

True to Life

AN EVANGELICAL CHILD & FAMILY AGENCY PUBLICATION

SPRING 2009

25 YEARS ~ HOW CAN IT BE?

On May 1, 2009, ECFA will reach the 25th anniversary milestone of ministry in Wisconsin. Since 1984, there have been thousands of clients who have received a variety of pregnancy support services and others, 370 to be exact, have added babies and children to their families through domestic and international adoption services. For 25 years, there has been a caring and compassionate staff available, a committed Advisory Council to impart their wisdom, and an army of dedicated volunteers, ages 3-99+!

Initially, a Task Force was formed in 1982, which was coordinated by Dick Faulkner with the full support of his wife, Arlene. Maurie Daigneau and his wife, Susie were instrumental in providing the financial impetus to establish this work. Anita Wonder, Dianne Marek, and Pastor Wendall Boyer were the other enthusiastic task force members.

In the beginning, these committed Christians recognized the need to provide pregnancy services to local church families whose daughters and sons were involved in unplanned pregnancies. Dick was working at Elmbrook Church as a pastor in the area of Pastoral Care Ministries. He would hear heartbreaking stories of



Dick and Arlene receive ECFA's 1st Wisconsin State License

*2401 N. Mayfair Road
Suite 302
Milwaukee*



families tempted to have their daughters abort their babies in order to resolve the embarrassment and shame that often accompanies the pregnancies of young teens.

Dick contacted Doris Wheeler, Executive Director of the ECFA office in Illinois, inquiring if services could be provided for Wisconsin families and was informed that a state license would need to be procured. Through GOD's leading, this daunting task was accomplished in less than a year and a half.

Eleanor Hill, a seasoned social worker from the Illinois office, and her husband, Maurie, were temporarily relocated to an apartment in Milwaukee, Wisconsin to provide the social services supervision and wisdom necessary for the agency staff. The first four staff members were: Director, Dick Faulkner, who had resigned his pastoral position at Elmbrook,

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Diane Cassanova, and Diana Baker, social workers, and Jan Story, administrative assistant. The second year, Katherine “Kit” Glenn came on board as Dick’s secretary and remained for the next seventeen years. Kit shared that during those first years, “The agency was just buzzing with activity as many of the young birthmoms were anxious to place their babies for adoption with our Christian families. It seemed that there were many placements and court hearings every month. We didn’t have computers back then so everything was done by hand or on the typewriter. GOD just kept bringing the girls and the adoptive families, one right after the other.”

In doing the research and historical gathering of information for this article, it is so amazing to discover GOD’s direction and faithfulness to the ministry. Dianne Marek, who has continued her involvement since her first task force meeting over 25 years ago, shared how the resale shop, *Almost Anything*, began. She decided to have a rummage sale at her home advertising that the proceeds would go to support the ECFA programs. After a successful sale, she had many items left over. Anita Wonder, also on the task force, decided to have a rummage at her home with her saleables, friends’ items, and Dianne’s leftovers, with proceeds going to ECFA. Again, there was another successful sale, but many more items were left which prompted the ladies to bring them to a nearby church for their rummage sale. After the sale – many leftovers were offered back to Anita who called the manager of the Illinois ECFA resale store, *The Bargain Barrel*, for advice on how to begin a shop in Wisconsin. A short time later, a location was chosen to rent, a former pharmacy in the Westwood Shopping Center on 76th and Beloit Road in West Allis. Anita, Dianne, Jessie Heywood and other volunteers painstakingly washed and mended all donated clothes, rearranged floral pieces at their homes, and made everything sparkle, with nothing going to waste.

Through the years, deep friendships between volunteers and customers have grown. There was even one lovely wedding that happened as two of the volunteers discovered in talking that they each had an available grown child “just a perfect match” for the other. The couple did marry and then eventually utilized the agency’s adoption services for a “perfect match” of a baby girl, who is now grown and still a blessing.

