



Child Specific Classes Meet the Needs of Foster Parents

A recurrent theme in national studies is that foster parents and relative caregivers often do not receive the supports and services they need. HFPA is proud to be addressing that need in Hawaii through its conference, newsletter, website, phone mentoring, and child specific foster parent classes.

Since November 2000, HFPA has provided the 15-hour child specific classes to over 1300 foster parents in Hawaii. A recent outcomes report by evaluator Caroline Ellermann stated that “participants strongly demonstrated learning of the program content and satisfaction with the program delivery.” She went on to say, “I highly commend HPFA for being so attentive to each of the participant’s concerns and the evaluator recommendations. It is remarkable that you are able to



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Be a Hero for an Older Child

By Steven Walker

My name is Steve and I am 18 years old. I am so happy to see all of you here tonight for the Heart Gallery opening. It shows me that you really care about children and want to make a difference.

I want to share a little bit about myself with you. I was a former foster child for 6 years before I was adopted and had a forever family. I had been in many, many foster homes and looked at by several families interested in adopting me, but it felt like an eternity before I finally had a place to call HOME.

Many children will behave the way I did (*not so long ago*). I was a handful. I would push my new parents away when I found myself loving them because I didn’t want to get hurt again. I would say inappropriate things and act uncontrollably.

I was so afraid to love them and then have them kick me out so I decided to kick myself out before they could hurt my feelings. I really gave them a run for their money. There are days I just shake my head and can’t believe I acted that way, but they understood how my heart

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Researcher Responds to DHS Kinship Policy Presentation

HFPA recently received a copy of a letter sent to the Hawaii Department of Human Services from Jill Duerr Berrick, Ph.D., one of the researchers quoted in presentations being made by DHS to justify their kinship care policy. She expressed her concerns about the policy and the use of her research. With her permission, the letter in its entirety is posted on the website at www.hawaiifosterparent.org and excerpts are provided here. Dr. Berrick is co-director of the Center for Child and Youth Policy at University of California, Berkeley and has done a tremendous amount of research in the area of child welfare and, in particular, kinship care. In her letter to DHS, she states the following:

“Since my research on kinship care was used to justify Hawaii’s new approach to kin, I feel compelled to suggest that your agency consider modifying the new policy... I am, and have always been, a strong advocate of kinship care. As you know, kinship care can provide children with a sense of family stability, cultural continuity, and connections to language and religious legacies. In many circumstances, kinship care can benefit children as it may be less traumatic at the time of placement (if the child knows the kinship member), and if it can promote continued contact with birth and extended family members. As you indicate in your power point, a good deal of research supports kinship placement.



But kinship care is not without its hazards and it should not be viewed as beneficial in all circumstances. To clarify some of the points made in the presentation: While most data has shown kinship care to be more stable than non-kinship care, more recent work by Mark Testa shows that instability can be pronounced when children are adolescents and that differences in stability may not

(Continued on page 2)

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be as great as was once thought...

Similarly, although we presume that placement in kinship care is less traumatic than placement in non-kin care, there is no data to support this conclusion. The articles you reference all indicate the presumption of less trauma, but there are no empirical studies to document this point. Instead, as above, it is likely that placement is less traumatic when children know their kin caregiver, but there is no



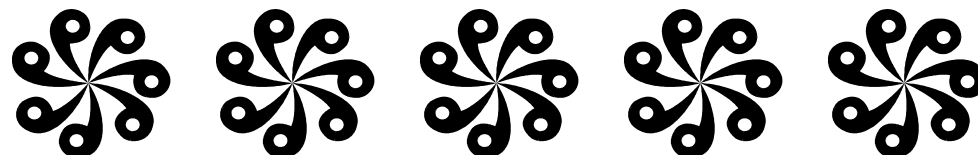
reason to assume that placement is any less traumatic when children are placed with kin strangers compared to non-kin strangers. Further, there is a good deal of evidence to suggest that placement can be upsetting to children if they have a secure attachment to their caregiver; moving children out of homes where they feel safe and where they have attached to their caregiver could indeed be quite traumatic for

children...

There is limited research showing that children in kinship care may have somewhat fewer mental health and behavioral problems. However, these findings do not implicate children's caregivers as the *cause* of their reduced symptomatology. Indeed, it may be that kin are less willing or able to take children with more serious mental health and/or behavioral challenges, or that child welfare workers are less likely to make these placements. There is much we do not yet understand about this important finding.

