

#Be the Village

Tips for How
YOU
Can Support
Families
in Need!



All families (biological, relative, foster, adoptive) experiencing transition, either temporary or long-term, deserve and need our support.

Many times, it can be difficult determining what the needs are and how to be helpful.

If you are moved to **# Be the Village** – here are ways that **YOU** can choose to support these youth and families:

Provide In-Home Support Kits ~ When an in-home case opens as means to avoid a foster care placement. This means a child remains in the home with the parent and does not enter foster care but is provided services in their home. A kit/basket/bag can be given to the family by the agency worker with items that are meant to support family bonding and unity. **Suggested items:** board games, decks of cards, movie theater popcorn, soft cuddle blanket for the couch, books, gift card for pizza, coloring books, gift certificates for family activities such as zoo, bowling, roller skating, items needed for a cooking activity such as cake mix, frosting, and cake pan, or items for a family craft or art activity.

Create Transition Baskets ~ Fill a new laundry basket for youth aging out of foster care at age 18+ including items for an apartment or independent living. **Suggested items:** new bath towels, wash cloths, toiletries, cleaning supplies, blanket, laundry soap, stain remover, gift cards for groceries or home supplies to places such as Walmart, gas cards for gas stations.

*Laptops for post-secondary education or training would be very useful for this age group as well.

Build Foster Parent Support Packs ~ Foster parents give, do, provide, help... but do not always get recognition for the role they play in helping children and families living in our communities. Being a foster parent can be exhausting!! **Suggested items:** self-help book, book of quotes, gift card for coffee or dinner, new board game for the house, bubble bath, gift certificate for car wash, or anything that will let foster parents know that their efforts and contributions are appreciated.

Contribute Foster Parent Safety Support ~ Licensing requires family homes to be fully equipped with fire extinguishers, carbon monoxide detectors, smoke alarms, etc. These are three items that expire and are needed in order to maintain licensure. These items are not provided for interested families, and once licensed, each foster family must maintain these items with their own funding. **Suggested items:** fire extinguishers (check with licensing agency for specific requirements), carbon monoxide detectors, fire ladders, gift certificates for fire extinguisher maintenance or furnace safety checks.

Assist with Foster Parent Appreciation or Family Activities ~ Sponsor or assist with an event that shows appreciation to foster parents or provides opportunities for families to enjoy time together such as a meal or a recreational activity. This can be done for groups of families or to support one family. **Suggested activities:** Provide a meal once, or once per month, purchase a family swimming pool pass, movie theater tickets, zoo pass, State Park pass, bowling gift certificate. or other activities.

Give Welcome Bags ~ A new bag for the custodial agency to give to each child upon removal from the home, when placed into a foster home. **Suggested items:** a new overnight bag filled with a toothbrush/toiletry items, pajamas, stuffed animal, blanket, note pad for journaling or color book, items selected for boy or girl.

**These bags are especially needed for older children and teens.

For more information on how to support youth and families, or if you would like to help, please contact the

ND Tollfree Foster Parent Inquiry Line at 1-833-FST-HOME (1-833-378-4663), or

Sheila Muus, Foster Parent Recruitment & Retention Specialist at sheila.muus@und.edu

Or contact your local agency at: **Roughrider North Human Service Zone @ 701-456-7675**

Ask for **Carrie Kovash** or **Lisa Giese**



