



Metropolitan Washington  
Council of Governments

# Child Welfare News

Edition 12

## Inside this issue:

Message from the Program Manager	1
Editor's Footnote	1
Wednesday's Child Children	2
Jurisdiction Spotlight: City of Alexandria's Collaborative Efforts to Better Serve Families	2
Frederick County Honoring Foster Families for National Foster Care Month	3
Meet the Region's Foster Parent's of the Year	4
About COG's Child Welfare Program	4

## Message from the Program Manager



© 2012 Joan Brady

Happy Foster Care Month! This month marks a very busy time for child welfare professionals throughout the National Capital Region. There are celebrations occurring

throughout the region this month to recognize foster parents and their commitment to abused and neglected children.

The Metropolitan Council of Governments is proud to host our Annual Foster Parent Appreciation Event. Because this year also marks the 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Wednesday's Child, we are having a formal Appreciation Event, a gala, on June 9, 2012. The Metropolitan Council of Governments, the Freddie Mac Foundation, and NBC4 are expecting about 700 people for the Saturday evening formal gala, comprised of foster parents, dignitaries, members of the media, volunteers, and child welfare professionals.

During foster care month, whether an event is regional or local, large or small the overall purpose is the same to congratulate and recognize foster parents. By doing so, the hope is to retain more foster parenting services for children in need in our communities.

Foster parents accept children in their homes at a moment's notice, and often the background of the child who arrives on their doorstep is a mystery. Usually, children who are in the foster care system have been victims of abuse or neglect, but the extent of the abuse or neglect they had to endure is frequently unknown. One our outstanding foster parents, Charles County's Foster Parent of the Year, said it best while being interviewed recently about her experience as a foster parent: *"Some of these kids, the things that they have gone through and dealt with and they come out of it with the type of spirit...the way that they are (it) amazes me their intelligence and their ability to survive."*

Excellent foster parents work to show the children that they are loved, and their feelings matter. This month's newsletter will highlight some of the events in our region to show foster parents that **they** matter too, **their** service to the community is critical, and **their** sacrifices have not gone unnoticed.

Best,

Kamilah Bunn

## Editor's Footnote



© 2012 Joan Brady

If there are any ideas that you would like to see covered in future newsletters, please email me. Looking forward to receiving your suggestion.

Carette Rogers  
[crogers@mwkog.org](mailto:crogers@mwkog.org)

You can also contact me if you would like to unsubscribe

## Wednesday's Child Children



Photo by © 2012 Christine Meulemans

Da'Jour (L) and Steffon (R) are active young men who love sports. Their ideal family would have the experience of raising two terrific young men. To learn more about these siblings, call 88-TO-ADOPT-ME, or click [here](#).



Raychelle is a loving and affectionate young lady. She communicates through sign language and other non-verbal gestures. To learn more about Raychelle, call 88-TO-ADOPT-ME, or click [here](#).

Photo by © 2012 Christine Meulemans



Photo by © 2012 Christine Meulemans

Kristian (L) and Ry'Onite (R) are two of a kind that would love to live together again. Kristian loves reading and Ry'Onite enjoys math. To learn more about these siblings, call 88-TO-ADOPT-ME, or click [here](#).



Tony B. is a happy and cheerful young man. He would like to transition for a hospital from a permanent home. To learn more about Tony B., call 88-TO-ADOPT-ME, or click [here](#).

Photo by © 2012 Christine Meulemans

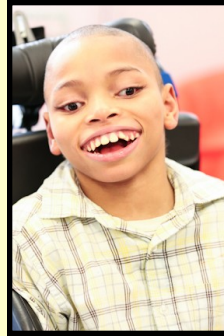


Photo by © 2012 Steve Maxwell

Victor is a charmer and loves being in the water. He is wheelchair bound, he needs a family that will be attentive to his needs. To learn more about Victor, call 88-TO-ADOPT ME, or click [here](#).

## Jurisdiction Spotlight: City of Alexandria's Collaborative Efforts to Better Serve Families

The City of Alexandria's Department of Community and Human Services completed their Quality Service Review (QSR) this past October. The QSR is a thorough, case review evaluation process that looks at how children and their families are making use of services received and how well local agencies are working with families and community partners. Trained reviewers went through cases and held in person interviews with service providers and family members to get a concise overview of the services that were received and the areas that need to be changed for the better.



At the conclusion of the case assessment, the QSR offered trends for reviewers to make an inclusive child and family status score along with an overall practice score. These ratings were then used by the local agencies to develop a System Improvement Plan that would assist them in implementing practice change for the families that this agency serves. Particularly, the recommendation that was highly recognized was to increase the level of family engagement with fathers and paternal relatives.

This jurisdiction plans on taking the appropriate steps in elevating their practices with training their entire staff and community partners on the Family Engagement Process. They are consulting with an expert to form a community based fatherhood program. They will be utilizing a male Social Worker staff to lend a hand with improving the fatherhood engagement portion. They have developed a family engagement unit to hosts partnership meetings, family finding and family group conferences. Lastly this training is essential for all Social Workers to attend as its focus is on the QSR recommendations the agency is trying to improve as a whole.

# Frederick County Honoring Foster Families for National Foster Care Month



*Ryan & MaryBeth Dunlop*



*Left: Lynn & John Taylor,  
Jennifer Long*



*Susan Lindauere & John Bertulis*

May is National Foster Care Month, a time to come together on behalf of the many children who are living in foster care because their families are in crisis. What better way to show foster families that you appreciate them thanks to Frederick County's Department of Social Services hosted a Foster Parent Appreciation Dinner and celebration at the Delaplaine Visual Arts Education Center. There were remarks from staff who expressed their ceaseless thanks to the foster families who make Fabulous Frederick live up to it's name. The Department of Human Resources Foster Parent Ombudsman, John Bertulis, gave a special thanks to the service award recipients for their continued efforts in always opening up their homes in providing a safe haven for children in care. Most importantly they are proud that it is usually those temporary residences that lead to a more permanent, loving home for their children in need.

