



UNCONDITIONAL COMMITMENT: *The Only Love That Matters To Teens*

by Pat O'Brien, Executive Director

You Gotta Believe! The Older Child Adoption and Permanency Movement, Inc.

Having directed both foster care and adoption programs that place teenagers into permanent families, and then having founded an agency that places teenagers into permanent families, I often get asked the question “What kind of people will offer their home permanently to a teenager?” My answer is always the same. I always say “Any and all kinds of people who, after a good preparation experience, are willing to unconditionally commit themselves to a child no matter what behavior that child might ultimately exhibit.” Teenagers need first and foremost at least one adult who will unconditionally commit to and claim the teen as their own. Anything less is an artificial relationship. Teenagers need unconditional commitment before anything constructive can happen.

This country has thousands of young adults between the ages of 18 and 21 being discharged to no one but themselves. Half the homeless population is made up of these foster care discharges. This is in spite of the fact that teenagers, as a general rule, are easier to care for and the rewards and gratification for caring for them come back a lot sooner than accepting younger children for permanent placement.

However, our child welfare culture seems to have an anti-permanency bias against caring for teenagers. Very few organizations have the slightest expectation that prospective parents for teens will make the unconditional commitment that is absolutely necessary for the placement to succeed. Parenting strategies and a whole variety of other skills we teach families in pre-placement preparation and training are essentially rendered useless if unconditional commitment to a child is not imbedded in the



philosophy of the preparation and training we offer to these prospective families.

My working definition for “unconditional commitment” is simply that there is nothing a teenager can **do** to stop being someone’s child. Unconditional commitment means that we **treat** any child’s behavior with the exact same commitment we would treat a biological child’s behavior who might commit the very same act. If a bio-child commits a crime in the community, that bio-child might go to jail. But that child does not lose his parents because he makes a mistake. If a bio-child becomes mentally ill, that bio-child might have to be hospital-

ized on a long-term basis. But that child does not lose his parents because he has an illness that needs to be treated. If a bio-child becomes heavily involved in drugs, that bio-child might have to be placed in a residential treatment therapeutic community. But that child does not lose his parents because he has the disease of addiction. But most importantly, if a bio-child has a real nasty attitude, a parent develops ways to deal with it. The child does not stop being that parent’s child because of the attitude.

This, of course, is not the case for teens living in traditionally prepared foster homes. Simply put, what all teenagers need is unconditional commitment. They need a place where they can make mistakes and not have the equivalent of a child welfare capital punishment sentence imposed on them. So many teens in foster care lose their foster parents simply because they do what teens do. All parents who come forward to help children they did not give birth to must be prepared in the same permanency philosophy that biological parents automatically imbed in the care-taking of their children.

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Unconditional Commitment (Continued from page 1)

I have oriented over 2,000 prospective foster and adoptive parents in the past three years. I always ask prospective parents why they want to be parents to children not born to them. Generally, people answer that they love children and/or they want to help children. My second question to them is "Who is coming forward to be a foster or adoptive parent to *hurt* hurt children?" Usually one person who wasn't paying much attention to my question raises his or her hand. All the other participants are usually baffled by the oddity of the question. Then I go up to the person who raised her hand and ask again "You really want to *hurt* hurt children?" at which point she immediately withdraws her raised hand. Then I ask six more similar questions to the rest of the group, changing just one word. The words I substitute are as follows:

<i>Hurt</i>	<i>Who wants to hurt hurt children?</i>
<i>Abandon</i>	<i>Who wants to abandon abandoned children?</i>
<i>Reject</i>	<i>Who wants to reject rejected children?</i>
<i>Traumatize</i>	<i>Who wants to traumatize traumatized children?</i>
<i>Victimize</i>	<i>Victimize victimized children?</i>
<i>Abuse</i>	<i>Abuse abused children?</i>
<i>Neglect</i>	<i>Neglect neglected children?</i>

Invariably no one raises their hand for any of these seven questions. Then I point out to them that every time a foster or adoptive parent returns a child for a behavior that they committed we are "re-everything" them. We are re-abusing, re-abandoning, re-hurting, re-traumatizing, re-victimizing, re-rejecting, and re-neglecting the child.

