



# FAPAC-FOSTER & ADOPTIVE PARENT ADVOCACY CENTER

# advocacy news

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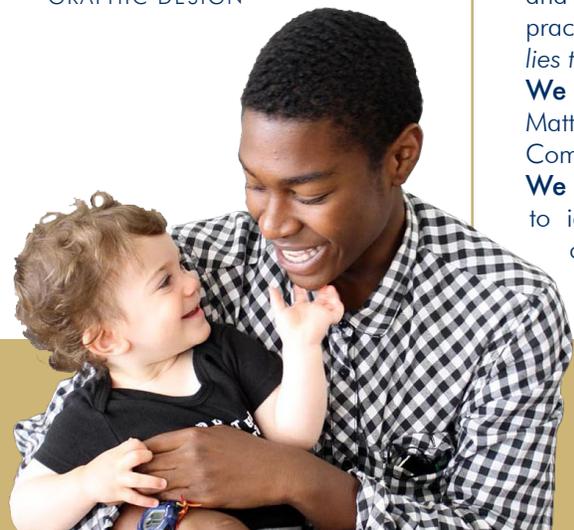
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## FAPAC news!



FAPAC hosted our second annual Circle of Love Valentine's Day concert on February 14. At the event we were proud to honor three people with the Caring Heart Award for their "high integrity, sincere respect, and authentic partnership". The honorees were:

Reverend Perry A. Smith, III - former Pastor of The First Baptist Church in North Brentwood, Maryland, from 1958 to 2010, and an adjunct professor at Howard University Divinity School. Rev. Smith was honored

because he has "demonstrated extensive support for the foster and adoptive parents in his congregation."

Peter Fitts - The director of DC operations for Progressive Life Center, oversees all program operations in the District of Columbia. He was honored "because he was FAPAC's first true partner from the private sector, because he can take conflict and make it into opportunity, and because he knows how to make partnership a real and (CONTINUED ON PAGE 2)

## kudos & thumbs up

(for more information on these acknowledgements, please see "advocacy update", page 2)

**We acknowledge:** Foundations for Home and Community implementation of a new practice model that strives to "Empower Families to Achieve Positive Outcomes."

**We applaud:** Rose Bruzzo, Angelia Baker-Matthews and Foundations for Home and Community staff.

**We acknowledge:** CFSA's current efforts to identify barriers to permanency and to consider how to resolve them.

**We applaud:** Andrea Guy, Rishaunda Ewings, Amy Templeman, Jasmine Hayes, CFSA Office of Planning, Policy and Program Support (OPPS).

**We also acknowledge** our wonderful organizational partner Children's Law Center for being chosen as one of the top 50 nonprofits to work for in America. Congratulations CLC!!

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# advocacy update

**Foundations for Home and Community's Family Based Foster Care** program is focusing on achieving better outcomes by building their work with families on the following principals: *Engaging, Understanding and Assessing, Planning & Teaming, Implementing & Intervening, and Finding What Works for Families*. These principals are achieved through regular Family Team meetings that serve as a way for the family—birth, kin and foster-- to work together with Foundation staff to make plans and decisions that work best for each child and family. Foundation's practice draws upon the family's strength, experience, knowledge, and resources to create a plan that provides for the safety and well-being of the children in the family.

**CFSA held an inclusive series of permanency forums** which engaged CFSA and private-provider managers and staff, youth, foster parents, birth parents, members of the legal community and others to identify, prioritize, and consider how to resolve key barriers

## need training?

### **JUNE 4: Legal Issues in Child Welfare and Legal Clinic (for foster, kinship and adoptive parents)**

Learning objectives: Participants will develop a working knowledge of the overview of legal issues relevant to them as foster, kinship and adoptive parents of children from the DC child welfare system. Individual legal consultation will be available by advance registration.

### **JULY 23: Exposure to Violence (for foster, kinship and adoptive parents and social workers)**

Learning objectives: Participants will learn about the developmental and behavioral impact that prior exposure to violence could have on the children in their homes. Participants will learn about the potential link between exposure to violence and increased depression, decreased academic achievement and posttraumatic stress disorder. Foster parents and social workers will learn critical strategies to help children who are dealing with the psychological impacts of having been exposed to violence in their homes and communities.

### **FAPAC news!** (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

active word. Peter's openness to hearing and listening has served as an inspiration to FAPAC staff."

Rose Bruzzo - The regional director for Foundations for Home and Community was honored "because of her long history serving the District's children and families and her willingness to face challenges with positive spirit, honest assessment, and constructive action while maintaining her integrity and her respect for others." In FAPAC's eyes, "Rose has gained the well-earned reputation as someone whose dedication for children and families is unsurpassed in our community."

