



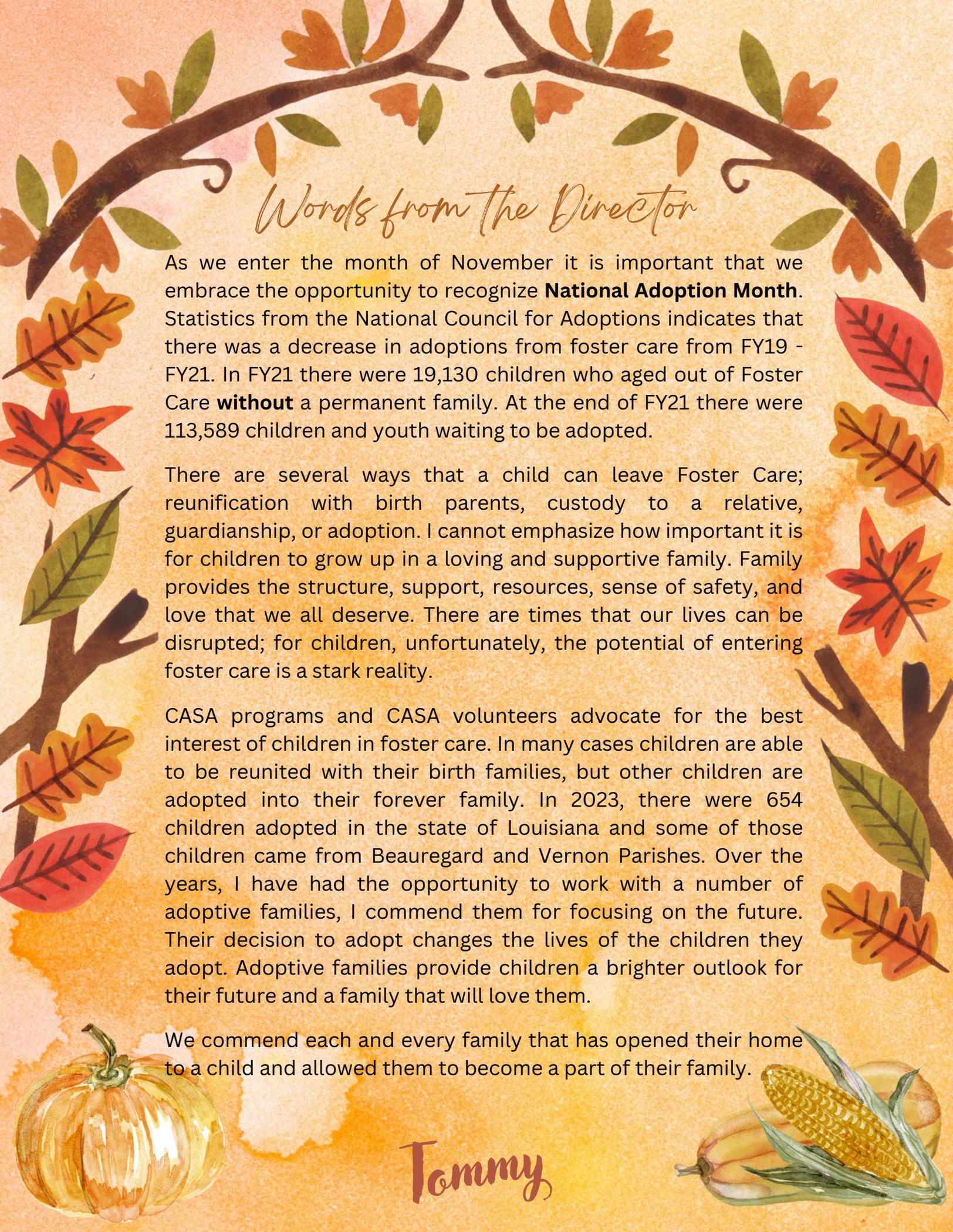
NOVEMBER 2024

“The News”

in this
ISSUE

WORDS FROM THE DIRECTOR
SUPERVISOR TIPS
TRAINING-TRAINING-TRAINING
COMMUNITY RESOURCES
HAPPENINGS IN OUR COMMUNITIES
ADVOCATE SPOTLIGHT
EXTRA!





