

# Peer Support Networks

CFC has just begun working with the assignment of exploring ways Foster Carers can support each other.

Many people find that the best kind of support comes from people who have walked through the same challenges you are dealing with at present. It's often very helpful to be able to share with someone who has been where you are and come out the other side better for the experience. Connecting Foster Carers SA (CFC-SA) would like to find ways to help facilitate these kinds of experiences.

There are a number of ways this can happen. Almost exactly half of you who have registered so far are on email and can be sent information easily this way. If you have internet access you probably know about 'chat rooms', and we are looking at the possibility of using our website for one of these. This would enable you to chat with other carers from all over the state about whatever is on your mind and to generally network with other carers.

Another way for you to connect with others is by sharing a cuppa with carers who live nearby to you. Please call us or email if you'd like to see any of this happen. You can email: [enquiries@cfc-sa.org.au](mailto:enquiries@cfc-sa.org.au) or phone (08) 8269 9300 and leave your details. We look forward to hearing from you if you're keen to connect in this way, although over the coming weeks we will be calling many of you who have already registered to introduce this concept and to explore this with you.

## Your Details

We wish to thank those carers who have already registered their details. We really need your feedback and input, and the ability to keep you abreast of information, sometimes more quickly than when we do our quarterly mailout. Our aim is to continuously update our database for carers for information exchange by email or mail and to be able to get your comments and views from time to time.

So for those carers who have yet to register, we ask if you would like to submit your details on the attached form and return to us by post, email or fax.

**Connecting Foster Carers - SA** PO Box 288 | KILBURN SA 5084 | P: 08 8269 9300 | F: 08 8269 1935  
[enquiries@cfc-sa.org.au](mailto:enquiries@cfc-sa.org.au) | [www.cfc-sa.org.au](http://www.cfc-sa.org.au)



### Carer Details

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

MOBILE: \_\_\_\_\_ PHONE (HOME): \_\_\_\_\_ PHONE (BUS): \_\_\_\_\_

EMAIL: \_\_\_\_\_

Attached to which agency?: \_\_\_\_\_

Type of care provided?: \_\_\_\_\_

# Welcome

Welcome to CFC, with Easter behind us and winter on its way, CFC-SA's initiatives just keep on growing.

The development of more Working with Carers groups, and the local peer support groups are just some of the things we have planned.

This newsletter has lots of national information and some state news, but for future editions we welcome your input, so if you have any ideas for content let us know.

We have some exciting diary dates for you to note down in your diaries too, and just a brief overview of some highlights so far:

- We had a fantastic response from Carers who registered their details with us, but if you still haven't, we welcome you to do so.
- We have been providing peer support to many carers, as appropriate.
- We have attended "Working with Carers groups", providing information to Carers, and getting feedback.
- We are having an active role in various sector forums, representing the best interests of Foster Carers in SA, with a focus on partnership and teamwork, and all working towards better outcomes for children and young people in care.
- We are currently assisting with developing Peer support groups for carers.
- We have had a lead role in achieving some good outcomes for carers in the recent updating of the children's payment manual, this information to follow soon.
- We are working with carers and the sector in the South East (Mount Gambier) in developing their Working with Carers group.

These are just some of the highlights so far, and with your help and vital input we as a group can achieve much more, and as our motto says:

*"Together we can make a difference"*

## INSIDE

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# General News

## FOSTER CARER NATIONAL RECOGNITION AWARDS

For application forms and information please email, download or write to:  
(self-nominations accepted)

Connecting Foster Carers  
PO Box 288  
KILBURN SA5084  
equiries@cfc-sa.org.au, www.cfc-sa.org.au

## OFFICE OF THE GUARDIAN

*What is the Office of the Guardian for Children and Young People?*

The Office of the Guardian advocates for and promotes the best interests of young people and children under the care of the Minister for Families and Communities.

For further information please contact:  
Office of the Guardian  
for Children and Young People  
Level 1 Riverside Centre, North Terrace  
Adelaide GPO Box 292  
Adelaide, SA, 5001  
Ph: (08) 8207 0794, Fax: (08) 8207 0783  
gcyp@saugov.sa.gov.au

## THE DEVELOPMENT OF ALTERNATIVE CARE STANDARDS

Alternative Care Program Standards are currently being developed and will be implemented by the end of this year. Standards promote shared understanding and consistency regarding provision of quality care to children and young people, including informing the required levels of support to foster carers.