Some interesting agency statistics to pass along from ministry over the past 25 years include: 370 adoptive placements, 322 domestic and 48 international from 12 different countries around the world. There have been 26 families who have served as agency licensed foster homes of newborns, children, and some birth moms too, providing over 27,540 days (and nights 😊) of care in their homes. An accurate count of dressers filled with new baby items provided to moms who were abortive and decided to carry their babies to term is now 55 (since 1996), thanks to project pioneers Lynn and Scott Prochaska and Marilyn and Warren Lister. Callers in crisis have exceeded 10,524, and long term cases are in excess of 2,700. Purse-sized Bibles are offered and provided to each and every client during the first contact. An incentive program, *Fruits of Your Labor*, has encouraged birth moms to implement positive behaviors since 2003.

The Advisory Council was originally chaired by Attorney Edward Plagemann who remains involved as the agency attorney completing Termination of Parental Right Hearings when birthparents place their babies for adoption. Other past chairmen included some businessmen, a state senator and a salesman – all devoted individuals serving a minimum of a three year term.

There have been four different directors (Dick Faulkner, ~interim Doris Wheeler~, Ralph Story, Julie Zahn, and currently Linda Oberbrunner) at three locations - Mayfair Road, Redeemer Evangelical Free Church, and New Berlin; two additional state offices in Green Bay and Beloit/Janesville were added in the 1990’s, and a variety of donated agency vehicles have traveled over a half a million miles for client services, meetings, and adoptive home visits. Volunteers have given significant time, totaling over an incomprehensible number of hours. All donors have contributed over \$7,300,000 to partner in saving the lives of at least 5,000 (25 years x 200 of our 400 per year callers) babies which is a conservative estimate, many of whom have become adults. The prayers offered on behalf of the agency is a number known only to the LORD.

These 25 years allow us to reflect upon ECFA’s history, special memories, miraculous stories, remarkable statistics, and many extraordinary people who had established a firm foundation to pave the way for all those needing and providing services in JESUS’ name for many years to come.



WEBSITE MAKEOVER

On April 2, 2009, www.ecfawisc.org was reborn with a new fresh look and even online registration for our 23rd annual Bike & Hike event courtesy of Kathy Martin from our ECFA Illinois office. She has worked tirelessly to implement our ideas, suggestions, and personality in a site format. Click on, navigate around, refer others and think about joining us for this year's Bike & Hike.

Save the Date!!!

This October 23, 2009, we will celebrate our 25th Anniversary with a banquet celebration at the Sheraton Milwaukee Brookfield Hotel.

Set the date aside now and begin inviting some of those who were involved in the beginning days of ECFA Wisconsin to rejoice in the ministry that GOD continues to use for His glory.



Ryan Dobson, son of James and Shirley Dobson, Focus on the Family founders, will be our guest speaker. There will be many surprises that night in addition to reconnecting with past staff, volunteers, and clients.

If you have old pictures and artifacts from the past that we could borrow, please call Cathy at 262-789-1881. If you would like to be part of a 25th Anniversary Committee, please call Linda also at 262-789-1881.

ADOPTION TEAM GOODBYES

~~ By Jill Anderson

The ECFA Adoption Program says goodbye to two faithful adoption workers. Our compassionate, caring caseworkers, Sally Ankerstein and Ev Lutter attended their goodbye lunch and time of reminiscing together on February 2, 2009 at the Thunder Bay Grille in Waukesha. ECFA needed to decrease staff due to a reduction in the volume of home studies and agency financial constraints.

Sally had been employed as a part-time Adoption Worker for the past seven years. She stated that she loved working as a part of the Adoption Team and completing home studies. Sally will continue her counseling ministry and teaching swimming lessons to the young and old.

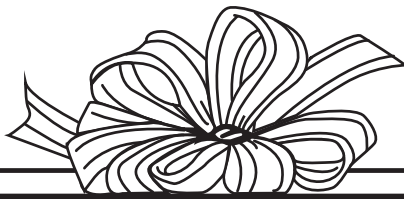
Ev has been employed as a part-time Adoption Worker for the past ten years initially coming on board as an office organization volunteer and then doing an internship for her master's degree in social work from UW-Milwaukee. She stated that the most positive aspect of her work with ECFA was the people. Ev has joined her husband in the development of their auto repair and sales business (Lutter's Elmbrook Automotive – 16880 West Greenfield Avenue, Brookfield, WI 262-782-7825)

Jill Anderson will continue as the Adoption Supervisor assisted by Dorinne Geldon out of the New Berlin office and Kristy Kellner who continues to service the Green Bay area families.



