



GOVERNOR SIGNS LAW TO INCREASE ACCESS TO HIGHER EDUCATION BOARD PAYMENTS

During the 2008 Hawaii Legislative session, Hawaii Foster Parent Association (HFPA) joined forces with the Department of Human Services (DHS), the Hawaii Foster Youth Coalition (HFYC) and other child welfare agencies in a successful bid for legislation that greatly enhances the DHS Higher Education Board Allowance program which is designed to help former foster youth meet living expenses while attending an accredited academic or vocational institution of higher learning. In June, Governor Lingle signed **Act 198, Higher Education Board Allowance Payments for Foster Children**, at the annual graduates luncheon celebrating foster youth who successfully completed high school. Former foster youth are now eligible for the \$529 monthly benefit if they:

- Are between the ages of 18 and 26,
- Submit their application for board allowance before their 22nd birthday (**former foster youth who are now between 22 and 26 years of age may be eligible but must apply before June 30, 2009**),
- Are attending or accepted to attend accredited institution of higher learning,
- Are a full-time or part-time student,
- Reached age 18 when either under the placement responsibility of DHS or was under placement responsibility of DHS when custody granted to another caretaker. *This change means foster youth may be adopted and still be eligible for the higher ed payment.*

In addition, the amount of time a youth can participate in this program has changed from 48 to 60 months. Youth interested in this support should contact their social worker to begin the application process.

HFPA congratulates the HFYC & DHS for leading this campaign & sends a “**Mahalo**” to all who worked on this bill. But our work is not done! Please inform foster & former foster youth about this enhanced resource! Youth Circles (see below) are a good way to help youth learn of available resources & plan for a successful future. Another useful tool for you and your youth is the new HFPA Youth Resource brochure (see page 5).



Governor Lingle signs HB1356 into law while Cynthia White and Blake Lanoza of HFYC look on.



Youth Circles

by Wilma Friesema

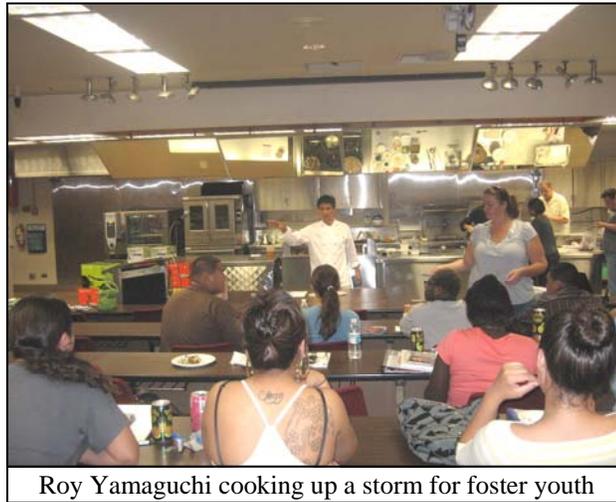
For teens, becoming an adult is exciting but also laced with pressure. Who am I? What career do I want? How am I going to make it on my own when I turn eighteen?

These questions put even more pressure on foster teen youth. Without a strong safety net, staying on track is like walking on a tightrope, and missteps can quickly become disasters. If foster youth age out of the system without a safety net and plan for their future, drug use, unemployment, and unstable housing can easily become their reality.

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CHEF ROY YAMAGUCHI INSPIRES HAWAI`I'S FOSTER YOUTH TO FOLLOW THEIR DREAMS

A big mahalo goes out to famed chef **Roy Yamaguchi** of Roy's Restaurants. September 13th, at T.H.E. Collaboration's* foster youth training, Roy managed to demonstrate how to cook two delicious dishes, give everyone samples, all the while telling his story and encouraging his young audience to follow their dreams, work hard and never give up. The youth gave Roy a standing ovation and Roy, in turn, invited the youth to a special dinner at his

