



The Quarterly

NFPA 45th Annual Convention

FACES of Virginia Families will soon be hosting the National Foster Parent Association (NFPA) 45th Annual Convention. Members of the NFPA Board have indicated that Virginia is raising the bar for the quality of the convention. FACES has also been working diligently to keep the cost down for attendees and arranging for special events and discounts in the area.

Here is what you can expect at this year's event.

On Thursday, a Science to Parenting Academy will kick-off the convention. Nationally recognized scientists, clinicians, and researchers will present their work and discuss its implications on parenting.

Thursday late afternoon we will host a National Walk Me Home event to support the advocacy and educational work of the National Foster Parent Association. Consider forming a team to show your support for our National Voice!

On Friday, the day will start with a national dialogue on youth trafficking as well as a plenary session on food security, nutrition and behavior. The afternoon will provide you with a selection of 31 different topical workshops and small group discussions. That evening we will be celebrating all foster, adoptive, and kinship families with Your Just Desserts Heroes Gala and DJ Dance Party (a FACES tradition) at the Half Moon Celebration Center overlooking the Elizabeth River.

Saturday begins as a Breakfast with the American Bar Association's President-elect and adoptive parent, Paulette Brown. A legal panel will follow the breakfast presentation as



**2015 NFPA
Annual Convention
June 25-28, 2015**

Sheraton Norfolk Waterside Hotel

well as a session on communications strategies for the child advocate. The Virginia Department of Social Services is co-sponsoring a luncheon for Virginia attendees only. In the afternoon, there will be 21 workshop selections. Our day will close with the option of attending a Picnic in the Ballpark and watching the Norfolk Tides (AAA team for Baltimore Orioles).

Sunday will be a day for laughter as we close at breakfast with the Fostering Comedy Team of Matthew Hoffman and Claudia Fletcher.

Register and reserve your room here: <http://nfpaonline.org/convention2015>

See you in Norfolk!

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 third 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 3 public agencies and 2 private agencies. They have attended 1 roundtable meetings involving agency staff in 1 regions; supported 3 families calling our WarmLine call; distributed over 500 postcards public and private agencies and; 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. This quarter, the support group chat had 97 posts viewed by an average of 85 members. They have started 2 new Trailblazer programs for UMFS in Fredericksburg and Richmond and introduced Trailblazers to 3 more agencies.

Camp FACES: We have 22 registrants for our Highroad's camp already. In addition, Fairfax County DSS has received their Camp Smiles flyer and is beginning to register their families for the day camp on July 25 at Hemlock Adventure Center.

Educational Services: The NFPA Convention is less than 3 months away. The FACES registration has been extended to May 30 for the \$90 rate. On-line registration is now available at www.nfpaonline.org. Don't miss this incredible event not only for the training hours but the support and friendship you will treasure for a lifetime. What do you get when you cross a convention with a vacation...a Conven-cation. The hotel is extending the reduced rate of \$90 for two



days before and after the convention, so that you can take more time to enjoy the eastern region of Virginia.

FACES partnered with Formed Families Forward for a Spring Forward event in Northern Virginia. Over 40 families participated and learned about educational advocacy while the kids enjoyed crafts and fun.

Giving Tree Depot: Our consignment store has provided approximately \$500 in donated clothing to families in need this quarter and raised \$5541.11 in funds to support our work thanks to our contract with VDSS that underwrites our office and administration. The store, also, collects funds for the William Perry Scholarship Fund and in this quarter we raised \$34 in change collected from customers after their sale.

Board of Directors: The Board was pleased to accept a \$70,000 grant from the Meyer Foundation for business sustainability and marketing to increase our outreach to foster, adoptive, and kinship families. We are working with Madison & Main and the Knowledge Center. Stay tuned for our future growth!!!

