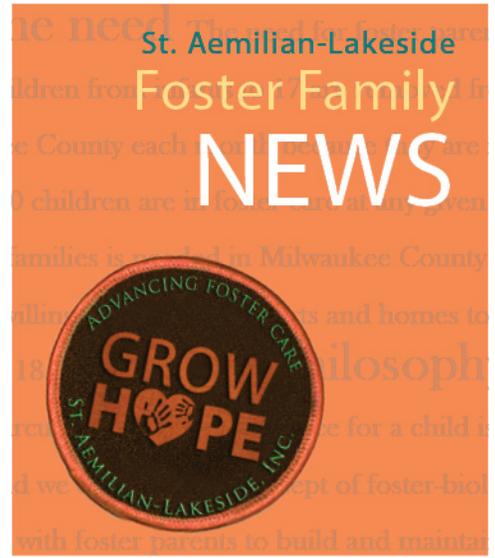




March/April 2012



IN THIS ISSUE

Dear Foster Parents:

As the new Chief Program Officer at St. Aemilian-Lakeside, I am excited to be part of more history-in-the-making for the agency. St. Aemilian-Lakeside has more than 25 years of foster care experience through our Treatment Foster Care Program, and I am grateful to all of you who have contributed to that history. On Jan. 1, we experienced a major growth spurt because of changes in the Bureau of Milwaukee Child Welfare. In our partnership with Integrated Family Services, St. Aemilian-Lakeside will be responsible for serving even more children in Milwaukee County and beyond.

To prepare for this growth, we have hired a new director, a foster care services coordinator, two supervisors, 13 licensing and placement staff and two recruitment and resource staff. We also have also moved our staff to a new office, transitioned about 300 foster and adoptive families who had been licensed through our partners at Children's Service Society of Wisconsin, and we will expand our support and training resources to kinship families who are not licensed but are caring for children. Whew!

Advancing our foster care services will provide St. Aemilian-Lakeside with many opportunities to expand services to children by building a continuum of care for foster care Levels 1-4. I am very excited to have all of you as part of this journey, and this newsletter serves as your connection to all that is happening to serve children and to support you as a caregiver. **THANK YOU** to all of the foster parents who have helped build such a great program at St. Aemilian-Lakeside and **WELCOME** to those new foster parents who will help us build more history. With our expanded "army" of foster parents, we can **GROW HOPE** together because, as you know, the need is great and the rewards are greater!

Denise Pilz
Chief Program Officer

Trauma Informed Care

A new way of looking at behavioral and other challenges in children, and central to the St. Aemilian-Lakeside philosophy of care and treatment. Instead of asking "What's wrong with them?" the question becomes "What happened to them?"

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Visit Our Website!

For updated training and other information, visit our website at:
www.st-al.org.

Click on "Services" and go to "Foster Care"

UPCOMING EVENTS

-March 25: *Occupational Therapy and Trauma Informed Care*, with Deb Buchannan.

-April 2: *Drug and Alcohol Exposed Infants and Children*, with Kathy Elertson.

See "Training Opportunities" inside for more details.



Trauma Informed Care

St. Aemilian-Lakeside is in the forefront of therapeutic practices that are based on neuroscience. Research has shown that trauma, such as drug or alcohol exposure, abuse and neglect, experienced in-utero through early childhood affects the brain. We know that children change fundamentally and biologically as the result of trauma. And we know that these changes affect behavior.

As a result, all our services to children and families are based on what is called trauma informed care. We assess children to try to learn when trauma occurred in their development and how long it lasted, because we know that different parts of the brain develop at different times. These various parts, from the brain stem to the cortex, affect different behaviors, from things such as motor control to abstract reasoning. Understanding when trauma occurred helps us tailor our responses.

“Adult” responses to “bad behavior” often focus on talking or reasoning or even yelling. That kind of abstract thought comes from the cortex. Responses from children who have experienced trauma, however, are based in the brain stem. This part of the brain produces emotional reactions from alarm to fear to terror. Reasoning with a child who is flooded with a stress response as a result of trauma simply doesn’t get through.

Therefore, we try to shift attitudes as an essential first step. Changing “What’s wrong with you?” to “What happened to you?” allows understanding and opens the door to healing.

We work with what are called sensory interventions to promote calming and to actually create changes in neuro pathways. We know, for instance, that rhythmic, repetitive activities can alter brain activity, and, to a degree, brain structure. So we incorporate things from hand massage to drumming or dancing or rocking in a rocking chair into the work we do with children. And we have seen dramatic results.

We also foster a deep understanding by our clinicians — and all our staff — of how our own responses affect those around us. We encourage various practices to instill calm in our clinicians so they can mirror it with the children and families with whom they work.

Please visit our website at www.st-al.org to view a video about our approach to trauma informed care and read some of our exciting success stories.

