



# Fostering Futures NY

## InTouch

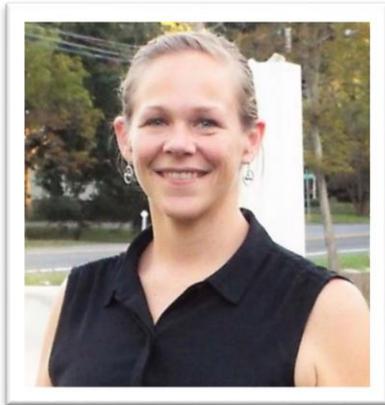
Supporting foster families in building better futures for children and youth



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ISSUE 3: FALL 2016



### *Are we all going to get to do something special?*

The members of the women’s group at the Awaken Church in Niskayuna, N.Y. wanted to make a difference. Beyond their monthly gatherings for book study, they were committed to serving their community. “We really wanted to focus on reaching out to the community, to God, and to each other,” said Deb Hodge, “We helped out at a shelter for victims of domestic violence and sent shoes to needy kids overseas.” When they heard a presentation by

Fostering Futures NY at one of their meetings, however, the idea of providing practical help to foster families struck a chord with the group. Several women had young children at home, “so they could relate,” and one had adopted a child after completing training to become a foster parent. Eight group members agreed to form an FFNY team. After training, they were matched with a foster family in Rotterdam that has eight children in the home. This blended family has children by birth, adoption, including triplet siblings, and foster care.

### *“The arrangement felt natural from the first meeting at the family’s house,”*

“The arrangement felt natural from the first meeting at the family’s house,” Deb said. The team and the family started planning activities for the month. One team member offered to do the girls’ nails and another volunteered to take the children to the library. Deb remembers that one little girl interrupted excitedly, “Oh, are we all going to get to do something special?”

During its two months as an FFNY team, the group has brought in meals to the family, taken the children on back-to-school shopping, and treated the girls to the promised nail care. Deb, as the athletic single in the group, has taken the one boy to a nearby park to play basketball. “Everyone is so happy to help,” she said. “One lady went to several stores to find hair accessories for the girls because she was determined to find the right ones.”

Welcome to FFNY, Awaken Team. You’re doing a great job.



Fostering Futures NY (FFNY) recruits and trains small teams of volunteers from the community that give practical support to foster families and serve as ‘extended families’ for foster parents and children.



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*Bishop Emeritus Howard Hubbard with Deb Favro of FFNY*

## ***FFNY's First Pizza and Ice Cream Social – A Major Success!***

FFNY held its first “thank you” event for foster families and volunteer teams on Thursday, Oct. 6, at the Lynnwood Reformed Church in Guilderland.

More than 60 people attended, including foster parents, their children, volunteers, program staff, and advisory board members. The evening included a dinner of pizza, salad, and

make-your-own sundaes, followed by crafts and games for the children.

The social was the first opportunity for volunteer teams to meet their counterparts from other churches and agencies. It also was a night out for foster parents where they knew children in their care would be involved in supervised activities.

“We are so grateful to our volunteers for their commitment to providing practical help to foster families,” FFNY Program Director Meredith Osta said to the group. “We also thank our foster families for being willing to participate in this new model and to welcome teams into their homes.”

The showing of the new FFNY video, which features comments by volunteers and foster parents, was the high point of the evening. [Click here](#) to see the new FFNY video!

The social event was made possible by Pastor Richard Garret Szantner and the congregation of Lynnwood Reformed Church, who offered their facility for the gathering. Special thanks to local businesses Bountiful Bread, Stewart’s Shops, and Market 32 by Price Chopper for contributing dinner items.

FFNY will be holding more “thank you” events in the future. Plan now to attend!



## ***FFNY has joined #GivingTuesday again this year.***

FFNY has joined #GivingTuesday again this year. Giving Tuesday is a global day of giving that harnesses the collective power of individuals, communities and organizations to encourage philanthropy and to celebrate generosity

worldwide and to transform how people think about, talk about and participate in the giving season.

We are excited to be a part of a global giving day that intends to inspire people to take collaborative action to improve their local communities, give back in better, smarter ways to the charities and causes they celebrate and help create a better world.

Our Giving Tuesday campaign has two specific goals. The first is to raise at least \$10,000 by the end of December. The second is to increase awareness of FFNY across the Capital Region via Facebook. We hope to more than double the number of people who like our Facebook page to over 500! [Click here](#) to check out our FFNY page on Facebook. Help us meet our goals! Like us and invite your friends to like us.

### **MAKE A DONATION TO FFNY**

#### **Welfare Research, Inc.**

Fostering Futures NY is a program of Welfare Research, Inc. (WRI), a nonprofit consulting firm that provides technical assistance to both public and private human services agencies. FFNY is funded by private donations, a grant from the NYS Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) a federal grant. This project is funded in part by the Children’s Bureau, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, under a Cooperative Agreement, Grant # 90CO-1109. The contents of this publication are solely the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official views of the Children’s Bureau, Administration for Children and Families, or the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Further support and guidance are provided by [WRI's staff](#) and [Board of Directors](#).

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### **FFNY STAFF**

- Meredith Osta, Program Director*
- William G. McLaughlin,  
Capital Development*
- Debbie Favro, Team Coordinator*

### **Thank you to our supporters**

The following charitable organizations have provided generous support for Fostering Futures NY. We also thank our many individual donors for responding to the need to expand the program to more foster families in the Capital Region.

- The Community Foundation of the Greater Capital Region
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