



Wisconsin Foster and Adoptive Parents Association, Inc.

# WFAPA News

Fall 2012

## “I Just Got Back From the Moon” By Dr. James Sutton

Before you laugh too much at this one, you must know it actually happened in a counseling session. I asked an 11-year-old boy how his weekend went, and he launched into quite a tale.

He told me his folks are divorced and that his father lived just outside Houston. When he went to visit his father, they took a trip to the *Manned Spacecraft Center*. As it worked out, they had a rocket there all fueled up and ready to go. They asked him if he was up for a two-day trip to the moon. He said, “Sure!” and blasted off for the weekend.

Although I’m pretty sure the *NASA* folks in Houston only *track* ‘em, not *launch* ‘em, I sensed that confronting him would not be productive. Besides, he already knew he didn’t *really* go to the moon.

There can be a number of dynamics operating here, and I won’t run the whole list. Ruling out thought disorder or schizophrenia, I believe the boy was covering for a sense of insignificance.

Perhaps he was really saying, “If you really knew how dull and lackluster my life really is, you wouldn’t waste your breath on me. But if I can tell you some really far-out stuff, just perhaps I can hold your attention a bit longer.”

I believe there are kids, defiant ones included, who are starving for just five of unconditional time with us. A little affirmation can work wonders, and it generally brings reality back into focus and discussion.

**Dr. James Sutton**, a nationally recognized child psychologist and former Special Education teacher, speaks, trains, and writes about emotional and behavioral issues of young people. His latest book is *The Changing Behavior Book: A Fresh Approach to the Difficult Child*. Free resources for parents and teachers, including an ebook on resolving conflict and a monthly digest on ideas for improving behavior and communication, are available at [thechangingbehaviorbook.com](http://thechangingbehaviorbook.com).

### WFAPA is YOUR Organization

If you have questions, concerns or suggestions, please contact Tina Christopherson, Vice President at

[twfapa@new.rr.com](mailto:twfapa@new.rr.com) or 715-938-6667.

SEE PICS of FALL CONFERENCE pages 4-7!!

Spring Conference April 12-14, 2013

**BLUE HARBOR RESORT & SPA**

Sheboygan

## Questions?

### Who Can You Call?

FASPP (Foster & Adoptive Support & Preservation Program) is a peer-driven volunteer network designed to help YOU. These highly trained volunteers are here to help you navigate the frontier that is foster care and adoption. Each specializes in a different area, but can help with questions outside their area of expertise, as well.

715-234-1606— Joanne (Native American fostering issues and giver of motherly advice)

715-735-7124— Melissa (Advice on fostering younger children, not adoption)

715-421-1367— Manda (Specializing in working with teen boys)

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## Message from President Sherry Benson...

Greetings:

Another conference has ended. Great sessions, great speakers, great fun! I would like to thank my board of officers and committee heads for all their hard work. I would also like to thank the FASPP workers for their diligence in answering the phones and making someone's day a bit brighter just by being there! This association could not exist without everyone working hard!

The next conference is in April 12-14, 2013. It will be in the great city of Sheboygan, WI at the Blue Harbor Resort. The theme for this conference is "Everything you wanted to know about allegations, but were afraid to ask." It will be jammed packed with a multitude of speakers: Connie Klick and Jonelle Brom from the State; Donna Kuchler from Kuchler & Cotton Law offices, who will also be bringing her "criminal sidekick" along for their presentation; Dr. Bellelizabeth Foster, Child Psychiatrist from Marshfield Behavioral Health; Dr. Matt Doll, Phd. Psychologist who practices in Fond du lac and works with children with mental health issues; and a panel of foster/adoptive parents who have survived being "under the microscope" in an investigation. I hope to give each and every participant a "ride" on the rollercoaster of life during an investigation. It won't be fun, but it will be filled with correct information, time frames for the investigation, and who to call when and why. It will speak to the shame and blame, the Post-Traumatic Stress disorder that you may encounter on your journey, and how to partner with your agency/county during the investigation to minimize the trauma. It will be intense at times, but I promise that laughter will also be given in generous doses. Please try to attend-you never know when your home might be the next one investigated!

Brenne Brennan said it best: "If you put shame in a Petri dish, it needs three things to grow exponentially: secrecy, silence and judgment."

Let your life never be filled with shame when you are under allegations-for there are no secrets worthy of keeping, no silence worthy of sharing, and no judgment worthy of stigmatizing.