Words from the Director

As we enter the month of November it is important that we embrace the opportunity to recognize **National Adoption Month**. Statistics from the National Council for Adoptions indicates that there was a decrease in adoptions from foster care from FY19 - FY21. In FY21 there were 19,130 children who aged out of Foster Care **without** a permanent family. At the end of FY21 there were 113,589 children and youth waiting to be adopted.

There are several ways that a child can leave Foster Care; reunification with birth parents, custody to a relative, guardianship, or adoption. I cannot emphasize how important it is for children to grow up in a loving and supportive family. Family provides the structure, support, resources, sense of safety, and love that we all deserve. There are times that our lives can be disrupted; for children, unfortunately, the potential of entering foster care is a stark reality.

CASA programs and CASA volunteers advocate for the best interest of children in foster care. In many cases children are able to be reunited with their birth families, but other children are adopted into their forever family. In 2023, there were 654 children adopted in the state of Louisiana and some of those children came from Beauregard and Vernon Parishes. Over the years, I have had the opportunity to work with a number of adoptive families, I commend them for focusing on the future. Their decision to adopt changes the lives of the children they adopt. Adoptive families provide children a brighter outlook for their future and a family that will love them.

We commend each and every family that has opened their home to a child and allowed them to become a part of their family.



Tommy

Supervisor **TIPS**

SCHEDULE VISITS AHEAD OF TIME

With some CASA families, it works well to set up regularly scheduled home visits, such as every first and third Tuesday of the month. This can help you plan ahead, as well. Other families may need more flexibility; in these cases, you can suggest regularly scheduled visits but assure them it's OK if a future visit has to be rescheduled. Planning your visits a month in advance can help you avoid scrambling for a good time to meet at the last moment.



TALK TO THE WHOLE TEAM

Recognize the power of teamwork. The more you remain in contact with the schools, counselors, rehabs, doctors, employers, social workers, etc., the better you can support and validate what your family tells you.

DON'T OVERTHINK THINGS

Please remember, you are an information gatherer, not the judge.

PAY ATTENTION

Be an active listener by making eye contact and asking questions to clarify your understanding.



USE YOUR ADVOCATE SUPERVISOR

Ask your Advocate Supervisor for help as soon as you need direction with your case. She won't bite! Try asking your Advocate Supervisor for advice on different ways you could connect with your kids. You'll be surprised what a different perspective can accomplish!

SELF-CARE IS IMPORTANT

If you're feeling burned out, it could be because you're putting too much thought or time into things you personally can't control. Give yourself grace. You are volunteering to help children and families in difficult situations. It's hard work; make sure you take care of yourself.





Christmas
PROJECT

It is that time of year again! All the kiddos have turned in their Christmas Wish Lists. If you want to sponsor a child for Christmas, please contact one of our offices.

Beauregard Parish

337-462-4667

Vernon Parish

337-239-1970

TRAINING-TRAINING-TRAINING

PRE-SERVICE

January 

March 

May 

September  

CASA OF WEST CENLA WOULD LOVE TO
PRESENT OUR AGENCY TO YOUR GROUP,
CLUB, OFFICE, AGENCY, ETC. FOR MORE
INFORMATION CONTACT US AT
337-462-4667 OR 337-239-1970

Community **RESOURCES**

Council on Aging

- Beauregard Council on Aging 337-463-6578
- Vernon Council on Aging 337-239-4361

Education/Career

- American Job Center - 337-462-5838
- Beauregard Christian Women's Job Corps - 337-463-4451
- Beauregard Parish Library - 337-463-6217
- SOWELA - 337-537-3135 or 800-278-9855
- Early Steps Program - 225-342-0095
- Literacy Council of SWLA - 337-375-7794
- Upper Iowa University (UIU) - 337-537-4465

More resources in next month's issue.