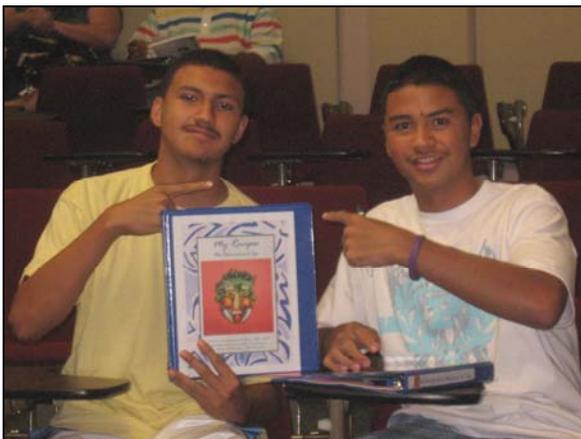


Roy Yamaguchi cooking up a storm for foster youth

restaurant so they will be able to see for themselves what a person can do when they have a dream and are willing to work hard to actualize it. This exciting invitation made those who attended this training feel like they were in a dream!

Kapiolani Community College generously provided their demonstration kitchen for this day of fun & good food to help Hawai'i's transitioning foster youth learn their way around a kitchen, recipes and about resources available to them. Each youth received a cookbook plus a binder of recipes created especially for them by HFPA. In addition, every youth went home with at least one door prize. Many won a complete cookware set provided by Heart Gallery Hawai'i.

The next foster youth training has a corresponding training for foster parents. Please join us on October 18th from 10 am to 1 pm at Leeward Community College ~ more details on page 6.



Who will be first to try a recipe from their binder?



Going home happy with a cooking set from Heart Gallery Hawai'i

The Hawaii Foster Parent Association offers resources and information to those in the community concerned with protecting the interests of children and youth in out-of-home care, while providing responsible advocacy.

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Judith Wilhoite, Editor

The comments of individual are not necessarily those of HFPA.

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

Web Site Address:
www.hawaiifosterparent.org

*T.H.E. (Transition Housing Education) Collaboration was formed in 2003 to provide training, resources, and support foster youth transitioning out of care. Members include representatives from Catholic Charities Hawai'i, EPIC 'Ohana Conferencing, Family Programs Hawai'i, Hawai'i Foster Parent Association, Hawai'i Foster Youth Coalition and Heart Gallery Hawai'i.

Hawai`i Foster Care Laws Effective July 1, 2008

Following are highlights from two new state laws that impact foster families in Hawai`i.

Act 183 Guiding Principles for the Care of Foster Children - Lists eight guiding principles for the care of foster children. Highlights of this new law are:

- Foster children shall have adequate medical, dental (including orthodontic) and mental health services,
- Visits/contacts with siblings and parents, unless prohibited by the court,
- Child has the right to participate in appropriate extracurricular activities,
- If moved during the school year, the child has the right to finish the school year at the same school, if practicable,
- Life skills training and a transition plan starting at age twelve to ensure an adequate transition into adulthood for children aging-out of the foster care system,
- Family court may issue any necessary orders to DHS, DOE, and DOH to ensure that the guiding principles are adhered to.

Act 199 Relative Placement Preference - This law defines “hanai relative” as an adult other than a blood relative who has performed a substantial role in the upbringing or material support of a child, confirmed by child or another person credible to the court or DHS. It establishes:

- Preference for relative placement, if the relative placement is deemed appropriate by DHS, as State policy and law,
- Requires DHS to give relative requesting placement a foster parent application within fifteen days of relative’s inquiry,
- Requires DHS to make reasonable efforts to identify all relatives within six months of assuming custody of the child,
- If the application is denied, DHS must give the reasons for the denial, and inform the relative of the administrative appeal process. The denial is subject to an administrative appeal.



Supporters watch as Governor Lingle signs Act 199 into law at the annual graduates luncheon for foster youth at historic Washington Place.