November of this past year, the Department of Human Resources honored families throughout the state during National Adoption Month. John and Lynn Taylor were honored as Frederick County's Adoptive Family of the Year. John and Lynn have been licensed with the agency for two years now. Shortly after being licensed, the Taylors took in a young man who had been in group care for a number of years. He had been ready to step down, but because of his history of emotional issues as well as his 6'8" stature, it was challenge to find a match. This young man quickly adapted as a part of the Taylor family and truly thrived in their home.

He attended a public high school for the first time in his life and even got to play on their football team, a dream of his. John and Lynn functioned as advocates, mentors, nurturers, disciplinarians, and most of all, parents to this young man. Last summer, three weeks before this young man's 18th birthday, they made him a permanent part of their family. The Taylors truly understand the meaning of permanence for youth of all ages. It is because of families like the Taylors that help us recognize the great things that resource families are doing, as well as inspire and encourage more individuals to take action to support these children in their home community.



*John & Lynn Taylor*



*Allen & Randy Rowe*



*Beth & Jason Anderson*



# Meet the Region's Foster Parent's of the Year

On June 9, 2012 National Capital Region's Foster Parents of the Year are being honored at an Appreciation Gala for their dedication and support of children in foster care. Stay tuned as the next edition will have pictures from this fabulous event.

*Arlington County's Ryan and Sara Kirkwood* have fostered multiple children and go out of their way to guarantee the biological parents develop and maintain loving bonds with their children.

*Charles County's Harriette Julian* has been a foster parent for three years. In that time she has cared for nine foster care youth, mostly dealing with older teenagers. Ms. Julian provides the positive family environment that many of our youth have never had before.

*City of Alexandria's Fulvio and Stacey Padova* fostered a teenage boy in their home for five months. During this time the Padovas treated the child's birth parents as equal partners. While their foster child was in their home, his family was celebrating Ramadan. The Padovas took the time to learn about the holiday and make sure this child had everything he needed to observe it. His family members frequently remark that they will always be a part of their family.

*District of Columbia's Doris McLean* has been a foster parent for 18 years and has provided foster care for approximately 25 children over the years. Ms. McLean tries to enhance the self esteem of the children by giving them an opportunity to fully experience their childhood doing the things that children do.

*Fairfax County's Randy and Marisa Smith* have been foster parents since 2007. The Smiths and their four children have embraced active involvement as a foster family. They consistently "Bridge the Gap" effortlessly with the birth family throughout the placement and after reunification. They currently maintain contact with a child, who they fostered for two years and eventually went to live with a family member.

*Frederick County's Chad and Alan Snyder* have been licensed for one year, but have already made a lasting impact. Almost immediately after being licensed, the Snyder accepted an emergency placement of two young boys that were malnourished, non-verbal, and had significant health and emotional needs. Without the Snyders, these children would never have caught up in less than one year.

*Loudoun County's Lynwood and Cathy Owens* have been active in providing care to children of various ages. They also provide support to other resource families through respite care as well. The Owens brought both a teenage boy and girl into their home. They have made a lasting impact in their lives.

*Montgomery County's Jimmy and Sujei Daniels* adopted their foster daughter who they had since birth, and in November 2011, they adopted their second child, a boy. They took on three siblings in August 2011, rearranging their home so the whole group could stay together.

*Prince George's County Regina Drake-Zellars* have taken five difficult to place teenage girls into her home. Her latest child, a female teenager with a traumatic brain injury, has been with her since June of 2010. Ms. Drake-Zellars encourages her to have a healthier relationship with her birth mother. She has made her foster child feel like a part of her family, as she refers to her as "Mom."

*Prince William County's Donald and Annette Wright* are currently caring for two siblings, including one that was diagnosed with brain cancer. They have excelled in providing a safe, and loving environment for these children.

## About COG's Child Welfare Program

### **The Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG) —**

The Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG) is a regional organization of Washington area local governments. COG is comprised of 22 local governments surrounding our nation's capital, plus area members of the Maryland and Virginia legislatures, the U.S. Senate, and the U.S. House of Representatives. COG provides a focus for action and develops sound regional responses to such issues as the environment, affordable housing, economic development, health and family concerns, child welfare, population growth, public safety, and transportation.

### **The Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments' Child Welfare Program —**

In partnership with local and state child welfare agencies, COG's Child Welfare Program achieves positive outcomes for youth in foster care by bolstering local governments' foster and adoptive parent recruitment and retention initiatives. COG's child welfare committees provide a platform for this work while also providing local governments in the National Capital Region with technical assistance and a gathering place to discuss and track trends in foster care.

### **Our Committees —**

- ◆ Child Welfare Directors Committee (meets quarterly)
- ◆ Foster Care Advisory Committee (meets monthly)
- ◆ Wednesday's Child Adoption Committee (meets monthly)
- ◆ Child Welfare Data Workgroup (meets monthly, October-May)
- ◆ Child Welfare Emergency Preparedness Workgroup (ad hoc)

To learn more about the Child Welfare Program, please visit: [www.mwcog.org/childwelfare](http://www.mwcog.org/childwelfare)

Become our "FAN" on Facebook, [www.facebook.com/kidsneedfamilies](http://www.facebook.com/kidsneedfamilies), or send us a Tweet, @kidsneedfamily