

TRUE TO LIFE

An Evangelical Child and Family Agency Publication



November 19-20, 2020 ECFA's 3rd Benefit Auction – Virtual



2019 Autographed Football

As the ECFA Auction committee, comprised of Darleen Snyder, Annette Cernohous, Nancy Roets, Micki Schmitz, Sharon Fuller, Sue Carlson, and Jennie Tietjen, had a conference call meeting in August 2020, they

made a reluctant, but necessary decision - the 3rd Annual ECFA Benefit Auction would be held virtually. After all, what could go wrong with something you have never done before?

There were numerous concerns about a virtual auction. Would there be glitches that could occur using an online program that had never been seen or used by staff? Would businesses be as generous as in the past with their donations to the auction due to COVID? Could items be presented effectively, knowing they could only be seen online? Will people even sign up and participate? These were real fears! The committee spent time in prayer, committed the evening to God, and set a goal of raising \$20,000 for the agency.

As the women faced these challenges with bravery and enthusiasm, they proceeded to divide the responsibilities among themselves. Letters were



Apple Watch

sent to all the businesses who gave in the past, and some of the ladies followed up with a visit or phone call. Others went through the items already donated and made a list of additional things needed to complete a grouping for display. Everyone did their part. The fall newsletter highlighted items

that were desired, and readers responded with donations. God provided through His people, and by November 19th there were 129 individual groupings or items for



Kissimmie Condo

sale. (See the list of Business and Individual Donors)

Givesmart.com was the online program that ECFA of Illinois chose to use for their auction. Sue and Jennie began to educate themselves on it, thankful that Tony Malandro, Director of Development in Illinois, was a call away. They listened and watched podcasts and tutorials, called staff at Givesmart.com, and asked a lot of questions, inputted data into the program, and prayed for wisdom.

The Auction event was advertised in a variety of ways. ECFA's fall newsletter included an invitation and instructions on how to participate. The ECFA website hosted links to sign up as the auction approached. Finally, through posting on the ECFA/PSS Facebook pages, with "blast emails" to friends, and personal invitations from the committee and friends of ECFA, publicity was complete.

The 19th of November came, and the hour for bidding commenced. Jennie and Sue stayed at the office to trouble shoot any difficulties, expecting lots of questions. Would the online program work? Yes, it did - problem free! It worked just as the company representatives said it would. One hundred twenty-nine items went up for sale at noon on the 19th, and the bidding closed at 8:30 pm sharp on the 20th.



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(pictured are some of our most popular items)

During the night, Sue and Jennie watched the bidding go higher and higher on some of the items and back and forth between people who wanted the same one. At the end of the evening, all 129 items were sold! Soon, the office received texts and emails expressing, "What fun!" "This was so easy." Best of all, as the totals were calculated, including the \$5,000 matching gift from a like-minded, Christian foundation, the auction netted \$17,586 - just \$2,414 short of the committee's goal.

God is good and a great provider for the work of ECFA. Sure, there were things missed about a live, in-person auction, but God was present in a powerful way and met the financial needs of the agency. He is to be praised!

The date for the 4th Annual Benefit Auction is November 19, 2021, with more information to follow in the coming weeks and months. You won't want to miss it whether in-person, virtual, or both!

37th Anniversary Celebration Brunch-May 1, 2021

It may come as a surprise or you may be expecting this announcement, but at the November meeting of the Wisconsin Advisory Council, it was recommended, that due to COVID-19 concerns and issues, the 37th Anniversary Celebration be canceled. It was scheduled to be held at the Marriott West Hotel in Waukesha, on Saturday, May 1, 2021, at 9 am.

At each ECFA event, attendees hear updates from the ministry and wonderful testimonies from the clients. To bridge the gap absent a live event, the staff is endeavoring to bring on-line videos to you.

The team has been very resourceful in meeting with clients through video and phone calls, porch drop-offs, and other means.



2020 Virtual Auction Donors

Businesses:

Platinum Level \$1000+: Going to Orlando-Condos

Gold Level \$500-\$999: Ozinga Concrete

Silver Level \$250-\$499: My Pillow, Stages Photography, Green Bay Packers

Bronze Level \$10-249: Chick-Fil-A, Brookfield, Cousins Subs, Danielle's Deli, El Beso Mexican Restaurant & Cantina, HuHot Mongolian Grill, Kaestner Auto Electric, Keith E. Post Dental, Morning Star Productions, Oscar's Frozen Custard, Patterson Orchards, ProBuColls Gifts & Books, Waukesha Civic Theatre

Individuals:

