

Advocates



Citizens Advocating Safety & Permanence

Foster Care Review Board - South Carolina Heart Gallery Newsletter



Content

| | |
|------------------------------------|----|
| New Members and | |
| Employee Spotlight | 2 |
| Heart Gallery | 3 |
| <i>Review Board Roundup (4-11)</i> | |
| 13C, 10C | 4 |
| 10B, 5E, 3B | 5 |
| 2B, 7A, 9A | 6 |
| 7B, 5D, 13A, 13E | 7 |
| 5E, 14A | 8 |
| Greenville/Oconee | 9 |
| 14B, 16A, 16B | 10 |
| 9C, 9D, Greenville DSS | 11 |
| Contact & Dates | 12 |

Alisha

Alisha describes herself as outgoing, laidback and fun. She would like to be a cosmetologist or a veterinarian when she gets older. She says that she likes makeup and would like to be a model one day. Her favorite subject in school is science, her favorite movie is *The Notebook*, and her favorite foods are mac & cheese, fried chicken, peach cobbler, and tamales. Alisha would like to join a family in which she would be the only child.

Contact info@scheartgallery.org for more information about adoption.

Photography by Mike Baker



New Review Board Members



WELCOME!

Standing: Jerry Roberts (9B), Camille Noonan (15B), Ernest Williams, Jr (5E), Chesnee Klein (13B)

Seated: Tiffany Brand (RB Coordinator), Dorothy Smith (7C), Dierdre Holland (5C)

Employee Spotlight



Amanda Blackmon

Heart Gallery Recruitment Specialist

Amanda is a Recruitment Specialist with the Heart Gallery and works with families and children all over the state. She first became involved with the SC Heart Gallery in 2007 through her previous position as an Adoptions Specialist with the Department of Social Services. Amanda grew up in Columbia, South Carolina, and has been back in the area for the past four years. She is married and has a five-year-old daughter.

South Carolina Heart Gallery

Heart Gallery Adds Video Feature to Recruitment Profiles

This year, the South Carolina Heart Gallery is trying something new. With the help of Clark Smith (of the SC Heart Gallery Foundation) and his team, children are being videotaped at photo shoots. In addition to having a private photography session, each child has the opportunity to have his or her own taped interview. The video portion greatly enhances the child's recruitment by allowing his or her personality to shine through more clearly than through a photograph alone. For families looking to adopt, these videos can provide a little extra glimpse into the mind of the child—and hopefully establish a connection. The video feature will eventually become a part of the child's personal page on the Heart Gallery website. Some videos are currently up for viewing on the Heart Gallery Foundation page. The SC Heart Gallery team, and their partners, are very excited about this new feature that will help South Carolina's waiting children find permanent, loving, forever homes.



Submitted by Selina Joyner,
Heart Gallery Program Assistant

*Tim Angevine and Clark Smith at a
Heart Gallery shoot in Columbia.
(photo by Tracy Rowell)*

Photographer Nick Spinelli has participated in Heart Gallery photo shoots in Greenville, Columbia, and Florence. For the past fifteen years, Nick has worked in media relations and is happy to work with the Heart Gallery. "It is a lot of fun to spend time with the kids and see their personalities emerge and shine through the photos," Spinelli said.

Nick enjoys "walking around the parks and gardens with the children and volunteers, because, at first, they tend to be shy and hold back, but, within a

few minutes, they are directing their own shoots. I have children who jump around and start shouting out ideas of how they want their photos to turn out."

The highlight came when one of the children he photographed last year was recently matched with a forever family: "It was great knowing that a child I saw now has a family to call his own; every Christmas, every birthday, he belongs somewhere."

