New staff in the Fairbanks ACRF office!

Rachel Hanft, Family Support Specialist

After earning her B.S. in Natural Resources at Colorado State University, Rachel Hanft moved to Bettles, Alaska in 2000 for a summer position with Sourdough Outfitters. She loved the area so much that she chose to stay on for winter help as an assistant guide for dog sledding trips; and she stayed in Bettles for the next 9 ½ years. In small, remote communities, residents tend to wear many hats. She worked part-time as a teacher aide/librarian at the Bettles School, until the school shut down from low enrollment numbers. Rachel then shifted over to the National Park Service in 2002, working as the Visitor Use Assistant/Office Manager for Gates of the Arctic National Park & Preserve. Rachel was the City Clerk for the City of Bettles, Postmaster Leave Replacement at the Bettles Post Office, Janitor for the Bettles Weather Station and Elder Nutrition Cook/Coordinator for the local Tribe. Rachel also volunteered her time as the river reader for the National Weather Service, the snow pillow surveyor for the USDA, and air quality monitor for the National Atmospheric Deposition Program. Rachel and her husband Max also ran a dog sledding/guiding business out of Bettles for 6+ years, with their 45 sled dogs. There are very little resources in Bettles and so Rachel also learned a lot about self-reliance and innovation; especially when it came to thawing a septic system and cooking without having access to the right ingredients.

Rachel and her husband Max were married March 31, 2002 at -10 in the Brooks Range. Their first child, Dietrich was born Dec 2005. In 2006, Rachel decided she wanted a more community-minded and family-oriented position. She became the Tribal Family Youth Specialist for the Evansville Tribal Council and its Tribal Members, while still maintaining her various other part-time positions. In 2009, Rachel and Max’s son Darwin was born. Max and Rachel decided the house was too small and that it was time to move closer to realities, I mean amenities. In fall 2009, Rachel, and her family moved to Fairbanks. Rachel continued work from home for almost two years. Rachel received an e-mail posting for the Family Support Specialist with ACRF and decided to inquire further. She is very excited to be a part of the team and looks forward to the new perspective of working with and educating Resource Families.

Julia Holmes, Project Assistant

Hi, my name is Julia Holmes. I am the new Project Assistant in the Fairbanks office. I am married to a wonderful man and we have two boys, Jared, who is 17 and Johnathan who is 9. My family and I recently moved back to Alaska from California, my husband Chris was born and raised in North Pole where his grandfather homesteaded. I grew up in California where I spent 8 years of my childhood in foster care. After I became emancipated I worked several different jobs until I began working as a certified nursing assistant nearly 9 years ago which evolved in to working with mentally and physically disabled adults over the past several years. When we made the decision to move back to Alaska I heard of a position open with ACRF and decided to apply long distance. I am overjoyed to have this opportunity to work as the project assistant. I have only been here a short time and I am so pleased to work with such a great agency. I have always enjoyed helping others. I feel like I have a chance in this agency to give my heart away to others who are in tough situations to help overcome their challenges in positive ways.
**OCS Licensing Requirement for Resource Families...**

Licensed foster homes are required to have 15 hours of training per licensing year for a two-parent home and 10 hours for a single parent home. Report all your training to ACRF. To find out how many hours you’ve completed or to find out ways to complete your training hours, contact your local ACRF office or call toll-free 1-800-478-7307.

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**Fairbanks Training:**

Unless otherwise noted, the trainings in Fairbanks are held at ACRF: 815 Second Ave, STE 101 Pre-registration is REQUIRED, call 479-7307 to register.

**OCTOBER:**
- On-Call (Emergency Shelter Care) Orientation
  
  Wednesday, October 26th from 6:00 – 7:30pm

**NOVEMBER:**
- Core Training for Resource Families
  
  Must attend all four sessions to fill the Core Training requirement.
  
  Tuesday, November 8th; Wednesday, November 9th; Tuesday, November 15th; and Wednesday, November 16th from 6:00 – 9:00pm.

