

NEP-TUNES



A Monthly Newsletter from Nepenthean Homes

A Caring, Full Service Foster Family Agency

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EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

by Richard Farlinger

In these difficult times, please be aware that we are continuing to cut expenses and streamline our administrative component. Last month we were very fortunate to connect with the Sierra Health Foundation in a plan for downsizing our office in the Sacramento area. This will certainly cut costs, as it did with our move from our old Richmond office to El Sobrante. An additional benefit to this move is that it will locate us right next to the Sierra Health Foundation and its support. The Foundation is directed by Chet Hewitt, former Director of Alameda County Department of Social Services, and a former foster parent!

We are blessed with that connection and that of a new communication provider, O1 ("Oh-One") Communication. O1 will take over our communications in December and cover all areas of our service which are now covered by two separate companies. Additionally, O1 will cut costs significantly, since the State of California supplements the cost of O1's work.

My best wishes to you all for a wonderful holiday season. I pledge to continue making all efforts to further

streamline our operation and continue reimbursement rates without cuts.

My thanks to you also for your patience in this time period. It shows without question your sincerity and commitment to providing quality care that makes a difference in the lives of needy children.

OFF GROUNDS SUPERVISION

by Michael F. Quinn, MA

Can your foster children be supervised effectively when away from the foster home?

The short answer is yes—if certain conditions are met. These include:

- If the children can be directly seen and heard by the foster provider. This is the most effective form of child supervision.
- If the children are on sanctioned off-site activities where authorized adults provide oversight and are backed up by their training, expertise, and agency liability insurance coverage. This would include school-sponsored events (athletics, field trips, clubs).
- If the children have been authorized to visit with birth family and the county social worker has pre-approved the visit by inspecting the birth family home for safety concerns and plans for child supervision.

Ultimately, however, it is the responsibility of foster parents who have signed

an agency-to-foster-parent agreement to provide care and supervision, and to make certain that those who provide oversight off grounds have the necessary information (emergency contact numbers, medical information) and tools (insurance releases) to help ensure the children are safe.

But what about when a child is visiting with a neighborhood friend, recreating at a park or mall, or is in transit from one location to another? Are there other tools available?

Situational Awareness

A foster parent can have what is referred to as Situational Awareness—a term originally invented by the military—to help make sure a child has access to adult supervision. Situational Awareness consists of knowledge of the foster child and planning made in advance to react quickly to any off-grounds issues.

For foster parents, Situational Awareness starts with knowing the Four W's at all times:

1. Who: Who is the child with whom we are concerned? Name. Age. Clothing style. Habits.
2. What: What is the sanctioned off-site activity in which he/she is engaged? School. Recreation. Visit. Travel.
3. Where: Where is the activity taking place? Location.
4. When: When is the child scheduled to return to the foster home? Know the duration of the event and transit time.

Through better Situational Awareness of the whereabouts and activities of children off grounds, foster parents can more

(Continued on page 3)

CAPITOL CITY NEWS



**ON-CALL CELL PHONE: (916) 704-7780
Foster Parent Training—Mandatory!**

Date: **Saturday, December 12, 2009**
Time: 2:00 to 3:45 p.m.
Topic: "CHRISTMAS PARTY—PIZZA PARTY!"
Where: John's Incredible Pizza
384 N. Sunrise Avenue, Roseville
Please call the Fair Oaks office for directions, at (916) 535-7780, or, for a map to the location, look on the web at www.johnspizza.com.

FOSTER PARENT ORIENTATION:
The next foster parent orientation meeting will be on **Saturday, December 5, 2009**, from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon at the Fair Oaks office. **Please call Rich Farlinger at (916) 535-7780 to RSVP.** This meeting will answer your questions about foster children, foster parenting, and becoming a certified foster parent with Nepenthean Homes FFA.

**HAPPY HOLIDAYS
to all our fabulous foster families!!**

ATTENTION FOSTER PARENTS!

