

Hey West Seattle folks- see below about engaging our Delridge West Seattle DSHS!

Subject: Supporting West Seattle DSHS

First of all, I want to say thank you for your interest in supporting foster care in West Seattle! We met about a month ago at the All Souls office for an introductory meeting about the DSHS offices in West Seattle and presented several ways we, as the faith community, can support them. I wanted to provide a short explanation of each of those opportunities here as well as some attachments to look over. There was also interested in setting up a tour of the offices and I'm working with Lisa McKee to coordinate a few dates. I will keep you all posted on when those will be.

1. Prayer - pray for children in foster care, families that are separated, reunification when possible, the DSHS staff, foster and adoptive families, and for children to find permanence as soon as possible either through reunification, long term foster placement or adoption
2. Office Moms and Dads: an on-call volunteering opportunity for qualified women and men to sit with, care for and entertain children who have recently been removed from their homes. Interested volunteers will need to pass a background check and complete a 1.5 hour training. An Office Moms and Dads coordinator is needed in order for this program to launch in West Seattle. Attached is job description for the coordinator position. Please contact me if you might be willing to serve in this role. Co-coordinators is also an option if two people want to share the responsibility. We also need about 20-30 volunteers trained and background checked in order to launch.
3. Care Boxes: While a child is waiting, a social worker or Office Moms & Dads can give a child a box for them to take to their new home. The boxes are filled with hygiene items, comfort items, small toys, snacks, and more. It is essential to put these boxes together as instructed in the attached brochure. The DSHS office is very eager to get these boxes for kids and it would be great to have a few churches start to put boxes together. This is a great initial activity/project to talk about foster care with congregations or small groups. It is also a great way to include children in the conversation. The goal would be to always have these on hand at the office for all ages and gender.
4. Office Volunteers: There are numerous tasks in the offices that a volunteer could help fulfill including cleaning toys, organizing donation closets, letting churches know when there are needs for more toys, clothes, luggage
5. Encourage DSHS office staff: Provide snacks/treats for staff meetings, bring lunch monthly for the staff, write notes of encouragement.

I am more than willing to help lead future meetings like this, if there is interest. I'm open to coming to churches on a Sunday morning or a midweek gathering and presenting some of these ways that people can serve. I am praying that an Office Moms and Dads coordinator comes forward and we continue to work toward a launch this spring. And the greatest need of all is more foster homes in King County. Being a foster parent isn't for everyone, but for those whom God is calling, I would love to help connect them to resources as they make steps toward welcoming a child into their home.

Thank you!

Jen

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