Every person who comes forward to help a child must come to this work with an unconditionally committed permanency mindset. For example, if they are going to be a foster parent, they must commit to the child's permanency future. The number one permanency plan is for the child to return home. And until that goal is achieved that child needs one placement and one placement only. Anxious children invariably must do things that upset foster and adoptive parents. Can you even begin to imagine what it would feel like to have someone give you up every time you do something they do not approve of, particularly if your behavior occurs during the most difficult period in your childhood? This happens to teenagers in care every single day as a matter of accepted and common practice that we professionals perpetuate and endorse both implicitly and not so implicitly.

Often a teenager in foster care is in foster care because they have no one planning for their permanency future. They may have a goal of adoption but most often they have a goal of independent living. Both goals mean if the child does not get into a permanent family before discharge from foster care, they run a high risk of being alone in the world and becoming homeless after they are dis-



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

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The comments of individuals are not necessarily those of HFPA.

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Unconditional Commitment (Continued from page 2)



charged from care. Way too many of these youths are living in group homes until their discharge from care. They may be taught skills but if no one is found to

unconditionally commit to them before their discharge from care, their hopes for a brighter future are drastically reduced.

Very often, the system takes a half-full approach to teens in foster care and attempts to find *conditionally* thinking, traditionally prepared foster parents for them. Intake workers across the land make the same mistake when they call traditionally prepared foster parents for a teen. They make “the deal.” “*Try it and see if it works out.*” The implication is that if it does not “work out,” the child will be removed.

Can you imagine if you had to live under those conditions when you were a teenager? Can you imagine if you had the equivalent of child welfare capital punishment inflicted on you (i.e. losing the bed you slept in last night) every time you caught an attitude, or every time you came home late, or every time you got caught smoking a cigarette, or every time you broke even the most basic of rules?

I knew a teenager kicked out of his home for washing his sneakers in the washing machine. I knew another teen who got kicked out of two houses: one house because he flushed the toilet at night and the other house because he did not flush the toilet at night. In the first house, the father had to get up for work at 4am and no one dared wake him up with the flush of a toilet. The other house found it very disgusting that this same teen did *not* flush the toilet. Both houses kicked him out for this utterly minor offense. This happens to teens time and time again because we do not imbed the unconditional commitment permanency philosophy in our preparation of these families.

We have dehumanized teenagers in our care. We have treated them like disposable garbage. And we have to stop it. Kids should not have to grow up in institutions, but they equally cannot grow up in conditional homes. *You Gotta Believe* makes it a practice of teaching each and every one of our families how important unconditional commitment is. We will only approve prospective families who agree to practice this form of love. Every time we place a child, that child is placed forever. We support families through their hard times after kids are placed. And we are there to con-

stantly remind our families that if this child’s adolescence is handled in the right way, this child will have a family for life and this family will have this young person in their family forever. And we teach each and every family to treat each child they accept as if this is the child who will bring them their last glass of water. Having practiced for over 15 years in this field, I know of at least three placements where the child that we placed *was* the child who brought their adoptive parent her last glass of water even over the dying parent’s biological children.

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. If we don’t, we will continue to perpetuate what we did to another group of human beings in our country’s history. In an article written in the November 2000 issue of Harper’s Magazine “*Making the Case for Racial Reparations*” there was an eerie quote about the condition that slaves found themselves in when they were set free:

“Think about this.

In 1865 the federal government of this country freed 4 million blacks. Without a dime, with no property, nearly all illiterate, they were let loose upon the land to wander.”

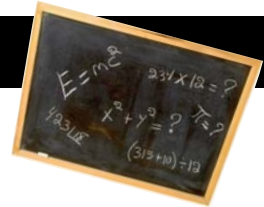
Here it is 139 years later and we do the exact same thing to tens of thousands of youth in our country’s care every year. We discharge them without a dime in their pockets; without any property; rarely with a high school diploma so they might as well be illiterate. And without an unconditionally committed permanent family in their corner, they are simply being “let loose upon the land to wander.”

We can absolutely do better for our kids. All we have to do is believe there are enough people willing to offer them unconditional commitment and then go about the good work of bringing those families into the process. It is far easier to find these families than you think. But you can only do so if you first believe it is possible.

The choice is yours. Choose to believe. You gotta believe! Our children’s future depends on it.

