

## 2007 is gone...hello 2008

By Don Darland

Well, another year has passed and there have been several changes that may affect your future in fostering. In general, I think the year has brought much reflection on the "why" and "how" DHS does things in this business and as we all know, whatever they must change or adjust, it affects the caregivers of the children. Some of this has been good and some challenging.

Let me briefly recap this past year. In March we hosted our fourth semi-annual training conference in Eugene. This event was not well attended because of "budget woes" but it was a great time for all who could attend. At the end of May, several providers went to Washington D.C. to the National Foster Parent Association Conference. They also experienced Capitol Hill and some of our National legislators. At the end of our state legislative session, there were several bills passed that will interest most of you and as of January 1, 2008 are in effect:

SB 412 changes policy to read:

*"When a report is received alleging that a child or young adult in the home of a certified family may have been subjected to abuse or neglect, within three business days of the Department's receipt of the report, the caseworker of the child or young adult who is the alleged victim must notify the following individuals that a report was received:*

- (A) *The attorney for the child or young adult;*
- (B) *The court appointed special advocate (CASA) for the child or young adult;*
- (C) *The child or young adult's parents;*
- (D) *Any attorney representing the child or young adult's parents; and*
- (E) *If the disclosure is authorized by ORS 419B.035, others who are involved in the case plan as necessary.*
- (F) *The notification of the child or young adult's parents and any attorney."*

Please contact your certifier to see how the local office will be notifying foster parents if a report is "screened out."

SB 414 requires Child Welfare to increase visits for biological family members. Contact your caseworkers to find out if visits for your child(ren) will be increasing. Remember the "Foster Parents Bill of Rights" states that you are to, "Be treated with dignity, respect and trust as a member of a team, including respect for the family values and routines of the foster parent." Make sure your family routines are being respected.

SB 282 modifies definition of "foster home" to allow persons related to child by blood or marriage to be

considered as foster parents to same extent as unrelated foster parents. This bill requires Department of Human Services to adopt payment standards for (relative) foster care.

Another big change came when the "firearms" section of our Safety

Standards was removed. Just make sure you are using common sense with your handling and storage of your firearms and ammunition.

During the December storm we had several foster parents drastically affected. Through the generous donations of our

partners and community, we will be distributing over \$3,400.00 in gift cards. We wanted to raise \$10,000.00, but we will take this. Sleep Country USA also facilitated a donation of 20 queen mattresses and box spring sets, in partnership with Simmons Company.

What is 2008 going to bring? We are hoping for continued relationship building and OFPA will be much more involved with training opportunities.

So, sit back, buckle up, hold on for another WILD RIDE! May you all be blessed this year.



Don Darland

## Scholarships to NFPA Atlanta conference awarded

### "Walk Me Home to the Place I Belong"

Six fortunate foster/adoptive/kinship care providers were selected to attend the NFPA 38th Annual Education Conference, this year to be held in Atlanta, GA, May 12–16. They are: **Malinda Fleming, Salem; Becky Lloyd, Dallas; Genie Shafer, Eagle Point; Gerrie Fuller, Burns; Russell Thompson, Coos Bay; and Kristi Kutch, Lakeside.**

Each recipient is asked to return prepared to write a brief article for the OFPA newsletter, share training with support groups, agency staff, and other care providers upon request, as well as provide the OFPA office with a photocopy of their Certificate of Attendance showing which workshops they attended. It is a wonderful opportunity to hear what is happening in other states and to bring back good ideas to share with others caring for Oregon's children.

### The following remarks are just a sample of what the 2007 attendees brought back to Oregon from Washington, D.C. Others will be shared in future newsletters:

First, a huge thank you to the OFPA for the funding to attend the NFPA training conference in Washington DC!

A highlight of the conference for me was the reception May 25, in the Executive Room of the Omni Shoreham Hotel where the conference was held, to honor actress, advocate and author Victoria Rowell. The food was fantastic! Victoria Rowell is an ardent advocate for children and youth in foster care and displayed this again by taking extra time with each of the books she autographed after speaking to us. She is the founder of the Rowell Foster Children's Positive Plan and read from her memoir, *The Women Who Raised Me*. She shared her own experiences in foster care in a tribute to her foster mothers and mentors. She says, "I was never meant to be raised by one mother..."

