



CHEROKEE COUNTY FOSTER AND ADOPTIVE PARENT ASSOCIATION

From The President

Wow! What a way to start out the new year. Thanks to all the foster parents that attended last months meeting. It was great to see such a good turnout for our first meeting of the year and the children had a good time as well. Let's keep the momentum going.

This location will be our permanent home for the 2009 year thanks to [First Baptist Church Woodstock](#). We hope to see more foster parents at our up-coming meetings. Our meetings will be on the (3rd) Third Thursday of each month from 7pm - 9pm. Check the calendar for reminders. Many thanks to Glen Greet (Foster Parent) Charles Mingonet & Craig Ormsby (FBCW) for giving us the chance to meet as a group and grow as foster parents.

If anyone would like to volunteer once a month for two hours and help us look after foster children while their parents attend training let me know. We would appreciate your help. The [map and directions](#) are posted on our web site in the calendar area. We will be using room 240 and 241A/B in building-A upper level. We will have two rooms for the children one for the older kids and one for the younger.

Last month we discussed starting a new **respite network** for foster parents within your area. We discussed having 4 main communities to target cluster areas. The only way this will actually work is if families join our network. The idea is once we decide where the cluster areas will be we then meet as a cluster group and get to know the other families in your area so that you will feel comfortable leaving your children with another family and the children will most likely not have to depend on wrap around services to get back and forth from school on time. Then we will need someone within the cluster to be a lead contact person for the group. As we work out the network other advantages will come apparent and better relationships will be formed with your fellow foster parents. I look forward to any ideas you may have to help get this off the ground.

Membership dues for the 2009 year is \$10 per person and \$2 per meeting for non-members. I still have a few giveaways for new members while they last.

We really want to see all foster families involved in some way with our association. Those planning to attend can RSVP to mblackwell@fosteroradopt.org or by calling 770-378-0759. Our training is an interactive session with speakers and foster parents. Please feel free to ask questions.

We would like to offer Ms. Maxwell our best wishes on her new position in the State office. Also, we want to welcome Jennifer Leikam in her new role as the supervisor of the RD/Adoption unit, and Lou Shewmake as the new RD case manager.

Cherokee County Foster
Adoptive & Parent Assoc.

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Issue 44

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Message from D'Anna

Happy Valentine's Day!

Thank you for the feedback I received from the questions posed to you in December and January newsletters on ways to strengthen and improve our partnership. Some of the responses I received included your support and appreciation of the Embrace initiatives and the Foster Parent Liaison assisting with communication and in sponsoring events around the county. Many of you requested more data regarding the number of children we take into legal custody each month and their ages, some of you posed legal questions regarding the length of time in adoptions or why CASA are able to review case file information and foster parents aren't provided the same level of information. Some of your responses dealt with staff performance issues as well. All of these comments have been researched and we are trying to meet your needs in our communication and better partnership with you. I know you have recently received information from Margaret Dawe, Foster Care Administrator, regarding our restructuring of units in an effort to secure permanency for children sooner. Hopefully, this information on our organizational structure was helpful to you.

Regarding current data, in January we took custody of 8 children; 6 girls, 2 boys. This group of children was diverse this month and included 3 white, 1 African American, 2 Hispanic, and 2 Native American children. Age ranges were as follows: 0-5, 3 children; 6-12, 1 child; and 13 and over, 4 children. There were 2 siblings groups of 2 children. 2 of these children were placed with relatives. The other 6 children were placed in Cherokee DFCS foster homes. 1 child was returned at the 72-hour hearing. The case stage was 6 children from CPS Investigations and 2 from Family Preservation. This is one less child entering care than in December.

We currently have 77 approved family foster homes in Cherokee County. 2 homes closed in January and we added no new homes. We have maintained a 76.1% retention rate of our foster homes since January 1, 2008 (as of Dec. 31, 2008). When adoption closures are removed from the data, our retention rate is at 85.0% for this time period. In the last six months, since July 1, 2008, our retention rate is 89.7% and when adoption closures are removed from the data, our retention rate is at 92.4% for this time period. We currently have approximately 13 studies to be reviewed with the potential for 13 new homes to be approved in March. We delayed the beginning of our next scheduled Impact class due to staffing needs but this class is scheduled to begin March 19.

I hope those of you who will be attending the upcoming Conference in Jekyll Island Feb 26, 27, 28 and March 1st will enjoy and benefit from this training and networking opportunity. I trust you will find the workshops and training helpful and beneficial to you and will return restored and renewed in your abilities to care for foster children. Enjoy the Conference! As an additional reminder, we still have some families who have not achieved their required training hours for 2008. Please work toward gaining all of your required hours so your home will remain in full approval status.

The next Foster Parent Roundtable will be held on March 3rd at Canton United Methodist Church starting at 6:30 PM. Please RSVP to Amy Blanton at 770-356-5102 or info@embracecherokee.com by 2-24. Dinner and babysitting will be provided. Mark Washington, DHR Assistant Commissioner, will be at the meeting. I hope you will be able to attend this event. We have gotten some encouraging news on some revisions to the Natural Helper guidelines which will better streamline the approval process. As these revisions are finalized and approved by State DFCS Leadership, I will share these with you.

Continue -->

Message from D'Anna ...Continued

Given these challenging times we are in, I want to end this note with a quote that I hope is meaningful to you, as it is to me.

