



“Better Start” Conference Prepares College-Bound Foster Youth

Arlina Wong, LSW

T.H.E. (Transition, Housing, Education) Collaboration

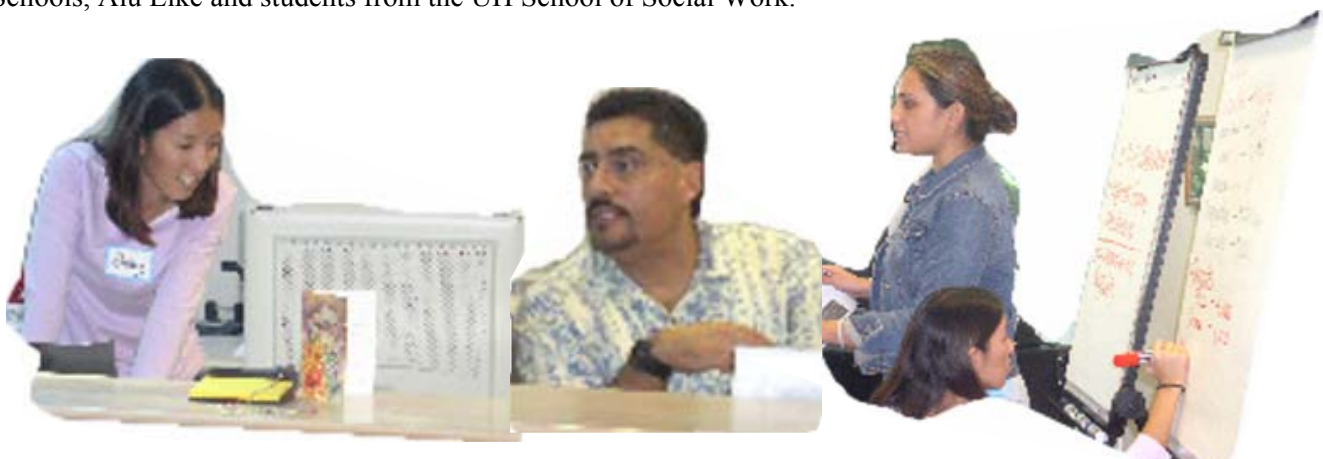
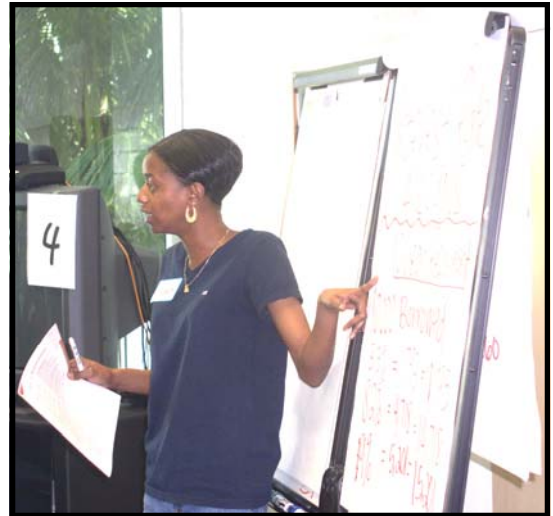
Preparing for college is a chaotic challenge for most everyone, but it is especially so for foster youth. There is the common plight of deciding what field of study to enter and deciphering what colleges have to offer. But, the real difficulty comes when determining where you will live, how college tuition will get paid, and what benefits are available for foster youth in college. These topics were discussed at the recent “Better Start” workshop series.

The workshops focused on what youth need to succeed in college. Information was presented step by step in a realistic and concrete format. Speakers stressed the importance of attaining scholarships, financial aid and grants to get through the financial burden. One-on-one assistance was offered to fill out the on-line FAFSA form, complete college applications and write personal statements, which can be grueling tasks when done without assistance.

Nearly 100 youth and adults in the foster care system participated in this two-session series. All of those who finished their paperwork also received \$50 gift certificates for Ala Moana Shopping Center from the Hawaii Foster Youth Coalition. Door prizes and lunch were provided to all attendees.