*Nick Spinelli at a Heart
Gallery shoot in Greenville*



Submitted by Nina Spinelli, Review Board Coordinator



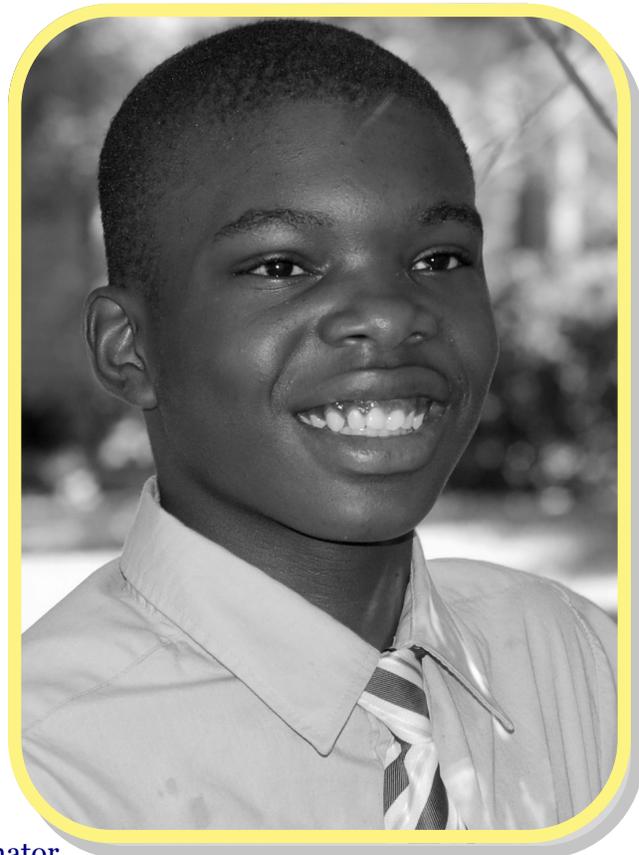
Review Board Roundup

Greenville County 13C

Camp for Spencer

Review Board 13C rallied together to raise \$320.00 in funds, in addition to advocating for a scholarship for 16-year-old Spencer to attend Camp Spearhead. Camp Spearhead is a camp that creates an environment of unconditional acceptance for those with special needs and disabilities. His case manager reached out to the FCRB for assistance in raising funds so that Spencer could attend Camp Spearhead this summer. Spencer has been in foster care for nine years and his case has been reviewed by FCRB 13C since 2005. The FCRB graciously accepted the challenge in order to ensure that Spencer would have an enjoyable summer experience.

Spencer is also one of the children featured on the SC Heart Gallery.



Submitted by T. Dawn Mike, Review Board Coordinator

Anderson County 10C

Anderson Board 10C members made sure that they were represented at quarterly partners meetings to address issues that hinder permanence for foster children. They participated in the Anderson County Joint Training session with the Children's Law Center to identify solutions to overcome barriers towards permanence for the foster children in Anderson County. They attended the Annual Professional Development Day in Columbia. They also sent a representative to a joint meeting to discuss different ways to recruit more foster homes.

Submitted by Stephanie Spink, Review Board Coordinator

Anderson County 10B

Board members met with the Chief Administrative Judge to discuss trends in the foster care system in Anderson County in January 2014. They have sponsored Heart Gallery photos at several local bank branches.

Submitted by Stephanie Spink, Review Board Coordinator

Kershaw & Richland Counties 5E

In May 2014, 5E Foster Care Review Board member Heidi Lovit completed her appointment term with the Review Board. Heidi worked with Richland and Kershaw Counties over her term and has been a wonderful asset to the community. Heidi volunteered at Heart Gallery photo shoots, arranged a Heart Gallery display at the Jewish Community Center, and helped throw an Independent Living shower for teens heading off to college.

Heidi shared that “it was an honor and privilege to be on FCRB 5E serving the children of Kershaw and Richland Counties. During my tenure I heard heartbreaking stories of difficult childhoods and witnessed success stories of finding forever families. The dedication of the volunteers on my board and other boards across the state is remarkable and hopefully helps to make a difference in lives of the too many children in the foster care system. Being a watch dog to gather information from all parties for the benefit of each child makes everyone accountable. I hope that some of the decisions I helped to make made a difference in the lives of each child we discussed.”

Submitted by Nina Spinelli, Review Board Coordinator



FCRB 5E presented Heidi with a commemorative plaque at her last FCRB meeting

Lee & Sumter Counties 3B

Board members from 3B participated in the SC Heart Gallery photo shoot in March 2014. They attended the Annual Professional Development Day in Columbia.

Submitted by Stephanie Spink, Review Board Coordinator

Aiken & Bamberg Counties 2B

Foster Care Review Board 2B collaborated with the Aiken County Department of Social Services and Helping Hands to provide play tickets for teenage youth to attend the musical 9-5.

For one teenager, it was his first time seeing a play: “When they first said we were going to a play, I thought it would be terrible and I’d sleep through it. But the people were fun and it wasn’t boring like I thought.” The teen was happy to say that he went to his first play and is looking forward to his next one.

