



# Foster Parent Advocacy Foundation Inc

Issue I



## OUR MISSION

It is our mission to help improve the quality of life for foster parents and children in foster care. We will be responsible for addressing the social service needs of the children in care, as well as the foster parents.

At the same time we look for constructive ways to improve relationships between foster care agencies and foster parents and children, so that they may provide quality service.

*(Continued on page 2)*

## Providing a place for foster parents and children

Our organization aims to provide a place for foster parents and children to receive adequate services. We provide advocates to foster parents, in turn helping the children in their care. We also work to provide youths who have 'aged out' of the child welfare system, with the services they are entitled to receive.

We want to work to build relationships be-

tween agencies and foster parents, to ensure that parents and children in the foster care system receive the services they need. Foster Parent Advocacy Foundation Inc is a 501C3 non-profit organization, founded in 2008. FPA provides community resources, educational programs, and support and training services for foster parents and children in the child welfare system.



## Foster parents need support

Many foster parents are having issues with their foster care agency. Most of the foster parents require assistance and will benefit from having outside additional support and help. There needs to be an evolution of foster parents from "babysitters" to professional volunteer team members. We want to educate, support and develop an army of well trained community members who will be the agents for change and a

strong foundational support for our children in care in New York City. We want to work with everyone to make sure that the children in care are well taken care of. When you're a foster parent, you may not always understand how to best advocate for the child that is in your home, because child welfare laws and protections are complicated and confus-

ing. At Foster Parent Advocacy Foundation Inc we're here to help you understand your rights as a foster parent and the child's rights so you can use your knowledge to take action on behalf of your child. You can look to us for guidance in becoming the best advocate you can possibly be – at the local (i.e., classroom) level, and, when you're ready, at the district, state, and federal levels.

FPA Foundation Inc will provide trainings to foster parents! We provide trainings that inform you of your rights as a foster parent. We educate you about the foster parent manual and how you can use it to benefit you as a foster parent.

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**OUR MISSION**

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We are consistently open to finding new ways to achieve the mission and constantly seek ways to do our work and meet the needs of those we serve.

We use our diversity to gain new perspectives, collaborate with, and help strengthen foster care agencies through training and organizational development. Our standard is excellence and we will always work to exceed expectations. We strive toward continuous improvement in all we do!



We thank you in advance for your time, attention and support. We look forward to hearing from you, working with you as a team and building a relationship with you, your staff and your foster parents. We hope that our mission coincides with yours and that we can partner together to provide the best quality services for foster parents and children in foster care. None of us can change our yesterdays, but all of us can change our tomorrows.

Our foster parents have been constant in their commitment and have given so much to children in need. We will continue to work hard and support them in every possible way. Again, we commend our foster parents for opening their hearts and homes to the abused and neglected children of New York City. Our greatest need continues to be quality foster parents that are willing to commit to the children most vulnerable in our community.

We need to come together as a community to ensure that our children have every opportunity to grow up in safe, healthy and loving environments. We want to focus on foster care agencies and help to improve the services that are being provided to help the foster parents become effective in caring for the children in their home. We hope to expand and have an office in all of the five boroughs so that foster parents will receive the services and support that they need for the child that is in their home.

**MEET OUR FOUNDERS**

**F**oster Parent Advocacy Foundation Inc was started in 2008 by two founder's Dorin Matthews and Sylvia Hooper. They started this organization because they both have personal experiences with the child welfare system.

**Dorin C. Matthews**

Dorin C Matthews - has been a foster parent and also an adoptive foster parent for 11 years. She has faced many challenges trying to get the assistance and help for the children that were in her home. Dorin went back to school and obtained a Master

Degree in Social Work in order to help foster parents and youths fight the system. The eleven year experience has motivated Dorin to reach out and help other foster parents by providing support, education and empowerment, to help them get the services for the foster children in their care. Dorin believe's that in order for foster parents to be able to make changes, they must first become united. "Speak up and be heard! That is the only way change will happen."

**Sylvia M. Hooper**

Sylvia M. Hooper is an adoptive child whose parents passed away when she was 15 years old, causing her to go into the foster care system. She was placed in kinship foster care, where she did not have a positive experience.

She faced many obstacles and challenges without any support. Despite her experience, she went on to attend Adephi University. She knew and believed that education would be the key to her success. Ms. Hooper holds a Bachelor's Degree in Psychology from Adephi University and a Masters Degree in Social Work from Touro College. She has made it her personal mission to advocate for children, individuals and groups who do not where else to turn. Ms. Hooper decided to take action and reach out to families and children of the community to make a change.

**FOSTER PARENT BOARD MEMBERS****Phoebe Chen****Ann Dowd****Teja Duchworth****Diana Long****Miguel L. Salazar**

## FOSTER PARENTS NEED SUPPORT

(Continued from page 1)

We'll be focusing on legislative activities happening in Washington, D.C. — and how we (and you!) can be involved in the upcoming changes that are likely to take place. We'll translate those legislative happenings so that you can better understand what they mean for you as a foster Parent and the child in foster care.

