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A. Expectations of Families

We understand that adoption is a lifelong commitment to a child. We understand that our family will need to make sacrifices and be flexible in order for a child to remain a part of our family. Therefore, as adoptive or foster parents of Another Choice, we agree to:

1. Be spiritually connected. Understand the power of and the need for prayer.
2. Accept children unconditionally.
3. Work as a team/accept help and follow through with suggestions.
4. Develop (have) a strong support system.
5. Do not embarrass easily.
6. Advocate for the child.
7. Participate in therapy.
8. Provide transportation to appointments and visits.
9. Be responsible for child's care and welfare by keeping medical, therapeutic, or educational appointments.
10. Be honest and forthright in sharing information including changes in household, employment, and medical.
11. Use funds (foster care board or adoption assistance) appropriately.
12. Develop (have) a sense of humor.
13. Recruit other families to become adoptive or foster parents.
14. Maintain licensing standards.
15. Expect an adoptive worker to be assigned once you receive your criteria letter.
16. Respect and abide by the state and agency's policy which prohibits the use of corporal punishment on children in the foster care system.

B. Expectations of Staff

Our motto is, “When you adopt through Another Choice, Another Choice adopts you.” We are committed to being there for you. To that end, we promise:

- A. Respect
- B. Prompt follow up with concerns or actions
- C. Confidentiality
- D. Be available for (to) you
- E. Be honest in sharing and forthcoming with information
- F. Inform you of services available
- G. Provide quality and responsive services, including post-adoption services
- H. Advocate for families (we will hold your hand throughout the process)
- I. Will maintain open communication with you and your family
- J. Recruit families for available children
- K. Return phone calls within 24 hours
- L. Start and end meetings on time
- M. Ensure your home continues to meet licensing standards
- N. Have fun, be informed and professional

We will live our mission, which is “Building and Sustaining Families.”

Let’s Shake On It!



C. Key Definitions

Recruitment of Resource Families. Recruitment is much more than placing an ad in the newspaper. We believe that recruitment of resource families must be defined broadly, inclusively, and in a way that encourages us to measure the effectiveness of our efforts in terms of our bottom line—finding families for children in foster care. Accordingly, we encourage you to think about recruitment in the way that it is defined by AdoptUsKids (2005):

Recruitment is much more than placing an ad in the newspaper.

Recruitment includes all outreach, educational and supportive activities that an organization uses to interest and help an individual and/or family become a foster and/or adoptive parent. This includes all activities from outreach and/or first contact to placement of a child with a licensed and/or approved parent.

This definition includes some activities that others may call “retention” or family preparation. The AdoptUsKids definition is comprehensive, as it is promoting a definition of recruitment that is results-based and inclusive of all persons (practitioners) in the agency who have a hand in helping a prospective parent become a foster or adoptive family. The intended result of recruitment is the placement of a child with a prepared and committed foster and/or adoptive family.

Retention of Resource Families. Retention of resource families must be defined broadly, inclusively, and in a way that encourages us to measure the effectiveness of our efforts in terms of our bottom line—supporting and sustaining families for children in foster care. Accordingly, we encourage you to think about retention in the following way:

Retention includes all outreach, educational, and supportive activities that an agency uses to sustain existing/licensed/approved resource families.

This definition seeks to include all persons in the agency who interact with and have the opportunity to support resource families. The intended result of retention is the continued presence of prepared, committed resource families who are willing and able to care for children in foster care.

(Adapted from AdoptUsKids, 2005)

For more detailed information about key retention concepts and strategies, see Chapter XIII of this guide.

Training of Resource Families. According to many social workers and foster parents, children in foster care today have more complex problems, come from more challenging backgrounds, and require more from resource families than children have in years past. To ensure they have the skills and knowledge needed to care for these children, resource families must be provided with special instruction.

During the pre-licensing phase, resource family training should take the form of timely orientation and pre-service training. Course content must be grounded in reality

so prospective families know what they can expect once children are placed in their homes. Having the entire pre-service training co-presented by an experienced resource parent is an excellent way to achieve this. Including panels of youth in care during pre-service training is another good way to help families know what to expect; these panels can inspire prospective resource families to care for the kinds of children who need homes (e.g., teens).

Training remains essential after licensing. Through one-on-one contacts with agency representatives, surveys, and other methods agencies should regularly assess resource families' training needs. It is important for resource families to have a major role in choosing training topics and monitoring training quality. The out-of-home family services agreement should outline child specific training needs. Please remember it is the responsibility of the agency, not the foster parents, to arrange this training.

Chapter XII of this guide provides a more detailed description of resource family training requirements and strategies.

Give resource families a major role in choosing training topics and monitoring training quality.

D. Links to State and National Recruitment Resources

Data Sites

- **North Carolina Child Welfare Data**
Arranged by county, with comparisons to other counties of similar size and entire state.
<http://ssw.unc.edu/cw>
- **U.S. Census Bureau**
North Carolina census data, with easy link to data for each county
<http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/37000.html>

Recruitment and Retention Resources

- **AdoptUsKids Public Service Announcements (PSAs)**
 - To see sample material: <http://www.adcouncil.org/default.aspx?id=17>
 - To download PSAs: <http://psacentral.adcouncil.org/psacentral/signon.do>
- **AdoptUsKids Recruitment and Retention Committee Workplan**
<http://www.adoptuskids.org/images/resourceCenter/develRecruitWorkplan.pdf>
- **Answering the Call: Getting More for Children from Your Recruitment Efforts Practitioner's Guide**
<http://www.adoptuskids.org/images/resourceCenter/practitionersGuide.pdf>
- **Answering the Call: National Adoption Month 2008 Toolkit**
<http://www.adoptuskids.org/images/resourceCenter/2008NAMToolkit.pdf>
- **North American Council on Adoptable Children National Adoption Awareness Month Guide**
<http://www.nacac.org/adoptalk/adoptionmonth.html>
- **Annie E. Casey Foundation Family to Family Resources Page**
Includes recruitment, training, and support of foster parents; guide to finding permanence for older children; child welfare media guide, etc.
<http://www.aecf.org/Home/MajorInitiatives/Family%20to%20Family/Resources.aspx>
- **Mecklenburg County Department of Social Services Page**
A good example of using a web page for community education. Includes series of videos on the foster care recruitment process, adoption recruitment process, and understanding foster care.
<http://www.charmeck.org/Departments/DSS/Youth+and+Family+Services/home.htm>
- **Foster Parent College**
Provides on-line training and educational materials for resource families, social workers, and Guardians ad Litem. <http://www.fosterparentcollege.com/>

R & R Groups/Listservs

- **AdoptUsKids E-Notes**
To sign up, go to <http://www.adoptuskids.org/professionalResourceCenter/eNotesSignUp.aspx>
- **Nat'l Resource Center for Family-Centered Practice and Permanency Planning Weekly Update**
To subscribe, visit <http://www.hunter.cuny.edu/socwork/nrcfcpp/update-subscription.html>

E. New Caller Intake Form

CONTACT INFORMATION FOR PROSPECTIVE RESOURCE FAMILIES AND VOLUNTEERS

1. Name of Caller: _____
2. Date of Initial Call: _____ 3. Date Call Returned (if applicable): _____
4. Home Address: _____
5. Phone: _____ 6. E-mail: _____
7. Date of Birth: _____ 8. Marital Status: _____
9. Employment: _____ 10. Work Hours: _____
11. How did you hear about the need for resource parents/volunteers?

12. Do you know what you are interested in doing? If so, what would you like to do?

13. What can I do for you?

- Send more information Arrange an interview Accept a donation of goods
 Accept a donation of money Other:

INFORMATION ON OTHERS IN THE HOME (if applicable; use back of sheet if additional space needed)

Name: _____
Relationship to caller: _____ Date of birth: _____
School or employment: _____

Name: _____
Relationship to caller: _____ Date of birth: _____
School or employment: _____

NOTES FROM CALL

TRACKING INFORMATION

If no follow-up is planned, list reason:

Invited to Orientation Meeting to be held _____ Attended: Yes No
Date Information Packet Sent: _____ Sent by: _____
Date of Follow-up Letter or Visit: _____ Completed by: _____
Staff Member Completing Form: _____

Adapted from: National Foster Parents Association, 2000; Barbell & Sheik, 2000

G. Annual Resource Family Survey

Please read each item carefully and circle the number that most accurately represents your level of satisfaction with the service you have received in the past year in the area described.