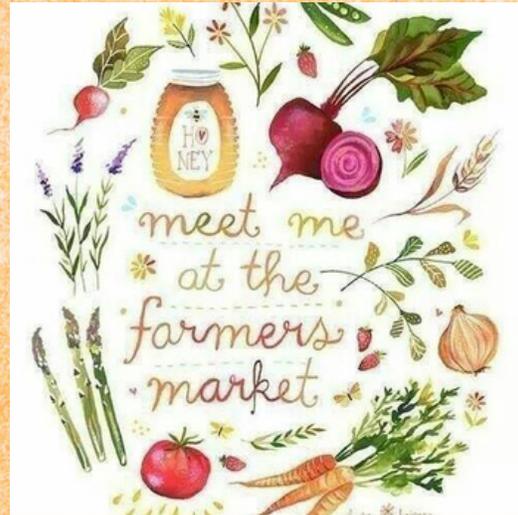


Community EVENTS



Mother Goose Storytime
Vernon Parish Library
Saturdays 10am-10:30am

Farmer's Market
3rd Street - Leesville
Saturdays 8am-1pm



Advocate
SPOTLIGHT



Vernon
Parish
Vanessa



Beaugard
Parish
Jennifer

Extras

Southern Thanksgiving Recipes

HASHBROWN CASSEROLE



Ingredients

- 1 (32-oz.) package frozen diced hash brown potatoes, thawed
- 1 (10 1/2-oz.) can cream of celery soup
- 1 (8-oz.) container sour cream
- 1 cup shredded mild Cheddar cheese
- 1/2 cup chopped onion
- 3/4 cup unsalted butter, melted
- 2 cups cornflakes cereal
- Garnish: fresh curly-leaf parsley sprigs

Directions

- Prepare the oven and baking dish:
- Preheat the oven to 350°F. Grease a 2- to 3-quart baking dish with cooking spray.
- Combine casserole ingredients:
- Stir together the first 5 ingredients and 1/2 cup of the butter until well blended.
- Spoon into a greased 2- to 3-quart baking dish.
- Add casserole topping:
- Crush the cereal, and stir in the remaining 1/4 cup butter. Sprinkle over the potato mixture.
- Bake casserole:
- Bake at 350°F for 50 minutes.



TENNESEE ONIONS

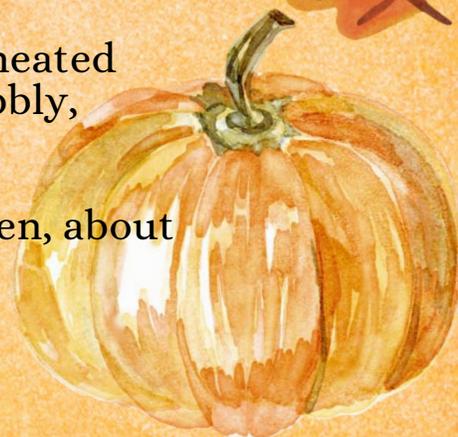


Ingredients

- Cooking spray
- 2 1/2 lb. sweet onions (about 3 large onions), sliced crosswise into 1/4-in.-thick slices and separated into rings
- 1 tsp. dried thyme
- 1 tsp. dried parsley flakes
- 1 tsp. garlic salt
- 1/2 tsp. dried oregano
- 1/2 tsp. dry mustard
- 1/4 tsp. cayenne pepper
- 1/4 cup salted butter, cut into 1/4-in.-thick pieces
- 4 oz. mild Cheddar cheese, shredded (about 1 cup)
- 4 oz. smoked Gouda cheese, shredded (about 1 cup)

