

Free Dinner • Child Care Provided
1 Hour Training Credit Provided at Circle of Support Meeting

NEIGHBORHOOD	LOCATION	ANCHOR PARENTS	ACS CONTACT	DEC	JAN	FEB	MARCH
BROOKLYN Bed-Stuy (6 pm-8 pm)	MS 35 272 MacDonough Street Brooklyn, NY	Audrey 718-783-3797 Yolanda 718-857-5062	Yolanda Howard 212-676-6935	Wed. 21st	Wed. 18th	Wed. 15th	Wed. 15th
BROOKLYN Bilingual Bushwick (6 pm-8 pm)	Salvation Army Comm. Ctr. 1151 Bushwick Ave. 11221	Janet 718-573-6654 Queenie 718-452-0038	Zinaida Zeltser 212-676-7562	Wed. 07th	Wed. 04th	Wed. 01st	Wed. 01st
BROOKLYN Canarsie	P.S. 272 101-24 Seaview Ave. 11236	Betty 718-241-6168 Jill 347-715-6926	Yolanda Howard 212-676-6935	Tues. 20th	Tues. 24th	Tues. 21st	Tues. 21st
BROOKLYN Crown Heights	Jesus Joy Epip. Rec. Center 716 Lincoln Place 11216	Pearl 718-774-9834 Shatema 347-385-0608	Yolanda Howard 212-676-6935	Mon. 19th	Mon. 30th	Mon. 27th	Mon. 27th
BROOKLYN Bilingual Downtown Brooklyn (6pm-8pm)	151 Lawrence Street, 4th Fl. Brooklyn, NY	Lourdes 718-596-2035 Gwen 718-484-3709	Yolanda Howard 212-676-6935	Wed. 28th	Wed. 25th	Wed. 22nd	Wed. 29th
BROOKLYN Bilingual Flatbush/East Flatbush	Salem Miss. Baptist Church 305 East 21st Street 11227	Nivia 718-675-4504	Audrey Matthews 212-676-6941	Thurs. 01st	Thurs. 05th	Thurs. 02nd	Thurs. 02nd
BRONX Bilingual Concourse Village	P.S. 70 1691 Weeks Avenue, Bronx NY 10457	Henrietta 718-992-9362 Grace 718-295-2391	Keni McRae 212-676-7569	Wed. 14th	Wed. 11th	Wed. 08th	Wed. 15th
BRONX Mott Haven	Paterson Comm. Ctr. 340 Morris Ave. Bx, NY	Leatrice 718-379-4739 Carol 718-993-4225	Audrey Matthews 212-676-6941	Thurs. 08th	Thurs. 12th	Thurs. 09th	Thurs. 09th
BRONX Bilingual Kingsbridge(10am-noon)	St. Stephen's Church 146 West 228th Street 10463	Dorothy 718-884-4452 Nancy 347-275-8769	Pauline Waite 212-676-7586	Tues. 27th	Tues. 31st	Tues. 28th	Tues. 28th
MANHATTAN Central Harlem	Harlem State Building 163 W. 125th Street, 8th Fl. New York, NY 10027	Angela 212-426-0983 Stephanie 212-788-2906	Ann Perry 212-676-9922	Thurs. 08th	Thurs. 12th	Thurs. 09th	Thurs. 09th
QUEENS Jamaica (6 pm-8 pm)	Gertz Mall Building 92-31 Union Hall Street, 3rd fl.	Diane 718-712-3874 Dymita 718-949-0438	Keni McRae 212-676-7569	Thurs 22nd	Thurs. 26th	Thurs. 23rd	Thurs 23rd
QUEENS Bilingual Long Island City	Saint Margaret Marys Church 9 - 18 27th Ave, Astoria, Qns	Minnie 718-726-7063 Nilsa 718-908-8844	Audrey Matthews 212-676-6941	Wed. 28th	Wed. 25th	Wed. 22nd	Wed. 22nd
QUEENS Queens Village		Daisy 718-712-6990 Barbara 718-776-1250	Ann Perry 212-676-9922	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD
STATEN ISLAND	Calvary Presbyterian Church 909 Castleton Ave. 10310	Karen S. 718-317-5750	Audrey Matthews 212-676-6941	Tues. 20th	Tues. 17th	Tues. 21st	Tues. 21st
SPECIALTY GROUPS	LOCATION	ANCHOR PARENT	ACS CONTACT	OCT	NOV	DEC	
LGBTQ CIRCLE 6pm-8pm	LGBT Center 208 W. 13th St. New York, NY	Shawnese 718-529-2532 Greg 718-210-3191	Zinaida Zeltser 212-676-7562	Tues. 20th	Tues. 17th	Tues. 21st	Tues. 21st
CIRCLE OF YOUTH (14 & up) 6-8pm	Saint Margaret Marys Church 9 - 18 27TH Ave, Astoria, Qns	Natasha & Marquita 718-726-7063	Payal Dalal 212-341-0724	Wed. 28th	Wed. 25th	Wed. 22nd	Wed. 22nd

