

# FOSTER & ADOPTIVE FAMILIES of LARIMER COUNTY

Monthly Newsletter

May 2018

## Welcome to FAFLC

**Foster and Adoptive Families of Larimer County** is a family support organization that strengthens foster and adoptive families through:

- Publications
- Training and education
- Providing opportunities for networking among families
- Financial assistance for the special needs of children

We know you have busy schedules, but we hope you take the time to read these important tips, events, and articles.

Additionally, here are some local training classes that we are very excited about. Check them out!

Programs for STUDENTS at Center for Family Outreach:

### **A Young Woman's Journey**

Being a teenage girl is not always easy. For some girls, this development is much more difficult due to a variety of issues including mental health disorders, trauma, depression, substance abuse, and other risk-taking behaviors. A Young Woman's Journey is an all-girls class that covers these topics and more, including healthy decision making, building confidence and resilience, media awareness, connection, and bonding.

### **Power of Conversation**

Most people are aware of the problem of bullying and cyberbullying in schools. Many students struggle with verbal conflicts, bullying behaviors, victimization of bullying, physical conflicts, and unhealthy communication that contributes to the issues around bullying. Power of Conversation classes are designed to provide a structured group setting that can be utilized by teens who find themselves in recurring incidents with peers in their schools. We build on each student's existing strengths and provide new skills for healthier functioning.

Other student programs offered: Life Skills, Navigating Life in the Teen Transition, Why Try?, and Young at Heart. More information at [tcffo.org](http://tcffo.org).



### **In This Issue**

- Article: Helping Adopted Children Thrive
- Support Groups
- Bingo Volunteers
- Local Events
- Little House Volunteers
- Book Corner
- Mom Blog Post



## Parents, Need A Date Night?

Fundango offers foster, adoptive, and kinship parents a night off while Kids At Heart hosts a 3-hour FUN themed event for kids from 0-18 years old. Cost is \$5 per child or \$15 per family.

RSVP: 970-223-1230 or [director@kidsatheartfundango.org](mailto:director@kidsatheartfundango.org). Reservations required.

# Helping Adopted Children Thrive

Crystal Killion, RainbowKids.com

Children, even very young children, can have extreme difficulty adjusting their adoptive home. Here are some ideas and tips for making that transition easier for them.

Change can be hard for anyone. Adoption is no exception. True, children can be very resilient, and they do seem to bounce back from trauma and illness with greater ability than many adults. The problem is that adults tend to forget that children are also human beings with complex emotions. Yet they lack the ability to fully comprehend what is going on around them, so processing changes in their lives can be quite difficult for them to do.

## An Adopted Child May Have Mixed Emotions

Adoption is usually thought of as a joyous event in one's life. However, a child, even after living through the worst of circumstances, may not hold this same view. A child who has survived early life in an orphanage, with relatively little physical and mental stimulation, may find constant human interaction and touch over-stimulating or even frightening.

Children coming from foster care and institutions who have bonded with other children, foster parents or caretakers, or have memories of their birth family, are likely to have mixed emotions toward adoption. While they may be excited to have a family to call their own again, they may also be angry with their adoptive parents for taking them away from their previous "home". Some children even have the belief that their adoptive parents are keeping them from going back home to their birth family, even when this couldn't be farther from the truth.

What can adoptive parents do to help their children adjust and thrive in their new family?

## Give Them Familiar Surroundings

- Surround them with something familiar. Place pictures of familiar faces in frames and hang on their bedroom wall or place on their bedside table. Do they have a favorite teddy bear or blanket that they can have nearby?
- Create an adoption lifebook. This is a wonderful tool to use to help an adopted child adjust and thrive in his new home. It answers the question of where he came from, where he's been, and aids in giving him a sense of belonging to his family now.

## Explain Family Rules & Expectations

Let him know what is expected of him. Explain the family rules and expectations on the child's age and maturity level. Write out a daily schedule and post it where he can refer to it as often as needed. Even fairly young children and children who do not yet speak English can decipher the meanings of pictures. For example: a picture of a bed means that it is time to go to bed, a picture of food means it's time to eat, and so forth.

