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My Journey Home

By Jaime Wieland and Wilma Friesema

Aloha. I'm both nervous and excited to be telling you my story. Wilma is helping me write it, but the events and perspectives are my own. My wish is this: if you're a parent whose children were taken away by CWS you will find hope, and if you're a service provider you will find gratitude and inspiration. My journey home hasn't been an easy one, but it has been showered with kindness and support. I didn't always see the kindness or recognize the support, but it was there. I just had to be open to it.



Wieland Family

But I'm getting ahead of myself. I'll start my story when I first *lost* my home. I was in the 4th grade when I was taken into foster care because of abuse. My parents were getting divorced so life was hard. Once in care, I ran away a lot and bounced between foster homes until, at age 13, I was placed with a maternal auntie. I lived with her until I aged out. I didn't finish High School.

I met Gordon, the father of my children, when I was 16. I had our first child, a boy, when I was 18, and our second child, a girl, 11 months later. It was after the birth of our second child that I got fired up to go back to school and get my diploma. Gordon was in and out of jail so I knew I had to find a way to take care of myself and my babies. I buckled down and attended Waipahu school for adults. Once I got my diploma, I went on to Leeward Community College to get my Certified Nursing Assistance (CNA) license.

I worked as a CNA for a long time and at a lot of different nursing homes and hospitals. I loved helping patients and had pride in my work. On the home front though, it was messier. Gordon was still in and out of our lives, as was drugs and domestic violence. We were both hot-headed and set each other off, but we loved each other too.

I was 27 when I had another baby girl. It was hard to handle so many kids and the stress really got to me. I was overwhelmed and kept missing work. I started using drugs as a way to cope. Drugs felt like the only way I could check out and get some relief, but, in reality, they didn't help. Our family life was spiraling down.

My youngest was two years old when I got arrested. I spent a week in jail (OCCC) and that's when CWS first removed my children. When I got out of OCCC my kids came home, but CWS monitored us for 14 months. During that time I had to do a lot of services: parenting and anger management classes, drug treatment through Hina Mauka outpatient services, and therapy. To be honest, none of those services really worked because I didn't think I had a problem; I was just going through the motions to get my kids back. I thought I was a good mom because I loved my kids. I saw CWS and the service providers as the *real* problem.

Fast forward: at 32 I have another child, a boy, and all my children are in care because of my drug use. Also, my older children are using drugs too. Our family has fallen apart. In hindsight I can see how drugs really are a family disease because your kids start doing what you do. If you use it to cope, they will too.

After losing my kids a second time, I decided to do things differently. I entered the inpatient drug treatment program at Hina Mauka where I learned about myself and my triggers. Instead of going through the motions I actually wanted to learn because I desperately wanted my life to be different. I wanted my kids back and to never lose them again. After two years, my two youngest were returned; my oldest several years after that.

It's been a long, hard journey to get where I am today. I had to admit I had problems and be humble enough to accept guidance and help. I had to be responsible for myself, be aware of my triggers, and learn to cope without drugs. The Hina Mauka program, along with living in a clean and sober house for a year, taught me so much. I learned about boundaries, the downside of enabling, and how to actually live life as a sober adult. It was a life saver.

But there have been many life savers. My list of services could fill a book – from Drug Court, to Wrap services, to

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HUI HO'OMALU STATEWIDE RESOURCE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The Hui Ho'omalua Statewide Resource Advisory Committee (RAC) provides support to the resource family community through identifying ongoing needs, facilitating communication and by sharing resources.

The Building Connections Newsletter is published four times a year to provide information regarding foster and adoptive care to resource families, service providers, and to the public.

This newsletter may be viewed on the following websites:

www.hawaii.gov/dhs/protection/social_services/child_welfare/foster

www.pidfoundation.org

Partners in Development

Foundation

2040 Bachelot St.

Honolulu, Hawai'i 96817-2433

If you would like to receive this newsletter, please call:

441-1125 (O'ahu),

888-879-8970 (Toll Free) or

E-mail: RAC@pidfoundation.org

GO GREEN!

Want to help our environment? Contact us today and request an electronic copy!



Understanding Why Foster Children Act the Way that They Do

by "Shining Goose", a former foster youth

Have you ever seen turtles hatching from their eggs? It's a beautiful sight; they emerge slowly from the sand by themselves and crawl into the ocean to start their lives. One interesting thing is noticeable: the parents of these turtles are nowhere to be found. Baby turtles are born and grow without their parents. That is how turtles have evolved and they continue to propagate that way successfully. Unlike those little baby turtles, we humans are not so independent. In fact, we are complete opposites. For the very first few years of our lives, we are completely incapable of survival; we can't eat by ourselves, we can't defend ourselves, and we can't build shelter for ourselves. Even as we begin to talk, walk, and grow, we are still dependent on our parents financially



and emotionally; the love and affection of a parent is just as important as the food and protection they provide. Parents, with their love and support, are a necessary part of the young human's survival. However, what if the parents are incapable of supporting their child? How does the child fare in those scenarios?

There is a very popular theory in psychology called Adult Attachment Theory. Psychologists John Bowlby and Mary Ainsworth spent their careers studying the effects of relationships between young children and their parents, the consequences of a separation¹ and how the interaction between child and parent in youth has a significant impact on that child's adult relationships. Bowlby and Ainsworth surmised that there are different attachment styles that are divided into 4 quadrants:

1. "Secure": a child who received unconditional love and had a strong bond with parents.
2. "Anxious-Preoccupied": a child who received love and attention in unpredictable intervals, leading to an adult who is anxious and "clingy" over their relationships, worried those relationships may go away.
3. "Dismissive-Avoidant": a child whose emotional needs were not met by parents, thus leading to an adult who values independence, avoids intimacy, and avoids commitment.
4. "Anxious-Avoidant": an unfortunate mix of #2 and #3, this child is likely to have been abused or heavily neglected by their parents. They yearn for love and relationships, yet are scared by it.

