From the Desk of the Child Welfare Director

I’ve met many of you over the years and during the recent listening tour events around the state, but I want to send every one of you my particular greetings and thanks this month, which is Foster Care Month.

My husband and I are former foster parents, adoptive parents, and parents to five children. I’ve worked for the Department of Human Services for 20 years, primarily in Child Welfare. Before being appointed Child Welfare Director last October, I was a District Manager in Baker City.

As I traveled around the state listening to people in the different community forums, I appreciated how many foster parents and relative caregivers were able to participate. I listened to the challenges you face, and heard the stories of success for children and families that you make possible. When you talk about the work you do, your passion for helping and your commitment to the children and youth in your care, it truly resonates with my own experience as a foster parent.

On behalf of Child Welfare staff and the children and families we serve, I want to say a heartfelt thank you this Foster Care Month. We are honored to be able to support you, and are focused on ways to better provide that support to each child and family in Oregon. The contribution you make to Oregon’s children, families and communities is critical to making our state a safer place for children. We can’t thank you enough!

Marilyn

Child Care for Working Foster Parents

We are excited to officially announce that effective May 1, 2018 the Department is launching Child Care for Working Foster Parents program. While we know this program does not cover all Child Care needs of foster children, it is a step in the right direction and something that we have all been wanting to provide. Success of this program will lend itself to future expansion.

The Highlights are:
• Foster parents and relative caregivers who are parenting children in DHS custody under the age of 6 can use the stipend to cover child care costs incurred due to employment
• Foster parents and relative caregivers can access up to $375 a month per child under 6 years old
• Stipends can only be used when the children are being served by licensed, approved or listed child care providers
• Stipend payments are issued in the form of a reimbursement to the foster parent or relative caregiver

Department staff are being trained in how the program will work and more information and necessary forms are available at the website; http://www.oregon.gov/DHS/CHILDREN/FOSTERPARENT/Pages/resources.aspx

Please contact your caseworker or certifier if you are interested in participating in this program.

Informational Newsletter

We are planning to start a caregiver quarterly newsletter in the Fall of 2018. The purpose of the newsletter is to increase communication between the department and foster and relative caregivers. Might you assist us in a catchy newsletter name and topics you as caregivers would like to regularly see from the DHS Child Welfare Foster Care program? Please send all ideas to FosterFamily.Supports@dhsoha.state.or.us no later than 7/30/18.
Resources

Oregon has been recognized in the National Foster Care Month of 2018 campaign with 8 of the 15 short stories about the role of Relatives in caring for children. [http://www.oregon.gov/DHS/Children/fostercare/Pages/index.aspx](http://www.oregon.gov/DHS/Children/fostercare/Pages/index.aspx)

Oregonians are great volunteers and offering to help is the Oregonian way. This site was developed to help guide individuals. [helpafosterchild.oregon.gov](http://helpafosterchild.oregon.gov)


While there has been a big push this year regarding the *Sibling Bill of Rights* and prior to this the *Oregon Foster Children Bill of Rights*, we must not forget about the *Foster Parent Bill of Rights* originated in 2006. [https://aix-xweb1p.state.or.us/es_xweb/DHSforms/Served/ce1019a.pdf](https://aix-xweb1p.state.or.us/es_xweb/DHSforms/Served/ce1019a.pdf)

Foster or Adopt Social Media Websites [http://www.oregon.gov/DHS/CHILDREN/FOSTERPARENT/Pages/Foster-or-Adopt-Social-Media-and-Websites.aspx](http://www.oregon.gov/DHS/CHILDREN/FOSTERPARENT/Pages/Foster-or-Adopt-Social-Media-and-Websites.aspx)

It’s time for the Outdoors:

Oregon State Parks offers free camping and day-use parking to Oregon foster parents, guardians and parents who have adopted Oregon foster children. [https://oregonstateparks.org/index.cfm?do=v.page&id=20](https://oregonstateparks.org/index.cfm?do=v.page&id=20)

Fishing License: Free fishing licenses for foster youth in foster care who are 15 years and older can be obtained by contacting your certifier or the child’s caseworker. A fishing license is not required for younger children if they are with an adult who has a fishing license.

Summer Camps for Youth:
- Camp to Belong; Siblings June 24-29 or Aug. 12-17
- Oregon Foster Youth Connection – Policy Conference July 21 – 24
- Independent Living Teen Conference – June 25-28
- DREAM Conference July 30 – Aug. 2 (college preparation)
- Native Teen Gathering Aug. 6-9