President Signs Historic Child Welfare Bill

We are happy to share some good news from Washington D.C. with you! On October 7, 2008 President Bush signed the **Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008 (HR 6893)** into law. You can view a summary and/or the entire text on our website at www.hawaiifosterparent.org. This law will (among other things):

- Reauthorize and update the adoption incentives program,
- Provide for Title IV-E funding of kinship guardianship placements,
- Create a grant program to support kinship caregivers,
- Require reasonable efforts to keep siblings together,
- Require agencies to inform prospective adopters about the tax credit,
- Gradually de-link Title IV-E adoption assistance from income requirements so that all children with special needs eventually have access to this federal support,
- Allow states to receive federal reimbursement for support provided to foster youth up to age 21.



We will keep you posted on how this law will impact Hawai`i’s keiki.

It Doesn't Have To Be Something Big

Excerpted from *The Simple Truths of Appreciation* by Barbara Glanz

My friend, Bob Danzig, has an amazing story. Simple words of appreciation and encouragement changed his life. Bob was in five foster homes during his youth, and said he spent his childhood trying to find someone to love and appreciate him.

When he was nine years old, he had a new social worker. He said after she had done all the paperwork to move him to yet another foster home, she sat him down, looked him directly in the eyes, and said, "Bobby, I want you to always remember these words:

"YOU ARE WORTHWHILE!"

Bob says that no one had ever said anything like that to him, and each time they met, she repeated those words. They became an affirmation of appreciation that he heard over and over again in his head.

Bob graduated at sixteen, not because he was smart, he says, but because he got mixed up in the system! He soon took a job at the Albany New York Times as a copy boy, and his very first boss was a woman named Margaret.

After he had worked there about six months, Margaret called him into her office one day and asked him to sit down. He thought for sure he was going to be fired! She looked him right in the eyes and said to him, "I have been the office manager for 15 years – I have been observing you – and I believe YOU ARE FULL OF PROMISE."

Those words, on that day, gave him permission to aspire.

Those two positive messages of appreciation played over and over again in his head and ultimately gave him the courage to be the very best he could be. Sixteen years later he became the Publisher of the Albany New York Times, and seven years after that, he became CEO of Hearst Newspapers, one of the largest newspaper companies in the world-and he credits it all to those simple words of appreciation and love.

What a wonderful example of how little gifts of appreciation can make such a difference in a life!

Visit www.barbaraglanz.com to read more stories gathered by Barbara Glanz.



Self-Concept Builders and Stealers	
<u>Builders</u>	<u>Stealers</u>
Focus on their children's strengths.	Focus on their weaknesses.
Expect their children to work for most of the things they want.	Give their children everything.
Set loving limits and expect their children to behave.	Are afraid to set limits.
Make discipline look easy.	Show frustration and make it look hard.
Show their children that arguing and manipulation doesn't work.	Get sucked into arguments and power struggles.
Guide their children to own and solve the problems the children create.	Rescue or punish.
Avoid lectures and repeated warnings.	Use lectures and repeated warnings often.
Love their kids for who they are.	Love their kids for what they do.

Continued from Page 1

EPIC `Ohana Conferencing offers a unique program that helps foster youth navigate the transition to adulthood. E Makua Ana Youth Circles is a youth driven process that empowers youth to clarify their goals and identify supportive people and resources. The "Circles," as they're called, are meetings that bring concerned people together to help a youth plan for his or her future.

The youth help to create the Circle from the very beginning. They chose who will attend, what food will be served, how they want the meeting to start, and how it will end. While there is a format that the EPIC facilitator follows, it is the youth who chooses a plan of action. The group is there to brainstorm, identify available resources, and lend a helping hand when they can. The manager of the program, Randy Shiraishi, describes it as a positive process that encourages youth to dream about possibilities. "No dream is too far fetched," he says. "We just help the youth understand what it will take to make that dream a reality and the help they can have along the way." Here's the story of a former foster youth, Adrian, and his experience with Youth Circles.

Adrian was in and out of Hawaii's foster care system since the age of thirteen. A chronic runaway, he would do what most youth do on the streets: shoplift, smoke pot, and drink. His first Youth Circle was held when he was seventeen, and, he admits, he attended because he heard there was free food. Along with the free food, the Youth Circle provided an array of information about scholarships, housing options, and other supportive services, but, unfortunately, Adrian didn't digest the information as well as the pizza. After he aged out of the foster care system he ended up in jail for robbery. Once out of jail, he turned to harder drugs until he landed in a drug rehab program.

