

Dear Friends of Foster Care,

Here' hoping that some of these pictures might capture for you the inspiring and information presentations we heard at the February meetings of the Faith Communities Coalition on Foster Care meetings in the Detroit metro area.

On February 7 at the Mild-Oakland Faith Communities Coalition, Matt Henry, director of Skyline Camp and Retreat Center portrayed the wide variety of ways that foster children and youth can connect with Creation and others:



Dan and Amy Robinson enthusiastically shared life changing experiences that foster children experience at the week-long, all volunteer run Royal Families Kids Camp and Mentoring Program.

On February 13 the Western Region of FCC met in Novi. Mike Garrity shared a DVD interview he made of his adopted 12 year old son, Kevan. They met at the Royal Family Kids Camp.



At the same meeting Gail Bagale, founder of SOCC and Katie Page Sander, director, gave us a brief history of the Save Our Children Coalition and how it has grown to a data base of 1500 participants with over 40,000 hits last year on the SOCC web site. This serves as a clearinghouse of resources and events as well as frequently updated information. Katie also described the innovative U-Tools program designed to serve 50 foster youth which SOCC conducts with the UM-Dearborn faculty and staff from various disciplines and departments.

SOCC's annual conference, entitled "Mind, Body and Soul: The Inner Experience of a Child in Foster Care" takes place at UM-Dearborn on March 24, 2012 with Michael Trout as keynoter. All foster/adoptive parents and interested individuals are welcome. See the SOCC website for details.

The Eastern Region met last Thursday evening at St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church in Grosse Pointe. Several speakers spoke including Tracy McCullough, the Wayne County supervisor for the Educational Planner program.

Vickie Thompson-Sandy, VP of Luther Social Services of Michigan shared pictures of the camp they ran last summer specifically for foster siblings. It was such a success that they plan to increase the numbers of siblings that can attend this coming summer.



Dr. Joanne Riebschleger, Assistant Professor in the School of Social Work along with Jim Hennessey described the innovative MSU pilot program provided for foster youth at their own summer camp. A YouTube done by one of the students shows the various enrichment activities and deep friendships made through this mentoring program. Google MSU Foster Camp.

The theme that connected all of these meetings was best articulated by our presenters who said, "Our foster kids and youth see that "people do care."

Individuals and congregations can support these positive experiences for foster kids through donations of camping supplies, providing camperships or volunteering to help. Contact Matt Henry, matt@campskyline.org ; Dan Robinson, robinson64@sbcglobal.net , Vickie Thompson Sandy, vthom@lssm.org, and Joanne Riebschleger, riebsch1@msu.edu and Jim Hennessey, hennes43@msu.edu, See the SOCC web site or call us for details. In addition, motivational posters and items for the Resource Center for youth at Wayne County DHS can be forwarded to Tracy McCoullough, at mccoullough@michigan.gov.

Congregations can also host "Match Parties" put on by Michigan Adoption Resource Exchange. Contact Heidi Raubenolt at Heidi_Raubenolt@judsoncenter.org. Heidi would also like to see if there might be a congregation or two who would pilot a new program called "Wrap Around." I this a congregation would sponsor a particular foster child awaiting a forever family and be the family of faith for the child. Contact Heidi_Raubenolt@judsoncenter.org to make arrangements.

For more suggestions on ways that YOU can make a difference in the life of a foster child, please see the SOCC web site for ideas and contact information: www.saveourchildrencoalition.org.

Our next Faith Communities Coalition meetings will be held on Mondays, Feb. 27 and March 26 in Flint and on Thursday, March 22 at Greater Grace Temple, Detroit. See the SOCC web site for details.

Warm regards,

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See Detroit Public TV 's documentary on our work, *Faith Communities Caring for Michigan's Foster Children* at <http://www.youtube.com/user/saveourchildren1>.