

# ANNUAL REPORT

## Tennessee Foster Adoptive Care Association

2015 - 2016



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### Members, Partners, and Friends,

As the 2015-2016 Fiscal Year comes to an end, I can honestly say that I feel a little overwhelmed but very encouraged. TFACA has once again made tremendous strides in better serving our families this year. We have developed a Strategic Plan which will guide us through the next two years. This guide will keep us on the path to excellence in our programs, leadership, support and education across the state.

We are excited about our programs this year! The Mentorship program has more than doubled since its beginning in January of 2015. The Advocate program is fully staffed with the best Advocates in the nation! The Walk Me Home program continues to enrich the lives of our foster children. The Ken and Maxine Fox Scholarship program helped finance college for six youth this past year. All of these programs are direct benefits from TFACA to our foster and adoptive families.

Our Board has begun implementing Leadership trainings at our quarterly meetings. Our hope is that, through our Regional Directors, we will increase the level of communication to all foster parents across the state. Most of that work is focused on supporting our local associations. We have developed a Minimum Standards to act as a guide for strengthening these associations. We are having calls for our local association Presidents so they can support one another across the state with guidance from the board. By strengthening and training the board, we are better able to lead the foster parents at a local level across the state.

TFACA has a wonderful relationship with the Department of Children Services, TN Community Services Agency and other partners across the state. Without these partnerships, we would not be able to do our work effectively. TFACA participates in many workgroups across the state that benefit all foster parents. We are **your voice** at the table in problem solving with our partners and make things better for you, our foster/adoptive parents, and the children you serve. These are *indirect benefits* that are not tangible to you, but they are an integral part of what we do for you all on a daily basis. We appreciate our partners!!!

It has been a very busy and productive year. I feel encouraged by the direction TFACA is moving and can't wait to see what the new year brings. I want to encourage you to get involved with your local associations so that you will know more about what TFACA is doing for you and so that your voice can be heard! Thank you for all you do to better the lives of the children you serve.

All the best!

Myra Cooper, President/Chair

TENNESSEE FOSTER AND ADOPTIVE CARE ASSOCIATION, INC

MESSAGE FROM  
THE PRESIDENT



## OUR VISION & MISSION

Tennessee Foster Adoptive Care Association exists to support and encourage Foster Parents so that they in turn can provide safe, secure, loving homes for the children that come into their care. As such, our Vision is one of a child-focused organization that understands and communicates to the world how important good foster care is to a child's future.

***Our Vision is that the children who come into care in the state of Tennessee will have the same advantages and opportunities as those children who do not experience the foster care system.***

***Our Mission is to help Foster Parents feel that they are not alone. We motivate and support them to keep them participating in the fostering community. It is also our Mission to recruit and retain Foster Parents .***

TFACA works closely with DCS to support their work to educate, support, and retain Foster Parents across the state. We encourage and motivate foster and adoptive parents, as well as any other interested member of the community, to work together to promote the general welfare of foster children. We assist in communications between foster and adoptive parents and others concerned with the growth and development of foster children. First and foremost, we are spokespeople for foster and adoptive parents and the children under their care and custody in Tennessee.

TFACA is passionate about bettering the lives of the foster children in Tennessee. We know that supporting the Foster Parents who parent those children is paramount in the success of each placement.

With local associations under our umbrella, TFACA has the infrastructure in place to support Foster Parents across our great state. Our Regional Directors are entrusted with the tasks of supporting the local associations and Mentorship Program in their region. Our Advocacy program provides support as needed when our families are in crisis or under a SIU. TFACA presence across the state allows us to identify trends and through programs and services address issues that our Foster Parents are facing. With a commitment to strong partnerships to benefit Foster Parents, we work with them to address and resolve problems as well as seize opportunities. Our partners, among others, include our local associations, the Department of Children's Services, and Tennessee Community Services Agency.



