



Empowering Kansas communities in the fight against methamphetamine

Record

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Family Expands to Welcome Meth-Exposed Brothers

James and Tina Smith never expected to raise more children after their three children grew up and moved out of the house. They certainly never imagined that they would become parents to two drug endangered children.

James, a police officer, has spent the last seven years as a School Resource Officer for the El Dorado and Douglass School Districts. Tina is a medical assistant.

After six months of an “empty nest” the Smiths began certification classes to become foster parents. During the certification process, James recalls both he and Tina said that they absolutely would not consider adoption. “What a change in opinion we experienced after having foster children live in our home!” James said.

In January 2007 James and Tina received their first foster child: a 5 month old boy named Jaxon. “I can still remember the day my wife brought him home—this little baby with a small body and a big head. I can still smell



Brothers Jaxon (l) and Bo (r) Smith found their forever home when they were adopted by a Kansas family.

the stench of the cigarettes coming from him and the dirty clothes he was dressed in,” James said.

The foster care agency informed the Smiths that although Jaxon was born with methamphetamine and marijuana in his system, there were no immediate medical concerns or diagnosed conditions. However, Jaxon was small for his age and suffered from breathing problems

requiring the use of a nebulizer. Recently the Smiths have noticed behaviors they believe may be related to Attention Deficit Disorder.

The most significant health problem Jaxon faces is a chronic eye problem. In 2008 Jaxon was diagnosed with a cataract, which a specialist believed to be caused by prenatal exposure to meth.

See Adopted Brothers, page 4

Inside the Record

Meth Lab Cleanup Program Eliminated 3
KADEC Update 3

On-Line Meth Course 4



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Regional Prevention Centers provide drug and alcohol prevention education and technical assistance to communities across the state of Kansas.

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Shawnee/Osage	Topeka	785-266-8666

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This newsletter is available to download in Adobe Acrobat (PDF) format from the Kansas Methamphetamine Prevention Project website.

Follow the "Resources" link at www.ksmethpreventionproject.org.

Kansas Meth Lab Cleanup Program Eliminated

Recent budget reductions have required the Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE) to eliminate the Clandestine Drug Lab Response Program. In 2008, KDHE responded to approximately 170 methamphetamine and other illegal drug labs at the request of law enforcement.

"It is unfortunate, but unavoidable, that keeping a balanced state budget made the elimination of this program necessary," stated Roderick L. Bremby, Secretary of KDHE. "The Clandestine Drug Lab Response Program not only



helped to ensure healthy and clean neighborhoods and communities, but was an opportunity for KDHE to build partnerships with law enforcement."

"The closure of the Clandestine Drug Lab Response Program is a significant blow to our state. Without the state program, the responsibility to clean-up meth lab sites will fall to local law enforcement agencies which often lack necessary funding and other resources," said Cristi Cain, State Coordinator of the Kansas Methamphetamine Prevention Project.

"Additionally, local law enforcement agencies may have to wait hours or days for federal

clean-up crews to arrive to clean-up a site," Cain continued.

A typical response by the Clandestine Drug Lab Response Program to a methamphetamine lab involved the removal and disposal of hazardous chemicals, as well as testing the home or other structure to determine if the residual contaminants exceeded safety standards.

Structures deemed unsafe were marked with hazardous materials placards until owners cleaned up their properties. Such clean-ups could include replacing carpeting, wallboard or other contaminated materials, and painting. Once properties were cleaned, KDHE personnel retested them to determine if they were safe.

KS Alliance for DEC Update

During June and July, the Kansas Alliance for Drug Endangered Children (KADEC) partnered with the U.S. Attorney's Office and Regional Community Policing Institute to conduct four Partners for Justice training. The Partners for Justice training is an annual training program for law enforcement officials, however because the topic of the training was Drug Endangered Children, social service providers were also invited to participate.

Over 170 professionals attended the trainings in Hays, Dodge City, Andover and on the Potawatomi Reservation. The trainings focused on Drug Endangered Children (including how to implement and expand efforts) and substance abuse during pregnancy.

On August 20th, the 5th Annual KADEC Conference was held at the Ball Conference Center in Olathe. More than 140 participants from Kansas, Nebraska and Missouri attended the event.

