

# Between Families

Our Mission

Devoted to the Strength of Family

Editors

Jason Cecil

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TFI Family Services, Inc. is licensed by the State of Kansas Department of Health and Environment as a Child Placing Agency. License No. 766.

## DIRECTOR'S CORNER

BY: GAVEN LUDLOW, MSW AND MBA  
DIRECTOR OF RESOURCE FAMILY SERVICES

Greetings,

I wanted to continue our conversation from last month about how placement decisions are made with TFI. There are many steps and pieces that go into making good placements. To make really good placements, you have to be able to 'match' kids to families. The matching process at TFI is called 'Best Match'. So how does the 'Best Match' process work?

As you will recall, TFI uses a tool called the APLI (Appropriate Placement Level Indicator) to determine the level of care a child needs. It is the first step in determining a placement for a child and is done by gathering the needs and behaviors of that child on the APLI. The next step is to use the other tool in the matching process. That tool is your own family profile. Our systems use both the child's APLI and your family profile to run a Best Match fit for placement. This initial matching will only pull families that fit 100% with a child's needs on the APLI. So when

you mark "would not prefer" on a behavior, children with that behavior will not connect on a Best Match. If a placement is not found through the first run on Best Match, it is run again and allows some non-matching behaviors to come in.

So how do we know our process and tool is working? Well that is something we are continuously testing with the help of The University of Kansas (KU) School of Social Welfare. KU began work this year to evaluate and validate the Best Match system as a method to provide placement stability for children. So far, results of over 3000 placements studied, show the Best Match system is successful at identifying placements which support the child's need for stability. Here are some of the results as of now:

Do placements made in the same level of care indicated by the APLI result in better placement stability? In placements made at the same

level of care, the stability rate was:

- 1.4 times better than if placed in a lower level of care than indicated
- 1.8 times better than if placed in a higher level of care than indicated

When children were placed in their first placement after removal at the same level of care indicated by the APLI, they were over 3 times more likely to be stable than those placed in a lower level of care than indicated.

Several other factors are also being evaluated, but key to all of this is increasing the stability of children's placements. We have also held exhibitions of the system for DCF, The Casey Foundation (Dr. Pecora and Lien Bragg) and for other child placing agencies (KCSL).

All of this research is helping us to be more impactful for children and provide them what they need.

⇒ **Cont'd on Pg. 6**

## RECRUITMENT MOMENT

BY: JASON CECIL, RECRUITMENT MANAGER

I would like to introduce you to KFAPA (Kansas Foster and Adoptive Parent Association) with an excerpt from Jeff Piepho:

*The Kansas Foster and Adoptive Parent Association is here to be your voice as a foster parent. KFAPA was formed in 2007, as the official state affiliate of the National Foster Parent Association, to help families have access to support, resources and information.*

*Because of their many members, and leaders, who have fostered and adopted thousands of children, KFAPA provides private consultations and support for families who need more information or advice about their situation. Hundreds of families have been helped through their interaction with KFAPA.*

*With members from every region of Kansas, KFAPA is regularly involved in discussions with DCF (formerly SRS), KDHE, judicial conferences, governor conferences, foster agencies and more. The organization takes input from their members and endeavors to include foster family input in new regulations and laws before they are decided upon.*

*KFAPA is here to help you and be a voice to speak on your behalf*

*Thank you,  
Jeff Piepho, President, KFAPA*

TFI will be purchasing a corporate membership in the near future, allowing all our licensed Foster Families to enjoy membership with KFAPA. This is an additional way of giving you the support you may need. We hope you will enjoy this new service. Thank you for all you do.—Jason Cecil, Recruitment Manager

**Welcome  
New Resource  
Families**

Thomas and Ruth  
Sprague  
John and Heather  
Stone/Kelly  
Matthew and Eva  
Preston  
Ashley and TeRee Davis  
William and Marilyn Booe  
Steve and Betty  
McMillin/Fredrick  
Matt and Heather Clymer  
Harry (Clayton) and  
Sherri B. Bridgette  
Fredrick and Ashley  
Clerk  
Oscar and Tabitha  
Frazier/Jenkins  
Romond and Tammy  
Graham  
Davie and Amanda  
Allison  
Eric and Kammi Bean  
Clinton and Mary  
"Margarita" Nance  
Bob and Sharlyn Splean

**Reminders**

For after hour  
emergencies, please  
call  
1-877-921-4114.

