

W F A P A

Wisconsin Foster And Adoptive Parent Association



How Covid Made Life Even More Unpredictable for Kids in Foster Care

Everything from reunification to social worker visits to permanent placements got derailed.

My proverbial backyard was the best place to begin my journey to motherhood through adoption. In Los Angeles County, where I live, 20 percent of the 20,876 children in foster care are Black. Black children here, and in the rest of the country, are overrepresented in the system, and that is the reason I signed up to become a foster/adoptive parent in 2006. I wanted to make a difference in the life of a Black child—a baby boy, to be specific. Black male infants are the least likely to be adopted, because of false assumptions about who they are—aggressive, incorrigible—and who they will become: gangbangers, violent. I was confident I could help change that narrative, because I easily saw beyond that cruel stereotype. Years later, I would add a Black princess to my lot, also through adoption, making my motherhood mission complete. All foster children are forced to cope with transitional situations and not knowing what the future may hold.. The Covid-19 pandemic took these uncertainties to new extremes. Thankfully, my children's journeys through the foster care system were relatively brief. My daughter's case sailed to the finish line without incident. She was assigned two social workers and then an adoption worker. Thirteen months after the process began, we went to dependency court, where before a judge I swore to love her as my own. I have photos of that moment with my family and the judges who declared us forever bonded. My son faced more bumps in the road. Over the course of two years, he had nine social workers. *Continued On Page 6*

TRAINING

Take a look at the upcoming LIVE webinars offered by Wisconsin Adoption & Permanency Support. All WISAPSP webinars are just \$5.00 and have post-tests available for those in need of certificates of training hours.

Have fun continuing your learning! To view upcoming webinars, please go to their site, www.wiapsp.org/education.

Wisconsin Kinship Navigator

Take a look at The Wisconsin Department of Children and Families, Wisconsin Kinship Navigator at www.dcf.wisconsin.gov/kinship/navigator. This resource is designed to help you find resources to help you with medical care, support payments, and more for the children in your care.

They also have the following link, https://media.wcwpds.wisc.edu/related-training/Kin-Nav/Caregiver/story_html5.html?lms=1, which provides a glimpse into the thoughts and feelings of caregivers in situations like yours.

ADOPTION QUILT

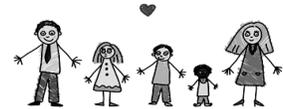


Adopting a child is such a powerful, emotional experience and like pregnancy and birth, no two adoption stories are the same. We are making another WFAPA Quilt and if you have adopted a child or you were an adopted child, we would like to hear from you.

Sherry will send you a quilt square-which you will design. Also, you will need to provide a short essay about what your adoption means to you. Please remember, no identifying information. You can reach Sherry Benson, WFAPA Treasurer and Social Worker Liaison, by emailing her at misssherry@new.rr.com or by texting or calling her at (715) 923-1124.



ADOPTION



Considering joining or renewing your membership with WFAPA? WFAPA continues to play a role in influencing public policy and advocating on behalf of Foster and Adoptive children and parents in Wisconsin. WFAPA's Leadership has helped to educate policymakers and engage Foster and Adoptive Parents in the debate on issues that affect the Foster and Adoptive System.

As a member, you:

- ~ Receive four newsletters in the mail each year.
- ~ Who to call when an allegation arises.
- ~ Scholarship information.
- ~ Opportunities to become involved in projects to help foster children.
- ~ Get first hand information of what's happening at the State level.
- ~ Peer Support.
- ~ Reduced rate for conferences.



Please join today. \$10.00 per family.

WFAPA Membership Form

For Family memberships, return this form along with \$10.00 to: Michelle & Larry Ward * W7018 Discovery Dr. * Fond du Lac, WI 54937 Email: twowards@charter.net

Name _____ Phone _____ Fax _____

Email _____ Your Address _____ ?4 _____

_____ Would you be willing to help out with WFAPA? yes no

County, State or Agency Name (that licenses you) _____

Additional Donation: ___ \$5 ___ \$10 ___ \$25 ___ \$50 ___ Other _____

GO GREEN! ___ I'd like to "go green" and paperless by receiving my newsletter online only.

