

True to Life

AN EVANGELICAL CHILD & FAMILY AGENCY PUBLICATION

SUMMER 2009



On October 23, 2009, ECFA is excited to celebrate what GOD has done the past 25 years in Wisconsin! **We would love to have you enjoy this special evening with us!** Our guest speaker, Ryan Dobson, is a passionate young man who grew up as the second of two children of the renowned author, family counselor, and radio host, James Dobson, and his wife, Shirley.

Born in 1970, many pushed Ryan to follow in his father's footsteps. However, he took the time to explore his own gifts while trusting in Jesus to lead him. After graduating from college, Ryan found that his natural talent for public speaking, combined with his passion for youth, soon opened countless doors. Ryan traveled extensively for years, challenging youth at music festivals, concert tours, youth camps, and crisis pregnancy center activities.

From his four published books to his newly launched daily podcasts and frequent speaking engagements, Ryan uses every opportunity to call people out of the moral relativism of today's society and into "the ultimate adventure" of following Christ. He has that conviction now that comes from knowing your purpose – and loving every minute of it.

Drawing from his experiences talking first-hand to teenagers and young adults, he wrote his first book, *Be Intolerant* in 2003. This wake-up call warned young Christians not to fall for the lies of a relativistic, postmodern society. Described as having "a colloquial style with all the subtlety of a two-by-four to the side of

the head" by *Publishers Weekly*, it quickly rose up the sales charts – followed by two more best sellers, *2 Die 4* and *2 Live 4*. His fourth book – *WRECKED: What God can do when things crash and burn* was released a year ago by Tyndale Publishers. This book is about two things: "first, leaning into and learning from our wrecked times, no matter what causes them; and second, allowing ourselves to be wrecked in a whole new way – in a redeemed way – by a God who loves us too much to let us live forever in a safe, boring comfort zone."

Behind the scenes, Ryan has been developing his own base – KOR World Ministries, with the purpose to "build passion and identity in Christ followers". He produces KORcast, a podcast that challenges listeners in how they see, hear, and think about life and their interaction with culture. He also continues to speak, lead short-term missions trips and men's retreats.

Ordained in 2007, Ryan has a bachelor's degree in Communication Studies from Biola University. He lives in Colorado with his wife, Laura, and their three-year-old son, Lincoln.

Ryan connects with the young, old, and in-between and will share his unique story with guests at the Sheraton Milwaukee Brookfield on Friday, October 23rd beginning with a meal at 6:30 p.m. Doors open at 6:00 p.m. and seating will be limited.

Invitations to this year's banquet will be sent out, but reservations can be made now by calling Cathy at 262-789-1881.

25 Years ~ So Many Memories

Recognize these ECFA Pioneers?



Answers on Page 7

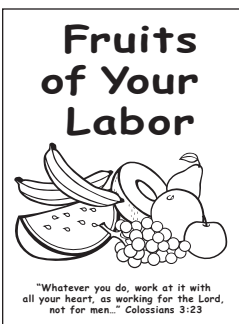
Spiritual Adoption Program Benefits Clients For Life

Last fall, a “Spiritual Adoption Program” was presented to the members of Holy Apostles Congregation of New Berlin, the 1st-8th grade-school students, and the confirmation class by Coordinators, Mary Sage and Sharon Foy. This idea was proposed by Sharon Baxter, the Chairperson of the Human Concerns Outreach. A birthday party and baby shower culminated this unique and effective venture on the weekend after Mother’s Day and involved hundreds of participants.



According to the national Spiritual Adoption Program’s website, the threefold purpose is to:

1. Encourage prayer for those contemplating abortion that they will respond to God’s grace and welcome their child into life.
2. Educate adults and children about the development of the pre-born child (through age appropriate fetal development posters displayed each month).
3. Provide mothers in need with a ‘baby shower’ of donated baby gifts, or simply celebrate with a ‘birthday party’ at the conclusion of the program.



The *Fruits of Your Labor* incentive program of ECFA’s Pregnancy Support Services was chosen as one of two recipients of the abundance of baby shower and birth-day gifts lovingly purchased or made and then donated by so many individuals who had prayed diligently throughout the eight plus months of the program. Mary

stated, “many of the participants had even named *their babies* in order to further personalize this experience for them.”

