



2020

Adoptive and Foster Parent Association of Georgia
47th Annual Education Conference
February 28 – March 1



CELEBRATING EXTRAORDINARY PARENTS

Jekyll Island Convention Center
75 North Beach View Drive
Jekyll Island, GA 31527



**DIVISION OF FAMILY
& CHILDREN SERVICES**

FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK

A very special welcome to a very special group of people,

You are the one who doesn't turn your head and look away. Instead, you face the insurmountable problem head on boldly believing you can, you must, you will, make a difference. Over 14,000 children are safer because of your care.

Our family is diverse, made up of judges, attorneys, social workers, therapists, volunteers, and most importantly, foster parents. We are united together with a passion to help Georgia's children. We don't always agree on how to get there, but we all know that we want our kids to be safe, happy, and to thrive. We want them to overcome their adversities. We want them to break the cycle. On this at least, we all can agree.

Now take some time and celebrate, because you deserve it. Recharge that spent emotional battery, laugh a little, cry a little, and connect with others who "get it", who understand what you are going through and why you do it. Learn some new skills and add them to your toolbelt as you foster these amazing, yet sometimes challenging, children.

On behalf of AFPAG, I welcome you to our 47th foster parent conference. Our great team of foster parent volunteers have worked hard to provide you with the best experience possible. I am so grateful to work with such an amazing group of board members. Not only do they care for Georgia's children as foster parents, but they also dig even deeper to provide support for Georgia's children's caregivers – you. You are amazing. Now go change the world one child at a time.

Thank you for all you do for Georgia's children.



Paul Blough, President

"Caring for those who care for Georgia's Children"

www.afpag.org

PO Box 709 Cairo, GA 39828

Greeting from the Conference Chair,

Wow, how time flies! Can you believe it is conference time again? On behalf of our new President, Mr. Paul Blough, and the AFPAG Board of Directors, we would like to welcome you to the 47th Annual Education Conference. The theme for the 2020 conference is “Celebrating Extraordinary Parents”. Webster describes extraordinary as very unusual, remarkable, and exceptional. You better believe these words are true. It is extraordinary to see so many adoptive and foster parents willing to do the right thing by taking care of the many children in foster care, who sometimes have multiple and varying needs.

The focus of this conference is to provide the attendees with the best training, so when you return home, you can be better equipped to manage your busy lives. The workshops were chosen to enhance your knowledge and skills in order to better prepare you to take care of Georgia’s children. We wish you all safe travels to and from Jekyll Island, and we look forward to seeing and meeting you.

Sincere Blessing,

Mrs. Eunice E. Daniels – AFPAG Conference Chair

HOTEL INFORMATION

You will need to make your own hotel reservations. **Tell them you are with the Adoptive and Foster Parent Association of Georgia (AFPAG) Conference, February 28-March 1, 2020.**

All hotels reservations must be made by the cut-off date listed by the hotel below to ensure you get the conference rate.

VILLAS BY THE SEA PHONE 1-800-841-6262 CUT-OFF DATE JAN 22, 2020

Mini-Villa/Studio	\$109.00
One Bedroom Villa	\$129.00
Two Bedroom Villa	\$169.00
Three Bedroom Villa	\$189.00

HAMPTON INN AND SUITES PHONE 1-800-426-7866 CUT-OFF DATE JAN. 21, 2020

Standard Room, Two Queen Beds or one King Bed	\$152.00
Suites	\$172.00

DAYS INN AND SUITES PHONE 1-912-635-9800 CUT-OFF DATE JAN. 22, 2020

Island Side Room	\$115.00
Ocean Side Room	\$125.00

HOLIDAY INN AND SUITES PHONE 1-912-635-2211 CUT-OFF DATE JAN 26, 2020

Island View	\$135.00
Ocean View	\$145.00
Oversize Ocean Front	\$155.00
Oceanfront Suites	\$205.00

WESTIN HOTEL PHONE 1-888-627-8316 CUT-OFF DATE Feb. 1, 2020

Island View	\$161.00
Ocean View	\$181.00
Premium Ocean Front Room	\$201.00

BEACHVIEW CLUB HOTEL PHONE 1-912-635-2256 CUT-OFF DATE JAN. 22, 2020

Standard Room	2 Queen Beds	\$155.00
Beach View Club Suites	2 Double Beds Suites	\$205.00

JEKYLL ISLAND CLUB HOTEL PHONE 1-800-535-9547 CUT-OFF DATE JAN. 23, 2020

Clubhouse or Traditional Rooms	\$139.00
One Bedroom Suites	\$179.00

SEA FARER INN & SUITES (Quality Inn & Suites) 912-635-2202 CUT-OFF DATE JAN 23, 2020

Standard King Room	\$126.00
Standard Two Queen Beds Room	\$126.00

Adoptive and Foster Parent Association of Georgia
2020 Annual Education Conference
February 28th - March 1st, 2020
Jekyll Island, Georgia

Thursday February 27, 2020

12:00 p.m. – 2:00 p.m.	AFPAG Board of Directors Meeting
12:00 p.m. - 4:30 p.m.	Early Registration
12:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.	Exhibit Set Up

Friday February 28, 2020

7:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.	Registration Open
7:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.	Exhibits Open
8:30 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.	Opening Session
10:30 a.m. -10:45 a.m.	BREAK
10:45 a.m. -12:15 p.m.	Breakout Workshop Session A
12:15 p.m. – 1:30 p.m.	LUNCH ON YOUR OWN
1:30 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.	General Session #1
3:00 p.m. – 3:15 p.m.	BREAK
3:15 p.m. – 4:45 p.m.	Breakout Workshop Session B
4:45 p.m. – 5:45 p.m.	Annual Business Meeting

One Hour Credit Will be Given

Saturday February 29, 2020

7:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.	Registration Open
7:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.	Exhibits Open
8:00 a.m. - 9:30 a.m.	General Session #2
9:30 a.m. - 9:45 a.m.	BREAK
9:45 a.m. - 11:15 a.m.	Breakout Workshop Session C
11:15 a.m.- 11:30 a.m.	BREAK
11:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.	Awards Luncheon
1:30 p.m. - 1:45 p.m.	BREAK
1:45 p.m. - 3:15 p.m.	Breakout Workshop Session D
3:15 p.m. - 3:30 p.m.	BREAK
3:30 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.	General Session #3

Sunday March 1, 2020

8:00 a.m. -- 8:45 a.m.	Non-Denominational Worship Service
9:00 a.m. - 10:30 a.m.	Closing Session Presenters: DFCS Liaison & AFPAG President
10:30 a.m.-11:00 a.m.	Closing Remarks and Grand Prize Drawing

Adoptive and Foster Parent Association of Georgia
2020 Conference Registration
Jekyll Island, Georgia

PLEASE USE A SEPARATE FORM FOR EACH PERSON REGISTERING

Name: _____

Address: _____ City _____

Zip _____ Ph. _____ County _____ Region _____

PLEASE CHECK ONE

Adoptive Parent Foster Parent Kinship Caregiver DFCS Staff Private Agency Other

Friday Workshop Session (A)

Workshop- 1st Choice _____ 2nd Choice _____

Friday Workshop Session (B)

Workshop- 1st Choice _____ 2nd Choice _____

Saturday Workshop Session (C)

Workshop- 1st Choice _____ 2nd Choice _____

Saturday Workshop Session (D)

Workshop – 1st Choice _____ 2nd Choice _____

TO RECEIVE ALL TRAINING HOURS PARTICIPANTS MUST ATTEND ALL WORKSHOPS, GENERAL SESSIONS, OPENING SESSION, CLOSING SESSION AND AWARD LUNCHEON.

