



Children's Service Society SUPPORT SERVICES

JULY, AUGUST, & SEPTEMBER

From the Desk of Jacqui Graham

It's exciting to talk about all the new things that are happening at Children's Service Society! As mentioned in previous newsletters, we've gathered our Adoptions, Grandfamilies, Home Visitation (PAT and Welcome Baby), and Mental Health services under one umbrella called *Support Services*. We chose that name because they are all social services that support families. We're doing some exciting employee cross training so families may now be able to access services from more than one program.

In this article I'd like to draw attention to our Welcome Baby program. We started this program a couple of years ago in conjunction with United Ways collective impact communities' projects in order to assist families in South Salt Lake City. We quickly became aware that areas outside of South Salt Lake also needed these free services.

Welcome Baby's trained volunteers go into homes with new babies and offer community resources, gifts (receiving blanket, booties and a book), and the opportunity to visit the home once or twice a month to answer child development questions.

We're excited to have hired Tami Hansen as our full time Welcome Baby Coordinator. Tami and her husband live in Bountiful and are the parents of three young adult

children. She is a University of Utah graduate with a degree in early childhood development.



Tami Hansen, Volunteer Coordinator

Previous to being hired, Tami was a Welcome Baby volunteer while she attended school. She enjoys reading, boating, camping, and being in the outdoors with her family. She has also been running our children's group in Grandfamilies for the past year. If you'd like to receive visits for your new baby or would like to volunteer, please call Tami at 801-326-4410 or email her at tami@cssutah.org.

Jacqueline R. Graham, LCSW

Jacqui Graham, LCSW
Support Services Program Director



**Children's
Service Society**

Safe Children • Caring Families
Strong Communities • Since 1884

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SUPPORT SERVICES

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Ten Ways to Use Your Creativity for Good

www.simplemom.net

*Real joy comes
not from ease or
riches or from
the praise of
men, but from
doing something
worthwhile.*

~ Wilfred I. Grenfell ~

It seems like summer brings a big sigh of relaxation and a feeling of extra time to do, make, create and enjoy.

But we can do even more than come up with fun ways to fill our summer days. We can use our creative minds purposefully to focus on using less resources and blessing others. It's easy to get overwhelmed with projects (Pinterest-overload, anyone?) so here are just ten easy ideas and activities for using our creativity for good this summer.

FOR THE KIDS & THE ENVIRONMENT:

Craft stores can be overwhelming with their brightly-colored kits and gazillion ideas for kids' crafts, but with what we have at home, our kids (and us) can create beautifully in a less-impact sort of way. Think outside the box this summer!

> **Don't throw away those broken bits of crayons!** Save them to make sun-upcycled crayons, by melting them into new crayons.

> **Paper bowl jellyfish:** Have a paper bowl or two leftover from an event? With a little paint and some embellishments, you can make this summery craft.

> **Paint rocks.** This is one of my older daughter's favorite pastimes. If you want to get really fancy (yet totally easy), you can even modge podge your rocks with scraps of fabric or paper.

FOR FRIENDS, FAMILIES, NEIGHBORS:

Sometimes creative living means planning an event and welcoming others into your home, or your cul-de-sac, or sometimes it means thinking up ways to deliver happiness to those you care about.



*We can use our
creative minds to focus
on using less resources
and blessing others.*

> **Have a casual ice cream social, complete with homemade ice cream!** Or give homemade ice cream as gifts.

> **Organize a block party and get to know your neighbors.** Use your creativity to plan a potluck and some fun games and enjoy the company of those in your community.

> **Deliver goodies to friends and neighbors.** A homemade treat after dinner would be happily received, especially with a cute tag. Have a bumper crop in your garden? Share some of that zucchini with a neighbor; you could even deliver it with your favorite zucchini bread recipe.

FOR THOSE OUTSIDE YOUR IMMEDIATE CIRCLE:

All of the following ideas are great for small groups of friends to work on together.

