



# California State Foster Parent Association, Inc.

Representing all California Resource Families

*“To Touch A Life Forever”*

**1ST QUARTER 2017 NEWSLETTER**

FEBRUARY 13, 2017

## **1st Quarter Board Meeting**

*Joyce Hammerich, CSFPA*

The California State Foster Parent Association quarterly meeting was held in Sacramento on January 20-21. We spent the morning in great discussion about the new Resource Family Approval (RFA) Process with Greg Rose, Deputy Director, Children & Family Services Division; Sara Rogers, Chief, Continuum of Care Reform Branch; and Kim Wrigley, Manager of RFA Implementation Unit, CCR Branch.

New officers were sworn in as follows:

Patricia Welsh, Southern Region VP  
Carrie Myles, Central Region VP  
Patricia Negus, President

Two goals for 2017 were identified.

1. Be a physical presence in Sacramento and actively participate in pertinent legislation regarding providing foster care in California.
2. Regional VP's support each of their chapters to delegate an identified individual (s) to participate in State QPI Allegations/Support training in order to knowledgeably assist resource families.

The CSFPA 2<sup>nd</sup> quarterly meeting will be held April 21st and 22nd in Sacramento. Please plan on attending, take advantage of the training, and be a voice for caregivers in California.

## **2016 Annual CSFPA Conference and Training: Wheel of Change—Still Powered Through Love: Wrap Up**

*Nadine Fleek, 2016 Conference Chair*

The 40th Annual CSFPA Conference and Training took place October 28-30, 2016 at the Concord Hilton. It was a great time for all who attended. The speakers were varied and knowledgeable. This was the first time we had Native American workshops which were excellent. There were many first timers in attendance. Mary Hagenbeck created a form for them to complete, and their 2017 membership was paid for by the association. This conference was friendly, inviting and encouraged people to engage and participate. The silent auction was fun with lots of great items. The proceeds from the silent auction go to the Hagenbeck Scholarship Fund. When we can help our youth on their way to success, it feels great. This conference was a state conference in all ways as people throughout the state helped in the planning and implementation of the conference. My heartfelt appreciation goes out to all who helped make this yet another successful conference.

## **2017 CSFPA Conference and Training**

*Marylud Baldwin, 2017 Conference Chair*

SAVE THE DATES for the CSFPA Conference October 12-14, 2017

Get ready, get excited, get your reservations NOW for the 2017 CSFPA Conference and Training. It will be held at the GREAT WOLF LODGE, 12681 Harbor Blvd., Garden Grove, CA. 92840. The lodge is pretty cool with a water slide park attached to it that is included in the room reservation. Reservations can be made anytime between now and Sept. 10. The room rate says \$120 but it ends up being \$171.99 (with resort fee and taxes.) Call 1-866-954-9653 and use group code 1710CAST.

Questions? call MaryLud Baldwin 805-471-1660



## Legislative & Policy Update

*Jenn Rexroad, Legislation Chair*

As foster parents know, when children are removed from their parents due to abuse and neglect, they are in crisis and need a safe, loving family environment. But for our youngest children, one of the top barriers to finding placement is the lack of access to child care. An estimated 25 percent of placement denials were due to the lack of child care. Increasing access to child care would enable a larger pool of families to become foster parents, providing a stable home for more children in need. Child Care Bridge Program legislation will be introduced in February to address this important need. Caregiver voices are needed to tell our story.

ACL No. 17-11 January 31, 2017

Describes Phase II implementation of the Continuum of Care Reform (CCR) Home-Based Family Care (HBFC)

and Short-Term Residential Therapeutic Program (STRTP) rates structure and conversion process from the old rate structure to the new rate structure. New level of care rates are scheduled to begin December, 2017.

\*Phase I rates began January 1, 2017

Two rounds of Foster Parent Retention and Recruitment (FPRRs) funding have been awarded to counties. Do you have feedback on what programs are working most successfully in your county? How can counties best invest these funds to recruit and retain high quality caregivers?

