



Quarterly Newsletter

ISSUE NO 1 | January 2021



Welcome to the FosterKY Quarterly Newsletter!

As we start off the new year, we look back on all of the challenges, changes and accomplishments 2020 brought. We could not have made it through without each and every one of our foster and adoptive parents. YOU persisted through the challenges of quarantines, virtual visitation, virtual training, virtual home visits, virtual education and so much more! We at DCBS are truly grateful for our foster and adoptive parents and are committed to providing the best support possible for you and the children we all serve.

This year we are launching our first FosterKY Quarterly newsletter. We hope you will find this newsletter helpful in keeping up to date on all that is happening in foster care across the state. In each of the quarterly newsletters we will be highlighting amazing foster/adoptive families who have gone above and beyond to change the lives of the children and families we serve. In addition to spotlighting our foster/adoptive families, we will spotlight youth who are in need of a forever home in our KAPE Korner, regional foster/adoptive parent events, resources, and updates from Central Office. We hope that this newsletter will be enlightening and useful to you as a foster/adoptive parent in KY.

Thank you for the dedication, love and support you provide to the children and families across the Bluegrass.

Rena Hardin, Diligent Recruitment Specialist
Kelli Root, Out of Home Care Branch Manager

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Family Spotlights

Spotlight family of the Quarter THE WILSON FAMILY

William and Johnnie Wilson were nominated by their worker, Frances Yates. Yates states that William and Johnnie are amazing foster parents and work exceptionally well with children and birth families. The Wilsons advocate for children in their homes and assist their birth families with services when appropriate. The Wilsons recently had a sibling group of five whom were able to return home and maintain contact by supporting and mentoring the birth mother. The Wilsons are loving and caring foster parents who will go outside of their own acceptance criteria for foster placements to ensure that the sibling groups are kept together. They have expanded their acceptance criteria to include parenting teens and youth who have aged out and recommitted. Yates states that the Wilsons are truly in the foster care program to love, care for, and mentor the children and parents they work with. Our agency, children and families are truly lucky to have the Wilsons in our network!



“Mr. and Mrs. Wilson are the type of foster parents that our children and families deserve. They represent the very best of our agency and I am grateful to work with them.”—SSW Yates

Meet the Mattinglys

Laura and Nathan Mattingly have adopted two children from foster care and are exceptional advocates for all children touched by foster care. They advocate for the children in their own home, provide support to other foster/adoptive families and raise awareness through recruitment of additional foster families. Laura is The Foster Parent Network leader in the Two Rivers region and has organized the Juju’s Night Out initiative for foster families (more about Juju’s Night Out on pg. 5).

The Mattingly’s worker stated that “Laura has a HUGE creative spirit” and “we could not be a successful county for supportive foster families without the leadership role of Laura Mattingly”.



Meet the Gilliams

Laura and Jason Gilliam shared their family’s story of adoption from foster care for National Adoption Month in November.

Laura and Jason have been fostering since April 2019. They were able to adopt their son, Chance, in October 2020. “He officially became a part of Team Gilliam!”

Laura and Jason state that although not everyone is called to foster or adopt, EVERYONE can do something!





Shatayvia (12/2005) describes herself as beautiful, smart and unique! This teen girl enjoys rap and R&B music. Singing and dancing are two talents that she likes best. Hanging out with her friends and playing on a cell phone are her favorite pastimes. Her career aspirations include being a therapist, social worker, foster parent, police officer or maybe even the President of the United States! Shatayvia is fine with two parents or a single mom. She would want a potential adoptive family to know a little about her past and also that she would like to have her own bed. Shatayvia's favorite quote is "positive vibes bring positive outcomes." Shatayvia doesn't let hard things get her down.

To see a video of Shatayvia please visit:

<https://americaskidsbelong.org/project/sha-tayvia/>

Why adopt a teen?

You never outgrow the need for a family. Think back to your late teens and early twenties... How many times did you call a parent or parent figure for help, advice or just someone to talk to? Who helped you fill out college or job applications? Who did you call when you needed to learn how to change a flat tire? Youth and young adults need a family to be there as they navigate the adult world and rejoice in their successes. They need someone to spend the holidays with and celebrate big occasions such as graduating high school or college, getting a new job, getting married and having children. Helping a youth grow into a young adult is fun and rewarding in so many ways and through adoption, those relationships can last a lifetime!

