

# NEP-TUNES



A Monthly Newsletter from Nepenthean Homes

*A Caring, Full Service Foster Family Agency*

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February 2010



## EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

*by Richard Farlinger*

Our sincere thanks for all the generous support received by our agency during the past holiday season. The generous gifting of Bay Area businesses and individuals, including Kaiser Hospital, Bluitt Copiers, World Assist (Bay Area), Santa Clara County Giving Tree, Carla Den Dulk and our Valley supporters, Modesto Soroptimist Club, World Assist (Central Valley), Nepenthean Homes Fair Oaks office Auxiliary, Executive Board member Jessica Couch, Joelisa Franco, and again, Carla Den Dulk, made this last Christmas season a memorable one despite the challenges of our time. The most wonderful thing is that, year after year, many of the same thoughtful and supportive folks help out with Christmas-time events and gifting. Again, thanks to all!

By the time you read this newsletter, we will have moved from the old Fair Oaks office to our new Sacramento office. The new location address and phone numbers are announced in this newsletter (see next column). Thankfully for

many, the new site is more centrally located and is very easy to find. We look forward to more participants attending the regular trainings to be offered at the new site.

### NEW SACRAMENTO OFFICE INFORMATION:

#### ADDRESS:

1331 Garden Highway, #320  
Sacramento, CA 95835

#### PHONES:

Main: (916) 993-7776  
Fax: (916) 993-7775  
Mike: (916) 993-7787  
Toll-free: (800) 439-8998

The main phone number is the way to reach Rich Farlinger.

The toll-free 800 number will remain the same.

### Foster Parents and their biological family members: Is blood thicker than mud?

*by Mike Quinn, MA, SSW Sacramento Office*

PART 1 OF 2

In recent months Community Care Licensing has investigated allegations and unusual incidents involving foster parents' birth family children and adults

living in the home—and foster children placed in private agency foster homes.

The issues and incidents have included adult children and friends of the providers living in the foster home without having undergone mandated background checks; standards of supervision, accountability, and care for foster parent birth children that are perceived as “different” than those for foster children in the home; and changes in the criminal background and living status of foster parents in the home that aren't reported to agency social workers.

#### **Biological Family and Partners versus Foster Children**

Why do intelligent and trained foster parents find themselves under licensing investigation when the core issues appear to center around favoritism shown to their birth children—to outright deception regarding changes in the foster family composition that negatively impact the foster children in the home?

When I have spoken with foster parents under licensing investigation regarding the type of issues mentioned, I often encounter moments of uncomfortable silence and, on occasion, defiant anger. A few have mentioned that while they understand their legal responsibilities as foster providers, when it comes to their biological children and marital partners there is an invisible moral line drawn that allows for justifying their actions and deviations from foster agency policies and licensing regulations. What can be done to check this human impulse to protect the birth family members and spouses at the expense of foster children?

*(Continued on page 3)*

## CAPITOL CITY NEWS



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

Date: **Saturday, February 27, 2010**  
 Time: 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon  
 Topic: "Child Safety and Supervision"  
 Where: New Sacramento office  
 Speaker: Michael F. Quinn, MA.  
**Please call for directions: (916) 993-7776.**

### FOSTER PARENT ORIENTATION:

The next foster parent orientation meeting will be on **Saturday, February 13, 2010**, from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon at the new Sacramento office. **Please call Rich Farlinger at (916) 993-7776 to RSVP.** This meeting will answer your questions about foster children, foster parenting, and becoming a certified foster parent with Nepenthean Homes FFA.

### 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 Sacramento 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 Sacramento or El Sobrante office.

**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 Sacramento office (916) 993-7776 with your email address, to get set up for this **no-cost** training.

## BAY AREA NEWS



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

Date: **Wednesday, February 24, 2010**  
 Time: 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.  
 Topic: "Placements and Funding"  
 Where: El Sobrante office  
 Speaker: Kevin Smith, MA.

### 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, February 10, 2010**

Time: 10:00 to 11:30 a.m.

Topic: "Adoption: Beginnings; Reckoning with the Past; Preparing for the Future"

Speaker: Peggy Pearson, MFT, and group discussion  
*and*

Date: **Wednesday, February 24, 2010**

Time: 10:00 to 11:30 a.m.

Topic: "Guardianship versus Adoption"  
 Speaker: CVC staff

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:** Please call Peggy Pearson at (510) 428-3783. **Sorry, no childcare is available.**

## FOOTHILLS NEWS



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

**UPCOMING AUBURN AREA FOSTER PARENT TRAININGS WILL BE HELD ON AN INDIVIDUAL BASIS, PER CFH. PLEASE CALL THE FAIR OAKS OFFICE TO SCHEDULE YOUR FOSTER PARENT TRAINING, AT (916) 535-7780. (REMEMBER, YOU MUST HAVE AT LEAST 12 HOURS OF FOSTER PARENT TRAINING PER YEAR TO MAINTAIN YOUR CERTIFICATION!**

## CENTRAL VALLEY NEWS



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

Date: TO BE ANNOUNCED  
 Time: TO BE ANNOUNCED  
 Topic: TO BE ANNOUNCED  
 Where: TO BE ANNOUNCED

**Watch your mailbox; we will be sending out an informational 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.

### FOSTER PARENT ORIENTATION:

If you are interested in learning more about foster care, please call us! 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.

