



**CENTRE COUNTY PREVENTION COALITION**  
*A SAMHSA Funded Drug-Free Community Coalition*  
*Supported By Centre County Drug and Alcohol*



**May 20, 2009 – Foster Care**

Jordan Luckenbill, Foster Home Recruiter for Centre County Children and Youth Services, graduated from the Pennsylvania State University in 2006 with a B.S. in Elementary Education. Jordan is dedicated to improving the lives of Centre County children in foster care by securing Centre County foster homes for them. This weekly column, published on Wednesdays, is a collaboration of Centre County *Communities That Care* serving Bald Eagle, Bellefonte, Penns Valley, and Philipsburg-Osceola Area School Districts, and Care Partnership: Centre Region *Communities That Care* serving the State College Area School District.

Imagine a world in which you are forced to pack your few belongings and move to a new home and a new family. It is most likely that you are not making the move with your brothers and sisters who are being placed in other different homes with other new families. And imagine for a moment that you are the new family taking in a child who is confused, rootless and upset. Very little imagination is required if you are one of the nearly 513,000 children in foster care in the U.S., or one of the foster families who open their hearts and homes to children in desperate need of stability.

May is National Foster Care Month – a time when we turn our attention to the children and youth in care, and honor the dedicated foster families, relative caregivers, volunteers and child welfare professionals who serve them. The foster care “system” is only as good as the people who choose to be a part of it. With the help of more Americans, the lives of these young people will change for the better.

There are presently 71 children in the custody of Centre County, either residing in foster homes or in residential facilities. No matter how much time you have to give, you have the power to do something positive that will “*Change a Lifetime*” for a young person in foster care. Nearly every community is suffering from a shortage of foster families. More and more children need you. Children in foster care feel more secure and are likely to do better in school when they are able to stay in their own community. The simple truth is that the larger the pool of qualified foster parents, the easier it will be to ensure that children can remain in their own neighborhoods and schools and to keep siblings together in foster care.

Being a foster parent is not the only way to have an impact on the life of a child in foster care. You can become a mentor or support foster youth attending college or vocational school. You can offer older youth essential job skills training or employment, a place to stay, a computer or tutoring. Consider sending some coupons for free pizzas or amusement park passes to Children and Youth Services for distribution to foster families and the children they serve. Get involved -- no foster child should be without a strong relationship to a caring adult they can depend on in times of need. Visit [www.fostercaremonth.org](http://www.fostercaremonth.org) or call Centre County Children and Youth Services at 814-355-6755 to find out how you can help.

Care Partnership: Centre Region *Communities That Care*  
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