Gratitude in the Midst of Stress

By Karen Best Wright

Have you ever noticed that some people just seem to be happier than others, no matter what is happening in their lives? Some have the innate ability to see the positive in almost any situation. Sometimes they can be almost irritating to those of us with less sunny dispositions. Research has shown that grateful people have a greater sense of well-being when faced with stressful situations. Grateful people are not merely thankful when something good happens in their lives, they feel gratitude even when things are difficult. Grandparents and other relatives raising children face many challenges and stressors. Stress may be caused by health problems, relationship problems, fatigue, and financial worries. Family discord and dealing with emotionally traumatized grandchildren are also stressful. So how do we deal with the stress of it all?

How does a general sense of gratitude help deal with major stressors? Is it all in our perception of

how we think about what is happening? Yes, how we think affects how we feel, and how we feel will largely determine how we react, which in turn affects how we feel. If this pattern is pleasant, then no worries. However, this pattern is often extremely unpleasant and knowing how to break a negative cycle can feel elusive or totally out of our realm of thinking.

Positive psychologist Sonja Lyubomirsky of the University of California Riverside and colleagues propose that 50% of happiness comes from our genetic make-up, 10% depends on our personal circumstances, and 40% is under our own ability to control. While our basic temperament may be inherited, that does not give us the excuse to chock up our bad moods and feelings of ingratitude to our genes. What is your immediate reaction when someone cuts you off in traffic? That can be very stressful. Do you get angry, honk, say a few unpleasant words? Or do you think, "Wow, he's in a foul mood. I'm sure glad we didn't run off the road," and then take a breath and go about your

Continued...

REPEATING>>>Medicaid Information

Coverage for Former Foster Care Youth

Beginning July 1st, 2014, Medicaid coverage became available to eligible former foster care youth who were receiving Medicaid and foster care services in any state at the time of their 18th birthday and are currently under age 26. Any young adult who was formerly in foster care at the time of their 18th birthday can apply online at www.commonhelp.virginia.gov or by calling the Cover Virginia Call Center at 1-855-242-8282 or they can print the [paper application](#) (Spanish version available [here](#)) and send by mail or fax to their local Department of Social Services (LDSS) or visit their LDSS in Person. For more information click [here](#). Find out more information on [Covered Services for Former Foster Care Youth](#).

Managed Care and Child Welfare

This powerpoint may help explain how Medicaid works when covering children in foster care, including mileage reimbursement for travel to medical appointments. http://www.dmas.virginia.gov/Content_atchs/altc/altc-prsnt1.pdf

Taking care of yourself is the most powerful way to begin taking care of others.

-Bryant McGill

way. Do you tell everyone about the terrible driver when you get home, or do you let it go and focus on other things at hand? Kinship caregivers face many stressors, certainly more serious ones than merely dodging a disgruntled driver. So how does gratitude help deal with real major stressors? It certainly takes more than simply being grateful for the pretty flowers along the side of the road or even a clean house. A truly grateful heart that brings true happiness is one that sees positive in situations that actually relate to the stressors. For example when my granddaughters were young (but not that young) and purposely made a mess all over the kitchen counters and floor with play dough, I remember clearly thinking, *I am so thankful they have the ability to be this annoying. They could have been wheelchair bound, unable to make a mess of my kitchen at all.* Now, I did make them clean up their own messes to the best of their abilities, before I took over.

“A thankful heart is not only a virtue but the parent of all other virtues.” - Cicero
Feeling gratitude does not come easily when one is faced with court appearances, rigid visitation schedules, or discord within a family. We may even think the other person does not deserve that we feel grateful. What the other person deserves is not the point at all. The point is that when we focus on what we are grateful for, we are happier and when we are happier, we deal with stress in a more productive way. A good habit to get into that helps gratitude linger longer is to regularly write down - preferably each night - what we are grateful for that day. Forcing ourselves to write down what we are thankful for will actually help us improve our habits of positive thinking. If we know we are going to need to record “something” in our journals at the end of the day, we will automatically get in the habit of thinking about it more during the day. Some days are easy, others not so much. Some days we may merely be grateful that the grandkids are in school or that no one called demanding our attention. Other days will be more profound. We may be filled with love and gratitude

Summer is almost upon us!

