

The Link



CHILDREN & FAMILY SERVICES / WINTER 2013 / VOL 5 ISSUE 1

embracing your loss

by Jordan Neal, guest contributor

I believe that by embracing a loss you can find happiness in a generally bad situation. Never knowing the people who created you can be looked at as a huge loss. However, I see it as a positive opportunity to define myself; not based on what my genes say, but by whom I believe I should be.

A great number of people assume adoption is a negative thing. In my honest opinion, I see it as a beautiful thing. It brings joy to not only the family that the child has been placed with, but brings a spark of happiness and love to the kids' heart knowing that someone truly loves them and actually wants to care for them.

I have heard time and time again, "So, Ron and China aren't your real parents, right?" At that point, I feel like a kettle ready to just let out steam. I quickly answer, "Ron and China ARE my real parents. They were there when I fell off the swings and got a concussion. They were there at every single one of my soccer games and even practices. They were always there to support me, in whatever my heart wanted to do at that time. Those two people are in fact my parents."

I could not feel more blessed to have such loving, openhearted, non-judgmental parents. They raised me to stand up for my opinions, to be brave, strong, and most importantly, how to love and respect others. I truly believe that adoption has brought joy in not only my parents' lives, but in my life as well.

Generally speaking, adoption and the kids involved have a rough story behind them. Even though I was adopted at a very young age, five months to be exact, I was lucky enough to not experience some of the hardships other kids in the (foster care) system have to face. The life choices my birth parents made resulted in a situation where they could not care for me. At young ages, they both started using drugs and breaking the law. My bio dad had messed up at the time I was born and was incarcerated, which caused him to miss my birth. He also lost the ability to "say goodbye" as they gave me away to a loving family that could care for me.

I do love them though very much and am grateful for the life they have given me. In my records, my birth mom was quoted, "I hope she makes it and does better than I did and I love her." Hearing that quote gives me chills and makes me want to embrace the loving family I have even more. I do not want to say that I regret their actions because I believe that eventhough it is a loss, it has resulted in a positive outcome.

Through thick and thin, good and bad and the crazy and memorable times, I could not think of two better people to raise me. I truly believe that by embracing a loss you will then gain happiness from that bad situation.



what's new with AB12

by Michael Manchester, foster care licensing

As 2012 draws to a close, foster parents should be familiar with Non Minor Dependent (NMD) placements. Assembly Bill 12 (AB12), California Fostering Connections to Success Act, allows foster children 18 and older to remain or return to foster care until age 21. The bill is designed to promote more stability in the lives of our foster children through encouragement of educational and career pursuits. Be on the lookout for updates as new information becomes available.

Youth targeted videos such as "After 18", "Talking with Emerging Adults" and "Talking with Caring Adults" are being produced to give youth and caregivers an overview of AB12 and to provide specific information on eligibility and placement. In conjunction with "After 18", a series of step-by-step conversation guides was developed to facilitate a dialogue between an NMD and a caring adult. The purpose of the conversations is to inform youth about the benefits of the new law and encourage them to consider remaining in extended foster care. Visit www.after18ca.org for more information.

Foster youth and caregivers are encouraged to contact their assigned social worker or licensing worker for questions regarding AB12. Please call (714) 704-8000 and ask to speak with your assigned social worker or licensing worker.

AB12 nmds are VALUED

V
voices
of young
adults

They truly matter. It's about listening and really hearing what's important to them and helping them to act on that. Every aspect of these young lives counts; including educational goals, meaningful work experiences and permanent, loving and dependable adult relationships.




A
assistance &
partnering

Young adults often need active assistance and real partnerships to reinforce and support learning as they transition into adulthood. This is an opportunity to support them in taking charge of their lives and futures. Work with them on building relationship skills, problem solving and how to take personal responsibility for choices they make. Keep in mind to emphasize support rather than supervision to ensure a true partnership.

L
love &
belonging

Everyone needs someone. We all need someone who loves us unconditionally and on whom we can depend. Family and loved ones provide a foundation and help enable young adults to realize their potential. First priority is to ensure every young adult has a family or caring and committed relationships with adults who can support and guide them in life.



