



Fostering Across Wisconsin

Summer 2008: Volume 3, Issue 2

Live
DEEPER.

Foster Care Month 2008

Each May, we take time to celebrate Foster Care Month throughout Wisconsin and across the nation. We want to start by acknowledging important changes at both the state and federal level that have a positive impact on foster families.

At the state level, we will have a new Department of Children & Families in July, created by Governor Jim Doyle to focus more specifically on serving children and families in our state. Our 18- to 21-year olds who age out of the foster care system are now eligible for Badger Care Plus, expanded health care coverage. Go to <http://dhfs.wisconsin.gov/badgercare> for more information.

To top things off, foster families received a 5% increase in the basic rate this year with another 5% increase starting in 2009.

At the federal level, a new law makes it possible for teens in foster care to be adopted without losing access to college financial aid. Under this new law, youth who are adopted from foster care at any point after their 13th birthday will not have to include their adoptive parents' income for determining their need for financial aid on the federal financial aid forms. For more information, go to: http://voice-for-adoption.org/assemble/advocacy_updates.html

Beyond celebrating these exciting changes for our youth, we at the Foster Care and Adoption Resource Center are proud to feature stories of appreciation, poems, and artwork from current or former youth in care.

We have been overwhelmed by the positive responses we received from young people. Due to space constraints, we couldn't include everything we received in this newsletter. But you can find the complete collection on our website at wifostercareandadoption.org. Or call us at 800-947-8074 to request a hard copy.

Love
WIDER.

Leave
BIGGER.

TALENT SHOW



"Come help us celebrate foster care!"

Family and Children's Center hosted a Foster Youth Talent Night at Logan High School in La Crosse on May 1, 2008. Kia, a current youth in care, came up with this idea. She wanted to provide youth in care with a venue to express their talents and skills in recognition of Foster Care Month. Kia also created the artwork above.

Foster Care Month Events 2008

Throughout the state during May, many foster care agencies and foster parent associations are hosting local events to recognize National Foster Care Month 2008. If the Foster Care and Adoption Resource Center has knowledge of events, we try our best to make sure they are posted on our calendar at: www.wifostercareandadoption.org.

We also suggest contacting your local foster care coordinator for information about events in your area. For information about national events visit:

www.fostercaremonth.org.

The national campaign for Foster Care Month is, "Foster Care, Change a Lifetime." On its website you will find tools and ideas for foster care month celebrations which can be used by youth in care, foster parents, and social workers.



Become a foster parent.



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Voices of Current and Former Youth in Care

As time passed, I had realized that my father had been drinking and using drugs. As for my mother, she had also been drinking and using drugs. So I lived with my grandma for 13 years. As my grandma was moving away, I ended up with a foster family.

When I entered this foster family, I was disrespectful to them—yelling at them, not following rules. As time passed, we had finally started to bond, as they had persuaded me to do physical activities, and they came to my games.

They had bonded with me easier because there was a month that there were no other foster kids. We bonded as a family doing things from cooking to chopping wood from golfing to having a relaxing dinner together.

I have had a great seven months and will have another great four years. Karen and Ralf have been a great family for me.

—Kris

For the entire context of Kris's story, go to

www.wifostercareandadoption.org

Leaving Milwaukee

I remember sitting on the old lady's couch preparing for the worse.

I remember the social workers walking in slowly, sitting down with grim expression plated on their faces.

I remember my heart banging on my chest. Feeling like I would explode.

I remember one telling me that I might get adopted, but if I didn't at least my brother, and sister, and I would be together.

I remember sweating and crying, saying I didn't want to get adopted and not wanting my picture taken when she asked for it.

I remember meeting my soon to be foster parents at the Milwaukee domes. An old white man with puffy white hair and his

daughter I thought.

I remember the awkwardness and anger I felt when mom kissed me good-bye and saying I should come over for the weekend.

I remember when the weekend came and when they came to get my little sister and me but I wouldn't go. They had planned a birthday party for my sister and everything. Just thinking about it makes my heart ache.

I remember the social worker calling me and telling me I had to go the next weekend. Boy was I mad.

I remember getting out of school early on Friday and going to an office to wait for my new "parents" to pick me up.

I remember after my parents picked us up we went to Apple Bee's. I didn't like the baby-backed, BBQ ribs.

I remember when my mom said that she would like it if I called her mom. That made me uncomfortable.

I remember when we came home and met Zoey and Gracie, our dogs. I was really scared because I thought all dogs were bad.

I remember the fun weekend we had.

I remember that Sunday when mom asked me if I wanted to stay for good and I said yes."

I remember all the hard times I put mom and dad through 'til they thought of giving me away more than once.

I remember the things I said to and about them and the things I thought about them. But now I love them with all my heart and I want to be with them forever.

—Claire-Terese, age 12

The Girl Who Found Her Dream

This girl I know lived in a hell hole.

She had a dream that someday She will Get to have a real mom.

She hated her mom. She wished she never had met her.

Then one day part of her dream came true. Her step-dad got hauled away to jail.

But she never knew She would be put in a foster home. Both the Girl and her brother got sent to a foster home. They go to see their mom once in a while.

But then one day the girl and her brother got separated. The girl didn't

know what to think. But she still gets to see him.

But then this girl was sent to another foster home. Then her whole dream came true.

She met a woman who she thought would be a good mom.

This girl finally starts to like her and the family.

Now I truly like my new mom and family. I hope to stay a while.

