

# Wright County Human Services Child Foster Care

July 2012

Wright County Human Services, 1004 Commercial Dr, Buffalo, MN 55313 - 763-682-7400  
<http://www.co.wright.mn.us/department/humanservices/childfoster.asp>

## 12<sup>th</sup> Annual

{Wright County}

# FOSTER CARE PICNIC

Please Join Us:

Wednesday August 8<sup>th</sup>, 2012

Upper Sturges Park Shelter in Buffalo

6:00 p.m. ~ 8:00 p.m.

Wright County will again be providing:

Hot Dogs & Buns, Tableware,  
Condiments, Ice Water, Baked Beans

\*\*\*All you need to bring is a dish to share\*\*\*

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*"Fostering is the  
hardest job you'll ever  
love."*

*~ Unknown*

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RSVP with number attending or with regrets ASAP to:

Tamara Romer

763-682-7488

[tamara.romer@co.wright.mn.us](mailto:tamara.romer@co.wright.mn.us)

## Secondary Trauma for Child Foster Care Providers

As a child foster care provider, you began your journey to offer children a safe and nurturing home while their families work through difficult times. We look to foster families to be stable, prepared, and ready to focus on the needs of foster children in their care. In order to do this, your families must have open communication, a strong support system, and the ability to deal with the tragic stories you hear from children placed in your homes each and every day.

These deeply sad and sometimes horrific stories have an impact on every one of us. There is no way to completely steel yourselves or separate your emotions when you hear stories about abuse and neglect of children. This is simply human nature. The impact on you as a result of continually hearing this type of information about someone else's trauma, is referred to as "secondary trauma".

Usually, people want to provide foster care to try to make a difference and to be part of a positive solution for children. Unfortunately, reaction to secondary trauma is a reason many families burnout and are no longer able to continue providing child foster care services. It is vital for foster parents to acknowledge that hearing this information day in and day out will affect the way you think and react as people. It is also important that you maintain personal awareness and assess how this information is effecting your decision making and reactions to situations.

Some signs that you may be struggling with secondary trauma reactions may be:

- No longer seeing the positive attributes in children
- Blaming the children in your care instead of focusing on your role to improve situations
- Excessive anger and frustration toward a child's family of origin or the child welfare system
- Feelings of hopelessness and negativity regarding case plan objectives

It is critical for foster parents to find outlets to discuss the range of feelings that come from being part of the child welfare system. Many of you have friends and family that you can talk to for support in general terms (without sharing confidential information). However, remember you can also utilize support groups, foster parent mentors, and training opportunities as part of your larger support system. It is important for you to find healthy ways to process the heartbreaking things that happen for children. Healthy means of processing these situations may be different for each of you, but all of us need to take time for self-care and reflection.

Suggestions for combating effects of secondary trauma:

- Allow your emotions and take time to process them: cry, journal, or talk with an appropriate support person.
- Identify how you can be a support person within the foster parent role to help improve the child and family's situation
- Get enough sleep, good nutrition, and exercise.
- Find time to have fun and play.
- Identify time or a hobby that is just for you and does not relate to foster care. Do not allow yourself to become so immersed as a foster parent that you lose sight of who you are as a person.

## Legislative Changes ~ 2012

Each year our legislature changes and modifies laws that pertain to child foster care licensure. These changes were recently released and many of them go into effect as of August 1, 2012. At this time, we have not received detailed information from the state Department of Human Services regarding how these changes will need to be implemented. **Please watch for further information in the coming months regarding how these changes impact you as child foster care providers.**

MN Rule Parts ~ 2960.3000-2960.3340 Child Foster Care  
MN Statute ~ 245A Human Services Licensing  
MN Statute ~ 245C Background Studies  
<https://www.revisor.mn.gov/pubs/>

## Communication about Summer Fun!

Has everyone been out enjoying some fun summertime activities? While it is terrific to share these memories with your families and foster children, you also want to remember to be safe and have open communication with your foster child's family about your plans.

If you are a family who enjoys outdoor activities such as riding ATVs, jet-skis, water skiing, dirt bikes, horses, driving golf carts, jumping on trampolines, etc, make sure you have your foster child's parents sign a permission form before allowing the child to take part. While this document is likely not legally binding, it is still a very good idea. It is much easier to have a conversation with parents ahead of time, than it would be to talk about these things while sitting in an emergency room.

Wright County Human Services suggests a basic form that lists your foster home information and any activities you participate in that could pose safety risks for children. Ask the biological parent sign off on each activity they are giving permission for their child to part-take in. Keep these documents in your records for future reference.

Have fun and enjoy the rest of your summer!

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***“A smile happens in a  
flash,  
but its memory can last  
a lifetime”***

*~ Unknown*

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*Have you checked out the Child Foster Care page on the Wright County website lately?*

*New information is added to the Provider Corner on a regular basis!*

*If you have a helpful resource or website, contact Jill or Kris.*

<http://www.co.wright.mn.us/department/humanservices/childfoster.asp>

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## Capturing Memories for Foster Children

When children come into foster care, their lives do not stop. They are making fun and positive memories while in your homes. Typically as parents, we take pictures of our children, save some of their school projects, report cards, and so on. It is important to do the same for the foster children in your care. This can be an extremely important way to increase a child's self-esteem and feelings of personal value.

Of course you need to be aware of and respect children's rights and need for confidentiality. While Wright County Human Services encourages you to take pictures and share these memories with children, we remind you that you cannot put foster children's pictures on Facebook, Christmas cards, or any other venue in the public domain. However, it sends a wonderful message to children to have their pictures up in your home or in your wallet. We suggest making copies of pictures for both you and the foster child to keep and take with them if they would like to. Most likely, you have shared positive time with one another and helped the child through difficult times. They may want these tangible memories of you to have with them as they move on in life.

**Capture joyful moments when practicing a new skill or just being silly!  
Catch your foster children making a memory!**

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*Happiness is not something ready made.  
It comes from your own actions.*

~ Dalai Lama

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## Baby Marzean

Jill welcomed a handsome baby boy on July 22<sup>nd</sup>!  
**Congratulations!** Mom and baby are doing well!  
Jill will be out until the end of October.

In her absence, please contact Kris Carlson for any questions:  
kris.carlson@co.wright.mn.us  
763-684-2311