1. In-Service Training						
a. I am very satisfied with the in-service training offered through my agency.	1 Strongly Agree	2	3	4	5 Strongly Disagree	N/A
b. To improve my skills as a foster parent, I would like training or information on the following topics: -----						
2. Pre-Placement Arrangements						
a. Prior to placement, I was given complete and accurate information on the child(ren) being placed in my home.	1 Strongly Agree	2	3	4	5 Strongly Disagree	N/A
b. I am satisfied with the arrangements the agency made for pre-placement visits before the child was placed in my home.	1 Strongly Agree	2	3	4	5 Strongly Disagree	N/A
c. The agency and others did a great job identifying and addressing the child(ren)'s behavioral needs before the placement occurred.	1 Strongly Agree	2	3	4	5 Strongly Disagree	N/A
d. The agency did a great job preparing me to work with the child(ren).	1 Strongly Agree	2	3	4	5 Strongly Disagree	N/A
3. Staff Consultation and Support						
a. Program staff visit my home often enough.	1 Strongly Agree	2	3	4	5 Strongly Disagree	N/A
b. When they visit my home, I want my visits with program staff to be longer.	1 Strongly Agree	2	3	4	5 Strongly Disagree	N/A
c. Program staff visits to my home are helpful to me in working with the child(ren) in my home.	1 Strongly Agree	2	3	4	5 Strongly Disagree	N/A
d. I am satisfied with the extent to which program staff reach out to me (e.g., through phone calls) to see how I am doing or to follow up regarding the care of the child(ren).	1 Strongly Agree	2	3	4	5 Strongly Disagree	N/A
e. Program staff generally return my phone calls in a timely manner.	1 Strongly Agree	2	3	4	5 Strongly Disagree	N/A
f. I am very satisfied with my agency's on-call crisis support services.	1 Strongly Agree	2	3	4	5 Strongly Disagree	N/A
g. In general, I get excellent help/guidance from program staff.	1 Strongly Agree	2	3	4	5 Strongly Disagree	N/A
h. Program staff fully understood and responded to the needs of the youth(s) I have worked with this year.	1 Strongly Agree	2	3	4	5 Strongly Disagree	N/A
i. Program staff demonstrate genuine concern for me, my family, and for my success as a foster parent.	1 Strongly Agree	2	3	4	5 Strongly Disagree	N/A

j. Program staff demonstrate clearly that they genuinely value my skill and effort as a foster parent.	1 Strongly Agree	2	3	4	5 Strongly Disagree	N/A
k. Program staff do an excellent job supporting me as I work with others (schools, Courts, birth families, etc.) regarding the child(ren) in my home.	1 Strongly Agree	2	3	4	5 Strongly Disagree	N/A
l. I am satisfied with the amount of the monthly reimbursement I receive as a foster parent.	1 Strongly Agree	2	3	4	5 Strongly Disagree	N/A
m. I am satisfied with the promptness with which I receive my monthly reimbursement payments.	1 Strongly Agree	2	3	4	5 Strongly Disagree	N/A

4. Support Services Overall

a. The agency is meeting my overall needs as a foster parent.	1 Strongly Agree	2	3	4	5 Strongly Disagree	N/A
b. The agency is sensitive to issues of race and culture in working with me and the child(ren) placed with me.	1 Strongly Agree	2	3	4	5 Strongly Disagree	N/A
c. The agency is meeting the needs of the child(ren) in my home.	1 Strongly Agree	2	3	4	5 Strongly Disagree	N/A
d. I am satisfied with my overall experience as a foster parent.	1 Strongly Agree	2	3	4	5 Strongly Disagree	N/A

e. List three ways the agency could improve its support to you in your work as a foster parent.

f. List the biggest challenge you currently face as a foster parent:

5. About this Event

a. Would you have been able to attend tonight's event even if child care was not offered?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
b. Given the choice of a catered meal here at the agency or going to Golden Corral, which would you prefer for next year's banquet?	<input type="checkbox"/> Catered meal at agency	<input type="checkbox"/> Golden Corral

6. Other Comments:

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME AND FEEDBACK!

Adapted from Schooler, J. & Jorgenson, K. (2000.) A system in transition: examining foster parent recruitment and retention in the new millennium. Gig Harbor, WA: National Foster Parent Association.

H. Resource Family Stay Interviews

Purpose:

- Discover what individual resource families value and what motivates each person to continue fostering
- Help develop individualized strategies to increase satisfaction and motivation
- Convey that the agency cares and that each resource family is valued and important

What the interviewer needs:

- Desire to establish trust with the family
- Willingness to listen and thank people for their input
- Willingness to respond with empathy

When to do stay interviews:

- When someone begins fostering
- On a regular basis, such as at an annual resource family development meeting
- When concerns arise

Source: Jordan Institute for Families. (2008). *Staying Power! A Supervisor's Guide to Child Welfare Retention*. Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill School of Social Work.

Possible Questions:

1. You are a valuable part of our team. What will it take to keep you working with our agency? What might make you stop working with us?
2. What would be the one thing that, if it changed, would make you consider no longer fostering?
3. Based on your experiences so far as a resource parent, what have you learned about your strengths?
4. How are things different than you thought they would be?
5. Of all the things you have done so far as a resource parent, what has been the most challenging?
6. What is confusing for you at this point?
7. What talents or skills would you like to develop more?
8. Given what you know about fostering, what appeals most to you? What concerns you most?
9. How is your relationship with our agency? What could make it better?
10. How can we involve resource families more in our agency?

Sources: Kaye & Jordan-Evans, 2005; JIF, 2008

I. Resource Family Exit Interviews

Tips for Exit Interviews

1. **Be objective.** It's important that someone who can be neutral conducts the interview. Keep an open-mind about what the parent might say, without taking it personally or trying to "set the record straight."
2. **Give the person time to prepare.** Provide a list of questions for the parent to consider ahead of time. This can focus the discussion on constructive feedback.
3. **Prepare yourself.** Think about the resource family's time with the agency: what were their strengths and needs? What specific ideas or issues have they had that might be worthwhile to discuss for the benefit of the agency?
4. **Be appreciative.** Acknowledge the parent's service to the agency and to the children for whom they've provided a home. End on a positive note. Families may refer others if they leave with a good opinion of the agency. Sometimes you can even set the stage for a later return to the agency.
5. **Act on the information.** In general, review exit interview feedback over a six month or one year period, so that you can differentiate between outlier comments from a single disgruntled person and more systemic patterns. Of course, in some cases you may hear information that it's appropriate to act on sooner, such as an innovative idea or helpful feedback for a worker or supervisor.

Source: Beagrie, 2005

Possible Questions:

1. Why are you leaving our agency?
2. What might have prevented you from leaving?
3. What did you like most about being a resource parent?
4. What did you like least?
5. What suggestions do you have for:
 - Recruiting more families to foster or adopt?
 - Preparing and training resource parents?
 - Supporting resource families?
 - Training/development of agency staff?
 - Anything else about our agency?
6. How might we improve our communication and partnership with resource families?
7. What might make you foster or adopt with us again in the future?
8. Would you recommend a friend to foster or adopt with our agency? Why or why not?
9. Would you be willing to continue to work with our agency as a volunteer or community supporter? If so, how would you like to help? (If possible, provide list of volunteer or community support opportunities, based on your agency's goals.)

Source: UCAC, n.d.

J. MEPA Plan TEMPLATE

Multiethnic Placement Act /Interethnic Adoption Provision *Protection from Racial Discrimination in Adoption and Foster Care*

- Purpose** The specific intentions of MEPA-IEP are to:
1. Decrease the length of time youth wait to be adopted,
 2. Facilitate the recruitment and retention of foster and adoptive parents who can meet the needs of waiting youth,
 3. Eliminate discrimination on the basis of race, color or national origin of the child or the prospective parent.

- Policy** “Agency Name” is subject to MEPA-IEP and complies with all its provisions as required by law.
- A. No “Agency Name” personnel or agent delays or denies the placement of a child for adoption or into foster care on the basis of the race, color, or national origin of the adoptive or foster parent, or the child involved.
 - B. No “Agency Name” personnel or agent denies an individual the opportunity to become a foster or adoptive parent on the basis of the prospective parent’s or the child’s race, color, or national origin.
 - C. “Agency Name” diligently recruits foster and adoptive parents that reflect the racial and ethnic diversity of the children under our placement responsibility.

Procedure

The following policy outlines specific practices and standards that “Agency Name” has established to ensure MEPA-IEP compliance. However, the prohibitive practices listed below are not a comprehensive list. Should a “Agency Name” team member be faced with a situation that requires professional judgment for which they are unsure, they should seek the guidance from their supervisor.

- A. No “Agency Name” personnel or agent delays or denies the placement of a child for adoption or into foster care on the basis of the race, color, or national origin of the adoptive or foster parent, or the child involved.
 - “Agency Name” provides MEPA-IEP training during new employee orientation and new foster/adoptive parent training.
 - “Agency Name” does not delay or deny placement based on biological parent’s preferences.
 - If the referring agent (ex. county DSS staff, the child, or biological family) asks “Agency Name” to place a child with a home of a specific race, color, or national origin, then the social worker will complete the questionnaire in Attachment A and give it to their supervisor for approval. This is done prior to placement or placement change. This questionnaire outlines the child’s

distinctive needs that warrant consideration of the child's race, color or national origin and serves as the documentation required in these rare occasions.

