

# Fostering Hope

For YCS Specialized Treatment and Foster Home Families

Autumn 2010



**H'Olympics  
and other accomplishments**



## **SPECIAL BACK TO SCHOOL ISSUE**

**TIPS ON HOW TO HELP YOUR CHILD  
GET OFF TO A GOOD START...**

**LEARNING WITH ADD/ADHD**



**Our children share their thoughts and feelings  
about returning to school**

# Fostering Hope

## Autumn 2010

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## Let's get acquainted!

### A Warm Welcome!

#### New parents whose homes have been officially licensed

- **Chevelle McNair & Arthur Bryant** from Laurel Springs
- **Vernon Robinson & Janet Robinson** from Magnolia
- **Gail Howard** from Somers Point
- **Dudley Williams & Sheila Williams** from Willingboro
- **Patricia & Charles Wilson** from Lindenwold
- **Marcia & Walderman Wizzard** from Lodi

### Congratulations to families with their first placements!

**Elayne & John Murray** and their 13 year-old daughter  
**Sharon Brown** and her 14 year-old daughter  
**Carmen Willis** and her 10 year-old son

### A special thanks goes out to all existing parents who have so generously opened up their homes to other children.

**Dianna Munford** & her son welcomed a 11 year-old boy into their family.  
**Mary Ann Jones** welcomed a 14 year-old girl into her home.  
**Ivonne Imtriago** & her 2 year-old son welcomed a baby boy into their home.  
**Mary & Galen Norwood** welcomed a 12 year-old boy into their family.  
**Yavanca Gonzalez** welcomed a 14 year-old boy into her home.  
**Dominique Balan** welcomed a 15 year-old boy into her home.  
**Janice & Walter Russ** welcomed a 16 year-old boy into their home.

## Adoption News!

### Congratulations to the Boland Family

*Our fondest well wishes to Richard & Cheryl Boland, their daughters, Sophie & Kelly and the newest member of their family, Sean Zamir*

*Congratulations on the completion of your long journey from foster care to adoption.*



*Carla & Patrick Adams  
honored by NACY&F  
as the 2010 Treatment  
Home Parents of the Year*

The NJ Alliance for Children, Youth and Families (NACY&F) defines itself as a common voice for children with challenging special needs, and families in crisis. Each year at its annual conference, the Alliance honors several treatment home parents who have been selected for their exceptional performance.

This year we are proud to report that one of our families, Carla and Patrick Adams, have been chosen as the Treatment Home Family of the Year for the northern region of the state.  
*Read more on page 8.*

**From the Desk of William Waller  
Vice President, YCS Treat-  
ment Home Svcs.**

Dear Parents,

*I do not know where summer went, however fall is firmly upon us and we are hopeful that all our children and parents are settling into a consistent school routine and schedule. This fall, there are a couple of changes in how all treatment home children's school placement will be paid for.*

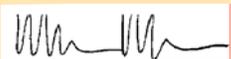
*From this point forward, all new admissions are required to have a letter from the legal guardian's school district agreeing to reimburse the providers district of residence for educational and transportation costs for out of district educational placements. If, for whatever reason, the district of residence cannot be determined then the state Office of Education will make all such determinations. If a child is a ward of the state, then the state Office of Education will be the responsible school district.*

*We are hopeful this new process will not impact the education our children are receiving, If you have any questions, please direct them to your team. Our goal is to keep you abreast of all changes that could impact services to our children, youth and young adults.*

*I also would like to encourage all providers to attend the upcoming Parent refresher trainings to be held on October in the Northern region and November in the southern region. In one day you can complete more than half of the 14 yearly on-going training requirements for all treatment home providers statewide.*

*Lastly, I want to thank Ms. Charlita George for her years of service as the PAC President in the south and challenge her successor in the upcoming election to match her passion, advocacy and leadership.*

Warmest regards,



William Waller  
Vice-President



## *Tips for Helping Your Child Cope During the Holidays*

*No it is not a mistake! We are reprinting this article from our last issue of Fostering Hope, because we feel it has very timely, valuable information that needs to be revisited by all of us.*

For a child who has been adopted or is in foster care, the holidays bring about feelings of loss, separation, and grief. This is especially true when the child is old enough to have memories from past seasons. "Children who were removed from their birth families due to abuse, neglect, or substance abuse may associate the holidays with traumatic times," explains Lois Melina in the article, *Holidays Can Bring Up Lots of Emotions*. "Rather than approaching them with a sense of joyful anticipation, these children may unconsciously associate holidays with disappointment or [trauma]."