Because there is much to recommend kinship care from the research literature, because kinship care corresponds to the child welfare value of strengthening families, and because federal law suggests a preference for kin, I applaud states for making diligent efforts at the time of child removal to locate and assess appropriate kin for foster care placements. But enthusiasm for the value of *family* should not override our knowledge of the fundamental building blocks children need for their healthy growth and development. Certainly we now have decades of research suggesting that children's attachments to primary caregivers are central to development, and that stable, healthy relationships help to foster these attachments. The literature you cite in your power point refers to children's abilities to form multiple attachments with other caregivers *assuming that they continue to have a secure base*...Government policy and practice should *never* intentionally separate children from their primary caregivers with whom they have attached and with whom they are likely to live long-term, without compelling evidence of the child's risk to safety. For foster children, these separations only further their already vulnerable developmental risk. Substantial evidence now exists to show convincingly that each additional move in foster care increases children's behavioral problems. Stability of care is critical for all children; for foster children it is essential.

I do hope your efforts to locate appropriate kin during the early hours and days after removal from the birth home are successful. I also urge you to reconsider policies that move children from safe, stable non-kin settings simply to promote kinship care. Many other alternatives exist (including more "open" foster placements so that children's connections to the birth family can be maximized). These alternatives should be pursued in order to secure children's well-being."



The Hawaii Foster Parent Association nurtures, educates, and supports foster and adoptive families, while providing responsible advocacy for improvements in the foster care system.

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The HFPA Bulletin is published quarterly by HFPA for foster and adoptive parents, legal guardians, service providers, friends and supporters of HFPA. It is made possible through grants and donations.

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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.

FACTS ABOUT CHILDREN IN FOSTER CARE IN HAWAII

<http://www.fostercaremonth.org>



May is National Foster Care Month. The National Foster Parent Association (NFPA) and National Foster Care Month (NFCM) have announced that the beloved cartoon character, Ziggy, is the 2006 spokes character and will help NFPA and NFCM recognize the efforts of foster parents across the nation and spread awareness about the ever-growing need for foster parents.

This information from the NFCM website highlights foster care statistics for Hawaii. The information is provided through the Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS) data, U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000, and the Child Welfare League of America.

Total Population:

2,886 children were in the foster care system in Hawaii on September 30, 2003. Most children are placed temporarily in foster care due to parental abuse or neglect.

Age: Average Age: 8.6 years

7% < 1 year	26% 11-15 years
31% 1-5 years	11% 16-18 years
25% 6-10 years	0% >19 years



Race and Ethnicity:

<u>Race/Ethnicity</u>	<u>In out-of-home care</u>	<u>In state child population</u>
Black (<i>non-Hispanic</i>)	1%	2%
White (<i>non-Hispanic</i>)	9%	15%
Hispanic	2%	12%
Am. Indian/Alaska Native (<i>non-Hispanic</i>)	1%	0%
Asian/Pacific Islander (<i>non-Hispanic</i>)	46%	41%
Unknown	3%	N/A
2 or More Races (<i>non-Hispanic</i>)	38%	30%

Length of Stay: The average length of stay for children in care on September 30, 2003 was 18 months.

Reunified: 62% of the young people leaving the system in FY 2003 were reunified with their birth parents or primary caregivers.

Foster Homes: In 2002, there was a total of 1,806 licensed kinship and non-relative foster homes in Hawaii. On September 30, 2003, 41% of youth living in out-of-home care were residing with their relatives.

Adoption: Of children with state agency involvement adopted in FY 2003, 46% were adopted by their non-relative foster parents and 54% were adopted by relatives.

Neighbor Island News

Maui Kupa'a

Scott Seto, DHS Supervisor

In partnership with the Neighborhood Place of Wailuku, Maui Community College and the Department of Human Services, the Kamehameha Schools Extension Education Division sponsored Maui Kupa'a 2006. Maui parents, young people and service providers had the opportunity to build knowledge, experiences and relationships that foster healthy and resilient native Hawaiian families. The keynote speaker, Mervlyn Kitashima, gave an inspirational talk about resiliency. There were a number of breakout sessions designed to share best practices and proven effective strategies in promoting the health and well-being of the Hawaiian community.



