

SERVING 50 COUNTIES  
IN NORTHEAST AND  
NORTH CENTRAL  
NEBRASKA  
~ SINCE 1998 ~



## *September is National Foster Parent Month*

*Building Blocks would like to take this opportunity to thank our foster parents and respite providers for their hard work and dedication to children throughout the year.*

*We are truly blessed to have you as part of our team. As a sign of our appreciation, we will be holding weekly drawings throughout the month. The winners will be announced on our Facebook Page.*

### *2019 Fall Festivals*

*Building Blocks invites you to our Fall Festivals*

*Poppy's Pumpkin Patch  
55275 837th Road - Norfolk  
Checkout Poppy's at:  
[www.poppypumpkinpatch.com](http://www.poppypumpkinpatch.com)*

*Helgoth's Pumpkin Patch  
121 Eagle Road - St. Libory  
Check out Helgoth's at:  
[www.helgothspumpkinpatch.com](http://www.helgothspumpkinpatch.com)*

*Please notify Building Blocks if you will be arriving after 1:00p.m.*



*Saturday*

*28*

*September*

*RSVP to Rachael Kallhoff by:  
Monday, September 23, 2019  
at: 402-336-4841 or  
[Rachael@buildingblocksforkids.org](mailto:Rachael@buildingblocksforkids.org)*

*Hope to see you there!*

# NATIONAL ADOPTION DAY

2019

Did you know that last year alone, 4,000 adoptions were finalized on National Adoption Day? Events are held all over the country to celebrate this holiday—during which communities and courts join efforts to find the right families for children in the foster care system. On November 23<sup>rd</sup>, we celebrate National Adoption Day as thousands of foster children are welcomed into their forever homes.

- **MYTH:** Children in foster care have too much “baggage.”
  - This is perhaps the biggest myth of all. Children in foster care — just like all children — have enormous potential to thrive given love, patience and a stable environment. Just ask former U.S. Senator Ben “Nighthorse” Campbell or Minnesota Viking Dante Culpepper. They were both foster children who were adopted by caring adults.
- **FACT:** Since its inception, this annual one day even has made the dreams of over 70,000 children come true.
- **OUR TRUTH:** In 2018, Building Blocks assisted with 18 children finding their forever families in the State of Nebraska.
  - Already in 2019, we have had 17 adoptions.

## Building Blocks Annual Holiday Party



Saturday, December 7, 2019  
3:00p.m - 6:00p.m.

Northeast Community College  
Lifelong Learning Center  
801 East Benjamin Ave  
Norfolk, NE 68701

Hope to see you there!!

3:00p.m. - 4:00p.m. - Register for door prizes, games, glitter tattoos, balloons with Sunny & Share and pictures with Frosty and Mrs. Claus

4:00p.m. - 5:00p.m. - Entertainment by Magician Brian Ledbetter

5:00p.m. - 6:00p.m. - Buffet dinner and door prizes

Must be registered by 4:00p.m. to be eligible for a flat screen T.V., laptop, cash drawings, gift cards and many more door prizes!

RSVP by Monday, November 18, 2019 to  
Rachael at: 402-336-4841 or  
Rachael@buildingblocksforkids.org



## Social Media, Facebook, Confidentiality: Things You Need to Know. . .

*As technology advances and becomes more accessible, so does the desire to share your joys and concerns on social media like Twitter and Facebook. Building Blocks would like to remind you that you cannot do so. It is a violation of confidentiality policies that you agreed to uphold as a foster parent for your licensure. For your convenience, we have listed the policy for you to review as we are again getting closer to the holidays.*

### **1-007 RELEASE OF PHOTOGRAPHS AND IDENTIFYING INFORMATION REGARDING WARDS.**

*No photographs or slides, electronic video, or other identifying information regarding a Department ward may be released for use on posters, in news stories, presentations, press releases, newsletters without the written consent of the child's worker and agreement of the parent, if parental rights are intact.*

*In deciding whether to give consent, the worker will consider:*

- Legal status of parental rights;*
- The child's opinion and wishes;*
- Purpose and use of material;*
- Effect of use on child and family*

*If a situation is questionable, consent shouldn't be given*

*If you have any questions on this policy, please contact your Resource & Licensing Specialist!*

# Rules of Engagement with Foster and Adoptive Children

By: Blake Griffin Edwards, MSMFT, LMFT

Most children and teens in the foster care system have experienced significant rejection, whether their biological parents ignored their most fundamental needs or acted violently against them in some way to bring a false semblance of control to the chaos of their own lives. Then, of course, there are even greater evils: sexual abuses and other physical and emotional forms of torture.

