



## Dear Parents:

As someone interested in the welfare of children in Southwest Florida, you will find in this message the same reasons for pride that our Board of Directors shares. You will see that much has been accomplished to help our most vulnerable children.

In the last year alone:

- 104 children were adopted
- A diversion program that has a 99.1% success rate was created.
- In the last two years, we have placed 105 children with their relatives or non-relatives instead of in foster care in the last years.
- The number of missing children was reduced dramatically.
- Children in out of home care have been reduced.

In addition, The Children's Network became only the fifth Community Based Organization in State to achieve national accreditation. This was done without a single deficiency.

This is a collective tribute to the dedication of our staff, our many partners who work tirelessly to help vulnerable children and their families, as well as foster and adoptive parents like you.

With all these accomplishments, more still needs to be done. Every child deserves the safety and security of a loving, nurturing home. When circumstances disrupt this, we must do everything possible to provide this in the least upsetting manner possible.

I look forward to continuing these efforts so that, with your assistance, we effectively reach out to every child who needs protection.

Mark M. Geisler ACSW  
Chairman of Board  
Children's Network of Southwest Florida



# CHILDREN CONTINUE TO FIND PERMANENCY

The Children's Network of Southwest Florida would like to offer a huge congratulations and thank you to our newest adoptive families from December 2009 and February 2010. These families have made the ultimate commitment: providing a safe, loving and permanent home for children that might never had a family to call their own. We would also like to thank the adoptive Child Welfare Case Managers who work long hours to help these families be successful and reach their goals. Listed below are our newest families:

## Lutheran Services Florida, Inc.

Jeff & Beth Gallino  
Patrick & Kimberly Smrek  
Todd & Melissa Stowe  
Roger & Cheryl McKellar  
Frank Galaska

## Family Preservation Services of Florida, Inc.

Robert & Sue Macon  
Mario & Ana Tomas  
Ericka Sanchez



## Welcome New Foster Parents

The Children's Network of Southwest Florida would like to extend our sincerest appreciation to the families who were newly licensed between December 2009 and February 2010. In addition, we would like to continue to recognize Lutheran Services Florida, Family Preservation Services of Florida, Florida Baptist Children's Home, and Florida Mentor who worked hard to complete this challenging task. Great job everyone. We look forward to continued success!

Amy and Trevor Fulleton  
Barbara Sanchez  
David/Sandra Ferryll/Pinard  
Dennis and Renee Wisniewski  
Donald and Tanya Baer  
Edwin and Wendy Amerman  
Eric/Ryan Riker/Gosselin  
Heather and Wayne Perry  
James and Minerva Longmire  
Jamie and George Pennell  
Jason and Jamie Mastin  
Joe and Jennifer Glisson

Joyce and Bennie Williams  
Lillian and Edward Velez  
Mark and Candice Silvering  
Megan and William Hull  
Michael and Sylvia Kelly  
Michelle Arrondo  
Michelle McCurdy  
Rene and Aurora DeJesus  
Robert and Ericka Manchette  
Robin Mays-Holmes  
Wendy Olson

# Meet Billy V.



Billy is an extremely polite and well mannered young man. He is very sociable and has a friendly nature which makes him popular with other children. Billy is described as an all-around boy who loves to play sports, especially football.

Billy demonstrates an ability to be loving and compliant when he believes that he is being treated fairly. He appreciates the nurturance and care that his foster family provides, but he looks forward to that same type of environment in his forever family, whom he hopes will come along really soon. Billy needs a strong family that will love and care for him as if he were theirs. If you are that family, Billy awaits your call! If you are interested in adoption, please call our Adoption Specialist at 239-226-1524.

WHEN DREAMS  
COME TRUE

## FIRE SAFETY

Now that a hot summer is fast approaching, it is important to remember fire safety. As a foster parent, you are responsible for completing fire drills in your home. Fire drills are to be completed within 72 hours of the placement of a new child and also every six months. You are also responsible for keeping a log of these drills in your home. Your re-licensing counselor will be asking to see them. We also recommend you change the batteries in your smoke detector every six months.

According to the US Fire Administration, "Curious Kids Set Fires". Often what begins as a natural exploration of the unknown can lead to tragedy.

