

Foster Parent Newsletter

Hephzibah Children's Association

1144 Lake Street,
5th Floor
Oak Park, IL 60301



(708) 649-7140
Fax (708) 649-7194

Hephzibah News

- ♥ **GET READY FOR SIBLING CAMP!** Planning is under way for the 2011 HephSIBah Camp at Camp Duncan in Ingle-side, Illinois. Mark your calendars for August 1 - 4!
- ♥ **THE FAMILY ROLLING SKATING PARTY WAS A HUGE SUCCESS!** On Saturday, January 22, Hephzibah foster families and staff hit the rink at Fleetwood Roller Rink in Summit, IL for an evening of fun and socializing. Some of the children skated for the first time and others whizzed around the rink. Foster parents built connections that will provide support and companionship in the future. Join us for the next family outing this summer!
- ♥ **HEPHZIBAH'S HEART OF GOLD BALL** Hephzibah's Gala is right around the corner. The annual gala at the Marriott Magnificent Mile is on Saturday, March 5. It will be a wonderful evening of dinner and dancing plus silent and live auctions to benefit the children of Hephzibah. Tickets can be purchased online at www.hephzibahhome.org.
- ♥ **HOOF IT FOR HEPHZIBAH!** It's time for the 11th annual 5K fun run and family walk, children's mini mile run and 50 yard dash. Race day is Memorial Day, Monday, May 30th at Newton Park in Glen Ellyn. All proceeds benefit Hephzibah.

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Hephzibah Group Homes
(708) 649-7100

DCFS Advocacy Office
1 (800) 232-3798

**Hephzibah Finance/
Day Care Offices**
(708) 649-7140

Hephzibah's Mission Statement

Hephzibah enhances the lives of children and families through a continuum of innovative programs.

TRAININGS

Educational Advocacy - Information that parents need to know so that they can advocate for their foster child's educational rights and needs; required during the first 4 years of licensure. (6 hours)

- Led by Davida Williams, LCSW
- March 5 OR May 14, 9:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
- Hephzibah, 1144 Lake Street, 5th Floor

CPR - (3 hours)

- Presented by the Oak Park Fire Department, 100 Euclid, Oak Park
- 1st and 3rd Wednesdays of the month, 6 - 9 p.m.
- March 2, 16, April 6, 20, May 4 OR 18
- Contact Alison Corsino at 649-7112 to register.
- Classes are small, so please register early.
- Child care is not provided.

The Cradle offers Parenting Workshops which are open to the community. Register online at www.cradle.org/parenting-workshops-o Workshops are held at the Cradle, 2049 Ridge Avenue, Evanston, IL (847) 475-5800 Register Early!

Fees: \$20 per person; \$10 for second family member. Childcare is not provided.

Look Who's Talking: promoting speech from day one	Renee Reilly, PhD Speech Pathologist	April 16, 9:30—11:30 a.m.
How to Discipline without Losing Yourself	Kay Holler, LCSW Therapist	May 11, 6:30—8:30 p.m.
It's a Family Affair; Everything Relative	Becky Carter, LCPC Therapist	June 4, 9:30—11:30 a.m.
Caring for Afro-textured Hair and Skin for parents of African-American and Bi-racial Children	Erylne Jean-Baptiste & Iheoma Okeke Banks Cradle Staff	August 20, 9:30—11:30 a.m.
LGBT Parenting	Aaron Cooper, PhD Psychologist	September 24, 9:30—11:30 a.m.
Conspicuous Families: What kids wish their parents knew	Judy Stigger, LCSW Therapist	October 22, 9:30—11:30 a.m.

A REMINDER ABOUT TRAININGS!

If you RSVP, be sure to attend. Special planning is made to accommodate those who have registered, both at Hephzibah and community trainings.

PLEASE BE COURTEOUS!