Pat O’Brien will be the keynote speaker at the 9th Annual Hawaii Foster Parent Association Conference on Thursday, October 7, 2004. Check out Pat’s website at www.yougottabelieve.org.

Training and Support Opportunities



Fetal Alcohol Syndrome Seminar and Town Hall Meeting

When: March 29 and 30, 2004

Where: Radisson Waikiki Prince Kuhio
2500 Kuhio Avenue

Cost: FREE!

Download application from the HFPA website,
www.hawaiifosterparent.org or call 800-999-3429.

Resource and Support Group for Foster and Permanency Parents

When: 5:30 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.

Friday evenings March 19,
April 16, May 21, June 25, July 23, August 27

Where: Halawa District Park Gym Meeting Room

Cost: FREE!

Come to one, several or all of them!

Dinner will be provided.

Childcare is provided upon request for children ages 3-12.
Please call Helena at 521-9531, ext. 297 to register and to sign up for childcare.



2nd Annual Foundations to Attachment Conference

When: April 23 and 24, 2004

Where: Dole Ballrooms
735 Iwilei Road, 2nd Floor

Cost: \$115 both days, \$75 one day

Download application from www.hawaiifosterparent.org
Limited number of scholarships available for DHS foster parents. Call HFPA for information at 263-0920 or 1-877-775-4400.

Kids' Night Out

When: Friday evenings, March 26,

April 30, May 28, June 25,

July 30, August 27

5:30 pm – 9:30 pm

Where: Central Union Church
1660 South Beretania St., Honolulu

Cost: \$5 per child

Mark the following Friday nights for some well deserved respite time! Central Union Church's **Youth On The Move!** will take care of your kids in their Children's Center. While you're "out on the town", they will provide dinner, games, crafts, videos and more.

Call Reverend Ron Williams at 440-3006 to confirm the date and to RSVP. (Please RSVP by noon on the preceding Thursday of the Friday you plan to go out.)



Parenting With Aloha

When: April 3, 2004
9 am – 12 Noon

Where: Waianae District Park Meeting Room

Cost: FREE

Loving and effective ways to discipline children. Learn how to interact with children to develop mutual respect. Encourage creative thinking, two-way communication and responsible decision making in your children. Speaker Linda Uehara is a certified facilitator for Strengthening Hawaii Families.

Please call Sharon at 535-0101 to register by March 29th.
This training is sponsored by the Foster Care Training Committee.

SPIN (Special Parent Information Network) Conference

"Take a SPIN Through Hollywood"

When: April 24, 2004

Where: UH Campus Center, Honolulu

Cost: \$20, limited parent scholarships and airfare available

For info, call 586-8126, email: accesshi@aloha.net or go to www.spinhawaii.org to register by April 9, 2004.

Prevent Child Abuse Hawaii's 5th Annual Conference

"Once Upon A Time - Sharing Stories of Prevention"

When: April 29-30, 2004

Where: Ilikai Hotel, Honolulu

Limited neighbor island & registration scholarships
For info, call Jennifer Murphy at 808-951-0200 or email: jmurphy@preventchildabusehawaii.org

Trainings sponsored by the Department of Human Services Staff Development Office

Overview of Protective Services Statutes

When: April 13, 2004

Where: 8:00 am - 11:30 am

Foundation to Child Welfare Services

When: April 15, 2004

Where: 8:00 am-11:30 am

Physical & Behavioral Indicators of Child Abuse and Neglect

When: April 27, 2004

Where: Waiakamilo Business Center, Honolulu

For info, call 808-832-5137



CARE Program Provides Comprehensive Health Assessment for Children Entering Foster Care

*Victoria Schneider, MD
Kapiolani Medical Center*

Every child entering foster care is required to have two types of physical examinations:

- A **Pre-Placement Exam (PPE)** within 24 hours of placement. The purpose of the PPE is to examine the child for evidence of physical abuse, document medical findings, photo document injuries, evaluate and treat communicable diseases (like ukus and impetigo) as well as acute illnesses, identify health/dental needs and ensure that the child receive follow up care. Unfortunately, many of these exams are cursory and can miss important signs of abuse and neglect.
- A **Comprehensive Health Evaluation (CHE)** within 45 days of placement. The purpose of the CHE is to review medical records, identify psychosocial problems, developmental problems and help ensure that the child receives referrals for specialty services.

