DHS ANNOUNCES LAUNCH OF NORTHSTAR CARE FOR CHILDREN
NEW PROGRAM WILL HELP MORE FOSTER CHILDREN FIND PERMANENT FAMILIES MORE QUICKLY

More children will leave foster care and become part of permanent families more quickly with Northstar Care for Children. Launched January 1, 2015, Northstar Care is a unified benefit program designed to reduce the length of time children spend in foster care by finding them families through adoption or legal guardianship.

“Northstar Care is about families,” said Minnesota Department of Human Services Commissioner Lucinda Jesson. “With it, we are helping children who cannot be reunified with their birth parents become part of another family as soon as possible. Northstar Care helps ensure that children will grow up in permanent families—not foster care—and that those families can provide the support they need.”

Previously, foster children received significantly lower benefits once they were adopted or living legally with relatives (receiving adoption assistance or relative custody care). This benefit discrepancy was a barrier, particularly for American Indian, African-American, older children and sibling groups to getting adopted. Now, whether in foster care, adopted families or relative care families, of children 6 and older will receive the same benefits.

“In the past, foster parents who wanted to adopt or relatives who wanted to legally care for children would typically see a decrease in benefits of 40–70%, leaving many children in out-of-home placement for long periods of time,” said Jesson. “The potential consequences—homelessness, involvement with the criminal justice system—for those who didn’t grow up in permanent families were tragic. Northstar Care will help change that by eliminating the financial discrepancy.”

For most children in the system, Northstar Care offers Medical Assistance, a monthly basic payment based on their age and monthly supplements based on an assessment of their needs. This assessment, the Minnesota Assessment of Parenting for Children and Youth (MAPCY), focuses on what children need and what their caregivers are doing to meet those needs.

Foster children age 6 and older in the program will receive the same benefits as they move from foster care to adoption or permanent custody with a relative. Children 5 and younger will see a reduction in benefits once they are adopted or transferred as they did under the previous system.

Continued on page 4

SAVE THE DATE:
2015 FOSTER CARE RECOGNITION EVENING
Thurs., May 21, 2015 • 6:00 p.m. • Lake Elmo Event Center

This special evening celebrates, acknowledges, and thanks the licensed foster care providers who care for our children and vulnerable adults. This is a night for you to dress up (business casual), leave the kids at home, and enjoy! We hope to see as many licensed providers as possible. There will be delicious food, door prizes, awards, and an opportunity to socialize and enjoy the evening. Watch for your invitation in the mail soon!
Adult Foster Care Providers Needed!

When life gets difficult... ...can you help? As a Washington County Adult Foster Care provider, you can make a difference in the lives of adults with a mental health diagnosis who are unable to live independently. Many choose to live in a family setting and simply need the support and stability of foster care to manage the demands of everyday life.

Who needs care?
• Over 18 years old
• Individuals with a mental health diagnosis
• Need a safe, caring environment
• May be involved in programs during the day such as school, work, or organized day program
• May stay with you for a long time, but most are short-term

What is adult foster care?
Licensed individuals or families provide adult foster care in their own home. The adults in care need a safe and supportive environment in which to thrive and learn independent living skills.

Please pass the word on so we can keep adults in local foster homes.

OUR NEXT ADULT FOSTER CARE INFORMATIONAL MEETING:
Mon., April 6
6:00-8:00 p.m.
Government Center
14949 62nd St. N.
Stillwater

For more information call (651) 430-6455.
CERTIFICATE OF RENT PAID DUE JANUARY 31 FOR ELIGIBLE RESIDENTS

Adult Foster Care providers are required to issue certificates of rent paid (CRP) to all eligible adult foster care residents by January 31, 2015. You do not need to issue a certificate of rent paid if the person only receives MSA or SSI. You do need to issue a CRP if the person receives RSDI, has a job and contributes some of the earned income to their room and board, or has other income they use to pay their rent. See article from the Minnesota Department of Revenue below:

Certificate of Rent Paid (CRP): Waiver Programs - Adult Foster Care
All rental property owners, managers, or operators must provide a Certificate of Rent Paid (CRP) to each person who rented from them during the previous year unless the property is tax-exempt.

You must give each renter a CRP by January 31, 2015, if you’re a landlord and property tax (or “payment in lieu of property tax”) was payable in 2014. Renters need the CRP to apply for the state Homestead Credit Refund (for Homeowners) and Renter’s Property Tax Refund (“renter’s refund”).