Foster Parent Advocacy Foundation Inc is heavenly committed to the social change of foster parents in the child welfare system. FPA is designed to meet the needs that are not met otherwise. FPA is committed to foster parents and are vigilant towards our mission. Our services are innovative, exploratory and catered to the needs of foster parents and youths in foster care.

Advocacy requires both the will to confront injustice and the commitment to transform it. There, FPA's daily "rescue missions" for children and foster parents engaged it in the fight for services that they need. FPA helps to improve the lives of children and foster parents who, otherwise, might have waited unnoticed, vulnerable and suffering, with no advocate to witness their pain and give voice to their needs.

Children in foster care are one of the most vulnerable populations. Presently, there are 15,900 children in the NYC foster care system, and only 12,000 foster parents. These children suffer daily from a lack of services. As a result, these children may face homelessness, unemployment, little to no education, and contribute to higher crime rates.

The economy has changed, however the needs of foster children have not changed at all. Agencies need to provide loving supportive homes for each child that awaits foster care. Youths that 'age out' of foster care make up the majority of our homeless population. 40% of foster youths do not graduate from high school. These kids deserve better; they need guidance, support, and advocates to fight for their rights — especially when agencies chooses not to do so.



We want to stop the inadequate services that are not being provided to foster parents and children. We need people of the community to get involved. These children need your help; be that voice in the community; reach out and support our cause. You can get involved by becoming a Foster Parent Advocate, or by making a donation. We need to provide every child in foster care with an advocate in order to keep them safe. Get involved - no foster child should be without a strong relationship to a caring adult they can depend on in times of need. Foster youths need your support now by providing advocates to fight for their rights. Foster Parents: we need you to come on board, speak out, and make that change.

With the help of more American's, the lives of these young people can change for the better. Nearly every community is suffering from a shortage of foster families. More and more children need you. Children in foster care feel more secure and are likely to do better in school when they are able to stay in their own communities. The simple truth is, the larger the pool of qualified foster parents, the easier it will be to ensure these children remain in their own neighborhoods and schools, and stay together with their siblings. Change the future for a young person in foster care. Find out how to get involved.

## ORGANIZATIONAL ADVOCACY

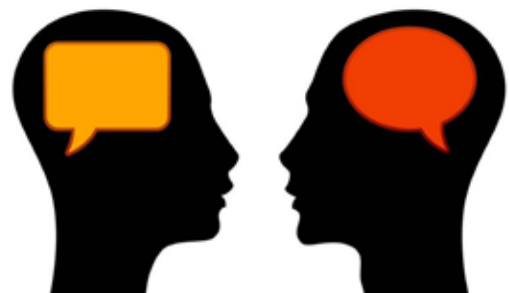
**F**PA works towards systemic improvement in the child welfare system by identifying issues that are barriers to our families in receiving the necessary supports and services for the children in their homes. Organizational advocacy areas include but are not limited to:

- Health and Mental Health Advocacy
- Policy Advocacy
- Court Advocacy
- Educational Advocacy

### Other Areas of Focus

- Inclusion of foster parents into decision-making about the children in their homes and into policies and regulations that effect them.
- Issues of practice and relationships between foster parents and their agencies.

- Individual Advocacy: FPA provides individual advocacy and troubleshooting for foster, kinship and adoptive parents of children who are having trouble accessing quality services for their children, or who need support and guidance.



**FOSTER PARENT TRAINING**

**F**oster parents are encouraged to participate in several workshops and trainings. Workshops and trainings will cover topics and issues such as:

- Know your rights as a foster parent
- How placement affects children
- Being prepared when a child is placed
- Agency policies
- Services that are provided to children in care
- Advocacy for children in care
- Adopting a child
- Parent's rights
- Working as a team, parent & foster parent
- Family team conferences
- How to fight false allegations
- The importance of foster parents attending court hearings
- Foster Parents Bill of Rights

**WORKSHOPS, TRAINING, RECRUITMENT**

**F**PA provides individual training sessions on topics related to advocacy and access of services. Trainings may be "stand-alone" half-day or day-long workshops. Foster Parent Advocacy Foundation Inc will be working to facilitate co-parenting between foster and birth parents. FPA hosts advocacy training opportunities to empower foster, kinship and adoptive parents of New York children, so that they may become better advocates for the children in their homes and for each other.

In addition, foster parents who complete this training program become eligible to become members of FPA foundation. You will be able to form committees that will come together and speak out against inadequate services. Our Partnership Coordinators facilitate workshops for social workers and other child welfare professionals.

**HOW THE COMMUNITY CAN HELP**

**G**et Involved to help change the foster care system. There are 513,000 kids living in foster care across America. Now young people are banding together to make a difference for their peers who have suffered abuse, neglect, or abandonment.

