



NATURE,THE NURTURER

Jennie Peterson, Hawaii Nature Center



This summer, 24 foster children, including some foster family siblings, attended a two-day camp at the Hawaii Nature Center in Ma-kiki Valley. They went home tired,

hungry, muddy, and with a few mosquito bites, but they were happy campers. The program offered respite for foster parents and unique nature adventures for the children.

The program was carefully planned through the collaborative efforts of the Hawaii Nature Center, the Hawaii Foster Parent Association, and the Department of Human Services, with funding from the Okumura Family Foundation. There was a careful selection of the participants and volunteer helpers. Specialized training of the environmental educators was provided by Allana Coffee, Ph.D.

An outcomes evaluation was conducted by Caroline Eller-mann, PhD., to determine the effectiveness of the program.

The children loved the indoor crafts and the outdoor bug catching, fishing exploring, and fruit picking. They learned a lot about the environment and caring for living things. They made new friends, all of whom were involved in foster care in some way. Parents found that the program helped support the relationship between the foster child and the birth child in the home. Foster parents appreciated the opportunity for some respite, often ranked



#1 in terms of support needs.

Our thanks to the Okumura Family Foundation for supporting this activity and to our collaborators for assuring its success. We look forward to the possibility of making this an annual event.

“Family Finding” focuses on Intensive Relative Search

Family Court and DHS are sponsoring a series of workshops with Kevin Campbell, formerly of EMQ Children & Family Services, a nonprofit agency dedicated to transforming the lives of children with serious emotional difficulties.

In Campbell’s first “family finding” project at Catholic Community Services in Washington state, he and other staff focused on finding permanent families for foster youth with serious behavioral issues and numerous failed placements. These youth were in danger of being discharged to themselves upon aging out of the system, with no connection to family or other committed adults. The agency looked for family members and/or unrelated adults to whom the youth felt connected. They conducted an intensive search by researching paper files, talking to the youth themselves, and taking advantage of new internet database search engines.

According to the reports, this intense research yielded very positive results in finding families with whom to place the youth. It is indeed a promising venture to find a committed adult who will make an unconditional commitment to a youth who is in danger of aging out of the system with no permanent



(Continued on page 4)

New Services Complement Those Provided by HFPA

The Hawaii Foster Parent Association has provided support and training services to foster families since 1971. Over the years, these services have included a warm line, with a toll-free number for neighbor island folks; workshops and support groups offered on all parts of Oahu and the neighbor islands (except Lanai); mentor services; and a newsletter with information, resources, and articles, developed in collaboration with DHS and other agencies.



In fact, the HFPA programs have been greatly enhanced and supported by the collaborations that have developed over the years with a number of local and national agencies and organizations serving the needs of foster families.



With the new Internet age, HFPA went live a couple of years ago with a constantly updated website at www.hawaiifosterparent.org, providing the most

comprehensive local listing of trainings, special events, resources, and articles for the foster care community. And, of course, the conference, supported and attended by foster parents, social workers, and other professionals from all aspects of the foster care community, enjoys a stellar reputation.



We are pleased to learn that the Department of Human Services, recognizing the value of services such as HFPA has been providing for years, has recently dedicated substantial funding to expanding these types of services. Research has shown that support services to foster families can greatly enhance the quality of care the families provide to children and improve the retention rate of foster parents.



The Hawaii Foster Parent Association will continue to provide the support services it is

known for and has been honored for by the legislature and others, and welcomes aboard the other agencies that will assist us in our commitment to providing support services to foster and adoptive families, relative caregivers, and legal guardians.

As always, you can call us at 263-0920, or toll-free at 1-877-775-4400, for personal assistance. You can contact us via e-mail at info@hawaiifosterparent.org. Also, check out the website at www.hawaiifosterparent.org for a current listing of trainings, special events, and articles and resources of interest to the foster and adoptive community.



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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Sarah T. Casken, *Editor*

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.

DHS Procedures Outline Services to Foster Parents

The Department of Human Services is guided in part by a procedures manual developed in 1998 and updated on a periodic basis. Some sections of the manual are of direct interest to foster parents. One such section is printed below, taken directly from Part III, Section 4.10.3 of the DHS Procedures Manual.

Part III, Section 4.10.3, p. 4-81—Services to Family/Relative Foster Parents

It is essential that complete information is provided to foster parents, whether family or non-family, for each child placed in their home, to ensure that the optimal placement for each child is realized.

