

Building Connections

A Newsletter for Resource Families

Volume 9, Issue 4

April 2016

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A Home of Her Own

By Chassidy Kruse and Wilma Friesema

Launching from home is an exciting and anxiety provoking experience for most teenagers. Freedom to do what you want is exciting; paying the bills is daunting. That certainly has been Chassidy Kruse's experience. Chas is a 19 year old former foster youth who entered foster care when she was 17 months old. After a very long journey, which included over 33 placements, she is now living on her own in a one bedroom apartment. Chas is happy and proud of her accomplishment. We sat down for breakfast one morning and talked about how she was able to achieve her independence.

Wilma: Thanks for meeting Chas, and being willing to share your experience of getting your own apartment. A lot of youth find it difficult to get their own place. How has it been for you? What have been some of your challenges?

Chas: Actually my biggest challenge was something that happened even before I moved out. Finishing High School had a really big effect on where I am now. I really, really wanted to graduate, and when I did it helped me to have a more positive attitude. It wasn't easy. There were people who didn't think I could do it, but there were a few who did believe in me. I didn't want to let the believers down, and I didn't want the doubters to be right, so I worked really hard.

When I graduated I thought of where I wanted to be in 2 to 5 years and I could see myself living somewhere on my own, being independent. That image gave me a sense of personal power; of feeling like this really is my life! I knew I wanted that.

Wilma: Were you working? What happened after you graduated?

Chas: I actually started working when I was 16 and have been working since. I started learning and practicing Jujitsu at that time too, and joined a team: the 86 BJJ 'Ohana. After I aged out of foster care I bounced around in terms of where I was living. I first moved in with a friend for about a year, then with an auntie for about 6 months, then with another auntie and uncle, my auntie Debbie and uncle Rodney, for another 5 months. They helped me a lot. Though I like living on my own, I do miss talking with them every day and sharing life. I'd do anything for them..

Wilma: So how did you go about getting your apartment? Walk me through it.

Chas: Well, I had already applied for Imua Kākou [the financial assistance for youth who have aged out of foster care]. I had to apply for Section 8 housing, and two ILP workers, Charisse and Rachel, helped me with that. Usually it takes up to 6 months to get approved, but it only took about 3 or 4 months for me.

It's challenging to find a place that will accept Section 8; a lot of landlords are put off by it. I had to have patience and perseverance when I called and talked to people. I found this apartment on Craig's list.

Auntie Debbie went with me when I came to check this place out. I had to fill out an application and pay a \$25 fee to get a credit clearance. I talked to the landlady and told her how much I liked the apartment and how I would be a good tenant. Auntie Debbie talked to her too, and helped win her over. I had to ask the landlady to hold the place for me because I didn't have a voucher yet, plus she had to fill out paperwork and talk to Rachel. The place also had to be inspected. I'm so grateful the landlady was so patient and able to accommodate me. I think she wanted to give me a chance.



Chassidy Kruse

Continued on pg. 4

HUI HO'OMALU STATEWIDE RESOURCE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The Hui Ho'omalua Statewide Resource Advisory Committee (RAC) provides support to the resource family community through identifying ongoing needs, facilitating communication and by sharing resources.

The Building Connections Newsletter is published four times a year to provide information regarding foster and adoptive care to resource families, service providers, and to the public.

This newsletter may be viewed on the following websites:

www.hawaii.gov/dhs/protection/social_services/child_welfare/foster

www.pidfoundation.org

Partners in Development
Foundation

2040 Bachelot St.
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96817-2433

If you would like to receive this newsletter, please call:

441-1125 (O'ahu),

888-879-8970 (Toll Free) or

E-mail: RAC@pidfoundation.org

GO GREEN!

Want to help our environment? Contact us today and request an electronic copy!



OUTSTANDING DHS WORKERS!



Robert Asato
CPS Specialist, West O'ahu Unit 4



Aloha,

My name is Ruth Paoao and I'm a Resource Caregiver for my Grand-Daughter. Our Investigator, **Robert Asato**, was amazing. To me, he really cares about the BEST INTEREST for a child. He has shown it through his words and actions. He was very helpful to us but, above it all, he was a blessing to my family and I. He came to my home, did what he had to do, and left us feeling in awe of how great he was to us. There should be more workers like him in that field of work. He called us when he needed info regarding the case. He's answered my calls promptly. This is what makes a worker a pleasure to work with. If it wasn't for him, I really don't know where this case would have lead too. Thank you, Robert Asato, for your commitment to helping families. I pray nothing but blessings to abound upon you. I pray that you will always be a success in everything you do. May God's favor always locate you wherever you go. May His grace always rest upon you. Thank you for being that kind of worker that we enjoyed working with. May your day be blessed and filled with prosperity.

Mahalo,

Ruth Paoao

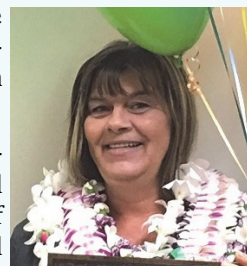


Dianne Pana
CWS Case Manager, Kapolei Unit 2



It Takes An 'Ohana's Advisory Committee (IAC) would like to recognize **Dianne Pana** for going above and beyond in accessibility, advocacy, commitment and dedication to create positive outcomes for children and families in the child welfare system.

Resource caregivers praise Dianne for appreciating their work in keeping children safe in their homes. They feel a deep understanding and support of their role, on the CWS team, from her. Dianne makes herself available at all times and is empathetic to both the foster children and resource caregivers' needs.



Dianne Pana

It is clear that Dianne is compassionate about ALL people on her caseload and that she works incredibly hard to do the best for them. She is always positive, optimistic and sees the best in people! These are just some of the reasons why we are sending a big MAHALO to Dianne for all the work she does as part of the O'ahu Special Services Unit 2 team. We want Dianne to know that she is truly appreciated!

Do you know a DHS-CWS worker(s) that you would like to acknowledge for his/her exceptional work? Share their name(s) with us and what makes them so special so we can let others know how wonderful they are!

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY!!!

How long have you been a resource caregiver? We would like to honor you by printing your name and current years of service in our newsletter. We know you are out there but we need your help. Please send your name and years of service to:

RAC@pidfoundation.org ★ (O'ahu) 441-1125 ★ (Toll Free) 1-888-879-8970

Mahalo for your dedication and heart for Hawai'i's keiki and families!

