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SERVICES**

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THE CASEY Reporter

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December 2008

Becoming the Hatch Family

by Michelle Hatch

We always knew we would adopt children. We had two birth children and envisioned adding more. Happy voices and smiling faces around the table. The beginning process was simple enough. We worked with the Division for Children, Youth and Families of New Hampshire, took our classes, did the home study, decided what we could and could not handle. How many children? What legal risk? What behavioral problems? It was easy to say yes or no without knowing who we were saying no to. We told them we never wanted a boring day.

In July of 2006 we met with DCYF as they had found a potential match for us. Three boys, one girl, ages 4-9. At that time we were told there was little legal risk; one of the children had Aspergers but no additional items were identified for any of the children.

In the next year and a half we learned more than we ever thought we needed to know. Abbreviations like RAD, TPR, and PTSD, became an intricate part of our vocabulary. We fought battles on many fronts. There were psychology appointments, school



meetings, court proceedings, calls from the principal - but we did all of it because after the names became faces, and the faces smiled, they were our children. After the first hugs, and the first "I love yous," no matter what we had said back in July of 2006 we hadn't wanted to do, we did. We had to fight for what was best for them.

In November of 2007 we found ourselves at a cross roads. Our new children still weren't our legal children yet. Their needs were much more compounded than originally thought. On DCYF's recommendation, our license was transferred to Casey Family Services. It was there that we met allies in our crusade for the children.

The knowledge level of the psychological issues and the associated behaviors were a perfect partnership for us to be able to best help our children. They made us feel sane again.

On April 10, 2008, the legal system finalized what had been long true in our hearts - our children were legally ours. Although the children's needs had turned out to be much greater than we had planned on, in the end, it is worth every minute. Our situation was unique compared to others we have met in the foster to adopt community. In the end, we got our wish. We adopted four wonderful children and we still haven't had one boring day since.

From the Division Director's Desk: Edward C. Rennells Jr.

We've spent a lot of time in the New Hampshire Division and throughout Casey Family Services talking about "permanency." And yet with permanency comes change. By that I mean that we've been incorporating changes in the office, in new staff, new programming, and new thinking.

First, congratulations to Cindy Lamontagne, our new Team Leader. Cindy has been with Casey for nine years now, having served as a social worker in foster care and before that as a family support specialist in Franklin when our Family Resource Center work was starting. She brings a perspective of having done Casey's work in family preservation and foster care, both stages of what we call the permanency continuum. That is, the full spectrum of how we in the child welfare field work to assist vulnerable children



attain a permanent family.

In Franklin that has meant working to prevent the conditions that cause family problems to escalate to the point where a child has to be removed. We have worked with parents, and sometimes grandparents, to give them the help they need in raising young children. That help can take the form of emotional support through a facilitated group, home visits to go into great and specific

detail about issues facing the family, and material supports from toys at holiday time to connecting families with resources for financial help.

In coming weeks, that work will take the form of a Casey - led coalition to provide free income tax preparation aimed at families that qualify for the Earned Income Tax Credit. Year round, the coalition connects families to such resources as a matched savings account. Over the summer, for example, a woman who saved through such an account got matching funds to help her buy a more reliable car. The car will help her to provide stability for the granddaughter she is raising, and allow them both to remain in Franklin, a community without public transportation.

Our new Reunification program seeks to bring

children back together with their birth families. We are working closely with the Division for Children, Youth and Families to pilot this effort in the Concord and Laconia areas. If it proves successful, it will be expanded to other parts of our state. It is intense work that is emotionally challenging, for both families and staff. Yet the rewards of working to achieve true permanency in the life of a child are very gratifying.

This is a time of year when celebrating family connections is particularly meaningful. For some, that means being reunited with the family that gave them life. For others, it means adoption into a new family. And for others, it means getting a little help, or sometimes a lot of help, to stay together. Happy holidays to you all.

Dennis Antonelli: A Tribute by Gail Newton



Editor's note: Foster Parent Dennis Antonelli died in a motorcycle accident on July 25, 2008. He and wife Stacy became Casey parents in 2001 and over the years welcomed four young people into their family. He is pictured on the right with his wife Stacy, and foster parents Gail and Dan Newton.

