



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 news or recipes.

SHINING STARS!



- ★ M.L. made the honor roll. Congratulations!
- ★ B.W. got a summer job. Good work!
- ★ K.S. paid off all court fines. Way to go.
- ★ T.L. met important behavior goals. You rock!
- ★ B.C. is sporting a positive attitude lately. Keep seeing that glass as half-full!
- ★ D.C. passed his evaluation for his school's gifted and talented program with flying colors.
- ★ W.O. is doing a terrific job balancing many activities—and he mastered his reading goals at school. Keep it up!
- ★ C.J. is doing great with independent living exercises.
- ★ J.L. is working really hard on controlling his behavior!

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

Sojo Closet

A new supply of clothing has been contributed to the Sojo Closet from retailer Christopher Banks. These brand new items are a variety of sizes. Ask Shelia, Joy, or BJ to take you on a fashion tour. Foster moms, as well as foster youth, are welcome to browse. Sadly, all of the clothing is for females. We could use donations of boys' and men's clothes, too.

Add Vitamin "Fun" to Dinner

Spice up dinner with some good old vitamin *FUN*. Here are some suggestions.

- Pick a theme for dinner. Make it a luau, indoor picnic, Mexican fiesta, Chinese celebration, vegetarian feast, or a meal made from all fresh food. Or, grill out in a snowstorm.
- Scramble up the seating and make everyone sit in a different chair for a meal.
- Try to plan a meal that does NOT use the microwave—not even once!
- Let each person in the family pick the food from one of the main food groups—bread, meat, dairy, fruit, vegetable—to build a menu. OK, include dessert as a food group, too.
- Have a backward meal. Start with dessert and work your way backward to the salad.
- Do a joke night—each person has to tell a (clean) joke before he or she can eat.
- Set aside one night a week as "Kid's Choice." Let one youth select the menu that night.
- Go around the table and have each person tell something they did that day. Repeat two more times. You could do this as food is passed—news goes around with the potatoes.
- Make food look like something else—Shelia suggests putting peanut butter and raisins on a stick of celery—she calls it "ants on a log."
- Have breakfast for supper—or, have supper for breakfast!
- Turn off cell phones, pagers, phones, iPods, computers, TVs, and as many other electronic gadgets as you can. Focus on each other instead.

Training News

May Training: "Parenting Children with Mental Retardation (MR) / Mental Illness (MI) diagnoses." This training will focus on helping and supporting dually-diagnosed young people. The trainer is Wendy Goodman, who has taught at Hope Haven School in Jackson for 10 years.

Session 1: Wednesday, May 20, 5:30-8:30 p.m., in the Sojourners classroom.

Session 2: Saturday, May 23, 1:00-4:00 p.m., at the Vinton County Public Library in McArthur.

Sojourners Calendar

- *Foster Care Training*, "Parenting Children with MR/MI Diagnoses." *Session 1:* Wednesday, May 20, 5:30-8:30 p.m., Sojo classroom. *Session 2:* Saturday, May 23, 1:00-4:00, Vinton County Library.
- *Foster Care Staff Meeting*, May 8, 2009.
- *Food Bank*, May 15 10:30 - noon; 1:00 - 4:00 (closed from 11:00 to 11:30 for Foster Care Ceremony).
- *Foster Care Awareness Month Ceremony—Sojo Anniversary Celebration*, Fri., May 15, 11:00, at the Vinton County Courthouse.



Note: As requested, revised copies of the Sojourners Foster Care policy manual are available for foster caregivers to pick up. Please see Shelia for a copy.

Shelia's Corner

Nuked Caramel Popcorn

Ingredients:

- 2 packages of plain microwave popcorn, popped
- 1 cup brown sugar
- 1/2 cup margarine
- 1/4 cup light corn syrup
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1/2 teaspoon baking soda
- 1 brown paper grocery bag
- Waxed paper

Place popped popcorn in paper bag and set aside.

In a 2-quart casserole dish, combine brown sugar, margarine, corn syrup, salt, and vanilla. Heat for three minutes in the microwave, then take out and stir until well blended. Return to microwave and cook for 1-1/2 minutes. Remove from microwave. Stir in the baking soda.

Pour syrup over the popcorn in the bag. Roll down the top one or two times to close the bag and shake to coat corn.

Place bag in the microwave and cook for 1 minute and 10 seconds. Remove, shake, flip bag over, and cook for another minute and 10 seconds.

Dump popcorn out onto waxed paper and let cool until coating is set. Store in an airtight container.

Mother's Day

Happy Mother's Day to all of our Sojo foster moms—and to all moms everywhere.

SO JOURNERS

Sojo Family News

Foster Care Awareness Month



May is Foster Care Awareness Month, represented by a light blue ribbon. We've planned a ceremony on **Friday, May 15th at 11am**, to honor our foster families, staff, and all of the young people Sojourners has served in its ten years of operation.

The Foster Care Awareness Ceremony is open to the public. All are invited to attend.

The ceremony, co-sponsored by Vinton County Department of Job and Family Services, will take place in front of the Vinton County Courthouse. Vinton County Juvenile Court Judge Robert Grillo is the featured speaker. Marcus Games will share some of Sojourners' greatest success stories. Joy Henderson will sing.

VCDJFS will serve a cookout lunch following the ceremony at Wyman Park in McArthur.

Wyman Park is just off US 50 on Pearl Street.

In addition, May 15 is Food Bank day for foster parents. The food bank will close from 11:00 to 11:30 to allow for attendance at the ceremony. We hope foster parents can combine their trips to pick up food and attend the event.

At the end of the event, each person in attendance will have a chance to ring Vinton County's bicentennial bell. We want to ring out across the town the fact that we are people who care about foster care and the children we serve.

Sad Farewell: Sojourners foster care would like to honor the passing of Shirley Faye Moore, who served as a Sojourners foster parent for many years. Shirley died on April 25, 2009. We extend our thoughts and prayers to her family.

WHAT?
Foster Care Awareness Month Ceremony

WHEN?
Friday, May 15, 11:00 a.m.

WHERE?
Vinton County Courthouse, front steps

WHO?
Anyone who cares about young people

WHY?
To honor the successes of young people in foster care and those who advocate for them.

Co-sponsored by Sojourners and Vinton Co. Job and Family Services

Notes from the Director

Grief is universal. Across cultures and communities, across families, across all ages. Whether its grief from losing a loved one, being separated from your family, or a significant life change...the experience of loss is invariably difficult.

And yet...we're all unique. Whether we react with disbelief, anger, or sadness, acceptance of

loss and change is a long journey. When the loss is a death...we're almost always able to be empathetic and supportive. Most of us can relate. But, few of us have ever experienced the loss our children endure...being taken from their natural family, their friends, their day-to-day life.

Not surprisingly, we often interpret their reactions (e.g., hostility,

withdrawal, indifference) without ever considering grief. "They just don't care about anything!" "They are impossible to be around!" Perhaps we all could take a moment, and just remind ourselves...losing someone we love is gut-wrenching, losing your entire way of life...is unimaginable.

- Steve



Foster Youth Featured in *Eagle-Gazette*

Kayleigh Stockmaster and her foster parents, Jim and Vesta Bailey, were highlighted in the *Lancaster Eagle-Gazette* on April 24, 2009. Stockmaster was one of two teens who shared their life stories with the community at Fairfield County Job & Family Services' annual candlelight walk. Small candles were used to symbolize the children served by the agency, which receives 5,000 calls a year about potential abuse and neglect. The event was designed to raise awareness of child abuse in Fairfield County. We're proud of Kayleigh's courage to share her life story, and of her foster parents for their dedication to young people.