People are thinking about ways the foster care system in America can be improved. One way would be to change the rules about how your state can spend federal money on kids in foster care. One thing we know for sure your voice is needed to make people listen. Your story could change the way people look at the foster care system — and the kids in it. Foster Parents and youths need to come together. Write congress to make foster care a national priority.

**FOSTER PARENT COMMITTEE**

**F**oster Parents need to get involved and stick together to fight for changes. Join our Foster Parent Committee today! We need your voice to be heard in the community, in order to help children in the foster care system get better services.

- Designed to help foster parents during crisis and provide support services
- Empowers foster parents with knowledge and awareness about agency policies & procedures
- Ensures foster parents are receiving services for the child(ren) in their home
- Gets other foster parents on board to lobby for policy change



## WHATEVER IT TAKES YOUTH PROGRAM

**P**rovides youths with the educational workshops about their rights while in the foster care system. Provides youths with a youth advocate that they can talk to about addressing issues and getting the services that they need. Provides youths ages 14-23 with the resources that they need to succeed.

The objective of these workshops is to educate and inform youths regarding problems and issues they face on a daily basis, and to work

with the foster care agencies to help create solutions to the problems foster parents and youth face. Our mission is to help enhance the quality of life for foster care youths.

If you are a foster parent and would like to get involved in this organization, contact Dorin Matthews at 1-646-425-6526 or Sylvia Hooper at 1-917-536-1377. Be the voice in your community. Act now! These children need our help.



## SMALL TALK BIG ISSUES

COMMUNITY SERVICE LEARNING PROGRAMS FOR YOUTHS

## WHY YOUR VOICE MATTERS

**S**mall Talk Big Issues Program allows youths to shown passion and dedication in making media about foster care issues. Youths become trainers themselves to share their media skills, knowledge, and passions to other young people in the foster care system.

FPA Foundation Inc Philosophy is that leaning should be fun, creative, and challenging, as well as relevant to the experiences of their students/peers. Young people teaching their

peers how to tell their own stories, guides the work of FPA. Small Talk Big Issues is non-traditional learning and consists of hands on training and interactive sessions. There is no one right way to learn and there is no one way to teach. Together, peer trainers and students learn together using different techniques. If you enjoy media and teaching others and are between the ages of 14-21 years-old, e-mail us at: [unitedfosterparents@yahoo.com](mailto:unitedfosterparents@yahoo.com).

**E**very two minutes a child enters the foster care system. There is not a minute to waste. We must improve the foster care system for our peers. It's critical for the the future of our generation and for the future of America. Foster Parents also need support because they are not getting it from the foster care agencies.

Foster Parents and youths, both in and out of care, are being recruited to raise public awareness around the issues of foster care and to advocate for the re-

sources needed to improve the system. FPA Foundation Inc engages foster parents and young people to take action in ways to help improve life for children in foster care.



# FOSTER PARENT

## Sign Up and Support our Mission!



We need **1,000** signatures to pass the Foster Parents Bill of Rights in New York State. Sign the petition today!

Contact us at (917) 536-1377 or email us at [unitedfosterparents@yahoo.com](mailto:unitedfosterparents@yahoo.com) to get involved.

<http://www.gopetition.com/petition/39019.html>

The following are states which have enacted a Foster Parents Bill of Rights:

Alabama, Arkansas, California, Georgia, Illinois, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Missouri, Mississippi, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, Washington

New York City's Advocate Bill de Blasio and Councilman Ydanis Rodriquez support Foster Parents Advocacy Foundation Inc.

- (1) The right to be treated with dignity, respect, trust, value, and consideration as a primary provider of foster care and a member of the professional team caring for foster children.
- (2) The right to receive information concerning the rights enumerated in this act.
- (3) The right to a concise written explanation of their role as foster parents in partnership with children and their families, the department, and other providers, the role of the department, and the rights and role of the members of the birth family of a child in foster care.
- (4) The right to training and support for the purpose of improving skills in providing daily care and meeting the needs of the child in foster care.
- (5) The right to training, consultation, and assistance in evaluating, identifying, and accessing services to meet their needs related to their role as foster care providers. This includes, but is not limited to, all foster care policies, the Foster Parent Handbook, Foster Family Homes Minimum Standards, the Therapeutic Foster Care Manual, and a mediation process.
- (6) The right to provide input to the department in identifying the types of resources and services that would meet the needs of children currently in their care and of their families, and advocate for the same without threat of reprisal.
- (7) The right to information concerning behavioral problems, health history, educational status, cultural and family background, and other issues relative to the child which are known to the department at the time the child is placed in foster care prior to the child's placement with a foster parent or parents. When the department knows such information after placement, the department shall make that information available to the foster parent as soon as practicable.
- (8) The right to a written explanation of the plan concerning the placement of a child in the foster parent's home. For emergency placements where time does not allow prior preparation of the explanation, the department shall provide such explanation within 72 hours. Prior to placement, the department shall allow the foster parent to review a written summary of information concerning the child, including, but not limited to, assessments, evaluations, and case plans, and allow the foster parent to assist in determining if the child would be a proper placement for the prospective foster family. For emergency placements where time does not allow prior review of the information, the department shall provide the information within 72 hours of placement. Confidential information shall be kept confidential by the foster parents, except as determined through the ISP process to promote the health and welfare of the child.
- (9) The right to a staff person representing the department on call 24 hours a day, seven days a week, for the purpose of aiding the foster parent in receiving departmental assistance.
- (10) The right to fair and equitable board payments based on a system of daily board rates and other financial reimbursement as specified in a plan adopted by the department after consultation with foster parents, subject to the availability of funds.
- (11) The right to accept or refuse placement within their home, or to request, upon reasonable notice to the department, the removal of a child from their home for good cause without threat of reprisal for acting on such good cause.
- (12) The right to information of scheduled meetings and appointments concerning the foster child and permission for the foster parent to actively participate in and provide input to be used by the Individualized Service Plan team in the case planning and decision-making process regarding the child in foster care, including, but not limited to, individual service planning meetings, foster care reviews, individual educational planning meetings, and medical appointments.