You can also join by going online to our website, www.wfapa.org.



Federal Guidance on Foster Youth Pandemic Relief: A Breakdown

The long-awaited federal guidance on [child welfare pandemic assistance](#), which passed as part of the relief package signed by former president Trump in January, is out the door and into the hands of state and local agencies. The need for guidance to land grew urgent as it became clear to advocates and other observers that some states were loathe to act on the legislation alone, and were content to wait for more particular details.

Youth Services Insider has been through the guidance, issued this week by the Administration for Children, Youth and Families, and has spoken with several federal policy experts about it. Here, we try to break down some of the most salient parts in layman's terms.

Pandemic Assistance for Older Foster Youth

The \$400 million enhancement to the [John H. Chafee Foster Care Program for Successful Transition to Adulthood](#) was distributed to states last month. They will have until late 2022 to spend it.

The boost is broken into two parts: \$350 million for independent living and \$50 million for educational assistance, with 1.5% backed out for the feds to spend on technical assistance support to states.

Independent Living

This guidance makes clear that the money can be used for any allowable expense under the Chafee program (many are listed out), but urges states to use "at least a portion of the funds to facilitate quick and streamlined access to direct financial support for youth who were or are in foster care."

Translation: Don't overthink it. Just [cut the check](#). That had already been stressed as a preference informally by child welfare officials from the Trump administration, and by advocates for foster youth, and is further endorsed here. The guidance goes further in stressing that direct assistance should not be saddled with time-consuming action plans, or requirements that recipients account for their spending with receipts, and that states should not spend a lot of time trying to vet candidates past a simple verification of foster care experience.

"In this time of crisis, a youth's state of origin should not preclude them from receiving critical services to prevent their homelessness and ability to connect to the social service system in the community where they now live," the guidance says.

One other point of guidance on the independent living: Costs for driving and transportation are allowed as usual under Chafee, but there is a per-youth cap of \$4,000 on assistance in this area.

Educational Training Vouchers (ETV)

Higher Age Limit: From April 1 through September 30, 2021, the age ceiling for both the independent living and educational assistance is 27. Once the clock strikes midnight on October 1, any remaining funds from the Chafee boost can be used only on those who would normally qualify. For independent living that means younger than 23; for education, it's younger than 26.

Higher Awards: The usual cap of \$5,000 per recipient was raised to \$12,000, and it will stay that way through September of 2022.

Enrollment: Normally, a current or foster youth must be enrolled in college or a training program to qualify for the voucher. But until September of 2021, this support will be available for those who are not currently enrolled.

Allowable Uses: The standard ETV use is limited to the more visceral needs of a post-secondary student: tuition fees, room and board, books. The guidance makes clear that a much broader view of necessary student expenses will be taken through September of 2021 for the money.

Among the allowable expenses mentioned in the guidance: laptops, cell phones, printers, desks and chairs, and products related to WiFi connectivity.

Preventing Foster Youth from Aging Out

Exiting: No child welfare agency can require a youth to leave foster care due to their age until September 30, 2021.

Education and Employment: States with federally approved extensions of foster care from 18 up to age 21 all have a basic requirement that a foster youth is pursuing an education or employment while remaining in care, with some exceptions for disabled youth. Continued on Top of Page 5

calling all SPONSORS

WFAPA is a peer and volunteer-based association that supports and advocates for foster and adoptive parents by offering training, support program and helps to create and support different legislative measures with our fellow representatives in Madison. Every year we hold a spring conference in April and a fall conference in October throughout the state of Wisconsin.

WFAPA conferences reach a statewide population, and WFAPA encourages networking amongst foster and adoptive parents. Our conferences bring in highly qualified speakers who can help foster and adoptive parents on the issues presenting in their home. WFAPA also educates the public and brings a more positive light to foster and adoptive parenting through stories in different areas of the media (including radio, newspapers, etc.) and through our quilt, which tells the stories of foster children.

