

IN THIS ISSUE:

1

Ashtian's Adoption Story

2

Director's Desk

What You Can Do to
Help Recruit More Foster
Parents!

Casey Welcomes New
Foster Families

3

Helping Teens in Foster
Care

4

Top Ten Great Reasons to
Adopt a Teen

Foster Parent Advisory
Committee: Up and
Running

Adoption Highlights

5

Welcome Stuart and Rosie!

Belknap Merrimack
Community Action
Program Thanks You!

6

Building a Bridge to a
Home for a Lifetime

7

Kid Kudos

Importance of Permanency

8

Save the Dates

**CASEY
FAMILY
SERVICES**

105 Loudon Road,
Building 2
Concord, NH 03301

603.224.8909
800.417.7375

THE CASEY reporter

Established 1988

May 2011

Ashtian's Adoption Story by Deb Dionne

Brenda Watts first met Ashtian when she was five years old, when Brenda became her educational surrogate. Brenda remained a consistent person in Ashtian's life over the years by participating in Ashtian's education. As Brenda watched firsthand the struggles Ashtian experienced over the years, moving back and forth between foster homes and group homes, she realized she needed to do something more than just be Ashtian's educational surrogate. She needed to provide Ashtian a permanent family so that she would never need to move again. Brenda did just that. After finding out at a school meeting that Ashtian needed to change homes once again, Brenda told Ashtian's Division for Children Youth and Families worker and her Casey social worker at the time, Jennifer McAllister, that she wasn't going to see Ashtian move into yet another home and wanted to adopt her. Foster care



Brenda and Ashtian Watts

was nothing new to Brenda, as she had been a foster parent previously and adopted two children, in addition to raising her birth son. She was aware of the struggles and behaviors that children in foster care can demonstrate and was up for the challenge. Ashtian moved in with Brenda and her family in the summer of 2009. Brenda never gave up

on her commitment to Ashtian and her commitment to adopt her, no matter what behaviors and challenges Ashtian threw her way, and believe me there were many!

On January 24, 2011, Ashtian Marie Shannon legally became Ashtian Marie Watts. Congratulations to Ashtian and Brenda and the new Watts family!

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

Happy National Foster Care Month. Each year, the month of May provides us with the opportunity to shed some light on the extraordinary work that so many of you do. It is also a time to reflect on the field of child welfare and the best practices that can be brought to the most vulnerable children.

Bridge homes are an important component of the work that we do in foster care. We emphasize permanency in working to bring about lifelong family connections for children and youth. Many of those youth have been or are in a group home here in New Hampshire. As these youth make the transition to a family setting, foster families can provide that "bridge" toward a forever home.



It is all part of the ongoing need, and opportunity, for families to step up and make the commitment to children in our state. We know there are some challenges. We like to use the word "tough" to describe our youth. That is, they can be "tough" to parent due to their histories of abuse and neglect. But, it is important to remember that their "toughness" was built

to help them be resilient to life's disappointments. This is where the gift of a bridge family – you—comes into play. A loving home that provides focused attention can go a long way toward helping these youth bring out the best in themselves, and often the best in ourselves.

In order to accomplish our effort, Casey Family Services continues to offer resources for you to give you the skills and support you need. A support group for new foster families provides education on a variety of topics as well as a chance for the parents to learn from each other. Trainings, put on by Casey or in partnership with Granite State College, also offer in depth skills-building. We urge you to take part regularly and check with your Casey social worker

to make sure your training requirements are up to date.

We also celebrate you and the work that you do, with recognition during this month and activities throughout the course of the year. I hope you can attend the picnic we will host for foster families in August. We continue to celebrate the adoptions that have grown out of our foster care work. It is usually accompanied by a long and well-thought out plan. Whether through a bridge home, respite care, or fostering that leads to adoption, it starts with individuals and families willing to make a commitment to the life of a child. Thank you for making such a commitment and your effort to encourage others to join in fostering a youth.

What You Can Do to Help Recruit More Foster Parents!

Just a quick reminder that you can receive \$250 each time you help us recruit a new foster/adoptive parent. It's very simple too. If you know someone that may be interested in fostering, ask them to go to the Casey website (www.caseyfamilyservices.org) to find out more information about fostering.

