



The Quarterly

Advocates Take Action

It was September 18th and the U.S. Senate was set to adjourn by midnight and had not yet passed critical child welfare legislation. National and state advocacy organizations took to social media to urge families to stop what they were doing, take 5, and call their U. S. Senators. They did and at 10:30 PM HR 4980 was passed by the Senate. On September 29 the measure became law!

HR 4980 contains many important measures for improving life for children and their families. This link will identify all of the components of the new law.

<https://www.congress.gov/bill/113th-congress/house-bill/4980>.

Essential components include:

Protections for Children victimized by Sex Trafficking by requiring state plans for reporting and protecting children who may be or become victims of sex trafficking.

Prudent parent standard to allow for normalization in foster care by requiring states to develop standards for protecting children while allowing foster parents the authority to approve children's participation in age and developmentally appropriate activities.

Changes to the formula used to determine state adoption incentive payments and requires states to utilize the incentive payments to supplement post adoption services, foster care, adoption services, and other child and family services. Also, requires the state to reinvest savings from adoption assistance into post-adoption services, post guardianship services, and prevention services.



[2015 NFPA
Annual Convention
June 25-28, 2015
Norfolk Sheraton
Waterfront Hotel](#)

Agenda at a Glance

Thursday, June 25

The Academy: From Research to Parenting

A day of brain science applied to the art of parenting.

Friday, June 26

Interactive training from poster sessions to workshops

Saturday, June 27

A day of Communication and Negotiation Skills Development and Application from Advocacy to Service Delivery

Sunday, June 28

NFPA Board Meeting and Closing Session (you won't want to miss)



FACES Quarterly Report to Members

FACES of Virginia Families is pleased to present this report to our members, funders, and subscribers regarding a few of our activities in the first quarter of our fiscal year.

Ambassadors: The FACES Ambassadors have been hard at work this quarter. Each Ambassador works a maximum of 30 hours per month. In that time they have visited with staff of 9 public agencies and 8 private agencies. They have attended 5 roundtable meetings involving agency staff in each of the 5 regions; supported 26 families calling our WarmLine call; distributed 60 posters and 1500 rack cards to public and private agencies; and hosted 12 Wednesday FACEBOOK chats. In addition, our member's FACEBOOK posts are always responded to as they are posted by at least one Ambassador.

Camp FACES: Highroad was once again the setting for Camp FACES in the northern region. There were 102 attendees. Children and youth participated in the High Ropes course, Low Ropes Course, nature hikes, and crafts. *(The above picture is our art exhibit developed at Camp FACES.)* The families had the opportunity to enjoy fishing, swimming, and campfires during camp, evening board

games, and let's not forget S'MORES!

Educational Services: This quarter we provided a webinar for families and staff on developing support networks within their communities. Our website updates have been completed to offer a simplified resource site and updated calendar for training events. FACES continues to work on the agenda and support for the 2015 NFPA Annual Convention in Norfolk, VA and National Walk Me Home event.

Giving Tree Depot: Our consignment store has provided approximately \$1000 in donated clothing to families in need this quarter and raised \$7,554.52 in funds to support our work. The store, also, collects funds for the William Perry Scholarship Fund and in this quarter we raised \$105 in change collected from customers after their sale.

Board of Directors: The Board with staff and the VDSS contract manager, Em Parente, met to discuss the FACES performance contract and assign tasks. The Board assigned responsibilities for attending VDSS committee meetings, development of 2015 Camps, and plans for the upcoming National Foster Parent Association Convention.

In Our Own Words

By Lin Newman, mother to 8 children 4 of whom were adopted

When we embrace another child coming into our home, we enroll them in school. Usually there are problems with either academic or behaviors, or both. All at the school seem to know these are "foster" children or if you have adopted "foster abused" children. Once when I was walking up to pick up one of my children the bus driver came out and approached me with information about my child I didn't even know about their living conditions before coming to my home. I was shocked to say the least as I thought this was confidential information?