Another girl participated in drama at school and was excited to see her first production

outside of school. She shared that the actors were talented, and it made her want to continue in drama.

Jamie Turner, who played Judy Bernly in the production was excited to “share theater with someone new, especially kids, and it was an exciting experience,” and loved having a new “audience.” Having the teens attend Grand Dress night was also great, because they saw first-hand the work that goes into a show and also, that no matter how hard everyone might try, mistakes may happen and everyone has to work together to make sure the show goes on!



Mary Kolarek at USC Aiken on July 11, 2014

Mary Kolarek with Foster Care Review Board 2B spoke to the Teacher’s Institute at the University of South Carolina Aiken on July 11, 2014. Mary enjoyed the opportunity to speak with teachers about the work of Foster Care Review Board and share its mission and purpose.

Mary shared that the “Teacher’s Institute is a terrific arena for networking, sharpening our tools, and spotlighting the needs of our most vulnerable children. This year’s agenda highlighted critical information for changing the life of children.”

Submitted by Nina Spinelli, Review Board Coordinator

Spartanburg 7A

Foster Care Review Board 7A and Wofford College hosted a free basketball event for children in foster care in Spartanburg County on Sunday, March 2, 2014. The event included free tickets, free drinks and pizza, and on-court games during halftime, as well as gifts of Wofford duffle bags.

Submitted by 7A Board Members

Charleston County 9A

The 9A board members continue their dedication towards educating the community about the mission of the FCRB. The board members routinely discuss their concerns and brainstorm ways their advocacy efforts can help find forever families for foster children.

Submitted by Michelle White, Review Board Coordinator

Cherokee County 7B

Board members from 7B made sure that they were represented at quarterly partners meeting to address issues that hinder permanence for foster children. They also attended a court hearing to stay informed about legal concerns. They have developed a strong partnership with DSS and GAL programs and often discuss any barriers towards permanency for foster children. They assist with individual case follow-up to make sure that services are provided to children and families in Cherokee County.

Submitted by Stephanie Spink, Review Board Coordinator

Richland County 5D

Board members from 5D have participated in the Palmetto Power (P2) meetings and attended the Annual Professional Development Day in Columbia. They provided a special gift to a retiring DSS employee to recognize her years of service and dedication to the children in foster care in Richland County.

Submitted by Stephanie Spink, Review Board Coordinator

Pickens County 13A & 13E

On February 6, 2014, Foster Care Review Board Members Betty Garrison, Ellen Johnson and Wilma Shealy attended the annual Julie Valentine Center luncheon. The Greenville, South Carolina-based Julie Valentine Center works to end sexual violence and child abuse and offers confidential services to anyone in need. The Center offers trauma-focused therapy by licensed professionals for children and adult victims of abuse, as well as support and education group sessions. For children, the Julie Valentine Center offers forensic medical examinations, forensic interviews for assessment and investigation, coordination of services in a child-focused atmosphere, and a facilitation of team meetings between interested parties.

Now in its fourth year, the Julie Valentine Center welcomed former American Idol judge Kara Dioguardi as their guest speaker.

Kara shared her life as an artist, songwriter, and her experience with sexual abuse, as well as the hope and healing she found in her music. All proceeds from the luncheon will be used to provide services to the community, and the Review Board members were happy to be part of such a wonderful program!

Review Board members Wilma Shealy (13E), Betty Garrison (13A), and Ellen Johnson (13A)



Submitted by Nina Spinelli, Review Board Coordinator

Kershaw & Richland Counties 5E

Foster Care Review Board 5E undertook a knitting mission for the children in Kershaw County. Lead by board member Sandra Inabinet, over 20 red and pink scarves were knitted as Valentine's Day presents during the winter season. Sandra shared that it was a great project for her knitting circle and allowed them to put their knitting to good use. Last year, the board knitted scarves for the Foster Care 2 Success Program, a national organization which distributes handmade scarves in their Valentine's Day care packages.

Sandra enjoyed the national project so much that she implemented the local scarf project for Kershaw County. She explained it allowed her the opportunity to turn creativity into a treasured gift for children, and she was happy to see the scarves being used on a local level.



5E Board Members Heidi Lovit, Mary Long, Laurie Parks, and Sandra Inabinet

Submitted by Nina Spinelli, Review Board Coordinator

Allendale, Colleton, & Hampton Counties 14A

Over the years, FCRB 14A board member Kelly Ramsey has focused her energy on providing clothes to children in Colleton County. Kelly has collected everything from jeans to prom dresses: "I do all of this because I want to. I do it out of love...and truly, it is because of the need of the community." Kelly feels "led by God to do this work, and help the children in foster care, because being in foster care is already an unfair burden on the children."



