



Winter 2020

TRUE TO LIFE

A publication of Evangelical Child & Family Agency

Love-In-Action Dinner

ABBY JOHNSON

Abby Johnson will be the featured speaker at ECFA's 70th Anniversary Love in Action Dinner. Her passion surrounding a woman's right to choose led her to become a spokesperson for Planned Parenthood. During her eight years with the organization, she rose in the ranks to become a clinic director and was involved in 22,000 abortions.

However, Abby became increasingly disturbed by what she witnessed. Her life changed on September 26, 2009, when she was asked to assist with an ultrasound-guided abortion. She watched in horror as a 13 week baby fought, and ultimately lost its life to an abortionist. At that moment, the full realization of what abortion is occurred to Abby and a dramatic transformation took place.

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SHARON IRVING



"I take a deep breath and step out on faith." Those words have been the motto for south side of Chicago native, Sharon Irving, songstress/songwriter/ poet, voice over artist, worship leader and actress, since she was a little girl, performing in front of the congregation at the south side church in Chicago where her grandfather was pastor.

She is an inspiring 'voice for the voiceless', a passionate wordsmith spewing truth and inspiration, singing songs of life and love motivated by her personal experiences, and undergirded by her Christian beliefs. Sharon has been a part of the worship team at Willow Creek Community Church in Barrington, Illinois for several years and has contributed songs and words of hope before thousands at liturgical and corporate events and youth conferences.

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Friday, May 8, 2020
Abbington Distinctive Banquets
Glen Ellyn, Illinois

ECFA's Accreditation

ECFA has been accredited by the Council on Accreditation (COA) since 1980. Every 4 years, documents need to be uploaded into the COA website and placed in binders for review. Our most recent site visit occurred Dec. 8th to Dec. 11th. Team leader David Cook from Parsons Child and Family Center in Okemos, Michigan, and peer reviewer Teresa Hayner from Good Shepherd Children and Family Services in St. Louis, Missouri, were assigned as ECFA's reviewers. We enjoyed our time with them as they poured over files, met with Board members, interviewed staff, and spoke with clients.

Though we will not know the results for a couple more weeks, the exit interview was a wonderful time of reflection about the many great things happening at ECFA. David and Teresa stated that though there are minor things we could improve upon, overall, they were quite impressed.

Here are a few things they observed: There is a very good working relationship between our Board and our Executive Director, Ken Withrow; our personnel files were consistent and every file had an up to date performance evaluation; our Performance Quality and Improvement (PQI) plan is one of the best they have ever seen; it was evident that all clients were aware of their Rights and Responsibilities; they were impressed at how often supervisors meet individually with staff members; they sensed a genuine feeling of care and concern for the well-being of staff; the case files were the best kept records Teresa had ever seen, and they found that the scope of services for the size of our staff is impressive.



I have seen firsthand how hard our staff work and how important it is to them to offer quality services to our clients. The observations of our reviewers came as no surprise. God has directed amazing staff to ECFA; people who love Him and care greatly about others.

We look forward to getting feedback from COA about areas of growth so we can continue to strengthen the work that we do!

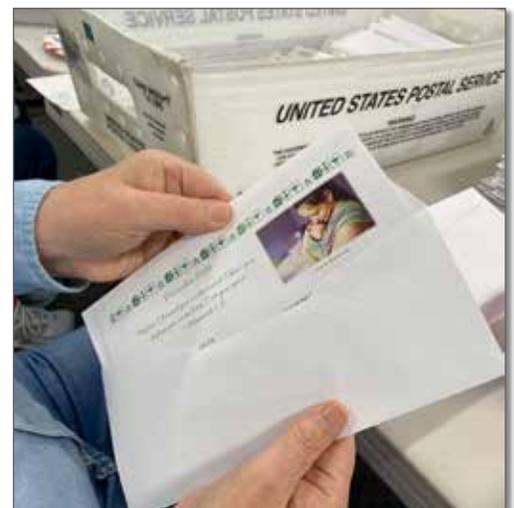
Wendy Payne, MSW, LSW
Director of Professional Services

VOLUNTEERS

ECFA is blessed with the best supporters and volunteers. However, we can always use additional help. One of our greatest volunteer needs is for help with our mailings. We put out four newsletters, three appeal letters, and two major invitation mailings each year. The commitment is to come in for the morning, stuff envelopes, have fun visiting with the other volunteers, enjoy donuts and perhaps a coffeecake, and coffee! The more who help, the quicker we are done.

