



**Children and Family Service
Training Center**
Department of Social Work
University of North Dakota

Fostering Communications



Fall 2010

Building a Network of People in the Foster Care System

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2010 Family Foster Care Conference: Fostering Hearts – Promising Futures

For the 260 foster parents, adopt parents and social workers attending the 2010 Family Foster Care Conference, the theme of “Fostering Hearts-Promising Futures” was most notably emphasized by the keynote and workshop presenters. The Nurturing Heart Approach offered by the main speaker, Lisa Bravo, was a great way to emphasize the theme and get the conference started in a positive direction. Helping foster children to feel better about themselves by catching them doing positive things is clearly a move towards a more promising future. The wish was for each participant to take something away from the Nurturing Heart presentation that will make foster parenting more rewarding and the lives of the children in foster care more successful. Hopefully that goal was met and parents will be able to implement some of the techniques discussed. There are books and website information to assist with further learning of the Nurturing Heart Approach. In addition, there are trainers from North Dakota who conduct workshops on this method of dealing with children who exhibit intense behaviors. Look for workshop announcements in your area.



Lisa Bravo

For those who are familiar with the PRIDE Core Training Modules, you might have recognized Module Five, “Supporting Relationships Between Children and Their Families” presented on Friday afternoon by Randy

Slavens, Regional Supervisor and an experienced PRIDE trainer from Grand Forks. The timeliness of this session coincides with the implementation of federal guidelines mandating agencies to diligently seek out appropriate relatives as possible placement options for children in the foster care system and providing ample opportunities for visitation with parents and siblings while the child(ren) are in care. The PRIDE Model of Practice preceded the law by many years when the competencies of supporting relations between children and their families and connecting children to safe, nurturing relationships intended to last a lifetime were implemented back in the mid 1990’s.



Dr. Arne Graff

Poverty is a major contributing factor in the abuse and neglect of children. Research has shown this to be true worldwide and we only need look in our own backyard to see the effects of poverty on the children of North Dakota. Even in our thriving state economy, children who enter the foster care system are often from the poorest families. It was interesting to participate in the keynote address by Ann Pollert on Friday night and try to put oneself in the shoes of families experiencing poverty.

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President's Corner

By Jon Mielke, President



Approximately 260 people attended this year's North Dakota Foster Parent Conference in Grand Forks and plans are already underway for next year's conference in Minot. Mark your calendar – September 23-25 at the Riverside Holiday Inn.

There is an unbelievable amount of planning that goes into putting the conference together – themes, speakers, meeting site arrangements, menus, auxiliary events, etc. I want to once again thank everyone who was involved in planning the 2010 conference – folks at UND's Children & Family Services Training Center, PATH staff, association directors, and foster parents in the Grand Forks region. It was a team effort and it could not have been done without everyone's enthusiastic and insightful contributions!

The association has decided to rotate future conference meeting locations. Following next year's conference in Minot, it will move to Fargo in 2012 and then to Bismarck in 2013. Then it will be back to Grand Forks in 2014.

At this year's annual meeting, members ratified proposed changes to the association's bylaws. Major changes included identifying major purposes for the organization and modifying the election process to create staggered terms so not all officers are elected the same year. These staggered terms will help insure some continuity within the association's board of directors.

Elections were held following the vote on the bylaws. Here is a list of the association's officers and the year that their current term in office expires:

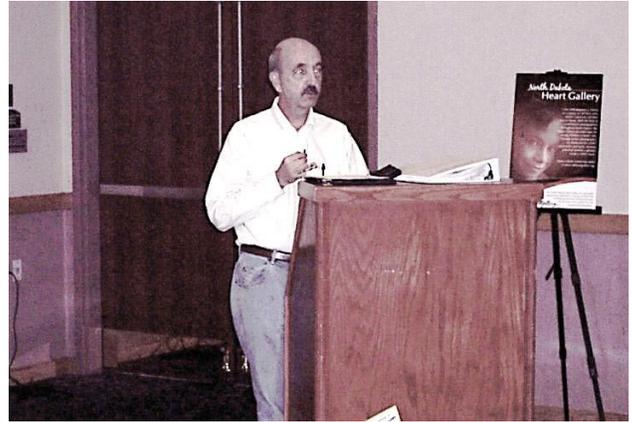
President	Jon Mielke (Bismarck)	2012
Vice President	Keatha McLeod (Horace)	2012
Secretary	Theresa Osteros (Burlington)	2011
Treasurer	Jim Hooge (Munich)	2011
Past President	Jim Schnabel (Venturia)	
Dept. of Human Services	Tara Muhlhauser	

I appreciate everyone's willingness to serve the association in a leadership position. Please feel free to contact any of these individuals if you have questions, concerns, or suggestions concerning the operations of your association.