We are looking for sponsors to help keep our association growing. We cannot do this without the help of people like you. Would you consider donating \$25.00 a month, a one-time yearly donation of \$300.00, or a donation of your choosing? Not only is your gift 100% tax deductible (we are a 501(3) (C)), but our members are encouraged to patronize your establishment, and you will also be mentioned in

- ~ WFAPA Newsletter that is published four times a year: February, May, August & November,
- ~ On our Facebook page, www.facebook.com/wfapa,
- ~ On our website, www.wfapa.org and
- ~ Our conference folders.



We are very proud of our achievements and the hard work of a lot of people connected with our association. Please feel free to contact our President, Tina Christopherson at (715) 938-6667 with any questions. Thank you in advance for your generosity and support!



Wisconsin Foster & Adoptive Parents

Get Your 12 Credits at WFAPA's Fall Conference

OCTOBER 2021

at the Grand Lodge Waterpark Resort in Rothschild, Wisconsin



GROOVIN' IN THE MUSIC

FOR CAREGIVERS & CHILDREN; AGES 18 MONTHS – 4 1/2 YEARS

Stimulate growth, make connections, bond! Research shows that music impacts all areas of our brains and by utilizing music in an intentional way, we can stimulate and ignite our child's brain in the following areas: • Intellectual • Social • Emotional • Motor Language • Literacy • Memory skills. By incorporating music and movement – we stimulate the connection of body/mind working together, allow for self-expression while building and strengthening bonds between child & caregiver!

Join us in this fun learning environment! Utilize music and movement to ignite all areas of child's development!



Group will be held at: Expressive Therapies, LLC on 245 and 250 N Metro Drive in Appleton, WI 54913. Please contact Expressive Therapies for more information. Phone: 920.903.1009 Email: scheduling@expressivetherapies.net. For more information about other services and events Expressive Therapies offers: Visit our website at www.expressivetherapies.net and follow them on Facebook and Instagram @expressivetherllc.

Early in the pandemic, the Children's Bureau made clear that under the Stafford Act, which pertains to flexibilities in federal rules during an emergency, states could waive those requirements, because ... well, it is tough to enforce them when so many schools are closed and it's dangerous to go to work. But, states did still have the option to enforce the requirements if they wanted to.

This guidance makes clear that this pandemic legislation makes a suspension of those requirements mandatory. No state can kick a youth out of care because of the work and school requirements until September 30.

Re-Entry: The COVID-19 relief bill said that not only must states prevent youth from aging out, but they must also allow anyone who has left foster care during the pandemic to return if they choose. And the guidance makes clear that agencies are expected to be proactive about this.

Per the guidance, states must conduct a public awareness campaign about the option to return for any youth younger than 22 who left foster care this year or in 2020. They are encouraged to go beyond that age range in their public campaign, presumably to find people in their mid-20s who aged out and might need help through the Chafee enhancement.

Another interesting wrinkle: states will be allowed to temporarily use a definition of foster care that doesn't match the normal federal regulations. The example in the guidance is that a youth or young adult could re-enter care and be financially supported, with case management, but not be "placed" by a foster care agency. This allows a youth who might need some help, but is fine living where they are, to re-enter care without possibly having to give up their current residence to do so.

Paying for foster care: This is one of the most complicated pieces of the guidance, because this provision of the relief is instructing states to allow for more foster care, which comes with more costs.

Federal money for foster care is limited by what's called Title IV-E eligibility, and the biggest point of criteria is the income of the youth's parent or parents. If the household income is below the 1996 threshold for poverty, then the child is eligible and the feds share the cost of foster care for her.

For youth who are IV-E eligible, states must continue to share the cost of care, according to the guidance. But for youth who are not IV-E eligible, states can use their share of that \$400 Chafee pot to pay for foster care placements.

One thing to watch here: the guidance does say that states must demonstrate they've made a genuine effort to verify IV-E eligibility and are paying a state share for as many of these young people as possible. This is particularly relevant for the states that do not operate a federally approved extension to 21, because those states have not ever checked the eligibility of foster youth older than 18.

Kinship Support

The Family First Prevention Services Act offers states a 50-50 match on funds to pay for kinship navigators, programs that are meant to serve as one-stop shops to assist relatives and family friends caring for the children of loved ones. One problem: it's only available for models with efficacy approved by a clearinghouse, and to date, no kinship navigator models have cleared that hurdle.