Sherry

### GO GREEN!



#### WFAPA Goes GREEN!

If you would prefer to "go green" and receive your WFAPA newsletter online only, check the box on the membership form on page 8 or on your next conference registration form.

### GO GREEN!

## Mama Kasch's Kitchen

### "Bestest" Cranberry Bars

1/2 c. (1 stick) butter	1 1/2 c. sugar	2 eggs
1 tsp. vanilla extract	1 1/2 c. flour	1/2 tsp. salt
1 tsp. baking powder	1/2 c. chopped pecans	2 c. whole fresh cranberries

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Grease and flour 13x9 in. baking pan. In bowl, cream together butter and sugar. Beat in eggs and vanilla. Add flour, salt, baking powder, cranberries and nuts. Pour batter into pan. Bake in preheated oven 35 to 40 min. Cool completely. Spread with frosting and cut into small bars. Makes 45 small bars.

### Frosting

2 1/2 c. powdered sugar	1/4 (1/2 stick) butter, room temperature	
1 tsp. vanilla	2 tsp. milk	4 oz. cream cheese, room temperature

In bowl, beat together all ingredients. Spread on cooled bars.



# Fun Fellowship





*The fun continues...*



Prez Sherry instructs VP Manda



*How many board members do you see?*

Huh?





*Great Heidel House Food!*



*A little cheesecake among friends...*

Jeannie Fowler & Jeff Cotton



# Great Speakers for Excellent Training!

Rosemarie Carbino



## Documentation for Good Practice & as Preparation for Allegations of Child Maltreatment

By Rosemarie Carbino, Advisor to WFAPA

### Introduction

This article brings you some of the content of a workshop at WFAPA’s Fall 2012 Conference at Green Lake. The workshop resulted from concerns from WI foster parents that county agencies may not be following State policy when handling child abuse/child neglect (CAN) reports about foster homes. Examples of these concerns included a perceived “mindset of ‘guilty’”; claims of no agency communication with the foster family after a CAN report occurs; assertion that the required letters about final disposition of the investigation always take the full 60 days to arrive; a claim that foster parents feel betrayed. I seek to learn if these concerns are widespread.

In recent years, there has been extensive training in WI of foster care coordinators and foster parents [See the *Resources* list at the end of this article]; and State policy to provide foster parents with resources to understand the allegations and the CPS process, to provide a designated agency person who should be available to foster parents to explain the process; provide opportunity for their input into investigation and for appeal of agency decisions. Also, WFAPA originally developed a S.A.A.N. support group for foster parents and articles on coping with allegations were published in the WFAPA NEWS. Recently a Foster & Adoptive Support Program (FASPP) program with Statewide telephone information/support for foster parents was established. [See the FASPP phone numbers elsewhere in this issue.]

### Documentation

Documentation is a **dated**, daily, record of what happens in a foster family’s life. It supports good practice in foster care. It also helps a lot once allegations of child maltreatment occur.

While there is no guaranteed way to prevent an allegation, your good records can later help validate what you, as the foster parent, say happened or did not happen.

Below are recommended items for *your own permanent written record* because the child’s required record leaves with the child. **Important:** Be assured that you can make/keep personal notes: these are not the same as the confidential records, eg. child medical or school reports, that depart with the child. [Personal communication from Jonelle Brom, Wisconsin Out-of-home care Specialist.


### General documentation

**SAMPLE Daily journal – use these headings at top of each journal page:**

<b><u>Date</u></b>	<b><u>Record of event</u></b>	<b><u>Details: from/about whom; plan/outcome; copy to; etc.:</u></b>
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Using a daily log, Date everything; be factual and objective; avoid opinion and value judgments. Include these:

- At **or before** placement, record that you asked for information on the child’s history of abuse reports before deciding whether to take the placement — and record what reply you were given, by whom, when, how. (continued on next page)