- Children of all ages set over 35,000 fires annually. Approximately 8,000 of those fires are set in homes.
- Children make up 15-20% of all fire deaths.
- At home, children usually play with fire in bedrooms, in closets and under beds. These are "secret" places where there are a lot of things that catch fire easily.

### Practice Fire Safety in Your Home

- Supervise young children closely. Do not leave them alone even for short periods of time.
- Keep matches and lighters in a locked drawer or cabinet.
- Have your children tell you when they find matches and lighters.
- Develop a home fire escape plan, practice it with your children and designate a meeting place outside.
- Take the mystery out of fire play by teaching children that fire is a tool, not a toy.
- Teach children not to hide from firefighters, but to get out quickly and call for help from another location.
- Show children how to crawl low on the floor, below the smoke, to get out of the house and stay out in the case of fire.
- Demonstrate how to stop, drop to the ground and roll if their clothes catch fire.
- Familiarize children with the sound of your smoke alarm.

# ***10 TIPS AFTER YOUR OLDER CHILD IS HOME***

The below suggestions may assist during the adjustment period between you and your new child.

1. **Reduce Sensory Overload** - Usually, we're so excited to have our child that we want to do all the things we've imagined. Go to the park, out to dinner, to visit grandparents, to birthday parties. STOP! Just being in your home is sensory overload for your child...new food, new smells, new rules, etc. Keep their lives boring for the first few weeks, if not months.
2. **Create Structure and Routine** - Your child needs to wake up each day and know that certain things happen: mom wakes me up for school, breakfast is at 6:30, and we read books before bed. And they need to know that there are regular weekly activities: we have dinner at Grandma's on Tuesday, we eat pizza and watch a video every Friday night.
3. **Assume Your Child is Younger Than They Are** - Until you know your child, assume they are several years younger than they are. Limit their choices, restrict their freedoms, play kid games. There may be developmental, social, and psychological "steps" that they missed. By treating them a few years younger for a time, you reduce any pressures they're feeling and allow them to live and learn from the stages they missed.
4. **Re-Parent** - You and your new child have missed out on the baby and toddler interactions that occur between parent and child. To help facilitate bonding and allow your child to enjoy these phases, re-parent your child.
5. **Assume Your Child Has Attachment Issues** - Attachment issues can be connected to in-utero issues, disruptions in caregivers, or multiple placements. Until you know otherwise, treat your child as if they have some level of attachment issues. If your child does not have attachment issues, you still will have facilitated a smooth integration into your home, and have secured a tight attachment between the two of you.
6. **Give Your Child Chores** - Within a few days of being home, give your child appropriate regular chores. This helps them to feel needed, gives you something to compliment them on, helps them to learn that everyone in a family has responsibilities, and adds to the structure in their daily lives.
7. **Implement Consequences For Their Actions** - Depending on your child's personality, temperament, and background, they will test you a little or a lot. It's their way of learning where the boundaries are, as well as confirming that your commitment is real. Teach them the rules and the related consequences, and be consistent about implementation.
8. **Have Fun** - If everything is going smoothly, it's easy to have fun with your child. Do everything possible to find moments to laugh together, share a giggle, or play a game. It will remind you of your child's great qualities, and help your child to understand that life is a blending of varying emotions and different activities.
9. **Time For You** - Remind yourself that you have to have time to yourself. If you're not rested, positive, and strong, it's impossible to be a good parent. Take a walk. Soak in the tub. Go out to dinner.
10. **Time** - Your adjustment period with your child may last a month, six months, or a couple of years.

Unfortunately, many things related to becoming a new family just takes time. Your child arrived with years of experiences, good and bad, before they entered your life. And you joined your child after years of your own experiences, again good and bad. It takes time to blend and mesh your personalities, interests, and expectations. Be patient!



**Holiday Inn**

Ft. Myers Airport @ Town

# Save the Date

In honor of National Foster Parent Appreciation Month, Friday, May 28th, Children's Network will be hosting a Foster Parent Appreciation Night complete with dinner and a speaker. This event is being sponsored in part by the Holiday Inn at Ft Myers Airport at Towne Center.