**Visit TFI's website and  
view Between Families  
newsletter online at  
www.tffamilyservices.org**

Dear Daisy 

Dear Daisy,

**As a new foster parent I'm struggling with working with the birth parents of the children in our care. I understand from PS-MAPP Training how important it is but am having a hard time putting it into practice.**

Sincerely,

Wanting to do better

Dear Wanting to do better,

Here are some tips for working with birth families:

1. Recognize and support parent strengths/Use strengths to engage parents:

**"The parent obviously has needs or their child would not have been placed in care but we're beginning our work with them counterproductively if we focus our attention too tightly on those needs... When we recognize a parent's strengths, we feel better about working with him or her, and we will have a positive place to begin talking and working with that person."**

2. Manage Personal Emotions:

**"Foster parents may ask themselves, "How can I be respectful to someone who did those things?" The answer is that a positive, constructive working relationship is the most effective route to help the parent never again do those things. Foster parents may be judging the parent by the worst thing the parent ever did in his or her life. All of us probably have a worst thing that we did in our lives, and we do not want to be judged by that forever. How would any of us feel if we were judged by the worst thing we ever did?"**

**"Foster parents may be surprised upon getting to know the parent that they are better able to empathize with the parent."**

Sincerely,

Daisy

Taken from "The Role of Foster Parents in Building Alliances with Parents of Children in Foster Care" Presented by Heather Craig-Oldsén, MSW at NYS Citizens' Coalition for Children, Inc. 14<sup>th</sup> Annual Statewide Adoption Training May 9, 2003.

*SOUTHEAST REGION CARE PROVIDER OF THE MONTH  
DUSTIN MITCHELL*

Dustin Mitchell has been nominated as the Southeast Region Care Provider of the month. Dustin gives the children in his home the chance to "be kids" - he ensure they can participate in activities, take part in school functions, and enjoy their childhood.

Dustin recently became licensed as a single foster parent and took in a child who had previously been in his home. When the child's brother was released from the hospital, Dustin accepted him back as placement. This has given the children a chance to bond again, and they are thriving in his home at this time.

Dustin is very involved with every aspect of each child's case. He has been extremely cooperative and helpful to RFS staff by taking tough kids for respite when placement has not been immediately available.

Submitted by,  
Devin Eccles, RFS and Ashley Marple, RFS Supervisor—Chanute

*WEST REGION CARE PROVIDER OF THE MONTH  
ROBERT AND RITA VREDENBURG*

Robert and Rita Vredenburg have been nominated as the West Region Care Providers of the Month. Robert and Rita have been with TFI since October 2011. They started as house parents in 2000 at Cal Farley's Boys Ranch outside of Amarillo, TX, and became a foster home 4 years later. The Vredenburgs have had the privilege of touching the lives of over 90 children through Boys Ranch home and foster parenting.

Robert and Rita share that the rewards for doing foster care are watching the children grow and develop. Rita says their calling has always been that for whatever length of time they have a child, they pray they are able to give each child some structure and positive influence that will help the child throughout his or her life. Robert and Rita love sharing our Christmas Miracle Village with youth and whenever possible allowing them to help do small things or help make items we display, of which the youth become very proud. Rita shared a compliment from a LPC who counseled MANY of the children in their care. She said "I have never had a home where all the children consider it 'their home' and they consider all the other children in the home 'their siblings and you guys as 'their parents.' It's truly like a family no matter how many children come and go." Rita represented TFI at the Drug and Alcohol event in Hutchinson and participated on the panel. While in Texas, they served on the foster parent association board for several years and helped arrange speakers & facilities for trainings and events, attended many state and national conferences, were nominated by their agency for the Foster Family of the Year Award, were a mentor family for the agency when new families came aboard, and Rita was requested to serve as a parent advocate for the preschool program at the local elementary school.

Submitted by,  
Marsha Kaegi, RFS—Burton

*NORTHEAST REGION CARE PROVIDER OF THE MONTH*

Wanda Massie has been nominated as the Northeast Region Care Provider of the Month. Wanda has been sponsored by TFI since 2007. She is very patient, has realistic expectations for youth placed in her home, and understands when it is necessary to contact her Resource Worker and ask for assistance.