May is National Foster Care Month

Mahalo...

*to Hawai'i's Resource Caregivers
who have opened their hearts & homes
for our keiki in foster care &
Changed a Lifetime*



A. F. T. A Fostering Thought

OUR LEGACY

By Dr. Paul Brennan

For the past seven years, Dr. Brennan has been an active participant on the Statewide Resource Advisory Committee. He was a regular contributing writer to the Building Connections Newsletter where he shared his knowledge, experience and wisdom. This will be Dr. Brennan's final article as he will be taking time to focus on his family. Mahalo, Dr. Brennan, for your ongoing support, dedication and heart for foster care and making Hawai'i a better place for our children and families.

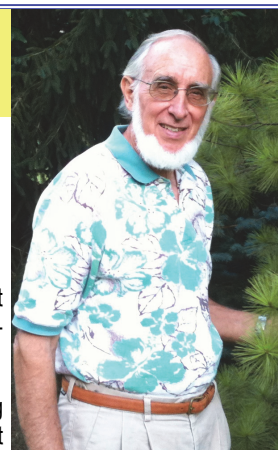
Over the span of twenty foster kids and three decades, several important lessons about parenting have emerged. What might be the most significant of them—those that are worth remembering and deserving of being passed along for subsequent generations? Here are the three that I wish to share as I look in the rearview mirror:

1. Developing social skills in children/youth is most important. Living a fulfilling life can be boiled down to developing wholesome, healthy relationships. It is not primarily a matter of what you know or whom you know, but how well you can get along with those around you. Studies have shown that the social skills children and youth develop interactively contribute profoundly to successful living. Such skills are not innate and unchangeable, but instead can be taught, promoted and modelled by their families, teachers and peers. That's tremendously encouraging (and challenging!) to all of us in supportive roles. We parents play a key role in showing our youth how to listen, how to solve problems, how to care about others' feelings, being respectful—and adding that all up—how to live a happy, constructive life.

2. Unconditional love is the only route to successful parenting. The four biological children my wife and I have been privileged to receive, never had trouble understanding the kind of love prevalent and persistent in our home. It was not dependent on circumstances or outcomes. It could not be challenged (though they tried!). It was not based on any merit they could accumulate. It was simply deserved intrinsically by virtue of the fact they were born to us. Part of their DNA, they quickly learned, was to receive our love unconditionally. In the passage of time—after falling in love, getting married, and having their own children—they could come to understand it more completely. Unconditional is the only kind of love they too choose to express. But such was not the case with those children not born to us. Having never consistently known unconditional love, or circumstances in life having aborted it if such ever had been present, these children were baffled by our "love". What was it, where did it come from, and could it be taken away? The logic of it was often baffling. Only in the passage of time and circumstances could glimmers of it shine through. Now in their 20s, 30s, and 40s, as we have remained in their lives unconditionally, have they better come to understand that this brand of love is not based on earned success, on performance, on talent, on achievement. It lies outside of logic, and they will forever be "worthy" of our love. As long as we live, we will strive to share the same.

3. Keep our youth on the right track. "Disconnected youth", according to a study completed last year, now comprise some 5.5 million Americans between the ages of 16 and 24. Their disconnection is due to either not being in school or not working. That staggering number translates to nearly one of every seven who belong to that age category—more than the entire populations of 30 states. The tragic consequence is that once they go off track at that young age, it's especially hard for them to get back on. According to the authors, these youth among us "are cut off from the people, institutions and experiences that would otherwise help them develop the knowledge, skills, maturity and sense of purpose required to live rewarding lives as adults." Anticipating such findings, President Obama several years ago instituted My Brother's Keeper, a program to assist youth in staying on track. Hopefully, after he leaves the White House, he'll continue to support such a worthy cause. . . as will we in our own important efforts to keep our youth on track for success.

Seven years ago I accepted the challenge to write a column for this newsletter, thinking that in retirement from resource caregiving my reflections might benefit others in the challenging but important role of support families. I am grateful that I could do this and have tremendous admiration for the great work all of you do—including the newsletter staff—to help our youth. Now as my wife and I approach the octogenarian chapter of our lives—sorting out, cleaning, transferring, purging—it is necessary for me to bid aloha and transfer my energies to caring for my family. May you always have a deep sense of purpose in the role you play, never tiring in passionate efforts to help our youth become strong, stable, and fulfilled.



Dr. Paul Brennan

A Home of Her Own (cont.)

It actually took a couple of months for the landlady to get the first payment. I was really lucky she was willing to wait that long. Once I got in, furnishing it was the next big step. I got a lot of help from supporters and family, but really it's also been just getting things bit by bit.

Wilma: I know, you and I wrote up a big long list of stuff you needed. It's amazing how many things you have to get for your first apartment: dishes, towels, glasses, silverware -- you name it -- besides all the big stuff like a bed and couch. You've actually done amazingly well though, Chas.

Chas: Thanks!

Wilma: So *why* has it felt so important for you to get a place of your own?

Chas: All my life I've had to answer to people. I really needed my own space; to take charge and feel in control of my own life. I wanted to be able to open the fridge 20 times a day and not get scolded because of the electricity, though now I'm starting to be aware of how much electricity costs! I wanted to be able to bring others over to my house, but also to say no.

Wilma: So what are you learning as you live in your own space?

Chas: That it's ok to say no, even when I don't want to. For me, bills come first before fun. It's been a real eye opener to learn that! I've always been independent, but now it shows. I feel proud that I'm making it. I feel proud and strong that I can figure out my boundaries with family and friends. It's still sinking in that I have this, that I did it!

Wilma: Is there a down side?

Chas: Paying the bills, loneliness sometimes.

Wilma: And the upside?

Chas: Everything! Having my own space, decorating the place the way that I want, saying I'm going home and it's actually my home. The word "home" really means home to me now. It's mine. That's something I've wanted for a very long time -- a place that I can call *my* home.

Bake Sale Fundraiser

On February 12, 2016, the Glue Committee had another successful Valentine's Day themed Bake Sale fundraiser that included a Silent Auction and Rummage Sale! All of the money raised goes towards supporting statewide events for Hawai'i's resource families and youth in foster care.

