

DECEMBER 12, 2017

A HOME for the HOLIDAYS

This year, the 19th annual *A Home For The Holidays* will air on Tuesday, Dec. 19 at 8/7c on CBS and CBS All Access, honoring families whose lives have been changed through adoption.

A Home For The Holidays features uplifting stories of adoption from foster care and raises awareness of this important social issue. The inspirational stories of these American families are enhanced with performances by some of today's most popular artists, including headliner Josh Groban, plus Kelly Clarkson, Kacey Musgraves, and Kane Brown.

During the special, you'll hear personal stories from the Dennis Family from Norfolk, Virginia, the Fisher Family from Salt Lake City, Utah, the Thompson Family from Poteau, Oklahoma, and the Black Family from Rochester, New York.

Currently, there are more than 420,000 children in foster care in the United States. The inspirational "Children Waiting" segment gives voice to these forgotten children by creating an intimate portrait of their hopes, their dreams and their wish for a "Forever Family."

Watch *A Home For The Holidays* on Tuesday, Dec. 19 at 8/7c on CBS and CBS All Access.

5 Meaningful Holiday Traditions for Kids

Parents often lose themselves amid the chaos of preparing for the holidays. All too often, the stress can stay with you long after the guests leave and the last new gift is put away.

If you tend to equate the holidays with cursing traffic at the mall, why not take a new approach this year? Here are five things you can do to create meaningful traditions that your children will appreciate more than any stocking stuffer. Best of all: most of them are free. [READ MORE](#)

Winter Trainings

Jan. 20 (9am-4:30pm) **CEDAR RAPIDS**

[Utilizing the Nurtured Heart Approach](#)

Jan. 27 (9:00am-12:15pm) **ANKENY**

[Why Don't Friends Come With Instruction Manuals?](#)

Jan. 27 (1:15-4:30pm) **ANKENY**

[It's All Greek to Me: A Brief Overview of Learning Disorders](#)

Feb. 10 (9:00am-12:15pm) **ANKENY**

[Worrywarts...Understanding Anxiety Disorders](#)

Feb. 10 (1:15-4:30pm) **ANKENY**

[I Won't Do It and You Can't Make Me](#)

Feb 24 (9am-12:15pm) **CEDAR FALLS**

[De-Mystifying the Therapy Process](#)

Feb 24 (1:15pm-5:30pm) **CEDAR FALLS**

[Communicating with Your Child Through Play](#)

Mar 3 (9am-4:30pm) **ANKENY**

[Utilizing the Nurtured Heart Approach](#)

Mar 3 (9am-12:15pm) **IOWA CITY**

[Parenting the Willful Child—Helping Your Child Use Their Power for Good, Not Evil](#)

Mar 3 (1:15 pm-4:30pm) **IOWA CITY**

[Grrr...I'm Just So Mad—Helping Young Children Deal With Their Anger](#)

Mar. 24 (9am-12:15pm) **CEDAR FALLS**

[Everything You Always Wanted to Know About Foster Care](#)

More Trainings Will be Scheduled for the Winter Months. Check IFAPA's Training Page for the Latest Updates

TO REGISTER FOR A CLASS:

[CLICK HERE TO REGISTER ONLINE](#)

9 ideas for supportive adults to help their young person through the holidays

1. Prepare the foster youth in your care for the holidays in your home

Have a discussion with the young person about your family's holiday customs. Do you celebrate over multiple days, or is there one "main" celebration? Are there religious customs? Will gifts be exchanged? What should they wear? Who will they meet? What preparations need to be done in advance? Will there be visitors to the home? Will they be taken on visits to the homes of other family or friends? And in all of these events, will your youth be expected to participate? Knowing what to expect will help to decrease anxiety around the holidays. Avoid surprises and you will decrease seasonal tensions.

2. Prepare friends and family before you visit

Let people know in advance about new family members in your home. Surprising a host or hostess at the door with a "new" foster youth may set up an awkward situation — such as a scramble to set an extra place at the table — making the young person feel like an imposition right from the start of the visit. Your preparation of friends should help cut down on awkward, but reasonable questions such as "who are you?" or "where did you come from?"

3. Remember confidentiality

You may receive well intended but prying questions from those you visit with over the holidays. If your young person is new to your home, it is natural that family members ask questions about your youth's background. Understand that questions are generally not meant to be insensitive or rude, but simply come from a place of not knowing much about foster care. Think in advance about how to answer these questions while maintaining your youth's confidentiality. Use the opportunity to educate interested family and friends. Discuss with your young person how they would like to be introduced and what is appropriate to share about their history with your family and friends. (Remember, they have no obligation to reveal their past.)

4. Arrange meeting your family in advance, if possible

The hustle and bustle of the holidays can make it particularly chaotic for your young person to participate in your family traditions. Anxiety may run high for young people already, and the stress of meeting your relatives may be a lot to deal with. If possible, you can arrange a casual "meeting" in advance of "main events." If it is not possible or practical to meet beforehand, make a list of names of some of the people they'll meet and their connection to you. You can also encourage a quick call from relatives you plan to visit to deliver a personal message of "we are excited to meet you" so that your youth knows they will be welcome.

5. Have extra presents ready to help offset differences

It should not be expected that all relatives purchase presents for your youth. Be prepared with other small gifts and for

those family members that express concern over not having brought a gift, offer one of your "backups" for them to place under the tree. Extra presents may be addressed "from Santa", even for older youth, to help offset a larger number of gifts other children may receive at the same time. Children often keep count of the number of gifts received (right or wrong) and use it to compare with other kids, so sometimes quantity is important.

6. Facilitate visits with loved ones

The holidays can be a busy time for everyone including foster parents and caseworkers. But it is especially important during this time of year to help your young person arrange for visits with loved ones. Don't allow busy schedules to mean the postponement of these important visits. Try to get permission for your youth to make phone calls to relatives (if long distance charges are an issue, ask if calls can be placed from the foster care agency or provide a local business or individual to "donate" by allowing the use of their phone). A youth may wish to extend holiday wishes to relatives and friends from an old neighborhood, but may need your help getting phone numbers together.

7. Help them make sure their loved ones are okay

Young people may worry that their family members are struggling through the holidays. If homelessness has been a regular issue, the winter season may bring cold weather and extreme hardship. Your youth may experience guilt if they feel a loved one is struggling while they, the youth, are living in comfort. Knowing that a biological parent or sibling has shelter from the cold or has their other basic needs met may ease a young person's mind through the always emotional holidays.

8. Understand and encourage your youth's own traditions and beliefs

Encourage discussion about the holiday traditions your young person experienced prior to being in foster care, or even celebrations they liked while living with other foster families. Incorporate the traditions the youth cherishes into your own family celebration, if possible. Use the opportunity to investigate the youth's culture and research customary traditions. If the young person holds a religious belief different from yours, or if their family did, check into the traditions customarily surrounding those beliefs.

9. Assist in purchasing or making holiday gifts or in sending cards to their family and friends

Allow young people to purchase small gifts for their relatives, or help them craft homemade gifts. Help send holiday cards to those that they want to stay connected with. The list of people that your youth wishes to send cards and gifts to should be left completely to the youth, although precautions may be taken to ensure safety (for example, a return address may be left off the package, or use the address of the foster care agency) and compliance with any court orders.