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# THE CASEY reporter

Established 1988

November 2010

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

November is National Adoption Month, which we at Casey Family Services have always acknowledged. To celebrate Adoption Month, Casey joined the Division for Children, Youth and Families in sponsoring an annual Adoption Celebration Event at the Christa McAuliffe Discovery Center. This annual tradition to celebrate the joys of adoption and highlight families and workers in the field was well attended and received the attention of Governor Lynch, the Health and Human Services Commissioner, and the Director of DCYF, Maggie Bishop. There have been a



number of adoptions here at Casey, including the one described in this issue.

When a potential foster parent begins the process of licensure, it is often with an eye toward ultimately adopting. When that is the result, it is a joyous time for all involved. Our social

workers and family support specialists join in the celebration. Then, it's back to work as the need for new foster families continues.

Other permanency outcomes for kids have been increasing. For staff in our reunification efforts, that means a lot of joy, and a lot of work. The work is often intense, in helping a birth parent overcome the obstacles to effective parenting that are part of his or her life. The work is also very rewarding when it leads to parent and child functioning as a family.

Continuing our work, you will see a write up in this issue on the Twin

*Continued on page 2*

## New IRS Ruling Provides Incentive for Adoption

The Internal Revenue Service recently made a significant change to the federal adoption tax credit that could bring foster families who adopt up to \$13,170.

The changes include an increase in the amount of the credit for 2010 and making the credit refundable. That means the amount of the credit in excess of what a filer owes in federal income tax is refunded to the filer. Previously, the credit was non-refundable; meaning any amount over a person's tax bill simply went away. Another key change means the taxpayer may claim up to the full amount of the dollar limitation for adoption of a child with "special needs." Under state law, that would include a child adopted through the child welfare system.

Filers will need to attach an adoption court order or decree to their federal tax return to claim the credit. More information is available at the IRS Web site, [www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov), under Notice 2010-66.

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

Rivers Workcamp, which expanded on our work in Franklin to bring home improvements to elderly, disabled, and low-income homeowners with the enthusiastic help of youth volunteers.

Several new staff, and familiar faces in new roles, will be part of carrying out our work in the future. Jennifer DeLorme, former team leader, has been promoted to deputy director, Jennifer McAllister has been promoted to team leader, and Joe McKellar has been appointed team leader in our Littleton office. Welcome, also, to new



*Congratulations to new Massachusetts Division Director Meme Wheeler, pictured here with her children Emma and Helen.*

social workers Angela Fallon and Olalekan Elesho.

In addition to National Adoption Month, November is also the month

in which we sit down for Thanksgiving. The Bennett family will be among those enjoying the folks seated at their table all the more. Franklin families in homes

made warmer for the cold weather, also have a lot to be thankful for.

Lastly, I want to say thank you to Meme Wheeler, who has been deputy director with Casey Family Services here in New Hampshire for the past two years, and who has begun new duties as director of our Massachusetts Division. The work has changed, some faces have changed, but Casey's commitment to vulnerable children and families remains strong.

### Jennifer DeLorme, Joe McKellar, Jennifer McAllister Promoted to New Positions at Casey

Jennifer DeLorme, has been promoted to the position of deputy division director for the New Hampshire Division. She assumed her new role effective October 4, 2010. Jenn received both her BSW and her MSW from Syracuse University. She began her career with the New Hampshire division in 1994 in a position known as a Foster Home Specialist. Jenn was then promoted to Social Worker in 1995 and subsequently promoted to Team Leader in 2005.

New Hampshire Division Director Ed Rennells noted, "During her almost 16 years with Casey she has demonstrated excellent case management, supervisory, and leadership skills. Jennifer supervised the CPAS-Collaborative Post-Adoption Services Project in partnership with DCYF and Child and Family Services. She led the move to integrate all programs into services in the New Hampshire division. She was instrumental in receiving the US Department of Health and Human Service's 2006 Adoption Excellence Award for support of adoptive families for Casey Family Services. Jennifer has been a strong advocate for permanence in the NH Division and she has actively assisted the division to significantly increase its census of both children and foster families."