  **Adoption Information Session**
  
  This session will be held at the Noel Wien Library. For more information call 456-4729.

  **Thursday, November 10th** from 6:00 – 8:30 pm

- Adoption Orientation
  
  Tuesday, November 22nd from 11:30am – 1:00pm

**DECEMBER:**
- Adoption Orientation
  
  Tuesday, December 6th from 11:30am – 1:00pm and again on
  
  Tuesday, December 20th from 6:00 – 7:30pm

  **Building Families through Adoption**
  
  Must attend all three sessions.

  **Thursday, December 8th; Tuesday, December 13th and Thursday, December 15th** from 5:30 – 9:30pm

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**Fairbanks Support Groups:**

- **Grands Raising Great Children Support Group.** Participation is FREE. Limited supervised children’s activities are available during the group. Please pre-register if you are bringing your children. Group meets the second Monday of every month from 6:30–8pm, at RCPC, 726 26th AVE, Suite 2 in Fairbanks. Call 456-2866 for more information.

- **A Night Out for Moms.** A support group for moms and caregivers of children with FASD. Please join us for fun, an activity and dessert on Saturday, November 12, 7pm. Held at Alaska Center for Children and Adults (ACCA), 1020 Barnette ST, Fairbanks. For more information call 456-4003.

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**Juneau Training:**

Unless otherwise noted the trainings in Juneau will be held at ACRF: 9109 Mendenhall Mall RD, Suite 6A. Pre-registration is REQUIRED, call John at 790-4246 to register

**OCTOBER:**
- Children with ADHD
  
  Wednesday, October 5th from 6:30 – 8:30pm

**NOVEMBER:**
- Working with a Child who may be Acting-Out Sexually
  
  Thursday, November 3rd from 6:30 – 8:30pm

- What is PTSD and What Can I Do About It?
  
  Thursday, November, 17th from 6:30 – 8:30pm

**DECEMBER:**
- Lifestory Books
  
  Wednesday, December 7th from 6:30 – 8:30pm

- Talking to Kids about Foster Care and Adoption
  
  Wednesday, December 14th from 6:30 – 8:30pm

- Core Training for Resource Families

  Must attend both days to fill the Core training requirement

  **Thursday, December 8th** from 6:00 – 9:00pm and

  **Saturday, December 10th** from 9:00am – 5:00pm
Juneau Support Groups:

✦ Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Support Group meets on the last Tuesday of each month at T.J. Arnold’s house, 9343 Parkview CT in Juneau. Call T.J. at 209-0516.

✦ The Stone Soup Group (children with special needs) meets every Thursday from 6-8pm at Catholic Community Services Bldg., 419 6th ST in Juneau. Call Lori King at 321-8311.

Mat-Su Training:

Unless otherwise noted, the trainings in Wasilla will be held at ACRF: 5050 Dunbar ST, STE A2 (off the Palmer/Wasilla HWY, Brentwood Plaza). Pre-Registration is required for the following events by contacting Betsy at 376-4678 or bwoodin@nwresource.org.

✦ OCTOBER:
  Building Families Through Adoption
  Must attend all four sessions.
  Monday, Oct 17th; Thursday, Oct 20th; Monday, Oct 24th; and Thursday, Oct 27th from 9:00am - Noon

  Video Day: Films on Childhood Trauma
  May attend any part of this event.
  Tuesday, Oct 25th from 9:00am – 2:00pm

✦ NOVEMBER:
  Core Training for Relative Placements
  Must attend all three sessions to fill the Core training requirement.
  Mondays: Nov 7th, 14th and 21st from 6:00 – 9:00pm

  Video Day: Films on Adoption
  May attend any part of this event.
  Thursday, Nov 10th from 9:00am – 2:00pm

