

# Caring for Kids Chronicle

OCTOBER 2015

Caring for Kids was founded by former foster parents in 1995.

Caring for Kids provides: Birth and adoptive parent supportive services, international and domestic home studies, pre and post placement training and supervision, foster care certification, and child focused recruitment.

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## Director's Corner

The Caring for Kids Annual Ice Cream Social has come and gone again! Where did the summer go?! Thanks to all who attended the Ice Cream Social! It appeared that many people had a great time. It is wonderful to see all the families attend and share their experiences with the staff and other families; all at varying stages of the foster and/or adoption journey! We all learn best from each other.



Every year after the Ice Cream Social we take a day or two to reflect on the event, and then begin planning for Adoption Awareness Month in November! We will

be holding our annual First Hand Views of Adoption Program again this year at Akron Children's Hospital, Con-sidine Professional Building, on November 12, 2015 at 6:00 pm. Save the Date! This is always a powerful program as adoptive families and children share personal accounts of their joys and challenges through the adoption process. Again, our best

learning comes from other families and children and their personal experiences!

Caring for Kids is pleased to report that we have serviced more foster children, and made more adoptive placements so far this year than we did in all of 2014! We continue to grow and most importantly have added more supportive services to all of our programs. We hope this helps the families and children we serve. We look forward to our continued work and hope to see you all on November 12<sup>th</sup>!

Jill and Pat

## Holiday Helpers

On September 21st, as everyone was celebrating the first day of Fall, we were kicking off our annual Holiday Helpers Campaign. Every year CKF helps bring joy to the over 200 kids and families we serve by helping make their holiday wishes come true.

If you would like to help Caring for Kids in this mission we have three ways in which you could help:

1. We are in need of individuals, families, churches, and organizations to sponsor one or more of our foster children for the holidays.

When you sponsor a child, you will get a wish list for that child of three gifts that average about \$25 dollars each, that they are dreaming of for the holidays. Gifts will be collected unwrapped to our office.

2. We have a general Holiday Helpers wish list in which individuals or groups can buy items from and donate them to Caring or Kids. This list is included on the last page of the newsletter
3. CFK accepts monetary donations for the holidays as well. Many of the over 100 teens in foster

care we work with love to receive gift cards so that they can enjoy the experience of going shopping and picking out their own items. Your monetary donation would allow us to provide our teens this experience.

If you are interested in participating in Holiday Helpers or sponsoring a child or children, please contact our Caring for Kids office at 330-928-0044.



Adoption Foster Care Birth Parent Services



Did you know that Caring or Kids also cares about the environment? CFK is proud of our recycling program

In 2014 Caring for Kids recycled approximately 2,369 pounds of paper.

As a result  
CFK conserved

- 20 Trees
- 450 Gallons of Oil
- 8,292 Gallons of Water
- 5,686 Kilowatt Hours of Energy
- 118 Cubic yards of Landfill Space

In addition to recycling paper, Caring for Kids also recycles, aluminum, plastic, and cardboard.

## Public Post

Hello Public Families! We have been busy in the Public Program and we wanted to share our stats so far this year. We have placed 11 children: ages, 4, 5, 7, 9, (3) 11 year olds, (2) 14 year olds and (2) 17 year olds. It has been wonderful to see older children gaining permanency and a place to call their “forever home”! The crisis in adoption still remains for children ages 9 and up. It’s important to understand how many factors go into determining a child’s “actual age” if they have spent time in foster care. Every parent who adopts a child that has been in foster care must understand typical child development and the devastating impact of neglect and physical and sexual abuse on a child’s developmental level and

overall well-being. Children have several aspects of their development to consider: their age in years; appearance age; IQ age; academic age (grade in school); emotional age; social age; and their life experience age. Children who have experienced the tragedy of abuse and neglect and sexual abuse have fragmented pieces of development. For most children who have been abused or neglected, typical attachment and trusting relationships are complicated. Children who have been sexually abused have experiences that many don’t have until they are grown up and experience intimate relationships. A 10 year old child may look between 9-11 years old but may be behind in school, performing at a 2nd grade level and have the emotional age of a 5

year old based on their history of abuse and neglect. If they have had several placements in homes and school with different children, they may not have learned how to be social and navigate peer relationships. Therefore, that 10 year old child may not have the same interests and capabilities of the “typically” developing children he/she interacts with. These children may have also missed out on some of the most basic experiences of childhood, especially if they have been parentified by needing to take care of their younger siblings. Being mindful of how all of these pieces fit together will give you, as their adoptive parent, some insight into how to help them navigate their environment and help manage your expectations of them.