—Judy Garrett

## Sleep Country, Simmons, OFPA and DHS partner to provide mattresses to flood victims

The Simmons Mattress Company, through Sleep Country, USA, offered to provide 20 new queen mattress sets for foster families who were in need of beds due to the massive flooding that affected the northwestern portion of Oregon last winter.

Based on recommendations from the local DHS branches, and facilitated through a combined effort of OFPA and Sleep Country, USA, these mattress sets were delivered by Sleep Country trucks from their Portland warehouse directly to 6 families living in the Astoria area, with the remaining mattresses going to Columbia County. The Daily Astorian dated Tuesday, February 5, 2008, covered the donations with a story by reporter Kara Hansen. Long time foster parents Bruce and Dana Holt consented to be interviewed as mattress recipients, and their story gives a look into the joys and the concurrent frustrations of being foster parents.

**Thank you,** Laci McMaster of Sleep Country, USA; Jennifer Ritchie from Revolution PR; the people at the Sleep Country, USA warehouse in Portland; and DHS branch personnel Suzanna Vermeul-Wilson, Janna Owens, and Rick LaPine. It took the combined efforts of everyone to make this happen: proof of what partners working together can accomplish!

## OFPA election results

For those voting members who cast a ballot, thank you! For those voting members unable to do so, perhaps next year! If you currently are not a voting member, please take a moment to complete the membership form found in this newsletter; join your voice to those of others who have chosen to make OFPA's voice one that is heard when and where it counts most!

### 2008-2009 Officers & Directors

President .....Don Darland, Scio  
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ofpaoffice@aol.com

www.ofpa.com

## 2007 Shoulder To Shoulder Conference “The Sky’s the Limit” a great success

From its humble beginning in 1998 with 138 attendees to present day numbers that have quadrupled, Shoulder to Shoulder still strives to remain true to its original mission, “to provide expert trainers in a professional environment.” The ninth annual conference, presented on November 8, 2007 in Portland, OR proved that was the goal for everyone in attendance at the Oregon Convention Center for the entire day of workshops.

While funding 50 scholarships for foster parents who otherwise would be unable to attend is a priority, OFPA also assists in other ways. Several board members sit on the planning committee, and the OFPA office processes credit card payments for registrants. Other partners contributing to the overall success of Shoulder to Shoulder are: PSU, DHS, Greater Metro FPA, JCIP, ORPARC, and CJA. Planning currently is underway for November, 2008.

## Fostering Connections For Children: “Bridging the Gaps to Success”

March 29–31, 2007, at the Hilton Eugene and Conference Center in Eugene, OR were busy days for the approximately 160 foster/adoptive/kinship parents, community partners and DHS staff attending the fourth biannual training conference presented by the Oregon Foster Parent Association. With 21 workshops from which to choose, the easiest part was accumulating enough hours for the remainder of 2007. Making the selection was difficult because all those presenting were engaging, knowledgeable, as well as professional.

The Hilton staff were, as always, friendly and accommodating, working hard to provide the conference attendees with everything needful for a refreshing two and a half days of good food, networking, and comfortable rooms. For some, this was their only break from caring for children who present major challenges on a daily basis. All who needed and applied for mileage and child care scholarships were assisted, one way OFPA removed financial barriers to receiving training.

Partners in this effort were: ORPARC, ORPTI, NACAC, DHS, Julianne Harris of Northwest Center for Justice, as well as the OFPA Board of Directors. Even though budget issues kept numbers down from previous years, those who came to the Hilton Eugene and Conference Center were enthusiastic about their experiences during March 29–31, 2007!

2008 will see changes in training opportunities from OFPA, so keep in touch. OFPA is going places, and we want YOU to come with us!

## TSM ending partnership with OFPA

Todd Peters, owner/manager of Thrift Supply Management, informed OFPA in January that TSM would no longer be able to continue the donation program due to the low levels of public support and participation, and that perhaps this format may not be viable in a community the size of Salem. There were other reasons, and while both Todd and OFPA remain appreciative of the efforts of everyone who took the time to use the program, only .005% of TSM’s annual volume was collected in Salem, clearly indicating that it was time to bring the partnership and the program to a close.