- "Agency Name" will not use race or the cultural capacity of prospective parents when making placement decisions or when differentiating between potential placements except as stated above.
- B. No "Agency Name" personnel or agent denies an individual the opportunity to become a foster or adoptive parent on the basis of the prospective parent's or the child's race, color, or national origin.
- "Agency Name" has a no discrimination policy with regards to an individual's opportunity to become a foster/adoptive parent. This includes race, color and national origin as well as race-neutral factors such as income, age, education, family structure and ownership of housing unless Medicaid or licensing required.
 - "Agency Name" recognizes that such opportunity is a privilege rather than a "right."
 - "Agency Name" makes placement decisions based on the distinctive needs of the child and the skill set and willingness of particular families to meet those needs.
 - "Agency Name" does not routinely assess a prospective foster or adoptive parent's cultural capacities.
 - "Agency Name" does not asks parents directly what race, color or national origin they would like to parent. Should the parents initiate that conversation, "Agency Name" will have that discussion and will assist in the development of foster and adoptive parents to broaden the types of children they are able to parent.
- C. "Agency Name" diligently recruits foster and adoptive parents who reflect the racial and ethnic diversity of the children within our placement responsibility.
- "Agency Name" has a recruitment plan that is reviewed at least annually, and that focuses on developing a pool of potential foster and adoptive parents willing and able to foster or adopt the children needing placement.
 - "Agency Name" monitors the racial and ethnic demographics of the youth we serve as compared with the foster and adoptive parent pool and modifies its recruitment plan to diligently develop strategies that reach communities of potential foster and adoptive families that reflect the ethnic and racial diversity of waiting youth accordingly. "Agency Name" recognizes that any targeted recruitment cannot be the exclusive means to identify families for particular children. Efforts should also be inclusive of all other racial and ethnic groups.
 - "Agency Name" Resource Family Recruitment and Retention Committee monitors outcome and placement data for each race and for transracial placements to assess any disparities and make adjustments as needed.

MEPA Attachment A: Race, Color or National Origin Consideration Questionnaire

This questionnaire outlines the child’s distinctive needs that warrant consideration of the child’s race, color or national origin in placement decision and serves as the documentation required in these rare occasions. Any use of race, color, or ethnicity in placement decisions is subject to the *strict scrutiny standard of review* and consideration of such factors is permitted only in exceptional circumstances where the special or distinctive needs of a child require it and where those needs can be documented.

Any consideration of race, color or national origin must not be predominate to the other needs of the child—such as the child’s age, child’s preferences, ties to siblings and other relatives, health or physical condition, educational, cognitive, psychological needs, and cultural needs including religious, linguistic, dietary, musical or athletic needs.

If “Agency Name” is asked to place a child in a home of a specific race, color, or national origin (by county DSS staff, the child, or biological family), then the social worker will answer the following questions and give the completed questionnaire to their supervisor for review. This is done prior to placement or a placement change. The supervisor, in conjunction with the Child and Family Team and PCP when available, will then determine if such consideration is justified.

Please answer the following questions in writing and submit to your supervisor for review prior to placement.

1. What are the child’s special or distinctive needs based on race, color, or national origin?
2. Why is it in the child’s best interests to take these needs into account?
3. Can the child’s needs related to race, color, or national origin be taken into account without delaying placement and placing the child at risk of other harms?
4. Can these needs be met by a prospective foster or adoptive parent who does not share the child’s racial or ethnic background?
5. Can these needs be met only by a same race/ethnic placement?
6. If so, is some delay justified in order to search for a parent of the same race or ethnicity, if an appropriate parent is currently not available within the agency?
7. In a foster care placement, can the child’s special needs be taken into account without denying the child an opportunity to be cared for in a readily available foster home?
8. What are the child’s other important needs?

MEPA Attachment B: “Agency Name” Recruitment Plan

1. A description of the characteristics of waiting children.

Our YEAR analysis revealed that X% of our youth are age five or under; X% are age 6-10; X% are age 11-15; and X% are 16 years old or older. X% of the youth served through “Agency Name” in NC are Caucasian; X% are African American; and X% are bi-racial or other. X% are female and X% are male.

X% are traditional foster care placements; X% are in therapeutic foster care placements, and X% are receiving other services such as community supports or Multi-Systemic Therapy. X% were part of a sibling group. X% our youth have one or more mental health diagnosis.

2. Specific strategies to reach all parts of the community.

“Agency Name” recruitment strategies for foster and adoptive families include, but are not limited to, the following: slogans on promotional items such as bookmarks, pens, cups, etc., information booths at meetings or gatherings, flyers, handouts, notices in congregational and community bulletins, newsletters, special events, presentations in community, newspaper feature stories, community and neighborhood canvassing, and current foster parent incentive programs.

3. Diverse methods of disseminating both general and child-specific information.

“Agency Name” uses the above strategies to disseminate both general and child-specific information.

4. Strategies for assuring that all prospective parents have timely access to the home study process, including location and hours of services that facilitate access by all members of the community.

“Agency Name” notifies the community via postings at the agency, newspaper publications and radio announcements of upcoming foster/adoptive parent training. Once prospective parents have contacted “Agency Name” a communications log is created, detailing date information sent, phone calls placed, and follow up made to ensure prompt attention to inquiries.

“Agency Name” varies its pre-service training hours based on the needs of the community. Additionally, each social worker is available to families to complete their home study during hours that are convenient to the family. Preplacement adoption assessments are completed within 90 days after the application for adoption has been approved and the request for the assessment has been received.

5. Strategies for training staff to work with diverse cultural, racial and economic communities.

Each “Agency Name” team member shall receive cultural diversity training during pre-service training and during ongoing annual training. Cultural issues are also addressed during clinical supervision.

6. Strategies for dealing with linguistic barriers.

“Agency Name” strives to hire staff that reflect the diverse background of the communities we serve including bilingual staff. Should the situation arise where we have a family

interested in becoming a foster/adoptive who does not speak English, "Agency Name" arranges for an interpreter for pre-service training.

7. Non-discriminatory fee structures.

There is very little cost involved in becoming a foster/adoptive parent with "Agency Name". Should a parent be unable to absorb the cost of pre-service training materials, "Agency Name" will discuss options with that parent and will try to accommodate the parent's needs.

8. Procedures for a timely search for prospective parents for a waiting child include the use of exchanges (such as NC Kids) and other interagency efforts. Such procedures ensure that placement of a child in an appropriate household is not delayed by the search for a same race or ethnic placement.

If the permanency plan for a child is adoption, the social worker ensures the child is registered with the North Carolina Exchange (NC Kids) and assists in gathering information or photographs as needed. The social worker explores possible permanency options with current or former connections the youth has such as relatives, teachers, coaches, former foster parents, etc.

K. Participation Letter to Community Supporters

Excerpted from *Answering the Call: National Adoption Month 2008 Toolkit*. <http://www.adoptuskids.org/images/resourceCenter/2008NAMToolkit.pdf>

Print on Your Organization's Letterhead
[DATE]

Contact Name
Title
Company
Address
City, State ZIP

Dear [CONTACT]:

This Thanksgiving season, remember the 114,000 children who are in need of adoption. They have no permanent family with whom to celebrate the holiday.

Many of these children are teenagers and children with physical, emotional, behavioral or learning challenges. Some have been neglected, abandoned, abused and/or exposed to drugs and alcohol. Others are brothers and sisters who want to remain in the same household. Of the children in need of adoption, 36 percent are African-American and 45 percent are over the age of 8.

All of these children need your support.

November is National Adoption Month. [STATE/COUNTY/CITY/AGENCY] is asking you to join thousands of individuals, government agencies, and child advocacy organizations across the nation in promoting the National Adoption Month 2007 Campaign. Named "Answering the Call: You Don't Have to Be Perfect to Be a Perfect Parent," the campaign's goal is to spread awareness of the needs of children waiting to be adopted and to increase the number of foster and adoptive parents in our community and nation.

It would be a great benefit to the campaign if you would agree to [MAKE SPECIFIC REQUEST HERE].

Enclosed is background information about the campaign. We thank you in advance for your consideration of this important national observance. We are confident that increased awareness will help find loving families for all children in foster care. Every child deserves a permanent home. Your participation in this effort will greatly contribute to the accomplishment of this worthwhile goal.

For more information about National Adoption Month or to confirm your support, please call us at [AGENCY NUMBER].

Sincerely,
[YOUR NAME]
[TITLE]
Enclosures

L. Talking Points for Engaging New Callers

You are giving the family their first impression of your agency. It is crucial to be warm, enthusiastic, helpful, and positive about the call and about the program.

- Thank you for calling! I'd be happy to tell you about our foster care program and answer any questions you might have." Make them feel appreciated and welcome.
- Tell them you'd like to learn a little bit more about them, and ask questions on Intake Form.
- Give the applicants a chance to ask questions, explain how they came to contact your agency, and share some of their expectations for the process.
- Provide a brief description of your program:
 - i. Age ranges, needs of the children in care
 - ii. Basic licensing requirements
 1. Age (over 21)
 2. Health (all family members in good physical and mental health)
 3. Number of children in the home (**family foster homes** may have a total of 5 in the home, including the family's own children; **therapeutic foster homes** may have a total of 4 children in the home, no more than 2 of whom may be foster children)
 4. Criminal history checks (all adults over age 18 must agree to fingerprinting for background checks; state determines whether a particular history may make someone ineligible for a foster home license)
 5. Agreement to work in partnership with agency
 6. Training requirements (30 hours of pre-service training plus 10 hours/ year once licensed)

iii. Steps and time involved in the application and licensing process

1. Orientation meeting
2. Application
3. Criminal background check
4. 30 hours of pre-service training
5. Mutual home assessment: other steps in this process for your agency

iv. Date of next orientation

- “Do you have any other questions I haven’t answered?”
- Tell them what the next steps are. Ideally this will be:
 - i. An information packet will be mailed to them.
 - ii. A staff member or foster parent will call them to schedule a home visit at a convenient time for the family, to meet in person and answer any additional questions.
 - iii. “We would love you to come to our next Orientation meeting on _____ to get more information and meet some of our foster parents.”