This CRP requirement also applies to group residential housing (GRH) facilities covered by waiver programs, including adult foster care. Residents may qualify for the refund only if the facility has state or federal waivers to provide housing and other services for people who would otherwise need nursing home care.

However, if your facility is exempt from property tax, do not give CRP forms to your residents. (People who live in tax-exempt facilities are not eligible for the renter’s refund.)

No CRP needed for residents with income only from certain assistance programs
If a resident receives income only from certain government assistance programs, they are not eligible for the renter’s refund. Therefore, you don’t need to issue a CRP to any resident whose only income is from the following programs:
• Supplemental Security Income (SSI), under Title XVI of the Social Security Act.
• Minnesota Supplemental Aid/Group Residential Housing (MSA/GRH), under Minnesota Statutes, sections 256D.35 to 256D.54.

Note: If a resident has any other income beyond what they receive from SSI or MSA/GRH, they may be eligible for a renter’s refund. You must give them a CRP if – and only if – some of their other income is used to pay rent.

How to complete the CRP for group residential housing facilities
For each qualifying resident, follow the instructions below when calculating lines 1 and 3 on the CRP form:
• Above Line A: Check the appropriate box to indicate “Adult Foster Care”.
• Line B: Enter the amount of GRH payments you received on behalf of the resident. (The resident will need this information to apply for the refund.)
• Line 1: Multiply the number of months, or fraction of months, the resident lived in the facility by $740, and enter the result on line 1. (Monthly rent is assumed to be $740 for 2014; this amount is adjusted each year.)
• Line 3: Multiply the amount from line 1 by 0.17 (the percentage of rent that is considered to be property tax), and enter the result on Line 3.
• Sign and date the form and include your telephone number.

For detailed information and a copy of Form CRP, see Landlord Instructions for Form CRP.

You may buy computer software to generate multiple CRPs. View a list of CRP Software Products.

If you need help filling out a CRP or a Homestead Credit Refund (for Homeowners) and Renter’s Property Tax Refund Return (Form M1PR), call the general assistance number at (651) 296-3781 or 1(800) 652-9094.
Welcome New Child Providers:

August 2014
• Cindy Kyles, Oakdale (Kin)

September 2014
• Linda Archambault, Woodbury (Non-Kin)
• Coral & Joe Haselbauer, Scandia (Kin)
• Sue King, Hugo (Kin)
• Mersha Landrum, Woodbury (Kin)
• Melinda & Mike Myers, Oakdale (Kin)

October 2014
• Mitchell Azariah & Stephanie Tesch, Oakdale (Kin)
• Melanie Walters, Cottage Grove (Kin)

November 2014
• Fofana Fatou, Woodbury (Non-Kin)
• Carrie Moore, Woodbury (Non-Kin)
• Laura Schleh, Cottage Grove (Kin)
• Corrine & Justin Stephenson, Woodbury (Kin)
• Toni Turnquist, St. Paul Park (Kin)

December 2014
• Rick Coates, Cottage Grove (Kin)
• Samantha Coleman, Cottage Grove (Kin)
• Lisa Doyle, Woodbury (Kin)
• Sheana Durnil, Forest Lake (Kin)
• Donald Patrai, Oakdale (Kin)

January 2015
• Lona Harris, Oakdale (Kin)

So what does this mean for Washington County child providers? You?
• It means that children (0–21) in relative custody, adoption and foster care in placement before January 1, 2015, will be reimbursed the “old” way until:
  - the youth’s placement setting changes, and/or
  - the status of their placement changes from foster care to an alternative permanency.
    (from foster care to relative custody or adoption)
• These “old” programs will be referred to as the Legacy Program.
• It means that for any foster care placement beginning January 1, 2015 the Minnesota Assessment for Parenting for Children and Youth (MAPCY) will be used for children/youth in relative custody transfers (kinship care), foster care (whether kinship or non-kin care), and adoption to address child needs and for reimbursement.
• It means that within 30 days of placement or sooner the case manager, licensor, family, and other appropriate members of the treatment team will meet to do the MAPCY and case plan. The MAPCY is a child assessment tool and your parenting style/needs/expectations are based on the child’s needs.
• The MAPCY is a computer generated tool which, based on the ratings and justification for the ratings, is scored by the computer.
• The MAPCY is much more behavioral in nature and describes what you as a caregiver will need to do (or are doing and maybe don’t even think about it) to meet the child’s needs, adjusting your parenting style and environment to do so.