Directions

- Warm the oven: Preheat oven to 350°F.
- Coat a 13- x 9-inch baking dish with cooking spray.
- Season the onions:
- Place onions in a large bowl. Sprinkle with thyme, parsley, garlic salt, oregano, mustard, and cayenne pepper; toss gently to coat.
- Add to baking dish:
- Arrange evenly in prepared baking dish.
- Add toppings and bake:
- Arrange butter evenly over onions, and sprinkle with Cheddar and Gouda.
- Cover with aluminum foil, and bake in preheated oven until onions are soft and sides are bubbly, about 40 minutes.
- Finish baking:
- Remove foil. Bake at 350°F until top is golden, about 30 minutes.



SWEET POTATO CASSEROLE

Ingredients

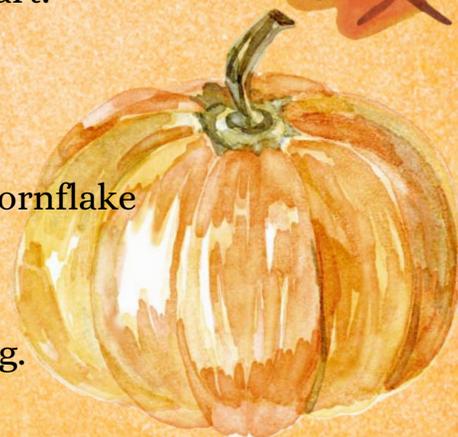
- 4 1/2 lbs. sweet potatoes
- 1 cup granulated sugar
- 1/2 cup butter, softened
- 1/4 cup milk
- 2 large eggs
- 1 tsp. vanilla extract
- 1/4 tsp. kosher salt
- 1 1/4 cups cornflakes cereal, crushed
- 1/4 cup chopped pecans
- 1 Tbsp. brown sugar
- 1 Tbsp. butter, melted
- 1 1/2 cups miniature marshmallows



Directions

Bake sweet potatoes:

- Preheat oven to 400°F. Bake sweet potatoes at 400°F for 1 hour or until tender. Let stand until cool to touch (about 20 minutes).
- Mash sweet potatoes:
- Peel and mash sweet potatoes. Reduce oven temperature to 350°F.
- Mix sweet potatoes:
- Beat mashed sweet potatoes, granulated sugar, and next 5 ingredients at medium speed with an electric mixer until smooth.
- Add sweet potato mixture to baking dish:
- Spoon potato mixture into a greased 11- x 7-inch baking dish.
- Make cornflake-pecan mixture:
- Combine cornflakes cereal and next 3 ingredients in a small bowl.
- Add cornflake mixture to casserole:
- Sprinkle over casserole in diagonal rows 2 inches apart.
- Bake casserole:
- Bake at 350°F for 30 minutes. Remove from oven.
- Add marshmallows
- Sprinkle marshmallows in alternate rows between cornflake mixture.
- Finish baking:
- Bake 10 minutes. Let stand 10 minutes before serving.



Cranberry Sauce



Ingredients

- 1 (12-oz.) pkg. frozen or fresh cranberries (about 3 cups)
- 1 1/2 cups packed light brown sugar
- 1 cup fresh orange juice (from 2 large oranges)
- 1 tsp. kosher salt
- 1 cinnamon stick
- 1/2 cup chopped toasted pecans (optional)

Directions

- Stir together cranberries, sugar, juice, salt, and cinnamon stick in a medium saucepan. (Reserve pecans if using.)
- Bring to a boil over high heat; boil, stirring occasionally, for 3 minutes.
- Reduce heat to medium; cook, stirring often, until most of the cranberries have burst and liquid is syrupy, about 15 minutes.
- Remove from heat. Remove and discard cinnamon stick.
- Stir in pecans. Transfer mixture to a heatproof bowl.
- Let stand 30 minutes, or cover and refrigerate until chilled, at least 4 hours or up to 1 week.