The “Better Start III” workshop is scheduled for **Saturday, May 21st** at Foster Family Programs (former Casey building at 1848 Nuuanu Ave.) from 9:00 a.m.—1:00 p.m. The workshop will be very interactive and will feature foster youth who are in college now. There will also be a graduation celebration. For more information, contact Hawaii Foster Youth Coalition at **255-8365** or check the HFPA website at **www.hawaiifosterparent.org**.

Members of this collaborative effort include the Hawaii Foster Youth Coalition, Children’s Alliance, Hale Kipa, Catholic Charities Hawaii, Foster Family Programs, Hawaii Foster Parent Association, Kamehameha Schools, Alu Like and students from the UH School of Social Work.



Child Specific Foster Parent Training Project Expands

HFPA is expanding its Child Specific Foster Parent Training project so more foster parents can attend the classes. Our state law requires that child specific foster parents receive training. Foster parents who have attended these classes tell us that they just wish they had been able to take the classes earlier because the information is so useful and the trainers make the classes so enjoyable.



Series of five classes will be offered on Oahu (15 series), Maui (1), Kauai(1) and the Big Island (6). The classes meet for a total of 15 hours over the course of several weeks. At the end of the series, you will receive a certificate certifying your attendance.

The best way to find out when classes are scheduled is to go to the website, www.hawaiifosterparent.org and look through the list of events on the home page for the child specific classes. If you don't have Internet at home, you could use the computers at the public library. Also, your licensing worker will have the dates for classes just as soon as they are scheduled. Many workers send out letters to the foster parents informing them about the dates.

We'd like to thank Queen Liliuokalani Children's Center in Nanakuli for their generous provision of classroom space to host several of these classes. We are looking for additional sites in Ewa Beach, Pearl City, Aiea, Kapolei, Waipahu and the Neighbor Islands. Please call us if you know of a church or community center that could provide a room, preferably air conditioned with a kitchenette, able to hold 30 people seated at tables. The room needs to be available for a total of five classes, either in the daytime or evening. If you know of a place that might work, please contact us at **263-0920; toll free 877-775-4400** or e-mail us at info@hawaiifosterparent.org.



info@hawaiifosterparent.org.

You can call the lead trainer, Barbara Wright at **261-9569** or **428-6794** to reserve a space or find out more about the classes.

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

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The comments of individuals are not necessarily those of HFPA.

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



Enhancement Funds Available for Children

Linda Santos
Foster Family Programs



Foster Family Programs (formerly Friends of Foster Kids) receives money from the Bradley and Victoria Geist Foundation and the Theresa Hughes

Foundation to provide enhancement funds to children.

These enhancement funds can be applied for when all other funding sources have been tapped. Activities and items that have been funded in the past include tutors; summer school tuition; self esteem programs such as sports, dance, scouting, martial arts and music; special events such as proms and graduation, travel to the mainland or Neighbor islands; and special projects such as back-to-school items. A maximum of \$500 per year per child will be considered. Requests for enhancement funds **must** come from a professional (social worker, therapist, G.A.L., etc.) working with the child.



To apply for funds:

Geist Foundation Funds

Recipients of Geist funds must be legally recognized foster children. These children can be associated with any agency working with children in foster care. To request funds for Geist-eligible children, a copy of the Enhancement Fund Request Form can be downloaded from the web at www.hawaiifosterparent.org. Click on Resources, then on Services, Enhancement Funds. The professional submitting the request for Geist funds can fax or mail the form to Elaine Chung at DHS. The address and fax number are on the form.



Theresa Hughes Foundation Funds

Children eligible for funds from the Theresa Hughes Foundation include those who have been abused, abandoned or neglected, even if they are still living in the abusive situation. Funds are also available for children of a single parent under the age of 21. For Hughes Foundation eligible children, please contact Foster Family Programs directly at **521-9531**.

Mahalo for your Donation



Murray Towill, president of the Hawaii Hotel and Lodging Association, presents a check for foster parent training to Sarah T. Casken, executive director of the Hawaii Foster Parent Association.