*Congratulation on your  
adoption finalization!*

# Fostering Families



A lot of children in foster care don't see themselves as having value. They blame themselves

for becoming involved with the foster care system; Seeing their history of abuse and neglect as their own fault. Unfortunately, the child welfare system often reiterates the message that children in foster care don't have the same value as other children. Children in foster care are bounced around from home to home and often times told they, because of their behaviors or special needs, are the reason that they must move to a new foster family. To make matters worse, when the children move their possessions are oftentimes placed in trash bags, sending a message that their belongings are equivalent to garbage. Birthdays are forgotten in the shuffle between homes and the busyness of family visits, home visits, and other appointments. Children internalize these subtle messages which confirms their belief that they are worthless and undeserving. Over time these beliefs can become so ingrained for children who spend long periods of time in foster care that the children we serve eventually think they don't deserve parents, don't deserve for their basic needs to be met, and don't deserve love.

At Caring for Kids, we believe

that all children have infinite value. This is a message that we want to convey to every child with whom we work. Due to the internalized beliefs of worthlessness it can be difficult to share this message with only words. We have to show children their worth with our actions. One way we show them is by spending quality time with the children we serve during visits and special events. We get to know them. We remember their likes and dislikes and the things they tell us. We make them promises and we keep them, unlike many other adults they have encountered. The promises can be as simple as bringing a candy bar to their next visit or taking them to lunch on their birthday, but when we remember, it builds trust in the relationship and shows they are worth our time and energy. Another way we show foster children that we value them is by providing tangible items that they may have not received in the past. For example, every staff member at Caring for Kids signs a personalized birthday card for every youth in foster care with whom we work. We also provide each child who needs school supplies with a book bag filled with all of the school supplies from their school list. It is amazing to see a child's eyes light up when they receive what so many of us simply expect in life. For some of the foster children we serve, the book bags we provide allow them to go to school with school supplies for the first time in their lives. One particular child

was thrilled by his book bag because he previously had only ever had whatever used supplies had been left at school the year before. Several others expressed similar delight and were so proud to finally be prepared for school like the other children in their school.

Providing these items to the children we serve is only possible through generous donations. Birthday cards, school supplies, birthday gifts, and many other donations are accepted year round to enable the staff of Caring for Kids to continue building up the self worth of our clients. As the holidays approach, we will be collecting many other items that will allow us to once again affirm the worth of the children we serve by providing gifts to each child in foster care with whom we work. Sadly, some of our youth may have never previously received a gift for the holidays. Giving them a few bottles of lotion, a football, or a board game is another tangible reminder that someone cares. Although it may not be much to some, it could be the turning point for our kids to finally realize just how precious and valued they are.





**Birthmother  
retreat  
Fall 2015**

*“Everyone craves being acknowledged, appreciated and respected. Accepting another person unconditionally means acknowledging their opinions and feelings and choices and their right to hold them—regardless of whether you agree. To accept another doesn’t necessarily mean liking what the other person stands for or the choices they have made. Acceptance is the opposite of rejection, judging, criticizing, accusing, mocking, and disapproving.*

*Here’s the secret:  
Whenever you have a  
choice to be right or to be  
CARING,  
choose CARING.”*

*~Author Unknown*

## Private Pulse

The Private Infant Program has had an extremely successful 2015 thus far! We are happy to report that we’ve placed 45 infants with their forever families since January 1st. This exceeds the total number of placements we did last year. Congratulations to each family that got to bring their child home!

Our 2015 Spring and Fall Birthparent retreats were huge successes and we are already looking forward and planning out 2016 retreats. We are so grateful to continue this opportunity for birth mothers and we again want to thank the families that donated, sponsored or encouraged a birth mother to attend. We

continue to feel this program is a huge success with so many benefits to our birth parents and adoptive parents.

Please see the article below by an anonymous source. We think there are many good tips and things to think about as an adoptive parent.