Rachel Aviles, Bethany & Lily Blechacz, Sally Boya, David Brown, Chad & Kim Bushey, Sue Carlson, Annette Cernohous, Dave & Lori Cottrill, Friends of ECFA, Sharon Fuller, Greg & Stephanie Geeve, Carol Honeyager, Dean & Judy Iwinski, Heather Joswick, Gary & Carol Knosp, Kent Krauss, Sue Kusnierz, Larry & Clare Liebe, Patti Miller, Linda Oberbrunner, Chad & Jamie Olson, Greg & Nancy Riederer, Jon & Elizabeth Smith, Darleen Snyder, Dave & Jennie Tietjen, Tina Wienss, Raymond Wilson, Carol Yule

Since the agency family of staff, clients, and donors cannot meet in person in May, it was decided to again hold a "virtual celebration" through an appeal letter to the donors. More information will follow.

The new date for the 38th Anniversary event in May 2022, has not been determined. Currently, the agency is in negotiations with the hotel and the guest artist, Point of Grace. Watch for more updates in the Spring Newsletter or at www.ecfawisc.org.

If this is a time in your life when you need prayer, the staff would count it a privilege and joy to pray for you. Please feel free to use the enclosed envelope, call the office, or communicate online at www.ecfawisc.org/contact.

Trends in Pro-Life Issues



It is difficult to believe, but it has been 48 years since the Supreme Court legalized abortion in America with the Roe v. Wade case. This is the time of year when we especially grieve with millions of pro-life people on January 22nd – the date of that infamous 7-2 decision. President Ronald Reagan in 1984, named and declared the 3rd Sunday in January as “Sanctity of Human Life” Sunday. For many Christians, the practice of abortion on demand is an abomination. It appears to run counter to the value scripture places upon life, especially pre-born life (Ps. 139:13-16). His Word has always told us how much He loves the children.

With the pro-life debate ongoing in our country, the purpose of this article is to help the newsletter readers have a Christ-centered response to abortion. The following information was gleaned from resources provided by the Wisconsin Action Council, CareNet, Heartbeat International, and Wisconsin Right to Life.

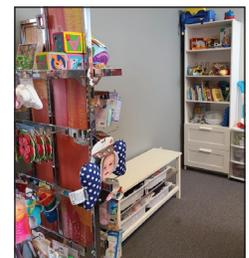
- From 1973-2020, more than 61 million lives have been lost to abortion. Annually, an estimated one million abortions are performed in the U.S.
- The U.S., along with North Korea, Canada, and China, are the only four countries that allow “abortion on demand” during all nine months of pregnancy.
- Nine out of ten abortions are performed in the first 13 weeks of pregnancy.
- Most abortion clients are in their 20's and have already had at least one child.
- Fewer Americans view abortion as a moral issue and the percentage who consider it morally wrong has also declined. 43% of American adults believe abortion is morally acceptable.
- Due to COVID, pregnancy centers are reporting that their intakes/referrals are down.
- In 2019, the total number of abortions for Wisconsin residents was 6,372, an increase of 330 from 2018.
- While surgical abortions fell from 71% to 66%, the rate of chemical abortions rose from 29% to 33%.
- A study in 2017 found that 67.5 % of women visited a mental health professional after their first abortion.
- Male counterparts were experiencing similar struggles, opening up about the secrecy of lost fatherhood, grief, and the negative effect on a man’s emotions, soul, relationships, and his life.
- 86% of women who had an abortion were unmarried.
- 29 % of Gen Z believe that abortion is wrong.
- 33 % of Millennials believe abortion is wrong.
- 21% of Gen Z believe that sex before marriage is wrong.
- 17% of Millennials believe sex before marriage is wrong.

This information is important for the staff as they continue to serve those in the circumstance of a crisis pregnancy. ECFA’s avenues of support include invaluable steps of meeting them at a neutral site, intentional listening, appropriate referrals to community resources, practical parenting education, and guidance to make life-affirming decisions for themselves and their child. All of this is provided at no cost to them. The journey with each family can continue for up to a year after the birth of their baby. As the workers serve their needs with a “cup of cold water,” they also endeavor to share the love of Jesus with them so that the whole person can gain life from the whole truth.



Needs in “Baby Blessings Boutique”

- Laundry Detergent (safe for babies)
- Girls & Boys clothes – size 9 months - all seasons
- Baby Lotion
- Infant socks size 0-6 months



TECH Support: Above and Beyond

What every company wants with their computer needs is excellence — in service, in knowledge, and in quick responses to difficulty. These are the goals for a business providing computer, networking, and technology needs. One such company is AscendNet, Inc. led by President Edward (Ed) Magaw. Their motto is: *Rising Above Your Expectations with Service & Solutions You Can Trust*. For 17 years, ECFA has been privileged to be the recipient of their excellent services and practices.