It was after exiting drug rehab that Adrian had his second Youth Circle. This time he was clear headed and ready. He *wanted* the information and appreciated the structure Youth Circles offered. EPIC staff wrote down his plans and goals on paper, which helped Adrian focus on what he really wanted. His support team -- made up of EPIC staff, other service providers, and friends -- clarified specific times, dates, and actions to take to meet crucial deadlines. The team committed their energy and assistance to help Adrian meet his goals.

Adrian is 20 now, and is the Vice President of the Hawaii Foster Youth Coalition. He has had five Youth Circles. When he runs into a hurdle he can't get over he calls EPIC staff and requests another Circle. For him, it's like having a coach who helps navigate a difficult playing field that has constantly changing conditions. While Adrian's choices and actions are his responsibility, he no longer feels alone or that he has to figure everything out on his own.

Adrian is an example of the resiliency so many of our foster youth possess & Youth Circles is a tool that encourages that resiliency. It's available to all foster youth ages 16 through 24, for however many times they may need it. Transitioning into adulthood is rarely easy, but with enough support foster youth can make it and thrive.

Wilma Friesema is an EPIC `Ohana Engagement Specialist. Youth Circles are funded by Hawai'i's Department of Human Services and the Victoria S. and Bradley L. Geist Foundation. For more information about EPIC, Inc. and Youth Circles, please visit our website: www.EpicOhana.org or call Randy Shiraishi at 808-358-2222.

Free Tool to Help Foster Youth & Former Foster Youth Create a Successful Future

We hope you find our new brochure, *Resources Available for Foster Youth & Former Foster Youth*, helpful during "planning for your future" conversations with the foster and former foster youth in your life. Download your FREE copy from our website, www.hawaiifosterparent.org, or request FREE hardcopies by contacting us at info@hawaiifosterparent.org or 808-522-1016. Recent feedback about the brochure:

Thank you so much. Your brochure is a welcome sight, particularly given our concern about our children that "age-out" of the system. I will share this with all of our VGALs, Attorney GAL's as well as Family Court Probation Officers.

M. Kaohi, VGAL Manager

Thank you for sending out the brochures . . . rec'd them today. We will be including those in the ILP (independent living program) packet we are creating for our "aging out" teens.

L. Belongie, social worker



UPCOMING TRAININGS

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 18 ~ TRAINING FOR RESOURCE PARENTS*
Helping Teens Make Good Decisions for the Future & Supporting Them to Have a Successful Transition

Speaker: Jennifer O'Donnell
Time: 10:00 am—1:00 pm
Location: Leeward Community College
RSVP: Call Jennifer at 521-9531 x 297 by Oct. 16th.

Lunch and Childcare (ages 3—12) provided. (Children must be registered for childcare.)

Training sponsored by the Foster Care Training Committee (FCTC).

*Resource parents include foster, adopt, guardian and kinship family parents.

**Attention
Foster Youth**

You are welcome to attend the Foster Youth Training being held at the same time and place as this training. See information below.

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 18 ~ TRAINING FOR FOSTER YOUTH AGES 13- 18
Better Start I ~ Prepare For Your Future

This promises to be a fun and exciting training for foster youth!

Date: Saturday, October 18
Time: 10:00 am—1:00 pm
Location: Leeward Community College
RSVP: Call Jennifer at 521-9531 x 297 by Oct. 16th. **Lunch provided.**



Featuring EPIC, Inc. Youth Circle Information, Career Connections, and GEAR UP College 101. Aging out resources will be provided.

**Attention
Resource Parents**

You are welcome to attend the Resource Parent Training being held at the same time and place as this training. Information above.

Maui's 10th Annual Foster Parent Appreciation Lunch

This luncheon is a mahalo for the special services Maui foster, adoptive, and legal guardianship homes kokua to the community. On the agenda for the day is lunch and prizes for foster, adoptive, and legal guardianship parents and a special presentation by Jim Gritter titled "*The Wonder of Hospitality: Helping Children Feel at Home*".