Meetings are 6:30 pm to 8:30 pm, unless otherwise indicated.
For more information about Circle of Support or to start a Circle in your neighborhood, call 212.676.7381



NYC Administration for
Children's Services
150 William Street 5th Floor
New York, New York 10038

POSTAGE

COMMENTS/SUGGESTIONS: If you have any questions, comments, or concerns about this issue, please contact Diane at 718-712-3874.

TO SEND MATERIALS FOR THE NEWSLETTER MAIL TO:
Attn: Circle of Support/Newsletter, 150 William Street, 5th floor, New York, NY 10038
or email to: circleofsupport@dfa.state.ny.us



CIRCLE OF SUPPORT MISSION:
To promote a positive environment for foster, kinship, and adoptive parents by increasing the level of community support through networking, building partnerships, and information sharing.

CIRCLE TIMES

FOR RESOURCE FAMILIES WINTER ISSUE 2005
A Quarterly Newsletter Published in the Significance of Foster/Adoptive Parents

DIANE DUNK Foster and Adoptive Parent

Diane Dunk and her husband Leander were certified as foster parents with Forestdale, Inc. on December 26, 1995. As a belated holiday present to themselves, they quickly took in two children, a brother and sister. Over the next two years they cared for the children and worked with the children's mother until they could be re-united. In December of 1997 two young brothers were placed with the Dunks and continue to reside with them today.

During the years of being a foster parent, Mrs. Dunk became very involved with her agency and community activities. She joined a group to re-establish the Forestdale Foster and Adoptive Parents Association, and in 2002 became the Vice-President. She has spearheaded the Forestdale Foster and Adoptive Parents Association Scholarship Dinner for the three years of its existence, from which eight youth entering college have benefited.

Mrs. Dunk has also assisted the agency in recruiting additional applicants for foster parenthood. She has conducted meetings in her home, spoken at community meetings and referred a number of friends and family to the agency.

In 2002, Mrs. Dunk took on an additional responsibility as an Anchor Parent for the Circle of Support. The Circle of Support is sponsored by Administration for Children's Services and provides monthly support group meetings for Foster, Adoptive and Kinship parents in various communities. Mrs. Dunk, along with another Forestdale foster parent, worked with ACS to implement the group in Community District 12, Jamaica, New York. In addition, Mrs. Dunk is also a



member of the Southeast Queens Neighborhood Network and New York State Foster and Adoptive Association. In the spring of 2003, Mrs. Dunk received a Golden Heart award for her work as an Anchor Parent, as well as for the work she does for her agency and the children of New York City.

Mrs. Dunk writes poetry and has had several poems published in Foster Parent Newsletters. Mrs. Dunk is also a staunch advocate for children and families, and believes in meeting the needs of children and makes them a priority in her life.

As an ambassador of her community, her love, dedication and commitment is endless. From being in various organizations to organizing scholarship funds or just giving a child love, she can always be counted upon in making the community a better place to reside.

Diane Dunk can be reached at (718) 712-3874.

Editorial Message

Dear Resource Parents,

The, "Circle Times" is a quarterly newsletter designed for Foster, Adoptive, & Kinship Parents (Resource Parents).

The purpose of the "Circle Times" is to acknowledge the accomplishments of Resource Parents, provide them with valuable information, and highlight the important work they do.

