

Adoptive Homes Sought as Foster Care Surges

As of July 31, 2016, more than 10,400 children are in foster care in North Carolina - almost a 25-percent increase over a five-year low recorded in 2011 according to data collected and maintained by the Jordan Institute for Families at the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill.

"Ten-thousand children who do not have a permanent family is not acceptable," said Susan McDonald, Board Chair of Children's Home Society North Carolina (CHS). "One child without a permanent family is just not acceptable."

Jordan Institute and UNC-CH data also reveal over 500 foster children aging out and facing adulthood without finding permanent homes, and about 130,000 children with investigated reports of abuse and neglect in North Carolina each year during the past five years.

"When children are forced to deal with the basic needs of having safety, a permanent home and a loving family, how can they possibly reach their potential?" asked Brian Maness, President and CEO of Children's Home Society (CHS). "We can do better and change these statistics here in North Carolina. Last year alone 2,500 children were referred to CHS because they needed a family. Because of financial constraints, we were only able to serve 694 of them. Every year, more and more young people enter the system, and we are not able to help them. There are no unwanted children, just unfound families. What will we do together for these children?"

To meet Maness' challenge, the leadership team and Board of Trustees of Children's Home Society forged and approved a five-year, \$25-million campaign to expand capacity and services for families and children in North Carolina.

According to Maness, expanded capacity will enable CHS, the largest private adoption agency in the state, to dramatically boost the number of completed adoptions and increase the size of its enhanced foster care to permanency program.

"The Promise of Family campaign will raise funding to bolster the right of every child to a permanent, safe, and loving family, and sustain the important work of Children's Home Society throughout North Carolina," said Susan McDonald. McDonald, campaign co-chair with husband Mackey McDonald of Greensboro, launched the drive with a \$2-million contribution.

Founded in 1902 to rescue homeless children from the streets of Greensboro, Children's Home Society now serves over 20,000 children and families in all 100 counties in North Carolina with adoption, foster care, family preservation, and teen pregnancy prevention services. More than 15,000 children have been adopted through Children's Home Society North Carolina.

"We believe in the importance of family, not only in the life of a child but also in the foundation of a community," said Maness.

For information about about the Children's Home Society visit www.chsnc.org.

New Natural Heritage Website Identifies Rare Plants and Bats Near You



In North Carolina's cities and counties, many creatures live and thrive unnoticed in natural communities. The N.C. Natural Heritage Program has a new website (ncnhp.org) that allows citizens to discover the many life forms in their midst. A few, such as the Venus fly trap (pictured at left), are unique. Others, such as the long-eared bat, are endangered. It is a tool for citizens, conservationists, government and industry to inform economic development and land conservation decisions.

Natural communities technically are a distinct collection of plants and animals, including fungi and bacteria, that are associated with each other and their physical environment. More than 300 such communities are in the state. They consist of plants and animals, the living elements; and soil and water, non-living elements. The combination of factors makes each North Carolina natural community unique.

Each natural community thrives in its preferred ecoregion, the mountains, piedmont or coastal plain, and preferred conditions - high and dry, low and moist or a combination. The varied topography, soil types and moisture present creates a rich biodiversity in the state. In addition to being home to native species, natural communities are home to ecosystems that cycle nutrients and clean the water and air. Different types of natural communities can be found close together in the landscape, like distinct neighborhoods in a city.

The Natural Heritage Program is the repository for data on rare species and exemplary natural communities. The revamped website allows members of the public, business and industry, the military and others to access information about the state's ecology and natural heritage. A popular feature is the interactive Data Explorer map that shows nature preserves and conservation areas online at ncnhde.natureserve.org/content/map.

Environmental professionals can subscribe to the environmental review tool to generate reports about natural features in specific project areas. Anyone can search a database to discover what rare species are known in their county at www.ncnhp.org/data/species-community-search.

Natural Heritage Program rules, contact information and information on recent activities are on the new website also.

For additional information, please call Misty Buchanan at (919) 707-8107. The Natural Heritage Program is within the Division of Land and Water Stewardship of the N.C. Department of Natural and Cultural Resources.

Raffle for Veterans Memorial Project at Wadesboro Park

Win a Marlin XT-17 Series rifle! Tickets are only \$5.

The Anson County Veterans Council is constructing a new Veterans Memorial to be located inside the Wadesboro City Park. The memorial will be concrete, with a granite marker that displays the emblems of the five branches of service and flags along with the American flag on a 30 foot pole. The memorial will also have the North Carolina flag and the Anson County flag on each side at 25 feet tall. The memorial will have a box for citizens to discard used American flags. Flags placed inside the box will be collected and disposed of properly.

Work is progressing, and recently sod has been added along with some shrubbery. More shrubbery will be added in the fall. The next project will be the addition of the three flag poles.

A new fundraiser has begun for this project, the raffling of a Marlin XT-17 Series rifle. Tickets are \$5 and are on sale now! Tickets may be purchased at Lacys, Permanent Solutions, Anson Sign Company and Rayfields Meat Center. Also, you can purchase tickets from any Veterans Council member or call 704-694-6770.

To make a contribution, please make checks payable to the Anson County Veterans Council, PO Box 791, Wadesboro, NC 28170. Donations are tax deductible.

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