Now, what does all of this have to do with the turtles and why foster children behave the way they do? It is because foster children are very likely to be between #3 and #4 on the attachment quadrant. Their parents were not able to properly care for them so they may build an emotional wall of indifference and mistrust around their heart. Or they may self-sabotage their stable, adult relationships with avoidance or outbursts, as a defensive mechanism against being hurt.

When I was in foster care, I never had outbursts. In fact, my resource caregivers would describe me as a low-maintenance foster child. The truth was that I was hurting deep inside. I kept an online journal when I was 17-18 that I recently re-read. I documented all my hate, my insecurity, my loneliness, and my desires to have a normal life not in a foster home. The world saw a young man who was quiet and kept to himself. But inside I was a damaged little boy who had erected a wall rivaling the Great Wall of China around my heart, to keep myself from the unbearable pain I've experienced since childhood. After being emancipated, I spent many years thinking I was abnormal. Maybe autistic, maybe a psychopath. But my feelings and behaviors were actually very normal for children who grew up with extreme neglect like I did. Knowing that has helped me to better understand my deficiencies and allowed me to make a concentrated effort towards improving how I relate with people.

There is no formula for being a resource caregiver, but knowing the background of your foster children can help you gauge their attachment style and what issues you are likely to see in their behavior now and in the future. One recommendation I have for resource caregivers is this: practice "unconditional positive regard" (UPR)². This is a method that many psychotherapists use to establish trust with their patients to provide an environment for personal growth. UPR involves listening to the person, without judgement and criticism. UPR is not about approval or liking - UPR is about understanding and giving the feeling of acceptance, both of which are powerful feelings that are likely foreign to your foster children. Examples of when UPR may be useful are when your foster children do some troublesome things such as running away, yelling at you, using illegal drugs, ditching school, or getting into fights. Your initial reaction may be anger or frustration. But, by addressing your foster children with UPR, you can help them with their personal growth.

¹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Attachment_in_adults, <http://psycnet.apa.org/journals/amp/46/4/333/>

² https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Unconditional_positive_regard

May is National Foster Care Month

Mahalo!!!

*to Hawai'i's Resource Caregivers
who have opened their hearts & homes
for our keiki in foster care &
Changed a Lifetime*



My Journey Home (cont.)

therapy – but through them all it was the providers who really made the difference. I eventually came to see that *they* weren't the problem; they were my helpers encouraging me on my journey home. What they did is help me to return to my true self, to who I really am without the crutch of drugs and the baggage of my past. It's because of them that I've made this discovery: I'm much stronger than I thought. Life still throws me challenges, but I always find my way through them.

My faith in God – surrendering, trusting, and leaning on him – has helped me through all this too, and has made trusting others easier. I've found it always helps to seek out an understanding that's bigger than my own. That's how I grow, that's how I heal.

Now my life is so much easier without drugs. When I eliminated drugs I eliminated chaos, my self-worth grew, I came to know my own strength, and I became a healthier mom for my kids. And you know what? They copy me in that too. The more stable and consistent I am, the more they trust me and themselves. My two youngest children live with me, along with my granddaughter, and all three of them are thriving. I am so proud of the thoughtful, intelligent people they are becoming. Instead of falling apart, our family is now growing closer and stronger. My mom lives with us too, and together we support each other on this continuing journey. Even our dog is happy!

In reflection, I can see my journey home wasn't about arriving at a place; it was about being true to what I love. My family, my faith, and my aspirations are what matter, are what give me a home in myself. My derailment from that started years ago, but with a lot of work and a lot of help I truly am back on track. It hasn't been an easy journey, but it has totally been worth it. For all you parents, know this: it's never too late to make those first important steps. And for all you providers: your help can and does make all the difference. For me, nothing has been more important than this journey of recovery and discovery. I am finally truly home in myself, and with my kids. I never want to leave again.



Prudent Parenting: Common Question

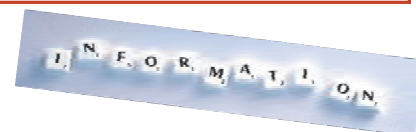
The following is an excerpt from the *Don't Say "NO" Before You "Know"* guide, created by the State of Hawai'i Department of Human Services, Child Welfare Services. The guide presents common questions and answers for Resource Caregivers on how to provide normalcy for children/young people in foster care, so that the children/youth can participate equally with their classmates and peers in age or developmentally appropriate extracurricular, social, and cultural activities. These Q & A's can be found within the Normalcy Guidelines provided by your DHS licensing worker.

Question: Is there funding available through the Department to help pay for some of the costs of extracurricular activities? Example: community football, dance lessons, cheerleading, etc.

Answer: YES. Resource Caregivers may ask the child/young person's social worker for assistance in helping to pay for the cost of extracurricular activities. The worker will look at availability of funds through the Department's payment system as well as through the *Enhancement funds and *Ho'ola Na Mana'o (Friends of Children's Justice Center) funds. *Limited funding amount available each year.



Resource Family Basics



Did you know this about **Financial Assistance for Summer Fun & Recreational Activities?**

Resource caregivers may be reimbursed for group activity fees such as scouts, YMCA, YWCA, Boys and Girls club, soccer or baseball? Tuition waivers for City and County Summer Fun Programs are available for those who apply. Contact the child's SSA or SW.