Jill Sherbrooke, the association's former president, has volunteered to maintain the association's website. Please monitor the site (<http://www.caringforkidsnd.com/links.htm>) for future announcements and related information on your association.

In retrospect, state conferences are really great because of their educational content and the opportunities that they provide to network with other foster parents from around the state. But ultimately, it's still all about the kids. We had seven-month old twins with us at the conference and

they could not have been in a better place – surrounded by well trained and loving people who are dedicated to providing kids in need with a safe, secure, and loving home and hopefully a more promising future. We were confident that whoever was holding the twins – they were in a great place. Thanks for all that all of you do for all the kids that you care for!



President Jon at the business meeting

From the State Office

By Dean Sturn, Foster Care Administrator



Fostering Communications to Go Electronic

In these changing times, Fostering Communications will also be changing the way it will be delivered to you. As part of our desire to provide you with more timely news and to save printing and mailing costs, we will be transitioning Fostering Communications to an electronic newsletter format in the coming months. In order to facilitate the transition we are asking you to provide us with your current email address. You can do this by sending an email to cfstc@mail.und.nodak.edu and specify that you would like to receive your Fostering Communications newsletter electronically. We will also be sending out a reminder in the spring edition of Fostering Communications.

Also, did you know that you can read the newsletter on-line by going to the Children and Family Services Training Center website at www.cfstc.und.edu. Thank you for your assistance in our transition.

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We wish to express thanks to Tara Muhlhauser, Director of the Children and Family Services Division of the ND Department of Human Services, and an Executive Board member of the ND Foster / Adopt Parent Association, for her words and participation in the conference. It's important to know that the State Office is willing to have a representative attend the conference and assist in the ongoing development of foster care and adoption services.



Police Officer Sue Shirek

Here are a few highlights from the other sessions presented throughout the day on Saturday.

- Gene Delorme is a well-respected expert in matters related to culture and law. He is an invaluable asset to the North Dakota Child Welfare system and a friend to all who have had the great opportunity to work with him and hear his wisdom. One comment made on the evaluation of the session titled, "Addressing Myth, Stereotypes, Cultural Extremes and the Indian Child Welfare Act" was, "Best I've ever attended!! Very informative!!!"
- The panel of former foster youth coordinated by Shirley Hoffarth, social worker at Grand Forks County Social Services, was, as expected, a session full of intense emotion. Those who grow up in the foster care system or have spent a portion of their formative years in foster care, have a perspective that few others can imagine. One evaluation reads: "So heart wrenching to hear their stories – I respect their courage."
- Dr. Arne Graff has perhaps become the foremost expert in matters related to child abuse, especially child sexual abuse in the state of North Dakota. His work with the Children's Advocacy Centers has been nothing short of phenomenal – just ask any of the staff who are benefiting from his expertise. Dr. Graff presents at nationwide conferences so we were especially pleased to have him join us to assist foster parents in gaining a better understanding of the "Long Term Effects of Child Maltreatment: What To Expect."
- The highest rated session of the day was "Texting, Sexting and Internet Safety" presented by Grand

Forks Police Officer Sue Shirek. Her use of personal examples in addition to a hands-on look at specific websites, gave the audience an informative and perhaps alarming look at one of the new problems faced by parents and children in our society. This is a topic that has gained increased interest by law enforcement due to the exploding potential for criminal acts as the worldwide web is entering the lives of everyone and causing many problems as well as providing a valuable service as it is intended.



Participants at the 2010 Family Foster Care Conference

- The final two sessions of the afternoon were on the topic of psychiatric medications, presented by Dr. Ellen Feldman and Dr. Kondal Madaram, and attachment issues presented by Dr. Shyla Muse. Both sessions were well attended and very informative. Everyone seems to have concerns about the amount of medication being given to children.

Overall, the conference proved to be a positive learning experience for participants. Foster parents came away with tools to help them deal with the complex nature of the problems facing children and families in our state. Future foster family conferences will continue to fill the need and the requirement for quality training while also providing the opportunity for great camaraderie and support.



Conference organizers Shirley Hoffarth and Lisa Piche draw for door prizes

Child Neglect and Food Hoarding

By Charley Joyce, LICSW and Rick Delaney, Ph.D.

Food hoarding is a common issue displayed by foster-adoptive children. Food hoarding can be central in a child's world and resistant to change. Additionally, hoarding food behavior can bedevil and bewilder parents. So why does a child hoard food?

