



Spring 2020

# TRUE TO LIFE

A publication of Evangelical Child & Family Agency

## BACK HOME AGAIN!

On May 26, 2018, a massive fire broke out at the ECFA office building in Wheaton. The building was completely engulfed in flames and severely damaged by fire, smoke, and water. Approximately, 15 fire trucks and emergency vehicles from at least five municipalities arrived on the scene to help the Wheaton Fire Department extinguish the blaze.

Fire inspectors later determined that the fire was caused by an electrical failure in the wiring above the ceiling of the children's playroom. Fortunately, no one was in the building at the time of the fire. The interior of the building was completely gutted

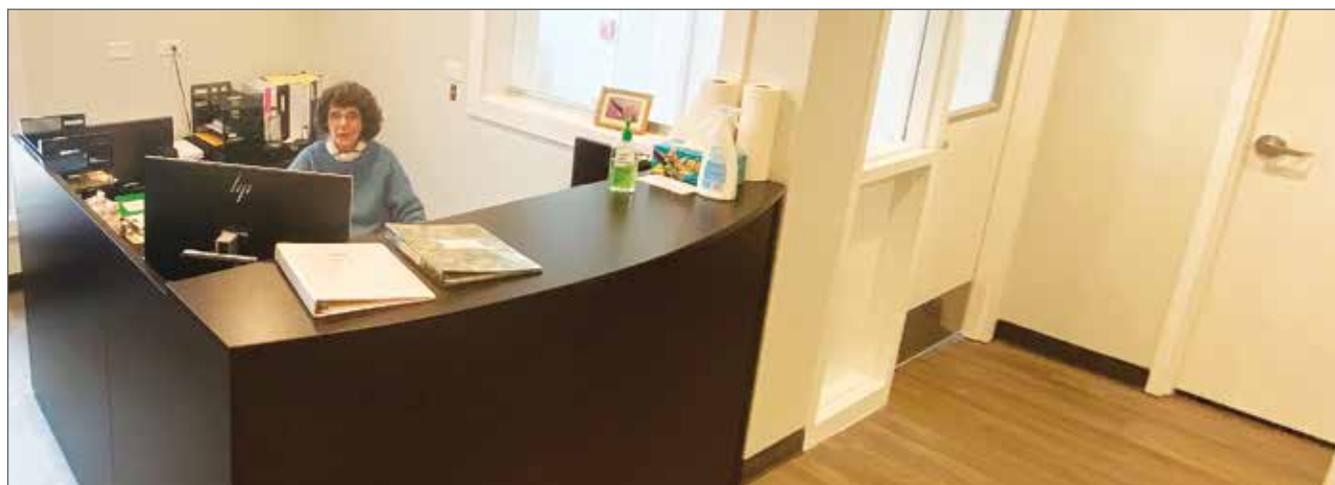
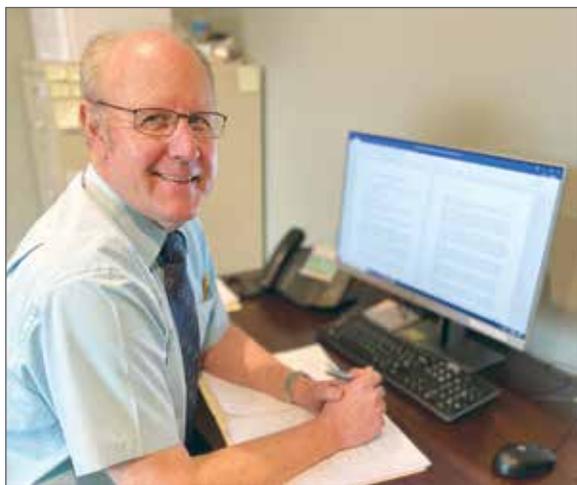
before the work of restoration could begin. For nearly two years, ECFA staff was relocated to temporary facilities. Over the course of our displacement we made several new friends who came to our aid.

We owe special thanks to Glenn Kosirog who provided us with office space in his building in downtown Wheaton. Rich Vogt and Bob Cook from Resource Communication, Inc., assisted us with space in their company's building on Main Street in Lisle.