How do Children Respond to Domestic Violence? Check out the user-friendly information on the National Child Traumatic Stress Network's website www.nctsn.org/sites/default/files/assets/pdfs/DomViolenceFactSheet_final.pdf Many of the children in foster care have been exposed to domestic violence. Learn ways to better understand your child's behavior now in light of their previous trauma.

ONLINE FOSTER PARENT TRAINING!

In collaboration with Adoption Learning Partners, Hephzibah is pleased to announce online training courses for foster parents. Founded by the Cradle in 2002, Adoption Learning Partners has already helped more than 20,000 families, providing them with access to adoption expertise and best practices in the field at the convenience of their home computers.

Are you ready to get started? Follow these easy steps!

1. Access Adoption Learning Partners (ALP) at www.AdoptionLearningPartners.org
 2. Register, in which you will be prompted to create a username and password. You will also need to enter Hephzibah's ALP Participating Agency Code, which is **F330HCA**. Each foster parent in a household should create an individual registration so that you can take the courses separately and receive separate certificates of completion.
 3. Choose your course(s). The courses listed below are FREE to Hephzibah foster parents, and relevant to caring for children with special needs. Descriptions of all courses are available at the Adoption Learning Partners Website. Although courses may indicate "adopted children" in the title, the course content is relevant to "foster children" also. Four hours of online courses will be accepted towards your 12 training credit requirement each year.
 - Adopting the Older Child (2 credit hours)
 - The Journey of Attachment (2 credit hours)
 - Finding the Missing Pieces: Helping adopted children cope with grief and loss (2 credit hours)
 - Lifebooks: Creating and telling your child's story (1.5 credit hours)
 - Adoption Tax Credit (1 credit hour)
 - Conspicuous Families (1.5 credit hours)
 - Becoming Your Child's Best Advocate (2 credit hours)
 - Let's Talk Adoption (2 credit hours)
 4. When you finish the course, you will be prompted to complete the Course Evaluation, which is required in order to receive a Certificate of Completion. One or two days later, your Certificate will be available from your Adoption Learning Partners' Page. You may choose to download, email, or print the Certificate. Please save a copy for your records and also email a copy to Ashley Horn, Hephzibah Family Assessment Specialist at AHorn@hephzibahhome.org. A Foster Parent Training Credit Approval Form will also need to be completed prior to Hephzibah submitting the information to DCFS for approval.
 5. Other hints: If you complete the "Becoming Your Child's Best Advocate," "Lifebooks," or "Adoption Tax Credit" courses, you must click "Apply for A Certificate" after completing the course. For the other courses, it will happen automatically after you complete the course evaluation.
- If you have any questions or comments, contact Amy O'Rourke at (708) 649-7176 or aorourke@hephzibahhome.org.

Connecting Your Family, Inside and Out

As children grow and mature, they rely on strong family bonds to ease their transition to adulthood. While connecting with one's children can be a challenging task under any circumstances, adoptive parents can face additional obstacles to familial closeness.

On **Tuesday, March 8**, Adoption Learning Partners will host a webinar to teach parents how they can better connect with their child as a toddler, tween, and teen. Attachment expert Dr. Dan Hughes will be joined by Lynn Wetterberg, Executive Director of ATTACH. For more information, visit www.adoptionlearningpartners.org.

7–8 p.m. Central Time

Course Fee \$15

Kirk Martin of Celebrate Calm offers stories, guidance and support by email and a radio program. Check it out at www.celebratecalm.com

The Beyond Consequences Institute offers books, DVDS, email support, Mom's Conferences, webinars, articles and more. Beyond Consequences is a love-based approach to helping children with severe behaviors.

