



Volume 12 Issue 6

JUNE 2016

**Kids Grow Better in Families**



## June is National Iced Tea Month!

**Yes, really. Just for fun, here is a fun strawberry iced tea recipe:**

1. Pour four cups of boiling water into a pitcher (heat proof) over two teabags for three to five minutes. Remove teabags.
2. Add in 1/3 cup superfine sugar, or powdered sugar, and stir.
3. Add in 1/4 cup lemon juice.
4. Puree a pint of fresh strawberries and use a sieve (this will remove the seeds), then when the tea is cool, add it in.
5. Put strawberry tea in the fridge for at least 30 minutes.

**Enjoy!**

**Executive Director:**  
Jermaine H. Johnson, MS, LMFT

**Director of Operations:**  
Marianne L. Werth, LCSW

**GATE Coordinator for Independent Living Group (ILG)/TFC Program**

**Supervisor:**  
Gina Park, LCSW

**TFC Program Supervisor:**  
Christina Halstead, LCSW

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## GREETINGS FROM LESLIE



*Hello Treatment Foster Families,*

It's June? Already? As 2016 is running full steam ahead, I wanted to take the time to thank you for attending the Foster Parent Appreciation Night event at PJ Skidoos. I hope everyone had a fantastic time, and ate well! Also, your contribution to the mission and vision of AFGC is noticed and appreciated. Mainly, thank you for all you do for the kids in foster care, your phenomenal support, and your willingness to go with the flow with all the changes afoot! Your support will help us expand and develop new programs for the youth in our care, and we hope to have your input in future meetings about these programs. Remember what Jermaine stated—\$1,000.00 to anyone who will refer someone as a foster parent.

This year will bring many changes, including training opportunities, support networks, information sessions, and more therapeutic messages for you. After all, parenting takes more than love, it takes skills too. Besides the skills, we all need support. Teenagers are not the easiest people to work with, and sometimes a little self-care goes a long way. Remember that [www.fosterparentcollege.com](http://www.fosterparentcollege.com) offers plenty of training opportunities. You are more than welcome to complete these and let me know. It will count towards your mandatory 24 hours of training per year.

Summer is very near. Remember your sunscreen, mosquito repellent, and that you have support only a phone call away. If you have some fun ideas for foster parents (karaoke, white elephant parties, or other events in mind), please let us know! The more support we have for another, the better our summer will be!

*Best regards,*

*Leslie*



## WHEN TO SAY “NO”

### “NO”

As parents, foster parents, and caregivers to teenagers, we can expect them to: lie to us, be bombarded by peer pressures and not see things clearly, and act like teenagers do (messy rooms, boredom, and acting up). Summer time is hardest, especially if a teen is bored or is going through a rough time. Are all kids up to no good? No, but even good kids make bad decisions.

By saying “no,” we are not being a kill-joy, or depriving the kids. Unfortunately, the word “no” has become unacceptable in teen lingo. We say it, they hear it, then reject the notion. Can’t you just hear them saying, “No?! What’s that? Are you actually saying no to me?”

When we do say “no,” most kids retort by saying, “Why don’t you trust me?” It’s ok to say, “Would you trust you?” Often times, kids will just smile and drop the conversation. Trust is not a bargaining tool.

Your job is to protect them, not trust them. The teenage brain is still developing, and making rational choices can be difficult when there are multiple pressures for the teenager (friends, bio-parents, school). In fact, here are some facts to ponder:

50% of high school seniors are sexually active

Alcohol related car accidents kill 4,700 teenagers a year

32% of high school students in Fairfax County report symptoms of depression

17% of high school student in Fairfax County reported suicidal thoughts

Moodiness, tantrums, and friendship concerns have long been part of growing up. These days, teenagers have different types of concerns however, such as: online addiction, sexting, self-harm,

aggression, overt sexual behaviors, and learning about matters through internet access.

So here is the thing. It’s ok to say no. It’s also ok to consider possibilities. For example, is your teen going over to their boyfriend/girlfriend’s house? Do not trust them if they say a parent is around, nor trust them in regards to knowing to bring protection. Also, use parental controls. You have the power to do so on your televisions or anything else you are paying for in your house. You also have a voice—use with family specialists and social workers regarding the safety of your teen. If you believe your teen is watching inappropriate shows, sexting, or doing something inappropriate, it is ok to speak up.

Many teenagers state that having a heart-to-heart about subjects such as peer pressure, intimacy, and drugs is better than just getting in trouble. They may give you a hassle about talking about these things, but they do listen. They do hear. Here’s the thing. Having an open communication is better than just saying no. Why? Because we can tell a teen to say “no” to something, or we say no to something, but we don’t then teach the teens how to say “no” to someone else. So a guy at a party gives someone a drink of alcohol and the teen takes it. Why? Because they didn’t know how to say no. Seems illogical, but it’s true all the same. When you say “no” and tell a teen why, they learn from you. Keep an eye, an ear, and trust yourself to say “no” when you need to say no. Also trust that this gives a moral lesson when you explain your reasons. As always, you can call and discuss decisions to say “no” with me or your family specialist.