The Kapi'olani CARE Clinic, through funding from local foundations and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, offers these services with a team of medical and mental health professionals trained in child abuse and neglect.

Children can receive:

- ✓ **Screening for psychosocial problems** and referral for further services.
- ✓ **Review of past medical records** to identify health problems
- ✓ **Referral to primary care provider** for ongoing health care
- ✓ **Photo documentation** of injuries or scars concerning for abuse
- ✓ **Evaluation** for evidence of neglect

All this in a child friendly environment! Call the CARE Program for more information or an appointment:



KAPI'OLANI
CHILD AT-RISK EVALUATION (CARE) PROGRAM
A Kapi'olani Medical Center for Women and Children Program
1314 South King Street Suite 415

Honolulu, Hawaii 96814
Telephone: (808) 592-3255
Fax: (808) 592-3266

Federal Tax Benefits for Foster and Adoptive Parents and Kinship Caregivers: 2003 Tax Year



Many foster and adoptive parents and kinship caregivers are eligible for valuable tax benefits. However, these families make up less than two percent of all taxpayers, and neither the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) nor commercial tax manuals offer information on unique tax rules that affect these families. As a result, obscure and complicated tax rules cause some families, and even some commercial tax preparers, to overlook or miss deductions and tax credits.

This booklet is found on our website at www.hawaiifosterparent.org or at its source at http://www.casey.org/Documents/casey_federal_tax_benefits_2003.pdf. If you do not have access to the web, you can call HFPA at 263-0920 or toll-free at 877-775-4400 to request a hard copy. The booklet explains basic rules and offers tips on ways that foster and adoptive families can legally claim the maximum tax benefits available to them. This information should not be considered legal advice or tax advice – it is general information that should not be acted upon except in consultation with a professional tax advisor. You should give a copy of the booklet to your tax preparer, and discuss whether you qualify for any of the benefits discussed.

MENTORING PROGRAM FOR CHILDREN OF PRISONERS

Judith F. Clark
Hawaii Youth Services Network

(Foster parents: This may be a resource that can benefit you and the child in your care.)

More than 5,000 children in Hawaii have a parent in prison. These children face many challenges.

"...This boy has been living a life of despair, is in deep depression and is doing poorly in everything...I know how much my grandson is suffering as his mom has been in prison for 6 years..."

--Grandmother and Foster Parent

"I tell myself my dad is gone. The drug (Ice) is so powerful. It robbed me of the dad I could have had."

--Child of a Hawaii prisoner



When Mom or Dad enters prison, the children may have to adjust to new caregivers (family caregivers or foster care) and move to new schools and communities. Children of incarcerated parents are seven times more likely to enter the juvenile or adult prison system themselves. They often experience guilt, anxiety, and fear. Their school performance may suffer. They may turn to drugs or become aggressive toward others.

Hawaii Youth Services Network, in cooperation with five organizations on Oahu, Maui and Kauai, has started a mentoring program for children of prisoners. The program matches children of incarcerated parents with a caring adult mentor. The activities they participate in during their meetings can include academic focused activities (doing homework, visiting the library), cultural activities (fairs, museums, concerts), recreational activities (hiking, sports), or just "hanging out/talking story."

The project is looking for children who have a parent in prison. Priorities for participation include:

- Parent is in a prison located on another island from the child's residence or in another state
- Child is in out-of-home placement (e.g., foster care)
- Parent has at least one year remaining before release
- Parent recently entered prison

We are also recruiting adult mentors. Why become a mentor? You can

- Make a difference in the life of a child
- Do something worthwhile in your spare time
- Share your interests and hobbies with a young person
- Increase your skills in working with children



"We need...to help people reclaim their lives so innocent children don't end up as the next-generation inmates."

--Lorraine Robinson, Executive Director, Matlock Hale

If you are working with a child who would benefit from a mentoring relationship or you are interested to volunteering as a mentor, please call one of the *Hawaii Mentoring Project for Children of Prisoners* partners:

- Big Brothers Big Sisters of Honolulu (Oahu, children aged 6 – 16): 521-3811
- Keiki O Ka Aina Family Learning Centers (Oahu, children aged 4 - 5): 843-2502
- Kauai Team Challenge (Kauai, children aged 9 – 17): 651-7619
- Maui Youth and Family Services (Maui County, children aged 9 – 17): 579-8414

WHAT'S UP FOR ADOLESCENTS?