You can find this information under the *Financial Assistance for Summer Fun & Recreational Activities* section on the Resource Family Basics document. This is just one example of the wealth of information you can find in the Resource Family Basics to help resource families! Learn about different financial assistance, services, and resources, that are available and so much more! Go to the website below to see all that it has to offer!

<https://humanservices.hawaii.gov/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/RESOURCE-FAMILY-BASICS-with-signature-082516.pdf>

HI H.O.P.E.S. Update: Focusing on Youth Rights, A Plan of Action

By Keola Limkin

Aloha mai kākou! My name is Keola Limkin and I am a former foster youth and an advocate for foster youth rights and well-being. I have been involved with foster youth advocacy and have been serving on the HI HOPES (which stands for: Hawai'i Helping Our People Envision Success) Youth Leadership Board since 2011. Till this day, it continues to be one of my life's greatest passions.

The HI HOPES Youth Leadership Board is a group comprised of current and former foster youth between the ages of 14-26. These young leaders span across the Island chain on Kaua'i, O'ahu, Maui, and West and East Hawai'i. HI HOPES serves as the Youth Advisory Council for the Department of Human Services – Child Welfare Services, and provides the youth a voice for the Hawai'i Youth Opportunities Initiative (HYOI). Lastly, we pride ourselves in our role which is to educate people on the needs of foster youth, collaborate with community partners, and advocate for improved outcomes.

The HI HOPES board has been focusing on empowering young people in foster care over the last year and will continue to do so this year. In 2016, board members participated in efforts to support Normalcy and Prudent Parenting through legislative advocacy, panels, a video and other presentations. A bill, which supported extracurricular activity and qualified immunity for caregivers who exercise the prudent parenting standards, was signed into laws on June 29, 2016.

HI HOPES board members also worked on foster youth rights. They discussed updating the current bill of rights, or Guiding Principles, at the annual Summit held in January. Several presentations, workshops and meetings with stakeholders were held in 2016 to educate youth and supporters about foster youth rights, and to display the importance of implementing them and updating them.

In 2017, the HI HOPES boards will be working with key stakeholders to craft legislation for the 2018 session that will update the Guiding Principles. They will advocate for the proposed changes with testimony. HI HOPES board members will also be working with Child Welfare Services and the Deputy Attorney's office to craft a youth-friendly grievance process for young people in care to utilize if they feel their rights have been violated. The "Right For You" campaign will be launched by HI HOPES board members in 2017. This campaign is a continued effort to promote empowerment and self-advocacy for young people in care through education on the importance of foster youth rights, the creation of a grievance process, encouraging youth participation in case planning and court hearing, and participation in the Youth Leadership Institute, which promotes education and self-advocacy for young people and their adult supporters.

For anyone interested in applying for the HI HOPES board, applications are available at epicohana.org for current or former foster youth between the ages of 14-26. Other individual supporters are welcome to provide testimony during the 2018's legislative session. Mahalo piha -- thank you very much.



Bake Sale Fundraiser

On February 14, 2017, the Glue Committee had another successful Valentine's Day themed Bake Sale fundraiser that included a Silent Auction! All of the money raised goes towards supporting statewide events for Hawai'i's resource families and youth in foster care.

We were very fortunate to once again partner with, and receive an abundance of donations from our Dole Cannery neighbor, **Hawai'i Information Service (HIS)**. They held pre-bake sale fundraisers, provided baked goods to sell, helped to spread the word, AND all funds raised were provided to the Glue Committee!

There were so many amazing items to bid on, and of course, delectable goodies! There was an array of tantalizing homemade treats such as cookies, brownies, cupcakes, organic popcorn, banana bread, strawberry cake, and lemon bars, all of which drew in the

crowds. The success of this event wouldn't have been possible without the help, support and donations of many individuals, organizations, and companies!



Mahalo!

Big City Diner
Big Island Candies
Carol Morimoto Jewelry
Catholic Charities Hawai'i
Department of Human Services

Family Programs Hawai'i
FCTC Committee
Glue Committee
HAPA Committee
Hawai'i Information Service
Kyo-ya Hotels & Resorts, LP

Partners in Development Foundation
Pizza Hut
Pono Life Coaching
Sea Life Park Hawai'i
The Old Spaghetti Factory

Grandparents Raising Grandchildren

By Shane Taylor, Catholic Charities Hawai'i

The information in this article can be found in: **Grandparents as Parents: A survival Guide for Raising a Second Family**, Sylvie de Toledo & Deborah Edler Brown, 1991.



Sometimes the call comes at night, sometimes on a bright morning. It may be your child, the police, or child protective services. 'Mama, I've messed up....' 'We're sorry. There has been an accident....' 'Mrs. Smith, we have your grandchild. Can you take him?' Sometimes you make the call yourself – reporting your own child to the authorities in a desperate attempt to protect your grandchild from abuse or neglect. Often the change is gradual. At first your grandchild is with you for a day, then four days, a month, and then two months...You are no longer watching your grandchildren, you are raising them.

The Reasons for Grandparenting

There are many complicated reasons why grandchildren need grandparents to care for them...the reasons you take them in are straightforward and simple: love, duty, and the bonds of family.

(A Child's Quote):

"I live with my grandma because my mom left me on a hotel bench to go get a cup of coffee. You're not supposed to leave babies by themselves." - Erica, age seven

Taking Immediate Action

While each family has different needs, there are a few things that every grandparent should look into as soon as possible:

- ✓ *Consider other options.* Some grandparents don't have the health or resources to raise a second family. If you have family members who can help out, you might consider letting them step in or at least sharing the responsibility with them.
- ✓ *Keep records.* One of the most important things you can do when your grandchildren arrive is to start taking notes. You will be the one trying to protect your grandchildren's rights – in court, in school, and in the welfare system.
- ✓ *Look into financial aid.* Raising children is expensive.
- ✓ *Keep medical records.* Accurate medical records can be critical when you raise a child. Few children arrive with records of any kind, but if you can somehow acquire them, they will make your life easier.
- ✓ *Find your own emotional support.* Look around at your resources. Who can be your emotional support? Whom can you turn to for help?