The pandemic relief bill set aside both the match and the evidence-based requirements through September of 2021. This means that the feds will pay 100% of the costs for any kinship navigators through the fall.

The guidance does impose one very light caveat. The state agency must sign a form attesting to the fact that the navigator program "will be, or is in the process of being, evaluated for the purpose of building an evidence base."

Angelique Day, a child welfare researcher and associate professor at the University of Washington, said she was disappointed at something not included in the kinship guidance: a requirement to supplement, and not supplant state funding. The guidance delineates all kinds of COVID-related supports that the new funding can be used for, and many states operate kinship navigators that are not accessible to the entire state population, particularly kin in rural areas.

But under this guidance, Day said, states could expand or add services to navigators, but they don't have to. They could simply do business as usual, and save the state money that would have gone toward it.

The federal boost in this bill was a "beautiful carrot" to get states to build on navigators, Day said. "I wish they had built more of an incentive to get skin in the game from states."

Article written on March 22, 2021, by John Kelly, who is a senior editor for The Imprint Youth & Family News.

Some were experienced, others were not, but all were juggling too many cases. Large and complex, his case was passed from one social worker to the next. On multiple occasions, I had to educate successive workers on where we were with the permanency plans. This was unexpected, but being knowledgeable about my son's status made me a more organized foster mother and the monthly visits from social workers more tolerable.

The story is very different for current foster children whose plans for reunification or permanency got derailed by the pandemic. Immediate safety protocols went into effect to stop the spread of the disease. Covid mandates delayed reunifications, movement between foster homes, and adoption finalizations; the whole system came to a screeching halt. Child dependency courts went dark last March, exacerbating the logjam of existing cases until they reopened virtually at various times in different states. Foster children were stuck in temporary placements within individual homes or in overcrowded group homes, with pending placements on hold.

It often takes two years for the reunification process to conclude. During this window, biological parents are given chances to resolve the issues that led to their child's detainment. If the issue was homelessness, parents have to find housing. If the parents had addiction issues, they have to get clean and stable. In California, approximately every six months, the parents' progress is reviewed. If all stipulations are met, the child is reunified with them; if not, the case is extended for six additional months. Because neither of my children's biological parents had satisfied the requirements for reunification after these time periods, their cases moved to the concurrent planning stage, which began after the birth-parent rights were terminated and included preparing their kids for permanency with a foster/adoptive family. In both situations, I had the honor of becoming their child's new parent.

For others on the road to reunification, the pandemic completely derailed this process. Not only was the foster care system interrupted, but birth parents hoping to start or complete reunification plans experienced major setbacks. As housing instability and job insecurity deepen, families are increasingly unable to access the services they need to reunite with their children, because rehabilitative and support services have closed or waiting lists have lengthened. Pre-Covid, as of 2018, more than 32,000 children had been stuck in supposedly temporary care for three years or more. Post-Covid, this timeline could be even longer. Meanwhile, the reunification clock, which starts the day children are detained by child welfare services, will run out; biological parents' rights will be forever terminated; and families will be irreparably broken. The solution rests in HR 7976. Introduced last summer by Milwaukee Representative Gwen Moore, the bill proposes to "suspend the timeline, not parental rights." In other words, because the pandemic created a public health crisis, states will have flexibility in halting the reunification clock, giving biological parents time to reconnect and, one hopes, reunify with their kids.

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Hello my dear friends,

I hope and pray that each of you are well and healthy through this COVID-19 virus. Perhaps soon, life will again be somewhat normal. Stay well, we do care about all of you!

Jonelle Brom who was our OHC (Out of Home Care) Manager that brought State updates to us on Friday nights at our conference has gone to a new position. Jonelle, we wish her well! Our new OHC Manager is Shannon Braden. Hopefully, she will be able to join us with updates in October. Welcome Shannon!

May is FOSTER CARE MONTH. We have about "7,070 children and youth in foster care throughout Wisconsin. 3364 are female and 3706 are male. 5112 are placed in foster care, 1000 are placed in kinship care, 330 are in residential care, 240 are in group homes, 119 are in trial reunifications, 70 are missing, 56 are in institutions, 52 are in detention, 47 are in supervised living and 44 are in shelters." I thank each one of you that takes in our foster children and guides them. I realize during this pandemic that it is has been difficult for all. My gratitude goes to the selfless work of our foster families.

