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Licensing Unit’s Mission

To enrich the lives of children and adults by promoting safe and quality licensed care.

Washington County

Community Services
14949 62nd St. N.
P.O. Box 30
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www.co.washington.mn.us

THE PULSE OF FOSTER CARE

Since our last edition of “The Star” a lot has happened in our adult and child foster care programs. We welcomed Jessica Lentz as our Adult Foster Care Licensor in January and had Caitlin McNamara, Child Foster Care Licensor, transfer to an On-going Child Protection position. We were fortunate to have Rebecca (Becky) Barnhart replace Caitlin on June 15, 2015 with experience in licensing! The state has implemented the new Northstar legislation which is impacting many of the child foster care providers and will ultimately impact all child providers. Many of you in the adult world are still adjusting to the 245D legislation. Child providers who provide emergency foster care have seen an increase in children, particularly infants and sibling groups, being placed. Based on conversations with adult licensors, referrals are also up in the adult family world. Many times the needs of these children and adults are getting more complex and expectations are increasing.

We anticipate the 2015 Child Protection Legislation providing funding for more Child Protection workers will have a ripple effect of increasing the need for child foster care and kinship/relative licensing.

What does all this mean for you? Well at times I’m certain that you felt less supported during the vacancies of the position. Fewer workers can be stretched only so far. It means that you have to say goodbye to someone that you had a relationship with and now we are asking you to develop a new relationship with a different worker. We acknowledge this is not easy and will try and be as understanding as possible. Reaching out and connecting with other providers by attending trainings and getting to know fellow providers on a more personal basis is an excellent way to increase your support system, get a different perspective, and maybe get a new idea or technique. With data privacy being such a big issue in our society and work today, talking and connecting with people who do the same work is key to being a successful, trained not burned out provider.

If you have specific frustrations related to Northstar and/or 245D legislation, we want to hear the details so we can provide that information to our administration and DHS. That is how you do have a voice and can impact (albeit slowly sometimes) change. So call or send us an email with specific examples!

Recruiting child providers with our society having so many working parents, is not getting any easier so any help you can generate in that direction helps the foster care program grow. We have had several new non-kin providers in the past few years become licensed due to knowing one of you. We appreciate you being recruiters too and ask you to be observant of others you know who might be good at fostering adults or children.

Thank you seems like such a small phrase for what you do day in and day out. We do our best to provide some benefits in return: the annual recognition event in May, zoo passes with drawings at trainings, an occasional gift certificate for an event or dinner, $100 training reimbursement per year, training sponsored and/or provided by Washington County, good practice support calls, and visits by licensors.

You all are truly a talented, committed, caring group of individuals and we are proud to have you for our providers. Working in this position for the last 20 years, I can honestly say that knowing you, Continued on page 2
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., August 3 6:00-8:00 p.m. Government Center 14949 62nd St. N. Stillwater For more information call (651) 430-6455.

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 CELEBRATING CHILD FOSTER FAMILIES WITH FREE TWINS TICKETS

To honor the contributions of child foster families, the Minnesota Twins have teamed up with the Twin Cities metro counties and the Minnesota Department of Human Services to take foster families out to the ball game. The Twins are offering a limited number of free tickets to honor and celebrate foster families. Foster families may request tickets for everyone in their immediate household.

There are a limited number of tickets, so reserve yours now! All requests must be received before Wed., August 19!

Fri., September 18 • 7:10 p.m. (game time)
Target Field, 1 Twins Way, Minneapolis, MN
Minnesota Twins vs. Los Angeles Angels of Anaheim

Click on this link for more info.: Celebrating Foster Families Flyer
Questions: Contact your licensor.

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GROUP RESIDENTIAL HOUSING (GRH) RATE CHANGE

The Group Residential Housing Rate (GRH) is set by the state each year to pay for room-and-board costs for low-income adults who have been placed in licensed care. The amount of the Group Residential Housing payment is based on a federal/state standard of what an individual would need, at a minimum, to live in the community. In some cases, Group Residential Housing may pay a supplemental amount to the basic rate. The supplement, difficulty of care, is based on the behavior of and/or cares required by the resident. Beginning, July 1, 2015, the rate is increasing by $15 to $891 (from $876).