Often food hoarding is directly connected to significant neglect that the child has experienced in consistently having their basic needs for life sustaining food denied or inadequately met. As a result, the child is forced to become prematurely self-reliant in meeting their own basic needs. For example, in a situation where the parent is chemically dependent, resulting in inconsistency in providing and having food available, it would be reasonable that when food is available that a child would view this as an opportunity. It would be logical that a survival mentality would develop, causing the child to respond to the availability of food by overeating or hoarding food. In neglectful situations, food hoarding is a wise alternative to ongoing food deprivation.

What can be confusing and frustrating to foster-adoptive parents is why food hoarding continues when the child is being properly cared for and has no apparent reason to continue to hoard food. Unfortunately, child neglect often leaves a child insecure, seeing himself as unworthy of care and lacking in a sense of partnership with foster/adoptive parents. They may not feel that their foster-adoptive parents are available and sensitive, drawing this false conclusion from their previous "blueprint" of being victimized by negligent parenting.

When trying to positively impact food hoarding, we hope to move the child from solitary and secret self-parenting behavior to getting needs met within a healthy parent-child relationship.

We want to avoid drawing battle lines around food. If we lock the pantry, the refrigerator, the kitchen, we create a "mine and yours" mentality, one the child is very familiar with from the past. Designing family interventions should be preceded by a close look at the child's motivation for hoarding food, which is to at all costs avoid food deprivation caused by neglect.

Several examples of interventions that are designed to focus on the function of neglect-based food hoarding include:

Food Baskets: Provide food baskets in the home—created with the child's input—consisting of snacks that are healthy and appealing to the child. The child should be told the food baskets will be refilled and are a better alternative than hoarding. If the child hoards the food basket, set limits, but do not discontinue the basket idea. Some schools will also cooperate with keeping food baskets in the classroom, especially if the child is prone to taking other students' snacks.

Backpacks: When packing lunches for school or events, pack a special container of food that can be removed and kept with the child. This provides a traveling sense of food security and food availability for the child.

Coupling Nurturing with Eating: Always positively reinforce any progress the child makes in curbing hoarding behavior. If the child utilizes a food basket, nurture the child when he seeks items from the food basket. Positively comment on how all family members are always fed. Weave this message into mealtimes and have this message commented on by various family members.

- **Teach Food Regulation:** If child has a tendency to gorge, set a "food time out" after a complete meal is consumed. Make certain this applies to all family members. The goal is to assist the child in learning to experience a sense of fullness. The food time out should not be presented as denying food but rather delaying additional eating for a prescribed period of time. Describe the physical sensation of fullness. Fifteen minutes is about how long it takes to feel full. As with all behavioral and emotional challenges, a child's special needs and individual circumstances should be considered when designing interventions. Additionally, professional therapeutic assistance can offer help in the assessment and treatment of food issues. In an effort to understand the function of food hoarding, the following questions can assist in a parent's understanding of their child's food hoarding.
- Could there be psychiatric or biological issues contributing to the hoarding?
- Does the child's history reveal reasons for fixation on eating?
- Does the child substitute a food fixation for a loving relationship with parents?
- Are there things that trigger eating problems in the child?
- Is the child displaying an emotional neediness in the way he eats?

It is important to understand how the child's food issues impact you as a parent. Become aware of your own food issues and explore if they influence your ability or willingness to look at the child's problem with an open mind and creative flexibility. Also, study yourself to determine if the child's food hoarding personally threatens your role as a provider and nurturer.

(Exceptions from this article were taken from the book "Behavior with a Purpose" by Charley Joyce, LICSW & Rick Delaney PhD. Copies of "Behavior with a Purpose" can be ordered by going to www.charleyjoyce.com which will provide you with a direct order link. You can also email a request to cjoyce22@gmail.com)

New Foster Care Resources

Introduction to Parent-Child Visits Online Training

Child Welfare Information Gateway partnered with the National Resource Center for Permanency and Family Connections, a service of the Children's Bureau, to provide this self-guided online training on parent-child visits to help you enhance efforts toward family reunification. <http://training.childwelfare.gov>

Collection of Family Information About Adoptees and Their Birth Families: Summary of State Laws

Read an overview of State laws for the kinds of information about adoptees and their birth relatives that can be collected and shared with adopting parents. www.childwelfare.gov/systemwide/laws_policies/statutes/collection.cfm

Foster Care Statistics

Learn the most recent national statistical estimates from fiscal year 2008 for children in foster care and view trends over time. Data were obtained from the Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS). www.childwelfare.gov/pubs/factsheets/foster.cfm