Alternative Care Standards will have a particular focus on:

- Safety and well being of all children and young people in care
- Effective complaints/grievance mechanisms
- Participation
- Privacy/confidentiality
- Indigenous, cultural and spiritual considerations
- Children and young people with high and complex needs
- Approval, registration, support, training and review of carers in the alternative care system
- Licensing/review of foster care agencies and children's residential facilities
- Organisational management and governance

A Standards Development forum was held on 3 and 4th March in Adelaide involving foster and relative carers, alternative care service providers, CYFS representatives and other stakeholders. The aim was to gather input from participants in the development of elements that will make up the final set of Alternative Care Standards.

The Alternative Care Directorate would like to thank all those people who participated in the forum. The information that was gathered over the two days has already proven valuable in defining the way forward.

If you would like more information about this project, please contact us.

Connecting Foster Carers are actively involved in this project and are keen to get feedback from carers. Please forward your comments and views to us by email or mail.

## FOSTER CARER ADVOCATE

There are ongoing discussions on options for this service. So we would like your input either by email or mail with your views on the provisions of an Independent Foster Carer Advocate for Carers.

## THE OFFICE FOR FOSTER CARE RELATIONS

In August 2004 the Minister for Families and Communities appointed a Director of Foster Care Relations to report directly to him and to the Chief Executive of the Department. The Minister said in his press release "Foster carers play a unique and critical role in giving homes and care to children who are particularly vulnerable".

Director of Foster Care Relations is charged to find ways to improve and strengthen relationships between carers, the government and the non-government agencies and to let the Minister know directly what is happening for carers.

Foster Carers will be consulted during the year to seek their ideas in revising the Foster Carers' Charter.

## CFC-SA WEBSITE

 www.cfc-sa.org.au

Visit our website for updates and info

# Info Updates

## DIARY DATES

### National Foster Care Conference

*Living and Learning Together: A Celebration and Appreciation of Diversity*

29 - 31 July 2005

Alice Springs Convention Centre  
Alice Springs, Northern Territory, Australia

### International Foster Care Organization

14th IFCO Biennial Conference

*"To Honor the Child"*

*(from Birth through Independence)*

August 7 - 13, 2005

Monona Terrace Convention Center  
Madison, Wisconsin, USA  
www.fostering.us/ifco2005

For further information on these conferences and if you are interested in attending, contact us:  
www.cfc-sa.org.au

## SECURING A SAFE AND EFFECTIVE FOSTER CARER SYSTEM

### Australian Foster Care Association (AFCA)

Priorities and Position Statements

*2005 For Foster, Relative and Kinship Care across Australia*

The backbone of alternative care options for the most vulnerable children and young people in Australia are the volunteer foster, relative and kin carers. These carers volunteer their time, skills and commitment to children and young people to care for those who are unable to continue living in their own homes.

As the number of notifications of child abuse and neglect continue to rise throughout the country, child protection systems struggle more and more to provide adequate protection and support for those most in need.

For the complete document visit our website.

*We wish to thank those carers who have already registered their details recently. For those carers who have yet to register, we welcome you to submit your details to us by email or mail.*

## INSPIRATIONAL STORY

### WHAT WILL MY REWARD BE?

Author Unknown

One day a fisherman was lying on a beautiful beach, with his fishing pole propped up in the sand and his solitary line cast out into the sparkling blue surf.

He was enjoying the warmth of the afternoon sun and the prospect of catching a fish. About that time, a businessman came walking down the beach, trying to relieve some of the stress of his workday. He noticed the fisherman sitting on the beach and decided to find out why this fisherman was fishing instead of working harder to make a living for himself and his family.

"You aren't going to catch many fish that way," said the businessman to the fisherman. "You should be working rather than lying on the beach!" The fisherman looked up at the businessman, smiled and replied, "And what will my reward be?"

"Well, you can get bigger nets and catch more fish!" was the businessman's answer. "And then what will my reward be?" asked the fisherman, still smiling. The businessman replied, "You will make money and you'll be able to buy a boat, which will then result in larger catches of fish!"

"And then what will my reward be?" asked the fisherman again. The businessman was beginning to get a little irritated with the fisherman's questions. "You can buy a bigger boat, and hire some people to work for you!" he said. "And then what will my reward be?" repeated the fisherman.

The businessman was getting angry. "Don't you understand? You can build up a fleet of fishing boats, sail all over the world, and let all your employees catch fish for you!" Once again the fisherman asked, "And then what will my reward be?"

The businessman was red with rage and shouted at the fisherman, "Don't you understand that you can become so rich that you will never have to work for your living again! You can spend all the rest of your days sitting on this beach, looking at the sunset. You won't have a care in the world!"

The fisherman, still smiling, looked up and said, "And what do you think I'm doing right now?"

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