Date: Thursday, November 20th, 2008
Time: 9:30 am to 2 pm
Location: Maui Tropical Plantation Restaurant
 1670 Honoapiilani Highway, Wailuku (near Waikapu. Phone: 244-7643)
RSVP: Call 243-4604 by November 17

This training is brought to you by Child Welfare Services, Maui Special Services Unit, Family Programs Hawai'i, Hanai Coalition, Hawai'i Foster Parent Association and Hawai'i Adoption Permanency Alliance.



Presenter Jim Gritter

HAPA'S Oahu Conference

The Hawai'i Adoption Permanency Alliance (HAPA) conference, *No Longer a Guest: Opening Heart & Home to an Adopted or Foster Child*, will focus on the concept of Hospitality as a means of deepening connections and empowering children.

Presenter Jim Gritter, MSW, has more than 3 decades of experience in the field of adoption and understands the importance of the long view. He has been a strong & consistent voice for greater openness in adoption. His fourth book, *Hospitious Adoption*, is scheduled for publication this year.

Date: Friday, November 21st, 2008
Time: 8:30 am to 4 pm
Location: Japanese Cultural Center
 2454 S. Beretania St., Honolulu
Early Registration: \$60 (before Oct 15)
Regular Registration: \$70 (Limited scholarships available) Go to www.hawaiifosterparent.org or call 543-8446 for details & registration form.

East Hawaii Foster Parents Honored at Mahalo Luncheon

by Diane Kubo, DHS

East Hawaii's Annual Foster Parent Mahalo Luncheon was held on May 3, 2008. The 90 attendees enjoyed an afternoon with speakers Billy Kenoi, Jennifer Ah Chong and Michele Carvalho.



Billy Kenoi inspires all in attendance at special luncheon in Hilo

Bobby Jean Leithead-Todd opened the event as a representative for Mayor Harry Kim. Ms. Leithead-Todd read the proclamation and then expressed her heartfelt understanding and appreciation for foster families as she herself has become a guardian to three siblings whom she recently fostered. All who attended could relate to her as she shared her personal thoughts and experiences.

As a representative of Partners in Development Foundation (recruiter/trainer) and Foster Family Programs (support group co-facilitator), Michele encouraged resource families to attend the support group as it is a time to share valuable knowledge, insights and receive tangible help. As the new East Hawaii Director, Jennifer spoke of her passion for the Hawaii Foster Youth Coalition. She shared her successful life journey from foster child to parent, foster parent, adoptive parent and youth advocate.

On last year's luncheon evaluations, foster parents requested that Billy Kenoi be their luncheon speaker in 2008. Despite his very full schedule, he fulfilled this request and spoke about his deep appreciation for foster parents. He addressed the need for community involvement in the lives of all children, especially those who return home after school with no one present and nothing to do. He proposed an idea whereby children will be given opportunities to do extracurricular activities after school with the help of caring volunteers. *He encouraged people to take an interest in children, as one never knows how words spoken to a child may leave a lasting and motivational impact.* He spoke of his own challenges as a child growing up in the Puna area and how meaningful adult relationships made the difference in changing the direction of his life. He left us with the thought that children need to know that they matter.

The event closed with families receiving door prizes, generously donated by businesses and individuals in the community. The training committee is grateful to all the donors and volunteers who made this annual event a memorable one.

~ ~ ~ Upcoming Training in Hilo ~ ~ ~

Navigating Foster Care; Understanding Family Court, Hazards of Foster Care and Working with the Department of Education

Date: Friday, October 31, 2008

Location: Hilo Hawaiian Hotel, Mokuola Room

Time: 8:30 am to 1:30 pm.

RSVP to your agency worker. Call Diane at 933-0355 for more information.

Cost: \$5 for foster, guardian & adoptive parents and VGALs ; \$10 for all others.

Presenters: The Honorable Ronald Ibarra, Warren Chong & Susan Woods



Coffee and pastries as well as a buffet brunch will be provided.