As the substitute caregiver, the foster parent shall be provided the following for each child placed in the home:

- A. Information regarding the abuse/neglect the child suffered and any special needs of the child that is known to the caseworker at the time of placement.
- B. Information as to the medical coverage and the means to access medical care for each child within 24 hours of placement.
- C. A copy of all medical information regarding the child, in the possession of the department, must be provided to the foster home within 30 days of placement to assure the child is provided adequate medical care.
- D. Foster board payments, (\$529 per child) initiated within 7 days of placement. (Not to be paid to non-custodial parents)
- E. Knowledge of difficulty of care (Special service) cost.
- F. The determination of whether a child is eligible for difficulty of care payments should be a joint decision. The CWS social worker should first discuss any noted behaviors or concerns with the foster parent and determine if the child meets the eligibility criteria. If the child is eligible, the worksheet and directions as to how to complete the worksheet should be explained to the foster parent. (Refer to Part V, Section 4 Foster Care Related and Difficulty of Care Payments.)
- G. The CWS social worker must provide the foster parent a copy of the family's service plan.
- H. The foster parent should be provided ongoing assistance, support and information through face-to-face visits and frequent phone contact with the CWS social worker as well as access to the other essential CWS staff and the CWS unit supervisor. Contacts with foster parents should occur on a monthly basis and the frequency of face-to-face contacts will be dependent upon the needs of the child and the foster parent.
- I. Foster parents are to be noticed of all review hearings. The CWS social worker is to send a letter to the foster parents indicating the date and time of the court hearing. Attached to the letter is a copy of the family service plan, which also outlines the responsibilities of the caregivers. Foster parents (both relative and non-relative) have the right to attend the court hearings and voice any concerns directly to the court.



Neighbor Island News

Kauai Honors Foster Parents at Luncheon

The Kauai Foster Care Training Committee hosted the Kauai Foster Family Recognition Luncheon at the Hanama'ulu Café for over 75 foster parents, who received certificates and gifts of appreciation. Entertainment was provided by Augie T, who commented, "I know what you folks are going through. I was a foster parent for three years and, eventually, the foster child I had become my own."

"Our community will continue to profit from the valuable contribution made by our foster parents long after we're gone," said Mary Lou Barela, executive director of Hale 'Opio Kaua'i. "Once you touch a child's heart, you leave a lasting imprint that no one can erase."

The Kaua'i Foster Care Training Committee is a collaborative effort of Hale 'Opio Kaua'i, Dept. of Human Services, Dept. of Health, Dept. of Education, Queen Liliuokalani Children's Center, the Children's Justice Center, Hawaii Behavioral Health, Child and Family Service, and the Hawaii Foster Parent

Association. For more information on becoming involved in foster care, contact the DHS office at 274-3303, www.haleopio.org, or www.hawaiifosterparent.org, and click on *Resources, Foster Care Agencies*.



Augie T. entertains the foster parents at the Kauai Appreciation Luncheon.

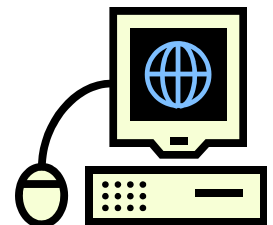
("Family Finding" continued from page 1)



connections to anyone. Pat O'Brien of "You Gotta Believe!", featured at a recent HFPA conference, states, "Teenagers need first and foremost at least one adult who will unconditionally commit to and claim the teen as their own. This country has thousands of young adults between the ages of 18 and 21 being discharged to no one but themselves." O'Brien goes on to say, "We have to stop accepting that teenagers are not worthy of permanency. We have to continue to recruit only unconditionally committed permanent families for every teen in our care who risk being discharged to no one." HFPA joins O'Brien and Campbell in the shared belief that children must grow up in families, not institutions or multiple placements in long-term foster care.

In addition to using the intensive relative search strategies for teenagers in group homes, agencies have begun to explore its potential for identifying family members when a child first enters the system, right at the beginning of the case. Relatives who are found still need to be thoroughly investigated. Agencies have learned that not every relative found is fit to care for a child nor does every relative want to take on the responsibility. And when relatives are found who can care for or connect in some other way with the child, it is important that resources be available to support the relatives' commitments to the child or youth.

One of the search strategies utilized by Campbell is to access on-line databases. According to reports, Campbell worked with officials of USSearch.com to develop a special Web portal for child welfare agencies (www.ussearch.com/familyfinders/.com). From this site, social workers can enter a youth's information and receive back information in a short turn-around time to aid in the search for relatives. Campbell will be demonstrating the use of this technology during the meetings in Hawaii.