We were very fortunate to once again partner with, and receive an abundance of help and donations from our Dole Cannery neighbor, **Hawai'i Information Service (HIS)**. They held pre-bake sale fundraisers, solicited and obtained donations, provided baked goods to sell, helped to spread the word, coordinated and manned the Rummage Sale, AND all funds raised were provided to the Glue Committee!



There were so many treasures to be found at such great deals, amazing items to bid on, and of course, delectable goodies! There was an array of tantalizing homemade treats such as cookies, brownies, cupcakes, organic popcorn, banana bread, rum cakes, and lemon bars, all of which drew in the crowds. The success of this event wouldn't have been possible without the help, support and donations of many individuals, organizations, and companies!

A BIG MAHALO to everyone who came out to support this event and to the following donors for their generous contributions:

Mahalo!

Big City Diner
Catholic Charities Hawai'i
Child and Family Service
Colleen Yasuhara
Department of Human Services
Diana Haraguchi
Dream Float Hawai'i
Earl Fusato

Egan's Fit Body Bootcamp
Faith Geronimo
Family Programs Hawai'i
FCTC Committee
Gay Rapisora
Glue Committee
HAPA Committee
Hawai'i Information Service
Jamba Juice Hawai'i

Michelle Geronimo
Mountain Apple Company
Partners in Development Foundation
Renee Gomes
Sea Life Park Hawai'i
Sue Ann Militante
Toshiba Business Solutions
UHA Health Insurance



June is National Reunification Month

The State of Hawai'i, Department of Human Services (DHS), Judiciary-Family Drug Court, UH Law School, EPIC 'Ohana, Partners In Development Foundation, It Takes An 'Ohana, Queen Lili'uokalani Children's Center, and various other community stakeholder groups in the child welfare field will come together to plan Hawai'i's fourth annual National Reunification Month event. National Reunification Month, recognized by the American Bar Association, Center on Children and the Law, and other national organizations, celebrates both the importance of and successful reunifications of families involved with child welfare services. The national movement recognizes that reunification is achievable through collaborative partnerships between the family, child welfare service providers such as social workers, attorneys, guardian ad litems & CASAs, etc., and other community supporters. The State of Hawai'i takes this a step further and emphasizes a "team" effort among not only the family, child welfare services and the family court, but also community service providers and resource caregivers (formerly known as foster families).

Hawai'i's event will honor all families and those supporting reunification. In keeping with the theme of "team collaboration," however, a special tribute will be paid not only to a family who was reunified, the Child Welfare Services, and Family Court, but also other key support team members, without whose support, the family's reunification may not have occurred. This "by invitation only" event, taking place on June 17, 2016, is significant as it not only honors families, child welfare services, and support persons and organizations, but is also an example of DHS' progress in achieving its mission to strengthen families and to safely reunify children with their families.

A heartfelt Mahalo to all DHS staff, 'Ohana, Resource Caregivers, Guardian Ad Litems, CASAs, Community and Service Providers, and all who support Hawai'i's families in helping to reunify children in foster care with their families. Reunification is a team effort...everyone working to best meet the needs of every child in foster care.



Help! Looking For Stories!

Would you like to share some helpful tips? Got an inspirational story to tell? Know of some useful resources in your community?

These are just some of the many possibilities that you can contribute to this newsletter. Please send them over so we can all benefit from each other's wisdom!

We would also appreciate any feedback, comments and suggestions on ways that we can improve this newsletter so that it is useful to you. What would you like to see in it? Topics of interest? We look forward to hearing from you!

Email: RAC@pidfoundation.org



'OHANA REWARDS

Want to know how you could receive a \$200.00 gift card?

Would you like your name to appear in a future RAC newsletter?

All you need to do is help us find more homes for Hawai'i's keiki in foster care!

If you can refer, help, cheer, and see your referral to the finish line to become licensed, you could earn a **\$200 gift card** of your choice and join this list of folks who have received their 'Ohana Rewards:

Jennifer Bates

Amparo Parker

Katie Blair

Desiree Kaleohano

Val Nakamura

Winifred "Winnie" Tamaye

Brandee Webb



Call Hui Ho'omalu today at 441-1117 or 1-888-879-8970 (toll free) for more information!

Welcome to FPH's Resource Family Support Services Corner

By April Lum, RFSS Family Resource Specialist

Resource Family Support Services (RFSS) is funded by the Department of Human Services



April Lum

Ask the Warm Line

What is the difference between available resources regarding adoption or legal guardianship?

If parental rights are terminated, resource caregivers may be asked if they would consider adoption or legal guardianship for the child placed in their home. When a child is adopted from foster care, the adoptive parent(s) becomes the legal and psychological parent(s) of the child. The child is considered to be a legal child of the adoptive parent(s). A legal guardian has the rights of a parent, but the child is not considered to be his/her legal child and the legal guardian's responsibilities automatically terminate when the child reaches age 18. Some families may wonder if there is a difference in available resources for each option. Here are some areas that families may wish to consider:

