



Holiday Fundraiser for Youth

On November 12th, Sojourners will host the 2nd annual Chinese Auction to benefit foster and transitional living youth.

The Chinese Auction will be located at the Vinton County Community Building, and doors open at 1pm. Drawing begins at 7pm and will also include refreshments, a

50/50 drawing and several cake walks.

Last year's event raised over \$1,000 to benefit Christmas gifts and clothing for foster and transitional living youth. All of the proceeds from the event will go directly towards purchasing gifts for the youth during the holidays.

This year's event will include items donated from over 50 local organizations. Please come join us on the 12th!



Notes from the Director



An alarming trend is quietly emerging in the lives of foster children across the state of Ohio. Foster children have become the latest casualty of the shrinking Ohio budget. During the past month, several Sojourners foster children have been faced with the potential of being removed from their long-term foster families...and certainly more are likely to face this soon. These children are being asked to do the unthinkable...to leave their families, again, in order to relieve the budget pressures facing county Children's Services agencies.

I certainly don't envy the position of a Children's Services administrator these days. When the daily budget pressures force decisions between the clear best interests of a

child, and the complex needs of the whole community, judgment can become compromised. Simply 'pointing-fingers' or assigning blame to the decision makers won't solve these problems...and in the end, only the children will suffer.

So, instead...let's look at the facts. Foster care alumni already face four times the rate of homelessness of their peers.¹ They are twenty-two (22%) less likely to remain in school and forty-four (44%) percent less likely to be employed. They face greater risk of mental health conditions, such as PTSD (22%) and Depression (15%) than others.² They're substantially less satisfied with school, work, and life. These are not easy problems...and doing less won't

solve them.

The long-term, tangible costs of these problems (e.g., chronic unemployment, dependence on welfare or social security, costs of imprisonment) outweigh the costs of prevention now. And the good news? Resources are still available to help turn this around...at least, for now.

Therapeutic foster care and adoption, time and time again, has proven to offer children stronger, brighter, and more independent futures.³ Through TFC, children receive immediate access to mental health care, supportive education and vocational training, caring mentors and treatment workers, and stable, loving parents. It's time to make your voice heard...before it's too late.

Steve

Youthbuild College Visits

Youthbuild will be hosting two college campus tour days during November. The tours will visit Rio Grande on November 18th and Hocking College in Nelsonville on November 19th. If any youth are interested in joining the tours, please contact Joy at 591-6279 to register.

Calendar

- Independent Living Classes
November 3rd at Sojourners Offices, from 5-6:30pm
- Foster Parent Training (Third-Party Investigations)
November 9th at McArthur Library, from 9-12pm.
November 16th at Ross County YMCA, from 6-9pm.
- Holiday Fundraiser Chinese Auction
November 12th at Vinton Co. Community Building, 7pm.
- Food Bank
November 18th, at 318 W. Main St, McArthur, 11-2pm



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
 Janie 577-1347 Adoption / Recruit.
 Liz 596-1117 Operations
 Sojourners Fax Number: 739-4357

All numbers are in area code 740.

Please call Shelia with questions about the newsletter—or to submit news or recipes.

SHINING STARS!

Call Shelia to share good news about the young people in your care.



- * C.T. raised his grades from his interim report! Great job!
- * J.C. got the lead role in the school play, "Little Drummer Boy."
- * N.W., a senior at Paint Valley HS was on the football team this year and scored a touchdown!
- * C.J. worked to get his birth certificate and state ID. Happy job hunting!
- * T.T. earned an army backpack for good behavior at school!
- * W.S. earned all A's, B's, and C's on his report card for the first time!
- * M.V. earned good grades on her midterm report!

CITATIONS

The following are research citations from the article "Notes from the Director"

¹ Mason, et al. (2003). A comparison of foster care outcomes across four child welfare agencies. *Journal of Family Social Work*, 7(2).

² Casey Family Alumni Study (2009). Assessing the effects of foster care: Mental health outcomes from the Casey family alumni study.

³ Arehart-Treichel. (2008). Quality of foster care may determine future mental health. *Psychiatry News*, 43(14)



Creating an Asset-Based Culture

On October 16th, Marcus Games led an interactive training on developing an "Asset-Based Foster Care Culture." He challenged trainees to "think like John McKnight", the noted community developer from Northwestern University. McKnight has conducted a great deal of research on social service delivery systems, community organizations, and asset-based neighborhood development.

In Chicago, McKnight was able to cultivate the relationships between existing community assets to address significant social challenges. There are many ways we can help our young people overcome barriers by using the skills, strengths, and resources already available to them.

- Challenge young people to see themselves as resources, not victims. Young people and their families do a disservice to themselves by using their past experiences as a reason to stop striving for success.
- Use wraparound meetings as an opportunity, not a hassle. Always include the youth, and focus on the future. These opportunities are a great way to accentuate the youth's strengths and resources. They're also a way to help the youth see the strength and support of the team around them.
- Remind ourselves of "why we're in this field." Always "checking ourselves", our motives, and setting aside time to reflect on our own actions. Are our actions "problem-based" or are they "asset-based" ?
- Ask the hard question. What's good about the young people we serve? Look beyond our initial reactions to stories and histories, and see the good in each person. When we do this, we're one step closer to rebuilding our children's lives by encouraging them to strive for their goals and trust those around them. - RE

Training News

Sojourners will offer the final group CPR class of 2009 on November 19th from 9-5am at the Athens County Red Cross. CPR and First Aid certification are requirements of all foster caregivers. Failure to maintain the certifications are violations of agency policy and state law, and can result in citations to the foster caregivers record. If you haven't completed one of these trainings, please contact Barb Tilley at 418-0250 to schedule a training.



Shelia's Corner

Peanut Butter Pancakes

- 1 1/4 c flour
- 2 tbsp sugar
- 1/2 tsp salt
- 1 1/4 c milk
- 1 egg
- 2 1/2 tsp baking powder
- 1/4 c peanut butter
- 3 tbsp melted butter



Directions:

1. Combine flour, sugar, salt, and baking powder. Beat milk with egg and peanut butter until smooth.
2. Add to dry ingredients and beat just until well moistened.
3. Lightly butter hot griddle. Spoon by 1/4 cupfuls onto griddle.
4. Cook until golden brown on both sides.
5. Serve with regular syrup, or use 1/2 cup maple syrup and 1/4 cup peanut butter, combined in a saucepan, heated until smooth.

Great Saturday morning treat!