

Arizona Statewide

News for Foster, Kinship and Adoptive Families Across Arizona

Spring/Summer 2013



877-543-7633

Arizona Department
of Economic Security
Division of Children,
Youth and Families

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For more information
on Arizona's children
in need of foster or
adoptive families,
please call:
877-KIDS-NEED-U
(877-543-7633)
or visit our website
azkidsneedu.gov.

Meet This Month's Shining Stars: **Kimani**

Kimani is a very handsome, well-mannered and enjoyable young man. Open and sincere, he has a great sense of humor and is always ready to make others laugh, but he can be serious when he needs to be. He works hard to earn good grades and to meet the goals he sets for himself.

Kimani is very enthusiastic about sports. His favorite sport is basketball, but he also enjoys playing football and any other sport when he has time. Kimani is always ready to join a school team or league.

On the weekends, Kimani stays in shape and remains active by playing football with his foster family. "Where I live, we go to the park. They have a big, big field and we play football almost every Saturday. I go out there and they put me on the most suckiest teams so I can be the quarterback. I've got a good arm to make the plays — I can throw," he explains.

Kimani's favorite pastime, besides sports, is to play video games. He recently saved enough money to buy an Xbox 360 and is ready to challenge anyone at video games. Kimani's favorite meal is breakfast and he will eat breakfast anytime.



After college Kimani says he would like to become a professional basketball player or join the U.S. Air Force. Kimani would like a family with other children. He would also like his forever family to help him maintain contact with his older sister.

Kimani was born in 1997.

Dalisha



Music is at the top of the list for Dalisha — from Lil Wayne to Nicki Minaj — but she also plays instruments from the snare drum to the bass clarinet and sax. She wants to learn to play guitar and she would like to perform again, having played the snare drum in a marching

band. If she did have her own band, it would have to have a cool name like "Epic Rainbow." Dalisha is also an artist and red is her favorite color. She sketches flowers such as her favorite dandelions, as well as unicorns, flying people and the Fantastic Four.

Dalisha's sense of humor is infectious! She says science is cool, though reading takes too much time. She loves to run track. Dalisha says she gets along with her peers. She has dreams of having a horse farm and training horses to jump and she has participated in barrel racing.

Dalisha wants an active family who likes Chinese food — PF Chang's is the best, she explains — especially the shrimp fried rice or orange chicken. She is also a Green Bay Packers fan, and likes punting if she gets a chance to play football herself. Dalisha has a heart for those in need, particularly the homeless. Alaska would be a prime travel destination someday as she loves the cold and says she has seen such beautiful pictures of the state.

Dalisha was born in 1999.

Arizona Celebrates Foster Care Month

Throughout the month of May, Arizonans celebrated and honored our foster families.

Central Office in Phoenix — Ribbons

The kickoff for the month began at the Central Office of the Division of Children, Youth and Families (DCYF) the morning of May 1.

Staff from DCYF and the Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD) tied blue ribbon on the trees in the atrium. Staff also hosted an information

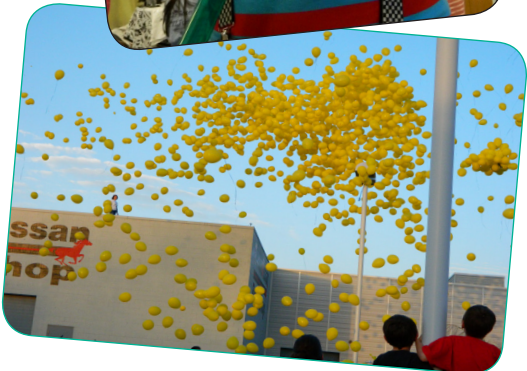
table throughout the day.

Tucson — Balloons

On Saturday, May 4, Pima Region celebrated at Thoroughbred Nissan in Tucson. This is the sixth year that the dealership has opened its doors to host the celebration, which includes games, inflatables, and food for the

entire family.

The finale for the event was the balloon launch where one helium-filled balloon is released for each child in foster care in the Pima Region.



Phoenix — Batter Up!

On May 11, families attended the Diamondbacks baseball game. Through the generous contributions of community businesses and individual donors, 1,500 people received free tickets. Each ticket included \$5 in D'backs bucks, giving participants the opportunity to purchase food or memorabilia. In addition to the game, volunteers assisted children and youth in making posters and face painting.

In addition to these large events, many licensing agencies held events to honor foster families and to raise awareness of the need for additional families.



