



Adopted Teen Empowerment and Mentoring

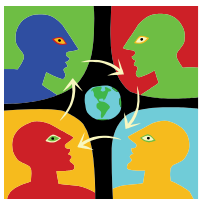
Columbus State  
University  
Spring 2011

... a special place for a special group of friends.

This monthly program is designed to support adopted teens in 6th-12th grade and provides participants with a program of educational, social, and recreational opportunities on a college campus. ATEAM participants share experiences with other adopted teens to gain mutual support and talk about issues important to them. This program is sponsored by the Georgia Department of Human Services, DFCS, Social Services Administration, contracted to Family Matters Consulting, Inc., and hosted by Columbus State University.

## Upcoming ATEAM Events

### Learn to Think Positively This May



Come join us on **May 21st** as we set out to explore the difference that a little positive thinking can make in your life! Our theme for this month is *"ATEAM Ambassadors: Your Voice, Your World, The Power of Positive Thinking."* This month,

we will participate in a variety of activities focused on anger management, conflict resolution, and peacemaking. So much of our lives are spent in conflict with others, whether this is conflict with friends, family, or even ourselves. As we work together to conquer the challenging activities staff will give us this month, we will learn to change our negative thinking to positive. After all, seeing the glass half full rather than half empty can do wonders for our perspective on life! Our culture of focus this month will be Germany. You won't want to miss this last Saturday meeting before the retreat. Sign up today!

### Get Ready for the ATEAM World Summit!

It's that time again! The ATEAM Summer Retreat is right around the corner. This year's retreat will be held at the Georgia FFA-FCCLA Center in Covington, **June 10-12th**. To cap off our year-long "ATEAM Ambassadors: Your Voice, Your World" theme, our retreat theme will be *"ATEAM World Summit: The Power of Peace!"* Retreat activities will focus on cultural diversity. Each site will present the nation they have been working on all year. We will recap the topics of each monthly meeting and have a blast! Registrations will be accepted on a **first come, first serve basis and MUST INCLUDE a completed registration form along with a \$20.00 per person deposit made payable to Family Matters Consulting**. Space is limited for this retreat so register today with your site coordinator to reserve your spot for this exciting weekend event!



## An Invitation For the Ties That Bind!

Great news! It's still not too late to register for the Ties That Bind Adoptive Family & Youth Training Seminar. This seminar will be held May 13- 15, 2011 at the Dolce-Atlanta Peachtree Conference Center in Peachtree City, Georgia. Space is still available, so hurry and get your registrations in for this exciting event! Please visit our website at [www.ties-that-bind.org](http://www.ties-that-bind.org) for all of the seminar details, workshop descriptions and registration forms. Please click on the "Registration" tab at the top right side of our website to register online. This page will have the links to all of the current registration forms for you to be able to download and then complete. Just type in your information, hit the submit tab at the top, save the file with your name in the title, and then send us an email with all of your forms attached to [registration@ties-that-bind.org](mailto:registration@ties-that-bind.org). If you register online, you also have the option of paying by credit card on our website for both your registration fee (\$40) and your hotel deposit (\$35), and this will complete your registration. Please call us at 770-881-7789 or 877-669-0634 if you have other questions. We hope you will visit our website and complete the registration forms. Hope to see you there!



## Look at All the Fun you Missed...

### **ATEAM Learned to Communicate in February**



ATEAM Columbus gathered together on February 19th to begin a 2-part series on a very important topic—communication. Our theme for this month was *"ATEAM Ambassadors: Your Voice, Your World, The Power of Communication, Part 1."* Teens and staff enjoyed participating in a variety of fun and meaningful activities all aimed at examining the power of communication. We explored communication skills such as listening and expressing feelings. We also learned about the different styles of communication and which styles are appropriate for specific settings. The teens discovered what types of phrases are "Communication Helpers" and what are "Communication Killers." During this month's meeting we discovered that Musical Chairs and LEGOs are not just for kids! We learned key communication skills by participating in these activities. We also had the opportunity to learn a lot more about each other through the "Sorts and Mingles" activity. The culture of focus this month was Japan, and we had a great time racing our Origami Jumping Frogs in a contest! The teens and staff learned about Japanese culture, including the food, as they enjoyed lunch prepared before them hibachi style at Japanese Steakhouse and Sushi Restaurant in Columbus. Next, we spent the afternoon at Hollywood Connection where we had a terrific time roller skating!