Once there they can click on the "request more information" tab and complete the inquiry form. You can also invite them to one of our Foster/Adoptive Parent Information Nights held every month in either our Littleton or Concord office.

If that person then becomes an approved and licensed foster parent we will pay you \$250

If they do not have access to the website, they can call 1.800.417.7375 and request an information packet.

Casey Welcomes New Foster Families

Kelly and Jason Flibotte
 Tammy Rackliff
 Steven and Tracey Siravo
 Stephanie Stillings
 Ellen and Scott Woodsum
 Sabrina Beavans and Juli Bryant
 Svetlana Brock and Eugene Vayman
 Debbie and Keith McGowan-Bujeaud
 Sarah and Fran Patno
 Sheila and Earnest Shaw
 Elizabeth and James Guphill
 Denise Coulstring
 Cheryl Bean
 Kevin and Mary Ann McHugh
 Peter and Cecilia Streechon
 Susan and John Junkins

Helping Teens in Foster Care

Here at Casey Family Services New Hampshire Division, we are committed in finding homes for older NH youth in care. We feel it is important that every child have a permanent legal connection, regardless of age. Every youth in care needs an adult who they can count on to support them as they make the transition to adulthood. These teens long for a family to call their own.

What can you do to help us? We hope that you will consider helping us find homes for some of the teens listed below, by being a visiting resource or opening your own home to one of them. We all know teens need people who care about them to help them through the joys and challenges of being a teen. You can help by providing occasional overnights or weekend care. Our staff developed a workshop entitled Youth In Transition: Almost Home that prepares bridge and pre-adoptive homes to care for youth transitioning out of residential settings. We will be there every step of the way to support you. Here is just a small sample of the more than 20 older youth looking for a home:



Grace is a 14 year old girl who wants a family of her own. Grace loves animals, especially horses, and currently volunteers at a farm. She would love a family who has horses or an interest in being involved at a farm with her. She also enjoys reading, arts and crafts, and outdoor activities. Grace can be giving and thoughtful. She does well in school and has friends. All of

her teachers like her and find her to be a pleasure in class.

Grace needs a patient family who can allow her the time and space to feel as if she belongs. She will do best in a family with either no other children or children who are significantly older. She would do best in a family without small dogs or cats.



Joe, age 17, is an energetic young man who enjoys video games, art, camping, traveling and shopping. Joe has cognitive limitations and is a youth who will need a family to help connect him with services in adulthood. Joe says, "I am very respectful, helpful, loving and get along well with people. I am looking for a family who can be loving and patient, and who can

give me the opportunity to grow."

Joe would be a great addition to a family where he is either the youngest or only child; and one that can be firm and help support him through his transition into adulthood

Interested? Call Cathy Smith, Resource Coordinator, 224.8909 or email: csmith@caseyfamilyservices.org.

Top Ten Great Reasons to Adopt a Teen



A group of determined young people put together a list of “Top 10 Great Reasons to Adopt a Teen”. Credit for the original list goes to the Oklahoma Youth Advisory Board of 2000. The list was modified by You Gotta Believe, a New York City-based agency that finds homes for teenagers. Here is the list:

- No formula, diapers, bottles, or burp rags required
- Teens sleep through the night
- Teens will be ready to move out sooner (but they will always come home to visit)
- Teens can program your cell phones, DVD players, and teach you how to use your computer
- Teens can keep you up to date with latest fashions and trends
- Once they get their permits, they can drive you places
- You don't just get a child, you get a friend
- Teens can pick up after themselves and do their own laundry
- Teens can teach you how to be more patient, understanding, kind, and empathetic
- Teens need someone to share their life dreams, achievements, and holidays with

Foster Parent Advisory Committee: Up and Running

The Foster Adoptive Parent Advisory Committee (FAPAC) is a group of foster/adoptive parents who meet with staff from the NH Division of Casey Family Services for the purpose of sharing information about policies, procedures, projects, activities, or concerns. Members offer feedback on this information from a foster/adoptive parent's perspective. The FAPAC serves as a liaison for other foster/adoptive parents, representing their ideas and concerns whenever possible to improve communication between foster/adoptive parents and Casey staff.

