



Kid's Point of View

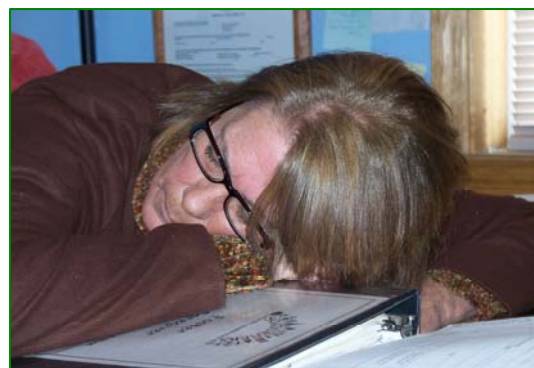
From a 13-year-old foster youth comes these ten pieces of advice for foster parents—but they also apply to all of us.

1. Don't rush new foster children into talking about themselves and their past.
2. Listen to them and understand their feelings. They are very scared and not sure of what is going to happen.
3. Include them and treat them as members of your family.
4. Accept their feelings and help them work through them.
5. Let them know that you really care about them.
6. Respect their birth families. Don't talk bad about their parents.
7. Foster children don't have much say in what happens to them. Show them enough respect to tell them about what is going on in their case.
8. Give them as many choices as you can.
9. Help them to get good self-esteem. Many

foster kids have been told they are worthless.

10. When things get hard, when kids have had enough of working so hard to learn a new way of life and keep making mistakes, tell them what my new mom always tells me: "Never give up!"

This list came from a website called UFOSTER-SUCCESS, at <http://www.ufostersuccess.org>. There are several first-hand stories on the site about foster youth who made it past their dark histories to achieve some peace and success in their adult lives. Check it out.



"Hey, BJ, how was on-call this weekend?"

Notes from the Director

The eight most common words I hear from parents of difficult youth? "I just don't know what to do anymore!" The helplessness and despair is gut-wrenching. While parenting flexible, patient, even-tempered youth is often rewarding and fulfilling...parenting youth with major behavioral difficulties can make even the strongest parents question themselves.

And even more, I often hear the litany of strategies that have

been tried...to no avail. Time-outs...removing privilege after privilege...reward programs. "Nothing works!" The cycle to find "the" answer becomes so consuming, and often fruitless, that failure feels inevitable.

Here's the reality. It's *okay* to not have the answer. No one has all the answers. I'm not suggesting we ignore problem behaviors, or that it would even be a good idea to do so...I'm merely suggesting it's okay to take a step back for a

minute. Here's a few suggestions to break the cycle.

Random Acts of Kindness. While the child might've started the fire...we often have to make the first move to put it out.

Humor. Laughter is truly the best medicine. Helping others laugh may even be better.

Keep Perspective. We're all in this together. In times of challenge, lean on those around you for support.

- Steve

GRAND OPENING:

SOJO'S CLOSET

The Sojourners' Clothing Exchange, so wonderfully managed by BJ Zdenek, has become a collection of clothing downstairs from our offices. Many of the items are new, through donations arranged by Shelia Turn. If you're coming into the office, ask Shelia or someone else to show you around. We have sizes from 2 through XXL. Donations still being accepted.



Sojourners Calendar

- March 8, 2009, Sojourners 10-Year Anniversary.
- **Food Bank**, we'll let you know when we get it scheduled.
- April 1, 2009, **Foster Care Training**, "De-escalation Training for Therapeutic Providers," *Session 1:* 10:00-1:00 at the Vinton County Library; *Session 2:* 6:00-9:00 in the Sojo Classroom at 605 W. Main.



Caring for Kids in Care

Shelia	464-1411	General Questions
Steve	418-1072	Director, Foster Care
Lisa	357-0143	Placement/Respite
Barb	418-0250	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.

... SHINING STARS!



