



## Mahalo to all the Conference Supporters and Helpers!

The 8<sup>th</sup> Annual Hawaii Foster Parent Association Conference, held on October 3 and 4, 2003, was attended by over 700 foster parents, social workers, teachers, health professionals, community members and others. Thank you to everyone who supported, attended, volunteered or otherwise made the conference such a success.

A special thanks to Lt. Governor Duke Aiona for providing the opening welcome. And thanks to those who helped at the registration desk, book table or as room monitors. Check out our website at [www.hawaiifosterparent.org](http://www.hawaiifosterparent.org) for pictures from the conference and acknowledgement of our supporters. You can also find a listing of the conference advertisers and supporters on page 3 of this newsletter.



Lt. Governor Duke Aiona provides opening remarks at the 8th Annual HFPA Conference.

## Comments From Attendees and Speakers at the 8th Annual HFPA Conference

The annual HFPA conference is an excellent pep rally to energize, rejuvenate and motivate foster parents, social workers and other stakeholders to work hand-in-hand, inspiring each other to promote healthy keiki ohana and communities, one child at a time. Thank you!

*A team of Kauai foster parents and social workers*

Brilliant job on the conference. I was very impressed with the quality of the speakers I saw, the organization of the event and the chicken and pasta. Well, maybe not the chicken. You and your crew did a truly fine job.

*Dan Ziegler*

The conference was definitely a positive experience. Personally, I got a chance to connect with both

some old co-workers as well as other agencies we might like to collaborate with in the future. I also got a chance to speak with some of the foster parents / attendees and realized that more information about SATC really is necessary.

We do have a brief web page on the Kapiolani Health website at: <http://www.kapiolani.org/facilities/programs-sex.html> which describes our general services of Crisis Intervention; Counseling Services; and Community Outreach and Education. I would be happy to send you hard copies of our general services brochures or any other information you might like.

I also noticed that many foster parents liked our coloring book, "Let's Talk About Touching," a guide for parents to discuss good / bad touch and the body with their children. We do have these available for families for free, and for sale in larger quantities. We are currently developing a curriculum around the coloring book

(Continued from page 1) Comments from Attendees  
for use in pre- and elementary schools.

Thank you for inviting us to the conference-what a fabulous group of people! It's great to be surrounded by people who care so much for Hawaii's youth! Please let me know if I can provide any more information to you. Feel free to call either educator Leslie Hall at **535-7137** or myself at **535-7629**.

Corey Adler  
Sex Abuse Treatment Center



**T**hank you for inviting Amy and me to speak at the conference. We enjoyed ourselves and really enjoyed meeting some of the parents.

Becky Rosenberg  
Dept. of Education

**I**wanted to congratulate you and Judith and all your supporters and "worker bees" for putting together a great conference. You all looked so cool and collected and calm that I figured you have the conference planning stuff wired. Thanks for inviting me to be a part of your conference.

Jennifer Schember-Lang  
Learning Disabilities Association of Hawaii

### Conference attendees responding to "What did you like best about the conference?"

- ▶ *The Hawaii Foster Youth Coalition presentation---PRICELESS! A must-hear for every stakeholder.*
- ▶ *Seeing the mass of other foster parents was encouraging. Also the free airfare, cost of conference & meals, discounted room rates. And the really great speakers and the Youth Panel, etc.*
- ▶ *Fellowship & getting to meet others in the field and hear their stories/ challenges/triumphs.*
- ▶ *Very realistic perspective about social workers, GAL's, and the system in general. Great information about how to make concerns known in a professional manner.*
- ▶ *To learn that I wasn't alone in this situation. Got a lot of info.*
- ▶ *To know there are resources for me; meeting other foster parents & sharing info & having a positive nurturing outlook.*
- ▶ *Smoothly run and informative; no lags in time; well worth the time spent.*



**The mission of HFPA is to educate, support and nurture caregivers, empowering them to provide quality care to children in Hawaii affected by foster care.**

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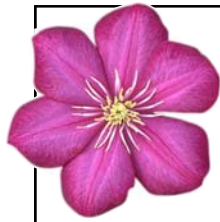
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The HFPA Bulletin is published quarterly by HFPA for foster parents, friends, and supporters of HFPA. It is made possible through grants and donations. Please send comments and change of address to:  
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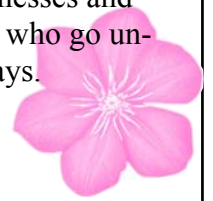
Sarah T. Casken, *Editor*  
Betty J.C. Dumas, *Layout*

*The comments of individuals are not necessarily those of HFPA.*

HFPA is a non-profit organization registered with the Hawaii State Dept. of Commerce and Consumer Affairs.