Maintaining the Connection *by Sue Badeau*



In January 1986, our family of five children nearly doubled when we adopted a sibling group of four children from foster care. We decided we were not going to add any more children to the family. After all, nine was my husband's lucky number, so why would we want to mess with that?

That June, an article and photo of our racially-mixed family appeared in a newspaper. On July 1, while celebrating one child's fourth birthday we received an unusual phone call.

It was a woman who had just given birth. She read about our family and wanted us to adopt her son. She had been thinking about adoption and wanted the opportunity to select a family. Since her son had an African American father she was particularly concerned about finding a racially-mixed family for him. She felt the newspaper article was her answer.

Hector and I kept slipping out of the room where the party was in full swing talking about this baby. Going back and forth, we talked, prayed, and by the end of the party we knew he was meant to be our son.

This was our first venture into open adoption. It felt exciting, "right" and yet a little scary. We made plans for a July 5 picnic and brought all of the children. On the way we told them about their new brother, Todd.

We had a wonderful picnic, bonded with his birth mother and met several other family members, then it was time to drive home.

When we got home, I sat rocking him and touching his soft curly hair, wondering how we ended up with this unexpected miracle. He was a delight. And we have been happy with our open adoption – only wishing we had similar relationships with all of our children's birth families.

Over time, we have had the opportunity to get acquainted with some of the

other birth families of our children, including the four siblings we adopted.

We did not realize at the time that we were among the "pioneers" of modern-day open adoption. I say modern-day because openness in adoption is not really new. It's not an experiment. It is the way nearly all adoptions evolved over centuries of human history. Children proved to be capable of loving more than one set of adults. They managed to grow up without being confused. Their lives were richer – not damaged – by knowing their roots.

Closed adoption is the "new model" within the past 100 years. Social mores, adult needs and the newly established "child welfare system" began to dictate that secrecy in adoption was the way to go.

More than 20 plus years later, open adoption has become the norm, and is often promoted as the best way to meet the needs of adopted children. Yet, often the literature focuses on voluntary infant adoptions like we experienced with our son Todd. What happens when this is not the case? Is open adoption a viable option for children adopted at older ages when there is a history of abuse, neglect, parental drug use or incarceration?

We believe that it is still possible and beneficial to children who have already experienced trauma for them to have access to the people who gave them their start in life. This is not to say it is an easy path. When I think about the challenges associated with open adoption in these more challenging situations, it seems

analogous to our experiences raising our daughter Alysia.

Alysia was born with cerebral palsy. The prediction was that she would never walk, feed or dress herself. During the pre-adoption phase we were asked if our home was wheelchair accessible and if we were prepared for the challenges of raising a child in a wheelchair. But we were never asked if we were prepared for the challenges of helping her work through the pain of physical therapy so she would not have to spend her life in a wheelchair.

We believed that one day she would walk, so we challenged her. We made her endure physical therapy sessions and continued the exercises at home. It was often not comfortable. It would have been much easier to accept that she would never walk and to avoid the pain the therapy brought into our lives.

But we did not choose that route. We stood with her in her pain while holding and comforting her through it, but we did not allow her to avoid it.

Today, she not only walks, she runs. She hikes. She swims. She leaps on the trampoline. She dances and has realistic hopes of becoming a dancer.

The pain, struggle, challenges and discomfort of the physical therapy were for her, a path to physical and emotional wholeness, and an opportunity to reach her life potential.

Sometimes bringing our children's birth parents into their lives – and ours – whether through truth-telling conversations, letters and pictures, occasional visits, or on-going contact – can be as uncomfortable and at times even painful for our children – and for us – as the physical therapy was for my daughter. Sometimes it would be easier to avoid all that discomfort and pain.

Yet, when we find ways to stand with them as they work through their trauma, often with professional therapeutic support, just as we had the support of a professional physical therapist for Alysia, we give them the opportunity to heal.

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Here are a few of the reasons we have come to this conclusion.