Do you have a story or perspective to share about how child care impacts a foster parent or relative caregiver? Would you like to be involved in statewide child welfare advocacy? Please email Jenn at [jrexroad@cacaregivers.org](mailto:jrexroad@cacaregivers.org).

## Membership and Insurance

*Mary Haghenbeck, Membership/Insurance Chair*

It's that time of year that you must renew your dues in your Chapter. There are lots of good things happening this year. If you want to be part of it, submit your membership dues now to become a member. CSFPA is in a great place with the Department of Social Services and working hard to advocate for you—the foster parent/resource family.

I have taken on the role of Insurance Chair this year, so, if you have any questions regarding the insurance coverage offered by the CSFPA, please contact me at (510) 223-2022 or [mhaghenbeck@comcast.net](mailto:mhaghenbeck@comcast.net). I'm here for you!



Join Us

## QPI 2017 California Conference in Sacramento

The 2017 QPI California State Conference is being held at the Crowne Plaza Sacramento Northeast on March 2nd and 3rd. The co-sponsors for this year's convening are The California Youth Connection (CYC), The California Department of Social Services (CDSS), The County Welfare Directors Association of California (CWDA), and The California Social Work Education Center (Cal SWEC).

The Conference Agenda includes Will Lightbourne, Director of CDSS presenting on “The

Benefits for Our Youth,” Birth Parent/Resource Family Panel and a Foster Youth Panel as well as other workshops. The registration fee of \$180 includes all meetings and workshops, as well as continental breakfast, lunch and morning and afternoon snack breaks. It does not include lodging. For more information and to register for the conference, go to <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/2017-qpi-california-statewide-conference-tickets-30567056890>.

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# Here's What's Happening Around the State....



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## Northern Region

Nadine Fleek, Northern Region VP

In March of last year, the Northern Region hosted a two day regional meeting and training. We had great food and a chance to meet and greet each other. We prepared for 35 people, but many more came. In attendance were foster, kinship, and adoptive parents as well as representatives from Health and Human Services, District Attorney's Office and Regional Center. There were several classes and all were informative.

We also met as a region at the October 2016 CSFPA Training Conference. Siskiyou, Tehama, Lake, Humboldt and Shasta counties were there. Some of the concerns discussed were that we need to get out information on state and local chapters. We need to invite news media and local businesses to support us. When the chapters have their elections, they must follow the state CSFPA by-laws, unless they have their own approved by CSFPA. It is challenging to set up regional meetings, since we are spread out, and a central location is hard to find. We are hoping to schedule another one in April or May.

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## North Coastal Region

Sheri Justice-Cook, Northcoastal Region VP

A North Coastal Meeting is being planned for March 11th 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Vallejo AFS Office, 160 Marina Vista Way (in the Glenn Clove Area), Discussions include RFA, CCR, and how all of this is progressing in your area. Please send suggestions or other concerns to be put on the agenda. Refreshments and lunch will be provided. RSVP as soon as possible with the number of guess accompanying you. I am sorry, there will not be any childcare available.

Questions: 707-747-5329.

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## Central Region

Carrie Myles, Central Region VP

Our quarterly meeting in January, was well represented by Department Social Services it was question and answer session. I have made contact with my chapters except two unable to reach. This is the latest update information, if you need material mailed out please let me know or if you have questions and recommendations, I welcome your response.

CCR- updates

Acl - 17-11 - January 31,2017

Acl - 16 -117 - January 4, 2017

Next Quarterly Training will be in April, it would be great to have someone from your chapter to attend.

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## Valley Region

Marylud Baldwin, Valley Region VP

Our region is responsible for planning the October 2017 conference. We are looking for referrals about good speakers, so send us suggestions. We also urge everyone to save the date (Oct. 12-14) and make your room reservations early (see conf. Info elsewhere in newsletter). All our chapters are active but are struggling with similar issues; recruiting and keeping members, dealing with the new RFA implementation, and helping members with allegations. More info next newsletter. Feel free to contact me at 805-471-1660 with any questions.