Above: Staff from The Division of Children, Youth and Families and the Division of Developmental Disabilities tie blue ribbons. Pictured are: Melissa Kushner, Janine Ramirez, Laurie Devine, Pat Carey, Deidre Calcoate, Shannon Mendez, Maria Lewis, Roxann Miller, Lynn Griffin and Julia Gillespie.

Right top: KVOA TV, Tucson did a live remote from the celebration at Thoroughbred Nissan. M.T. Pockets (center right) is always popular with the children. Families launch balloons in Tucson (lower right). A sea of blue shirts show support for foster care (upper left). Posters and face painting were popular (center and lower left). Members of the Arizona Blue Ribbon planning team took the field to raise awareness about foster care (lower right).



CMDP Website

The Comprehensive Medical and Dental Program (CMDP) website has a wealth of health care information. The site has past editions of CMDP newsletters for members and health care providers. It also has a list of health care providers and a list of preferred medications.

Check it out at www.azdes.gov/cmdp.

Equal Opportunity Employer/Program • Under Titles VI and VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Title VI & VII), and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, and Title II of the Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act (GINA) of 2008; the Department prohibits discrimination in admissions, programs, services, activities, or employment based on race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, genetics and retaliation. The Department must make a reasonable accommodation to allow a person with a disability to take part in a program, service or activity. For example, this means if necessary, the Department

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Looking Back, Looking Forward — by Charlee Foster

Editor's note: Feedback from a recent survey of Arizona foster parents indicated that many parents want to know the stories of youth who were in foster care and how they are faring as adults.

My mother and I were looking at the *Arizona Statewide* newsletter and noticed the article, “Never Too Old To Be Adopted.” I would like to let foster families know that 18 is not too old to be adopted.

I know from personal experience because my mom adopted me at the age of 20 in Prescott on November 17, 2012, one month before my 21st birthday. I have been with my forever family for a total of six years and because of unforeseen circumstances I was unable to be adopted before the age of 18.

Although I knew I had a forever family and nothing would change it, I felt an adoption would make it official. With the help of an attorney we found that in Arizona an adult can be adopted until they're 21. Judge Mackey agreed to do the adoption along with my three foster siblings.

I would encourage foster families to look at young adults and realize that they can be adopted. Being adopted after aging out of Foster Care, I was able to keep my Independent Living Subsidy.



Above: Charlee and her family at the Prescott Courthouse on Adoption Day, left to right: Serrina, Charlee, Teresa, Cameron, Kayla, Lacy.

As you probably have noticed, my last name is now Foster. Everyone jokes about it and tells me that it's ironic that I'll always be a Foster kid.

Introducing: DCYF Mental Health Specialist for Adoption Subsidy

Kathleen Michon is the Mental Health Specialist for Adoption Subsidy. Her job is to help adoptive families navigate the behavioral health system and to brainstorm ideas regarding resources that will meet the needs of the children and families involved with Arizona's Adoption Subsidy Program.

One of the ways Michon accomplishes these tasks is to provide empowering information to both Adoption Subsidy case managers and families. The following guides have been developed by DES and other state and community partners. These guides can be found online or you can ask your Adoption Subsidy Case Manager to send them to you by postal mail:

■ Behavioral Health Guide

<https://www.azdes.gov/InternetFiles/Pamphlets/pdf/ACY-1268BHPNA.pdf>

■ Educational Guide

<https://www.azdes.gov/InternetFiles/Pamphlets/pdf/ACY-1268AHPNA.pdf>

If you are experiencing challenges with getting the needs of your child (ren) met through the behavioral health system please contact your Adoption Subsidy Case Manager, who will work with Michon to resolve the issue. To contact Adoption Subsidy please call (520) 885-8002 in Southeastern Arizona or (602) 771-6470 in Phoenix and Northwestern Arizona.

Ask Dr. Sue

Keeping Baby Safe While Sleeping

Every year, we see infants in foster care die while co-sleeping with adults. The vast majority of infants in foster care have been prenatally exposed to drugs, tobacco, and/or alcohol. So by definition, our infants in foster care are at higher risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) and co-sleeping deaths when compared with other infants.

An increased risk of SIDS has been described with all drugs of abuse, including nicotine, alcohol, and marijuana. In addition, many of our Substance Exposed Newborns (SEN) babies have been born prematurely which again raises the risk of SIDS.