When these kids are placed into the warmly anticipating homes of well-meaning foster parents, often there exists a gulf between preconceived expectations for their behavior as a member of this new family and the reality of these children's ongoing emotional warfare. Children in foster care may experience profound difficulties such as significant delays in normal developmental processes, from learning language and gaining healthy physical mobility to using age-appropriate thinking skills and engaging in appropriate social behaviors. Abnormalities in appetite and sleep are often lingering effects that can stop and start for years.

Additionally, foster children and teens may regularly or periodically engage in behaviors that mirror the very abuse they have endured or other behavioral reflections of unresolved trauma—nearly always carrying some outdated, adaptive purpose once essential to their survival. These behaviors may include hoarding food, self-harming/self-soothing behaviors (rocking, chanting, scratching, biting, or cutting themselves), and acts of aggression and cruelty often directed at those smaller and less powerful (such as younger children and animals). Such acts of aggression and cruelty may stem from undeveloped empathy and impulse control that may reflect an attempt to understand how others react when experiencing pain and may also reflect a kind of reprocessing of past harm directed upon themselves.

In many cases, children who have endured such a lack of nurturance may engage in “indiscriminate attachment” behaviors, in which abused or neglected children may seek affectionate behaviors from individuals relatively unknown to them in a kind of misplaced effort to find reassurance of safety. This may be because they never developed a strong and secure emotional bond with a caregiver during critical junctures of development. Again, such behaviors may reflect underlying survivalist as well as investigatory causes.

Renowned psychiatrist and researcher Daniel Siegel (1999) noted, “The care that adults provide nurtures the development of essential mental tools for survival. These attachment experiences enable children to thrive and achieve a highly flexible and adaptive capacity for balancing their emotions, thinking, and empathic connections with others” (p. 33).

With this in mind, foster and adoptive parents (all parents, for that matter) must understand and acknowledge that there are ways they may choose to manage their children's maladaptive behaviors that may be more effective and constructive—both for immediate practical purposes and in terms of nurturing overall development—and ways that may be not only ineffective in redirecting behaviors but may also be destructive to the necessary mission of resolving fundamental attachment needs and spurring healthy ego development, prosocial activity, and capacities for independent life skills.

It cannot be overstated: The moment-by-moment, day-by-day tactics used by parents who care for children and adolescents who have been victims of abuse or neglect should take into consideration not only the desirable here-and-now effects of such tactics, but also, and far more importantly, the ultimate desirable impacts of their words, actions, and quality of relationship in the future. Development is a marathon. Every mile marker is lined with either a cheering squad of supporters bearing affirmation and nourishment or the lonely and painful oppression of dark voices and traumatic experiences that interject between confidences, spurning hope.

Zig Ziglar said it best: “Be careful not to compromise what you want most for what you want now.” The volume is turned up on such “dark voices” when parents engage in power grabs or spineless placation as the children in their care scale the precipice of an already steep and daunting developmental cliff. Rather, the route less traveled, the arduous adventure that makes resilient, goal-directed men and women out of wounded children, is always the one in which a parent joins more intimately, more affectionately, and more vulnerably into the mire while maintaining footing, perspective, and discipline.