Find out more at www.beyondconsequences.com

UPCOMING DCFS TRAININGS

Pre-registration required. Call 1-877-800-3393. For more information on the courses and for additional dates, times and locations, click on the link "Foster Caregiver In-Service Training" on www.state.il.us/dcfs

CHILD TRAUMA (4 HOURS)

- * March 14, 9:30–1:30 at DCFS, 6201 S. Emerald, Chicago
- * April 4, 9 a.m.–1 p.m. at Lutheran Social Services of Illinois, 10 W. 35th Street, 15th Floor, Chicago
- * April 9, 9 a.m.–1 p.m. at DCFS, 1911 S. Indiana, Chicago
- * June 7 and June 14, 6:30–8:30 p.m. at DCFS, 6201 S. Emerald, Chicago

REUNIFICATION (3 HOURS)

- * March 22, 6:30–9:30 p.m. at DCFS, 6201 S. Emerald, Chicago
- * April 23, 9:30 a.m.–12:30 p.m. at DCFS, 15115 Dixie Highway, Harvey

MODULE 1: THE FOUNDATION FOR MEETING THE DEVELOPMENTAL NEEDS OF CHILDREN AT RISK (12 HOURS)

- * April 5, 7, 12 and 14 at DCFS, 6201 S. Emerald





1st Annual Youth Leadership Conference: Restoring Hope After Trauma

When: March 12th, 10 a.m.—7 p.m.

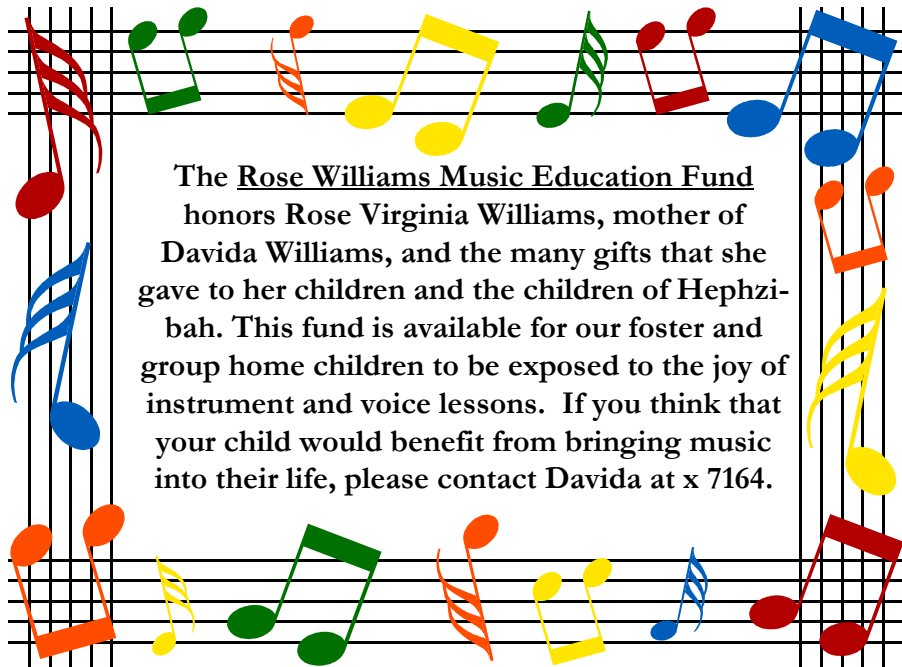
Who: Youth ages 14—25

Why: To learn about trauma, what it means, and resources and ways that youth can cope

Cost: Free

For more information: Email vrompala@larabida.org or call 773-374-3748 x 2230

Want to learn more information about Foster Parents across the nation? Receive information and resources to help you better advocate for all foster parents and children? Check out the National Foster Parent Association at <http://nfpainc.org/>



Call for Recruiters! Will you help Hephzibah recruit new foster parents? Word of mouth is our most successful method of recruiting. We are available to speak at your place of worship or community meeting. We have recruiting materials that you can put up in your local library, beauty salon, barber shop, restaurants, shops, workplace, etc. Contact Davida at x 7164. Thanks!

The Advocacy Office is available to foster parents throughout the state of Illinois. For Hephzibah foster parents, we first encourage you to contact your Caseworker, supervisor or other agency representative to discuss any concerns or frustrations you might have.