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## Free Legal Hotline Empowers California Foster Caregivers

*Article Featured in The Chronicle of Social Change Written By Leah Burdick*

**As an advocate for foster youth and foster parents,** I've heard many foster parents complain that they feel voiceless when it comes to decision making and input into the well-being of a child in their care. If a child's been with the foster parents for a time, they will have bonded, and the foster parents will be intimately aware of the child's needs and sensitivities.

Where is a foster parent to turn for quick, inexpensive guidance when they feel their input is ignored or that decisions are being made that do not reflect the child's best interest?

In California there's [Advokids](#), a legal non-profit that offers the only telephone hotline (877-238-4543) providing free legal information to anyone concerned about a child living in foster care.

Advokids founders believe they are the only hotline for caregivers of their kind in the country.

From June 2015 to June 2016, Advokids opened 558 new hotline cases and served 743 new foster children. Over 95 percent of hotline callers sought assistance with bringing information to the court on behalf of a child under three years of age. Of these hotline cases, 65 percent presented issues of threatened placement disruptions and/or compounding systemic trauma.

Hotline staff provide callers with legal education about their caregiver rights, point the caller to legal documents on the Advokids' website and even describe how to complete and file the paperwork to get crucial information about the child to the judge.

"The need for this advice is great. So much so that we get calls from other states, but state child welfare laws vary. Unfortunately, we can't be experts in the laws across all 50 states," explains co-founder and Deputy Director Jan Sherwood.

Given their high volume of contact with so many cases, Advokids has gleaned substantial insights into typical system weaknesses and communication breakdowns.

"So often foster parents are convinced that social workers and their supervisors are the ultimate decision makers when it comes to a child in care," says co-founder and Executive Director Margaret Coyne. "In California that is simply not true, and we suspect it is similar in other states. Too often, problems in a child's case are not identified and communicated effectively to the juvenile court. Judges need access to letters from caregivers, pediatricians and therapists to make informed decisions."

Advokids uses the hotline as a starting point to "teach people how to get to the courthouse, file the necessary paperwork and share critical information with the juvenile court judge," says Coyne. "Participation in the juvenile court process can also present opportunities to let the court of appeals weigh in."

Advokids also recruits pro bono attorneys throughout the state who can step in and represent a hotline caller when a case presents compelling facts and violations of the law. According to Coyne, "If we hear about an issue over and over again in a specific county, we have skilled pro bono attorneys who will fight to systematically change the root cause, not just Band-Aid one case at a time."

Advokids is currently one of the named plaintiffs in a [lawsuit against the Los Angeles Department of Children and Family Services \(LADCFS\)](#) for routinely failing to provide foster parents and relative caregivers with advance written notice of court hearings and opportunities to be heard.

Both Coyne and Sherwood believe that California has very child-centered, progressive laws, which allow anyone, such as a teacher, nurse, neighbor or other caregiver, to file court documents and be heard by a judge.

"The issue in California is not the laws, but the lack of awareness and also poor implementation in certain counties," said Coyne.

Placement disruptions are by far the most common issue that Advokids addresses with clients."A baby is placed in a potentially permanent foster home. Six to 11 months later, the county finds a relative and moves the baby without any thoughtful transition," explains Coyne. "It's a traumatic event to move a small child to a caregiver with whom they have no relationship, and these decisions are being made by line social workers without any judicial review. That's not how it should be."

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## Free Legal Hotline Empowers California Foster Caregivers (Cont'd)

“Sherwood adds: “Many social workers believe that the law requires them to always place a child with a relative. It’s untrue — like an urban myth. Relative placements should always be considered and reviewed with careful consideration of each individual child’s history, current placement and the child’s attachment to the current caregiver.”

Social workers’ large caseloads pose another significant issue, but Coyne and Sherwood believe this problem would be alleviated if laws were followed as intended.