  Adopting through OCS
  Wednesday, Nov 16th from 6:00 – 9:00pm

✦ DECEMBER:
  Video Day: Children Are Worth It
  May attend any part of this event.
  Thursday, Dec 1st from 9:00am - 2:00pm

  Core Training for Relative Placements
  Must attend both sessions to fill the Core training requirement.
  Mondays: Dec 5th and 12th from 9:00am – 1:00pm

  Adopting through OCS
  Thursday, Dec 15th from 9:00am - Noon

Rural Teleconference Training

Families may participate by dialing 1-888-626-7441 and when asked enter the code: 9939775#. For more information email Betsy at bwoodin@nwresource.org or call 1-800-478-7307.

Wednesday, November 2th, 7-8pm
• Adoption Issues, Betsy Woodin

Tuesday, November 8th, Noon-1pm
• Rejecting Behaviors of Children in Care, John Bennett

Wednesday, December 7th, 7-8pm
• Advocacy, Betsy Woodin

Tuesday, December 13th, Noon-1pm
• Stress, Betsy Woodin

Statewide Autism Spectrum Disorder Support Group

First Tuesday of EVERY month from Noon-1pm. Dial 1-800-315-6338, follow voice prompts, then enter code 2272#

CHECK IT OUT

ACRF has posted past Rural Teleconferences as well as some Webcast audio courses on our website

http://www.acrf.org/Audio.php

Listen to a teleconference, take the quiz and earn 1.0 hour training!

You can also take a course on-line; we are continuously updating our website to serve you better!

ACRF would like to wish you all a very Safe and Happy Holiday Season!
Disability is a natural part of the human experience. One out of every five people will experience a disability. People with disabilities make up our nation’s largest minority group. It’s also our most inclusive group. A disability can happen to anyone at any time regardless of age, income, religion or ethnicity. You can be born with a disability, acquire one through an accident or develop one as part of the natural aging process. Only 15% of folks who are disabled were born with a disability. Disability is also on the increase. The past decade has seen a 14% increase in children born with developmental disabilities. These range from mild speech and language impairments to more serious disabilities like intellectual disability, cerebral palsy and autism.

Think about how you would want to be described. Would you want the language used to describe you to suddenly make people feel differently about you? Would you want for your condition to be how you were introduced? Would you want to be known as “his ovarian cyst wife” or “her diabetic boyfriend”? The words matter. While much has changed around our perceptions of people with disabilities, inaccurate language still reinforces powerful negative stereotypes. People with disabilities still struggle with descriptors that define them as a medical diagnosis and not as an individual.

**Person First Language** is a way of reframing our speech to put the person before their disability. It describes what a person has or experiences, not who a person is. The Vet next door is not brain damaged; your neighbor has a traumatic brain injury. Your sister isn’t cancerous, Aunt Susan has cancer. Grandma isn’t crazy; your mother-in-law has Alzheimer’s. These people we know and love are more than their disabilities. Yet we often hear people talk about the “autistic boy” or the “Downs’ girl”. These are individuals who have disabilities. They may also have blue eyes, a sense of humor and a cat.

Person First Language also reframes “problems” into “needs”. Instead of “Johnny has behavior problems” we can say “Johnny needs behavioral supports”. Instead of “Edith has a reading problem” we can say “Edith needs a sight word reading program.” This reframing helps keep Johnny and Edith from seeing themselves as just their “label”. By the same token, a person is not “bound to” or “confined to” a wheelchair. They “use” a wheelchair. In fact they can also “zip around”, “navigate” and “race”!

Some General guidelines for Person First Language:

1. **Use has instead of is.** Robert has autism, instead of Robert is autistic. Bonnie has FASD; instead of Bonnie is my FAS kiddo.

2. **Use has or uses rather than is confined to or bound** when referring to assistive technology. The technology is liberating! Julia uses a wheelchair. We can also say someone has or uses something for assistance, rather than focusing on the disability. Jessie uses a speech generating device to speak, instead of Jessie can’t talk.