Maui Foster and Adoptive Families Take Time to Play

Scott Seto, DHS

More than 150 people attended the second annual "Treasured Keiki Day" at the Ma'alaea Sports and Adventure Park. The foster and adoptive families enjoyed a day of bumper boat riding, rock climbing, trampoline jumping and miniature golf. The Heart Gallery and the Maui Foster Parent Association set up informational tables. Disposable cameras were donated to the families through an AdoptUsKids grant, which funded the event co-sponsored by DHS, the Hanai Coalition of Maui, and Friends of the Children's Justice Center of Maui. Thanks to the many individuals who volunteered their time to assist with this special event.



Keiki Kokua Event Held on Maui

James St. James

On August 13, 2006, Keiki Kokua held its 2nd Annual Maui Foster Parent Association get together. Sixteen foster and adoptive families gathered at Baldwin Beach Park. The keiki played games, won prizes, and then joined the parents for free pizza while enjoying a magic show by Neil Bruce. Door prizes that were donated by generous Maui businesses



were given out at the end of the afternoon. Everyone got a chance to meet each other, talk story, and just plain have fun. Mahalo to all the parents who took the time to come, and to all the volunteers who helped make the day a huge success.

“Biology is not everything. If it were, you wouldn’t have this thing we call adoption,” said **Wade Horn**, assistant secretary for children and families at the **U.S. Department of Health and Human Services**. “If you get up every day and you are there for that child; if you’re the one who makes them breakfast and gets them to school and tucks them in at night, you are that child’s parent.” (*Honolulu Advertiser, September 17, 2006*)

Legislation Impacts Foster Families



The 2006 legislative session ended with the passage of several bills and resolutions that affect foster families. Thank you to all who took the time to follow the bills and submit testimony. Following is a list of the bills and resolutions that may affect

foster families, along with the description provided by the legislature.

SB2328 SD2 HD2 CD1 Act 192 A Bill for an Act Relating to Notice to Foster Parents for Chapter 587, Hawaii Revised Statutes, Child Protective Act Hearings



This law authorizes a child’s current foster parents to attend and participate as parties in all Child Protective Act proceedings subsequent to a disposition hearing.



SB2162 SD2 HD1 CD1 Act 289 A Bill for an Act Relating to Foster Children

Requires the Department of Human Services to provide written consent for foster children to apply for a driver's license. Requires a foster child's parents to

pay for the child's car insurance and establishes provisions for payment if the child's parents are unable to pay. Allows higher education board allowances to be paid directly to former foster children. (Refer to page 7 in this newsletter for additional information about this law.)

SB 247 SD 1 HD 1 CD 1 Act 175 Child Passenger Safety Seats; Mandatory Use

Requires child safety seat or booster seat usage for children over four years but less than eight years old; defines "restrained". (See article on page 7 for more information).



House Resolution 26

This resolution requests the Department of Human Services to convene a working group to determine the feasibility of implementing procedures for placing a

child in temporary foster custody with kin or non-kin foster parents. Members of this working group are to include, but not be limited to, OHA, HFPA, HFYC, HYSN, native Hawaiian groups, guardians ad litem, social workers, foster parents, and foster children. DHS is requested to submit a report to the Legislature no later than 20 days prior to the convening of the Regular Session of 2007.

In addition to these state laws, there has been a change in the federal law that affects foster parents. The legislation is:

The Safe and Timely Interstate Placement of Foster Children Act of 2006 (Public Law (P.L.) 109-239).

The law amends Title IV-B and IV-E, encourages States to improve protections for children and holds them accountable for the safe

and timely placement of children across State lines. State courts must ensure that foster parents, pre-adoptive parents, and relative caregivers are notified of any proceedings held with respect to a child in foster care and are provided the “right” to be heard in “any proceeding.” The law also requires a State to supply a copy of the child’s health and education record to the foster parent at the time of placement and to provide it at no cost to the child at the time the child is emancipated from foster care. There are several other amendments in this law. More information about this law and the information memorandum can be found at www.hawaiifosterparent.org, Article, Legal and Court Information.



New Law Requires Older Children to be in Car Seats or Booster Seats

Are you caring for a child 4 years of age but under 8 years of age? If so, you need to know about a new law that takes effect January 1, 2007 (Act 175) that requires children in this age range to be in safety or booster seats in the car.

The changes in the law are as follows:

For children under 4 years of age: The person operating the motor vehicle shall ensure that the child is properly restrained in a child passenger restraint system that meets Federal motor vehicle safety standards.