**W**e'd like to recognize some of the individuals, organizations, businesses and foundations who provided support to the conference. There are many others who go unnamed but we are grateful for the help they provided in so many different ways.



***Mahalo to the foundations who provided funding to support the Youth Track:***

- Frear Eleemosynary Trust--\$5,000
- Rev. Takie Okumura Family Fund--\$2,000

***Mahalo to the organizations and companies who supported this conference:***

- Adoption Connection
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- Children's Alliance of Hawaii
- Elaine Chung
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**Conference Attendees:**



**T**hose of you who attended the workshop "Don't Shoot Me, I'm Just the Messenger" will be interested to know that you can find samples of court reports on the HFPA website, [www.hawaiiosterparent.org](http://www.hawaiiosterparent.org).

And those of you who attended the RAVE workshop and did not sign the sheet to receive a copy of the handout, you can e-mail us at [info@hawaiiosterparent.org](mailto:info@hawaiiosterparent.org) and we will send you the handout by return e-mail in a Word document.

# The Care and Feeding of Foster Parents

*This information was developed on flip charts in small-group discussions at the conference in Denise Goodman's workshop on the "Care and Feeding of Foster Parents." These are meant to be helpful suggestions to social workers about how best to support and respond to foster parents' needs.*



## RESPECT

- Return calls promptly
- Be on time for meetings, appointments, etc.
- Ask for suggestions and follow through
- Two-way communication
- Get to know Foster Parents: spend time, talk story, go to trainings and other events with Foster Parents
- Be truthful about children and their history
- Ask Foster Parents how they want child to address them (mom, Mr., Auntie)
- Get to know families through pictures, past events, get to know their other foster or bio kids
- Be honest when you (SW) don't know
- Respect schedules and life styles
- Treat Foster Parents as part of team, not as a client
- Don't forget the other kids (bio and foster)
- Clarify special needs
- Help to problem solve
- SWs need appreciation, too
- Make good matches in placements
- Foster Parent mentoring (Experienced Foster Families assist new Foster Families)
- Keep Foster Parents involved and accept our feedback

## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- Expand informational resources (web sites, videos, articles, brochures, books)
- SWs should attend PRIDE
- Be understanding of SW's busy schedules
- Improve communication between workers, assistants, Foster Parents, supervisor, etc.
- Networking with other agencies for trainings – have Foster Parents initiate and provide trainings
- Survey needs of Foster families and share the results/feedback
- Need more trainings for Kinship Foster Families

## APPRECIATION

- Communication – two-way; prompt response
- Thank you's: birth parents, school, churches/ community, kids, social workers
- Follow through with services
- Holiday cards (from Governor, etc.)
- More social events
- Free turkey and other goodies – enough for everyone

## CRISIS INTERVENTION

- Laminated card to carry with emergency numbers
- Pairing families for mentoring
- Have a special 24 hr Foster Hotline (not the CPS reporting hotline)

## TEAM PARTICIPATION

- Know members of the team
- SW should spend a weekend in the home
- Give Foster Parent opportunity to see what a day as a social worker is like

## PERSONAL SUPPORT

- Therapy/counseling to caregiving families
- Validation, acknowledge Foster Parents
- Give alternate contact numbers (not just office) – be available after 5 p.m. and on weekend

## CAREGIVING ASSISTANCE

- Network with other Foster Families – trade off on rides, resources, childcare
- Support groups and geographically based local/ community support
- Increase availability of childcare
- Weekly meetings with those who have kids with similar needs
- Get more resources from the community (bowling, discounts, freebies)
- Placement package or basket (toiletries, towels, diapers, hair brushes, etc.)
- Sponsorships (camp, bands, other activities as well as school bags, supplies and pets) through the community
- Hospital discharge with more diapers and formula
- Utilize military resources

## FLAT \$10,160 FEDERAL TAX CREDIT FOR SPECIAL NEEDS ADOPTION NOW AVAILABLE

*North American Council on Adoptable Children*



*Joe Kroll, executive director of the North American Council on Adoptable Children, discusses the tax credit at recent HFPA conference.*

**B**eginning with their 2003 taxes, many parents who adopt a child with special needs can claim a flat tax credit of \$10,160 for every adoption finalized after January 1, 2003, without having to document any adoption expenses. According to the Internal Revenue Service (IRS), "An eligible child is a child with special needs if he or she is a citizen or resident of the United States (including U.S. possessions) and a state determines that the child cannot or should not be returned to his or her parents' home and probably will not be adopted unless adoption assistance is provided to the adoptive parents." Therefore families of children who are eligible for adoption assistance would be able to claim the tax credit.