Carol Imanaka
Children's Alliance of Hawaii

The Children's Alliance of Hawaii (formerly known as the Friends of the Children's Advocacy Center) offers FUN and EXCITING groups for adolescent foster youth on Oahu that focus on skill-building and enhancing self-esteem. Separate groups are being offered for boys and girls at no cost and transportation is provided.



The boys' group, **Hui Ho'opona** (*group that bonds*), is a 7 session experiential youth development program that is conducted in coordination with the Marimed Foundation. Middle school boys from the Leeward area are now being recruited for the group that is scheduled to begin in April. The program teaches life skills through a series of experiential outdoor activities that are fun and challenging. The group meets 3 hours a week for six weeks. The 7th session ends with a full day's activity on the final Saturday of the program.

The activities vary according to the group and may include challenges such as low & high ropes course (teaches team building and group problem solving), hiking (to get in touch with feelings and the environment), sailing (the thrill of discovery), 6 man outrigger canoe paddling (for communication, team-

work) and geocaching (teamwork to find a hidden treasure through use of GPS coordinates).

PICS 808 (*Personal Improvement Classes Hawaii*) is a 6 week group for girls that builds self-esteem and healthy relationships by providing positive female role models and fun activities. Volunteers from the Junior League of Honolulu provide cultural, skill-building, self-improvement and healthy living activities for girls. These activities may include exercise, excursions to a University campus, make-up and skin care, ceramics, service projects, life planning sessions, etiquette and dining, and crafts such as memory boxes. Girls will learn to communicate more effectively, to develop their inner beauty, to build and maintain healthy relationships and to develop greater confidence.

Girls, 14-15 years old, from the Leeward to Honolulu area, are now being recruited for the February 28, 2004 to April 3, 2004 session. The group meets on Saturdays from 9:00 a.m to 1:00 p.m. Snacks and lunch are provided each week. Girls, 16-17 years old, are also being recruited for the next group that is targeted to begin in late April.



If you know an adolescent who is interested and who could benefit from the program, contact your social worker and have them make the referral to The Children's Alliance of Hawaii at **599-2955**. If you have any questions, ask for Carol Gottlieb or Carol Imanaka for Hui Ho'opona (boys' group) and Carol Imanaka or Karen Turran for PICS 808 (girls' group).



CURIOUS

by Ken

*I'm so curious
About my Family*

All I want to know is how I was born

*I'm so curious
About the way you live
Every single piece of my heart has torn*

'Cuz it has begun to start

To look again

And I want to say these

Words today

*Why did you leave me for some
Drugged off Life?*



*I'm so curious
Why did they choose abuse?
All I wanted was a family that loved*

*I'm so curious
Why did they not want me
Was it 'cuz I was pathetic to them*

How was I to know

How it's s'posed to go

I was only small

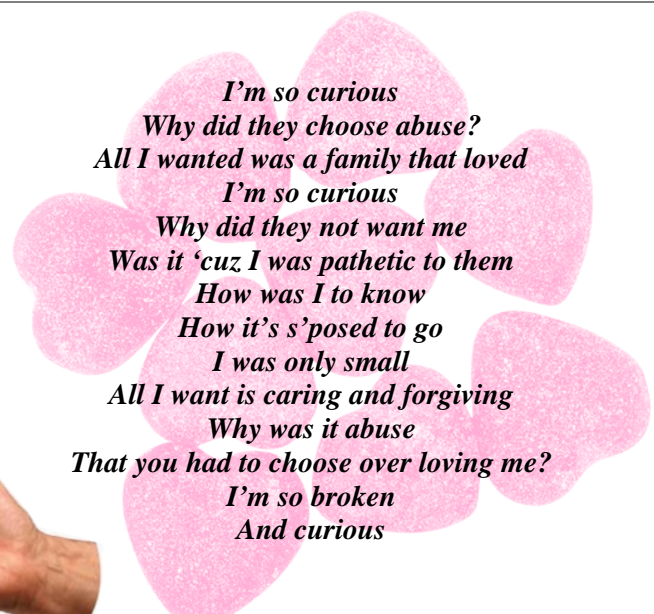
All I want is caring and forgiving

Why was it abuse

That you had to choose over loving me?

