"TRANSITIONS – MAYBE THE ONLY CONSTANT IN LIFE!"

One of my former colleagues that worked for the Youth Service Bureau used to say “the only thing consistent in working with youth is that they are going to be inconsistent”. I’ve also heard it said that we are in a constantly changing world. Maybe it is the business we are in, the fast paced social media, the mobile society, the global news stories but it seems like it’s true we are constantly adjusting to some type of transition in our day-to-day and work lives. On a personal level, I am in the process of trying to sell my house. Big decision as it is the childhood home for my adult kids and feels like we have one leg in the house and the other out. At work and in foster care you have had many changes and transitions during the past few months – foster youth moving in and out of your homes, especially if you do respite care, courts making decisions which you question but put the best foot forward in trying to make sense out of it for the sake of the kids, legislative changes for adult family providers (245D) which makes you stretch your computer suaveness and decide how to serve waiver clients, wishing we could better predict when placements for youth or adults are going to be needed.

All this is happening at the same time your own day-to-day family fluctuations are occurring, making it challenging to be grounded. One of the hardest things about being a foster parent is that you are in some respects alone with a very demanding job. You can’t talk to your neighbors, kind church members, or even best friends about what is going on with the children/teens in your home. This puts you in a difficult spot and we as an agency want you to have the support and connection that you deserve and frankly need. We want you to be as grounded as possible in the midst of the transitions. Our licensors are there for you, and one can expect to have a calm empathetic voice literally “just a call away”.

Two additional services to assist you to be grounded are training and child foster care support group. At training you will meet others who share your passion for caregiving and understand your story. You will find caring people willing to share their knowledge and open to learning. We are very excited to be offering for the first time in 2014 a 5-part series “Caring for Children who have Experienced Trauma”. Please see the training page for current training offerings. We plan to offer local regular night child support groups beginning in 2014. The adult family providers have an active successful support/education group that meets every two months. This is an essential benefit for child providers. Support groups are for you to ask questions, better understand how the system works, share your frustrations of fostering, learn from others, do a check-in of what is realistic, and laugh and sometimes cry with people who truly comprehend what you are going through. We know that you deal with difficult family situations and sometimes hard to imagine behaviors. Your “job” is to be kind, structured, flexible and at the same time understand and keep the children safe. We expect a lot and truly want you to be the best skilled, equipped and caring foster parents in Minnesota. I think with everyone’s help and commitment we can achieve this goal. We are open to suggestions so, don’t hesitate to call your licensor or me with an idea.

The last transition we need to acknowledge is Heidi Bischoff, child foster care licensor for primarily the southern part of the county is transferring to an Adoption/Children’s Worker position effective October 25, 2013. While we are very sad to have Heidi leave our unit, she will truly be an asset to the agency with her foster/adoption background and exceptional case worker skills. The good news is that we have already filled the vacancy with Kim Pfuehler, whose background is working with individuals with developmental disabilities (Washington County DD Unit), most recently she worked in our Adult Intake and Screening Unit; and many years ago she was a licensor so is familiar with the job. We are very thrilled to have Kim join the child foster care program and believe you will enjoy getting to know her and working with her beginning November 12, 2013.

We recognize that changing licensor’s is not that easy and now once more one will have to get to know a new worker, how she thinks, what she expects, what is the best way to communicate.
BURNS

If a foster child or adult sustains a burn in the second and third degree, it is considered a serious injury and should be reported to the Office of Ombudsman. Most burn-related injuries that are reported are thermal, including sunburns, hot water burns, hot moist material burns, and burns from personal heating devices.

Hot water burns often involve one or more of the following factors:
- Temperature of the water
- Length of time the skin is exposed to hot water
- Integrity of the skin
- Staff supervision

When symptoms of a burn injury are present, such as redness, swelling, pain, blisters and/or weeping of fluids, have the injury promptly assessed and treated by a healthcare professional. We will check your water temperature on a yearly basis to make sure you are under 120˚, but it’s a good idea to keep an eye on it to make sure everyone is safe.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Water Temp.</th>
<th>Time Required for 3rd Degree Burn to Occur</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>155˚</td>
<td>1 second</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>148˚</td>
<td>2 seconds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>140˚</td>
<td>5 seconds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>133˚</td>
<td>15 seconds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>127˚</td>
<td>1 minute</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>124˚</td>
<td>3 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>120˚</td>
<td>5 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100˚</td>
<td>Safe temperature for bathing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Information gathered from the Office of Ombudsman for Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities
http://mn.gov/omhdd/documents/medical-alerts/
**TOP 10 COOKING TIPS**