Families with modified adjusted gross incomes of \$150,000 or less are eligible to claim the full credit. The credit cannot exceed your federal tax liability, but can be spread out over 5 years, which will allow families to maximize the amount of the credit that they can claim against their federal tax liability.

Here are some examples of how the federal tax credit could help families:

- Family One paid \$3,000 in federal income taxes through normal payroll withholding, and their tax liability is \$2,000. When they file their taxes for 2003 they normally would have a refund of \$1,000, but because of the adoption tax credit, they will get a refund of the full \$3,000 paid and will carry over a tax credit of \$8,160 that they can apply against future tax liability for the next 4 years or until used up.
- Family Two has a federal tax liability of \$12,000 so can claim the full \$10,160 adoption tax credit in that year and reduce their federal tax liability to \$1,840. They will not have any carryover of the tax credit to following tax years.
- Family Three has a federal tax liability of \$5,000 per year and they adopt a sibling group of four children who all have special needs. They would be eligible for a \$40,640 federal tax credit, but they could only claim a total of \$25,000 in tax credits, \$5,000 each year over 5 years, assuming the family's tax liability remains the same.

**See IRS Publication 968 for more information on the adoption tax credit at <http://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/p968.pdf> or call 1-800-829-3676 to order it.**

This \$10,160 federal tax credit will be a valuable resource to families as they raise adopted children with special needs. The credit can help cover some of the costs of providing services and support to meet children's special needs. Prospective adoptive families should keep this credit in mind as they consider the resources available to them to help them care for their children with special needs. If you have questions on the adoption tax credit, contact the North American Council on Adoptable Children at **651-644-3036** or check their website at **[www.nacac.org](http://www.nacac.org)**.



# 8<sup>th</sup> Annual HFPA Conference October 3 & 4, 2003



HFPA Board President, Michael Troy, draws the audience's attention to the conference program.



Lt. Governor Duke Aiona and volunteer Chickie Guillaume enjoy the humor of keynote speaker Denise Goodman.



The 2003 Starfish Award recipient, Beryl Smith, pauses from her volunteer work to accept the organization's top award.



Conference participants select breakfast items before they go into the ballroom to hear the keynote presentation.



Staff member, Ray Andrade, and volunteer, Beryl Smith, provide coverage at the HFGA book table, which offered over 50 different titles related to foster care, adoption, and child rearing.



Laughter and fellowship with other foster parents are a common occurrence at the conference.



Participants at the youth strand of the conference take a break for lunch and a photo opportunity.



Youth from the Hawaii Foster Youth Coalition provide insights during their powerful and moving luncheon presentation.



Conference manager, Judith Wilhoite, receives words of enlightenment from former foster youth and current Rhythm Klub entertainer, Tino Ibach.



Conference attendees Georgia and Octavia Gonzaga flew in from California to attend their second HFGA conference.

## *Moving a Child Into a Permanent Family: A CHECKLIST*

*Norma Nelson*

*(Ed. note: The following is a suggested checklist for social workers to use during transition as a child moves into a prospective permanent home. On behalf of foster parent, prospective adoptive parents or permanent guardians, HFPA strongly advocates that these steps be taken in order to meet the needs of the child and the families.)*



**I**t's a great feeling to have matched an eligible family with one of your kids. There's little time to rest on your laurels, though, as now you need to prepare the family for the child to come into their home. To help, here's a quick checklist of suggestions.

- ✓ ***Have you made full disclosure?*** Birth history, copies of evaluations and testing results, school records, foster parent observations, etc. The best placements happen when families know in very real ways what they're getting into, and are helped to 1) anticipate how their lives will change, and 2) know how they can cope with those changes. Full disclosure better prepares families and lessens chances for disruptions, and even future lawsuits.
- ✓ ***Has the family been helped to identify and locate useful resources they and the child will need after placement?*** Lining up therapies, school programs, doctors, day care, support groups, etc. ahead of time gets a placement off to a sound start and should be a regular part of any pre-placement plan. It also gives the family practice in locating and accessing resources and advocating for their child — skills all families need to cultivate.
- ✓ ***Does the family understand what can be realistically offered in the way of agency support to them after the child is placed?*** Often disruptions occur because problems develop and fester without the worker being aware of how serious they are until the family calls in desperation to have the child moved. Regular ongoing contact with the family can lessen the chances of this happening. The contact doesn't always have to be face-to-face. The important thing is for the worker and family to work out a communication plan they both understand and will use.
- ✓ ***Have you developed a pre-placement visiting plan that is appropriate for the child's developmental level and is focused and realistic?*** No matter how pressed for time you are, moving a child into a permanent family requires some planning. In the long run, it's worth taking the extra time. It's important to remember that contact between the child, present caretakers, and new family can take many forms and does not always have to be face-to-face to be effective. Phone calls, cards, photos, and videos can all be ways that children and families get acquainted and stay connected between visits.