Here are my recommended “rules of engagement” to consider in moments of distress or disruption. If you listen closely and read between the lines, you will hear echoes of ancient wisdom here:

1. **Seek first to understand and then to be understood.** When kids misbehave, parents who understand their children’s underlying needs (related to development and, in some cases, past trauma) respond in ways that guide the development of the personality underneath the monstrous mood paralyzing it. Bruce Perry (2001) wrote, “The more you can learn about attachment problems, bonding, normal development and abnormal development, the more you will be able to develop useful behavioral and social interventions. Information about these problems can prevent you from misunderstanding the child’s behaviors.” He added, “A punitive approach to (these problems) will not help the child mature. Indeed, punishment may actually increase the child’s sense of insecurity, distress and need” (p. 9).
2. **Know thyself.** It is crucial that you understand your own underlying predispositions and that you ensure appropriate checks and balances are in place to protect your children from your own unresolved issues. I have written (2011), “To the extent that we fail to go toe-to-toe with our own reflex and mood, our reflex and mood will go toe-to-toe with the ones we love. We will find ourselves acting in ways that sabotage our own efforts to get more of what we want, whether it be understanding, connection or behavior change.”
3. **Have the courage to do whatever may be helpful.** You can establish structure for a child by implementing house rules as well as child-specific goals, by linking privileges to responsibilities, by creating safe and private spaces for children to be and discover who they are, and by engaging them regularly in playful—as well as skill-building—activities that facilitate opportunities to explore relationships and the world around them. You can provide feedback to a child by giving affection unconditionally, lavishing praise on every effort and success, large or small, by showing interest and inquiring into their lives, whether they like it or not and whether they’re responsive or not.
4. **Try to lay off of issues you cannot resolve.** You cannot simply fix the problem of disobedient behavior through any immediate reaction, but you can sabotage an opportunity for your child’s deep emotional learning and moral-muscle conditioning through giving into your own need to rant and blame. You cannot change whether your kid is responsive to your affection and praise, but you can hold his or her emotional autonomy hostage by engaging in self-serving attempts to procure reciprocity. You cannot change whether your kid is particularly shy or moody or energetic (i.e., temperament), but you can inflict or reinforce a psychological complex in which he or she is left to contend with lingering suspicions that he or she is not good enough.
5. **In all things, seek to be an instrument of peace.** This is not an easy mission, but it is the right one. It should be the prologue and the epilogue to your own personal parenting manual. It must be your first prayer before you step into the mire each day and the final project each night if it is to be achieved. If I have not yet established a persuasive case for those who perpetually believe that their way is the right way, perhaps the immensely practical words of W.L. Bateman will drive us home: “If you keep on doing what you’ve always done, you’ll keep on getting what you’ve always got.”

## References:

1. Edwards, B. (2011). Fighting, family, and finding peace. *Relevant Magazine*: <http://www.relevantmagazine.com/life/relationship/blog/26757-fighting-family-and-finding-peace>.
2. Perry, B.D. (2001). Bonding and attachment in maltreated children: Consequences of emotional neglect in childhood. *Caregiver Education Series*. Houston: Child Trauma Academy.
3. Siegel, D. (1999). *The developing mind: How relationships and the brain interact to shape who we are*. New York: The Guilford Press.



# “Inspired to Improve 2019” 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Conference

**Oct. 19, 2019 8am-4:15pm**

Lifelong Learning Center~701 E. Benjamin Ave. ~ Norfolk, NE 68701

**The presentations have been approved for criminogenic, mental health, and childcare CEU's.**

Registrations are available at: [www.buildingblocksforkids.org](http://www.buildingblocksforkids.org)

## Keynote: Derek Clark



Derek Clark’s life is one of resilience and redemption. As a child he suffered unthinkable child abuse, abandonment and emotional distress before being turned over to the psychiatric hospital at age five. His 13 years in the San Francisco bay area foster care system reflected an early life of humiliation, aggression, emotional distress, overwhelming anxiety and being wrongfully labeled. Eventually, with the help of foster parents, a fantastic social worker and mentors, he defied the artificial limitations imposed upon him. Derek knows first-hand how to cope with adversity and overcoming hardship. His past has never held him back from accomplishing what he set his heart and mind to.

## Social Media Deep Dive - Stephanie Olson



Stephanie Olson is a speaker, an author, and the CEO/President of The Set Me Free Project. Stephanie Olson holds a BA degree in Psychology. Her experience includes 6 years of curriculum writing and development for women experiencing domestic violence, homelessness, and alcohol and drug addictions; 8 years of educating women in the area empowerment and intrinsic value; 4 years of educating youth ages 11-18 in healthy relationships, the dangers of human trafficking, and social media safety. Stephanie has had extensive training, research, and study of human trafficking prevention education and social media safety. Stephanie is also a sought-after speaker on the subject of women, youth, human trafficking, and nonprofit business. Stephanie currently runs two nonprofit organizations, writes and develops the curriculum for The Set Me Free Project, and trains the current speakers to speak to youth with an interactive and engaging approach. Stephanie leads The Set Me Free Project to help prevent youth and young adults from ever seeing the “dark” of trafficking. She speaks to women, youth, and families all over the United States on life issues and the dangers of human trafficking.

