



Illinois Families Now & Forever®

Families by DCFS Foster Care, Adoption & Guardianship



Message from the DCFS acting director

May is Foster Parent Appreciation Month, a time normally filled with social gathering to honor and celebrate the thousands of families across the state who are providing a temporary safe haven to abused and neglected children.

Although we cannot hold in-person events this year, I can still take the time to say *thank you*.

Thank you for making the selfless decision to share your home and your family with a child whose life has been turned upside-down.

Thank you for loving and caring for a child who may have never felt loved or cared for before.

And most importantly, thank you for your unwavering commitment to the children in your care during this chaotic time.

You truly embody the department's core mission of keeping children safe.

I admire you; and I thank you.

Marc D. Smith
Acting Director

May is Foster Parent Appreciation Month



*Governor Pritzker's official proclamation
setting May as Foster Parent Appreciation Month*

Parent Cafés go virtual

by Julie Cebulski

Since 2012 the nonprofit agency Be Strong Families has hosted Parent Cafés to help families heal and grow stronger. The cafés, first introduced to birth families and now offered to foster families, have grown in popularity across the state as participants are able to share their experiences, struggles and successes in a comfortable and safe environment.

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Now & Forever**

J B Pritzker, Governor

Marc D Smith, DCFS Acting Director

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Address Changes:

Families must notify their licensing representative, who will notify DCFS.

Archive Issues:

www2.illinois.gov/DCFS

(English and Spanish available)

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Parent Cafés go virtual (contd)

In March when in-person gatherings became unsafe due to COVID-19, Be Strong Families acted quickly to meet the needs of families who were sheltering in place by offering daily webinars and virtual cafés around the state using the Zoom platform.

“Now more than ever, it’s important to help families cope successfully with stressful events and to maintain holistic vitality. Having kids at home, uncertain employment situations and social distancing all put pressure on fragile families. The same tools we use to stay strong in everyday life are the ones we need to intensify using now,” said Be Strong Families CEO Katthe Wolf.

Virtual Cafés immediately became popular and are now being offered regularly across the state. Though families miss seeing one another in person, there have been many positive outcomes.

“Families who live far away from a physical meeting location find Virtual Cafés easier and more convenient with their schedule,” said Darla Knipe, a foster parent support specialist in Vermilion County. Families find the virtual meetings are bringing people together they may have never met otherwise and are receiving even more information.

TO REGISTER for a Virtual Foster Parent Café, foster parents can contact their foster parent support specialist or send an email to info@bestrongfamilies.net.