

Building Connections

A Newsletter for Resource Families

Volume 7, Issue 4

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Men's Circles: A New Approach to Supporting Men as Fathers

By Maureen Riley

New Program Manager, EPIC 'Ohana, Inc.

When a family is involved in the child welfare system, often times the mother is expected to engage in services, make the necessary changes, and ultimately reunify with her children. The mom is seen as the natural caretaker and nurturer of the children and the more obvious choice to raise them. But what about the dad? Some fathers are equally, or in some cases, more equipped to raise their children. Others can rise to the occasion and be effective parents with some extra help to overcome their challenges. To balance the scales, Hawaii's Child Welfare Services deliberately engages fathers and has increased their support for dads.



EPIC, along with backing from Casey Family Programs, is contributing to that balance by developing a new approach for empowering and assisting fathers. The Men's Circle is a pilot project rolling out in East Hawaii to help bridge the gap for men who want to be involved in their children's lives but need some extra help and encouragement.

A Men's Circle is a collaborative process that offers support to a father who is currently involved in a Child Welfare case. The Men's Circle is driven by the individual father and tailored to his individual needs. The father has an active role in designing his circle and chooses the attendees, the time and place of the circle, as well as the food to be served during the meeting. The target areas of the men's/father's circle are: Housing, Transportation, Education/Training, Childcare, Financial issues, Physical/Emotional health and "Other" if the father has a need that does not fit into the other categories.

The attendees in the "circle of support" are led through a facilitated discussion that first, focuses on the father's individual strengths, cultural background, and family story before brainstorming through the above target areas to offer any assistance and guidance that is needed. A Men's Circle provides a powerful opportunity for the father to share his life story, hear how his supporters view him from a strength-based perspective, and learn about community resources that may be of specific benefit to him. The value of a Men's Circle is that the father is led through a process where he is *respected*, *supported* and *valued* for his contributions to his family. He is also given information at the Men's Circle that will help him meet his individual needs.

In 2013, a total of 11 Men's Circles took place in East Hawaii. EPIC is currently contracted by Casey Family Programs to complete another 15 Men's Circles in 2014 in East Hawaii. The response and feedback from fathers, supporters, and Child Welfare workers, has been extremely positive.

The importance of working with fathers cannot be overstated. Today, the research and data we have on fatherhood and the important role fathers play in children's lives is clear. The presence of a supportive father in a household can mediate against problems such as school dropout rates, teen pregnancy and incarceration, to name a few. The Men's Circle model is a promising new approach to working with families, positively impacting the lives of our children, and strengthening our community as a whole.

*EPIC 'Ohana Conferencing is funded through the Department of Human Services
For more information about 'Ohana Connections work
contact Wilma Friesema at EPIC 'Ohana Conferencing, Inc. at 748-7921*

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.

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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 WORKER! ★

NORA KAAUA, CWS Social Worker

It Takes An 'Ohana's Advisory Committee (IAC) would like to thank **Nora Kaaua** for her many years of outstanding service to resource families and foster children. East Hawai'i families report that Nora always approaches the families with kindness, love and concern. Families appreciate that Nora has a great sense of humor and follows up with them in a timely manner. In addition, she was very helpful when families had to transition to a new licensing worker. Nora works at the East Hawai'i Child Welfare Services Unit 1. Mahalo nui loa to Nora for going above and beyond to help bring about positive outcomes for resource families and foster children!

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!

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

New DHS Clothing Allowance

During the 2012-2013 session, the Hawai'i State legislature approved the Department of Human Services budget request for an increase in the foster care clothing allowance. This additional funding allows the Child Welfare Services Branch to increase the total clothing annual allowance from \$500 to \$600 per State fiscal year. All children in foster care placement are eligible to receive this annual clothing allowance. Resource caregivers can also request an additional \$125 for special circumstances or events, such as proms and sports uniforms for children in their care.

Highlights of this new DHS policy include the following:

- ★ Resource caregivers shall receive a \$600 clothing allowance, per fiscal year, for the child in their care.
- ★ School uniforms, diapers and T-shirts are added as an allowable expense.
- ★ The annual clothing allowance will be provided twice a year at \$300 each – at the beginning of the school year (July/August), and in January/February.
- ★ For new placements, the clothing allowance will be provided on a prorated basis.

There are four different ways resource caregivers can receive the clothing allowance. The child's social worker can help to determine which method of payment would be best in each individual situation.

For more information or assistance on this policy, resource caregivers can contact their child's social worker or their licensing worker.

'Ohana is Forever VIII: *Ke Ola Hou: New Beginnings*

Attention current and former foster youth age 14 to 26! You are invited to 'Ohana is Forever VIII: *Ke Ola Hou: New Beginnings*, a foster youth-led, free conference. Explanations by youth of the meanings behind this year's theme include:

No matter what life situation you were in when you came into foster care, you can create your own destiny.

The choice is yours. Every moment you have the choice to recreate your life.

The past doesn't define you.

Back by popular demand is former foster youth and poet, Jaiya John. Jaiya will give the keynote address as well as lead youth in a sacred youth circle. Two of Jaiya's books are *Beautiful: A Poetic Celebration of Displaced Children* and *Black Baby White Hands: A View from the Crib*. Learn more about Jaiya and his work at jaiyajohn.com.