Tomorrow is another IEP meeting. What will they ask? What will I say? The questions are always there. Why does your child act out? Why does your child have so much trouble learning? The questions can seem quite intrusive and if one says we don't want to

do a social history their eyes are raised like something is being hidden.

On IEP day today I feel I am a lone parent in a room with all these, what seem like, really smart people. First off the counselor informs me she has had my son in for sessions and he has shared his whole story with her. Okay, something very personal and she just shared it with 10 other people in the room. Isn't the child's trust supposed to be honored? (I now have learned to opt my kids out of personal/social counseling). They already see a psychologist so why do they need to share their story with the community.

My one son who has transitioned to middle school has an IEP

[Continued...](#)

Having a place to go--is a home. Having someone to love--is a family. Having both--is a blessing.

-Donna Hedges

Family Corps Volunteers WANTED

FACES Family Corps members serve in many different volunteer capacities. All Board of Director members are considered a part of the FACES Family Corps. They volunteer their time to help set the direction of the agency and oversee the administration of programs. Several of these Board Members also serve as family representatives of state level committees.

WE believe the family voice is best represented when we engage more families beyond our Board of Directors in the state level committees and as public spokespersons for foster, adoptive, and kinship families.

If you are interested in being trained to serve as a member of the FACES Family Corps, please contact our Lead Ambassador, Kim Barbarji at kbarbarji@fov.org.



meeting coming up and I want to just keep his social history out of the spotlight, yet somehow I feel guilt like it is my fault and I want to make sure the school knows I haven't done anything to him. When we first met they already pointed fingers at the names of my kids on paper and said, now which ones are adopted? This son personally doesn't want me to share that he is adopted. How do I get around this? Will it make any difference in his education? He is just a normal teenager who has been through more than most other teens have been.

When asked by several of the new middle school teachers to write a letter telling them about my child, I decided not to share their past history of abuse/foster/adoption, but to focus on the positive traits, abilities and talents that they possess.

One thing our family has learned to be is unconditionally accepting to all the differences, whether it is race, learning abilities, behavior oddities, mental health issues, etc. This has been one of the best things that has happened to us - to be able to accept.

I would like to see the community, i.e. school accept kids for who they are without having to probe into why all the time. We/they just want to be in a normal family, but I guess we really are not a "normal" family.



Just kids being kids at the Camp FACES archery class!

The family. We [are] a strange little band of characters trudging through life sharing diseases and toothpaste, coveting one another's desserts, hiding shampoo, borrowing money, locking each other out of our rooms, inflicting pain and kissing to heal it in the same instant, loving, laughing, defending, and trying to figure out the common thread [that keeps us] together.

- Erma Bombeck

Family Corp Report

By Kevin Grindheim, President

Child Welfare Advisory Committee

Commission on Youth Presentation

Amy Atkinson, Executive Director shared the 2014 studies and initiatives. They are working on a 6th edition of its publication of Collection of Evidence-based Practices of Children and Adolescents with Mental Health Treatment Needs. View the publication at: <http://vcoy.virginia.gov/collection.asp>.

Virginia Adopts UPDATE

Governor Terry McAuliffe appointed Deborah Johnston as Virginia's newest "Adoption Champion". Ms. Johnston is the owner of a Midlothian-based home health care agency. She is passionate about helping children find permanent families, and in her new role, will work to support the Commonwealth's permanency efforts statewide. Last year's VAdopts Campaign for 1,000 successfully resulted in 1,041 adoption matches and 695 finalized adoptions. There are currently 828 foster children available for adoption in Virginia.

Foster Care to 21 UPDATE

Alex Kamberis provided an update on the progress of expanding foster care and adoption assistance to youth up to the age of 21

Mr. Kamberis clarified that youth that are special needs already qualify for adoption assistance to age 21, but this change will



A Sit Down with VDSS Commissioner Schultze

Commissioner Schultze has a long history with the Virginia Department of Social Services with nearly 18 years of service at various levels within the agency. She is also a wife, mother, and grandmother. Her pictures in the office show her family pride.

