

The FAN

SCCFAPA Resource Center (408) 975-5309

Proposed Legislation Would Improve Lives of Foster and Adoptive Parents

New legislation is being introduced in Sacramento that would increase reimbursement amounts for foster and adoptive parents, strengthen supports for foster parents, and provide additional information on children to their caregiver families. According to Regina Deihl, executive director of Legal Advocates for Permanent Parenting (LAPP), AB 324 would result in a 5% increase in foster care rates in 2008 and base future increases on the California Necessities

Index. It would also create a Foster and Adoptive Parent Recruitment and Support Program to increase supports such as respite, one-time expenses such as the cost of an extra bed, and other supports for families caring for foster children. The bill is being carried by San Jose Assemblyman Jim Beall.

AB 277, another LAPP-sponsored bill, would require child welfare agencies to provide foster and kinship parents with the child's portion of the

court-ordered case plan, a plan outlining the child's needs and services to meet those needs, and a copy of any court orders pertaining to the care of the child. Additionally, the bill would require that training be offered on legal topics and would require counties with respite programs to permit caregivers to utilize respite funding for short-term, occasional babysitting as outlined in the Prudent Parent law.

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Association Meetings & Upcoming Events

FAPA Association meetings are held on the 2nd Friday of each month beginning at 11:30 AM at the FAPA Resource Center.

The Association meetings are structured as an open forum discussion with the FAPA President Dawn Haddaway and DFCS Foster Parent Advocate Denise Marchu. This is a time when caregivers can network with others; voice their opinions about daily obstacles they are facing as well as learning how others best navigate

the system.

These valuable discussions have allowed the Association leadership to return with member input with which to help steer developing DFCS policy.

Also please note that regular Association Board meetings are every 4th Friday at 10:00AM in the Foster & Adoptive Parent Association Resource Center.

Attendance is welcome!

UPCOMING EVENTS! SAVE THE DATES!!!

May 2nd Kick off Celebration for National Foster Care Month

May 27th Grand Family Day

July 25th Ice Cream Social

August 6-10th Summer Camp for North County

August 13-17th Summer Camp for South County

September 7th-9th Weekend (Family) Campout

THANKS

For your generosity and
community spirit in support of
SCCFAPA

Arts Council Silicon Valley
Juanita Vargas
Alza Corporation
Baby Super Discount
Silicon Valley Children's
Fund
Carol Donovan
San Jose Water Company
Ken Schwab
Safeway Foundation
Toys for Tots
Whole Foods Market
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Artisan Printing
Sonoma Chicken Coop
MOMS Club of Sunnyvale
California Beauty Source
See's Candy
Gunter's Restaurant & Catering
University Art
Community School of Music
Lisa Tea for Two
UnaMas
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Tomato Thyme
House of Bagels
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Howard Self
Thomas & Joanne Carr DDS
Yvonne Mills & Family
Beverly Tolbert
Irene Vega
Sabine Lemmo

FAPA Committees Need Your

The Association is in the process of forming three new committees to address pressing needs of our members, strengthen our voice and develop stronger community support .

The Welcome/ Membership Committee has already begun and started off by calling members about upcoming Association meetings. They are in the process of putting together a welcome packet of information for all new members and will make a welcoming phone call to that member. They will continue that personal connection with members to remind them of the Association meetings and

give them an avenue for more inclusion. With the strengthening of positions surrounding the issues affecting our individual Association members, the development and formalization of a mentoring program can begin.

The Communications Committee is being formed to oversee all aspects of communication within our Association. Volunteers for this committee would publish The FAN (Foster & Adoptive News), update the membership directory, oversee the calendar of events, and give regular updates to Association members in regards to what's happening in

foster care and in the Association.

The Fund Development Committee charter includes assisting in making important connections in the community, helping the Association gain fundraising and donation support for specific events and activities, and focusing on the financial aspects of our vision.

If you are interested in serving on one of the committees please call the Resource Center at 408-975-5309.

PROJECT BACKPACK Continues to be a Success!