Joe McKellar has been promoted to team leader in Casey's Littleton office. Joe had been a social worker with Casey since mid-2009. He previously was on staff at the New England Salem and the Hunter School in Rumney, NH in the position of Therapist and Clinical Director. Joe graduated from Washington & Jefferson College in Washington, PA with a double major in Psychology and English and received his MSW at the University of New England in Biddeford, Maine.

Jennifer McAllister has been promoted to the position of Team Leader in Concord. She will begin her new duties as of October 11th. Jennifer has been our first Intake Worker after being a Foster Care Social Worker for the NH Division division. "Jennifer has helped us increase our census and maintain our high quality of care in the role of Intake Worker. She has worked for Casey for more than 11 years, and her passion and commitment for the work has been apparent on every case," said Ed Rennells, NH division director.

## An Adoption Journey by Rebecca Bennett

“Happiness isn’t a destination you reach, it’s your attitude on the journey.” I found this quotation over 13 years ago in an improbable place (a circuit board factory) at 2 a.m. on a Sunday morning. At the time life had been throwing out road blocks and after reading that quote, and partly due to the groggy idealism that comes at 2 a.m. and is best fueled by coffee, I decided to take a different approach in my thinking and be happy with the imperfect life and all of its quirks.

Twelve years later and plan A, B and C on the road to parenthood hadn’t turned out quite the way we thought. We turned in our paperwork, finished our home study and classes (six weeks from starting by dashing around the state taking the Foster & Adoptive Care ESsentials (FACES) classes in five different places) and a week later we got a call that really surprised us. There were 3 siblings who would likely be free for adoption and our biggest surprise was their ages; 2, 3 and almost 5. Lexi (a fashionista in the making), Jorge (a sports junkie with amazing coordination) and Keegan (our mini “Romeo” who charms everyone) entered our lives and it felt too good to be true. They must have thought so too; they threw their shoes at their DCYF worker on the way back to their foster parents’ home after our first visit because they couldn’t come home with us. They aren’t perfect, as anyone who has witnessed one of the tantrums lasting up to five hours can attest, but it hasn’t been as scary as we thought it would be either. They have blended seamlessly with our families and think that having six grandparents, 14 aunts, 10 uncles and a gaggle of cousins, not to mention the enormous extended family, is the best thing ever.



*From left to right, Keegan, Rebecca, Jorge, Doug, and Alexis*

Our happiness comes easier since we have worked out a good working relationship with the birth family and consider maintaining that relationship important to the kids’ long term well being. We hope in the years to come that the contact will help reduce the “what ifs” most adopted kids have. We also embrace every service available, from counseling to the first year support group (which in our opinion is the most valuable Casey perk and has help bring both support and new friends). We cannot imagine a more perfect family for us and we are looking forward to the journey ahead.

## First Year Support Group and Foster Parent Support Group

The First Year Support Group meets the fourth Tuesday of each month (except for December) from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. at our Concord office and will provide information on topics relevant to parents in their first year of fostering. In addition to receiving valuable training (and two training hours), participants will have the chance to form connections with other parents dealing with similar issues. Newly licensed foster parents will be given more specific information

about this group, a schedule of topics, and encouragement to attend. Please contact Barbara Slayton or Katie Arnold for more information.

Foster parents requested more supportive services, so an informal group was developed for any Casey foster parent and any parents receiving Casey post adoption services. This group is designed to assist parents in supporting one another and to share experiences and expertise.

The group started Monday, October 18 and will be every third Monday of the month at Casey Family Services in Concord from 6 to 7:30 p.m.

We have light refreshments, but childcare will not be provided. The support group is facilitated by Katie Hersom and foster parent Julie Morris. If you are interested please contact Katie at 224.8909 or [khersom@caseyfamilyservices.org](mailto:khersom@caseyfamilyservices.org)

### WHICH GROUP IS RIGHT FOR ME?

Maybe both! If you should be attending the First Year Group, you either received a flyer in the mail, or you will receive one at the Welcome Dinner or from your assigned social worker. All foster parents are welcome to attend the ongoing Support Group. This group is a more open format and geared toward all levels of experience.