The business relationship with AscendNet began in 2003, when former ECFA director, Linda Oberbrunner, was experiencing serious computer and networking issues at the office. She contacted several companies and AscendNet was the only one to return her call. Ultimately, Ed and his crew came out that weekend to resolve the difficulties, thus minimizing disruption to the staff.



In their initial conversation, Linda told Ed about the pro-life work at the agency. He believed in the work that ECFA was doing for individuals and

families through their adoption and pregnancy support services. He especially loved the Christ-centered focus. Ed expressed his vision for supporting the agency in this way, "Often with

"The majority of our clients do not have full-time IT staff, but this does not mean that they don't have the same needs as larger companies. For these clients we handle all their technology needs. We assist with hardware and software purchases, properly configuring, managing, and securing both new and existing systems, as well as providing the day-to-day support. We are truly your technology partner."

"With AscendNet you will never get stuck with an unpleasant IT person again, because you're entitled to support that is actually supportive. Ultimately though, what we are providing is peace of mind to allow you to focus on your business instead of your technology." - Ed Magaw

organizations like yours, where budgets are tight, the technology needs tend to get pushed back. In this day and age, proper security and management is as much if not more important than the [tech] support provided to businesses."

In 2014, ECFA was able to secure the funds to equip the entire staff with new computers. Ed and his people delivered, setup, and migrated the software, including settings and data. In 2019, new network and internet equipment were needed and purchased. AscendNet came again and served the agency well. They continue to provide services remotely to help secure and protect ECFA's systems,

data, and servers. As Ed related, "Early on, I made the decision to help ECFA, and I'm proud that for the past 17 years we have been blessed to be able to provide this normal, day-to-day support at no cost." The agency is so grateful that this Christ-centered business has likely saved the agency tens of thousands of dollars over the years.

For nine years, Kira Gearhart has been our "go-to computer tech" answering the service calls for ECFA. If there is a problem, she has empathy and then provides excellent, real time support to staff. You can sense her smile through the phone line and see it when she visits.

**AscendNet Inc., 21415 W Greenfield Ave,
New Berlin, WI 53146
Phone: 262-513-1117**

AscendNet is a leading provider of IT, Cloud, and VOIP services for small to medium-sized businesses near Milwaukee and across Southeast Wisconsin.

Christmas at ECFA

Thank you to everyone who responded to the "blast email" sent out on December 4th. Our clients enjoyed a Christmas filled with love and acceptance because of your generosity. Within 50 hours, every item on the suggested lists were spoken for, and they arrived at ECFA the following week. Thank you from the bottom of our hearts.



A Passion for Life and Art

Rebecca (Bogdanovich) Schwartz, known to friends as Becca, grew up hearing about ECFA for as far back as she can remember. She and her family always participated in the annual Bike & Hike fundraiser each year. Growing up, she loved hearing the stories of how ECFA social workers helped women with unplanned pregnancies and assisted families that adopted children from overseas or in Wisconsin.

In Becca's junior year of high school, she began to ponder what her career path might be. Linda Oberbrunner (former director of ECFA) was a social worker she respected. Becca fondly remembers good conversations and prayers with her regarding her life choices. Perhaps social work would be a good option.



However, Becca also loved art and drawing, as had been evident all during childhood. She entered the contest for the annual design of the Bike & Hike t-shirt a couple of times. She won in 2011! As she made plans to attend college, she sensed God was leading her to WCTC to major in Graphic Design. She is now the Senior Art

Director at a local communications firm where she has been employed for the past seven years.



In July 2017, Becca was asked to join the ECFA

Advisory Council for a three-year term. It seemed fitting since her mother, Cathy, served on the council for many years also. Becca offered the millennial perspective and was able to come up with more ideas for design-related content by getting a unique behind-the-scenes view. Over these past three years, Becca has helped refresh and rebrand the full range of ECFA's printed material. In addition, she completed a total redesign of the agency's website. This has helped ECFA to communicate much more effectively.

In 2015, God brought Sean into her life, and they were married in the fall of 2017. He has joined in the ministry with his gift of photography and videography while serving as a police officer in the Milwaukee area. As blessings can come in threes, Sean and Becca await, with joy, the birth of their daughter in May of 2021.

