



**Stronger families build
stronger communities**



Back to School

For Many Families, Class Meets in Home

Greetings! Summer vacation is almost over and the **new school year** is just ahead. For many students in Michigan, that means learning from home. In this issue, **two Spaulding parents who also are educators** share important insights with us. We also give **kudos to some very special members of the Spaulding team**, both staff and volunteers. We spotlight an important and timely webinar on Aug. 26: "[Transracial Adoption and the Black Lives Matter Movement.](#)" You'll also find more news, including details on a new publication that helps build connections with parents from **QIC-AG**.

Two Amazing Educator-Parents

Teaching, Mothering & Caregiving from Home



We interviewed two Spaulding foster/adoptive parents who also are professional educators for insight about their work remote teaching while also teaching their own kids during the national emergency posed by COVID-19. Extraordinary individuals in normal circumstances, these foster/adoptive mothers also are teachers educating their classes from their home while also educating their own children at home. To protect their identities and families, we have called them "Ms. D" and "Ms. K."

Question: What's it like to be a parent and a teacher doing both from home?

Ms. D: "Having to teach at home online and having a certain amount of class instruction each day, and then finding time to oversee two kids at home, one a senior, the other an 8th grader, while keeping up with their assignments and schedules can be stressful at times. But, we're working it out."

When classes return in the fall, Ms. D, a Detroit Public School District special education teacher, expects things to run more smoothly. Teachers have received training for using software programs needed to reach students and parents. Most students and families also have received needed technology, including computers, over the summer.

Ms. K: "I teach special education in a suburban district. Many saw what the district was doing in response to the pandemic as a giant failure. I did not see it that way. While there was a huge learning curve, teachers had to be creative and flexible. The summer has given us time to examine where we are and to prepare for the school year ahead."

"The national emergency has been a perfect storm hitting the schools. We need to remember, though, the entire nation is experiencing this. Your child won't be

further behind than other kids and this is just a portion of their educational careers. There will be other parts. And we'll get through it all, working together."

Tips for Parents from Teachers with School-Age Kids at Home

Ms. K:

Change Your Mindset -- Everyone in the nation is going through this together. Your child won't be at a disadvantage from this experience.

Let's Not Judge -- Not ourselves nor other parents for their daily choices -- those that succeed and those that fall short.

Set up a Dedicated Learning Space -- That means space, seating, lighting and know that they need breaks from screen time, often too.

Protect your Foster Child's Privacy -- Ask teachers that sessions where your child is on screen not be taped. Applies also to health care provider and other service providers working online such as Physical Therapy, Occupational Therapy, Speech Therapy, and Mental Health services.

Ask for help from your school -- Walk through the programs or clarify. "I don't know what you are asking for here." If you are struggling with the technology (and we all are) ask if you could come in person. Tell the teacher: "Show Me or watch me to see if I am doing this correctly."

Ms. D:

Kids Need a Routine --To accomplish the schoolwork they need to do, but also for mental and physical health, a daily routine must be established at the beginning of the school year.

Get To Know Your Kids' Schedule -- You are going to be involved more than in past years. Learn their classes, follow their assignments and know what's due when. Make time to sit in a few times a week during virtual sessions.

Get the Tools -- Make sure you have enough computers so they can participate in real time with teachers. Again, you may have to advocate with schools to get the necessary equipment or devices.

Enlist Older Kids -- Older kids should be encouraged to help younger kids with their learning. It creates bonds, helps you and reinforces what they've learned in years past.

Education is a Priority -- Let everyone in the house know that the new year might mean rearranging rooms and spaces, as well as reallocating resources and establishing times conducive to study.

Mom: The Tutor also Learns



This summer Spaulding launched the **Caring Community Online Volunteer Tutoring Program** to assist students who are now in remote and online school. Funded through the UPS “**Caring Community Volunteer Program**” grant, student volunteers were recruited by **Maya Lis**, also a young volunteer who created an online yoga program.

Presently 17 volunteer tutors are active tutoring 20 children in foster care. The tutors include middle and high school students, who live in Florida, wanted to play a role in helping others during COVID.