So many birth moms that courageously chose the option of life and their babies will be blessed by the provisions and prayers from the caring contributors of all ages from Holy Apostles.

A WISCONSIN & ILLINOIS CONNECTION

At the end of last year, Jocelyn Kemink was a senior, majoring in social welfare at Trinity Christian College, Palos Heights, Illinois. Her areas of interests have been in child welfare and the foster care system so she applied to ECFA for a Foster Care Bachelor’s Level Internship. She was interviewed by Supervisor, Victor Lasko, in the Chicago-Pilsen office and was accepted for the semester because he sensed she would be a good fit. Never once during the interview did she mention that in Wisconsin, her family served as an exceptionally warm and caring ECFA foster family for a number of years and continue to be licensed for their county. She did not want any favoritism to be given to her.

Jocelyn’s internship extended from January to her May graduation. She enjoyed the experience and stated, “It was definitely more intense than I had thought. I have a better understanding about what happens in the system with the birth parents when their child is placed in foster care.” Barb Hellmer, Director of Child Welfare said, “It was a pleasure to discover that Jocelyn’s family were former foster parents in Wisconsin. I am aware that her positive contribution to the Cook County Foster Team was gratefully received.”

After graduation, Jocelyn returned to Wisconsin to finalize her wedding plans for the end of August and will pursue a career in her field once she and her husband are settled in their Illinois residence. What a blessing it is to have had this graduate who initially learned firsthand how to share her family with infants and children in need of a loving home.

OUR SINCERE CONGRATULATIONS TO YOU JOCELYN!



Victor Lasko & Jocelyn Kemink



BIKE & HIKE RECAP



This year on Saturday, May 16, 2009, the 23rd Annual Bike & Hike was a bit chilly and windy, but thankfully dry. It was an opportunity for Baby Hezekiah, age seven months at the time, to make his first bike ride, bundled and strapped in a car seat fastened in his pull behind trailer. His big eyes seemed to survey the fleeting scenery until he was lulled to sleep. His adoptive parents, Kim & Kurt, had become aware of ECFA's services the previous year through their Pastor (Fred) who looks forward to participating in Bike & Hike each year with his wife, Diane.

Pastor Fred continues to challenge himself by raising the bar to secure more funding for the agency. He was the top fundraiser again this year with over \$3,000 raised through his personal efforts and those of church members who hosted a rummage sale at Watertown Community Church at the same time as the ride.

The touching testimony of Hezekiah's (Hez) adoption story (the quickest selection by a birth mom and placement in ECFA's history) was shared as participants returned from the Glacial Drumlin Trail. They enjoyed the invigorating music of Cheryl McCrary & the Heir-born Praise Band while eating the delicious Cousins



"Jesus Loves Me..."



Subs lunch provided by Jim Valentine and Family. Cheryl dedicated *Jesus Loves Me* to Hez and encouraged all to sing along. As his mom, Kim, lifted him up in the air, everyone seemed to understand at that moment the purpose behind this annual event.

This year, a new volunteer, Doug Kowalski, offered to set up a free bike check-up and repair station. Actually a number of riders were grateful that Doug examined and adjusted their bikes before they ventured out on the trail.

Once again, Gerry Miller, who is now 86-1/2, rode with his friend, John, out to Wales and back still smiling when he returned. This year, even his doctor and wife were in full support of Gerry's adventurous spirit and determination.

So many people are instrumental in the success of this event and include:

- the generous couple who match the donations up to \$10,000
- the major sponsors: Cousins Subs, Chef Jack's Catering, Waukesha State Bank, and two new this year, Sheraton Milwaukee Brookfield and The Wisconsin Christian Expo Family and Music Festival



- the Bike & Hike Committee who begin meeting regularly for prayer and planning in January. This dedicated team of Ron and Jan Baer, John Misany, and Linda Oberbrunner is led by Brian & Nancy Farrell who are supported by their children, David, Tim, & Ruth.

