

## **Foster Parent Ombudsman Report**

*September 20, 2011*

- Happy Autumn! As we all get back into our more regular routines, we find the fall as a time of new beginnings. That is my hope for MFPA as you try to get up and running full steam. This is an important time as the end of your current grant/Plan of Work draws near and the need to begin the new one is looming.
- Participation in meetings and activities is a long standing issue, especially for busy resource parents. However, maybe MFPA can take a chapter out of Michele Burnette's playbook. She has wonderful attendance at her association meetings due in part that she calls members personally a day or so prior and urges them to attend. Maybe someone could volunteer to do that for next Wednesday's conference call.
- Secretary Dallas continues to express his interest in MFPA and his support of Maryland's resource parents. As most of you know, at his request, the Maryland Public Foster Parent Local Department Assessment was sent out with monthly statements a few weeks ago. Forms are being returned and he urges all foster parents to respond. Another copy will be included in the October Newsletter.
- The Secretary has also endorsed that the DHR policies for resource parents be included as a tab on the MFPA web site. As previously agreed by you, DHR will manage that tab and it will be read only. Secretary Dallas feels this will be a win-win situation. It not only lists the DHR policies in an easily accessible place, it can enhance your web site and maybe attract new visitors. The Secretary is very anxious to see the unveiling of your reborn web site and certainly I would like to promote it in the October Newsletter.
- Speaking of the October Foster Parent News, the deadline for input/articles is 9-28. It would be great to have more information from local associations and jurisdictions. Please submit any information to me by next Thursday.
- It is difficult when a child leaves your home for any reason; likewise when someone leaves the MFPA Board. As many of you may know, Trisch Sadowski has resigned as President Elect. Also, as you saw recently, Cathy Crone is taking a leave of absence as Secretary. I personally want to thank both of these ladies and wish them well. Thanks to Gloria Parsley for volunteering to temporarily fill in for Cathy.

- FYI on the end of fiscal year foster care statistics. As of June 30, 2011, in Maryland, there were 7,411 children in foster care (4,005 or 54% are from Baltimore City). There were 2,599 approved foster homes (1,019 or 39% are from Baltimore City). There were 544 adoptions from foster care (263 or 48% were from Baltimore City).
- I believe one of the greatest MFPA accomplishments this year are the regional conferences. There have been three successful ones, with another two happening in the next two weeks. I am looking forward to participating in both of them. KUDOS to the Conference Committee and to all who worked on each event. Plans are already in the works for next year's conferences. The Eastern Shore one is already scheduled for 3-31-2012.
- As your ombudsman, I try to participate in many local association meetings/activities. If anybody has an event that you would like me to attend, please let me know. In the next few weeks I am going to Prince George's, St. Mary's, Kent, Anne Arundel, and Montgomery Counties.
- It is great that MFPA has come up with a schedule of conference call Board meetings. However, it seems to me that something is lost without some face-to-face contact. To that end, my challenge of the month is for you to consider having some sort of retreat like you did in 2008. This could give the Board an opportunity for camaraderie and team building, as well as a chance to assess where MFPA is and where you are going. Also, please remember that your participation and votes on MFPA matters not only represents your local jurisdiction, but what is in the best interests of all State resource parents.
- I look forward to talking to you next Wednesday evening (9-28) on the conference call Board meeting. Otherwise, if I can help you in any way, please let me know.