Nearly 4,000 of the children in foster care are between the ages of 12 and 21. Youth who age out of foster care without a family are more likely to experience homelessness, unemployment and financial instability among other things. There are **635** children in Kentucky who are available for adoption but have no identified adoptive family. Two-thirds of these children are over the age of 12. Could you be the family these youth need? Do you know someone else who could change the lives of youth through adoption?

Visit Adopt.ky.gov or AKB Kentucky - America's Kids Belong to find out more.



Lanard (7/2004) can seem a bit quiet and reserved when you first meet him, but he is a friendly and likeable young man. He just needs to get to know you! Lanard is very respectful and kind. He is a pleasant and easy-going person with a variety of interests. Lanard is artistic and likes to sketch. He enjoys reading comics and also likes sports. His favorite sport is football. Lanard loves animals. He would enjoy being in a home that had animals. Lanard is very smart and does well in school. He usually gets all As and Bs. Lanard wants a family that will be there for him and offer him the support and love that he deserves. You could be the family Lanard is waiting for!

To find out more about Lanard please visit:

KAPE - Kentucky Adoption Profile Exchange

Regional Happenings



Foster and Adopted children from the Northern Bluegrass region submitted drawings of what family means to them. Several children submitted drawings and one child's drawing was featured on an Adoption Awareness month Billboard in Scott County!

Khloe- Age 11 was the winner of the contest.
Congratulations Khloe!

Southern Bluegrass R&C and the Network hosted their first Holiday Light Show Event. Foster/adoptive families drove through the event admiring the light displays and a holiday movie while waiting to receive gifts from Santa and his Elves. Gifts were donated by foster families, DCBS staff, Accounting Firm in Lexington, Retired Fayette Co. Teachers, Ashland Ave. Baptist Church, The Mentor Program, The Network and The Village from Mercer County.



Northeastern Service Region R&C invited foster/adoptive families to Morehead City Park to admire a beautiful light display and receive gift bags from Santa and Mrs. Claus.



DCBS staff partnered with Pathways, The Morehead Optimist Club and Gatti's of Morehead to put on this event and offer gifts bags for families.



Jefferson Service Region R&C and the Network hosted a holiday event with entertainment and gifts for over 150 youth in care.

The event included Santa Clause, the Grinch, A Christmas Tree, Stilt Walkers and more. Volunteers included DCBS staff, Network Members and local youth.



Foster/Adoptive Parent Resources



Just in Time is a web-based service program designed to connect foster parents, kinship or other caregivers with online training, peer experts and other resources.

Training topics have been reviewed and designated videos (with an attached quiz) are approved for online credit hours. The website also has document resources available at your fingertips.

New trainings are added each month!

Recently added trainings include:

- *Visitation and Partnering with Families (CC)
- *Regulation for Protection
- *Autism Spectrum Disorder for Child Welfare Professionals (CC)
- *#TalkWithTeens
- *Advocating to End Human Trafficking: Justice, Equality, and Economic Security for All

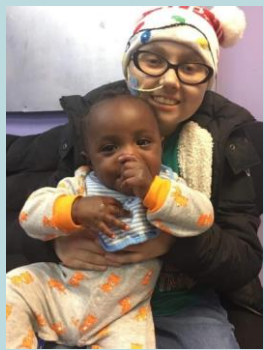
Paper Bridges

(Cumberland, Eastern Mountain and The Lakes Regions)

Paper Bridges, a non-profit organization through Yale University, is dedicated to helping youth and vulnerable children on both a local and international level. They will be providing free virtual tutoring services to our foster youth in **Cumberland, Eastern Mountain, and The Lakes** service regions. Paper Bridges will be tutoring in traditional subjects like Math, English, and Sciences, but would also like to offer tutoring for extracurricular activities, like music lessons, knitting lessons, and more.

Nearly 50 foster youth have been identified within these three regions. This provides an added support to foster parents struggling with helping their youth with school work.

If you reside in the Cumberland, Eastern Mountain or The Lakes service regions and are interested in this program, please contact your worker to register.