3. **Special education is individualized services and supports, not a place, or a title.** Connie receives special education supports. She has an IEP. She is not “in” special education, nor is she a special education kid.

4. **“Handicap” describes golf or horse racing.** People and things should not be referred to as handicapped. Parking spaces and restrooms are accessible for people with disabilities. Brian has cerebral palsy and needs an accessible restroom at school and accessible parking for his mom’s van.

5. **The term disabled sounds like someone is incapacitated.** We disable bombs and smoke alarms to render them useless. People have disabilities. Disability, according to the World Health Organization, is an umbrella term, covering impairments, activity limitations, and participation restrictions.

6. **Avoid using words that emphasize limitations or tragedy.** Words like afflicted with, suffers from, stricken with, is the victim of, deformed by, is incapacitated with or is crippled by are very negative and emotional.

7. **Focus on the positive.** Lisa walks with braces. Lily communicates with sign language. Matt uses a voice output app on his iPad. Let your speech help promote understanding, dignity and respect.

8. **When in doubt, put yourself in the place of the person you are speaking of.** Think of the thing that you are most self-conscious about or is your biggest challenge. Would you want everyone to refer to you as the “fat woman” or the “nice person who never met a cookie she didn’t like”?

**USING PERSON FIRST LANGUAGE**

*Christie Reinhardt, Family Support Specialist*

*Words do two major things: They provide food for the mind and create light for understanding and awareness.* - Jim Rohn
**USING PERSON FIRST LANGUAGE continued…**

**Instead of**
- Handicapped person, disabled person
- Normal kids
- He’s mentally ill or crazy.
- He is ADHD. She is FAS.
- He is Down’s or a mongoloid
- She is brain damaged.
- He is blind.
- She is retarded.
- He has a birth defect.
- She’s learning disabled.
- He is crippled or disabled.
- She is a dwarf or a midget.
- He is ADHD, ODD, OCD and a little ODD.

**Use**
- A person with a disability, a person
- Typical kids, kids
- He has a mental illness or an emotional disturbance.
- He has ADHD. She has an FASD
- He has Down’s syndrome.
- She has a brain injury.
- He has a visual impairment or low vision.
- She is intellectually disabled or cognitively impaired.
- He has a congenital impairment or disability.
- She has a learning disability.
- He has a physical disability.
- She’s of short stature or a little person.
- He has tired parents.

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**USING PERSON FIRST LANGUAGE**

1.0 Hour Self-Study Questionnaire

If you read the above entitled article and want foster parent training credit applied to your training requirement, fill out the following questionnaire and FAX it to 1-907-479-9666, mail to ACRF, 815 Second AVE STE 101, Fairbanks, AK 99701 or email to acrf@nwresource.org.

| Name: _______________________________________ | Email: _______________________________________ |
| Address: _________________________________________________________ | Provider#: ___________________ |

1. ___________________________ make up our nation’s largest minority group. (Fill in the blanks)

2. What percentage of people with disabilities were born with them?
   - _____ a. 10%
   - _____ b. 15%
   - _____ c. 25%
   - _____ d. 75%

3. Person First Language describes what a person ____________, not what a person ________. (Fill in the blanks)

4. The blue marked parking spaces at the front of a store are not ________________ parking spaces, they are _______________________________ parking spaces. (Fill in the blank)

5. A person who ______________ cerebral palsy, may ________________ a wheelchair. (Fill in the blank)

6. When talking about a child with a low IQ score we would call them? (Check all that apply).
   - _____ a. Special
   - _____ b. Cognitively impaired
   - _____ c. Intellectually disabled
   - _____ d. Retarded
   - _____ e. Suffering from intellectual challenges
   - _____ f. A child
The Prediction:

“He will never amount to anything”

These words were spoken to a young man at the beginning of his 6 year journey through foster care.