As editors, it gives us great pleasure to announce a new column to be featured in the coming issues titled, "The Greg & Diane column."

This column will allow readers to write in their questions, comments, and/or suggestions, which we will then try to answer. In addition, we would like to thank Circle of Support staff for giving us the opportunity of playing such an integral role in the implementation of this newsletter.

We would also like to thank and commend our organizer, Ms. Natalie Hunt, as she elevates to her new level of achievement. Her vital and diligent input will be greatly missed by all.

Please send any questions, comments, and/or suggestions to:

Attn: Circle of Support/Newsletter

150 William Street
New York, NY 10038

or email to: circleofsupport@dfa.state.ny.us

Diane & Greg

REFLECTIONS OF YOUTH

Before I open my mouth, society makes certain assumptions about me. About my intellect. My character. Even my worth. Based not on fact but on the judgments they have already made about me. These assumptions shape my reality, both present and future.



Children entering the foster care system face a similar fate. If they are over the age of 12 they are instantly labeled too. Older. Hard-to-place. Teenager. These labels often land otherwise fine children in group home settings where behavior that may have been a minor, fleeting reaction to foster care can turn into a major, permanent prob-

lem. Society generally views teenagers as aimless, disrespectful and irresponsible. These opinions are only strengthened when that teenager is also a foster child. How loudly the saying "Youth is wasted on the young" rings in my ears. It is these misconceptions that keep many exceptional children from ever making the permanent connection that everyone needs to survive. Let me take this opportunity to dispel three of the most common myths about adopting teenagers.

Teens want to come and take over my home.

Do you remember what you were like as a teenager? Did you ever do anything just to see what your parents' reaction would be? Teens of today are no different. What may actually be occurring is a teenager trying to find their niche in your home and testing their boundaries. Keep in mind that the teen entering your home may not have lived with a family in many years and may not know what it is expected of them. Also every home is different. What may have been okay in another home may not be okay in yours and vice versa. How else will they learn what is acceptable to you and what is not? Do we not learn by trial and error?

Teens don't want to be adopted.

At 14-years-old, I remember wanting nothing more than to be part of a family. After losing my biological parents and living in two foster homes only temporarily, by the time I reached my third and final home I was confused, angry and lonely. So when told that I was too old to be adopted anyway, I certainly didn't have any reason to try to make a permanent connection. In my third placement I acted out and resisted my foster mother's attempts to reach me. Not because I didn't want to be part of a family. It was because I was scared. Scared of being rejected and disappointed. It took years for

me to trust that I wasn't going to be shipped off for some misdeed, perceived or otherwise. When I finally did open my heart it helped me to reform myself and make better decisions about my life.

Teens are too old to be adopted.

This is perhaps the most hurtful myth and the one farthest from the truth. When you became a teenager did you suddenly not need your parents anymore? Did you erase their number from your phone? Their address from your memory? Their love from your heart? Of course not. It's no different for a teen in foster care. They still want someone to ask for advice, to come to their high school or college graduations, and to walk them down the aisle. I was in graduate school before I stopped posting my report cards on the refrigerator for my forever family to see. Even today, at 23-years-old, it still warms my heart to see the look of pride on my mom's face when she hears of my accomplishments.

Teens and older children make up the majority of the waiting population in foster care. Statistics show that teens who age out of care without a permanent connection are more likely to end up on welfare, in jail or homeless. Before you decide that a teenager is not for you consider this: Where would you be if no one ever took a chance on you?

Keema Davis found her forever family at age 14. Today she works at ACS as the *Wednesday's Child* Coordinator, helping other foster children find families too.

WoRd JuMbLe

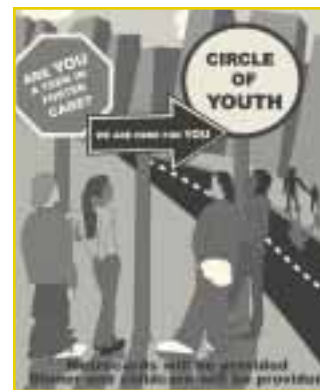
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CIRCLE OF YOUTH
718-726-7063
Natasha & Marquita

Circle of Youth is a support group for foster and adopted youth. Participation is open to youth 15 and up including those who have aged out of care.