The night will begin with an amazing buffet dinner! Then, we will hear from the International and Global speaker, Jaiya John. Jaiya was born in Albuquerque, New Mexico. Immediately placed in foster care and eventually adopted, Jaiya's childhood branded in him a burning passion for giving his life to improve the way human beings relate to each other. Jaiya studied psychology at Lewis & Clark College in Portland, Oregon, and earned his doctorate from the University of California, Santa Cruz in social psychology with a focus on identity development and intergroup relations. He lived during 1988 in the Himalayan nation of Nepal, where his research on Tibetan medicine instilled in him an appreciation for holistic concepts of physical, emotional, and spiritual health.



Being of African (including Balanta, Mende, and Kru), and Blackfeet and Cherokee descent; and having grown up in the midst of the Southwest's American Indian and Latino communities, Jaiya has a deep appreciation for the spiritual and communal passions that spring from these worlds. This spirit he ingrains in his messages about our social world. Jaiya believes that in every moment of life, each of us is a teacher and a student and that our ultimate purpose is to honor the interconnected web of life.

The event will be held at the Holiday Inn Ft Myers Airport at Towne Center. We will be providing babysitting services, complete with dinner, at no charge. This event is free for all foster parents! Please call 239-226-1524 to register today!

## LEE COUNTY TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

Date / Time	Topic	Location	Registration
For available dates & times please call to register	Roots and Wings Parenting Training (6 sessions)	To Be Announced	Contact: Keven Mace (941)875-8273
April 1, 2010 (Thursday) 6:30pm-8:30pm	FBCH-Foster Care Support Group Meeting <u>Topic:</u> Eddie Easter with F.A.S.T.	First Assembly of God Ministries 4701 Summerlin Road, (room 225 ) Fort Myers, Florida	Please contact: Florida Baptist Children's Home 239-936-3079
May 6, 2010 (Thursday) 6:30pm-8:30pm	FBCH-Foster Care Support Group Meeting <u>Topic:</u> MAPP Refresher Class 7 & 8	Summit Church 19601 Ben Hill Griffin Pkwy. (Activities Room) Fort Myers, Florida	Please contact: Florida Baptist Children's Home 239-936-3079

June 3, 2010 (Thursday) 6:30pm-8:30pm	FBCH-Foster Care Support Group Meeting <u>Topic:</u> Elsa Hofer with Medicaid	First Assembly of God Ministries 4701 Summerlin Road, (room 225 ) Fort Myers, Florida	Please contact: Florida Baptist Children's Home 239-936-3079
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## CHARLOTTE COUNTY TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

<b>Date / Time</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Registration</b>
For available dates & times please call to register	Roots and Wings Parenting Training (6 sessions)	To Be Announced	Contact: Keven Mace (941)875-8273
6:00-10:00pm  8:30-1:00pm	Adult CPR/AED No scheduled Dates	Charlotte County American Red Cross 1300-D Enterprise Drive Port Charlotte, FL 33953	Contact: Jennifer Prescott 941-629-3435
5:30-10:30pm	Infant CPR/AED No scheduled Dates	Charlotte County American Red Cross 1300-D Enterprise Drive Port Charlotte, FL 33953	Contact: Jennifer Prescott 941-629-3435
6:00-10:00pm	First Aid No scheduled Dates	Charlotte County American Red Cross 1300 D Enterprise Drive Port Charlotte, FL 33953	Contact: Jennifer Prescott 941-629-3435
8:30-3:30pm	First aid/ Adult CPR No scheduled Dates	Charlotte County American Red Cross 1300 D Enterprise Drive Port Charlotte, FL 33953	Contact: Jennifer Prescott 941-629-3435
Call to schedule	Water Safety	Charlotte County American Red Cross 1300 D Enterprise Drive Port Charlotte, FL 33953	Contact: Jennifer Prescott 941-629-3435
1 <sup>st</sup> Thursday of the month	LSF Foster Care Support Group Meetings	19500 Cochran Boulevard Port Charlotte, Florida	Contact: Cynthia Tuning Foster parent Support Coordinator 941-204 7960 or 941-613-3912
To be scheduled on Tuesdays per request	Anita Kos- Identity theft	Dept of Children and Families 19500 Toledo Blade Blvd. Port Charlotte, Florida	Contact: Naomi Johnson 941-613-3908