Dennis Antonelli was a good man. He was a good husband, father, son, grandfather, foster father and friend. He'd been to Vietnam. Dennis and Stacy had blended a family together and became one. It was not a "my kids" and "your kids" home. It was an "our" kids home. Together they had one child. After my husband Dan chatted with Dennis about us being a foster family, he went home and talked to Stacy. They became a Casey family soon after.

He is missed terribly. He is remembered every day. You expect him to walk in the door at any minute. You

expect to hear his booming voice give a joke or funny gesture. It does not come, and it brings home how real losing him is.

Stacy is trying to keep things running smoothly. She is continuing to raise the foster sons in her care. The pet store is still running with the help of family and friends. Casey has been supportive to her and the family. In her loss, there is some absolutely wonderful news coming from daughter Elia, husband Ryan and grandson Luke. They are expecting the arrival of twins in April. I am sure Dennis is marveling at this also.

2008 Casey Family Services Foster Parent Conference

A Parent Perspective by Darcy Tuoti

On September 13 and 14 the 2008 Casey Family Services Foster Parent Conference was held in Boston at the Marriott Copley Place Hotel. The theme of the conference this year was “The Power of Family.” For me, one of the highlights of the conference was the chance to hear Victoria Rowell speak. Victoria is a well-known television and film actress. She is also the national spokesperson for the Annie E. Casey Foundation and an ardent advocate for children in foster care and their foster parents. She spoke honestly, movingly, and eloquently about her life as a child raised in foster care and how that has impacted her then and now. She also graciously signed copies of her book, *The Women Who Raised Me*.

Dr. Patricia Leebman’s presentation was also interesting and helpful. She talked about parenting children with backgrounds of loss and trauma, and shared some useful insights and tips. The panel, which featured Casey youth and parents talking about what their families mean to them, was inspiring. The individual small workshops gave conference goers the chance to interact on a more personal basis and share common experiences and advice with other foster parents. Sometimes just knowing that someone else has

the same questions, concerns, and frustrations that you have makes life a little easier.

Attending this conference for the first time, my husband Frank and I were very impressed with the consideration given to us and the other attendees. The hotel accommodations were luxurious and made us feel pampered (check out the feather beds!), and the Casey staff were cheerful and helpful. A comedy cabaret cocktail hour preceded dinner with entertainment provided by comedienne Loretta LaRouche, who taught us not to take ourselves too seriously, and that laughter really can sometimes be the best medicine. After dinner, a band and dancing were available for those who wanted, or if you chose, you could have down time. The speakers, whether professionals in their field, or Casey parents or youth, were thought provoking and inspiring.

All too soon the conference came to an end, and it was time for us all to head back to our respective homes, whether it was to one of the New England states or south to Maryland. We took with us pleasant memories, new knowledge, and a rekindled commitment to our families.

Families, Staff Play Role in Foster Parent Conference

Several parents and staff of the New Hampshire Division had featured roles in “The Power of Family,” the 2008 Casey Family Services Foster Parent Conference held September 13 and 14 in Boston.

Attendees also heard presentations that included a workshop by Jennifer McAllister and Gwen Whitney-Gill, entitled “Missing Pieces: Discovering the Mysteries of Birth Families.” Jennifer also joined Cindy Lamontagne to co-present “Cognitive Behavioral Therapy:



Donna and Kayla Coraluzzo joined families from Hartford and Bridgeport, Connecticut, in a plenary session: “The Power of Family in the Lives of Youth”, that opened the conference’s second day.

Treatment for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder.”

In addition, the workshop “From Fostering to Adoption to Post-Permanence” included several NH Division staff and foster families. Lori Pelletier-Baker and Kathryn Starratt were joined by foster parents Brenda Marotto, Marc Potvin, and Darcy and Frank Tuoti in a session described as offering “candid and inspirational insights into their journey from fostering to adoption and beyond.”



Casey Welcomes New Interns!

Gordon Krantz is studying at the Boston University's School of Social Work for his Masters in Social Work.

Jessica Brazeau is studying for her Masters in Social Work at the University of New Hampshire.

Children Waiting for Adoption

We have a current need to find families for several youths and we thought you might be able to help us spread the word. We hope that you may be able to share them with others in your community through your neighborhood, house of worship, civic group, and workplace. If you know of anyone who might be interested in exploring this important opportunity to provide a home for one of the youth described below, please have them contact Cathy Smith, Resource Coordinator, at 603.224.8909.