Nathan Hancock from Hancock International provided us with much needed storage space in his company's building in Carol Stream. Lombard Gospel Chapel allowed us to hold monthly staff meetings in their church building for over a year and a half.

On March 2nd, our entire Illinois staff was able to once again meet together at our newly restored building at 1530 N. Main Street in Wheaton. We are most grateful for the Lord's provision for all this time and so glad to be back home! After we are settled and can furnish and decorate our building, we will plan an open house for our friends and supporters to visit us at our restored facilities.

*Ken Withrow  
Executive Director*



# HAVE A HEART FOR LIFE

On Saturday, February 15th, 80 bowlers came out on a cold and windy day to the Fox Bowl in Wheaton. We celebrated Valentine's Day weekend by raising needed funds for ECFA's Pregnancy Support Services, Counseling Program, and Child Welfare Services. Bowlers of all ages enjoyed a delicious pizza lunch, snacks, three games of bowling, and lots of prizes.

It was all for a good cause! ECFA has been providing positive alternatives to abortion with life-affirming services for 70 years. Pregnancy Support Services Supervisor, Faith Allman, shared how expectant parents receive compassionate care and

counseling from professional social workers. Many young women are helped to prepare for parenting, while others are assisted in making the loving plan of adoption.

Thank you to all of those who supported this event through your prayers, donations, volunteerism, and participation. Due to your efforts and the goodness of God, we were able to achieve our goal, raising \$10,000. To put that in perspective, this would cover the full counseling costs for 10 individuals or families, and purchasing parenting curriculum. Thanks for being a blessing!



# Intact Family Services,

As I write this, we find ourselves in the midst of uncharted waters as a nation. Schools are closed, restaurants and other public places are closed, and we are told to stay home.

Yet, in a time like this the needs of our clients are far greater still. The Intact Family Services Program is contracted with DCFS to support families and ensure the safety and well-being of children in homes where abuse and/or neglect has occurred.

As part of the frontline of Child Welfare, we don't get to stay home during the COVID-19 pandemic. These children need us, these families need us, and so we go. We have 8 case management staff and 2 supervisors, and serve about 80-85 families at any given time. We currently have 85 families. That is 85 families with children now home from school, 85 families who are unsure about income, 85 families who are unsure how they will get food or diapers



*For illustration only*

for their families, and 85 families with concerns and questions just like many of us have.

For many of these families therapeutic and supportive services have also been placed on hold because providers cannot safely offer services at this time. Our presence in the lives of these families has never been more important, so we go. We go and lovingly serve the families that God has entrusted to us.

In the process we are put at risk for contracting the virus and; therefore, put those around us that we love at risk too. We wash our hands diligently, use hand sanitizer, wipe surfaces with disinfecting



*For illustration only*

wipes, and keep our distance when we can, but the risk remains. However, the risk to the children we serve, if our presence was absent, is far more important to us than the risk to ourselves. And so we go.

We go and we bring gas cards, packed school lunches, diapers, wipes, cleaning supplies, laundry detergent, food, and grocery store gift cards. We go and we talk with parents about how they are managing with children home and school work to do. We go and make sure families have food in their homes. We go and let parents and children process their fears and frustrations. We go and make sure children are supervised. We go and make sure children are safe. Safety is our number one priority, not the safety of ourselves, but the safety of the vulnerable children we serve.

As a supervisor of this program, I cannot tell you how incredibly proud and humbled I am by the case managers going into homes and supporting these families. They are not complaining, they are not refusing, they are not thinking about themselves at all. They are continuing to do their jobs like they always have done, only with a greater challenge.

Please join me in praying for our staff and the families we serve in the Intact Family Services Program. You will not find a more faithful group of people nor a more vulnerable population.

*Brigid Luke, LCSW  
Supervisor, Intact Family Services*

# Love in Action Dinner Rescheduled

Abby Johnson was scheduled to be the featured speaker at ECFA's 70th Anniversary Love in Action Dinner on Friday, May 8th, at the Abbington Distinctive Banquets in Glen Ellyn. Our event has been rescheduled to April 30, 2021.

