



REGIONAL RESOURCE TEAM: REGION 4

FAMILY NEWSLETTER

WHO'S TRAINING YOU?

As a fun way to wrap up the summer, we wanted to take a moment to introduce all of our wonderful Region 4 & 5 GROW trainers! This incredible team has a diverse range of experience and has been hard at work these past few months training to deliver the recently launched GROW training curriculum, which has replaced the previous PRIDE training curriculum. Do you recognize anyone??

To learn more about the Navigator team, head to <https://www.fcnp.org/about-fcnp/meet-staff!>



MAIRIN has been a trainer with Region 4 since June 2019 and originally got into training because “My husband and I took PRIDE to become licensed to adopt our granddaughter. I was told about the job because we had previously been licensed.” When asked about her favorite thing about training, Mairin said “Helping people become foster parents.”

A bit more about Mairin: “My husband, Ryan and I have been married for almost 24 years. We have three adult children and three grandchildren. We have a group foster home license and we currently have seven foster children and on relative placement.” A fun fact about her is that she graduated from high school in Honolulu, Hawaii!



LATOIA has been a trainer with Region 4 since January of 2020 and trains primarily in Washtenaw and Livingston Counties. She originally began training because “I was already trained in PRIDE and thought it would be a good experience.” When asked about her favorite thing about training, Latoia said “When the parents find out that they have rights and are important in the life of the foster child.”

A bit more about Latoia: “I am married with three adult children. We are a blended family that shared custody. I remember the challenges that we faced and the rewards that came from working together as parents.” A fun fact about her is that she experiments with different foods and, when she was a child, her siblings named her MIKEY from the LIFE cereal commercial because she would eat almost anything!



JACKIE has been a trainer with Region 4 since 2018, but recently made the switch to Region 5. She originally began training “to share with families my mistakes, how to be a more informed foster parent, and the lessons I’ve learned.” When asked about her favorite thing about training, Jackie said “When families ask questions and I can share my beautiful son with the audience because I do this for him and to tell his story of how children can find a forever home—You will always be WANTED!”.

A bit more about Jackie: “I’m a single working mom with a special needs child and I have a wonderful mother, who is my support person helping me to raise him. I elected to leave the corporate sector and devote the remainder of my life to nonprofit work because I wanted to give back to my Native American community and make a difference in the life of a child’s path. My life was changed by my college professor and my parents and I will forever be grateful to both for their words and wisdom.” A fun fact about Jackie is that she’s a goofball and loves to dance, watch crime stories, and laugh really loud with her son.



TRACEY has been a trainer with region 5 since 2019. She says “I enjoy training and wanted to be able to let foster parents know how important they are in children’s lives. I also believe it’s important to provide information to foster parents so that they can make informed decisions and understand the importance of being flexible and having realistic expectations.” Her favorite thing about being a trainer is interacting with participants and other trainers.

A bit more about Tracey: “I have been married for 20 years and have an 18-year-old-son, three dogs, and a lot of fish. I enjoy doing arts and crafts, camping, fishing, and golfing.” A fun fact about her is that she won a bass fishing tournament with her dad!



L'VETTE (VET) has been a trainer with Region 5 since August of 2018 and primarily trains in Wayne, Macomb, Genesee, and Oakland counties. She originally started training because “Child Welfare is my passion and I love to talk. This allowed me to blend both worlds! ;-).” When asked about her favorite thing about training, Vet said “Meeting new people and hearing your amazing stories!”

A bit more about Vet: “I have two kiddos ages 18 and 13. I’ve worked with children and their families for more than 20 years. I have a Bachelor’s degree in Criminal Justice and a Masters degree in Mental Health Counseling.” A fun fact about her is that she has three dogs, a cat, and a fish named Brad! “My animals are my most obedient children.”



MYAMA (MYA) has been a trainer with Region 5 since February of 2018. She originally started training because “I enjoy training and teaching others about foster care and adoption, based on my personal and professional experience.” When asked about her favorite thing about training, Mya said “Meeting the participants.”