You are also beginning the mutual home assessment with this first call. How receptive is the caller to taking the time to complete the assessment and training? How open are they initially to the variety and needs of children in foster care? As you learn the answers to these and other questions, you will begin to get a sense of how these parents communicate, why they want to foster, and their strengths and needs.

Source: National Foster Parent Association, 2001

M. Sample Newsletter for Resource Families

Nash County Foster Parent Newsletter

OCTOBER/NOVEMBER, 2007



WELCOME ABOARD!

We would like to welcome to our foster parent family:

Darrell and Teresa Hopkins
licensed as of Aug. 30, 2007

They live near Bailey and enjoy spending time together as a family. They have two daughters, Daisha (10) and Samantha (8) and look forward to the opportunity to parent additional children.



UPCOMING TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

CPR/First Aid/Universal Precautions

Saturday, November 17.

This class is full and no additional people can be included. We will make arrangements to offer it again after the first of the year - Ginny will keep you informed when its scheduled.



Foster Children's Christmas Party

Saturday, December 15

11:00 AM - 2:00 PM at the Red Barn.

Directions are enclosed.

Mark your calendars now and please plan to come!



Round Table

Tuesday, January 15, 2008

6:30 - 8:30 PM at DSS

This is your opportunity to tell us how we can assist you and give suggestions for training opportunities. Please plan to attend. Light refreshments will be served and child care will be provided.



Going the extra mile...

We encourage all of our foster parents to participate in Child and Family Team meetings. It's a great way to know what is going on in the child's life and to participate in their planning as well as shared parenting. Mr. Hoggard made himself available to participate in a CFT on speaker phone while vacationing at Disney World. We appreciate the extra effort. Job well done!

Brent Hoggard



Brent and Marcy Hoggard are holding a Christmas Tree auction at the Red Barn on November 24, 2007. Proceeds will benefit the needs of children in foster care. Please share information about this event with family and friends. See the enclosed flyer.



GET TO KNOW YOUR SOCIAL WORKER:

Shea Neal

Shea has been a foster care social worker for 10 years. She graduated from East Carolina University in 1997 with a BS degree in Family and Community Services. Shea began working in the foster care unit in January 1998 and has been with us since that time. She really enjoys working with the children and trying to make a difference in their lives. Shea reports that "it's seeing the smiles on the children's faces, or seeing their eyes light up" that makes this job worthwhile and "knowing that we are helping to keep them safe and healthy".



She married Jeremy Neal in May of 1998 and they reside in Franklin County. They have a six year old son, Jackson, and are expecting a baby GIRL in March!!!! Her family stays very involved with Jackson's activities as he plays soccer, basketball and baseball. He is also very active in 4-H and participates in chicken, goat, sheep and heifer shows through the Franklin County 4-H program.

Shea and her family are very involved in their church, particularly in the Children and Youth Programs. Shea's favorite hobby...when she can find time...is scrap booking and she also enjoys photography. Her favorite place to visit is the beach, where you can find her most weekends from May through September!



EXTRAORDINARY STAR:

GLORIA COX, an adoptive parent, as well as a licensed Nash County foster parent, has been a wonderful asset to the Nash County Foster Parent team. Her dedication and devotion to children can only be described as "extraordinary". She gives tirelessly and loves deeply. Her heart is truly in providing the best possible care for all children. A child in Gloria's home is treated as her very own! What she does for her own child, she readily does for the foster child. Since the adoption of her nephews, Gloria has fostered one Nash County teen. For nearly three years, she worked very hard with this young man, who at times exhibited some difficult behaviors. She worked side by side with his social workers in an effort to address the behaviors and attempt to resolve school disciplinary issues. She acted as his parent in every way, to the point that school officials thought that she was his biological parent and were unaware of DSS legal status. Due to the emotional attachment that had formed, Gloria as well as the teen, was saddened by the decision made to try a different type placement. Despite the move, she continued to be supportive of this teen during this period, volunteering to become his visitation resource which allowed their bond and connection to remain intact. This young man has since left the foster care system but remains a "member" of her family. He continues to visit her home regularly and she is supportive of his current caretaker in ensuring that his needs are being met. Gloria Cox...an extraordinary woman doing an extraordinary job!

Gloria, we salute you for a job well done!

RESOURCES:

Please read these helpful attachments:

Six ways to Help Foster Kids Express Anger Constructively
Child Development and Attachment
Grief and Loss for Children in Foster Care



Banquet

We had an excellent turn out for our annual foster parent banquet. We are growing so much that we may need to look at another location. Thank you to all who participated!



Pumkin Festival...

First it rained, then the temps rose into the 90's, but we hung in there on Oct.6th at the Spring Hope Pumpkin Festival. We hope we were successful in spreading the word about the need for foster and adoptive parents. Please talk to your church members about fostering/adopting - or perhaps your minister would consider having a representative come and talk to your congregation. We love every opportunity to get the word out and can speak to your civic groups as well. We need more people like you!



STATS:



Ages:

0 - 5: 17 children in care

6 - 12: 5 children in care

13 - 18: 15 children in care

Of these children, 3 are cleared and available for adoption. Ages range 12-17

In September, we had 3 children enter care and found permanence for 5.

In October we had 1 child enter care and found permanence for 2.



The 2007 Budget Bill approved by the North Carolina Legislature provided state funding to match Federal Medicaid dollars for young adults who aged out of North Carolina DSS custody. This means that all young adults who were in NC DSS custody as of their 18th birthday are eligible for extended Medicaid coverage without regard to income or assets until their 21st birthday. Please contact Cindy Lewis, Links coordinator, if you have any questions regarding this matter.



A Hundred Years From Now...
*... it will not matter what my bank account was, the sort of house I lived in, or the kind of car I drove...but the world may be different because I was important in the life of a **CHILD***

ADOPTION AWARENESS MONTH:

Nash County Department of Social Services sponsored a Conference on Saturday, November 3, 2007 as part of their National Adoption Awareness Month activities.

"Open Homes - Open Hearts" was held at the Dunn Center for the Performing Arts on the campus of NC Wesleyan College. Jo Ann Lamm, Deputy Director for the NC Division of Social Services, was the keynote speaker. Workshops provided information on adoption assistance benefits, post adoption services, therapeutic supports and a light hearted look at life and parenting.



A complimentary deli lunch buffet was provided for the approximately 81 people who attended. NC Kids, Children's Home Society, Christian Adoption Services and Nash County DSS provided displays and information about their agencies and adoption programs for interested individuals. Foster parents who attended received 6.5 hours of training credit.



MAPP

Orientation will be on Jan. 7, 2008.
 Nash County will teach the next MAPP class: January 12-February 21. Classes will be held on *Monday* and Thursday nights with exception to the first week. Due to the MLK holiday, classes will be held on Tuesday and Thursday

Nash County Foster Parent Mentors

Need to talk with someone who has actually "talked the talk" and "walked the walk"? The following is a list of foster parents who have agreed to participate in the foster parent mentoring program. They will support new foster parents and have agreed to answer any questions that you may have regarding fostering. As always, Ginny Cobb and your child's assigned social worker can help with any questions you may have as well.

Mentors:

Gloria Cox (252) 450-6989
 Henry and Linda Hedgepeth (252) 478-3968
 Brent and Marcy Hoggard (252) 459-3812
 Charles and Ethel Metters (252) 437-0465
 James and Mable Woodard (919) 269-0775



GREAT NEWS



College Funds

Youths aging out of foster care and youths with special needs adopted from foster care after age 12, now have access to funding to help them attend public colleges and community colleges in NC.

What's covered?

****Tuition/fees normally assessed a student carrying the same academic workload as determined by the institution, including costs for rental or purchase of equipment, materials, or supplies required of all students in the same course of study**

****An allowance for books, supplies, transportation, and miscellaneous personal expenses, including a reasonable allowance for the documented rental or purchase of a personal computer, for a student attending the institution on at least a half-time basis, as determined by the college**

****An allowance (as determined by the college) for room and board costs incurred by the student**

Adoption Tax Credit

An individual who is allowed a federal adoption tax credit for the taxable year is also allowed a NC tax credit

****The credit is equal to 50% of the amount of the federal tax credit**

****Effective for the tax year beginning Jan. 1, 2007; it will expire after the 2012 tax year unless it is extended**

Hear those sleigh bells jingling...