Continued on pg. 8



**A. F. T.
A Fostering Thought**

NO CHILD LEFT INSIDE

By Dr. Paul Brennan



As a boy growing up in rural Ohio, the outdoors was our playground. Yes, work needed to be done first, so in summer we mowed lawns, in fall we raked leaves, in winter we shoveled snow, and in spring we prepared our gardens. But, we also found delightful, ample moments to connect with ourselves, our imaginations, and those around us. The "Old Mill Stream" flowed through our town, so its banks often pulled us in pursuit of elusive bass, catfish and carp. Here too I spent many hours scanning the soil for evidence that previous cultures had lived there; my flint arrowheads, stone hammers and grinding stones made the Ottawa Indians especially come to life. Closer to home there was baseball and softball, "Kick the Can", kite flying, and croquet on massive lawns. Two railroad tracks beckoned us into the countryside where skunks and raccoons might be encountered. Likewise, on our bicycles we followed winding, country roads through corn, sugar beet, wheat, and alfalfa fields. We didn't need much money in our pockets to entertain us, nor did we have television to take us to distant lands. The world was in our grasp and--

poor though we all were--we felt we could claim it.

One connecting memory remains especially indelible. My best friend (aside from my brother), Jim, and I, building on our summer practice of designing tree houses, decided when we were about to enter high school, to construct our masterpiece high in a tree overlooking the river. Hauling our crate material and cardboard by hand over our railroad bridge, we succeeded in building a platform on which we could, we believed, sleep the night away. Mosquitoes, passing trains, and our own storytelling, however, didn't yield us much sleep, but together it still brings smiles to our faces as we recall our wholesome, innocent youth. Such outdoor connections, more than 60 years ago, provided some of our most important foundation stones for fulfilling lives.

Today's kids aren't so fortunate. Technological gadgets of many kinds spill from their hands in the likes of BlackBerrys and iPhones. Seduced by this technology, they have fallen prey to the widespread belief that these devices magically provide significant connections. The opposite is actually true: connections of such superficial (expensive!) kind actually pull us away from a sense of who we are and what really matters. An MIT professor, Sherry Turkle, author of the book, *ALONE TOGETHER: WHY WE EXPECT MORE FROM TECHNOLOGY AND LESS FROM EACH OTHER*, states: "From social networks to sociable robots, we're designing technologies that will give us the illusion of companionship without the demands of friendship." One film which has illustrated this theme well is the 2013 release *DISCONNECT*. The writer, Andrew Stern, conceived the movie after he had invited friends to dinner, only to find them emailing and texting other people continuously through the meal. Sound familiar?

Over the past few years social scientists especially have been observing this pervasive trend, pointing out future disturbing consequences. The U.S. National Park Service, for example, has noted that though the roads to some national parks have remained clogged, increasingly fewer Americans actually get out from their vehicles to connect with the land and to camp in the parks. Yellowstone National Park is but one example, prompting officials to launch the program, "More Kids in the Woods." If future sustainability of Hawai'i's fragile natural environment is to take place, then our children and our youth must be encouraged and shown how to once again be connected to the 'aina. How might this happen?



EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Co-trainers Needed. *Resource Caregivers/Former Foster Youth in East Hawai'i* are needed to co-train new Resource Caregivers in the HANA 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 on weekday evenings and Saturdays. Training and compensation provided.

Child Care Providers needed in East Hawai'i, West Hawai'i and Maui to provide child care (i.e., during trainings), in the 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

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*



Mahalo to Girl Scout Brownie Troop #112

In December 2013, Girl Scout Brownie Troop #112 out of Kailua contacted PIDF because the girls had decided that they wanted to raise money through a lemonade stand and donate the proceeds to children in foster care. They set up their lemonade stand outside of Enchanted Lake Elementary School one afternoon, sold lemonade and explained to the customers that the money was going to children in foster care. They raised \$100! In early January, Stephanie Helbush from PIDF met the troop to receive the donation and explain how their donation will go to providing an ice cream party for children who attend a support group for resource caregivers in Kailua. It was such a treat! After purchasing the items for the ice cream party, there were some leftover funds that went to providing snacks to children in foster care on Kaua'i when they are being transported or waiting in the DHS office. Thank you to Girl Scout Brownie Troop 112 and Sara Lemstrom, their Troop Leader!



Mahalo to Together We Rise

The holiday season can be a wonderful, yet challenging time for children in foster care. For children and families who attended Family Programs Hawai'i's Hilo Support Group in December, they were treated to a day filled with games, activities, and a special present donated by Together We Rise, UGG shoes! Together We Rise is a California based non-profit who strives to make a difference in the lives of foster children across the United States. Michele Carvalho, Hilo Support Group Facilitator, stated that the children were very excited and grateful for the donation.



thank
you!

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, QLCC, and various other community stakeholder groups in the child welfare field have come together to plan Hawai'i's second 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 litem & 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 services 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 an O'ahu family who was reunified, the O'ahu 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 Oahu, 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 Litem, 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.



Jennifer Torres

FPH Projection Visitation Hilo

by Jennifer Torres

My heart is filled as I hear a nine year old boy tell his 17 year old sister, "I love and miss you." I turn around to see his sister give him a hug while telling him, "I love you too and don't worry, now we will be able to see each other every month." She then looks at me and says, "Thank you."