Donations for the past quarter

Friend (up to \$99)

- Elizabeth Neill
- Harold Nakagawa
- Jerry and Consuelo Tanaka
- Rhonda Chaffin
- Linda A. Santos
- Jeff and Nancy Smith

Builder (\$100 to \$249)

- Anonymous

Provider (\$250 - \$499)

- Wal-Mart #2314
- Diana Warrington

Healer (\$500 - \$1,499)

- Lloyd and Nancy Thompson

Advocate (\$1,500 - \$4,999)

- Hawaii Hotel & Lodging Association

Visionary (\$5,000+)

- Atherton Family Foundation



Websites Provide Great Information for Youth in Foster Care



According to www.fyi3.com, at least 16,000 young people formally "age out" of the nation's foster care system every year. Because the transition process extends well beyond the formal age of emancipation (18 in most states), at any given time approximately 100,000 young people in America are in the process of transitioning from dependency on the child welfare system to adulthood. For too many youth, there is no happy ending at the conclusion of this journey.

Studies have demonstrated that four years after leaving foster care:

- 46% of young people lack a high school diploma
- 25% have experienced homelessness
- 13% have graduated from a four-year college
- 62% have not maintained employment for a year
- 38% have been diagnosed with emotional problems
- 42% have become parents
- Fewer than one in five is completely self-supporting
- A significant proportion have spent time in jail

Evidence indicates there is more success for the young people and for the community if youth take control of their own lives. Websites such as the ones listed here provide access to information and resources that can help them. "The more good information they possess, the better decisions they can make," said Celeste Bodner, executive director of FosterClub and FYI3.com.



www.fosterclub.com

FosterClub, the national network for foster kids, is a non-profit organization based in Portland, Oregon. It was formed by a foster parent who saw a need for a stronger support network for youth in care. FosterClub's website provides information, support, motivation and camaraderie for youth in foster care.

Youth Talk Back:

Get Teen Perspective on Important Issues

Who is best at helping youth reach their goals in school? Find out what youth have to say!

www.fosterclub.com/speakUp/talkback.cfm

www.FYI3.com

This is a partnership web project between FosterClub.com and the Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative. FYI3.com is completely free, anonymous, and available 24 hours a day. This site empowers young people to become:

- **Involved** - through message boards, contests and feedback forums
- **Informed** - offering news, legislation, a glossary, FAQs, and a list of rights and responsibilities pertaining to foster care
- **Independent** - with listings of opportunities, resources and scholarships in dozens of communities



Do you know your rights in foster care?

Check out FosterClub's list of 20 rights that every young person in foster care should have.

www.fyi3.com/fyi3/informed/rights

*Take the time to check out these sites.
Remember, knowledge is power!*

Evaluation Data Guides HFPA in Conference Planning

Caroline Ellermann, PhD, RN
Conference Evaluator

Data analysis of the responses from the questionnaires collected at October's foster care conference gives valuable information in planning for this year's conference. The responses came from professionals (32%), parents caring for children in foster care (38%) and those that are both parents and professionals (10%). Twenty percent of those responding to the questionnaire did not indicate which role they were in. About half (305) of those attending the conference completed questionnaires. We have learned about conference topic interests, the influence of past conferences and the preferred times for conferences.

Topic Preferences

In order of priority from most to least, these are the topics conference attendees would like to see at future conferences: 1) Behavior management skills, 2) parenting skills, 3) communication skills, 4) separation and loss, 5) care of sexually abused children, 6) independent living skills, 7) attachment disorders, 8) transitions, 9) anger management, 10) working with birth parents, and 11) child development. These preferences will help guide us as we select presentations for this year's conference.



Making a Difference

Responses to the questionnaire indicate that we are making a difference in the support of foster children. After attending past (2002, 2003) conferences, 16.7 % of the respondents indicated that, because of the conference, they increased the number of foster children in their care. Additionally, 10.5 % said that, because of the conference, they adopted a child.

Overall, those attending previous conferences feel most encouraged by their conference attendance in relation to 1) being more understanding of the children's situation and needs, 2) working with the system, 3) advocating for the children at school, and 4) sharing ideas with other foster parents.



Conference evaluator, Caroline Ellermann, chats at conference with volunteer, Elaine Chung.

Professionals indicated that after conferences, they felt most encouraged by sharing new ideas with foster parents and felt they were able to communicate better with other professionals, including advocating at schools.

Foster parents indicated, in nearly all categories, very positive influences as a result of attending the conferences. With foster parents, it was more interesting to note what did not positively influence them after conferences than what did. Although not statistically significant, they denied feeling encouraged when working on the children's health, educational and emotional care even though they indicated advocating more for the children in school. From the foster parents' point of view, communication gaps appeared to remain with the professional team. Both professionals and parents acknowledged that when they took care of themselves, they were better able to care for the children.