The FAPAC and its members work together to support other foster/adoptive parents by organizing activities, making personal connections, mentoring, and encouraging community building such as support groups. In addition, the FAPAC shares information and encourages communication with other foster/adoptive parents.

The committee meets every two months on the third Monday from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m., with the exception of the summer months. A current foster parent, and social work staff member Bernadette Pelczar co-lead the committee

The Advisory Committee is focusing on supporting and mentoring new foster and adoptive parents through matching them with experienced foster parents. Discussions are ongoing regarding new ideas regarding ways to best accomplish this goal. If you are interested in finding out more please contact Bernadette Pelczar.



ADOPTION HIGHLIGHTS

Congratulations to the following families:

- Terry and Marcia Lewis adopted Athena in December
- Brian and Sandy Neal adopted Adam in December
- Brenda Watts adopted Ashtian in January
- Cathy Cherri-Liston and Mel Liston adopted Jeremy in January

The Lewis family pictured left

Welcome Rosie Deoleo



My name is Rocio Deoleo (“Rosie”) and I am a new Administrative Assistant at Casey Family Services in the New Hampshire Division. I was born in the Dominican Republic and migrated to the States with my parents when I was 12 years old. I lived in New York City for seven years. I attended my first year of college at the University of New York and at the age of eighteen, moved to New Hampshire with my father. I obtained a Child Psychology Degree from Southern New Hampshire University and later obtained a Master’s Degree in Business Administration from Franklin Pierce University. Before joining Casey, I worked as a Legal Assistant/Paralegal for ten years.

I have a seven year old son, Gabriel (“Gabe”), who is the rainbow that lights my day, every day. I enjoy writing, reading and of course, vacationing in the beach of the Caribbean, and doing pretty much anything that equates to spending time with my little man.

Furthermore, I enjoy working with my community to make it a better and safer place. I have volunteered at a number of non-profit organizations, beginning with Big Brothers Big Sisters and most recently, at an organization against rape and domestic violence. My services as a volunteer are very rewarding to me as an individual. I am fluent in Spanish and English, I strongly believe that it is our responsibility as community members to share our skills with those in need, so that we can all grow strong together.

With that said, it was with great joy that I accepted this position, and after actually working here, I am even more content that I can form part of such a great organization made up of incredibly caring and professional people.

Stuart Scott Joins NH Division



Hello my name is Stuart Scott and I’m very happy to be here in New Hampshire again with Casey Family Services!

I am originally from England but immigrated to America when I was four years old. I grew up in Connecticut. I came to college in New Hampshire and fell in love with the state and its unique balance of natural beauty and healthy communities. I stayed in New Hampshire for nine years,

working at Spaulding Youth Center and then DCYF at the Claremont district office before I moved back to Connecticut to finish my Master’s of Social Work degree. While in Connecticut I was an MSW intern for Casey Family Services, Hartford Division and subsequently became a full-time staff member. Connecticut never really felt like home, however, and I’m back where I belong.

I enjoy the work that we do with children, families and communities. I find people from New Hampshire to be open and responsive about helping out children in need of permanence and lifelong support. I’m very happy to be a part of a team that puts a premium on connecting with families and working together to find ways to make children’s lives better.

Dear Cary and the Foster Care Families:

What a generous group of families you have on your team! The donated food that was gathered for us at The Belknap Merrimack Community Action Program in Franklin mirrors the love and kindness in your hearts for others less fortunate.

Your donations are so appreciated again this year with our needs growing larger, as unemployment benefits end and the job market turning bleaker. You make our job much easier by allowing us to give more food to these needy families. The appreciation on the faces we serve fills our hearts. We would never be able to meet all our client’s needs without the kindness of others, such as yourselves.

We are a nonprofit agency who help low to moderate income households and supply necessary services to help with heating costs, rental assistance, electrical discounts or shut offs, and clothing and food, just to name a few. We serve 8 local towns which include Danbury, Salisbury, Andover, Hill, Franklin, Tilton, Northfield and Sanbornton.