1. Preserve the nutrients and colors in veggies. Cook them quickly by steaming or stir-frying.

2. Use herbs, vinegar, tomatoes, onions, and/or fat-free or low-fat sauces or salad dressings for better health, especially if you have [high blood pressure](www.heart.org/HEARTORG/Caregiver/Replenish/Top10CookingTips/Top10_Cooking_Tips_UCM_301837_Article.jsp) or [high cholesterol](www.heart.org/HEARTORG/Caregiver/Replenish/Top10CookingTips/Top10_Cooking_Tips_UCM_301837_Article.jsp).

3. Use your time and your freezer wisely. When you cook once, make it last longer by preparing enough for several other meals. Freeze it and have a ready-made healthy treat for the next time you are simply too tired to bother.

4. A smoothie can cover a multitude of needs. Throw a banana (you can keep them in the freezer for weeks) into your blender along with frozen berries, kiwi, or whatever fruit is around, some orange or other 100% juice, and some fat-free or low-fat yogurt. You can get 4–5 servings of fruit in one glass of yummy shake. Try getting your loved one to sip on a smoothie. It’s easy, cool, refreshing, and healthy.

5. Prepared seasonings can have a high salt content and increase your risk for [high blood pressure](www.heart.org/HEARTORG/Caregiver/Replenish/Top10CookingTips/Top10_Cooking_Tips_UCM_301837_Article.jsp). Replace salt with herbs and spices or some of the salt-free seasoning mixes. Use lemon juice, citrus zest, or hot chilies to add flavor.

6. Canned, processed, and preserved vegetables often have a very high [sodium](www.heart.org/HEARTORG/Caregiver/Replenish/Top10CookingTips/Top10_Cooking_Tips_UCM_301837_Article.jsp) content. Look for “low-sodium” veggies or try the frozen varieties. Compare the sodium content on the Nutrition Facts label of similar products (for example, different brands of tomato sauce) and choose the products with less sodium. If you buy canned, rinse veggies under cold water to reduce the level of sodium.

7. Prepare muffins and quick breads with less saturated fat and fewer calories. Use three ripe, very well-mashed bananas, instead of 1/2 cup butter, lard, shortening, or oil or substitute one cup of applesauce per one cup of these [fats](www.heart.org/HEARTORG/Caregiver/Replenish/Top10CookingTips/Top10_Cooking_Tips_UCM_301837_Article.jsp).

8. Choose [whole grain](www.heart.org/HEARTORG/Caregiver/Replenish/Top10CookingTips/Top10_Cooking_Tips_UCM_301837_Article.jsp) for part of your ingredients instead of highly refined products. Use whole-wheat flour, oatmeal, and whole cornmeal. Whole-wheat flour can be substituted for up to half of all-purpose flour. For example, if a recipe calls for 2 cups of flour, try 1 cup all-purpose flour and 1 cup minus 1 tablespoon whole-wheat flour.

9. In baking, use plain, fat-free or low-fat yogurt or fat-free or low-fat sour cream.

10. Another way to decrease the amount of fat and calories in your recipes is to use fat-free milk or 1% milk instead of whole or reduced-fat (2%) milk. For extra richness, try fat-free half-and-half or evaporated skim milk.

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**ADULT FOSTER CARE PROVIDERS SUPPORT GROUP & TRAINING**

Support Group meets the 4th Tuesday of every other month. The following training replaces the normally scheduled AFC Support Group:

**Title:** Diffusing Crisis Situations Safely & Sanely (Part II)

**Date:** Tuesday, November 26 • 6:00-9:00 p.m.

This is a joint adult and child foster care provider dinner and training. Participants will learn how to understand anger as an unmet need, identify the stages of a developing crisis, and build the skills necessary to de-escalate a potentially volatile situation. If you would like to participate in the potluck, please arrive at 5:30 p.m. and bring a dish to share!
**TIPS FOR CHILD FOSTER CARE PROVIDERS DURING THE HOLIDAYS**

