



## Department of Children and Family Services

### Kinship Support Division

## Providing Assistance and Support to Relative Caregivers

### Volume II, Issue 4, April 2012

**QUOTE OF THE MONTH:** "There is a fountain of youth: It is your mind, your talents, the creativity you bring to your life and the lives of the people you love. When you learn to tap this source, you will have truly defeated age." –Sophia Loren

#### **CAREGIVER SPOTLIGHT: Gerri Lavonda.**

My interview with relative caregiver, Geri Lavonda started like this...."Can I tell you a little story?" "Of Course", I responded. From that moment, I realized that this interview was going to be special, and it was. "I've been caring for my 3 year old grandson and now month old granddaughter. I have been caring for the 3 year old for 3 years now and the 13 month old for the past 6 months. I am 64 years old this year. I didn't think my life was going to be this way. I worked, then retired, and traveled. My life belonged to me....I took in my grandson and thought it was going to be temporary...then came his sister. I felt alone and deserted. I no longer had my circle of friends. They were single. They didn't have babies... eventually I started to make new friends at Shields for Families."

"I cannot remember how I came in contact with Maggie (Kinship's Margarita Perez). Maggie wouldn't give up. When I would ask for something, she would call me back. She actually called me back. She gave me childcare referrals and even went with me (to child care site) to support me. Whatever it was, whatever I needed, she would assist me. She gave me tools to use for my life. I found freedom. I became free again." [pause]

"I highly recommend that caregivers call the Kinship Centers. You can have material things and money. Money may get you the things, but what you guys (Kinship) have given me is tools that I need, to get what I need... to accomplish things. It's not about how old you are, it's about growing up. I was at an age that I wanted to play. Well, I can still play. I learn a lot from the children. I have someone that needs me. The children need me."

Kinship thanks you Ms. Lavonda. You are inspiring.

*Thank you!*

Marianne Yamato, Kinship CSA I



#### **KINSHIP STARS: Elizabeth Harris and Rosella Yousef.**

Trying to get motivation to write is sometimes tricky, and then, magic just happens. Sitting at my computer I heard a passionate voice saying, "I have been going through this for four years and I did not even know you guys (Kinship) were here. I wish all the staff were like you." These words came from relative caregiver, Taylor Beaudet. When asked about the Kinship staff who she felt appreciative about, she acknowledged Kinship CSW, Elizabeth Harris, and CSA II, Rosella Yousef. These moments are Kinship's motivation...the reason we wake up in the morning! Kinship is here for you and we want you to know we are your listening ear and navigator through your life as a caregiver. Good Job Elizabeth and Rosella...Keep on Shining. And a big THANK YOU to Supervising Children's Social Worker, Nancy Armenta for referring Ms. Beaudet to the Kinship Office.

Marianne Yamato, Kinship CSA I

## RESOURCES:

**Community Youth Corps: Career Opportunities for Foster Youth.** 100 hours of work experience. \$8.00 per hour. Assistance with work attire and transportation. Requirements: 17-21 years old; California I.D. or Driver's License; Social Security Card; and Birth Certificate. Call (562) 484-5013.

## RESOURCES: CONTINUED

### Mexican American Opportunities Foundation:

Resource Center which provides a variety of services from Senior Services, Childcare, Handy-Man Program, taxi vouchers and tokens, employment etc. Funded by the Department of Education. Call for more information: (323) 890-9600, 401 N. Garfield Ave. Montebello, CA 90640. Currently serves four counties (Los Angeles, San Diego, San Bernardino, and Kern).

**Foster Children's Resource Center:** Serving families in foster care from the San Fernando and Santa Clarita Valley. Volunteers at this center serve children from newborn to 18 years of age. They will provide new clothing such as undergarments, socks, jeans, jackets, shirts and school uniforms, school supplies and layettes for newborn babies. Open Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays. Call (818) 701-0506 for more information.

## EVENTS:

**April 3, 2012:** 9:30-12:30pm. Rio Hondo Community College presents a free class on **Conflict Resolution** at Los Nietos Community Center, 11640 Slauson Ave Whittier, CA 90606. Caregivers will apply effective ways on approaching and resolving conflict. Call (562) 908-3435 to register.

**April 7, 2012:** 9am-11am, **Easter Egg Drop**, Free Easter Event being held at Azusa Pacific University East Campus Football Field. 25,000 Easter Eggs for your enjoyment plus prizes!

**April 10, 2012:** 5pm-8pm. **Karaoke Night** for relative caregivers and teens hosted by Kinship Division. Located at "Club 705", 705 Pier Ave. Hermosa Beach, CA 90254. The spaces have been filled, however participants can attend if they pay \$8.00 per person. Call (562) 777-1751 for more information.

**April 10, 2012:** Kinship Resource Center **South Open House**, 9834 Norwalk Blvd. Santa Fe springs, CA 90670. Drop in any time from 9am-4pm to learn about how Kinship can help you or your relative caregivers. Refreshments will be provided.

**April 12, 2012:** 5:15-7pm: Kinship South Monthly Meeting for caregivers on **Educational Issues Facing Your Children**, 9834 Norwalk Blvd. Santa Fe Springs, CA 90670, (562) 777-1751. Come ask your educational questions. DCFS educational consultants will be here. Childcare and activities for your children and teens is available. Light dinner will be provided. No Fee!!!

**April 14, 2012:** 11am-4pm. **Target Free Family Saturday: Monster Mash**, enjoy a day of monster related fun and crafts for the whole family. FREE at the Japanese American National Museum, 369 E. First St. Downtown Los Angeles. (213) 625-0414.

**April 21, 2012:** 8am-3pm. **Earth Day at Cabrillo Marine Museum**: Free admission on April 21, 2012. 3720 Stephen M. White Dr. San Pedro, CA. Call (310) 548-7562 for more information.

**April 21, 2012:** 10am-2pm, **How to Advocate in Favor of Your Special Needs Child**: Learn about Regional Center Process and D/F Rate Assistance. College Certified Training Hours Provided. Citrus College, 1000 W. Foothill Blvd. Glendora, CA 91702, Lunch will be provided. Call (626) 857-4028 to register.

**April 26, 2012:** 7-8:30pm, **Child / Teen Safety Workshop: Keeping Kids/ Teens Safe from Sexual Predators**. Children of Victory presents this workshop which will be held at Pan Pacific Park, 7600 Beverly pacific Park. 7600 Beverly Blvd. Los Angeles, CA 90036.

## Save the Date:

**May 25, 2012, 6-8pm. Speedzone. Come enjoy a night of high octane racing, miniature golf and video games (For Kinship families and children ages 5-18 years old). Speedzone is located at: 17871 Castleton St., City of Industry, CA 91748. Dinner will be served. FIRST COME FIRST SERVED. RSVP Required!!! RSVP to Jenny at: (562) 777-1753.**



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<http://dcfs.co.la.ca.us/kinshippublic/default.html>



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