As you know we had to cancel our Spring 2021 Conference. We are looking forward to having our Fall Conference in October. I will be getting more information and a date hopefully within the next week. The Grand Lodge Hotel has been going through their own business dealings with the pandemic. Please watch our website and next newsletter for any updates. I do look forward to seeing everyone!

Please stay healthy and safe. Enjoy the summer and family times. Be kind, be mindful and practice self-care during this difficult time.

Warm thoughts,

Tina



FASPP (FOSTER AND ADOPTIVE SUPPORT AND PRESERVATION PROGRAM)

FASPP's mission is to meet the needs of foster and adoptive parents statewide through a network of peer driven support and information which will help to preserve foster and adoptive families.

Are you feeling lost?

Do you need information?

Are you under an investigation?

If so, FASPP may be able to help! Our FASPP and SAAN volunteers are highly trained to provide you with information and/or resources to guide you through various issues. FASPP and SAAN is made up of fellow foster or adoptive parents.

SAAN (SURVIVING ALLEGATIONS OF ABUSE AND NEGLECT)

SAAN is a peer driven support network, the purpose of which is to minimize the trauma to foster and adoptive families while undergoing an allegation without compromising the integrity of that investigation. Foster parents welcome children into their homes knowing that they bring their histories and issues along with them. For this reason, foster and adoptive parents are at a higher risk of having an allegation made against them. Undergoing an investigation is a stressful and scary situation for anyone, and SAAN is here to provide information to support you throughout the investigation process.

Please call or email the following people with questions in these areas:

Norma, Chairperson (Advice on general/allegations) ~ Phone: (920) 922-9627

Melissa (Focuses on fostering younger children) ~ Phone: (608) 333-6650 Email: lovedalemelissa@gmail.com

Tammy (Advice on general/foster) ~ Phone: (715) 497-3561 Email: tmeesha1973@yahoo.com

Lauri (Advice on general/adoption) ~ Phone: (715) 816-4152 Email: lthorssen@gmail.com



WHAT'S COOKING MAMA KASCH?



Perfect Cream Cheese Pound Cake



PREP TIME: 15 Minutes **COOKING TIME:** 1 Hour 20 Minutes **TOTAL TIME:** 4 Hours

Ingredients: ~ 1 & 1/2 cups (3 sticks) unsalted butter, softened to room temperature ~ 8 oz. block full-fat **cream cheese**, softened to room temperature ~ 2 & 1/2 cups granulated sugar ~ 1/3 cup sour cream, at room temperature ~ 2 tsp. pure vanilla extract ~ 6 large eggs, at room temperature ~ 3 cups cake flour (spoon & leveled) ~ 1/2 tsp baking powder ~ 1/8 tsp salt ~ optional for serving: homemade whipped cream & fresh berries

Instructions:

1. Preheat oven to 325°F. Generously grease a 10-12 cup bundt pan with butter or nonstick spray.
2. Using a handheld or stand mixer fitted with a paddle or whisk attachment, beat the butter on high speed until smooth and creamy, about 2 minutes. Scrape down the sides and up the bottom of the bowl with a rubber spatula. Add the cream cheese and beat on high speed until completely smooth and combined, about 1 minute. Add the sugar and beat on high speed until combined, about 1 minute, then add the sour cream and vanilla and beat on high speed until combined and creamy. Scrape down the sides and up the bottom of the bowl with a rubber spatula.
3. On low speed, beat the eggs in 1 at a time allowing each to fully mix in before adding the next. Careful not to overmix after the eggs have been added. Once the 6th egg is combined, stop the mixer and add the cake flour, baking powder, and salt. Beat on medium speed *just* until combined. Do not overmix. Using a rubber spatula or sturdy whisk, give the batter a final turn to make sure there are no lumps at the bottom of the bowl. The batter will be a little thick and very creamy.
4. Pour/spoon batter evenly into prepared pan. Bang the pan on the counter once or twice to bring up any air bubbles. Bake for 75-95 minutes. Loosely tent the baking cake with aluminum foil halfway through bake time to ensure the surface does not over-brown. The key to pound cake is a slow and low bake time. Use a toothpick to test for doneness. Once it comes out completely clean, the pound cake is done. This is a large heavy cake so don't be alarmed if it takes longer in your oven. If it needs longer, bake longer.
5. Remove cake from the oven and allow to cool for 2 hours inside the pan. Then invert the slightly cooled pound cake onto a wire rack or serving dish. Allow to cool completely.
6. Slice and serve with optional toppings like homemade whipped cream & fresh berries.
7. Cover leftover cake tightly and store in the refrigerator for up to 5 days.