# BILL OF RIGHTS



Governor Riley pictured above signing the bill into law in the state of Alabama!



Governor Perdue pictured above signing the bill into law in the state of Georgia!

(13) The right to request that a person or persons serve as volunteer advocate and to be present at all meetings with the department, including, but not limited to, individualized service planning, administrative hearings, the grievance/mediation process, the adoption process, and the allegation process where the foster parent is present. All communications received by the volunteer advocate shall be in strict confidence.

(14) The right to notice and an opportunity to be heard, including timely information concerning all court hearings. This notification may include, but is not limited to, notice of the date and time of the court hearing, the name of the judge or hearing officer assigned to the case, the guardian ad litem, the location of the hearing, and the court docket number. The notification shall be made upon receipt of this information by the department. Although not a party to the case, the foster parent may attend court hearings at the discretion of the judge.

(15) The right to communication with professionals who work with the foster child, including, but not limited to, therapists, physicians, and teachers who work directly with the child.

(16) The right to communicate with the child's birth family, other foster parents of the child, and prospective and finalized adoptive parents of the child with Individualized Service Plan Team approval and without the threat of reprisal.

(17) The right to necessary information on an ongoing basis which is relevant to the care of the child, including timely information on changes in the case plan or termination of the placement and reasons for the changes or termination of placement to the foster parent except in the instances of immediate response of child protective service.

(18) The right to first consideration as the resource for a child in a foster parent's home who becomes free for adoption or another planned permanent living arrangement.

(19) The right to a period of respite upon the request of a foster parent. The foster parent shall provide reasonable notice of a request for respite.

(20) The right to information, in person and in writing, of any allegations of maltreatment of children in the home of the foster parent alleged to have been perpetrated by a member of the foster parent's household, the process for disposition of these allegations, and any review process for reports of indicated child abuse and neglect upon receipt of the allegations. A written notification of any report in which a finding is not indicated on the county level shall be provided to a foster parent within five days of the findings.

(21) The right to copies of all information relative to their family and services contained in the personal foster home record.

(22) The right to mediation procedures that may be developed and adopted by the department and the Alabama Foster and Adoptive Parent Association Board. The foster parent may request mediation in accordance with any mediation policy adopted by the department and the Alabama Foster and Adoptive Parent Association Board without threat of reprisal.

(23) The right to appeal the closing of a foster family home by the department in accordance with any appeal procedure adopted by the department and the Alabama Foster and Adoptive Parent Association Board without threat of reprisal.

Section 3. This act shall become effective on the first day of the third month following its passage and approval by the Governor, or its otherwise becoming law.

## FOSTER PARENTS TESTIMONIALS



her agency.

The agency placed a 20 year-old female in her home. They did not reveal that the young woman was HIV positive. Her medical condition required her to inject herself everyday. Because Ms. Estrella was not informed about the young woman's condition, she assumed the young woman was a diabetic. Ms. Estrella also discovered that the young woman had Hepatitis C.

### Guadalupe Estrella

Ms. Estrella has been an adoptive foster parent for 19 years. She adopted 4 children and continues to keep her home open helping 12 other children in foster care. Even though Ms. Estrella is not a therapeutic foster parent, she takes in children with special needs. She has not been fully supported by

One day, health inspectors came out to Ms. Estrella's home and told her that the room the young woman resided in had been contaminated and required disinfecting. They also threatened to remove her other children if she did not comply with their instructions. Ms. Estrella called the agency to discuss the matter. They ignored her request and did not answer her calls about the situation. Afterwards, the sick woman left the home. Ms. Estrella cleaned and disinfected the room because the inspectors were coming back.