Yes, I have the most rewarding job. I get to witness and experience compassion, loyalty, bravery, protectiveness, humbleness, and appreciation all while providing a service for East Hawai'i's foster youth. I am honored to be a part of Family Programs Hawai'i's Project Visitation program, where keeping siblings connected is our goal.

Aloha, my name is Jennifer Torres. I am one of six siblings who grew up in foster care. I resided in four different foster placements, none of which included all of my siblings. I know all too well the importance of our goal of keeping siblings connected. I am truly blessed to be in a position to pay it forward while providing positive life experiences for siblings in need of family connections.



East Hawai'i is currently serving 32 youth. We are in need of volunteers for monthly visits and quarterly events. Our last event was held in February of this year at The Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park and Kilauea Military Camp. Sibling groups were treated to a fun-filled day of activities that included a lava tube adventure hike, viewing of the crater, tour of Jaggar Museum, sibling pictures, Cosmic Bowling, arcade games, and lunch. The whole event was sponsored by Golden State Foods.

If you would like to experience gratitude beyond words and make a difference in children's lives, please contact me at 808-935-2876 ext 228 or JTorres@FamilyProgramsHi.org. Separated siblings may be referred to the program through the children's social worker, CASA, or GAL. Project Visitation is currently offered in East Hawai'i and on O'ahu.

Welcome to FPH's Resource Family Support Services Corner

By Lorie Naftel, RFSS Family Resource Specialist

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



FAMILY PROGRAMS HAWAII

Ask the Warm Line



Lorie Naftel

I frequently receive inquiries from resource caregivers statewide wanting to know about upcoming trainings and how to get training hours. Resource caregivers, licensed by DHS, are mandated to obtain six hours of training per year. I'd like to share several ways resource caregivers can receive training credits if they are unable to attend trainings or annual conferences in your area, during the year. Here is a list of FREE alternative training opportunities:

1. Foster Parent College - Self paced, online training with a variety of training topics to choose from. A great resource for resource caregivers struggling with specific issues with children in their care. An active email account is required to participate. For more information, email Michelle Sajona at MSajona@familyprogramshi.org or call 521-9531 ext. 247.

2. Past Trainings and Annual Conference DVD Lending Library – DVD's can be borrowed by emailing LNaftel@familyprogramshi.org, calling the Warm Line on O'ahu at 545-1130 or toll-free on neighbor islands at 1-866-545-0882.

If you would like more detailed information about the trainings or annual conferences go to www.familyprogramshawaii.org and click on "resources" and "training opportunities for resource caregivers."

The following DVD's are available for lending and I have provided a brief description for each:

- ★ **H.O.P.E.—HELPING OUR PROVIDERS EDUCATE:** Tips for effective communication with youth about sexual health. (2 DHS Credit Hours) Learn techniques and tools to talk with youth about sexuality; understand the basics of adolescent brain development and its importance when communicating with youth.
- ★ **A Follow Up to....Pathways to Healing: Understanding the Trauma Behind the Behavior.** (2 DHS Credit Hours) Learn about trauma-informed care practices and how trauma histories have an impact on behaviors; discuss triggers and effective interventions; learn how natural and professional supports can help.
- ★ **Overmedication & Children in Foster Care.** (2 DHS Credit Hours) Learn what DHS is doing to address the concern of foster children being overmedicated and gain a clear understanding of the alternatives to medication.
- ★ **Trauma and Anger Management for the Family.** (2 DHS Credit Hours) Understand anger and trauma and the effects of trauma on children, teens, and adults; explore coping skills.
- ★ **ADHD: What is it & what can I do about it?** (2 DHS Credit Hours) Learn about behaviors, learning processes, and developmental growth of children diagnosed with ADHD; develop strategies to assist children with ADHD.
- ★ **Mixed Plate: Permanency, 'Ohana Time, Ongoing Trainings, and You.** (1 DHS Credit Hour) Learn about the new federally mandated ongoing training requirements for Resource Caregivers and how this will affect your licensure; give your input on what DHS recommended for ongoing training requirements; learn how you can support different permanency options.
- ★ **Caregivers & the Court.** (2 DHS Credit Hours) Learn the how's and why's of Resource Caregivers' involvement in their foster youths' court hearings; better understand the family court process; learn how to support foster youth attending hearings.
- ★ **Kids Are What They Eat – How Food Affects Your Child's Behavior.** (2 DHS Credit Hours) Learn to improve health and happiness for the whole family.
- ★ **Ho'olohe Pono.** (2 DHS credit hours) Increase Resource Caregiver's knowledge and understanding of bullying and suicide among youth through prevention, intervention, and post-vention strategies; provide skills to identify high-risk populations for bullying and suicidality and identify tools to increase resiliency in youth; learn the importance of creating a "Web of Support" for yourself and your foster keiki.
- ★ **2012 Annual Conference with Dr. Kimo Alameda, Laurie Jicha, and Lynne Kazama**
"Fostering COMMUNITY Connecting Our 'Ohana" (4 DHS credit hours) Promote healthy attachment, development, well-being, and positive adjustment to placement through 'Ohana Time; understand the benefits and purpose of Visitation-'Ohana Time for children in foster care, birth families, and resource families; learn how to supervise visitations in a way that maintains safety.
- ★ **2011 Annual Conference with Norma Ginther** "Best of Both Worlds: Resource & Birth Families Working Together for Children" (3 DHS credit hours) Facilitate visits and participate in other interactions with birth families to ensure that the child maintains critical connections in his/her life; evaluate sources of conflict from different perspectives and learn to manage them & explore ways of working with birth families, regardless of whether the goal is reunification or adoption/guardianship.
- ★ **2010 Annual Conference with Tom & Barbara Naki** "Nurture Me & Watch Me Grow: Cultivating Healthy Resource Families" (4 DHS credit hours) Develop & enhance the attitudes, skills & knowledge to create nurturing Resource Families; explore multicultural parenting issues and practice behavior encouragement techniques.