To be scheduled on Tuesdays per request	Anita Kos –Care Teen Dating Violence	Dept of Children and Families 19500 Toledo Blade Blvd. Port Charlotte, Florida	Contact: Naomi Johnson 941-613-3908
To be scheduled on Tuesdays per request	Anita Kos Sexual assault on children	Dept of Children and Families 19500 Toledo Blade Blvd. Port Charlotte, Florida	Contact: Naomi Johnson 941-613-3908
To be scheduled on Tuesdays per request	Anita Coss Safe dating	Dept of Children and Families 19500 Toledo Blade Blvd. Port Charlotte, Florida	Contact: Naomi Johnson 941-613-3908
To be scheduled on Tuesdays per request	Anita Kos –Care Effects of Domestic Violence on Children	Dept of Children and Families 19500 Toledo Blade Blvd. Port Charlotte, Florida	Contact: Naomi Johnson 941-613-3908

## COLLIER, HENDRY AND GLADES COUNTIES TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

Date/ Time	Topic	Location	Registration
For available dates & times please call to register	Roots and Wings Parenting Training (6 sessions)	To Be Announced	Contact: Keven Mace (941)875-8273
For available dates & times please call to register	Water Safety (Spanish classes available)	For Locations in your area please call to register	Contact: Julie Spellman (239) 770-0641 <a href="mailto:waterwonders@swlfa.rr.com">waterwonders@swlfa.rr.com</a>
For available dates & times please call to register	Speech/language, behavioral & occupational therapy for children	Building Blocks, Inc. 681 Goodlette Rd N. # 150 Naples, FL 34102	(239) 434-9512
For available dates & times please call to register	Family to Family	NAMI 5020 Tamiami Trail Suite 106 Newsband Bldg. Naples, Florida 34103	Contact Katherine Hunter (239) 434-6726
April-June 2010 Every Monday @ 6:30 P.M.	Parenting Programs	Collier County Counseling, Inc. 3375 Tamiami Trail E. Suite 200 Naples, Florida	Contact: Collier County Counseling 239-417-0181 <a href="mailto:ccnaples2272@aol.com">ccnaples2272@aol.com</a>

For available dates & times please call to register	Independent Living Workshop	Children's Home Society 1940 Maravilla Ave. Fort Myers, Florida	Contact: Sue Clark (800) 940-0102 x 308
For available dates & times please call to register	Infant/Child/Adult CPR & First Aid	Collier CPR and Safety Training 3823 Tamiami Trail East # 276, Naples, Florida	Contact 239-537-0495
For available dates & times please call to register	Nutrition, health education, prenatal and infant health care program, school health program, facts about WIC	Collier County Health Dept. 3823 Tamiami Trail East # 276 Naples, Florida	Contact: Deb Millsap 239-252-8220
For available dates & times please call to register	Cyberspace Bullying/ Internet Safety, Safe Streets & Homes: Including Gangs, Child Abuse, Neglect & Drugs	Naples Alliance For Children 660 9 <sup>th</sup> Street North, Ste. 35D Naples, Florida	Contact Judy Gross for more information on upcoming workshops & seminars 239-732-2740
For available dates & times please call to register	Hurricane preparation plans, Community services in the area and Child development	Hendry/Glades County Health Department  1140 Pratt Boulevard Labelle, Florida  1100 South Olympia Avenue Clewiston, Florida  956 Hwy 27 SW Moore Haven, Florida	Contact the Health Department's for further information  (863) 674-4041 x149 (Labelle) (863) 902-3311 (Clewiston) (863) 946-0707 (Moore Haven)
April-June 2010 The 4 <sup>th</sup> Monday of every month @ 6:00 P.M.	Clewiston- Foster Parent Support Meeting (Topics vary monthly)	Clewiston Public Library 120 West Osceola Avenue Clewiston, Florida	Contact: Loyette Houck (PRUSupervisor) 239-213-4133
April-June 2010 The 2 <sup>nd</sup> Monday of every month @ 6:00 P.M.	Collier County-Foster Parent Support Meeting (Topics vary monthly)	Family Preservation Services 2606 Horseshoe Drive S. Naples, Florida	Contact: Loyette Houck (PRUSupervisor) 239-213-4133