> **Sew some ConKerr pillowcases.** This is a super simple project, creating colorful pillowcases for children with cancer. They can be donated to local hospital chapters.

> **Fight maternal and infant mortality.** Put together some simple yet lifesaving birth kits. ●



Creative Fitness Fun for the Whole Family!

www.carolinaparent.com



Depending on your kids' ages and interests, finding positive ways to help them stay active — and get exercise yourself — can be challenging. By taking a flexible and creative approach, you can be more active and have fun at the same time.

TAKE ADVANTAGE OF TECHNOLOGY

Use technology to get your family moving, and kids won't even realize they are exercising!

Phone Apps — One helpful app is Fit-Quest Lite, where young kids jump and run to make the squirrel move. When the kids stop moving, the squirrel sits down.

Wii Games or Xbox Kinect — In addition to Wii Fit games for adults and kids, consider Just Dance, which can be just as effective a workout.

Pedometers — Encourage kids to get 5,000 steps a day, and increase the number of steps if it gets too easy. When children complete 10 days of 5,000 steps, celebrate with something they enjoy.

TV Time — Have kids pick one show each week the family watches together. During every commercial, get up and exercise. Do jumping jacks, pushups, squats, planks, running up and down the stairs, etc.

Play games with a fitness twist -

A deck of cards and lots of enthusiasm is all you need to play an active game. In short, assign a simple exercise to each card suite and perform the number of exercises that go with that suite depending on the card that's flipped over. Face cards and aces are additional repetitions. Set a time limit or number of cards to play, aiming for 30-45 minutes.

MIX IT UP DURING THE DAY

Elizabeth and Ben Carr's sons, Joseph, 6, and Dallen, 3, enjoy exercising and have energy to burn. The challenge for this Wake Forest family is to find positive ways to help the boys be active. One solution has been to incorporate short exercise sessions into their daily routine.

Elizabeth homeschools Joseph and Dallen and has started incorporating exercise into the curriculum and school schedule. Her goal is to exercise daily as part of the school lessons as well as exercise at the YMCA at The Factory.

Before starting the day's first lesson, Carr explains that she leads the boys in a 10-minute exercise session to burn off some energy and warm up their brains. They do aerobic activities such as jumping jacks, jump rope and jogging in place

and incorporate strengthening and balance exercises.

During the rest of the school day, the plan is to take 2-minute breaks every 20 minutes to get up and get moving. Ben works from home and joins some of these exercise sessions, too.

FIND WHAT WORKS

Planning physical activities together can help everyone stay motivated, according to Cindy Goulding, a licensed behavioral counselor, certified fitness trainer, health and wellness coach. Let each person choose a different activity. The variety reduces the risk of becoming bored and also works your muscles in different ways.

Tina Steed embraces variety and enjoys trying different options to see what works best for her and her two girls, Day, 10, and Belle, 8. Along with trying several new recipes for mealtimes, Steed has



also experimented with different classes at the Cary Family YMCA (her daughter enjoys the family fitness classes) and has taken advantage of the covered pool, which is deep enough that her girls have to stay moving to stay afloat.

Steed says that when making changes and trying something new, it's expected that things don't always go as planned. But with a sense of humor and positive attitude, you learn from each experience. ●

In the Eye of the Beholder

www.adoptivefamilies.com

Is it my hairline? Should I have worn a different outfit for the picture? When you're waiting to be matched with a birthmother, each day that passes without a call makes you question every part of yourself and your life. You may have had this feeling during fifth-grade gym class. But back then, even the kids who were picked last were picked within five minutes. After all, gym class lasts only an hour.

This is more like a police lineup, and the birthmother is behind the two-way mirror. She might see me, but I don't see her. All I can see is...me. And after staring at myself long enough, all I notice are imperfections: My clothes aren't stylish enough, my skin is marked with blemishes. Most of all, I see my soul, and I wrestle with the desire to bare it and the fear of revealing too much.

