



CHEROKEE COUNTY FOSTER AND ADOPTIVE PARENT ASSOCIATION

From Our President, Andrew Earle

September 2008
Issue 39

I hope everyone has had a great month. I am looking forward to our monthly meeting on September 23rd, 2008 at Hickory Flat United Methodist Church on East Cherokee Drive.

In October we will have our business meeting and will be electing new officers, it would be great to see all our members present. Cherokee County Foster and Adoptive Parent Association is not just a form to obtain your training hours but to also become updated and educated on changes in the foster care system and ways we can help improve our county for our Foster Children. With out our foster parents help and support we will not be able to be as effective as a group united. You are needed to help make this change for our foster children. Thanks in advance for your time and I look forward to seeing you there.

We also want to continue to extend an open invitation to all Cherokee County DFCS workers. There are some new faces at Cherokee County Department of Family and Children services and would especially like to invite you to our monthly meetings. This would be a great opportunity to meet some of our foster families.

Our caseworkers are doing the best job they can do with the resources they have. Together we can make the difference for our foster and adoptive children. To all of our DFCS workers "Thank you". You do a great job!

The web site is constantly being updated so check it out for upcoming events and for free or low cost entertainment for the whole family.

Inside this issue:

Letter from President	1
Guest Speaker	1
Letter from DFCS Director, D'Anna	2
Julie's Corner	3
Upcoming Events	4
Continued Upcoming Events	5
Association Information	6

Guest Speaker: Belinda Jenkins, President of NW Georgia Foster & Adoptive Parent Association

How to Survive as a Foster Family

This workshop will give you real life issues families face as foster parents. It will show you how fostering affects your immediate and extended family.

This is a must have training to insure that your core family remains in tact and survives every new foster placement in your home. Fostering is more than the couple's decision because every decision made by the couple affect every member of your family. You will learn how to hold a family meeting and include your entire family in placement, as well as, the removal decisions of foster children. You will also learn how to make the final decisions regarding the adoption of a child based on how the family as a unit feels.

This session will include a lecture as well as an open forum and discussions regarding issues foster families have encountered and what is yet to come.

WORDS FROM OUR DFCS DIRECTOR, D'ANNA LIBER

We entered September with unexpected news from DHR DFCS regarding economic projections for revenue collections from the Governor's office. The impact of the economic shortfall will have impact on the families we serve, including our own families. You have probably heard about the economic impact that tax revenue dollars have for all State Agencies through reading the newspaper, or even watching television news. It seems every day another large company has closed its doors and the unemployment rate has increased. In early August all State Agencies were asked to re-submit their FY 09 budget with a 6% reduction in spending. A proposal of budget cuts was prepared in August by State Leadership that included Moratoriums on hiring, spending in operation expenses including purchasing supplies and in travel. Also included in the initial proposal was the furlough of upper management pay grades for one day a month beginning in September. This proposal was submitted to the Governor's Office in early September, but was rejected as the budget reduction was not quite at the 6% level. A new proposal was drafted and DHR DFCS has now moved to an almost 7% budget reduction plan that will now include 2 furlough days per month for upper management staff and 1 furlough day a month for Social Services Supervisors and all Social Services Staff beginning in October.

We are now faced with a test to continue to serve families when we ourselves are being challenged. We must have the resolve and dedication to continue to serve at the same level of commitment and performance for the children and families in Cherokee County.

It's easy to lead when things are going well, with a full staff and the ability to travel to see our families without having to make the choices of which families to see and where in order to save travel costs. The test of perseverance comes when we begin to experience vacancies and are unable to travel to provide the quality service we strive to do on a daily basis. An example of this concern is that this week, an experienced worker was weighing the decision to travel to Columbus to see a young man on his caseload who had gotten into some trouble with drugs. He wanted to have a deliberate face to face contact with him, or should he just call this young man and talk through this difficult and challenging time? The choice should be obvious, yet we are finding ourselves having to make these hard decisions each day. We are making decisions on things we Must Do, Should Do and what may be Nice to do.