As you know, 12 hours per year of foster parent training are required to maintain your certification.

To help with this, Nepenthean Homes is now offering our 21-DVD Foster Parent College training set. These videos are available for viewing in-house at our Fair Oaks and El Sobrante offices **ONLY**—we cannot offer home check-out.

You may call the offices to schedule a time to view the videos. Each DVD is 30 to 45 minutes in length. Viewing only gives you one hour training credit; viewing plus taking the test gives you two hours training credit. For more information and to schedule your viewing time, please call the Fair Oaks or El Sobrante office.

BAY AREA NEWS



**ON-CALL CELL PHONE: (510) 750-4769
Foster Parent Training—Mandatory!**

Date: **Monday, December 7, 2009**
Time: 12:30 p.m.
Topic: "CHRISTMAS PARTY!"
Where: Kaiser Permanente building
8th Floor, Room 8K
1800 Harrison St., Oakland, CA
A department at Kaiser Permanente (Oakland) has adopted our office for a Christmas party. **THANK YOU, Kaiser Permanente!**

ADDITIONAL FOSTER PARENT TRAINING:
The Center for the Vulnerable Child (CVC) at Children's Hospital Oakland, in cooperation with Alameda County Social Services and Nepenthean Homes Foster Family Agency, presents **NO-FEE** foster parent trainings. The classes serve as continuing education hours by foster care agencies. Verification of attendance is given.

Date: **Wednesday, December 9, 2009**
Time: 10:00 to 11:30 a.m.
Topic: "Care for the Caregiver"
Speaker: Karen Cox, MA
and

Date: **Wednesday, December 23, 2009**
No meeting today due to the holidays.
Our next class will meet January 13, 2010. Happy and blessed holidays to all!

Where: Children's Hospital Oakland, Center for the Vulnerable Child, 5275 Claremont Ave. and 5400 Telegraph, Oakland
(This building has two entrances—enter on either side.)
RSVP: Call Peggy Pearson at (510) 428-3783, ext. 5326. **Sorry, no childcare is available.**

FOSTER PARENT ORIENTATION:
If you are interested in learning more about foster care, please call Kevin Smith at (510) 222-2666. An individual orientation meeting will be set up to answer your questions about foster children, foster parenting, and becoming a certified foster parent with Nepenthean Homes FFA.

FOOTHILLS NEWS



**ON-CALL CELL PHONE: (530) 392-1597
Foster Parent Training—Mandatory!**

Date: **Saturday, December 12, 2009**
Time: 2:00 to 3:45 p.m.
Topic: "CHRISTMAS PARTY—PIZZA PARTY!"
Where: John's Incredible Pizza
384 N. Sunrise Avenue, Roseville
Please call the Fair Oaks office for directions, at (916) 535-7780, or, for a map to the location, look on the web at www.johnspizza.com.

A warm Nepenthean Homes welcome is extended to Kushmir and Rattan Singh, new foster parents in Auburn, CA. We're so glad to welcome you aboard!

PLEASE NOTE: You may do a maximum of six (6) hours of online foster parent training with Foster Parent College. Please call Mike Quinn or Rich Farlinger at the Fair Oaks office (916) 535-7780 with your email address, to get set up for this **no-cost** training.