How to Cope

As you move into a life with your grandchild, here are a few key points to remember:

- ✓ *Prioritize.* Decide what is most important and handle that first. Childcare is primary. Think about after-school care.
- ✓ *Don't just take one day at a time; take one thing at a time.* Get the children ready for school, then make your shopping list and schedule your afternoon. Plan for small increments.
- ✓ *Take time for yourself.* Structure your life in a way that works for you; find a routine that gives you downtime. What can you do to refuel? Is it a movie? Reading the paper? Make time for it.
- ✓ *Make life easy.* Try lightening your load.
- ✓ *Set limits with your grandchildren.* Setting rules and limits, like private time or a regular bedtime (earlier than yours!), will give you a little time here and there for yourself.
- ✓ *Ask for help.* Look for *people* support. If you have supportive friends, use them. Also, find other people who have gone through what you are going through. It's important to know you're not alone.
- ✓ *Get into a support group.* Therapy and support groups are a safe second family. You may also find resources in a group.
- ✓ *Consider your religious community.* Many people get strength from their faith.
- ✓ *Focus on the positive.* Keep in mind why you are doing this and what you have accomplished. In spite of all the stress, there are rewards.



Moments of Pure Joy

Grandparents sacrifice a lot to raise grandchildren, but there are rewards: the relief of knowing that the grandchildren are safe and happy, the wonder of watching them grow, the pride of their accomplishments.

There may be times when you, as a resource caregiver, have a question or concern and are not sure where to go for help. We will be presenting scenarios in each newsletter as a way to highlight different situations and suggestions on "Who Ya Gonna Call?"

Who Ya Gonna Call?

Another happy day...the foster youth in your home was reunified with her birth parents! Even after 20 years of being a resource caregiver, you can't imagine doing anything else. As you're sitting with your cup of coffee reminiscing of all the children who have come and gone from your home, the phone rings. After telling your daughter the happy news and that you currently don't have any youth in your home, she states, "This is the perfect time for you to jump on a plane and visit me!" You're thrilled at the idea but you're not exactly sure who to inform that you'll be taking a short break from fostering. Pull out your handy dandy "Who Ya Gonna Call" list that was also in the January 2017 Building Connections Newsletter. Look under *Time off needed before accepting another child* where you'll find that your Licensing Social Worker is the person to call.

Time Off



Welcome to FPH's Resource Family Support Services Corner

By Salome Bala, RFSS Warm Line Family Resource Specialist
Resource Family Support Services (RFSS) is funded by the Department of Human Services

Ask the Warm Line



Salome Bala

Aloha, my name is Salome Bala and I would like to introduce myself as the new Family Resource Specialist at Family Programs Hawai'i, where I will be happily assisting you on the Warm Line. I feel a special passion when it comes to Hawai'i's Resource Caregivers because I myself was one! I feel that I have come full circle in my life as a social worker because I started out as a case manager for DHS Child Welfare Services, became a Resource Caregiver after I left DHS, became an adoptive parent, and now have landed here at the Warm Line. I look forward to being a support for all of you and hearing from you soon!

Thank you to all of the Statewide resource caregivers who call the Warm Line to inquire about trainings, Care to Share, support, and referrals. It's always a pleasure to talk with you and help you navigate through the process of being a resource caregiver! I recently had a question about what are the various ways of contacting the Warm Line. Unfortunately the 808-545-1130 Warm Line number as well as the toll free 1-866-545-0882 Warm Line number is currently not working.

Q: Is there another phone number that I can call to reach the Warm Line?

A: Yes, the Warm Line can also be contacted at 808-348-1255. Please feel free to call this number during regular Warm Line hours from 8:30am-5:00 pm. If you are calling outside of the operating hours, you can also leave a voice message. This is a cell phone so you can also send me a text message on this number!

Q: Can I email the Warm Line?

A: Yes, you can also email the Warm Line with any questions or concerns. You can email the Warm Line at the following email address: warmline@familyprogramshawaii.org

Q: Can the Warm Line be reached via any social media outlets?

A: Yes! Family Programs Hawai'i RFSS has a page on Facebook! You can direct message us there as well. If you are on Facebook, look up Family Programs Hawai'i RFSS and you will find us there.

Thank you all for your patience and understanding while we are having technical difficulties with the Warm Line number.

Also, if you are a Resource Caregiver looking for training hours, our Annual Conference is coming up during the last week of April. Please be on the lookout for the flyer coming soon to your mailbox!

Resource Families Support Services

Get to know your resources!

Resource Families Support Services, or RFSS for short, offers different programs aimed to support you and your family as you open your home and your heart to a child who is or has been involved in the Child Welfare System. The services we provide include the Warm Line, Quarterly Trainings, and Support Groups, not to mention the Annual Conferences and the Care to Share Program.

What makes the Warm Line so great?

You can get access to resources and services that you never even knew existed! We have a dedicated Family Resource Specialist to answer phone calls and emails to the Warm Line, who can provide support and information about being a resource family. The Warm Line can get you connected to trainings, support groups, child-care, and giveaways through the Care to Share Program. The Warm Line can also provide you with resources and referrals in the community. Just give us a call, Monday through Friday 8:30 am-5:00 pm, and we can provide you with one to one support.



Why should you attend a Quarterly Training or the Annual Conference?