Personal needs money that your residents receive will also increase to $97 beginning July 1.

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ADULT FOSTER CARE PROVIDER TRAINING GROUP

Topic: Health Care Directives

Emily Justman from the Metro. Area Agency on Aging will present on Health Care Directives. Leaving instructions about your health care choices helps make sure decisions are made that are based on your values and preferences, even if you are unable to make your wishes known. We will explain what a health care agent can do if a person is unable to make or communicate decisions. We will also discuss why a health care directive is important and how to complete a Minnesota Health Care Directive.

Date: Tues., July 28 • 6:00-8:30 p.m.
DID YOU KNOW?

FOOD STORAGE APP

The FoodKeeper – is a mobile app which provides valuable food storage advice to help consumers maintain the freshness and quality of foods. The guidelines recommended in The FoodKeeper can also help consumers use food while at peak quality and reduce waste. The guide was created through the work of the Food Marketing Institute, Cornell University’s Department of Food Science, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA).

GAS GRILLS

Gas grills are NOT allowed on decks without stairs. The propane tanks cannot be safely taken through the house to the deck.

FREE TUESDAY - Washington County Parks

Visit any Washington County Park for FREE on the first Tuesday of every month (non-holiday).

2015 dates still available:
• August 4
• September 1
• October 6
• November 3
• December 1

IMPORTANT UPDATE FOR ELDERLY WAIVER PROVIDERS

Effective July 1, case managers will no longer be using the County Waiver Funded Foster Care Rate Sheet (Functional Formula) to determine payment under the elderly waiver. They will be using the Customized Living Tool. This is a state developed tool which the case manager fills out based on the assessment of the client done using the MnCHOICES assessment. MnCHOICES replaces the Long-term Care Consultation (LTCC) screening. When your currently placed elderly waiver clients are due for reassessment the case manager will use the new MnCHOICES assessment and then complete the Customized Living Tool to determine the rate. New placements will already have been assessed using MnCHOICES. The placing worker will then complete the Customized Living Tool to determine the rate.

SAFETY WARNING ON EXTENSION CORD & MULTI-PLUG ADAPTER USAGE IN CHILD AND ADULT HOMES

Child and Adult Foster Care providers are prohibited from using an extension cord for permanent wiring.

This means using the extension cord for an extended period of time. Using an extension cord for holiday lights would be allowed, using an extension cord for the refrigerator would not be allowed. Also, using the extension cord in the bedroom where there is inadequate number of electrical outlets is not allowed. Extension cords are easily subject to damage due to the electrical cord being moved, being stepped on, having furniture moved onto the cord, etc. Fires caused by extension cord use are still one of the higher cause of fires and easily preventable.

It is allowed to use multi-plug adapters as long as they are Underwriters Laboratory (UL) listed (or other national laboratory tested) and used as directed by the manufacturer. An approved device will have the UL listing (or other laboratory) and the devices amperage rating printed or imprinted right on the device. IF THIS INFORMATION IS NOT ON THE DEVICE, DO NOT USE THE DEVICE.

Multi-plug adapters can be safely used for devices such as lamps, clock radios, and small kitchen appliances. They should not be used for devices which draw a lot current such as microwave, refrigerator, washer/dryer, freezer, and air conditioners. Those devices should be plugged directly into the wall socket.

IMPORTANT - CHANGES IN VULNERABLE ADULT REPORTING

There has been a change in how to make a vulnerable adult report. Previously, providers would contact their county/local Common Entry Point (CEP) to make the report. As of July 1, the Department of Human Services (DHS) will be taking these reports through a statewide phone number and electronically. This new service is called Minnesota Adult Abuse Reporting Center (MAARC). Reports of vulnerable adult abuse, neglect, or exploitation can be made by the the options listed below:

• Electronically submitting a report a www.mn.gov/dhs/reportadultabuse/  
  OR
• Calling 1-844-880-1574

Taken from the Food Marketing Institute webpage www.fmi.org/industry-topics/cont-
sumer-affairs/food-keeper-food-stor-
gedatabase/foodkeeper-mobile-app
Welcome New Child Providers:

January 2015
• Becky & Keith Knefelkamp, Lakeland (Kin)

February 2015
• Debbie Emery, Forest Lake (Kin)

March 2015
• Anne & Francois Ahimou, Woodbury (Non-Kin)
• Brenda & Kyle Benning, Woodbury (Kin)
• Stacy Roloff, Cottage Grove (Kin)

April 2015
• Jodi Clair, Mahtomedi (Non-Kin)
• Jodi & Craig Hunter, Forest Lake (Kin)
• Kristine Olness, Oakdale (Kin)
• Linda & William Stixrud, Cottage Grove (Kin)

May 2015
• Louise & Lee Adolfson, Woodbury (Kin)
• Jennifer & Matthew Hazzard, Hugo (Non-Kin)

WELCOME BECKY BARNHART - OUR NEW CHILD FOSTER CARE LICENSOR

Hello, my name is Becky Barnhart; I am the new child foster care licensor with Washington County. I am in the process of relocating to this beautiful community with my significant other. Previously I worked in Pierce County, Wisconsin for seven years as a child protection investigator. Before that, I worked in both Olmsted and Hennepin Counties in child foster care. I have great passion for the foster care program and the good work foster parents do with the kids and adults of the community. I look forward to meeting the foster parents of Washington County!

BUILDING FINANCIAL CAPABILITY WITH YOUTH IN FOSTER CARE

What is financial capability?
Financial capability is the ability of individuals “to understand, assess, and act in their best financial interest” (Johnson & Sherraden, 2007, p. 124). To acquire this ability, youth need more than financial education or financial literacy while in foster care. To be prepared to manage financial matters when they exit care, young adults need the means to exercise money management skills through a combination of opportunities and experiences that allow them to apply that knowledge in day-to-day life with access to money, financial products, and support services.

The Financial Literacy and Education Commission (FLEC), together with other key organizations, developed the Financial Education Core Competencies, which encompass the principal components of what it means to be financially capable and are identified by these five concepts:

Earn • Spend • Save and Invest • Borrow • Protect

Where to start?
Many young people will have some knowledge about money and money management. It is important to learn about their level of understanding and build on that experience base. Assessment tools can highlight strengths and identify gaps in basic financial competencies and can serve as a catalyst to start a dialogue with youth. Discussing money and financial matters requires attention to both the mathematical nuts and bolts of balancing a check book as well as an understanding that this topic often has a socio/individual cultural/emotional component. Be prepared to explore not just if someone has taken a course in financial matters but also what their attitudes and values are in relationship to money and personal financial management. As young adults, they should lead the planning and direct the areas of need. Consider some of these questions when beginning a conversation with youth and young adults:

• What opportunities have they had to manage their own money?
• Have they had any financial education courses? What was that experience like for them?
• Have they received SSI, or a regular allowance, or been employed earning a pay check?
• What are their beliefs regarding the importance of wants versus needs?
• How well informed do they feel they are now? What do they want to know more about?

To view the full article, visit:

DID YOU KNOW?

Summer Activities
Summer is finally here! See the links below for more activities and adventures to enjoy:

• www.kidsbowlfree.com/allergy-group.php?path=mn-bowl
• www.familydaysout.com/kids-things-to-do-usa/minnesota/
• Free & low-cost activities

Source: National Resource Center for Youth Development
http://nrcyd.ou.edu/learning-center/publications
**FOSTER CARE RECOGNITION EVENING**

The Licensing Unit hosted their annual Foster Care Recognition Evening on May 22 at the Lake Elmo Inn Event Center. We celebrated family adult and child foster care providers and the services they offer to children and adults. About 60 foster care providers were in attendance from the newly licensed to those celebrating several decades of dedication to foster care. Among the guests who came in support of the foster care providers were Commissioners Weik and Miron, County Administrator Molly O’Rourke, Judges Miles and Jude, Community Services Director Dan Papin, and many Community Services’ social workers.

The goal of the evening is for foster providers to eat some delicious food, have a chance at a door prize, mingle with other providers and county representatives, and hear some heartfelt praise from the speakers. It was a special evening for everyone. Thanks to all who assisted and attended the event!

5 years of service award was presented to Cecilia Erdmann by Commissioners Weik & Miron.