While cleaning the room, Ms. Estrella was stuck by a needle. She advised the agency about the situation and went straight to the doctor. She is now infected with Hepatitis C. The agency has turned their back on her and is not willing to take the blame for placing someone in her home that they knew was very ill from the beginning.

Ms. Estrella and her family were unable to take the proper precautions to safeguard their home because they were unaware the young woman was sick. The agency told her that it was a confidential matter about the young woman's condition. Ms. Estrella's entire family has been affected by this tragedy. She is now trying to lobby and fight for some changes regarding the treatment of foster parents.



### Ann Dowd Arancio

Ann has been a foster parent for five years now. The child has been in her home since he was 8 months old. He is now 4 years old and has been removed from her home. Ann has worked with the birth parent for 2 years now. Ann and her family had the privilege of having a foster child name Trust in their care whom they loves deeply and have

not been allowed to see since his removal from her home. It was this situation that brought her to Foster Parent Advocacy Foundation Inc. Ann needs assistance – she does not know what to do. She is heartbroken and deeply concerned as she has no contact with the child since that time. Can you help us provide assistance and support to her?



### Carolyn Bryant

Ms. Bryant has been a foster parent for 4 years and has been working with the birth mother because she has a disability. They have built a strong bond and have been working together in the best interest of the children. Ms. Bryant reached out to us because the child was removed from her home

after having been with her for 4 years.

## FOSTER PARENTS SUCESS STORIES



### Lydia Flores



Lydia Flores is a kinship foster parent who took in her grandchildren. She has been accused of allegations and her grandchildren

have been placed in another home. She is Spanish speaking and did not know her rights as a foster parent and did not have an interpreter to explain how to request a fair hearing. FPA was able to help her to get a fair hearing and an interpreter. The case is still pending.

### Luz Rio



Luz Rio has been a foster parent for five years now. She has been a victim of false allegations against her – 6 times.

At the time the allegations were called in, Luz had no foster children in her home. Her agency has not supported her and she reach out to us for support and guidance. We have provided Ms. Rios with support and assisted her with the paperwork that she needed to get it expunged off her record. This case is still pending but Ms. Rios feels like she is being supported and comfortable with her Partnership Coordinator who supports her. She does not feel alone and frustrated anymore.

### Keisha Miles



Ms. Miles is the Aunt of her niece and nephew that she has been taking care of since both parents are incarcerated. The

child is blood-related and has been in foster care for a few months. The children need therapy and other services that she is having problems getting because she is not the guardian. The Aunt has reached out to Administration for Children Services about becoming a kinship foster parent, however she was told to request custody of the children. Ms. Miles was very angry that she was not getting the help that she needed. She reach out to us and we were able to provide a partnership Coordinator who went with Ms. Miles to the agency. Ms. Miles is happy that she was able to have support and someone to guide her in her time of need.



## THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT

### Community Board 12

Pamela Pelanque  
Ebenezer Smith  
Debra Blow

### Community Board 10

W. Franc Perry III  
Danni Tyson  
Henrietta Lyle  
Patti Jacobs  
Stephane Howze  
Lea Francis

### CB10 Staff Members

Paimaan Lodhhi  
Giji James  
Evelyn Green  
Laverne Lawson

### Merz Gillmore Foundation

Paul Benette & Staff

- Dr. Nancy Feldman – Touro College
- Jewish Federation of Greater Alanta – \$500 Donation
- GLBT Expo & Community
- Circle of Sisters
- Tonnis Minis
- Papa Johns
- Make my Cake
- C-Town
- The Bronx and Manhattan Community for all your donations and support
- United Federation of Teachers
- Mr. Alfonzo Wyatt
- Pat O'Brian-You Gotta Believe
- Cleavan Daniel-Lehman College Small Bussiness Administration
- Eric Canales-East Harlem Community Partnership Initiatives

- Janice Issacs-Administration for Children Services
- Rebecca Miller-Department of Education
- Ross Murdick-Grant Writer
- Sean Harrell-NYC-I School
- Tyquan Matthews
- Travis Matthews
- Tejah Duckworth
- Dr. Dorothy Gloster
- SYEP-Outreach Youth Workers
- DYCD-Wendy Garcia & Eduardo Laboy
- Yandis Rodriguez's Office
- Bill de Blasio's Office
- Robert Jackson's Office
- Inez Dickens' Office
- Tom Duane's Office
- Bill Thomas
- Charlene Lane-Touro College

- Carol Phelan-Adephi University
- Julio Hernandez
- Anthony Graham-Administration for Children Services-Office of Advocacy
- Isabel Castellanos-Manhattan Neighborhood Network
- Lisa Sita & Jay Francisco of TCI College of Technology
- Christopher Hooper
- Shamara Ford
- Dr. Carman Becker
- Phoebe Chen
- Stephanie Tong
- Dedication to FPA's Mission: Hailey Myziuk  
Ann Dowd  
Donna Colon-Digital Media Intern