“Federal and state laws have timelines, but no one enforces them,” Sherwood says. “In most instances, a case should not go beyond 12 months, but cases going 36 months is not unheard of. The longer it takes, the more detrimental it is to a child.”

Coyne and Sherwood point to several lawyer-related issues that leave children vulnerable to negative outcomes. On the one hand, says Coyne, “Some lawyers have too many cases, but others just do not do their job. Others still lack the appropriate training, and in many rural areas appropriate training isn’t even available.”

Other lawyers, she says, have an aversion to new information being introduced to the court from interested parties.

“We’re ... blown away by the resistance to outside information coming into the court,” says Coyne. “Why would more information for decision making be bad? Judges can read the information and do what they want with it. Some of the contention is rooted in the fact that outsiders in the courtroom bring accountability, and the resistant lawyers and social workers don’t like being held accountable.”

Advokids offers 18 live legal training sessions for California lawyers and social workers each year, and both Coyne and Sherwood say they are willing to provide guidance to lawyers and advocates who wish to create similar organizations in other states based on the Advokids model.

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## CSFPA Awards & Scholarships Committee Sandra Aguirre, Committee Chair

I would like to invite you to participate in this year’s Awards & Scholarships program. This is the time when we can come together as a group to formally honor those who have inspired us with their extraordinary efforts, whether they are fellow foster parents, or remarkable young people pursuing their educational dreams, or those who support us in the many areas needed, so we can better care for the beautiful children.

The following awards are offered for your nominations:

1. State Directors Award for outstanding Foster Parent
2. Outstanding Kinship Award—One per Region
3. Outstanding FFA Award—One per Region
4. Outstanding Adoption Award—One per Region
5. Outstanding Social Worker Award—One per Region
6. Outstanding Director or Deputy Director Award
7. Outstanding Service Award
8. Lavern Adolfo Award for Excellence in Advocacy
9. Haghenbeck Scholarship Award—One per year for graduating youth

10. Lifetime Membership Award offered every five years

Anyone is eligible to submit a nomination form. We request each Chapter President make copies of the nomination forms and have them available at their meetings and encourage members to participate.

Please be objective and unbiased as you thoughtfully consider your nominee(s) keeping in mind the criteria for each award. The person submitting the nomination form will receive a letter of confirmation acknowledging the nomination is received. Additionally, once the awards have been determined, the person who submitted the nominee will be notified of the person selected for the award.

All applications, letters and statements must be received by the Awards & Scholarship Committee Chair no later than July 1st to be considered.

Nomination packets will be distributed at the 2nd Quarterly meeting in Sacramento April 20-21. We look forward to presenting these awards to deserving recipients. Please take time to participate in the nominations process.



## 1ST QUARTER 2017 NEWSLETTER

California State Foster Parent Association  
c/o Newsletter Editor  
272 Devon Drive  
San Rafael, CA 94903



***Our main focus is to address issues of foster parents, guardianship and adoptive parents, as well as kinship placements which now includes over 55% of all children in out-of-home placements in California.***

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## 2nd Quarter Training and Meeting 41st Annual CSFPA Training Conference

The CSFPA 2nd Quarterly Meeting will be held April 21st and 22nd at the Hilton Hotel in Sacramento. All members are encouraged and welcome to attend. There is also a training offered on the 20th. Please contact Joyce Hammerich, CSFPA Secretary for more information at [ham\\_mom@yahoo.com](mailto:ham_mom@yahoo.com).

All members are welcome and encouraged to attend.

This year's annual CSFPA Training and Conference will be held October 12-14, 2017 at the Great Wolf Lodge in Garden Grove, CA. Mark your calendars now—you won't want to miss it!



If you prefer to receive your newsletter via email, please send an email to Carol Ihlenburg, Newsletter Chair at [CSFPANewsletter@gmail.com](mailto:CSFPANewsletter@gmail.com).

If you have an item you'd like considered for inclusion in the newsletter, please submit to the same email.