



GEORGIA SAFE

Relationships are the Key to ChangeSM

GEORGIA QUARTERLY NEWS

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EVERY CHILD DESERVES A LOVING HOME MAY IS NATIONAL FOSTER CARE MONTH

Georgia SAFE is blessed to have the best foster parents and support staff in Georgia. These family teams help us make a difference in the lives of the children we serve. In honor of National Foster Care Month we invite you to participate in our Open Houses and Appreciation events throughout the month of May. A listing of these can be found on the next page. Also look for Georgia SAFE at community events and help us find safe and loving homes for children in Georgia. Visit www.fostercaremonth.org or call your nearest Georgia SAFE office to get involved by volunteering, donating, or becoming a foster parent. Here are just a few stats about foster care in your communities :

- Nationwide there are 496,000 children and youth currently in out-of-home care.
- There are 12 million foster care alumni that are now active community members.
- In 2005 there were approximately 90,000 waiting to be adopted from the U.S. Foster Care System.
- 51,323 of those foster children were adopted.
- As of Sept. 2003 there were 13,578 children in the GA foster care system.
- 51% of these children were black, 41% white, and 4% Hispanic
- Male and Female children are represented equally in this system.
- Children 1-5 years old make up 32% of GA's system, 28% of these children are 11-15 years old, 22% are 6-10 years old.
- Most children are placed in temporary foster care due to parental abuse or neglect.
- You can also help children by becoming a foster parent, volunteering with local agencies, becoming a mentor to a youth that has "aged out" of the system, or donating money or other goods and services.
- Visit www.georgiasafe.org or www.necco.org to find out more.



APRIL IS NATIONAL CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION MONTH.



LOVE. NOT HURT.

What you can do¹:

Get to know your neighbors. Problems seem less overwhelming when support is nearby.

Help a family under stress. Offer to babysit, help with chores and errands, or suggest resources in the community that can help.

Reach out to kids in your community. A smile or a word of encouragement can mean a lot, whether it comes from a parent or a passing stranger.

Be an active community member. Lend a hand at local schools, community or faith-based organizations, children's hospitals, social service agencies, or other places where families and children are supported.

Keep your neighborhood safe. Start a Neighborhood Watch or plan a local "National Night Out" community event. Get to know your neighbors & help keep your neighborhood and children safe.

Learn how to recognize and report signs of child abuse and neglect. Reporting your concerns may protect a child and get help for a family who needs it.

Child Welfare Information Gateway
1.800.394.3366 | www.childwelfare.gov

¹Information & text retrieved from Child Welfare Information Gateway. Available online at www.childwelfare.gov/pubs/factsheets/cpswork.cfm

{ NOTES FROM EXECUTIVE DIVISION DIRECTOR, JILL AMOS }

Advocacy More Important than Ever

Georgia foster care continues to struggle with budgets cuts. Agency rates cut again in October 2008 coupled with a reduction in referrals from DFCS and DJJ has made it difficult for private agencies to sustain themselves. Several providers have shut their doors in the last several months. No one better than foster parents and staff understand the need for specialized foster care for the at-risk children and youth we serve. We would like to give a **HUGE thank you** to those of you taking an active part in advocating for the rate restoration to private providers. The letters sent to the Governor, Lieutenant governor, and House and Senate leaders is most appreciated.



Candice Gould, Jonesboro Home Resource Coordinator, Jill Amos, Executive Division Director and Jamie Gore, Compliance Specialist recently attended a private provider meeting with Mark Washington, Assistant Commissioner DHR DFCS/OCSS.

Update! Since submission, the 2010 budget has been approved, restoring agency rates! Way to Advocate!

{ Name change update! }

The name change from YDCA, Inc, dba Georgia SAFE to ENA, Inc., dba **NECCO** has been approved by the Office of Regulatory Services. Our official name change should be rolled out very soon and we are all excited about these exciting and positive changes!

Supervision Reminder – Attention Foster Parents!

ORS audits are resulting in citations particularly in the area of supervision. Foster parents; please be mindful of the safety/supervision plans for your consumers. If you have any questions, please discuss with your assigned Case Manager, Home Resource Coordinator and/or designated Program Director. Increased supervision citations may lead to significant fines for the agency and/or suspension of referrals up to termination of our contract. Please supervise according to agency and state regulations!

{ MARK YOUR CALENDARS : APRIL + MAY EVENTS }

In honor of **Child Abuse Prevention Georgia SAFE's Warner Robins** office will host a **"Darkness to Light Training"** for all staff and foster parents during the month of April. "Darkness to Light" is a nonprofit organization committed to increasing public awareness of Child and Sexual Abuse. It is designed to educate adults to prevent, recognize, and react responsibly to Child Sexual Abuse and it also equips and empowers adults to keep children safe. The guest speaker for the training will be **Sandra Sneed**, Director of The Crescent House in Macon, Georgia. The date and time of the training TBA.

In recognition of **Foster Care Awareness month**, the **Warner Robins** team will honor the hard work and dedication of our **foster parents** for their willingness to offer their home as a safe haven for a child in need of specialized care. A potential date of **May 15, 2009**, has been set for the Foster Parent Appreciation Banquet at the Holiday Inn on Watson Blvd. in Warner Robins, Georgia. Be on the lookout for more details.

