

# The STAR Newsletter

## Child Issue

A newsletter for licensed child foster care providers of Washington County.

Spring 2023

### Permanent, Emergency Operable Phone

All child foster care homes require a permanent, operable phone which stays in the home at all times and is accessible to everyone. DHS does not allow this to be a provider's/foster child's personal cell phone, Echo Dot, Alexa, or tablet. This must be a landline or an extra cell phone that functions normally; a pre-paid phone is acceptable.

### Child Foster Care Licensing Team's Mission

To enrich the lives of children by promoting safe and quality licensed care.



Community Services  
Child Foster Care  
Licensing  
14949 62nd Street N.  
Stillwater, MN 55082  
[Child Foster Care  
Licensing Website](#)

### Meet the Washington County Child Foster Care Licensing Team

As you may have noticed, the Licensing Unit has had considerable changes over the last year. The unit is comprised of all new licensing social workers who are here to help you through the licensing process and answer your questions. Currently, we have three licensing social workers and a fourth will join our unit shortly. We also have a case aide who will be contacting our non-kin foster care providers with placement requests.

Here is your Washington County Child Foster Care team:



My name is **Sarah Yang**. I am Hmong and came to Minnesota when I was 7 years old as a refugee from the war-torn country Laos in 1979. I came from a culture that lives out the motto, "it takes a village to raise a child." I believe that strong families build strong communities and that all families have natural occurring strengths and positive attributes, regardless of race, culture, socio-economic status, level of functioning, or social history. I look forward to working and partnering with foster care providers to nurture and

care for children who are the future of this great nation.

Hello! My name is **Emanuelle Xiong**. I have been a social worker in Washington County for a few years. Not only do I love being a resident and worker of Washington County, but I love being able to serve my community as well. My professional passion has always been revolved around child welfare, working with families, and education. I recently transitioned to the Child Foster Care Licensing



Continued on page 2

## Foster Parents Needed!

Word of mouth is one of the best forms of recruitment to get new foster parents in Washington County. If anyone has said to you, "I've always thought about becoming a foster parent" or you know of someone who is good with kids, wants to help the community, and you think has what it takes to become a foster parent, please send them our way! We need people who can provide care to a variety of youth, such as teens, sibling groups, children with mental health diagnoses, developmental disabilities, and everything in between. We need foster parents in all areas of the county. Whether families can only commit to one or two weekends per month for respite care or be a placement resource, we have a need for both! Please pass the word on so we can keep kids in our local foster homes.

Our next Child Foster Care Info. Meeting:  
**Thursday, May 4  
6-8 p.m.**

Teams (online)

For more information, call 651-430-8307.

*Continued from Meet the Washington County Child Foster Care Licensing Team on page 1*

Team back in 2021 where I can practice the best of both worlds by working with families and being an educator when licensing my foster families. In addition to a busy life as a social worker, I am a full-time mom! I love spending time with my family, traveling, trying new restaurants, and always making time for a trip up north to Duluth to recharge my soul!



My name is **Michelle McIntosh**. I have been the senior social worker for the Child Foster Care Team since March 2022. I transferred from the Child Care Licensing Team where I worked a little over two years supporting child care providers to keep children and their homes safe. Prior to joining the Licensing Unit, I was a social worker for four years on Washington County's Homeless Outreach Services Team, assisting county residents to obtain housing/shelter, prevent evictions, and connect to community resources. Previous experience includes providing social work within the medical and employment fields. I am a mother of two adult children and one teenager. I enjoy music and comedy in any form (movies, theater, books, etc.). I am excited to be a part of the foster care team and passionate about assuring the

children of Washington County are being cared for in safe and nurturing homes.

My name is **Angelic Heller**. I have been the case aide for the Licensing Unit since September of 2022. I initially started working as a case aide with RentHelp in October of 2021 and was promoted to an Eligibility Specialist. I transferred to the Licensing Unit after the RentHelp program ended, but I was proud to have been able to help the people of Washington County stay in their homes through the pandemic. I have a Bachelors in Psychology from Concordia University, St. Paul. I am also a mom to my handsome 4-year-old son Brodie, so with a mix of my degree and my son, it gives me a drive to make sure I meet the needs of every child that I encounter and find every child a safe environment to be able to live!