	Adoption	Legal Guardianship
What kind of financial assistance is available?*	<p>Foster board payments end. Adoption Assistance (AA) funds are available to children who meet DHS eligibility requirements.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adoption Assistance by age: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 0-5 years: \$576 6-11 years: \$650 12 years and older: \$676 Difficulty of care payment, if applicable, up to \$570/month Clothing allowance is not provided 	<p>Foster board payments end. A legal guardian may choose to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fully support the child Apply for financial/medical assistance from the DHS BESSD (Benefit, Employment, and Support Services Division) as a non-needy caregiver if related by blood to the child Apply for Permanency Assistance (PA) from the DHS SSD (Social Services Division) Child Welfare Branch (CWS). <p>The legal guardian of an eligible child may receive, subject to income resources of the child:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Permanency Assistance (PA) payment by age: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 0-5 years: \$576 6-11 years: \$650 12 years and older: \$676 Difficulty of care payment, if applicable, up to \$570/month Clothing allowance and special circumstances costs, if warranted <p>The benefits will continue for the child up to age 18 or until the child completes high school, whichever occurs last.</p>
Is medical insurance provided?*	<p>The child is covered under the adoptive parent's medical insurance.</p> <p>If the family is receiving adoption assistance, medical insurance is provided by DHS as secondary coverage.</p>	<p>The legal guardian may choose to include the child under the legal guardian's own medical plan. Medical insurance would be provided by DHS as a secondary coverage.</p> <p>If the legal guardian chooses not to include the child under the legal guardian's plan, medical insurance is provided by DHS.</p>
Is there financial assistance for college?	<p>Youth placed in legal guardianship or adopted after age 13 may be eligible for Pell grants and do not have to report parent's income if they indicate they were a "ward of the court" on the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid). Apply at www.fafsa.ed.gov</p> <p>If a youth wishes to attend an institution of higher education and qualifies: Higher Education Board payments of \$676 per month may continue through the youth's 26th year.</p> <p>If the youth was placed in legal guardianship or adopted at age 16 or older from foster care (Child Welfare Services) in Hawai'i they may qualify for extended adoption or permanency assistance. Participants must fulfill program requirements which can be found at www.imua21.org.</p> <p>Education and Training Voucher (ETV) is another source of DHS funds. Applications are online at www.shakatown.com. ETV funds assist students with the "cost of attendance" for college. Funds can be used for books, supplies, computers, tools, bus passes, uniforms, childcare, etc. Youth may apply each year until age 23. Youth who were adopted or had a legal guardianship with kin after their 16th birthday are eligible.</p>	
Are we still able to attend support groups and trainings for resource families?	<p>Yes! Support groups, trainings, and annual conferences with Resource Families Support Services – Family Programs Hawai'i are open to all resource, guardianship, adoptive, and kinship families.</p>	

*Information gathered from the Department of Human Services Hawai'i – Child Welfare Services and Epic 'Ohana Conferencing's Comparison of Permanency Options, www.imua21.org, & College Money for Foster Youth.

Please call the Warm Line at 545-1130 or 1-866-545-0882 if you have any questions.

A Reflection on Teen Day II: “Applications to Success 2015”

By Sharla-Ann Fujimoto, EPIC 'Ohana, Inc.

It was a crisp, winter morning on December 28, 2015—the Monday after the Christmas holiday. The West Hawai'i Civic Center was bustling with people renewing their driver's licenses, obtaining permits, and partaking in other business. In the Community Hale, Teen Day started at 10:00 am with sleepy-head youth filtering in over the course of the half hour for registration and sign-in. Upon signing in, the youth received their own resource folder that included information about what to expect for the day, handouts from the presentations and a resume writing handbook tailored for high school-aged youth. Breakfast and beverages, that consisted of delectable pastries, muffins, juice, and water, was provided by the Youth Empowerment and Success (YES) Hawai'i Program.

The adaptation of Teen Day in West Hawai'i was inspired by the Court Improvement Project's bi-annual Teen Day event held on O'ahu, for teenagers aged 14-17. Teen Day teaches foster youth about resources available to them in the community and about the importance of attending their court hearings. To meet the needs of the foster youth in West Hawai'i, the Hawai'i Helping Our People Envision Success (HI H.O.P.E.S.) Youth Leadership Board decided to form their own version of Teen Day. They decided their Teen Day would be open to a larger age range of youth, to include those aged 14-21, and it would provide information and support in areas that the foster youth themselves had identified as important.

Upon reviewing the feedback received from the first Teen Day in West Hawai'i back in October 2014, youth related that they wanted to know more about Employment—specifically skills related to gaining employment. This feedback helped the West Hawai'i HI H.O.P.E.S. Youth Leadership Board choose the theme, “Applications to Success”, for their second annual Teen Day.

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, as of December 2015, the current unemployment rate in Hawai'i is 3.2%, which is quite a bit lower than the national unemployment rate of 4.9%. Although this rate is much lower than one of Hawai'i's record-breaking highs of 7.3% back in 2009, many of the foster youth I work with have a lot of difficulty in finding, obtaining, and securing employment.



Kona HI H.O.P.E.S. Board Members



Employment Panel

After months of outreach, networking, research, and planning, the HI H.O.P.E.S. Youth Leadership Board formed an agenda that would include inspiration from individuals experienced in the employment field in our community, a chance for the youth to get to know each other through an interactive icebreaker activity, and an opportunity for the youth to learn about the different aspects of how to obtain employment through informative workshops hosted by community partners.

To kick off Teen Day, the keynote speaker, Nakoa Pabre, owner and operator of the poke shops Umeke's and Bowls and Rolls, talked to the youth about how he started his business and how hard work can lead “small town kids” to achieve their biggest goals and even become their own boss one day. Judge Aley K. Auna delivered the opening message to the youth that highly emphasized the importance of education—even a high school diploma—and how it is vital to increasing one's earning potential over the course of their lifetime. He also shared about the benefits of youth attending their court hearings and encouraged them to ask questions as much as possible if they would like to know information about their case.

Youth and adults that attended were able to provide information about their stance on slightly controversial topics through the interactive icebreaker, “Where do you stand?” In this activity, participants were asked “this or that” questions and had to stand under the one they liked or identified with the most. Examples of topics included “mauka or makai”, “pancakes or waffles”, “drive or ride”, and the highly debated topic, “country or city”. This activity sparked some creative thinking from several participants who formed their own stance on the topics provided or decided to stand in the middle because they really couldn't choose.

Winding down from this activity, The Salvation Army-Family Intervention Services (TSA-FIS) Imua Kākou (IK) Case Manager (CM) Kristi Kekoa and I presented on the new IK program, which is available to foster youth who aged out of the foster care system under the Foster Custody and Permanent Custody legal statuses. Many of the youth in the room had questions about eligibility for this program, and for other programs if they are not eligible. They also expressed high interest in how employment ties into maintaining eligibility for this program. For some youth, they were able to clarify timelines about when they should be looking to apply and were able to identify individuals in the room that would help them.