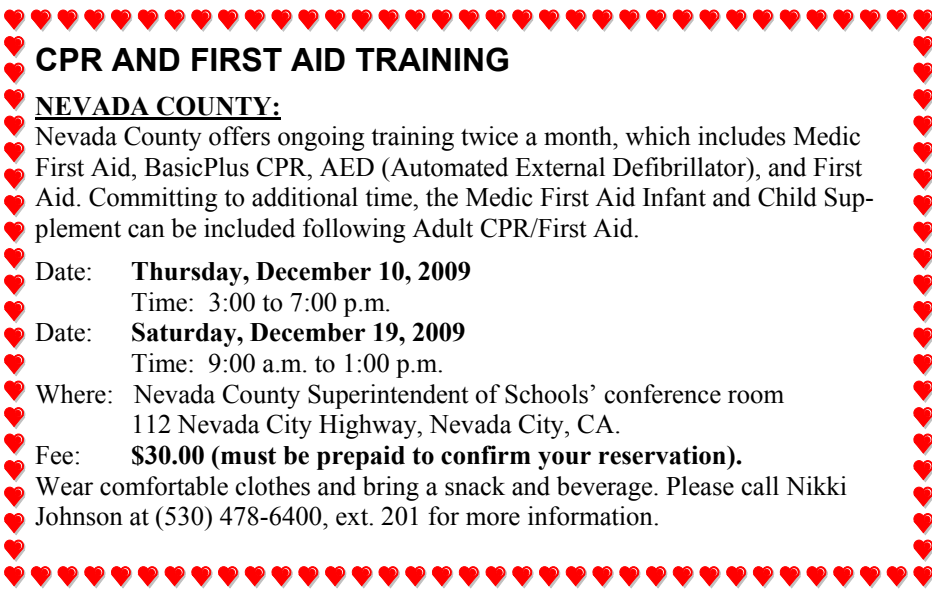
CENTRAL VALLEY NEWS



**ON-CALL CELL PHONE: (209) 495-9492
Foster Parent Training—Mandatory!**

Date: TO BE ANNOUNCED
Time: TO BE ANNOUNCED
Topic: "CHRISTMAS PARTY—PIZZA PARTY!"
Where: John's Incredible Pizza, Modesto area
Watch your mailbox for the Christmas Party flyer!

SUPPORT GROUP for kinship caregivers and grandparents, **Wednesdays 10:00 to 11:30 a.m.** Held at Family Resource Network, 5232 Claremont Ave., Oakland, CA. For more information and RSVP call Sonia Waters at (510) 547-7322 x15.



CPR AND FIRST AID TRAINING

NEVADA COUNTY:

Nevada County offers ongoing training twice a month, which includes Medic First Aid, BasicPlus CPR, AED (Automated External Defibrillator), and First Aid. Committing to additional time, the Medic First Aid Infant and Child Supplement can be included following Adult CPR/First Aid.

Date: **Thursday, December 10, 2009**
Time: 3:00 to 7:00 p.m.

Date: **Saturday, December 19, 2009**
Time: 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

Where: Nevada County Superintendent of Schools' conference room
112 Nevada City Highway, Nevada City, CA.

Fee: **\$30.00 (must be prepaid to confirm your reservation).**

Wear comfortable clothes and bring a snack and beverage. Please call Nikki Johnson at (530) 478-6400, ext. 201 for more information.

(Continued from "Off Grounds Supervision" on page 1)

quickly respond to emergencies such as runaways, medical issues, police calls, and acting-out behaviors. Remember, Situational Awareness is a helpful mental tool, but it does not take the place of direct, ears-and-eyes oversight.

When allowing a child to attend off-grounds activities, a provider must have answers not only to who, what, where, and when, but have structured plans to address emergency conditions should these arise.

Mental tools including Situational Awareness do not take the place of direct supervision, but can give a provider a helpful mental template to start the critically important business of responding to supervision issues and incidents when they occur. This gives good foster parents a mental edge.

IMPORTANT LESSONS ABOUT THE WAY WE TREAT PEOPLE

Always Remember Those Who Serve

In the days when an ice cream sundae cost much less, a 10-year-old boy entered a hotel coffee shop and sat at a table. A waitress put a glass of water in front of him.

"How much is an ice cream sundae?" he asked. "Fifty cents," replied the waitress. The little boy pulled his hand out of his pocket and studied the coins in it. "Well, how much is a plain dish of ice cream?" he inquired.

By now, more people were waiting for a table and the waitress was growing impatient.