Abby is the author of the nationally best-selling book, *Unplanned*, that chronicles her experiences within Planned Parenthood and her dramatic exit. The book has become the movie by the same name. *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 transition out of the business. To date, this ministry has helped over 430 workers leave the abortion industry.

Sharon Irving had been a part of the worship team at Willow Creek Community Church in Barrington, Illinois, for several years. She has appeared on *America's Got Talent*, where she received the coveted "Golden Buzzer" at her first televised audition, and was chosen to compete in the Semi-Finals. Sharon will be the vocalist at next year's Love in Action celebration.

*We hope that everyone who was planning to attend ECFA's 70th Anniversary will join us for our 71st Anniversary Love in Action Dinner*

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## MEET BECCA, MARIA, AND ARREALLE



**Rebecca (Becca) Adams** is originally from Fresno, California. She and her husband moved to Wheaton so that he could attend Wheaton College as a graduate student. Becca joined the ECFA staff as a full-time secretary. In addition to general clerical duties, she assists our Director of Development, Tony Malandro, with special fundraising events. Being new to the area, Becca and her husband Dillan are in the process of looking for a home church.



**Maria Cruz-Rodriguez** has joined the Intact Family Services Program as a bilingual, Spanish speaking case manager. She earned a BA in Behavioral Sciences from East-West University in Chicago and has had three and a half years of case management experience before coming to ECFA. Maria and her family attend Ebenezer Christian Reformed Church in Berwyn.



**Arrealle Owens** is our newest staff member. She also has joined the Intact Family Services Team. Arrealle has a BA in Psychology from Southern Illinois University and a Master's in Social Work degree from St. Louis University. She has four years of case management experience from two child welfare agencies in St. Louis. Arrealle decided to move back to our area to be close to her family and we are glad that she has become a member of ECFA's staff.

# Kid's Korner

## What is "Orphan Hosting?"



*For illustration only*

Children come to the USA with a chaperone for a two to three week summer hosting experience and have possibly their only opportunity to find a permanent family. If you are considering adoption of an older child from overseas and want to learn more about what is involved in the Orphan Hosting Program, please give us a call. ECFA is working with two other Christian organizations to place children from Columbia into orphan hosting homes that have all been cleared for an intercountry adoption.

*"Religion that God accepts as pure and faultless is this;  
to look after orphans and widows in their distress..." (James 1:27 NIV)  
"Defend the oppressed. Take up the cause of the fatherless." (Isaiah 1:17 NIV)*

*For more information contact Barb Hellmer at [barbh@evanefa.org](mailto:barbh@evanefa.org) or call 630-653-6400.*

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## VOLUNTEERS — WE NEED YOU!

*Dear children, let us not love with words or speech, but with actions and in truth. - 1 John 3:18*

At ECFA we are privileged to follow Christ's example of serving others. While it's not about proving anything to God, since we know our salvation is a gift from Him, it is about expressing our love for God and seeking to follow Christ's example. As we all know, it's one thing to say you love someone, but quite another to demonstrate that love through your actions. Volunteering at ECFA is "one" of the ways anyone can put their faith and love of God into action.

Now that we're back "home" in our newly renovated building, we need help with mailings, evening reception desk coverage, and general administrative support. We need you!!

By partnering with ECFA as a volunteer, you're joining a ministry that:

- Makes a difference for children and families through adoption
- Provides professional counseling services based on biblical principles
- Serves families at risk for having children placed in foster care
- Offers free education, material support and counseling to moms before and after pregnancy

For additional information on opportunities to serve, contact ECFA @ 630-653-6400  
Or check out our website: <https://evanefa.org/opportunities/volunteering/>

# INTERNS

ECFA offers a distinct opportunity for graduate level college students to develop their ability to integrate their Christian faith with professional practice. Coming from diverse backgrounds, interns learn how to hone their skills and contribute their talents in the field of human services. These emerging professionals are preparing for future careers in child welfare, clinical practice, and other areas of social service.