In launching into the theme of Employment, we felt that it would be valuable for the youth to hear perspectives in the form of a question and answer panel from managers of different local and chain businesses in Kona. The panel included Kauhi Keli'ia'a from Oceanic Time Warner Cable, Arelene Reilly from KTA Superstores, John Dennis from Outback Steakhouse, and Phillip Freed from Macy's. The HI H.O.P.E.S. Youth Leadership Board moderated the panel with questions they brainstormed would be interesting for the youth. Examples of questions included: “What is the first thing you notice or look for when you meet someone coming in for a job interview?”, “What traits make the best resumes or job applications you've seen, the best?”, “What is your biggest pet peeve about applicants when you're interviewing them for a job?”

After the panel answered the pre-selected questions, the panelists were able to answer questions directly from the youth. Some questions were very

Continued on pg. 8

A Reflection on Teen Day II: “Applications to Success 2015” (cont.)

introspective and ranged from asking for advice about what to write on job applications when they do not have work experience to how to prepare for the world of work to fun questions like, “What do you like most about your job?”

The next workshop, which was presented by Kealoha Daubert from the Goodwill Industries of Hawai‘i’s Ola I Ka Hana Program, was an information session about how to fill out job applications. Kealoha covered what information should be included on job applications and tips on how to fill out the job application from start to finish. She also covered the mistakes that individuals frequently make when filling out job applications and talked about the services of her program’s Career Center, where youth can utilize the Center’s resources to apply for jobs, create resumes, and practice job interviews with their staff.

The last session, presented by the HI H.O.P.E.S. Youth Leadership Board and I, covered what we considered to be the most important aspect of the job search process: “Job Interview Skills” and “How to Prepare for a Job Interview”. The workshop started with our HI H.O.P.E.S. Youth Leadership Board members performing mock job interviews comprised of the most commonly asked questions with applicants from two types of backgrounds: the first interview featured an applicant straight out of high school with no work experience; the second interview featured an applicant who was more seasoned in the



world of work that left their previous place of employment due to issues with their past employer. Both interview scenarios featured common errors that most of the youth picked up on such as slouching, picking at lint, fidgeting, forgetting to shake hands with the interviewer, and one of the applicants forgetting to turn off their cell phone. The youth debated heavily about which interview they felt went more smoothly and were able to decide for themselves which applicant they would hire. I finished off the session by presenting about “Job Interview Do’s and Don’ts” along with tips to prepare for a job interview.

To close out the day, our HI H.O.P.E.S. Youth Leadership Board shared their experiences about what it was like for them when they were searching for jobs while in foster care, the support they received, and how their employment experiences have shaped who they are and the goals they want to accomplish. As a way for the HI

H.O.P.E.S. Youth Leadership Board to show gratitude to the youth for their time and attendance to Teen Day (and after filling out their evaluation forms), all youth were given gift cards for different businesses around Kona. Two youth were given grand prizes in the random prize drawing.

The feedback we received from the youth was extremely positive. The youth felt that the most helpful workshop was the Employment Panel because it helped them to learn about what employers look for when applicants walk into their business for a job interview. Other youth felt that the Job Interview Workshop was helpful because now they feel more prepared and know what to do before they go to a job interview. Several other youth said that they enjoyed the day so much, but wished it was longer and wanted more interaction and games to get to know the others in the room.

All-in-all, the day was a success. We had 18 youth and ten adults present for the day’s festivities. Our HI H.O.P.E.S. Youth Leadership Board was able to accomplish hosting their second Teen Day event and know that they are on the right path in guiding their fellow foster brothers and sisters to a more successful future. Knowledge is definitely the key to success and the HI H.O.P.E.S. mission to educate, collaborate, and advocate for foster youth in the system continues as we plan for Teen Day III that will take place on June 2, 2016. If you, or someone you know is interested, please call Sharla Fujimoto at EPIC ‘Ohana’s Kona office: 443-5574.

Resource Family Basics



Did you know, as a resource caregiver...

Child care/preschool financial subsidies for children may be available from various programs. Call the Warm Line at 545-1130 (O‘ahu) or 1-866-545-0882 (Toll Free) for more information and referrals.

You can find this information under the *Financial Assistance for Child Care or Preschool* on the Resource Family Basics document. This is just one example of the wealth of information you can find on the Resource Family Basics to help resource families! Learn about different financial assistance, services, and resources, that are available and so much more! Go to the website below to see all that it has to offer!

<http://humanservices.hawaii.gov/ssd/files/2016/02/RESOURCE-FAMILY-BASICS-111015.pdf>

There may be times when you, as a resource caregiver, have a question or concern and are not sure where to go for help. We will be presenting scenarios in each newsletter as a way to highlight different situations and suggestions on “Who Ya Gonna Call?”

Who Ya Gonna Call?

You’re so excited that you are now a Resource Caregiver...YAY! But, being a newbie, you know there is a lot to learn and you’re not exactly sure where to turn for help and answers...EEK! Pull out your handy dandy “Who Ya Gonna Call” list that was also in the January 2015 Building Connections Newsletter. Look under *Resources* and find some direction. The Child’s Social Worker, Social Service Assistant, Licensing Social Worker, or the Warm Line at 545-1130 or 1-866-545-0882 (Toll Free) are all there to help you every step of the way!



Normalcy

By Sue Badeau

We couldn't take our foster daughter with us on a family camping trip because it was in another state and we couldn't get all the permissions in time. We felt terrible about that.

Our foster son made the basketball team at middle school, but soon we learned he could not go to the away games unless the volunteer parents and coaches who drive the team all obtained clearances – that was crazy! He missed half the games.

A young lady in the group home has been friends with a girl in her class at school for five years. Her mother is a CASA and even volunteers for some events at the group home. Yet even with all of that history, we can't let the two girls have a sleep-over at the friend's house.

My foster son gets all A's and has proven himself to be responsible. He wants to get a part time job, but where we live he'd need to drive, so we looked into helping him get a driver's license and it was a nightmare.

These are typical examples of the situations that created awareness among youth, resource caregivers, residential facility staff and, eventually, policy-makers that something needed to change. One young person who testified before Congress on this topic said, "I felt like foster care was prison; I could never do any of the normal activities my friends and peers were doing."

Ensuring that children and youth in foster care have access to healthy, well-rounded, developmentally appropriate activities is critical for their physical and mental health, and their overall well-being. Yet for years laws and policies have created nearly insurmountable hurdles, leading youth to spend their entire childhood without access to these normal activities.

