

## Spirit Lake Tribal Social Services

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Dear Foster Parents,

I hope that your holidays were plenty and full of joy. In this letter you will find important dates, upcoming trainings and/or (community) events. You will also find some useful information each month about foster care. I hope in the future this letter becomes more handy to you all rather than the multiple mail outs. I hope you are all liking the newsletters 😊

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## Rebuilding Trust

“When a child experiences or witnesses any form of emotional or physical abuse, their trust can become shattered. Trauma survivors may have trouble trusting their close family relationships or friendships. The symptoms of trauma can cause problems with trust, closeness, communication, and problem solving. These problems may affect the way the survivor acts with others”. Dr. Sue offers 8 steps to help children heal from trauma and learn to build trust again in the following

### 8 Tips to Rebuild Trust:

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Traumatized children do not believe the world is safe or that adults will protect them. They often live in fear of what could happen next. All

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## Upcoming Events

### January 14

Appreciation Dinner Blue Building 5-7pm

### January 16

Hot Coco & Activities SLTSS

### January 28

Support Group SLTSS

### February 12

Unity Training

### February 13

Story Teller: Mary Louise

### February 26

**Unity Training: Mandatory**

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One tree can start a forest;  
One smile can begin a  
friendship;  
One hand can lift a soul;  
One word can frame a goal;  
One candle can wipe out  
darkness;  
One laugh can conquer gloom;  
One hope can raise your  
spirits;  
One touch can show you care;  
One life can make the  
difference;  
Be that ONE today!!!!

children need calm and caring caregivers, but especially traumatized children. Remaining calm when your child is agitated and teaching calming techniques reduces the anxiety and emotional arousal that affects their mood, sleep, and concentration.

Children need to learn that adults can be dependable, caring, patient and loving following a divorce, bullying incident or [child abuse](#). Parents can become their children's secure base by being emotionally available, sensitive, responsive and helpful. Parents can learn when not to push and when to hold back. Most of all, parents need to feel confident that they can help their child move through their healing process.

Here are 8 steps to help your child heal from trauma and learn to build trust again:

1. Talk with your child: communication builds trust and is a constructive coping skill; find times they are likely to talk; start the conversation – let them know you are interested.
2. Listen: listen to their thoughts, feelings, and point of view with empathy – don't interrupt, judge or criticize; this opens the door to a healing relationship.
3. Accept feelings: anxiety, irritability, anger and depression are normal reactions to loss and trauma and will subside over time in a safe environment.
4. Be patient and supportive: it takes time to come to terms with trauma and grieve losses; each child's path to recovery is unique; offer comfort and reassurance and be available when they are ready.
5. Encourage healthy expression: children act-out distress negatively without constructive outlets; foster the use of talking, art, play, music, sports, journaling and other healthy methods.
6. Maintain consistency: structure and routines enhance security and stability; provide appropriate rules, expectations, boundaries and consequences.
7. Promote a sense of control: children feel helpless and powerless in response to trauma; help them believe they can successfully deal with challenges via constructive activities (e.g., hobbies, sports, clubs, volunteering).
8. Make home a safe place: your home should be a ["safe haven,"](#) a place of comfort, security and peace; stress and chaos provokes traumatic reactions; minimize conflict and discipline with calmness and love.

Rebuilding trust takes time, patience and a great deal of strength on every parent's part. Remember your dreams for your child can be rebuilt. They just may look a bit different.

Dr. Sue

# Fostering Communications

## More Important News

### Fire Safety

Fire Safety Training is now available online on the CFSTC website. Both the two-hour initial training along with the one-hour refresher are provided. We encourage you to take a look at the Fire Safety as well as peek at the training calendar for other training opportunities.

<http://und.edu/centers/children-and-family-services-training-center/online-training/fire-safety-training.cfm>

### Warning Signs

Many teenagers turn to prescription drugs as they perceive them to be less dangerous than illegal drugs. Even in ND, prescription drug abuse is on the rise and the risks can be deadly.

The following video highlights this risk through a personal story while offering tools to help one protect teens from entering into prescription drug use.