14A Member Kelly Ramsey

Kelly shies away from recognition and collects the clothing to make sure that children "don't have to go without. It's not me doing it, it's God giving me strength and the generosity of people who give things.

It's not just one or two items, but numerous gifts, and kind hearts in the community do so much." Kelley has a core group of people who work with her in collecting donations, including 70 prom dresses that were distributed over the last two years.

Kelly is driven by her desire to make sure the children in care are not made to feel different than other kids at school. She stated that "our children deserve to have nice things to boost their self-esteem, and give them extra support." Kelly relies on the help of Guardians

ad Litems to understand the need in the community and remains committed to helping one child at a time by making sure each child has the clothes he or she needs.

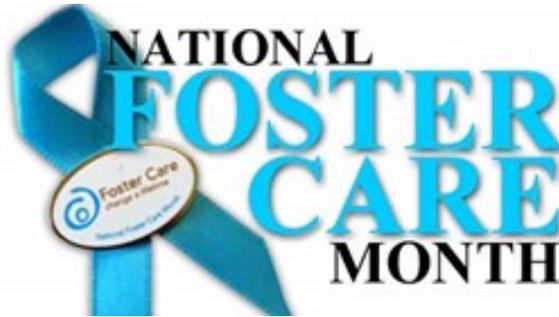
Submitted by Nina Spinelli, Review Board Coordinator

Greenville & Oconee County Boards

May is recognized around the country as National Foster Care Month. In honor of this month, Foster Care Review Board members from Oconee and Greenville participated in various activities.

The color blue is the designated color for Foster Care Month. The Greenville and Oconee County FCRBs participated in a Blue Ribbon Campaign. Each board member wore foster care pins and blue ribbons throughout the month. They also shared them with members of the community. FCRB 13B Chair Thomas Angermeier reported how a person inquired about his ribbon, and he was able to provide them with information in regards to becoming a foster parent. 13C board member Gene Bishop reported that by wearing the ribbon, several people expressed interest in the foster care system and foster children as a whole.

In addition to wearing the ribbons, FCRB members also wore the color blue to



their May review in recognition of the month. The Review Boards also participated in other activities during National Foster Care Month. Led by Dot Baily, FCRB 13D

provided homemade cookies to DSS staff and Review Board participants for their hard work and service. FCRB 10A Board Member Barbara Waters arranged for Laura Morgan from SCYAP to come to her church, Westminster Baptist, for a presentation on foster care and becoming a foster parent. FCRB 13C sent a certificate of acknowledgement to foster parents Joyce and William Logan who are currently fostering two sisters who have various special needs. While in their care, the Logans nurtured a child who doctors said would never walk into the energizer bunny. Their hard work, dedication, and love have made a tremendous impact on the lives of two sisters. In addition, the Boards gave community collaborators certificates of appreciation for their hard work and dedication.

13C Board Members Rhonda Littleton (Board Chair), Jane Daniel, Suzanne Gebhert, Gene Bishop, Vernon McCurry and Coordinator T. Dawn Mike.



Submitted by T. Dawn Mike , Review Board Coordinator

Beaufort & Jasper Counties 14B

Barbara Solley with FCRB 14B attended “Trauma Informed Care: Orientation to Improving Outcomes for Children and Families” on June 19, 2014, at the University of South Carolina Beaufort. The training was hosted by the Collaborative Organization of Services for Youth (COSY).

Presenter Pat Patrick, Director of Children’s Conferencing with the South Carolina Department of Social Services, focused on the need to understand trauma, types of trauma and how it affects child welfare, as well studies that are relevant to social work.

“Recognizing every child is unique and comes to foster care with individual needs is important, and using a trauma-focused approach may help understand those needs a little better,” shared Barbara, who also found the training helpful in her work as a Review Board member. “Being able to recognize the signs and impact of trauma is good to know in helping make recommendations and working to make sure that every child has the services they truly need.”



Barbara Solley (14B), Tonia Cassaday (Intensive Foster Care and Clinical Services), Julia Schneider (Beaufort County DSS), presenter Pat Patrick, and Fred Leyda (COSY).

