



Winter 2021

TRUE TO LIFE

A publication of Evangelical Child & Family Agency

A Joyful Christmas!

2020 – I imagine when people see that, they may cringe a little. 2020 was a challenging year in so many ways. Though it is ok to feel overwhelmed, sad, scared, etc., we do not want to forget to reflect on the good.

At the beginning of March, we enjoyed the first staff meeting together in our new building, and then COVID came along. Once again, our work environment was turned upside down. Flexibility has been a key word for us at ECFA. We adapted as the needs of those we serve became greater. Our programs grew and we even hired more staff.

As fall approached, our minds turned towards the upcoming holidays. Christmas brings our Annual Toy Drive which brings such joy to our families. Once again, we were determined to brighten the holiday season for the children we serve. This meant finding people to fulfill wish lists for all of these kids, approximately 250 of them. Our desire was for each

child to receive 4 gifts; knowing that for many, these would be the only gifts they receive.

As always, our community, friends, and supporting families, rallied to ensure the toy drive was a success. Those who have been part of the toy drive for many years participated again, and new people joined in as well, wanting to bring joy to others. We received countless donations, far exceeding 4 gifts per child. We are so grateful for the love our families have been shown.

My favorite lyrics from the classic Christmas Carol, O Holy Night, are “A thrill of hope the weary world rejoices”. Many are weary but there is reason to rejoice. We have the hope of heaven and we have the love of our great God who is always with us.

We believe that there are many reasons to rejoice!
Wendy Payne, MSW, LSW
Director of Professional Services



Bowl Classic Delayed

The 2021 “Have a Heart for Life” bowling classic will not be held on Saturday, February 13th, as previously scheduled. We are closely monitoring guidance from the Illinois Department of Health, and staying in touch with our friends at Fox Bowl to determine an appropriate date to hold this event in a safe and enjoyable manner for all. We do expect to hold the event



sometime in 2021, and will post updates on our website (www.evanefa.org/events) as soon we have more information. We look forward to getting together again and enjoying the fun, food, and fellowship with our extended ECFA family. Feel free to contact Tony Malandro (630-653-6400) if you have any questions regarding this event.

ECFA FOUNDATION AT WORK

Among other things, the ECFA Foundation has provided a \$15,000 grant to subsidize counseling services to economically disadvantaged individuals and families. This funding has enabled ECFA therapists to serve individuals of all ages who are homeless, single mothers raising children on their own, families experiencing domestic violence and substance abuse, and clients suffering from anxiety and depression that do not have coping skills to manage crisis situations without support.

The ECFA Foundation has also provided a \$10,000 matching grant that was more than doubled by Agency supporters who participated at ECFA’s November virtual “Auction” event. The result is that the Agency was able to purchase a new 2020 Dodge Grand Caravan. This vehicle is needed for its large cargo capacity and is being used to pick up and deliver necessary items to pregnancy counseling clients and those without transportation in our Intact Family Services Program.

ECFA has partnered with the Barnabas Foundation to assist individuals in preparing wills and estate

plans which prudently provide for bequests to Christian charities.

Please prayerfully consider an investment in the ECFA Foundation, a gift which keeps on giving back to the agency in the future.

For further information, please contact Tim Carrick at (630) 653-6400.



PSS EXPANDS SERVICES

MENTOR PROGRAM

The Pregnancy Support Services (PSS) team is excited to announce the launch of its Mentor Program in 2021. In an effort to provide additional support to some of our clients who we feel would benefit, the PSS program will begin to recruit and train mentors in the Spring.

Each mentor will be matched with a client who will soon be ending PSS services. The Mentor Program will be seen as a “step down” program and it will focus on building relationships, setting and achieving goals, and learning new life skills.

The majority of our perspective “mentees” are parenting their child/children, but we also have women who made other choices (abortion or adoption) who would benefit from additional support and friendship. Since the PSS program works with many clients who are originally from other countries, and have little

to no family in America, the role of a mentor would be increasingly valuable.