And some days, I wonder if anyone's even looking at me through the mirror.

THE ENDLESS WAIT

I meet others in the lineup. Some become my friends. Some of us are reserved, while others cope with the wait by talking about their every thought and feeling. But unlike those in a police lineup, we aren't whispering to ourselves, "Pick him." We are praying, "Pick me!"

Some leave after a month, others after a week. "Is that fair?" the rest of us wonder. "They haven't served their time yet!" I know in my heart that they must have been the right parents for a baby—the connection with birthparents is why we chose open adoption, after all—but knowing that doesn't make it any easier. It only makes me look harder at myself.

"When you're waiting to be picked by a birthmother, you question every aspect of yourself."

Should I submit a different picture? Are prospective parents rejected because they're Caucasian? Because they're heterosexual? Or homosexual? Because someone doesn't believe in their god? Or because they don't believe in someone else's god? While the birthmothers' choices are infinite, I have only one: to wait.

I'm an engineer, so I try to make sense of the world by looking at statistics. One in three placements is "last-minute." Average time in the pool is about 10 months. Our agency matches roughly five families per month. But these statistics don't matter when your wife is having an emotional day, and you both start going a little crazy.

ANY DAY NOW

At some point we crossed the line—from it could happen any day now to I can't put my life on hold any longer. So we pass the time like others we've met in the pool—in a mix of preparation and insanity. We have a fully equipped nursery. Babies-R-Us could practically shoot pictures for its fall catalog at our house. I know that having the nursery prepared will work in our favor in the long run, especially if we get a last-minute placement, but walking by this room every day makes me wonder if we've spent just enough time and money to jinx ourselves.



After the nursery was completed, we tore out all the flooring in our home. For now, our new flooring is on a manufacturer delay, the contents of the nursery are crammed into the sunroom, and most of our other furniture is sitting in the garage. That, combined with the two business trips I have to go on later this month, must mean the phone will ring any day. We hope.

LIFE ON HOLD

I've learned that it's nearly impossible to explain the waiting experience to someone who hasn't gone through it himself. Our friends and family are universally sympathetic, and they understand our desire to be parents. What they don't get is the anxiety involved in calling the adoption agency, yet again, just to see if our profile has been requested by any birthmothers, then hearing, yet again, "Not yet, but keep your spirits up. Now's the time to work on things you've been meaning to do, while you wait."

I'm waiting for the flooring to arrive. I'm waiting for next week's "Waiting Families" meeting. I'm waiting for my wife to break down in tears, although I'm afraid I'll only be able to offer her vague statistics and a reassuring hug. I'm waiting to share the love bottled up inside of me with a son or daughter. I'm waiting for the phone to ring. ●

Underage Drinking: What's a Parent to Do?

www.parentsempowered.org

Like nearly anything worthwhile, keeping your children alcohol-free takes effort, commitment, and consistency. Fortunately, the process can be both fun and rewarding. Develop and use the following skills and you're well on your way.



STAY CLOSE TO YOUR KIDS

Bonding is essential to preventing underage drinking. Children are less likely to drink when their parents are involved in their lives, and when children and parents feel close to each other.

> **Spend time together.** Spend at least 15 minutes a day of one-on-one time.

> **Do fun activities together.** Do fun things together on a regular basis. Play catch. Go camping. Don't skip vacations. Have a weekly "game night." Invite the kids to help plan these activities.

> **Eat dinner together.** Research shows teens who regularly eat as a family five to seven times per week are 33% less likely to use alcohol.

> **Listen - be supportive.** Take time to daily to talk with your kids about their interests and activities. Ask about their lives, hopes, fears, and concerns.

> **Create a positive home environment.** Be kind and respectful of each other. Remind your kids often that you love them. Maintain at least a 4:1 ratio of positive comments to negative ones.