Association members: Don't forget to request a back pack for all new youth placed in your care.

Project Backpack continues to receive donations from local corporations; Alza Corporation, Bank of the West and San Jose Water Company are just three of the latest companies to provide support for an additional 45 back packs for youth. A total of 90 + back packs have been provided to

foster youth which helps ease the transition into their new environment.

The Moms Club of Sunnyvale continues to raise funds to provide new books for each back pack, and several community groups have handmade blankets for our younger children. Most recently Association members have been contacting local dentists to receive donations of tooth brushes and floss.

Furthermore, the Backpack volunteer crew meets regularly to pack the bags, organize the project and identify needs,

The target is to ensure that each Backpack is valued between \$50-\$100.

If you would like to donate to Project Backpack please call the Association's Resource Center at 408-975-5309.

California Connected by 25 Spotlight

The California Connected by 25 Initiative (CC25) has made many strides toward implementation. Although there are many components, through Career Pathways, EFY (Emancipated Foster Youth) County Jobs Program, and Financial Literacy alone over 100 youth have been served.

The first semester of Career Pathways has finished and the second has just begun. The first semester at Mission College served 16 former foster youth, most of which have returned to school. Some of the youth preferred to work full time, including one who accepted a position with the County. Several of the continuing students have accepted part time employment with a local non-profit organization. All students continue to receive the support and guidance of the CC25 Employment Services Unit, as well as assistance with their housing needs.

The current cohort at San Jose City College has 21 students, of which 17 are identified as former foster youth. The students are just a few weeks into the semester, and are settling into “college life” with a full-time load of classes in math, reading, English, and a career guidance component. New to this cohort, is a tutor hired especially to serve the needs of this special learning community. The tutor who was hired is a standout student from the first cohort at Mission!

The EFY (Emancipated Foster Youth) County Jobs Program has assisted over 35 youth in applying to become part of an applicant pool for 20 different County job classifications. Many youth have been called for and scheduled to interview. To date, approximately 6 youth have been placed in County employment through this innovative collaborative effort between DFCS and County Human Resources.

Our Financial Literacy and IDA Program have held its first training as well. Once youth complete the Financial Literacy Training, they can open an Individual Development Account (IDA) and receive a one-to-one match, essentially doubling their money! Youth then receive support and guidance to continue saving towards their identified asset goal. Over 35 youth have called for an application, and 10 were served during the first training in January. There is already a waiting list for the next training and the applications are still coming in.

The THP (Transitional Housing Program) Plus is in its roll-out planning stage. The goal is to have THP-Plus ready to accept referrals and applicants in the very near future. For the Career Pathways students in need of housing, San Jose State University partnered with DFCS again to provide dormitory space. We now have students from the first and second cohort living on campus at SJSU while they attend school full time. Other students from the cohorts are able to access stipends to provide support while in the Career Pathways program.

Please check out the CC25I website CC25.sccgov.org for more information, contact numbers, and access to flyers and information about these programs and other special CC25I events.

Respite Changes..... Talks Continue

The leadership of the Santa Clara Foster & Adoptive Parent Association continues to request an audience with DFCS management in their efforts to clarify the respite use guidelines. Included in this effort are other areas identified by Association members as areas of interest. FAPA has forwarded the following list and has taken steps to set up and participate in a joint workgroup with DFCS, SSA and FAPA.

The list includes: Security Policy; Disclosure ; Eligibility Payments; Special Needs; Court Inclusion; Prudent Parent/ Respite; ESH “Requirements” ; Transitions ; Siblings Protocol; Educational Rights; Post Adoption Services; Homes on Hold / Allegations; Teamwork with DFCS; Updated Bill of Rights for Caregivers.

Legislation (continued)...