### **Steps you can take to help a child cope with the stresses of the holidays:**

- Recognize that what the child is feeling is perfectly normal given the situation. Let him know that you understand and that it is alright to feel the way he does.
- Allow the child to talk about it on her terms – resist the temptation to push her into talking about her feelings or the past, but do not try to avoid it either. If the child has a caseworker, discuss the possibility of getting him into counseling to help him work through his emotions.
- Identify with them. Tell them about a time that you felt as they do. Most of us have experienced a year when our holiday was met with the loss of a loved one or other significant event. Identifying helps the child not feel so isolated in his grief, and may help him to open up to you.
- Get them involved in outside activities. Play dates, sports, holiday activities, volunteering – all help to ward off the sense of sadness that is a common thread for foster and older adopted children this time of year. Keep them active but do keep things balanced. The holiday season tends to lend itself to busyness so use common sense to keep things in check.
- Find ways to incorporate traditions that the birth family participated in that the child can remember. Learn along side the child about her native customs if she is culturally different from the rest of your family. By doing this you give the child a sense of pride and self-worth, and, who knows, you may gain a new family tradition!

Excerpted from  
[www.fosterparenting.suite101.com](http://www.fosterparenting.suite101.com)

## Three Steps

### to helping children with Attention Deficits

### start the school year off

### with a PLAN!!!

Just mention the word homework and you'll probably hear a long groan from children and parents alike. However, if you are the parent of a child with ADD/ADHD, homework can be a golden opportunity to connect with your child on many different levels. Homework provides you a chance to directly support your child, and helps your child succeed academically and personally. Here is some advice from the experts on how to start the new school year off right.

#### Step 1: Help your children get organized

- Establish a homework folder for finished homework and additional folders for loose papers.
- Help your child organize his belongings on a daily basis, including his backpack, folders, and even pockets.
- If possible, keep an extra set of textbooks and other materials at home.
- ◆ Help your child learn to make and use checklists, crossing items off as they are accomplished.

#### Step 2: Establish a routine and an environment

- Decide on a specific time to begin and end homework each day.
- Pick a permanent place for homework that is as free as possible of clutter, pets, TV and any other distractions. You may want to have the desk facing away from windows and doors.
- Establish a spot where all school supplies and books will be kept.
- Allow your child breaks as often as every ten to twenty minutes.
- ◆ Show a positive interest in your child's studies.
- ◆ Let your child teach you what she's learned. This will reinforce what she has learned and build her self confidence.

#### Helpful Tip

Many children with ADD/ADHD have difficulty following directions. You can help your child by being extremely brief when giving directions.

Talk in short clear sentences and allow your child to do one step of an assignment at a time. It is important to reinforce your child's progress before helping him move on to the next step.

#### Step 3: Be an Advocate for your child at school

As a parent, you are your child's advocate. For your child to succeed in the classroom, it is vital that you communicate her needs. It is equally important for you to be positive and listen to what the teachers and other school officials have to say.

- **Make meetings happen.** Arrange to speak with school counselors or teachers at least once a month. Try to meet in your child's classroom so you can get a sense of your child's physical learning environment.
- **Create goals together.** Discuss your hopes for your child's school success. Together, write down specific and realistic goals and talk about how they can be reached.
- **Listen carefully.** Like you, your child's teacher wants to see her succeed. Listen to what she has to say—even if it is sometimes hard to hear. Avoid interrupting. Understanding your child's challenges in school is the key to finding solutions that work.

#### **DID YOU KNOW...**

Many children, especially those with ADD / ADHD, benefit from a little outdoor play before school time. Physical exercise has been found to help improve concentration and mental focus and decrease restlessness. If your child is full of energy in the morning, be sure to set aside some time for a little exercise (running, jumping, skipping) outside before school.

- **Ask the hard questions.** Ask if your child is having any problems in school, including on the playground or cafeteria. Find out if your child can get any special services.
- ◆ **Communicate honestly.** Be sure to list any medications your child takes and explain any other treatments. Share what tactics work well—and which don't—for your child at home.

## Advice from the Frontlines

*Practical tips from our parents on helping your children with homework and more!*

My son needs medication for hyperactivity. I've found that by the end of the day, the medication wears off and he has difficulty concentrating or sitting long enough to do his homework.

### The Solution

I've found that it is easier for him to do his homework in the morning before school. He gets up, has his breakfast, and meds and after a short break is able to do all his homework. He is in the first grade and usually has a couple of sheets to complete each night.