One young tutor’s mom reported her daughter, **Lizzie**, not only enjoys the

program, but it is helping her excel, as well, during this difficult time. Lizzie is in the photo above, between her mom and dad.

“Lizzie is a 4.0 student, but with the sudden shutdown, social distancing which we are still practicing due to underlying health issues that put my husband and myself at more of a risk for the coronavirus, and trying to balance the new way of learning at home we were all worn out,” the mother wrote.

“However, a few weeks after the orientation and with school winding down not only did Lizzie have more free time, I could see she also needed something to look forward to for the summer considering her YMCA swim team was cancelled due to the coronavirus...”

“I know (Lizzie) is getting as much out of it as (her pupil) **Olivia**. She looks forward to the planning and enjoys digging through my teaching materials for books or props. Olivia is just as sweet as can be and they seem to get along very well.”

As the new year begins, both tutor and student will continue to study together, a relationship both families appreciate and encourage, mom wrote.

“Thank you so much for organizing this,” she added. “I know it has benefited everyone involved, at least in our case.”

Aug. 26 Webinar:

Transracial Adoption and the Black Lives Matter Movement

Discover Ways to Help Multiracial Families Adapt and Thrive



Get insight on how racial identity, the struggle for justice, and societal perceptions combine to impact adoption and foster parenting in a live panel discussion webcast on Aug. 26, “**Transracial Adoption and the Black Lives Matter Movement.**”

The program panel is composed of three transracial adoptees who currently serve in the fields of adoption, foster parenting and child welfare. The panelists are **April Dinwoodie**, Spaulding Consultant and Founder of Adoptment, a mentoring program that matches foster youth with adopted adults; **Alexis Oberdorfer**, President of Children’s Home Society of Minnesota; and **Marcus Schmidt**, a Mentor for Adoptment. **Sharonlyn Harrison, Ph.D.**, President/CEO, Public Research and Evaluation Services, will lead the discussion as moderator.

“We would like to serve as a voice for children and parents, to help them internalize and understand some of the proactive things they can do to help and protect their children,” **April Dinwoodie** said. “We want to help parents who are eager to absorb the new dimensions posed by the BLM movement.”

Black Lives Matter is an organization opposed to systemic racism and police brutality in the United States. Advocating nonviolence and peaceful civil disobedience, the organization began as a social movement in 2013 after the shooting death of 17-year-old **Trayvon Martin** in Florida.

“Parents have typically taken a transactional approach to matters of race in the family as opposed to a transformational approach,” Ms. Dinwoodie said. “Transactional examples can be when the family goes to the African Festival or

takes a child to a Black barber for a haircut. By themselves, these undertakings are important, but may seem to happen in isolation or in ways that are unconnected from one another."

"When parents operate under a transformational system, their home has Black art on the wall and Black people coming over to eat at the house. It's not a one-day event or a month-long observance, it is part of the family's normal life. It is a commitment to cultural awakening day in and day out throughout the year."

Presented by **Spaulding for Children**, the program is open to child welfare professionals, parents and caregivers, and all interested in helping children grow in a safe and nurturing nation. Pre-registration is required. [Click here for details and to sign up.](#)

Issues raised by race and racial identity – and limited human perception and understanding – can make all the difference in the world, particularly in the life of a child. They also can make all the difference for communities and nations.

Spaulding's First *Summer Fun Day*

Since the COVID-19 pandemic hit, people and companies all across the United States have had to pause and pivot their plans. Spaulding is not exempt in changing to meet the new situation.

For more than five decades, we have hosted a completely free event for our families annually; an **Ice Cream Social**, in the past nine years, at the Red Oaks Waterpark. For the safety of our families and staff, we had to cancel this year. However, we couldn't let the summer go by



without showing our families how much we love and support them.

Summer Fun Day started with a \$1,000 donation from **Community Financial Credit Union's** *Summer of Sharing* program.

