

## Director's Cut

Welcome Adoptive Parents,

Whether you have previously adopted, going through the adoption process now or just considering adopting, we are very pleased to have you as our community partners and welcome you to our first quarterly newsletter, "Cornerstone". How did we come up with the name, "Cornerstone," you might ask? Well, while we were discussing the newsletter and attempting to come up with something catchy, many fancy ideas were floated, each more elaborate than the rest, until one person just said, "How about simply calling it "Cornerstone" because the family and home is the cornerstone of everything that makes a person who he or she is. Needless to say, we liked it. We hope Cornerstone is both entertaining and informational for you. However, we don't want this to be solely what we want to write about. We would like some ideas from you, the adoptive parent, as to what it is you would like to read about. Suggest a topic and we will do our best to gather information and get it out to you. Or, if you know information that you would like to share with others in the community, please send it in to us and we will review it and possibly insert it into our next newsletter.

As per our website, Youth and Family Alternatives, Inc. (YFA) is a private, community-based, not-for-profit organization incorporated in 1970 and founded on the principles of preventing child abuse, strengthening families and strengthening communities. YFA is governed by a voluntary Board of Directors that is actively engaged in the communities of YFA's service area, and committed to the organization's mission of developing collaborative partnerships with families and communities. YFA began providing child welfare case management and adoption services in 2004 and is also a network provider of child welfare services with Eckerd Community Alternatives, Inc.; Sarasota Family YMCA, Inc.; Hillsborough Kids, Inc.; Family Services of Metro Orlando, Inc. and as of 1 December 2009 with Kids Central, Inc.

Since our transition into adoptions within Circuit 5, which consists of Marion, Lake, Sumter, Hernando and Citrus Counties, we have completed over 176 adoptions and are looking forward to partnering with Kids Central, Inc, the Centers, Children's Home Society as well as all of the foster and adoptive families in all of the various communities. Without you, we would not be a success.

Glenn Henson

Director of Adoptions for Circuit 5  
Youth and Family Alternatives

## SPOTLIGHT ON SUCCESS

If I had to write a success story about one child and her adventure toward adoption, Tiffany is the obvious choice.

Having been adopted previously in the 1990's in New York, Tiffany re-entered the dependency system in 2005, this time in Florida, when her adoptive caregiver could no longer cope with Tiffany's difficult behaviors. After Tiffany had been thrust back into the dependency system, her behaviors worsened and she began acting out on a seemingly regular basis for vari-

Written By: Rick Manuel

ous reasons, and during those early years, a lot of effort went into trying to stabilize Tiffany in her placements. Tiffany was placed in several higher level placement situations in an effort to stabilize her behavior, and she moved around numerous times with many placement disruptions. All in all, Tiffany had approximately 24 different placements during her time in the Florida dependency system,

despite the efforts of so many individuals that worked tirelessly to ensure Tiffany's safety and well-being. Tiffany's primary support system until her case was staffed to adoptions included her former dependency caseworker, Katie Robinson, who had been Tiffany's caseworker for the longest duration of time, and her Guardian ad Litem, Jeannie Romas, who had also been on Tiffany's case from the onset. Around 2008, Katie Robinson located Tiffany's biological siblings in the State of

# Shining Stars



**Lacy**

Lacy is a bright, energetic teenager who loves dolphins and doing “girl stuff.” She hopes to one day be a naval officer, lawyer or a veterinarian. Lacy loves to read and her favorite writer is J.K. Rowlings, author of the Harry Potter Series. When Lacy is not reading she is singing, dancing or riding horses. Lacy loves to laugh and enjoys engaging others in conversation. Lacy hopes for a family that loves to have fun together and that will go to interesting places. She

describes her perfect family as “loved ones who will give me hugs when I come home from school and people who will always want to be around and will never want to leave.” Lacy would do best in a home where she is the only child and can express herself in a safe environment. For more information on Lacy, please contact Elizabeth Torres at 352-253-5625.