"Thirty-five cents," she brusquely replied. The little boy again counted his coins. "I'll have the plain ice cream," he said.

The waitress brought the ice cream, put the bill on the table and walked away. The boy finished the ice cream, paid the cashier, and left. When the waitress came back, she began to cry as she wiped down the table. There, placed neatly beside the empty dish, were two nickels and five pennies.

You see, he couldn't have the sundae, because he had to have enough left to leave her a tip.

PLACER COUNTY:

Date: **Wednesday, December 2, 2009**
Time: 6:00 to 9:00 p.m.

Topic: "Reunification and Concurrent Families"

Where: Placer County CSOC
11716 Enterprise Drive, Auburn, CA

RSVP: To register and for childcare, call (916) 781-6214.

Date: **Saturday, December 12, 2009**
Time: 2:00 to 6:00 p.m.

Topic: "It's Better to Give Than to Receive"

Where: Sierra College Gateway Campus
333 Sunrise Ave., Roseville, CA

RSVP: (916) 781-6214. Must RSVP by December 9th.

Dinner and childcare provided.

NEVADA COUNTY:

Date: **Tuesday, December 1, 2009**
Time: 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.

Topic: "Living with Personality Differences"

Where: The Imaginarium, 112 Nevada City Hwy., Nevada City, CA (**Across the street from NCSOS**)

Speaker: Steve Saylor

RSVP: Mary Jane (530) 478-6400, x210
Sorry, no child care provided.



THANK YOU, PROJECT LINUS!

Our heartfelt thanks and appreciation to Claire Gliddon, Sacramento Coordinator, and all the volunteers of Project Linus, for



donating handmade blankets for our children in this holiday season. What a wonderful, lasting gift of love for our kids!



WELCOME NEW KIDS ON THE BLOCK:

- FAIR OAKS:** **BAY AREA:**
 * Karen P. * Jeremiah G.
 * Maya G.
 * Kayla W.

ON THE LIGHTER SIDE

After every flight, airline pilots fill out a form, called a "gripe sheet," which conveys to the mechanics problems encountered with the aircraft during the flight that need repair or correction. The mechanics read and correct the problem, and then respond in writing on the lower half of the form as to what remedial action was taken. Some of them have a sense of humor!

P = problem logged by pilot

S = solution/action taken by mechanic

P: Left inside main tire almost needs replacement.

S: Almost replaced left inside main tire.

P: Something loose in cockpit.

S: Something tightened in cockpit.

P: Dead bugs on windshield.

S: Live bugs on backorder.

P: DE volume unbelievably loud.

S: DE volume set to more believable level.



FAIR OAKS:

- Play Station I games (new or gently used)
- Digital scale (to weigh children)
- Kids' movies on DVD
- Computer CPU
- Computer software

MODESTO AREA:

- New or gently used laptop computer for Modesto teen

BAY AREA:

- Changing table
- Hand-held electronic games
- VCR

AUBURN AREA:

- Wireless mouse
- New or gently used office copy machine

NEPPY'S NOTABLES

December birthdays for staff:

Malikah Taylor (Bay Area) on Dec. 22



Birthdays this month!

FAIR OAKS:

Karen P. (Tiong home).....18 on 12/5

BAY AREA:

Nikeyda F. (Sims home).....7 on 12/15

Robert F. (Sloan home).....10 on 12/31



All Nepenthean Homes offices will be closed on Friday, December 25, 2009 to celebrate Christmas Day, and on Friday, January 1, 2010 for New Year's Day.

brate Christmas Day, and on Friday, January 1, 2010 for New Year's Day.



Nepenthean Homes is a private, non-profit Foster Family Agency that helps adults become successful foster parents. If you want to improve a needy child's future by becoming a certified foster parent, please telephone:

** in Sacramento area, 1-800-439-8998

** in Foothills area, 1-800-479-8998

** in Modesto area, 1-800-696-0611

** in Bay Area, 1-800-564-2292

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED