  
**Topic:** What Is A Law Guardian?  
**Amount of In-Service Hours:** 1 hour

**Date:** January 21, 2010  
**Location:** Hudson West Local DYFS Office; Gateway Plaza; 5th Fl.; 1 Harmon Meadow Blvd.; Secaucus, NJ 07094  
**Time:** 6:30 p.m.  
**Speaker:** Hudson County CASA Rep.  
**Topic:** An Overview of Hudson County CASA  
**Amount of In-Service Hours:** 1.5 hours

### Hunterdon and Warren Counties: *Hunterdon Chair, Vacant; Warren County Co-Chairs, Tammi Fennelly and Cathleen Fischer*

**Date:** November 16, 2009  
**Location:** Please see Warren County FAFS' monthly newsletter for location information  
**Time:** 7 p.m.  
**Speaker:** Office of Licensing Representative  
**Topic:** Office of Licensure - New Requirements for Resource Parents  
**Amount of In-Service Hours:** 1 hour

**Please Note:** Information for the January 2010 meeting/training was not available at press time.  
  
 Please see Warren County FAFS' monthly newsletter for date, time, location and training information.

### Morris County: *Chair, Michelle Cannavero*

**Date:** November 18, 2009  
**Location:** Morris DYFS Local Office; 855 Rt. 10 East; Randolph, NJ 07869  
**Time:** 7 p.m.  
**Speaker:** Jerzie Ann Coppola, MS OTR  
**Topic:** Sensory Integration Processing Disorder  
**Amount of In-Service Hours:** 2 hours

**Date:** January 20, 2010  
**Location:** Morris DYFS Local Office; 855 Rt. 10 East; Randolph, NJ 07869.  
**Time:** 7 p.m.  
**Speaker:** Ed Baginsky, Traffic Safety Specialist  
**Topic:** AAA Child Passenger Safety Seminar  
**Amount of In-Service Hours:** 2 hours

### Passaic County: *Chair, Catherine Fredericks*

**Date:** November 13, 2009  
**Location:** Passaic County Technical Institute; 45 Reinhardt Rd.; Wayne, NJ 07470  
**Time:** 7 p.m.  
**Speaker:** Erika Fischer, Topp, Exec. Director  
**Topic:** Overview of Passaic County CASA  
**Amount of In-Service Hours:** 1 hour

**Date:** January 8, 2010  
**Location:** Passaic County Technical Institute; 45 Reinhardt Rd.; Wayne, NJ 07470  
**Time:** 7 p.m.  
**Speaker:** Karina Bouxin, Community Outreach Specialist  
**Topic:** Overview of Passaic County FSO  
**Amount of In-Service Hours:** 1.5 hours

### Sussex County: *Co-Chairs, Cheryl Novak and Lisa Santarpia-Hamler*

**Date:** November 23, 2009  
**Location:** Sussex County DYFS Local Office; 20 East Clinton St.; Newton, NJ 07860  
**Time:** 7 p.m.  
**Speaker:** Cheryl Novak, CPR Board  
**Topic:** Child Placement Review Board Overview  
**Amount of In-Service Hours:** 1 hour

**Date:** January 25, 2010  
**Location:** Sussex County DYFS Local Office; 20 East Clinton St.; Newton, NJ 07860  
**Time:** 7 p.m.  
**Speaker:** Office of Licensing Representative  
**Topic:** Office of Licensure - New Licensing Requirements for Resource Parents  
**Amount of In-Service Hours:** 1 hour

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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.

• Holiday party info for December 2009 will come via the mail.

• If you are interested in becoming Hunterdon County Volunteer Committee Chair, please 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.

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](http://www.fafsonline.org/onesimplewish.html).

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**1.800.222.0047**  
**Web site: [www.fafsonline.org](http://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

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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](mailto:scholarships@fafsonline.org).