For children 4 years of age but under 8 years of age: The person operating the motor vehicle shall ensure that the child is properly restrained in a child safety seat or booster seat that meets Federal motor vehicle safety standards.

Exemption for children 4 years of age but under 8 years of age: The child may be restrained by a seat belt assembly instead of a child safety seat or booster seat if the child is (a) over 4 feet 9 inches in height, or (b) over 40 lbs. in weight and traveling in a motor vehicle equipped only with lap belts, without shoulder straps, in the back seat.

If you have any questions, call your agency social worker.

Foster Youth Can Apply for Driver's License under New Law

This year the Hawaii State Legislature passed a measure that allows the Department of Human Services (DHS) to sign the driver's license application for any child in foster care qualified to apply for a driver's license. We commend the DHS for their support of this bill that will give foster youth the opportunity to obtain a driver's permit and license, regardless of the fact that they are in foster care. There are a number of aspects of the new law that may affect foster parents.

If the foster child owns a car, the law requires that the birth parents of the child pay the costs of the child's motor vehicle insurance. The law also establishes provisions for payment if the birth parents are unable to pay.

The law gives the Department immunity in the event that the foster child is involved in a motor vehicle accident, or a lawsuit arising as a result of the foster child's driving. *This immunity does not extend to the foster parent.* There are several points that foster parents need to address before allowing their foster child to drive either their own vehicle if they own one, or the foster parent's vehicle.

In the State of Hawaii, insurance follows the vehicle: it is the registered owner of the vehicle who is legally required to carry the insurance and is held liable for damages. If you plan to allow your eligible foster child to drive your car, one step you should take is to call your insurance company and add the new driver onto your policy as a member of the household.

If the vehicle is owned by the foster child (or by the foster child's birth parents), liability may *still* fall to the foster parents since they are responsible for the supervision of the foster child. In the case where the State pays the premium, it is important to realize that the State will only pay for basic limits of liability (\$20,000 limits), not generally considered a sufficient amount of insurance. Therefore, the foster parents may want to contribute to the child's car insurance premium in order to increase the limits of liability. More insurance provides better protection for all parties involved.

Though this legislation does not *require* that foster parents allow foster children to drive the foster parents' vehicles, it does, for the first time, make it possible for foster parents to support foster children in obtaining a driver's license and learning to handle the responsibility of driving a car. Be sure to consult your insurance agent regarding appropriate coverage before your foster child starts driving.

If you have comments or would like to be part of a task force regarding the implementation of this law, call HFPA at 263-0920, e-mail us at www.hawaiifosterparent.org or e-mail Lee Dean at the Department of Human Services at Ldean@dhs.hawaii.gov.

Outside Evaluator Commends the HFPA Child Specific Training Program

Excerpted from evaluation report by
Caroline R. Ellermann, PhD, RN

The Hawaii Foster Parent Association Child Specific Class outcome evaluations have been followed for about a year and a half now. It is clear the organization has carefully attended to recommendations resulting from data analysis over that period because ongoing testing demonstrates continuous improved outcomes. I believe your organization continues to be very strong in the ability to provide this educational and supportive program for the Hawaii foster parents.

Here are some specific facts that support the assertion that the Child Specific Classes have remained the highest of quality. The pre- and post-tests have continuously demonstrated a significant increase in knowledge. The combined test difference for the two classes currently under analysis (29 participants) was significant at the $p = .000$ level. For those unfamiliar with statistical measures, the .000 level of significance is highly desirable and can be interpreted to mean that the participants really learned about their roles, responsibilities and rights as parents through the course. Testing knowledge is an excellent means of measuring your accomplishments.

Participants responded to open ended questions that asked them to identify materials that were of the greatest value to them. When comparing their responses to the manual list of course content it was interesting to note that *all course content areas* were identified as valuable by numerous participants. They also indicated that the course would make a difference in their ability to parent foster children. Responses included comments such as *"I needed to learn this, I got much more than I expected!"* Participants' perception that they will be able to apply many of the principles and the knowledge gained is a highly valued outcome.

Participants were asked what additional course content they would like. Several topics were identified:

- ◆ more information on working specifically with teens
- ◆ how to help foster parent's birth children adjust to foster children
- ◆ more detail about the laws governing foster care
- ◆ additional strategies for building children's self-esteem and creating attachment
- ◆ more strategies on how to work with the system, particularly with social workers
- ◆ greater depth in most of the subjects covered
- ◆ more support on how to integrate these positive approaches into own parenting style.



HFPA may want to consider developing specialty parent classes on the identified topics.