The Power of an Adoptive Family

Adopted at age ten, this young man went on to graduate at the top of his class, become Student Council President, captain of the football team and a three sports athlete. He graduated from a community college. Today, he is an adoption advocate whose story has reached thousands in the US and Canada. He is a published author and appeared on television and in videos. Through his efforts, 400,000 suitcases were donated for youth in care. He has helped write legislation in New York City and in 2006, he shared his story with then Senators Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama.

The Message

Don’t give up on us! You never know who we can become. Accept each of us as your child. I am simply your son, not your adopted son or foster son. All of the adoptive families who stick with the children they adopted from foster care are my heroes. Walk in our shoes and you will understand; our love is deep and the best place we have ever lived is the place with the family who keeps us forever.

By Steven K. Walker

Taken from Fear to Advocacy; My Journey from Foster Care to Helping Others
Adoptalk, published by the North American Council on Adopted Children, St. Paul, Minnesota; 651-644-3036; www.nacac.org

November is National Adoption Month

A time to celebrate families created through Adoption and to remember the thousands of children still waiting for their forever family. You can make a difference in the life of children. Call your local ACRF office for ways to get involved.
FOSTER TALK: Advice From Seasoned Foster Parents About Kids and School

What tricks and skills have you picked up in your days/weeks/or years of being a foster or adoptive parent? Send your ideas to Aileen at amcinnis@nwresource.org with Ideas from Seasoned Foster Parents in the subject line. We will post a couple ideas in each of our Training Tracks as a way to pass on the ideas.

From Valerie Gilligan, Fairbanks –

**Check if the child has the necessary supplies for school – especially gym shoes that fit.**

**See the school nurse. Make sure she has your contact information as she is generally the one that will be calling you if your child becomes ill at school. She may also have medical information that you don’t know about such as asthma, food or drug allergies, etc.**

From Alan Corrick, Fairbanks –

**Go in ASAP and introduce yourself as the child(ren)’s foster parent to the school’s principal, counselor, and teachers, whether or not you are stepping into the role in the school the child is already attending or you are enrolling the child in the school yourself. Give the school admin/office a copy of your relevant paperwork for their files. These actions ensure there is no confusion as to your authority if a sticky situation comes up with birth family members or you need to deal with discipline, special needs issues, or other decisions.**

**It may be even MORE significant for foster children to have you involved in/care about their school activities than it is to your birth children. Go to the class plays, sports, games, etc. Be there, but don’t be obtrusive with them. They may not want the other kids to notice you until they are comfortable with you but THEY will notice you’re there for them.**

**Do not hesitate to get expertise from others if your foster child(ren) take you into areas where you have no experience or knowledge. If they are into sports you don’t understand, talk to friends who are into those sports or other team dads and moms. If they have an IEP or are otherwise involved in special education, talk to people in the district, other agencies like ACCA or FRA in Fairbanks, and with other parents in their classrooms or programs. If they are from another culture, seek out classmates’ parents from that culture.**

From Brahman Huber via the ACRF Facebook Page –

**For kinesthetic (touch) learners take them to the beach or a sand table to do homework. The grains under the fingertips help memorization. Write the problem out in the sand and trace it twice, voila!**
New Library Items Available from ACRF

**Self-Study Book:** Attaching in Adoption: Practical Tools for Today's Parents (5.0 Hours)
**Self-Study Book:** Disaster Preparedness: For Families of Children and Youth with Special Health Care Needs (1.5 Hours)
**Self-Study DVD Set:** Social Skills and Autism (2.0 Hours)
**Self-Study DVD:** Toilet Training a Child with a Developmental Disability (2.0 Hours)
**Self-Study DVD:** Self-Advocacy for Individuals on the Autism Spectrum (2.0 Hours)
**Self-Study Course:** Fostering Pregnant and Parenting Teens (3.0 Hours)

Available at the Fairbanks ACRF Library!
Call 479-7307 or 1-800-478-7307 to check it out

*Check-out period for Books and DVDs is two weeks*