## Summer Fun

For the first time, AFGC will not have the summer program up and running. Usually, teens were able to go bowling, swimming, horseback riding, go to theme parks, and hang out with other teens. AFGC does realize that summer is hard on foster parents, and therefore, a list of activities has been put together if your teen is bored. Hopefully, you have been in touch with your family specialist as well as your social worker to find camps or other places for your foster youth to enjoy. If not, here are some ideas:

Laser Tag

Bowling

Paintball

Movies

Swimming

Go to a carnival

Go to theme parks

Have water balloon fights

Do Color Runs

Camp in the back yard

Go to Flight in Springfield

Volunteer

Go to Inflight in Ashburn

Get a job

Netflix Binge

Write music/videos and put them on YouTube

Go on a day trip somewhere

Have gaming competitions

Have Karaoke competitions

Have spa days

Be a tourist in DC

Learn how to cook

Cook: Spaghetti Tacos or Grill a pizza

Hike in the Shenandoah or Great Falls

Go fishing

Wash cars and earn money

Keeping foster teens active and having fun can also keep them out of trouble. If there is a way to carpool, network, or support your fellow foster parents, the summer is the perfect time to do so! These kids are creative, so it might help to get them to write down ideas too.

No matter what, have a safe and happy summer!

## Did You Know....?

### Zika Virus and Tick Bites

The Zika Virus is caught by mosquitos carrying the virus. This summer, use mosquito repellent. The symptoms of Zika are: Fever, rash, joint pain, and conjunctivitis (pink eye). Facts about the Asian tiger mosquito that transmits the **ZIKA VIRUS:**

- ☐☐ **They *ONLY* breed in standing water in man-made containers**
- ☐☐ **They *DO NOT* breed in ponds, puddles or any standing water with a soil substrate**
- ☐☐ **They exist throughout Virginia**
- ☐☐ **They bite during the day and fly close to the ground, making pesticide spraying ineffective**
- ☐☐ **They typically spend their entire lives within a 200-yard radius of their birthplace**
- ☐☐ **Larvae develop into adults in approximately 10 days**

**It is therefore very important that once a week you check your property for mosquito breeding sites, and ensure the safety and wellbeing of your family!**

### TICKS and LYME

Did you know that by getting rid of Opossums, ticks will thrive? Opossums are the only natural predator ticks have. If you get bit by a tick and have a rash, see a doctor immediately. Lyme is a great imitator, so rashes, joint pain, headaches, and fatigue can seem like the flu, or like an autoimmune disease. Make sure you check for ticks every day.

**Be safe this summer!**

## In The Spotlight!

# HAPPY BIRTHDAY to

*Leada Barksdale* this month on June 9th and  
*Stephanie Beekman* on June 18th!



Happy Birthday to the both of you, and we here at AFGC wish you the best!

## MEET A FAMILY SPECIALIST...

Meet *Tania Alfaro*, Family Specialist/Therapist/OP Coord.



Tania started at AFGC in 2015. She is still going to school to obtain her Master's degree, is very down-to-earth, and has a passion for the kids she works with. Her birthday is in July!

What you might not know is that Tania is an adrenaline junkie. She went skydiving last year, loves to hike, and loves to have adventures. She has also stated she loves to sleep, and is an avid Foodie who loves to try new places around the area.

Tania wants you to know that the biggest barriers between teens and foster parents seem to be in lack of communication, and taking things personally when teens are just being teens. She says that patience truly is a virtue, and that their behaviors are a direct result of historical trauma and lack of skills in communication. Most of the time, teens act out without intent to hurt feelings.

Tania's advice is to remember that she is a connector, or someone who can provide support for all members of the team to help resolve any issues that arise. She wants you to know she is there for you.

**NEXT MONTH: JUNE Foster Parent Birthdays, and Meet another Family Specialist**

## Earn Training Credits by reading the Newsletter.

Take advantage of this opportunity to make sure you satisfy the 24 hour per year requirement.

**This month's newsletter is a little bit different, so please answer the following questions and return to Yancy Gonzalez. The fax number is 703-425-9206.** You can also fill this out online now through [www.afgcinc.com](http://www.afgcinc.com) website, under the heading of **NEWS**.

Rate yourself "S" and your family specialist "FS" a "5" if the words are always present in transactions with each other. Use "4" for usually, "3" for much of the time, "2" for sometimes, and "1" for usually not.

5: Most Always Present      4: Usually      3: Much of the time      2: Sometimes      1: Usually not

Self = S / Family Specialist = FS **Please fill this out and return it as soon as possible!**

- \_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_ Friendly and positive with each other and others.
- \_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_ Listens calmly and respectfully.
- \_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_ Sensitive to and accepting of cultural, ethnic, and lifestyle differences.
- \_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_ Does what is expected in a timely manner, and is prepared to do more than what is expected.
- \_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_ Is consistent and predictable.
- \_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_ Is interested in the problems, concerns, and difficulties that are going on in the family.
- \_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_ Has helpful and cooperative approach.
- \_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_ Keeps commitments.
- \_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_ Returns phone calls in a timely manner.
- \_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_ Is respectful with treatment team members, teachers, and community members.

True "T" or False "F"

- \_\_\_\_\_ You can get Lyme disease from a tick bite.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Saying "no" to a teen will cause irreparable harm to their fragile egos.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Tania loves to read.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Teens can be active this summer.



Name \_\_\_\_\_

**Adolescent & Family Growth Center, Inc.**

8000 Forbes Place  
Springfield, VA 22151  
Phone: 703-425-9200  
Fax: 703-425-9206  
Email: [afgc@afgcinc.com](mailto:afgc@afgcinc.com)

**We're on the Web!**

[www.afgcinc.com](http://www.afgcinc.com)



CREDIBILITY • INTEGRITY • ACHIEVEMENT

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**JUNE 2016**

**JUNE 16th – CPR Training**

**JUNE 17th – AFGC is closed**

**July 4th – Independence Day**

**Web sites that offer Foster Parent Training Certificates:**

[www.Fosterparenttraining.com](http://www.Fosterparenttraining.com)

[www.fosterparentcollege.com](http://www.fosterparentcollege.com)

[www.Fosterparents.com](http://www.Fosterparents.com)