Top: Ev & Jill, Bottom: Dorinne & Sally

**THANK YOU FOR ALL THAT YOU DID
FOR ECFA OVER THE YEARS!
WE WILL MISS YOU!!!**



A GIFT FROM Kazakhstan

On June 21, 2007, the adoption journey of Tracy and Ian began through ECFA. They contacted ECFA inquiring about adoption a few months after Tracy had delivered a stillborn baby, in addition to experiencing numerous miscarriages throughout their marriage. They do have one biological son, Canyon, however, they longed for more children.



The adoption program supervisor, Jill Anderson, met with them to discuss domestic or international adoption options. They eventually decided to adopt internationally from Kazakhstan. They chose this country because in 1997, Ian had participated in a mission trip to Kazakhstan. During that trip, Ian had a life-changing event, in particular, spiritually. Ian stated that the country is beautiful; the food was some the best he had ever eaten, and the people were very family-oriented, and selfless. Ian had a difficult time leaving the country, always hoping to return someday. Little did Ian know, just twelve years later, God would have a daughter waiting in Kazakhstan for them.

During the beginning process, Tracy e-mailed Jill, frustrated as she could not locate an international adoption agency that worked with Kazakhstan. This country is not a popular area to adopt from. After reading Tracy's e-mail plea and sensing her frustration, Jill was also frustrated and prayed for GOD to lead them to a trustworthy agency in that country. Shortly thereafter, she heard someone enter the front door of the agency and left her computer to greet the individual.

It was the 2007 Christmas season and a woman (Mary) came to purchase an Entertainment (coupon) Book as a gift. While Jill casually conversed with Mary, she shared that she had adopted her two children, internationally, from...you can guess, Kazakhstan! Jill was shocked to hear this, realizing GOD was immediately answering her prayer for Tracy. Mary identified World Partner Adoption Agency, a small Christian agency located in Georgia, that she highly recommended. Jill explained the dilemma that Tracy and Ian were facing, not being able to find an international agency. Mary offered to assist Tracy and Ian giving her contact information to Jill.

Jill quickly contacted Tracy to inform her of this unbelievable encounter and to share Mary's phone number. Soon after, the two couples got together with another adoptive family that adopted from Kazakhstan. for dinner. They all connected well and shared and encouraged Tracy and Ian through their own experiences.

After Tracy and Ian's home study was approved by ECFA and all the international paperwork was completed, mailed to Kazakhstan and approved, Tracy and Ian finally received word that they were matched with a baby in Kazakhstan. On January 31, 2009, Tracy and Ian flew to Kazakhstan to meet their new seven month old daughter, Savannah. They stayed in the country for six weeks and brought their daughter home to meet her new brother and grandparents on March 14, 2009.

Tracy and Ian were so amazed how God worked out all the details from beginning to completion, including major financial support from family and friends. They were able to bring home this beautiful daughter they so longed for from a country where twelve years before, the sacrifice given on a mission trip was incomparable to the gift of Savannah that they have received.



NOT QUITE...



Almost Anything Anymore

The date of February 10, 2009, has definitely affected the resale community of customers and store owners, too. A federal law went into effect that day which prohibits any resale or thrift store from selling children's toys or clothes that may contain lead. The fine is \$100,000 per item for any violation. ECFA's position was to comply with this mandate which removed a significant portion of inventory at both locations. One out of every four children that is tested for lead poisoning is positive for this irreversible condition. New products sold at retail stores must now display a safety approved seal. A \$30,000 machine could be purchased by resale stores to test for lead in products, which is cost prohibitive to any small shop like ours. A number of area thrift stores have chosen not to follow this law, however, this agency does not want to jeopardize the health or well-being of any child.