As of June 30, 2016, there were 8,008 children in Tennessee state custody. Of those, 2,350 were teens over the age of 16. There were 1,051 children in full-guardianship, but the majority were in pre-adoptive homes. Of the foster homes in Tennessee, 3,336 were DCS homes and 2,624 were private provider homes. The biggest challenge is securing homes for teens, larger sibling groups (3+ children), and homes in rural areas.

*(from John Johnson, Director of Foster and Adoption, DCS)*

# PROGRAMS

**The Advocacy Program** has been one of our banner programs. It is designed to help in times of crisis or special needs. The Advocates are highly trained experienced Foster Parents who are available to answer questions, assist with concerns that a Foster Parent may have, and advocate on their behalf. They receive specialized training to assist other Foster Parents in

communicating effectively with their DCS family service worker. On those rare occasions when communications fails, Advocates will assist Foster Parents in filing grievances and appeals. Currently, all 12 regions across the state have at least one Advocate who is available to the Foster Parents should they have questions about DCS policy and procedures or should they need representation in an SIU (Special Investigation). During this fiscal year, the 12 Advocates fielded over 14,000 calls, emails and texts, appeared 813 times at DCS meetings and court hearings to support foster/kinship parents, and assisted with 547 SIU inquiries.

It should also be noted that this program has been recognized outside of the State of Tennessee, and other States have modeled or adapted similar programs based on the work that was begun by TFACA in 1997.



We are also happy to report we have hired two Advocate Relations Specialists. These positions are designed for public relations initiatives for the Advocacy and Mentorship Programs. The Advocate Relations Specialists will work in conjunction with DCS, TFACA, and Tennessee Community Services Agency (TNCSA) to create, manage and implement PR activities with the goal of expanding statewide foster parent's knowledge of the Advocacy and Mentorship Programs.

The goal of the **Mentorship Program** is to recruit, support and retain good foster parents by educating them, actively engaging with them and partnering as a Mentor. This program is available statewide for all new foster parents. Its focus is to match new Foster Parents with seasoned Foster Parents who can help them understand the foster care system and how to best work with DCS. The Mentors develop relationships with the new Foster Families and help them to grow more knowledgeable and assured in parenting foster children. The more these families feel supported, the more likely they will have positive experiences in fostering and in turn will remain Foster Parents. Through Encouragement,



Education and Support, parents gain a supportive resource in their Mentor, as well as competence. TFACA is committed to improving the knowledge and skills of the Foster Parents of Tennessee.

Led by TNCSA and the TFACA Regional Directors in each region, the Mentorship Program is the place for foster families to gain confidence in their work with foster children. There have been 112 foster parents trained as mentors this fiscal year, and we've made 223 mentor/mentee matches.

**The Kenneth and Maxine Fox Scholarship Fund** is awarded each year to eligible foster children and/or an eligible birth/adopted children of TFACA members. The fund is a direct result of the money raised from the silent auction at each Foster Parent Annual Conference. On average, 6 students receive a \$1000 scholarship each year.

The **Walk Me Home Enrichment Fund** directly impacts the lives of Tennessee's foster children by providing a source of funding for enriching activities and emergency needs, such as school trips, music lessons/instruments, athletic fees and therapeutic camps. TFACA hosts four 5K Walks across the state each year to educate the public about fostering issues and raise donations for the Walk Me Home Enrichment Fund. TFACA awarded over \$22,000 in Walk Me Home grants this fiscal year.