What is the cost of doing nothing? Or in other words, what is the cost to the youth when they are NOT given the opportunity to experience developmentally appropriate normal life activities?

Research and life experience have shown that when children do not have access to the normal activities of childhood – including activities for adolescents that may involve risk (such as learning to drive, dating, playing sports or getting a job) – creates or exacerbates the following problems for young people:

- ◇ **Greater stigma**
- ◇ **Social exclusion** and social isolation
- ◇ **Negative impact** on the ability to form and sustain healthy **relationships**
- ◇ **Hindered** socio-emotional **well-being**
- ◇ **Hindered skill development** particularly in areas of decision-making, problem-solving, teamwork, leadership and managing risk
- ◇ **Decreased** opportunities for **permanency*** (*youth who are engaged in activities form more meaningful relationships and have a greater likelihood of achieving permanency before aging out)
- ◇ **Increased negative outcomes** for youth who age out without having these experiences including higher levels of unemployment, homelessness, poverty and vulnerability in relationships (i.e. domestic violence)

As a result of great advocacy efforts, led, in large part, by youth in care and resource caregivers, the law has changed and every state must now implement what are known as "reasonable and prudent parenting" standards. Let's look at a few key definitions:

- 1) **Normalcy** - Age and Developmentally appropriate activities and experiences that will allow children and youth to grow.
- 2) **Reasonable & Prudent Parenting Standard** -The standard characterized by careful and sensible parental decisions that maintain the health, safety and best interests of a child while encouraging the emotional and developmental growth of the child. The caregiver must use these standards when determining whether to allow a child in out-of-home placement to participate in extracurricular, enrichment and cultural activities and social activities.
- 3) **Age or Developmentally Appropriate Activities** - Activities that are generally accepted as suitable for children of the same chronological age or level of maturity or that are determined to be developmentally appropriate for a child, based on the development of cognitive, emotional, physical and behavioral capacities that are typical for an age or an age group.

What were some of your favorite activities as a child growing up? Participating in boy or girl scouts, Little League, learning to play an instrument, playing at friends houses, and moving on to more challenging activities in your teens are probably close to some of your own answers. The most important focus of this legislation is to ensure that children and youth in foster care can live as normal a life as possible while in care. Participation in a wide range of activities based on age, development, social norms and interests supports the healthy growth and well-being of children and youth in a number of ways. Through participating in activities such as these, children acquire skills, identify talents and create or deepen relationships.

Developmentally appropriate activities engage young people in opportunities to learn problem-solving, conflict resolution and leadership skills.

Continued on pg. 10

Normalcy (cont.)

Through self-initiated or peer-led activities youth are able to make and learn from mistakes, experiment within safe boundaries, take appropriate risks and learn to manage risks. These are all elements of cultivating social capital which not only enhances well-being but also improves permanency outcomes for children. Ensuring access to the normal activities of childhood and adolescence also respects the integrity and rights of young people in care.

While the *primary* focus of the legislation is to improve opportunities and outcomes for the children and youth in care, a second area of focus is to improve the experience of caregiving for resource caregivers. When caregivers are empowered to make normal and reasonable decisions related to the everyday life of the children in their care they generally experience greater satisfaction with their role. In turn, caregivers who feel empowered and satisfied are more likely to encourage their friends or extended family members to consider becoming resource caregivers. Existing resource caregivers are the most important and effective recruiters for new resource caregivers. Empowering caregivers to make reasonable parenting decisions is one way to remove barriers to the recruitment and retention of resource caregivers. The law not only empowers caregivers but provides role clarity and helpful guidance to support caregivers as they make these important decisions. In turn, when caregivers can make these important decisions, youth get the benefits associated with having other caring adults in their lives. For example, many young people remember a coach, music teacher, tutor, mentor or “first-job” supervisor as pivotal in their own formative years. Providing normalcy for youth in care makes it possible for these relationships to flourish.

If you are a resource caregiver wondering how to use the law to help you make the best decisions for children in your care, here is a “Top Ten” list of questions you can use to guide your decision-making. Use these questions when considering whether or not to give the foster child in your care permission to participate on a team, in a school field trip or in a social activity. Be sure to talk to your case worker as you begin so that you are clear about the parameters of the law. Remember, the goal is to ensure that both you and the children in your care can have as normal a family life experience as possible.

CHECKLIST – Top Ten Questions to Consider:

- (1) Is this activity or opportunity suitable for a child of this age, maturity and developmental level?
- (2) What are the child’s wishes about this activity or opportunity?
- (3) Is this an activity or opportunity that will support and maintain the overall health, safety and well-being of the child?
 - A. Does it encourage and support healthy physical development (access to exercise, strength-building, etc.)
 - B. Does it encourage and support emotional development and growth?
 - C. Does it allow the child to appropriately express his/or cultural, racial or spiritual identity?
 - D. Does it provide a healthy social experience for the child?
- (4) Does participation in this activity or opportunity support the most family-like living experience and permanency opportunities for this child?
- (5) Does participation in this activity or opportunity help the child or youth to develop skills to successfully transition to adulthood?
- (6) Will the child need any special accommodations based on special needs, trauma history, sexual orientation, gender expression or other factors in order to safely participate in this activity or experience and have we successfully generated ideas to provide these accommodations?
- (7) What are the potential risk factors to this child?
- (8) What are the potential risk factors to others?
- (9) What is the full scope of the request (in other words, does participation in this activity also require specific transportation arrangements, use of equipment, missing school or therapeutic appointments and how can these factors be taken into account when making a decision)?
- (10) Does supporting the child’s participation in this activity or opportunity support the best interest of this child, based upon all of the information I have available?