SPRING CLEANING? THINK ALMOST ANYTHING



We are in **dire need of saleable items at both resale shop locations in West Allis**, since this economy has brought in more customers who are searching for ways to

stretch their dollars. Currently, all **your donations are still tax-deductible**. Your extras can benefit moms, dads, children, and babies with Pregnancy Support Services, since all proceeds are given back to ECFA to provide agency services. Customers benefit by purchasing affordable items for themselves or others. Your excess items will provide services for others that impact many lives.

Our other need is for people. Any male or female, 16, 26, 36, 46, 56, 66, or older with a cheerful attitude ☺, possibly between jobs or semesters, with a gift of time to share as a resale shop volunteer is especially desired! Hours and days can be suited to your schedule. Call Karen Thoen, Supervisor for an appointment today: 414-321-0226.



Making a Statement with Jewelry

Invitations to a *lia sophia jewelry* show were sent out to a number of family, friends, and co-workers from hostess, Reneé Erdmann, the newest social worker at ECFA. What was so different about this event was the statements written on the invite. This show was being given by Reneé's sister, Bridget Grasch, who unselfishly agreed to do this show as a benefit for ECFA. In addition, another invitation sentence stated: Bring a baby item and you will be entered to WIN FREE JEWELRY! Nineteen

women responded to this unique request, some bringing not only baby items, but also their friends. Time was allotted for an agency presentation with a Q & A as well. Reneé prepared some great desserts and everyone connected well with each other.

Special thanks to Reneé, Lois, Barb, and Mary Erdmann, Ann Gapinski, Bridget and Bob Grasch, Wendy Fields, Michelle Geuder, Nancy Schatzman, Jill Anderson, Joan Wagener, and Linda Oberbrunner who pooled together to provide cases of diapers, wipes, infant outfits, lotions for new moms, blankets, and other baby accessories for clients to select and purchase with their *Fruits of Your Labor* incentive program points.

Thanks Reneé and Bridget for using your sisterly ingenuity to provide resources for babies and moms and information about our services!



WISCONSIN
**Christian Expo
 Family & Music
 Festival**
JUNE 5-6, 2009

Wisconsin Christian Expo Family and Music Festival is a two-day event in the comfortable setting of the Wisconsin State Fair Park. This year's Expo will take place beginning Friday afternoon, June 5th – Saturday evening, June 6th in the Fair's Products Building and outside in the music festival tent. Bike & Hike's favorite singer, Cheryl McCrary, will be performing in addition to other local and national talent.

This is the third year of the Expo which continues to feature free admission, activities, and fun for the whole family. This event is invaluable to partner Christian suppliers with prospective buyers. Whether needs are health-related, financial, economic, educational, legal, or in another field, Wisconsin Christian Expo offers this specific setting for effectively promoting products and services, and networking with community resources.

For more information, please go to:
www.wisconsinchristianexpo.com



*With a
 Grateful Heart*

There is a continual outpouring of blessings received by this ministry on a regular basis. As a result, there are so many individuals to be grateful for in each quarterly newsletter. The scriptural premise for our gratefulness comes from Psalm 9:1, *"I will give thanks to the Lord with all my heart; I will tell of the wonders."*

Our thanks from grateful hearts:

- ♥ For the unexpected beautiful used bassinette for recycling to PSS clients' newborns from Pete & Kathy Economou
- ♥ For the lovely women's outfits and footwear for impoverished PSS clients from Michelle Geuder
- ♥ For the restaurant gift certificates given to bless staff who go above and beyond from the James Valentine Family
- ♥ For the many bags of very nice women's clothing for PSS clients in need from Annie & Molly Nelson
- ♥ For the surprise Valentine's Day dinner provided to the Bike & Hike Committee from John & Kathy Misany
- ♥ For the beautiful Springtime basket arrangement in the New Berlin office from Sally Boya
- ♥ For the outstanding Volunteer Brunch preparations graciously provided by Linda Wood and Beloit Road Baptist Church Saints

GOD ANSWERS PRAYERS

In the last newsletter, a request was made for a scale to weigh our letters on since we would not be renewing the Pitney Bowes contract in order to save the agency over \$1,000 a year. Dennis V., Nancy S., and Dan B., all generously offered to purchase or provide a new postage scale for the agency. We were grateful for your offers! One anonymous woman, however, brought in a used scale which she had taken from her son two years before. It was very precise as it had been used by him to sell marijuana to students in a school. She said she kept it in her closet knowing that someday GOD would let her know how this could be used for good. The New Berlin Police were notified of the gift, so that there would not be any problem in the future. After the "all clear," we are thankful for this unique answer to our prayers.