Don't expect perfect behavior and perfect adherence to the family rules and expectations. The older the child is when he or she enters the family, the more bad habits they are likely to display. Give the child some adjustment time, and then take only one or two behaviors at a time to work on. Otherwise, the child may feel like he or she has to earn love and quickly become overwhelmed and frustrated.

## Identify Problems & Provide a Solution

- Pulling away from attempts to show affection is common. Should the child be reluctant to receive physical affection, start slowly by asking his permission to for a hug. In this way, he feels he is in control and won't feel violated. Try a quick little tickle, or hand-pat to acquaint your child with physical affection, if he is not quite ready for hugs.
- Children who were not adequately fed in their previous home or orphanage may hoard or sneak food. When the family is bonding, making this a control issue is a big mistake. Undernourished children need their basic needs met before they are able to attach deeply to a parent. Allow the child to have some snacks in his or her room, or assign a kitchen space (cabinet shelf) that is entirely 'free food' that may be eaten at ANY time. Eventually, he will be able to be weaned off as he learns to trust that his adoptive parents will feed him consistently.
- Give him choices. Many times older adopted children feel out of control, with strangers constantly dictating his every move. Perhaps he was forced to fend for himself much of the time prior to his adoption. Allow him the chance to make appropriate choices. For instance, if he prefers to wear inappropriate clothing, allow him two or three choices from an acceptable alternative. On the other hand, some children have never made a choice for themselves and must be slowly introduced to this concept.

It will take time for the adopted child to trust his new parents and learn that they will take care of him. By identifying the child's learned behaviors and providing an acceptable solution, power struggles are headed off before they arise, and the child learns that his new parents really do care about his well-being.

## Adjustment Takes Time and Effort

It is vital to allow the child plenty of time to adjust to his new life, while still offering consistent expectations of behavior. The challenge for every parent is to balance these expectations with affection and acceptance. The good news is that adopted children, more often than not, not only adjust well to their new environment, but also thrive there. Children grow best in families.

# Summer Splash

June 9, 2018, 11am-2pm  
Old Town Square  
Free to the public

Come make a splash and enjoy the sunshine at the 3rd Annual Summer Splash in Old Town Square, Saturday June 9th, 2018 from 11am-2pm! Free and fun for the whole family. Head on down to historic Old Town Square for fun toys on the Splash Pad, face-painters, oversized coloring books and much more! We'll see you there!



## Local Support Groups

### **Boulder** | Boulder Valley Christian Church

Group Name: Adoption, Foster & Orphan Care  
Contact: Cathy at [cathy@bvchristian.org](mailto:cathy@bvchristian.org)

### **Broomfield** | Discovery Christian Church

Group Name: Adoption and Foster Care Support Ministry  
Meeting: Last Sunday, 2:30- 4:30 pm  
Contact: Bonnie Robertson at [bonnie.robertson02@yahoo.com](mailto:bonnie.robertson02@yahoo.com)  
Please RSVP to Bonnie and let her know your childcare needs

### **Denver** | Various Support Groups

Contact: Deb Marshall at 303.204.7515 or [dmar-sal@earthlink.net](mailto:dmar-sal@earthlink.net)

### **Englewood** | AllHealth Network - Inverness Office

Group Name: Adoptee Relationship Techniques for Teens (ARTT)  
Meeting: Every Monday, 5-6pm  
Helping teens who were adopted effectively communicate their needs and have better relationships. Open to teens ages 13 - 18.  
Contact: Call (303) 730-8858 about this group

### **Fort Collins** | Faith Evangelical Free Church

Group Name: Foster Care/Adoption Support Group  
Meetings: 2nd Wednesday of the month, 6pm in the café  
Contact: Jodi Larson at 970.226.0100 or [msquared2@comcast.net](mailto:msquared2@comcast.net)

### **Fort Collins** | Timberline Church

Group Name: Foster Care/Adoption Support Group - Welcome Child  
Meetings: 2nd Sunday of the month, 6-7:30pm  
Contact: Wayne and Michele Sanner at 970.481.5749 or [mlsanner@gmail.com](mailto:mlsanner@gmail.com)

### **Fort Collins** | Poudre School District Parents of Special Needs Kids

<https://www.meetup.com/Poudre-School-District-Parents-of-Special-Needs-Kids/>

### **Greeley** | Christ Community Church

Group Name: Forever Families  
Meetings: Check calendar at <http://cccgreeley.org>