We then reached out to our community for donations to put together a **Spaulding Summer Fun Beach Bag!** Several donors stepped up to the call for action and chose items from our Wish Lists on Target and Amazon websites, while others gave monetary or tangible items and either sent or dropped them by the office. **Mutual of America** donated ice cream and **Veoneer** not only gave monetarily, they gave 30 pail and shovel sets to our families. Included in each bag were bubbles, water balloons, chalk, a jump rope, a S'mores making kit, and so much more!. So, we put on a drive-thru bag pick-up event on August 1, where our families came to Spaulding, picked up their bags, picked out ice cream, and then had the option for brand new clothing that was donated by **Rock on Main** in Plymouth.

We couldn't have held this drive-thru event without the help of volunteers from **Brown & Brown, UPS, Spaulding Board of Directors, and Spaulding staff** and their **families**.

On Friday, August 7, 2020, the **First Ever Spaulding Summer Fun Day** launched live on the Spaulding Facebook page. Videos and photos were posted throughout the day of staff members showing how to enjoy the activities included in the Summer Fun Beach Bags. Families were then encouraged to comment and share photos of their participation. Families who participated also were entered in a raffle contest to win a basket full of goodies to continue the fun! There were 5 winners!

The 2020 Summer Fun Day event truly was a great time filled with fun. Plus, our families shared that they loved seeing the silly side of Spaulding staff!

Our Helpers for Summer Fun



UPS has a long history with Spaulding, from volunteering at the Ice Cream Social to sponsoring a grant for a volunteer program at the Agency. To help us with the Summer Fun Day, UPS solicited and purchased items for the families, had four volunteers assisting with the items in the warehouse to deliver to Spaulding. The Saturday prior, there also were 2 UPS volunteers at Spaulding offices in Southfield helping our staff distribute the Beach bags and pass out ice cream. After the distribution day, UPS delivered 60 bags to the families' homes so they could participate!

"UPS is always willing to jump in and help in the community, especially when it involves children," **Brenda Sapp**, of UPS, said.

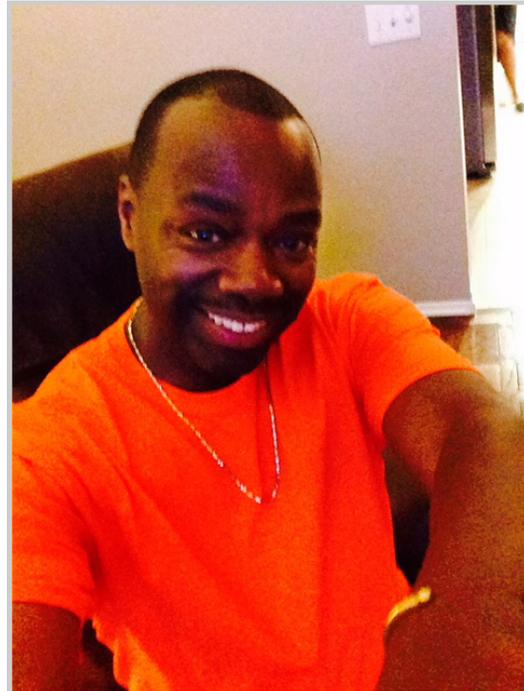
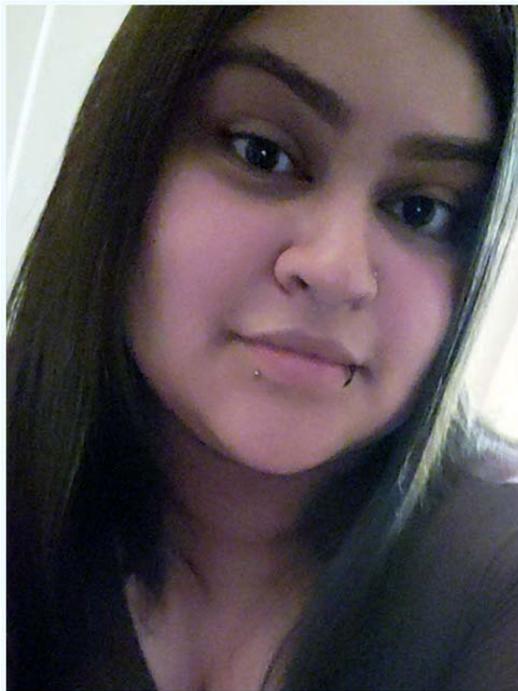
Three of **Brown and Brown's** staff also volunteered with Beach Bag Distribution. **Tyler Vandenberghe**, **Jason Bellant** and **Tricia Rawlins**, Marketing & Carrier Relations Leader. Tricia brought **Tyler** and **Cody**, two of her grandsons to volunteer, children helping children. When they left, both said how much fun that was and asked if they can do it again next year.