Foster parents, Marcy and Brent Hoggard, have graciously volunteered to host our next annual foster child Christmas party which will be on Saturday, December 15, 2007 at the Red Barn in Nashville. (Directions included with Newsletter) They will be providing pizza and of course, Santa will be there!

The Hoggards felt it would be FUN to have a talent show this year and hope you will encourage any children in care that are in your home to participate in this wonderful opportunity to showcase their talents. Maybe they'd like to sing a song, do a dance, read a poem or show off a picture they drew. This is their time to "be a star". Please contact Ginny Cobb if you have a child who would like to participate in the talent show.



*It is our wish that each of you will have a blessed
and joyous holiday season.
We count you and the great job you do for our children
among the many blessings we are thankful for.*

N. Media Contact List (Sample Format)

Media	Contact Name	E-mail	Phone	Address	Date(s) Contacted	Purpose	Result
<i>Local Newspapers</i>							
1. Details:							
2. Details:							
3. Details:							
<i>Television Stations</i>							
1. Details:							
2. Details:							
3. Details:							
<i>Local Area Radio Stations</i>							
1. Details:							
2. Details:							
3. Details:							

O. Editorial

Open Your Heart to a Foster Child

By [Hildagene Reid](#)

Imagine being forced to pack your few belongings and move to a new home and a new family. Imagine that you are not making the move with your brothers and sisters, who are being placed in different homes, with different families.

Also imagine, for a moment, that you are the new family taking in a child who is confused, displaced and upset.

Very little imagination is required if you are one of the 395 children in foster care in Guilford County, one of 11,000 children in foster care in North Carolina. Or one of the too few foster families who open their hearts and homes to children in desperate need of stability.

My mother was 4 years old when her parents died. She had two sisters, a 1-year-old and a 6-year-old. A cousin in California wanted the baby girl. An aunt in Philadelphia wanted the oldest girl, and every relative in my hometown wanted the middle girl, my mother.

When telling the story to her children, my mother remembered knowing even at age 4 that something terrible had happened and something worse was about to happen. She was going to be separated from the only two people she loved.

Another aunt, a widow with four children of her own, and struggling to make ends meet by taking in washing and other domestic work, stepped in. She would not allow her brother's children to be torn away from each other. Since the relatives who did not have children couldn't take them all, they couldn't have any. So the widowed aunt ended up rearing seven children.

My mother was eternally grateful she and her siblings were not separated, but were able to grow old together along with cousins who became like sisters and brothers. I am eternally grateful to my mother for teaching her seven children the priceless value of what it means to be family.

May is National Foster Care Month, when we turn our attention to the children and youth in care, as well as honor the dedicated foster families, relative caregivers, volunteers and child welfare professionals who serve them.

Children in foster care feel more secure and are likely to do better in school and life overall when they are able to stay in their own communities. The larger the pool of qualified foster parents, the easier it will be to ensure that children can remain in their own neighborhoods and schools and that siblings can remain together.

Being a foster parent is not the only way to have an impact on the life of a child in foster care. You can become a volunteer, community representative or a mentor. You can support foster youth attending college and vocational school. You can offer older youth job-skills training or employment or tutoring. You can consider becoming a "secret pal" to foster families and send them coupons for free pizzas or movie tickets or offer them services through your business.

Use National Foster Care Month as an opportunity to help change the perception that children in foster care are the responsibility of someone else. Their well-being is dependent on the willingness of our entire community to care for and about them.

Many states are celebrating National Foster Care Month with a blue-ribbon campaign. I hope Greensboro will show foster families and children they deserve first-place status by tying blue ribbons around trees. Put a blue ribbon on the door of your business; place one on the car antenna; wear one on your lapel.

The 395 blue ribbons representing Guilford County foster children will be on a tree in the Department of Social Services lobby. But there will be only 130 white ribbons representing the current licensed Guilford County foster parents.

Together we can help change that by bringing positive awareness to National Foster Care Month.

Hildagene Reid is a family recruitment social worker for the Guilford County DSS.

P. Feature Article

Fostering Care

By Michael Barrett
February 4, 2007

The scars of neglect in foster children can be as boundless as the number of kids in foster care nationwide.

Chris and Sandi Maners were reminded of that a year ago, after their 4-year-old foster daughter came to live with them in Belmont.

"She didn't even know how to play," Chris said. "There are things you expect an almost 4-year-old to do naturally, but she was content to just sit.

"It was almost like people had fed her and done basic things for her, but there hadn't been any child development."

Such deficiencies are inherent in many children who come under the care of the Gaston County Department of Social Services. But too few worthy adults are willing to help them by adopting or providing foster care, said Sherry McKinney, adoptions and foster care recruiter.

Of the children placed in foster care in Gaston County each year, around 10 percent are adopted on average, McKinney said.

Though adoptions here have mostly been on the rise since 2002, officials say the success rate has not risen as high as needed.

"You can do the math," McKinney said. "The number of homes is nowhere meeting our demand."

The system has actually improved by leaps and bounds in the last decade, McKinney said. Courts began fast-tracking custody cases to address parents who were making no progress in getting their children back, she said.

"There was a realization that a lot of children were languishing in foster care," she said.

An average of 200 to 220 children are under the legal and/or physical care of Gaston County DSS every day, McKinney said.

That number was up in the 400s as recent as five years ago, she said.

Once DSS begins supervising a child, parents or legal guardians now have a year to work toward reclaiming them. If that begins to look unlikely, efforts begin to find the child a new home, said county adoption supervisor Rita Ferguson.

DSS commonly turns to foster homes and other facilities before custody issues have been resolved.

Some licensed foster parents provide short-term care for children who may end up back with their parents or elsewhere. Other foster parents are long-term providers.

"I think people have their different reasons (for foster parenting)," Ferguson said. "Some are interested in adopting themselves and believe fostering will allow them to see if it's what they really want."

Foster parents must be state certified. That includes attending a mandatory weekly class that runs 2½ months.

The state pays a moderate, per-child stipend to assist with needs such as food and clothing.

McKinney said the Maners exemplify everything that is great about foster parenting.

"They're wonderful," she said. "They're just good-ole' people who do this out of the goodness of their heart."

The Maners, of Belmont, said many things influenced their decision to become foster parents more than three years ago, but the strongest motive was their religious faith.

"Growing up in church, you always want to reach out and help others," Sandi Maners said.

The couple "fell in love" with the second foster child to come through their home, who they quickly nicknamed "Half-pint." They adopted the girl, who is now 14, after she was legally cleared for adoption in 2005.

"With Half-pint, we knew we wanted to adopt her the day we got her," Chris said.

The Maners have since become foster parents for two Hispanic siblings — a 7-year-old boy and 4-year-old girl. They hope to adopt them as well if they are legally cleared.

McKinney said foster parents and adoptive parents are hardest to find for teenage children. Spanish-speaking foster parents are also in high demand, she said.

Foster parenting and adoption are two of the most significant things people can do to help children in need, Sandi Maners said.

"If you love children and want to help, this is probably the most personal, one-on-one way you can do it," Chris said. "But it takes a 100-percent effort."

You can reach Michael Barrett at (704) 869-1826.

Reprinted from the Gaston Gazette
<http://www.gastongazette.com/articles/foster_3797___article.html/parents_children.html>

Q. Instructions for Writing a Press Release

Awareness



Step by Step

Writing a Standard Press Release

[Organization's name
Address
City, State/Province, Zip/Postal code]

FOR RELEASE: [Date] CONTACT: [Name, phone number]

Photographs and interviews with families who have or are in the process of adopting waiting children are available upon request.

Calling Out Ceremony Will Draw Attention to Children Who Need Families

During a Calling Out ceremony at [place, time] on [day of the week], November [date], [an adopted child/your group representative, etc.] will read names of some of the children in foster care who need adoptive families and light a candle in honor of every child who is waiting for a permanent home. "These are real children," says [group representative name, title], "who desperately need families of their own. Because the public is so often unaware of these kids and their needs, we would like to draw special attention to waiting children during National Adoption Awareness Month in the hope that we can unite many of these boys and girls with permanent, adoptive parents."

In [state/province], approximately [number] children live in some type of foster care setting. Many have spent most of their lives in this "temporary" situation, and have moved within the child welfare system more times than they care to remember. [A number or percentage] will never return to their birth families. [A number or percentage of those] are legally free for adoption.

These waiting children come from a variety of backgrounds. Some have physical or mental disabilities; some are part of a sibling group; many are of African American or Native American or Latino heritage; and many are older children or adolescents. Advocates from organizations such as [your group name] are working hard to prove that there is no such thing as an unadoptable child.

This Calling Out for Those Who Wait is part of National Adoption Awareness Month, and is just one of many special November events planned throughout the country to focus attention on adoption.

Those who are thinking about adoption should know that, according to [name], adoption has changed significantly over the last 30 years. "You don't have to be married, childless, under 40, rich, or own a house to adopt," [the representative] says. "You do have to provide a stable, loving home, and be able to help your child work through issues raised by his or her past."

[Organization name] provides specific information about waiting children and the adoption process in [state/province]. To learn more, contact [name, address, and/or phone number].

###

Adapted from "Sending Effective Press Releases" by John Hewitt, the Writer's Resource Center, 2001.