St. Aemilian-Lakeside is one of only a handful of agencies in the nation incorporating such practices on an everyday basis. We closely follow the work of Dr. Bruce Perry, a pioneer in trauma informed care and one of the premier experts in this area. His ChildTrauma Academy, based in Houston, has done seminal research in this area.

Foster Parent Information Line 414-380-3780

It’s important to us that you have the information that you need when you need it. The St. Aemilian-Lakeside Foster Parent Information Line is here to help you with questions such as:

- Bureau of Milwaukee Child Welfare re-design
- Licensing process
- Trainings and networking groups
- Contact information -- who to call for what
- Resource questions
- Any other general questions.

The line is staffed by licensing workers 8 a.m.-5 p.m. You can also find us at www.st-al.org



Training Opportunities

Wisconsin Family Assistance Center for Education, Training and Support (WI FACETS)

FACETS is a statewide non-profit, with its main office in Milwaukee, that is dedicated to helping families understand the special education laws and systems.

They offer:

- Telephone-based training, during the day and evening, that you can participate in from home or anywhere else you have a telephone
- Web-based training
- Conferences and classes held at their main office or other locations around Milwaukee and the State of Wisconsin

Most trainings are free to parents and foster parents, and they offer real-world perspectives and advice on helping your foster child receive appropriate special education services. Trainings taken through FACETS will count toward Ongoing Training hours for Level 3 foster parents, as well as Mastery training hours for Levels 1 and 2 foster parents. Visit their web site at www.wefacets.org, or call them at 877-374-0511, for more information or to request a complete schedule of trainings.

Foster Care and Adoption Resource Center (FCARC)

Located at 6682 W. Greenfield Ave., West Allis, FCARC offers information and resources for:

- Prospective foster and adoptive families
- Public, tribal and private-agency foster care, child welfare and adoption staff
- Youth currently or previously involved with the foster care system

They provide a toll-free information telephone line at 800-947-8074 and a comprehensive website that is full of resources and ideas at www.wifostercareandadoption.org. They also offer low-cost webinar trainings that can be used for ongoing training credit for all levels of foster parents. These include:

- **From Youth in Care to College Student:** The program features a panel of people talking about some of the barriers that are specific to youth in care who are considering going to college. *Wednesday, Feb. 29, 6:30-8:30 p.m.* Attend via webinar or in-person at

their office. Cost: \$10 per person.

- **Calming the Explosive Volcano: A Three-Part Series.** This series will help you learn the key ingredients of good communication and how to deal with frustrating behaviors, while also significantly reducing stress for everybody. *Wednesdays, March 14, 21, and 28, 6-8 p.m.* Attend via webinar or in-person at their office. Cost: \$40 per person for all three sessions.
- **The Dark Side of Digital Technology: The Internet, Cell Phones and Social Media.** This includes real-life examples and practical advice for anyone interested in the safety and well-being of children. *Tuesday, May 1, 6-9 p.m.* Attend via webinar or in-person at their office. Cost: \$20 per person.

For more information and to sign up, visit the FCARC website, or call the toll-free information line.

Phone: 800-947-8074

Foster Family Support and Advocacy Groups Upcoming Meetings

Connecting Bridges was formed in 2009 by foster parents to help the various parts of the Milwaukee foster care system work together. The group meets at St. Aemilian-Lakeside in the Franciscan Center. (Enter through Capitol West Academy, 3939 N. 88th St.) For more information, including speakers featured at meetings, visit www.connecting-bridges.org, or e-mail Ralph Gundrum at wifosterdad@yahoo.com. Please join the group at one of these upcoming meetings:

- Monday, April 9, 6:30-8 p.m.
- Monday, May 14, 6:30-8 p.m.
- Monday July 9, 6:30-8 p.m.

The United Foster Parent Association of Greater Milwaukee was formed by foster and adoptive parents to advocate for foster families and inform foster parents. The group meets at 4425 N. Port Washington Road, Glendale. Membership is \$5 per year. For more information, please call 414-477-3598 or 414-871-8230. Please join the group at one of these upcoming meetings:

- Thursday, March 15, 6-8 p.m.
- Thursday, April 19, 6-8 p.m.
- Thursday, May 17, 6-8 p.m.

Voices United is a support group for foster, adoptive and kinship families. The group meets on the third Wednesday of each month, 6-8 p.m. at Adoption Resources of Wisconsin, 6682 W. Greenfield Ave., West Allis. Membership is \$10 per family per year. For more information, contact voicesunitedmilw@aol.com.