I'm so broken

And curious



News from the Hawaii Foster Youth Coalition

Rhonda Nichols

Independent Living Conference

The Spring Independent Living Conference will be held on Maui, March 22-24. The Conference is open to high school seniors only. You must contact your social worker in order to register. Space is limited so sign up now. If your social worker cannot be reached or is unsure of the process, contact Lee Dean, DHS State Independent Living Coordinator at 586-5704.



Higher Education Funds

Youth transitioning from foster care may be eligible for uninterrupted continuation of the room and board payments. You must be accepted into and planning to attend an approved institute of higher learning or vocational trade program in that program's next regularly scheduled session. You must have applied to the school and received an acceptance letter. This is sufficient documentation to file the Form 1611, Higher Education Application, to continue board payment through the summer under its new classification as Higher Ed board payment. You DO NOT have to be registered for school yet, since that won't happen until the fall.

The goal is to have seamless transition from high school into higher education and to avoid needing to apply for welfare to make it through the summer. Once you register for school, provide that documentation to the worker. At the end of the term, send a copy of your grades to the worker to ensure that your room and board payments continue.



Also make sure you have filled out the necessary forms for the uninterrupted continuation of your health care. This is available for ALL youth in transition from care regardless of your transition plan.

If you have any questions regarding transition services, please call Rhonda Nichols at Hawaii Foster Youth Coalition (HFYC): 255-8365.



Alumni of Foster Care

HFYC is creating an alumni association of people ages 21-99 who spent time in out-of-home placement, including the juvenile court system or any form of foster care including kinship and therapeutic care. There is a strong national movement to organize the millions of us from across the nation who were clients in the Child Welfare System. We are trying to give a voice to the issues that affect those who currently reside in care and make sure that the system is providing the best practices to these youth and that they can learn from what worked and didn't work from those of us who have been there. If you are interested, please call Cynthia White: 221-0575.



Local Chapter Meetings

There are local chapter meetings held on Oahu in Aiea, Kapolei, Honolulu, Waipahu, and Mililani. Call Cynthia White at 221-0575 or 735-2989 to confirm time and location. For meeting schedule on Kauai, call 221-0575. For the Big Island and Maui, call 255-8365 or 935-3695.



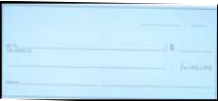
Scholarship Opportunities for Youth in or formerly in Foster Care



The **Hawaii Community Foundation** is accepting scholarship applications for the 2004-2005 academic year. Applicants must be residents of Hawaii attending an accredited two- or four-year college or university here or on the mainland. All applications must be postmarked by **March 1, 2004**. There are many scholarships available.



The **Victoria S. and Bradley L. Geist Foundation** provides financial assistance to students currently or formerly in the foster care system. Verification of foster care status is required. There is no minimum GPA requirement and **no deadline**, so you can apply at any time. However, you are strongly encouraged to apply by **March 1**, as processing time takes 2 to 3 months. Scholarships increase in amount in year, based on satisfactory progress.



Ho'omaka Hou Scholarships are for students who have turned their lives around after facing difficulties or major crisis in the past. Students must demonstrate financial need and enroll in a degree-seeking or certification program in Hawaii. Applications are accepted year-round but applicants are strongly encouraged to apply no later than **March 1** to meet fall semester payment deadlines.



Vocational Education Scholarships are available to Hawaii residents enrolled in vocational programs at Honolulu Community College or Kapiolani Community College.



For the scholarships listed above, please call (808) 566-5570 or toll-free (888) 731-3863 for an application, or visit HCF's website at www.hawaiicommunityfoundation.org.



Other Scholarship and Loan Opportunities for Youth in Care

The **National Foster Parent Association** (NFPA) offers scholarships for foster youth who wish to further their education beyond high school, including college or university studies, vocational and job training, and correspondence courses, including GED. Visit their website at www.nfpainc.org or request for an application from: NFPA Scholarship Committee, 7512 Stanich Ave., #6, Gig Harbor, WA 98335. Scholarship applications must be postmarked by **March 31st**.