LAPP encourages foster and adoptive parents to make their voices heard by supporting these bills. For further information on writing support letters and/or testifying at legislative hearings, contact LAPP at (650) 712-1442 or by e-mail at info@LAPPonline.org

* In this Newsletter you will find a sample letter to Assemblyman Jim Beall about your support for the proposed legislation. Please fill it out according to your own information to help advocate for this very important legislation that will support you in your work as a foster parent. This letter needs to be submitted to LAPP by March 20th as they are needed to be delivered to state offices on March 21st. You can send it to them via US Mail, Fax or email once you have filled it out.

See **LAPP contact info on the back page**, or view them on the web www.lapponline.org

New FACES in FAPA

We are all here to support foster, adoptive and kinship parents so that they can access the resources needed to do the best they can when parenting their foster children.

Leah Lazo, Resource Specialist is our newest employee at the Resource Center and has been on board since mid-October. She has mentored foster youth, worked with a Foster Family Agency, Concept 7, and as a service provider while earning her degree at CSU Long Beach. Upon graduation she returned to San Jose, to work in the Mental Health field with EMQ Children & Family Services as a Family Specialist.

She is focused on restructuring the Resource Center to make it more user friendly, developing a new

way to look at resources, planning yearly events, and is here to support foster, adoptive, and kinship families in any needs that they may have. Please feel free to call her with any questions or concerns at 408-975-5481.

Jan Kasahara, Secretary of the SCCFAPA Executive Board. Jan is an international adoptive mother of 2 daughters, and has one biological son. She is currently working on getting Clover Closet up & running and co-chairing the Welcome/Membership Committee. Jan hopes that the association can become

a positive community that can help all children and their parents.

Dodi Lindsay, VP of Community Events, is our newest Board Member. She is a mother of 2 birth children, one adopted child, and has been a foster parent and active member of the association for 6 years. Although Dodi has been running our ticket program for several months she hopes that in her new position she can support foster parents in increasing their involvement in community events and activities.

Clover Closet Has a New Location**NEW Closet Hours**

Monday 9:00-12:00
Wednesday 9:00-12:00
Friday 9:00-12:00

(No appointment needed)

Call Janie, Jeni or Jan for more information.

Clover Closet is owned and operated by the Foster & Adoptive Parent Association and staffed by volunteers. The new location of Clover Closet is located at:

**The Children's Shelter
4525 Union Ave
San Jose, CA 95124.**

If you have any questions please call the FAPA Resource Center at

975-5309 NOT the Children's Shelter. The new, regular, weekly hours for Clover Closet access will be from 9-12 PM Monday, Wednesdays, and Fridays.

The "closet" contains children's clothes, as well as other items needed by caregivers. We are often able to offer an assortment

of things like strollers, cribs, baby supplies and books.

If you have donations of new or gently used clothes or larger items for Clover Closet, please drop them off at the Children's Shelter. You'll find easily accessible blue bins in the main lobby. For safety reasons, we can no longer accept used toys or stuffed animals.

Ujirani Family Resource Center

by Sue Mason, Ujirani Community Liaison

In September of 1994, the Santa Clara County Social Service Agency extended their services already rendered, to include a center that would primarily target their African American populous. Demography concluded that nearly 16% of the African American children in this county received some form of child protective service intervention. The alarming research compelled DFCS's, African American's Employee's Committee to derive a Strategic Planning Commission which then created the idea of a family service organization which now bears the name **Ujirani** Family Resource Center. Ujirani is a Swahili term, meaning "**neighborhood.**"

Today, Ujirani has a strong commitment to build on family strengths that value self, diversity, and respect for others. Ujirani thrives as a supportive

nurturing environment for people to achieve their goals of self-sufficiency and well being. This goal is accomplished through a variety of different programs, which are open to people of all cultures.

For over 12 years, Ujirani has provided a range of programs and services that include parent education, mental health counseling, domestic violence victim group, twelve step groups, grandparent/caregivers support groups, recruitment and retention for resources families (Foster/Adoptive). There are monthly workshops and seminars held on specialized subjects.

Ujirani FRC has a special recruitment team of two fantastic individuals who are committed to outreach to the community. The need for quality foster care homes continues to escalate in our community. Our community

liaisons participate in community events every month for the purpose of providing information about becoming a resource family. We offer educational workshops to assist the Resources Families needs. We are always searching for more families who can love more children.