The other donors, listed alphabetically are:

- Ace Hardware (Olson's) of Waukesha ~ Popcorn Machine & Supplies
- Allô! Chocolat ~ Candy Gift Certificate
- Brownie baker ~ Maryanne Miller
- Cookie makers©: an adoptive mom, her mom, her mother-in-law, her sister-in-law, and her MOPS group
- Focus on the Family ~ Fundraisers Prizes
- Lasertag Adventure ~ Coupons & Prize
- Molly Llannas ~ Face-painting & kid's game organization
- Cheryl McCrary & the Heir-born Praise Band ~ Outstanding Music & Worship, CD
- Merkel's, Bob & Deb ~ Harley Davidson Jacket
- Milwaukee Buck's ~ Two Tickets
- Sarah Oberbrunner ~ Nintendo Accessories Prize Package

- Re Family ~ Harley Museum Tickets & Harley 100 Years Book
- **VOLUNTEERS** (42) Former & New ~ All Ages !!!
- Water Doctor's of Waukesha ~ Eight Cases of Kinetico Water Bottles

We are extremely grateful to each of the participants who has taken personal time to obtain their sponsors. Every dollar pledged in support is then matched up to \$10,000 and benefits the 400 plus Pregnancy Support Services Program clients throughout the year.

The total funds raised this year by only 130 participants was \$17,837.50 plus the \$10,000 match!

The top three fundraisers and prizes this year are:
 1st Pastor Fred Smith ~ Brewers' Baseball Package
 2nd Jerry Dalton ~ Chef Jack's Gourmet Meal for Six
 3rd Kathy Misany ~ Two separate one night weekend packages for two at the Sheraton Milwaukee Brookfield

This event is dependent upon favorable weather authored by GOD and the involvement of participants and volunteers. Thanks to the LORD and each and everyone who was a part of the 23rd Annual!!!

UMOJA = A SWAHILI WORD FOR UNITY

THE 2009 UMOJA CONFERENCE
October 23-25, 2009
Green Lake Conference Center
Green Lake, Wisconsin

UMOJA
A BLACK HERITAGE EXPERIENCE



If you are a Caucasian family who has adopted African American children, then this conference is well worth considering for your entire family. Julie Ryno, an adoptive mother of two and co-founder of UMOJA, writes on their website: "For many of us, our children are the single most important part of our lives. We want the best for them, and make every effort to provide them with all

the tools they need to become happy, healthy, productive adults who feel good about themselves. These are important goals for everyone, but for children adopted into families of a different race, this can be especially important. In my own family, I have two children who joined our family through adoption. My daughter and son are African American. We have been so blessed by adoption, and feel that our multi-racial, multi-cultural family is special. Together, we can celebrate and learn about our diverse backgrounds, while growing together as a family. Families like mine are becoming more and more common. In 2009, approximately 130,000 children will be adopted in the United States. 17% of them will be of a different race than their new parents.

Along with the countless joys, transracial adoptions bring special challenges. My children do not have many African American adult role models in their lives. They do not get a lot of opportunities to see families who look like ours. We often receive questions and unwanted attention in public. Even daily tasks such as hair and skin care can be challenging. To address these issues, a group of African-American community leaders, transracial adoptive families, and the Fox Cities Rotary Multi-Cultural Center have joined together to develop a very special retreat for transracially-adopted youth.

UMOJA is a Black Heritage Experience created for families who have adopted or are fostering African American children or children from the African continent and the diasporas. Our camp provides an opportunity for children ages 3 to 18 and their families to examine, explore, reflect, understand, and celebrate the rich and diverse traditions of Black identities and culture in the United States. The program takes a family-based approach by providing a fun, nurturing, celebratory, positive and safe environment for all its participants. Umoja is committed to helping children and their

families experience a sense of pride about Blackness in American society. For the last two years, over 30 families have joined us on this journey into their children's birth heritage. We shared joys and struggles. Many of the children made their first friend that looked like them and came from a similar family. The experience made a difference in all the participants lives.

Umoja is committed to helping children and their families experience a sense of pride about Blackness in American society. I hope you join my family in this unique experience."

The final agenda for Umoja 2009 is still being tweaked but participants can expect the following activities:

- Age appropriate Afrocentric games and activities
- Mankala (Ayo), African dancing..., story telling.
- Interactive activities about history and culture
- Family adult-based workshops on transracial adoptions
- Braiding workshops for children and families
- Raising Black sons and daughters: What do I do?
- Speakers who "walk the talk" did that, done that, it worked!
- "I am me" workshops for children
- Drumming activities
- Soul food dinner
- Speaker Raquel McFadden from the Gladney Center in Texas

In the last two years, some ECFA families have participated in the conference and wholeheartedly recommend this event to others. Mary, an ECFA adoptive mother of two, shared, "The speakers are good quality – high school principals, college professors, sociologists... Even though the programming is great, the highlight is the connections the kids make – tons of kids that look just like them growing up in families that resemble their own."