## PARTNERSHIPS & COLLABORATIONS

- Community Partnership Initiatives East Harlem
- Child Welfare Organizing Project-CWOP
- Transform America
- Youth at Risk
- Strive
- You Gotta Believe-Pat O'Brian
- Alianza Domincana
- Long Island University Brooklyn
- Monroe College
- TCI College of Technology
- Berkeley College



- Borough of Manhattan Community College
- New York Paralegal School
- Manhattan Educational Opportunity Center
- Retired & Seniors Volunteer Program
- Grass Roots.Org
- Meet Up.Com
- Idealist.Org
- Do Something.Org
- Manhattan Neighborhood Network
- NYC- I School
- Catch a Fire

## FOSTER PARENTS WHO RECEIVED SERVICES FROM THE ORGANIZATION

- Ann Dowd (Manhattan)
- Sherly Newman (Manhattan)
- Carolyn Bryant (Brooklyn)
- Juanitya Bowers (Brooklyn)
- Nereida Sanabria (Queens)
- Lizzette Jiminez (Manhattan)
- Elizabeth Rosario (Manhattan)
- Luz Rios (Manhattan)
- Veronica Boyle (Brooklyn)
- Guadalupe Estrella (Brooklyn)
- Rosa Pena (Bronx)
- Monique Faure (Brooklyn)
- Don Powell (Queens)
- Martha Soto (Bronx)
- Lillian Morris (Bronx)
- Sheila Davis (Bronx)
- Maritza Colon (Bronx)
- Debra Thomas (Bronx)
- Maria Garcia (Manhattan)
- Lydia Flores (Queens)
- Arlene Conyers (Bronx)
- Tracie Brown (Bronx)
- Eadith Goethe (Bronx)
- Digna Cotto (Manhattan)
- Nereida Abad (Manhattan)
- Jose Sanchez (Manhattan)
- Ruth Payano (Bronx)
- Melanie Ohalloran (Bronx)
- Denia Soto (Manhattan)
- Anna Perez (Bronx)
- Carolyn Wells (Manhattan)
- Carmen Ayala (Manhattan)
- Tina Graves (Bronx)
- Valerie Betton (Bronx)
- Migdalia Torres (Queens)
- Tylisha Kennedy (Brooklyn)
- Shoukry Fauntleroy (Brooklyn)
- Ethel Johnson (Bronx)
- Alverine Thomas (Bronx)
- Sarah Alleyne (Bronx)

## ORGANIZATIONS THAT HELP BIRTH PARENTS NAVIGATE THE CHILD WELFARE SYSTEM

### THE CHILD WELFARE ORGANIZATION PROJECT (CWOP)

The Child Welfare Organizing Project (CWOP) is a parent/professional partnership dedicated to public child welfare reform in New York City through increased, meaningful parent involvement in service and policy planning. Founded in 1994 with a grant from the Child Welfare Fund to the Hunter College School of Social Work, CWOP's early research led to the conclusion that clients, particularly biological parents, had practically no voice in NYC's public child welfare system.

Contact Information:  
80 E. 110th Street, #1E  
New York, NY 10029  
Phone: 212-348-3000  
Email: [mikearsham@aol.com](mailto:mikearsham@aol.com)

### THE BRONX DEFENDERS

The Bronx Defenders employs a ground-breaking system of holistic defense to fight both the causes and consequences of involvement in the criminal justice system. As holistic defenders, we are committed to providing our clients with seamless access to services to meet those needs. Our interdisciplinary teams of criminal, civil, and family defense lawyers, social workers, parent advocates, investigators, and community organizers work with clients and their families to identify and overcome the challenges they face. Whether addressing the root causes of their involvement in the criminal justice system such as addiction, mental illness, and joblessness or the collateral consequences of their criminal case, our goal is not just to succeed in court but to make a long-term difference in our clients' lives.

Contact Information  
860 Courtlandt Avenue  
Bronx, NY 10451  
(718) 838-7878  
[info@bronxdefenders.org](mailto:info@bronxdefenders.org)

## ★ FOSTERING & ADOPTION ★



### Interested in Fostering/adopting older children.

#### **You Gotta Believe!**

The Older Child Adoption and Permanency Movement, Inc. is an IRS determined 501(c)(3) not-for-profit corporation and was approved by the State of New York to have the

authority to both place out and board out children since 1995.

We are a homeless prevention program that seeks to prevent homelessness by finding permanent moral and legal adoptive homes for teens and preteen children in foster care. We offer an on-going learning experience to the general public by making available to you a 30 hour ten-week GPS II/MAPP with a specialty in Teen Permanency (that we also refer to as the Adopting Older Kids And Youth - A-OKAY) parent preparation course in ten different locations in and around New York City every week.