Our quarterly trainings and conferences are planned with you and your needs in mind. We seek out knowledgeable trainers and professionals for topics that are important for caregivers. We rely on your feedback to make things as convenient and comfortable as possible for resource caregivers! These are some of the things that other resource families liked best from past trainings:

- ◆ "...the skills she [the trainer] talked about, I did with my 6 foster children – and it worked!!"
- ◆ "The information shared by Dr. Kealoha will help me in understanding the wants and needs of foster children."
 - *Understanding and Responding to Youth's Challenging Behaviors presented by Dr. Chanel Kealoha*
- ◆ "Applies to resource parents on skills for self as well as kids."
 - *Mindfulness: How to Support Youth that Display Challenging Behaviors presented by JoYi Rhys*
- ◆ "Trainer had compassion and sensitivity to the individual perspective."
 - *Giving Grief Guidance: Navigating Loss and Trauma presented by Cynthia Rollo-Carlson, MSW, MA, LCSW, LADC, CT*
- ◆ "The knowledge and meeting more caregivers and people from the agencies that help."
 - *Overmedication and Children in Foster Care presented by Colin Fukunaga*

Continued on pg. 7

Resource Families Support Services (cont.)

What do resource families get out of attending Support Groups?

We could tell you why we think you should come to our support groups, but we thought other resource families would do a better job. When we asked them to tell us what they got out of attending support groups, they said:



- "It's helpful to hear from other families how they deal with different situations. Also to get answers about adopting, since so many have gone [through] it or are struggling [through] the process." *Central O'ahu Support Group – 6 Groups Attended.*
- "Since you can share or listen as much as you like, it truly is for everyone and gives the kids a chance to mingle with other kids 'just like them'. You definitely come home with a new idea or two, or at least happy to share the camaraderie of fellow caregivers." *Central O'ahu Support Group – 5 Groups Attended.*
- "Great bonding experience and you don't feel alone with what's happening in your family situation." *Central O'ahu Support Group – 5 Groups Attended.*

Here's what some resource caregivers want to tell you about Support Groups!

- "They should come to get any questions answered." *Maui Support Group – First Time Attendee.*
- "Come and check it out. It may seem intimidating at first. Just come for the food (Ono), stay for the fellowship. I have made lifelong friends and not felt so alone in this journey when I attend support groups." *Central O'ahu Support Group – 12 Groups Attended.*

RFSS is passionate about helping you help kids, and we would love to see you and your family attend our events or give us a call on the Warm Line. Please reach out to us and let us know what we can do to better support you. Mahalo!

Adoptive Families Needed Through Wendy's Wonderful Kids

~ Nick ~

Nick is a 17-year-old Caucasian male who desires to live in a family "of my own, just like other kids do." He enjoys playing video games and drawing, but would rather be outside doing activities, such as skateboarding, fishing, surfing, and other water sports.

Nick has been described as caring and determined. He is eager to please and loves to receive adult attention. He is social and loves to talk story with others.

A forever family for Nick must be calm, structured and predictable. Like most teens, he desires a family who will give him freedom, but at the same time needs routines in place and close monitoring. He also needs clear, direct and positive communication. Nick functions best with a low-level of stimulation and most frequently has trouble managing peer relationships. He would do best as an only child and would prefer a two-parent family.

Nick is a youth who longs to be connected to a family that will share their lives with him. He would prefer living in Central O'ahu to live near his older brother, but is open to living in other parts of the island as long as it's not in a noisy area. He is most successful in relating to males, and his Forever Home will need to include an invested male caregiver who can model successful family relationships for him.

Wendy's Wonderful Kids seeks to find **good homes for great kids in tough situations**. If you are interested in learning more about Nick and his need for permanent, nurturing connections, please contact April Lum, Wendy's Wonderful Kids Recruiter, at (808)540-2552 or by email at alum@familyprogramshi.org.



Forever Family

'OHANA REWARDS

Want to know how you could receive a \$200.00 gift card?

Would you like your name to appear in a future RAC newsletter?

All you need to do is help us find more homes for Hawai'i's keiki in foster care!

If you can refer, help, cheer, and see your referral to the finish line to become licensed, you could earn a \$200 gift card of your choice and be listed here as an 'Ohana Rewards recipient!

Joy Lewis
Esther & Brad McDaniel
Kina Pule

Call Hui Ho'omalu today at 441-1117 or
1-888-879-8970 (toll free) for more information!

Help! Looking For Stories!

Would you like to share some helpful tips? Got an inspirational story to tell? Know of some useful resources in your community?

These are just some of the many possibilities that you can contribute to this newsletter. Please send them over so we can all benefit from each other's wisdom!

We would also appreciate any feedback, comments and suggestions on ways that we can improve this newsletter so that it is useful to you. What would you like to see in it? Topics of interest? We look forward to hearing from you!

Email: RAC@pidfoundation.org

Educational Stability for Children in Foster Care

Children and youth in foster care represent one of the most vulnerable student subgroups in this country. Of the approximately 415,000 children in foster care in 2014, nearly 270,000 were in elementary and secondary schools.¹ Studies find that children in foster care are much more likely than their peers to struggle academically and fall behind in school. Students in foster care at age 17 are also less likely to graduate from high school, with only 65 percent graduating by age 21² compared to 86 percent among all youth ages 18 to 24.³

Children in foster care experience much higher levels of residential and school instability than their peers; one study showed that 75 percent of children in foster care made an unscheduled school change in one school year, compared to less than 40 percent for children not in foster care. Unplanned school changes may be associated with delays in children's academic progress, leaving highly mobile students potentially more likely to fall behind their less mobile peers academically. Children experiencing this type of instability, including many students in foster care, are thus more likely to face a variety of academic difficulties.⁴