As we settle back into our renovated building, we will need volunteers to welcome our evening clients.

If interested, call 630-653-6400 x 7203 and ask for Rita.



LOOKING FOR WINTERTIME FUN?

"Have a Heart for Life" 2020 BOWL CLASSIC

Looking for some winter time fun? Join us at our bowling fundraiser! Play leisurely or if you have a competitive spirit, we have prizes in store for those who get the highest score! All proceeds will help our Pregnancy Support Services Program.

REGISTRATION FEE: \$60

INCLUDES:

\$20 NON-RECEIPTABLE FEE

\$40 MINIMUM RECEIPTABLE PLEDGES;

we encourage raising more pledges

Your registration includes:

- pizza & soft drink lunch,
- 3 games of bowling,
- shoe rental, sweet treats,
- t-shirt (if you register by February 1st)

Saturday, February 15

11:00 AM Check-In

11:30 AM Lunch Begins

12:00 PM Bowling Begins

@

Fox Bowl

1101 Butterfield Rd.

Wheaton, Illinois 60189

Prizes will be awarded to the top male and female adult bowlers, the top male and female youth bowlers, and winning teams (1 youth, 1 adult). If you raise \$250.00 or more in pledges, you will be given a gift card of your choice! Bowlers will receive a t-shirt (please make sure you register before February 1st and tell us your size to guarantee your shirt). There will be numerous

prize drawings during the event. Start creating your team now! Choose a team captain and add three or four bowlers, register, and begin getting pledges! If you don't have a team, simply register and we'll put you on one. Looking forward to seeing you there! Together we can make a difference!

*For registration and/or inquiries, please call 630-653-6400 ext. 7203 and ask for Rita.
You may also register online at www.evancfa.org and go to the events section.*

I.R.A. and 401K Giving Opportunity

Are you wondering how to handle your IRA and 401K Required Minimum Distribution (RMD) this year? You may already know that the Protecting Americans from Tax Hikes Act, popularly known as the I.R.A. charitable rollover, has been made permanent. This gives you the ability to make charitable gifts directly from your IRA or 401K up to \$100,000 per year, without tax consequences and without treating the distribution as taxable income when donated directly to a qualified charitable organization.

If you are considering a gift to ECFA Foundation, Inc., you may want to take advantage of this IRA opportunity. If you are 70 1/2 or older, you can instruct your

plan administrator to make a direct transfer of all or a portion of your annual RMD. The annual RMD charitable distribution has a cap of \$100,000. When your gift is transferred directly to ECFA Foundation, you do not personally receive the funds, and therefore the distribution is not included in your taxable income. Your gift counts towards your minimum distribution requirement.

If you have any questions about this charitable procedure please contact Tim Carrick at (630) 653-6400 so that we can answer your questions and provide instructions for completing your gift.

Why do people give to ECFA?

This year marked ECFA's 12th Annual Toy Drive! This event has grown significantly over the years with many people donating - friends and family of ECFA, H4 training, DuPage County State's Attorney's office, Wheaton Town Square, moms from The Wheaton Moms Facebook group, Lombard Gospel Chapel, and Orange Theory Bartlett. This toy drive is so special to the children we serve, and we are thankful for the generosity of so many!!

But why do people give? Why are people drawn to ECFA and the kiddos we serve? Though sometimes we may know the reason, most often, we don't. This year, Amy, who has donated to ECFA for a few years now, shared her "why" with us:

"I have always donated when I could because I come from a very unfortunate childhood where I didn't get presents at Christmas or birthdays. When my daughter Addison was 3, I started having her help me buy toys and items for children in need. At first, we started in November. She would pick several toys, clothing, and books to sell on our garage sale pages. We would keep the money set aside and then shop. A few years ago, we found your organization, one that helps children, and the type of children ECFA helps really hit close to our hearts. Addison doesn't know my whole childhood story, but she is aware of many parts of it, including that I was neglected as a child.

Addison decided after our first year donating to ECFA that she didn't have enough money/toys and wanted to start making money sooner. It's now a year long process! My daughter Sophia is now part of this as well! We sell and buy stuff when we see great deals, Addison and Sophia both give up birthday presents

that we set aside for donation, friends donate, and sometimes we post on Facebook to our local moms group and buy new toys from there.

Both girls really enjoy picking kids from the toy drive list to buy special things for such as a doll or scrunchies. This year Addison found a girl who asked for scrunchies and Barbies which hit her a little hard because both of those things are her favorites. She actually gave away 2 dolls she had been holding onto because she had admired them so much.