OFPA appreciates the assistance given by TSM throughout the partnership toward making this fundraising donation program a success. Thank you, Todd, and thank you Thrift Supply Management.

## Rants & Raves

There is a caseworker in Douglas County who just needs a pat on the back. Actually, there are a lot of them, however, Heather cares so much and she gets so involved with the kids who come into care. She has been know to sit all night at the hospital with a baby who has just been removed from a cocaine home or take a newly arrived teen out shopping for a few new clothes on her own time. She always works hard on behalf of the kids, as well as working hard to match kids to foster homes that will help make a successful placement. I really appreciate Heather and just wanted to say “thanks” to her for all her hard work.

—Submitted by Jan Patton, Douglas County

### Submitting a Rant or a Rave

If you have a Rave or a Rant, your name and city must accompany your maximum 2 paragraphs (approximately 150 words), and please! No Rants against people, only issues! You may fax it to 503-362-6393, mail it to OFPA 707 13th St. SE, Suite 275, Salem, OR 97301, or e-mail it to [ofpaoffice@aol.com](mailto:ofpaoffice@aol.com). We want to know what is working and what is not. Perhaps then we can work together to discover why.

## Treasurer shares insights from 2007 NFPA conference

Once again, the National Foster Parent Association 37th Annual Education Conference held May 23-27, 2007 was a great success. There was something for everyone as foster parents gathered from their various states to attend sixty plus workshops packed with information and training.

Some felt that it was impossible to measure how addressing education needs impacts children in foster care. The reality is that small, incremental changes resulting from improved education attention and advocacy for these children's education needs have been measured. Some examples include:

- Improved enrollment policies
- Fewer changes in school placements
- More school advocacy
- Improved school services for children

Oregon HB 3075 passed in Summer 2005 allows youth in foster care to remain in school of origin if determined by the juvenile court to be in the child's best interest to do so. Law requires child welfare agency to be responsible for transportation.

Another thought was the children in foster care did not need any additional attention to their educational needs. However, we discovered that numerous studies and reports show the bleaker picture. The long-term effects are devastating: higher risks for homelessness, poverty, public assistance, and juvenile or adult court involvement.

The bottom line is that for children in foster care to achieve academic success, judges, attorneys, CASAs, caseworkers, foster parents, schools, and other advocates in the child welfare and school system MUST work together to overcome hurdles to meeting education needs.

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) sets certain criteria for special education services that must be met. It provides federal dollars to states to ensure all children with disabilities that impact their ability to succeed in school receive a free, appropriate, public education in the least restrictive environment possible.

The IDEA statute requires states to have procedural safeguards in place for the special education process including "...procedures to protect the rights of the child whenever the parents of the child are not known, the agency cannot, after reasonable efforts, locate the parents, or the child is a ward of the state, including the assignment of an individual to act as a surrogate for the parents, which surrogate shall not be an employee of the state educational agency, the local educational agency, or any other agency

that is involved in the education and care of the child."

A new provision in the 204 reauthorization provides that States shall make reasonable efforts to ensure the assignment of a surrogate not more than 30 days after there is a determination by the agency that the child needs a surrogate.

To learn more about the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and surrogacy contact your local school district. Advocate for your child to have the best education possible!

—Susan Cady, Treasurer, OPFA

## Chip in for OFPA!

Planning for the 7th annual golf tournament at Mallard Creek Golf Course in Lebanon, Oregon is underway. Lane Branch of Foresters has provided consistently strong support as a community partner every year, ensuring assistance for registration & monitoring prize holes. In addition, they donate interesting prize packages and silent auction items. If you golf or even if you do not, OFPA and Foresters hope you will join in the fun August 16, 2008. For more information, please call toll free 888-544-3402.



### THERAPUTIC FOSTER PARENTS NEEDED

For at-risk children in the Portland area.

- Children in need are ages 7-17 years.
- 24 hour support by trained professionals that can walk you through each day and a monthly reimbursement rate of \$1500.

For more information

e-mail [courtneyg@ccsww.org](mailto:courtneyg@ccsww.org) or

call Courtney Gonzalez at 503.517.8663x108.



