

Fostering Communications

Building a Network of People in the Foster Care System

May 2020

Upcoming State Conferences...

ND Children & Family Services Conference,
Bismarck, ND
July 27-30, 2020
HAS BEEN CANCELLED

ND Conference of Social Welfare
Bismarck, ND
September 23-25, 2020
Bismarck, ND
HAS BEEN CANCELLED



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Children and Family
Services Training Center
Department of Social Work
University of North Dakota

Appreciation Central

“This month, and during this difficult time for everyone, we pause to recognize the strengths, challenges, and significant effort put forth for children and families by foster care case managers, providers, agency staff, schools, law enforcement, courts, and our communities. As the foster care administrator for North Dakota, I want to thank all of you for your efforts in serving children and families. North Dakota currently has over 1600 children in foster care. This number has remained fairly consistent in the last eighteen months. In order to best meet the needs of the numbers of children in North Dakota foster care, we need strong, willing providers. We recognize and appreciate the number of relative caregivers who are actively involved in the lives of their kin who are in foster care. At the same time, it is understood that not all relatives are able to provide care for their kin, which reinforces the need for well-trained, licensed foster parents who are willing to open their hearts and homes to temporarily care for foster children and support their families. ND currently has nearly 1000 licensed foster homes. Thank you!”

–Dean Sturn, Administrator ND State Foster Care, Department of Human Services

The Children & Family Services Training Center would also like to extend our appreciation of North Dakota’s foster parents! YOU are truly our heroes, who day in and day out show up for our children by providing love, nurturance, and a place for a child to flourish. YOU make a difference in a life of a child! THANK YOU!!!!

*“Every kid is one caring adult away from being a success story.”
– Josh Shipp*

Foster Parent Survey

We would like your input! Please utilize the link below and complete the foster parent needs survey to provide your thoughts, opinions, and recommendations for how we can best meet your upcoming training and educational needs.

[2020 Foster Parent Needs Survey](#)



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Comments should be directed to the Training Center.*

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Children's
Foster Care
Month 2020



STATE OF NORTH DAKOTA

PROCLAMATION CHILDREN'S FOSTER CARE MONTH MAY 2020

WHEREAS, strengthening families and focusing on their well-being is the key to building strong communities; and keeping families together is the primary goal of the child welfare system; and

WHEREAS, North Dakotans have a long-standing tradition of opening their hearts and homes to children in need of stability and caring surroundings; and

WHEREAS, North Dakota foster parents are role models and an important support for parents, helping them enhance their relationship with their children to achieve family stability and maintain family connections until reunification can occur; and

WHEREAS, Children's Foster Care Month is an opportunity to recognize the nearly 1,000 licensed foster families who provide quality foster care in the state; and

WHEREAS, there is an ongoing need to recruit new foster families and to retain current foster families; and


WHEREAS, grandparents, aunts, uncles and other close family members and relative caregivers also have an important role in providing normalcy, stability and family connections to their kin who are not able to remain with their biological parents; and

WHEREAS, foster families, human service zones, child welfare providers and professionals and others involved in foster care deserve recognition this month and all year long for their continued teamwork and steadfast devotion to the safety, permanency and well-being of children and adolescents; and

WHEREAS, this annual observance calls attention to the value of foster care as a temporary service that provides help, healing and hope to children, adolescents and their families in our state.

NOW, THEREFORE, as Governor of the State of North Dakota, I do hereby proclaim
May 2020, CHILDREN'S FOSTER CARE MONTH in the State of North Dakota.




Doug Burgum
GOVERNOR

ATTEST: 
Alvin A. Jaeger
SECRETARY OF STATE

Governor Burgum's Proclamation Children's Foster Care Month
President Trump's Proclamation on National Foster Care Month, 2020

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Are you interested in becoming a foster parent?

Please call the **NEW** Toll Free Inquiry Line

1-833-FST-HOME
(1-833-378-4663)

And speak with Sheila Muus, Foster Parent Recruitment & Retention Specialist



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Exciting News...

The Children and Family Service Training Center is excited to introduce one of our newest members to our team, Sheila Muus, as the Foster Parent Recruitment & Retention Specialist. This is a **NEW** position with the outreaching goal of supporting you, our current foster parents, while recruiting new foster parents to join the team! Please read below regarding Sheila and her new role in our Child Welfare Community:

ND Foster Care Recruitment and Retention: Looking for the Gems and Keeping the Treasures

This is a very challenging and exciting time in foster care in North Dakota, where there is a tremendous amount of change and restructuring while facing a worldwide pandemic and a myriad of impactful societal/economic factors. These elements place great demands on the foster care system and foster families that provide care to the youth of our state. More than ever, this time requires efforts to be diligent, mindful, and targeted in developing **Gems (new foster homes)** and maintaining **Treasures (experienced foster homes)**.