My Heart for Life



Sharon Fuller, Chairperson
Wisconsin Advisory Council

"There are two passages from scripture that have stood out to me for many years now. The first is Psalm 139:14 that says, *"I will praise You for I am fearfully and wonderfully made."* The second passage is from Jeremiah 1:5 that says, *"Before I formed you in the womb, I knew you and before you were born, I set you apart."*

I believe both of these tell me how unique I am and also how precious I am to God. These are also statements that tell me how precious every human being is to Him, and this is why I am strongly pro-life in my belief.

I first became acquainted with ECFA at a banquet in 1993. Over the years at other banquets, I heard stories of adoptions and how the social workers were working with pregnant moms who were experiencing difficult circumstances. I was always impressed with how lovingly the workers would come alongside the moms or the adoptive families to share the

love of God and support them with their decisions.

In 2012, I was asked to join the ECFA Wisconsin Advisory Council. I will admit at first, I saw it as a "business meeting" of the Agency. It didn't take long for me, however, to see that while the Advisory Council conducted business, it was also about praying for families, babies, moms, and dads. The Council cared for them, as well as the staff, in the way that God would want – always striving to be the hands and feet of Jesus here in Wisconsin.

As believers, we are called to serve God, and this may take many different forms depending upon our abilities and opportunities. That service can be volunteering for a short period, taking a mission trip, or for me, it was finding a pro-life organization and seeking how I could be of service to them. Being a member of the Wisconsin Advisory Council and now, for the last two years, serving as Chairperson, has shown me the depth of God's love to even the littlest and most vulnerable.

In the various aspects that I have served as a volunteer, I have always found that I learned so much more than I ever thought I would. I count it a privilege to be part of ECFA."

Champions for LIFE

In 2020, the Lord called home two “champions” for the pro-life cause who served ECFA. They were Dennis Drinkwine and Ronald Baer. Both of these Godly men were involved as volunteers with ECFA for more than twenty-eight years.



Dennis Drinkwine came to the agency in the late 1980’s with a servant’s heart. He believed in the pro-life and family work of ECFA and wanted to help. For years he was seen at events, taking pictures and capturing the joy of those

in attendance. He was also a handyman and could just about fix anything. He was frequently seen at the office fixing or painting something or at one of the two “Almost Anything” resale stores making a repair. He was Johnny-on-the-spot and ready to help.

Dennis was very proud of serving his country in the Army National Guard and became the Military Chaplain at American Legion, Post 537 a few years ago. He was also highly active in the VFW and Sportsman’s Bible Group. He was a devoted Christian who had a big heart and was always willing to help those in need. Dennis lived his faith in Jesus Christ.



Ron and Jan Baer attended an ECFA banquet in the early 1990’s. They supported the work, and after Ron retired, they joined the Bike and Hike Planning Committee where they served for twenty years. Even though Jan was legally blind due to a

degenerative eye disease, and Ron walked with a cane, their attitude was always, “What can we do to help?” At the Bike & Hike recap meeting in late September 2020, co-chair Nancy Farrell asked the committee members, “Do you want to serve again next year?” Ron and Jan said “Yes! If the Lord is willing!” It was said of Ron by Nancy, “Ron was Godly, upbeat, “never give any excuses” type of man. He always exhibited the joy of the Lord.” Our theme at the Bike & Hike in 2018, was Compassion in Motion. That was a fitting description of Ron and



Jan. They were a matched set.

Ron served his country proudly in the U.S. Army during the Vietnam War and also as Chaplain of his American Legion Post. Ron was an active member at Lamb of God Lutheran Church in Pewaukee, (faithful supporting church of ECFA), and most recently lead the Missions Board as chairperson.

These two men will be missed, but as 2 Corinthians 4:17-18 tells us. *“For our present troubles are small and won’t last very long. Yet they produce for us a glory that vastly outweighs them and will last forever! So, we don’t look at the troubles we can see now; rather, we fix our gaze on things that cannot be seen. For the things we see now will soon be gone, but the things we cannot see will last forever.”*



Ron, Jan and Dorinne Geldon, ECFA Adoption Social Worker

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Choose Life

CHOOSE LIFE license plates help support pro-life centers in the state of Wisconsin.
Do you have yours?