Older Children know their History

Through memories and information that has been shared with them, including gaps or inaccuracies. Children may try to fill in gaps by using their imagination. If they are angry with a social worker, foster or adoptive parent, they may decide that they cannot trust what they know about their history and they may construct a totally different version. If they were the victims of abuse or neglect, they may incorporate self-blame, or victimization of the birth parent into their story.

These children are dealing with a puzzle of scattered pieces. They need the help of adoptive parents and other caring adults to make sense of the puzzle.

Truth is Better Than Fiction

Hard as it may be in some instances, truth will be easier to deal with, face and heal from than the fictions, fears, and fantasies that will fill the void when the truth is kept from our children.

The truth may be painful or confusing, and the child may need professional guidance to help work through it and eventually come to a place of healing.

Adoptive and foster parents, working together with therapists can create a strategy for sharing difficult information with a child. This plan needs to begin with a foundation of trust and informed by knowledge of child development.

People are not all “good” or all “bad.” No matter what the birth history includes, the birth parents are not totally evil people. They have talents, skills and positive qualities. When the child knows his or her birth family “for better or for worse” they learn that poor decisions lead to problems, but even people who made these choices have good qualities. This can be enormously important as the child comes to terms with his or her own identity and self-worth.

People can change: Sometimes birth parents who were not able to parent at a particular stage in their life due to youthful immaturity, involvement with drugs or other challenges are able to make changes in their lives that make an open relationship safe and non-threatening. It’s helpful for a child to see that people can change by

making better decisions and choices. In addition to being adoptive parents, we are the birth grandparents to a child who was adopted into an open adoption. Our granddaughter has had the opportunity to see the changes her birth mother has made in her own life as she has grown and matured over time.

People sometimes don’t change: One of our daughters spent several months as a young adult living with members of her birth family. She came away from that experience disappointed that some of them had not changed the circumstances that led to her placement in foster care, yet this also equipped her with a greater understanding of her life experiences. The open relationship proved to be a positive and healing experience for her.

Children need closure and wholeness:

Children who are cut off from contact with their birth families because there was abuse, neglect or other challenges often feel as though they have an open wound that does not heal. Future contact with the birth family helps bring a sense of closure and healing to these wounds.

Tools for A Successful Open Adoption in Challenging Situation:

If you are in or contemplating an open adoption where there are special challenges, here are some of our tips for making it a positive and rewarding experience.

Use a lifebook: a lifebook is a great starting point for openness in communication before and after a visit or other contact.

Safety first: If there was a history of abuse or violence it may be best to use a neutral and safe location for visits.

Communicate about feelings: Model for and teach your child communication about a wide range of feelings. Ask open ended questions that will help your child feel comfortable talking about difficult feelings.

Be positive: Look for positive qualities in the birth family that you can appreciate, talk about and relate to.

Debrief: Allow time after any contact to debrief. Prepare comfort foods, and give your child the opportunity to talk or be alone.

Use your support system: Other adoptive parents and professionals who have experienced similar issues and relationships are valuable.

Be flexible: As circumstances and people change, be willing to change your plans. Use your heart and head to make creative and wise decisions.

Be in charge: Your child must always know that you put his or her needs, safety and well-being first.

My son Todd, the new baby in the beginning of this story is now a young adult with a son of his own. He recently returned from spending an extended visit with his birth mother. While I was working on this article, she called me and we chatted. It truly has become had extended family relationship.

And those other four siblings I spoke of now have relationships with their birth family. Just today, as I was finishing this article, I was at an appointment with my daughter and new doctor.

She was asked about her medical history, and she said, “My birth mom had ...” and proceeded to give detailed health information. The doctor picked up on the word birth mother and asked her if she was adopted, and when my daughter said yes, the doctor asked, incredulously, “How did you ever get all that information?” When we told this doctor that we have a relationship with the birth mother, her eyes filled with emotion. “I am adopted too,” she said, “And I have nothing, nothing at all about my birth family.”

Open adoptions can and do work even in the most challenging situation. But like any relations, they take work. If you believe an open adoption will be best for your child you can get the support you need to find a way to make it work out safely and relatively comfortable for all.