What's Working in Foster Parent Recruitment: Stories from the Field

The May/June 2010 issue of *Adoption Advocate*, a publication of The National Council for Adoption, presents examples of real-life recruitment strategies from across the country that are working to help improve the lives of children in foster care and foster families. Initiatives include: Missouri Extreme Recruitment Grant; Focus on the Families' "Wait No More" Project; Wisconsin Foster Care and Adoption Resource Center's "Wisconsin Success" (networking with churches and synagogues); Washington State Children's Administration's Foster Parent Support and Recruitment; Minnesota's Metro Recruitment Team; and, using Facebook in Hamilton County, Ohio. <https://www.adoptioncouncil.org/images/stories/documents/adoptionadvocate24.pdf>

Teachers Advise on Helping Foster Children

A long-running California initiative that aims to improve education quality and outcomes for children in foster care has published a suite of new reports and resources. The initiative, *Ready to Succeed: Improving Educational Outcomes for Children and Youth in Foster Care*, is a partnership among the Stuart Foundation, the Center for the Future of Teaching and Learning, and Mental Health Advocacy Services, Inc., formed to promote collaboration between the education and child welfare systems. The group's latest releases include two reports.

Ready to Succeed in the Classroom: Findings From Teacher Discussion Groups on Their Experiences and Aspirations Teaching Students in the Foster Care System is a new report based on six teacher discussion groups in three California counties. The groups addressed the experiences of children at every grade level, including those in alternative schools. The resulting report includes discussion on:

- Barriers that children in foster care experience in school
- Strategies for welcoming new students who are in the foster care system
- Assessments for determining a student's education level and progress
- Wish lists of resources and policies that teachers would like to see from their schools, districts, and communities to help children in foster care succeed in the classroom

Advice for other teachers

Grappling With the Gaps: Toward a Research Agenda to Meet the Educational Needs of Children and Youth in Foster Care is based on interviews with 12 foster care experts with a wide variety of experience with children and youth in foster care. The report includes discussion and experts' opinions on:

- What is needed to promote school readiness for children in the foster care system
- Necessary components for school success
- The importance of data collection and sharing
- A research agenda to spread knowledge about ways to promote educational success for children in foster care

The collaborative has also produced a series of four "discussion cards," each with a different target audience (teachers, schools, districts, and communities), that provide tips on how to help foster children succeed in school.

To find out more about the *Ready to Succeed* initiative and access the reports and other resources, visit the website: www.cftl.org/initiatives_RTS.php

Related Item

Children's Bureau Express last wrote about the *Ready to Succeed* initiative in "Connecting to Improve Education for Children in Foster Care" (February 2009).

2010 Foster Parents of the Year

Tammy Balliet, LICSW, from Burleigh County Social Services, submitted the nomination of Gordon and MaryJo Jangula for the prestigious award of the 2010 Foster Parents of the Year. Gordon and MaryJo have been licensed foster parents since January 2003. They have taken 16 children into their home. They have two children of their own, have adopted a foster child, and currently have two foster children. MaryJo was deployed to Kosovo in August 2009. Gordon kept the foster children in the home during her absence. During this time, Gordon provided for the children's daily care, kept them busy by taking them swimming and to the farm, and assisted with transportation for sibling visits. While in Kosovo, MaryJo kept in contact through email and attended Child and Family Team meetings by phone. They are dedicated and wonderful foster parents.

CONGRATULATIONS Gordon and Mary Jo!! Well done!!

Independent Living

By Dawnita Nilles

New Resource: www.nd.gov/ndyouth

The ND Youth Advocacy group is made up of young individuals from across the State of ND who are currently in foster care or who have aged out of the foster care system. One of the tasks this group of dedicated young people has spent the last couple of years doing involves researching and locating resources they feel would be useful to anyone who is turning 18 and making that transition to living independently. After gathering this information they have worked diligently to pull it together and make it available to ALL young people at the just the click of a mouse!

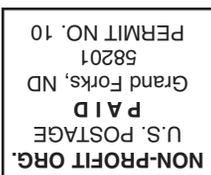
On behalf of NDYouth I would like to unveil their work: a new website – made by youth for youth! This site, at just the click of a mouse button, will give you information about finding an apartment, managing money, paying for

post-secondary education, finding crisis resources and over 150 other links broken up by region within the State of ND.

The work for the site was done by the youth with support from the Annie E. Casey Foundation. Check it out and more importantly, point any young person you know who is turning 18 and venturing out into the world of independence to this great site: www.nd.gov/ndyouth

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