Bay Area: Call Kevin Smith at (510) 222-2666.

Foothills Area: Call Mike Quinn at (916) 535-7780.

## 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: **Saturday, February 20, 2010**

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.

### NEVADA COUNTY:

Date: **Friday, February 19, 2010**

Time: 9:00 to 11:00 a.m.

Topic: "Dealing with Sexualized Behaviors"

Where: Nevada County Superintendent of Schools Office, 112 Nevada City Hwy., Nevada City (Harold Houser Meeting Room)

Speaker: Kathy Ellis, LMFT

**RSVP: Call Mary Jane at (530) 478-6400, ext. 210**

Childcare available in adjoining Fellersen Room.

### PLACER COUNTY:

The Sierra College Foster & Kinship Care Education foster parent training workshop flyer did not make it to the editor prior to press time, and could not be included in this month's hard-copy Newsletter. However, the information will be posted on our website (on the "News" page) as soon as it is received. Check it out!

### **Double Standards of Care and Deception**

During the initial agency to foster parent orientation interviews it's difficult to fault a foster parent who reports loving their birth children and partners—above all else. Blood is thicker than mud, after all—so the saying goes. But over time, those same family-based values are sometimes translated into errors in judgment by the foster parent in the foster home—leading to serious allegations and incidents.

These can include treating foster children differently in word and action (for example, separate standards and consequences for rule violations, foodstuffs, etc.) than biological children—and in the process violating Personal Rights of children in care. Personal Rights violations create resentment, anxiety, and poor adult-to-child role modeling.

Violations can also include a foster provider who allows adult children or family "friends" with criminal records into the home without authorization and clearance—to potentially assault and victimize foster children who are very often already victims of adults. Finally, it can involve a foster parent who "hides" a spouse with a recent criminal conviction or history of mental and drug-induced instability in the foster home—through deceptive behaviors. Deceptions can involve foster parents arranging weekly agency social worker visits and other child care-related contacts when the "un-cleared partner" is out of the foster home, and "coaching" or "warning" foster children through threats (including removal from the foster home) "not to tell" the agency and county social workers about the deception.

It has been my experience that when deceptions and incidents occur relating to foster parent providers' birth family members and marital partners, there is an immediate sense of regret by the providers—and an acknowledgment of the mistake in judgment to mislead; that the cover-up and coaching of foster children was bound to lead to trouble.

But by then – it's too late.

*(Watch for Part 2 next month!)*

## IMPORTANT LESSONS ABOUT THE WAY WE TREAT PEOPLE

### **Giving When it Counts**

Many years ago, when I worked as a volunteer at a hospital, I got to know a little girl named Liz who was suffering from a rare and serious disease. Her only chance of recovery appeared to be a blood transfusion from her 5-year-old brother, who had miraculously survived the same disease and had developed the antibodies needed to combat the illness. The doctor explained the situation to her little brother, and asked the little boy if he would be willing to give his blood to his sister.

I saw him hesitate for only a moment before taking a deep breath and saying, "Yes, I'll do it if it will save her." As the transfusion progressed, he lay in bed next to his sister and smiled, as we all did, seeing the color returning to her cheek. Then his face grew pale and his smile faded.

He looked up at the doctor and asked with a trembling voice, "Will I start to die right away?"

Being young, the little boy had misunderstood the doctor; he thought he was going to have to give his sister ALL his blood in order to save her.



## Birthdays this month!

### BAY AREA:

Nicole F. (Sims home).....9 on 2/1  
 Angel T. (Velasco home).....19 on 2/14  
 Rosa C. (Velasco home).....14 on 2/17

### AUBURN AREA:

Elijah L. (Downey home).....13 on 2/8  
 Lacey M. (Giacomini home)....10 on 2/11



### GOOD NEWS!



A great big THANK YOU goes out to our wonderful transportation workers, Joanna DeKoning and Tedda Blevins, for their staunch service in helping our foster children get where they need to go. Foster parent, Kelly Giacomini, is especially thankful to Joanna and Tedda for their help with the children's visits, doctor appointments, therapy, etc., etc. Kelly says, "It would be a nightmare without the transporters. I couldn't make it without them!"

Robert N., formerly of the Tiong home, has transferred over to the Adolpho Transitional Housing at Mather Community Campus. He is now emancipated and is working full-time. Good for you, Robert!



### **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:**

- New or gently used office copy machine

### **NEPPY'S NOTABLES**

*February birthdays for staff:*

No February birthdays for staff—  
see you next month!

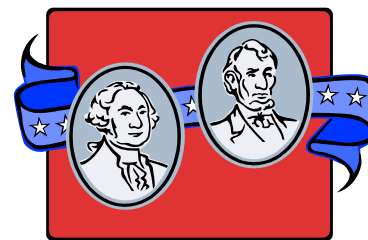
### WELCOME NEW KIDS ON THE BLOCK:

#### **AUBURN:**

- Gary R.
- Gayla R.

#### **BAY AREA:**

- Rosa C.



All Nepenthean Homes  
 offices will be closed on  
 Friday, February 12, 2010 and  
 Monday, February 15, 2010  
 for the Presidents' Day  
 holidays. Enjoy your long  
 weekend!

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, 1-530-268-2266

\*\* in Modesto area, 1-800-439-8998

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

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