*Continued on page 3*

*Continued from Meet the Washington County Child Foster Care Licensing Team on page 2*

Hello! I am **Becky Motzko**, the supervisor for the Licensing Unit with Washington County. I have been in child welfare for 23 years working in Child Foster Care Licensing and Child Protection Investigations. Child Foster Care Licensing has always been a passion of mine. I am so thankful to individuals such as yourselves for opening



your homes to children who need a temporary home. I live in a small town in Wisconsin with my husband and five dogs and cats. Living in the country, we also enjoy the wildlife that surrounds us.

## May is National Foster Care Month!

### [National Foster Care Month](#)

is an initiative of the Children's Bureau. It's a time to recognize that we can each play a part in enhancing the lives of children and youth in foster care.

Starting in 1988, U.S. presidents issued annual proclamations in recognition of National Foster Care Month to show appreciation and gratitude to foster parents across the nation.



This year's theme, "Strengthening Minds. Uplifting Families." highlights the need to take a holistic and culturally responsive approach to supporting the mental health needs of those involved with child welfare.

Washington County appreciates the work you do with the children of this community. Thank you.

## Resources for Families

We realize it is a lot of work and may be frustrating trying to locate some resources for your families. Here are a few that can get you started from basic needs to fun family activities:

### **BASIC NEEDS**

**Safe Haven Foster Shoppe:** A non-profit organization that gives foster children in Minnesota and Western Wisconsin

placement bags/packs with one day to one week's worth of brand-new essentials including such items as clothing, socks, underwear, toiletries, blankets, coats, shoes, etc. The provider completes the [Request Items online form](#) for the child in need along with clothing size/age, gender, and any special needs information. Safe Haven personally delivers bags/packs to the foster home. They also

*Continued on page 4*

*Continued from Resources for Families on page 3*

provide holiday sponsorship programs and offer community opportunities for foster families.

763-742-7799 / [Email Safe Haven](#)  
[Visit Safe Haven's website](#)

#### **FIRE EXTINGUISHERS**

[MN Rule 9502.0425](#), Subp. 16 A fire extinguisher with a minimum rating of 2A:10BC is maintained in the home.

Fire extinguishers should be readily accessible in case of an incident. Fire extinguishers should be serviced and tagged annually. The Licensing Unit has a short list of places that services fire extinguishers. If you know of additional places that service fire extinguishers, let your licensor know and we'll add it to the list.

**All Fire Extinguishers must be tagged annually by a licensed, bonded, fire extinguisher company.**

*Some companies that service and sell fire extinguishers:*

- **All Safe Global**  
26542 Fallbrook Lane, Wyoming, MN  
866-958-3473 x119 / [Email Eric Olson](#)
- **Becker Fire & Safety Services**  
1575 Regatta Drive, Woodbury, MN  
Office: 651-739-7776 / Cell: 651-373-8820  
[Email Bill Becker](#)
- **Forest Lake Ace Hardware**  
814 S. Lake St., Forest Lake, MN  
651-464-6262 / [Email Sue Olson](#)
- **Mississippi Welders Supply Company**  
1810 Webster St., Suite 3, Hudson, WI  
Office: 715-381-6964 / Brian: 507-450-0225  
[Email Brian Stevens](#)
- **Nardini Fire Equipment Company**  
405 West County Road E., Shoreview, MN  
651-483-6631 / 888-627-3464 / [Email Nick Rotter](#)
- **St. Croix Fire & Safety, Inc.**  
4177 Kirkwood Lane N., Lake Elmo, MN  
651-248-5069 / [Email Dave Wyland](#)
- **Weber and Troseth, Inc.**  
1902 University Ave. W., St. Paul, MN  
651-645-1034 / [Email Roger Wyland](#)

#### **[FREE/REDUCED COST ACTIVITIES & RESOURCES FOR FOSTER FAMILIES](#)**

##### **SUMMER ACTIVITIES/CAMPS:**

Below are a few resources for summer camps and activities for low or no cost for our families. They fill up fast!