These points are reinforced from Arizona's data from the *Child Fatality Review Program, Nineteenth Annual Report, November 2012*, Page 56: Home Safety-Related Deaths – The most common cause of death in and around the home was suffocation (31%, a total of 42 children). Among the 64 unsafe sleep-related deaths in Arizona last year, 42 infants were sleeping in adult beds, three were sleeping on the floor, two were sleeping on the couch and one was sleeping on the waterbed. Thirty-six infants were put to sleep on their sides or stomachs, instead of the safe sleep position (on back).

SIDS Prevention has been proven to be key:

- Always have the infant sleep on their back, unless they are having supervised “tummy time.”
- Avoid overheating the infant and dress the infant appropriately.
- Avoid second hand smoke exposure.
- Keep infant off of soft surfaces such as pillows, blankets, and mattresses.

- Do not have the baby sleep in the same bed as the adult(s).
- Please share this information with all family, friends, and other child care providers who may care for your baby to ensure they follow the safe sleep steps.

Protect Your Baby's Life with These Safe Sleep Steps

1. Baby should sleep alone in a crib, portable crib or bassinet.
2. Always put baby on his or her back to sleep even when he/she can roll over.
3. No pillows, blankets, comforters, stuffed animals or other soft things should be in the sleep area.
4. Keep baby's face uncovered during sleep for easy breathing. Use a sleeper instead of a blanket.
5. Don't allow anyone to smoke around the baby.
6. Don't overheat the baby. Dress the baby in as much or as little clothing as you are wearing.
7. Use a firm mattress with a tightly fitted sheet.
8. Place baby in the same sleep position every time.

— Susan M. Stephens, M.D., is the Medical Director of the Arizona Comprehensive Medical & Dental Program.

DCYF Administration Changes

February and March 2013 marked several significant changes in leadership within the Division of Children, Youth and Families.

■ Flora Sotomayor brings more than 30 years of child welfare and other management experience to her new position as Assistant Director for DCYF. She began her career 34 years ago working in Nogales in a community mental health agency. Sotomayor joined DES' Division of Children, Youth and Families in 1981 where she has remained for more than 31 years. She began her work in Tucson in the area of Child Protective Services and has worked in many capacities during her time with the Department. Most recently, Sotomayor spent seven months in Tucson as the Acting Program Manager for the DCYF Pima Region. She has a Masters of Social Work degree from Arizona State University and is a licensed clinical social worker for the State of Arizona.

Sotomayor replaces Veronica Bossack who retired from the Division on February 28, 2013, after serving the State of Arizona for 36 years.

■ Michael Wisehart is now serving as the Deputy Assistant Director for the Division of Children, Youth and Families. In his 12 years with the DES Financial Services Administration, Wisehart has demonstrated both his tremendous expertise in the Department's fiscal operations and also exceptional leadership abilities.

■ Lela Wendell has accepted the position as Administrator of the DCYF Finance and Business Operations Administration (FBOA). Wendell previously served as Financial Manager in the DES Financial Services Administration overseeing the DCYF budget.

■ After more than 32 years of service in Arizona's child welfare system, Linda Johnson, DCYF Policy Unit Manager, retired effective February 28, 2013. Linda's depth and wealth of knowledge of child welfare policy at the state and federal level, and her experience over three decades in our system, will be greatly missed.



DCYF Assistant Director
Flora Sotomayor.

Working Together Advocating for Your Children

What child doesn't want a forever home today? Seven years ago our family received our first foster assignment. Two beautiful little boys ages one and two, Dylan and Devon. In another home their eight month old little sister, Destiny was placed with yet another loving family. Eight months later these children had another baby brother who was able to stay with his birth parents.

A Bright Future for Your Child

For 20 months we loved these boys and started a relationship with Destiny through the family visits and a few respite opportunities. We developed a relationship with the birth parents through a journal. This journal started because I had told Devon that I would need to tell his mother what choice he had made at day care that day. Well, I couldn't lie to him, right?

No one ever told me to start this journal, although if they had in our initial trainings I no doubt forgot about it. Keeping a journal with the parents was a saving grace for Dylan and Devon. Mom and Dad were able to know of new foods, behaviors, health issues, growth spurts, sleep patterns, new experiences, etc. This not only allowed the Mom and Dad to open up the communication with their children but to also let the children know that we, my family and their parents, were a team.

In the following issues I want to share some helpful tools that will not only help you as a foster parent, your foster child, but the entire team. Team is a very strong word in the foster care system. Your team is the Case Manager, GAL (Guardian Ad Litem), Therapist, Parent Aide and/or Case Aide. You need to be sure that your presence is either heard or seen at every table that will discuss your foster child.