<https://wisconsin.gov/Pages/dmv/vehicles/title-plates/choose-life.aspx>



WITH A GRATEFUL HEART

There is a continual outpouring of blessings received by this ministry.
As a result, there are many individuals to be grateful for in each quarterly newsletter.
"I will give thanks to the Lord with all my heart; I will tell of the wonders." Psalm 9:1

♥ Thank you to all the dedicated volunteers who assembled the past three mailings in their homes and returned the trays to the office:

- | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------|
| Annette Cernohous | Darleen Snyder |
| Lori Cottrill | Dave Tietjen |
| Joyce Dankert | Margo Whitcomb |
| Nancy Farrell | Tina Wienss |
| Sharon Fuller | Judy Zwitter |
| David & Margo Hoffman | Friends of ECFA |
| Julie Patterson | |

Serving at Our Office:

- ♥ Leaf blowing by Dick Merten
- ♥ Christmas tree set-up and take down by Tina Wienss

Pregnancy Support Services/Baby Blessings Boutique:

- ♥ Diaper bag, Dr. Brown's glass baby bottles, diapers, and baby blanket from Lori Cottrill
- ♥ Diapers and baby clothes from Josh & Susan Soldin
- ♥ Baby blankets and wooden blocks from Elizabeth Smith
- ♥ Diapers, pull-ups, formula, pack 'n play, bath toys, pacifiers, blankets, pillow & blanket set, knit hats & mittens, booster seat, board books, bibs, baby toiletries, hooded towels, washcloths, socks, onesies, outfits, shoes, and cleaning supplies from Lamb of God Lutheran Church
- ♥ Diapers and baby clothes from Seasoned Salt Seniors at Grace Community Church
- ♥ Baby clothes, rattle, blankets, hair bows, manicure set, baby powder, ladies bath kits and bath cubes, and plastic water bottles from Gary & Lois Gantner
- ♥ Baby sandals and boy clothes from anonymous donors
- ♥ Boy outfits, hangers, bib clip, wipes and baby lotion from Carol Honeyager
- ♥ A variety of gift cards for our clients' needs from Phil & Darleen Snyder, Carolyn Fields and Judy Zwitter
- ♥ In response to our blast email request and need - many Christmas gifts for our clients and family from Art & Annette Cernohous, Dave & Lori Cottrill, Curt & Carrie Downes, Wally & Anita Julius, Phil & Lisa Kuehl, Bill & Sue Kusnierz, Jason McClure, the Patterson family, Gary & Barbara Raasch, John & Christi Reinsch, Bob & Jane Runnels, Randy & Beverly Schrieder and friend Naomi
- ♥ Cases of wipes and pull-ups from Julie Kelly
- ♥ Baby clothes, wash cloths, blankets and grooming kit from Lynn Bridger

Miscellaneous Gifts:

- ♥ Beautiful Christmas outdoor plant for our porch from Tina Wienss
- ♥ Porch Christmas Wreath from Dave & Jennie Tietjen
- ♥ Cheese and sausage tray from Grady, Hayes & Neary

Memorials

In loving memory of: Debbie's mom, Carmen Angove
From: Tim & Debbie Michelic

In loving memory of: Ron Baer
From: Ralph & Janet Abts, Lauren Beale, Brian & Nancy Farrell, Foxe Trust, Carolyn Freiberg, Carolyn Goodson, Mike & Linda Oberbrunner, Doug & Christine Strzalko, Dave & Jennie Tietjen, and an anonymous donor

In loving memory of: Our Friend, Bill Bartels
From: Art & Annette Cernohous

In loving memory of: My husband, Michael Foster
From: Judy Foster

In loving memory of: Our father, John W. Hillmer who died in Sept. at 91!
From: John & Bonnie Hillmer

In loving memory of: My Godmother/Aunt, Bernice (Bee) Mackowiak
From: Renee' Marek

In loving memory of: My husband, Alex Muza
From: Betty Muza

In loving memory of: Jake Nelson
From: Joe & Joan Fall

In loving memory of: Our daughter, Luann Marie Stadler
From: Louis & Patricia Stadler

In loving memory of: "Papa" Ralph Staus
From: Dave & Anne Osterwind

In loving memory of: My dear wife, Sarah Troxell
From: Gary Troxell

In loving memory of: Sunny Turner
From: Anita Wonder

Tributes

In honor of: Jesus my Savior!
From: Lynn Frank

In honor of: Our sister, Jennie Tietjen
From: David & Susan McDonald



Evangelical Child
& Family Agency
1617 South 124th Street
New Berlin, WI 53151

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MARK YOUR CALENDAR

ECFA Adoption Training from a Christian Perspective
at Poplar Creek Church, New Berlin - March Date TBD

37th Anniversary Celebration Brunch

Will not be held this year due to COVID restrictions
Please check the ECFA website or the Spring newsletter for new information

35th Bike & Hike Fundraiser, Supporting Moms, Dads, & Babies

Saturday, September 12th at 9 am, on the Fox River Trail
at Bethesda Park Shelter, Waukesha

4th ECFA Benefit Auction, November 19th

More info to follow

For information about these events, contact Sue at the office
262.789.1881 or suec@ecfawisc.org