U
unique
needs

Every young adult is unique. Some may require intensive levels of support and assistance while others may need more guidance and skill building to achieve their goals. Providing individualized attention helps to ensure successful transitions.

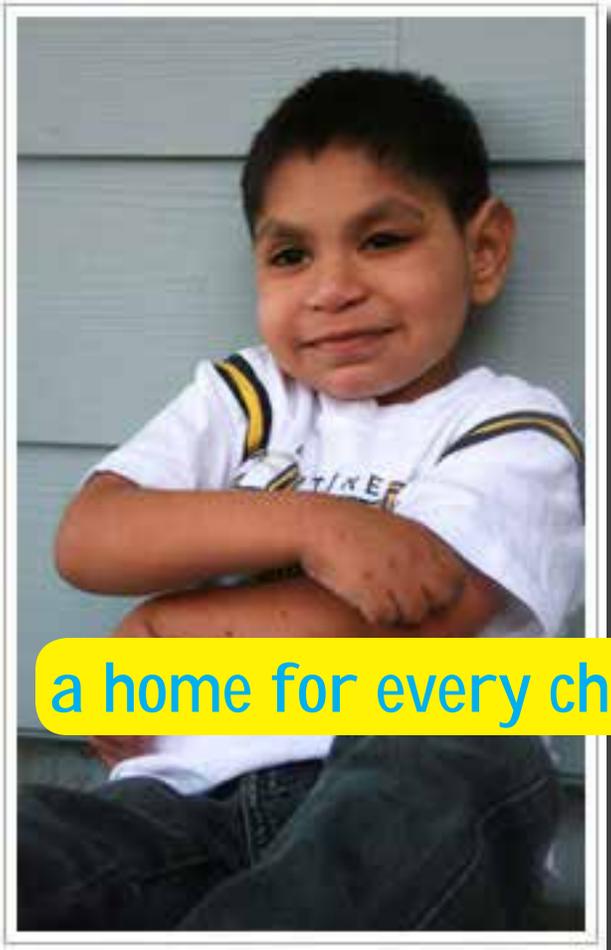
E
eligibility
maintained

Young adults should have access to every available service. Our community is committed to supporting programs and policies that cover all eligible, young adults and helping them secure all needed and allowed services.




D
development
supported

Challenges, pitfalls and experimentation are part of the becoming an adult process. Young adults need to explore their own abilities and be accountable for their mistakes. They need to experience logical consequences for their choices and know that no matter what, they still have support and guidance from accepting adults.



by Elizabeth McConnell & Margot Umemoto
adoption matchers

meet Anthony

Anthony is a sweet, 5-year-old, Hispanic boy who loves attention and to show off to others. He is happy and affectionate and gives hugs and kisses. He is active, social and enjoys spending time with other children. He likes to explore his environment and look through books. Anthony has been placed in a Regional Center small family home for three years. He has been diagnosed with several complex medical issues and global delays.

If you are interested in providing Anthony with the permanency that he is longing for, please contact the Adoption Matching Coordinators, Margot Umemoto at (714) 704-8945 or Elizabeth McConnell at (714) 704-8944.

a home for every child

now taking applications

Rancho Santiago Community College District, Early Head Start program, is currently accepting applications to serve low-income families and foster and relative caregivers in the city of Santa Ana for their program. The RSCCD Early Head Start program is comprised of two options:

-  A home-base program - a weekly home visit for 90 minutes and two monthly socializations with a parent educator.
-  A full-day, center-based program - at Santa Ana College Early Childhood Education Center.

Parents and caregivers must bring the following along with completed application: verification of parents' income for the 12 months using either pay stubs, W2 form, IRS form, letter of verification or AFDC notice of action; child's birth certificate (for home-base infant/toddler program); and proof of Santa Ana residency.

For more information about the programs and the services offered and for qualification questions, please call (714) 480-7547.

foster care auxiliary

The Foster Care Auxiliary of Orange County is a proactive group of foster parents, social workers and community members dedicated to working together to provide high quality care to dependent children, foster parent support, legislative advocacy and continuing education.