Eighteen Maui community agencies provided information about their services. Participants included the Maui Police Department Domestic Violence and School-based Resource Units, Maui County Office of the Prosecuting Attorney, Heart Gallery Hawaii, Hawaii Behavioral Health, Child and Family Services, Kokua Ohana, Maui Economic Opportunity, Department of Health Early Interventions and WIC programs, PACT, Hale Kipa, Maui Youth and Family Services, Maui Family Support Services, Maui Friends of the Children's Justice Center, Maui Foster Parent Association, and the Community Clinic of Maui.

Registration fees for Maui foster parents and their families were covered by a grant from AdoptUsKids through the Friends of the Maui Children's Justice Center and the Hanai Coalition of Maui.

Governor Lingle Visits Youth Programs

Governor Linda Lingle paid a site visit to the National Guard Armory on Maui to learn about the Project About Face and Community All-stars Programs. These programs focus on life building skills for teenagers. Both programs, sponsored by the Department of Defense and the Department of Human Services offer teens the opportunity to "earn while they learn," as participants receive a stipend of \$15 for each 2 ½ hour class session attended. Topics include teen pregnancy prevention, substance abuse prevention, life, academic and employability skills, as well as leadership, critical thinking and interpersonal skills. Family strengthening sessions and personal

development workshops are also provided to parents of participating youth. Maui foster youth and foster parents who have participated have been very pleased with the positive results. Registration is now open for the summer session. The programs are available on Kauai, Maui, Oahu and the Big Island. For further information, contact :

Oahu and Kauai, call Lehua Kaauwai at 808-330-5928.

Big Island, call Tim Iida at 808-960-0545.

Maui, call Francis Driesbach at 808-757-0479.



Governor Lingle chats with About Face and Community All Stars students. (l-r) Lincoln Seto, Lex Dempsey, Governor Lingle, Leimana Kekoa, Haun Lopes and Napua Nascimento.

Foster Parents Learn How to Deal with Difficult Behaviors

In collaboration with the Maui Children's Justice Committee, Maui Friends of the Children's Justice Center, Adopt UsKids and the Hanai Coalition, 30 of Maui's foster parents participated in a training offered by Joanne C. May PhD., who is a published author and nationally acclaimed speaker. This training, held at the Maui Community College on April 20, 2006, afforded some of Maui's Foster Parents an opportunity to gain further insight on how to address difficult behaviors with emotionally challenged children. An all-you-can-eat dinner was served with food catered from Bentos and Banquets. Child-care was provided for 30 children whom foster families brought along with them to the training.



Walmart gift cards were also distributed to each foster family that attended. Many positive comments were received by foster parents who attended this training event. Special thanks goes out to Lisa Belongie of the Maui DHS office who coordinated this training.

Foster Parents Participate in Awareness Activities on the Big Island



Friends and families across West Hawaii on the Big Island came out in support of Prevent Child Abuse Month activities during April. On April 12th, a huge sign waving campaign literally brought the message to the streets in many communities.

Also, for National Foster Care Month, West Hawaii communities prominently displayed five hundred and fifty-five blue ribbons, each ribbon representing a child in foster care on the Big Island as of January, 2006. Ribbons were attached to Parks & Recreation fences in Kailua-

Kona and Captain Cook. In Waimea, this important message was fastened to the chain link fence between the courthouse and the hospital, and in Kohala the ribbons were tied by Kohala Elementary A+ students on the school fence.

In May, Hawaii Behavioral Health is offering three PRIDE Trainings on the Big Island; in Kealahou, Waimea and Hilo. For more information, please contact Lisa Yamada (Hilo) at 935-7949 or Lorraine Urbic (West Hawaii) at 885-0916.



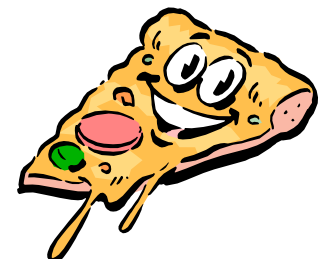
WAIMEA'S "555 kids-in-care on the Big Island" ribbon campaign (from left): Nyles Toguchi & Jennifer Chang and their son, Toshio - newly licensed foster parents, Renee Lipmann - PRIDE co-trainer, Lorraine Urbic - Foster Parent Recruiter/Trainer, Joan Luzney - clinical supervisor, Keala Peters-Case - youth volunteer, (seated) Diane Chadwick - chair, No. HI Drug-free Coalition. Photo taken by Patti Cook - Waimea Middle School.



