



Vermont Foster/Adoptive Family Association's
31st Annual Institute & Conference
APRIL 13-15, 2018

Hilton Burlington, 60 Battery St., Burlington, VT

Pieces of the Puzzle: How We Fit Together to Build Thriving Communities

Come celebrate, learn, problem solve, and network with your peers!



April 13th, 2018
9:00am to 4:30pm
Laura Porter

Collaboration: Family, Community & NEAR Science

Become part of the social movement that is strengthening the well-being of youth, family, and community in Vermont!

This day will provide an overview of “NEAR” Science: Neuro-science, Epigenetics, Adverse Childhood Experience and Resilience, as well as offer Community Cafe discussions to generate solutions addressing your local concerns and dreams to grow vibrant communities.

Presented in collaboration with Promise Communities and Building Flourishing Communities initiatives.

About Laura Porter: *Laura Porter is co-founder of ACE Interface, LLC (www.aceinterface.com) and the designer of Self-Healing Communities in Washington State. She is now sharing the information in Vermont as we are Building Flourishing Communities.*

\$110/person • \$100/group of 5+ CEUs pending • REGISTER @ www.vfafaconference.org

SATURDAY KEYNOTE : Working the Puzzle

Michele Feiner will discuss the difficulties of trying to stay on top of the various issues that come with parenting children with attachment challenges and early trauma, and the importance of looking at the challenges with an eye towards solving a puzzle.



April 14th, 2018
Michele Feiner

Michele is a Vermont foster/adoptive parent and the Coordinator of Disability Services at Johnson State College.

She is the author of “*Laugh Before You Cry: Creative Strategies for Raising Attachment Challenged Children.*”

SUNDAY CLOSING : Uplifting & Inspiring

Sue combines her experience as a foster/adoptive parent with her expertise as a Licensed Clinical Mental Health Counselor, trainer and speaker. Susanne’s compelling and humorous presentations assist listeners to understand the power of stories to heal.



April 15th, 2018
Susanne Schmidt

With a focus on working with participants, staff, and leadership teams, Sue teaches the science and art of storytelling and designs her presentations that raise awareness and celebrate community.

www.sueschmidtcomedy.com



Vermont Foster/Adoptive Family Association

Who are we and what is our mission?

VFAFA came into being over 30 years ago to provide a network of support for the state's foster families. The organization has grown to include Adoptive and licensed Kin/Foster families and works in collaboration with Department for Children and Families, Family Services Division with the shared purpose of safety and well-being for all children.

OUR MISSION is to empower, support, & unify foster/adoptive families by strengthening the systems that care for Vermont's children.

WE ENVISION a world where all foster/adoptive families have the resources they need to restore faith, hope and joy to the children they nurture.

FOR THE PAST 31 YEARS

VFAFA has organized a Conference weekend that provides foster, kin, & adoptive parents with training and networking opportunities to support the amazing work they do! The Conference also offers service providers, educators, mental health clinicians, childcare providers, DCF social workers, and individuals from the legal and medical communities an opportunity to enhance their skills to better serve youth in custody.

Pieces of the Puzzle: How We Fit Together To Build Thriving Communities

The 2018 Conference is presented in collaboration with the Promise Communities and Building Flourishing Communities initiatives. In coming together we will gain a greater understanding of "NEAR" science; Neuro-science, Epigenetics, Adverse Childhood Experience, Resilience. With this information in mind, we'll discuss what communities can do today that will strengthen the protective factors that support youth and families now, and will improve intergenerational health and well-being into the future.

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Jody Dickerson • Sue Travers • Lisa Steckler

CURRENTLY there are approximately:

- 1,250 children in state's custody
- 1,200 licensed foster homes
- 85 youth looking for their "Forever home"
- 2,718 children have been adopted through DCF since 2000