Mary Kay Carney, YCS, APN  
and mother of 8 year-old Ricky

Last year I took in a wonderful young man, 14, who lived with us for about 8 months. I quickly discovered that he was nearly unable to read or do math. On the surface, it seemed he had absolutely no motivation. In reality, he was very embarrassed to admit that he couldn't read a sign or count change after he bought a snack at the corner store.

His charts said he had an anger management problem and was put on medication prescribed by a psychiatrist at a residential facility where he had previously lived. I found this made him groggy and sleepy. After a discussion with my son and another physician, we decided to see if he could function without the medication.

He did very well, was more alert and less sleepy. Now, I could address his learning problems. I enrolled him in an after-school private tutorial program with financial support from DYFS.

At home, I made every day a learning experience. The key was working *with* him. Before school, we would read the newspaper together. I went to the Dollar Store and bought flash cards and simple English and math workbooks. On the weekends, we'd take walks and note interesting things. These became the words of the week, and he'd earn rewards for mastering these words. By the time we parted, this young man's reading and math grades had risen more than two grades.

Lisa Smith  
Northern Region TH Parent

### Want to learn more?

There is a very informative article online:  
Motivating the Child with Attention Deficit Disorder  
[www.ldonline.org/article/19975](http://www.ldonline.org/article/19975)

Mark your  
calendars!

### Annual Parent Refresher Trainings\*

Northern Region  
Saturday, October 2nd  
9 am to 5 pm  
60 Evergreen Place, 10th floor  
East Orange

Southern Region  
Saturday, November 6th  
9 am to 5 pm  
20 east Evergreen Avenue  
Somerdale

\* Lunch will be provided.

### A very special thank you to outgoing southern region PAC President Charlita George

**Ms. George was elected by her peers as the first Parent Advisory Council president in the southern region in 2002. For 8 years, she gave her all to support every treatment home parent and child. She led the meetings and advised the parents and children whenever they needed her help.**

**Ms. George and her husband Michael have been the quintessential models for treatment home parenting. They have adopted five of their foster children and continue to be in contact with so many others who have passed lovingly through their home.**

**We wish Ms. George the very best in her future endeavors. We are confident that wherever she goes she will inspire others as she has done us.**

*IN THEIR OWN WORDS....*

*OUR CHILDREN OPENLY SHARE THEIR THOUGHTS ABOUT THEIR EDUCATION*

Our children want to let us and their teachers know how they feel about school - their concerns, frustrations and expectations. They share here what troubles them about school and how they sometimes react.

We hope you can use this section to have a dialog with your children about school and gain greater insight into what you can do as parents to help them succeed with their education.

Frankie: The school work they give us is so easy. I need something that is challenging. This is frustrating. I think the teachers are soft and afraid to speak up for us. I would like the teachers to give me something that I would really have to be taught.

Lydia: I want my teachers to know that I am a very slow learner. Please break things down for me and don't race through lessons.

My mom knows that I hate school, but I will go to college because I want to be a fashion designer and there are things I need to know.

Tom: I want the teachers to know that I am a nice person. When they see me for the first time, I feel that they think that because I'm black that I must be bad.

Desmond: I moved down here [south Jersey] from Newark. When the teachers hear Newark, they automatically think that I will cause trouble I'm not that way and I don't want to be treated different.

George: I want the teachers to know that I like to joke around. I do it to get along with other kids...not to cause trouble.

Kara: The biggest stress that us kids in the system have is ourselves. We want to make sure that every one, our parents, teachers, friends, coaches, are happy... even if it doesn't make us happy...Because we lost a mom or dad we can't go home and be proud to say HEY LOOK MOM/DAD LOOK WHAT I DID! and have them be proud. Yea there's foster parents and case workers and stuff but its not the same as having your actual parents being proud of you. The older you get the worse it can get... less we know how to deal with it.



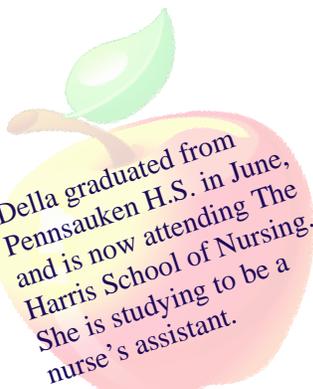
Sixteen year-old Dana



*They are the apples of your eyes, and with all of your support and dedication to their well being, they are beginning to thrive on their own.*



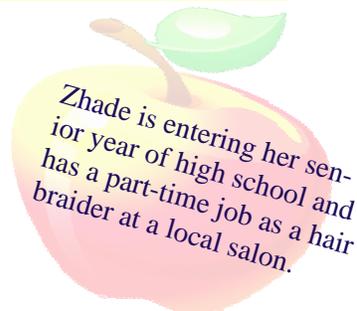
Hugo made the Varsity Soccer Team at Pennsauken H.S. This summer he worked full time at the PA Social Security office.