Waimea police officers joined friends and families in support of Prevent Child Abuse Awareness sign waving.

Pizza Party on the Beach in Maui

Maui foster parents are invited to a free pizza party on Sunday, August 13th at 1:00 pm on the grass behind Pizza Paia. This event is open to all foster and adoptive families and legal guardians. Bring your family, drinks and desserts, beach chair, swim suit and towel. There will also be games and prizes for the kids. The flyer with more details can be found at www.hawaiifosterparent.org. To RSVP, call Jim and Alda St. James at 573-4972.



Be a Hero *(Continued from page 1)*

was broken and needed time to heal.

It was New Year's Eve 1997 when my parents took me to Niagara Falls to see the ball drop. It was their 2nd wedding anniversary, and they wanted to celebrate their marriage and ME as their SON! Finally I felt like a REAL kid and finally I had a forever family.

They stuck through everything with me and have helped me be the person I am today and will continue to help me be the adult I want to become. My parents also sought out help and advice from adoption professionals to help our family grow stronger and over come the rough times.

Please **DO NOT** believe children when they say they don't want to be adopted. They really DO! They are just afraid to be disappointed so they would rather not take the risk of getting their feelings hurt so they decide to ACT TOUGH instead. EVERY kid wants to have a place to call HOME! And every kid wants somebody to come home to!

Please do not look at the age of a child as a reason to NOT adopt them! Older children and teenagers need a forever family and want to be loved, too! I should know! I am 18 and could not imagine what my future would be if I could not come home from college for Thanksgiving or be a married adult and not have a family to visit for Christmas with the kids.

We are not just children until the age of 18 or 21. We will be your kid for the rest of our lives. I want to be 30 and be calling my dad to talk about sports and how he lost our

Superbowl bet! I want to be 40 and tell my mom that my teenager is driving me nuts....and then ask her "How did you ever do it, Mom? Thank you for sticking by my side!"

There are so many children waiting for a forever family and many of them are older, who will love you the rest of your life if you would just give them a chance.

There are also many siblings waiting to be adopted, who need and should stay together. I know first hand what it is like to not live with my younger brother. My heart aches for him everyday and I dream of what it would have been like to grow up in the same home with him and do things together. YES, that also means fighting with each other too.

Please don't say no to a child because they come with a brother or sister or two. Sure many of you will say "Wow, that's an instant family but you know what....it's also an instant wonderful family for the kids, too!

So I ask you tolook around... Open your hearts... and give one child, or two or three or more a chance. You can be the hero in their life, and they will be the hero in yours.

This speech was presented at the opening of a heart gallery in New York. Steven's mother is a parent leader of the group Supporting Our Families' Interest in Adoption in Amherst, New York.

Anyone interested in adopting older children from foster care may contact Deeanna Wallace at HOPE INC. 808-230-2445; Cell: 808-398-3089.

For information about Heart Gallery Hawaii, contact David at 422-9579 or e-mail: heartgalleryhawaii@hawaiiantel.net.



Placement Issues Discussed in Presentations and Legislative Session

The Child Welfare League of America recently made presentations across the state regarding kinship care. The training reiterated the importance of making case-by-case decisions about placement of children. As stated in their presentation, kinship placement should be considered as a possible placement options for children, but there must be a complete assessment of the family's willingness and ability to care for the child. There should not be an assumption that kin is always best and, as they showed in their presentation, there is no research to support such an approach. In addition, it is vital that there be good follow-up services and supports for the kinship care providers. HFPA will continue to advocate for upfront case-by-case assessment of families, unbiased decision-making, good follow-up support and holding the best interests of the child in the forefront of all placement discussions.

During the legislative session, we were especially concerned to see statements such as that made by DHS in legislative testimony (March 18, 2006), that "the best interests of the child...cannot be responsibly or reliably applied by the Department." In light of the fact that the federal government requires, as recently confirmed in an e-mail by Susan Orr, the Associate Commissioner for the DHHS Administration for Children, Youth and Families, that "States determine a child's permanency plan based on the child's needs and best interests of the child," it is certainly our hope that DHS applies the "best interests of the child" standard to its decision-making process.