The **Augusta** office will invite local government officials to the local Georgia SAFE office during **Foster Care Month** in May. The team plans to distribute facts and statistics related to foster care and ask local officials for their continued support in advocating for better rates and services. Dates and times TBA.

Augusta is also hosting a **Carnival Day** for Foster Parents & Youth on **May 16** at their office location. **Come join the fun!**

{ YOUTH SPOTLIGHT } * Great Job! *

ELAINA P. OF ALBANY COMPLETED HER GED, GAINED EMPLOYMENT, AND IS IN THE PROCESS OF ENROLLING TO ALBANY TECHNICAL COLLEGE TO PURSUE A CAREER IN CRIMINAL JUSTICE.

{ GRACIAS! DANKE SCHÖN! MERCI! GRAZIE! }



Sarah Beth Loudermilk, Warner Robins Case Manager, Jackie Bell, WR Program Director and Traci Williams, Balvaunaca Club Member

GA SAFE, Warner Robins office staff was proud to be selected as one of the recipients of the **Balvaunaca Club's** annual contributions to worthy non-profit organizations. At a presentation on February 10, **Jackie Bell**, Program Director and **Sarah Beth Williams Loudermilk**, case manager, were presented with a \$1,000 check to benefit children in need placed in our agency. We are most thankful to be recognized for our services to Georgia's children and are particularly thankful to the Balvaunaca members for considering our organization, especially in light of state budget cuts that make our mission more difficult to accomplish without the support of organizations such as Balvaunaca.

The **Jonesboro** office currently has 5 homes and 6 placements thanks to the hard work and commitment of **Candice Gould!** **Augusta** is also doing great and currently has 53 children in care.
Way to go teams!

{ WE HAVEN'T FORGOTTEN... }

The **Warner Robins team** would like to thank everyone who helped ensure a successful Christmas party this year. Thanks to **Joyce Bentley** for donating the banquet room at the Holiday Inn. We also send a special thanks to **Sergeants Elanda Ware and Paul Phinessee** and **Robins Air Force Base Military Personnel Office** for donating gifts to all our children as well as assisting with distributing gifts to each child. Thanks also to the **Swanson Inn** for providing delicious food and to **Traci Williams** for donating her generous efforts. Last but not least, thanks to **Jorge Jauregui** for bringing a smile to every child's face during a very special appearance!



Jorge Jauregui as Warner Robins' Santa!

The **Milledgeville team** would like to thank a number of corporate sponsors for their assistance and support. We would like to thank **Marcus Lilliard of Totoya Scion** who donated \$200 and the **Baldwin Exchange Club** for donating \$400 to our consumers for the holidays. Special thanks to **Christie Arnold** and her daughter **Brittiany Arnold** who decided to spend her birthday money to make sure a foster child would have a special Christmas. These donations helped to purchase bikes, children laptops, clothes, children's jewelry, and toys. **Russell Thomas** of Milledgeville donated toys to two therapeutic foster children.

Team Augusta would like to thank the following sponsors for their Christmas party donations - **Sandra Heard** provided funding for the building, **Old Macedonia Missionary Baptist Church (Aiken)**, **Automatic Data** and **Lily Preacher** donated gifts, **Wal-Mart Aiken** donated food, **RaSheeda Usry** provided photography, and **McDonald's Evans** donated dinner supplies. Sponsors like these make a huge difference for our kids and we appreciate it!

The **Albany team** would like to express heartfelt thanks and gratitude to the businesses and organizations that helped to make each youth's Holiday Season special this year. **Albany Electric** made a generous donation which was used to purchase Christmas items for the children and to honor our foster parents with a Christmas dinner. **The Junior League of Albany, Inc.** sponsored a Christmas Party for our youth, complete with Santa and Mrs. Clause and presented them with gifts from their "wish lists." All youth received a stocking filled with treasures, including MP3 players. This donation was made possible by the **U.S. Marine Corps Toys for Tots** program. **Phoebe Putney Network of Trust and Phoebe Pharmacy** donated bicycles, toys, and gift cards. **Belk's**, and **Fox 31 News** supplied stocking stuffers to the children as well. In addition, **Wal-Mart** donated a gift card so we could purchase items for youth that were placed with us after the wish lists had already been distributed. We would also like to thank **NEOS Technologies** for donating a McDonald's gift card to all of our kids here in the Albany office. We were overwhelmed with the outpouring and generosity from all of these wonderful businesses!

{ STAFF ANNIVERSARIES! }

Congratulations to our valued employees on their milestones. We appreciate your dedication!

Warner Robins

Jackie Bell, 1 year
Chandler Scott, 1 year
Chris Beck, 9 years

Augusta

Erika McNair, 1 year
Sandra Heard, 2 years
La'tachia Mallett, 3 years

Albany

Jermaine White, 1 year
Latoya Evans, 1 year

Milledgeville

Sandra Simmons, 5 years
Dawn Greene, 5 years
Santina Bagley, 4 years



:: Georgia SAFE Locations ::

Albany (229) 889.8884 | Augusta (706) 210.3435 | Jonesboro (678) 610.1933
Milledgeville (478) 451.0775 | Warner Robins (478) 971.2170



335 Margie Drive
Warner Robins, GA 31088