Approximately 1/3 of our caseload speaks Spanish so we will be seeking bilingual (Spanish) mentors as well. If you are interested in learning more, please call Faith Allman, at the office (630) 653-6400, ext. 7241.



Illustration Only

Special Christmas Thank You

We would like to give special thanks to H4 Training, FTX CrossFit, Bartlett Orange Theory, Wheaton Town Square, Amy Kipfer and her children, Mark Conforti, Luis and Laura Alcantar, Calvary Lutheran Church of Wood Dale, our faithful Toy Drive donors, and our new ones as well!



H4 Training

Intact Family Services During the Pandemic

Intact Family Services (IFS) is our largest child welfare program. Cases are referred to us by the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) due to indicated reports of serious child maltreatment. We work with families who are experiencing homelessness, domestic violence, substance abuse, unsafe home environments, and mental health concerns. Our objectives are to strengthen these families, ensure no further abuse/neglect occurs, and to promote healthy family functioning. The overall goal is to keep the children from going into foster care unless absolutely necessary.

IFS is a challenging program in normal times. Children who have experienced emotional trauma, neglect, and/or abuse often have a great deal of difficulty trusting adults and feeling safe. Our case managers need to find ways to connect with them in order to build healthy, trusting relationships. They also need to work with parents and help them find appropriate services that will address the reasons DCFS became involved with their family and other critical issues, such as their own history of trauma.



Illustration Only

The pandemic has been especially challenging for families we serve. Our families are experiencing more crises situations as they have faced job loss, less access to in person counseling services, and their kids being kept home doing e-learning.

Parents are often low income and daycare may not be affordable or available. Our services are considered essential and have never stopped since the beginning of the pandemic. Though home visits are

less frequent, case managers still need to see their families in person. They need to be sure the parents are engaged in required services, the children are well, the home environment is safe, and the family is stable.

Assessing risk and safety issues is not an easy task when a family can only be interviewed over a video call. It is more difficult to connect with people and harder to understand the full picture of what is happening in the home.



Illustration Only

Sadly, there has been an increase in incidents of abuse and neglect within some of our families due to substance abuse, domestic violence, and mental health concerns. Many kids we serve find school to be a safe place and this has been taken away from them. The positive relationships they have with friends at school and adults too, are not the same. Consequently, some of our children are struggling with feelings of isolation, anxiety, and depression.

Through all of this, our case managers press on. They are putting in long hours and are dealing with incredibly challenging situations. They don't complain. They know their job is important. They are essential not just because they are IFS case managers. They are essential because they are a light to our families. They are a source of encouragement and hope. To many, they are "the hands and feet of Jesus", and we believe there is nothing more essential than that.

As a Christian faith-based agency, our Intact Family Services supervisors and case managers ask for prayer for the parents and children served in our program, especially during these difficult days of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Wendy Payne, MSW, LSW
Director of Professional Services

2021 Golf Scramble

Save the Date

ATENTION golfers.....pencil in Monday, June 14th, 2021 on your calendars and plan to join us at Prairie Landing Golf Club, for ECFA's Annual Golf Scramble FUNdraiser and Silent Auction. While Covid restrictions have caused us to cancel or modify several events, we are optimistic that this one will take place. Unlike most other events, golfing provides the benefit of being outdoors, dramatically improving our odds of being able to host the event this year.

This is our first time at Prairie Landing Golf Club in West Chicago, and you're going to love it. This links style course was rated 4.5 stars by Golf Digest, one of only 25 courses in Illinois to receive such a rating.

Space is limited, so call your friends now and register by June 1st to ensure your tee time. 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@evancfa.org), or check out the Events section of our website, www.evancfa.org. Looking forward to seeing everyone "in person"!