- ★ C.J. made the 11th grade honor roll. Good job.
- ★ S.H. made positive decisions regarding activities at school. Excellent.
- ★ J.L. kept his cool while kids around him were disrupting class. We're proud of you.
- ★ T.K. represented her school in the district-wide spelling bee. S-U-P-E-R!
- ★ S.M. did well on her report card. Keep up the good work.
- ★ E.L. and W.O. continue to work hard in Cub Scouts!
- ★ C.T. served dinner to his foster parents at church. That's a nice thing to do.

Call Joy (591-6279) to report good news about the young people in your care!

Shelia's Corner

Chocolate Brownie Oatmeal Cookies

Ingredients:

- 8-oz package cream cheese, softened
- 1 stick margarine or butter, softened
- 1 cup firmly packed brown sugar
- 1/2 cup granulated sugar
- 2 eggs
- 1/2 teaspoon vanilla
- 12-oz package chocolate chips, melted
- 1-1/2 cups all-purpose flour
- 1-1/2 teaspoons baking soda
- 3 cups uncooked oats

Foster Parent Survival Kit

From "Fostering Across Wisconsin" newsletter: Foster parenting demands an enormous amount of time and energy. It's important to take some time when things aren't so busy to think about how to manage stress. Remember, in order to take care of children, you need to take care of yourself. One suggestion is to create a "Parent Survival Kit" to help you cope in difficult times. Here are some things to keep in your kit.

1. Updated Sojourners Phone List going out to foster parents with this newsletter.
2. Phone Numbers: Agency numbers, including youth intervention specialists; after-hours emergency numbers; close friends and family members; other supportive foster parents.
3. Reminders of Happy Times: Photographs of fun vacations or outings; photos of happy family times; jokes or stories of things children said or did; cartoons about family chaos.
4. Reminders of Coping Skills: "Count to Ten" refrigerator magnet; "100 ways to praise a child" poster; inspirational quotes or scriptures; charts or handouts from training workshops; list of treatment team members.
5. Reminders of Personal Care: Bottle of bubble bath; favorite coffee, chocolate, or tea; favorite books or magazines; favorite movies or weekly television shows; respite or substitute caregiver list; Tylenol.

Training News

- Next Training: Wednesday, April 1, 2009, "De-escalation Training for Therapeutic Providers," presented by Tyrone White. Note that this is a required training. There are **two** sessions at **different** locations: Session 1: 10:00-1:00 in the meeting room at the Vinton County Library; Session 2: 6:00-9:00 in the Sojo Classroom at 605 W. Main Street.
- We are still working on a time and location for training on the Ansell-Casey Life Skills curriculum. We'll let you know...
- The Spring training catalog will be coming to you soon. As usual, Barb will highlight trainings in your catalog that might be of particular interest to you.
- Want 9 hours of training in one weekend? Put April 24 & 25 on your calendar. The Southeast Ohio Regional Training Center is sponsoring a Foster Parent Conference on Friday evening and from 9:00 to 4:00 on Saturday. Location: Athens. You'll get a brochure on this soon, or call Barb for info.

IRISH JOKE

Said one leprechaun to the other, "Did you hear that Flanagan invented an invisible deodorant?"

"No," said the other leprechaun. "What good is it?"

"Well," said the first, "if you use it, you vanish and no one knows where the smell comes from!"



Excess Peanut Butter?*

Are you having trouble using up your case of peanut butter? Probably not, but there are lots of great ideas at the Jif website, www/jif.com. They include peanut butter granola, peanut butter/maple syrup, peanut butter bread pudding, peanut butter marmalade, and even peanut butter and bacon sandwiches. You'll also find some fun facts. Did you know that there are 1,218 peanuts in a 28-oz jar of Jif?

In large bowl, beat together cream cheese, margarine, and sugars until creamy. Add the following, mixing well after each: eggs and vanilla; melted chocolate; combined flour and baking soda; oats. You can also add 1 cup of chopped nuts. Cover dough; chill for one hour.

Shape dough into 1-inch balls, placed 3 inches apart on ungreased cookie sheet. Bake in 350-degree oven 8 to 10 minutes or until cookies are almost set. Cool 1 minute on cookie sheets; remove to wire rack.

* We checked—the peanut butter you received at the most recent food bank is not involved in any government recall.