### **Nonverbal Communication Took Precedence in March**

The ATEAM met on March 19th where we completed the second part of our communication series. This month, we focused on nonverbal communication. Our theme for the month was *"ATEAM Ambassadors: Your Voice, Your World, The Power of Communication, Part 2."* Teens and staff participated in some exciting activities which posed a great challenge because we were not allowed to talk to each other. That's right! Many group games and initiatives had to be completed in silence. We found this quite difficult and quickly realized just how much we rely on verbal communication when trying to get our message across to others. Teens especially enjoyed activities like "Tic Tac Toe" and "Quiet High Rise" in which they had to cooperate silently in order to solve the game. Working on these activities showed us the importance of nonverbal communication. Research shows that up to 85% of our communication is nonverbal? This means that *what* we say isn't always as important as *how* we say it. Other activities helped us to be aware of body language and eye contact. Our culture of focus was Italy, a culture well known for its exaggerated gestures and expressive body language! We enjoyed learning about how the Italians use gestures to communicate their message to others. Shaping dough for the bread allowed us to express our passion for creating pizza at Deorio's Italian restaurant. Our field trip to the Annual Thunder in the Valley Air Show showed us how important nonverbal communication is for pilots and air traffic controllers in their job.



### **The ATEAM Invites You to Join!**

The ATEAM welcomes teens who will benefit from becoming part of a supportive group for adopted teens where there is trust and mutual respect among all members. This program encourages participation from adopted teens who are willing to share their creative ideas, exhibit problem-solving ability, and demonstrate acceptance of others. This program may not be well suited for teens that have difficulties interacting within a group setting. We support participants by upholding the ATEAM Code of Conduct. ATEAM is a program open to all eligible adopted teens in 6<sup>th</sup> grade through 12<sup>th</sup> grade. **Please mail in the registration form for each event as soon you receive the newsletter or you can bring the registration form with you to the meeting and give it to your Site Coordinator, Ronnie Bell. We must have a signed registration form on file for each teen who participates in the meeting, and each teen must be signed in by a parent when they arrive.** This is also very important because many times, field trips or special events are planned, and we must pay deposits or make reservations in advance. We have limited spaces available and thus, we accept registrations on a first come first serve basis. Once all spaces have been filled, those who remain will be placed on a waiting list. If you are unable to attend and need to cancel even after you have registered, we ask that you please call or e-mail Ronnie so that another teen on the waiting list can join the group. We want to serve as many teens as possible and certainly hope that you will join us soon!



## Directions To Campus

The Columbus ATEAM meets from 9:45 am—5:00 pm in the Elizabeth Bradley Turner Center for Continuing Education building on campus. Please park in the lots adjacent to the center, escort your teen to our meeting room and sign them in with the staff. In order to give the teens the opportunity to be involved in all activities and feel connected to the group, it is important to arrive on time. Parents, please join us for refreshments as you are signing in your teen. **Important note: Parents must sign in teens. Parent signature is required for participation in the program.** Thank you!



## Important Summer Retreat Information!

It's that time again! You won't want to miss out on the biggest ATEAM event of the year so hurry to register for the Annual ATEAM Summer Retreat scheduled for the weekend of **June 10-12, 2011!** This year's summer retreat brings the ATEAM back to the Georgia FFA-FCCLA Center in Covington, Georgia, which is located between just East of Atlanta off I-20. Center offers an ideal youth-centered setting, with great food, spacious cabins, and many wonderful recreational facilities such as: swimming, volleyball, basketball, tennis, miniature golf, paddleboats, field sports and much more. Lodging, transportation, activity fees, and meals will be provided for all registered ATEAM teens. Each of the ATEAM sites will provide transportation to and from their respective locations. **Note that the DEADLINE for registration will be May 21, 2011! However, we recommend that everyone give their registration forms and deposits to Ronnie Bell, your Columbus Site Coordinator, at your May ATEAM meeting.** Registrations will be accepted on a first come, first serve basis and **MUST INCLUDE** a completed registration form along with a \$20.00 per person deposit made payable to Family Matters Consulting. All eligible teens **MUST** attend a regular ATEAM meeting prior to this retreat. **PLEASE REMEMBER THAT SPACE IS LIMITED.** Once we have received your registration form and fees, the Site Coordinator will send you a retreat packet with all of the details including what to bring as well as departure and return times. We definitely want to see you come to the ATEAM Retreat!



## Adoption Tax Credit is Now Refundable

The health care reform bill made the federal adoption tax credit refundable as of 2010—meaning that adoptive families can benefit from the credit even if they do not have tax liability. This change makes the credit more accessible to lower and moderate income families. **Last week the IRS released guidance stating that adoption tax credit amounts carried forward from previous years are also refundable, so even parents who adopted as long ago as 2005 can benefit from the new law.** If parents claimed the credit on their tax return for adoptions from 2005 to 2009 and have been carrying it forward on each return, with their 2010 taxes they can be paid for any remaining amount of the credit that they have not yet received. Parents who didn't file for the credit originally will need to amend past tax returns. (Look for more information on NACAC web site soon. They will include links in future News from NACAC.) If you have questions, contact [adoption.assistance@nacac.org](mailto:adoption.assistance@nacac.org).