Autumn is a spunky teen whose life is centered on her love for animals. Following graduation from high school Autumn hopes to continue her education and become a veterinarian. Her favorite bird is the Macaw, a close relative to the Parrot. She loves a variety of foods with her favorite being steak or chips and dip. She also loves to collect recipes and cook and would love to have a forever family that would allow her the opportunity to ex-

plore her culinary interests in the kitchen. Autumn is very outgoing and loves to talk to anyone who will listen. She would benefit from a family who has consistency and positive role modeling skills. Autumn would also benefit from a family that is willing to allow her to express herself when she perceives an injustice. For more information about Autumn please contact Renee Miracle at 352-547-3750.

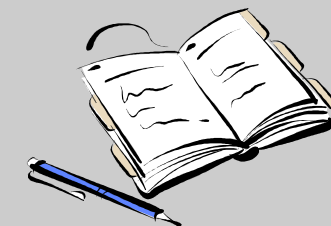
**Autumn**



As this is our inaugural newsletter, I would first like to describe what you might expect in this section. This is where we will be listing upcoming training events that may be of interest to you, either from Youth and Family Alternatives and our partners Kids Central Inc, The Centers and Children’s Home Society or from an outside agency. These training events will be mainly geared toward child welfare, but at times we may list other activities and trainings that might be helpful in everyday life or an activity within your communities that may be fun for your family. We would also like to hear from you if you know of an event or activity that you feel may be of interest. If you know of anything that you would like to share, please send everything you to [david.coppula@kidscentralinc.org](mailto:david.coppula@kidscentralinc.org) and I will make sure we add them to the newsletter. Please, no garage sales.

This section will also contain resources and information you all may find useful, some fun, some serious and some just down right interesting.

The following people were adopted: Art Linkletter, Bo Diddley, Edgar Allan Poe, Faith Hill, Jessie Jackson, John Hancock, Presidents Gerald Ford and William Clinton. These are just a few famous adop-



Please go to our website, [www.yfaadoptions.com](http://www.yfaadoptions.com) for more information or contact me, Dave Coppula, at 352-277-5860

## Other Resources for Adoption Information:

American Adoption Congress  
 AdoptUSKids.org  
 Child Welfare Information Gateway  
 National Resource Center for Special Needs Adoption  
 North American Council on Adoptable Children  
 Children Awaiting Parents, Inc. CAPS  
 Florida Adoption Information Center  
 Florida's Adoption Reunion Registry  
 Florida Adoption Information  
 Dave Thomas Foundation For Adoption  
 Child Welfare League of America  
 National Adoption Center  
 One Church, One Child

**TRAININGS AND RESOURCES**

## EMPLOYEE OF THE QUARTER

Congratulations to Rick Manuel, YFA Adoptions first employee of the quarter. Rick started as an Adoptions Supervisor with Youth and Family Alternatives, Inc. on December 1, 2009 at the beginning of the adoption contract in Circuit 5. Rick started with a group of workers with no experience in adoptions case management. With his calm nature, patience, dedication, and hard work, he has helped the Hernando/Citrus unit lead the circuit in adoption finalizations. In a sometimes very stressful job, Rick is able to keep stress from escalating. His door is always open to offer assistance, help problem solve, or to just listen. He is always willing to



Congratulations to Rick and all of the YFA adoption employees for all of their hard work and dedication.

help his team members with court hearings, paperwork, home visits, transportation of children, family assessments, etc. Rick has shown that he cares about his employees and the children and families we provide services to. Rick has taken a group of individuals and helped mold them into a team that is accomplishing great goals.



## POST ADOPTION SERVICES

### Peer to Peer Adoption Support Groups:

YFA is proud to announce the formation of Peer to Peer Adoption Support Groups in Marion, Lake, Citrus and Hernando Counties. The support groups provide members with an opportunity to share parenting strategies, support others, find support, and help each other cope with the challenges they face. The groups meet once a month and are not designed to be group therapy or a treatment group. All of the groups are facilitated by the Clinical Coordinator, Lori Ann Floramo however are run by the members. The Adoption Support Groups are open to those who have an approved home study or who have already adopted through the Florida Foster Care system. **To RSVP for a group in your area please contact LoriAnn at 352-547-3750 or by email at [LoriAnn.Floramo@kidscentralinc.org](mailto:LoriAnn.Floramo@kidscentralinc.org).**

We are also looking for feedback regarding starting an adopted youth support group for children 10 to 17 years of age. If you have a child interested in attending meetings please contact LoriAnn at 352-547-3750.