Within the first 24 – 48 hours of your foster child coming into your family you will want to inquire with the Case Manager about the following:

■ What is the Case Manager's email and phone number?

■ Who is the Case Manager's Supervisor and what is his or her contact information?

■ Who is the Guardian ad Litem (GAL) and what is his or her contact information?

■ When is the next hearing scheduled?
Within the first 24 – 48 hours these are things you, the foster parent, should do.

■ Call the Case Manager for the child's CMDP health and dental insurance identification card (if you don't have it) .

■ Contact CMDP directly and let them know the name of your pediatrician and request if the child's history of physicians is available, and if so, that records be forwarded to your pediatrician.

■ Schedule a physical for the child.
■ Take photos of your foster child.
■ Take videos of your foster child to demonstrate your foster child's current abilities and features.

■ If day care is needed, register your child and email the Case Manager the information.

■ If your child comes with no clothes and you have little to none, request an emergency clothing allowance.

■ Schedule an appointment with WIC.

■ Contact the FCRB (Foster Care Review Board) to see if there is a review scheduled.



— Mimi Condon, pictured with her family above, is a foster and adoptive mom. Her column, "A Bright Future," will be a regular feature in the Arizona Statewide.

Save the Date — 2013 KIDS-NEED-U Regional Trainings

DCYF is excited to announce the 2013 KIDS-NEED-U Regional Trainings. These one-day training events will be offered in Tucson, Flagstaff and Phoenix. Open to all foster, adoptive and kin families, the trainings will offer families an opportunity to meet and network with others in their area. Six hours of advanced training credit will be available for those who attend an entire day.

The Tucson KIDS-NEED-U Regional Training will be Saturday, August 24, 2013, at the Westin La Paloma.

The Flagstaff KIDS-NEED-U Regional Training will be Saturday, October 5, 2013.

The Phoenix KIDS-NEED-U Regional Training will be in early 2014.

Stay tuned for additional information and registration details.

This Is Your Publication!

The Arizona Statewide is designed for you, our wonderful families! We appreciate you and want to make sure we are providing the information you want. If you have article recommendations for future issues, please contact Roxann Miller, editor, at 602-542-2359 or email her at rlmiller@azdes.gov.

CMDP Covered Services

Foster caregivers do not pay for medically necessary or dental fees for children in foster care. Members and foster caregivers should not be billed for any services that CMDP covers. Be sure you list CMDP as the responsible party. Do not give your own personal information. If you have to sign any forms, please write "(foster parent's name) for DES/CMDP." Should you receive a bill, contact a CMDP Member Services representative at 1-800-201-1795.

Below: DES Director Clarence H. Carter unveils the Children's Heart Gallery. Lower right: A guest at the CHG unveiling contemplates adoption.



DCYF Debuts Redesigned Web Site

In an effort to become more client-focused and user friendly, the Division of Children, Youth and Families has redesigned its web presence. Please visit www.azdes.gov/dcyf and take a look!

CAMP Movie Premieres in Arizona

Nearly 500 faith and community leaders, including Gov. Janice K. Brewer, attended the opening of the movie CAMP on April 17, 2013. Hosted by Hope and a Future, Casey Family Programs and the Department of Economic Security, the event included a reception prior to the showing. The event was held at the Harkins 101 in Scottsdale.

Inspired by true stories, CAMP is a feature film about investment advisor Ken Matthews (Michael Mattera), who volunteers to go to camp to impress a new client, but finds himself paired with an angry, troubled 10 year-old camper named Eli (Miles Elliot, "The Mentalist").

While fictional, the film draws from the experiences of Writer/Director Jacob Roebuck and Producer Emily Shubin's time spent at Royal Family Kids camp. Roebuck first attended the camp when he was on a church staff, "I was 'required' to join a summer missions trip," he explained, adding, "The last time I spent time with a 9-year-old is when I was nine.

"Then, in my heart, I felt the call to go help these kids. The call went against my wiring.... But I also knew better than to ignore what could be a divine prompting. I still resisted interaction with children, many orphaned, who desperately need contact with loving, caring adults.

"That week became the hardest and yet the best week of my life. I learned what it meant to



Jacob Roebuck, writer and producer of the movie, CAMP, presents Gov. Jan Brewer with a poster from the movie that has been autographed by the cast. Photo by Paul Newberry paulnewberryphoto.com

love kids whom no one else wanted.