Training Opportunities Through St. Aemilian-Lakeside Open to all Levels of Foster Parents

Please Note:

- *Level 1 and 2 homes SAL training offerings are IN ADDITION TO the training curriculum offered and facilitated by the UWM Training Partnership; they do not replace the Foundation or Mastery Series.*
- *Child care is not offered at St. Aemilian-Lakeside trainings or meetings. Due to confidentiality issues and the sensitive nature of some training material, please do not bring children to trainings, and make child care arrangements accordingly.*
- *Since our organization has grown to include many more foster parents of different service levels, all classes will be open to any foster parent licensed by St. Aemilian-Lakeside/Integrated Family Services regardless of their licensing certification level.*
- *Please read the training announcements carefully. Not all classes start and end at the same time.*
- *Thank you for being on time. We cannot admit anyone into class who arrives more than 15 minutes late. Please make sure you sign in when you arrive to receive training credit.*
- *All classes will be held at St. Aemilian-Lakeside, 8901 W. Capitol Dr., unless otherwise noted.*
- *Please RSVP for classes by calling 414-463-1880, ext. 200, at least one week in advance. Your message will confirm your registration for the class.*

Training Opportunities

For all levels of foster care

Monday, March 5, 6-9 p.m.

Maintaining Connections with the Primary Family.

Part of the pre-service training series, but a great refresher for foster parents of any experience level. This class looks at ways that foster parents can help make the child's birth family part of the team. *This class is an updated version of the "Birth Family" pre-service class. Foster parents may receive ongoing training credit even if they have attended the previous version.*

Wednesday, March 7, 6-9 p.m.

Promoting Positive Behavior. Focusing all of our efforts on managing the child's behavior and neglecting the relationship can only serve to make the behavior challenges worse. This class emphasizes promoting positive behavior from a trauma informed perspective. *Training credit can be given only to those who have not attended this class previously.*

Monday, March 12, 6-9 p.m.

Separation and Placement. When children are removed from their families, or move between foster homes, they are experiencing a traumatic event. This class looks at their grieving process, as well as how the effects of these events can be minimized by foster parents. *Training credit can be given only to those who have not attended this class previously.*

Thursday, March 15, 6-8 p.m.

Trauma Informed Care: Lower Brain Interventions.

Deb Buchanan, an occupational therapist who consults with our agency, offers a hands-on demonstration of techniques that any foster parent can use with children to help them calm and regulate their lower brains every day — and which are fun and children actually want to do. Be prepared to be move around and play! *Due to the hands-on nature of this training, space is limited. Walk-ins will be welcome on a space-available basis.*

Wednesday, March 21, 6-8 p.m.

Trauma Informed Care Case Study. Follow a real-world example of a child in care whose foster parents are at the center of treatment. *While names have been changed, thank you for keeping in mind St. Aemilian-Lakeside's policies regarding confidentiality.*

Recruitment and Retention Updates

In a partnership, everyone needs to be heard, everyone has strengths, and power is shared. We warmly welcome you to our new partnership. We are committed to providing the very best of care to our youth and families. What, you ask, does this have to do with recruitment? Recruitment efforts are critically integrated with retention efforts. Our goals are to support and value you, offer you respect, provide clear communication and develop/maintain a collaborative working relationship.

Formally, we will partner with community groups, faith-based organizations, businesses and non-profit organizations to assist us in our recruitment efforts. At St. Aemilian-Lakeside/Integrated Family Services, we believe that recruitment/retention efforts must be ongoing, coordinated and an active responsibility of everyone. To provide a small gesture of our appreciation to you — existing foster parents who help recruit families — we are offering referral incentives.

A referral bonus will be paid to foster parents, faith-based organizations and community organizations for each new foster parent referral. For each referral that results in an application, the referral source will receive a logo item. If the referral is licensed and takes a placement, the foster family or community partner will receive \$200. If the referral takes placement of a child 13 or older, the foster family or community partner will receive an additional \$100.

Please contact us at growhope@sal.org or toll free at 855-GROW-HOPE if you would like additional information

For more information on training, contact Mike Joranger, Training and Retention Specialist, at 414-604-5125



Training Opportunities for All Levels of Foster Care (*continued*)

Wednesday, March 28, 6-8 p.m. [Transitioning to Independence, Film and Panel Discussion: “Out of Respect: A Story of Five.”](#) View a locally produced film on the challenges of “aging out” of the foster care system as experienced by five LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender) youth, and discuss the efforts taking place in our community to help all youth make the transition to adulthood. *Credit can be given only for attending either Feb. 25 or this class, not both.*

Monday, April 2, 6-8 p.m. [Drug Exposed Infants and Children.](#) This class will describe the effects of different classes of drug, alcohol and tobacco on the newborn infant. The presentation will discuss signs of withdrawal, tips on caring for substance-exposed infants, and the possible long-term effects. Kathy Elertson, BMCW nurse practitioner, has more than 20 years of experience caring for infants and children, many of whom were substance-exposed prior to birth.