Until that bill becomes law, foster kids all over the nation will continue to feel lonely, depressed, and disconnected from loved ones. In fact, 52 percent of young adults currently or formerly in foster care reported that Covid negatively affected their health or mental health care. LGBTQ foster youth in particular face housing and job insecurity, as well as placements in homes where they might be misgendered, leading to violence, depression, and suicidal ideations. For the lucky few whose reunifications or adoptions were made final during the pandemic, there were no happy photos with family or a judge. Instead, there were screenshots of judicial hearings held via teleconference.

Foster youth were not the only group directly impacted by the pandemic. Foster parents, who are an integral piece of the foster care system, worried about contracting the virus from children moving in and out of their homes. Those with preexisting conditions—diabetes, asthma, compromised immune systems, etc.—were reluctant to facilitate visits with their foster children’s biological family members or to take in additional kids. Expanding their bubble put the entire household at risk for anything from mild symptoms to death. Because children move around a lot, their chances of picking up the virus were high. This led to the question of where they would quarantine. Alternatively, if a foster parent became infected, she would need to quarantine, further shrinking the pool of available foster homes. In one fell swoop, the pandemic left foster parents in precarious health legitimately nervous about fulfilling their obligations.

Before Covid, foster parents supported the reunification process by taking kids to visit their biological relatives, to children’s court, to doctor’s appointments, and so on. I remember leaving work early to pick up my 10-month-old from day care to take him 30 minutes in the opposite direction to meet his social worker so he could spend one hour with his biological mother. I did the same for my daughter. These visits were stressful and time-consuming, and there was no guarantee that their biological mothers would arrive on time, if at all. On more than one occasion, the social worker called at the last moment to reschedule or cancel a visit. By then, I was already en route and irritated that I had juggled my schedule to accommodate a no-show. As frustrated as I was, I reminded myself that the lives my children led before me were important.

Looking back, my issues were minor, as I was able to complete the foster care/adoption journey. Though I am not required to, I have made sure that my kids maintain ties with their biological siblings. We see them a few times a year for birthday parties, special church programs, or riding scooters at the park. All of this stopped last March, though, when the pandemic shut the whole world down. And for the first time in seven years, my children did not see or touch their biological brother or sister in person. I tried to look on the bright side: My kids had each other. Such is not the case for thousands of foster children, separated from their siblings, kin, and birth parents. Though foster parents are responsible for maintaining family ties, social workers are on the front line. They monitor visits, transport kids from foster home to foster home or dependency court in their personal vehicles, and spend hours of face time with foster children. Their reports, which determine reunification or concurrent planning, are based on their firsthand observations. Some workers worry about being deployed during the pandemic. One social worker, who wished to remain anonymous, said, “My husband has asthma. I would be devastated if I became infected and he got sick.” Those invisible first responders are as vulnerable as the children they serve, because according to the National Conference of State Legislatures, “Some jurisdictions do not have adequate gloves, masks or hand sanitizer to keep caseworkers safe during investigations and home visits.”

For others on the road to reunification, the pandemic completely derailed this process. Not only was the foster care system interrupted, but birth parents hoping to start or complete reunification plans experienced major setbacks. As housing instability and job insecurity deepen, families are increasingly unable to access the services they need to reunite with their children, because rehabilitative and support services have closed or waiting lists have lengthened. Pre-Covid, as of 2018, more than 32,000 children had been stuck in supposedly temporary care for three years or more. Post-Covid, this timeline could be even longer. Meanwhile, the reunification clock, which starts the day children are detained by child welfare services, will run out; biological parents’ rights will be forever terminated; and families will be irreparably broken. The solution rests in HR 7976. Introduced last summer by Milwaukee Representative Gwen Moore, the bill proposes to “suspend the timeline, not parental rights.” In other words, because the pandemic created a public health crisis, states will have flexibility in halting the reunification clock, giving biological parents time to reconnect and, one hopes, reunify with their kids.