**\*\*For more resources please see your "Fostering Families Today" quarterly magazine or the following websites:**

**<http://www.fosterparent.com>**

**[http://www.olivecrest.org/foster\\_training\\_video\\_test.html](http://www.olivecrest.org/foster_training_video_test.html)**

**<http://www.foster-parenting.adoption.com/training>**

**<http://www.come-over.to/FAS/videowebcast.htm>**

**<http://www.dshs.wa.gov/ca/fosterparents/webarchive.asp>**

# COMMUNITY EVENTS

**Saturday, May 15, 2010**

**11:00 AM - 3:00 PM**

**Saturday, June 19, 2010**

**11:00 AM - 3:00 PM**

**C'mon Family Fun**

At Bell Tower Shops. Children, ages 4 through 8. The programs are free to the public.

A parent or adult must stay and participate.

Bell Tower Shops

13499 S. Cleveland Avenue

Fort Myers, Florida Website: [www.cmon.org](http://www.cmon.org)

**Saturday, April 24, 2010 10:00 AM - 10:00 PM**

**Circle of Life Expo 2010**

The Circle of Life Expo showcases products, services and resources for growth, and fosters the individual quest for wholeness and self understanding. The Event will have an array of Television Celebrity Guests, vendors, speakers, musicians, artists, performers, door prizes, product, samples, demonstrations, exhibits, practitioners. Fun for the entire family!

Interstate Fair Grounds Conference Building

6655 Mobile Hwy

Port Charlotte, Florida Website: [www.circleoflifeexpo.com](http://www.circleoflifeexpo.com)

**Saturday, June 5, 2010**

**10:00 AM - 3:00 PM**

**Wildlife/Animal Awareness Expo**

Wildlife/Animal Awareness Expo, 10 am-3 pm. Visit with organizations and businesses throughout the Village dedicated to the care and education regarding wildlife and domestic animals. Free Admission.

Fishermen's Village

1200 W. Retta Esplanade

Punta Gorda Website: [www.fishville.com](http://www.fishville.com)

**Sunday, May 2, 2010 12:00 PM - 4:00 PM**

**Taste of Collier**

Fabulous food and family fun! Admission is \$5 per person, children 5 and under are free. 3 oz tasting portions \$3 - \$5.

Bayfront in Downtown Naples

Website: [tasteofcollier.org](http://tasteofcollier.org)

**January 1, 2010 – though April 30, 2010**

**Tours start at either 8:30am or 9am**

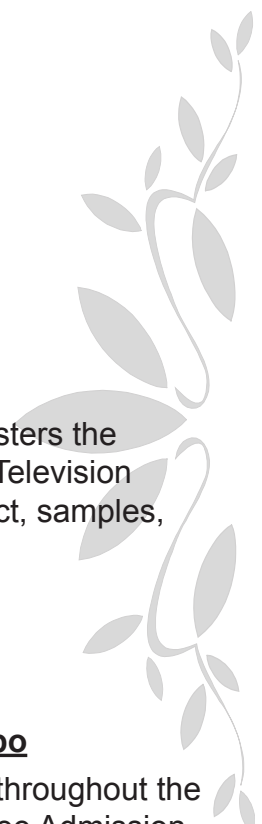
**Free Guided Nature Walks from The Conservancy of**

**Southwest Florida**

All walks conducted by trained Conservancy volunteers and are subject to weather conditions and volunteer availability.

Clam Pass, Naples; Tigertail Beach, MarcoIsland;

Briggs Boardwalk, Rookery Bay Website: [www.conservancy.org](http://www.conservancy.org)



## **COOK'S CORNER**

*"Recipe submitted by  
Clewiston Foster Parent, Margaret A. Howard"*

### **Chicken Stew**

**1 bag chicken breast tenderloins**

**2 sticks butter**

**1-2 Tablespoons of minced garlic**

**1 bag of sweet onions - sliced**

**Goya Adobo seasoning to taste (we use a lot)**

**Melt butter and sauté onions and garlic until onions are soft.  
Add chicken, cover, and cook until done.**