Past conferences are reported to have significantly greater impact on foster parents than on the professionals. This might be because education and other training are more available to the professionals, while the conference might be the only training attended by the foster parents.

Best time for conference

There is about equal interest in having a one-day versus a two-day conference and having the conference on a weekday versus a Saturday. The message was clear (69%) that most participants prefer a combination of both large and small group workshops.

For those of you that attended the conference and responded to the questionnaires... your input is enormously valuable and greatly appreciated!

Insurance for DHS Foster Parents



Department of Human Services foster parents recently received information regarding foster parent liability insurance purchased by DHS from Servco Insurance Services. This is a liability-only policy and not a first-party property policy. As the letter from DHS indicates, this insurance policy does not cover damage done to your property or claims related to automobiles. It is good risk management to also have homeowner's or renter's insurance and automobile insurance.

If you have any questions about what is covered under this policy, you should call the company. They can be reached at **540-3333** or via e-mail at **judya@servco.com**.

New Centralized Statewide Intake Services for Child Welfare Services

Johnny Papa, CWI Supervisor

The Child Welfare Intake Unit (CWI) is pleased to announce the completion of Centralized Statewide Intake Services to all islands effective 12/13/04. CWI would like to share the following information with foster parents statewide:

- All reports of Child Abuse and Neglect, including Institutional Harm reports are now received by the CWI Unit on a 24/7 basis. Institutional harm refers to all substitute care arrangements licensed by the Department (foster, group, child care).
- Foster parents statewide requiring Child Welfare Services **after hours** may also contact the CWI Unit for assistance.
- Standby Duty social workers are available on each island to respond to crisis after hours.



For additional information, please feel free to contact the CWI Supervisor, Ms. Johnny Papa at 832-5280 or via toll free number, or email: jpapa@dhs.hawaii.gov.



Centralized Intake Line

Use to report child abuse and neglect. Foster parents may also use if you need Child Welfare services after hours.

Oahu: 832-5300
Neighbor Islands: 1-800-494-3991 (toll free)



Celebrating Foster Families



The Oahu Foster Care Training Committee is sponsoring or supporting several events in April and May on Oahu in celebration of Foster Care Month in May. Watch for a flyer in the mail with the details. Also, check the website, www.hawaii Foster parent.org, for the latest details about the events. Except for April 17th event, dates are tentative.

- * **April 17** Outback Steakhouse Lunch for foster families
(must register with HFPA for tickets; limited to first 250;
see details on back page of this newsletter) *
- * **April 30** Part 1 of 3-part series on Sexual Abuse Training—time and location to be announced *
- * **May 7** Lo‘i—Taro Patch Family Day (Windward Oahu) *
- * **May 14** Recruitment Fair *
- * **May 20** Foster Parent Dinner (Waianae) *
- * **May 27** Foster Parent Support Group (Halawa) *



SAVE THESE DATES

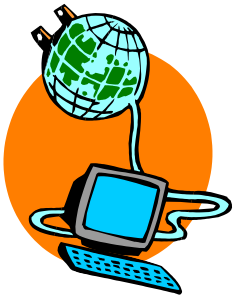
Friday & Saturday, October 14 & 15, 2005
 Hawaii Foster Parent Association
 10th Annual Conference
 Sheraton Waikiki, Honolulu, HI
 8:30 am - 4:00 pm

Join us for two days of fun and learning with exciting mainland and local speakers who will help you fill your foster parenting "tool box" with new and effective tools.

Registration brochures will be sent out in August.

New Articles Posted on HFPA Website

www.hawaii Foster parent.org



Check out the website on a regular basis to find new articles, resources and events listings. Recently added items include a phone list of DHS workers, including e-mail address information; details about the DHS Program Improvement Plan (PIP); recommended books; latest edition of the newsletter; scholarship information; contact information for public health nurses; and enhancement funds. Under "Court Hearings" you'll find sample foster parent court reports and a blank form you can download and fill out before your next court hearing.

