

May, 2017

NEWS FROM YOUR PEER LIAISON



JOHN SMITH

IFAPA Peer Liaison

How to Contact Me:

877-305-3396

712-665-4011

jsmith@ifapa.org

I UNDERSTAND... I AM A FOSTER PARENT TOO

IFAPA recognizes that foster parents often need the perspective of peers during the foster parenting and adoption experience.

I can provide support and assist you with questions regarding:

- Licensing requirements
- Training needs
- Respite care
- Behavior challenges
- Working with birth families
- Confidentiality issues
- And much more!



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Dear Fellow Foster Parents-

Connie was gone for the weekend and while I was taking a break from the list of chores that had been left for me to complete while she was away, I decided to do a little channel surfing. I came across the movie The Blind Side. Later that evening (during another break), I came across the movie Four Brothers. I think it was only appropriate that both these movies about foster parents, foster families and foster care be on TV during the end of April as we moved into May.

In April, we observed National Child Abuse Prevention Month, a month focused on making meaningful connections as a way to reduce instances of child maltreatment. May 1 brings us into National Foster Care Month which is observed in the United States during the month of May every year. It began with President Ronald Reagan in 1988 and continues to be recognized and celebrated since then with the President providing a yearly proclamation recognizing the work of foster families, and others that are improving the lives of young people in foster care across the country and serving these children not just during the month of May but throughout the year.

May is a month set aside to acknowledge foster parents, family members, volunteers, mentors, policymakers, child welfare professionals, and other members of the community who help youth in foster care find permanent homes and connections. During national Foster Care month, we renew our commitment to ensuring a bright future for the nearly 400,00 children and teens in foster care and we celebrate all those who make a meaningful difference in their lives by acknowledging the thousands of dedicated foster families and other caring individuals and organizations who are already supporting these young people.

It also provides an opportunity for people all across the nation to focus attention on the year-round needs of American children and youth in foster care by raising awareness about foster care and encouraging many more citizens to get involved in the lives of these youth- whether as their foster parents, volunteers, mentors, employers or in other ways.

On any given day there are more than 400,000 children in foster care. If you were able to bring together all these children into one city, this city would be the 43rd or 44th biggest city in the United States. This city made up of foster children would be bigger than cities like Miami, Pittsburg, St. Louis, Cleveland, Cincinnati, Minneapolis, New Orleans and Honolulu. Over the course of a year nearly 700,000 children spend at least some time in foster care and that makes this population of children and youth bigger than all but 18 U.S. cities!

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Of these 400,000 children, approximately 250,000 will leave foster care this year, nearly 130,000 will be reunified with their families, another 50,000 will find new loving families through adoption and 35,000 will stay with a guardian or with their families through kinship care. But at the same time 1500 will run away and nearly 30,000 will leave foster care without a chance of permanence, which means they have reached eighteen and become too old for foster care as they “aged” out and are now on their own. Many are alone with no familial support, resources, or job or life skills.

I am one of those that believe in the philosophy that it takes a whole community to raise a well-rounded child. In addition to modeling appropriate skills to children and their natural parents, I think it is important for foster families to participate in community organizations and activities. I think by doing this, we are: 1) raising the awareness of foster care issues; 2) motivating others to help foster care and foster children succeed and 3) maintaining the attention made during the month of May throughout the rest of the year.

In honor of National Foster Care Month, I will be honoring foster parents with weekly drawings! Check out the Lucky winners on my Facebook Page! Visit me on Facebook at: IFAPA John

Take Care & God Bless – IFAPA John

PS – For what it’s worth, In October of 2013, at the 15th Annual Angels in Adoption Program, Connie and I had a chance to meet Sean & Leigh Anne Touhy (the legal guardians of Michael Oher) and basis for the book and movie The Blind Side. In my opinion, Sandra Bullock’s representation of Leigh Anne Touhy was spot-on!

AND REMEMBER: Although things may be changing in the way services are being delivered to you, Please remember that I am just an email/phone call away. I will continue to be an advocate for foster children, foster parents and families! Now as much as ever, advocates are needed! If you ever have a question, concern or celebration, give me a call. The conversations which I have with other foster parents are the best part of my day! I will continue to be here for you!

John Smith
402 Ash
Lake View, IA 51450
smithous@netins.net
712-665-3396



From My Side of the Desk!

I am sad to say that this will be my last outreach to you. During the past 40 plus years, it has been IFAPA’s privilege to serve families with training, support and advocacy.

The Department of Human Services has decided to combine the Recruitment and Retention contract held by IKN and the Training and Support contract held by IFAPA. Due to these changes, IFAPA’s Peer Liaison will be ending June 30, 2017.

Families will now receive services through a new Recruitment, Retention, Training and Support contract which will be provided in the Western Service Area by LSI and in the Northern Service Area by Four Oaks.

IFAPA appreciates the time and dedication you have provided to so many children through the years.

It has truly been my pleasure to be your liaison over these past ten years as together we have advocated for what was best for children in care.

-IFAPA John