Child Specific Foster Parent Training

(Continued from page 1)

continuously improve the quality of what appears to be an already excellent educational program.” She concluded her report by saying, “Hawaii is very fortunate to have an agency that is attentive to the content, quality and delivery of the educational materials for foster parents. You should commend your trainers for doing an excellent job.”



In a survey of 377 child specific foster parents who took the series of classes between March 2005 and Feb 2006, we found some interesting statistics, some of which run counter to national statistics on kinship care providers.

In our survey results, 53% of the attendees were part-Hawaiian. This is a disproportionately high number compared with the overall part-Hawaiian population in Hawaii, though the number is influenced in part by the fact that over half the classes were held in areas with a high percentage of part-Hawaiian families. In addition, statistics from the Department of Human Services indicate that over 50% of the children in foster care in Hawaii are part-Hawaiian. If the child specific foster parents are blood relatives, it follows

that there will be a similar percentage of part-Hawaiian child specific foster parents as in the foster child population. These survey results reflect and reinforce that conclusion. These results also show that this training program has successfully targeted the part-Hawaiian child specific population. Holding classes in the geographic vicinity where families live can be perceived as being culturally and ethnically sensitive to the population served.

Another interesting statistic was that female attendees outnumbered male attendees nearly two to one. Attendees are required to attend as couples when possible, and very few exceptions are made. This survey result suggests that more than one third of child specific foster parents who attended the training are single female caregivers.



Class attendee made a cake for the potluck, advertising the “no problem” parenting technique from the class.

We also learned that nearly 70% of those surveyed have an income of over \$30,000/year. These statistics suggest a higher income level of kinship care providers in Hawaii than seen in research of kinship families on the mainland. It is possible that demographic information about kinship families in Hawaii differs greatly from the research on kinship families on the mainland, who are often urban, African-American grandmothers. Hopefully, Hawaii will be able to conduct its own local research in order to gain a better understanding of our local foster care population and its needs.



Our contract with the state to provide the child specific foster parent training ends June 30. We are proud of the quality of training and support we have provided to child specific families for the past 5 years and we regret that this support opportunity for families may be ending.

Foster Parent Appreciation and Information Fair

Sponsored by the Oahu Foster Care Training Committee

Thanks to all the people and organizations who contributed to a fun-filled day at the Bishop Museum.



Special thanks to St. Michael's second grade class and the Kapiolani CARE Program for the "Suitcases for Kids" drive.



Girl Scout Junior Troop 389 kept busy at the bean bag toss game.



The Gee Yung International Lion Dance Association performed at the fair.



A message presented at the fair from Governor Linda Lingle and Lieutenant Governor James R. "Duke" Aiona, Jr. thanked foster parents for "your dedication to providing these children a place to call "home." You are truly an inspiration and role model to these keiki, and we know they will be forever grateful for your compassion and caring. You have shown them what it means to be a family. Mahalo for all that you do on behalf of our foster children."

Dear Editor,
 Recently I had the opportunity to present testimony in support of a bill in Hawaii, SB 2615 S.D. 2. This bill addressed the importance of stability to the well being of a child in foster care.

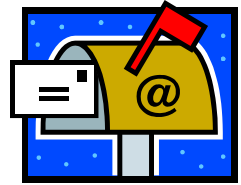
The National Foster Parent Association adopted a new mission statement last year, "To support foster parents in achieving safety, permanence and well-being for the children and youth in their care." This mission statement delineates the responsibility of foster parents to provide a safe and stable environment, with a focus on the well-being of youth, which includes the permanency plan. My mantra is, "What is in the best interest of this child/youth?" All decisions should be made with the best interest of the child in the forefront. In fact, the federal government says that "states determine a child's permanency plan based on the child's needs and best interests of the child."

All through pre-service training for foster families, we are given a great deal of information about attachment issues and the child's feelings of grief and loss, having been removed from the birth family home. The first consideration is, of course, to reunify the child with the birth parents whenever possible. But if reunification is not taking place and the child has lived with a foster family for an extensive period of time, with evidence of bonding and attachment, why would the department move the child to a home of someone who is related by blood, but unknown to the child? This is yet another trauma in a child's life, being moved once again. The grieving process begins all over again.

I implore you to adopt my mantra, and ask each step of the way, "Is this in the best interest of this child?" Together we can effect systems change, that is, getting everyone to adopt this point of view.