In 2015-2017, the Department of Human Services North Dakota identified five outcomes that are the priorities to guide the efforts for foster care recruitment and retention: Outcome 1: Children can remain in their home community; Outcome 2: Sibling groups remain together while placed in foster care/adopted; Outcome 3: Resource homes are available to older children with special needs; Outcome 4: Resource families represent the racial, cultural and ethnic characteristics of the region's population; Outcome 5: Providers will not terminate their foster care license due to the licensing agency's lack of support, insufficient training or feelings of inadequacy.

To assist in working toward reaching those goals a new position, the Foster Parent Recruitment and Retention Specialist was created. I am so honored to have the chance to fill this role and be working with the Child and Family Services Training Center. I have over 30 years of work in human services, but my real passion for this position comes from providing foster care in my home for about 13 years.

This new position has a few main areas of focus. My office will act as a "clearinghouse" for incoming inquiries from people who are interested in becoming licensed to provide foster care. This will allow for quick response to inquiries and provide screening to direct potential foster parents to the agency that will be the best fit. I will be working with the regional recruitment and retention coalitions and co-facilitate the statewide recruitment and retention task force. This membership on all the coalitions/taskforces will allow for efficient sharing of ideas and successful efforts. I will keep my eyes and ears open across the entire state for unmet needs and areas to direct additional efforts. We will be embarking on developing a statewide "brand" for foster care. We will develop a common logo and tag line for all foster care recruitment and retention efforts. This will reduce costs and allow for the dollars allocated for recruitment and retention to be used most effectively. Time and effort will be spent exploring and targeting our message to maximize our contact with those who will be most interested in providing foster care. Special attention will be given to identifying what current foster families need to feel supported and recognized so that they are able to continue to open their homes to youth.

I hope to meet and hear from you about your ideas, needs, and your thoughts about most effect efforts in finding those **Gems (new foster homes)** that will be willing to open their homes and provide loving care to youth and also learn what more can be done to maintain our very important asset of **Treasures (experienced foster homes)**. You are a **Treasure** to our state, and we need to take care of you!

I am glad to join with you and help you to do the tremendously important work of providing foster care. I am open to ideas, suggestions, and feedback. I would love to hear from you! I can be reached at 701-777-5913 or sheila.muus@UND.edu

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ONE....



One tree can start a forest;
One smile can begin a
friendship;
One hand can lift a soul;
One word can frame a
goal;
One candle can wipe out
darkness;
One laugh can conquer
gloom;
One hope can raise your
spirits;
One touch can show you
care;
One life can make the
difference;
Be that ONE today!!

~Author unknown



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PRIDE Link

In this issue we are again highlighting the PRIDE competency of **“Supporting relationships with birth families.”** This ties into this year’s Foster Care Month’s theme, “Foster Care as a Support to Families, Not a Substitute for Parents.” Nationally, reunification is the most common permanency goal and outcome of children in foster care. Foster Parents and their relationship with biological parents can have a direct correlation with this positive outcome. According to the Children’s Bureau “Supporting Successful Reunification”, when foster parents support and or mentor biological parents, the positive outcomes with developing this relationship include biological parents being more informed about their child’s development, the biological parenting skills improve, placement stability is increased for the child, and there is a more timely permanency outcome. In North Dakota, approximately 72% of children in foster care have a primary permanency goal of reunification and your work as foster parents plays a vital role in meeting this permanency goal for the children you care and love for in your home. Understandably, at times this may be difficult and test all of your foster parenting skills. In the link below “Positive Interactions with Birthparents as a Foster Parent”, foster parent, Angela Erickson, provides useful tips on how to make these interactions a positive experience for birth parents, children, and foster parents. Please note that some of these tips may be things that you are naturally doing or come quite easily (yay for you!) and some may pose to be more challenging at different times. We encourage you to communicate and process with your caseworker and/or licensing worker any challenges and/or questions you may have as each family is unique with their own circumstances. Communicating with your child’s case worker/licensing worker will offer you the best guidance.

[Positive Interactions with Birthparents as a Foster Parent](#)

Lastly, is a link to a reunification story with the perspective from a biological parent, foster parents, and case worker. The article has great insight from all who were involved with a successful reunification. [Putting Ethan First: A Reunification Story](#)

Coping with Coronavirus Pandemic

When our March newsletter was sent out we were just starting to adjust to a new “normal” to include social distancing, working from home, and distance learning to name a few. Wow, we sure have come a long way! With that being said we understand that foster parents have had to carry a bigger load and this is just another reason we recognize YOU during Foster Care Month. To support you, below is the CFSTC link for all six archived webinar series “EmergenFC”. In these six sessions Deb Detwiz, LICSW addresses various topics from how to address difficult behaviors, ADHD, prenatal exposure to substance, and the need for self-care as it relates to the COVID-19 epidemic. [EmregenFC](#)

Many teenagers have been particularly challenged by the COVID-19 epidemic and the new “normal” that has followed. This can have a particular impact on their mental health. UNICEF has provided six strategies for teens to protect their mental health during this time. Please read and feel free to share with a teen in your life.

[How teenagers can protect their mental health during coronavirus](#)

Please check out this link from PBS kids in how to de-stress with your kids during the Coronavirus with helpful tips and tools to deal with stress. [PBS Kids](#)