Welcome comments were provided by Scott Rask, Assistant United States Attorney in the U.S.

Attorney's Office for the District of Kansas and Cristi Cain, Chair of the Kansas Alliance for Drug Endangered Children.

The featured presenter at the event was Jim Gerhardt, a Sergeant with the North Metro Task Force in Thornton, CO and a founding member of both the Colorado and National Alliances for Drug Endangered Children. Sgt. Gerhardt's presentation was entitled "Changing the Course of Drug Investigations by Recognizing Child Victims".

The conference would not have been possible without the assistance of our sponsors— U.S. Attorney's Office for the District of Kansas, KVC

Behavioral HealthCare, Inc. and Shawnee Regional Prevention and Recovery Services, Inc. Thank you also to the many volunteers and KADEC Board of Directors members who assisted with the event!

If you have ideas for topics or speakers for the 2010 KADEC Conference, please contact Loretta Severin at lwyrick@parstopeka.com.



Adopted Brothers Find Forever Home

Continued from Page 1

Jaxon endured two surgeries related to the cataract removal. He wears a patch over the eye and may need additional surgeries in the future.

In June 2007 the Smiths learned that Jaxon's biological mother was in jail and was seven months pregnant. In August 2007 the Smiths traveled to a Wichita hospital to pick up Jaxon's brother, Boston ("Bo"), who was three days old.

Although no drugs were detected in Bo's system at birth, his mother had tested positive for drugs during the pregnancy. Bo's mother had not received any prenatal care. The Smiths say Bo appears to be healthy and hasn't exhibited any health problems.

Jaxon and Bo's biological parents relinquished their parental rights in court, making it possible for the Smiths to adopt the boys. On June 29, 2009 the adoption was finalized.

Tina credits their three eldest children for lovingly accepting their expanding family.

"We asked each of our three grown children whether it was okay to adopt Jaxon and Bo and told them their answer would be strictly confidential in case they were opposed to the adoption. Not one of our children had any concerns or objections. They were all excited and couldn't wait to have new brothers!" Tina said.

The Smiths say that both Jaxon and Bo have made "amazing progress" and are now doing well physically and developmentally. The brothers celebrated their 2nd and 3rd birthdays surrounded by family and friends.

"We never believed we would be raising children again, but we would not have it any other way. Jaxon and Bo have brought much joy to our lives. There is never a dull moment at the Smith house!" James said.

Tina encourages individuals, couples and families throughout Kansas to consider fostering or adopting children in need of loving homes. "Anyone that has ever wanted a child or thought of adoption should seriously consider foster children as an option," Tina said.

Tina continued, "People reading this may think we are 'special' for adopting drug affected babies, but we only think of them as beautiful boys that needed love and a family."

"Children, regardless of what situation they come from, deserve the opportunity to grow up in a healthy, nurturing home and to be loved. There are no statistics regarding the healing power of love on the soul, body and mind of a child. We have seen it and know it makes a difference! We are everyday, normal parents who have two sons that we love and we are a family— *that* is what makes us special."

Cost of On-Line Course Reduced

In 2006 the Kansas Methamphetamine Prevention Project partnered with Kansas Children's Service League (KCSL) to create an on-line training entitled "Critical Issues of Methamphetamine".

The course has recently undergone revisions and has been shortened to 1.5 hours. Additionally, the cost of the course has been reduced from \$40.00 to \$10.00.

This self-paced course provides participants with information about methamphetamine and related

child endangerment issues. General information, including signs someone is using meth, meth lab indicators, effects on children living in a meth environment, and safety for workers and home visitors will be covered. A certificate for 1.5 hours of in-service training will be mailed after completion of the course.

For more information or to register for the course, visit www.elearningkcs.org. An on-line Home Visitor Safety course is also available at that site.



Conference Opportunity!

Drug Endangered Children: Bringing Disciplines Together

Featuring:

Lori Moriarty,
National Alliance for DEC

Friday, October 30th
Grand Prairie Hotel
Hutchinson, Kansas

For more information visit:
<http://www.prairieview.org/upcoming.html>