Registration Fee: \$125.00 per participant: Only checks and money orders will be accepted

Registration cut-off date is February 1st, 2020

On-site registration fee: \$175.00 No personal checks will be accepted.

Extra Awards Luncheon tickets are \$35.00

All return checks will be charged \$45.00. NO REFUNDS WILL BE GIVEN AFTER FEB. 1st, 2020.

Make check payable to: AFPAG Conference.

Mail check to: AFPAG Conference 101 Windsor Road, Savannah, GA 31419

PLEASE DO NOT BRING CHILDREN INTO ANY WORKSHOPS OR CONFERENCE SESSIONS.

2020 AFPAG Conference Information

Please choose two selections for each workshop session and record the workshop number in the order you prefer for each workshop selected. Be sure to record your 1st choice and then your 2nd choice. Remember to register early for the best selections of workshops as classes are size limited.

EXAMPLE

Workshop: 1st Choice: A-1

Workshop: 2nd Choice A-6

IF YOU ATTEND ALL OF THE FOLLOWING:

Opening Session, General Session, Awards Luncheon, Closing Session, Business Meeting and your assigned workshops, you will receive a total of 16 credit hours of training.

Registration includes: Registration Fee, Workshop Materials, Conference Bag, Award Luncheon Ticket, and a One Year Membership to AFPAG.

ALL EXTRA TICKETS TO THE AWARDS LUNCHEON ARE \$35.00

This conference provides a great opportunity to learn and address issues such as childcare, new policy changes, and working in true partnership with those agencies that support us as we care for the needs of children in DFCS custody. The Adoptive and Foster Parent Association of Georgia will not provide any kind of childcare for any children accompanying you to this conference. Please contact your local DFCS case manager to assist you in arranging suitable respite care for your children.

OTHER HELPFUL TIPS

- Arrive at your workshop early.
- Make sure you sign in to get credit for the workshop.
- Please attend only the workshops that you registered for.
- Complete the workshop evaluation sheet and give it to the class monitor.
- Make sure you receive your workshop stamp at the end of the workshop.

NO CHILDREN WILL BE ALLOWED IN ANY CONFERENCE GENERAL, OPENING, CLOSING SESSIONS AND WORKSHOPS. THERE WILL BE NO EXCEPTION TO THIS RULE. PLEASE ASK YOUR DFCS CASE MANAGER FOR RESPITE CARE OR TAKE ADVANTAGE OF PRUDENT PARENTING.

IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS OR CONCERNS PLEASE DON'T HESITATE TO CONTACT OUR OFFICE: 912-920-8362 or 912-312-6941 or 1-877-804-6610

2020 AFPAG Conference at-a-Glance

Thursday February 27, 2020

12:00 p.m. – 2:00 p.m.	AFPAG Board of Directors Meeting
12:00 p.m. - 4:30 p.m.	Early Registration
12:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.	Exhibits Set Up

Friday February 28, 2020

7:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.	Registration (Pre-Registration and On-site Registration)
7:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.	Exhibits Open
8:30 a.m. - 10:30 a.m.	Opening Session: Keynote Speaker: Mr. Tom Rawlings
10:30 a.m. - 10:45 a.m.	BREAK

10:45 a.m. to 12:15 p.m. Breakout Workshops (A)

- A-1. Communication is the Key: Opening Doors to Effective Parenting
- A-2. Educational Rights for Children in Foster Care
- A-3. You Can't Pour from an Empty Cup
- A-4. The Importance of Caregiver Involvement in School Extra Curricular Activities
- A-5. Keeping Children in School and Out of Court
- A-6. Words Matter in the Foster Care System
- A-7. Speaking of Extraordinary - "Then Let's Talk Adoption"
- A-8. Who and What is the Office of the Child Advocate? And Why Should You Care?
- A-9. Advocating for Children in Foster Care

12:15 p.m. - 1:30 p.m.	LUNCH ON YOUR OWN
1:30 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.	General Session # 1. DFCS Policies Update: Presenter: DaJari Patterson
3:00 p.m. - 3:15 p.m.	BREAK

3:15 p.m. to 4:45 p.m. Breakout Workshops (B)

- B-1. Post Adoption Services through Adoption Assistance
- B-2. ADHD Mystery
- B-3. Building a Foundation for Successful Partnership
- B-4. Case Law Updates for Foster and Adoptive Children
- B-5. Communication is the Key: Opening Doors To Effective Parenting
- B-6. Successful Strategies for Preparing Youth in Care for Employment
- B-7. Making the Adoption Decision
- B-8. It Takes Two to Make a Thing Go Right/Collaboration with Your Child's School

B-9. Neurofeedback: A New Way to Help Adoptive and Foster Children

4:45 p.m. to 5:45 p.m.

AFPAG Annual Business Meeting

SATURDAY FEBRUARY 29, 2020

7:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

Registration on Site

7:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

Exhibits Open

8:00 a.m. - 9:30 a.m. General Session # 2 The Right to be Heard in Court Presenter: Jerry Bruce

9:30 a.m. - 9:45 a.m.

BREAK

9:45 a.m. to 11:15 a.m.

Breakout Workshops (C)

C-1. Skin and Hair Care for Infants to Adolescents

C-2. Complex Trauma Informed Approach to Children in Foster Care

C-3 Communication is the Key: Opening Doors to Effective Parenting

C-4. Preventing Adoption Disruptions

C-5. Parenting to Encourage Healthy Behavior

C-6. Understanding Amerigroup 360

C-7. The GRACE Period- (Getting Ready for Adulthood Challenges and Expectations)

C-8. Best Practices in Bullying Intervention and Prevention

C-9. Legal Journey From Juvenile Court to the Final Adoption Hearing

11:15 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.

BREAK

11:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.

AFPAG's Awards Luncheon

1:30 p.m. - 1:45 p.m.

BREAK

1:45 p.m. - 3:15 p.m.