Sue Badeau is a mother, grandmother, teacher, writer, advocate, sister, friend and wife. She and husband Hector have 22 children, two by birth and 20 adopted.

*Reprinted from **Fostering Families Today**. You can see more articles like this at www.fosteringfamiliestoday.com.*

Helping Children Succeed...



Reading aloud is the single most important activity to prepare children for school...here are ten fun & easy read aloud tips:

1. Read to your child every day for at least 10 minutes.
2. Create an aura of specialness around read-alouds.
3. Find a comfortable spot.
4. Pre-read the story.
5. Introduce the titles and authors/illustrators of the book.
6. Have your child predict what the story is about.
7. Change your voice to fit the mood, action, and voice.
8. Discuss what is happening (“How would you feel if you were that character?”).
9. Ask your child what he/she enjoyed about the story.
10. After reading, enjoy a related activity together, e.g., act out the story, do a craft, cook.

Tips from Read To Me International. Read more at www.readtomeintl.org.

MAHALO TO OUR WONDERFUL SUPPORTERS!

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In Memory of Blessing Iwalani Akim

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Tips on Allegations

Foster parents are at a higher risk of abuse allegations than the general population due to:

- Standards for licensed providers
- Close monitoring by DHS due to placements in the home
- Children in care with difficult behaviors can increase stress levels
- Children in care may be mad at their parents
- Children in care may have flashbacks from past abuse
- Lack of information
- Lack of support

Remember:

- An abuse allegation does not mean that you are presumed guilty
- You need clear & accurate information for yourself and for your family
- Foster parents are responsible for providing all information to the Assessment Worker
- **YOU ARE NOT ALONE!**

Tips for parents during an assessment:

- Keep a log of contacts and calls throughout the assessment process
- Request documentation from others who have information on issues raised during the assessment
- Cooperate with the Child Protective Assessment worker
- Stay as positive as you can through the assessment process
- Educate yourself on foster care rules and policy
- Do not blame the child

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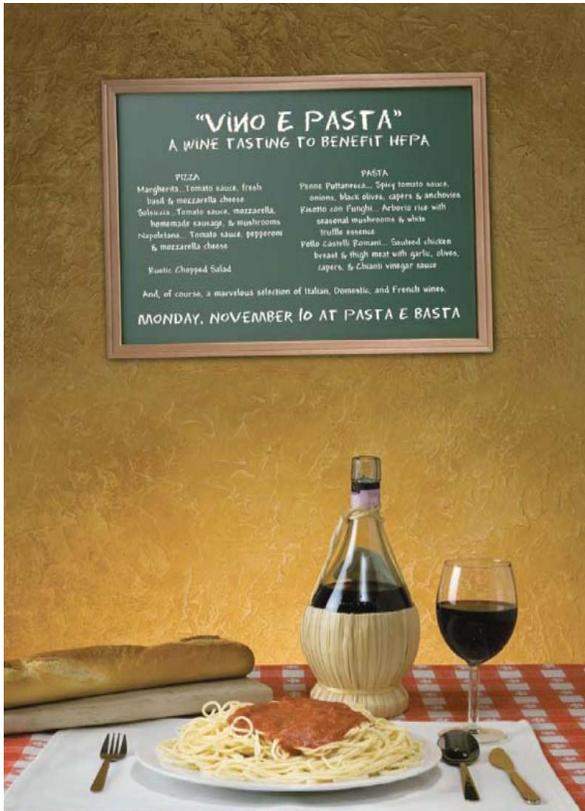
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**E PŪLAMA NĀ KEIKI
HFPA Newsletter
76 N. King St., Suite 201
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Mankind owes to the child the best that it has to give...

~ League of Nations, Declaration on the Rights of the Child, 1924



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Pasta e Basta by Donato.*

November 10, 2008

6:00 to 8:30 pm

Pasta e Basta by Donato
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*Proceeds and silent auction to
benefit Hawai'i's foster and
adoptive families through
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