## Things I Wish All Adoptive Parents Knew

(from a Birthmother’s Point of View)

1. Nothing means more than calling the child we share an immense love for ‘our child.’ Recognizing that the child does in fact have two sets of parents who love him or her means the world to us birthparents.
2. That old, crinkled up sheet of paper with errant crayon scribbles all over it that you are about to throw away because you’ve already kept approximately 8,000 of them? Don’t. Send it to your child’s birth mom or dad, no extensive letter necessary. What may be every-day and semi-”meaningless” to you may mean the world to a birth parent.
3. You can never send enough photos. If you don’t want to send one for fear of being too “pushy,” I can assure you almost certainly that you are not. If we aren’t ready to look yet, we’ll save it for later. But just knowing you thought of us means everything.
4. Including us as part of your family is the biggest honor you could give us. Even if visits are not part of the adoption plan, including us on group emails (with photos) to far-away family members doesn’t go without notice. (My daughter’s adoptive mom sent a photo of our little girl waving two flags in her hands last year on 4th of July. I love the emails she sends only to me, but to see all of my daughter’s many aunts and uncles on both sides of the family included on the email, along with myself and my mother, made my heart practically burst!)
5. Likewise, being a part of your “Christmas Card List” is also amazing. If you’re one of those families who take professional Christmas photos and sends them out on little postcards consider sending one to your child’s birth family. (I still have mine from the two Christmases that have past).
6. No matter how much we love you ( which, trust me, is a lot!), it is still extremely hard to trust someone else with your child. Think of how nervous you were the first time you let someone babysit your children...this is how we felt at placement, only it was magnified seven-fold. This is not to say we don’t trust you—we more than trust you, and are secure in that trust—but keep this fear in mind when we send quick texts or emails just to see how everyone is doing. We don’t mean to bug you.
7. Sending us quick emails just to say hello, check in, or wish us luck on our upcoming finals or whatever it may be, means the world to us. Feeling like we not only share a common interest in the child, but also share a friendship, is wonderful.
8. Not sure if we want that low-quality, grainy video you took on your cell phone? We do! You may have better ones that you took with the digital camera, but we cherish anything—and I mean anything you send us.

## Things I Wish All Adoptive Parents Knew cont...

9. Always keep your promises. This goes for birth parents and adoptive parents alike. Promises in open adoption are worth gold...there is no relationship more delicate or fragile on earth, so promises are sacred.
10. We may not admit it, and a lot of us may share our pain quicker than we share our joy, but we love you for providing our children with what we couldn't at the time. Whether it's a two parent household, a solid financial ground, or just a house period, it's something we couldn't provide or provide properly. I've heard it said that people think adoptive parents should "owe" their child's birth parents the world for "giving them a child." Well, birth parents feel indebted (in a good way) to adoptive parents for loving their child above themselves. **We didn't give our child to you, we gave you to our child.**
11. Don't hold back on what you tell us. Don't be afraid to tell us that you missed 'our' baby while you were away on a business trip because you're scared we'll think "how do you think I feel?" The feeling we get when you are expressing your love for our child will eventually win over any jealous feelings we have about the time you get to spend with them that we don't.
12. Allow us to send gifts. While some of us can't bear to walk down the baby aisle or the kid's toy aisle at Target, others find immense comfort in buying things for the child. The occasional "spoiling" we get to do feels amazing.
13. Sending photos of your child wearing outfits we sent to her/him or playing with toys we sent are priceless.
14. Always feel free to send us the "outtakes," too. While pictures in nice lighting, in cute outfits and with huge smiles are great, we want to see pictures of our kids just being kids, too. Not sure if you should send the picture where his or her back is to the camera and they are playing with toys? Please, send it! That one where they are crying or in mid-scream...send that one, too. We want as much insight into their daily lives as you are willing to give.
15. If you don't already, please understand that as long as the safety of the child isn't a risk (mentally or physically), it can never be a bad thing for more people to love a child. When everyone has the child's best interest at heart, the more love, the better. Please don't close us out, we are not a threat. We don't want to take over your title or role and 99% of us would never have that intent nor would we dream of trying. We just want the opportunity to let our child know that he or she always was and always will be loved by us.



## Caring For Kids, Inc.

Adoption Foster Care Birth Parent Services

Presents

### First-hand Views of Adoption 2015

Featuring a Diverse Interactive Panel of Adoption Triad Members

2 hours of  
Foster Parent  
Continuing  
Training Credit

- Openness in Adoption
- Foster to Adopt Placements
- Trans-racial Adoption
- Older Child Adoption
- Infant Adoption
- Q & A Session

**Thursday, November 12, 2015**

**Adoption Panel begins at 6:00-8:30 p.m.**  
**Panel Meet & Greet from 8:30-9:00 p.m.**

Akron Children's Hospital  
Considine Professional Building Auditorium  
Ground Level  
215 W. Bowery St.  
Akron, OH

**\*2 Free CEUs\***

With pre-registration  
for nurses, social  
workers & counselors

For pre-registration or additional information please contact us at (330) 928-0044 or [info@cfkadopt.org](mailto:info@cfkadopt.org)