**The handouts and PowerPoint notes for trainings are available by downloading them from our website. If you do not have internet access, they can be

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FPH's Resource Family Support Services Corner (cont.)

Ask the Warm Line



FAMILY PROGRAMS HAWAII

mailed to you with the DVD. The DHS training verification form is also available on our website. The form needs to be completed in order to receive DHS credit for the training. Mail the completed DHS training verification form to your licensing worker, and remember to make a copy for your records.

- 3 Alternative methods of Approved Trainings -- These include reading books, attending a support group, or an 'Ohana conference, etc. To see a list go to www.familyprogramshawaii.org, click on resources, scroll down to training opportunities for families and at the top of the page under 2013 Hawaii DHS Mandatory Training Information, click on *DHS Approved Training List*. To see if a book is available for lending you can call the Warm Line.

To keep apprised of upcoming support groups, trainings and State-wide annual conference dates you can check the FPH calendar:

www.familyprogramshawaii.org/calendar



Care to Share



The Care to Share project was fortunate to work with a couple of young community members this past quarter. We want to recognize them for their generosity and spirit to help youth in foster care. Chrystal Wood, who is 11 years old, donated 16 new pairs of sandals, shoes and socks to children in foster care here on O'ahu. Chrystal and her parents delivered the shoes to FPH and her mom shared, "Chrystal asked Santa Claus for new shoes to help children who didn't have their parents." Sixteen foster youth received new shoes and socks thanks to Chrystal's generosity.



Chrystal Wood



Katie's Beautiful Valentine Cards

Katie (Nalani), a senior at Kamehameha Schools in Hilo is working on her legacy project and chose to help children in foster care. Her first project was to make Valentine Cards for children in foster care. Katie and her peers decorated and wrote positive messages on the Valentine cards and she delivered them to DHS in Hilo. The cards were delivered to children in care by their social workers. DHS Section Administrator, Roselyn Viernes, and Supervisor, Wendy Jo Robinson, thanked Katie for her donation of Valentine cards upon delivery. Wendy emailed the Warm Line and said, "The cards that Nalani made are truly amazing. It was clear that a lot of thought and hard work went into Nalani's project." Katie's next project is to collect baby items, pajamas and backpacks in preparation for national foster care month in May.

The Care to Share project would like to collect school supplies in preparation for the 2014-15 school year so if you would like to help please call the Warm Line at 545-1130 or toll free at 1-866-545-0882.

- | | |
|-----------|-------------------------------|
| ❖ Crayons | ❖ Folder Paper (college rule) |
| ❖ Pens | ❖ Folders |
| ❖ Pencils | ❖ Color pencils |

We sincerely thank our young community members for their work and contributions to help children in foster care. Your altruism and compassion shines through in the love and care you have shown the children you have touched through your projects! You are truly outstanding!

If you feel inspired and would like to help children in foster care please call the Warm Line. On O'ahu call 545-1130 or toll free for the neighbor islands call 1-866-545-0882.

This program, brought to you by FPH's Resource Family Support Services (RFSS), is funded by the Department of Human Services

Advertise in the Newsletter—Promote Your Business

100% of the proceeds will be used towards supporting our 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.

Hawai'i Youth Opportunities Initiative (HYOI)

By Delia Ulma

Statewide Initiative Coordinator, EPIC 'Ohana, Inc.

The Hawai'i Youth Opportunities Initiative (HYOI) helps youth leaving foster care to become successful adults in their communities. HYOI works with youth and community partners to provide access to education, employment, family relationships, financial capability, health care, housing, and community connections. Working with youth and community partners, HYOI strives to increase opportunities for young people leaving care so that they become successful adults. One component of HYOI is the Opportunity Passport Program. Young people between the ages of 14-26 who were in foster care at least one day after age 14 are eligible to take financial literacy training, earn \$140 and open free savings accounts at Bank of Hawai'i. As program participants, they are then eligible to have their monies matched, dollar for dollar, for approved asset purchases up to \$1000 per year with a \$3000 lifetime cap. Assets include purchases for a car, educational expenses (tuition, fees, laptop), housing deposits, medical expenses, business start-up, investments, and credit repair. HYOI develops youth leadership and the youth voice among those with experience in foster care. The HI H.O.P.E.S. Youth Leadership Boards are made up of young people between the ages of 14-26 who are currently in, or were formerly in, foster care. Board members receive training and meet regularly to plan and execute their advocacy work in their communities. There are boards on O'ahu, East and West Hawai'i, Maui and Kaua'i. In 2013, the work of the boards were instrumental in the passage of Act 252, the law to extend voluntary foster care to age 21 and the extension of Medicaid to age 26, for young people who age out of foster care.



