



BITS & PIECES NEWSLETTER

WELCOME TO BITS & PIECES

This newsletter is to keep you informed about the activities and support services of LFAPA. It will be a means of communication so you can keep up to date on agency policy changes, legislative advocacy and training opportunities at our annual training conference.

Your Board of Directors will continue to work hard for Foster/Adoptive Parents across the state, in partnership with OCS, to improve the Child Welfare System.

LFAPA hosted a Legislative Doll Project for Foster Care Awareness in 2006 and successfully advocated for the Bill of Rights for Foster Parents which became law in 2006. We also testified before the House Appropriation Committee advocating for an increase in the basic foster care board rate in 2007 resulting in a 25% increase after 13 years of no increases.

Your Board serves on or speaks at several statewide committees including the Court Improvement Project, LAAB, Citizens Review Committee, Committee on Evacuation Shelters and others.

LFAPA/LAST is available to present a 3 hour training class on Defensive Parenting/LAST to local associations, support groups or as OCS regional training opportunities. This class has been well received in several areas of our state. Parents comments have been...."We feel this should be a required training for all new foster parents" "This should be an annual training to all".

If you would like to host Defensive Parenting/LAST, contact Carrie Hicks, LFAPA Executive Vice President and LAST Coordinator at 318-340-0230 or toll free 888-655-9564 to schedule or receive LAST brochures and information.



LFAPA is working for Louisiana's foster/adoptive parents

BLUE RIBBON DAY AT THE CAPITAL

On May 18th, LFAPA hosted Blue Ribbon Day at the Capital. We hung blue ribbons and our state banner on the trees near the Capital steps to increase public awareness of the needs of foster/adoptive children and the parents who care for them.

We set up a table in the rotunda of the Capital building to distribute brochures, serve coffee and speak to our elected officials. That afternoon parents were presented to the House and recognized in the Senate for their dedication and

service to the children in care.

We were joined by OCS representatives and a youth who had aged out of care to advocate for changes in proposed budget cuts to the YAP program and services for foster/adoptive parents.

We have held a Blue Ribbon Ceremony for the past few years during May, National Foster Care Month, and will schedule another next year.

Hope to see you there to get our voices heard.

Volume 1, Issue 1

June, 2009

Mission statement

To empower foster and adoptive parents and the children in their care by providing communication, support, training and advocacy services.

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YOUTH SCHOLARSHIPS

LFAPA has developed three (3) \$1,000 scholarships for foster/adoptive youth, ages 18–21, in the Shreveport and Monroe regions. These scholarships are for secondary education through universities, community colleges, vocational schools and online degrees.

Through generous donations we are able to offer two (2) Carrie B. Adger \$1000 scholarships to youth in the Shreveport region and one (1) \$1000 Linda Christmas scholarship in the Monroe region.

.Applications were mailed to foster parents encouraging them to work with the youth in their homes to take advantage of the opportunity.

Deadline for this years scholarships was May 30, 2009 but the application for next years scholarship opportunities will be available on our website, www.lfapainc.org.

We have developed the **HOPE** Scholarship Donation Fund (**H**elping **O**thers by **P**romoting **E**ducation) to encourage contributions to increase the

availability and number of scholarships. Letters to community leaders and businesses will be mailed this summer asking for contributions to the **HOPE** fund.

You or your association are encouraged to mail the letter to businesses or individuals in your area. Please contact **Peggy Kirby** at kirp50@juno.com for further information or a copy of the letter to mail. Our goal is to have scholarships available in every region of the state.

See story below.

HOPE Scholarship Donation Fund

We are seeking donations from community leaders, businesses and individuals to enhance the availability and number of scholarships by offering the **HOPE** Scholarship Donation Fund (**H**elping **O**thers by **P**romoting **E**ducation)

Our goal is to be able to offer several scholarships in ALL areas of our state. To reach this worthy goal, we need financial support from each section of our state.

(These sections are identified as the nine (9) geographic regions designated by the Louisiana Department of Social Services)

Donations to the fund are now being accepted. Levels of donations are:

Diamond Level: \$1000 & up

Emerald Level: \$500–\$999

Ruby Level: \$250–\$499

Opal Level: \$100–\$249

Gems Level: \$1–\$99

Each level has benefits such as being recognized as contributor on website, etc., receive plaque or certificate of appreciation and others depending upon level of donation.

Donations can be mailed to:

HOPE Donation Fund

PO Box 332

Baton Rouge LA 70821

At **L.A.S.T.** Louisiana Advocacy Support Team

Goals of LAST:

- Retain quality foster homes
- Provide moral & technical support
- Provide information about investigation process
- Advocate to improve Child Welfare policy
- Provide a training tool to give foster parents the training

they need to parent defensively

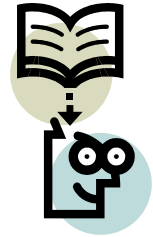
LAST volunteers are foster parents who receive ongoing training so they can help other foster parents deal with allegations. The LAST volunteer knows what the parents are experiencing. He/she: will listen, will not make judgments, will explain the OCS/CPI process, will help parents prepare for meetings with staff, and will

maintain confidentiality according to state laws.