Sophia picked a little girl who wanted LOL dolls. She bought her a few new ones, we found some unused ones at the wear and share, and bought some from a generous mom who sold them to us at an amazing price! It was perfect! Addison and Sophia also try to find great deals on hats and mittens to include them in the gifts they give.

Some years are better than others for what we collect, but both girls work hard and really love doing it, and so do I! Addison has already set a goal to collect 100 items for next year. We didn't count this year, but I bet she was close! Thank you for letting us give back and make a little difference. It really has left an awesome impression on Addison and makes her and Sophia feel proud and happy."

No matter the "why", we are so thankful for all those who help brighten Christmas for the children we serve. Please know you are a blessing!

Wendy Payne, MSW, LSW
Director of Professional Services



Love-In-Action Dinner



ABBY JOHNSON *continued from page 1*

Desperate and confused, Abby sought the help from a local pro-life group. She swore she would begin to advocate for life in the womb and expose abortion for what it truly is. Planned Parenthood knows that workers who leave are their greatest threat. They took immediate action to silence Abby with a gag order and brought her to court. However, the lawsuit was ultimately thrown out.

Abby is the author of the nationally best-selling book, *Unplanned*, which chronicles her experiences within Planned Parenthood and her dramatic exit. The book has become the movie, *Unplanned*. From the writers of *God's Not Dead*, came a film that speaks to one of the most polarizing topics of our day. *Unplanned* brings an eye-opening look inside the abortion industry.

Abby travels across the globe sharing her story, educating the public on pro-life issues, advocating for the unborn, and reaching out to abortion clinic staff who still work in the industry. She is the founder of *And Then There Were None*, a ministry designed to assist abortion clinic workers in transitioning out of the business. To date, this ministry has helped over 430 workers leave the abortion industry. Abby lives in Texas with her husband and seven precious children.

SHARON IRVING *continued from page 1*



Sharon has also performed at the popular "CHIC", ('Covenant High in Christ'), NFL Increase Conference, in small clubs and intimate settings all over the country, at the Angola Prison in Angola, Louisiana, and and even entertained millions while a participant on Season Ten of "America's Got Talent", where she received the coveted "Golden Buzzer" at her first televised audition, and was chosen by America to compete in the Semi-Finals.

Sharon poured her spirit into her debut album, 'Bennett Ave', which premiered September 29, 2017. "I like to blend different art forms when I'm writing songs and, with this album, I've drawn inspiration from every genre. I have a passion for shaping words and everyday phrases to melody. 'Bennett Ave' is an expression of my thoughts on issues of justice, love and redemption in the darkest situations. It's about what it means to be human when we're at our lowest and highest points."

Our Love-In-Action Dinner would not be complete without hearing compelling stories from some of our ECFA clients. Dinner is complimentary, but reservations are required. An offering will be received to help underwrite ECFA's services. Seating is for tables of 10; table and other sponsorships are available. For information or promotional material please call Rita at (630) 653-6400 ext. 7203 or email ritab@evancfa.org.

PSS Connections

Over the years, Pregnancy Support Services (PSS) has intentionally worked to establish relationships with community resources such as churches, counseling centers, food pantries, and hospitals. These relationships help us in two important ways. First, the PSS program develops an awareness of additional resources that can benefit our clients. Second, the program receives referrals from these friends in the community. Frequently, PSS clients need the services of multiple community providers that focus on specific areas such as counseling for domestic violence, substance abuse, and housing alternatives.

When “Cynthia” (not her real name) first called the agency earlier this year, she revealed that she was six months pregnant and living out of her car. Immediately, the PSS worker knew that finding housing was the top priority. After making a few phone calls, the worker connected with a very compassionate director of a local Christian agency that provides housing. Both the worker and the director quickly agreed that Cynthia sounded like a perfect candidate for their program. She participated in an intake interview and within a few days was able to move into her apartment! She now receives parenting support and education from PSS as well as life skills training through the housing program.

This teamwork approach has benefitted Cynthia significantly.

That same month, PSS received a referral call from a hospital social worker seeking parenting education and support for “Sarah” (not her real name), who had delivered her baby three months early. Although her premature baby was under 2 ½ lbs at birth, baby “Ella” had a determined will to live, and grew stronger with each day. During the weeks that Ella was in the NICU, the PSS worker met with Sarah to help her prepare for parenting a baby who requires special care. The hospital social worker helped coordinate services for her once her baby was discharged from the hospital. The hospital staff educated her on special care that Ella would require, and her PSS worker helped her learn healthy



For Illustration Only

parenting techniques, household management, and self-care. Sarah and her family are thrilled that Ella is now at home and thriving.