For more information on HYOI, please contact Delia Ulma, Statewide Initiative Coordinator, at 748-7052 or email her at dulima@epicohana.org.

YOUTH VOICES



Mahalo to the O'ahu HI H.O.P.E.S. Board for sharing with us their thoughts regarding what would have helped them feel more in control of their lives while in care:

Having more options and being able to understand those options such as being able to choose what school to attend and friends to hang out with. One youth stated that having opportunities to work, would lead to developing a work ethic as well as providing feelings of empowerment due to earning his/her own money. Another felt that being provided with options and treated as someone who could succeed, would have helped him/her to grow and build his/her life.

Having some normalcy in their lives such as being able to socialize and not having restrictions on outings and dating. This would help to alleviate the feelings of having to hide and be ashamed of being in foster care.

Having clear boundaries and consequences set forth in a home but, with the final choice go to the youth.

Finding ways to cut down on the length of time it takes to get permission to do anything such as having visits with one's birth family.

Having more control over their own bodies. One youth stated that foster youth can't get tattoos and, while piercings is one thing, they can't even get a haircut without their social worker's permission.

Encouraging youth to socialize more by joining the YMCA, community activities, sports, events, etc.

Having a mentor that is not a therapist, social worker, or case manager that they can open up to and can help them to fulfill their goals, dreams, and to develop their potential.

'Ohana is Forever VIII (cont.)

The conference will be held on July 18th at the beautiful Ko'olau Ballrooms in Kāne'ohe from 8:30 AM to 4:00 PM. Youth can register on-line at familyprogramshawaii.org/event/ohana/ after June 15 or contact their social worker or ILP worker for a registration form. A limited number of airline tickets are available to bring Neighbor Island youth to the event. Neighbor Island youth who are interested in attending should check with their social worker or ILP worker to see if transportation is currently available.

Foster youth who attended last year's conference said they liked the activities, meeting new friends who are in the same situation as they are, learning about resources, the food and the great entertainment.

Attendance to the event for adults is by invitation only. If you are a resource caregiver and would like to attend, contact Judith Wilhoite at (808) 540-2543 or jwilhoite@familyprogramshi.org to check on ticket availability.

This event is funded by the Hawai'i Court Improvement Program and the Victoria S. and Bradley L. Geist Foundation, supported by the Hawai'i Department of Human Services, EPIC 'Ohana and First Circuit Family Court and coordinated by Family Programs Hawai'i.



'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:

**Jeanie Bargas
Gwen & Alex Bresslauer
Kathryn Cruz
Jenn Selfo-Jones
Jana Kailiawa**

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



ITAO BOOK CLUB

The ITAO Advisory Committee invites you to join the ITAO Book Club. It will begin this summer and meet quarterly. Books will be chosen from the *DHS Approved Ongoing Training List*, thus you will get DHS credit hours that can be applied toward your mandatory training requirements while enjoying the company of other resource families who share the same interest in child well being as you do.

If you are interested in learning more, please contact Judith Wilhoite at (808) 540-2543 or jwilhoite@familyprogramshi.org.

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

Legislative Update on the Foster Care Reimbursement Rate

By Judith Wilhoite

It Takes An 'Ohana (ITAO) Advisory Committee (IAC) is currently advocating at the legislature to raise the foster care reimbursement rate. At the time of this writing, there are two bills that could accomplish this, HB986 and HB1576. Last year, the Department of Human Resources (DHS) said that they support an increase in the foster care rate but wanted to take a closer look at how to best structure rates. They did that work and recently released the *DHS Hawai'i Foster Care Rate Report* as well as requested funds in the DHS budget to support an increase. This is great news and we truly appreciate these efforts! However, after reviewing the DHS report, IAC has the following recommendations:

- The DHS report utilizes data from the *USDA Estimated annual expenditures on a child by husband-wife families, urban West, 2011*. At the time the DHS study began, this was the most recent data available. IAC recommends that the 2012 USDA data that is now available be used to calculate the rates.
- The amount that DHS has requested in their budget would meet the needs of children by 94%. IAC recommends the needs of the children are met at 100%.

The DHS Report utilizes the *Estimated annual expenditures on a child by husband-wife families, urban West, 2011*. This averages states in the Western region of the US. According to the US Department of Labor, the cost of living in Hawai'i is higher by 6.8% than the figures in the USDA Urban West category. Thus, to guarantee that the needs of children and youth are met, IAC recommends the reimbursement rate be calculated at 106.8% of the 2012 USDA Monthly Expense.

You can read both the DHS and IAC reports at www.ittakesanohana.org. Look under *News* on the home page and scroll down to *2014 Legislative Session*.

Please join us in letting our state legislators know that there is strong community support for this issue! If you are able to help, we will guide you every step of the way. Go to www.ittakesanohana.org and sign up on the right hand side of the webpage under *ITAO Newsletter*. Choose *Legislative Update* and you will receive our e-mails when action needs to be taken to advance this cause. We will include step-by-step directions for you to follow. Don't have an email? You can still have a huge impact by using your voice – please contact me at (808) 540-2543 and I'll tell you more!

Again, IAC truly appreciates the work done by the DHS, Hawai'i's legislators and Resource Families on moving this important issue forward!