For most people, the holidays can be incredibly fun yet also hectic and stressful. This is especially true for foster families and youth in care. Many aspects of the holiday season remind foster children of what they do not have and will stir up a wide variety of emotions from grief and loss to excitement to anxiety and sadness. Foster children miss their biological families all year, but their feelings of loss can intensify during the holidays especially if he or she has been told they will be home by Christmas and that does not happen or when biological parents make promises of gifts they cannot deliver. You as foster parents can be a tremendous asset in supporting youth in care during this emotional time of year. Here are a few tips to remember as this special time of year approaches:

- **Be prepared for the sadness and grief.** Give your foster child opportunities to talk about his/her feelings throughout the season. Remember grief takes many forms including becoming withdrawn, being rebellious, having temper tantrums, or reverting back to younger behaviors.
- **Prepare foster children for your family gatherings, especially if they have just joined your family.** Talk about the events; who will be there, what happens, how loud things may be. Show pictures of your family and friends who may be there so they do not feel overwhelmed with all the new faces.
- **Ask your foster children about their own traditions, if they have any, and incorporate what you can into your celebrations.** For example, prepare one of his/her favorite holiday foods even if it does not necessarily go with the elaborate dinner you have planned.
- **Be prepared for gift giving issues such as receiving socks and underwear instead of an iPod, receiving more or much less than everyone else.** Gift giving and receiving can be hard on foster children, especially if they have never experienced it before. Take the time to teach how to give and receive respectfully and thoughtfully.
- **Keep your own expectations of how the holiday season will go realistic.** Do not expect the perfect holiday or perfectly behaved, grateful foster children. Foster children are likely to have a lot of mixed feelings about the holidays and those feelings are often reflected in the behaviors mentioned above.

**FUN PRODUCTIVE USE OF SCREEN TIME!**

Did you go to the zoo this summer? See any animals from Africa? Do you like looking at pictures? Here is a way to look at these animals and volunteer at the same time. **Snapshot Serengeti** is a Citizen Science project run through the University of Minnesota that uses volunteers to help researchers sort through huge amounts of data. **Snap** shot Serengeti has hundreds of camera traps set up in the Serengeti National Park in Tanzania. They are trying to figure out how competing animal species coexist in the park. They need help identifying the animals in the millions of photos that the camera traps take.

To begin, you must sign up for an account. The website has a short tutorial on identifying the animals then you can begin. It is set up like a kid’s game; you have choices on the right to help identify the animal. Is it antelope/deer like or cow/horse like? What shape are the horns? What is the pattern on the fur? It is easy to maneuver and understand. This is a project that all ages can do and enjoy. It can be done alone or together. Those who are a little less able to identify can do it with help. Young kids can practice their skills in identifying parts of the animal. Best of all, you are not alone. This is a project that is completed by thousands of people. If you think it is a buffalo and someone else thinks it is a wildebeest, the odds will sort it out. The majority has been proven to be right by experts.

Not interested in animals? Check out [www.zooniverse.org/projects](http://www.zooniverse.org/projects) for other projects in astronomy, climate, or biology.
WASHINGTON COUNTY

All trainings will be held at the Washington County Government Center in Stillwater unless otherwise noted. To register for trainings contact Anne Fildes at (651) 275-7259. All trainings are free to Washington County Foster Care Providers unless otherwise noted. *Reminder: Foster parents can seek up to $100 training reimbursement per calendar year per household.

Resource Family Training:
Impact of Abuse & Neglect on Child Development — Module 5

This training provides an overview of normal childhood development and the impact of abuse and neglect. It also explains how to recognize developmental delays or challenges.

Date/Time: Thurs., November 21 • 6:00-9:00 p.m.
Trainer: Dept. of Human Services Contracted Trainers

Diffusing Crisis Situations Safely & Sanely: A Joint Adult & Child Foster Care Provider Dinner & Training

Potluck begins at 5:30 p.m.

Date/Time: Tues., November 26 • 6:00-9:00 p.m.
Trainer: Dept. of Human Services Contracted Trainers

C.A.R.S. (Children and Restraint Systems) Training

This training is required when caring for kids 8 and younger. Limited seating! No walk-ins.

Date/Time: Tues., December 3 • 6:00-9:00 p.m.
Trainer: Washington Co. Public Health Staff

Resource Family Training:
Attachment, Separation, & Placement — Module 6

This training outlines normal, healthy attachment and the impact on attachment of separation from primary families. Participants will explore how children’s developmental levels affect their understanding of and reactions to out-of-home placement.