"The camp experience, learning to care for the fatherless, has become the heart of the story we want to tell with our film.

"It is our hope this film will inspire people to open their hearts to forgotten children who need adults in their lives."

To date, the film has played in more than 90 markets across the U.S. from New York to Hawaii. It will be available on DVD this summer.

Children's Heart Gallery Unveiled

The Children's Heart Gallery (CHG) was officially unveiled Friday May 17, 2013, at a ceremony held at Pure Heart Christian Fellowship in Phoenix. Master of Ceremonies for the evening was Scott Light from KPNX-TV. Light has been the Wednesday's Child host for the past nine years.

Dr. Terry Crist, chair of the ArizonaSERVES Task Force and pastor of City of Grace also spoke. Crist told the 200 gathered, "We can not afford to outsource our compassion on this important issue."

DES Director Clarence H. Carter (pictured left), also addressed the group. "There is an amazing coalescing around the issues of serving our vulnerable children," he commented, adding, "We are making a difference; we are actually moving the needle."

Berisha Black, an alumnus of foster care shared her story of being separated from her sister in foster care. Black, on staff with Casey Family Programs, found a permanent relationship with a foster mom she calls Grandma.

Deidre Calcoate, statewide adoption manager also spoke about the development of the Children's Heart Gallery and the importance of finding permanent connections for our children.

The first photo shoot for the Children's Heart Gallery was held September 29, 2012, at the Biltmore Resort in Phoenix. Twelve

children were photographed; six of these children have been matched with their forever families.

The second photo shoot, on December 1, 2012, was at the Loews Ventana Canyon Resort in Tucson, where 26 children were photographed. Six of these children are now in the transition process to their forever homes.

On March 9, 2013, the Mesa Campus of City of Grace, Dr. Crist's church, welcomed the CHG. Here 15 children were photographed; four have had forever families identified.

Each host location donated their facility, providing a place for children to prepare prior to photos and gave photographers access to their grounds. In addition, community members and the faith community — including Pantano, Mission and Redemption Churches — provided refreshments for children and volunteers.

Since launching in February, the CHG has received more than 150 inquiries. Visit the CHG at childrensheartgallery.org.



Meet This Month's Shining Star: Keith

Keith is friendly with a big imagination. He enjoys playing video games. Keith is an excellent reader! It is important that his parents support and encourage his active reading habits.

Keith really opens up to those who listen to him. He would do best with parents who can provide one-on-one attention and a large dose of love and patience.

Looking to the future, Keith has expressed that he would like to be a police officer, a fire fighter or a security guard. He would also like to go to college and live in New York. Keith would like a "parent who is a good cook." He also wants an active family and siblings.

Keith was born in 2000.

Keith is one of the 30 children who are featured in the Children's Heart Gallery. Visit childrensheartgallery.org for more information.



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Foster Parent Warm Line

The Foster Parent Warm Line is a toll-free number for resource parents who are experiencing crisis situations and cannot reach their Child Protective Services' (CPS) case manager in a timely manner. By calling 1-877-KIDSNEEDU (1-877-543-7633) and selecting Option 3, resource parents will be connected to a Warm Line designee. The line is staffed from 8:15 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday. Messages may be left at any time of the day or night.

Staff's goal is to respond to those messages within the next business day so resource parents feel supported in getting their needs met in serving our children. The Warm Line is intended to provide resource parents with information, assistance with authorizations for services, timely communication, and support. It does not take the place of direct and regular communication between the CPS case manager and the resource parent. Since its inception in July 2012, nearly all parents who have utilized the Foster Parent Warm Line have experienced resolution to their questions. Resolutions have been particularly successful regarding day care and payment processing issues.

Renew Your License EARLY!

While the Legislature has changed the length of the license period for some foster homes, this change will not go into effect until 90 days after the close of the legislative session and it will not be retroactive.

Please remember that all requirements for the renewal of your foster care license must be met and submitted to your licensing agency **before your license expires**. When a foster home license is not renewed prior to expiration foster home payments cannot be issued by DES because the foster home becomes temporarily "unlicensed."

Please make sure your Fingerprint Clearance Card is current and that all of your required annual training is completed **BEFORE** your foster home license is up for renewal. Fingerprint Clearance Cards are valid for six years from issue. The responsibility for having a **TIMELY** annual foster home license renewal is shared between the foster parent and their licensing agency.

Contact your licensing worker if you have additional questions. A more complete list of legislative and policy changes will be in the next issue of the Arizona Statewide.