Breakout Workshops (D)

D-1. Fetal Alcohol Syndrome

D-2. Post Adoption Services through Adoption Assistance

D-3. The Child Welfare System: The Pipeline to Human Trafficking

D-4. Bikers Against Child Abuse (B.A.C.A)

D-5. Peaceful and Positive Parenting: Establishing and Maintaining Structure for Behavior Management

D-6. Making the Adoption Decision

D-7. Who and What is the Office of the Children Advocate? And Why Should You Care?

D-8. Bridging the Gap

D-9. The Advantage of Maintaining a Healthy, Safe, and Clutter Free Home Environment

3:15 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.

BREAK

3:30 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.

General Session #3 Division of Family & Children Services
Special Operation Team. Presenters: Marva Reed, Shoney Lowery, Chad Mahan, Tomika Wadley,
Jonathan Jackson, and Sam Doyle

Sunday March 1, 2020

8:00 a.m. to 8:45 a.m.
9:00 a.m. to 10:30 a.m.
10:30 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.

Non - Denominational Service
Closing Session: Educational Advocacy Presenters: EPAC
Closing Remarks: AFPAG Pres. Paul Blough & Grand Prize Drawing

2020 Adoptive Parent of the Year Application

Name of Nominee _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

County _____ Phone _____ Region _____

Name of Nominator _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

County _____ Phone _____ Region _____

References for Verification

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

What makes this adoptive family/parent the best in Georgia? (Use a separate sheet of paper if needed)

Is the nominee a member of any organization or civic club? _____



**The nominee must be a member in good standing with AFPAG and their local DFCS. All applications must be received by February 1, 2020. The winner must attend the awards luncheon. Please mail your application to:
AFPAG CONFERENCE
101 Windsor Road
Savannah, GA 3141**

Foster Parent of the Year Application

Name of Nominee _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

County _____ Phone _____ Region _____

Name of Nominator _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

County _____ Phone _____ Region _____

References for Verification

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

What makes this caregiver the best foster parent in the State of Georgia? (use a separate sheet of paper if needed).

Is this nominee a member of any civic organization or clubs? _____

**The nominee must be in good standing with AFPAG and their local agency. All applications must be received by February 1, 2020. The winner will be selected by AFPAG Conference Committee. The winner must be present at the awards luncheon. Please mail your application to:
AFPAG Conference
101 Windsor Road
Savannah, GA 31419**

2020 Caseworker of the Year Application

Name of Nominee _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

County _____ Phone _____ Region _____

Name of Nominator _____

Address _____

City _____ State - _____ Zip _____

County _____ Phone _____ Region _____

Reference for Verification

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

What makes this person the BEST caseworker in Georgia? (Please use a separate sheet of paper if needed.)

Is the nominee a member of any civic organization or club? _____

**All applications must be received by February 1, 2020. The winner will be selected by the AFPAG Conference Committee. The winner must attend the awards luncheon. Please mail application to:
AFPAG Conference
101 Winder Road
Savannah, GA 31419**

2020 Association of Excellence Award Application

Name of Association _____

Address _____

City _____ **State** _____ **Zip** _____

County _____ **Phone** _____ **Region** _____

Name of Nominator _____

Address _____

City _____ **State** _____ **Zip** _____

County _____ **Phone** _____ **Region** _____

References for Verification

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

What makes this local association the best in Georgia? (Use a separate sheet of paper if needed)

**All applications must be received by February 1, 2020. The winner will be selected by the AFPAG Conference Committee. The winner must have a representative present at the awards luncheon. Please Mail Application to:
AFPAG Conference
101 Windsor Road
Savannah, GA 31419**

Adoptive and Foster Parent Association of Georgia

Winnie Levinson Scholarship Application

THE ADOPTIVE AND FOSTER PARENT ASSOCIATION OF GEORGIA WILL AWARD TWO (2) \$1,000.00 SCHOLARSHIPS

The Winnie Levinson Scholarship is awarded to deserving students who are Georgia residents and are in foster care. Caregivers must be a member of the Adoptive and Foster Parent Association of Georgia (AFPAG). The Winnie Levinson Scholarship is sent directly to the student to use for any educational purpose the student may encounter. It is payable in two payments, one at the start of the fall semester and one at the start of the spring semester. Proof of enrollment is required before payment can be issued.

The applicant need not attend a traditional school. Enrollment at a Technical School, Business School or a Post-Secondary School would also qualify for the scholarship. We encourage all that qualify to apply. The following is a list of all the information needed to process the application.

- ✓ **Personal Data-** name, address, contact information including e-mail address and phone number
- ✓ **Recommendation** from three people who do not reside with the applicant and have known applicant for a minimum of one year and one recommendation from the applicant's local DFCS on their letterhead.
- ✓ **A short (500 word) essay** on why the applicant should receive this scholarship.
- ✓ **A copy of the applicant's high school transcript.**
- ✓ **A letter from one of the applicant's caregivers** stating why the applicant should receive this scholarship.

**All applications must be received by February 1st, 2020
You can apply by mailing the above information to:**

**AFPAG Conference
101 Windsor Road
Savannah, GA 31419**

Workshops Description Session A
Friday February 28, 2020
10:45 a.m. to 12:15 p.m.

A-1. COMMUNICATION IS THE KEY: OPENING DOORS TO EFFECTIVE PARENTING: Communication can be positive or negative, effective or ineffective. It is important for parents to be able to communicate openly and effectively with their children. In general, if communication between parents and their children is good, then all is well. You will learn about different communication styles, the difference clear communication makes, and how to communicate with teens. **Presenter: Debra Suzette Brown**

A-2. EDUCATIONAL RIGHTS FOR CHILDREN IN FOSTER CARE: Children in foster care consistently experience some of the lowest educational outcomes of all youth. Research demonstrates that every time a child changes schools, he or she loses up to 6 months of his or her education and many foster youth change schools 10-15 times throughout their time in care. Furthermore, many foster children suffer from the emotional ramifications of the incidents that led to their placement in foster care, and this can lead to acting out and avoidance of school. Come learn how you can be a good educational advocate for your foster or adoptive child. **Presenter: Craig Goodmark**

A-3. YOU CAN'T POUR FROM AN EMPTY CUP: It is easy to neglect ourselves while meeting the needs of others. This workshop explores ways to take care of yourself physically, psychologically, and emotionally. This workshop helps identify your own needs and how to take steps to meet them. This workshop is beneficial for parents, workers, and providers. **Presenters: William "Buddy" and Martha Hooper**