It’s been more than one year since the first case of Covid-19 was reported, and scientists have developed a vaccine for it. Their research allows movie theaters, summer camps, and schools to reopen, paving the way for the foster care system to reopen too. But amid the jubilation over lifted restrictions, let us remember the foster children who have lost precious moments with loved ones, time they will never get back.

Story written by Nefertiti Austin and appeared in *The Nation* on March 9, 2021. Nefertiti Austin is a memoirist and the author of *Motherhood So White: A Memoir of Race, Gender, and Parenting in America*. She lives with her two children in Los Angeles.



New Mobile App Helps Prevent Suicide



In March the President's Roadmap to Empower Veterans and End a National Tragedy of Suicide (PREVENTS) released a groundbreaking new mobile app for suicide prevention among Veterans and others. The app, called the How We R.E.A.C.H. Coaching Tool, provides guidance to everyone – helping individuals who are offering support to a loved one who is struggling and helping those who are struggling themselves seek support. The app puts vital information, resources, and clear steps on how to REACH at everyone's fingertips. For more information about the How We REACH Coaching Tool, and to share it with your community, please visit R.E.A.C.H.S.'s website at www.reach.gov/resources/tool/.



EnACT

(Encouraging Adoptees through Creativity and Theater)



This group allows pre-teens through teens, to engage with the creative process through acting games, lyric analysis, musical reviews, and character studies while learning how to reflect, honor, and share their personal experiences with others in a healing environment.

Engaging in the Creative Arts is motivating and healing! When art in any form is created with other people, a sense of community is created as well. This trauma informed group focuses on increasing self-awareness through exploration, offering validation from a community of peers, and emotion expression. Participants will engage in various experientials centered around musical theatre incorporating music and art therapy. Group members will reflect on personal experiences while learning how to creatively relate and share their experiences with others within this created community. There is no need to have any experience or special talent in acting or on an instrument to benefit from the powers and motivation of music and art! Art & Music supplies will be provided; however, participants are welcome to bring personal supplies/instruments as well.

The skills that will be focused on: • Self-Exploration • Interpersonal Relationship Skills • Communication and Validation • Emotional Insight and Expression • Improving Self Esteem • Creative coping strategies

Group will be held at: Expressive Therapies, LLC on 245 and 250 N Metro Drive in Appleton, WI 54913. Please contact Expressive Therapies for more information. Phone: 920.903.1009 Email: scheduling@expressivetherapies.net. For more information about other services and events Expressive Therapies offers: Visit our website at www.expressivetherapies.net and follow them on Facebook and Instagram @expressivetherllc.

W E A P A

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MY ADOPTION STORY

We all have stories. Some make us laugh until we cry. Others? Well...they just make us cry. If you have lived at all, you have likely experienced both joy and heartache. While it can be easy to wish that we lived a carefree existence without the difficult moments, sometimes even our most trying burdens can become our biggest blessings.

Have you ever gone through a situation and felt utterly alone? Have you been ashamed to speak your truth out loud? Have you ever just needed someone to say, "It's okay. I've been there, too."? Most of us want so badly for someone to identify with, to normalize what we often think are unique struggles. In these times, the testimony of others can be a bright and shining light in the darkness. So...have you considered sharing your testimony?

If you think that nobody is interested in what you have to say, you'd be surprised. Whether you are a birth parent, a potential or current adoptive parent, or a person who was adopted, your story can touch the lives of countless others. Don't forget about the stories in your life that are completely unrelated to adoption as well. First, it can help to think about where your story begins, how it progresses, and how it has led to your current situation. Also remember that your future is still wide open, so your story is never really finished.

If you would like to share your story and/or your family's picture on WFAPA's website, Facebook, and/or newsletter, please email Tina at twfapa@new.rr.com.

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