Prominently display contact information for your organization as well as the person who will work with the media.

Set a release date for the information or write "For Immediate Release."

Mention photos at the top of the first page, but only if you have high quality images that add to your story. Never tape or paperclip photos—if damaged they cannot be published.

Include a succinct, enticing title.

The first paragraph includes the most important information—what, when, where, and who.

A quote by a dignitary or organizational representative adds credibility to your release.

Use standard 8 1/2" by 11" paper, an easy-to-read font, and 1 1/2" to 2" margins.

Unless speed is essential, mail your press release rather than faxing it.

Fold your press release so that the headline and date are visible as soon as the editor opens the envelope.

If the release continues onto a second page, include a page number, a two- or three-word description of the story, the contact person's information, and the release date at the top of each page.

Write paragraphs in news style, using short words and sentences.

Never use exclamation points.

Consult either the *AP Stylebook* or the *Chicago Manual of Style* to learn the general guidelines for abbreviating words, writing numbers, and capitalizing names.

Repeat contact information in the text of the final paragraph.

End with three centered number signs.

R. One Church – One Child Program Newsletter



Rowan
One Church
One Child
Ministry



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The Message

VOLUME VI

SUMMER 2008



The Director's Pen

As we closed out our fiscal year on June 30, we looked back at the ROCOC activities over the past twelve months. We thought of all the prayers, donations, and time that our member churches provided. We thought of the car washes and hot dog sales you sponsored, the clothing drives, the school tool collections, and the Christmas Star trees you hosted. We thought of the money you gave and how it was used to pay for summer camp, a family's rent, a bicycle, and other things. We thought of the prom dresses you gave and the birthday parties you hosted. The children in foster care, separated from their families because of abuse or neglect, have received a great blessing from the generous spirit that moves among our

ROCOC partners. You have been and continue to be a blessing not only to these children but also to the DSS staff who work to find permanent and loving homes for them.

During the year, we welcomed eight new churches to the program.

As we begin fiscal year 2008 – 2009, we welcome new ROCOC Advisory Board members: Mrs. Martha Baker, Rev. Regina Dancy, Mrs. Marion Melton, Mrs. Darlene Murphy, and Mr. William Peoples. They join current board members attorney Jeff Morris and Rev. John Tucker, along with several DSS staff members.

With a grateful heart, we look forward to working together.

churches and DSS, to enrich the lives of children who need our care.

Rowan County Department of
Social Services

Sandra Wilkes—Director

*Tom Brewer— Children's Services
Program Administrator*



ROCOC Coordinator

I am thankful for God's blessings and gifts that you are sharing with our children and families. The families and children that we serve are blessed because of your bounteous generosity. It is a joy to work with each of you in this ministry. God takes the smallest mustard seed of service and makes it multiply. That has surely happened as we now have thirty-one churches in this ministry with four joining since the last newsletter. Our newest members are listed on page two.

Our Advisory Board has worked very hard this year. Thank you for the leadership, service and direction that you give to this program. Our thanks also goes to Stanley Price and Kevin Williams who are RCDSS Foster Care Social Workers for moving and loading furniture and other items and delivering these items to the families that we serve. Way to Go!!! Kevin and Stan.

Beverly Mobley and I were honored to represent the Rowan

One Church One Child Ministry at a National Conference in Richmond, Virginia from July 9-11, 2008. The National Network of Adoption Advocacy Programs sponsored the Conference.

People attended the Conference from One Church One Child Programs throughout the United States. Rowan One Church One Child Ministry was one of eight programs nationally to receive an award for "Best Practices." It was my honor to receive this award on your behalf.



Together We Are
Making a Difference
in Children's Lives!

Together we grow.

Since the last
newsletter we are
happy to welcome
the following new
member churches:

- Bethel Lutheran
- Dorsett Chapel
UCC
- Soldiers
Memorial AME
- Zion
Lutheran
- St. Matthew's
Lutheran

ROCOC COORDINATOR

The recognition would not have been possible without your time, dedication, generosity, and love for our children. WE ALL should be proud of this honor. The ROCOC Ministry is also one of twelve ministries featured in a document entitled "Best Practices for One Church One Child Model Programs" compiled by Mrs. Jane C. Talley which was submitted to the National Network of Adoption Advocacy Programs in March 2008. Again, this recognition was due to what each of you is doing here in Rowan County. Finally, I was honored to represent our ministry on a National Speakers Panel entitled

"OCOC Best Practices in Recruitment and Services" at the conference.

On behalf of our Advisory Board, DSS Staff, foster parents, relative caretakers, and the children and families that we serve, I want to express our deepest praise and gratitude for the difference that you are making here in Rowan County. Our prayer is that God will continue to richly bless all of you.

Please call if I can assist you in any way. I look forward to speaking at some of your churches in the fall. Continue to share this blessing and ministry with your sister churches.

Let us keep multiplying God's mustard seed in Rowan County.

We look forward to meeting with you at our next Church Coordinators Meeting on Monday, October 13, 2008 at the Mt. Tabor United Methodist Church.

Jon



Christmas Star Tree



Last year was the first year that One Church One Child took on the challenge of providing Christmas presents for the children, not only in foster care, but also those children that we are serving in protective services or in-home services. The response on your part was overwhelming. Thank you so much for that.

We are getting started earlier this year so you have more time to plan and let your congregations know about this opportunity. Please follow the steps below if your church is interested in participating.

- Let Jon Hunter know if your church is interested and the number

of children you could take on. After we get this number we will divide the children among the churches. Please do this by 9-30-08.

- We will pass out the list of children and the stars at the meeting on 10-13-08. This will give your church two months to get your stars passed out and the gifts back to us.
- Peggy will pass out a set of guidelines with the stars so everyone is doing the same thing and there is uniformity.
- At the time you receive your stars you may also

receive a list of suggested items to purchase for children that will be coming into foster care or will be involved in one of the other service areas between 9-30-08 when we make out the list and Christmas day, so that those children will not be left out.

We hope beginning the process earlier and having more guidelines in place will help those who wish to participate. Bring any questions to the coordinators meeting on 10-13-08.

Peggy Thorneburg

Contributions Made by One Church One Child Churches

- End of school party for foster children and families at Dan Nicholas Park.
- \$100 gift card for Josey and Stormi.
- Chest of drawers and dresser for Alivia and Caleb.
- New girls outfits size 4T
- Four bags of clothes, business suits and dresses for teens.
- \$45 gift card to Sears to purchase new-born clothes.
- Birthday Party for teenagers in the Links program, eleven \$20 gift cards for teens with birthdays, fifty-eight \$5 gift cards for all teens who attended, cakes, drinks, and ice-cream.
- \$360.17 for the ROCOC Account.
- One bag of clothes.
- \$100 for the ROCOC Account.
- \$25 gift card to Toys R US for Stormi and Josey.
- Six box springs and mattresses, twin bed frame, sleeper sofa, love seat, two chairs.
- Two pairs of girls shoes and two bags of girls socks.
- Two boxes of boys clothes, woman's shoes and sweaters, two leather coats, prom shoes, pocket book, and bag of clothes.
- New Alpine Extreme Green Bike, new pair of Nike tennis shoes, 2 pairs of shorts and four shirts for Ja'Darnius.
- Crib, mattress, crib sheet and child protector.
- \$50 for Betty to buy school clothes.
- Pink book bag, markers, crayons, colored pencils and Kleenex for Stormi.
- Shoes, suits, ties, cups and plates for teenagers.
- Two boxes of women's and girl's clothes.
- School Supplies, children's clothes, shoes, baby blankets and food.
- 2 small children's bikes and two tri-cycles.
- Kitchen table with six chairs, six plastic chairs, twin cot and mattress, full size mattress, end table, patio chair, clothes and school supplies.
- Two book bags, three ring binder notebooks, and report folders.
- Little Tikes Rocking Horse.
- Notebook paper, crayons, glue, glue sticks, pencils, three ring binder notebooks, report folders and notebook dividers.
- Notebook paper, composition books, notebooks, ten book bags, packages of socks and report folders.
- Sixteen book bags
- Notebooks, composition books, pencil holders, book covers, packs of pencils, crayons, bags of erasers, glue, pencil sharpeners, packs of index cards, packs of note book paper, report folders, rulers, scissors, and glue sticks.
- Notebook paper, packs of pencils, rulers, packs of erasers, crayons.



ROCOC



**Advisory
Board
Meeting
Friday**

**September 12
2008
12 P.M.**

**Conference
Room
Rowan DSS
Children's
Services
Building
165 Mahaley
Avenue
Salisbury, NC**

**Important
DATE!**

Church Coordinators Meeting

F.Y.I.



**Monday, October 13, 2008
Mt. Tabor United Methodist Church
Fellowship Hall
4520 Old Mocksville Road, Salisbury, NC 28144
Salisbury, NC
12—1 p.m. (Lunch provided)
Or
5:30—6:30 p.m. (Dinner provided)**

**Rowan
One Church—One Child
Ministry**

Rev. Jon Hunter
Coordinator
310 N. Main Street (office)
165 Mahaley Avenue (mailing address)
Salisbury, NC 28144
Phone: 704 - 216 - 7914
E-mail: jon.hunter@rowancountync.org

For a free Ministry Portfolio Packet or to schedule Jon Hunter to speak, please telephone or email Jon.

