

Family Living

Oregon Launches Redesign Of Foster Care

GUEST OPINION IS BY CAROLYN GRAF
FOSTER CARE MANAGER

For some, foster care is a temporary, safe passage of childhood. For others, it is a protective bridge to adulthood. However long they stay, and for whatever reasons that bring them here, foster care continues to play a necessary role in the protection of children.

We have seen dramatic shifts in how foster care services are provided. Social and political trends and new legislation, including the Adoption and Safe Families Act, are reshaping our approach to child protection.

In response, Oregon is redesigning its foster care system. Changes during the coming years include:

Rate redesign: Children in protective services represent some of Oregon's most vulnerable children and their caregivers are in need of subsidized child care and respite child care services. Foster parents are reimbursed for room, board, clothing and incidentals, at an average amount of 390 a month, or \$12.85 a day. A proposal is being developed to equitably reimburse foster parents and meet the needs of our children in the foster care system.

Independent Living: Teen-agers in foster care are particularly vulnerable. Their transition to independence is difficult because of limited resources to prepare teens to live independently. Work is being done to

improve these services for children leaving foster care.

Kinship care: During the past decade the number of non-relative foster parents decreased while the number of children in need of out-of-home care increased. Faced with a shortage of non-relative caregivers, the foster care system increasingly is turning to a child's relatives. Relative placements meet a child's needs for continuity, attachment and identity. SCF has received grants that will help increase support to place children with relatives and remove barriers to permanency with relatives.

Recruitment and retention: Recruitment and retention rank among the most pressing needs in the child protective system. The number of children in foster care averages 6,500. While SCF will continue its statewide recruitment efforts, there will also be greater emphasis on good foster parents. One way to do this is to involve the foster care parent in planning for a child's reunification with the biological family or the move to another permanent placement.

Neighborhood foster care: Children and youth in foster care often have substantial educational needs, having moved from family to family and from school to school. Oregon has a program in place that focuses on keeping children in their own neighborhoods when they come into protective care. A supportive plan is being developed for this program.

Multnomah Women's Club Presents Scholarships



On June 5, 1999 the Multnomah Women's Club presented a total of \$7,000 to two local students. Jonathan J. Johnson (left) graduated from Barlow High School in 1998 and attended his freshman year at Highline Community College near Seattle, Washington. He will attend Lane Community College in Eugene, Oregon to begin his sophomore year. After completing his sophomore year at Lane, he will complete his degree in Business Administration at University of Oregon in Eugene, Oregon. Jonathan, the son of Mr. and Mrs. Levan Johnson, received \$3,000. Douglas Jon Gaither (right), son of Mr. and Mrs. Ronald Gaither, is a 1999 graduate of Wilson High School. He will begin his studies at University of Oregon in the fall. Douglas Jon received \$4,000. Multnomah Women's Club was organized April, 1941 for the purpose of working for the moral, economic, and religious welfare of women and children. Mrs. Lillian Whitlow is the president.

Other parts of the revision plan include implementation of a common home study of foster and adoptive homes; a complete revision of the certifier handbook and the first training curriculum for certifiers; and

policy revisions, including placement matching, child-family contact and ensuring quality care in foster homes.

Although foster care is a temporary placement for children, we must work to provide high-quality,

nurturing and supportive environments. It is never too late to intervene in a young life and restore a child's path to wholeness. For thousands of children the first step begins in foster care.

RENTERS Know Your Rights

The Community Alliance of Tenants (CAT) is a grassroots, tenant-membership organization. We are the only renters' rights organization in Oregon. Our mission is to educate and empower tenants to demand safe, stable and affordable housing. CAT operates a Renters' Right Hotline ((503) 288-0130) for renters throughout the state who have questions about their rights as tenants. Currently we are looking for volunteers to staff the hotline. This is a great opportunity to learn more about the law and to support and empower the very low-income families who are the majority of our callers. The next volunteer training is Sunday, July 18th. Call Megan at 460-9702 for more information.