And so is the sun! Check out these great sun safety tips from Healthy Child!

<http://healthychild.org/sun-safety-guide/?inlist=Y> .

that the children are safe with us or grateful that we just obtained a new source of financial income. Most likely we may be up and down from day to day. We've all been there. But the goal is that by bringing more gratitude into our hearts, even through our hurts, may smooth those days to be less bumpy and even allow us to experience joy. Part 2 of this article will focus more on actual journaling our experiences to increase our ability to experience greater gratitude and less stress.

Chocolate Eclair Pie

Submitted by Dale Church

2 Boxes of Pudding 1 large cool whip 1 box of graham crackers 1 frosting.

Make in 9x13" glass dish, 1 box graham crackers, (cover bottom and sides of dish, save enough to put on top) 2 boxes of french vanilla instant pudding (make according to box.) Once pudding starts to set mix in cool whip until smooth. Pour pudding & cool whip on top of graham crackers. Now place the remaining graham crackers on top. Put in Ref. until it sets. Put chocolate frosting in microwave for 10 - 15 seconds. Spread frosting on top of graham crackers, put back in Ref. and leave over night. Enjoy!!!

Shop Amazon SMILE at
<https://smile.amazon.com/ch/61-1516224>

for FACES of Virginia Families.

FACES Legislative Actions

Members of FACES of Virginia Families have much to be proud about when it comes to shaping policy in Virginia. It may be worth giving you a summary of actions you have taken that resulted in changes to law and policy in Virginia.

In our first year, we developed and advocated for a foster care rights and responsibilities compact which would serve as a signed agreement between families and agencies. We believe that while this is now in place, there is much work to be done to educate everyone on the use of the document. We will be working to develop a webinar.

<http://law.lis.virginia.gov/vacode/title63.2/chapter9/section63.2-900/>

We began working as a coalition with Voices for Virginia's Children and the Virginia Poverty Law Center the following year and continue to do so, today. As a part of those coalition efforts we worked on the passage of several initiatives to help Virginia implement the federal Fostering Connections Act. Here is a listing:

Sibling placement. <http://law.lis.virginia.gov/vacode/title63.2/chapter9/section63.2-900.2/>

Educational Stability.

<http://law.lis.virginia.gov/vacode/title63.2/chapter9/section63.2-900.3/>

*Exceptions for specific barrier crimes when placement is with a relative. (see F.)

<http://law.lis.virginia.gov/vacode/title63.2/chapter9/section63.2-901.1/>

Annual credit checks for youth over 16.

<http://law.lis.virginia.gov/vacode/title63.2/chapter9/section63.2-905.2/>

Allowance for youth in foster care who sign out of foster care to have 60 days prior to their 21st birthday to sign back in to foster care.

<http://law.lis.virginia.gov/vacode/title63.2/chapter9/section63.2-905.1/>

*Removal of Independent Living as a goal, except as necessary for refugees and asylees.

<http://law.lis.virginia.gov/vacode/title63.2/chapter9/section63.2-906/>

Provision of certain appeal rights for foster parents (does not include placement as that is prohibited as an appeal right by federal law).

<http://law.lis.virginia.gov/vacode/title63.2/chapter9/section63.2-915/>

Established specific conditions in which a child can be removed from Kinship Foster Care placement in order to improve stability. (see D.)

<http://law.lis.virginia.gov/vacode/title63.2/chapter9/section63.2-900.1/>

Expanded Medicaid coverage to youth from foster care until 26.

This initiative is in the Virginia State Plan for Medicaid and is currently in force. Learn more at www.coverva.org/main_programs.cfm

For the past 4 years we have advocated in our coalition to extend foster care to 21. This has been a small steps initiative. This year it is in the Governor's budget and we await its fate.

** Signifies a department initiative that we advocated for and assisted in passage.*