Mission: To provide a comfortable environment where young adults and adolescents in foster, adopted, kinship, and congregate care settings can come together to learn about their rights, express their feelings, set a positive example, and help each other achieve goals.

Purpose: Meet other foster and adopted youth. Learn about information and programs. Discuss topics that are important to youth in care.

Admission is free
Meal and childcare provided
Metrocards provided

WHAT IS THE FAMILY TO FAMILY MODEL?

There was a time not too long ago when children were removed from their homes and communities and placed in foster homes throughout the City. There was also a time when foster parents and birth parents were not encouraged to maintain a relationship. This did not create a positive outcome for the children being placed into foster care. Not only were they removed from their homes, but also removed from their schools, churches, neighborhoods, essentially all people that may have been important in that child's life. No matter how loving a foster parent may be, the child will always have a connection with his/her family and community.

The Family to Family model was designed in 1992 by the Annie E. Casey Foundation. The framework for this initiative is grounded in the belief that reforms in foster care must be focused on a more family-centered approach that is: 1) responsive to the individual needs of children and their families, 2) rooted in the child's community or neighborhood, 3) sensitive to cultural differences, 4) able to serve many of the children now placed in group homes and institutions. The initiative has the following systemic goals:

1. Develop a network of family foster care that is more neighborhood based, culturally sensitive, and located primarily in the communities in which the children live.
2. Assure that family foster home resources are provided to those children who must be removed from their homes.
3. Reduce the reliance on institutions and group homes by meeting the needs of many more of the children by placing them into family foster care settings
4. Increase the number and quality of foster families
5. Reunify children with their families as soon as that can safely be accomplished based on the family's and children's needs-not simply the time frames that the system provides
6. Reduce the lengths of stay of children in foster care
7. Decrease the overall number of children in foster care

LEGAL NEWS: New State Law Streamlines Family Court Process

Under a recently enacted state law designed to help shorten the length of time children spend in foster care, children will have permanency hearings every 6 months instead of every 12 months. In addition, the court process has been streamlined so that there should be less court delay and more meaningful hearings.

The first permanency hearing will now be 8 months from when the child was removed from his/her home and then the hearings will be every 6 months—at dates pre-set by the court, well in advance. Foster parents will continue to receive notices in the mail of these pre-scheduled permanency hearings approximately 10 days before the hearing.

In addition to receiving a notice, foster parents will also be receiving the detailed court report prepared by the caseworker. The permanency hearing report will include detailed information about the child's permanency plan, any search that has been undertaken for the child's missing relatives, services to the child, services to the child's parent (if the child is not freed for adoption), the child's family visiting plan, and an update on the child's health and education. Foster parents are encouraged to read the Permanency Report carefully.

In addition, any foster parent who had a child in his/her home for 12 months will also receive notices for the permanency hearings of children and youth no longer in their home. This has been done so that children in foster care can reconnect with former foster parents who had cared for them for a significant portion of their lives.

Although foster parent participation in Permanency Hearings is not mandatory, the hearings will be an important opportunity

for foster parents to raise any concerns they have about the child's permanency plan and to advocate for any supportive services they feel the child may need. ACS strongly encourages foster parent participation in these hearings.

These provisions of the new law are scheduled to take effect on December 21, 2005.

Stephanie Gendell

TIPS FOR FOSTER PARENTS

Decisions birth parents and foster parents can discuss and share together:

- **Food and meals:** what the child likes to eat, allergies, mealtime customs, table manners
- **Clothes:** favorite colors, styles, items
- **Hair:** how the child usually wears his/her hair
- **Toys and hobbies:** favorites, any toys not wanted such as guns, certain video games
- **Photographs:** photos from the child's past, photos of the child's present with birth and foster parents
- **Schedule, chores:** what the child is used to, what is the foster parent's custom, e.g., bedtimes, homework, keeping one's room clean
- **Health:** current history, conditions
- **Religion:** what is the child used to, what is the foster parent's practice, birth parent's wishes
- **Family traditions:** customs such as family gatherings, celebrations, games, etc...