5 years of service award was presented to Francene & Dan Myhra by Commissioners Weik & Miron.

10 years of service award was presented to Sheryl & Paul Nickle by Commissioners Weik & Miron.

15 years of service award was presented to Donna Bauman by Commissioners Weik & Miron.

15 years of service award was presented to Bonnie & Mike Knajdek by Commissioners Weik & Miron.

25 years of service award was presented to Nancy & James Anderson by Commissioners Weik & Miron.

25 years of service award was presented to Kris & David Lindsey by Commissioners Weik & Miron.

Delicious hors d’oeuvres and dessert buffets at the Lake Elmo Inn Event Center.
**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., September 14 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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**MYTHS ABOUT YOUNG CHILDREN AND SCREEN TIME**

1. **All screen time is detrimental to early learning.** Although children learn best through hands-on exploration, the reality is that most young children are exposed to screen media at a very young age and can learn from these experiences. What is most important is that:
   a. Content is age appropriate
   b. Viewing time is limited
   c. Caregivers are involved and help children make the connection between what they see on the screen and the real world.

2. **Children aren’t impacted by t.v. that plays in the background.** Study after study shows that background t.v. interferes with children’s play and learning. Exposure to programming not designed for young children, even when it is playing in the background is associated with a negative effect on children’s language development, cognitive development, and executive functioning.

3. **T.V. at bedtime can help lull children to sleep.** Studies have shown that viewing t.v. within 2 hours of bedtime can make it harder for children to fall asleep.

4. **Parental cell phone use doesn’t affect kid’s behavior.** A recent study that involved observing families at fast-food restaurants found that 40 out of the 55 parents used a mobile device during the meal. The longer that parents interacted with their mobile devices, the more likely their children were to act out.

5. **The more interactive a screen experience is, the better for kids.** One study involving e-books showed that more interactive features actually interfered with the children’s ability to focus on the storyline. Although e-books can still be useful tools for children, it is important for caregivers to help children focus on the story and not allow the technology to drive the experience.

Source: [www.zerotothree.org](http://www.zerotothree.org)

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**FIRE EXTINGUISHER RECALL**

This recall involves 31 models of Kidde disposable fire extinguishers with Zytel black plastic valves. The recalled extinguishers are red, white, or silver and are either ABC or BC rated. Manufacture dates included in the recall are July 23, 2013 through October 15, 2014. The extinguishers were sold at Home Depot, Menards, Walmart, and other hardware stores nationwide for between $18-$65. The hazard involves a faulty valve component that can cause the disposable fire extinguisher not to fully discharge when the lever is repeatedly pressed and released during a fire emergency, posing a risk of injury.

**Remedy:** Replacement.

For more information call Kidde at 1(855) 283-7991 or online at [www.kidde.com](http://www.kidde.com) and click on Safety Notice.
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.

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

SUID (Sudden Unexpected Infant Death) / AHT (Abusive Head Trauma) Training

This training is required when caring for kids 5 and younger.

Date/Time: Thurs., August 20 • 6:30-8:30 p.m.
Trainer: Washington County Staff - MNCPD certified

Specialty Training - Significance of Substance Abuse on Families

Parental abuse of alcohol and chemicals greatly impacts the behavior of children in foster care. Come learn about different levels of chemical abuse and strategies for working with children and families.

Special treats, potluck, and the chance to win tickets to the MN Zoo are always a special part of the trainings. The more who attend, the better the training.

Date/Time: Thurs., August 27 • 6:00-9:00 p.m.
Trainer: Kirk Fjellman

Child Foster Care Orientation

While summer is finally here, we are busy planning trainings for the upcoming year. Get the dates on your calendar early!

The orientation sessions are required for newly licensed or those in the process of becoming licensed. Each will be held in the Washington County Government Center.

Date/Time:
   Session I: Tues., September 15 • 6:00-9:00 p.m.
   Session II: Tues., September 29 • 6:00-9:00 p.m.
   Session III: Tues., October 13 • 6:00-9:00 p.m.
Trainer: Washington County Community Services Staff

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., September 24 • 6:00-9:00 p.m.
Trainer: Washington Co. Public Health Staff

METRO TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

ADHD Update 2015

This workshop will look at recent developments in ADHD diagnosis, evaluation, research, and treatment. This year’s update will have a special emphasis on new research related to autism and ADHD, as well as sleep and ADHD.