News from the Neighbor Islands

Maui Hosts Appreciation Luncheon

Scott Seto

Maui Department of Human Services

Foster parents were honored at the sixth annual Foster Parent Appreciation Luncheon at the Maui Tropical Plantations restaurant. Fifty Maui foster parents attended the event sponsored by the Maui DHS in association with the Maui Friends of the Children's Justice Center. Presenters from the community included Child and Family Service, Maui Youth and Family Services, Hui Malama, Maui Police Department, the Attorney General's office and Hawaii Behavioral Health. The mayor's office was represented by Herman Andaya, who presented each foster parent with a certificate of appreciation signed by Mayor Alan Arakawa.

Thanks to Sgt. Hervina Santos of the Maui Police Department for donating door prizes and to the Roling Foundation and the Maui Art Gallery for their generous monetary contributions. A great time was had by all !!



Kauai Celebrates Foster Families

Kirstie Kashima

Kauai Foster Care Training Committee

More than 150 children and their families gathered at the Lihue Neighborhood Center for a holiday party for foster children and other victims of child abuse and neglect. The children enjoyed games and activities such as fish pond, crafts, bowling, hula hoop toss, face painting and a visit from Santa and Happy the Clown.

Volunteers from many agencies made this fifth annual party a huge success: Hale `Opio Kaua`i, Inc., Department of Human Services, foster parents, Department of Health, Queen Liliuokalani Children's Center, Department of Education, Drug Reduction Task Force, Hawaii Behavioral Health, Child & Family Service, Family Guidance Center, Kauai High School Riflery Club, and the Kula High School Interact Club, which is sponsored by the Rotary Club of Hanalei Bay.

Major funding for this annual event came from the Friends of the Children's Justice Center via a grant from the Victoria S. and Bradley L. Geist Foundation. Other donors of goods and services included

Duct-Ter Sheet Metal, Juana Hilario, Gary Pacheco, Gerard Koerte, Allison Perry, Fumiko Gluck, Marie Manguchei Joyce Chuang, Al Alamodin, Connie Browne and Fireman Colin Wilson and the Hawaii Firefighter's Association.

The holiday party was coordinated by the Kauai Foster Care Training Committee, a group of foster parents and public and private human service agency personnel. Their mission is to enhance the lives of foster children by providing nurturing, support and training for their caregivers.



Holiday Party held on Oahu

Paula Franzmeier

On December 19, 2004, the Neil Blaisdell Center was THE place to be -- the annual Foster Family Programs of Hawaii (formerly Friends of Foster Kids) holiday event. Every inch of the exhibition hall was full of activity as more than 350 volunteers made the day possible for Oahu's foster families. Along each wall there were activities for the children to choose from: ping pong, basketball, face painting, hair styling by Paul Mitchell volunteers, Tunes with Tino, and various arts & crafts. Linda Coble and Kirk Matthews kept the day running smoothly with their expert emcee skills.

More than 600 foster families were served a sit-down turkey dinner complete with all the trimmings. Each of the 1,078 foster children present received a wrapped, age-appropriate gift. The foster families' biological children received holiday gifts, too

Plans are already underway for next year's event. If you are interested in providing donations or volunteering, Foster Family Programs of Hawaii may be contacted at **521-9531**, or in Hilo at **(808) 935-2876**.



FFP Board Member, Linda Dooman, serving turkey dinner with a smile.

Community Service Project Benefits Youth in Foster Care

*Darlene Vysoky
UH Bachelor of Social Work
Student Organization*

During the Christmas season, the UH Bachelor of Social Work Student Organization sponsored two projects: 1) provide foster children with Christmas presents and 2) provide activities for the foster youth at their Christmas party. Both were a resounding success and a lot of fun.

We set up a Giving Tree at Wal-mart Kunia on the busiest shopping day of the year- the day after Thanksgiving! We had so much fun asking people to help support this great cause, and remarkably, we walked away with 100 gifts, including a bike, radios, and a stereo system. With the support of our students and faculty, we were able to provide an additional 50 presents.

Our second project was to provide activities for foster youth at the Foster Family Programs annual holiday party. With a donation from Wal-Mart Kunia, we purchased a portable basketball set, balls, a ping pong table,



BSW volunteers and friends at the Friends of Foster Kids Christmas Party.