Juju's Night Out For Foster Parents (Two Rivers Region)

Juliana "Juju" Wooldridge had dreams to grow up and become a foster parent and to help foster families so children could have a brighter future. At 14, Juju lost her battle with acute Myeloid Leukemia before she could see her dream become reality with "Juju's Night Out for Foster Parents"- an event in her hometown of Bowling Green. Juju's legacy is making a difference for foster children and families.

Read more: <https://bit.ly/35pEopA>



Adoption Support for Kentucky (ASK) is an award-winning peer support program that has been serving families for over two decades. ASK offers parent-led support group meetings to foster/adoptive parents and relative/fictive-kin caregivers across the state of Kentucky. Each meeting includes specialized training provided by an experienced adoptive parent and support group leader. Childcare is available at in-person meetings and up to two hours of Cabinet-approved foster parent training credit is available. Virtual ASK support groups and trainings, ASK-VIP, is currently available several nights per week.

To find a support group or training visit:
[Events for January 2021 – College of Social Work \(uky.edu\)](#)

Studio Thrifty For the Kids

Studio Thrifty For the Kids is a boutique style store provided by The Foster Care Council in Lexington where foster parents can bring their foster children to shop for new and gently used clothing and other necessities at no cost to the families. The atmosphere of the boutique was created to ensure the foster children have an enjoyable experience as they shop for clothing and necessities.

The Foster Care Council's staff operates the store with help from volunteers as needed to accept donations, clean, tag and inventory clothing and accessories. Shopping is scheduled by appointment only to create a safe space where staff can assist foster families and take care of each foster child's individual needs. The shop is not open to the public.

To schedule an appointment for shopping or donation drop-off please call (239)248-7699



Not in the Lexington area? To find out about clothing closets for foster children in your area, contact your R&C worker.

News from Central Office

Foster Parent Surveys for DCBS Parents ONLY

We value the feedback and experiences of each of our foster/adoptive parents and want to hear from you! An annual satisfaction survey has been created to solicit feedback regarding your experiences during the past year, what has been successful and where we can improve. A survey link will be distributed through email for all current foster/adoptive parents to complete each January. We encourage you to please complete this survey so we can improve support and services for our foster parents.

Survey links for this year have been emailed through GOVDelivery or you can click the link below if you have not already completed the survey. Survey responses are anonymous unless you chose to identify yourself at the end of the survey.

Reminder: The survey is for DCBS active foster/adoptive parents ONLY at this time.

https://ekusseme.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_6FOd3n98RvEVI6x

Every Student Succeeds Act

In 2015 the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) was signed into federal law to promote school stability and success for youth in care and collaboration between education and child welfare agencies to achieve this goal.

ESSA was designed to ensure that students in foster care remain in the same school district when in the student's best interest, receive immediate enrollment in school and transfer of school records, and receive school transportation when necessary.

A designated point of contact is established within Kentucky Department of Education, local educational agencies and child welfare agencies.

If a child in out-of-home care has been placed with a foster/adoptive family outside the attendance area for their school, services are available to assist in transporting the child to their home school to support educational continuity for the child.

Parenting Youth Supplement

To better support youth who are in out-of-home care and their children, policy has shifted to allow parenting youth to retain custody of their child if there are no concerns or safety threats surrounding the youth's ability to care for their child. The parenting youth supplement provides compensation to the foster parent or caregiver to help meet the everyday needs of the parenting youth's child. In retaining custody of their child, the parenting youth, with the support of their foster parent, will be able to apply for services such as child care assistance through the Division of Family Support (DFS).

Training is available for staff and foster/adoptive parents to learn the parenting youth's rights and responsibilities and how to address safety threats and risk concerns. Access this training via the link and enrollment key below:

<https://learn.trc.eku.edu/moodle/course/view.php?id=539>

Foster Parent with a state Recruitment and Certification Social Worker. Your enrollment key is: ParentingYouthFAP2020#



Beginning January 2021, a single statewide managed care organization (MCO), Aetna Better Health of Kentucky, will manage the new Supporting Kentucky Youth program known as SKY. This includes children and youth in out of home care, placed with fictive kin, and those receiving adoption assistance will be enrolled with Aetna for their Medicaid Coverage. The SKY program offers enhanced benefits to members.

For more information and frequently asked questions visit:

<https://chfs.ky.gov/agencies/dms/member/Documents/SKYFAQ.pdf>