Ms. Massie transports youth to all of their appointments and includes them in events with her extended family and vacation plans. Wanda has maintained stable placement for a youth currently living with her since June 2011. Wanda currently has a male youth placed in her home who has exhibited on-going behavioral problems and has experienced several disruptions in the past because of this. The youth recently started a fire to Wanda's carpet in the home. After speaking with her Resource Worker and on-call staff, she was able to successfully de-escalate the situation, and despite her feelings at the time, she decided to continue to work with the youth and maintain placement. Wanda understands that there is no perfect child and has adopted two of the children she has fostered. It is my belief that Ms. Massie will continue to work toward the Company's mission of being Devoted to the Strength of Family.

Submitted by,  
Kira Jackson, RFW—Kansas City

High School Diploma Process for Foster Care Youth  
Steve Solomon, Director of Public Policy

A recent law was passed in Kansas that will benefit youth in foster care as they earn their high school diplomas. The law was enacted because high schools in the state have different requirements for graduation; this can create problems for youth as they accumulate credits at different high schools. As a youth in out of home care approaches graduation, his or her total credit hours may stem from courses taken at different high schools. Sometimes the last school they are attending has different requirements than previous schools required. As a result, the youth would have been able to graduate from a previous school with his or her accumulated credits, but could not graduate from the current high school!

The law allows a school district to award a high school diploma if the person has achieved the minimum requirements adopted by the State Board of Education and meets the following conditions:

- The person requests the diploma be awarded
- The person making the request is at least 17 years of age
- The person is enrolled or resides in the school district
- The person is or has been in the custody of the Commissioner of Juvenile Justice or the Secretary for Children and Families at any time on or **after such person's 14<sup>th</sup> birthday**

With this statute, the credit requirements of any given school district can therefore be waived and the State requirements would be applied. The diploma awarded is a regular high school diploma; it is very important to ensure that students achieving their diploma through this process participate fully in **graduation ceremonies and related activity**. **Questions about the State's minimum standards or any other element of this process** can be addressed with your local school district personnel or with the State level contact, Jessica Noble at 785-296-3163, [jnoble@ksde.org](mailto:jnoble@ksde.org), or visit [www.ksde.org](http://www.ksde.org).

## Resource Family Anniversaries

### "One Year"

Robert and Rita Vredenburg

Debra Sabb

Robert and Kimberlie  
Pempin

Senta Washington

Rennard Sabb

Paula and Rebecca  
Clem/Stirton

Leann Mosqueda

**John "Darin" and Kimberly  
Pote**

Bruce and Amanda Vaughn

Faissal and Carol Abou-  
Faissal

Dwight and Connie  
Billings/Campbell

### "Three Years"

Dan and Misty Ritchers

Scott and Brianna  
Schoenthaler/Kaumans

Rodney and Kimberly  
Peterson

Sarah Kaumans

Denis and Jeanne Trefethen

Roger and Kathy Constable

Eric and DeAnna Jacklovich

Glen Mallam

Manath Leuthiphonh

Douglas and Cheryl Bibens

Kevin and Candace Russell

Dale and Jody Wagner

Belinda Savage

Christopher and Dana Harris

### "Five Years"

Bradford and Quinolla Boyd

**Winifred "Wendy" Williams**

### "Ten Years"

Elweard and Doris Garrett

Daniel Kobza

Jimmy and Shirley  
Blair/Herbison

Clifton and Betty Portley

### "Fifteen Years"

Brian and Kim Mitchell

## I NEED YOU—DO YOU NEED ME?



**X'Zavion** likes playing video games, putting together puzzles and playing with his Legos. He is a precious and extremely special child! X'Zavion will need to have supports in place to be successful in the home, community and at school. He does not do well with changes and new situations. X'Zavion usually likes to observe things from a distance and can become upset when he is subject to loud noises. He will need to be given space and time to explore new things. X'Zavion will need a family that has the ability to be very structured and consistent so that he knows

what to expect daily. The potential family must be fully aware of X'Zavion's issues and be committed to providing him with a long term, stable home. X'Zavion needs to become part of a family where he is the only or the youngest child in the home.

**For more information on X'Zavion, please contact Dereck Hutchison at (785) 271-6657.**

### Try Celebrating a Green Halloween

Submitted by Sara Willimon, Communications Specialist

Halloween is known for candy, ghosts, and mischief, but some celebrations have started to encourage community service, healthy choices, and environmental awareness. Try these ideas for a family and earth-friendly Halloween this year:



- Try making homemade costumes. Used, clean boxes and aluminum foil can turn a child into a robot or astronaut. A towel cape and foil crown with a child's dress clothes become the makings of a queen or king. For youth who already have costumes through an extracurricular activity such as acting or dance, reuse those costumes for Halloween fun.
- Want an alternative to the traditional trick-or-treat sugar craze? Try having your kids "trick or treat" for food donations for a local food bank.
- For decorations, take a family trip to a local pumpkin patch or garden store and purchase gourds, decorative corn, and pumpkins. When Halloween is past, reuse any good gourds or corn for Thanksgiving decorations, and compost the rest!