<http://notinmyhouse.drugfree.org/experts.aspx>

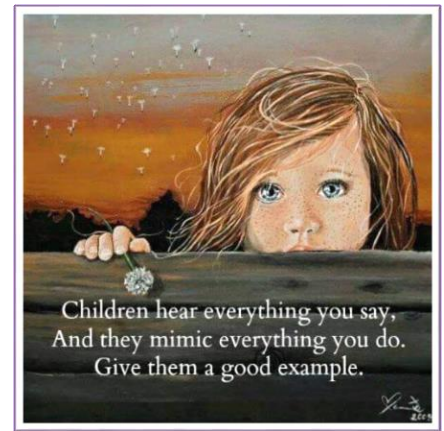
Lengthy information detailing how different types of prescription drugs are abused and examples of the side effects within the following link:

<http://www.drugfreeworld.org/drugfacts/prescription-drugs.html>

One way to keep your teen safe is being aware of the lingo that teens are using today.

Here is a drug guide for parents to learn the facts about a variety of drugs:

<http://theparenttoolkit.org/media/detail/drug-guide-for-parents-learn-the-facts-to-keep-your-teen-safe>



## In the Community

### Native American Crafts:

Location: CCCC: Natural Resource Rm., Date: 1/26/16 @ 5-7pm.

### Venison Sausage Making:

Location: CCCC: Natural Resource Rm., Date: 1/12/2016, Time: 5-7p.

### Jelly Making Workshop:

Location: CCCC: Natural Resource Rm., Date: 1/14/2015, Time: 5-7p.

### Support Group Adult:

Location: Dakota Baptist Church: Date: every Tuesday, Time: 7-8:30p.

### Nurturing Heart Classes:

Location: Sweetwater School, Date: every Wednesday, Time: 5-8p.

### New Beginnings/New

**Boundaires** @ CCCC, 1/23/16 @ 8am-7pm

### Snowshoeing: Sully's Hill

Date: 1/9/&/23/2016@ 12-4p

# Fostering Communications

## Impactful Words

There are often times when one may wonder if the children in our care hear what we say or know how we feel about them. We may even wonder if we are making a difference in their lives or if they will remember us down the road, long after they have left our home. According to one former foster youth, there are four messages that had great impact on his life and as he said made him “feel awesome”.

### 4 Impactful Things Foster Parents Can Say To Foster Kids

After I wrote about 5 things I disliked hearing as a foster kid, I was asked a great question: what things DID it help me to hear through foster care. I had a set of foster parents that really made an impact on me with the way they treated me during my time with them. Many of the things they said not only helped me through foster care, but also left an impact on me as I’ve become an adult. With that said here are 4 awesome things, which as a foster kid especially, made me feel awesome:

#### **“I’m proud of you and you should be proud too!”**

**I hadn’t really heard this too much at home. It was a lot of feeling like I wasn’t good enough. It was weird at first because I didn’t understand their level of sincerity. Were they being sarcastic? Soon I learned they were genuine and it made me feel great that I did something that pleased them. Often times I feel kids in foster care, after all they have been through, forget to be proud of themselves or think “they aren’t good enough.” As a foster parent remember to build up your child and teach them to be proud of themselves. They may leave your home and not be taught this by anyone else.**

#### **“You are loved.” or “There are people who care about you.”**

It’s an awesome thing to hear as a foster kid that you’re loved and cared for. Even if you don’t have that relationship where you feel comfortable using the “L” word, let your foster kids know that you care about them. This may throw them off at first or they may not give you the reaction back that you might expect. Some kids in foster care have never heard these words before or have been told the opposite. Many people couldn’t imagine this being true but I don’t think some people don’t realize the realities of the crazy, dysfunctional things that can go on behind closed doors. For me I thought it was simple, if my own parents didn’t care for me then how could these people? Once I realized that my foster parents or others that said this were really genuine it made a huge impact. During my time at Coyote Hill, I was taught about God and that He loved me as well. If your foster child is from the same religious background and that is something everyone in the case is comfortable with, learning about the love of God can make a big impact.