A-4. THE IMPORTANCE OF CAREGIVER INVOLVEMENT IN SCHOOL AND EXTRA CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES: Children/Youth in care should participate in normal childhood activities such as dance, swimming, sports, cheerleading, and summer activities. The support of their caregivers is important for their emotional and behavioral well-being. This workshop will explore how caregiver involvement in school and extra-curricular activities impacts the child/youth's academic performance, self-esteem, and creates positive caregiver-teacher-child interactions. **Presenter: Janice Miller-Walker**

A-5. KEEPING CHILDREN IN SCHOOL AND OUT OF COURT: This workshop is designed to provide participants with key strategies to aid in keeping children in school and out of juvenile court. Including trainings provided through the Department of Education to teachers on issues of mental health and trauma that impact children in foster care. **Presenter: Talley Wells**

A-6. WORDS MATTER IN THE FOSTER CARE SYSTEM: In recognition of the social work practice of focusing on strengths and needs instead of deficits and weaknesses; this workshop will take historical words and expressions used in child welfare and reframe them to have a more positive approach in connecting with and/or describing children, families, programs and services. Former foster youth provided input into the information that will be shared. **Presenter: Irene Clements**

A-7. SPEAKING OF EXTRAORDINARY – "THEN LET'S TALK ADOPTION" Whether you are a prospective adoptive parent, a resource parent, or a partnership parent, you want to attend this workshop if you have children placed in your home who cannot return to their parents. Participants attending this workshop will gain

knowledge regarding the requirements and the process to adopt children from Georgia's child welfare system. The primary focus will be on laws governing adoption policy in Georgia and Georgia's best practice supported by adoption policy. Presenter: Deborah Burrus

A-8. WHO AND WHAT IS THE OFFICE OF THE CHILD ADVOCATE? AND WHY SHOULD YOU CARE? The Office of Child Advocate (OCA) is a state agency that may serve as a resource to foster and adoptive parents. OCA addresses complaints and concerns, provides education and training opportunities, and advocates for system improvements. Come learn more about our office- what we do, how we might be able to help, trends we observe, and how we might be able to better partner and streamline efforts to enhance the child welfare system. Presenters: Rachel Davidson and Renee Moore

A-9. ADVOCATING FOR CHILDREN IN FOSTER CARE. This session will explore how caregivers and CASA volunteers can unite around shared goals of seeking to improve a child's experience in foster care and to ensure his or her wellbeing. Discussions will center around maintaining family connections, ensuring educational stability, and advocating for age, cultural, and developmentally appropriate treatment services and support. Presenters: LaFayette Young, Jr. and Angela Tyner

Workshops Description Session B Friday February 28, 2020

B-1. POST ADOPTION SERVICES THROUGH ADOPTION ASSISTANCE: Meeting a child's needs does not simply end after an adoption finalization court hearing. There comes a time when families may require post adoption services to assist with their needs long after an adoption has finalized. Families need support services to help with the demands of parenting special needs children. This workshop will focus on the post adoption services offered through the Adoption Assistance program in Georgia. Topics will include coverage on all available post adoption services in addition to Post Adoption Services through DFCS. Presenters: Leah Waters and Frank Twitty

B-2. ADHD MYSTERY: This workshop will focus on understanding symptoms of ADHD and some common mislabels. The goal is to help caregivers respond in a more positive way to the symptoms rather than the label. We will discuss some basic strategies to help manage symptoms of ADHD. This workshop is for anyone who has had ADHD impact their life. Presenters: Jen and Chris Cannington

B-3. BUILDING A FOUNDATION FOR SUCCESSFUL PARTNERSHIP: This workshop will focus on the need to change our culture in working with birth parents to be successful with reunification and how foster parents can mentor birth parents to strengthen the reunification process. This change begins with understanding all families are unique. When everyone on the team is working towards the same goal of preserving and rebuilding the family for the long-term welfare of the child, relationships are strengthened, and permanency can be achieved. Presenters: Audrey Brannen and Jennifer Shinpoch

B-4. CASE LAW UPDATES FOR FOSTER AND ADOPTIVE CHILDREN: Come to this workshop to hear and learn about the recent appellate laws in Georgia and even nationally that might impact you, your child, and even your case. This workshop will be structured as a lecture with plenty of room for discussion. Presenter: The Honorable Judge William Bartles

B-5. COMMUNICATION IS THE KEY: OPENING DOORS TO EFFECTIVE PARENTING: Communication can be positive or negative, effective or ineffective. It is important for parents to be able to communicate openly and

effectively with their children. In general, if communication between parents and their children is good, then all is well. You will learn about different communication styles, the difference clear communication makes, and how to communicate with teens. **Presenter: Debra Suzette Brown**

B-6. SUCCESSFUL STRATEGIES FOR PREPARING YOUTH IN CARE FOR EMPLOYMENT: Participants attending this workshop will learn the strategies that have proven effective in the field of youth employment by DFCS and gain knowledge on the difference between working with the general population of youth versus foster youth. Participants will also gain an understanding about employment trends and opportunities for youth in the state of Georgia. **Presenters: Dhakiyya Lewis and Dolly Pope**

B-7. MAKING THE ADOPTION DECISION: After working hard to reunify children with their birth family, Partnership Parents often find themselves facing the decision about adoption. How do you know when and how to “say yes” or to “say no” and what are the best steps to take after the decision is made? This workshop will help you honestly evaluate if your family is the right fit for a child becoming legally free in your home. This workshop will also help you with techniques on how to prepare your own family and the child for the transition to adoption in your family or with a new family. **Presenter: Evangel D. Wicks**

B-8. IT TAKES TWO TO MAKE A THING GO RIGHT/ COLLABRATION WITH YOUR CHILD’S SCHOOL: Are you eager to go beyond participating in your child’s education to engaging in your child’s education? If so, then this workshop is for you! Learning strategies to engage positively with your child’s school administrative team and special education teacher is exciting and has proven to increase the success of the child, specifically, a child with disability. Come and join me in learning best practice behaviors and academic strategies to help your child achieve success in school and home. We all know IT TAKES TWO TO MAKE A THING GO RIGHT! **Presenter: Kimberly Mobley**

B-9. NEUROFEEDBACK: A NEW WAY TO HELP ADOPTIVE AND FOSTER CHILDREN This workshop will explore a new way to help adoptive and foster children. This workshop is for you if your child or youth have any of the following: PTSD, Attachment disorders, Attention Problems (ADHD/ADD) and many other emotional, social, and behavioral problems. Information will be presented regarding the use of Neurofeedback along with Cognitive Behavioral Therapy as a modality of treatment for the problems and issues confronted by the children and adolescents of adoptive and foster care families. **Presenters: Dr. Jack Farrar and Sarah Farrar**

Workshop Description C
Saturday February 29, 2020
9:45 a.m. to 11:15 a.m.

