

southern connections

Covering Atlantic, Camden, Cape May, Cumberland, Gloucester and Salem 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

Atlantic County: Chair, Vacant

Date: November 10, 2009
Location: Mays Landing Library; 40 Farragut Ave.; Mays Landing, NJ 08330
Time: 6:30 p.m.
Speaker: Brian Illencik, Prevention Specialist
Topic: Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder - What You Need To Know
Amount of In-Service Hours: 1 hour

Date: January 12, 2010
Location: Mays Landing Library; 40 Farragut Ave.; Mays Landing, NJ 08330
Time: 6:30 p.m.
Speaker: Erin O'Hanlon, Director of Community Initiatives
Topic: What You Need To Know About Domestic Violence
Amount of In-Service Hours: 1 hour

Camden County: Chair, Dolores Cummings

Date: November 10, 2009
Location: Camden DYFS Local Office; 201 Laurel Rd.; Voorhees, NJ 08043
Time: 7 p.m.
Note: No training scheduled. There will be a guest speaker: "Two brothers, a sadistic mother and a childhood destroyed." Speaker Kenneth Doyle, author of "Mother from Hell."

Date: January 12, 2010
Location: Camden DYFS Local Office; 201 Laurel Rd.; Voorhees, NJ 08043
Time: 7 p.m.
Speaker: Lisa Johnson, FAFS Trainer
Topic: Coping With Stress
Amount of In-Service Hours: 2 hours

Cape May County: Chair, Vacant

Date: November 4, 2009
Location: Cape May Local DYFS Office; Court House Commons; Building B; 601 Rt. 9 South; Cape May Court House, NJ 08210
Time: 6:45 p.m.
Speaker: Office of Licensing Representative
Topic: Office of Licensure - New Requirements For Resource Parents
Amount of In-Service Hours: 1 hour

Date: January 6, 2010
Location: Cape May Local DYFS Office; Court House Commons; Building B; 601 Rt. 9 South; Cape May Court House, NJ 08210
Time: 6:45 p.m.
Speaker: Lisa Johnson, FAFS Trainer
Topic: Coping With Stress
Amount of In-Service Hours: 2 hours

Cumberland and Salem Counties: Cumberland Co-Chairs, Wendy Baptiste and Annie Mae Jeffers Brady; Salem Chair, Bonnie Stevens

Date: November 19, 2009
Location: YMCA of Vineland; 1159 East Landis Ave.; Vineland, NJ 08360
Time: 6 p.m.

Date: January 28, 2010
Location: YMCA of Vineland; 1159 East Landis Ave.; Vineland, NJ 08360
Time: 6 p.m.
Speaker: Terri McClure, FAFS, Resource Family Advocate
Topic: Lifebook Training
Amount of In-Service Hours: 1 hour

Note: No training scheduled; just a business meeting.

Gloucester County: Co-Chairs, Cynthia Glover and Theresa Brown-Glover

Note: There is no meeting scheduled for November 2009

Date: January 25, 2010
Location: Mantua Methodist Church; 201 Mantua Blvd., Mantua, NJ 08081
Time: 7 p.m.

Note: This is a business meeting. There is no training scheduled.

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

There are currently two vacant Volunteer Committee Chair positions: Atlantic County and Cape May County. If you are interested in becoming a chair please call FAFS at 1.800.222.0047. We look forward to hearing from you.



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COUNTY COLOR: A CLOSER LOOK AT CUMBERLAND COUNTY

by Wendy V. Baptiste, Cumberland County Co-Chair

On August 13, 2009, members of the Cumberland County Volunteer Committee, along with FAFS advocate Terri McClure, met with the managers and supervisors of Cumberland East/West local offices to discuss opportunities to build a more collaborative working relationship within Cumberland County.

On August 19, 2009, Cumberland and Salem counties successfully hosted its recognition event, an "Appreciation" Dinner at the High Street Buffett in Millville. The Committee received a certificate of appreciation presented to Cumberland County by Betty Musso, the Cumberland County local office manager, on behalf of DYFS. We would like to thank all invited guests for their attendance and support in making the event a success including: Anne

Okoth, Sheri Patuhas, Ellen Greenberg, Cynthia Eckheard, and FAFS' Terri McClure and James Chester.

We are now working on our holiday events and 100 percent premium membership. Until next time – continue striving for success.

Cumberland County would like to congratulate the following people:

- Mr. & Mrs. Gamaliel Collazo on their adoption of Gamaliel and Andres Collazo on August 29. Glenda Collazo is the Pride co-trainer in Cumberland County.
- Mr. & Mrs. Charles Ransome of Salem County on the adoption of their two great grandchildren.

- 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.
- 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. For more information please visit www.fafsonline.org/onesimplewish.html or call 1.800.222.0047.



Toll-Free Hotline
 Advocacy/Support Services
 Liaison/Mediation Services
 Information Resources
 Referral Services
 Education/Training
 Public Awareness/Recruitment
 Scholarship Fund
 Community Based Support
Hotline: 1.800.222.0047
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.