

# Fostering Foundations

DCFS Quarterly Newsletter for Foster and Relative/Kin Caregivers



## More regional Community Collaboratives begin

With the start of the new year has come more regional Meet & Greets with Sec. Matlock and foster caregivers, and Foster Care Community Collaboratives will soon begin in the Covington and Lafayette regions.

The collaborative meetings bring together foster caregivers, community partners and DCFS staff members to learn about and meet caregivers' needs. They began with a group in Shreveport and, since the beginning of 2024, have expanded to the Baton Rouge, Thibodaux, Monroe, Alexandria, and Covington regions.

Covington will hold its first Community Collaborative on March 19. Lafayette Region foster caregivers will have the chance to meet with Sec. Matlock on Friday, April 4, and should form their collaborative soon after. The goal is to have these community-driven meetings in all nine regions of the state by the end of this year.

If you want to be involved in your region's meeting, or if you want to be part of starting a collaborative in your region, please reach out to your Foster Care Recruiter. You can find the list of of recruiters at [dcfs.la/bethere](https://dcfs.la/bethere).

### Join Us!

*Current monthly schedule of Collaboratives:*

#### **Baton Rouge**

first Tuesday, 11:30 a.m. - 1 p.m.

EBR Parish Library

7111 Goodwood Ave., Baton Rouge, 70806

#### **Monroe**

second Wednesday, 12 - 1 p.m.

First West Church

500 Pine St., Webber Rm, West Monroe,

71292 (park & enter at 3rd St.)

#### **Alexandria**

third Monday, 6 - 7:30 p.m.

Kingsville Baptist Church

3911 Monroe Hwy., Ball, 71405

#### **Thibodaux**

third Tuesday, 9:30 - 11 a.m.

House of Prayer Church

2229 Hwy. 3185, Thibodaux, 70301

*First Collaborative meeting:*

#### **Covington**

Wednesday, March 19, 1 - 2:30 p.m.

Bogalusa YMCA

411 Ave. B, Bogalusa, 70427

### Thank You!

To the churches and community organizations who have hosted our recent regional meetings, we appreciate your hospitality!

#### **Alexandria:**

Kingsville Baptist Church

#### **Baton Rouge:**

East Baton Rouge Parish

Library System

#### **Covington:**

Bogalusa YMCA

Our Lady of Angels Hospital

Southeastern LA University

#### **Monroe:**

First West Church

#### **Shreveport:**

Broadmoor Baptist Church

#### **Thibodaux:**

House of Prayer

## State Recruitment and Support Manager, Final Consultant for Foster Caregiver Recruitment and Support Named

Joel Hooper has been named the new State Recruitment and Support Manager, overseeing the efforts of the recruiters in the nine regions of the state.

Joel has worked for DCFS Child Welfare for 25 years in a variety of roles, but has spent the majority of his career working directly with foster caregivers. He is excited to help his team continue to build relationships with foster caregivers and community stakeholders in order to provide children in foster care with safe, nurturing environments where they can heal, learn healthy ways to get their needs met, repair attachments and establish new ones.

Additionally, Courtney Young Sanders has been named the Shreveport Region Foster Care Consultant for Recruitment and Support.

- **Courtney Young Sanders (Shreveport)**  
[Courtney.Young.DCFS@la.gov](mailto:Courtney.Young.DCFS@la.gov)

Courtney began with DCFS in 2012 and has experience working in Foster Care, Home Development, Adoptions, and Supervision. She has a Masters in Social Work and currently holds her LMSW. She is also a TBRI Practitioner and QPI Champion. Courtney is excited to recruit and support foster parents and work with community partners in the Shreveport Region.

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## Get to Know Your Trainer: Lisa Kaichen

As a certified foster parent, you've probably been trained by Lisa Kaichen through the Louisiana Child Welfare Training Academy (LCWTA). Lisa has a long history in the social work field and passion for the work that shines through each session she does. Here's a little bit more of her story.