C-1. SKIN AND HAIR CARE FOR INFANTS TO ADOLESCENTS: Understanding how to properly care for a child’s hair and skin can create a positive self-image in children and youth. In this workshop, participants will learn: basic hair care, hair cleansing regimen and styling techniques. This workshop will debunk common skin and hair care myths, provide a cross diagram of hair textures in relation to ethnicity, help caregivers create positive skin and hair care experiences for the child, and increase product knowledge. **Presenter: Kimberly Cutter-Williams**

C-2. COMPLEX TRAUMA INFORMED APPROACH TO CHILDREN IN FOSTER CARE: The term complex trauma describes the dual problem of children’s exposure to multiple traumatic events and the impact of the exposure on immediate and long-term outcomes. Typically, complex trauma exposure results when a child is abused or neglected, but it can also be caused by other kinds of events such as witnessing domestic violence. Many children involved in the child welfare system have experienced complex trauma. In this workshop, you will learn about the current science and how the child welfare system is shifting in response to

this new information and how it can impact your foster or adoptive child. Presenter: The Honorable Judge Michael Key

C-3. COMMUNICATION IS THE KEY: OPENING DOORS TO EFFECTIVE PARENTING: Communication can be positive or negative, effective or ineffective. It is important for parents to be able to communicate openly and effectively with their children. In general, if communication between parents and their children is good, then all is well. You will learn about different communication styles, the difference clear communication makes, and how to communicate with teens. Presenter: Debra Suzette Brown

C-4. PREVENTING ADOPTION DISRUPTIONS: “Forever Family” is a term used when describing an adoptive family to a child. What happens when forever ends abruptly? Children/Youth who have been adopted have faced many traumatic experiences in their young lives and a disruption from their “forever family” can bring about further trauma. This workshop will prepare caregivers for a lifelong relationship with a child adopted out of foster care and how to prevent adoptive placement disruptions. Presenters: Kristi Lovelace and Bonnie Lockwood

C-5. PARENTING TO ENCOURAGE HEALTHY BEHAVIOR: Many children lack problem solving skills, healthy coping skills, and emotion regulation skills—all of which can lead to inappropriate behavior. Children need positive discipline that teaches them new skills so they can learn to respond appropriately. This workshop is an interactive experience focused on participants’ definition of positive behavior and ways to encourage positive behavior. Participants will leave with the knowledge of how their understanding of positive behavior can encourage a child to behave appropriately. Presenter: Brenda Gillespie

C-6. UNDERSTANDING AMERIGROUP 360: This workshop will provide participants with information and tools needed to secure health care services for children placed in their care. The Department of Community Health (DCH) identified a need for enhanced care coordination and service integration for children in foster care and receiving adoption assistance, and youth in DJJ custody who reside in community residential facilities. This interactive workshop will discuss and provide information on the recent changes to health care services as well as information on improving the health and well-being of children/youth. Presenter: Ronald Dunham

C-7. THE GRACE PERIOD (GETTING READY FOR ADULT-LIKE CHALLENGES AND EXPECTATIONS (GRACE): The GRACE Period Workshop will be a fun, interactive, and explorative way to convey the message to caregivers how vital the connection to a committed adult is for an older youth in foster care. Youth in foster care are more likely to perform better academically, reach their career goals, and be more successful post-foster care if they have a caring adult in their lives who is equally committed to their success. This workshop brings together the best of both worlds; the State Independent Living Program (who provides services and support for young people 14-26 in Georgia’s foster care system) and Georgia Empowerment (which is a group created of current and former foster youth who advocate with and on the behalf of young people in foster care). Presenter: Candis Jones, LAPC

C-8. BEST PRACTICES IN BULLYING INTERVENTION AND PREVENTION: This presentation will focus on bullying prevention and awareness to protect children from harmful and threatening behaviors. This workshop will equip participants with information on the responsibilities of caregivers and the school system when a child/youth is bullied. The presentation will cover an overview on: 1) the signs of bullying, 2) preventing bullying, 3) understanding why children/youth become bullies, and 4) responding to bullying. Presenter: Dr. Betty A. Brown

C-9. LEGAL JOURNEY FROM JUVENILE COURT TO THE FINAL ADOPTION HEARING: The first part of this workshop will include a discussion of the different types in juvenile court and the process of termination of

parental rights, while the second will cover the steps after termination that lead to the final adoption hearing.
Presenter: Juli Wilkes Wisotsky

Workshop Description D
Saturday February 29, 2020
1:45 p.m. to 3:15 p.m.

D-1. FETAL ALCOHOL SYNDROME: Fetal Alcohol Syndrome is a condition that results from alcohol exposure during the mother's pregnancy. This workshop will discuss diagnosis, treatment and resources for caregivers parenting children/youth diagnosed with Fetal Alcohol Syndrome. Presenter: Marjorie Jones

D-2. POST ADOPTION SERVICES THROUGH ADOPTION ASSISTANCE: Meeting a child's needs does not simply end after an adoption finalization court hearing. There comes a time when families may require post adoption services to assist with their needs long after an adoption has finalized. Families need support services to help with the demands of parenting special needs children. This workshop will focus on the post adoption services offered through the Adoption Assistance program in Georgia. Topics will include coverage on all available post adoption services in addition to Post Adoption Services through DFCS. Presenters: Leah Waters and Frank Twitty

D-3. THE CHILD WELFARE SYSTEM: THE PIPELINE TO HUMAN TRAFFICKING: Human trafficking is one of the fastest growing crimes in the United States. It has occurred in all 50 states and foster children are particularly vulnerable. This workshop will increase your knowledge of human trafficking and its impact on our children. Participants will learn tactics often used by traffickers to lure victims. Participants will also learn strategies to help keep children from becoming victims. Presenter: Karen Lambie

D-4. BIKERS AGAINST CHILD ABUSE (B.A.C.A.): BACA exists with the intent to create a safer environment for abused children. We exist, as a body of Bikers, to empower children to not feel afraid of the world in which they live. All attendees will learn how to empower the children in their home, and to keep them safe and from being afraid. Presenters: Mike and Bill Page

D-5. PEACEFUL AND POSITIVE PARENTING: ESTABLISHING AND MAINTAINING STRUCTURE FOR BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT: Children come into the system with life experiences and coping skills which have sharpened their behavior. Sometimes the behaviors are intense, baffling, and frustrating and can lead to more pain and disruption. This fun and engaging presentation, by two veteran foster parents who specialize in sibling sets with special needs, will help you create a peaceful home while your children build positive behavioral momentum and reduce household stress for children and parents alike. Presenters: Katie and Rob Ditchen

D-6. MAKING THE ADOPTION DECISION: After working hard to reunify children with their birth family, Partnership Parents often find themselves facing the decision about adoption. How do you know when and how to "say yes" or to "say no" and what are the best steps to take after the decision is made? This workshop will help you honestly evaluate if your family is the right fit for a child becoming legally free in your home. This workshop will also help you with techniques on how to prepare your own family and the child for the transition to adoption in your family or with a new family. Presenter: Evangel D. Wicks