This is a time when our agency needs to stand united, exhibiting teamwork and progressive thinking. How we react and respond to this challenging time should not have an impact on the people we serve who are the most important.

- Our State office is committed to the following:
- Maintain level funding for "must" do items;
- Cut services for most vulnerable citizens last
- Protect direct care
- Maintain standards for services
- Protect lowest paid staff.

We need your help and partnership more than ever. Amidst a somewhat negative outlook, we are moving forward and making positive changes. We did not experience any foster home closures in June or July. We had 2

Continued ...WORDS FROM D'ANNA LIBER

homes that closed in August, one home closing due to a finalized adoption (which is a positive outcome). We are in the process of approving 8 new homes this month. We are committed to moving forward with a vision and with hope for a brighter tomorrow.

Many of you enjoyed the Sept. 6 Dixie Speedway Foster Family Night Out – it seems a good time was had by the almost 80 people who attended as foster families or as agency staff and families.

We have planned the next Roundtable to be held at the October Foster Parent Association Meeting planned for October 28. The Roundtable discussion will follow the business meeting that is scheduled for 7:00pm. This a time to bring your questions, issues, concerns and solutions to things that are on your mind. We will have door prizes and refreshments, so please plan to attend. I hope you are planning to attend the Roundtable, in October at the Hickory Flat Baptist Church. I am looking forward to seeing you.

Thank you for all of your love, support and time to these children.

D'Anna Liber, Director
Cherokee County Department
of Family and Children Services

Julie Evan's Corner

There have been a number of changes in the Resource Development Unit recently! Please join Tinika, Pat, and me in welcoming Elizabeth McCauley and Linda Nwaneri to the unit! Linda will be taking over Sonya's caseload. Please contact her at 770-720-3663 or e-mail her at lnwaneri@dhr.state.ga.us to welcome her to the unit and to introduce yourself to her. Linda is new to GA and new to DFCS and we look forward to working with her. Elizabeth McCauley will take over Pat's caseload after Pat retires--which is also about the same time Elizabeth will return from Maternity leave. Elizabeth brings a wealth of knowledge from her time in foster care ongoing and foster care intake.

How many of you have completed your foster parent training hours? December is quickly approaching! I encourage you to take advantage of the upcoming 2nd Annual Northwest Georgia Foster & Adoptive Parent Association conference. Quite a few families attended this training last year and found it to be very informative and interesting. Also, please be aware that all foster and adoptive families MUST remain current on their CPR/First Aid certification! Please contact your resource development worker if you need assistance in obtaining additional hours.

We appreciate what you do for our children. Please bear with us as we deal with staff changes and budget cuts--we couldn't do it without you!!!

Julie M. Evans, SSCM
Cherokee County Department
of Family and Children Services

Up Coming Events or Classes

2nd Annual Northwest Georgia Foster & Adoptive Parent Association Conference

Register now for the Northwest Georgia Foster & Adoptive Parent Mini-Conference on December 5th – 7th at Red Top Mountain in Cartersville. See brochure that is attached for class details and registration. Register early to get your first choice.

Tell your case manager you would like to attend the Conference at Red Top Mountain State Park located in Cartersville, GA (Bartow County). Space is limited so [Register Early](#). Visit our web site at www.nwgfapa.org or www.gafosterparents.org.

Red Top Mountain Conference

December 5th - 7th, 2008

It's time to [Register](#) for the upcoming Conference. See Attached brochure for more details.

Contact: Belinda Jenkins at bjenkins@nwgfapa.org or call (770) 899-6920 or (404) 645-8523



You won't want to miss the anything from the first session to the last. Friday's session will be:

A Judicial Roundtable Discussion

Featuring: **Honorable Velma Tilley**, Bartow County Juvenile Court Judge

Honorable Peggy Walker, Douglas County Juvenile Court Judge

Honorable J. D. Sumner, Cherokee Juvenile Court Judge, **Mindy Foster**, Cherokee Court Program Manager

Honorable M. Anthony Baker, Cherokee County Juvenile Court Judge

Honorable Timothy Pape, Floyd County Juvenile Court Judge **Lori Moss**, SAG, Bartow County Juvenile Court

Saturdays Keynote Speaker - **Ciara Lowther**, a Teen in Foster Care - Ciara will share her story as a teen in foster care. She plans to illustrate for you that teens are children too and that all children deserve the chance to have forever families. She will also take you on a journey through the ups and downs of fostering a teen.