### **Longmont** | Life Bridge Christian Church, Room 122/124

Group Name: Foster Care/Adoption Support Group  
Meetings: Check calendar at <http://lbcc.org/events>

### **Online** | Free therapist-led support group and webinar

Meeting: See website for dates and times at [attachmentcenteroftherockies.com](http://attachmentcenteroftherockies.com)  
Contact: Deb at 970-328-5630 or [deb@attachmentcenteroftherockies.com](mailto:deb@attachmentcenteroftherockies.com)

### **Online** | Adoptive Families Circle Online Community

[http://www.adoptivefamiliescircle.com/groups/group/Colorado\\_Adoptive\\_Families1/](http://www.adoptivefamiliescircle.com/groups/group/Colorado_Adoptive_Families1/)



# Bingo Volunteer Lineup

Every Sunday night, 5:30—9:30pm

Please go to our website [www.fafcl.org](http://www.fafcl.org) and under the members tab click on Bingo and there is a signup genius. Any questions please contact:

Kathym Sparks:  
[kspar5411@gmail.com](mailto:kspar5411@gmail.com)

(970) 443-5411

Bingo is always in need of more volunteers—general volunteers as well as callers—and training is available. Youth have to be 14 years old to volunteer.

**Bingo is FAFLC's major fundraiser. This is a great easy way to get volunteer hours.**

This is also an opportunity for youth to meet other youth and to learn about customer service and handling money. They can also use bingo as a community service for school if it is needed. For the adults it is an opportunity to meet other foster or adoptive parents and network.

FAFLC has been doing bingo as a fundraiser for over 22 years! Please consider volunteering.

Kathym Sparks: [kspar5411@gmail.com](mailto:kspar5411@gmail.com) (new), (970) 443-5411

\*If you are unable to make your scheduled time, it is your responsibility to find a replacement.



## Holiday Twin Drive-In NOW OPEN

Tickets:

Children (ages 6 - 9): \$5.00

Regular (ages 10 and up): \$8.00

Seniors (65 and over): \$5.00

Box office opens at 6pm on Fridays and Saturdays.

Cash only. Online tickets available.

Shows begin at dark.

More info at [HolidayTwinDriveIn.com](http://HolidayTwinDriveIn.com)

Movie Info Line: (970) 221-1244

Located at: 2206 South Overland Trail Fort Collins, CO



# Local Events

## **Emil & the Detectives presented by Debut Theatre Company**

May 4 - 19

Evenings at 7pm

Matinees at 1pm

Lincoln Center Magnolia Theatre

Tickets: \$8.00

When his money is stolen by a mysterious stranger, Emil thinks he has lost everything. But as he starts to track down the thief, he soon discovers that he's not alone in the big city after all. Aided by a rag-tag band of intrepid street kids, Emil and friends must catch the criminal, find the missing money, clear his name, and get the flowers to Grandma. Will they catch the mysterious Mr. Snow in time or will the police catch Emil first?

## **Spring Fest Arts and Crafts Show**

May 5, 9am - 3pm

First Christian Church, Loveland

Free

Spring Fest 2018 is a premiere show featuring one of a kind original items from talented artists. We are so excited to bring to you a large diverse selection of quality handmade items. There is surely something for everyone! Jewelry, handmade textiles, spa items, honey, preserves, yard decor, pottery, stained glass, wooden toys, and more. Grab a friend and come on and join in. This is one show not to miss.

commemorating the 100 years of history of this important Loveland landmark. Historic Bike Tour starts at 8:30am. Reservations for the bike ride required.

For more information, go to [VisitLovelandCO.org](http://VisitLovelandCO.org)

## **Tour de Pants**

May 5, 10am - 3pm

Bill Reed Middle School, Loveland

Free

Join us for a special celebration of the 100-year anniversary of Bill Reed Middle School, formerly Loveland High School.