"Project 400 is Brown & Brown of Michigan's commitment to create a Culture of Caring through volunteering at least 400 hours a year," Tricia Rawlins said.

"It was our pleasure to support Spaulding for Children and help at the Summer Fun Day event. Everyone worked hard to get things set up for the arrival of the families. When the first family drove up, we all shouted and cheered, 'We have our first family!' It was a very rewarding feeling and experience. We look forward to partnering with Spaulding for Children again soon!"

Holding the Fort

Spaulding's Own Indispensable Heroes



Two Spaulding staff members have played key roles in keeping the doors open and the operations running during the national emergency posed by COVID-19.

Receptionist **Kimberly Hernandez** and Children's Case Aid / Transportation Supervisor **Charles Bragg** held down the Agency covering the phones, printing, faxes, accepting packages and receiving visitors during the height of the pandemic, alternating days while most other staff worked from home.

"It's been a little hectic at times," Ms. Hernandez said. "We are here to help

others. During the pandemic, we've come to show how people here really provide good care. The staff may not be in the office, but they are still working to support the children and families. The thing is, we all work together, and we always find ways to make it work."

For Mr. Bragg, making things work often meant being on the road to transport children or to deliver needed services. During the pandemic, however, he also has manned the fort, helping ensure that the office meets CDC guidelines. He also still finds ways to help the children and families Spaulding serves.

"I call it mobile therapy," Mr. Bragg said. "Sometimes a child can feel sensitive or get emotional due to a move or a visit to a doctor. I talk with them and listen. And I get them at ease."

Mr. Bragg has had to apply his principles over the phone in calls with children, and foster and adoptive parents.

"Parents have called and asked about ideas and activities to do with their kids – or sometimes they call and say they just need a break. I'll get on the phone with them and give them some ideas about getting a break in the routine or just to clear their minds.

"One thing: When we have a family in crisis, we call come together. And, like a family, we put our differences aside and we get it done."

Angela Johnson

A Commitment to Children

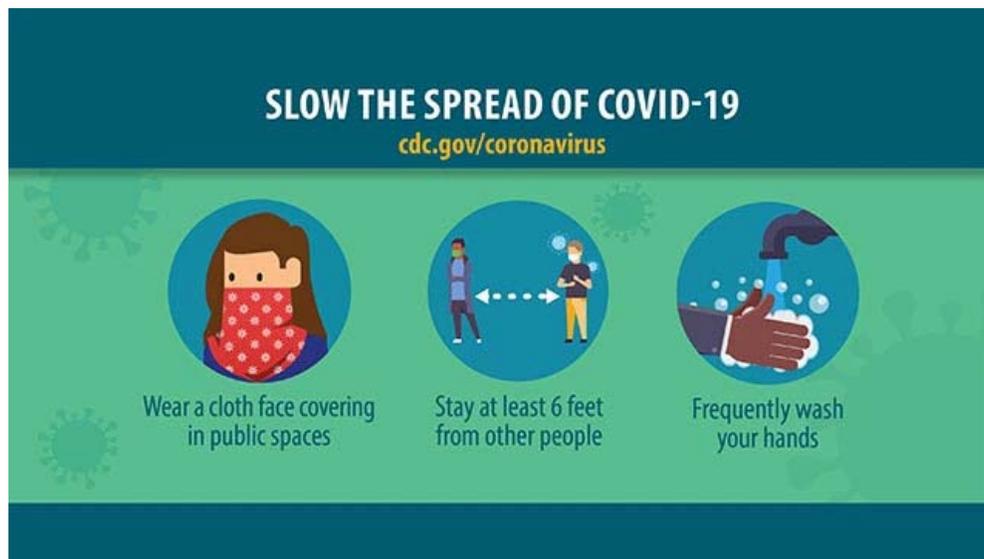


The **Michigan Department of Health and Human Services** gave kudos to **Angela Johnson**, a foster care worker at Spaulding for Children, who recently showed her commitment by obtaining services for a child in turmoil.