FAPAC's event featured our own Marilyn Egerton and ensemble. If you didn't get there this year, SAVE the date for next Feb 14!

ers to permanency for children and youth in care. FAPAC is proud to share that many of the identified barriers had been highlighted through the 2009 Barriers to Permanency research study conducted by FAPAC with support from Kidsave.

At the conclusion of the second forum, it became clear that four concerns rose to the top of the participants' priority lists and needed to be urgently addressed.

1. Communication among youth, families, and social workers
2. Education of all stakeholders that older/all children can be adopted and permanency can be achieved for all children and youth.
3. Flexibility is needed when licensing kinship and foster parents
4. Engagement of birth, kinship, foster, and adoptive families

Workgroups have been formed to further examine these concerns.

### **SEPTEMBER 10: Creating Stable Families**

Exciting new training: Details to be announced.

Please call 202-269-9441, box 8 to register for any upcoming trainings.

*We regret to inform our community that FAPAC is not able to host our signature 19-hour Peer Advocacy Training (P.A.T.) this spring or summer due to budgetary constraints.*

*In order to improve the quality of training offered to our families, FAPAC facilitates the Resource Parent Training Coalition (RPTC), which currently has 18 member agencies that provide training opportunities. To find out about other foster parent trainings open to you, check out [www.dcrptc.org](http://www.dcrptc.org).*

FAPAC is once again partnering with Post-Permanency Family Center (PPFC) to offer our unique Clinical Rap Group (CRG). Clinical Rap Group is a place for families to come together to share about stresses and other issues related to their role as foster, kinship or adoptive parents under the trained guidance of a skilled clinician. CRG is offered as an 8 - week series, and combines peer and professional support. Food and childcare are provided, including homework time if needed.

If you are interested in finding out more about CRG, please call FAPAC at 202-269-9441 .



# info from Department of Mental Health (DMH)

Effective October 2010, the Department of Mental Health added Functional Family Therapy (FFT) to its menu of services for children and youth. FFT is a family-focused home-based intervention for children/youth and their families, whose problems range from acting out to conduct disorder to alcohol and/or substance abuse. The goal of the intervention is to improve family communication and support while decreasing negative family interactions. Functional Family Therapy is a “therapeutic model” of intervention that is family focused, strength based, and risk and protective factor driven.

FFT has demonstrated positive program outcomes across a wide range of youth and communities including:

- Significant and long-term reductions in youths re-offending and violent behavior.
- Significant effectiveness in reducing sibling entry into high-risk behaviors.
- Very low drop-out and high completion rates.
- Positive impacts on family conflict, family communication, parenting, and youth problem behavior.

Children and Youth eligible for this program are those ages 10-18 that are living with their family or a permanent caregiver; youth struggling with truancy/running away, violent acting out behaviors, conduct disorder; youth at risk of out of home placement and those experiencing other family/school/community conflicts. Often these

families tend to have limited resources, histories of failure, a range of diagnoses and multiple systems involvement.

Currently, there are two MHRS Core Service Agencies (CSA), providing FFT: Hillcrest Children and Family Center and First Home Care. Both agencies have a team of three FFT Therapists who were trained by FFT Inc. to deliver functional family therapy. The maximum caseload per therapist is ten.

For children/youth already enrolled with a CSA:

- Parent/guardian, youth or custodian involved with the youth and family can request CBI Level IV (FFT) from their existing CSA.
- CSA staff will enter and submit the authorization to DMH
- Once the services are authorized, the FFT provider will contact the family to begin service delivery.

For CFSA involved children and youth:

- Work with the assigned social worker to request CBI Level IV (FFT) through the Office of Clinical Practice (OCP) standardized referral process.

For children/youth not currently linked to a CSA:

- They can contact the FFT providers directly
- First Home Care – 202-737-2554
- Hillcrest Children Family Center – 202-232-6100

# info from Child and Family Services Agency (CFSA)

CFSA has announced that they have amended their guardianship and adoption policy so as to no longer use a specific age as special needs criteria for subsidy. The previous policy had set the age of two. For questions, please call Ritu Atwal 202-727-3777 [ritu.atwal@dc.gov](mailto:ritu.atwal@dc.gov) or Patricia Johnson 202-727-5424 [patricia.rjohnson@dc.gov](mailto:patricia.rjohnson@dc.gov).

Please note that the Adoption Reform Amendment act of 2010 now allows for foster parents to become guardians, an option formerly available only to kin. Please also note that this same legislation extended adoption and guardianship subsidy from 18-21 for adoptions finalized after May 2010.