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>WFAPA Hoodies</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Available</b></p> <p>We are again offering our WFAPA hoodies for sale. They are available in navy, black and gray and have our logo with “Wisconsin Foster &amp; Adoptive Parents Association” on the upper left chest. Prices are \$26 and \$36 depending on size. See page 8 for an order form. They will be delivered to the next conference.</p> <div style="text-align: center;">  </div>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>PROM DRESSES</b></p> <p>If you have prom dresses that you’d like to donate to WFAPA, we will be storing these items with President Sherry Benson. Often girls in foster care want to attend their prom, but the funds for a new, fancy dress just aren’t there.</p> <p>We are now beginning to collect prom dresses to be donated to those who need them. To donate, send items to Sherry. If you have a foster child in need of a dress, contact any FASPP worker for more information.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>A NEW START</b></p> <p>WFAPA started a new program this spring and this is how it works:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◇ An item will be “called for” in both the newsletter and on the website a couple months prior to conference</li> <li>◇ The item will then be brought to conference by each participant</li> <li>◇ WFAPA will then connect with an agency or organization within the community where the conference is being held (such as Green Lake for our next conference)</li> </ul> <p>All items donated will be presented as a “gift” to their clientele as a token for a “new start.”</p> <p>The “called for” items for the Spring Conference in Sheboygan will be announced at a later date.</p>
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- Your House rules. Safety plan. List of duties of each foster parent.
- Arrangements for child/youth when you have meetings away from child.
- Changes in your work schedule. Changes in your family, such as a person moving into or leaving the home.
- Your request to agency to learn their procedures for allegations and the procedures of the investigating agency.
- Also record when you received copies of this information and which agency will investigate any reports —name, address, phone, FAX, email.
- Any unusual events involving child, child behaviors or comments; child's daily functioning, interactions with others in foster home. Information from school, medical, dental, therapy, court, appointments; briefly how they worked out.
- Any unusual incident or injury – even if appears minor. Full detail on what occurred; who was present [witness]. When. Detail on your follow-up communication to agency, tribe, physician, school, date, names of persons & contact information.
- Communications &/or contact with child's parents or other family members – specify who, when, nature of the interaction, for how long, child reactions before or after their interaction with bio family. Perhaps record a dated list of cards or pictures received; also, your or child's phone calls with parents.
- Communications & contact with caseworkers or other professionals who deal with the child -- specify who, when, nature of the interaction.
- Your requests for help with child's behavior; request for respite; requests for removal of child. To whom? How? What response? Put request, dated, into writing & keep copy.
- Request to take the child on a trip or vacation out of town – to whom; where; what response?
- Major physical damage to the foster home; harm to self or own children. When. How did it occur? Actions taken. Who has been notified & when? What response?
- Emergencies or special circumstances. Actions taken. Who has been notified.

**During/after a child protection investigation:**

- Continue or start a log of every conversation or activity related to the investigation, including the person calling, the agency they work for, phone, FAX, email, and what was said. If your messages are not returned, record that.
- Ask for all documents-- such as a copy of the complaint or report of maltreatment and the safety plan established for the child.
- Keep track in writing of Wisconsin timelines for conducting the investigation and when you requested or received information.
- Record if anyone from a local foster care support group/ association or agency offered information, support and assistance
- Record & date your request that the child welfare agency provide you at least one contact person in the agency to give basic information about the investigation process. Record and date of response to your request – who; what information received or not.
- Record the investigation – name the investigator, time, contact information; what s/he said; what you were asked (and not asked); what you replied and/or offered.
- If your own children were interviewed separately, record their accounts of those interviews.
- Write up your version of the event/situation, adding relevant information you were not asked or did not give. Send a copy and keep a copy.

**Conclusion**

Documenting your life as a foster family is both good child welfare practice and a helpful preparation for child maltreatment allegations involving your home. Improving how foster families are treated once maltreatment is alleged also helps foster children. So, you can see this protection for your family as a form of child advocacy. Best wishes.

Resources for foster parents can be found on the WFAPA website at: [www.wfapa.org](http://www.wfapa.org).

# WFAPA Membership Form

Name \_\_\_\_\_

County, State or Agency Name (that licenses you) \_\_\_\_\_

Your Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Fax \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Additional Donation: \_\_\_ \$5 \_\_\_ \$10 \_\_\_ \$25 \_\_\_ \$50 \_\_\_ Other \_\_\_\_\_

Would you be willing to help out with WFAPA? \_\_\_ yes \_\_\_ no

For Individual memberships, return this form and \$7.00 to:

Michelle & Larry Ward \* W7018 Discovery Dr. \* Fond du Lac, WI 54937 Email: imboard2@charter.net

**GO GREEN!** \_\_\_ I'd like to "go green" and paperless by receiving my newsletter online only.

SWEATSHIRT ORDER:

Amount Enclosed: \_\_\_\_\_

Color: Black \_\_\_\_, Gray \_\_\_\_, Navy \_\_\_\_

Size: S \_\_\_\_, M \_\_\_\_, L \_\_\_\_, XL \_\_\_\_ (\$26.00) 2X \_\_\_\_, 3X \_\_\_\_, 4X \_\_\_\_, 5X \_\_\_\_ (\$36.00)

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