

Fostering Hope

Coalition Newsletter

SUMMER 2019



FOSTER & ADOPTIVE
CARE COALITION

The Coalition Celebrates 30 Years of Family



In honor of our 30th anniversary, we are hosting 30 fun activities throughout the year to engage the community in our mission.

1. Boutique Blowout- January 26th
2. Rock 'N Raise
3. Cinderella Project
4. Jr. Board Trivia Night
5. Learning Lab- March 4th
6. Orthwein Open House
7. Hope in a Handbag
8. Give STL Day
9. Introducing Now & Forever Society
10. 30 Amazing Moms
11. 30th Birthday Party
12. 30 Years of Volunteers
13. 30 Amazing Fathers
14. 30 Families to the Muny
15. ReFresh Birthday Party
16. 30 Families Staycation
17. 30 Families to SkyZone
18. Learning Lab- July 15th
19. Boutique Blowout- July 20th
20. Back to School Bonanza- August 3rd
21. 30 Families to Cardinal's Game
22. Emeritus Board Luncheon
23. Stepping Up for Kids Luncheon
24. 30 Pumpkins at Eckert's for Families
25. A Sizzling Celebration- November 8th
26. Foster Love Ornament
27. Junior Board Holiday ReFreshments
28. Journey Home- November 25th
29. Holiday Wishes Shopping Day
30. Santa's Magical Kingdom



www.foster-adopt.org | 1750 S Brentwood Blvd., Suite 210, St. Louis, MO 63144 | 314.367.8373



From the Board President



What moved you to get involved with The Coalition?

Think back to the moment you first showed up for training as a foster parent, or filled out your volunteer application. Remember the first time you made a gift, or called your legislator to advocate

for our kids. Remember your first Little Wish or Birthday Buddy gift.

There are a million ways you have stepped up. And for each of you, a story. But we all share a single purpose: to create a community where every child has a place to call home. Let me assure you with absolute confidence – you have delivered.

You will find in the following pages a story of unmatched success. Because of you, our events have shattered records, foster and adoptive parents have felt support and appreciation,

and our program teams have reached farther and deeper into the community than ever before. If you feel your contribution has been small, well, that's what it takes. The Coalition's success is not owed to the great acts of a few but to everyday acts of service you all have given. On our kids' behalf, thank you.

In this, our 30th year, the difference The Coalition has made in our community could not be more clear. More children find families, more families stay together, dedicated parents continue fostering, and professionals always know who to call for their toughest cases. They depend on The Coalition, and The Coalition depends on you.

From our family to yours, thank you for sharing in the joy, hope and success of 30 Years of Family.

Thank you for caring about our kids.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'John Phillips'.

-John Phillips, Board President

Hope in a Handbag 2019



Hope in a Handbag was a huge success, raising a total of \$173,487 to help kids in foster care find nurturing forever families. The Hilton ballroom was packed with a crowd of enthusiastic guests who came to shop with a purpose! Kelly Jackson from KSDK 5 On Your Side served as emcee for the evening, and kept everyone entertained and informed. Handbags, jewelry, delicious appetizers, and drinks – nothing else needed to make this a fun party!

The proceeds collected at Hope in a Handbag directly benefit the Foster & Adoptive Care Coalition's innovative

adoption/permanency programs and support services.

A special thank you to the event co-chairs Lisa Forsyth, Veronica Grimes, and Stacey Sappington, and the entire committee for lending their time and talents to make this event a success! We would also like to recognize Chocolate, Chocolate, Chocolate Company, Mick Bingaman Photography, and Best Box Lunches for donating to the event. On the back of this newsletter is a list of our fabulous sponsors. Thank you to all for making the best girls' night out in St. Louis a monumental success!

30 Years of Volunteers



Photographs courtesy Andi Norwich

On May 14, Wells Fargo Advisors hosted the Foster & Adoptive Care Coalition for a luncheon to honor 30 years of volunteers. During the event The Coalition was presented with The President’s Volunteer Service Award, a national honor given by the Points of Light organization. It is the nation’s premier volunteer award, encouraging citizens to live a life of service through presidential gratitude and national recognition. Ambassador George Herbert Walker, cousin of the late President George H.W. Bush who founded the Points of Light organization, presented the honor.

