

From: Patel, Swati <SwatiPatel@gov.sc.gov>
To: Pisarik, Holly <HollyPisarik@gov.sc.gov>
Date: 5/11/2016 10:33:44 AM
Subject: FW: Super Advocate program for foster and adoptive children

Can you please follow up Ms. Poole on this and possibly connect her with DSS if that makes sense after you speak with her?

From: Priester, Nicole
Sent: Monday, May 09, 2016 5:24 PM
To: Patel, Swati
Subject: FW: Super Advocate program for foster and adoptive children
Importance: High

Swati-

I spoke to the Governor and she asked me to pass the below email along to you to see how to handle.

Nicole

From: Mary Poole [<mailto:mpoole@yorkdsnb.org>]
Sent: Friday, May 06, 2016 3:04 PM
To: Priester, Nicole
Subject: Super Advocate program for foster and adoptive children
Importance: High

Nicole,

Advocates for Families First is a collaboration of the North American Council on Adoptable Children (NACAC), the National Foster Parent Association (NFPA), and Generations United. They are funded by the Annie E. Casey Foundation, the Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption, and Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative. This year they began the "Super Advocates" program in an effort to bring personal stories and ideas grounded in experience to legislators in Washington DC and at the state and local levels. AFF chose 18 super advocates from across the country who will be brought to Washington DC on June 4th to undergo specialized advocacy training, meet with legislators and their staffers and to map out a platform to aid children in the foster care system as well as to facilitate forever families for those children who are available for adoption.

I have been chosen as one of those 18 advocates. I am a former member of the Governor's Task Force on Adoption and Foster Care under Gov. Sanford and am the adoptive mother of 5 children with Down syndrome. I am trying to get this message to Governor Haley in an effort to get her input as to what she sees as issues we need to address. I do have my platform mapped out; but am more than open to additional issues that need to be added.

The issues I have chosen stem from our adoption experiences in South Carolina and across state lines. They are as follows:

1. Disability-specific training for foster care parents and social workers. I have seen issues with medical treatment delayed, therapies not being provided and serious communication issues.
2. Title IV-E subsidies need to be available for all adoptions of special needs children.
3. Issues with systemic difference from state to state which confuse and confound potential adoptive parents.
4. The need to instill a sense of urgency in those who work in the child welfare system.

5. There needs to be better incentives to adopt versus all the incentives resting in foster care. This is a huge problem for special needs children who have a limited voice. Many are being kept in foster care because their per diem is much higher than any subsidy the adoptive parent would receive.
6. Post adoption respite for adoptive parents of children with special needs.

Once back from DC, I will be making appointments to speak to state legislators regarding this subject. I think those conversations could be enhanced with input from the Governor or her staff.

Mary Poole

Executive Director

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