Please see our events page for the topic of the next class. You may come to any class one half hour before the class begins for a mini-orientation. You are then welcomed to stay for the class and begin your ten week learning experience. All our classes are "rolling" which means you can join the class any time you would like. We offer these orientations and classes every 1) Monday night in Yonkers; 2) Tuesday night in the Bronx; 3) Tuesday night in Suffolk County/Holtsville; 4) Wednesday night in Coney Island/Brooklyn; 5) Thursday night in Harlem; 6) Thursday night in Staten Island; 7) Saturday morning

at 10am in East New York/Brooklyn; 8) Saturday afternoon at 2pm in Nassau County/Rockville Centre; 9) Saturday afternoon at 3pm in Manhattan's Greenwich Village; and 10) Sunday afternoon at 4pm in Jamaica/Queens. All evening weekday orientations start at 6pm. We will be adding an 11th class soon at the Long Island GLBT Community Center in Bayshore starting on March 2nd and we will also be adding a 12th class soon in far eastern Long Island in the Riverhead area.

#### **Eleven Orientations Every Week**

- Sunday at 4pm in Jamaica Queens
- Monday at 6pm in Yonkers, Westchester
- Monday at 6pm in Bayshore, Long Island
- Tuesday at 6pm in Bronx
- Wednesday at 6pm in Coney Island, Bklyn
- Thursday at 6pm in Middle Island, L.I.
- Thursday at 6pm in Harlem, Manhattan
- Thursday at 6pm on Staten Island
- Saturday at 10am in East NY, Brooklyn
- Saturday at 10am in Hempstead, L.I.
- Saturday at 3pm in Greenwich Village

Call for location & direction to all classes at 718-372-3003, or find directions to all locations. The only time above orientations are not offered is on holidays and holiday weekends.

#### **Contact Information**

**You Gotta Believe!**  
1728 Mermaid Avenue  
Brooklyn, NY 11224  
Tel: (718) 372-3003

## VOLUNTEERING AND INTERNSHIIPS

### VOLUNTEERING: A WAY TO GROW

Volunteers must be willing to commit at least one year to FPA Foundation Inc. Beyond the amazing experience of working with foster parents and children, volunteers and interns have the chance to develop professional skills in a diverse and expanding program.

Volunteer/intern responsibilities are divided into several areas and focus on any one of the combination of the following: intake, assessment, counseling, report writing, recruitment and case management.

FPA strives to provide our volunteers and interns benefits and appreciation for their hard work. Benefits include: the opportunity to work with a diverse clientele, excellent networking, build new skills, flexible work schedule, learn about the function of the Social Service Agency, and most importantly: the opportunity to make a difference for a child in foster care.

We are looking for youth volunteers between the age of 14 and 21 who have been in foster care, as well as youths who have not. We would also like experienced foster parents, who have three years of experience or more, to join us in working with new foster parents. We are always looking for help, new ideas and hardworking individuals who are dedicated in completing our mission.

Join the Board! We are seeking new members from the five boroughs to join our Board of Directors. If you are interested in joining, please submit a letter of interest via e-mail. Become a foster parent advocate now!

We are always looking for ambitious and socially active, passionate people – who love working with others. To apply, e-mail [unitedfosterparents@yahoo.com](mailto:unitedfosterparents@yahoo.com) and the position your interested in.

### STUDENT VOLUNTEERS/INTERNSHIP POSITIONS AVAILABLE

**Youth Advocate Coordinator** - 1 year experience working with youths. The Youth coordinator will supervise the youth advocates on a daily bases. This position will provide case management services to youths in foster care ensuring that they are receiving needed supportive services. The primary responsibilities of this position will be performing initial intake of youth and parent(s) upon entry into the program, ensuring that children are in appropriate day care/school settings and are involved in life enriching after school activities, maintaining proper documentation, assessing children and making appropriate referrals, and developing or coordinating educational and recreational activities for the children. Provide Awareness to School about foster care issues

**Recruitment Specialist** - 1 years of recruiting experience. Experience screening and interviewing. 20% travel required. Ability to communicate with all levels of management . Ability to interact with community organizations and agencies. Must be able to work with a recruiting team to recruit foster parents. Participate in external and internal job fairs & Expos. Develop and maintain relationships with community partners, such agencies, academic placements officers, and actively participates in local personnel associations. Demonstrate excellent interpersonal skills while performing in a high performance recruiting team. Ensures that recruiting and hiring practices are meeting requirements. Experience in identifying and implementing best practices in recruiting foster parents.

**Educational Coordinator** - Must be 21 years or older and a minimum of 1 years experience working with children & families in an educational and/or recreational program, including developing a curriculum. Ability to teach, encourage, and interact in a variety of educational setting. Excellent communication skills (Spanish and English). Experience using the computer for word. Must be able to supervise, teach, encourage and interact with foster parents & youths (ages 13-20). Develop a weekly curriculum based on program mission and goals. Work with Program Coordinator, other youth coordinators, FPA staff coordinator in developing program goals, schedule and discuss/troubleshoot issues. Communicate with Foster parents and encourage their participation in their children's progress.