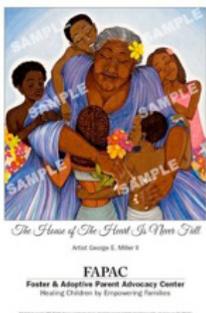
Did you know that the CFSA Policy Manual is available for all foster parents to review online? You can access policies, administrative issuances, and quick reference guides at [www.cfsa.dc.gov](http://www.cfsa.dc.gov). From the main page, click on “About CFSA”. The next page will show the “Policy” link right under “Who We Are”. Click on “Policy” and then you will be able to choose between the introduction and table of contents. Please feel free to read both! Reminder: some policy documents are specific to programs that directly impact foster parents but others are more generally focused on CFSA administration. Either way, CFSA welcomes you to become familiar with all policy documents!

## FAPAC photo shoot

FAPAC is offering the opportunity to have a free family photo taken by a professional photographer at the FAPAC PHOTO SHOOT on June 4 from 12 noon - 4 pm. In exchange for your getting a beautiful photo, FAPAC will have the option of using a copy of your photo

for our newsletter or other publication. Families must be adoptive or guardianship families as we cannot photograph children in foster care for this purpose. Anyone who is interested in finding out more about this opportunity, call FAPAC at 202-269-9441.

## FAPAC's new tag line



FAPAC now has a new tag line! To highlight the critical nature of our work, FAPAC has adopted the tag line: **Healing Children by Empowering Families.** We are proud to acknowledge the loving role of foster, kinship and adoptive parents through the art of artist George Miller, who created our signature poster, available at the FAPAC office for \$20. Honor a wonderful foster parent you know with this beautiful poster!

## FAPAC is seeking:

- foster parents who are interested in working on a project to build stronger relationships between foster and birth parents. We are looking for foster parents who have experience working well with birth parents and would like to help us to build a stronger culture of partnership~
- a volunteer to work on indexing the subjects from our past newsletters. Can be done from home or FAPAC office~
- playpen in good condition for our childcare room.

## resources

*NOTE: This list is a service to the public. FAPAC does not endorse and is not affiliated with any of the resources listed. FAPAC cannot guarantee the accuracy of the information provided.*

### Foster Parenting YahooGroup

There is a new YahooGroup set up specifically for those families who are fostering, social workers and professionals who work with foster families. The list has a topic posted every two weeks which the discussion revolves around. Find the group at Foster\_Parenting At YahooGroups.

### iFoster.org

iFoster.org offers free discounts at national and local retailers, grocery stores, healthcare providers (medical, dental, vision), restaurants, movie theatres, and attractions for family (foster, resource, kin, guardian, adoptive), transition age youth (16-21), and organizations supporting children in foster care. Check it out at [www.iFoster.org](http://www.iFoster.org).

## important national study on the need for post-adoption support

An extensive examination of adoptive families in the United States, released in October 2010, concludes that too many are not receiving the essential services they need, and calls for a reshaping of national priorities and resources to develop and provide such services.

In an effort to demonstrate the breadth of professional support for a "paradigm shift," major child welfare and adoption organizations across the country joined in endorsing the 99-page report, which was researched and published by the Evan B. Donaldson Adoption Institute and is entitled "Keeping the Promise: The Critical Need for Post-Adoption Services to Enable Children and Families to Succeed."

The report stresses that the vast majority of adopted children function normally — and their parents are highly satisfied with their families. But it also points out that just over the past 15 years, nearly a million boys and girls were adopted by Americans from foster care in our country and from orphanages abroad, and the majority of U.S. adoptions continue to be of those types (by far, mostly from state child welfare systems).

"What it means is that these children live with the emotional, psychological and developmental consequences of having been abused, neglected or institutionalized before they were adopted," said Adoption Institute Executive Director Adam Pertman. "The good news is that most of them, and their families, are doing just fine; the bad news is that the ones who need help too often aren't getting it."

The Adoption Institute report, which is the most comprehensive compilation of knowledge about post-adoption services to date, recommends that "the paradigm has to shift" from simply forming families to providing the supports needed to raise children to healthy adulthood. Among its recommendations are to:

- Convene a national leadership task force to shape/ promote changes in policy and practice.
- Develop public-private partnerships and dedicate federal funding for post-adoption services.
- Make such services a routine part of federal, state and local child welfare planning/financing.
- Fund and conduct critically needed research to develop/ assess the most effective services.

For more details about "Keeping the Promise" contact Adam Pertman at 617-763-0134 or [apertman@adoptioninstitute.org](mailto:apertman@adoptioninstitute.org).

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