# Fostering Communications

## “Can you say you gave it your best?”

This is an awesome question to ask your foster kids for several reasons. Many foster kids have had to deal with crazy reactions from their parents when they've “done things wrong” or “not up to par”. They may be used to verbal or physical lashing. This is a non confrontational way of getting your foster child to give you feedback on what they are thinking. It may throw them off a bit by your reaction. As foster parents, this gives you both insight into what the child is thinking and judge where to go with the conversation next. This also allows the child to evaluate themselves. It might be it really is their best or maybe they need help to do better. Maybe they know they can do better and they just need to be called on it. As a foster kid it was a non confrontational way for me to reflect on what I've done. With help from foster parents, foster children need to strive for success and learn to get in the habit of putting forth their best effort every go.

## “What are your thoughts?”

**I wasn't used to being able to give my opinion or feelings at home. It was something that I had trouble with and still have trouble with now. I had grown accustomed to going on with what I was told and that was that. I was there to make others happy. When I was able to share my opinion or feelings on things it felt great. Even if things didn't go as I would have like it was still nice that my foster parents took the time to consider what my thoughts were on the situation. You don't have to get your way to have the satisfaction of being heard. Some foster kids need to be taught to share their opinions or feelings with others. This will help them be happier in life and build better relationships in the future.**

Kind, uplifting words are only a foundation of course. Foster parents must accompany their words with actions that reflect what they are saying. Foster parents are the most important part of a foster child's while they are in foster care. A few kind words from a foster parent can possibly last a life time to a foster child.

## Fostering Self-Esteem

Young children face big challenges every day. Simple items such as getting dressed or picking up their toys can feel like big hurdles to little ones. These are typical milestones through a child's development. Children in foster care have a number of challenges that they have to overcome, which is why it is so important to help them build the skills they need to become resilient. “With self-confidence and the ability to express themselves, little ones will be able to handle whatever may come their way...” Sesame Street has created new resources to provide caregivers with daily activities and positive routines to help children (ages 2-5) build resiliency skills.

<http://www.sesamestreet.org/parents/topicsandactivities/toolkits/challenges>

# Fostering Communications

## Someday, One of My Children is Going to Invent Faster Than Light Speed Travel

**By: Jim Hooge, President of the ND Foster and Adoptive Association**

You are probably familiar with the terms: Hyperspace, hyperdrive, warp drive, tesseract, worm holes, even suspended animation. There are probably many others, because every science fiction story that involves travel across the vast distances of the universe must have some technique to shorten the time of the trip. Either the writer shortens the time of travel or lengthens the life span of the protagonists. Someday, one of my kids will invent this. I don't know who, but I hope.

I mentioned this idea to two of my children, who are in their twenty-somethings. One said, "Oh, you aren't really talking about inventing that, you really mean that you hope for your children to have stable jobs, have good relationships, and are able to view themselves as successful?" Another said "So, what will you think if one of your kids really does invent such space travel, but does not have the other stuff, like a stable job, and good relationships, will you still view her as successful?" I was surprised how quickly the focus came to standards and particularly the possibility of missing the standards. How quickly it comes to pleasing or disappointment.

We naturally have a lot of expectations and standards for our children. We measure behavior and accomplishments, we reward some, and we consequence others. We are taught new techniques as parents to achieve the goals we or others set for our kids. We look at the statistics for shooting percentages, or running time around the track. We are delighted when they make their first basket and then turn and look for us in the crowd. We set curfews and remind children to brush their teeth. We hope that their teeth last a long time and don't cause pain. We want them to be polite and yet to be aggressive enough to make their wants and needs known to others. We do genuinely want them to be successful.

But I think there is another job for us as parents, and that is to Hope for our kids. Hope with a capital H. Hope is one of the 'big assignments', but it is something we may not think about much. I hope for my children. I hope for them today, and I hope for them much farther into the future. I think there is a need for this that does not have specific steps or measureable outcomes. It is simply Hope. It is often a challenge to Hope, because there are many difficulties. We can get blocked by those difficulties. The immediacy of those problems can cloud our view. And yet there needs to be an overarching hope in us that is perceived by those in our care. Hope believes all things. I can even hope that one of my children will help us all to travel very fast and go very far. So I will hope for my kids...and I won't be disappointed, because that is something I choose to do for them.

Do Well