OVERVIEW

- The Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act (Fostering Connections) was enacted in October 2008. This law amends parts B and E of Title IV of the Social Security Act. In addition to other key areas, it requires child welfare agencies to include assurances in every child's case plan that the child will remain in the same school unless a school change is in the child's best interest. In that case, the child must be immediately enrolled in the new school with all school records.
- The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) was enacted in December 2015. It reauthorized the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). ESEA was enacted in 1965 and last reauthorized as the No Child Left Behind Act in 2002. The ESSA contains key protections for students in foster care, imposing new requirements on education agencies relating to school stability and prompt school enrollment like those the Fostering Connections Act imposes on child welfare agencies. Under ESSA, school agencies must collaborate with their child welfare partners to ensure school stability and success for these youth, including reporting on the academic outcomes of students in foster care.
- Together, ESSA and Fostering Connections envision dual agency responsibility; these laws require state and local education and the child welfare agencies jointly to ensure school stability and prompt school enrollment.

What has Hawai'i Department of Human Services (DHS) Child Welfare Services (CWS) and Hawai'i Department of Education (DOE) done to implement the federal law? Currently, Hawai'i CWS and Hawai'i DOE, as well as other stakeholders, have jointly created educational stability guidelines and a child's best interest worksheet on ensuring educational stability for Hawai'i's children in foster care. CWS and DOE will begin statewide implementation of educational stability in the coming months.

¹ Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS) FY 2014 data.

² National Youth in Transition Database. Unpublished analyses (April 2016). Administration on Children, Youth and Families, HHS.

³ National Center for Education Statistics (2014). Digest of education statistics, 2014 - table 104.40. Retrieved from https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/15/tables/dt15_104.40.asp?current=yes.

⁴ Courtney, M., Roderick, M., Smithgall, C., Gladden, R. & Nagaoka, J. (2004). The educational status of foster children. Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Cheryl_Smithgall/publication/268053940_The_Educational_Status_of_Foster_Children/links/54e4c0320cf22703d5bf415e.pdf.

Stress Relief From Laughter? It's No Joke

By Mayo Clinic Staff

Reprinted from MayoClinic.org (<http://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/stress-management/in-depth/stress-relief/art-20044456>)

When it comes to relieving stress, more giggles and guffaws are just what the doctor ordered. Here's why.

Whether you're guffawing at a sitcom on TV or quietly giggling at a newspaper cartoon, laughing does you good.

Laughter is a great form of stress relief, and that's no joke.

Stress relief from laughter

A good sense of humor can't cure all ailments, but data is mounting about the positive things laughter can do.

Short-term benefits

A good laugh has great short-term effects. When you start to laugh, it doesn't just lighten your load mentally, it actually induces physical changes in your body. Laughter can:

- **Stimulate many organs.** Laughter enhances your intake of oxygen-rich air, stimulates your heart, lungs and muscles, and increases the endorphins that are released by your brain.
- **Activate and relieve your stress response.** A rollicking laugh fires up and then cools down your stress response, and it can increase your heart rate and blood pressure. The result? A good, relaxed feeling.
- **Soothe tension.** Laughter can also stimulate circulation and aid muscle relaxation, both of which can help reduce some of the physical symptoms of stress.

Long-term effects

Laughter isn't just a quick pick-me-up, though. It's also good for you over the long term. Laughter may:

- **Improve your immune system.** Negative thoughts manifest into chemical reactions that can affect your body by bringing more stress into your system and decreasing your immunity. In contrast, positive thoughts can actually release neuropeptides that help fight stress and potentially more-serious illnesses.
- **Relieve pain.** Laughter may ease pain by causing the body to produce its own natural painkillers.
- **Increase personal satisfaction.** Laughter can also make it easier to cope with difficult situations. It also helps you connect with other people.

Continued on pg. 10



Free Summer Reading Program

Readers of all ages are invited to participate in the Hawai'i State Public Library System (HSPLS) Summer Reading Programs. Participants who visit their local library and read at least one book per week are eligible to receive a FREE weekly reading incentive, while supplies last. In addition to reading, the programs will feature performances by outstanding storytellers and artists.

Being a good reader can help a child be successful in school and studies have proven beyond a doubt that children who continue reading during the summer perform better when they return to school in the fall, score higher on standardized tests, and are more active and engaged in the classroom. Additionally, the National Working Group on Foster Care and Education tells us that, "Success in school can be a positive counterweight to the abuse, neglect, separation and impermanence experienced by children and youth in foster care."

The program is FREE and runs from June 4 to July 15, with registration beginning May 30. And remember, it is not only fun, it is FREE!

Resource Caregivers Encouraged to Attend Court Hearings

By Judith Wilhoite, Family Programs Hawai'i-It Takes an 'Ohana

It is important for resource caregivers to attend court hearings because of their unique perspective on the needs of the children in their care and the regular contact they have with therapists, teachers, and other service providers. By giving the Family Court current and detailed information about the child, resource caregivers can assist the Court in making the best possible decisions about the children in their home.



It is also important to transport, accompany and support all foster youth to attend their court hearings. Attending court also benefits foster youth. In Hawai'i, foster youth are strongly encouraged to attend their court hearings. This can help them to develop a sense of control and understanding on how they can impact the court process. Plus, the court learns more about the youth when they attend rather than simply reading what is presented in reports.

When a foster child or youth attends court, judges conduct the hearing in a way that assures the child's safety and well-being. Judges may allow a child or youth to bring a trusted adult with him/her into the courtroom or allow him/her to speak to the judge alone. Resource caregivers should report any concerns they have about the effects of coming to court to the Guardian ad litem (GAL) and on how the GAL and the court can help the child feel comfortable in the courtroom.