All data for the outcome evaluations provide evidence that strongly indicates that the planned style, organization, and delivery of course materials was robust. Your course reviews are so affirming and strong that I would encourage you to consider offering additional specialty courses in the areas suggested by the participants, and that you consider offering the program to other states. Perhaps some of the identified topics that participants wanted additional information in could be presented at the annual HFPA Conference.

Thank you for this opportunity to evaluate the Child Specific Classes.

(Ed. note: As of July 1, 2006, HFPA is no longer providing the training for the Child Specific classes, due to a change in contracts with DHS. For information about current classes, please call Sharon Simms at Catholic Charities at 535-0124.)

Rouge et Blanc Wine Tasting at Du Vin Provides Support to the Hawaii Foster Parent Association

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HFPA EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RECEIVES HAWAII'S 2006 OUTSTANDING ADVOCATE FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH AWARD

Sarah Casken, the HFPA executive director, was recently honored with the **2006 Outstanding Advocate for Children and Youth Award**. This award was established by the Hawaii State Legislature to recognize the superb commitment and efforts by individuals and organizations who protect and promote Hawaii's greatest asset, its children.

The award reads, in part, "Sarah Casken is recognized as Hawaii's Outstanding Advocate for Children and Youth for her outstanding commitment, devotion and dedication to youth and strong support of legislation which protects and improves the well-being of children and youth in Hawaii. The Senate of the Twenty-Third Legislature of the State of Hawaii hereby congratulates and commends Sarah Casken for her steadfast commitment to making children a top priority and extends to her its warmest aloha and best wishes for continued success in all future endeavors."



Long-time Hawaii legislator, Dennis Arakaki, presents Sarah Casken with the 2006 Outstanding Advocate for Children and Youth Award.



CATHOLIC CHARITIES HAWAII
 ...helping people in need to help themselves,
 regardless of their faith.

Foster Families Needed

If you would be interested in providing therapeutic foster care for Hawaii's youth between 5 and 17 years old, please call for more information:

NĀ 'OHANA PŪLAMA PROGRAM

O'ahu – call Marilyn Cocchia, 808-535-0101
 Hilo – call Kalani Spain, 808-961-7015
 Kona – call Amy Davis, 808-331-8989

Food Pantry Information

If you find yourself in a short term situation where you need food support, one option is to call 211 and ask for food pantry information. They will ask you for your zip code and then give you contact information for the pantries closest to you. Each pantry has its own requirements and hours of operation.

Or, you can find the pantries yourself by logging onto www.auw211.org. Enter your zip code under Step 1. Then click on "Search by Category" under Step 3. Next, click on Clothing/Food/PersonalGoods/Services. Then, click on Emergency Food, then Food Pantries.

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❖ **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.



Suitcases for Kids



The Kapiolani CARE Program would like to invite you to help collect suitcases for Hawaii's foster children. There are over 5,000 children in Hawaii's foster care program over the course of a year. Most of these children leave home with their possessions in a trash bag because they have no other way to bring their belongings with them when they are placed into foster care. "This program has been in effect for several months now and hundreds of suitcases have been given permanently to children entering foster care. This is truly a wonderful program," says Elaine Chung of the Department of Human Services. "The Suitcases for Kids committee, a public-private partnership, has a goal of providing every child in foster care with a personal piece of luggage to keep their special treasures in."

Hawaii's Suitcases for Kids campaign would like to enlist a variety of community groups to facilitate a collection of new or gently used suitcases, duffel bags, backpacks and any other bag in which children can put their personal belongings including clothing when they are placed into foster care.

For more information, contact Allyson Cordoni, Kapiolani CARE Program at aallyson@aol.com or 808-386-6172(cell).



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*It's About Time...
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Where: Pacific Beach Hotel
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Fee: One Day: \$85
Both Days: \$130

An exciting lineup of speakers will address topics of interest to foster and adoptive parents, social workers, service providers, educators, court personnel, health providers, and others.

Judge Patricia Macias joins us from El Paso, Texas to share information about innovative courtroom practices that promote favorable outcomes for children and families. Denise Goodman returns with her down-home teaching style on topics such as behavior management and effective recruitment strategies.

A youth conference is scheduled for Saturday, April 28th.

Limited scholarships available to foster parents, foster youth, adoptive parents and legal guardians. Watch the newsletter for details. Also, visit www.hawaii Foster Parent Association.org for updates.

Did you know that over 60 events have been posted on the HFPA website since July 1? Don't miss out on trainings, social activities and support groups. Check out www.hawaii Foster Parent Association.org today!

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