You have the right to request a staffing at any time to discuss any concerns or suggestions. We always encourage the rights of our foster parents, which include the opportunity to contact the Advocacy Office.

Please feel free to ask any questions about this office. We look forward to working together with you in maintaining the best interest of the children in your home! **1-800-232-3798**

Substitute Care Update in Illinois

As of 1/31/11, 15, 454 youth were in substitute care in Illinois. (2,338 in Cook County)

7,237 of these youth were in non-relative foster homes. (1,315 in Cook County)

6,304 of these youth were in relative foster homes. (661 in Cook County)

1,913 of these were in Independent Living Programs, Transitional Living Programs, Group Homes or Residential Care. (352 in Cook County)

(Source: Illinois Department of Children and Family Services, 2/7/11)

Foster Care and Permanency Trends in Cook County

	1988	1998	2008
Youth reunified with their birth families	59%	27%	28%
Youth adopted by foster families	8%	42%	23%
Youth involved in Subsidized Guardianships	Not a legal option in 1988.	12%	9%
Youth who aged out of the DCFS System	33%	18%	40%

Hephzibah Substitute Care Update

- Between July 1, 2010 and December 31, 2010, Hephzibah's foster care program provided services to 73 youth: 44 in specialized care, 26 in traditional care and 3 in residential placement.
- The ages of children in Hephzibah's foster care program range from 7 months to 21 years.
 - 19% are between 0 –5 years. 29% are between 6–10 years.
 - 35% are between 11–15 years. 16% are between 16–21 years.
- Hephzibah's foster care population is 51% male and 49% female.





Foster Parents Caught Being Great

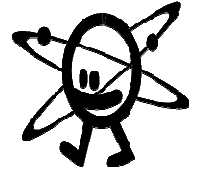
Mary Butowski was caught being great! She demonstrates incredible patience, love and understanding as a foster/adoptive parent. She is a tireless advocate for children's needs. **Thank you Mary!**

Martha Payne and Tony Noey O'Cha, and Sid and Kate Zell were caught being great! They opened their homes to emergency placements in the middle of the night and welcomed the children warmly! **Thank you Martha, Tony, Sid and Kate!**

Lisa and Zack Schrantz were caught being great! They have advocated for their son at school, in the community and with the agency in order to help him succeed. Additionally, they are very committed to maintaining his relationship with his siblings. **Thank you Lisa and Zack!**

Mike and Annie D'Addio, Bill Kujawa, Katherine and Jarrett Knox and Juanita and Juergen Broscheit were caught being great! They have communicated effectively and clearly amongst each other and the agency to best meet the needs of a large group of siblings. **Thank you Mike, Annie, Bill, Katherine, Jarrett, Juanita and Juergen!**

Mad Science



Mad Science workshops are a convenient way to offer students a hands-on science experience without being at school. The workshops will deliver unique, hands-on science experiences for children that are entertaining and educational!

When: March 26, 2011

Who: Students in K-8th grade**

**Where: Oak Park Conservatory, 615 Garfield Street, Oak Park, IL 60304
(The event begins promptly @ 10 a.m., please don't be late!)**

Schedule of Events:

10– 12:30 Mad Science Workshops 1 & 2 (The Science of Toys and All About Animals)

12:30– 1:30 Lunch (provided)

1:30- 2:30 Explore the Conservatory **

RSVP: By March 11 to Crystal Dominguez (708) 649-7140

****Children must attend with an adult. Ideally, 1 adult for every 2 children. To maximize learning, no children under 5 allowed.****

FOSTER PARENT LAW

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

WHAT IS IT?

The Foster Parent Law Implementation Plan is written every year and outlines the ways in which Hephzibah supports foster parents in exercising their rights and responsibilities according to Foster Parent Law on a daily basis.

WHY AM I RECEIVING A COPY?