Our Recruitment Efforts
We are often asked how Washington County informs the public about our need for more caring adults and families to become foster care providers. Over the years we have used many tools to get our message out. Recruitment efforts throughout the county have included:
• you, as foster parents!
• ads on screen at movie theaters and on the back of grocery receipts;
• we have purchased ad space in newspapers as well as running PSA’s and streaming on news websites, sending out drop mailings;
• flyers and posters have been sent to faith communities and schools;
• flyers, posters, and tabletop signs have been placed at libraries, medical offices, ECFE sites, coffee shops, fast food restaurants, and county building public spaces;
• popcorn bags with our message have been distributed to high schools for sporting events;
• magnets, mugs, and reusable shopping bags for the public; and
• most recently we have created vertical banners that have been placed in the entry areas of county buildings and libraries.

We will continue to do mailings, have monthly PSA’s for information meetings, distribute flyers, and utilize the banner. If you have ideas or want to help, please contact Barbara.

Mental Illnesses - Hope for Recovery
Free Workshops by NAMI-Minnesota
Spend a Saturday with a trained family member who will offer information, hope, and practical strategies for dealing with the complexities of mental illnesses.

Participants will learn about:
• Types of mental illnesses
• Treatments and recovery
• Coping strategies
• The mental health system
• Local resources

Date/Location:  Sat., April 18: St. Paul  •  Sat., May 16: Minneapolis  •  Sat., June 20: St. Paul
Registration:  Required. Website contains more dates: www.namihelps.org/classes.html
• It means that the first few times the case manager, you and all of us do this it may take quite awhile (2 hours+) until we understand the new tool.
• It means that for an emergency foster care placement the rate of reimbursement changes.

Benefits of MAPCY
• There is a more consistent determination of the individual child’s parenting needs across the state for all three programs.
• There is more of an incentive for permanency for children particularly those over 5 years of age.
• Child care costs are included in MAPCY for children 0–12 if a working parent (caregiver).
• Respite rate (for birth family to foster provider respite) is not determined by the MAPCY and is a flat daily rate of $60 regardless of the age of the youth.
• Foster parents of our youth will more clearly know what is expected of them as the daily parent to our children due to the increased level of detail in the assessment tool, coupled with the case plan.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MAPCY Basic Rates - 2015</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0 – 5 years:</td>
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<tr>
<td>6 – 12 years:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13+ years:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This is also the amount for the initial clothing allowance. What follows is a chart for the different levels based on the MAPCY rating:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Levels</th>
<th>FC &amp; Enter Perm 6+</th>
<th>Enter Perm 0-5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>$0</td>
<td>$0</td>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>$0</td>
<td>$0</td>
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<td>C</td>
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<td>$650</td>
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<tr>
<td>P</td>
<td>$1,400</td>
<td>$700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q</td>
<td>$1,500</td>
<td>$750</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

We have had two MAPCY trainings thus far and will continue to assess the need to have more for foster providers. Thank you to all of you who have attended training. We will put a MAPCY tip or key learning in each future newsletter to help us all understand and work with this new tool to better serve our youth and families. We know this will be an adventure for all of us, so please give your licensor, case manager, or me your feedback. We so value you as providers and want to make this new system work as well as possible.
**SECONDHAND SMOKE LEGISLATIVE CHANGES**

In children, what causes more ear infections, frequent and severe asthma attacks, respiratory symptoms (e.g., coughing, sneezing, shortness of breath), respiratory infections (i.e. bronchitis, pneumonia), and a greater risk for SUIDS? In the U.S. children aged 18 months or younger, secondhand smoke exposure is responsible for: *an estimated 150,000–300,000 new cases of bronchitis and pneumonia annually; approximately 7,500–15,000 hospitalizations annually. CDC Fact Sheet - Secondhand Smoke Facts via [www.cdc.gov/tobacco/basic_information/secondhand_smoke/index.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/basic_information/secondhand_smoke/index.htm).

Family Foster Care Licensing Statute Mn. 260C.215, Subd.9 addresses this area of concern. Per the statute, a foster child cannot be exposed to secondhand smoke in the foster home, the car used to transport the child, or any enclosed area attached to the home.

If unable to provide a smoke-free environment, the foster parent will have to comply with a plan that includes training on the health risks of exposure to secondhand smoke. If unable to provide a smoke-free environment for the foster child, the agency will need to determine if that environment constitutes a health risk to the foster child and assess whether the placement is based on the child’s best interests.

