



FAPAC-FOSTER & ADOPTIVE PARENT ADVOCACY CENTER Advocacy News

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Healing Children by Empowering Families  WWW.DCFAPAC.ORG

Empowered Foster Parents Can:

- Access critical services
- Advocate with schools and service providers
- Participate as full team members
- Identify and utilize support networks
- Increase chances for stability and permanency for the children in their homes

Margie Chalofsky, *Executive Director*

Marilyn Egerton, *Deputy Director*

Toni Carr,

Administrative Coordinator

Robert Robinson,

Administrative Assistant

Temitope (Temi) Fagbemi,

Program Coordinator,

STABLE Families

Wendy Baird, *Development Consultant*

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FAPAC News

FAPAC Introduces Two New Staff Members.

FAPAC is delighted to introduce Robert Robinson (Bobby) and Temitope (Temi) Fagbemi as our new staff members. Bobby has been helping out with logistics at trainings and FAPAC events for the past several months. He will now assist FAPAC Administrative Coordinator Toni Carr on a full-time basis to build and support FAPAC's administrative functions.

As the FAPAC Program Coordinator for STABLE Families, described on page four, Temi will be coordinating services, delivering parenting classes and facilitating support groups. Committed to serving families, Temi previously worked with the Healthy Families Thriving Communities Collaboratives and brings with him experience and enthusiasm. We welcome Bobby and Temi into our FAPAC staff family! (CONTINUED ON PAGE 4)

Kudos, Applause & Acknowledgement

Kudos to CFSA for applying for and winning a federal grant to become the first public agency in the country to infuse trauma informed treatment throughout its child welfare system. We applaud CFSA Director Brenda Donald, Program Administrator/ Agency Grants Coordinator Jasmine Hayes and Chief of Staff Michele Rosenberg for their vision and work to make this a reality. Additional ac- (CONTINUED ON PAGE 4)



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Attorney Column

Guardianship and Adoption: How to Decide Which is Right for Your Family

By Harvey Schweitzer, Attorney at Law

Adoption:

When someone (kin or non-kin) adopts a child, all rights and responsibilities are transferred from the birth parents to the adoptive parents. Adoption is intended to affect a permanent change that creates a new legal parent-child relationship between adopter and adoptee, including the receipt of a new birth certificate. Legally, it is meant to be “as if the adoptee were born to the adopter.”

In what cases *might* this be your best option?

1. For young children
2. For all children who do not have an on-going relationship with their birth parents
3. For any family who wants to have all parental rights transferred to them

Permanent Guardianship:

Permanent guardianship was originally created to meet the needs of children living with kinship caregivers who provide a stable and safe placement, and for whom goals of adoption and reunification have been ruled out. A significant piece of legislation passed in 2010 called the Adoption Reform Amendment Act (“ARA”) includes provisions expanding guardianship subsidies to include non-kin.

In guardianship, although the guardian has the right to make major decisions concerning the child’s welfare, education, discipline, medical care, etc., the birth parent’s

parental rights remain intact and the birth parent can petition the court at any time to overturn the guardianship.

In what cases *might* this be your best option?

1. For older youth who “do not want” to be adopted
2. For children who have strong relationships with their birth parents
3. For grandparents, other relatives or others who have serious concerns that moving towards adoption would hurt their current relationships inside the family and thus ultimately harm the child

By District law, eligibility for both Adoption subsidy and Guardianship subsidy has been expanded until age 21 for those children whose cases were finalized after May 2010.



Did you know?

By 72 hours after a new child is placed in your home, a social worker is supposed to come to your home for a visit. Is this happening in your agency? Please let us know by emailing your response to: margiec@dcfapac.org. Your response will be used to inform our work to improve the system. FAPAC does not use your name without your permission.

Hot Issues

Issue: Supports and services needed to parent older youth! There are many challenges that face foster parents trying to parent older youth placed in their homes. As a result, our older youth suffer by moving around from home to home, adding to the chance that they will age into adulthood without permanency.