The most important thing to remember is that when it comes to court, resource caregivers play a vital role. Although judges have the responsibility to make decisions about children and their families, they can only make good decisions if they receive good information.

To learn more, visit www.ittakesanohana.org and download "Caregivers and the Court" or call Judith Wilhoite, Family Advocate for Family Programs Hawai'i's It Takes An 'Ohana Program, at (808) 542-4006.

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HAPPY ANNIVERSARY!!!

How long have you been a resource caregiver? We would like to honor you by printing your name and current years of service in our newsletter. We know you are out there but we need your help. Please send your name and years of service to:

RAC@pidfoundation.org ★ (O'ahu) 441-1125
(Toll Free) 1-888-879-8970

Mahalo for your dedication and heart for Hawai'i's keiki

Advertise in the Newsletter—Promote Your Business

100% of the proceeds will be used towards supporting Hawai'i's resource families

Display advertisements with borders: business card size = \$30; 1/4 page = \$50; 1/2 page = \$75; full page = \$115.

Send information to: **Hui Ho'omalū—RAC, 680 Iwilei Rd., Ste. 500, Honolulu, HI 96817**

Phone: 441-1125 (O'ahu) ★ 888-879-8970 (Toll Free) ★ Fax: 441-1122 ★ E-mail: RAC@pidfoundation.org

RAC reserves the right to accept, reject or edit advertisements, articles and notices of events based on publication schedule, space limitations, and appropriateness.

Stress Relief From Laughter? It's No Joke (cont.)

- **Improve your mood.** Many people experience depression, sometimes due to chronic illnesses. Laughter can help lessen your depression and anxiety and may make you feel happier.

Improve your sense of humor

Are you afraid you have an underdeveloped — or nonexistent — sense of humor? No problem. Humor can be learned. In fact, developing or refining your sense of humor may be easier than you think.

- **Put humor on your horizon.** Find a few simple items, such as photos, greeting cards or comic strips, that make you chuckle. Then hang them up at home or in your office. Keep funny movies, books or comedy albums on hand for when you need an added humor boost. Look online at joke websites. Go to a comedy club.
- **Laugh and the world laughs with you.** Find a way to laugh about your own situations and watch your stress begin to fade away. Even if it feels forced at first, practice laughing. It does your body good.
- **Consider trying laughter yoga.** In laughter yoga, people practice laughter as a group. Laughter is forced at first, but it can soon turn into spontaneous laughter.
- **Share a laugh.** Make it a habit to spend time with friends who make you laugh. And then return the favor by sharing funny stories or jokes with those around you.
- **Knock, knock.** Browse through your local bookstore or library's selection of joke books and get a few rib ticklers in your repertoire that you can share with friends.
- **Know what isn't funny.** Don't laugh at the expense of others. Some forms of humor aren't appropriate. Use your best judgment to discern a good joke from a bad, or hurtful, one.

Laughter is the best medicine

Go ahead and give it a try. Turn the corners of your mouth up into a smile and then give a laugh, even if it feels a little forced. Once you've had your chuckle, take stock of how you're feeling. Are your muscles a little less tense? Do you feel more relaxed or buoyant? That's the natural wonder of laughing at work.

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The 10th Annual Conference for Resource Families

The 10th Annual Statewide Conference for Resource Families kicks off in April 2017!!!

- ☆ Hilo: April 24th at The Imiloa Astronomy Center from 9:00am – 3:00pm
- ☆ Kona: April 25th at The Royal Kona Resort from 9:00am – 3:00pm
- ☆ Maui: April 27th at The Maui Beach Hotel from 9:00am – 3:00pm
- ☆ Kaua'i: April 28th at The Kaua'i Beach Resort from 9:00am – 3:00pm
- ☆ O'ahu: April 29th at The Pagoda Floating Restaurant and Catering from 8:30am – 2:30pm.



These free conferences will be open to all Resource, Guardianship, Adoptive, Kinship Families and Service Providers who work with children and families in the Child Welfare System. This year's conferences will be presented by Denise Goodman, PhD, who will be presenting "What is a S.T.A.B.L.E Home?: Stability, Trauma-informed, Age-appropriate Activities, Buoyancy, Linked, Education". Participants will: understand their roles as a healer and change agent in a child and family's life, recognize the impact of instability on a child's social, emotional, educational, familial aspects, become familiar with the effects of trauma and trauma-informed parenting strategies, be able to identify opportunities to integrate normalcy into a child/teen's everyday routine, and be aware of their role in promoting educational stability within the school and at home. Free childcare will be provided, free breakfast and lunch, 6 DHS approved training hours, networking, and family gifts and door prizes. Come join us! You can register online now!

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Part-time Co-trainers Needed. *Resource Caregivers/Former Foster Youth in Maui, Kaua'i and O'ahu* are needed to co-train new Resource Caregivers in the HANA! curriculum. Your experience is invaluable to a new family just learning about providing foster care. Come and share what you've learned/experienced over the years with others!!! Trainings are generally held intermittently on some weekday evenings and some Saturdays. Training and compensation provided.

Part-time Child Care Providers needed in West Hawai'i, Maui and O'ahu to provide child care (i.e., during trainings), in the evenings and weekends on an occasional basis. Training and compensation provided.

Part-time Recruitment Assistants needed in West Hawai'i, Maui and O'ahu to staff various recruitment booths and share information with potential applicants about the need for additional Resource Caregivers. Times will vary and may include evenings and weekends, on an occasional basis. Training and compensation provided.

