



Department of Children and Family Services

Kinship Support Division

Providing Assistance and Support to Relative Caregivers

Volume IV: December 2011

QUOTE OF THE MONTH:

If you don't know where you are going, you'll end up someplace else. -Yogi Berra

KINSHIP SPOTLIGHT:

By Harriett Minke, CSA I

Cheral Hymen is a child advocate/relative caregiver residing in the Antelope Valley. She offers 24 hour emergency support to all relative caregivers. She tirelessly assists relative caregivers with their multitude of questions and needs.

Ms. Hymen is the founder of **ROCK** (Raising Our Children's Kids). ROCK is a group for relatives that come together weekly to support and educate each other. Cheral helps them with their individual issues and navigates them to resources and agencies that will be able to assist them further. ROCK support groups also have English to Spanish translation available for each meeting.

Ms. Hymen works closely with the administrators and Children's Social Workers in the Palmdale/Lancaster area. She attends case planning meetings and in her spare time she drives relatives with no transportation to important appointments. Cheral Hymen also partners with the Antelope Valley College to encourage the new relative caregivers to take part in their Kinship Orientation classes.

Cheral and her family find and keep used furniture, beds and appliances for the relative caregivers that are in need. She has even been known to deliver the furniture to the needy family if they have no other means for pick up. Cheral's warmth, compassion, kindness and knowledge is just what a relative caregiver needs when they enter the DCFS System. Our Kinship Support Division thanks Ms. Cheral Hymen and her efforts to make the relative caregiver feel supported and surrounded with love. Relatives can contact Ms. Hymen at 661-478-1881 for more information and assistance.



IF YOU BUILD IT, THEY WILL COME: KINSHIP'S RESOURCES OF THE MONTH:



*Fair Housing:

Is your rented apartment complex or home in the process of foreclosure? Are you wondering if you need to continue to pay rent? What are your rights? Call Fair housing at (562) 989-1206.

*Southern California Edison Programs:

You can receive a discount of 20% or more on your monthly electric bill if you meet income qualifications. Call: (800) 447-6620. SCE also helps residential customers by providing up to \$100 towards your energy bill if you meet income qualifications. This offer is available once during a 12 month period.

Call: (800) 205-4777 to discuss your options.

FOR KIDS:

*The YMCA of the West San Gabriel Valley- Junior Fit Club:

Calling all caregivers with children in San Gabriel and Alhambra School Districts -- If your child is in grades Kindergarten -8th grade, they may benefit from participation in the West San Gabriel Valley YMCA, 401 East Corto St. Alhambra, CA 91801. In order to combat the growth in childhood diabetes and to help parents with afterschool care, the YMCA is offering a Junior Fit Club. Children come to the YMCA after school where homework assistance is provided from 3-4pm. From 4-5:30pm, children participate in a fitness class. From 5:30-6pm, reading and checkout. The fee is \$100 per month. No membership fee is required and snack is provided.

Call (626) 576-0226 for more information.

NextSteps:

What's Up 4 U After High School?

Foster youth 14-18 meet weekly with Mentors, Tutors & Volunteers and are engaged in activities with real-world applications to prepare for life after age 18. Meetings are held

each Thursday evening 3:30pm-7:30pm. (Dinner included) NextSteps is located at: 336 E. Kelso Street, Inglewood, CA 90301. For more information call **310-673-1686** or email nextsteps@mac.com

***Department of Consumer Affairs(DCA):**

DCA is available for youth and adults to help protect themselves from credit fraud and ID theft. In June 2011, DCA was able to clear the records of 104 foster youth aged 16 of credit fraud. For more information, call (213) 974-9459.



ASK A PUBLIC HEALTH NURSE:

Question: I had a flu shot once and got sick with the flu. Why should I get a flu shot again?

Answer: Don't blame the flu shot. The flu shot cannot give you the flu because it has an inactivated vaccine, which means it cannot cause infection. What caused your illness may have been exposure to the flu virus shortly before you received your flu shot. Keep in mind that it takes about two weeks for the body's immune system to develop antibodies that will give you protection from the flu.

The 2011-2012 influenza (flu) vaccine contains protection against three viruses that research indicates will be the most common. There are many different influenza viruses in circulation, and other viruses that may cause illness with flu-like symptoms. The flu vaccine cannot protect you from other viruses, only the three, targeted strains of virus in the vaccine. The Center for Disease Control (CDC) recommends flu vaccine for everyone ages 6 months and older. If you had the flu vaccine last year, it does not give you protection against seasonal flu this year.

People who have a flu infection can infect others, for about one day before showing signs of being sick. Because people can infect others up to 5 to 7 days after they become sick, it is important to limit your contact with others when you are sick. If you do get the flu, antiviral drugs can help treat your illness, but these need to be given within the first two days of symptoms. Respiratory germs enter the body through touching the nose, the eyes and the

mouth. Cover your cough. Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you sneeze. Make sure tissues are placed in the trash. Children learn in school the proper way to wash their hands and can probably demonstrate this. Wash your hands frequently with soap and water. A hand-sanitizer is okay, if no soap or water are available.

There is a nasal spray flu vaccine available for ages 2 to 49 years, that has been in use for several years. It also takes time to develop antibodies with this vaccine, which is "live", but very weakened. Some individuals with underlying health conditions are not given the nasal spray vaccine. Consult with your MD and your child's pediatrician for more information.

Vaccines are a Medi-Cal covered benefit. It is not too late in the season to still get a flu shot. If you, or a family member, are very obese, have a chronic illness like diabetes, asthma, heart disease, etc., you are at high risk for developing flu-related complications and especially need to protect your health. But remember, everyone age 6 months and older is recommended to get a flu vaccine, every year. With warm wishes for a happy, healthy holiday season.

Information from this column is based on CDC Seasonal Influenza and Key Facts About Influenza and Flu Vaccine, available at www.cdc.gov. Ask-A-Public Health Nurse, all rights reserved. Betsy Blankfield, Public Health Nurse.

SAVE THE DATE

Kinship Resource Center South is planning a series of informative discussion topics for caregivers and for children / teens. Our first meeting will be on 01/12/2011. Light dinner will be provided. Call (562) 324-5282 for more information.

Questions? Please call Kinship at the telephone number below or e-mail any questions to youser@dcs.lacounty.gov We are also on the internet at <http://dcs.co.la.ca.us/> (click on the Kinship section to the far right of the page.) See you next month ☺