A bit more about Mya: “I am an adoptive mother of two girls ages 10 and 7; however, I helped raise my four nieces and nephews who are now in their mid to late twenties. The oldest will be 30 this summer.” A fun fact about her is that she loves to travel with her daughters and friends. “I believe in this: At least one trip alone, one trip with family, and one trip with friends every year.”



JASMINE has been a trainer with Region 5 since June of 2018 and trains primarily in Wayne and Oakland Counties. She originally began training because “I wanted to play a different role in foster care—Assisting foster parents.” When asked about her favorite thing about training Jasmine said “Interacting and educating the perspective foster parents on the child welfare system.”

A bit more about Jasmine: “We (she and her family) enjoy spending time together and watching Family Feud.” A fun fact about her is that she can speak Pig Latin!



LIA has been a trainer with Region 4 since November of 2018 and originally got into training because “After five years working in child welfare, I realized that in addition to having consistent workers for children in foster care, it is important to have foster parents who truly understand the needs of children, the complexity of being a foster parent, and how to take care of themselves in the process. It is vitally important for children to have foster parents and/or relative caregivers who understand the trauma they have experienced as well as the best ways to help support them through reunification and/or their journey

through foster care. When asked about her favorite thing about training, Lia said “Meeting foster parents and relatives who care deeply about their children in their home and knowing that, as pride trainers, we can provide some answers, some hope, expectations, and information to help make empower them to be the best foster parents they can be.”

A bit more about Lia: “I started volunteering at a private foster care and adoption agency. This quickly led to working as a foster care worker. I spent most of my career as a dual adoption and foster care worker, with a short experience as a licensing worker. I also work as a licensed social worker providing therapeutic services and working with families to assist with custody and parenting times. I am a single parent to two boys, 9 and 3. I love being outside in nature and being active.” A fun fact about her is that she recently dyed her hair a new color that she had never dyed it before (purple)!



RACHEL has been a trainer with Region 4 since June of 2019 and originally started training because “I wanted to be able to give new and prospective foster families real world perspective. I wanted to be a resource for those getting into this life.” When asked about her favorite thing about being a trainer, she said “I enjoy meeting and hearing the stories of all the families that come through my classroom. I enjoy making connections and seeing a new or even an existing foster family make a connection between the material and their family.”

A bit more about Rachel: “I am a single mom to 9 children currently, ages 22, 20, 19, 19, 18, 18, 11, 7, and 6. We live in Lenawee County and have been a licensed foster home through DHHS for 5 years. I work fulltime and attend college courses part time. I train foster parents for my downtime, it is my self care. Our family loves camping, fishing, and being outside. I am also a grandma to a beautiful 8 month old baby girl.” A fun fact about her is that she loves to decorate cakes! “Currently for my family but I used to volunteer with an organization in Texas called free cakes for kids. This organization used volunteers to make or provide cakes for children who were in foster care, shelters, or part of a family who could not provide a cake for their birthdays. It was something I am still very proud to have been a part of while I lived in Texas.”



RENEE has been a trainer with Region 5 since February of 2021 and primarily trains in Oakland and Macomb Counties. Renee originally started training because “I was at a PRIDE Training as a foster parent and I shared a personal story. The trainer approached me at the break and said I should train others.” When asked about her favorite thing about being a trainer, she said “I enjoy encouraging and challenging others to mentor, help, teach, train, love, and strengthen children who are hurting. To help them heal, get past their pain, and strive for the good things that are ahead of them. The power of a mentor!”

A bit more about Renee: “I am married, a mom of 10 children. I have been a foster mom for over 30 years with over 50 children in my home. We own and operate a farm. I am a singer, song writer, and author.” A fun fact about her is that she loves to do over seas missions work and work at orphanages in third world countries. She loves horse back riding and chocolate!