Thank you again for helping us to feed our needy families! You are a very special group of people!

*Sincerely,
Gail Lyman, Director, Franklin Area Center*

Building a Bridge to a Home for a Lifetime

Virginia Taylor is beginning her second year as a foster parent with the NH Division. Virginia knew that she was not going to adopt and thus she became interested in our Bridge Home program.

Virginia's first experience as a bridge home, was taking into care a brother and sister, ages 9 and 13 (as an emergency foster care placement) for five weeks until arrangements could be made through the court system to have their father, who resided in a different state, become their care taker. Virginia agreed to the placement of these children into her home with little information about them other than their ages, sex and the brief circumstances surrounding their removal from their mother's care. She generously agreed to take in their puppy as well, as she knew the children had already experienced the trauma of being removed from their home and shouldn't lose their pet as well. Over the next several days, Virginia enrolled the children in school and sports. The children helped her with chores on Virginia's farm (being city kids, they were not use to all of the animals Virginia had and were certainly not use to having no cable television or internet access).

Virginia did an amazing job of supporting the children during this transition time. She helped the children to maintain their relationship with their grandparents through nightly telephone calls and transporting them halfway across the state every weekend for visits. At the end of five weeks, the children were reunited with their father who moved back to New Hampshire. Even after their return to their father's care, Virginia remained connected to the children's birth family, inquiring about their well-being.

The second bridge home experience Virginia had was with a 10-year old boy we will call Joe. Joe exhibited many angry feelings when he first moved in to Virginia's home. Virginia accepted Joe unconditionally and

found ways to connect with him. Virginia found that by working with her animals he began to settle in. It took the summer for Joe to realize that Virginia was someone he could trust and depend on and who would not "give up" on him. By the time he was ready to go to school in the fall their relationship had deepened. Joe's grades improved and he made the honor roll in the first semester. He came to know what it was like to live in a family who deeply cared about him. As Joe's permanency plan was adoption, plans were made for Joe to meet a pre-adoptive home and begin the transition of moving



from Virginia's home to his new family. In December Joe left Virginia's home and was placed in his pre-adoptive home. Virginia felt satisfaction from preparing Joe to live in his new family. Joe came back to visit Virginia at Christmas time and also during winter break. Letting Joe "go" to his new family was difficult for Virginia as she clearly developed a wonderful

relationship with him and loved him dearly, but knew ultimately the best decision for Joe was to live with a family that could make the commitment to adopt so that Joe would have legal parents to call his own. As Virginia understands the importance of children remaining connected to caring adults in their lives, Virginia has made this commitment to Joe. She talks to Joe several times a month, when he remembers to call that is!

Virginia is currently fostering a teenage girl and loving it, though she did not expect to feel this way. Virginia originally thought that she would not be a good match for teenage girls. Virginia did not expect that she would love the kids that have come into her care as much as she does. This was a genuine surprise to her. She finds her bridge home work rewarding because, "the children are so hungry for someone who cares about them." She says, "In being a bridge home you have to dig in pretty quickly. You know going in that this is a short time and you need to make hay while the sun shines."

Kid Kudos

Kacie on her baptism!

Blake for excelling on the ski team and being raised to the 3rd level skier!

Hailey for being the “top” shoe tier in her kindergarten class!

Sophia for learning to walk and talk! (Great work, Kimi!)

Shaeleigh for learning to use her words! (Again, nice job Kimi!)

Ari for being placed in Advanced World Cultures Class!

Kassie for being invited back to work at Story Land for another season!

Sierra just completed her basketball season with a trophy. She has a natural talent for sports and learned a great deal about working as a team.

Cynthia and Jocelyn landed parts in the school play “Alice in Wonderland”.

Lisa is playing on the AAU basketball team in her community and travels all across NH!

Nicketa has significantly improved grades and is now getting all A’s and Bs in high school!