D-7. WHO AND WHAT IS THE OFFICE OF THE CHILD ADVOCATE? AND WHY SHOULD YOU CARE? The Office of Child Advocate (OCA) is a state agency that may serve as a resource to foster and adoptive parents. OCA addresses complaints and concerns, provides education and training opportunities, and advocates for system improvements. Come learn more about our office- what we do, how we might be able to help, trends we

observe, and how we might be able to better partner and streamline efforts to enhance the child welfare system. Presenters: Rachel Davidson and Renee Moore

D-8. BRIDGING THE GAP: This workshop will assist foster parents, adoptive parents, and social workers in improving communication and making meaningful impressions with youth. The class focuses on communication improvement through “L.O.V.E- Language, Observation, Vulnerability, Effectiveness”. Presenter: Maurice Gilliard

D-9. THE ADVANTAGE OF MAINTAINING A HEALTHY, SAFE AND CLUTTER FREE HOME ENVIRONMENT: Children need to feel safe and secure in their home environment. The home environment should be physically safe for all children first and foremost. This workshop will assist participants in identifying potential home safety hazards and strategies to ensure that your home is safe and healthy for Georgia’s most vulnerable children. Presenter: Cassandra Favors

Speaker’s Biographies

Bartles, William, Judge: The Honorable Judge William Bartles is the Juvenile Court Judge in Henry County. He received his Law Degree from the University of Georgia. During his tenure as Juvenile Court Judge, he has partnered with the Division of Family and Children Services to ensure the highest quality of services to children and families by the Division. Additionally, Judge Bartles frequently shares his vast knowledge with judges, foster and adoptive parents, and child welfare professionals throughout the country as a national speaker on child welfare topics.

Blough, Paul: Mr. Blough is CEO and founder of Blough Tech, a nationally recognized IT Service Company, focused on helping small business solve their problems through technology. Mr. Blough and his wife Kim, have fostered over 110 children in their 25 years as foster parents. They have also adopted 6 children. Mr. Blough is the current AFPAG president.

Brannen, Audrey: Audrey Brannen is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker. She received both her bachelor’s and master’s Degrees in Social Work from the University of Georgia. Ms. Brannen began her career with the Division of Family and Children Services in 2002 and has worked in Region 5 a majority of her 17 years with the Division. Ms. Brannen’s expertise is in foster care, adoption, mental health and systems of care. She is on the leadership committee of Home in 5 which is a public-private collaborative aimed at increasing awareness and availability of foster homes in Region 5.

Brooks, Robin: is currently the North District Education Manager with the Educational Programming, Assessment and Consultation Unit with the Division of Family and Children Services (DFCS). Ms. Brooks has worked as a teacher in the public-school system where she began tutoring youth in foster care. She worked as an Education Support Monitor within the division for 5 years. Ms. Brooks currently holds a bachelor’s degree in Education and a master’s degree in Mathematics

Brown, Betty: Dr. Brown is an educator for the Savannah Chatham County Public School System, embarking on her 28th year with the system. She attended undergraduate school at Armstrong State College, Savannah State College (University), and Georgia Southern University and graduate school at Cambridge College and Walden University which was one of her greatest accomplishments. Dr. Brown is a member of Zion White Bluff Baptist Church where she enjoys serving the Lord. Dr. Brown has raised two children, one girl and one boy.

Brown, Debra Suzette: Mrs. Brown has an Associate Degree in Business Management and a B.A. in Psychology. She has been employed with Families First- Georgia Center for Resources and Support for over five years. Mrs. Brown is happily married. She along with her husband, Charles, are raising their granddaughter.

Bruce, Jerry, Esquire: Jerry Bruce has been a parent, Guardian-Ad Litem, Delinquency and Adult Prosecutor, Delinquency and Adult Defender, Special Assistance Attorney General representing Georgia's Division of Family and Children and has served as a Juvenile Court Judge, essentially every job an attorney can do in Georgia's Juvenile Court. He is currently involved in child welfare law and policy work for state agencies and educational institutions, and he regularly presents and trains on child welfare issues.

Burrus, Deborah: Ms. Burrus is the Georgia Division of Family and Children Services State Adoption Director. Ms. Burrus has worked passionately in the field of child welfare since 1992. Most of Ms. Burrus' tenure has been spent working with adoptions. Currently as the State Adoption Director, she is responsible for leading her team's efforts to achieve timely and safe permanency outcomes for children in foster care. In this position, she oversees the Adoption Program and the recruitment of adoptive homes. Ms. Burrus has served on the National Foster Care Manager's Board and is a current member of the National Adoption Exchange Association's Executive Board. She is a proud graduate of Auburn University.

Cannington, Chris and Jen: The Canningtons have served as foster parents and have adopted two children. Mr. Cannington has used his personal experience to help children cope and understand ADHD from the inside out. Mrs. Cannington is a Licensed Professional Counselor. She has worked in mental health with adult and children and adolescent populations and with the Department of Juvenile Justice.

Clements, Irene: Mrs. Clements and her husband have fostered for twenty-seven years and adopted four. They are now the proud grandparents of eighteen beautiful grandchildren and three awesome great grandchildren. Mrs. Clements has served as an advocate within the Child Protective Services system for over forty-four years. She is currently the Executive Director of the National Foster Parent Association and provides services and advocacy on foster care and adoption related issues through her consulting business. She also serves as the Public Policy Chair for the Texas Foster Family Association and serves on the Texas Children Justice Act Taskforce and many other organizations.

Coggins, Heather: Ms. Coggins is the South District Education Manager with the Educational Programming, Assessment and Consultation Unit. Since 2000, Ms. Coggins has worked in several capacities ensuring the success of youth in foster care. She has worked with the Division on a state level since 2014. Ms. Coggins is a graduate of Clayton State University earning a Bachelor of Science degree in Criminal Justice and a graduate of Keller Graduate School of Management earning a Master's in Human Resources of Management.

Cutter-Williams, Kimberly: Mrs. Cutter-Williams has been a fulltime hair stylist for over 20 years and a licensed cosmetology teacher for 15 years. Mrs. Cutter-Williams holds a Cosmetology License from Savannah Technical College, Teachers License from Poway Beauty College, A Bachelor's in Psychology from Saint Leo University, and her Master's in Education from Armstrong Atlantic University. She is currently employed as the Department Chair at Savannah Technical College. Mrs. Cutter-Williams is a State Certified Mediator. She is married and enjoys spending time with her family, husband Richard, sons Stephen and Stephan, daughter Kimberlin and her two granddaughters Khloe and Zoe.