Wednesday, April 4, 6-9 p.m. [Partners in Permanence.](#) Part of the Level 3 pre-service series, but may be taken for training credit by currently licensed foster parents of any service level. Includes an overview of the child welfare system, planning for a child’s permanent living situation, and the roles of various team members.

Wednesday, April 11, 6-9 p.m. [Introduction to Trauma Informed Care.](#) A basic overview of the philosophy that drives the St. Aemilian-Lakeside approach to care and treatment. *Training credit can be given only to those who have not attended this class previously.*

Monday, April 16, 6-9 p.m. [Child Trauma: Physical Abuse and Neglect.](#) Part of the Level 3 pre-service series, but may be taken for training credit by currently licensed foster parents of any service level. An overview of the dynamics behind this type of trauma, and how foster parents can be at the center of treatment for survivors. *Training credit can be given only to those who have not attended this class previously.*

Tuesday, April 17, 6-9 p.m. [Trauma Informed Care: Lower Brain Interventions.](#) *A repeat of the March 15 class, but held at Summit Place, 6737 W. Washington St., West Allis*

Friday, April 20, and Saturday, April 21. [Milwaukee TFC Training Collaborative Spring Conference.](#) Please call Mike Joranger at 414-604-5125 for details. *For Level 3 foster parents only.*

Wednesday, April 25, 6-8 p.m. [Addiction and the Family.](#) A closer look at an issue that is central for many children and families that we serve. The class includes an overview of the healing process and how foster parents can support children whose families are affected by this problem.

Questions about training? Contact Mike Joranger, Training and Retention Specialist, at 414-604-5125



Training for Level 1 and 2 Foster Parents

For trainings listed on this page, contact the partnership at:

Registration: 414-964-7397

faptpreg@uwm.edu

Web: www.mcwppd.uwm.edu

East Lake Towers building, Suite 400

4425 N. Port Washington Rd., Glendale, WI 53212



TRAINING REMINDERS: Unless otherwise noted, all trainings are held at the above location. No one is admitted to a session 15 minutes after start time. Lunch is provided for all-day Saturday classes. Non-essential classes may be cancelled due to low enrollment. Please register in advance! **FREE** child care is available on a limited basis for foster/adoptive parents through the Foster/Adoptive Parent Training Program while they take classes. Both biological and foster children of participants are eligible for child care. To arrange for child care, please call 414-964-7397 at least one week prior to the class date. If you request child care and your plans change, please call to cancel.

Foundation Training Sessions Taken during the two-year Initial Licensing Period.

Saturday, March 3, 12:30-3:30 p.m., OR Tuesday, March 27, 5:30-8:30 p.m. (attend either class) Guidance and Positive Discipline. Information on positive ways to manage behavior.

Saturday, March 3, 9 a.m.–noon, OR Thursday, March 22, 5:30- 8:30 p.m. Separation and Placement. The effects of separation on the child within their cultural context.

Thursday, March 15, 5:30-8:30 p.m. The Impact of Trauma on Development. An overview of normal child development and examines the impact of abuse and neglect on child development.

Tuesday, March 20, 5:30-8:30 p.m. Attachment. How attachment is the foundation for guidance and positive discipline and how it is affected by separation from the primary family and other significant people.

Saturday, March 24, 9 a.m. to noon. OR Thursday, March 29. 5:30-8:30 p.m. (attend either class) The Effects of Fostering on the Family. The impact of foster care, adoption, and kinship care on the family.

Mastery Series (Formerly "In-Service.")

Saturday, March 3, 9 a.m.-3:30 p.m. Diffusing Crisis Safely and Sanely. Identify anger as an unmet need and identify stages of a developing crisis. For caretakers of children who are infants to age 18.

Saturday, March 17. 12:30-3:30 p.m. Permanency Issues for Children. The effects of long-term separation from the primary family, either through adoption or long-term foster care. For pre-adoptive parents only.

Saturday, March 24, 9 a.m.-3:30 p.m. Fostering to Adopt. Managing the emotions and unique challenges of this special kind of fostering. For pre-adoptive parents only.

Saturday, March 24. 12:30-3:30 p.m. Permanency Issues for Foster Families. Issues related to adoption often experienced by adoptive families. For pre-adoptive parents only.

Formal Support For new foster parents, taken within 30 days of initial placement.

Thursday, March 1, 5:30-8:30 p.m. OR Saturday, March 17, 9 a.m.-noon. (Attend Either Session) New Placement Check-In. An opportunity to connect with other foster parents, have questions answered, and get advice from Bureau of Milwaukee Child Welfare workers and experienced foster parents.

Classes are repeated often, and different classes will be offered in coming months. If you have questions about any of the trainings offered by the Milwaukee Child Welfare Partnership for Professional Development, please call 414-964-7397, or visit them on the web at www.mcwppd.uwm.edu.