



OCTOBER 2009

Our mission: To strengthen communities by building strong youth and families

November is *National Runaway Prevention Month*

Family Connection participates in National Runaway Prevention Month by taking part in the national public education campaign to:

- * Increase awareness of the issues facing runaways and
- * Educate the public about the solutions and the role they can play in preventing youth from running away.

TIPS FOR PARENTS AND ADULTS

1. Spend time with your children and listen: Listen for signs that they are feeling isolated, lonely or frustrated.
2. If your child asks to talk, give them your full attention. Turn off the TV, put down your book or newspaper and stop what you are doing at that time.
3. If your child has a worry or fear, don't dismiss it. Something that may seem small to you can be a big problem to them.
4. Remain calm, especially when discussing touchy issues such as dating, curfews and driving privileges.
5. Confront trouble directly, firmly and calmly. Remain firm on central values (such as no drug use) and be willing to bend or compromise on less critical issues (hair or clothes), especially when a child has exhibited good behavior.
6. Try not to take a teenager's mood swings personally.
7. Permit expressions of ideas even if they are different from your own.
8. If you are worried about something you think or feel may be going on with your child, talk with teachers and parents of their friends. They may have helpful observations and insights.
9. If you tell your teen that he or she can talk to you about anything, then mean it!

Family Connection is available to help!

Call 205-664-CARE or visit our website at www.familyconnection-inc.org

Youth Care Specialists Receive National Certification

Family Connection is proud to announce that the Youth Care Specialists at Family Connection successfully completed the process of becoming nationally recognized as Residential Child and Youth Care Professionals. Bonnie Hayes, Travis Jordan, Debbie Majors, Bonita Nabors, and Deanna Roper completed over 40 hours of live training and worked through a workbook on topics such as youth development, providing a culture of care, building relationships and teaching youth discipline.

The curriculum was created by the University of Oklahoma in a national effort to professionalize youth care workers and to insure that youth are being empowered by the programs that serve them. The program utilizes a positive youth development approach which emphasizes the youth's strengths to help youth overcome challenges and obstacles in their own lives. The training creates a shift from a disciplinary approach to a therapeutic approach to dealing with youth in our care. The staff members completed a difficult ninety question, college-level test in order to obtain this credential. Congratulations for all of your hard-work and becoming Youth Care Professionals!



L-R: Deanna Roper, Debbie Majors, Travis Jordan, Bonnie Hayes and Bonita Nabors

Understanding Child Victims of Human Trafficking

Human trafficking is a modern-day form of slavery where victims are subjected to force, fraud or coercion for the purpose of sexual exploitation or forced labor. Victims are young children, teenagers, men and women. Approximately 600,000 to 800,000 victims are trafficked across international borders annually, and between 14,500 and 17,500 of those victims are trafficked into the United States each year. More than half of these victims worldwide are children (U.S. Department of the State). Child victims are often exploited for sexual purposes including prostitution, pornography and sex tourism. They are also exploited for forced labor, including domestic servitude, sweatshop factory work and migrant farming.

Family Connection is a member of the Greater Birmingham Rescue and Restore Coalition which was formed to bring interested individuals together to advocate for these victims. **If you suspect that you have come into contact with a possible victim, please contact the Trafficking Information and Referral Hotline at 1.888.3737.888, Family Connection at 663-6301 or The Greater Birmingham Rescue and Restore Coalition.**

For more information about human trafficking, visit www.acf.hhs.gov/trafficking

Mr. Bill Best—Simply the BEST



Mr. Bill, as he is affectionately known by everyone at Family Connection, has been an integral part of our agency for many years. Mr. Bill serves on our Board of Directors and is an active volunteer around our campus. There isn't anything that Mr. Bill doesn't know how to fix or improve. No matter what the project, Mr. Bill is always willing to lend a helping hand.

We are very blessed to have such a caring person that works so hard to help the children and youth that are residing at our shelter and group home. His dedication over the years is one of our agency's greatest strengths!

Thank you, Mr. Bill!

Carol Williams, Project Coordinator

Carol Williams is a dynamic go getter that leads Family Connection's program, the Shelby County Drug Free Coalition. Carol is on-the-go conducting parent education workshops in the community or in the schools educating young people. Need to know something about drug prevention activities—ask Carol.

Carol has been with the agency since 2007. She is a graduate of Georgia Tech but we are working on her to choose a side: Alabama or Auburn! She resides in Chelsea with her husband, John.



Shelby County Drug Free Coalition at the Shelby County Fair

The Shelby County Drug Free Coalition, a program of Family Connection, set up a display at this year's Shelby County Fair. It was an outreach effort to provide information and resources on raising drug-free children to our community. The Shelby County Drug Enforcement Task Force and The Freedom Source (Coalition Members) provided additional information and displays to make it a success!

Family Connection—the CONNECTION that makes a difference

Our Wish List

As the holidays approach, we need your help more than ever! Please consider donating any of the items on our Wish List or consider organizing a drive this winter to support our services for at-risk, runaway and homeless children and youth. Donations are tax-deductible.

Personal Hygiene Products

Household Goods

Bottled Water

Canned Food Items

Blankets

New and Used Clothing Items

To donate or for more information, please contact Susan Johnston at 205-663-6301 ext. 201 or e-mail shelbyyouth@charterinternet.com

Your Gift to Family Connection

Yes, I want to help strengthen children, youth and families to build a better community!

Here is my gift of \$ _____

Please make checks payable to Family Connection or donate online at www.familyconnection-inc.org.

All Donations are Tax-Deductible

If you would like to make a donation in honor or memory of a loved one, please complete the information below. We will gladly send an acknowledgement.

(circle one) In Honor or Memory of Name: _____

Send Acknowledgement to: _____



Please return to:

P.O. Box 535 Saginaw, AL 35137

Phone: 205-663-6301 ext. 201

Fax: 205-663-6371

shelbyyouth@charterinternet.com

Please include Family Connection in your will and tell us when you do!