Be Part of a TEAM!

## Need legal assistance? It may be just a call away!

For families that believe they need the services of an attorney, a call to the Oregon State Bar Attorney Referral Service at 1-800-452-7636 may be a good solution. This service assists callers to locate an attorney or several attorneys who are accustomed to dealing with certain areas of law practice. The initial consult with one of the attorneys on a referral is guaranteed to be no more than \$35. For those who do not have the protection of a pre-paid legal service, filing this number away for future reference may be a good idea!



### Now you can raise money for the Oregon Foster Parent Association just by searching the Internet at GoodSearch.com

You use GoodSearch.com like any other search engine—the site is powered by Yahoo!—but each time you do, money is generated for us.

Here's how it works:

1. Go to [www.goodsearch.com](http://www.goodsearch.com)
2. Type Oregon Foster Parent Association into the "I support" box and click on "verify"
3. Search the Internet just like you would with any search engine
4. Since *GoodSearch* shares its advertising revenue with charities and schools, every time you search the Internet at *GoodSearch*, you'll be earning money for us.

*GoodSearch* also has a toolbar you can download from the homepage so that you can search right from the top of your browser.

You can keep track of our estimated earnings by clicking on "amount raised" once you designate us as your organization of choice. The more people who use the site, the more money we'll earn, so please spread the word!!



**Department of Human Services**  
**Office of Developmental Disability Services**  
**Children's Medical Foster Home Recruitment**

Medical Foster homes are needed in the Metro Area, as well as Lane County, Marion County, and Medford. If you know someone who would be interested in this kind of foster care, please have them contact Jeanette Williams, either by phone at 503-945-4800, or by e-mail at [Jeanette.Williams@state.or.us](mailto:Jeanette.Williams@state.or.us).

## Join Today!

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State: \_\_\_\_\_

Zip: \_\_\_\_\_ Branch: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone:(H) \_\_\_\_\_

Phone:(W) \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

New  Renewal

Check all that apply:

DHS  OYA

MRDD  Private Agency

### Annual Membership

\_\_\_ \$10 Associate Member (non-voting)

\_\_\_ \$20 Family Member (voting)

\_\_\_ \$50 Family & National FPA Member

\_\_\_ \$25 Community Partner

\_\_\_ \$25 Local Group Affiliate

### Corporate Member

\_\_\_ \$50 Silver Sponsor

\_\_\_ \$500 Gold Sponsor

\_\_\_ \$1500 Platinum Sponsor

\_\_\_ \$5000 Diamond Sponsor

\_\_\_ Donation to support OFPA

## OFPA and Foresters™ — helping children together!

Oregon Foster Parents Association is proud to announce our continued relationship with Foresters, a financial services organization inspired by helping children.

Our relationship began in 2002 when Foresters sponsored our Golf Tournament and has continued each year with a variety of exciting activities such as the Young at Art competition and the Golf Tournament as well as educational workshops and seminars. Also, Foresters has financial representatives especially for OFPA families who will be happy to conduct individual family financial needs analysis at your request.

For more than 125 years, Foresters reputation has been tied to financial strength and commitment to family and community. We support and raise funds for children's causes, while our members and staff volunteer locally. Foresters measures success not only in financial strength, but in the positive impact we have on children. Almost one million members strong, Foresters operates in the United States, Canada and the United Kingdom.

For more information about how Foresters can help you achieve financial security, please call 1-800-828-1540.



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*FACTS*

**Gifts-In-Kind  
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These Gifts-In-Kind partner stores make many items available at no cost to OFPA. We ask that you support these community partners:

**Office Depot  
Talbot's**

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Parent Association**



Membership is open to Oregon foster parents and their families. First Tech Credit Union is committed to helping every member with their financial needs - including yours.

Call 800.637.0852, visit [firsttechcu.com](http://firsttechcu.com) or stop by any branch to discover how we can help you think forward with your money and your life.



*Board Splinters*

The date for the next board meeting is May 10 at The Association Center in Salem where the OFPA office is located, from 9:30 a.m to 3:30 p.m. For more information or directions, call the OFPA office at 503-361-3906.