## Visit the ATEAM Website—[www.ateamgroup.org](http://www.ateamgroup.org)

Be sure to visit the ATEAM website at [www.ateamgroup.org](http://www.ateamgroup.org). The website has the contact information for all the Regional Site Coordinators and Program Administration. Check out our photo gallery so you can view some great pictures from ATEAM events. Parents, don't forget to check out the "Parent Corner" with educational materials, parent tips, and links to valuable resources. You can also download each region's newsletter by clicking on the "Newsletter" link and selecting your site's name. You can print the registration form off the back page and mail it in. Check it out when you have the time!



## ATEAM Needs Your Feedback!

If you have participated in ATEAM this year, we want to hear from you about how the ATEAM has helped your teen and family. Recently, we have received letters from ATEAM parents and teens telling us all about how they have benefited from the program. We also welcome any suggestions for ways to make the program better. Please send us a letter at Family Matters Consulting, PMB 121, 400 Peachtree Industrial Blvd. Suite 5, Suwanee, GA 30024 OR e-mail Chris Greer, Program Administrator, at [chris\\_greer@familymatters-ga.com](mailto:chris_greer@familymatters-ga.com).



Adopted Teen Empowerment and Mentoring

ATEAM Program Specialist  
 PMB121, 400 Peachtree Industrial Blvd.,  
 Suite 5  
 Suwanee, GA 30024-4072

<b>ATEAM Registration</b>	<b>Deadline: May 16, 2011</b>	Please check the dates you are registering for: Program Times: 9:45 am—5:00 pm <input type="checkbox"/> May 21, 2011 <input type="checkbox"/> June 10-12, 2011 <b>SUMMER RETREAT</b>																										
Teen's Name:	Age:                      Grade:																											
Street Address	Father's Name:	<b>ATEAM LOCATIONS IN GEORGIA</b> <table border="0"> <thead> <tr> <th><u>City</u></th> <th><u>Host Location</u></th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td><b>Rome, GA</b></td> <td>Berry College</td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>Atlanta, GA</b></td> <td>Oglethorpe University</td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>Atlanta, GA</b></td> <td>Clayton State University</td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>Carrollton, GA</b></td> <td>University of West Georgia</td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>Athens, GA</b></td> <td>University of Georgia</td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>Milledgeville, GA</b></td> <td>Macon State College</td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>Macon, GA</b></td> <td>Macon State College</td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>Augusta, GA</b></td> <td>Augusta State University</td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>Columbus, GA</b></td> <td>Columbus State University</td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>Valdosta, GA</b></td> <td>Valdosta State University</td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>Thomasville, GA</b></td> <td>Valdosta State University</td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>Savannah, GA</b></td> <td>Armstrong Atlantic State University</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	<u>City</u>	<u>Host Location</u>	<b>Rome, GA</b>	Berry College	<b>Atlanta, GA</b>	Oglethorpe University	<b>Atlanta, GA</b>	Clayton State University	<b>Carrollton, GA</b>	University of West Georgia	<b>Athens, GA</b>	University of Georgia	<b>Milledgeville, GA</b>	Macon State College	<b>Macon, GA</b>	Macon State College	<b>Augusta, GA</b>	Augusta State University	<b>Columbus, GA</b>	Columbus State University	<b>Valdosta, GA</b>	Valdosta State University	<b>Thomasville, GA</b>	Valdosta State University	<b>Savannah, GA</b>	Armstrong Atlantic State University
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Describe any special needs, behaviors, and/or disabilities we should be aware of:	What are your expectations for this program?																											
Have you attended ATEAM events before?	<b>Mail or Fax Registrations to:</b> Ronnie Bell Columbus ATEAM Site Coordinator																											
Parent's Signature required:	4032 Tifton Drive Columbus, GA 31907 Phone: <b>706-587-6246</b> , Fax: 770-818-5815 Email: ateamcolumbus@familymatters-ga.com																											
Date: ____ / ____ / ____		<b>Please visit <a href="http://www.ateamgroup.org">www.ateamgroup.org</a></b> For more information or if you would like to be removed from this mailing list please contact: <b>Family Matters Consulting, Inc.</b> Office 770-965-9336      Fax: 770-818-5815																										