Bike & Hike Countdown...



In just a few weeks, the 23rd annual Bike & Hike will take place on May 16, 2009, beginning at Bethesda Park in Waukesha. Every year, this exciting event welcomes new participants to

join those that have been "participating forever." Registrants begin gathering about 9:00 a.m to receive their t-shirts, turn in their sponsor sheets, and embark on their journey with individuals, families, groups, and even a few pets. All travel the paved, scenic Glacial Drumlin Trail by foot, bike, stroller, wagon, skates, wheelchair, on the back of another, or hand-in-hand, leisurely or occasionally competitively.



Afterwards, participants are treated to the delectable Cousins Subs lunch generously provided by the Valentine Family shops, which

can be enjoyed on the surrounding picnic tables. Olson's Ace Hardware lends out their famous popcorn making machine to send the fresh popcorn smells wafting throughout the park.



The exciting music and sparkling personality of Cheryl McCrary and the Heir-born Praise Band serenade the returning participants.

Since the little ones rarely tire before naptime, for a nominal fee they can participate in children's games with prizes and face painting by Molly Llannas adjacent to the diners. The safety rubber matted playground is also a popular place for the young and old to play.



New sponsors this year include the Sheraton Milwaukee Brookfield who has donated

one of the top three prizes for fundraisers this year ~ two separate one night weekend packages for two.

Another new sponsor is the Wisconsin Christian Expo Family & Music Festival, which takes place on June 5th & 6th at the Wisconsin State Fair Products Building and outdoor music tent. Be sure to attend and enjoy Cheryl McCrary who will be in concert at this music festival.



Lasertag Adventures is another new sponsor. On their website www.lasertagadventure.com, it is listed as "a family run business with the goal of providing an exciting yet safe environment for the young and young at heart." Participants can experience this adventurous facility with coupons and prizes generously donated by this new Waukesha business.



Chef Jack Wisconsin's Premier Catering Service has graciously returned this year to provide another fantastic \$500 value gourmet dinner for six to one of the top three fundraisers. Mmmmm, good!



Waukesha State Bank has again kindly offered to provide a four pack of Brewer's box seat tickets to a top fundraiser, which always catches the eye of Pastor Fred Smith who encourages his Watertown Community Church members to sign up to sponsor their favorite bike-riding pastor.



All those raising \$100 or more can earn the opportunity to participate in prize drawings of *Focus on The Family* items, an XL Harley Davidson jacket (thanks Deb & Bob), party subs from Cousins Subs, restaurant certificates, Lasertag Adventure Passes, and more.

Each dollar raised from this event is matched by an anonymous couple's \$10,000 donation which always makes the loaves and fishes scripture a modern day reality.

The Bike & Hike Committee co-chaired by Brian and Nancy Farrell along with Ron and Jan Baer, John Misany and Linda Oberbrunner are encouraged already by the early enthusiasm this year of interested participants who desire to do something worthwhile to support moms, dads, and babies. Let's surpass all previous attendance and donation records! For additional information, please call 262-789-1881 and ask for Joan or Linda.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS



BIKE & HIKE!
May 16th, 2009
Bethesda Park &
Glacial Drumlin Trail
Waukesha

 *Christmas in July Campaign* 



Sheraton Milwaukee Brookfield
Guest Speaker: Ryan Dobson
October 23, 2009

Tributes

In honor of:
All moms who love, nurture,
and sacrifice daily for their children
From:
Grateful children of all ages!



In honor of:
All dads who accept the high calling
to protect and guide their children
From:
Secure children of all ages!

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New Berlin, WI 53151



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