



**GWEN TIMMERMAN**

*IFAPA Peer Liaison*

**How to Contact Me:**

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### I UNDERSTAND...

#### I AM A FOSTER PARENT TOO

IFAPA recognizes that foster parents often need the perspective of peers during the foster parenting and adoption experience.

I can provide support and assist you with questions regarding:

- Licensing requirements
- Training needs
- Respite care
- Behavior challenges
- Working with birth families
- Confidentiality issues
- And much more!

## How can we work with birth families during the holidays?

- Ask children about their experiences and try to incorporate some of their traditions. The children placed in your home may miss some activities that they experienced with their family or in a previous placement.
- If possible, ask your child's family members about their holiday traditions and customs. Ask about their beliefs and observances. Although you may feel stretched at the holidays, try to coordinate schedules with the birth families. This gives the children a chance to share what is familiar while experiencing new traditions.
- This is a good time for the youth in your home to make small gifts and send cards to their birth families or old neighbors and friends.
- This is a time when many children feel conflicted feelings about their birth families and worry about them. It is a good time to let the young person know that it is okay for them to be safe and cared for even if their family struggles. Reassure them if you can, about the safety and care of their birth family.

<http://fosteringperspectives.org/fpv15n1/holidays.htm>

## Religious Differences & the Holidays

The holidays can be tough for foster families. Children in care miss their families and their traditions, while at the same time they may want to be part of the activities of the foster family. When there's a religious difference between the child's family and the foster family, things can become even more complicated.

Religion can be a sensitive issue. Legally, birth parents have the right to choose their children's religion or lack of religion. Placement of their child in foster care does not take away this right.

Of course, most foster parents try to respect the culture and religious customs of the children in their care. But what does this mean when it comes to religion?

The answer lies in establishing open lines of communication among foster parents, DHS, and the birth family. If your agency knows how you feel about religious issues (for example, if prayer makes you feel uncomfortable, or if you feel compelled to convert children and their families), it will make informed placement decisions. If you haven't already done so, consider talking with your social worker about how religion affects your role as a foster parent.

This communication works both ways. The more you know about the religion, traditions, and preferences of birth families, the easier it will be for you to act in a way that honors their beliefs.



[www.ifapa.org](http://www.ifapa.org)

# NEWS FROM YOUR IFAPA PEER LIAISON

## SUPPORT GROUP INFORMATION:

### ALLISON AREA SUPPORT GROUP:

Vineyard Community Church, 319 W Bremer Ave, Waverly

Meets monthly-- 2<sup>nd</sup> Monday, Meal at 6:00 p.m., Meeting 6:30-7:30 p.m.

Groups meet September-May

Free childcare offered for ages 0-5/Structured activity for ages 6+

Contact Persons: Tammy Faux (319-610-9115 or

[tammy.faux@wartburg.edu](mailto:tammy.faux@wartburg.edu))

Kate Haberman-Foelske ([khaberman@monarchtherapyservices.com](mailto:khaberman@monarchtherapyservices.com))

Gwen Timmerman (319-883-3594 or [gtimmerman@ifapa.org](mailto:gtimmerman@ifapa.org))

**November Meeting:** Roundtable discussion & support (No training credit)

### BLACK HAWK COUNTY SUPPORT GROUP:

Grace Lutheran Church, 1024 W 8<sup>th</sup> St, Waterloo

Meets monthly-- 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday, 6:30-8:30 p.m. Groups meet September-May,

2 hours training & free childcare offered

Contact Person: Gwen Timmerman (319-883-3594 or

[gtimmerman@ifapa.org](mailto:gtimmerman@ifapa.org))

**November Meeting:** "It's Not About You-Sparks & Resiliency" with Lois Smidt.

## Easy Turkey Pinecone Craft for Kids



1. Cut a small diamond out of yellow construction paper and fold in half to create the beak.
2. Cut a wattle (rectangle with a heart shape at one end) out of red construction paper.
3. Glue beak, wattle and google eyes to pinecone.
4. Twist dark pipe cleaner around pinecone base and poke into orange.

Glue fall leaves to opposite side of orange to create tail feathers. (Or trace your child's hand on two different color sheets of construction paper. Cut out and glue them.

**HAPPY THANKSGIVING!**

## What are YOU Thankful For?



**Waterloo Adoption Day  
Celebration!!!**

**Black Hawk County Courthouse**

Friday, November 18<sup>th</sup> from 1:30-4:30 p.m.

Please RSVP to Christa Hefel at 563.880.2638 or [chefel@fouroaks.org](mailto:chefel@fouroaks.org).

😊 CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL FAMILIES ADOPTING!!! 😊

## AMP—Achieving Maximum Potential

AMP is a youth-driven, statewide group that seeks to unleash the full potential for personal growth among foster and adoptive children in Iowa. AMP offers leadership opportunities, service learning projects, speaking opportunities, and educational/vocational assistance. Amp also provides the life skills youth need to become self-sufficient, independent adults. **AMP members are ages 13+ who have been involved in foster care, adoption or other out-of-home placements.**

**Waterloo AMP** meets on the second and fourth Tuesday of each month from 6:30-8:00 p.m. at Grace Lutheran Church, 1024 West 8th Street, Waterloo. Contact: Jessica Christman at 515-451-4233 (cell) OR [jperrychristman@gmail.com](mailto:jperrychristman@gmail.com)

**Marshalltown AMP** meets every first and third Tuesday of the month from 6-8 p.m. at the YSS of Marshall County office located at 11 E. State St. Marshalltown, Iowa. Contact Alyson Hicks at [Mtownamp@hotmail.com](mailto:Mtownamp@hotmail.com) or call me at 641-751-1776