



Family Support Services

OF NORTH FLORIDA INC.

SERVING DUVAL AND NASSAU COUNTIES

Dental services bring smiles to our children

Jim Adams, FSS CEO, says he wants to remind foster parents and case workers that dental services and braces are available for children in care. Those on Medicaid can be seen at the Duval County Health Department dental clinics and by certain dentists in Jacksonville who accept Medicaid. Dental services in Nassau County are available through the Nassau County Health Department Dental Clinic at the Full Service School on Felmor Road in Yulee.

Adams added that the Jacksonville University School of Orthodontics has partnered with Family Support Services and other agencies to provide 15 sets of braces and treatments per year. The school also seeks \$600 donations, which can fund one child's new smile.

For more information, call the JU Orthodontics School at (904) 256-7846 or visit www.smallsmilescampaign.com.



JR Figueroa, foreground, and Nick Rekau, deliver computers to Family Support Services from Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Florida.

A similar program is expected to begin in Nassau County.

“Our heartfelt thanks go out to the many volunteers behind the scenes from BCBSF, FCCJ and First Coast Service Options for their dedication to giving our foster children the tools they need to live up to their full academic potential,” he said.

Foster parents who already know how to operate a computer but who don't have one in their home can call Debbie Campbell at (904) 521-5628 to take a survey before getting a computer. Leave a voice mail with your name, phone number and how many foster children are in the home if she is not available. Every family getting a computer will be required to attend FSS' course on computer safety and sign documents assuring children will be monitored while using the computer.

Upcoming Events

Nov. 1-15: Heart Gallery exhibit at Jacksonville Agricultural Fair
 Nov. 16: State and Local Foster Parent Assn. meeting 7 p.m. - Hyatt Hotel, downtown Jacksonville; speaker Joel Weintraub at 3 p.m.
 Nov. 17: National Adoption Day

Coming home for the holidays

Home for the Holidays scheduled for Dec. 20 at the Duval County Courthouse will be celebrated by Judges Waddell Wallace and David Gooding. Judge Wallace will preside over adoptions at 9 a.m. and Judge Gooding will preside over adoptions at 10 a.m. A reception will follow for families and others who attend at the Hyatt Hotel next to the courthouse. The large adoption event is designed to give our children permanent homes in time for the holidays.

Meet Justin

Justin is a handsome and shy 14-year-old. He excels in science in school and enjoys working with his hands, using the computer, and tinkering with cameras and other tech-type gadgets.

Fitting to his personality, Justin can be described as friendly, loveable, compassionate and caring. So finding a permanent and loveable family is just what he needs.

Justin currently resides in a group home but if your home has room for this loving young man, please don't delay in letting him know. Call about him today!

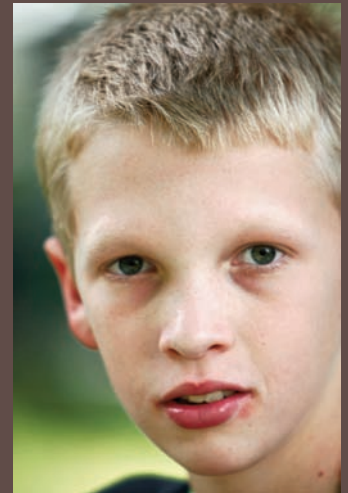


photo by Tim Tyler

Businesses help kids bridge digital divide

In October, Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Florida (BCBSF) donated 100 used computers to Family Support Services of North Florida (FSS), and First Coast Options donated the monitors to help foster children “bridge the digital divide.”

FSS and Florida Community College at Jacksonville (FCCJ) collaborated so foster parents can first be trained on the computers and cyber-safety. The first group of six has learned computer basics, e-mail, research, document set-up and how to monitor children's activities on computers. Other training is planned for those who've signed up.

“Through a state grant, FSS has been able to track the progress of foster children in the Duval County School System,” said FSS Chief Executive Officer Jim Adams. “This funding has allowed us to gain valuable information about our foster children and their academic needs.” The computers, he said, are just a part of the educational services FSS wants to provide foster children.

The Northeast Florida Fair in Nassau County brings families together and FSS was there to recruit new foster and adoptive parents.



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We'd like to hear from you! If you have any questions or would like to see any issues covered in the FSS Foster Newsletter, please email us at mary.hurst@fssnf.org or call Jim Adams, CEO, at (904) 421-5800.



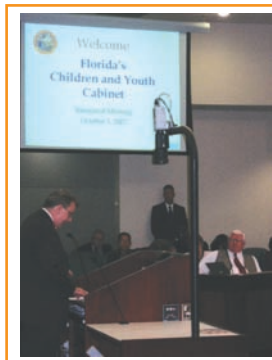
Judge Wallace: View from the Bench

I continue to be amazed by the services provided by our foster parents. You do not get enough recognition. There is no better expression of unconditional love than what you give of yourselves to our most vulnerable children.

It can be very difficult to care for a child for months and then have that child removed from your foster home. Yet, parents have a constitutional right to raise their children. To remove a child, the state must show that parents abused, abandoned or neglected the child. In most cases, the state is also required to provide services to parents to help correct the problems in the home.

It is painful to remove a child from a foster home when the child has become bonded to the foster parents. If the biological parents have shown themselves fit, they are normally entitled to the return of their children, even if knowledgeable persons would agree that it would be in the best interests of the child to remain in the foster home.

We must therefore act as quickly as possible to determine whether reunification with parents is possible. This includes prompt, consistent provision of services and regular visitation, when appropriate. We appreciate your continued cooperation with the courts as we seek to protect the children by fairly and objectively applying the law.



Jim Adams, CEO of Family Support Services addresses the Governors Youth and Children's Cabinet at the inaugural meeting in Tallahassee. Adams emphasized the importance of information sharing between agencies to track foster children's educational progress — a process that was initiated by FSS.

Easing out of foster care



Florida Department of Children and Families (DCF) Regional Administrator Nancy Dreicer welcomed DCF Secretary Bob Butterworth to Jacksonville recently to unveil a \$750,000 check from the state coffers to help fund New Life Village.

This project, by the Youth Crisis Center (YCC), will provide transitional housing for young people aging out of foster care. The Congressional delegation has pledged \$6 million.

YCC needs to raise an additional \$4 million as an operating endowment.

The transitional housing staff and programs will help foster youth, aged 16 to 21, get an education and job, life and social skills, and to live successfully on their own eventually.