From kite flying to sack races, a good time was had by all at the Casey Family Services Annual Family Picnic. Top right, foster parents Deborah and Elliott Markow

## Picnic at Ellacoya

On Saturday, August 28, Casey’s annual Family Picnic took place at Ellacoya State Park in Gilford, NH. It was a beautiful day, just right for a swim in the lake. Families spent their time enjoying chicken and burgers, talking with each other and enjoying the sun and water. Later the children and some adults had fun taking part in a sack race as well as a water balloon throw. Children enjoyed receiving beach buckets and sand toys that they used at the beach. Other youth received sunglasses or kites which they enjoyed flying as the wind picked up later in the day. Toward the end of the day, families anxiously waited as we chose the raffle prize winners and distributed their gifts. Thanks to all of you who came to the event and made the day such a success.

## Reminder for Foster Families

Important Reminder for our Foster Families -- Please be sure to notify Casey right away if there are any changes in your life. This information needs to be documented in your family file. You can call the office or send email to [csmith@caseyfamilyservices.org](mailto:csmith@caseyfamilyservices.org). Thank you!

- Change of address
- Change in email address
- Change of phone number and/or cell number
- Change in members of the household - someone moves in or out or turns 17
- Change in marital status
- Any structural changes to the home (adding a room)
- Any major health changes
- Any changes in police records—charges, violations, convictions
- Change of employer
- Change in local and/or out-of-state emergency contacts

### Casey Family Services Welcomes Our New Foster Families

Deborah and Elliott Markow, Allentown  
 David and Duffy Smiley, Auburn  
 Kimi Ender, Bartlett  
 Chris Chubbuck, Bethlehem  
 Jim and Kim Hennessey, Center Barnstead  
 Debra Bennett, Chichester  
 Zutoni and Honore Murenzi, Concord  
 Sandra and Brian Neal, Concord

Scott and Isabelle Kleinschrodt, Dalton  
 Teresa and Kevin McCullough, Danbury  
 Megan and Craig White, Farmington  
 Brandy Sailors-Dow, Grantham  
 Rikki Shiel, Hooksett  
 Linda and Doug Adams, Keene  
 Dan and Lori Homkovicz, Kingston  
 Gail Gorrow, Lancaster

Kristin Young, Nashua  
 Patricia and Kevin Trader, North Sutton  
 Howard and Pat Carpenter, Pittsfield  
 Mary Frances Renner, Salem  
 Marcy Kelley, Sanbornton  
 Jon and Stacey Abbott, Strafford  
 Eleanor Stilwell, Wilton  
 Brendan and Taryn Davey, Wolfeboro

## Welcome New Social Worker Olalekan Elesho



Hello, my name is Olalekan Elesho and I am a new social worker at Casey Family Services. Prior to joining Casey, I provided ongoing community resources, case management and assessment in the City of Buffalo, N.Y. I also interned for the Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS), Buffalo Regional Office, as an Adoption Specialist. I hold a masters degree from University of Buffalo located in Buffalo, NY.

My outlook on life is based on the belief that every individual, regardless of race, class, gender and socioeconomic status has a story to tell, and these stories make up our humanity. As a result, not only do I get to understand myself in relations to other people, I learned to respect, incorporate, and appreciate diversity. After all, we need each other to survive.

In my personal life, I enjoy time with my family, pet dog (Dupsi), and friends. Having studied Art as an undergraduate, I enjoy the aesthetic of different art forms. I also love fixing things and am very handy.

I looked forward to “making a lasting positive difference both in the lives of clients and coworkers at Casey Family Services.”

Special thanks to all co-workers for their warm welcoming ceremony.

## Welcome New Social Worker Angela Fallon

My name is Angela Fallon and I am thrilled to be back at Casey Family Services as a social worker!

My last position was as an intern at the Lowell Family Resource Center. I have been ecstatic to experience the same friendly, inviting atmosphere I grew to love there present here in Concord.

I grew up mainly in Londonderry, NH where my parents and in-laws still reside.

