

Fostering Communications

Building a Network of People in the Foster Care System

May 2021

May is Children's Foster Care Month

STATE OF NORTH DAKOTA

PROCLAMATION CHILDREN'S FOSTER CARE MONTH MAY 2021

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 900 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 2021, 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 2021

President Biden's Proclamation on National Foster Care Month 2021

**YOU MIGHT
BE TEMPORARY IN
THEIR LIVES
THEY MIGHT
BE TEMPORARY IN
YOURS
BUT THERE
IS NOTHING
TEMPORARY ABOUT
THE LOVE
OR THE
LESSON**

-Tonia Christle



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

Fostering Communications is published by the UND Children and Family Services Training Center under the sponsorship of the Division of Children and Family Services, North Dakota Department of Human Services. It is intended for all foster parents, foster care providers, and child welfare agencies. Comments should be directed to the Training Center.

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Are you interested or know someone who may be 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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Recruitment & Retention

Appreciation Central

May is National Foster Care Month! The Children and Family Services Training Center wants to express our deepest gratitude for all you do by opening your hearts and homes to children, youth and families! The statement, **“I cannot fix the world’s problems, but I will do what I can to make a difference where I can.”** resonates, when we think about foster parents and the sacrifices, contributions, and how you lean into difficult times to care for others. This year’s theme continues as **“Foster Care as a Support to Families, Not a Substitute for Parents”**. We salute all your efforts in helping to walk children and youth home by supporting and strengthening families to move forward with increased stability!

In addition, the North Dakota Department of Human Services Leadership Team expresses their gratitude to foster parents for their dedication and care to children in foster care. Below are links to videos from Chris Jones, Executive Officer; Sara Stolt, Chief Operating Office and foster parent; and Cory Pedersen, Children and Family Services Director; expressing their gratitude for the work you do as providers for the children in North Dakota.

Video Thank Yous From: [Chris Jones, CEO](#) [Sara Stolt, COO](#) [Cory Pederson, CFS Director](#)

Foster Care Success Stories

Melissa Ernest, a foster parent from Thompson, North Dakota keeps the 2021 National Foster Care Month theme at the center of her efforts as a foster parent. Read about her amazing connection and support of one of her foster child’s parents and the lasting contribution to that family’s success. A big **THANK YOU** to *It’s Her Brand Magazine* and Melissa for sharing this wonderful article!

Fostering Positive Mentorship Relationships

Do you have your own success story to share? We would love to hear it! Please reach out to sheila.muus@und.edu to share your story.

Foster Parenting: Supporting Children & Families

Foster parents are asked to go “all in” with everything they have to care foster children, youth, and their families! You have the awesome ability to impact an entire family by supporting family reunification and stability. Read this blog post from Administration for Children and Families that highlights another foster family’s success in strengthening the whole family.

Foster Care as a Support to Families, Not a Substitute for Parents

Check out these resources to continue enhancing your skills to work effectively with your foster children’s families! Children, youth, and families benefit greatly when developing strong connections with foster families.

[Partnering With Birth Families](#)

[Tip Sheet for Supporting Reunification](#)

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Upcoming State Conferences...

West River Conference of Social Welfare
June 10-11th
(Virtual)

Click wrcsw.org for details

North Dakota Conference of Social Welfare
September 22-23, 2021
Bismarck, ND
(In Person)

Click ndcsw.org for details

The North Dakota Department of Human Services' & Children and Family Services Conference
October 26-29 2021
Bismarck, ND
(In Person & Virtual)
details to come...



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PRIDE LINK

In this issue of PRIDE LINK we are taking a closer look at the PRIDE competency “Working as a member of a professional team”, specifically how it is important that you take care of one of the most valuable resource on this professional team...**YOU!** We all tend to have a long “To Do” list and are often being pulled into so many different directions, so it is not uncommon that YOU get pushed to bottom of that list. But, the reality is if you aren’t taking care of yourself it may make an already more challenging job of providing love, nurturing, and care to children even more difficult. As a valuable member to the team, we want you to take care of yourself, and in honor of Foster Care Month it is the most fitting time to remind and encourage you to push yourself to the top of the “To Do” list and take care of yourself.