What we are doing about it: FAPAC has been talking to foster parents individually and in groups and facilitating conversations about their challenges with agency administrators. It is critical to build our ability to dialogue constructively about our challenges so that we can develop meaningful plans to build supports and services. Some ideas include facilitated dialogues between foster parents and older youth, cross-trainings for social workers and foster parents on how to nurture strong family foster homes for foster parents, and building agency supports

for families who take older youth. Please email Margie at margiec@dcfapac.org if you would like to participate in next steps or to give your ideas so that we can include your suggestions in our dialogue.

Moving Toward Success! The voices of our families have been heard regarding the need for hands-on crisis intervention in their homes. Although models of crisis support have been attempted, families have continued to express a serious need for hands-on support in their homes that stays with them until the crisis is abated and follow up services have been put in place. Thanks to those of you who participated in events and surveys and spoke up about this need, CFSA has developed plans for this service to be available for both foster parents and private agency parents. It is anticipated that these services will be operational by Summer 2013.

Children Enjoy Special Holiday Celebration with Birth Parents, Foster Parents and Siblings

Thanks to the generosity of many, many volunteers and donors, over 50 children got to celebrate the holiday season with their whole families, including their birth parents, their foster parents, and their siblings. On Saturday, December 15th FAPAC hosted our 2nd Annual Loving Circles Holiday Brunch for children with plans of reunification with their birth parents. The festive mood was contagious as families partook of a holiday feast, decorated gingerbread houses, met with fire-

fighters and had tours of the fire truck, and received gifts from Santa. Birth parents were given gifts to bring home for their children and the children had the opportunity to “shop” for gifts to give to both their birth and foster parents. FAPAC sees this type of celebration as important to our commitment to form critical bridges between birth and foster parents. Our sincere thanks to all of you who made these special holiday memories possible.



FAPAC News! (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

FAPAC Announces New Partnership with Metro TeenAIDS to Deliver STABLE Families Program

STABLE Families is a community-based collaborative model that works across systems to ensure high quality, coordinated service provision to families affected by HIV and/or substance abuse. By ensuring that families experience seamless service delivery, STABLE Families' goal is to increase family stability, child safety, and well-being regardless of the number and type of services being delivered. The program serves families with at least one child under the age of 19 affected by HIV, and/or families affected by HIV and/or substance abuse. FAPAC is providing parent/caregiver support. Services offered by Metro TeenAIDS include case coordination, individual mental health services (children, youth and adults), medical access, out of school time support, and educational supports. To refer a family call Metro Teen AIDS at 202-543-9355 and ask for Melissa Sellevaag or Joanna Strait.

FAPAC Training Update

CFSA's Child Welfare Training Academy (CWTA) has determined that training courses sponsored and/or facilitated by FAPAC will continue to count towards "internal" CFSA training credit for re-licensure. Please let us or CWTA know of any confusion you may experience on this issue. For FAPAC training opportunities, please visit our website at www.dcfapac.org.

Kudos, Applause & Acknowledgement (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

knowledge goes to Principal Deputy Director Debra Porchia-Usher, Deputy Directors Andrea Guy and Sandra Gasca-Gonzalez, and Program Administrator Cheryl Durden. You can find more details about this grant in the CFSA Update insert.

Kudos to CFSA for making "significant progress in recent months" as cited by the Center for the Study of Social Policy, the monitor for federal court oversight. According to their newest report, DC is closer than at any time in the past two decades to exiting LaShawn oversight due to "clear and positive attention to results with a commitment to use data to track progress, identify problems, explore underneath and around issues to identify root causes, and to think and act flexibly to craft and implement solutions." We applaud CFSA Director Brenda Donald, her administration and the entire CFSA staff for working diligently towards this significant progress.

Congratulations!

Congratulations to FAPAC Deputy Director Marilyn Egerton and her husband Eddie, who were named by DC Congresswoman Eleanor Holmes Norton as Washington, DC's 2012 Angels in Adoption. This honor, bestowed by the Congressional Coalition on Adoption Institute, honors individuals, couples, or organizations that have "made an extraordinary contribution on behalf of children in need of homes." Marilyn and Eddie have fostered more than three dozen young people. Sixteen children have become permanent parts of the Egerton family, four by adoption and twelve others to whom they have made a lifetime commitment.



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