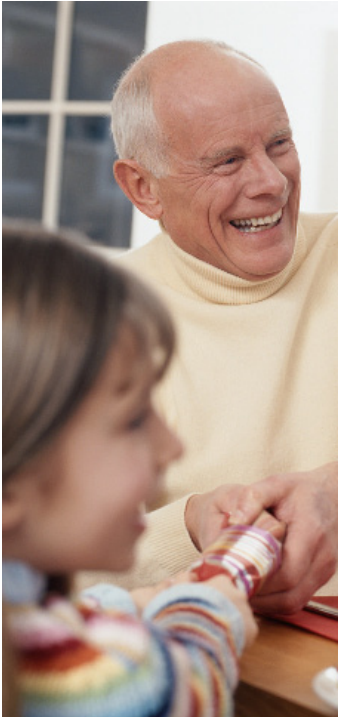
I graduated with a Bachelor’s in Visual Arts in 2006 from Gordon College in Wenham, MA, but decided to pursue a career in social work after traveling to Nicaragua several times. I stayed for four months for the longest stint. In Nicaragua I was struck by the extreme poverty, unmet needs and injustice that the people were facing. This experience so profoundly changed my world view and future plans that I returned home and began social work school the next fall. I graduated with my Master’s in Social Work from Simmons College in Boston in 2009.

Before coming to Casey Family Services, I spent a year working in a mental health clinic in Lawrence, MA where I continued to develop my skills at cross cultural work and Spanish. I saw every kind of problem imaginable during this year, and know this experience will help me in working with the families in NH.

When I am not at work, I spend time with family and friends, or reading, running, hiking, drawing, traveling or renovating the house my husband and I purchased last fall.



# Relatives as Parents Gathering



**Are you raising a grandchild, niece, nephew, or other relative's child?**

**Do you have experience and knowledge to share?**

**Do you have unanswered questions or unmet needs?**

**Do you want to connect with others raising relatives' children?**

If you answered "yes" to any of these questions, come to the Relatives as Parents Gathering. Each session will feature a timely topic of discussion, dinner,

a chance to connect with others, and childcare if needed. You may come to one, all, or any combination of sessions.

**Location:** Paul Smith Elementary School  
41 Daniel Webster Dr., Franklin.

Takes place the second Tuesday of every month from 5:30 to 7 p.m.

**Upcoming Dates:**  
November 9  
December 14

We will cover topics such as communicating with

the school, understanding this generation, and stress relief and self-care.

Workshops and dinners are FREE, but please RSVP so we can plan seating and accommodations. Childcare is also available free of charge, but pre-registration is required.

Facilitated by Jenn Sumner of Casey Family Services, and Thom Linehan of UNH Cooperative Extension.

**Please RSVP to Jenn Sumner at 934.3170**

## Smiles Bright as Workcampers Brave Heat to Perform Home Repairs

Forty-seven disabled, elderly, and/or low-income homeowners have had improvements made to their homes for free following the Twin Rivers Workcamp. Nearly 350 youth from ten states and one Canadian province traveled to Franklin to do the work, braving summer heat to do so. The result is reflected in homeowners' smiles as bright as the fresh coats of paint some of their houses received.

Amid reports of the hottest New Hampshire weather in eight years, the youth spent the week of July 5-10, 2010 building wheelchair ramps, repairing stairs, painting and roofing the homes of people unable to do the work themselves, either as a result of cost or their own physical limitations. The youth did it for them, sleeping on classroom floors at Franklin Middle School before going out to continue the work for each of five days. They were given a half-day off, and a cookout was provided by the co-sponsors, Casey Family Services and Hope Community Chapel. The Franklin Fire Department did the cooking on a grill they provided, and Arnie's of Concord provided an ice cream sundae bar. Serving was done by members of the steering committee, including Leonard Campbell of NH Catholic Charities and Gail Lyman of Belknap-Merrimack Community Action.