- [Camp Shamineau](#): Has some scholarships available. This camp is in Motley, MN.
- [Every Kid Sports](#): Provides grants to cover youth sports registration fees.
- [Find a Summer Camp Page](#)
- [For the Children's Royal Family KIDS Camp](#): Offers unconditional love, hope, and safety for children who have experienced relational trauma.
- [Seeds of Hope Camp](#): Serves kids in southern Minnesota currently in foster care or the social services system.
- [Ironwood Christian Ranch](#): Camps and programs for people with cognitive and physical disabilities.

##### **SPORTS/EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES:**

- [Oakdale Recreation Scholarship Program](#): Offers financial assistance through discounted fees to Oakdale residents who have financial limitations and want to participate in youth recreation programs and activities.
- [Youth Advantage](#): Provides qualifying children assistance to participate in academic, artistic, or athletic extracurricular activities and mentoring.

##### **SUPPORT:**

- [Foster Adopt Minnesota](#) (formerly known as MN ADOPT): Provides awareness, education, guidance, information, referral, resources, and support.
- [Foster the Love Minnesota](#): Lists support groups, therapy services, and resources like placement bags and free clothing for foster children.
- [Grand Families](#): A national legal resource in support of grandfamilies through education and technical assistance.

We would like to assist all our families in building a supportive community in Washington County for ongoing support and networking. If you have ideas or resources you think would be helpful for our next newsletter, please [email child foster care team](#).

If you are a foster care caregiver who would like to head up a support group for other providers, kin or non-kin, please reach out! Our team would love to assist you in that endeavor.

## Child Foster Care Training

*DISCLAIMER: In preparation of this newsletter, every effort has been made to offer the most current, correct, and clearly expressed information possible. Nevertheless, inadvertent errors in information may occur. For training information, please check the sponsor listing to be certain of all the details related to the training.*

**\*Reimbursement Reminder:** Foster parents can seek up to \$100 training reimbursement per calendar year per household.

**\*Training Reminder:** 12 hours of training is required yearly. (13 hours is required within your first year of licensure.) This needs to include one hour on each of the following topics: children's mental health, Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD), and cultural competency.

### UPCOMING TRAININGS

#### CARS (Children and Restraint Systems) Training

A three hour face-to-face car seat safety training is required if caring for children under the age of eight. This class is offered by Washington County throughout the year, but you may choose to take a class offered in another county; see our [Initial Training web page](#) for more information. *This class must be retaken every five years.* If you are a relative/kinship provider, contact your licenser for more information about a variance option. *Please register early, as class sizes are limited.*

**Date/Time:** Tuesday, May 16 • 6-9 p.m.

*\*Please arrive on time. If you are late by more than 10 minutes, you will be turned away.*

**Fee/Credit:** Foster care applicants are exempt from the \$30 fee unless your licenser is not from Washington County.

**Location:** Stillwater Government Center

**Registration:** [Email child care licensing](#)

## Training for Licensure and Renewals

Whether you are a new provider or in the renewal process, it always seems there are many questions surrounding training requirements for licensing. For new applicants, the training is provided in Binti with a post-test. Below are the links and requirements for training. *They must be completed every year prior to relicensing and off-year home visits to maintain your license.*

#### Initial Call Training

*Required for Non-Kin Providers only; not required for Kin providers.*

The Minnesota Legislature will require all social service agencies to coordinate an initial foster care phone call (also referred to as a comfort call) between the child's parents/legal guardian and foster parents/facility staff when a child is placed or when they move placements.

[Initial training first year information link](#)

#### Annual Training Requirements after the First Year

License holders are required to obtain 12 hours\* of training each year. *This must include the following training topics:* one hour of children's mental health, one hour of Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD), and one hour of cultural competency. The other nine hours of training may be in any topic you wish, so long as it is related to caring for children.