MEET JAKE

Jake is an engaging, goal-oriented 15 year old who likes to write, swim, snowboard, and work with animals. He's also interested in cooking, learning to play the guitar, movies, and video games. He wishes for parents who can provide him with consistency and quality time. Jake would do best in a structured environment surrounded with love and compassion where he can grow into adulthood. If you are interested in exploring the opportunity to provide a foster/adoptive home for Jake, please let us know.

MEET LILLYANA

Lillyana is a typical 14 year old girl who enjoys lacrosse, animals, listening to music, going shopping and spending time with her friends. Her favorite class in school is science. Lillyana would love to find a forever family in the Alton/Barnstead area with patience and skillful experience raising teens. She needs parents who will be able to advocate for her in the school system. To learn more about her, please contact us soon!

MEET EMMA

Emma is a charming, imaginative and spunky 12 year old! She enjoys gymnastics, children, arts and crafts, animals, and would love to live on a farm. She is wishing for an experienced family that can provide good supervision and has lots of energy. Emma would love a home where she can ride her bike and play basketball. If you are interested in learning about providing a foster/adoptive home for Emma to help nurture this engaging pre-teen into adulthood, give us a call.

Conversation on Attachment

Conversation on Attachment is an ongoing series for foster and adoptive parents that will occur in 2009 on an every other month basis. It is presented by Cynthia Hogan and Laurie Ekberg. Upcoming dates are January 15 and March 19, 6 to 8 p.m. at Casey in Concord.

For more information, call 603.224.8909.

CPAS Getaways Begin Final Year

As CPAS (Collaborative Post Adoption Services) enters its final year of our five year journey, we hope to serve more foster and adoptive families than ever before. For our final year, we have scheduled seven Romantic Getaways throughout the state with the hopes of having at least 15 licensed foster and adoptive couples at each getaway.

The Romantic Getaways will be held at either the scenic Wentworth by the Sea Hotel located in New Castle, NH or at the beautiful Woodstock Inn and Brewery, located in Woodstock NH. Each getaway offers licensed foster and adoptive parents an opportunity to getaway (without the children!) for a weekend while earning eight

training hours toward their license.

Each weekend includes two night accommodations, two full breakfasts, as well as a candlelight dinner for two. The weekend also includes an eight-hour PREP training that focuses on teaching couples how to communicate effectively, work as a team to solve problems, manage conflicts without damaging closeness, and preserve and enhance love, commitment, and friendship. This is the one and only training that focuses primarily on you and your relationship and gives you an opportunity to meet and connect with other foster and adoptive couples throughout the state.

Each couple is expected

to participate in an intake process that includes a questionnaire. The couple is also expected to attend our six-month follow up focus groups which have been occurring at the Common Man in Concord.

This unique opportunity is at no cost to you and will only be occurring until May 2009.

For more details, please call Erin Murphy, 224.8909 or email emurphy@caseyfamilyservices.org



Upcoming dates for CPAS:

November 21-23, 2008
Woodstock Inn, Woodstock NH

January 9-11, 2009
Wentworth by the Sea, Portsmouth, NH

March 6-8, 2009
Woodstock Inn, Woodstock NH

March 20-22, 2009
Woodstock Inn, Woodstock NH

April 10-12, 2009
Woodstock Inn, Woodstock NH

May 8-10, 2009
Woodstock Inn, Woodstock NH

Look What's New at Casey!

We are pleased to announce that we have our Reunification team in place! Lori Pelletier-Baker and Regina Mattrella are the social workers for the program. They, along with Gwen Whitney-Gill as the family support specialist, and Meme Wheeler as the team leader will make up the team for this new program as we prepare to work with DCYF on cases with first time placements. Please join us in congratulating our new team members and wishing them well as we start this new venture to help more children and families in New Hampshire!

We have also hired Amy York, MSW as our new

Foster Care social worker, and Carol Dudley as our new family support specialist. Amy comes to us from Child and Family Services in Nashua, NH. She graduated from the University of New Hampshire with her Masters Degree in Social Work.