Mayor Ken Merrifield of Franklin spoke at both opening and closing ceremonies, and issued a proclamation "celebrating our new friendships with 350 of the finest young people on earth." The co-sponsors would like to thank all of those who made the week-long project possible, including Franklin Savings Bank for their financial support, as well as SAU 18, the Franklin Middle School - with special thanks to Principal Jim Friel, Chuck Norwood and the Custodial Team, and Food Service Staff, The Fixit Program, The Franklin Family Resource Center Staff and Administrative Assistant teams at Casey Family Services, Hope Community Chapel, especially Rev. Glen Carter, Tim Mountford, City Councilman and church member, Bob Sharon, Community Action Program of Belknap-Merrimack Counties, CCNTR, Mayor Ken Merrifield, The Franklin Fire Department, Franklin Parks & Recreation Department, NH Catholic Charities, the City of Franklin and Towns of Tilton and Northfield.



## TEENAGER SURVIVES A WEEK WITHOUT CELL PHONE, IPOD OR VIDEO GAMES

By Sandy Blanchard

It is hard to believe, but Corey did just that during the third week in July, last summer. All the more impressive was the fact that six other kids from Casey Family Services divisions throughout New England and four adults joined together for a Wilderness Trip in the wilds of Maine, all without the benefit of modern conveniences.

The first three days were spent on the Moose River, canoeing and learning to work as a team as they journeyed 29 miles into the backwoods. They carried all their supplies, clothing and equipment in dry bags and portaged several miles overland to fulfill their journey. Camping skills were learned including cooking, setting up tents and using an outside hand dug toilet.

The next three days were spent working with the Maine Conservation Corps on the Appalachian Trail in sight of Mt. Katahdin doing trail work. Rock quarrying and rock moving skills were gained as well as learning how to improve trail by cutting roots and building rock bars. Passing hikers thanked them for their efforts.

Dirty, smelly, tanned, and much stronger after a week of challenges the group was in high spirits back in the Casey parking lot in Portland waiting to be picked up. They were a great group who worked hard, accomplished a lot and made friendships. The iPods were cranked, and the cell phones were very busy. It was a week that will be remembered for years.

## Kid Kudos

A foster parent writes: My two girls accomplished what being part of a forever family really means....they are finally home....including an extended family that loves them and will always keep them safe. We are all over the moon with joy/happiness! My two also learned about T Ball and what being part of an organized sport is about. Lots of hits, runs and errors! My two mastered swimming without life jackets. Two little sun tanned fish for sure!

Hailey has successfully completed her first three weeks at Kindergarten with flying colors! Good job Hailey!

Ari completed a week at rock climbing camp and received "RAVE" reviews from camp counselors for her hard work, positive attitude and for being such a great team player. In addition, Ari got her first job this summer at Dairy Queen and has done an excellent job at her place of employment. Keep up the good work, Ari!

Kassie completed a successful season working at StoryLand and was also offered a new position as a part of the cast in one of StoryLand's productions! Nice work Kassie!

Congratulations Blake for being one of the lucky ones chosen at Disneyland to come on stage and take part in the Star Wars stage production! "May the Force be with you"!

Scott and CJ are playing on their school football team and won their first game!

Jackie is kickin' on the varsity soccer team.

Brooke is blockin' shots on her school soccer team.

Margaret has started driver's ed! One more step toward independence.

A.D. set a goal this summer to get a job and work through the summer. She also opened a bank account and saved money. Finally, at the end of summer she spent a little! She reached her goals; we are all so proud of her.

H. M. was a part of the summer reading program at the library. He did so well his picture was posted at the Hampstead Central school in the reading hall of fame! Nice job H. M.!

Stephanie scored the winning (and only) goal in her KRHS field hockey game. She has also been a great help pitching in at the barn.

Natasha worked at the Franklin program with pre-schoolers. The kids LOVED her!

[www.caseyfamilyservices.org](http://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](mailto:BBRYAR@CASEYFAMILYSERVICES.ORG). Please be sure to put "For the Newsletter" in your subject line.

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# Save the Date

## Casey Holiday Party

December 5, 2010

11:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.

The Grappone  
Conference Center,  
Courtyard by Marriott  
Concord

Visit us online  
**TODAY**



[www.caseyfamilyservices.org](http://www.caseyfamilyservices.org)