# Profit & Loss July 2015 through June 2016

## FINANCIALS

Ordinary Income/Expense		
Income		
Direct Public Support - Walk Me Home		
Sponsors	7,860.00	
Donations	508.17	
Registration	950.00	
Direct Public Support	4,838.11	
Total Direct Public Support - WMH		14156.26
Indirect Public Support- TECC Contributions		522.00
Other Income		
Miscellaneous Revenue	114.54	
TFACA T-shirt sales	1,046.00	
Total Other Income		1160.54
Program Income		
Membership Dues	15,503.73	
Annual Conference	10,860.39	
Total Program Income		26384.12
Total Income		42222.94
Gross Profit		42222.94
Expenses		
Bank Fees	127.22	
Paypal Fees	53.52	
Contract Services - Website	761.48	
Postage, Mailing service	266.64	
Printing and Copying	1,074.00	
Supplies	259.68	
Telephone, Telecommunications	230.76	
Annual Dues	75.00	
Annual Fees - TECC	239.58	
TFACA T-shirts	1,000.00	
Other Expenses	406.80	
Promotional Expense	50.00	
Total Operational Expenses		4544.68
WMH Requests	16,287.69	
WMH Event Insurance	875.00	
WMH T-Shirts	1,102.16	
WMH Travel	2,087.24	
WMH Miscellaneous	1,782.99	
WMH Other Program Expense	612.32	
Total WMH Expenses		22747.40
Ken and Maxine Fox Scholarship	5,500.00	
Total Scholarship Expense		5500.00
Travel and Meeting		
Conference Expense	5,501.19	
Annual Conference Travel	637.50	
Board Meeting Travel	3,127.28	
Leadership Development	2,417.20	
NFPA Travel	175.00	
Other Travel/Meeting Expense	300.20	
Total Travel and Meeting Expenses		12158.37
Total Expenses		44950.45
Net Income		-2727.51

Active members must pay annual dues, and will have the right to vote and be eligible for election as officers or directors of the TFACA. Funding for operations also comes through the Tennessee Employee Charitable Campaign, individual and corporate donors, and through a series of "Walk Me Home" annual walks operated under the umbrella of the national Walk Me Home.

# BOARD OF DIRECTORS



Myra Cooper



Kathy Thompson



Tammy Beatty



Becky Rogers



Cheryl Hultman

## Board Liaisons

**John Johnson, DCS Director of Foster Care and Adoptions**

**Ronya Faulkner, DCS Director of Customer Services, Resource Parent Training**

**Jennifer McGhee, Program Director, TNCSA, Advocacy and Mentorship Programs**

The TFACA Board is made up of the association officers and **12 Regional Directors**, one for each Region recognized by the Department of Children's Services. These Directors have been charged with the following responsibilities:

### **Building and supporting local associations in their area**

Local associations provide a forum for foster parents to obtain direction, education and support. The Regional Directors attend the local association meetings in their area and support, encourage and motivate in an effort to retain good foster parents across our state.

### **Educating and motivating foster parents**

Regional Directors inform our foster parents about changes in policy, programs and other pertinent information, keeping them current with changes in the system. This is done at the local level and through our Newsletter, "The Foster Parent Connection".

### **Participate in and coordinate our Mentorship program**

This program is fairly new to our support list for foster parents. Regional Directors work with TNCSA and the Department of Children Services to identify seasoned foster parents who are able to mentor new foster parents in their walk through the process of fostering. While this program has been rolled out in three regions, it will be moving across the state in the coming year.

### **Growth and Development**

The Regional Directors are paramount in making sure that our foster families have the resources they need to support growth and development of the foster children of Tennessee.

### **Walk Me Home Event Coordination**

The Walk Me Home Enrichment fund helps foster children with special things such as medical equipment not covered by TennCare, summer camps, band instruments, etc. The Regional Directors work with TFACA to coordinate a 5K walk in their area, benefitting the Walk Me Home Enrichment Fund.

**Davidson** — J.P. Peach  
**East** — Sandra Brown  
**Knox** — Marion Rhines  
**Mid-Cumberland** — Ami Smith  
**North East** — Wendy Jenkins  
**North West** — VACANT  
**Shelby** — Shirley Richardson

**Smokey Mountain** — Susan Spalding  
**South Central** — Susan Jackson  
**South West** — Johnna Burton  
**TN Valley** — Anna Protano-Biggs  
**Upper Cumberland** — Jamie Worrell

TFACA is proud to partner with



**TFACA**

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