SET CLEAR RULES & EXPECTATIONS

Children respond better when they have clear boundaries and expectations. Never assume your children know your rules, expectations, and attitudes. Write them down and discuss them so they understand the reasons behind them.

> **Teach the risks of underage drinking.**

At an early age, begin talking with your children about not drinking alcohol. Ask questions. Make sure they understand.

> **Discuss what do to if alcohol is present.** It is essential that children have an alcohol-free social environment to help them remain alcohol-free. Make sure your children know what to do if they are at a party and alcohol is present or if they are offered alcohol. Brainstorm and practice ways to say "No."

> **Consistently enforce the rules.** Give appropriate consequences every time and reward for staying alcohol-free.

> **Help kids to choose friends wisely.** Studies show significant increased risk for underage drinking is influenced by whether your children's friends drink. Encourage them to choose friends who support your no-alcohol rules. Discuss your rules with your kids' friends.

MONITOR YOUR KIDS' ACTIVITIES

Know where your kids are, who they're with, and what they're doing. Stay involved. Studies show parental involvement drops by half between 6th & 12th grades. It's important to remain engaged throughout their teen years.

> **Know your children's activities.** Help provide safe, enjoyable, "no-alcohol" fun for your kids and their friends.

> **Observe your children's emotional well-being.** Watch for signs of excess stress or depression. These can lead to drinking. Help them cope in healthy ways.

> **Know your children's friends and their parents.** Get to know their friends and the parents of those friends. Discuss with parents your desires to keep your kids alcohol-free and enlist their cooperation.

> **Ensure an alcohol-free environment.** Make sure alcohol isn't available to your kids at home or from friends, siblings, etc. If they go to a friend's house, call to make sure parents will be home and there will be no alcohol.

> **Keep in touch.** Studies show kids are more at risk for alcohol abuse between 3:00 & 6:00 p.m. while many parents are at work. When away, call/text your kids. Show up occasionally, unannounced. Have a neighbor drop by. Let your kids know it's because you love and care for them. ●

At some level, most kids appreciate parental monitoring. It's very real proof their parents love them enough to care about their well-being.

Alcohol and the Developing Brain

ALCOHOL CAN PROGRAM A TEEN'S BRAIN FOR ADDICTION

A teen's brain is much more susceptible to alcohol dependence than an adult's. Alcohol tricks the brain's pleasure-reward system into generating pleasure-reward feelings from a harmful chemical instead of the real experience. Because the teen brain produces an abundance of dopamine, it can rapidly go from liking, to wanting, to craving alcohol.

BRAIN DAMAGE

The brain goes through dynamic changes during adolescence. Alcohol can seriously damage the long- and short-term growth process.

THE HIPPOCAMPUS

Alcohol can dramatically impact long-term memory and learning skills. The hippocampi was found to be 10% smaller among teens who drank more and longer.

ALCOHOL CAN DAMAGE DEVELOPING WHITE MATTER

In a recent study, white matter - the part of the brain that transmits signals - developed abnormally in teens who binge drink. Transmitting signals is a big part of what the brain does, which could impair thinking, learning, and memory.

THE PREFRONTAL AREA

Alcohol can cause severe changes in this area, which is responsible for good judgment, reasoning, and impulse control.



Children's Service Society

Safe Children · Caring Families
Strong Communities · Since 1884

124 South 400 East, Suite 400
Salt Lake City, UT 84111
www.cssutah.org

Administration
801-355-7444

Care About Childcare
(previously known as CCR&R ~ Metro)
Referrals: 801-355-4847
Training: 801-326-4403
Recruitment: 801-326-4404

Support Services
801-326-4409

INFORMATIVE WEBSITES

www.parentsempowered.org
www.thetruth.com
www.thecoolspot.gov
www.theantidrug.com
www.teens.drugabuse.gov
www.drug-rehab.org

www.cdc.gov/parents
www.guidance.group.com
www.familyfunshop.com
www.brillbaby.com
www.eyeonearlyeducation.org

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