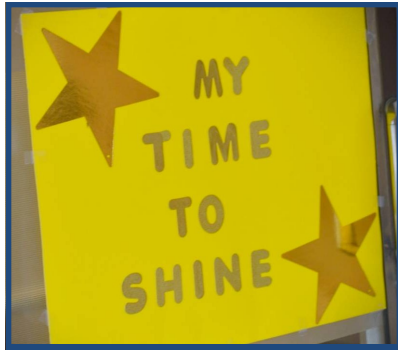
## Mentors Wanted

Caring for kids is looking for adults aged 21 and older to mentor kids in foster care, kids aging out of foster care, young mothers, and foster parents.

If you can spare about six hours a month to help make a difference in a life, contact Maureen at 330-928-0044 for info.

## WWK

### My Time to Shine



The Wendy's Wonderful Kids recruiters organized and hosted their annual event, "My Time to Shine". This event focused on taking professional photographs to be used as recruitment for some of the foster children that they serve. Each recruiter selected 3-4 foster youth that they work with to attend this event in August.

Caring for Kids solicited the help of many professionals to volunteer their time and services to make this event successful for



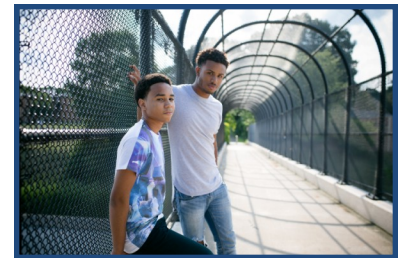
the children. There were professional hair stylists, make-up and nail artists, and photographers that came together to make this event truly special. Each child had the opportunity to be assigned their own time getting hair cut and/or styled, and make-up and nails done. These

volunteers made sure each child felt pampered and special. Once hair and make up were done, the youth has an individual session with a photographer. They chose from a wide variety of backdrops or the natural outdoor setting. The recruiters created very unique backdrops this year, including a huge chalkboard graffiti wall and several cool cars that the youth could have pictures taken in. Once the children completed their photo session, they had the opportunity to do crafts, play in a video game truck, and socialize.



My Time to Shine is a wonderful opportunity to empower our foster youth and make them feel confident. This shines through in the photographs that are taken. A confident child who is showcased in professional photographs truly makes them and their personality stand out. Often the recruiters use My Time to Shine as a chance to have siblings be photographed together. Sibling photographs are a great chance for youth to feel connected and bond as a family. Many recruiters also use this event as an opportunity for Senior pictures. This rite of passage helps the youth celebrate that

special time in his or her life. This day is all about the individual foster children having the opportunity to feel special and experience things that they often do not.



My Time to Shine is a large, community wide effort that comes together to give these foster youth one evening of special attention that they deserve. These unique photographs are then used as a recruitment tool to help in the search for a forever family for these youth. Most importantly, they are photographs the children can keep for themselves or give to loved ones. This event is truly a wonderful opportunity for some of our foster youth to feel beautiful and shine!



## Featured Children

### Michael, Jamon, and Jamarion 8, 6, and 5 years old



These siblings are a joy to be around, are full of energy, are bonded well with each other. Each of these young boys has their own individual personalities, strengths and needs. All three children receive at least one type of service to address behavioral, medical, and/or learning needs. Michael, Jamon, and Jamarion need a family who will love them as their own, and give them individual attention, as well as spend quality family time with them.

Michael, the oldest, is described as being energetic, a leader and smart. Michael needs a family who will understand the impact the loss of losing his biological mother has on him.

Jamon is described as being very friendly, energetic and mischievous at times. Jamon has some medical needs, which prevent him from playing or engaging in physical contact sports.

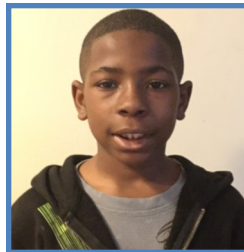
Jamarion is friendly, affectionate and sweet young boy. He attends pre-school and is doing well.

Michael, Jamon, and Jamarion are part of a large sibling group that includes three older sisters. These six children want to be together, but we have not yet

found one family for all six children. It is possible to keep all six siblings together, or to adopt only Michael, Jamon, and Jamarion. If the boys are adopted separately from the girls, our hope would be that any family considering these boys would also support and encourage a relationship with their sisters.