LAST will not only assist you during an investigation but will find answers for you concerning any OCS policy questions, resources available or allowable and training needs questions.

REACH OUT FOR HELP DURING A DIFFICULT TIME.

(888) 655-9564 Toll Free



Educational opportunities for our youth.



“The gem cannot be polished without friction, nor man perfected without trials.”

Chinese Proverb

Prayers for Children in Foster Care by Janet Farrand

Pray for children entering foster care today, that there is a kind & loving family to care for them.

Pray for the sibling groups entering foster care today, that they will be placed together.

Pray for all the children in care, that their first foster home is their last foster home.

Pray for more families to become foster parents who are able and willing to meet the special needs of their foster

children.

Pray that all foster children will return to a safe home or find a permanent loving home.

Pray for God's intervention with all families to enable them to recover and allow reunification of foster children with safe and caring birth families.

Pray that God blesses all the OCS caseworkers and staff who make decisions daily which impact the lives of children and families.

Pray that God's hand guides the judges to make their decisions in the child's best interest.

Pray for those children who are freed for adoption and waiting for a family.

Pray that foster & adoptive families and their children receive the support and understanding of their communities.

LFAPA asks that you pray for our leaders, our agency and our communities that they always remember the children



Bless all those who make a difference in the lifetime of a child

Foster Care Facts

Did you know?

20,000 teens age out of care nationwide each year:

25% are homeless, 56% unemployed and 27% of the males end up in jail.

Louisiana's foster home population has decreased by 25% in four years. From 2,700 homes in Jan. 2005 to 2,041 homes in Jan. 2009.

65% of children adopted from

foster care are adopted by foster parents.

Gov. Jindal proposed a whopping \$54 million dollar budget to care for 462 juvenile offenders, an annual cost of more than \$100,000 per youth.

OCS budget to care for more than 5,000 children is \$39.8 million, an annual cost of less than \$8,000 per child.

The Young Adult Program

(YAP) was eliminated in OCS proposed budget but through advocacy we were able to temporarily keep \$1 million to sustain the youth already in YAP.

We ask that you take these facts and write letters to your elected officials advocating for more support services to foster parents and permanent funding for the YAP program.

www.legis.state.la.us for contact information

"It takes a Village to raise a child"

Help us "CHANGE A LIFETIME" of a child

LFAPA & the Economic Times

LFAPA has contracted with the state to provide support and services to foster/adoptive parents for many years. This year our contract budget has been reduced by fifty (50%) percent.

To streamline our Board and reduce some costs we have changed the makeup of our Board by amending our by-laws in May. Elected officer

positions will now be President, Executive Vice President, Vice President of Membership, Recording Secretary, Treasurer, Financial Secretary, and Parliamentarian.

LFAPA is preparing for the **F.U.T.U.R.E.** by: **F**inancial responsibility, **U**ndisputed excellence, **T**raining opportunities, **U**nited membership,

Reaching out to build partnerships, and **E**ffective Leadership.

We will be creatively seeking other sources of income to enhance the services and support to foster/adoptive families. If you are aware of any grants or income possibilities, please share the information with us.



Our finance committee is adjusting the budget so we can continue to develop programs and activities to support our membership.



**Louisiana Foster and Adoptive
Parents Association**

P O Box 332
Baton Rouge LA 70821

318-396-6309
www.lfapainc.org
kirp50@juno.com

**To empower foster and adoptive
parents and the children in their care
by providing communication, support,
training and advocacy services.**

**WE ARE ON THE
WEB:**

WWW.LFAPAINC.ORG



**One voice lifted is seldom
heard.....Many voices
lifted can make a change**

**JOIN Today
Together we will raise our
voices and be heard**

I SUPPORT THE LOUISIANA FOSTER AND ADOPTIVE PARENTS ASSOCIATION

I want to be a part of the team

Name: _____

Address: _____

City/State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____ email: _____

\$15 Regular (family) Membership _____ \$50 Affiliate Membership _____

\$50 Supporting Membership _____ \$75 Corporate Supporter _____

Mail to address on the left, Attn: Membership

LFAPA Board Members

Your 2009 Executive Board of Directors are as follows:

"Mickie" Osborn, Corr. Secretary

318-472-8701

Peggy Kirby, President

Maple Martin, Treasurer

318-396-6309

318-326-4731

Carrie Hicks, Exe. V. P.

Willie Mae Booth, Parliamentarian

318-340-0230

504-242-7916

Jannette Suire, Membership V.P.

Myra Magee, Financial Chair

337-582-6900

985-732-9479

Antoinette Ackerson, Fundraising V.P.

Margie Rogillio, Past President

504-897-5481

985-795-9271

Richard Ott, Recording Secretary

Tyra Mercadel, OCS Liaison

337-433-6265

225-342-4039