Featuring the Tour de Pants bike ride and festival, school tours, bike safety information, history, games, frozen pants contest, prizes, and food! Find your Mother's Day gift at artisan booths by the People's Market and enjoy a special dedication of a Loveland heart sculpture

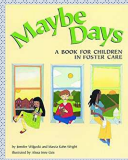


## Reminders for Volunteers at the Little House

- Don't forget to get the code for the doors prior to going to the Little House
- Sign in on the sheet inside the Little House or in the back warehouse regardless of the reason for being there
- Do not put items of any kind in the "Model T" shed
- Pay close attention to the bins and how they are labeled when sorting items. Watch sizes and TAKE YOUR TIME!!!
- When trying on clothes or looking at items be sure to return them the way they were found or better. This means folding the items and replacing them on the shelf they were found on—NOT THE FLOOR! Leave the buildings picked up. Many volunteers spend hours sorting, hanging up, and cleaning the buildings.
- Use the appropriate hanger for the item—don't use adult hangers for little clothes.
- If you have to drop off items please put them toward the back of the warehouse where there is empty space and not right inside the doorway. DO NOT LEAVE ITEMS OUTSIDE—IT DOES RAIN AND SNOW IN COLORADO!
- Be sure to turn the lights off and chain up the gate when leaving—utilities are paid by FAFLC

*Little House assistants—please call (970) 481-7993 if you see anything questionable at the Little House.*

# Book Corner



## Maybe Days: A Book For Children in Foster Care by Jennifer Wilgocki and Marcia Kahn Wright

Many children in foster care hear the answer "maybe" to all of their questions about with whom and when and where and how they will be living. This straightforward primer for kids explains the roles of everyone in the foster care system and reminds kids that their job is to always be kids!

## When Depression Comes in Disguise

I just learned that May is Mental Health Awareness Month which is PERFECT because I just started taking antidepressants again. Serendipity, friends; *I could not have planned this better.* Now this story, which I would've told you anyway, has a purpose. Awareness. Boom!

This is way better than when I told you about my wrap dress unwrapping in the parking lot which served no higher purpose at all. Of course, during the wrap-dress incident, I wrote without swearing. We're not going to be that lucky this time. But, you know, we can't have everything.

In my head, I've been handling life just fine. The key words there are "in my head." Which is a real shocker because a couple of weeks ago I would've told you the key words were "just fine." I began to suspect something was amiss, though, when I was getting ready for bed, pulling on my usual, sexy, threadbare, frayed t-shirt from 1991 — oo la la — and Greg, *bless his heart*, tried to talk to me.

"I love you very much," I replied, "but I can't talk any more today. Like, Not. Another. Word. So. Tired." Except minus the *I love you very much* part. It was implied.

And Greg gently said, "Mornings aren't good for talking. When I get home from work isn't good for talking. Nighttime isn't good for talking. When's good for talking?"

And I realized, um, *no time. No time's good for talking, Greg. How about we just email each other from now on?* But what I said out loud was, "I don't know."

The conversation played on repeat in my brain, like a bad song I couldn't get out of my head. I had a nagging suspicion, coupled with other red flags, that something wasn't right.

Here's the thing: I'm not depressed. I'm not sad. I haven't been living in a deep, dark pit of despair like I was the last time I took anti-depressants. I'm happy with my family. I like writing. I have fantastic friends. I'm more fulfilled at this point in

my life than at any other. More content. More purposeful. *I love* getting older; I finally know myself a little, I like myself most of the time, and I can generally figure out a) what I *really* need and b) how to get it.

But it was becoming hard to keep swatting those red flags out of my face. They were like mosquitoes on crack.

This past year I've become more and more **reclusive**. I'm an introvert by nature, which surprises people because I'm outgoing, I like people, and I'm often loud, at least when I'm comfortable. Being alone gives me energy, though, so while I enjoy parties, I'm something of a dried out husk by the end of them and Greg's left picking up the pieces, by which I mean ignoring me at my request until I can be personable again.

I found over the past year that I didn't recover as quickly from group events and people-contact. I found I needed steadily **increasing time alone** to feel like I could breathe. I found I only had time to focus on my kids and that most other activities, including the "little" things like grocery shopping, helping in kids' classrooms and going out for dinner with friends, induced **dread**. Utter dread. I still did them. Mostly. I even liked them, other than grocery shopping which can burn in the fiery depths of hell. But mustering the willpower to see events through was sometimes overwhelming.

