



RED ALERT: Holiday Party Date Changed!

Yes, we've been telling you for two months now that the Foster Care Holiday Party will be on December 13. **SCRATCH THAT! The party is now scheduled for Friday evening, December 12, from 5:30 to 8:00.** It will be at the Fire Hall in McArthur, which is pretty close to Sojourners. We hope everyone can come. You'll find:

- Santa Claus giving out gifts for each young person in foster care.
- Great food catered from Golden Corral.
- Opportunity to have a nice photo taken of

your family as it is on the night of the party. (One 8 x 10 for each family; 5 x 7s for kids in care—we'll supply frames.) It's our gift.

- Drawing for an Adirondack chair. Anyone who suggested a potential foster parent to Joy in the past year gets a ticket for each name they gave.
- Fun and fellowship, and a chance for us at Sojourners to tell you how much your work means to us.

You'll get an invitation soon. Call Joy or Shelia to tell us whether or not you can come!

Happy Holidays

from your friends at
Sojourners



Notes from the Director

Traditions.

Regardless of one's background, culture, or faith, the holiday season reminds us of the many traditions we have in our families and communities. My favorite memories of the holidays always involve sharing with others. From picking the family tree, to visiting with distant relatives,

traditions are a part of the fabric of many families.

Unfortunately, because of the many changes our youth have experienced, they may have missed or been separated from their own traditions. These customs aren't merely important for the joy of the season, they're central to one's identity.

This year, as we celebrate our own traditions, let's encourage our youths to share and develop their own. As they do, their sense of belonging and self growth will be the greatest gift of all this holiday. Happy Holidays!

Steve

Farewell to Jessica

November 14 was Jessica Fisher's last day at Sojourners, after three years of service. She resigned so that she could pursue a bachelor's degree (her second!) in Early Childhood Education at Ohio University. She hopes to be teaching kindergarten in the next couple of years. Good luck, Jessica. We'll miss you.



Calendar

- *Food Bank*, not yet scheduled. Shelia will give you a call to let you know the date.
- *Foster Care Holiday Party*, "Winter Wonderland," at McArthur Fire Hall, Friday, December 12, 5:30-8:00.
- *Foster Care Training*, December 17, 9:00 to 12:00, "Ansell Casey Life Skills Training," at the offices of SERL, 252 W. 13th Street in Wellston (this is on SR 93 right before it joins the main drag in Wellston, a square, red brick building on the south side of the road).



Caring for Kids in Care

Shelia	464-1411	General Questions
Steve	418-1072	Director, Foster Care
Lisa	357-0143	Placement/Respite
Barb	418-0259	Licensing/Training
Joy	591-6279	Recruitment
Liz	596-1117	Operations
Sojourners Fax Number: 739-4357		

All numbers are in area code 740.

Please call Joy with questions about the newsletter—or to submit new recipes.

Clothing Drive

BJ reports that we need coats, particularly sizes 10, 12, and 14. Call BJ (740-357-2299) if you have coats or other clothing to exchange.



Warm Winter Project

Transitional Living has taken over the Warm Winter Project. Warm Winter

collects coats, hats, gloves, mittens—all sorts of winter-wear—for distribution to young people in the community. New is preferred; gently used is highly acceptable. Bring your donations to Joy in the Foster Care office.

Shelia's Corner

Easy Ham and Potatoes Au Gratin

Ingredients:

- 4 medium potatoes (sliced thin)
- 1-1/2 cup cooked ham (cubed)
- 10 oz. can condensed cheddar cheese soup (or 12 oz. melted cheddar cheese)
- 1/2 cup sour cream
- 1 cup milk
- 1 cup frozen mixed vegetables
- 1 medium onion, diced (Joy added this!)

Heat oven to 350 degrees. Spray a 2-quart casserole dish with cooking spray. Mix the potatoes and ham in a large bowl.

In a medium-sized sauce pan, combine soup (or cheese), sour cream, milk, and vegetables. Mix well, then cook over medium-high heat until warm. Stir often.

Add potato/ham mixture to the cheese mixture and stir well. Pat into the casserole dish and cover tightly with foil. Bake about two hours, or until potatoes are soft.

Give GOOD, Not Goods

No-Cost Holidays Gifts



Money is tight this year for all of us. So, here are some ideas for non-monetary gifts. These gifts increase personal involvement and greatly reduce waste, while adding some good to this world.

- Give a good deed. As a family, go over and rake someone's yard or wash their windows. A good deed is a gift to the givers, as well as the recipient.
- Draw names for kindness. Each family member must give a gift of a secret kindness for the name he or she drew. The gift must NOT cost money. The kindnesses can be revealed on Christmas morning.
- Make homemade gift certificates for hugs, kisses, privileges, chores, or even a pizza!
- Set aside a day for each family member to be honored with his or her favorite meal, TV station, activity, and so on.
- Write a "name" poem. Write a person's name vertically on a piece of paper, one letter to a line. Find a word starting with each letter that describes the person. This would be a great gift for a birth parent. (OK, add some homemade cookies, too!)
- Have a self-esteem circle on Christmas Eve. Sit in a circle and have each person say something nice about the person to their left. Then have each person say something nice about the person to their right. Finally, have each person say something nice about him- or herself. These are wonderful gifts to give and receive.

I know you can think of more ways to bring more meaning to the holidays without adding more stuff or spending more money. Be creative—and let me know what you come up with!

—Joy

Training News

Supporting New Caregivers: In the past five years, the pre-service training requirements for becoming a foster caregiver have doubled from 18 to 36 hours. The hours include more information on childhood trauma and how it affects child development; non-traditional ways to intervene and manage difficult behaviors; advocacy issues; and the effects of care-giving on children whose families foster young people. Even with all the extra training, new foster parents still struggle. This is where you come in. New caregivers need your support, experience, and insight to help them fill in the gaps. When we ask you to be a mentoring foster parent, please say yes!

Ansell Casey Life Skills Training: The December 17 training will give you a chance to get hands-on practice with ACLST. The training will be from 9:00 to noon at the offices of SERL (Southeastern Regional Library) on SR 93 inside the Wellston city limits.

Sojo Foster Family Loses House in Fire

On November 22, the home of Tim and Rhonda Lambert was destroyed by a fire. Fortunately, the family was not at home at the time of the fire. However, they have lost pretty much all of their worldly goods. If you would like to help them out, we will take donations here at Sojourners (call or mail in to Joy). There is also a "Fire" Shower at the Lamberts' church, Calvary Assembly of God, which is directly across from Vinton County High School, on Thursday, December 4, at 6:00 p.m. New and gently used items will be most gladly accepted.