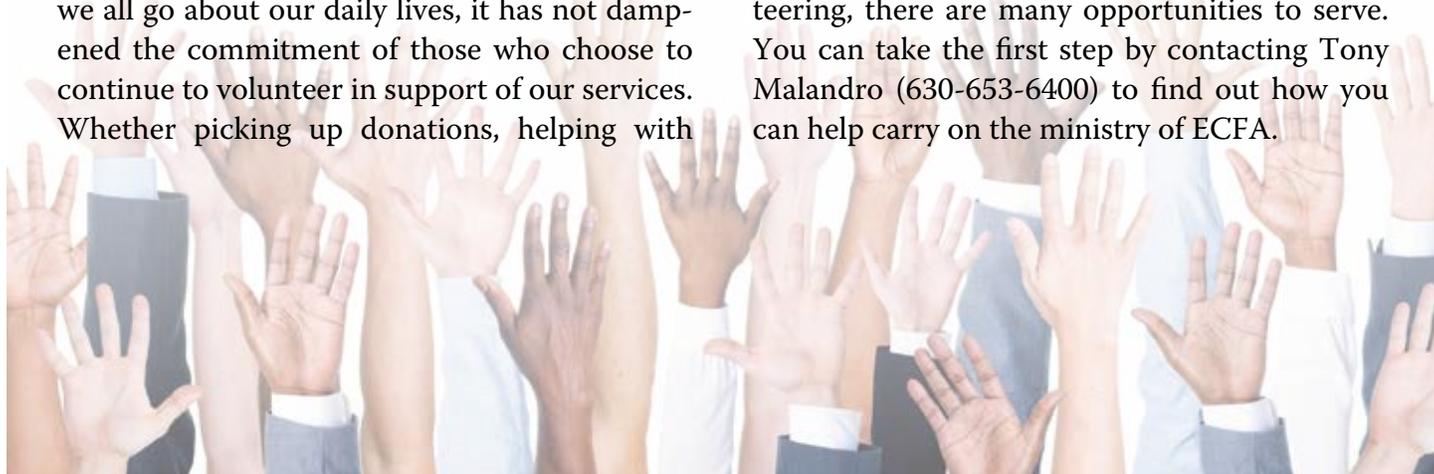


10th Hole ~ Prairie Landing ~ Be there!!

Giving Thanks for ECFA Volunteers

ECFA has been blessed over the years by the volunteer support of many people in numerous ways. While the pandemic has changed how we all go about our daily lives, it has not dampened the commitment of those who choose to continue to volunteer in support of our services. Whether picking up donations, helping with

mailings, or providing administrative support, ECFA volunteers have been up to the task and we thank you all! If you are interested in volunteering, there are many opportunities to serve. You can take the first step by contacting Tony Malandro (630-653-6400) to find out how you can help carry on the ministry of ECFA.



ECFA Staff News



Alison Tews joined the Intact Family Services Program as a case manager in July. She has a B.S. in Education from Taylor University and is certified in Special Education. She has worked as an Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) therapist and as a caregiver for children. Alison also has worked as the Special Needs Ministry Coordinator at Wheaton Bible Church. She currently attends College Church in Wheaton.



Kim Morjoseph is the newest member of the ECFA staff. She joined the Intact Family Services Program as a case manager in October. She has a B.A. in Human Services from National Lewis University and 18 years of experience in the field of social services. Kim is actively involved with the high school youth group at Village Green Baptist Church.



ADOPTION Is this something that you, a family member, or a friend have been considering? It seems that the list of questions regarding the process grows longer the more it is considered. Is international, domestic, or embryo adoption right for your family?

ECFA is happy to have a conversation that can help you, or someone you know, decide what might be the right choice for your family. Please call Barb Hellmer at 630-653-6400 if we can be of service during this process.

INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

ECFA offers a distinct opportunity for graduate level college students to develop the ability to integrate their Christian faith with professional practice. Interns learn how to hone their skills and contribute their talents in the field of human services while preparing for careers in child welfare, clinical practice, or other areas of social service.

JESSICA CURRY

As a Master's in Social Work (MSW) student at Aurora University, Jessica took her internship placement in ECFA's Pregnancy Support Services (PSS) Program. She developed skills in the areas of interpersonal communication, problem-solving, and time management. She especially felt challenged in learning how to build rapport with clients in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Jessica says, "My internship with ECFA has been a wonderful experience that I was blessed to have. I am so thankful for all the awesome people I was able to meet during my time as an intern with PSS." After completing her MSW program, Jessica plans to work in a mental health hospital. She believes that the mentally ill population is so misunderstood and stigmatized that she wants to help them in any way she can.



