



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

Foster NEWS

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A Monthly Publication
for Foster Parents

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www.fssjax.org

Reserve your spot for Children's Week

Join us during Children's Week, at the State Capitol in Tallahassee, and help strengthen Florida's families by sharing a commitment to improve our communities through events and outreach efforts aimed at promoting the health, safety and well-being of our children.

Tuesday, March 31 is Children's Day. Family Support Services (FSS) will be providing a free bus shuttle to the event. If you would like to reserve your spot, please email Candace.Monroe@fssnf.org or call (904)421-5860. Please provide your name, cell phone number, and the names of any traveling children (under 7 not allowed on the bus please). Seats will be filled on a first-come basis and is limited to 100.

The bus will depart FSS, 4057 Carmichael Ave., at 5:30 a.m. and return at 6:30 p.m.
(continued on back)

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.

Mahalo! Bryanna's heart is filled with gratitude.



Photo by: Kirk Chamberlain

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**.

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.

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*).

All things behavioral

Working together for children in care

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).

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. FSS with a team of people — mental health professionals, neighborhood providers and the foster parents can work together as a team for the best interest of the child.

Source: American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry

Children's (continued)

Children's Week is supported by over 80 different non-profit, corporate, philanthropic, faith based, state agencies and organizations. Children's Week develops and implements over 200 community events and activities statewide, bringing thousands of parents, children, policy makers, professionals, community leaders and concerned citizens together to share valuable knowledge and information about children's issues in each community across the state and at the State Capitol. For more information, visit <http://www.childrensweek.org>.

NEWS briefs

Mark your calendar!

March 7, 2009

Foster parent training on Foster Care Redesign. Details to come.

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.

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.

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



Are you a mentor?

Family Support Services has a Foster Buddy program that needs people interested in mentoring foster children. Can you think of someone who mentored you and made a difference in your life?

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



How can we please you?

Send your comments us at info@fssnf.org

To request a printed copy of the 2008 FSS Report to the Community, email info@fssnf.org. Or you may download a pdf at www.fssjax.org.