**\*In your first year of licensure only, you are required to obtain 13 hours of training which includes the mandated FASD training.**

*If your licenser allowed you to complete an alternative training, such as reading a book or watching a lecture, please keep a log of the resource date and time then submit to licensure or log it on Binti under training log.*

[Ongoing training after first year information link](#)

Please contact your licensing worker with your questions.

# Incentive for Referrals from Licensed Providers

There is a growing need for foster families in Minnesota. We're looking for help from our licensed child foster care providers.

## Referral Incentive

For 2023, all currently licensed foster homes can refer another family to be licensed for Child Foster Care in Washington County.

- \$100 will be given when the referral family gets licensed.
- *Limit: for the first 10 families referred and licensed only.*
- The family being referred needs to let us know who referred them.

### Foster families can be:

- married or single;
- a homeowner or renter;
- with or without children; and
- in a traditional or non-traditional setting.

### Foster family qualities:

- willingness to learn; and
- have flexibility.

Call 651-430-8307 or  
email [ComSvsCFCLicensing@co.washington.mn.us](mailto:ComSvsCFCLicensing@co.washington.mn.us)

For more information on child foster care, visit:  
[www.co.washington.mn.us/childfostercarelicensing](http://www.co.washington.mn.us/childfostercarelicensing)



## Outreach Updates

### Dinner and Dialogue

In December 2022, the Licensing team hosted a successful event, "Dinner and Dialogue," where licensed foster care parents and applicants of color were invited to discuss and explore their unique foster care experiences in Washington County. Dinner was provided to the families. Supervision for the children was provided by a supervisor and intern within an adjoined space with cartoons, art, and coloring activities as entertainment.

The Licensing Team was able to obtain feedback on how to better engage and retain more foster care families of color and make improvements in providing support to the providers as they care for children. At the end of the night, the providers and applicants had the opportunity to engage with each other, share contact information, and discuss ideas of a support group. The children in attendance found ways to express their gratitude to their foster/adopted parents with the art they created. It was a success! We look forward to more of these events with all our foster care supporters.

## Binti Turns Two Years Old in 2023 at Washington County!

As you may know, Washington County Child Foster Care has a new way of doing paperwork. Binti, a web-based program, allows you to complete required paperwork online. Binti is also mobile-friendly. Throughout the year you can note trainings and upload training certificates. No more keeping up with certificates and remembering trainings from months ago. Children you care for can be noted on the "Home In Use" form at any time.

If you have any issues along the way, there is a chat function in the program. You can type a question and they will help you out. The chat responders are extremely helpful.

You will receive an email asking you to complete your paperwork in Binti 60 days prior to your licensing visit month. Binti has so many useful features. We hope Binti will make things easier for you, as it has for us. [Log onto Binti](#).

Contact your licenser if you have issues or concerns.

## What to Expect in Upcoming Child Foster Care Newsletters

In our upcoming newsletters, we will be providing some helpful information, brief overview, and resources for our current and future child foster care providers.

There will be:

- 101 topics dedicated to Binti – our child foster care software system;
- home safety checklist reminders;
- child foster care rules/statutes requirements;
- training opportunities; and
- other insightful resources/events to ensure our foster families have the tools they need for the children in care.

## County Child Foster Care Licensing Staff

- **vacant**  
*Licenser*  
651-275-7739
- **Michelle McIntosh**  
*Senior Licenser*  
651-430-6577  
[Email Michelle](#)
- **Emanuelle Xiong**  
*Licenser*  
651-430-4167  
[Email Emanuelle](#)
- **Sarah Yang**  
*Licenser*  
651-430-6563  
[Email Sarah](#)
- **Angelic Heller**  
*Case Aide*  
651-430-8307  
[Email Angelic](#)
- **Becky Motzko**  
*Supervisor*  
651-430-6476  
[Email Becky](#)

## Email Us:

[Email Child Foster Care Licensing](#)

## Visit Our Website:

[Child Foster Care Licensing website](#)

## New Contact Information:

Notify your licenser of any changes to your email address or phone numbers.