The Rowan County One Church—One Child program is a mission/outreach program between Rowan County Department of Social Services and local churches that is designed to make a difference in the lives of children and families by:

- Identifying families in congregations who may be interested in becoming foster or adoptive parents.
- Helping to meet the needs of children and families served by DSS.
- Supporting families who are caretakers for Rowan County's children in foster care.
- Educating worshippers about the needs of Rowan County children and families who need assistance and support.

Member Churches and Advisory Board Members

Bethel Lutheran

Cedar Grove AME Zion

Church of the Word of God

Coburn Memorial UMC

Dorsett Chapel UCC

First Presbyterian—Salisbury

First UMC - Salisbury

Freedom United Church of God

Gethsemane Missionary Baptist

Grace UMC

Grace Worship Center International

Lebanon Lutheran

Main Street UMC - Salisbury

Maranatha Bible Church

Milford Hills UMC

Mount Olive Full Gospel Baptist

Mount Tabor UMC

Mount Zion Missionary Baptist

New Life In Christ

Oak Grove UMC

Park Avenue UMC

Providence AME Zion

Providence UMC

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San Mateo - St Matthew's Episcopal

Second Presbyterian

Shiloh UMC

Soldiers Memorial AME Zion

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S. Adoption Party Resources

A. How to Have a Successful Adoption Party

1. The best parties are relaxed, unstructured, and have a sense of spontaneity. Youth should have enough games and activities to keep them busy, without feeling pressure to “find a family” or be “interviewed.” You want the young people to forget why they’re there, and just have fun! Some ideas to include:
 - a. Music (of course!)
 - b. Food (of course!)
 - c. Manicure and pedicure stations
 - d. Face painting
 - e. Games
 - f. Basketball/kickball/volleyball/softball, etc.
 - g. Arts & crafts (anything from making a group mural to bead bracelets to coloring for smaller children)
2. Prepare young people individually before the event. Let them know when, where, what, and whom to expect. Attendance should be strictly low-pressure and voluntary: no child should be forced or pressured to attend. You can encourage kids before and during the party that the idea is to have fun – there are no other expectations. For some youth, that might be helping you out, or watching over the younger kids, rather than feeling pressure to meet families. There are lots of creative ways to build on young people’s strengths.
3. Families should also have an orientation before-hand. Provide some guidance on appropriate questions (“What kinds of things do you like to do?”) and inappropriate questions (“Do you think you would like to live with us?”). Encourage families to have fun, and to see the party as a chance to get to know some wonderful young people.
4. The party should be a chance for youth to shine: when they are relaxed and having fun, they are their own best recruiters. It is an opportunity for the young people’s strengths and interests to take center stage – beyond what would be in a typical “waiting child” description or case file. It should feel like a party, not a job interview or test.
5. You may want to have a list of the first name, age, gender, and caseworker for the children you expect to attend. This can help families prepare for who they might meet, and follow-up afterwards. **However: be sure families know not to consult their “cheat sheet” or make notes on it during the party!**
6. Have name tags for everyone, possibly with different colors for youth, social workers, and families. This makes it easier for people to introduce themselves and know who is who.
7. Encourage families to introduce themselves to social workers, not just to the youth. They never know what children might be free for adoption in the near future, and giving social workers a sense of who they are beyond what is on their application can only help with the matching process.
8. Have enough staff on hand to help engage youth or families who look uncomfortable. Try to connect with people as soon as they arrive to welcome them. Help with introductions, especially when you know of similarities between youth or adults, or a possible good fit between a youth and a family.

Source: Lumpe, 2008

B. “Cheat Sheet” for Families Attending Adoption Parties

Sample Questions Adults Can Ask Young People

- Ask them about school – what grade are you in? What are your favorite subjects and why? What else do you like about school? What do you wish you did better in school?
- If I told you that you could do whatever or go wherever you wished tomorrow, what would you wish?
- What is something that you would like to learn to do? Why?
- What do you hope to be when you grow up? Why?
- If you had three wishes – what would you wish for and why?
- What do you like best about yourself? (If siblings, ask what they like best about their siblings.)
- Talk to them about your likes/interests (i.e., “I like to bake cookies, do you?” Or “Here in (your town) we like to do _____, do you like to do that?” Or, “What do you do for fun?”
- If siblings – what is something that your brothers/sisters do that always makes you laugh or smile? (then ask that child to do that if appropriate)
- Ask them about their summer plans

***These are only guidelines. Feel free to ask
your own questions. Remember . . .
HAVE FUN and
MAKE THE KIDS LAUGH!***

Please Don't

- Refer to your “cheat sheet” when talking to the kids
- Ask children about their birth family or their background
- Ask children their last names
- Talk about adoption unless they bring it up

If you are potentially interested in a child, rather than ask if they want to move, tell them about some of the fun things you like to do in your area of the state and ask if they like to do those things, too!

Source: Lumpe, 2008

T. Training Design Worksheet

1. From the results of the needs assessment, what are the topics selected for in-service training?
2. What are the goals and objectives for the topic(s) selected for training?
3. What are the previous levels of target audience involvement with this topic?
4. What do we wish the target audience to have at the end of the training in terms of the following categories?

Knowledge:

Skills:

Attitudes:

5. In what order does the material need to be presented in order to be useful and understandable?
6. What are the available formats for delivery of the training?
7. What format best matches the training needs identified?
8. What resources are available to support this training?
9. Who should be involved in designing and delivering each component of the training?
10. Who else needs to be involved or informed to make this training relevant?
11. What approach, if any, will be used to evaluate the training?
12. How and to whom will the results of the training evaluation be communicated?

Adapted from: Caffarella, 1994; McCurley & Lynch, 1996; Crocoll, 2001

U. Checklist for Developing Training for Kinship Care Providers



Training Kin to be Foster Parents: Best Practices from the Field

MOVING FORWARD: A CHECKLIST FOR MAKING TRAINING RELEVANT TO KINSHIP CAREGIVERS

Child welfare agencies can develop new approaches to encourage kin to participate in training. By making the training a positive and helpful experience for kinship caregivers, agencies can help kin become more effective partners in permanency. The following questions are designed to help agencies assess whether existing foster parent training approaches are relevant for kin and, if not, how current training might be adapted to better meet relative caregiver needs:

- Does training present topics that are relevant to the kinship care experience, such as:
 - Grief and loss
 - Family issues around reunification
 - Shifting gears from spoiling to parenting
 - Role conflict
 - Boundary issues
 - Working with the child welfare system
 - Visitation within the kinship triad (birth parent, caregiver and child)
 - Responsibilities in permanency planning
 - Legal status
- Does the agency use the phrase “educational support” to convey the idea that kinship caregivers will be provided with useful information, as opposed to “training,” which can be intimidating to some kin caregivers and cause resentment among others?
- Does the agency share information that kin caregivers need, as opposed to giving them information they already know, such as information on challenges that are unique to kin caregiving arrangements, including family dynamics and boundaries?

Source: Chawthon, 2008

- Is training flexible enough so that caregivers who need more information about child development can get it, either from traditional foster parent training or other forums?
- Do kin have opportunities to be in educational programs separate from non-kin so that their unique needs can be addressed in a more comfortable setting?
- Is training presented in a support group format to create a more relaxing, flexible and supportive environment than a traditional classroom setting?
- Do current and /or former kinship caregivers assist in education programs so that new kinship foster parents can hear from someone who has shared similar experiences?
- Is education conducted at a convenient time and location? Are child care and transportation provided?
- Are training hours sufficient to convey information caregivers need, rather than being set at exactly the same hours as training for non-kin?
- Are caregivers provided with an opportunity to move flexibly between workshops or training modules so that they can access a full range of educational support options without fear that they will be penalized if they do not complete sessions in a specified order?

V. Recipe Cards for Your Resource Family Recruitment and Retention Program

1. Using Foster Parents and Teens as Recruiters
2. Recruitment Parties
3. Child-Specific Publicity: Heart Gallery
4. Child-Specific Publicity: PowerPoint Slide Shows Created by Teens
5. A Successful Model of Adoption Support
6. Teen Panel at MAPP/GPS Classes

Recipe Card 1

Using Foster Parents and Teens as Recruiters

This strategy has been used successfully by a number of agencies in North Carolina. Here's what Another Choice for Black Children has to say about it:

Approximate budget for strategy: Refreshments = \$40 per month combined with donated items. Donations may include beverages, chips, pastries, and other items.

Approximate staff hours for strategy: 3.5 hours (1.5 hrs. Information Meeting; 1 hr. Speakers Bureau; 1 hr. MAPP/GPS Panel)



We have used this strategy to:

- Review our data/set measurable goals
- Collaborate with other counties or community organizations
- Generate positive media attention
- Improve agency's support of/partnership with foster parents

Successfully Find Families:

- For teens
- For minorities
- For children with special needs
- For sibling groups
- From specific neighborhoods
- For all children in foster care

What steps did you take to implement this strategy?