Adopting a Teen: It's all about the Connections

Teresa Berg, LSW

As Adoptions Case Manager for Wendy's Wonderful Kids, I am often asked, "Why would a family adopt a teenager?" My response is automatic and enthusiastic: Teenagers in the foster care system are survivors! They have many strengths and abilities that have helped them cope with difficult life situations. They are typically very self-reliant and those who choose to enroll in WWK sincerely wish to be part of a forever family.

When foster teens have the opportunity to find permanency in an adoptive family, they gain a sense of belonging that continues well past their 18th birthday. When they get their first job, have their first baby or celebrate a milestone birthday, they do so with their family! These connections are real and important in safeguarding the foster teen's ability to grow and develop throughout the course of their life. While adoptive parents may not be able to "mold" an adopted teenager, they can definitely modify behaviors and beliefs in ways that promote the youth's health and wellbeing.

Teenagers gain many advantages when adopted. All families have social capital that they share with their youngest members. Many grandparents, for example, have wisdom gained over decades of life, cultural beliefs that assist younger generations in coping with difficulties, and a network of friends, acquaintances and business relationships that can assist a young person to find their first job, rent their first apartment or gain access to an educational opportunity. When a parent chooses to adopt a teenager, that teen gains access to the social capital of extended family members as well. They acquire aunts by kin, church communities, and social networks that help support their development into successful adults.

Research demonstrates that teens who exit foster care without permanency have a higher lifetime risk of being homeless, imprisoned, impoverished or losing their own child to the foster care system. Adopting a teenager is one way to break this cycle and provide vulnerable youth with a pathway to success. To learn more about teenagers in Hawai'i who would like to be adopted, visit <http://familyprogramshawaii.org/programs/>

Adoptive Families Needed Through Wendy's Wonderful Kids

Makena is a 12-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 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 and enjoys shared family meal times. She loves to sing and has an excellent voice. She can work well on group projects and in team situations. She naturally encourages others and has ready compliments and praise for her peers.

Makena responds to newcomers with caution, and it may take a caring adult some time to earn Makena's trust. However, once that trust is earned, she is very loyal to the relationship. Makena appreciates a hug and encouraging words 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. At times, Makena has difficulty accepting authority and will need to be patiently supported in developing healthier ways to handle her oppositional behaviors. Adults must earn Makena's trust by remaining low-key and neutral during these times of testing.

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. If you are interested in learning more about Makena, please contact Teresa Berg at Family Programs Hawai'i at 808-540-2552.



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!



Reflections...

My Experience as a Hanai “Mom”

By Rebecca Yonamine

“Mamacita! Mamacita! You always remember my birthday and little things that only a mother remembers for her child.” Elizabeth entered our lives by the grace of my youngest daughter Eva.

Every afternoon after school as any two eight-graders would do....talk story, giggle, do home work and snack. By 6:00pm I would remind the girls that it was time to end their day, “See you tomorrow Elizabeth.” I began to notice Elizabeth taking her time and whispering to Eva. As the weeks passed, Eva would begin asking me if Elizabeth could have dinner with us. I would say yes, as long as her parents said it was ‘ok.’

Elizabeth would comment at dinner how much she loved eating dinner at the table as a family. I asked her what part of sharing a meal she enjoyed most with us....Elizabeth becoming much more at ease with me shared, “My mom died, so I was sent to live with my dad and step-mom. They are always working so I eat T.V. dinners in front of the T.V. with the dog.” I assured Elizabeth she was always welcomed to have dinner with us, especially with her parents working late nights.

Slowly it began where Elizabeth slept over, first on the weekends, then some school nights. I asked Eva what she knew about Elizabeth’s family. Eva shared that Elizabeth wasn’t wanted by her dad and step-mom, she was a “bother” to their life style. At this point I went to Elizabeth’s home to introduce myself to her father and step-mother. Both presented as friendly and welcoming. Elizabeth’s dad thanked me for having Elizabeth in my home “all the time.” Before you knew it Elizabeth stayed in my home for longer periods of time. I would follow up with her parents, but they would be off on trips leaving me to care for her. After their return from one of their trips I talked to them about Elizabeth’s welfare. Once again emphasizing how busy they were with work and travel, and that Elizabeth was old enough to fend for herself. At that point I asked that she stay with me. When my daughter Eva and I welcomed Elizabeth into our home on a more “permanent” basis she expressed relief. With this arrangement Elizabeth would stop by to say ‘hi’ to her parents but coming ‘home’ every day.

The year Elizabeth and Eva were seniors, I learned that her father passed away from acute liver damage as a result of his drinking. He buried bottles of alcohol in his back yard hiding his addiction from everyone.

Elizabeth is now 36, married, enjoying a career she loves in New York city.....“mamacita! mamacita! I love you, mamacita!” Elizabeth knows she is my hanai daughter...yesterday, today and for all tomorrows.

Resilience: Every Child Has a Promise

By Marianna Sheehan & Judith Wilhoite

Resilience: the capacity to spring back, rebound, successfully adapt in the face of adversity and develop social competence despite exposure to severe stress – a quality we want for all children. And one that is very important for the children in our lives who have been affected by out-of-home care.

Mervlyn Kitashima grew up on Kaua’i enduring many challenges and was considered an “at risk” youth, yet she has blossomed into a strong, happy, productive member of our community. When asked what made the difference for her, she shared four protective factors, all of which have been validated by research done by Dr. Emmy Werner’s Kaua’i Longitudinal Study.