Carol graduated from Towson University in Maryland where she received Bachelor of Science Degrees in Psychology and Sociology with a concentration in Criminal Justice. After college she worked as a senior residential treatment counselor for four years in the adolescent boys unit of the Villa Maria Residential Treatment Center.

Pre-approved Informal Training Resources on Permanency

Videos

“The Martian Child”
(2008) – John Cusack
– Single father adopts young boy – abandonment issues.

Books

Adopting the Older Child
by Claudia L. Jewett.

Attaching in Adoption
by Deborah Gray. This book offers practical guidance on parenting adopted children who have behavioral and emotional challenges. It gives specific ideas for supporting a child through the stages of emotional development and helping children to “relax the grip of anxiety and control.”

Parenting the Hurt Child
by Keck and Kupecky. In this sequel to their *Adopting the Hurt Child* (1998), Keck and Kupecky explore how parents can help adopted or foster children who have suffered neglect or abuse.

The Family of Adoption
by Joyce Pavao. This book describes issues common to adoptees at different developmental stages.

The Primal Wound: Understanding the Adopted Child by Nancy Newton Verrier. Reading this book is like peering through a window into the secret inner life of the adoptee, which makes it an excellent book both for adoptees and for those who are close to them. Since some of the issues Verrier addresses in this book are common to many people who were not adopted, such as people who were placed in incubators at birth or

people who grew up with alcoholic parents. This is also an excellent book for people outside of the book’s target audience.

Toddler Adoption, the Weaver’s Craft by Mary Hopkins-Best. In this work, Hopkins-Best, a child development expert and mother of a child adopted as a toddler, provides a guidebook for those considering toddler adoption. She discusses

at length strategies for dealing with issues such as a grieving toddler or attachment disorder. She also explains normal toddler development and possible variances in the adopted toddler.

Twenty Things Every Adopted Child Wishes Their Adoptive Parent Knew by Sherrie Eldridge

Other Options:

The Family Resource Connection provides

the “library” link, then click on the subject. Write down the book id number and then email them at: FRC@finch.nhsl.lib.nh.us or call them at the above number to request the item(s).

Casey Family Services has a resource library from which you can borrow books and videos on subjects of interest, including permanency, parenting, grief and loss, talking with children about sexuality and sexual safety, life skills, diversity, and many others. The library is located in the Visiting Room in both the Concord and Littleton offices. Materials appropriate for reading with your Casey child and your birth children are also available.

To borrow materials from the Casey library, sign the card in the front of the book and give it to the receptionist before you leave the building. Materials may be borrowed for up to 30 days, although more “in demand” topics may have a shorter lending period.

To find which book/video you are interested in, go to their website and click

**PERMANENCE...IS A STATE OF FEELING
THAT IS SYNONYMOUS WITH IDENTITY.
IT IS THE QUALITY OF ROOTEDNESS.
-NADIA ERLICH FINKELSTEIN**



Kinship Care in New Hampshire

According to the AARP (2005), in the State of New Hampshire, there were 10,119 children living in grandparent-headed households (3.3 % of all children in the state). There were another 2,339 children living in households headed by other relatives (0.8 % of all children in the state). Of the children who were living in households headed by grandparents or other relatives in New Hampshire, 3,869 are living there without either parent present. As these numbers have grown since 2005 and continue to grow New Hampshire continues to offer services for these families struggling with issues such as substance abuse, mental illness, incarceration, economic hardship, divorce, and domestic violence. Relatives filling this role, known as kinship caregivers, provide a vital safety net to children inside and outside of the foster care system.

Kinship caregivers do not have to be licensed in New Hampshire to care for children but they must be approved by state's Division for Children, Youth and Families. To be approved, kin must fill out the Kinship Interim Care (KIC) Checklist (also called a "Form 2273") and participate, cooperate, and meet the requirements of the kinship care approval process. If kin wish to qualify as a fully-licensed foster family, they must meet the same requirements as non-kin. However, the agency may waive certain licensing requirements that are not related to the health and safety of the child.

Questions about kinship foster placements should be directed to Janet Kolhase, Kinship Care Specialist, and New Hampshire Division for Children, Youth and Families. Other resources for these families may be found on the web at: <http://extension.unh.edu/Family/NHRAPP/Kinship.htm>

KUDOS

Erica S. got a job!