“This award might have the Coalition’s name on it, but it represents all the great work done by each of you and all the other volunteers that have helped us over the last 30 years,” said Melanie Scheetz, Executive Director of Foster & Adoptive Care Coalition.

In 1989, the Foster & Adoptive Care Coalition was

founded by three volunteers in response to the crack cocaine epidemic that was causing a surge of children to enter the foster care system. “So much has changed since our beginning, but one thing has remained a vital part of our work ... volunteers,” said Scheetz. “Volunteers are the heartbeat of our organization. We are so honored to be recognized by the Points of Light organization for the commitment of our volunteers in finding forever families for kids impacted by foster care.”

Wells Fargo Advisors has been one of the Coalition’s most committed corporate partners. They have provided hundreds of volunteer hours over the years. Hosting the 30 Years of Volunteers Luncheon was a true testament of their partnership. The Foster & Adoptive Care Coalition extends sincere appreciation to Wells Fargo Advisors for hosting the luncheon. It was an honor to recognize the volunteers who do so much for our organization.

The Real “Crisis” in Foster Care



“When we first decided to foster, I thought our experience in education and social work would make training a breeze,” said Donna Campbell. *“But as we started to learn more about trauma and how to*

help children living in foster care, my eyes were opened to a whole other world.”

Trained and supported by The Coalition through our Dennis and Judy Jones Family Foundation Foster Care and Adoption Program, Tonya and Donna Campbell have opened their home to six foster children, including 11-year-old Logan, whom they eventually adopted, and another daughter who will also officially join the family this summer.

You have probably heard that we’re facing a crisis-level shortage of qualified foster homes. With the rise of the opioid epidemic, the number of children coming into foster care is increasing for the first time in decades. Nationally, more than half of foster parents quit fostering within the first year, with another significant dip in the second year.

We knew we needed to do something about it.

In 2017, the Coalition received a generous grant to create The Dennis and Judy Jones Family Foundation Foster

Care and Adoption Program. The purpose of the program is to recruit and train foster/adoptive families and then offer ongoing support throughout their journey.

Since the inception of this program three years ago, our foster parent retention rate is 97%.

So what makes this program different?

Like Donna and Tonya, all of our Jones Families receive the highest level training, the utmost care, and real-time support from Coalition staff, with continuous on-call communication. In addition to the state-required STARS training, our families receive 14 hours of Trauma Training.

Jones Families are increasingly the most sought-after families throughout the entire St. Louis metropolitan area for agencies looking to place children coming into the foster care system, with **80 families already licensed and 162 children placed.** The vast majority of these placements have resulted in reunification, adoption by relatives, or guardianship. The key to those outstanding numbers has been constant support and education – our parents learn the latest research in what our kids need to succeed.

“We initially thought we only wanted to adopt, but we really have grown to enjoy the fostering side of it,” said Tonya. *“Donna and I heartily believe in reunification – that kids should be with their biological family whenever possible. It’s obviously much harder, because you don’t know how long kids are going to be with you. But it’s a chance that we’re willing to take with our hearts.”*

Learning Lab: Unlocking the Heart of Adoption

Monday, July 15, 2019 | 6-8pm
Foster & Adoptive Care Coalition
1750 S. Brentwood Blvd. Ste. 210
St. Louis, MO 63144

Want a deeper look into the foster care system and its impact on children and families? Join us at our next Learning Lab, which includes an in-depth presentation, a short film called “Unlocking the Heart of Adoption,” and an interactive panel discussion with staff members who are experts in the field.

Unlocking the Heart of Adoption gives the viewer a powerful way to understand what ‘adoption as a lifelong process’ means today. It provides a window into the lifelong process of adoption following the path of relinquishment,



adoption, growing up adopted, raising an adopted child, years of silence and shame, and searching for answers to unasked questions. In the process, they explain what the universal issues of “identity,” “loss,” and “needing to know the truth” mean to them.

Announcing the Now & Forever Society



It is with tremendous joy that we announce the Now & Forever Society: A Child. A Family. Your Legacy!