For more information about Michael, Jamon and Jamarion, please contact Erin King at: 330-928-0044 or at [erin@cfkadopt.org](mailto:erin@cfkadopt.org)

### Jaynell - 10 Years Old

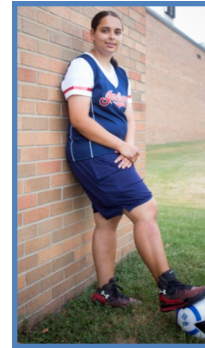


Jaynell loves to play with Legos! He can never have too many of them, and will play with them whenever he can. Jaynell is also very active, and enjoys playing outside. Although Jaynell will play pretty much anything that keeps his body moving, his favorite sports include football and basketball. Jaynell can be very sweet and really craves one on one time with his caregivers. Jaynell is an excellent artist, and also enjoys playing games on his tablet. Jaynell has suffered a lot of loss in his life, and is often afraid. Sometimes this fear can look like anger, but it doesn't define who he is. Jaynell needs the love of a committed family to show him how special he is, and help him learn appropriate social skills and coping mechanisms.

Jaynell has a 13 year old sister, Alaysha; a home that will adopt both children is needed.

For more information about Jaynell and Alaysha, please contact Laura Merklin at: 330-802-2675 or at [laura@cfkadopt.org](mailto:laura@cfkadopt.org)

### Liz - 15 Years Old



Liz loves to play volleyball, softball, and soccer. She has a great sense of humor and loves to play little tricks on others. She loves to watch comedies, and has been described as friendly, talkative and bright. She loves to go walking, biking and swinging at the park. Liz loves animals, particularly dogs and horses. She has good grades at school and is active in the youth group at church. Liz is hoping to find a forever family that would be willing to allow her to maintain contact with her previous care givers and be supportive and encouraging of her love for sports and her active lifestyle.

For more information about Liz and please contact Lydia Keto at 0330-928-0044 or at [lydia@cfkadopt.org](mailto:lydia@cfkadopt.org)

Caring for Kids, Inc. is grateful to have an ongoing partnership with the *Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption!* Together with the *Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption*, Caring for Kids believes every child deserves to live in a safe, loving, permanent family. To find more photos and bios of Ohio children currently available for adoption who are represented by one of our Wendy's Wonderful Kids recruiters, please visit our website at: [www.cfkadopt.org](http://www.cfkadopt.org)



# Holiday Helpers



*Help make the holidays a memorable experience for the foster children and birth families we serve*

## Ways to Help:

Donate one or more of our most requested gifts from the list below

**or**

Make an online monetary donation at [www.cfkadopt.org](http://www.cfkadopt.org) by clicking “Donate Now” with the note “Holiday Helpers” in the comment box and we’ll use your donation for our greatest holiday needs

Most requested gifts:

- 1 – **Sports Balls** (Official sized Footballs, Basketballs, Size 5 Soccer Balls, and Volleyballs)
- 2 – **Bath and Body Lotion/Shower Gel Sets**
- 3 – **Baby Dolls** (baby dolls of minority races are most needed and please no Barbie dolls)
- 4 – **Remote Control Cars and Trucks**
- 5 – **Infant/Toddler Development Toys** (V-tech, Fisher Price, Play Skool, Melissa & Doug, etc)
- 6 – **Lego or Mega Bloks Sets**
- 7 – **African American Hair Care Products** (Kinky Curly Brand, Shea Moisture Brand, Ampro Gel, Blue Magic Grease, etc.)
- 8 – **Pre-teen fashion items** (purses, fashion scarves, nail polish sets, lip gloss sets, etc.)
- 9 – **Diapers/Pullups** (sizes 3 and up) **and Wipes**
- 10 – **\$20 Gift Cards to Walmart, Target, Starbucks, Toys R Us, and Game Stop**
- 11 – **Gas and Grocery Gift Cards**
- 12 – **Laundry Basket filled with Basic Household Supplies** (toilet paper, paper towels, laundry detergent, toiletries, cleaning supplies, towels, etc)

Gifts will be accepted beginning October 1<sup>st</sup> through December 24<sup>th</sup>. Gifts can be delivered to Caring for Kids’ main office (650 Graham Road, Suite 101, Cuyahoga Falls, Ohio 44221) during regular business hours, Monday – Friday from 8:30am until 5:00pm. Alternate drop off times or pick-ups for large donations can be made by calling us at 330-928-0044.

A few friendly reminders:

**\*Please do not wrap any gifts as we need to see the items we have in order to distribute appropriately. This also allows items for siblings to be wrapped similarly to keep the joy and mystery of the holiday season alive.**

**\*Only new items which are in their original packaging can be accepted for our holiday gift giving program.**