By providing these protective factors to the children in our care, we may be able to alter, or even reverse, negative outcomes and enable the children and youth in our care to circumvent life stressors and go on to live a life of promise. The four factors are:

Caring and supportive people and places: Every child needs at least one caring, supportive adult who gives caring unconditionally. The more adults in a child’s life who give this unconditional caring, the better. For Mervlyn, the people who made the biggest difference in her life were her grandmother, her elementary school principal and an administrator at Kamehameha schools.

Growing up, Mervlyn remembers hearing people say that because she was Hawaiian she was nothing. Her elementary school principal was the first person Mervlyn remembers telling her differently. He said that because she was Hawaiian, she could do anything she wanted to. This began to instill in her a sense of hope and a shift in the way she thought about her future.

Her grandmother was someone Mervlyn always knew she could go to when things were difficult at home. She knew she would always be welcome and that no matter what condition she came to her grandmother in, she would not be turned away. Her grandmother showed her that she was lovable. For many children in out of home care, this is the belief so many children struggle with the most. When people continually give them up, when they are moved from home to home without explanation, they often believe it is because they are unlovable. The evidence in their lives of being unwanted backs this belief up. Tell the children in your home you love them and that they are lovable. Create new evidence for them.

Finally, an administrator at Kamehameha made it possible for her to finish her education after having become pregnant out of wedlock. This administrator went to bat for her, changing the schools policy that until then, prevented female students from continuing their education after becoming

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7th Annual Conference for Resource Families



Successful Futures

Helping Children, Adolescents, and Young Adults Thrive

Family Programs Hawaii-Resource Families Support Services program, in collaboration with the Department of Human Services, Partners in Development-Hui Ho'omalua program, and Epic Ohana, Inc. is pleased to present "Successful Futures: Helping Children, Adolescents, and Young Adults Thrive." We are fortunate to have as our guest speaker, Dr. Steven Choy, who brings over 35 years of experience specializing in the diagnosis, treatment and prevention of child maltreatment. He has studied the impact of child maltreatment trauma on the development of children and its impact on their social, behavioral and emotional development. Dr. Choy has worked with numerous children in foster care and their resource families to facilitate healthy development and help them THRIVE. At this conference, participants will learn to develop strategies to assist children in overcoming the effects of trauma and improve behavioral and emotional functioning. Participants will also learn how to assist children and adolescents in their educational success and their successful transition into adulthood. Please join us for this free conference and learn how you can help better support the children and youth in your home. For dates and times, please see the Calendar of Events on page 13.



Resilience: Every Child Has a Promise (cont.)

pregnant. This administrator helped to further instill in her what her elementary school teacher began to years before, a belief that she could do anything she wanted to and that she was worthy.

Just one adult who loves or cares for a child unconditionally is enough to make the difference between a child "making it" or not. That person may be a family member, older sibling, teacher, coach or other caring adult. That person may be you. All children need positive voices to counteract the negative ones in their lives.

Opportunities for participation in meaningful activities: In this context, meaningful activities are those in which build a sense of self. For Mervyn, these activities included student government, glee club and intra-murals. These activities created evidence she was talented, good at things, worthy and valuable and these new feelings took the place of "not feeling worth anything". The more we teach children, the more opportunities they have to learn new and different things, the more skills they have, the more confident they become and the better their choices in life will be.

Work and responsibilities: Children given the opportunity to develop a strong work ethic, a "stick-to-it" attitude, even in the face of adversity, have important tools to fall back on when things get tough. Children who are given work and responsibilities are more resilient because later in life they are able to persevere when things are difficult. They are able to follow through and accomplish tasks and goals when others give up, quit or get bored. Growing up, many of the responsibilities and chores for upkeep of the household fell on Mervyn and her siblings. These skills have carried Mervyn throughout her life as she completed her high school education, raised 7 children and then went back to school to earn her college degree in her 50's.

A sense of purpose, a sense of hope: For many children in out of home care and "at risk" youth, this sense of purpose and hope often comes from religion, faith and/or spirituality. Having something to believe in (spiritual strength) gives them a reason to hang on when there is no one in their lives to rely on. A belief that God (or whatever spiritual deity they have been exposed to) loves them, can provide them with the means to get through these challenging years in their lives and prevent them from feeling completely alone and hopeless. Religious communities often provide stable people in the lives of children (Sunday school teachers, ministers, priests, etc.) who say positive things such as "you are great", "we love you" and "God loves you". These are extremely powerful messages for a child who does not hear them anywhere else in their lives.

A passion for one's heritage and culture in combination with exposure and involvement in cultural activities and organizations can also provide similar or the same sense of hope and purpose. It can instill a sense of pride and worth from identifying with a particular group or culture.

So as you can see, there are many different ways to contribute to a child's development of resilience. Children need to not only hear they are lovable, worthy, valuable and that there is hope for a positive outcome in their lives, but they also need the opportunity to create evidence of these facts. These opportunities lie in spending time with an adult who cares unconditionally for them, participating in activities that are meaningful to them, completing work and chores and being a part of a community that teaches hope. Think about how you can provide these opportunities for the children in your life and take action on them. If you need support and information on how you can provide these opportunities, contact It Takes An 'Ohana.