## Drug Trends - Bobby Post

Bobby is owner of Community Monitoring Service in South Sioux City, NE. He has over 12 years of experience working with juveniles in the tri-state community. Bobby is currently a provider for Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services, Nebraska Probation and State Drug Testing. He has worked with several families, individuals, businesses and law enforcement agencies educating them on the dangers of illicit drugs and trends in the community. Bobby’s presentation will introduce the participant to the current drug trends in our communities, the hidden dangers at home and will provide interactive hands-on activities.

## “Lend a Hand” George F. Holm Memorial Fund



Congratulations to  
The 2019 “Lend a Hand”  
Scholarship Winner

**Avianna Jones-Doring**

“Lend a Hand” was created in 2018 by the Holm family to honor the legacy of George Frank Holm. Funds are available yearly to graduating foster youth in Nebraska’s Legislative District 40 (Boyd, Cedar, Dixon, Holt, Knox and Rock counties) as well as in Wayne County. This memorial fund will bestow up to two awards of \$1,000.00 each year with the intention to aid in continuing the recipient’s education, whether through vocational schooling, college, or, as George often referred to regarding his own learning path, “the school of life.”

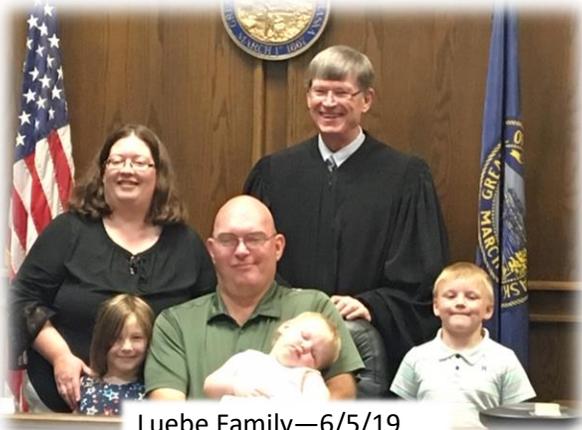
### Now Accepting Applications for 2020

**To be eligible, applicants must meet the following criteria:**

1. Be a high school graduate or possess a GED under the age of 25 **OR** be on track to graduate high school or complete a GED program by the spring of current academic year.
2. Currently be in foster care or formerly have been in foster care in any of the above listed counties.
3. Provide a letter of recommendation from **at least** one teacher, mentor, or employer.
4. Provide most recent high school transcript at time of application or G.E.D. certificate.
5. Provide a typed response to **each** of the following prompts: **(in total no less than 2 pages, no more than 6 pages, in Times New Roman 12-point font, double spaced, one-inch margins):**
  - A) Describe a time you **took initiative** or acted through self-motivation to improve a situation as an individual or as part of a group and summarize what you learned from the experience.
  - B) Define what **success** looks like for you.
  - C) Outline your **academic, work, or life goals** and explain how funds from this scholarship will help you accomplish them.

Questions regarding application process may be directed to Building Blocks (402-336-4841) or e-mailed to Karen Holm ([kgcleaners@yahoo.com](mailto:kgcleaners@yahoo.com)). For a copy of the application, visit [www.buuildidngblocksforkids.org](http://www.buuildidngblocksforkids.org)

**George F. Holm Memorial Fund**  
c/o Building Blocks  
118 North 5th Street  
O’Neill, NE 68763



Luebe Family—6/5/19



Marks Family—7/9/19



Jones Family—6/3/19



Ott Family—6/17/19

Wanted.....