#### Lake County:

##### Location:

First United Methodist Church of Tavares  
600 W. Ianthe St  
Tavares, FL 32778

##### When:

Fourth Monday of each Month

#### Hernando County:

##### Location:

First United Methodist Church of Spring Hill  
9344 Spring Hill Drive  
Spring Hill, FL 34608

##### When:

Second Monday of each Month

#### Marion County:

##### Location:

Immaculate Heart of Mary Catholic Church  
10670 S.E. Maricamp Road  
Ocala, FL 34472

##### When:

Second Thursday of each Month

#### Citrus County:

##### Location:

First United Methodist Church of Inverness  
3896 S Pleasant Grove Rd  
Inverness, FL 34452

##### When:

First Monday of each Month

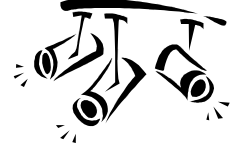
You **Must** RSVP  
For The Groups





## Spotlight on Success

Continued from page 1



New York, and Tiffany began to rebuild a sibling relationship with them and their adopted family. Tiffany's contact with her siblings continues to this day and is truly a success story and an integral reason why Tiffany's behaviors finally began to improve for the better.

In early December 2009, Tiffany's case was staffed over to the Hernando-Citrus County adoption unit with Youth and Family Alternatives. The case was assigned to Adoption Case Manager Betty Lou Gervais, who in conjunction with

Adoption Recruiter Maria Buckley, began an aggressive recruitment campaign to locate a suitable adoptive home for Tiffany. Within a few short months, interest was generated in Tiffany due to Maria and Betty Lou's efforts, and Tiffany was ultimately placed in an adoptive home. Tiffany's long journey through the dependency system toward adoption had finally reached its final destination as Tiffany would not be moved to another placement again. Tiffany, after years on her long road toward adoption, had reached her final stop. On July 21<sup>st</sup>, 2010, Tiffany was adopted. A little more than

one month shy of her 18<sup>th</sup> birthday, Tiffany had found the forever parent that she had always cried out for and that so many people had worked so hard over these last five years to ensure would be found. Present in the audience at the Hernando County Courthouse on Tiffany's special day were Betty Lou Gervais, Katie Robinson, Jeannie Romas, Toni Andriole, and so many other individuals that had worked with Tiffany over the years until her long road toward adoption finally reached its end. Congratulations Tiffany and we wish you and your family nothing but happiness in your future.

## Keeping Kids Safe on Halloween

Pedestrian injuries are the most common injuries to children on Halloween night. Here are some tips to keep your little witches and big goblins safe while they enjoy a fun evening of trick or treating.

### Remind your children to:

- Stay in a group and communicate where they will be going.
- Remain on well-lit streets and always use the sidewalk.
- If no sidewalk is available, walk at the far edge of the roadway facing traffic.
- Never cut across yards or use alleys.
- Never cross between parked cars
- Don't assume the right of way. Motorists may have trouble seeing Trick-or-Treaters. Just because one car stops, doesn't mean others will!



# HAVE A SPOOKY HALLOWEEN



## Youth and Family Alternatives, Inc. Locations

**Marion County Office:**  
1017 NE 14th Street  
Ocala, FL 34470  
(352) 547-3750

**Corporate Office:**  
7524 Plathe Road  
New Port Richey, FL 34653  
(727) 835-4166

**Hernando/Citrus Office:**  
19245 Cortez Blvd  
Brooksville, FL 34601  
(352) 277-5860

**Lake/Sumter County Office:**  
880 Duncan Drive  
Tavares, FL 32778  
(352) 253-5625