



Family Support Services
OF NORTH FLORIDA INC.
SERVING DUVAL AND NASSAU COUNTIES

Adoption NEWS

DECEMBER | 2008

Especially for Adoptive Parents and Relative Caregivers

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www.fssjax.org

National Adoption Month celebrated by 23 who found “forever families”

A ceremony for National Adoption Day was held on Nov. 20 at the Duval County Courthouse where 23 more children found a loving “forever home.”

Jim Adams, Family Support Services CEO, said the team of Judge David Gooding and Judge Waddell Wallace has set a precedent for safe, effective and timely adoptions, which foster children so desperately need. A private reception honoring judicial partners was held in the afternoon following the ceremony.

On Nov. 22, Nassau County’s adoptive families and community celebrated National Adoption Month with a luncheon.



Mackenzie, 3, celebrated her adoption on Nov. 8 during National Adoption Month.



From left: Dawn Lopez, Anchor, CBS 47, Jim Adams, CEO, Family Support Services, and Joyce Andrews, Foster Parent, at the Florida Coalition for Children annual conference.

Statewide event honors local news anchor

More than 500 gathered in Orlando last month to celebrate and honor the individual and collective work on behalf of children and families in Florida.

The annual conference for the Florida Coalition for Children brings together state, local and community agencies responsible for child welfare and advocacy. Family Support Services (FSS) nominated and received two awards for individuals whose support of children’s issues were exemplary.

Dawn Lopez, CBS 47 anchor and host of *Jacksonville’s Children* received “One Person Can Make a Difference” award. Airing since April 2005, the 119 shows (to date) have

increased Duval County’s adoption success rate by 50 percent.

Lopez donates her time each week to talk with a child or sibling group who is hoping to find a forever family. Her commitment to children in foster care has made a significant impact, and contributed to helping FSS lead the state in 2007-08 with a record-setting 576 adoptions.

The Florida Coalition for Children gave the Foster Parent of the Year Award to Joyce Andrews. FSS nominated Andrews for being a foster parent to more than 60 teenagers—helping them improve their lives—as they age out of foster care.

Home for the Holidays

December 18 2 p.m.

Duval County Courthouse

NEWS *briefs*

The Family Support Services 2007-08 Report to the Community is now available! To request a copy, please call (904) 421-5800. Download an electronic version at www.fssjax.org.



Northeast Florida Foster and Adoptive Parent Association Party

Monday, Dec. 8, 6:30 p.m., Northwest Branch Library. The Greater Jacksonville Foster and Adoptive Parent Assn. will not meet again until January.

Foster Children's Holiday Party

Saturday, Dec. 13
11 a.m. - 1 p.m.
Jacksonville Zoo and Gardens.

Holiday Party for Nassau County children in care

Sunday, Dec. 14
Time and place TBD.

Sisters in search of a "forever family"

Erika and **Britanni** are spirited sisters with a close relationship. Erika is outgoing, articulate and friendly with a high energy. While Britanni is her counterpoint with a more quiet nature and a tendency towards shyness. Together they bring out the best in each other.



These loving sisters are in full agreement when it comes to a family. They want a Mom and a Dad who can "be with them forever". It's no surprise that Erika and Britanni insist on being adopted together, where they can continue to surprise and delight each other and those around them for many years to come. To see more children that are hoping to find a forever family, visit www.heartgalleryjax.org.

Safety tips for a Happy Holiday Season!

Be extra careful around the Christmas tree and lights.

Ask Mom and Dad to help you plug things into the wall.

Play outdoors in groups since it gets dark earlier.

Blow out candles and turn off the lights at bedtime.

Do not touch the lights, they are HOT!

Do not play with candles and matches!

Advice to keep the holidays merry!

Here's advice to help everyone through the holiday season from www.more4kids.info

- ❖ **Teach your younger child to "boss yourself."** Experts said that the "tattling" child should be sure she's doing the right thing instead of paying so much attention to what other children are doing.
- ❖ **Use that advice yourself.** Don't worry... about what other people are getting their kids for Christmas...that the neighbors already have their lights up and you can't remember where yours are... that the cookies you bring to the holiday party are store-bought. You and your family decide where you want to spend your time and money.
- ❖ **Give yourself the gift of time.** It's not called the "Twelve Days of Christmas" for nothing. Cut out activities no one enjoys. Ask everyone in your family to pick one or two holiday activities they like and just do those.
- ❖ **Set a budget and stick to it.** If you have a large family or a limited budget, buy gifts just for the children, draw names, set a limit on the cost of gifts or make homemade gifts. Consider shopping online. Many retailers have free shipping this time of year.
- ❖ **Cook up some memories.** Many holiday memories involve food. If you like to, bake cookies and make candies with your family. Or get together with friends, bake together and split the goodies.
- ❖ **Spread the word.** When it comes time for the big holiday dinner and your family's large, ask folks to bring side dishes to pass.



FSS holiday schedule:

Happy Holidays!

Our offices will be closed Dec. 24 & 25, 2008 and Jan. 1, 2009.