- ✓ ***Are you helping the foster family and new family to make a productive connection and to keep their focus on the needs of the child?*** For so many reasons, you can feel pressed to hurry the placement process. The foster family may be grieving their impending loss and push to get the pain over with. Or the child's behaviors may be escalating and the foster family is requesting an earlier move. The new family may be impatient with the time you're taking with pre-placement visits, which may present monetary or geographic hardships for them.
- ✓ ***Have you provided for some form of continuing contact between the child and important people in his/her life?*** No matter how inconvenient it may be, as long as it's safe, the new family needs to make a clear com-

*(Continued on page 11)*



# News from the Neighbor Islands



## NEWS FROM MAUI

*Scott K.C. Seto  
Maui DHS*

**M**auui welcomes a new foster licensing worker, Darlene Davenport, who has come up through the ranks. Previously Ms. Davenport served the Department as Social Services Aide. Congratulations to Mrs. Davenport on her promotion/new appointment.

In March 2003, DHS collaborated with the Hanai Coalition and the Friends of the Children's Justice Center on Maui to sponsor training on the new adoption tax credit. Fea-

ture presenter was David Hoode of the C.P.A. firm of Mimi Hu and Associates, Inc. Approximately 30 foster/adoptive parents attended this function held at the Dunes Restaurant at the Maui Lani Golf Course. A buffet style lunch was provided for all attendees.

In September, Maui DHS, the Hanai Coalition and the Friends of the CJC sponsored training at Maui Community College on "College and Post Secondary Information and Higher Education Benefits." 30 foster parents and service providers attended the workshop. Speakers from the Upward Bound program and from the Maui Community Col-

lege Counseling Office and the Financial Aid office provided a wealth of information to the attendees.



## 2003 West Hawaii Foster Parent Luncheon

*Freda Owens, Licensing SW  
West Hawaii DHS*

**E**ighty-five DHS foster parents and guests enjoyed food and entertainment at a summer luncheon held in their honor. The Mauna Lani Hotel generously donated the food and facilities. We cannot thank them enough. Thirty-six local businesses and community members donated door prizes and favors. Guests included Pastor David Rees-Thomas who gave the blessing; Sharron Ackles, liaison to the Governor, who presented a message from Governor Lingle; and Andy Levin, liaison to the Mayor.

Many pictures were taken by foster parents Stephanie and David Charlton. West Hawaii Today was present to write a story about the foster parents. We cannot do enough for our foster parents and this is our way of showing our appreciation. Special thanks go to Neralyn Domondon, Ronnie Anderson, Jane Shiraishi, Marsha Isaacs, Karen Duty and Betty Hannah who volunteered their time to assist with this luncheon.



## Foster Parents Encouraged to Attend Court Hearings

*Article in East Hawaii Connections  
by J Yoshimoto  
Department of the Attorney General  
Family Law Division*

**A**loha! On behalf of the Attorney General's office, we want to express our gratitude and appreciation to foster parents for your decision to care for children in foster or permanent custody with the State of Hawaii. Your efforts as a foster parent provide a valuable and much needed service to the children of Hawaii who are in need of a safe home.

The majority of our court cases involve families who are participating in services provided by the Department of Human Services, Department of Health and Department of Education. Some of the children in these cases need to be placed in foster care for their protection. Your role as foster parent is important in helping these children deal with significant issues in their families. As a foster parent, you are invited to attend court hearings and the Family Court is very interested to hear from you about how the children are doing in foster placement, school, and any other relevant information you can provide. The social worker should let you know when the hearings are scheduled.

Thank you again for your efforts as a foster parent and the service that you provide to the children of our community.

## Letters to the Editor

Dear HFPA,

We received your excellent June 2003 newsletter and found much of the information of interest to foster parents in any state. I was particularly impressed with the article on "The Art of Advocacy" and would very much like to post it on The NYS Citizens' Coalition for Children website. We would of course credit the Hawaii Foster Parent Association and provide a link to your site.