MONICA has been a trainer with Region 4 since November of 2018 and primarily trains in Jackson County. She originally started training because “I love to learn and teaching others helps me deepen my proficiency in topics that help my family.” When asked about her favorite thing about being a trainer, Monica said “Connecting with parent learners/participants.”

A bit more about Monica: “We adopted our two children after fostering them for 2-3 years each. They are my husband's nieces kiddos so we were also relative placements. I have a Master of Science in Resource Development where I focused on environmental restoration and democratic engagement in decision-making.” A fun fact about her is that she loves puzzles and has been enjoying hiking with her first dog, Raven who was born Christmas of 2020.



GLEN has been a trainer with Region 5 since March of 2018 and trains primarily in Monroe, Oakland, and Wayne Counties. He originally began training because “I wanted to keep helping children in care, as I closed my license to work on my family after adopting a sibling set of three.” When asked about his favorite thing about training, Glen said “The revelation that people have through the training that the children that are in care need help to remember how to be children and need help to learn what love is and where it can come from.”

A bit more about Glen: “I am a IT Manager for a rural school district. My wife is a Foster Care Navigator. We have been married for over 17 years. We adopted a sibling set of three that were in our care when their rights were terminated.” A fun fact about him is that he is the tallest person in his extended family as far back as anyone remembers!



MELANIE joined our team in May of 2021 and began training with the launch of GROW in July. She originally began training because she and her husband are a current foster family and “our son was adopted from foster care when he was 1 year old, which is what led me to want to work in this wonderful field.”

A bit more about Melanie: “I live with my husband, Laurence, and our son Cameron in Plymouth. As a family, we love spending time outdoors, eating at new restaurants, and traveling to new places. My husband and I have actually travelled to ALL 7 continents together—and we hope to share this love of traveling with our son as he grows.” A fun fact about her is that she used to work at Tokyo Disneyland where she played Ariel in an aerialist show!



JESSICA has been a trainer with Region 4 since July of 2019 and primarily trains in Jackson, Lenawee, Monroe, and Washtenaw Counties. She originally began training because “The foster care system is unknown to those that aren’t submerged in it daily. Before becoming a foster care worker I was ignorant to an entire system of child abuse/neglect and how it functioned. The system is confusing and hopefully going through training sheds light on the realities of fostering/adopting.” When asked about her favorite thing about training, Jessica said “My favorite thing about training is that I never train it the same way twice.

Although I use the curriculum and slides to guide my training, it has become a blend of knowledge, experience, continued education, and others’ experiences to best prepare future foster/adoptive parents for the realities of foster care.”

A bit more about Jessica: “Our household consists of myself, my boyfriend, my son, and our German Shepherd, Scarlett. I work for the second attorney in Michigan to represent the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services CPS/Foster Care through private counsel. We are not affiliated with the prosecutor or attorney general’s office.” A fun fact about Jessica is that she was born in France and raised there until age 13 because her parents were missionaries there for 16 years. She attended French public school and spoke French outside of the home.



RACHEL joined our team in March of 2021 and began training with the launch of GROW in July. When asked about her favorite thing about training, Rachel said “As I am a foster parent I had to take PRIDE training. I enjoyed the stories that were shared from other foster parents.”

A bit more about Rachel: Rachel was born and raised in the UK and is the middle child in between two brothers who still live in the UK with the rest of her family. A fun fact about her is that she went parasailing in 2020 for the first time in Florida!





Foster Care Navigator

Contact Us

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WHAT IS A FOSTER CARE NAVIGATOR?

A Foster Care Navigator is someone who serves as a liaison between current and prospective foster parents and their agency. As trained and experienced foster parents themselves, each Navigator will mentor, through their own experience, parents navigating through the world of foster care.

The Adoptive and Foster Parent Recruitment and Retention (AFPRR) program in Region 4 is a program of Judson Center and is funded by the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services. For more information about becoming a foster parent, please visit us at www.fcnp.org or call 1-855-MICH-KIDS.



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