

South Central Chat

Foster Care News & Information

Welcome to the first quarterly newsletter for 2015. We wish each of our foster families many blessings through this new beginning, and abundant health and happiness. Thank you again for being foster parents for our region!



HAPPY VALENTINE'S DAY!

Just as we are recovering from Christmas, Valentine's Day is almost here. Think of the flowers that will be bought, the engagement rings, the cards, and the candy! Then think of the children who will not even receive as much as a hug, a homemade card, or an "I love you." Please don't let that be one of our Centerstone foster children. Remember them, please, even in the simplest of ways. Cook or buy them their favorite meal, or treat. Give them a sweet card. Most of all, let them know that you care about them, even when they don't respond or reciprocate.

Those of you who communicate by email have the following information for 2015, but here it is again for those who don't. *Remember the turn-in date is the very last date you can turn your paper work in to get paid on time. It's best to turn it in by the first day of every month; that way, there is no scrambling around on everyone's part and you can usually get paid early.*

TURN IN	PAY DATE
Mon Jan 5	Friday Jan 9
Mon Feb 9	Friday Feb 13
Mon March 9	Friday March 13

Mon April 6	Friday April 10
Mon May 11	Friday May 15
Mon June 8	Friday June 12
Mon July 6	Friday July 10
Mon August 10	Friday August 14
Mon Sept 7	Friday Sept 11
Mon Oct 5	Friday Oct 9
Mon Nov 9	Friday Nov 13
Mon Dec 7	Friday Dec 11

The payment chart may also be accessed at our website: www.centerstonefcs.org To the left, click on **Welcome**, then in the drop down box choose **FAMILY LOGON**. That page in itself will give you some great information, but to get to the **South Central Region**, scroll down the page, and click on that link. **At any time, if you are asked to log-in, use this: username fosterparent password—stone.** We will be discussing our website and the utilization of its information at our next training. The web site has "good stuff" that you may not be aware of!

Speaking of training, all of you have been told about this month's training, but here is more information:

February 9 at 5:00—Independent Living Training provided by Neil Lowe, IL Specialist for South Central DCS. Neil will provide training for both the youth and the foster parents, and afterward I will be reviewing some matters that we periodically need to go back and visit (what the contract specifies regarding payment, Centerstone expectations, DCS

expectations, and more about our integration toward becoming whole health homes by discussion of food and its effect on mood.) Please bring a dish to share with everyone.

March 26th (Thursday)—Training by Starla Hardin, a University of Tennessee Agriculture Extension Agent here in Maury County. Ms. Hardin has agreed to give us quarterly trainings in preparing and budgeting healthy menus and meals. She will be here in March, June, September, and December. We are so excited about this!!

Other trainings coming up will be scheduled and you will be notified in advance. These include the med management refresher course by Nurse Practitioner Leah Harwell (yes, she's my daughter for those who don't know), and other required DCS trainings with me.

So, here are some great things seen and heard while on my monthly visits in your homes. These are not all of them, but a few that come to my mind:

- I've seen a foster family preparing a healthy, nourishing meal (including a green vegetable!) together. Foster mother, biological children, and teenage foster child all in the kitchen, around the stove, and all participating.
- I've seen two teenage foster children sitting at the kitchen table crafting and making things—something that they like to do often, according to the foster mother. Busy children equals children who are staying out of trouble.
- I've heard a foster father express HIS delight in having a foster child express appreciation and profuse thanks (something that often we don't see or hear), for bringing him a drink and a

sandwich from the store without the child asking for it. Apparently, the child was not accustomed to someone ever thinking of him in that manner in his past life.

- I've heard of a post custody youth who, upon meeting with the disability worker at the state for testing, scored so much higher than last time, that the state worker praised the foster mother for the family's efforts with this child. The child is being prepared to leave the home and attend an employment training program that will also help with daily living skills.

Are there success stories you can share with us? Please, don't forget to do so! Also, please don't forget that Roddy offered a \$5 gift card to Wal-Mart to the youth(s) who prepare a healthy dish from a recipe he gives them, and can document it with a picture that we will publish in the newsletter! Send them in! :)

Finally, we want to share a word of encouragement about problems and disappointments, which brings us to the next page...



Did this come across your e-mail, or maybe your Facebook page, while all the northeast states were facing what appeared to be one of the biggest snow storms in history? If you have friends in the area, or have listened carefully to news reports, and are familiar with the way the people speak then you know why this is both serious and funny!

Upon reflection, whether regarding personal storms or foster care storms, storms that we see coming or storms that catch us off-guard, this image speaks volumes:

- Park ya cah! Be proactive, get out of the “fast lane” and seek shelter, whether that means turning to our faith, turning to our friends and family, or turning to our foster care support system and remembering our training. Go to your mental “happy place”, and if the storm involves a foster child, help them find their personal happy place.
- Learn to discern a “wicked big” storm from the less serious storms that are just coming through. Remember that, this too, shall pass.
- Finally, although we know that many of our foster care storms are very, very sober ones and are never laughable matters, for those that are less serious, it helps to keep our sense of humor and poke a little fun at ourselves. (Bless our hearts, right y’all??!!) And for the situations where there is no humor, it helps to keep a sense of reality and a sense of grace.

Until Next Time,

Roddy, Melanie, and Janette