Ujirani has recently moved to a new location. We welcome you to call for more information or stop by and say hello.

**591 North King Rd., Suite 1
San Jose, CA 95133
Telephone 408-928-3750
Fax 928-3751.**

**UJIRANI HOURS:
Monday-Thursday 8:00am-8:30pm
Friday 8:00 am-5:00pm**

SCCFAPA President Granted Release of Information For Eligibility Advocacy

With Will Lightbourne's approval, the Department of Employment & Benefit Services (DEBS) and FAPA have reached an agreement with respect to confidentiality and will be moving forward immediately with eligibility advocacy. This agreement will allow for case specific exchange of information and more thorough advocacy when the President of FAPA calls and inquiries on behalf of each caregiver. Furthermore it allows for each eligibility worker to give the President of FAPA specifics about where in the process each reimbursement is stuck, what issues need to be resolved, and where we can go to continue to trace payments, reimbursements and Medi Cal information.

As of February 1st eligibility issues forwarded to FAPA for resolution must accompany a release of information form. If you are experiencing problems with delayed payments, absent reimbursements and Medi Cal cards please contact the resource center 975-5309 about how we can support you in this new beneficial type of advocacy.

The Eligibility unit continues to struggle with aspects of the CalWIN program, but the group continues to definitely make concerted efforts to work with caregivers to resolve those issues. This agreement is an indication of that collaboration.

**Santa Clara County
Foster & Adoptive Parent
Association**

Resource Center
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San Jose, CA 95110

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Resource Center Director:
Murrie Zlotziver
(408) 975-5213

Resource Specialist
Leah Lazo
(408) 975-5481

We're on the Web!
See us at
www.SCCFAPA.org



**AB 324 (Beall): Foster
and Adoptive Parent
Recruitment, Retention
and Support**

AB 324 will provide critical support to foster and adoptive parents and relatives caring for abused and neglected children. Recruitment, retention and support for foster caregivers will ensure safe, stable homes for California's most vulnerable children.

**KEY COMPONENTS OF
THE BILL:**

► **Increases the reimbursement rate for children in foster care.** Foster care stipends to reimburse the costs of caring for a child in foster care have not increased in over six years. (The last increase of 4.85% was provided in July 2001). This bill provides a 5% increase effective 1-1-08 and bases future increases on percentage changes in the state cost-of-living.

► **Creates a Foster and Adoptive Parent Recruitment, Retention and Support Program to ensure services and support for foster and adoptive parents.**

Supports for foster caregivers include respite care to reduce stress so that families can continue to care for special needs foster children, one-time expenses such as the cost of an extra bed, and support for foster caregivers to participate in conferences, trainings and policymaking forums.

**NEED FOR THIS BILL:
• Children Should Be Placed with Families:**

Foster families are the best placement option for children who cannot reside with parents or relatives. Additionally, foster family care is a cost effective placement option when compared with congregate care facilities such as group homes. Families offer children a nurturing home in their own community with familiar surroundings.

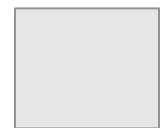
• **Families Need Adequate Support:**

Foster and adoptive parents need adequate reimbursement rates to ensure they have the resources to provide for their children's needs. California has not increased the reimbursement rate to care for foster children living with caregiver families in over six years. California currently supports its foster children at below poverty rates (based on federal poverty rates for a family of 4).

• **Supporting Families Supports Permanency for Youth:**

For children who cannot return home, foster and kinship families are by far the most likely people to provide permanent homes for them. Children who have a connection with a foster, adoptive or kinship parent exit the foster care system with a support mechanism for a lifetime.

*For more information, contact:
Regina Deihl, Legal Advocates
for Permanent Parenting (LAPP)
(650) 712-1442*



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San Jose, CA 95110

**NAME OR LABEL
STREET ADDRESS
CITY, ST 22134**