Making Reasonable & Prudent Parenting Decisions for Children in Foster Care: Resources

Normalcy and Reasonable & Prudent Parenting

Juvenile Law Center: Promoting Normalcy for Children and Youth in Foster Care

Kids Central: Caregivers Guide to Normalcy <http://www.kidscentralinc.org/caregiver-guide-to-normalcy/>

In Pursuit of Normalcy: Better Care for Children in Foster Care (Annie E Casey Foundation – includes links to videos of 2 panel presentations at the White House) <http://www.aecf.org/blog/in-pursuit-of-normalcy-better-care-for-children-in-foster-care/>

National Foster Care Month Resource for Foster Parents and Caregivers
<https://www.childwelfare.gov/fostercaremonth/resources/parents/>

Stages of Child and Adolescent Development

Child Development Institute <http://childdevelopmentinfo.com/>

Child Welfare Information Gateway: Understanding Developmental Stages
<https://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/preventing/promoting/parenting/understanding/?hasBeenRedirected=1>

Harvard Center on the Developing Child: <http://developingchild.harvard.edu/>

National Black Child Development Institute <http://www.nbcdi.org/>

Act for Youth: Adolescent Development Toolkit <http://www.actforyouth.net/adolescence/toolkit/overview.cfm>

Children with Developmental Disabilities, Special Needs & Special Populations

Parent to Parent of PA <http://www.parenttoparent.org/>

Parenting Children with Special Needs <http://specialchildren.about.com/>

Kids as Self Advocates: <http://www.fvkasa.org/index.php>

Guideposts for Success for Families <http://www.ncwd-youth.info/family-guideposts-information-brief> (see links to additional Guideposts for Youth in Foster Care and Youth with Disabilities)

Guideposts for Success for Youth involved in the Juvenile Corrections System <http://www.ncwd-youth.info/guideposts/juvenile-justice>

Child Welfare Information Gateway: Supporting your LGBTQ Youth <https://www.childwelfare.gov/pubPDFs/LGBTQyouth.pdf> (see additional resources for caring for LGBTQ youth at the end of this document)

Child Welfare Information Gateway: Teen Pregnancy and Parenting:
<https://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/outofhome/casework/children/older/pregnancy/>

Trauma, Disasters and Emergencies

National Child Traumatic Stress Network <http://www.nctsn.org/>

Multiplying Connections <http://multiplyingconnections.org/>

Family Voices: Disasters and Emergencies: Keeping Children Safe <http://www.familyvoices.org/work/caring?id=0004>

Advertise in the Newsletter—Promote Your Business

100% of the proceeds will be used towards supporting Hawai'i's resource families

Display advertisements with borders: business card size = \$30; 1/4 page = \$50; 1/2 page = \$75; full page = \$115.

Send information to: Hui Ho'omalua—RAC, 680 Iwilei Rd., Ste. 500, Honolulu, HI 96817

Phone: 441-1125 (O'ahu) ★ 888-879-8970 (Toll Free) ★ Fax: 441-1122 ★ E-mail: RAC@pidfoundation.org

RAC reserves the right to accept, reject or edit advertisements, articles and notices of events based on publication schedule, space limitations, and appropriateness.

Adoptive Families Needed Through Wendy's Wonderful Kids

Makena is a 14-year-old girl in need of an unconditional commitment by parents ready to support and nurture her growth and development. She is a strong girl who has faced challenging life situations with determination and grit.

Makena is a biracial Hawaiian and African-American youth who enjoys wrestling, playing basketball, and outdoor activities. She is a very fast runner and athletically strong. She is caring and protective towards young children and shows particular empathy for other youth that are bullied or mistreated by peers. Makena has a very healthy sense of humor which she can use, at times, to cope with difficult situations. Makena values family over anything else. She has a strong interest in remaining connected to her many birth siblings, so an adoptive family must be supportive of these important relationships in her life.

Makena has a healthy appetite. She loves to sing and has an excellent voice. Makena can work well on group projects and in team situations.

Makena responds to newcomers with caution, and it may take a caring adult some time to earn her trust. However, once that trust is earned, Makena is very loyal to the relationship. Makena appreciates a hug at times and an encouraging word when she is upset. She needs to feel that the adults in her life are listening to her and care about her when she's facing difficulties. Makena can more easily accept direction when it is positively phrased and followed up by recognition of her efforts. Often, Makena has difficulty accepting authority and will need to be patiently supported in developing healthier ways to handle her oppositional behaviors. Adults must earn her trust by remaining low-key and neutral during these times of testing. She would probably do best in a family without other children living in the home.

Makena hopes to one day attend college and become a doctor or health care professional. She expresses a strong desire to live in a Forever Family where she will receive the love, support and guidance to help her reach her dreams. Makena requires a family with exceptional commitment and the ability to not take her behaviors and actions personally.

Wendy's Wonderful Kids seeks to find **good homes for great kids in tough situations**. If you are interested in learning more about Makena and her need for permanent, nurturing connections, please contact Chiyomi Chow, Wendy's Wonderful Kids Recruiter, at 540-2552 or by email at Chiyomi@familyprogramshawaii.org.



EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Part-time Co-trainers Needed. **Resource Caregivers/Formal Foster Youth in Maui, Kaua'i and O'ahu** are needed to co-train new Resource Caregivers in the HANAI curriculum. Your experience is invaluable to a new family just learning about providing foster care. Come and share what you've learned/experienced over the years with others!!! Trainings are generally held intermittently on some weekday evenings and some Saturdays. Training and compensation provided.

Part-time Child Care Providers needed in East Hawai'i, West Hawai'i, Maui and O'ahu to provide child care (i.e., during trainings), in the evenings and weekends on an occasional basis. Training and compensation provided.

Part-time Recruitment Assistants needed in West Hawai'i Maui and O'ahu to staff various recruitment booths and share information with potential applicants about the need for additional Resource Caregivers. Times will vary and may include evenings and weekends, on an occasional basis. Training and compensation provided.