Commissioner Schultze is performance oriented. She takes great strides to manage her agency by responding to data trends and performance measures. Her agency is in the process of developing a performance contract with the Governor that will articulate specific outcomes to be achieved during his administration. Some of the measures are able to be located on the [Virginia Performs](#) website.

When asked about her priorities, Commissioner Schultze indicated that modernizing the Benefit program systems is key to helping families. The on-line portal provides improved access and helps families access the benefits to which they are entitled. Additionally, the permanency and well-being of children in the child welfare system continues as a priority. She keeps a data log near her desk that tracks the number of children adopted and focuses on those needing a permanent home. This tracking helps to identify service and system needs for children to be properly matched and supported.

Commissioner Schultze spoke to her overarching goal, "Our agency is all about the well-being of the children and families we serve. I want to have processes in place that will sustain continued improvement in the lives of families, in the least intrusive manner; but keeps us there when they NEED us."

include those youth adopted after the age of 16 with or without special needs.

In order to be eligible for services, the young adult meet at least one of the following conditions:

- Completing secondary education or a program leading to an equivalent credential.
- Enrolled in an institution which provides post-secondary or vocational education;
- Attending classes or in a program to promote or remove barriers to employment (Job Corp)
- Employed for at least 80 hours a month
- Incapable of doing any of the previously described educational or employment activities due to a documented medical condition.

Mr. Kamberis informed the group that the implementation plan has recommendations, not final decisions. There are several committees that are working on legislative changes, changes to guidance, youth engagement and outreach, and training.

Yummy Fall Recipe from Kim Barbarji

Caramel-Apple Skillet Cake

Ingredients:

½ cup (1 stick) butter

1 cup packed brown sugar

½ cup heavy whipping cream

1/3 cup light corn syrup

3 small Brae burn apples (Fuji, Jonathan, or Honey crisp can be substituted)

1 pkg yellow cake mix

3 eggs

1 cup sour cream

2 tsp cinnamon

1. Preheat oven to 350°F. Heat butter, sugar, cream and corn syrup in an oven-safe skillet over medium heat until simmering, stirring until smooth. Cook mixture, uncovered, another 7-9 minutes or until mixture is thickened and slightly darker in color, stirring occasionally. Remove skillet from heat.
2. Meanwhile, cut apples into 10 wedges each and set aside five of the wedges. Starting at the edges of the skillet, carefully arrange apple wedges; cut side down, over caramel. Arrange the remaining five wedges in the center.
3. Whisk cake mix, eggs, sour cream and cinnamon in until blended. Carefully spoon batter over apples and spread batter evenly. Bake, uncovered, 38-42 minutes or until wooden pick inserted in the center comes out clean. Carefully remove skillet from oven using an oven mitt. Let stand 2 minutes.
4. Carefully invert cake onto serving platter. Let stand 5 minutes and serve.

The Quarterly's Website Feature

There is actually a website to help cure procrastination! Who would have thought!! This website was developed by Rita Emmett. She provides great information about getting and staying organized; managing your household, and CURING procrastination (she calls it anticrastination)!

Rita provides a free tips newsletter, too. Check out here [website](#) for free tips. There are some great articles on her website.

Rita also sells books and videos. FACES has joined her affiliate program, so if you wish to purchase any items, please use this link.

<http://www.kickstartcart.com/app/?af=1607945>



A Cool Rita Tip:

"One of the best ways to take care of yourself is to get rid of the guilt; to start reminding yourself that every time you use some form of self-care, you have paused to "re-charge your battery" and will come back more loving and giving, more caring and ENERGIZED."

So go take a WALK!