Since the deadline for early registration has already passed, Julie, the Director, has extended the \$20 off per person to all ECFA families who register and mention they became aware of the event through this newsletter. Additional information can be found on the website: www.focol.org/umoja/ or call Julie at: 920-373-0192.



Last year's "family picture."

CLOSING UP THE GREEN BAY OFFICE



On June 16, 2009, Advisory Council Member, Nancy Schatzman, and sister-in-law to Linda Oberbrunner drove separate vehicles and a trailer up to the

Green Bay location to retrieve usable items and pack up the office. The task was more than anticipated and fortunately Nancy's son and daughter-in-law, John and Carrie Schatzman (eight and a half months pregnant at the time), who live in Green Bay adjusted their afternoon schedules and not only assisted but allowed their garage to be used for temporary storage of many of the items for birth moms until other loads are brought back. The move definitely could not have taken place without them!

Last year with a smaller agency staff, it became nearly impossible to serve the 47 counties throughout the state under the agency's licensure. However, calls were and still are forwarded to the New Berlin office where Pregnancy Support Service inquiries continue to be responded to through phone counseling or referrals. Paying rent did not seem sensible any longer. **Kristy Kellner, continues on as ECFA's Adoption Social Worker** and is able to meet with her clients at the church her father pastors; our deepest thanks Pastor Jerry! She stopped by to retrieve some personal belongings, reminisce a little, and then lock the door for the final time.

So many special relationships were formed through the years with former staff, the Green Bay Advisory Committee, the Family Fun Bowl participants and prize donors, churches and more. Thanks and GOD's blessings to each of you for the season we have had the privilege of serving on University Avenue in Green Bay, Wisconsin.



The First Green Bay Advisory Committee)



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 exceptional organization of the *Fruits of Your Labor* closet by Molly Erdmann and Sally Boya
- ♥ For the beautiful knit and crocheted baby items from Helen Cummins and the Kettle Moraine United Presbyterian Women of Stone Bank
- ♥ For the landscaping efforts of the Iwinski and Wright Families and Crossroads Quizzing Team members: Frank & Nick Patnode and Mason & Vaughn Retkowski



Quizzing Team

- ♥ For the gorgeous baby sweaters, blankets, and booties created by Annie Nelson and the Lake Country Bible Church crochet and knitters
- ♥ For the well made baby crib (with all the parts) from Pastor Bruce & Marty Applegate as they depart to serve in Indiana ☺

NEEDED:



A keyboard for practicing by an older child (recently placed for adoption). His heart's desire is to learn to play the piano.

ECFA PIONEERS IDENTIFIED

- 1) Kathryn (Kit) Glenn, Secretary 1985-2002 & Current Office Volunteer on Tuesdays & Fridays
- 2) Ron Menningan, Supervisor of Social Services 1984 -1998
- 3) Ralph Story, Director of Development & Administration 1986-1996
- 4) Jan Story, Initial Secretary 1984 -1985
- 5) Thomas (Tom) Idichandy, Director of Professional Services 1984 -1993
- 6) Diana Baker, Birth Parent Social Worker 1984 -1993
- 7) Diane (Cassanova) Augustine, Birth Parent Social Worker 1984 -1998
- 8) Attorney Edward Plagemann, First Advisory Council Chairman 1984-1991 ~ currently serves as the Agency Attorney
- 9) The Initial Task Force, 1982-1984
- 10) Rick & Donna Muelver & Family ~ Agency Foster Parent Family, 1984 - 2004

MARK YOUR CALENDARS



25th Anniversary Banquet

Sheraton Milwaukee Brookfield

Guest Speaker: Ryan Dobson

October 23, 2009

NEEDED:

Congenial individuals (two separate) with truck or van
for **occasional** on-call pickups for resale shops.

Please call Karen at 414-755-4881



Memorials & Tributes

In Loving Memory of:

Dr. Harold L Armstrong

From: Son Larry and Sharon Armstrong



In Honor of:

Doug Bainbridge's Retirement

From: The Grateful Staff
of Canterbury School



In Honor of:

Doug Bainbridge's Retirement

From: Former Colleague
Ralph and Judy Paulson

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