Marianna Sheehan, who grew up in foster care, works as a physical therapist in Anchorage, Alaska at Providence Alaska Medical Center. She spends her free time exploring the gorgeous outdoor paradise that is Alaska. You can find her any given weekend trail running, hiking on glaciers, sea kayaking and skiing.

Judith Wilhoite is the family advocate for It Takes An 'Ohana, a program of Family Programs Hawai'i. She & her husband have raised 5 birth sons and 3 foster sons. You can reach her at: (808) 540-2543 or jwilhoite@familyprogramshi.org.

Calendar of Events

O'AHU

- May 3 (Sat)** 7th Annual Conference for Resource Families-Successful Futures Helping Children, Adolescents, and Young Adults Thrive. 8:30am-2:30pm at Pomaika'i ballrooms At Dole Cannery. The conference is FREE. Must be registered to attend. Call the Warm Line at 545-1130.
- May 15 (Th)*** Wai'anae Resource Families Support Group. 5:30pm-8pm. 'Ohana Ola O Kahumana. RSVP to FPH at 521-9531 ext. 245 by 5/9. *Day changed to Thursday for this month.
- May 24 (Sat)** 2014 Resource Family Appreciation Day at Secret Island. 9:00am-3:00pm at Kualoa Ranch's Secret Island. The Foster Care Training Committee & Department of Human Services, with the support of Wells Fargo Home Mortgage of Hawai'i, Queen Lili'uokalani Children's Center (QLCC) & the Glue Committee, are happy to present the 2014 Resource Family Appreciation Day once more. It is open to Resource, Adoptive, Kinship, Guardianship, and Permanency Families and Former Foster and Former Guardianship Youth! Admission is \$10 per person, with children 2 years old and under free. Families will enjoy outrigger canoe paddling, volleyball, kayaking, swimming, stand up paddle boarding, snorkeling and more. Lunch will be provided by QLCC. Questions? Contact Rae at 527-4925 or rae.inn@catholiccharitieshawaii.org
- June 13 (Fri)** Windward Resource Families Support Group. 6pm-8:30pm. QLCC, Kāne'ohe. RSVP to FPH at 521-9531, ext. 245 by 6/6.
- June 27 (Fri)** Central O'ahu Resource Families Support Group. 5:30-8pm. O'ahu Veterans Center, Honolulu. RSVP to FPH at 521-9531, ext. 245 by 6/20.

MAUI COUNTY

- Apr. 9 (Wed)** 7th Annual Conference for Resource Families-Successful Futures Helping Children, Adolescents, and Young Adults Thrive. 9am-3pm at Maui Beach Hotel. The conference is FREE. Must be registered to attend. Call the Warm Line toll free at 1-866-545-0882.
- May 7 (Wed)** KAOI Radio Show. 12pm-1pm. Listen to Ethan Aronson, from Partners in Development Foundation-Hui Ho'omalua, as he talks about foster care and National Foster Care Month.
- May 8 (Thur)** Sign Waving for NFCM. 7am-9am. In Kahului near Kane St. and Ka'ahumanu Ave. Other possible dates TBD. Send an e-mail to earonson@pidfoundation.org to get on the e-mail list for updates.
- May 22 (Thur)** Ask a Resource Caregiver Info Mtg. 5pm-6:30pm at Queen Lili'uokalani Children's Center.
- June 19 (Thur)** Maui Resource Families Support Group. 5:30pm-8pm at Queen Lili'uokalani Children's Center, RSVP to the Warm Line at 1-866-545-0882 or email: warmline@familyprogramshi.org by 6/5.

WEST HAWAII

- Apr. 2 (Wed)** 7th Annual Conference for Resource Families-Successful Futures Helping Children, Adolescents, and Young Adults Thrive. 9am-3pm at Sheraton Kona Resort & Spa at Keauhou Bay, Kailua-Kona. The conference is FREE. Must be registered to attend. Call the Warm Line toll free at 1-866-545-0882.
- May 9 (Fri)** Healthy from Head 2 Toe Event. 4pm-7pm at Lanihaou Shopping Center. Resource tables, popcorn and much more! Contact Alice Bratton (322-1542) or Napua Victorino (331-8777) for more info.

EAST HAWAII

- Apr. 30 (Wed)** 7th Annual Conference for Resource Families-Successful Futures Helping Children, Adolescents, and Young Adults Thrive. 9am-3pm at Imiloa Astronomy Center of Hawaii, Hilo. The conference is FREE. Must be registered to attend. Call the Warm Line toll free at 1-866-545-0882.
- May 3 (Sat)** Resource Caregiver Annual Mahalo Dinner. Sponsored by East Hawai'i Friends of Foster Families. More info to come.
- May 10 (Sat)** Hilo Resource Families Support Group. 12pm-2:30pm Haili Congregational Church, Hilo, RSVP to Michelle Carvalho at 987-5988 by 4/25.

KAUAI

- Apr. 11 (Fri)** 7th Annual Conference for Resource Families-Successful Futures Helping Children, Adolescents, and Young Adults Thrive. 9am-3pm at Kaua'i Beach Resort. The conference is FREE. Must be registered to attend. Call the Warm Line toll free at 1-866-545-0882.
- May 1 (Thur)** Sign Waving for NFCM. 2:30pm-3:30pm at the airport intersection. Posters will be provided. Contact Monica (346-8184) for more info.



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 & Moloka'i: 1-800-498-4145

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

Kona: 808-322-3500

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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