A Picnic Of Gold

Come out and join the fun with our Gold, the Kids of the Community on a *Fantastic Picnic*

Alberta Park
July 3
Noon 'till dusk

Admission is Free
A Grand Raffle • Cook-off Contest
Cultural Activities • Music
Food Tasting Contest • Games

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Call 281-1882

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TRI - MET NEWS

Tri-Met Offers Youth Summertime Bargain

Youth can again enjoy unlimited travel at a bargain price this summertime on Tri-Met. "The Pass," which goes on sale Thursday, May 20, also offers discounts at local merchants.

With "The Pass," youth 18 and under can ride Tri-Met's buses and MAX light rail trains all June, July and August for just \$43. That's half the regular price of three monthly youth passes. The special pass is available at participating schools, and Tri-Met sales outlets including Fred Meyer, Safeway and most Albertson's stores in the Portland metropolitan area.

Pass holders qualify for these special discounts:

McDonald's: Free dessert with purchase of an Extra Value Meal. Offer excludes McFlurry dessert.

Ice Chalet at Lloyd Center & Clackamas Town Center: \$1 off general admission.

OMSI: \$1 off general admission.

North Clackamas Aquatic Park: \$1 off general admission.

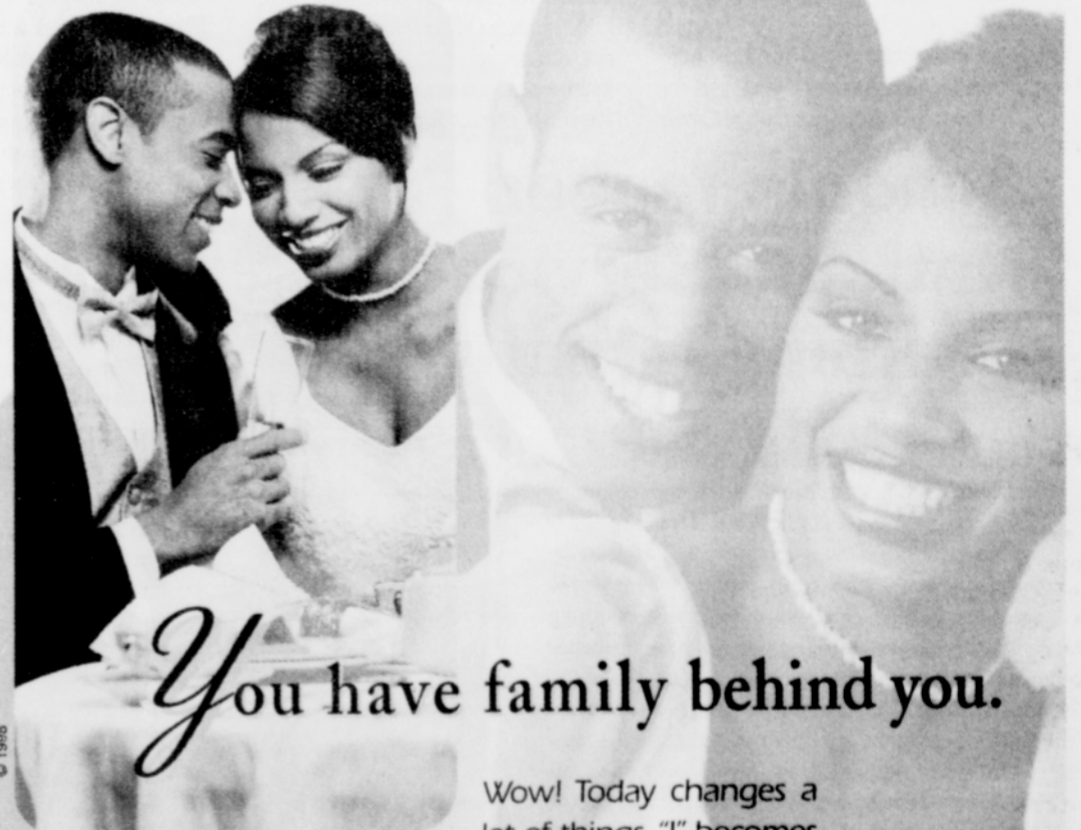
"We're really pleased to bring back this affordable way of helping youth meet their summertime travel needs," said Fred Hansen, Tri-Met General Manager. "We expect The Pass to continue to be a big hit."

More information about The Pass and Tri-Met is available by calling 238-RIDE.



How we get there matters.

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