



PARTNERS

THE NEWSLETTER FOR WISCONSIN'S ADOPTIVE & FOSTER FAMILIES



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FROM THE CORNER OFFICE

Dear Friends,

As fall approaches, I find myself sitting down to write this letter—the final one. The *Partners* newsletter was first published in 1997. At the time, we mailed out each edition and the mailing list grew to total over 20,000 at one point! As technology changed, the way people looked for and received information changed and we, too, changed by creating PDFs instead of printed pieces. Over the past year, as we have examined how people come to us for information, we have come to the conclusion that the *Partners* newsletter time has come and gone.

As you'll see in the following pages, we have launched some big projects and we are continuing to maintain and update two robust information center websites filled with tips, resources, lists, links, and information at your fingertips. And all of that is just the tip of the iceberg.

We want you to know that even as we make small changes with the changing times, we are still here for you and your family—no matter what. I invite you to continue reaching out to us sharing your thoughts and needs. Thank you for allowing us to be a part of your family's journey—we look forward to continuing with you for many more years to come.

Best wishes,

Oriana Carey

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MAKING AN IMPACT: YESTERDAY, TODAY, AND TOMORROW

As an organization, we work every day to help ensure that every child has a champion—someone who loves them, cheers them on, and believes in them no matter what—and that every champion has the support they need to feel strong and resilient. As we put together this final issue of the *Partners* newsletter, we took a look back through our stories and connections to see what families and workers in the worlds of adoption and foster care thought about their interactions with the Coalition.



"I have called over 10 different agencies and you are the first that really listened to me and provided me with resources." —Foster parent

One story came to mind right away: a mom who signed up for our parent and teen conference, *This is My Story*, with her daughter, Justine. Justine was not looking forward to the conference. She made sure that her mom knew that she did not want to be going, that it was a waste of her time, that no one else could possibly know or understand how she felt. On the way to the conference, she sat with her body turned away from her mother, her arms tightly folded across her chest. At this conference, the parents have a separate session from the teens. As the teens were talking between themselves and their group facilitator, another young lady began to share details about her story. Justine listened closely . . . it was almost exactly like what she had experienced. By the end of the day, Justine and her new friend, Kate, were nearly inseparable. Justine's mom, Sue, told us that, on the ride home, Justine called her "Mom" for the first time ever. She thanked Sue for taking her to the conference and told her that she loved her.

And we thought about Terri and her husband, who started taking Coalition webinars as new foster parents a number of years back. They have since fostered 12 children and adopted two and say they still learn something new each time. "One of the things we love most about Coalition trainings is that they offer reassurance that there isn't something wrong with us, our home, or our family. There are those rough days when you get looks or comments from other parents, and you wonder if



"I know it sounds funny, but I think of the Coalition as extended family. I always feel better after I've talked to someone there. Some days I'm not even looking for answers—I just want someone to talk things through with. They always listen." —H., Adoptive Parent

you've failed as a parent. The webinars are a reminder that we're working with kids who have experienced trauma. We are doing our best and they are doing their best. As we better understand that, we're able to help our kids build healthy, loving relationships."

Every time we hear stories like Sue and Justine's and Terri and her husband's we feel honored that families like yours have invited us to walk alongside you as you take your journeys of foster care, relative caregiving, or adoption. And we want you to know that, while *Partners* may no longer be one of our resources, we still have many ways to inspire, inform, and support you and your whole family!



"Coalition staff are committed to their mission and they go above and beyond to support, encourage, and to share their resources and expertise with foster families and child welfare professionals. They are an invaluable resource for foster youth, foster families, and the public and private agencies." —John Brell, Social Worker, St. Croix County Children's Services



CHAMPION CLASSROOMS

Early one Monday morning, our office staff got started for the day. One of the first things we do is check for any messages and emails that may have come in over the weekend. On this particular day, there was a note of desperation in a caller's voice.

"I don't know what to do. I don't know if I can do this. My son . . . I've tried everything I know and nothing's working. I saw online that you have training in three weeks, and I want to sign up, but what do I do now?"

That call was a very clear message: families needed more.

Just this summer, our training program here at the Coalition grew to include a critical new element: on-demand training. We launched our updated platform, called Champion Classrooms, to help ensure that, when you have a tough day, you don't have to wait for the next scheduled training. Instead, you can access information, resources, and support exactly when you need it most.

We are continuing all of our training programming—the webinars, workshops, conferences, and connection opportunities that you have come to depend on and appreciate—and we've added the on-demand courses, recorded webinars, and even audio versions of some of our tip sheets. Register now at <https://www.championclassrooms.org> to view the entire course catalog, access supportive and educational resources, and stay up-to-date on new and upcoming opportunities.



COALITION *Connection*

Want quick, easy access to the resources you need to be a champion? Our weekly email newsletter, *Coalition Connection*, contains all the latest information on programs, events, resources, tips, and more from the Coalition. Sign up from any of our websites—wifostercareandadoption.org, wiadopt.org, coalitionforccyf.org—or simply text CCYF to 22828.

SPOTLIGHT: WISCONSIN ADOPTION WEBSITE

The Wisconsin Adoption website is your go-to resource for information about all types of adoption.

Here's a quick overview of what you'll find at wiadopt.org:

- Resources and support information for birth parents
- Information about the different types of adoption and how to get started
- How to make adoption more affordable
- Lists of licensed adoption agencies in Wisconsin and Wisconsin adoption attorneys
- Reputable websites related to adoption
- Gallery of Wisconsin children and youth waiting for “no matter what” families



NO MATTER WHAT



We talk to a lot of parents and caregivers at various places along their journeys of fostering or adopting. What we hear a lot, is some version of, “does anyone else feel this way?” Sometimes everything can feel difficult and overwhelming and you may not know where to turn.

When you feel this way, we want you to know that there is a place to turn to. Our new website, **No Matter What: Stories of Hope and Resilience** is a place to go and hear from other families who have been through tough times. They’ve been knocked down and have felt afraid and have bravely volunteered to share their vulnerable moments because, like us, they feel like no one should be alone on their journeys.

We invite you to check out the site at <https://nomatterwhatfamilies.org>. And we hope these videos inspire you to ask for help when you need it because you aren’t alone. The Coalition is here.



SPOTLIGHT: FOSTER CARE AND ADOPTION RESOURCE CENTER WEBSITE

You have a heart for children. This website has what you need to make fostering, adoption, or kinship care a success! The Foster Care and Adoption Resource Center is a valuable guide to any new or current foster family, families considering adopting a child whom they are currently fostering, relative and kinship families, and foster care licensing staff.

Here's a quick overview of what you'll find at wifostercareandadoption.org:

- Information about how to get started as a foster parent
- Family support group list
- Resources for relative caregivers
- Informative resources for youth in foster care
- Reliable links to foster care-related websites
- Free lending library with books, DVDs, downloadable tip sheets, newsletters, and more
- Opportunities for training and ongoing learning



"The Coalition's Foster Care and Adoption Resource Center website is my go-to. The Coalition is a great support to me and I continue to share their website with foster parents." —Dawn Douglas-Mellom, Foster Care Consultant



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Family of websites:

coalitionforccyf.org
wiadopt.org
wifostercareandadoption.org

An umbrella of services over
foster care and adoption;
information and referral;
recruitment; training,
education and support for
families and professionals.



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