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HR@pidfoundation.org or fax to 440-6619

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Calendar of Events

O'AHU

- Apr 7 (Fri) Windward Resource Families Support Group:** 6:00pm-8:30pm. Kailua District Park, Downstairs Meeting Room. RSVP to FPH at 521-9531 ext. 245 by 3/31.
- Apr 13 (Thurs) Central O'ahu Resource Families Support Group:** 5:30pm-8:00pm. 'Aiea United Methodist Church. RSVP to FPH at 521-9531 ext. 245 by 4/7.
- Apr 22 (Sat) Resource Family Appreciation Day. Dragonfly Play: The Journey of a Young Local Girl in Foster Care.** 9:30am-1:30pm. Mission Memorial Auditorium. RSVP to CCH at 808-527-4925 by 4/14.
- Apr 29 (Sat) 10th Annual Conference for Resource Families – “What is a ‘S.T.A.B.L.E’ Home?: Stability, Trauma-Informed, Age-Appropriate Activities, Buoyancy, Linked, Education.** 8:30am-2:30pm. Pagoda Hotel. RSVP online at www.FamilyProgramsHawaii.org/conference by 4/14.

WEST HAWAI'I

- Apr 24 (Mon) 10th Annual Conference for Resource Families – “What is a ‘S.T.A.B.L.E’ Home?: Stability, Trauma-Informed, Age-Appropriate Activities, Buoyancy, Linked, Education.** 9:00am-3:00pm. Royal Kona Resort. RSVP online at www.FamilyProgramsHawaii.org/conference by 4/10.
- June 24 (Sat) Kona Resource Families Support Group:** 5:30pm-8:00pm. Lutheran Church of the Holy Trinity. RSVP to the Warm Line at 1-808-348-1255 by 6/16.

EAST HAWAI'I

- April 25 (Tues) 10th Annual Conference for Resource Families – “What is a ‘S.T.A.B.L.E’ Home?: Stability, Trauma-Informed, Age-Appropriate Activities, Buoyancy, Linked, Education.** 9:00am-3:00pm. Imiloa Astronomy Center. RSVP online at www.FamilyProgramsHawaii.org/conference by 4/11.
- May 13 (Sat) Hilo Resource Families Support Group:** 12:00pm-2:30pm. Haili Congregational Church. RSVP to the Warm Line at 1-808-348-1255 by 5/5.

KAUA'I

- Apr 28 (Fri) 10th Annual Conference for Resource Families – “What is a ‘S.T.A.B.L.E’ Home?: Stability, Trauma-Informed, Age-Appropriate Activities, Buoyancy, Linked, Education.** 9:00am-3:00pm. Kaua'i Beach Resort. RSVP online at www.FamilyProgramsHawaii.org/conference by 4/14. To include the **National Foster Care Month Proclamation** on display.
- May 18 (Thurs) Kaua'i Resource Families Talk Story Time:** 5:30pm-8:00pm. Lihue United Church. RSVP to the Warm Line at 1-808-348-1255 by 5/12.
- Date TBD Sign Waving for NFCM.** Details to follow. For more information, contact Monica at 346-8184.

MAUI COUNTY

- Apr 27 (Thur) 10th Annual Conference for Resource Families – “What is a ‘S.T.A.B.L.E’ Home?: Stability, Trauma-Informed, Age-Appropriate Activities, Buoyancy, Linked, Education.** 9:00am-3:00pm. Maui Beach Hotel. RSVP online at www.FamilyProgramsHawaii.org/conference by 4/13.
- May 3 (Wed) KAIO Radio: Interview to highlight NFCM.** 12pm. Mary Leyva of PIDF-Hui Ho'omalulu will be interviewed.
- May 25 (Thur) Maui Resource Families Support Group:** 5:30pm-8:00pm. Queen Lili'uokalani Children's Center. RSVP to the Warm Line at 1-808-348-1255 by 5/19.
- Date TBD Sign Waving for NFCM.** Details to follow. For more information, contact Mary at 268-5122.
- June 15 (Thur) Maui Resource Families Support Group:** 5:30pm-8:00pm. Queen Lili'uokalani Children's Center. RSVP toll free to the Warm Line at 1-808-348-1255 by 6/9.

****Please check www.FamilyProgramsHawaii.org for an updated calendar of events.**

Funding for FPH support groups, trainings, and annual conferences is provided by the Department of Human Services



PATCH publishes a quarterly newsletter -- Training Tracks, to inform the community of our upcoming trainings around town, and provide the latest child care news and information to professionals and the public. PATCH offers over 100 FREE child care workshops open to all caregivers such as family child care, preschool and infant and toddler staff, before and after school care programs, parents, resource caregivers, medical professionals, babysitters and informal child care. Please visit our website for the latest news and training schedule:

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Honolulu, HI 96817-2433

441-1125 (O'ahu)
888-879-8970 (Toll Free)

Fax: 441-1122

E-mail:

RAC@pidfoundation.org

The concept for the Statewide Resource Advisory Committee (RAC) was created by the Department of Human Services (DHS) as a means to support the resource family community. Hui Ho'omalua facilitates this committee comprised of adoptive parents, resource caregivers and various community agencies, all dedicated to providing services and support to Hawai'i's keiki and the resource families who care for them. The purpose of the RAC is to identify ongoing needs, facilitate communication, share resources, provide information through a statewide calendar of events and a quarterly newsletter and report on local projects and other topics of interest to benefit Hawai'i's resource families.

This committee, the newsletter and many of the represented agencies are supported and funded by Department of Human Services contracts.

RAC Committee Members:

Catholic Charities Hawai'i—Hui Ho'omalua

Department of Human Services

EPIC, Inc. 'Ohana Conferencing

Family Court

Family Programs Hawai'i—Hui Ho'omalua & It Takes An 'Ohana

Resource Caregivers

Adoptive Parents

Hawai'i Foster Youth Coalition

Partners in Development Foundation—Hui Ho'omalua