## FOSTER PARENTS

*Building Blocks is seeking additional foster homes to provide care for high needs children including teens, sibling groups, kids with severe behaviors and those exiting higher levels of care.*

*Building Blocks will help guide you through the process of becoming licensed. Additional training and support is available after licensure.*

*To learn more about becoming a Building Blocks foster parent please call: 402-336-4841.*





*Don't forget to check out our website, [www.buildingblocksforkids.org](http://www.buildingblocksforkids.org) for updated information on events, resources, in-services and pre-service training.*

*Provide your e-mail addresses to Tonya Bauman at: [tonya@buildingblocksforkids.org](mailto:tonya@buildingblocksforkids.org) or 402-851-1097 for enrollment in our online training services.*

*A Friendly Reminder . . .*

*DHHS Regulations require that each foster parent get at least 12 clock hours of Department Approved In-service training annually within the effective dates of his/her license. (DHHS Compliance Review Form).*

*Each Building Blocks location has a lending library as well as various self-directed study materials for your assistance. Our website also maintains a current and upcoming training schedule. For your convenience, your Resource & Licensing Specialist will be sending you a quarterly update of the number of hours remaining for the year.*

*We want to thank everyone who came out to celebrate National Foster Care Month with us in May!*

**OPEN  
HOUSE**

*We held open houses in our O'Neill, Norfolk, South Sioux City and Grand Island locations! Thanks for the Support!*

# Back to school



## Tips for going back to school

**Buy school supplies early** – bookstores are usually packed at the start of the school year. Avoid the rush by buying all the necessary school supplies early. Use a checklist to make sure that you've got everything covered.

**Reestablish routines** – during the summer break, you most likely had no strict mealtime and bedtime routines. It can take a week before you get used to the school routine so start waking up early before term time.

**Buy clothing essentials** – be sure to buy uniforms, socks and undershirts early. This lets you avoid panic on the day before school.

**Set the alarm clock** – the last thing you want is to be late on the first day of school. So remember to set the alarm clock.

**Create a meal plan** – start being conscious of your health by creating a meal plan. This enables you to have a balanced diet throughout the year.

**Use a checklist** – having an “assignment notebook” is a must for any student. It ensures that you won't forget your homework assignments in math, science, English and other subjects.

*Building Blocks wishes all of you a wonderful and enriching school year!!!*

# Spotlight on New Staff



*Danielle Borer joined our team as a Foster Care Specialist serving the Fremont and surrounding area in June 2019.*

*Josie Lindell joined our team as a Foster Care Specialist in the Grand Island and surrounding area in August 2019.*



## Support Groups

### IN-PERSON SUPPORT GROUP

**Columbus Support Group:** Meets the second Tuesday of the month (except July and December). Childcare available. Contact Tammy Welker at: 402-989-2197. Peace Lutheran Church, 2720 28th St. 7:00-8:30 p.m.

**Norfolk Support Group:** Meets quarterly. Childcare available. Contact Terry Robinson at 402-460-7296 Northern Heights Baptist Church, 3000 Harvest View Drive 6:30-8:00 p.m.

### ONLINE SUPPORT GROUP

**FACES:** Online Support Group: Every Tuesday 9:00-10:00 p.m. CT Contact Felicia at Felicia@nfapa.org to become a member of this closed group. Meets weekly to discuss issues foster parents are facing. Support only.

### TRANSRACIAL SUPPORT GROUP

**Parenting Across Color Lines:** This group supports and strengthens racial identity in transracial families. Support only. Meets the fourth Monday of the month. Children welcome to attend with parents. Newman United Methodist Church, 2242 R Street, Lincoln. 6:15-8:00 pm Contact the NFAPA office to register for Family Events or any questions. 402-476-2273 For more information or to RSVP, contact Laurie Miller at Laurie@nfapa.org