Davidson, Rachel: Rachel Davidson is the Director of the Georgia Office of the Child Advocate (OCA). She has more than a decade of experience as a child welfare attorney and was previously a policy analyst for OCA. Ms. Davidson has represented children in dependency cases with the DeKalb County Child Advocacy Center and served as a fellow for the Cold Case Project administered by the Supreme County of Georgia's committee on justice for children. Ms. Davidson earned a bachelor's degree in Business Administration from the University of Florida, a master's degree in Business Administration and a law degree from Stetson University.

Ditchen, Katie and Rob: Mr. and Mrs. Ditchen have seven young adult children and are foster parents to a sibling group of six children, ranging in age from toddler to teenagers. The Ditchens live in Canton, Georgia where Mrs. Ditchen teaches special education at a therapeutic public school for students with significant emotional and behavioral needs. Mr. Ditchen is a Cherokee County firefighter and EMT and is a member of the Search and Rescue Team.

Farrar, Jack, PhD: Dr. Farrar is a clinical psychologist who has been involved in biofeedback and neurofeedback for over 20 years. He is presently the director of Mind Sync in Jonesboro, Georgia. His clinic specializes in the Neurofeedback as a primary modality of treatment for youth who have emotional and behavioral problems. He has previously served as a director for a hospital treating emotionally, sexually and physically abused children.

Favors, Cassandra: Ms. Favors is the Adoptive and Foster Parent Association of Georgia's Executive Vice President. She served in the United States Army for 20 years. She is also a foster and adoptive parent. Ms. Favors serves as the President for the Spalding County Foster and Adoptive Parent Association Inc. Ms. Favors has served in many positions with AFPAG. She is an advocate for Georgia's foster and adoptive families throughout the state.

Franklin, Josette Dr: Dr. Franklin currently holds the position of External Education Quality Specialist with the Educational Programming, Assessment and Consultation Unit. Dr. Franklin has been in education for the past twenty-five years and has served as Teacher, Curriculum Specialist, Assistant Principal, and Principal in both the private and public-school sector. She began working with EPAC five years ago and brings her experience in education to the child welfare arena.

Gilliard, Maurice: Mr. Gilliard is an Army Veteran. His goal is to spread awareness regarding youth in foster care. Mr. Gilliard is the President of Gilliard and Company which focuses on providing services and assistance to foster youth, in and out of care. His passion is working with teens and young adults who have been affected by the foster care system. Mr. Gilliard has a Bachelor of Science in Criminal Justice from Austin Peay State University. As an Army officer and former Black Hawk helicopter pilot, he has received many military awards including the coveted Sergeant Audie Murphy medallion. He has completed three tours of duty in combat overseas.

Gillespie, Brenda: Mrs. Gillespie is the Program Manager for the Georgia Center for Resource and Support. She has an LMSW, having graduated from the University of Georgia School of Social Work. She retired from DFCS in 2004. She led the development of IMPACT, a continuum of services for prospective foster and adoptive families. She was a consultant for EMBRACE, the Foster Families Foundation of Georgia Inc.

Goodmark, Craig, Esquire: Attorney Craig Goodmark is currently running his own small private education law practice, having previously worked for 9 years at Atlanta Legal Aid Society. Craig received his education at University of Florida School of Law, and Wake Forest University, where he obtained a bachelor's degree in history.

Hooper, William "Buddy" and Martha: William and Martha began fostering in 1989, became adoptive parents in 2000 and kinship care providers in 2009. They have fostered many children during their time as foster parents for the State of Alabama. William and Martha have both served on the Alabama Foster and Adoptive Parent Board. William serves on the Alabama Court Improvement Project and Martha has trained foster parents around the country.

Jones, Candis: Ms. Jones began her career with the State of Georgia in 1997 with the Department of Corrections. In 2002, she transitioned to the Division of Family and Children Services. She has served in several positions with the Division, from the Office of Family Independence to the Office of Child Welfare. She also

served as Director of Thomas County DFCS. In 2015, she became the Director of the Caregiver Recruitment and Retention Unit where she worked to develop a strong and supportive network for Georgia's caregivers and children. Ms. Jones currently serves as the GARYSE Chafee Program Director.

Jones, Marjorie, LPN: Mrs. Jones is a Certified Nursing Assistant. She was employed for eight years at Memorial Mission Hospital in Asheville, North Carolina. Mrs. Jones served 5 years in the U.S. Army. After her tour of duty ended, she and her husband lived in Fort Hood, Texas for 28 years. During that time, she furthered her education by obtaining a nursing license from Temple Jo College and the University of Texas. Mrs. Jones is a foster parent and serves on the Adoptive and Foster Parent Association of Georgia's Board of Directors.

Key, Michael, Judge: The Honorable Judge Michael Key has served in the Juvenile Court in Troup County, Georgia since 1989. He is a partner in the law firm of Key and Grady, P.C. A graduate of Emory University School of Law, Judge Key served in the U.S. Airforce from 1971-1975. Judge Key is the past president of the Juvenile Judges. He is a member of the Georgia Child Support Guideline Commission and served as chair of the Georgia Commission on Family Violence.

Lambie, Karen Dr: Now retired, Dr. Lambie taught for a total of 32 years at both Elementary and University level. She has a PHD in Educational Psychology from the University of Georgia. Before retiring in 2010, she made the decision to dedicate the rest of her life to work social change and raise awareness concerning human rights violations. She serves on the Board of Director for Savannah Working against Human Trafficking. Dr. Lambie is a foster Parent from Bulloch County. Also Dr. Lambie serves on the Adoptive and Foster Parent Association of Georgia.

Lewis, Dhakiyya: Ms. Lewis believes there is something in everyone that can shed light on the world. Working with youth since 2006 and in social services since 2010, she has had the opportunity to assist the youth of many communities in recognizing their powers within to succeed. Ms. Lewis graduated from Alabama State University with a Bachelor's in Psychology and from Argosy University with a Master's in Community Counseling.

Lockwood, Bonnie: Mrs. Lockwood has a Master of Science in Rehabilitation Counseling from Georgia State University. She has been a Licensed Professional Counselor in Georgia since 1997. Mrs. Lockwood has studied and worked with attachment disorders for several years. She also specializes in addiction and child welfare. Mrs. Lockwood is married and has two teenage girls.

Lovelace, Kristi, Judge: The Honorable Judge Kristi Lovelace practices law in Central Georgia. She is certified as a Child Welfare Law Specialist by the National Association of Counsel for Children. She represents parents and children and works as a Municipal Court Judge.

Malone, Tonya Dr: Dr. Malone is the Program Director of the Educational Programming, Assessment and Consultation Unit. She brings a wealth of experience with over 20 years of experience in nonprofit organization, program development, community outreach and cultivation, resource development, community partnership, volunteer management and youth and family development. In addition, she has been an adjunct professor with Clark Atlanta University and currently with Georgia State University teaching social work students. She received her MSW from the University of Georgia, and PhD in Social Work, Policy and Planning from Clark Atlanta.

