



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

# Adoption NEWS

FEBRUARY | 2009

Especially for Adoptive Parents and Relative Caregivers

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www.fssjax.org

## FSS achieves national accreditation



Family Support Services (FSS) achieved national accreditation from the Council on Accreditation (COA) — a New York-based international agency accrediting community-based health care and human services organizations since 1977.

The COA accreditation process involves a detailed review and analysis of both an organization's administrative and service delivery practices. All are measured against national standards of best practice services: accessible, appropriate, culturally responsive, evidence-based and outcomes-oriented. The process also confirms FSS' services are provided by a skilled and supported workforce, which treats all individuals with dignity and respect.

"The standards are rigorous and many of our staff worked extremely hard for a year to assure our success. This is also verification to our clients, board members, community partners and stakeholders that we take seriously our credibility and integrity as the lead agency for foster care and adoption in Northeast Florida," stated Jim Adams, FSS's CEO.



Fred Taylor of the Jacksonville Jaguars presents FSS staffers with \$5,000 holiday donation from the Jacksonville Jaguars Foundation. Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Florida made a \$5,000 contribution as well.

## Mahalo! Bryanna's heart is filled with gratitude.



The staff at **Roy's Restaurant** opened their hearts to **Bryanna**, who wants to be a chef, when they invited her to prepare a special dessert with **Chef Nick** (left), **Dawn Lopez**, Anchor CBS47, (right) filmed the segment for *Jacksonville's Children*.

Bryanna couldn't believe the news when she heard her Uncle Chuck was going to adopt her. "I got my wish to be with my family," she said. "When my Uncle found out about me I was so glad."

Bryanna Little's adoption began in 2008 when a contact letter was sent out. Chuck Little and his fiancée, Lee, had been looking for Bryanna after they heard she was in foster care. Once the connection was made, Chuck's biggest fear was that Bryanna wouldn't remember him. But at their first reunion, Bryanna ran into his arms—"Uncle Chuck! It's a miracle... I'm with my family again."

Judge David Gooding finalized the adoption on Dec. 18 during *Home for the Holidays*, an adoption celebration event at the Duval County Courthouse, along with more than 22 other children.

"My heart was bursting with joy." Bryanna said following the finalization. "My Dad is a wonderful man and I'm so happy to spend the rest of my life with him." Bryanna's new family includes Mom and Dad, 10 year-old sister Kaetlyn and seven dogs.

Roy's Restaurant met Bryanna during an interview for *Jacksonville's Children* and invited the Little family to return for a gourmet lunch to celebrate her adoption. JP Diedrich, managing partner, and Chef Nick presented her with an autographed cookbook from Bryanna's favorite chef, Paula Deen. A special thanks to Jeannie Lee at Roy's Restaurant for helping to make it all happen.



Photos by: Kirk Chamberlain

Family Support Services CEO Jim Adams presented Bryanna with a life book filled with clippings, photos and other special mementos collected by adoption specialist Rebecca Marguelies, along with a framed portrait of her preparing a special dessert for the restaurant.

The holidays were especially happy for the Little family thanks to the tireless work of Michael Boling, Bryanna's caseworker, and her new friends at Roy's Restaurant. **Mahalo!** (that's "gratitude" in Hawaiian).

# NEWSbriefs

## A money tree in the backyard?

If your children treat money like it grows on trees, a website GiveMe20.com can help as a resource for your pre-teens and teens to teach them all about money.

The website, sponsored by credit unions, explains how to calculate an allowance for younger children, the difference between credit unions and banks, and all about credit and credit cards, and what credit means.

The site can teach your children (and you) about controlling spending and how to successfully manage money.

## Parent Association meetings

The Greater Jacksonville Foster and Adoptive Parent Assn. will meet at 6:30 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 26, at Jewish Community and Family Services, 3733 University Blvd. West, Ste.308, Jacksonville.

The Northeast Florida Foster and Adoptive Parent Assn. will meet at 6:30 p.m., Monday, Feb. 9, at the Northwest Branch Library on Edgewood Avenue.

The Nassau County Foster and Adoptive Parent Assn. will meet at 6:30 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 26, at the Nassau County Commission Chambers, 80626 Page's Dairy Road in Yulee.

# All things behavioral

A child placed in foster care may be there for a number of reasons including their own behavior, or that of his parents (including abandonment, incarceration, substance abuse or death).

Studies show that African-American children make up two-thirds of the foster care population; two of three children who enter foster care are reunited with their birth parents within two years.

A significant number may spend a long time waiting for adoption or other permanency.

The American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry advises that children in foster care struggle with issues including:

- Blaming themselves and feeling guilty about removal from their birth parents;
- Wishing to go back to their birth parents even though they were abused by them;
- Feeling unwanted if waiting adoption for a long time;
- Feeling helpless about multiple changes in foster parents over time;
- Having mixed emotions about attaching to foster parents;
- Feeling insecure and uncertain about their future;
- Reluctantly acknowledging positive feelings for foster parents.

The Academy recommends that foster parents recognize important challenges in working with their foster children and include:

- Recognizing the limits of their emotional attachment to the child;
- Understanding mixed feelings toward the child's birth parents;
- Recognizing their difficulties in letting the child return to the birth parents
- Dealing with the complex needs (emotional, physical, etc.) of the children in their care;
- Working with sponsoring social agencies;
- Finding needed support services in the community;
- Dealing with the child's emotions and behavior following visits from the birth parents.

Because foster children have such special and complex needs, the Academy recommends that a team of people — social workers, mental health professionals, child welfare agencies and the foster parents—work together as a team for the best interest of the child.

Source: American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry

## How to take care of your children's teeth



February is National Children's Dental Hygiene Month.

Here are some tips to keep your children's teeth healthy:

- ▶ Wipe your baby's gums with a soft damp cloth after feedings helps to prevent the buildup of bacteria.
- ▶ When teeth appear, start using a soft children's toothbrush twice a day.
- ▶ At preschool age, start using fluoride toothpaste. Don't cover the entire brush surface with toothpaste.
- ▶ Use fluoride tablets or get fluoride treatments if you have well water. City water supplies are fluoridated, which hardens the tooth enamel and protects the teeth against cavities.
- ▶ Don't let the small child go to sleep with a baby bottle. When the sugars in the fruit juice or liquid have contact with the teeth, cavities can develop.
- ▶ Avoid giving your children sweets, sticky foods and between-meal snacks. Too much soda also causes tooth decay.
- ▶ Be sure the child brushes twice daily.

Source: American Dental Association



## Wouldn't you like to be a mentor, too?

Family Support Services has a Foster Buddy program that needs people interested in mentoring foster children. Are you a mentor? Can you think of someone who mentored you and made a difference in your life? To read compelling commentary or watch short videos of well-known personalities—such as Quincy Jones, Clint Eastwood, Oprah Winfrey, Colin Powell, and others, talking about their own mentors, go to the *Who Mentored You* website at [www.whomentoredyou.org](http://www.whomentoredyou.org).

If you're interested in becoming a mentor, contact FSS Education Specialist, Gail Cook at (904) 421-5822.