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## GENERAL INFORMATION

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

**PRESIDENT**  
AMY SHANE

**VICE PRESIDENT**  
PATSY HURLBERT

**SECRETARY/TREASURER**  
TRACI OBER, CFO

**DIRECTORS**  
COREY FISHER  
SARAH HENDERSON  
RUTH MATTHEWS-MOTT  
DARCY POESE  
RICHARD FITCH, M.D.

### OFFICES

118 N. 5<sup>TH</sup> STREET, O'NEILL  
402-336-4841  
FAX-402-336-4640

101 EAST WILSON AVENUE, NORFOLK  
FAX-402-379-1056

1312 DAKOTA AVENUE, STE. A, S. SIOUX CITY  
FAX-402-404-8315

1300 SOUTH LOCUST STE F, GRAND ISLAND  
FAX-308-675-6966

CEO: JACQUELYN MEYER  
PROGRAM DIRECTOR: RACHAEL KALLHOFF

1-800-689-0945 ~ ON-CALL 402-394-5736  
WWW.BUILDINGBLOCKSFORKIDS.ORG

# Upcoming Events & Activities

## September

### National Foster Care Month

2 – Labor Day

10 – Columbus Support Group - Peace Lutheran Church – 2720 28<sup>th</sup> Street – 7:00p.m. – 8:30p.m.

23 – Autumn begins

23 – Board of Directors Meeting – 5:00p.m.

28 – Helgoth's Fall Festival – St. Paul – 1:00p.m. – 3:00p.m.

28 – Poppy's Fall Festival – Norfolk – 1:00p.m. – 3:00p.m.

## October

5 – Harvest of Harmony Parade – Grand Island

8 – Columbus Support Group - Peace Lutheran Church – 2720 28<sup>th</sup> Street – 7:00p.m. – 8:30p.m.

19 – 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual "Inspired to Improve" Conference – NECC in Norfolk

31 – Happy Halloween!

## November

### National Adoption Month

3 – Daylight Savings Time ends

5 – Election Day

11 – Veteran's Day

12 – Columbus Support Group - Peace Lutheran Church – 2720 28<sup>th</sup> Street – 7:00p.m. – 8:30p.m.

23 – Adoption Day Celebrations - Locations and times TBA

25 – Board of Directors Meeting – 5:00p.m.

28 – Happy Thanksgiving!

29 – Building Blocks offices will be closed

## December

7 – Building Blocks Annual Holiday Party – 3:00p.m. – 6:00p.m. – NECC in Norfolk

10 – Columbus Support Group – Peace Lutheran Church – 2720 28<sup>th</sup> Street – 7:00p.m. – 8:30p.m.

21 – Winter begins

25 – Merry Christmas!

# RESOURCES

**Nebraska Lifespan Respite Network:** Respite care, planned or emergency, is the provision of short-term, temporary relief to those who are caring for family members with special needs. <https://nrrs.ne.gov/respitesearch/>

**Friends of Foster Children:** Foster parents and providers have the opportunity to apply for special grants for foster children. [www.ne-friends.org](http://www.ne-friends.org)

**Project Everlast:** Foster youth council; [www.projecteverlast.org](http://www.projecteverlast.org)

**Susan Buffet Scholarship:** Scholarships for graduating youth. [www.buffetscholarships.org](http://www.buffetscholarships.org)

**Right Turn:** Good support site for Foster Parents. [www.RightTurnNE.org](http://www.RightTurnNE.org)

**NFAPA Newsletter:** The NFAPA Newsletter is a good resource for articles about foster care news, legislature, behaviors, and ideas for foster parents. [www.NFAPA.org](http://www.NFAPA.org)

**EMK Press:** Publishes a variety of books and helpful resources as your families evolve on the journey of parenting. [www.emkpress.com](http://www.emkpress.com)

**Foster Parent Insurance Information:** Information on the process and contacts for Foster Parent Insurance and how to make a claim. [www.das.ne.gov/risk/foster-parent.html](http://www.das.ne.gov/risk/foster-parent.html)

**WIC:** Women, Infants and Children subsidy program. ALL foster children are eligible for WIC because they are on Medicaid. [http://dhhs.ne.gov/publichealth/Pages/wic\\_index.aspx](http://dhhs.ne.gov/publichealth/Pages/wic_index.aspx)

**Through the Eyes of the Child:** Is a good website to find information about Court and Documents. [www.throughtheeyes.org](http://www.throughtheeyes.org)

**ATTACH:** Providing training to foster parents and professionals to promote healthy attachment and heal trauma. [www.ATTACH.org](http://www.ATTACH.org)



**Visit us on Facebook at: Building  
Blocks for Community Enrichment.**

Building Blocks for Community Enrichment  
118 North 5<sup>th</sup> Street  
O'Neill, NE 68763

Return Service Requested