Miller-Walker, Janice: Ms. Miller-Walker has been the CEO/Program Director of Trinity J and D, LLC, child placement agency for the last 15 years. She has a bachelor's degree in social work and has over 35 years of experience in the field. She understands the mental health challenges that children and families are experiencing and is truly motivated to advocate for their well-being. She had over 14 years working with numerous agencies in Savannah and comes with CPS experience from Queens, New York.

Mobley, Kimberly, Dr: Dr. Kimberly Mobley is currently employed with the Brighter Day Education Consulting, which provides services that support local school districts to provide general supervision for special education and related services to students with disabilities. As a former Director of Special Education and Special Education Program Specialist for Georgia Department of Education Compliance Unit, she has gained extensive experience.

Moore, Renee: Renee Moore serves as the Senior Investigator with the Georgia Office of the Child Advocate (OCA). She has seventeen years of experience in child welfare beginning as an investigator with the Department of Family and Children Services at the local county level. She then joined the State Special Investigations Unit at the State Office serving as a special investigator throughout Georgia, where she investigated child death, serious injuries, near fatalities, conflict of interest and high-profile cases. Ms. Moore earned a degree in Business Administration from Gordon College and paralegal certificate from the University of Georgia.

Page, Mike "Bugsy": Mr. Page is the founder of the Little River Bikers Against Child Abuse (BACA) Chapter and the State of Georgia BACA Chapter. He also serves as the Georgia State President, State Public Relations Officer, and the Little River Chapter Child Liaison. Just recently he was elected to serve as a regional representative for one of 11 regions covering North America.

Patterson, DaJari: has over 20 years of Child Welfare experience in both the public and private sectors. Ms. Patterson received her bachelor's and Master's in Social Work from Clark Atlanta University. She also has a Juris Doctorate degree from Atlanta's John Marshall Law School. She started her career at a private adoption agency in Atlanta. Ms. Patterson has been with the Division for ten years, having held positions in Region 14 as well as the State Office. Her areas of expertise include: Adoption, Foster Care, Kinship Care and Resource Development. She is originally from Chicago and is the proud parent of one adult son.

Pope, Dolly: Dolly Pope is a graduate of Georgia State University in Atlanta, Georgia where she received dual bachelor's degrees in Philosophy and Exercise Science. Ms. Pope served the Philadelphia young adult community in leadership development. Her passion for helping others has led her to hold roles on the Making Youth Employment Work team, participate in local Toastmasters group and serve her alma mater in many ways throughout the athletic department.

Shinpoch, Jennifer: Jennifer Shinpoch is mom to five children and wife to Joel. They were foster parents for seven years and have adopted two children. Prior to having children, Mrs. Shinpoch worked for CNN Media Operations in Atlanta. She now serves as Oconee County Foster Parent Association President and recently a Regional Advocate. Mr. and Mrs. Shinpoch were instrumental in the passing of Senate Bill 167 and currently runs Broken Road Home (www.brokenroadhome.com) to update foster parents on new legislation regarding children in foster care.

Twitty, Frank: Frank Twitty has been employed with DFCS for more than 22 years. His career began in Hall County as a foster care resource development worker in 2003. He has also worked in the State Treatment Services Unit, monitoring private child placing agencies and assisting with the placement needs of children with special needs. In 2008, he joined the Social Services Administration Unit (SSAU) where he is currently serving as Program Manager. The common thread that has run through his career is a desire to advocate for the needs of children and the people who care for them.

Tyner, Angela: Ms. Tyner has served as the Advocacy Director for CASA since 2004, where she provides legal guidance and technical assistance to the CASA network and participants in policy and legislative reform efforts. Ms. Tyner also serves on several task forces and committees seeking systemic child welfare improvement. She received her bachelor's degree from the University of Georgia and her JD from Mercer Law. She is a certified Child Welfare Law Specialist.

Waters, Leah: Ms. Waters has been in DFCS for over 18 years, she currently serves as an adoption consultant in the Social Services Administration Unit (SSAU) where she is responsible for processing IV-E Adoption Assistance applications. In her role, Ms. Waters also assists with policy consultation, special needs determinations, and approvals of Special Services Adoption Assistance requests. Ms. Waters has a Bachelor of Social Work Degree from Georgia State University. She is currently pursuing her Master of Social Work through University of Georgia.

Wells, Talley: Talley Wells is the Executive Director of Georgia Appleseed Center for Law and justice. During his tenure, Mr. Wells and his team have positioned Georgia Appleseed to be a key voice for systemic change in areas that affect low-income Georgia children, including healthy housing, school climate, school juvenile court partnership, and children's behavioral health. He is a frequent speaker on these topics. Mr. Wells earned his bachelor's degree from Duke University, a master's degree from the Harvard Graduate School of Education, and a Juris Doctorate from the Duke University School of Law.

Wicks, Evangel D.: Mrs. Wicks has more than 25 years of child welfare experience with the Georgia Division of Family and Children Services. She previously served as a case manager, resource development trainer and assessor, supervisor and an administrator. Evangel serves as Adoption Program Consultant for the State Adoption Unit and is a member of the Exchange Team facilitating healthy adoption matches for Georgia's waiting children.

Williams, Leia: Ms. Williams is the Metro District Education Manager with the Educational Programming, Assessment and Consultation Unit. Ms. Williams has worked in child welfare in Georgia for over 10 years, first as a Georgia Division of Family and Children Services CPS investigator and then as a program manager for a non-profit child advocacy organization. Ms. Williams is a graduate of Marshall University and received her Master of Science degree in Administration from Central Michigan University.

Wilkes-Wisotsky, Juli, Esquire: Attorney Wilkes-Wisotsky is a native of Jefferson, Georgia and has practiced law since 1996. As a graduate of UGA School of Law, she began focusing her practice solely on adoption in 2010. She has helped complete hundreds of adoptions and is a Fellow of the Georgia Council of Adoption Lawyers. She is particularly interested in the concerns of foster children in Georgia and loves to complete foster care adoptions. She has been a foster parent herself and has served on the Board of Chosen for Life, an adoption ministry located in the Watkinsville/Athens area.

Young, LaFayette, Jr.: For 14 years, Mr. Young has dedicated his career to serving vulnerable children and marginalized families within the child welfare system. He has served as a Child Welfare Specialist in Illinois and later joined CASA. Mr. Young obtained an associate degree from Heartland Community College with a concentration on Criminal Justice, a Bachelor of Liberal Arts from Lincoln College, and a Master of Social Work from Erikson Institute with a concentration in Children and Families and Child Development.