As a foster parent, it is critical that you know how Hephzibah is helping you. We also want your feedback so that we can support you in the most effective ways possible. You also may be receiving a call from a DCFS Representative to get your feedback about how Hephzibah is doing in implementing foster parent law.

TAKE A LOOK AT THE PLAN and CONTACT ME if you have any questions or comments, now or throughout the year at (708) 649-7176 or aourourke@hephzibahhome.org.

THANK YOU FOR THE WONDERFUL WORK YOU DO WITH HEPHZIBAH CHILDREN, FAMILIES AND STAFF!

Hephzibah Children's Association Procedure for the Investigation of a Licensing Violation

1. Any complaint made against a foster parent's compliance should be given in writing, by completing the Licensing Complaint Form. This form should be given to the foster family's Family Development/Assessment Specialist, if another party files the complaint.
2. The Family Development/Assessment Specialist will initiate a licensing complaint within two working days of the complaint being filed.
3. The Family Development/Assessment Specialist will begin an investigation of the complaint by conducting in person interviews with the complainant, the foster parent, and other involved parties. The foster parent has the right to have a person of their choosing present during this investigation.
4. The investigation will be completed within 30 days of receipt of the complaint. All interviews conducted during this time should be documented on the Licensing Complaint Interview Notes form.
5. Within 15 business days of completing the investigation, Hephzibah will make a formal determination of whether a licensing violation has occurred. The Family Development/Assessment Specialist will complete a Licensing Complaint Investigation Findings/Recommendations Form.
6. Within 5 calendar days of the determination, a certified letter will be sent to the foster parent summarizing the findings of the investigation.
7. The foster parent has 10 days from the date of the postmark on the letter to send a written request to the Director of Family-Based Services requesting an informal review of the decision.
8. An informal review will occur within 10 calendar days of the request. All parties will be given an opportunity to participate in the meeting and the foster parent has the right to have a person of their choosing present in this meeting.
9. Upon completion of this meeting, the foster parent will have 14 calendar days to correct the violation. This time frame can be extended in writing if agreed upon in the meeting.
10. If the violation is not corrected within the specified time frame, a meeting will occur with all parties present to discuss the intent to revoke the license. This will be placed in writing.

Exception: If the complaint alleges abuse and/or neglect, the Child Abuse and Neglect Hotline will be called and a formal investigation will be conducted in collaboration with staff from the Division of Child Protection and Agencies and Institutions. If a complaint is founded, a Clinical staffing is held with the foster parent(s), Caseworker, Supervisor, all service providers, Family Assessment/Development Specialist, Foster Care Services Coordinator, and the Program Director to determine appropriateness of continued placement, any additional service or training needs, and any need for a safety plan.

Attention all Parents!

Join us for Parents' Club: a morning of sharing and support from other foster and adoptive parents

Delia's Restaurant

1034 Lake Street

Oak Park

Every first and third Friday of the month, 9 a.m.

Contact Davida at x 7164 to RSVP and more information.

EMERGENCY CONTACT NUMBERS

After-hours situation that can't wait until normal work hours	708-649-7140, press option #5
Child is threatening to harm him/herself or others	800-345-9049 (CARES line)
Foster parent is in need of peer support	708-649-7140 x 7176
Child is out of control, but not threatening harm	708-649-7140, press option #5
Child abuse or neglect is suspected	800-252-2873 (DCFS Hotline)
Child has run away from home or school	911 and then 708-649-7140 (press option #5 if after-hours)
Medical emergency	911 and then 708-649-7140 (press option #5 if after-hours)

Hephzibah Children's Association

Foster Care Team

Julie Dvorsky, Director of Family Based Services	x7173
Amy O'Rourke, Foster Care Services Coordinator	x7176
Shelby Varela, Art Therapist	x7180
Ashley Horn, Family Assessment Specialist	x7178
Crystal Dominguez, Education Coordinator	x7187
Davida Williams, Foster Care Specialist	x7164