This girl's name is Amber R. My new mom's name is Karin W. I love my new Mom and family!

—Amber



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When I was in foster care, I went through three different homes. The first two, I found that the foster parents did not really care what was happening to me and they never listened all they ever did was yell so I ran away.

After so many times of running away, my social worker finally moved me to a new foster home. She moved me out of La Crosse so if I did run away I had nowhere to go. I ended up with a family in Holmen, they had two girls of their own and we became close.

My foster parents wanted me to call them aunt and uncle. I didn't understand it at the time but now I realize that they wanted me to call them that so I could see that they are just as much my family as my own.

Diane was my foster mom and she has helped me so much threw out the years. I went home with my dad when I was about 15 or 16 years old. I'm now 22 years old, and when I have a problem or even just need someone to talk to she's always there for me.

I believe that her and her family are one of the best things that has ever happened to me; without her I don't know what would have happened to me. I just want everyone to know that they are the best foster family anyone could ever ask for.

I also want to thank Diane for everything she has ever done for me. Thank you Diane, for always being there for me and I want you to know I love you.

—Kati



I would like to thank my parents for taking care of me and adopting me. I used to get special help in school because of something called Aspergers. But I don't get the help anymore. Whenever I need help with my homework my parents would help me. When I would be having a test, they did a good job quizzing me before a test. Right now I am in 7th grade. I have been getting As and one B this year. Because of my parents, I have been on the honor roll at school this year. [His mom adds, "We didn't get Ty on the honor roll, he did this due to his persistence.]"

—Ty



Artwork by Rosie, age 6

Give them happy childhood memories of being together, and it will last their whole life.

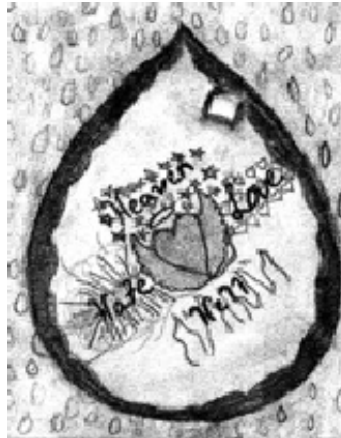
—Andi Andree and Lynn Price



Lynn with her big sister Andi. She didn't know she was a foster child or that she had a biological sister until she was 8 years old. Lynn went on to found [Camp To Belong](#), a camp for siblings who are separated by the foster care system.



I came into my now Mom & Dad's home as a triple threat! I was black, gay, and I wanted to be adopted. Moving into not only a home of Caucasian parents, but also a predominantly Caucasian community, had life looking uncertain.



Artwork by Crystal

Through the love and support of my Mom & Dad, not only was I adopted by these guys, but they supported a passion for the performing arts that I had. Due to this package of unconditional support and love, I've made it through the storm to become not only an adult with a heart, but I also have a very successful career as a dancer and dance instructor.

Since my encounter with my new family, I've performed for "Kids From Wisconsin" for 2 consecutive years and at "Six Flags

Great America.

It's possible....Faith is a knowledge within the heart, beyond reach of proof.

—Much light & love, Joey



The people that I have to thank for college would be Chris Lenske (from the state) and Marybeth Wilk (from the county). These women helped make it financially possible for me to attend college. With the state's help, I was able to purchase my books for school, pay tuition, pay for the gas it cost me to commute, and the other necessities that a college student faces about every other day.

—Heidi

For the entire context of Heidi's story for FCARC, go to our website at: <http://wifostercareandadoption.org>



Fostering Across Wisconsin

The *Wisconsin Foster and Adoptive Parent Association* (WFAPA) works hard to support the needs of foster and adoptive families by: operating a website with information about the creation of local chapters, publishing a quarterly newsletter, hosting two conferences every year, and working across the state on behalf of issues that are important to foster and adoptive parents and children.

To find out more about WFAPA, visit their website at: www.wfapa.org. Join them for their next conference, where there will be workshops for teens, as well as parents.

WFAPA Fall Conference
October 24-26, 2008,
The Waters, Minoqua, WI

For more information about other support groups, associations, and resources available in Wisconsin, contact the Foster Care and Adoption Resource Center, 800-947-8074.

Previous and Future Issues of *Fostering Across Wisconsin*

The Foster Care and Adoption Resource Center staff produce this newsletter on a quarterly basis. If you don't receive the newsletter from your licensing agency, you can find them on our website at: wifostercareandadoption.org. If you'd prefer, we can also mail you a copy of previous or future editions.

I was loved for a short time by **JUST** another foster parent. I would know how to love my children and grandchildren because **JUST** a foster parent showed me how to love a child. I am a survivor of child abuse—not a victim of child abuse—because of **JUST** one foster parent that loved me, guided me, and showed me being a child is not suppose to hurt.

When you ask yourself, "Does one person make a difference?" remember that my "Aunt Bea" was **JUST** another foster parent...but she made the difference in a child's life that made her a survivor, and not a victim.

—Jeanne Fowler,
Mother, grandmother, author of *Peter's Lullaby*, and president of Big Family of Michigan

For the entire context of Jeanne's story, go to our website at:

<http://wifostercareandadoption.org>



Artwork by Christa, age 15

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Services Provided:

- Resource Library
- Phone Support
- Networking
- Comprehensive Website
- Recruitment Tools
- Statewide Calendar of Events
- Newsletters
- Outreach at regional meetings, conferences, and events