## October 2012 Support Meetings

**Chanute:** Wednesday, October 17, 2012 from 6:00pm to 8:00pm at the Chanute TFI office, 1709 W. 7th St., Chanute, KS. Topic: Children's Health and Safety.

**Concordia:** TBA.

**El Dorado:** Thursday, October 11, 2012 from 6:00pm to 7:30pm at the El Dorado TFI office, 3913 SW 10th, El Dorado, KS. Topic: Effects of Trauma on Child Development.

**Emporia:** Tuesday, October 30, 2012 from 6:00pm to 8:00pm at the TFI Emporia office, 618 Commercial, Emporia, KS. Topic: Fire Safety.

**Fort Scott:** Monday, October 29, 2012 from 6:00pm to 8:00pm at the Community Christian Church, 1919 S. Horton, Ft. Scott, KS. Topic: Bring a Friend

**Hutchinson:** Thursday, October 4, 2012 from 6:00pm to 8:00pm at the South Hutchison Christian Church, 111 E. 1st, South Hutchinson, KS. Topic: TBA

**Independence:** Tuesday, October 23, 2012 from 6:00pm to 8:00pm at the Independence TFI Office, 501 N. Penn, Independence, KS. Topic: Recognizing Behaviors of Children Who Are Victims of Sexual Abuse.

**Iola:** Thursday, October 18, 2012 from 6:00pm to 8:00pm at the Iola TFI office, 1702 N. State St., Iola, KS. Topic: Program Ideas and Suggestions regarding Licensing, Training, the Placement Process and Disruptions.

**Kansas City:** TBA.

**Leavenworth/Atchison:** Monday, October 29, 2012 at 6:00pm at the Leavenworth Public Library, 114 Spruce St., Leavenworth, KS. Topic: First Aid Renewals.

**Lawrence:** Thursday, October 18, 2012 from 5:30pm to 7:30pm at the Lawrence TFI office, 910 W. 24th St., Lawrence, KS. Topic: Critical Incidents and Reporting.

**Manhattan:** Monday, October 15, 2012 from 6:00pm to 8:00pm at the Manhattan TFI Office, 116 S. 4th, Manhattan, KS. Topic: Working in Partnership.

**Overland Park:** Tuesday, October 9, 2012 from 6:00pm to 8:00pm at the Overland Park TFI Office, 8300 College Blvd., Ste 301, Overland Park, KS. Topic: Workshop on Lifebooks.

**Parsons:** Date: TBA from 6:00pm to 8:00pm at the Parsons TFI office, 1906 Main St., Parsons, KS. Topic: TBA.

**Phillipsburg:** No support meeting for the month of October.

**Pittsburg:** Tuesday, October 30, 2012 from 6:00pm to 8:00pm at Schlanger Park, 725 E. 6th, Pittsburg, KS. Topic: Social and Emotional Development of Young Children and Behaviors

**Salina:** Tuesday, October 23, 2012 from 6:00pm to 8:00pm at the Salina TFI office, 131 N. Santa Fe, Salina, KS. Topic: Bed Bugs in Salina? by Hassman Pest Control.

**Topeka:** Tuesday, October 16, 2012 from 6:00pm to 8:00pm at the Topeka TFI office, 217 SE 4th St., Topeka, KS. Topic: The Impact of Fostering on Foster Parents' Own Children.

**Winfield:** Monday, October 8, 2012 from 6:00pm to 8:00pm at the Winfield TFI office, 1321 E. 7th, Winfield, KS. Topic: "Gear Up" Program.

**Wichita:** Tuesday, October 9, 2012 at 6:30pm at the Wichita TFI office, 1711 S. Longfellow, Wichita, KS. Topic: Comcare PRTF Screens.

Questions?  
Suggestions?

Remember, if you have a problem, concern, or question about TFI Family Services, Inc., your first stop should be our Concern Line at [concernline@tffamily.org](mailto:concernline@tffamily.org) or Ombudsman Nadine Terry-Washington at 877-942-2239.