MDHHS reported: "Angela's consistent communication with the local DHHS office, Wayne County North Central, and their staff resulted in a partnership of agencies advocating for the necessary services for the child. Between Wayne County, the RPU (Regional Placement Unit), BSC 5 (Business Service Center 5), CSA (Children's Services Agency), Wayne County CMH (Community Mental Health), The Guidance Center and Troy Beaumont Hospital, this child had a team of advocates on her side."

Congratulations, Ms. Johnson! Your wisdom, compassion and perseverance truly made all the difference in the world for a child.

How to Help Your Kids Stay Healthy in These Uncertain Times



When our children look to us for guidance during times of crisis, they also gauge our responses to the national emergency posed by COVID-19 and learn how to pattern their own reactions. And while the last several months been stressful on all of us, we must do what we can to help our youngest recognize and process some of that stress.

1. **Help your kids identify how they are feeling and validate their feelings.**
2. **Talk about COVID-19 in an age-appropriate way to help educate kids on how to stay safe.**
3. **Allow for “big” emotions and recognize that if adults are feeling overwhelmed, it is likely the kids in the family are also feeling it too.**

Michigan Heart Gallery

[Attend Grand Opening Virtually on Sept. 12](#)



The **Michigan Heart Gallery** is a traveling photographic exhibit featuring older youth in foster care who are awaiting a forever family through adoption. The 2020 Michigan Heart Gallery Grand Opening hosted by [Michigan Adoption Resource Exchange](#) takes place virtually on Saturday, Sept., beginning at 12 noon. In addition to the main event, participants can utilize a Q&A session with some of MARE's **Adoption Navigators**.

[Click here to register.](#)

Now Available from QIC-AG

New Parent Outreach Paper Released

Prioritizing and Planning Parent Outreach for Adoptive and Guardianship Families: QIC-tips For Success is a new paper focused on an essential and sometimes overlooked element of implementation. The paper compiles seven lessons learned and “QIC-tips” collected from teams in the eight partner sites as they implemented the different interventions in support of adoptive and guardianship families.



Lesson #1: Successful parent outreach begins with a well-thought-out and deliberate strategy and documented plan

Lesson #2: Create messages that will resonate with your target population

Lesson #3: How messages are delivered matters

Lesson #4: Who delivers the message matters

Lesson #5: Cultural Appropriateness and Authenticity are Must-Haves

Lesson #6: Messages must be clear, concise, and include details to help families make good decisions

Lesson #7: Parent outreach requires resources and bandwidth

Building connections with parents through thoughtful and proactive outreach with relevant information, delivered consistently and in many different ways will help to create the conditions for parents to confidently engage in the services and supports their families may need when they need them.

[Click here for details in PDF format:](#) *"Prioritizing and Planning Parent Outreach for Adoptive and Guardianship Families: QIC-tips For Success."*

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foster parent!**

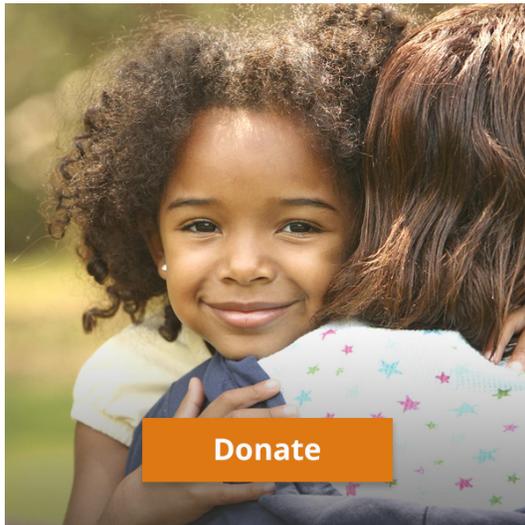
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