Then there is the latest fad – electronic cigarettes. Per Mn. 144.414, Subd. 5, these are prohibited in any facility or home licensed by the commissioner of human services.

If you need help complying with this rule, please speak with your licensor who can help find resources to assist in addressing this issue. We value our providers and the children in care and are willing to do all we can to support you.

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**Foster Parents Needed!**

Word of mouth is one of the best forms of recruitment to get new foster parents in Washington County. If anyone has said to you, “I’ve always thought about becoming a foster parent” or you know of someone who is good with kids, wants to help the community, and you think has what it takes to become a foster parent, please send them our way!

We need people who can provide care to a variety of youth, such as teens, sibling groups, children with mental health diagnoses, developmental disabilities, and everything in between.

We need foster parents in all areas of the county. Whether families can only commit to one or two weekends per month for respite care or be a placement resource, we have a need for both!

Please pass the word on so we can keep kids in our local foster homes.

**OUR NEXT CHILD FOSTER CARE INFORMATIONAL MEETING:**

Mon., May 4 6:00-8:00 p.m. Government Center 14949 62nd St. N. Stillwater

For more information call (651) 430-6455.

Thanks so much!

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**20TH ANNUAL MN AUTISM CONFERENCE**

This is a 4 day conference presented by the Autism Society of Minnesota (AuSM). Speakers, educators, therapists, psychologists, employers, paraprofessionals, caregivers, parents, and individuals on the autism spectrum have a platform to exchange knowledge and ideas with one another - all with the goal of enhancing the lives of those touched by autism and advance the public’s knowledge of autism spectrum disorder. Keynote speakers will include: James Coplan, Patrick Schwartz, John Miller, and Kari Dunn Buron.

**Date:** Wed., April 29 - Sat., May 2

**Location:** Doubletree Hilton, Minneapolis Park Place

**Questions:** [www.ausm.org](http://www.ausm.org)

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**FREE PEER SUPPORT FOR LGBTQA YOUTH AGED 16-20**

Dealing with depression, anxiety, bipolar disorder, or other mental health conditions? Connect with other young people who understand what you are going through.

**YOU ARE NOT ALONE.**

**Date/Time:** First & third Sundays of the month • 2:00-3:30 p.m.

**Location:** Springhouse Ministry Center, 610 W. 28th St., Micah Room, Minneapolis

**Questions:** Contact NAMI Minnesota at (651) 645-2948
WASHINGTON COUNTY
All trainings will be held at the Washington County Government Center in Stillwater unless otherwise noted. To register for trainings contact Ann Maudal at (651) 430-6485. 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.

*PreService Trainings: Highly recommended for providers (new, kinship, or licensed within the past 2 years) seeking to have respite/placements in their homes.

Pre-Service Training
An experienced foster, adoptive, or kinship parent and an agency professional will guide participants through an interactive and informative training series filled with activities and learning opportunities.

Trainees: Dept. of Human Services Trainers

Sexual Abuse
This training examines the definition and dynamics of child sexual abuse. Participants will learn that sexual abuse is a complex problem and that children who have been sexually abused may have a hard time adjusting to a new home. Additional training and resources to successfully care for these children and teens will be discussed.

Date/Time: Tues., March 24 • 6:00-9:00 p.m.

New Daytime Classes

Effects of Caregivers on the Family
Participants will learn to recognize signs of family stress and know the importance of developing and using support systems to prevent a family crisis. Procedures will be outlined that are required if allegations of maltreatment are made. Health, hygiene, and nutritional issues will be explored.

Date/Time: Fri., April 17 • 9:00 a.m.-Noon

Permanency Issues for Children
& Permanency Issues for Families

Mod 11: Participants will learn the unique aspects of becoming a permanent home for a child who will not be returning to their biological parents. They will begin to understand how post-placement issues such as loss, identity, and loyalties can be complicated for these children and begin to prepare for them. Caregivers will explore the supports for parents and children in their community.

Mod 12: This training helps participants recognize the long-term adjustment to adoption for the parent and the child. This includes dealing with grief, loss, identity, control, divided loyalties, and fertility issues, as well as the fantasy of being a “dream family.”

Date/Time: Tues., May 5 • 6:00-9:00 p.m.