HUI HO'OMALU

A Program of Partners in Development Foundation

See www.pidfoundation.org/about/careers

Email resume & application w/cover letter to:

HR@pidfoundation.org

or fax to 440-6619

PIDF is an Equal Employment Opportunity Employer



Calendar of Events

O'AHU

- Apr 28 (Thurs)** **Central O'ahu Resource Families Support Group:** 5:30pm-8:00pm. O'ahu Veterans Center. RSVP to FPH at 521-9531 ext. 245 by 4/21.
- Apr 30 (Sat)** **9th Annual Conference for Resource Families – "Learning By Doing":** 8:30am-2:30pm. Hawai'i Convention Center. RSVP at www.FamilyProgramsHawaii.org. Questions? Call the Warm Line at 545-1130.
- May 13 (Fri)** **Wai'anae Resource Families Support Group:** 5:30pm-8:00pm. Ulu Ke Kukui – Classroom 1. RSVP to FPH at 521-9531 ext. 245 by 5/6.
- May 21 (Sat)** **Resource Family Appreciation Day at Kualoa Ranch's Secret Island:** 9:00am-3:00pm. Cost is \$10 per person, ages 3 and up. For more information contact Rae Inn at 527-4925 or rae.inn@catholiccharitieshawaii.org.
- June 14 (Tue)** **Training for Resource Families on Bullying and Suicide Prevention:** 5:30-8:00pm. Catholic Charities Hawai'i. RSVP to FPH at 521-9531 ext. 245 by 6/7.
- June 17 (Fri)** **Windward Resource Families Support Group:** 6:00pm-8:30pm. Queen Lili'uokalani Children's Center - Ko'olau Poko Unit. RSVP to FPH at 521-9531 ext. 245 by 6/10.
- June 23 (Thurs)** **Central O'ahu Resource Families Support Group:** 5:30pm-8:00pm. Oahu Veterans Center. RSVP to FPH at 521-9531 ext. 245 by 6/16.
- June 30 (Thurs)** **Training for Resource Families on Bullying and Suicide Prevention:** 5:30-8:00pm. Daybreak Church Kailua. RSVP to FPH at 521-9531 ext. 245 by 6/23.

WEST HAWAII

- Apr 29 (Fri)** **9th Annual Conference for Resource Families – "Learning By Doing":** 9:00am-3:00pm. Sheraton Kona Resort & Spa at Keauhou Bay. RSVP at www.FamilyProgramsHawaii.org. Questions? Call the Warm Line at 1-866-545-0882.
- June 29 (Wed)** **Bullying and Suicide Prevention Training and Talk Story Time:** 5:00-8:00pm. Lutheran Church of the Holy Trinity. RSVP to the Warm Line at 1-866-545-0882 by 6/22.

EAST HAWAII

- May 5 (Thurs)** **9th Annual Conference for Resource Families – "Learning By Doing":** 9:00am-3:00pm. 'Imiloa Astronomy Center. RSVP at www.FamilyProgramsHawaii.org. Questions? Call the Warm Line at 1-866-545-0882.
- May 21 (Sat)** **Hilo Resource Families Support Group:** 12:00pm-2:30pm. Haili Congregational Church. RSVP to the Warm Line at 1-866-545-0882 by 5/14.
- June 23 (Thurs)** **Training for Resource Families on Bullying and Suicide Prevention:** 5:00-7:30pm. Church of the Holy Cross. RSVP to the Warm Line at 1-866-545-0882 by 6/16.

KAUA'I

- Apr 25 (Mon)** **9th Annual Conference for Resource Families – "Learning By Doing":** 9:00am-3:00pm. Kaua'i Beach Resort. RSVP at www.FamilyProgramsHawaii.org. Questions? Call the Warm Line at 1-866-545-0882. To include the **National Foster Care Month Proclamation and Presentation** by Kaua'i Mayor Bernard P. Carvalho, Jr.
- May 19 (Thurs)** **Kaua'i Resource Families Talk Story Time:** 5:30pm-8:00pm. Lihue United Church. RSVP to the Warm Line at 1-866-545-0882 by 5/12.
- June 17 (Fri)** **Training for Resource Families on Bullying and Suicide Prevention:** 5:30-8:00pm. Lihue Lutheran Church. RSVP to the Warm Line at 1-866-545-0882 by 6/10.

MAUI COUNTY

- Apr 21 (Thur)** **Maui Resource Families Support Group:** 5:30pm-8:00pm. Queen Lili'uokalani Children's Center. RSVP toll free to the Warm Line at 1-866-545-0882 by 4/14.
- May 4 (Wed)** **9th Annual Conference for Resource Families – "Learning By Doing":** 9:00am-3:00pm. Maui Beach Hotel. RSVP at www.FamilyProgramsHawaii.org. Questions? Call the Warm Line at 1-866-545-0882.
- June 16 (Thur)** **Maui Resource Families Support Group:** 5:30pm-8:00pm. Queen Lili'uokalani Children's Center. RSVP toll free to the Warm Line at 1-866-545-0882 by 6/9.
- June 20 (Mon)** **Training for Resource Families on Bullying and Suicide Prevention:** 5:00-7:30pm. Grace Bible Church Maui. RSVP to the Warm Line at 1-866-545-0882 by 6/13.

****Please check www.FamilyProgramsHawaii.org for an updated calendar of events.**



PATCH publishes a quarterly newsletter -- Training Tracks, to inform the community of our upcoming trainings around town, and provide the latest child care news and information to professionals and the public. PATCH offers over 100 FREE child care workshops open to all caregivers such as family child care, preschool and infant and toddler staff, before and after school care programs, parents, resource caregivers, medical professionals, babysitters and informal child care. Please visit our website for the latest news and training schedule:

www.PatchHawaii.org or contact your local PATCH office

O'ahu: 808-839-1988 ★ Maui: 808-242-9232

Lāna'i & Molokai: 1-800-498-4145

Kaua'i: 808-246-0622 ★ Hilo: 808-961-3169

Kona: 808-322-3500



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RAC@pidfoundation.org

The concept for the Statewide Resource Advisory Committee (RAC) was created by the Department of Human Services (DHS) as a means to support the resource family community. Hui Ho'omalua facilitates this committee comprised of adoptive parents, resource caregivers and various community agencies, all dedicated to providing services and support to Hawai'i's keiki and the resource families who care for them. The purpose of the RAC is to identify ongoing needs, facilitate communication, share resources, provide information through a statewide calendar of events and a quarterly newsletter and report on local projects and other topics of interest to benefit Hawai'i's resource families.

This committee, the newsletter and many of the represented agencies are supported and funded by Department of Human Services contracts.

RAC Committee Members:

Catholic Charities Hawai'i—Hui Ho'omalua

Department of Human Services

EPIC, Inc. 'Ohana Conferencing

Family Court

Family Programs Hawai'i—Hui Ho'omalua & It Takes An 'Ohana

Resource Caregivers

Adoptive Parents

Hawai'i Foster Youth Coalition

Partners in Development Foundation—Hui Ho'omalua