Jessica B. was accepted to Great Bay Community College

Fourteen Franklin High School students participated in the Youth Leadership Conference on March 19TH. The conference was hosted by the five 21ST Century Sites. The topic revolved around dealing with bullying in school. All students wrote skits, rap songs and poems dealing with bullying issues. The project was facilitated by ResNex, an urban nonprofit group that uses hip-hop and poetry to promote social change. The students work was showcased with a live performance open to the public at the end of the day. And the various student projects were posted on YouTube (Bullying workshop IIII) and will be brought back to the schools for all students to view. The event was very successful and students will be chosen through an essay contest to attend the National Youth Leadership Conference in Washington D.C.

www.caseyfamilyservices.org

Importance of Permanency

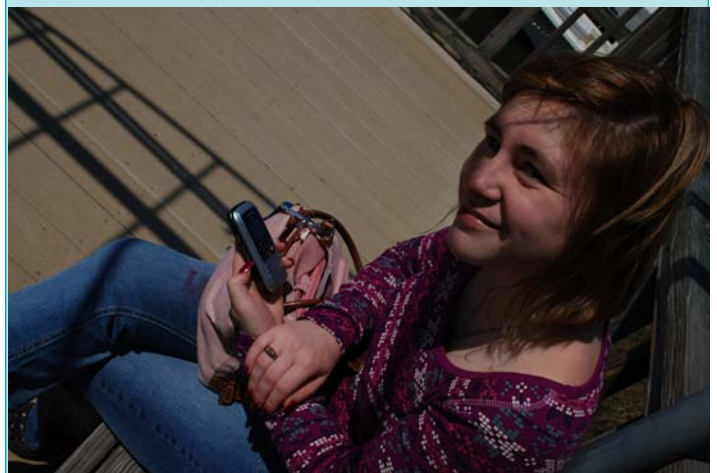
How long was I in foster care? I was in foster care for 16 years, that isn’t counting the next two years till I turned 18. I was adopted when I was 16.

How many places/where did I live? I lived in a total of four homes. The first one is Mr and Mrs. B. Some of you may know them, but I won’t put their names in here without permission. The second family I still talk to sometimes that was Mr. and Mrs. D. - some but not all of you also know them. My third family was just a temp home till I moved in with my fourth and final family. In my fourth family I lived for two years before I got adopted by Ms. K. Yes, most of you definitely know her.

What was my experience with Casey like? My experience with Casey Family Services has been awesome. Not only was my social worker there when I needed her but so were my former social workers, and they all still keep in touch with me to make sure I’m doing good!

What am I doing now? I now live in Virginia. I work at Rite Aid. I am a club historian for my Mustang club (Mustangcluboftidewater.com)!!! I just started the process of joining the United States Navy.

What are my dreams/goals for the future? Well my dream is to do awesome in the U.S. Navy, get married, have some kids, become a foster parent, and become a teacher someday!



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 biannually by the New Hampshire Division of Casey Family Services, Director Edward C. Rennells Jr.



THE DIRECT SERVICE AGENCY OF
THE ANNIE E. CASEY FOUNDATION

105 Loudon Road
Building 2
Concord, NH, 03301

603.224.8909
800.417.7375

Save the Dates

Casey Family Picnic
August 6, 2011

Casey Holiday Party
December 4, 2011

Concord Multicultural Festival
June 18, 2011

Foster Parent Conference
May 21-22, 2011

Coming Soon: NH Division Facebook page!

Visit us online
TODAY

Spring has sprung! We're busy getting ready for National Foster Care Month in May, coming up with new trainings for our parents, recruiting more foster parents and celebrating the many adoptions that are happening this spring. Between spring cleaning, finishing up the school year and planning summer vacations, I'm sure you're just as busy!

We hope you found this newsletter to be full of helpful and interesting information. We've done our best but know it could always be better. So as always, your comments and suggestions are more than welcome! In the meantime, dust off those sunglasses and flip flops and enjoy the beautiful weather! Spend some time outside with your kids. Have a picnic in the park. Plant a pretty flower. Just have fun!

Contributors to this Issue:

Beth-Anne Bryar, Rosie Deoleo, Deb Dionne, Cary Gladstone, Kimberlee Knapp, Cindy Lamontagne, Jennifer McAllister, Bernadette Pelczar, Ed Rennells, Stuart Scott, Barbara Slayton, Erin Wilson

www.caseyfamilyservices.org