Date/Time: Thurs., December 19 • 6:00-9:00 p.m.
Trainer: Dept. of Human Services Contracted Trainers

Save the Date: Resource Families Training - Caring for Children who have Experienced Trauma

Many children in the foster care system have lived through traumatic experiences. Understanding how trauma affects children can help you to make sense of their baffling behavior, feelings, and attitudes. The workshop will offer skills and techniques to help you respond appropriately to children’s behavior and support them in developing healthy attachments and coping strategies. We will also learn ways to reduce the stress of parenting a traumatized child.

*These sessions must be attended in the order given. Special consideration will be given to providers who have completed the series for future placement.

Date/Time: Tues., January 7, February 11, March 11, April 8, & May 6, 2014 • 6:00-8:30 p.m. (*May 6 training is 6:00-8:30 p.m. with a special celebration.)
Trainer: Dept. of Human Services Contracted Trainers

METRO TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

Six Skills for Effective Parent Advocacy

This workshop will explore six skills parents can use to become more effective advocates for their child with a disability. Come learn about these skills, which include understanding your child’s disability, knowing the key players, knowing your rights and responsibilities, using clear and effective communication, becoming well-organized, and knowing how to resolve disagreements.

Date/Time: Tues., November 19 • 6:30-8:30 p.m.
Location: PACER Center, Minneapolis
Cost: FREE
Registration: www.pacer.org/workshops or (952) 838-9000

Asperger’s Disorder: Understanding the Diagnosis

This workshop is an overview of Asperger’s Disorder, an autism spectrum disorder characterized by normal or above-average intellectual capability, but having challenges with abstract language, social cognition, and restricted interests and rigid behaviors. An overview of this disorder will be provided, as well as practical tools and strategies that address executive function, social perspective taking, and anxiety management.

Date/Time: Thurs., November 21 • 10:00 a.m.-Noon
Location: Fraser, Bloomington
Cost: $30
Registration: www.fraser.org
JENIFER SEILER

Provider Spotlight

Jenifer Seiler, Stillwater, has been a foster care provider for over 20 years. She currently only has an adult foster care license but has been dually licensed in the past for child and adult foster care.

What prompted you to become licensed?
I have always loved taking care of people. It didn’t matter if they were young or old. I worked as an electrologist for many years when I was fortunate to meet a wonderful woman at an appointment. She told me she was a caregiver for a young man with disabilities. For the next hour I asked many questions. To think I could make a difference in someone’s life, do something really important, give back to my community. I knew this was what I would do the rest of my life.

What keeps you going every day?
The smiles on the faces of my consumers. I love to see the pride in their faces when they learn something new; or watching them become more independent, or making a new friend. Another thing that helps is the positive feedback I get from the families after a visit. They love to see their loved ones thriving and content. They have become a part of our non-typical family. We always have them for holidays and birthdays.

What is something you have learned that would be helpful to other providers?
You never stop learning! Listening and being a good advocate are the most important tools you can have. When people cannot speak or communicate their needs or wants, it can be trying for them. Read body language and facial expressions; they are pretty universal. Treat people as you would like to be treated.

What advice would you give to someone that is newly licensed?
They are all in need of love and guidance. They have been displaced and need to learn to trust you. Be patient, it will come with time. Ask for help. Breathe before you act or speak. Ask the parents a lot of questions. Parents are a world of information which can be helpful in stressful times. This is the most important job you’ll ever have!

What have been the most helpful resources for you?
My family has been a wonderful resource. The trainings I attend are often good, giving me new techniques and strategies to be a better provider. Ask your licensor a lot of questions. There are no silly questions. They are knowledgeable and are there to help you. They want you to succeed. They want the placement to be successful.

What is your best memory of providing foster care?
I love birthdays, holidays, and family gatherings. It’s loud around my table, but it’s music to my ears!

More Training Opportunities

Living with Alzheimer’s: Middle Stage

Date/Time: Thurs., December 12 • 6:30 p.m.
Location: Christ Presbyterian Church, Fireside Room, Edina
Registration: Debbie Richman at (952) 857-0551 or drichman@alz.org

Saturday Morning: Education and Support

The morning will start with varied education topics for the first 90 minutes followed by the Alzheimer’s Caregiver Support Group.

Date/Time: Sat., December 14 • 9:00 a.m.
Location: Normandale Lutheran Church, Edina
Registration: Not needed
Contact: Keith Narr at (612) 250-7269 narrs@msn.com