FAMILY NEEDS

Our earlier story highlighted the challenges many of our Intact Family Services (IFS) families face. While addressing those needs, there are basic needs that are a struggle as well, such as putting food on the table, and getting to required appointments. Gift cards to grocery stores or an Uber card can ease the struggle in this economy.

If you would like to assist ECFA in helping our families, following are some suggested gift cards:

- Aldi's
- Walmart
- Target
- Jewel
- Or any major grocery chain
- Uber - to assist with transportation

Smoke detectors and outlet covers are very needed items as well. Our caseworkers are required to make sure the home environment is safe.

Items can be mailed to or dropped off at our office, 1530 N. Main St., Wheaton, IL 60187



Memorials and Tributes

In Loving Memory

Susan B. Alley

From: Ruth LaRue Mills

Corey Anderson

From: Sharon Watson

Wilber and Muriel Anderson

From: Douglas and Marcia Berg

Edna Brandt

From: Suzy McLaughlin

Evelyn Boonstra

From: Charles and Deborah Slager

Kathleen Burkman

From: Carol Hollingsworth

Louise M. Christensen

From: Tom and Marla Long

Marge Deckinga

From: Derk Deckinga

Bonnie Jo Fisher

From: Debbie Badali
Greg Fisher

Willa Mae Fletcher

From: Pamela Fletcher

Rev. and Mrs. Herbert Gotaas**Eleanor Gotaas****Phyllis Gotaas**

From: June White

Ed and Jean Griffiths

From: Mary Moravec

Christine Guzik

From: Alyce M. Ernst

Eleanor Hill

From: Mrs. & Mrs. Ed Covarrubias
Marie Davis
Suzanne Evans
Fred & Judy Hardman

Donald W. Lehman

From: Elaine Ernst

Gertrude B. Manning

From: Joseph and Mary Austin
Mr. and Mrs. Russell Hazell
Paul Scorza
Federal Life Insurance Company

Donald McGrail

From: Elaine McGrail

Terry McParland

From: John McParland

William McParland

From: John McParland

Rev Bob and Jess Murfin

From: Rose Reeve

Rose Reeve Family

From: Rose Reeve

Veronica Ann Rettke

From: Kurt Rettke

Joel Spann

From: George and Gloria Dearing
Ruth Freeman
Robert and Joanne Gill
Tatsuo and Mary Kimura
Steven and Cheryl Koob
Marilyn Salomonson

William Vandenberg

From: Mrs. Nancy Long

Jean Walstra

From: Elaine McGrail

William Weidenaar

From: Ms. Paula Carstensen
Mr. and Mrs. Joshua Caskey
Mr. Russell and Sharon Clousing
Mr. Reyn Homan
Mr. and Mrs. Scott Johnston
Ms. Nicole Lind
Mejeur Brother and Sister
Mr. Robert Mejeur
Mr. and Mrs. William Newell
Mr. and Mrs. Scott Pruiksma
Mr. Charles Reiter
Mrs. Catherine Solle
Mr. and Mrs. Dick Volkart
Mr. and Mrs. John Weidenaar
Mr. and Mrs. Ken Withrow

Doris Wheeler

From: Robert Wren Jr.

Don and Sylva Worsham

From: Suzanne and Don Wratney

In Honor of

Danielle and Nick Masi

From: Godlan Manufacturing
Performance Specialists on behalf
of Ben Hefner

Brad and Sue Mitchell

From: Ken and Jane Loerop

Ms. Esther Pikel

From: Chris & Debbie Khayat

Mrs. Audrey Vriesman

In honor of her 90th birthday.
From: Mrs. Annette Rops

Mrs. Theresa Wiltjer

From: Beverly Stob

Dante Buchanan

Happy 19th Birthday
From: Marlene Brokaw

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