*Karen Jorgenson, Executive Director
 National Foster Parent Association*

Dear Sarah:
 We are grateful for the important work that the Hawaii Foster Parent Association has provided to foster care families in Hawaii. We are writing to provide some highlights about the contributions of HFPA, those who work so hard on behalf of our beneficiaries and Hawaii's children.



Observations from our partnership with HFPA show that those who have cared for Hawaii's foster children received excellent training opportunities at annual conferences and trainings from a curriculum made especially for relatives and grandparents caring for children as well as other sources of useful information. Additionally, the information and resources that are included in the quarterly HFPA Newsletter are very helpful to Children's Center workers and 'ohana care families statewide.

HFPA also has a very useful website. Again, there is information that is of value to workers as well as families including information on the laws, rules, and policies that impact relatives caring for children. We were pleased to note that HFPA is a partner in advocacy, posting information on the website about the Na Tutu 2005 bill that successfully passed into law, Act 208, *Caregiver's Consent for Minors Health Care*.

We have heard many good reports about the quality of the training HFPA provides to kinship caregivers. Given that the 2000 Census shows the greatest number of Hawaii's grandparents raising grandchildren live on the Waianae Coast, we applaud HFPA for sending trainers out to Waianae to provide workshops and supports.

We are grateful that HFPA has been a strong and consistent voice for the needs of children and families. Observations show the HFPA strives to achieve balance in all that they do and for the highest quality of services.

*Gail Hironaka for Claire Asam
 Queen Lili'uokalani Children's Center*

Leaving Action Messages

Here are some tips to keep in mind when leaving a message for a social worker, which may help in getting phone calls returned in a timely manner:

1. Clearly state your name and the child's name.
2. Clearly and briefly give the reason for your call. Giving a reason gives the worker the opportunity to take care of it before she even calls you back. Or she can ask someone else to follow up. Since the point of the call is to get action, it's not always necessary to speak directly to the social worker.
3. State at least two times when you can be reached by phone.
4. Give your telephone number slowly and clearly, even if you know the worker has your number in the file. Restate your name.



Here's how your message might sound: *"This is Freda Foster Mom and I am calling about Suzy Foster Child. I have not received her medical card and she has a doctor's appointment next Wednesday. Please call me back to let me know how I will get the card before Wednesday. I will be home today between 3:00 and 5:00 or tomorrow between 8:00 and 12:00. My telephone number is 123-4567. I look forward to hearing from you."*

Finally, it is sometimes easier to get in touch with the social worker by e-mail. DHS social workers addresses are the *first initial of the first name, the last name@dhs.hawaii.gov*. Put the reason for your e-mail in the subject line. Put the information in the body of the e-mail, including the date by which you need the information, if appropriate.

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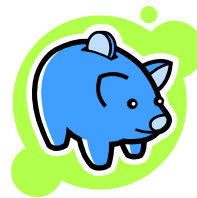
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Yes, I want to support quality foster care for Hawaii's children. Enclosed is my tax-deductible gift of:

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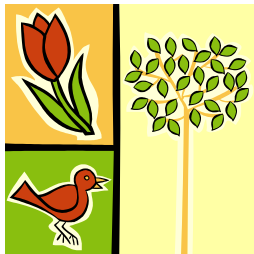
- Check enclosed Please charge my VISA or MasterCard

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- My company will match my gift—the necessary form is enclosed.
 Yes, please send me the next four quarterly newsletters, mailed directly from the HFPA office.

❖ **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.



HAWAII NATURE CENTER'S SENSATIONAL NATURE ADVENTURE PROGRAM

Hawaii Nature Center is offering 4 free day-long summer camps for foster children and their foster family siblings, 6 – 11 years old. The popular program will take place on July 3 and July 5, 6, & 7, from 9:00 am to 3:00 pm at the Nature Center in Makiki Valley. The certified environmental educators will lead the children in a variety of nature activities including hikes, insect hunts, stream explorations, nature crafts, games, and off-site field trips. You may sign your children up for any one of the 4 days.

Enrollment is open to all foster families but space is limited for this free opportunity. To reserve places for your children, call Elaine Chung at 832-5155.





**Hawaii
Foster Parent
Association**

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May is National Foster Care Month



Read more about foster care on the web at
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For up-to-date foster care information, news, and activities, visit www.hawaiifosterparent.org.