Date/Time: Tues., August 11 • 12:30-3:30 p.m.
Location: Shoreview Community Center, Shoreview
Cost: $79
Registration: https://fs17.formsite.com/macmh/form116/index.html or call MN Assoc. for Children's Mental Health at (800) 528-4511

Tackle Back-to-School Stress

Do your kids struggle with anxiety over school? Learn how to recognize signs of stress and anxiety and explore ways to help your kids manage their stress as they head back to school.

Date/Time: Thurs., August 20 • 6:30-8:00 p.m.
Location: Youth Service Bureau, Stillwater
Cost: $5
Registration: www.youthservice.pegasus.webaloo.com/parent-series_registration.aspx or pay at the door

CPR - Infant and Child

Designed for child care providers, teachers, parents, and others who care for children, this 3 hour course teaches participants how to recognize and care for breathing and cardiac emergencies in infants and children. This course meets child care licensing requirements.

Date/Time: Sat., September 26 • 9:00 a.m.-Noon
Location: Guardian Angels, Oakdale
Cost: $33
Registration: (651) 641-3549 or www.MNStreams.org

First Aid

This 3 hour course will help you recognize and deal with emergencies, injuries, and sudden illnesses in your child care setting. Class covers basic first aid principles and practices, injury prevention, and safety information. This course meets child care licensing requirements.

Date/Time: Sat., September 26 • 12:30-3:30 p.m.
Location: Guardian Angels, Oakdale
Cost: $33
Registration: (651) 641-3549 or www.MNStreams.org
**Provider Spotlight**

**Kris & David Lindsey**

Over the past 25 years Kris has provided care to countless children and young adults in her home. She has had so many successful placements that the case managers sometimes battle to use the home when there is room. A DD case manager wrote, “Kris and David never shy away from a challenge. Consumers are fully incorporated into their family, receive excellent care, and are treated with respect. They have excellent communication skills. I hope they continue providing care for another 25 years.”

**What prompted you to become licensed?**

I started at at a Intermediate Care facility at the age of 16. There were 32 children/young adults who lived there with significant developmental and physical disabilities and high medical needs. While working there I heard about Respite Care from a friend and decided when I moved out to my own place, I wanted to provide this service to families. I hoped that families who could get help or a break would be able to manage their child’s care at home. The facility I worked at was very caring and loving to all the children that lived there but nothing compares to having a family.

**What keeps you going every day?**

I’ve been blessed with being able to adopt 2 of the babies placed in our care, now age 19 and 2. I have also had the opportunity over the years to have some of my respite kids become long term Foster Care placements and a part of our family. I love the ability to be able to give a child a family, a home, consistency, and love. I have never thought about doing anything else. My bank account will never be overflowing but my heart is rich with so much love and personal rewards.

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

Always hope for the best but be prepared for the worst, it makes a hiccup in your plans seems so minor.

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

Too many memories to list just one. We have created so many memories with all the vacations from coast to coast and camping trips we have taken with all our kids.

**Marijuana Mayhem: What Parents Need to Know**

“Marijuana Mayhem” is an educational video for parents, families, and community members developed by CONNECT, Chemical Health Action. Marijuana is a hot topic in our community right now. Is it harmful? Is it safe? Is everyone doing it? What if I used it – what do I tell my kids? We all have so many questions! Emerging science suggests that the still-maturing brain of the adolescent is particularly vulnerable to the effects of marijuana. Marijuana policies in the U.S. are shifting towards medicalization and legalization, and as a result the popularity among teens is increasing. Research on the potential personal and social effects of this drug is vast. Doesn’t it sometimes feel a bit like mayhem?

In this video, hear two experts share their expertise on how marijuana impacts adolescent brain development, strategies for parent-child communication on the topic, and what parents can do amidst all this mayhem.

Full video (1 hour, 17 minutes): [https://youtu.be/nl6IpF3wf4g](https://youtu.be/nl6IpF3wf4g)