It has been amazing to work with many of our community resources to better serve the needs of our clients. The joint effort with area agencies to strengthen families has benefitted many moms and dads, as well as their young children.

Faith Allman, LCSW, PSS Supervisor

Building Restoration



It has been over a year and a half since a fire destroyed our facility on north Main Street in Wheaton. Since that time, much of the building has been restored. The interior walls have been constructed and painted, the concrete floors leveled, and the plumbing and electrical wiring throughout the building have been replaced. A number of things are being completed including the installation of floor coverings, kitchen cabinets and countertops, interior and external doors, exterior siding and final interior trim work.

Furnishings are to be delivered by mid-January and we anticipate moving back into the building later this month. We are thankful for the temporary offices in downtown Wheaton and in Lisle, and the storage area we have been provided by Nathan Hancock in Carol Stream. But as the saying goes, “There is no place like home”, and we are very much looking forward to moving back to 1530 N. Main Street in Wheaton very soon!

IN GOD WE TRUST, or do we?

Matt & Danielle are ECFA adoptive parents and this is their story.

“Our plan is not always God’s plan, but we are called to trust Him.

Our timing is not always God’s timing, but we are still called to trust Him.

Proverbs 3: 5-6 says ‘Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not unto your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will direct your paths.’

We believed God had a plan for us to be parents, but our trust did falter at times. Why? Because it was not happening soon enough. When we were at our lowest moments, we felt blessed by the encouragement of family, friends, and ECFA. God’s presence was very near. It was not long after we ‘relaxed’ and again put our trust in Him, that we got the call to say a mom picked us to adopt her son who we ultimately named Silas.

When Silas was one, we started the adoption journey again. This time ‘the call’ came less than one year after our home study was approved. We had 24 hours to make plans to go out of state to see our baby who was born with drugs in his system. We fell in love with him, but due to many complications to the case, it did not appear we would be able to adopt him. We checked out of our hotel, and while driving away Matt stopped the car. He felt God telling him that we need to go back and fight for our little guy. Matt was truly ‘trusting the Lord’ for this, because the complications to the case were great.

Matt returned to Illinois to work, and Danielle remained out of state, and visited our little guy daily who remained hospitalized for 30 days. She networked with many people to make sure everybody that had anything to do with his case, knew that the birth parents had chosen us to be his adoptive parents. Our joy was realized when the state and the judge agreed in early November 2018 that Mason was approved to come to our home with a plan for adoption. His adoption was finalized December 5, 2019. All praise goes to our Heavenly Father for our boys, and many thanks to ECFA for their encouragement, support, and prayers.”

~ Matt & Danielle



Memorials and Tributes

In Loving Memory

Corey Anderson

From: Sharon Watson

Wilbur and Muriel Anderson

From: Douglas and Marcia Berg

Evelyn Boonstra

From: Mr. and Mrs. Charles Slager

Edna Brandt

From: Suzy McLaughlin

Sandra Downs

*From: Judith Schulze
Don and Lynne Miller*

Dominic and Isabelle Fiorello

From: David and Sandi Fiorello

Bonnie Jo Fisher

From: Gregory Fisher

Rev Herbert and Eleanor Gotaas

From: June Gotaas-White

Phyllis Gotaas

From: June Gotaas-White

William Hicks Jr.

*From: Mrs. Carole Hicks
Mr. and Mrs. Paul Rowell*

Grandparents of Brian and Brianne Durfey

From: Steven and Sheri Durfey

Eleanor Hill

*From: Edmund and Rhonda Covarrubias
Suzanne Evans*

Nicholas Poland and Marilyn Misner

From: Ed and Pam Poland

Carol Reneau

From: Raymond Reneau

Veronica Rettke

From: Kurt Rettke

Devern Rush

From: Tamara McParland

Kenneth Selden

From: Ken and Claire Withrow

Doris Wheeler

From: Robert and Linda Wren

Dennis Weiner

*From: the Weiner family
Janet Weiner
Morgan and Ted Xoxakos
Susan and Matt Mowry*

Don and Sylvia Worshom

From: Donald and Suzanne Wratney

In Honor of

ECFA Board of Directors

From: Bill and Marilyn Newell

*For being so faithful and steadfast and
all the hard work you do for the ministry of ECFA.*

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