A part of taking care of oneself is ensuring that your emotional needs are met. Since Foster parents are providing care for children it is not uncommon to develop Compassion Fatigue. Compassion Fatigue is defined by the Compassion Fatigue Awareness Project as “...a broadly defined concept that can include emotional, physical, and spiritual distress in those providing care to another. It is associated with caregiving where people or animals are experiencing significant emotional or physical pain and suffering.” Compassion Fatigue isn’t a disease but rather a set of symptoms and one way to care for yourself, is to provide yourself with self care. Patricia Smith, Founder of the Compassion Fatigue Awareness Project, talks more about compassion fatigue, her experience being a caregiver with compassion fatigue, and the importance of taking care of your own emotional, physical, and spiritual health. To listen to Patricia Smith’s Tedx Talk please click on the link below.

[How to Manage Compassion Fatigue in Caregiving](#)

Carving out time during the day to practice self care is easier said than done and there isn’t a one size fits all approach. The North American Council on Adoptable Children (NACAC) provides an article that identifies barriers to self care that foster and adoptive parents experience as well as where to start with your self care journey for Foster and Adoptive Parents. Please click on the link below for the complete article.

[Self-Care: Barriers and Basics for Foster/Adoptive Parents](#)

Below are two links for different self care ideas you can use to reach your self care goals. The first list is simple self care ideas that you can incorporate in your daily life and the second list includes self care activities you can do with children. Please click on the links below for the complete lists of ideas and activities.

[100 Simple Self Care Ideas When You Need to Reboot](#)

[50 Self-Care Activities You Can Do Together With Kids](#)



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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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May is Mental Health Awareness Month

Millions of Americans live with mental illness, to include 1 out of 5 U.S. adults experiencing mental illness each year and 1 out of 6 U.S. youth aged 6-17 experiencing a mental health disorder each year. For 2021, the National Alliance on Mental health is promoting Mental Health Awareness Month with the message, "You Are Not Alone". Mental Health can be such an isolating disease for both adults and children and the goal is to ensure that individuals who are struggling with their mental health know that there is support and that they are not alone. This past year has provided additional challenges to mental health needs and more than ever it is important to reach out for assistance if you or someone you know is struggling with mental health. North Dakota Behavioral Health has resources that includes tips on taking care of your mental health, supporting your children, mental health provider contact information, as well as crisis numbers you can access. Please click on the link below to access Behavioral Health's webpage for all the complete array of resources.

[ND Behavioral Health-Help is Here](#)

At times unchecked mental health can lead to severe consequences, such as suicide. Suicide can be a difficult topic to discuss, but is one that can't be ignored. The Fargo Police Department produced a video resource, *Break The Silence*, that explores the topic of suicide. The video includes the impact of mental health and suicide on adolescents and young adults as well as a discussion regarding what you can do if you, or someone you know, is struggling with thoughts of suicide. To view the full documentary as well as the resources to the National Suicide Hotline and First Link (North Dakota) please click on the link below.

[Break The Silence](#)

Supporting family with friends who are struggling with their mental health is crucial. MentalHealth.gov provides information on different ways you can be supportive to that loved one who is struggling because they need your support. Please click on the link below for the complete article that provides suggestions on ways you can provide support and talk about mental illness.

[Supporting a Friend or Family Member with Mental Health Problems](#)

Foster Parent Training Needs Survey

We, at CFSTC, are excited to share that we are looking ahead to plan for future Foster Parent Trainings, which most likely will include in person and virtual training opportunities. As we move forward with planning we need YOUR feedback regarding foster parents training needs. Please complete the survey by clicking on the link below to provide your feedback.

[Foster Parent Needs Survey](#)