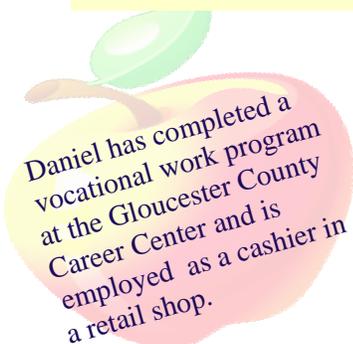
Della graduated from Pennsauken H.S. in June, and is now attending The Harris School of Nursing. She is studying to be a nurse's assistant.

Willie had the honor of carrying the Olympics torch as he ran around the track at the opening ceremonies of the national H'Olympic games at Ramapo College. The opening was televised on CW 11 News.

Darnell was accepted into Culinary Arts school starting in September. He has been getting a lot of practice this summer cooking up delicious meals for his family and they are loving it!



Zhade is entering her senior year of high school and has a part-time job as a hair braider at a local salon.



Daniel has completed a vocational work program at the Gloucester County Career Center and is employed as a cashier in a retail shop.



Dana is entering her junior year at Camden County Technical School in all honor classes!



Brandon graduated Eastside High & is attending Passaic Co. Community College.



### Are you ready for college football?

We are proud to announce that **Balial Sloan El, #20**, will be a starting running back for the MU Hawks this season.

In a preseason scrimmage, Balial completed 12 runs for 52 yards.

Balial, a junior, also shines off the field. With a major in early childhood education and a minor in sociology, he earned a 3.40 GPA last semester. His adopted mom, and current YCS treatment home parent, Miriam Sloan El, will be in the bleachers this season rooting on her son. We'll all be cheering for him too!

If you love football and have the time, we hope you'll attend a home game and give Balial your support.



Congratulations!

Dwayne Bunting George went on a trip this summer to Africa with classmates from Camden County Community College....

Please share the news with your children and encourage them to follow their dreams...

Look for photos in our next newsletter.

# PARENT NEWS!

## CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL FAMILIES WHO HAVE EARNED COMPLIANCE BONUSES

Dominique Balan  
Velouse Brizeous  
DeAnnette & Clyde Cross  
Bessie Eggleston  
Yavanca Gonzalez  
P. Large & M. Loadholt  
Jerry & Lynielle Moore  
Norma & Arundell Morris  
Dianna Munford  
Elaine Murray  
Belinda Neris & David Atias  
Galen & Mary Norwood  
Jose & Leci Oliveria  
Rosezena Perry  
Vernon & Janet Robinson  
Evelyn & Murray Shaw  
Carmen Willis  
Charles & Patricia Wilson

### ARE YOU READY TO TAKE THE CHALLENGE?

Our treatment home parents can earn an additional \$250 stipend for each quarter that they are 100% compliant. For more information, contact your regional administration or recruitment department. They are ready to help you with any compliance questions you may have.

### *CARLA AND PATRICK ADAMS ARE MODELS OF TREATMENT HOME PARENTING*

In 2006, Carla and Patrick Adams welcomed an eight year-old boy into their home. This young child, who was affected by trauma and a series of failed placements, repeatedly rebuked and challenged the Adam's sincerity and caring

Looking back over the family's first year together, it's incredible that Carla and Patrick never gave up on the child. Due to their ability to see beyond the distraction of M's behaviors and their capacity to appreciate those glimpses of his inner "goodness," they were able to tolerate the months of stress and turmoil. With a combination of love, dedication, patience, prayer, and support from extended family members, M found a home in which he felt comfortable enough to be his true self and experience the healing powers that the Adams' family offered.

Foster parents vary in their degree of openness in receiving feedback and suggestions from professionals. Carla and Patrick are easily the most receptive parents I've worked with. Not only did they consider many of the parenting strategies and interventions discussed during the family's weekly therapy sessions, but the couple frequently asked for assistance. Such openness requires courage in the therapeutic process.

I would also like to acknowledge their conscientious attention to M's monthly medication monitoring appointments. This required them to drive at least 90 minutes each way from their home in Port Murray to East Orange.

M's long journey as a child in foster care ended last winter, when M became a permanent member of the Adams' family. Carla and Patrick love and value their son and he knows he has finally "come home."

Adapted from a nomination by Chris Acker, clinician