The concept for the Society began with the thoughtful gesture of several long-term donors who generously named the Coalition as part of their estate plans. Its reality accelerated with a challenge grant by an Anonymous Donor

who would match up to 30 individuals if they named The Coalition in their estate plans by the closing celebration of our 30th anniversary: December 31, 2019.

We are thrilled to report that we are halfway to meeting this challenge! We'd like to invite you to join the Now & Forever Society - an esteemed group of forward-thinking people who recognize that there will always be children who need a place to call home.

When you join the Now & Forever Society, your commitment to our children will be proudly recognized on the "Hall of Heroes," likely inspiring others to make similar investments in future generations of girls and boys who need loving homes.

Learn more today by calling Kyle Williams at 314-367-8373, or by email at kylewilliams@foster-adopt.org, or fill out the reply form and ask for a free brochure today!

If you've already included The Coalition in your estate plan, let us know so we can share with our Anonymous Donor, and recognize you on the Hall of Heroes!

\$109,948 Donated for Give STL Day



On May 1st, you showed up in a HUGE way for Give STL Day! Our goal was \$90,000 to help find families for 30 kids in St. Louis foster care. You shattered that goal and donated \$109,948, and that's BEFORE prize totals, which will likely bring in another several thousand dollars.

We could not be more grateful for the commitment you have to our kids. Thank you for once again putting children and families first!

The Cinderella Project

It was amazing to see the community come together for The Cinderella Project to help young ladies throughout St. Louis find the prom dress of their dreams. Hundreds of stunning gowns, hundreds of smiles - all made possible by you! We're grateful for each individual, school, and business who hosted a dress drive; our volunteers who made each young lady feel like a princess; and our corporate sponsors - Baby Lock USA and Home State Health - who stepped up in a big way.



Jr. Board Trivia Night



Our Junior Board's Trivia Night was a resounding success! More than 200 people showed up to support our vision - For Every Child . . . A Place to Call Home. Shout-outs to our Trivia Co-Chairs, Joey Bedford and Vanessa Palka, for putting on such a fun, successful evening. We'd also like to thank our sponsors: Missouri Foundation for Health, Wunderman St. Louis, TierPoint, and The Dacey Team. You rock!

You Rocked the House at Rock 'N' Raise



We packed the house at Llywelyn's Pub for our inaugural Rock 'N' Raise. Spontaneous Nugent's high-energy performance helped us raise thousands of

dollars for kids in foster care! Thank you to the band and everyone who joined us that evening.

30 Amazing Moms Honored



In celebration of the 30th Anniversary of Foster & Adoptive Care Coalition, we honored 30 Amazing Moms for their incredible service to our children. They were treated to a celebratory tea at The Coalition where they enjoyed an afternoon of delicious food, fun, and friendship.



Back to School Bonanza



Even though summer just started, we're already thinking about back-to-school time in August! We're hoping to

help hundreds of children in foster care start the school year on the right foot by equipping them with the items they'll need. We would be so grateful if your company or organization would collect 25 backpacks, each one stuffed with these new school supplies:

- 1 three-ring binder
- 4 spiral notebooks
- 1 highlighter
- 1 pencil sharpener
- 10 pencils
- 1 eraser
- 4 pocket folders
- 1 package of colored pencils
- 1 glue stick

Stuffed backpacks need to be delivered by July 29 to:
Foster & Adoptive Care Coalition
1750 S. Brentwood, Suite 210
St. Louis, MO 63131

If you can help, please contact Shelley Thomas-Benke for more information at shelley@foster-adopt.org or 314-367-8373. Thank you!



BOUTIQUE BLOWOUT

HILTON ST. LOUIS-FRONTENAC

JULY 20TH

VIP HOUR

8AM - 9AM | \$25 TICKET

INCLUDES ONE DRINK

GENERAL SALE

9AM - 2PM | \$10 TICKET

PRESENTED BY



**SWAG BAGS FOR FIRST 50
ATTENDEES & DOOR
PRIZES ALL DAY!**

**FOR TICKETS & MORE
INFORMATION VISIT**

**[WWW.FOSTER-ADOPT.ORG/
BLOWOUT](http://WWW.FOSTER-ADOPT.ORG/BLOWOUT)**

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