**Partnership Coordinator** - A person must posses great communication skills and writing skills. Must be open to a flexible schedule and willing to travel. The Working Partnership Coordinator Position Provides foster parents with services and support. Partnership Coordinators provide one on one Peer Work Support Groups for foster parents. Other responsibilities include Assessments & Informal Meeting Support Groups. Must provide Empowerment Programs for foster parents. Able to keep foster parents informed about policy's and services available to Foster Parents & children in foster care. Provide Court Advocacy & Legal Referral services. Must be able to work with people.

### FOSTER PARENT LEGAL PROGRAM

Foster Parents and youths face a lot of obstacles and challenges and sometimes they don't receive the adequate services from their agency. They are not aware of their rights. Foster Parents don't have a voice in this decision. We would like to offer the community free assistance for foster parents, youths and especially kinship and grandparent foster parents. We have just started this new program to help foster parents and children.

We are looking for lawyers and paralegals who are interested in family law and child welfare system to help assist foster parents and youths that need legal representation. If you are an attorney or a paralegal that is interested in making changes in a foster parent and a youths life. Get Involved with our cause and mission. Make a difference in a child's life today. Come join us.

Please contact Sylvia Hooper, Assistant Director 1-917-536-1377

## COLLABORATING AND PARTNERING

Foster Parent Advocacy Foundation Inc has collaborated and built a partnership with two great organizations that have been doing great work working with our youths. Helping our youths to empower themselves and their communities. Please refer youths to any one of these great programs that they could benefit from.

### TRANSFORM AMERICA



Our Mission: To advance human rights by building synergy between student, non-profit, for-profit and community organizations. We empower communities to create and sustain a social justice movement for positive and innovative change. We do this by having a strategy of shared resources and collaboration. Creating a movement to solve particular issues, we focus on uniting forces to educate others about a topic, bring visibility and press to the problems, recruit activists to work towards a goal, and create a substantial impact in our society. This work is done through individual activists and our partner Wing Organizations. These partners continue their separate projects while collaborating for the greater good. Our mechanism has accomplished a lot and our organizations have much success to be proud of. We need your help to further our movement and create a just society. Use our website to get involved and make a difference. Please view our website [transformamerica.org](http://transformamerica.org).

Contact us at:

Transform America  
54 W. 128th Street #3  
New York, New York 10027

### YOUTH AT RISK



Youth at Risk (YAR) is a not-for-profit, volunteer driven organization committed to transforming the chaotic lives of young people through persistent and compassionate mentoring. Since 1985, Youth at Risk (YAR) has committed to transforming the lives of disadvantaged youth who exhibit maladaptive behaviors such as truancy, violence, gang membership, physical and verbal violence, and at-risk sexual activity. Our mission is to decrease the at-risk behavior of youths and to enhance the effectiveness of the people who live and work with them. Youth At Risk currently provides both prevention and intervention services. Please check out their website at [nyyouthatrisk.org](http://nyyouthatrisk.org).

Contact us at:

Youth At Risk, Inc.,  
116 John Street, 22nd Floor  
New York, NY 10038  
Telephone (212) 791-4927  
Facsimile (212) 791-7655  
Email : [info@nyyouthatrisk.org](mailto:info@nyyouthatrisk.org)



Foster Parent Advocacy Foundation Inc  
215 West 125th Street  
Community Board 10 - 4th Floor  
New York, NY 10016

### DONATE

Foster Parents Advocacy Foundation is a non-profit grass roots organization. We ask that you pledge your donations at [www.fpaoundation.org](http://www.fpaoundation.org).



### KEEP IT REAL GAME FOR FAMILIES AND FRIENDS



[www.keepitrealgame.com](http://www.keepitrealgame.com)

In a world where technology exceeds our wildest expectations, we are still without tools with which to unlock and discover the most precious and fundamental parts of ourselves. The creator of the Keep It Real game invented this game to provide a space where people can come together to explore, discover and share their innermost thoughts, feelings and desires, to create connection which has meaning, to help people to communicate deeply, and to celebrate the extraordinary diversity of the human psyche while having a fabulous time.

Leslie Robinson: Inventor, Founder and CEO. Inventor of the game Keep It Real, Leslie is a psychotherapist with a private practice in New York City, and she has been a Consultant for the foster care system for fifteen years. Leslie has been a Program Director for programs for at-risk youth in the South Bronx, for six years created and implemented long-term intensive arts and after-school programs in inner city schools for at-risk and hard to reach youth.

### VOLUNTEER

We are always looking for ambitious and socially active, passionate people who love working with others. To apply, email [unitedfosterparents@yahoo.com](mailto:unitedfosterparents@yahoo.com) and the position you're interested in.