If you are not a member, consider joining today and receive our monthly distribution of new products to help you in your endeavor to foster children.

Looking for the best deals around? Shop our Thrift Store! Bring your friends and neighbors and help support programs and services for foster families. Don't forget to also donate your gently used items to the store.

For more information, please visit www.fostercareaux.com. To join, call (714) 778-3383 or e-mail FosterCareAux@yahoo.com.



Resources

La Habra Family Resource Center

Free Spanish Support Groups for Relatives Raising Children

Grupos de Apoyo para Parientes Criando al Hijo de un Familiar

Join us and meet other families who are raising children who are not their own. Receive and give emotional support and information on community resources!

Acompáñenos y conozca a otras personas que están criando al hijo de un familiar y reciba y brinda apoyo emocional. Reciba información sobre recursos en la comunidad. Cada primer miércoles del mes. ¡Habrà cuidado de niños! Llame para apuntarse al (714) 447-3460.

La Habra Family Resource Center
301 W. Las Lomas Dr.
La Habra, CA 90631
6 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.
Meets every first Wednesday of the month
Call (714) 447-3460 to sign up.



Foster & Kinship Care Education



The foster and kinship care education program at Saddleback College provides quality education and support opportunities to caregivers of children in out-of-home care. The free classes are designed to assist the caregivers in meeting the children's educational, emotional, behavioral, and developmental needs.

In order for foster parents to meet their annual eight hours of training, monthly classes are offered throughout Orange County. To view classes, visit www.saddleback.edu/fkce or call (949) 582-4884 to request a class catalog and to register for classes.

Relative Support Services Available

Olive Crest's "Relatives Raising Children" is a Kinship Support Services Program, funded by the California Department of Social Services, to provide support services to any relative caregiver or non-extended family member caring for someone else's child in Orange County. Juvenile court dependency is not required.

Because we care about your family, we offer kinship support groups in English and Spanish throughout the county. If you are a relative caregiver or you know one needing support, kinship related information or if you want to help in some way, please contact us at (714) 543-5437 or visit our website at www.olivecrest.org/kinship.

El Programa de Olive Crest "Criando al Hijo del Pariente" es un programa de servicios de apoyo para personas que están criando a niños de la familia. El programa está financiado por el Departamento de Servicios Sociales de California, para proporcionar servicios de apoyo en el Condado de Orange.

Los grupos de apoyo del programa están disponibles en inglés y español en varias partes del condado y se enfocan en las necesidades específicas de familias que están criando a niños de la familia. Si usted es padre de crianza de un niño de la familia o conoce a alguien que esté buscando este tipo de apoyo e información relacionado al programa, o si usted quiere ayudar de algún modo, por favor póngase en contacto con nosotros llamando al (714) 543-5437 o visite nuestro sitio web en www.olivecrest.org/kinship.

Join the Board

The Foster Care Advisory Board meeting is held every other month on a Wednesday from 9:30 a.m. to 11 a.m. at 800 N. Eckhoff Street in Orange. Attendees include licensed foster parents and Children and Family Services management team members. Discussions include training opportunities, events, budget, and other information regarding the care of foster children. For more information, please contact Joanna Hussey at (714) 704-8255 or e-mail Joanna.Hussey@ssa.ocgov.com.

Feeling frustrated?
Not sure how to manage your child's behavior? We're here to help!



PARENT TO PARENT is a 10 week course at no cost for parents and caregivers designed to help you:

- Understand and manage your child's development
- Find positive approaches to parenting
- Communicate effectively with your children
- Learn helpful parenting skills to deal with challenging behavior
- Develop relationships with other parents in your community



Class Information

SIGN UP NOW

- Open to parents and caregivers with children ages 0 to 12 years of age
- All services are provided in English and Spanish
- The course is offered in various locations throughout Orange County
- **FREE** child care at select locations

For more information or to sign up for a class please call toll-free at:
1-855-955-5900
Parent2Parent@
BrightFutures4Kids.org

Funded by Orange County Health Care Agency, Behavioral Health Services, Prevention and Intervention Division, MHSA/Prop. 63

Directory

FOSTER CARE INFORMATION LINE
(888) 871-KIDS (5437)