Front row, l. to r.: Darlene Vysoky, Lisa Kuhlman, Melissa Lapastora. Back row: Kate Keener, Greg Farstrup, Ranelle Takahashi, Travis Masuda, Hugh Carlin, Brian Kano and Jermaine Turner.

a foosball table, dartboards, supplies for an "art wall" and refreshments for our volunteers. The "Youth Corner" at the party was one of the most popular areas of the party. All the children had a blast!

After the event, we donated all of the sporting equipment to Hale Kipa, Inc., a program that houses youth and runaways. Coincidentally, they had been creating a recreation room for the kids, so receiving this equipment was right on time and extremely appreciated.

These events took a lot of hard work, planning, and follow-through, but we had a lot of great support. Thanks to Sarah Casken and the Hawaii Foster Parent Association, Elaine Chung, DHS liaison

to FOFK, Sophie and Karen of Wal-Mart, Robert Loomis of Costco, Candy Santos of Hale Kipa, the customers of Wal-Mart and the students and faculty of the UH School of Social Work. A special thanks to all the volunteers who gave their time, patience and love at the party to work with the foster kids and have a great time.

Letters to the Editor



Dear HFPA,

Thank you for providing such great opportunities for us this holiday season. We appreciated the tickets to Breakfast with Santa and the Magic Show. The "Grease" Broadway production at the Neal Blaisdell was a fun and high energy production. It felt so good to watch a performance on stage. Growing up, my family attended several Broadway events, I have not been able to do that for many years. This note is just a small token of gratitude for all you do for foster families. May you receive many blessings in 2005.

--The Rogers Family

(ed. note: Tickets for community events are often made available to HFPA. Many are provided at the last minute. Check the website often for postings about tickets that may have become available. Go to www.hawaiifosterparent.org and click on "Resources.")

Hello Sarah and staff,

How are you doing today? I am fine. It is very cold here in Afghanistan now with some rain. The wind blows so hard at night that I think I am going to wake up and my tent is going to be gone. I have had a few soldiers asking about the Foster Pride Program. Could you provide contact information? It would be greatly appreciated.

My unit received so many letters from the FOFK Christmas party at the Blaisdell. The letters from the children were a nice surprise. My wife was running a booth that consisted of the children writing letters to the soldiers and the Department mailing them off. I still have the letters that I received and so do my soldiers.

I want to thank you and your staff for everything that you do. Take Care.

--Tim Smith

Foster parent serving in Afghanistan

Dear Ms. Casken,

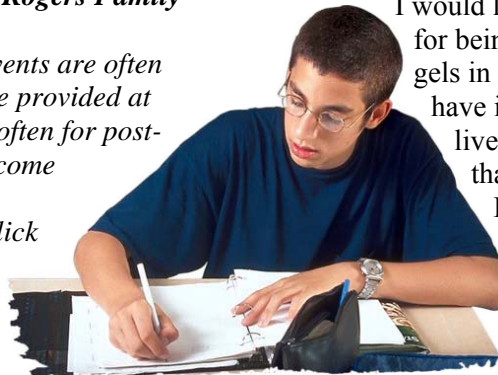
Thank you for your letter of February 24. Paula Ann Burgess-Tauala has consistently provided outstanding reports about the Hawaii Foster Parent Association's invaluable programs. Your organization's success in educating, supporting and nurturing foster and adoptive parents is vital in the islands; and we are truly pleased to be a part of your good work....Our collaborative efforts in serving Waianae's foster children and families are deeply rewarding. We look forward to a continued relationship in which we mālama this extraordinary community.

**--Dr. Juvenna M. Chang, Dean
Kamehameha Schools**

Dear Ms. Casken,

I would like to express my congratulations for being honored by receiving the Angels in Adoption National Award. You have indeed made a difference in the lives of children and the organizations that support them. On behalf of the First Judicial Circuit, we thank you for your many contributions to children and families in our community.

**--William A. Santos
Chief Court Administrator**



Hi Sarah,

I received your newsletter today. Just wanted to tell you I think you guys do a great job on it. It's a nice balance of reporting events, giving info, and recognizing your donors.

--Gay Tsukamaki

Dear HFPA,

Congratulations for the untiring work of HFPA and the national award by the Angels in Adoption. Please add this monetary gift as a measure of my support of the work foster parents carry out endlessly.