Submitted by Nina Spinelli, Review Board Coordinator

Union & York Counties 16A & 16B

These two Boards have been quite active in 2014! The board members have attended the two scheduled quarterly partners meetings this year. They are strong advocates and demonstrate strong leadership at these partners meetings. The board members are always willing to participate in local community events, and on March 31, 2014 they participated in the Prevent Child Abuse kick-off event in York County. In addition, the board members traveled to Columbia in February and April 2014 and participated in the P2 meetings organized by SCDSS. In May 2014, the board members coordinated a meeting with the 16th Circuit Chief Administrative Family Court Judge, Judge David Guyton. This meeting was a huge success, and the board members plan on meeting with Judge Guyton on a regular basis. The board members continue to donate to their “slush” funds. These funds are available to assist foster children in purchasing various items for special events.

Submitted by Michelle White, Review Board Coordinator

Greenville County DSS Staff Recognition

Foster Care Review Board meetings are held three times per month in Greenville County. This takes a lot of preparation and assistance from all parties that participate in these meetings. The Greenville County DSS Child Welfare Administrative Professional Staff play a vital part in ensuring that review days run smoothly.

The “Admin. Team” consists of Jan Parr, Trina Robertson, Sarah Sandifer, and Beth Westmoreland. These ladies assist the



Foster Care Review Board in many ways. Every Review Board day, they hang signs in the hallway to direct meeting participants to the conference room where the meetings are held. They rotate and serve as receptionists outside of the conference room and assist meeting participants while they are waiting for their scheduled review. They provide coffee and water to the FCRB members and ensure that all of their needs for the review are met. In addition, they are responsible for scheduling the conference room for FCRB meetings, reporting the children who enter and exit foster care to the FCRB Coordinator, and collecting FCRB packets from the case managers.

In order to show appreciation for their hard work and dedication, the Greenville County Foster Care Review Board honored them for Administrative Professionals' Day on Wednesday, April 23, 2014. Their diligence in providing administrative services to the children and families in foster care is greatly appreciated.

Submitted by T. Dawn Mike, Review Board Coordinator

Charleston County 9C

The 9C board members volunteered at the Heart Gallery photo shoot in April 2014. On behalf of the four Charleston County FCRBs, the 9C board members organized a catered appreciation luncheon for foster care staff on May 30, 2014 in honor of Foster Care Appreciation Month. This luncheon was a huge success and much appreciated by the foster care staff in Charleston County.

Submitted by Michelle White, Review Board Coordinator

Charleston County 9D

The 9D board members continue to be strong advocates for safety and permanence for all foster children. They meet a week prior to their scheduled review day and discuss the upcoming cases that will be reviewed, so that they are familiar with the history of each case. This has made a huge difference during the reviews. In April 2014, the 9D board members volunteered at the Heart Gallery photo shoot and provided lunch for all the foster children. During the summer months, the 9D board members began vigorously planning their yearly Christmas party, at which they honor a case manager for his/her exceptional work.

Submitted by Michelle White, Review Board Coordinator

Important Upcoming Dates

| | | | |
|---|---------|---|--------|
| Labor Day (State Offices closed) | Sept 1 | State Board Meeting | Oct 24 |
| Regional Professional Development (Florence) | Sept 5 | New Member Orientation | Oct 27 |
| Regional Professional Development (Columbia) | Sept 12 | Veteran's Day (State Offices closed) | Nov 11 |
| Regional Professional Development (Charleston) | Sept 19 | Thanksgiving (State Offices closed 27 –28) | Nov 27 |
| Regional Professional Development (Simpsonville) | Sept 26 | Christmas (State Offices closed 24–26) | Dec 25 |

2014

Vision Statement

South Carolina will make child well-being a top priority by assuring safe, permanent families for all children in foster care.

Mission Statement

The mission of the Foster Care Review Board is to provide external accountability for the foster care system and to advocate on behalf of children in foster care.

Advocates is published semi-annually by the Foster Care Review Board. The deadline for submission for articles for the next issue of *Advocates* (Winter/Spring 2015) is

January 2, 2015.

Anyone wishing to submit an article should contact *Advocates* editor Selina Joyner at:

SJoyner@oepp.sc.gov

The publisher reserves the right to make the final determination as to the content of each issue. Articles submitted are subject to editing and are not guaranteed inclusion.

Foster Care Review Board
1205 Pendleton Street, Suite 436
Columbia, SC 29201
Phone: 803.734.0480



CONTACT