CHILDREN & FAMILY SERVICES RECEPTION
(714) 704-8000
(714) 935-7584 (emergencies & after hours)

ADMINISTRATION

Dr. Michael Riley
Social Services Director

Mike Ryan
Social Services Chief Deputy Director

Gary Taylor
Children & Family Services Director

Anne Bloxom
CFS Deputy Director

Ray Gallagher
CFS Deputy Director

Susan Holl
CFS Deputy Director

Jorge Sole
CFS Deputy Director

FOSTER & ADOPTIVE FAMILY DEVELOPMENT

Cheryl Alexander, Supervisor
(714) 704-8230

Roylyn Burton, Community Program Specialist
(714) 704-8243

*Juan Herrera, Recruiter/Trainer
(714) 704-8242

Sharon Landis, Recruiter/Trainer
(714) 704-8257

*Yazmin Leal, Staff Specialist
(714) 704-8828

*Lorena Rodriguez, Information Line
(888) 871-5437

Robert Waddington, Recruiter/Trainer
(714) 704-8256

FOSTER & KINSHIP CARE LIAISON

*Joanna Hussey (714) 704-TALK (8255)

LICENSING

Jim Deming, Supervisor
(714) 704-8887

Donna Avise (714) 704-8821

*Nena Casis (714) 704-6102

Colette Kim-Abiog (714) 704-6105

Michael Manchester (714) 704-8819

*George Reyes (714) 704-8896

**Lianne Vu (714) 704-8811

*Angelica Zikoor (714) 704-8838

BIRTHDAY GIFTS FOR FOSTER CHILDREN

Mona Gustafson (714) 679-2438
Call for an appointment

EMERGENCY SHELTER HOME (ESH)

*Estela Ahuero (714) 935-8104

TRANSITIONAL PLANNING SERVICES PROGRAM

Raquel Amezcua, Program Manager

*Irene Briggs, Supervisor (714) 940-3965

Ilan Wolf, Supervisor (714) 704-8314

MULTIDIMENSIONAL TREATMENT FOSTER CARE (MTFC)

Dr. Mary Eason, Program Supervisor
(714) 704-8238

Terry Maher, Program Supervisor
(714) 704-4122

Michelle Medina, Recruiter/Trainer
(714) 704-8837

Denise Odom, Recruiter/Trainer
(714) 704-8835

SPECIAL MEDICAL PROGRAM

Mary Ewart, Medical Intake Coordinator
(714) 704-8531

Cindy Hutchison, Medical Intake Coordinator
(714) 704-8531

TIME OUT FOR PARENTS (TOPS)

New Alternatives, Inc. (714) 245-0045

WORKING CAREGIVER CHILDCARE

*Margaret Lopez-Krill (714) 704-8087

FOSTER & KINSHIP CARE EDUCATION
Saddleback College (949) 582-4884

FOSTER CARE ADVISORY BOARD

Sallie Miller (714) 848-2558
Karen Templeton (714) 556-5250

CAREGIVER SUPPORT GROUPS

Fountain Valley
Sallie Miller (714) 848-2558

Huntington Beach/Parents of Teens
Jessie Damerval (714) 848-0347

Single Parents (Male/Female)
Cynthia Bradbury (714) 843-6835

Foster Care Auxiliary/Anaheim
Kathy Harvey (714) 778-3383

Orange/Spanish Support

*Joanna Hussey (714) 704-8255

ORGANIZATIONS

California Children's Services (CCS)
(714) 347-0300

CalOPTIMA

Liaison (714) 246-8864
Member Services (714) 246-8500
Claims Department (714) 246-8885

Child Health & Disability Program (CHDP)
(800) 564-8448

Denti-Cal (800) 322-6384

Foster Care Auxiliary of Orange County
(714) 778-3383/www.fostercareaux.com

Kinship Center
(714) 957-1004

Olive Crest Kinship Support Program
Helen Lindsey
(714) 543-5437 ext. 1211

Orange County Mental Health
(714) 834-5015

Vision Services Plan (800) 877-7195

*Spanish Speaking

**Vietnamese Speaking

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