"I have come to the frightening conclusion that I am the decisive element.

It is my personal approach that creates the climate.

It is my daily mood that makes the weather.

I possess tremendous power to make a life miserable or joyous.

I can be a tool of torture or an instrument of inspiration.

I can humiliate or honor, hurt or heal.

In all situations, it is my response that decides whether a crisis is escalated or de-escalated, and a person humanized or de-humanized.

If we treat people as they are, we make them worse.

If we treat people as they ought to be,
we help them become what they are capable of becoming."

~ Goethe

I continue to look forward to many great things to happen for you and for the children and families in Cherokee County. Thank you again for your valuable service to the children and families.

D'Anna Liber, Director
dkliber@dhr.state.ga.us
770-720-3629

Featured Speaker for February

Our Speaker this month is Gwynne Maffett, Community Outreach Coordinator for the Cherokee Child Advocacy Council and the Anna Crawford Children's Center. She will be speaking on the topic of "**Empowering Our Children with Self-Esteem While Instilling Responsibility and Effective Discipline!**"

Gwynne is also a Parents HELP Mentor, she is a graduate of Kennesaw State University, has been with the Council for more than four years. Ms. Maffett leads classes that focus on life skills training, anger management, budgeting, coping with stress, and domestic violence issues and many more topics.

The Child Advocacy Council of Cherokee County educates parents with parenting information and support designed to assist them in the difficult job of parenting. These skills, tools and support efforts are invaluable because, as we all know, kids don't come with instruction manuals!

Confident parents create happier families. Happier families create more confident children. This leads to stronger families and a brighter future for everyone in Cherokee County.

Why not start the year out right by getting your required training hours early. Those who attend will receive two (2) training hours for attending.



Up Coming Events or Classes



AFPAG has announced its [2009 annual conference](#) on Jekyll Island, Feb. 26, 27, 28 and March 1 up can download the booklet on our website under the Calendar area. You can registration on their web site or through the mail. If you have any questions, feel free to contact Vala Peyton, AFPAG Secretary at vala@bellsouth.net or 404-428-2104.



February 22nd at 1pm - 4 pm Free Bowling at the Woodstock Lanes. Pizza provided! Space is limited! Please RSVP to Amy Blanton 770-356-5102 or info@embracecherokee.com.

CPR & Basic First Aid Class Scheduled for March 21st

The class is being held at the R.T. Jones Memorial Library in Canton, 116 Brown Industrial Pkwy, Canton across from Hasty Elementary. The class starts at 1pm - 5pm. The cost is \$55 per person. Upon completion of training you will receive 4 training hours. To register send your name and address to Jeff Blackwell at jblackwell@firstactioncpr.com.

Roundtable Meeting on March 3rd at Canton First United Methodist Church. Dinner starts at 6:30pm with the program starting at 7:00pm. Babysitting and dinner provided! Our guest is Mr. Mark Washington Assistant Commissioner of DHR. Please RSVP to Amy Blanton by February 24th.



Me & Mommy Georgia Aquarium Tickets for only \$20 - Have been extended through March 31st. Ticket includes Aquarium admission for one adult, free admission for children 5 and under and free parking (\$10 value). This offer is valid Monday-Friday and can only be purchased online at www.georgiaaquarium.org/visitus/meandmommy.aspx

CPR & FIRST AID CLASSES AVAILABLE

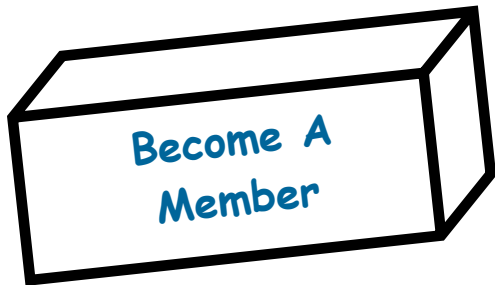
Please contact Jeff Blackwell at jblackwell@firstactioncpr.com or 770-652-9051 to register for either an individual class or group training. Foster parent should look for the Heart Saver CPR Course, he uses the AHA curriculum. For those who need specialized training he offers a wide variety of classes, check out the web site at www.firstactioncpr.com.



CPR & First Aid Classes are reimbursable with an ORIGINAL receipt. Certification is good for 2 years. You will receive training hours for the class.

Cherokee County Foster Adoptive & Parent Assoc.

Building The Future with our Foster and Adoptive Parents as they open their hearts & their homes to children.



Check out our web site at www.fosteroradopt.org for upcoming events and announcements. If you would like to receive the newsletter via email go to our web site and signup.

If your email changes let us know so that we can update our records.

Phone: 770-378-0759
E-mail: mblackwell@fosteroradopt.org

Board Members

PRESIDENT

Marie Blackwell

VICE PRESIDENT

Jimmy Duncan

SECRETARY

Debbie Earle

TREASURER

Mary Duncan

Other Associations or Support Foundations

Foster Care Support Foundation

located on Alpharetta Hwy in Roswell, 770-641-9591

Email: Rachel Ewald racewald@hotmail.com or visit www.fostercare.org.



Contact Laveda Moore Doxey or Beverly Miles at 404-929-0401 or visit www.familiesfirst.org.

Embrace Cherokee

Foster Parent Liaison Amy Blanton @ info@embracecherokee.com. or visit them on the web www.embracecherokee.com.