And the **weight gain**. Oof. I tried to tackle this whole thing, in fact, from the diet and exercise angle, knowing I feel *much* better when I'm running regularly, eating healthier foods, and about 20 pounds lighter than I am right now. But I just haven't been able to do it consistently. The momentum. The time. The not -medicating-my-feelings-with-food. Indicative of a larger issue? WHY, YES. DING DING DING.

It's the **anxiety** that drove me to my doctor, though. Or the **panic**. Potato potato. I've always loved traveling and Greg and I had an unusual opportunity to travel a lot last year. We did it and there

were some awesome moments, but overall I was a terrible traveling companion, almost constantly consumed by the **fear** that something awful would happen to my kids while I was gone.

So I saw my doctor on Tuesday morning. "I want to talk about anti-anxiety medication," I said. "Or something. I was on antidepressants successfully for several years. But I'm not depressed or sad now. I'm wondering if my current symptoms warrant a closer look at anxiety."

"Tell me more," she said.

"Well, I'm anxious to the point of paranoia. I'm hiding in my house. I don't want to travel even though that used to give me joy. I'm gaining weight. Apparently I'm not talking to my husband regularly, but I hadn't noticed. Do they make a pill for that?"

And then we discussed depression versus anxiety. And my doctor told me that my symptoms *are* symptoms of clinical depression.

Wha...?

"BUT I'M NOT SAD," I said again. "I'm not hoping for a car crash that will land me in the hospital where other people will take care of me. You know, *this time*. I'm not in despair."

"Just because you were sad last time doesn't mean you'll feel that way this time," she said.

"Oh."

"The symptoms are not the same for everyone," she said.

"Oh."

"Some people experience increased migraines," she said.

"Oh."

"Some people have difficulty concentrating."

"Oh."

"Some people experience anxiety or panic."

"Oh."

"Some people become reclusive or otherwise avoid engaging socially."

"Oh."

"Some people are 'irritable.'"

"Oh."

"And when people have several of the symptoms and a history of depression? Well, you see what I'm saying."

And everything came into focus.

As someone who's suffered from depression in the past, I was highly aware that it could resurface. I was on the lookout, even. But it came masked this time as a stranger, wearing clothes I didn't recognize, and it snuck up and clocked me from behind because, no matter what it *looks* like, Depression is a dick.

Guess what? I'm gonna kick its butt.

I sat quietly at our giant farm table after dinner the other night while Greg did the dishes and talked. He stopped and stilled suddenly after saying something funny and said, "Did you just laugh?" I nodded, hoping he wasn't offended and that I was laughing *with* him and not *at* him.

"Yeah...?" I said, wondering why he asked. He started on the dishes again and said, "I just haven't heard you do that in a while."

Oh.

I've been back on meds for one week, which anyone can tell you is not enough time to tell whether this is the right medication. It takes time to climb back out of the holes Depression pushes us into. But there's light up there, I just know it, and I've started digging.

P.S. Medication is not the right solution for everyone. It is the right solution for me. **If you're experiencing symptoms of depression, get help.** There are lots of options, and **getting help is the right solution for everyone.**

P.P.S. If you're having a hard time forgiving yourself for being depressed, read this all the way through the comments. You're not alone. And you're worthy of deep love. Including from yourself. True story.

*Beth Woolsey*

Read more of Beth's posts about raising biological and adopted kids at [bethwoolsey.com](http://bethwoolsey.com)

## IEP Preparation

From disabilityscoop

As parents begin discussing individualized education programs for their children this spring, disability legal experts say a U.S. Supreme Court ruling will set the stage for stronger goals and higher expectations.

## Thank You

Dear Foster and Adoptive Families,  
Thank you for the gift card and  
the Spring Cards.  
We are so Thankful  
for the FAELC  
group. Blessings  
Submitter  
Love, Jonathan Addeo

Dear Foster and Adoptive Families,  
Thank you for my gift card to  
Walmart. Thank you for thinking about  
me.  
Love,  
Sophia Schnitzler

But even with the backing of the highest court in the land, parents should still educate themselves and come prepared for a successful meeting, attorneys said.

"Parents should not hesitate to go for a more robust, challenging IEP goal and objective," said Gary Mayerson, a New York City civil rights attorney who specializes in representing people with autism. "They shouldn't be intimidated by the school districts that have been used to repeating goals and objectives over and over again, year after year. That's a classic no-no now."

[Click here](#) to read the entire article.