Tyler M. helped citizens of the Dominican Republic on a recent missionary trip with his family.

Sandy is playing volleyball for Mascoma High School and continues to ride and train horses on the weekends.

Cliff is learning the electric guitar and participates in Karate.

William is playing soccer for RSEC Academy.

Rob is playing soccer for Parker Academy and has a job at Market Basket.

Tra attended lacrosse camp and participates in many sports activities at The Works Athletic Club.

Nakayla made the JV volleyball team this year and has been offered a job for next summer working for Hidden Valley in the kitchen.



Littleton foster family Barbara and Robert Bernstein prepare their set up for the fun-filled Casey Family Picnic held last August.

www.caseyfamilyservices.org

Would you like to submit something to the *Casey Reporter*?

We always are looking for submissions and feedback. Send your articles, photos, poems, and ideas to Beth-Ann Bryar, resource coordinator, at BBRYAR@CASEYFAMILYSERVICES.ORG. Please be sure to put "For the Newsletter" in your subject line.

The *Casey Reporter* is published quarterly by the New Hampshire Division of Casey Family Services, Director Edward C. Rennells Jr.



THE DIRECT SERVICE AGENCY OF
THE ANNIE E. CASEY FOUNDATION

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Save the Dates

Manchester Monarchs vs. Manitoba Moose Hockey Game

February 8, 2009

4 p.m.

Verizon Wireless Arena,
Manchester

Foster Parent Dinner

May 15, 2008

6 to 9 p.m.

The Common Man,
Plymouth

Visit us online
TODAY



Victoria Rowell, actress, author, and foster care activist, seen here with Raymond L. Torres, Casey Family Services executive director at the 2008 Casey Family Services Foster Parent Conference.

Contributors to this Issue:

Beth-Anne Bryar, Mary Ann Fournier, Cary Gladstone, Cindy Lamontagne, Jennifer McAllister, Erin Murphy, Gail Newton, Bernadette Pelczar, Ed Rennells, Barbara Slayton, Lynn Stanley, Julie Skinner, Cathy Smith, Darcy Tuoti, Erin Wilson

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THE CASEY reporter

Established 1988

DECEMBER

- 17 **IEP Training**
Concord Office
5 to 8 p.m.
- 23 **First Year Support Group**
Concord Office
6 to 8 p.m.
- 25 **Holiday: Office Closed**
- 26 **Holiday: Office Closed**
- 31 **Holiday: Office Closed**

Shaded areas indicate foster parent training hours provided

JANUARY

- 1 **Holiday: Office Closed**
- 12 **SAFE**
Concord Office
5:30 to 7:30 p.m.
- 15 **Conversation on Attachment**
Concord Office
6 to 8 p.m.
- 19 **Holiday: Office Closed**
- 22 **CPR and First Aid 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. or 5 to 9 p.m.**
- 23 **CPR and First Aid 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.**
- 24 **CPR and First Aid 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.**
- 27 **First Year Support Group**
Concord Office
6 to 8 p.m.

FEBRUARY

- 9 **SAFE**
Concord Office
5:30 to 7:30 p.m.
- 16 **Holiday: Office Closed**
- 24 **First Year Support Group**
Concord Office
6 to 8 p.m.

LOOKING AHEAD

April 30 and May 1
The Diversity Journey
Radisson Hotel
Manchester
6 to 8 p.m.

CONCORD-AREA CALENDAR

CASEY FAMILY SERVICES

105 Loudon Road
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THE CASEY reporter

Established 1988

DECEMBER

- 25 **Holiday: Office Closed**
- 26 **Holiday: Office Closed**
- 31 **Holiday: Office Closed**

JANUARY

- 1 **Holiday: Office Closed**
- 19 **Holiday: Office Closed**
- 27 **Support Group**
Littleton Office
6 to 8 p.m.

FEBRUARY

- 16 **Holiday: Office Closed**
- 24 **Support Group**
Notchland Inn
6 to 8 p.m.

LOOKING AHEAD TO MARCH

- 24 **Support Group**
Littleton Office
6 to 8 p.m.

April 30 and May 1
The Diversity Journey
Radisson Hotel
Manchester
6 to 8 p.m.

Shaded areas indicate foster parent training hours provided

LITTLETON-AREA CALENDAR

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