Continued ... Up Coming Events or Classes

CPR Class at the Kennesaw Library Meeting Rm, 2250 Lewis Street, Kennesaw, GA 30144 (Behind the Whistle Stop Cafe in town).

Call or email Jeff if you would like to attend. Class starts at 1:30pm to 5:00 pm this Saturday September 20th.

Free Day at Nationwide Museums!

Mark your calendar for a **FREE** day at the **Museum Day!** The date is **September 27** when all visitors will be admitted free to **hundreds of museums and cultural venues nationwide.**

This is a great opportunity for a family outing. To find a local museum in GA go to <http://microsite.smithsonianmag.com/museumday>.

Cherokee Pignic - Free Admission on Friday at Heritage Park in Canton from 5pm - 10pm on Friday and 10am - 6pm on Saturday Admission is \$5 (**Children 3 and under FREE!**)



Limited on-site parking. Free shuttles running continuously from distinctly marked parking areas close to park! For more information go to www.cherokeepignic.com/entertainment.htm and don't forget about the BBQ **Cook-Off!** For a coupon go to www.cherokeepignic.com/coupons.htm.

WOODSTOCK POLICE DEPARTMENT HOLDS 13TH ANNUAL BIKE RODEO

for Saturday, September 20, 2008, See our web site for details www.fosteroradopt.org/Calendar.htm.

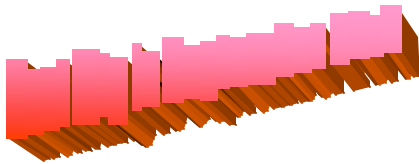
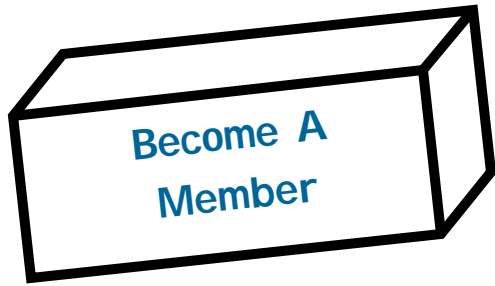
This is a FREE event sponsored by Wal-Mart in Woodstock 12182 Highway 92 is for children age 6 to 14 includes several events to focusing on safe bicycle operations and an opportunity to win a brand new bike.

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. He offers a wide variety of classes, check out our web site at www.firstactioncpr.com.

CPR & First Aid Classes are reimbursable with an ORIGINAL receipt. Certification is good for 2 years.





888 Stover Drive
Canton, GA 30115
Phone: 678-656-6634
E-mail: Andrew-earle@comcast.net

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

Our meetings are being held on the 4th Tuesday at 7pm every month at Hickory Flat United Methodist Church, 4056 East Cherokee Dr. Canton 30115. Childcare will be provided.

Directions: 575N – Take exit 16 and turn right onto Hwy 140. Take Hwy 140 to East Cherokee Road (Publix shopping Center is on the left). Take a left onto East Cherokee. The church will be on the right. We will meet in the trailers to the right of the parking lot. Look for signs.

Check out our web site at www.fosteroradopt.org

If you would like to receive the newsletter via email, contact Pam Frost at pfrost@telpluscommunications.com.

Board Members

President

Andrew Earle
678-656-6634
Andrew-earle@comcast.net

Vice President

Craig Block
volleyblock@aol.com

Secretary

Debbie Earle
Debora.earle@comcast.net

Treasurer/Marketing Director

Marie Blackwell
Mblackwell@fosteroradopt.org

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