## HALEY VERSLUYS

As a Master's in Social Work (MSW) student at Aurora University, this is Haley's second internship placement at ECFA. Currently, she is involved in the Pregnancy Support Services (PSS) Program. She manages her own caseload which has allowed her to develop excellent clinical skills.

Haley says, "Interning at ECFA has given me the opportunity to work alongside Christian clinicians who are doing the work of Jesus while practicing social work. Both my internship experiences have been educationally enriching. I always recommend ECFA to my classmates who are looking for an internship at a Christian agency."



## ERIN LAWINGER

Erin is also a MSW student at Aurora University and is taking her internship placement in Intact Family Services (IFS). She has been developing strong case management skills through interacting with clients and by collaborating with other service providers to meet the needs of parents, children, and families in the IFS Program.

Erin relates, "As an intern, I feel well supported and equipped to do my work. By completing home visits on my own, I have become more confident in my abilities. I am thankful for the ECFA staff that holds each other up, especially on days that seem most difficult."



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## Council on Accreditation ~ How We Fared



Recently we received the Final Accreditation Report (FAR) from the Council on Accreditation (COA), as well as a beautiful plaque, showing that ECFA is accredited through March, 31st, 2024. The FAR is a valuable document that contains observations and recommendations from COA peer reviewers, as well as noted organizational strengths and areas for growth. It was wonderful to read such encouraging comments from the reviewers who had many great things to say! We value being accredited because we know, as COA said to us in writing, "It (accreditation) is a process by which we are able to consistently strive for and achieve new levels of excellence."

*Wendy Payne, MSW, LSW  
Director of Professional Services*

# GOLF SCRAMBLE AND SILENT AUCTION – NEW LOCATION



This is the time of year we look forward to dusting off the “sticks” and enjoying the outdoors after months of cold weather. Mark your calendars now for **June 23rd**, when we host our annual Golf Scramble Fundraiser and Silent Auction at **Prairie Landing Golf Club in West Chicago**. We’re very excited to have secured this 18 hole prairie-links style course, which was rated 4.5 Stars by Golf Digest for **Best Places to Play**, one of only 25 Illinois courses to receive such a rating.

Registration, breakfast, and driving range access will begin at 7:30 am, followed by a shotgun start at 9:00 am. Lunch will be available all day at the **Halfway House**, so

you can grab a bite at the time of your choosing. The day will wrap up after golf with awards, prizes, desserts, and silent auction.

**Space is limited, so call your friends now and register by June 1st** to ensure your tee time and support ECFA’s life-affirming services. Multiple levels of sponsorship opportunities are also available and needed to support this outing. To register and/or get details on being an event sponsor, contact Tony Malandro (630-653-6400 or [tonym@evancca.org](mailto:tonym@evancca.org)), or check out the Events section of our website, [www.evancca.org](http://www.evancca.org). See you on the green!

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## *Caring for Moms & Babies*

Since many of the clients in the Pregnancy Support Services Program (PSS) are near or below the poverty level, they need additional practical help. Being able to take some of the financial pressure off of our clients is one way to convey God's love to them.

PSS is only able to assist our clients in this way through the generous donations from supporters. If you feel God nudging you to help our families, here is a list of the items that are in high demand and greatly appreciated.

- ♥ Diaper Cream
- ♥ Diaper Wipes
- ♥ Baby toiletries, including baby wash & lotion
- ♥ Fragrance free laundry detergent
- ♥ Formula
- ♥ Gift cards to Aldi, Jewel, Target, or Walmart



*During this time of uncertainty, in order to help ensure the safety and wellbeing of our clients and staff, we are not accepting donations of any used items.*

*Thank you for your understanding.*

# *Memorials and Tributes*

## *In Loving Memory*

**Lee Wright**

From: Mrs. Darlene Wright

**Charles Tuzik**

From: Rebecca Tuzik

**Jeff Newell**

From: Bill and Marilyn Newell

## *In Honor of*

**Dante Buchanan – for his 18th birthday**

From: Marlene Brokaw

## **ECFA FOUNDATION**

Are you wondering how to handle your IRA 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 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.

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 process please contact Tim Carrick at (630) 653-6400 so that we can answer your questions and provide instructions for completing your gift.

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