The key to implementing this strategy is to have buy-in to the philosophy that everyone connected to the agency is a recruiter. (It is not difficult to have foster/adoptive parents steer others like themselves to your agency when they have received respectful and equitable treatment.)

- Written Expectation document (see Appendix A in this guide) signed by prospective families during Orientation indicates that recruitment is an expectation
- Provide a platform for them to share their information. (Monthly information meetings serve this purpose, along with adoption panels, church engagements, community events, collaboration with others.)
- Administering formal and informal surveys and making observations during agency events (annual family day picnics, conferences, staff and family beach retreat, participation on MAPP/GPS panels)

- Recognize, acknowledge, and validate each person’s experience
- Provide incentives for participation (gift certificates, prizes and awards, discounts, financial assistance)
- Staff is trained to cultivate their relationships with foster parents and teens
- Celebration of success and use of success as a springboard for enhancing recruitment outreach and retention
- Offer support tailored to meet the needs of the families

What specific results have you seen as a result of this strategy?

- We have families who come into the process specifically to adopt teenagers
- Adopted teens are able to articulate their success and speak on behalf of other waiting teens with similar potential
- Teenagers who had given up hope of a forever family start to believe that they are indeed adoptable
- The agency has become an integral part of the community by allowing teens to earn community service hours. Their time at the agency serves to increase awareness, resulting in teens talking to other teens about adoption.
- The agency maintains a pool of adoptive parents and teens who are available to serve in all aspects of the adoption program
- Families and teens are able to see the value of the support they have received, and they willingly discuss the need for new families and teens to take advantage of the support offered

Recipe Card 2

Recruitment Parties

This strategy has been used successfully by Brigitte Lindsay of Forsyth County DSS.

Approximate budget for strategy: \$75

Approximate staff hours for strategy: 2 hours per party

We have used this strategy to: Successfully find families for teens and for all other children in foster care

What steps did you take to implement this strategy?

- Identify foster and adoptive families that were willing to have parties
- Have them invite their families and friends to come to an Interest Meeting House Party



What specific results have you seen as a result of this strategy?

This is something that needs to be done on a regular basis (like every other month or every quarter to be successful)

Additional details:

The foster parent invites friends and family to their home. I then do a presentation on our foster-adopt resource parent program. I discuss the needs we have. The family will discuss their experience as foster-adopt resource parents. The guests get to ask questions. If teens in foster care are available to speak, they are invited as well. The teens that have been used are active in our LINKS Program and LINKS coordinator will provide transportation for them. I bring information packets (which include brochures) to the meeting.

Things to consider:

- Decide which families you want to host the parties and discuss the idea with them.
- Make sure the families are aware of the foster-adopt resource parent guidelines.
- Make sure the families are aware of the types of families needed.

Recipe Card 3

Child-Specific Publicity: Heart Gallery

This strategy has been used successfully by Gaston County DSS.

We have used this strategy to:

- Collaborate with other counties or community organizations
- Generate positive media attention
- Successfully find families for all children in foster care



What steps did you take to implement this strategy?

- Professional photographers donate services in exchange for publicity
- Photos of waiting children displayed in an exhibit that rotates to a number of high-traffic locations: country club, public library, etc.
- Politicians, influential community members invited to opening exhibit

What specific results have you seen as a result of this strategy?

- 1st year (2006-2007): 7 out of 12 highlighted children adopted
- 2nd year (1st 6 months of this FY): 6 out of 10 highlighted children adopted

Additional details:

- NC Kids Adoption and Foster Care Network (1-888-NC KIDS-5) works with public and private agencies, free of charge, to support their Heart Gallery efforts

Recipe Card 4

Child-Specific Publicity: PowerPoint Slide Shows Created by Teens

This strategy has been used successfully by Sheila Hill, Child Specific Recruitment Specialist, Three Rivers Adoption Council, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Finished presentations are posted on TRAC's website (www.3riversadopt.org). Here's what Ms. Hill has to say about this strategy:

Approximate budget for this strategy: Lap top and digital camera originally purchased with grant money 5 years ago. No ongoing costs.

Approximate staff hours for this strategy: Varies, but approximately 2 hours per youth. Often this is split up over multiple visits. Sometimes she discusses the idea with teens at one visit, then has them think about it until the next visit so they have time to come up with ideas.



We have used this strategy to: Successfully find families for teens, minorities, and all other children in foster care

What steps did you take to implement this strategy?

- Take the laptop and digital camera to teen's home, so they're comfortable.
- Ask "What would you like adoptive families to know about you?"
- Teens can use up to 10 slides and can put on whatever they want, as long as it's appropriate (no profanity or violent images, for example). The last slide is social worker's contact information.
- Work together on the background, colors, wording, pictures, or images. Sometimes the teens work on the laptop directly; other times they dictate to the social worker. By hooking the camera to the computer, images can be added to the show on the spot.
- Some images may need to be tracked down later by the social worker.
- The social worker e-mails the completed slide show to the web master for the agency, so the show can be uploaded to the agency's web site.

Do you have other advice to offer?

Make time to get to know each teen. Though developing the presentations has taken longer than expected, staff appreciate that the more time they spend with teens at home, the easier it is for the teens to develop a positive and trusting relationship with them. Staff, in turn, learn more about the teens and can better inform prospective families.

What specific results have you seen as a result of this strategy?

Between January and August 2004, 8 of the 12 TRAC youth with online presentations had been matched with permanent families. One of the teens was a high school graduate. It continues to be the agency's most effective recruitment tool, generating more calls than any other method.

It also helps to develop prospective or current foster parents who may not have considered teens. One family had only been interested in children 6 and younger. They saw a slide show of a 17-year-old boy at a matching event, and ended up adopting him two months before his 18th birthday.

While this was originally conceived as a recruitment activity, the process of developing the slide shows is valuable in preparing teens for adoption as well. Important issues come up that teens and social workers discuss to help the teen get ready to move to a new family.

Teens also benefit from the extra attention and have fun creating the slide shows.

Social workers benefit from getting to know the teens better, establishing more trusting and positive relationships with them, and learning more about them to share with prospective families.

Sources: Hill, 2008; Riggs, 2004

Recipe Card 5

A Successful Model of Adoption Support

This strategy has been used successfully by Janet Barr, DePaul Family Services, Christiansburg, VA. Ms. Barr states, “The overall goal for our program is achieving permanency for waiting children through adoption. This is done through a three-pronged model: regional public-private partnerships, evidence-based practices, and worker specialization.”

Approximate budget for this strategy: Budget for two full-time adoption specialists (income, travel, supplies, office overhead, etc.)

Approximate staff hours for this strategy: DePaul has two full-time adoption specialists. There were probably between 100 and 150 children waiting for adoption in the region; the most difficult to place were referred to this program.

We have used this strategy to:

- Review our data/set measurable goals
- Collaborate with other counties or community organizations
- Generate positive media attention
- Improve agency’s support of/partnership with foster parents
- Successfully find families for: teens, minorities, children with special needs, and siblings

What steps did you take to implement this strategy?

This program is a partnership among seven county DSS agencies and a private adoption agency, DePaul Family Services. Adoption specialists at DePaul focus on pre- and post-adoption support with youth and families. Services include:

- Pre-adoption preparation for child. The public partners do not have time to work with youth extensively on considering and buying into adoption, but they recognize it as a critical part of successful adoptions. This service is highly utilized by the public partners.
- Child-specific recruitment. Children referred to this program are all considered “difficult to place” because of age, disability, or some other factor.
- General recruitment/community education to raise awareness about Virginia’s waiting children.
- Intensive pre-placement assessments of families and children. This helps in making good decisions about matching.
- Intensive post-placement support. This support is also highly valued and utilized by public partners to maintain adoptions.

What specific results have you seen as a result of this strategy?

- 98% rate of adoption for the 100 children served during the initial three and a half-year grant period. The two teens who were not adopted by then have subsequently been adopted.
- Message: There is a family for EVERY child.

Source: Janet Barr, DePaul Family Services. Personal communication. May 6, 2008.

Recipe Card 6

Teen Panel at MAPP/GPS Classes

This strategy has been used successfully by Durham County DSS.

Approximate budget for this strategy: \$0.00

Approximate staff hours for this strategy:
Depends how much you use teens in the class. You must make contact with each participating teen regularly and then remind them of class dates and times.



We have used this strategy to:

- Find families for teens

What steps did you take to implement this strategy?

Our agency has a youth panel during the foster/adoptive pre-service training to give insight into the teens' prospective of foster care and adoption.

What specific results have you seen as a result of this strategy?

We have not been able to measure outcomes yet, but reaction from classes is very positive.

One of the major accomplishments that we've seen is that it changes the hearts and minds of some of the foster/adoptive parents. It gives them the opportunity to see what teens go through while they are in the system. It also gives them an idea of what not to do. Some of our families have had a change in mindset about fostering/adopting teens. I just think it gives them a reality check.

We also use the DVD *Voices of Youth* on the first day of class. Then, by the time they talk to our teens, it is a confirmation of what they saw on the DVD.