Rita Emmett's Anticrastination Tip Sheet on De-cluttering

- **Always open your mail next to the recycling bin so you can immediately toss junk mail.**
- **When buying electronics, download the manual and store it in the cloud.** Uploading an electronic copy to the cloud keeps you covered in case the manufacturer stops producing the item.
- **Use shower curtain hooks on your closet rod.** The hooks take up less space than hangers. And it's a great way to compartmentalize scarves, belts, etc.
- **When cleaning the bedroom, always make the bed first.** 1) Provides a flat spot for organizing/folding, 2) you'll be less likely to collapse into bed and take a nap in the middle of your clutter-busting,
- **Fold your bedsheets up and stuff them in a matching pillowcase.**
- **When you have stuff too good to toss so you want to donate it, set up a box or big plastic bag in a designated spot such as a closet or corner of the garage.**
- **Use small boxes for small things in drawers you need to keep organized, like batteries or rubber bands.**
- **Every time you pass a stack of paper or clutter, process five things.** By process, I mean recycle, toss, donate, or put it where it belongs. (If it doesn't have a place to belong, it automatically becomes clutter.)
- **Use a sock to store those unwieldy cords.**
- **Get realistic about your books.** Yes, there are some that you will read again, or refer to or simply NEED to keep. And there are many more that you will never ever read, look at, want or miss. Donate to your local library.
- **Each time you buy a new item of clothing, get rid of one.** "A tie for a tie, a shoe for a shoe"
- **Try not to add to other's clutter. Give only gifts that people want or can use.** Take a friend or relative out to eat for their birthdays. Give a membership to a museum or zoo. Offer to spend 2 hours with them clutter-busting. This cuts down on gifts that turn into clutter and people might learn to give you the same thoughtfulness.



Board Appoints New Public Policy Champion & Team

At this past Board of Directors' meeting Ryan Kelly was appointed the Public Policy Champion for the FACES Board of Directors. Stan Phillips, J.D. and Kenneth Fowler will join Ryan Kelly in the effort.

The Board of Directors also approved the public policy agenda for the coming legislative year in Virginia. Our efforts will focus on:

- Extension of foster care/adoption to 21 now that the VDSS Committee has determined a potential need for additional legislation and funding;
- Identifying a member of the General Assembly willing to introduce legislation to amend the Virginia Budget Act. Our proposed amendment would require the state to increase foster care rates in the same year that state employees are provided increases;
- Advocating for a VA Adopts license plate to supplement existing funding for post-adoption services;
- Supporting VDSS efforts to improve timeliness of adoption.

If you are interested in joining the public policy team, please be sure to email Ryan Kelly at rkelly@fovf.org.

A Message for the Ryan Kelly, FACES Public Policy Champion

Happy Autumn out there!

I am so excited and honored to be serving on the FACES Board of Directors and continuing efforts to improve foster care, adoption, and kinship care in Virginia. It is a great pleasure and responsibility to serve in this capacity. I thank the Board for their vote of confidence.

My family and I are very close to this issue as you might already know from last year's Virginia Adopts campaign. For those of you who may not know my personal story, I look forward to sharing it with you within the forum of friends we have here at FACES of Virginia Families.

I have already been inspired by the stories of FACES members that I have met so far and I look forward to hearing your story as well.

The first order of business for me in this new role is renewing the effort to establish a specialty license plate with proceeds to increase funding for post-adoption services. Our Executive Director has already paved the way with the Commissioner to navigate through the technical necessities required for securing a mechanism for accepting license plate funds. Kenneth Fowler has begun the paperwork to establish this license plate and I hope to soon follow-up with the VDSS Commissioner to finalize an acceptable strategy for identifying a mechanism for accepting the license plate funds.

I promise to keep you informed on these efforts and other public policy matters through our FACES Action Now FACEBOOK group and this newsletter. In the meantime, I hope to hear from you with your suggestions for the FACES Public Policy Team or even better a request to join our team! You can reach me by email at rkelly@fovf.org.