Anonymous



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

Name (First & Last):		
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<p>Yes, I want to support quality foster care for Hawaii's children. Enclosed is my tax-deductible gift of:</p> <p> <input type="checkbox"/> \$35 <input type="checkbox"/> \$75 <input type="checkbox"/> Other \$ _____ <input type="checkbox"/> \$50 <input type="checkbox"/> \$125 </p>		
Payment Method:		
<input type="checkbox"/> Check enclosed <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; border-top: 1px solid black; margin-top: 10px;"> _____ _____ _____ </div> <p style="font-size: small; margin-top: 5px;"> <i>Card Number</i> <i>Cardholder's Signature</i> <i>Expiration Date</i> </p> <input type="checkbox"/> My company will match my gift—the necessary form is enclosed. <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, please send me the next four quarterly newsletters, mailed directly from the HFPA office. <p style="text-align: center;">❖ This gift will be acknowledged in the HFPA Bulletin unless requested otherwise.</p> <p style="text-align: center; font-size: small;"><i>In accordance with IRS regulations, your gift to the Hawaii Foster Parent Association is fully tax-deductible.</i></p>		



Federal Tax Benefits for Foster and Adoptive Parents and Kinship Caregivers



During this time of year, we get many calls from foster parents regarding taxes. At our website, www.hawaiifosterparent.org, we have posted under “Articles, Financial Information” a tax information booklet provided by the Casey Family Programs National Center for Resource Family Support. This booklet has not yet been updated for this tax year, but most of the information seems to remain the same from year to year. If an updated version is made available, we will post it on the web. This information on tax benefits is of a general nature, and should not be acted upon except in consultation with a professional tax advisor. You should download the booklet and give a copy to your tax preparer.



In the summer of 2001, the Federal Adoption Tax Credit was updated. The most important update was to expand benefits to children with special needs adopted from the U.S. foster care system. Originally families adopting from the foster care system could claim the adoption tax credit, provided they had qualifying expenses. Unfortunately, the IRS list of qualifying expenses was limited to the cost of the adoption process, but not the day-to-day costs of raising a child with special needs. So starting in tax year **2003**, families adopting a child with special needs from foster care, had access to this same tax credit without needing to document expenses. For tax year **2004**, the tax credit is \$10,390 and you have up to five years in which to use it. For more information, go to www.nacac.org and click on Public Policy, Tax Credit.



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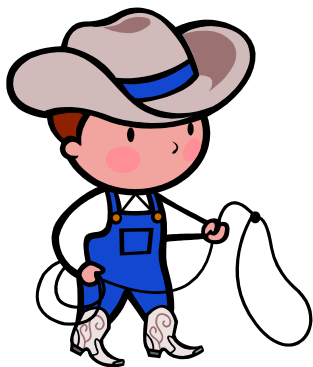
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Foster Parent Roundup

**A fundraiser in celebration of
foster families as a kickoff to
Foster Care Month in May.**

Foster parents: Check the website at www.hawaiifosterparent.org or call us at 263-0920 for the latest information about the availability of free tickets to this event. Space is limited.



**What: Lunch at Outback Steakhouse
1765 Ala Moana Blvd**

**When: Sunday, April 17, 2005
11:00 am – 1:00 pm**

Want to support this event?

Sponsorship is being solicited from companies and individuals who want to support and acknowledge the important work of foster families. Event proceeds will be used to provide support and education to foster parents.

If you or your company would like to sponsor tickets for foster parents and their children, please call us at **263-0920** or **428-6798** or e-mail us at info@hawaiifosterparent.org. Tickets are \$22 each and are tax-deductible to the fullest extent allowed by law. Sponsor a family of 10 for \$220.

Inside This Issue

1	<i>“Better Start” for Youth Preparing for College</i>
2	<i>Child Specific Foster Parent Training Expands</i>
3	<i>Enhancement Funds; Mahalo for Donations</i>
4	<i>Websites for Youth in Foster Care</i>
5	<i>Conference Evaluation Data</i>
6	<i>Insurance; Centralized Intake Services</i>
7, 8, 9	<i>Upcoming Foster Family Events and Recap of Past Events</i>
10	<i>Letters to the Editor</i>
11	<i>Federal Tax Benefits; Support HFPA</i>