CARS (Children and Restraint Systems) Training
This training is required when caring for kids 8 and younger. Limited participants! No walk-ins.

Date/Time: Thurs., March 31 • 6:00-9:00 p.m.

Specialty Training - Internet Safety
We are happy to announce a special topic training presented by Detective Craig Cilley of the Washington County Sheriff’s Department Computer Forensics Unit.

Date/Time: Wed., April 8 • 6:30-8:00 p.m.

SUID (Sudden Unexpected Infant Death) / AHT (Abusive Head Trauma) Training
This training is required when caring for kids 5 and younger.

Date/Time: Mon, April 6 • 6:30-8:30 p.m.

Date/Time: Tues., June 16 • 6:30-8:30 p.m.

DATE/Time:
Tues., June 23 • 6:00-9:00 p.m.

METRO TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

CPR - Infant and Child
This 4 hour workshop meets the DHS/licensing requirements for CPR training. Participants will be able to use their own mannequin. Certification cards will be given out in class.

Date/Time: Sat., April 25 • 8:00 a.m.-Noon
Location: Guardian Angels, Oakdale
Cost: $44
Registration: (651) 641-3549 or www.MNStreams.org

First Aid
This 4 hour workshop meets the DHS/licensing requirements for First Aid training. This workshop is geared to your needs as the first one on the scene when someone has a medical emergency. It covers basic first aid principles and practices, injury prevention, and safety information. Certification cards will be given out in class.

Date/Time: Sat., April 25 • 12:30-4:30 p.m.
Location: Guardian Angels, Oakdale
Cost: $44
Registration: (651) 641-3549 or www.MNStreams.org
Washington County Foster Care Staff

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Visit us on the Washington County website at:
www.co.washington.mn.us/fostercarelicensing

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**PROVIDER SPOTLIGHT**

**CAROL & BOB LAMERE**

Bob and Carol, who live in Forest Lake, have been providing placement and respite care to adults with intellectual disabilities since 2003. Bob and Carol try to plan fun activities for their residents including taking them on trips to Florida and Hawaii. They are familiar faces to many at the events and activities for individuals with intellectual disabilities. After 12 years as providers they are retiring this May. We thank you so much for your dedication to adult foster care and wish you the very best in your retirement.

**What prompted you to become licensed?**

My wife had been working with vulnerable adults since the early 1980’s, while I was working in the high stress printing industry. While I hated my job, she just loved her’s. She would always tell me about all the fun stuff they would be doing and how she just loved the adults she worked with. By the late 1990’s, all our kids, we had 4, were either married or living on their own. So we were living in a 4 bedroom home by ourselves. Someone told my wife about adult foster care and it sounded like something that would be just right for us. We contacted Robbin at Washington County and did some remodeling on our house and before we knew it we were adult foster care providers. It turned out to be the best decision we ever made.

**What keeps you going every day?**

This truly is an every day job. There are some sacrifices you have to make, but the rewards you get back far outweigh everything else; plus the fact that if I wasn’t doing this I would still be in the high stress printing industry. That’s more than enough to keep me going every day.

**What is something you have learned that would be helpful to other providers?**

The number one thing we learned as foster care providers, is that when a problem comes up that we are not sure how to handle, or if we just need another opinion from someone that we know is knowledgable and trustworthy, there is no one better to ask than our Washington County licensor.

**What advice would you give to someone that is newly licensed?**

To be patient and thorough when deciding to accept a client to live with you.

**What have been the most helpful resources for you?**

Washington County and Thomas Allen trainings.

**What is your best memory of providing foster care?**

Our best memory of providing foster care is the day we started doing it. That was truly a life-changing event. It changed our lives for the better, and hopefully, also for the clients we serve.

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**EDUCATION & TRAINING VOUCHER (ETV) PROGRAM**

The ETV Program is a federal program providing up to $5,000/year to eligible youth to attend accredited and Pell-eligible colleges. The ETV award can help pay for school/living expenses.

**Criteria for first time applicants:**

Child must be under age 21 and accepted into an accredited school of higher education and one of the following:

- In foster care on/after age 16-18
- Adopted from foster care on/after age 16
- In foster care on/after age 16 when the court ordered a transfer of custody to a relative
- Under state guardianship at age 18

If you have a child in your care that you think may qualify for this voucher be sure to discuss with the child’s case manager or your licensor for further information. You may also go to the DHS website and search for more information, criteria, and access a copy of the application and documents that should be submitted with application.