You may be interested in some of the materials in the LINK Family and Foster Parent Sections of our website at <http://www.nysccc.org/>. Feel free to link to our site and make use of any original materials you find there provided you credit the Coalition.

Your newsletter is one of the most informative we receive and your web site is very attractive. Keep up the good work and thanks.

*Susie Collins, Program Director  
New York State Citizens' Coalition  
for Children*



Dear HFPA,

You and your team are the greatest and I will utilize your wisdom and experience more. You've reassured me that primary caregivers

are important and my voice is important for the well-being and safety of our grandchildren. A big mahalo and love hugs to you!

*C.Y., foster parent*

Dear HFPA,

Thank you so much for your support of the Captain's Club Sailing Program. Our summer '03 class was full due to getting the word out through E Pūlama Nā Keiki. We've also received calls from our flyers handed out during your October annual conference. Looking forward to working with you in the future.

*Rich Marshall, Captain's Club*



Dear HFPA,

Hi, I would like to ask if I could be placed on your mailing list for your newsletter-"E Pūlama Nā Keiki". I have read your newsletter, and have found it to be very informative.

*Marsha Yamada  
Supervisor, Maui VGAL Program*

## Training Schedule\* for Child Specific Foster Parents

### Waianae

Shield of Faith Church  
January 17, 24, 31 and February 7 & 14, 2004  
Saturday mornings, 9:30 am—12:30 pm

### Halawa

Halawa District Park  
January 19, 26 and February 2, 9, & 16, 2004  
Monday evenings, 6:00 pm—9:00 pm

### Waianae

Shield of Faith Church  
February 21, 28 and March 6, 13, & 20, 2004  
Saturday mornings, 9:30 am—12:30 pm

### Windward

Kailua United Methodist Church  
February 24 and March 2, 9, 16, & 23, 2004  
Tuesday evenings, 6:00 pm—9:00 pm

Call Barbara Wright at 261-9569 to sign up now!

\*Schedule subject to change.

This training meets the requirements of the Department of Human Services. A certificate of completion will be provided at the end of the 5th class.



**Hawaii Foster Parent Association**  
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- My company will match my gift—the necessary form is enclosed.  
 For my donation of \$35 and above, please send me the HFPA newsletter.

❖ **This gift will be acknowledged in the HFPA Bulletin unless requested otherwise.**

*In accordance with IRS regulations, your gift to the Hawaii Foster Parent Association is fully tax-deductible.*



*(Continued from page 8) A Checklist*

mitment to honor and preserve connections important to the child (foster parents, extended birth family, and especially siblings). **The more this is spelled out, the better.** Write the contact plan down, have everyone sign it and get a copy to all the players. Again, this contact does not have to be face-to-face. It is all too easy for new families to put this commitment aside as they incorporate the child into their lives. When these connections are allowed to wane, kids lose continuity and their sense of identity is further eroded.



- **Does the child know who will be his/her next worker (if it won't be you) and what that new worker's responsibilities are? How are you handling this transition?** Again, continuity is everything. Until the placement is solid and everyone is agreed that the family is making a permanent commitment, the child needs to know who is watching out for him/her and who will take care of him/her if this placement doesn't work out (no one knows better than kids that placements sometimes fail).
- **Have you, or the next worker, helped the family develop a "panic plan" and a respite plan?** It's useful to help folks think through ahead of time 1) how they will know when they need help, 2) how will they ask for it, and 3) from whom. Likewise, lining up a respite provider or two before the placement of the child is good preventive medicine.

*Author, Norma Nelson, is currently an adoption specialist with the Washington State Department of Social & Health Services, Division of Children & Family Services. This article was first published in the Spring 2000 Alaska Adoption Exchange Newsletter published by Northwest Adoption Exchange. We thank NWAEE for permission to use it here. The article can also be found at [www.akaee.org/newsletter.html](http://www.akaee.org/newsletter.html).*



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*Happy New Year from  
Hawaii Foster Parent Association*

*Volunteers needed for  
May Fundraiser to celebrate  
National Foster Care Month*

Please give HFPA a call at 263-0920, toll free 1-877-775-4400, or e-mail to [info@hawaiifosterparent.org](mailto:info@hawaiifosterparent.org) if you would like to join us in planning our very first fundraising event for the Association. We are looking for people with skills, interests, and contacts for an event most likely involving a silent auction, music, and art. Funds will be used to further HFPA's efforts to provide support, training, and information to foster parents across the state.

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