Lisa's first professional social work job was in 1974 as the Executive Director of the Sanctuary, a shelter and counseling program for runaway youth in Michigan. It was there that she learned about the realities of teens who experienced sexual abuse, bullying at school, or who spent time in and out of behavioral health facilities.

From there, she became director of Children's Charter of the Courts of Michigan, a statewide children's advocacy program. She got involved with Prevent Child Abuse America and Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA), both of which were brand new in the early 1980s. Lisa chaired the Coleman Commission on Permanency Planning, organized the first national conference on permanency planning, and was asked to set up one of the first Children's Trust Funds in the nation.

Her work inspired her to become a mom through adoption in 1988, to a five-year-old named Angela. Lisa was one of the first single parents allowed to adopt a pre-school aged child. In the early 90s she married, had another daughter, Erika, and moved to Louisiana.



*Lisa (left) with her daughter, Erika*

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## Resources for Foster Families

- [DCFS' Foster Caregiver Resources webpage](#) has been updated so that you can easily access agency forms, review policy, and find other resources. Take a look and let us know what other items you'd like to see on this page.
- Our [Foster Caregiver Fact Sheet](#) answers some of our most frequently asked questions, and it has been updated to include information about daycare enrollment
- The Louisiana Foster Care Support Organization (FCSO) has a [statewide list of foster care resources](#).
- FCSO also offers [Foster Care Mentors](#) who support other foster caregivers at any stage of their journey in any region of the state.
- [UNITE Ministries' Foster Friendly](#) app is one way for foster caregivers to stay aware of resources and benefits available to foster families.
- [Mobile Crisis Response Services](#) for children through the Louisiana Department of Health are currently available in every region except Shreveport and Monroe.
- [988](#) offers free, confidential, emergency emotional support, 24/7, via call, text, or chat.
- [Siblings Supporting Siblings](#) holds support groups for children ages 12 to 17 covering topics related to foster care. For meeting days and times, contact Hannah Beth Nielsen at 318-884-2580 or [hnielsen593@gmail.com](mailto:hnielsen593@gmail.com).
- [Homework Louisiana](#) provides free academic tutoring for students from kindergarten through 12th grade, help preparing for standardized tests (including the ACT and SAT), and job search assistance for adults.

## Lisa Kaichen, continued

Without a local support system, Lisa reached out to the Parenting Center of West St. Tammany, who hired her to write a proposal to develop a First Steps Program in two local hospitals. In partnership with Prevent Child Abuse Louisiana, the program began, with volunteers visiting new moms in the hospital to find out how they were doing and what they needed and to offer resources. Lisa also developed a Mentor Moms Program.

Lisa started her consulting firm, ResourceWorks, in 1990. She provided start-up consulting for a children's advocacy and forensic interviewing program in Covington that is now Hope House, as well as an early Head Start Program near Covington High School.

Through much of the 1990s Lisa contracted with DCFS to provide in-service training for foster and adoptive parents. In the mid-90s she worked with Susan Shaffette to develop the St. Tammany Commission on Families, the State Plans for Child Abuse Prevention for the Louisiana Children's Trust Fund, and the Together We Can

Conference. She also taught at the University of New Orleans and the Tulane School of Social Work.

Over the last four years, Lisa has developed courses and served as a trainer for the LCWTA. She says that this work feels like going home. "I love learning from other adults with decades of experience as foster parents. I

love supporting people who have such great impact on the lives and future of children," Lisa said.

Lisa's younger daughter, Erika Brady Henderson, LMSW, now co-leads foster parent training with her. Erika is also an equine assisted therapist working with

children who have experienced trauma. As Lisa approaches 50 years in the field, she is pouring into Erika as her legacy, hoping that foster caregiver training classes will carry on far into the future.

Some of the [LCWTA upcoming sessions](#) to be led by Lisa and Erika include, *Raising Good Humans*, *Art that Builds Self-Esteem*, *School-Age Child Development*, and *Lifebooks that Heal*.

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