Casey Family Scholars/Orphan Foundation (open to non-Casey youth, too)

This program provides scholarships of up to \$10,000 a year to young people who spent at least 12 months in foster care and were not subsequently adopted. Scholarship money can be used for college or vocational training. The scholarships are renewable, based on satisfactory progress and financial need. In addition, recipients receive ongoing support through the OFA's eMentor program. Application deadline is **April 1, 2004**. See the Orphan Foundation Web site for complete eligibility information and application guidelines at www.orphan.org or call 571-203-0270.

Hildegard Lash Merit Scholarship (<http://www.orphan.org/programs/hildegard.html>)

\$5,000 per academic year, available to students who are currently in foster care or were in foster care at the time of their high school graduation and/or 18th birthday, who are entering their sophomore, junior or senior year as a full-time student at a four year college or university. For more information, please contact scholarships@orphan.org.



Burtrez Morrow Educational Loan Program (<http://www.orphan.org/programs/burtrez.html>)

Low-interest loans for young women currently in foster care or in foster care at the time of their high school graduation. Recipients must also be enrolled full-time at a four-year college or university and entering their junior or senior year. For more information please contact scholarships@orphan.org.

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Sarah and John Casken
 Sadora Kuwaye
 Mike and Terri Mathews
 Harry Okamoto, Jr.



Letters to the Editor

Dear HFPA,

In my short time as a Family Court judge, I cannot tell you how much I have come to value and appreciate the phenomenal contributions of our foster parents. Day in, and day out, I see them providing love, guidance, and support to children who have known only pain. Thank you, also, for the tremendous contribution you have made over the years. I toast to the difference you are making.

Michael Broderick



Aloha,

Just read the HFPA January 2004 newsletter and wanted to pass on my compliments on what a wonderful issue it is! Very informative, great pictures – foster parents really are the saviors of our kids.

Lori Kanaeholo



Hawaii Foster Parent Association
 PMB 261, 111 Hekili St., Suite A, Kailua, HI 96734
 Phone: (808) 263-0920 Fax: (808) 263-0921

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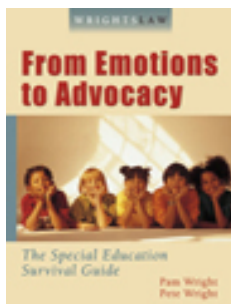
- My company will match my gift—the necessary form is enclosed.
 Yes, please send me the next four quarterly newsletters, mailed directly from the HFPA office.

❖ **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.



Book Review: From Emotions to Advocacy



"If it's not written down, it was not said. If it's not written down, it did not happen." So begins the chapter called "Creating Paper Trails" in From Emotions to Advocacy. Many foster parents want to advocate for themselves or their child but hold back. If you want to advocate, need to advocate, or believe you should advocate but have excuses or reasons why you cannot, this book is for you. You will face your obstacles and learn the skills you need to be an effective advocate for you and the children in your home.

Though this book is subtitled "Special Education Guide," much of the information is applicable to working with any bureaucracy. You will learn how to use tactics and strategies to anticipate problems, negotiate for services, and avoid crises.

Don't be intimidated, thinking: "I will never understand the information in this type of book." The authors write this in very easy-to-understand language. They actually make advocacy interesting to learn and easy to remember.

This book can be purchased from our office (808-263-0920) for \$27.00, which includes postage and handling. It can also be ordered from www.amazon.com or from www.wrightslaw.com for about the same price when postage and handling is added.



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Divert Your Course



Sometimes, in our work as foster parents or social workers, we may think we understand all the factors and each person's position when we really don't. The following offers an excellent example of the possible pitfalls of certainty, abusive power and the need for control. This is said to come from the transcript of a radio conversation between a US naval ship with the Canadian authorities off the coast of Newfoundland in October 1995.

Canadians: *Please divert your course 15 degrees to the south to avoid a collision.*

Americans: Recommend you divert YOUR course 15 degrees to the north to avoid a collision.

Canadians: *Negative. You will have to divert YOUR course 15 degrees to the south to avoid a collision.*

Americans: This is the Captain of a US Navy ship. I say again, divert YOUR course.

Canadians: *No, I say again, you must divert YOUR course.*

Americans: This is the aircraft carrier USS Lincoln, the second largest ship in the United States' Atlantic Fleet. We are accompanied by three destroyers, three cruisers and numerous support vessels. I DEMAND that you change your course 15 degrees north or countermeasures will be taken to ensure the safety of this ship.

Canadians: *This is a lighthouse. Your call.*

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