



Spring 2021

# TRUE TO LIFE

A publication of Evangelical Child & Family Agency

## Prospective Eagle Scout Blesses ECFA

Marc Duebener, a sophomore at Wheaton Warrenville South High School, is part of Scout Troop 23, which is affiliated with First Presbyterian Church in Wheaton. Marc has been a Scout for six years and his desire is to achieve the rank of Eagle Scout. As part of his Eagle Scout journey, he needed to take on a project that has “worthwhile purpose.” For his project, Marc chose to conduct a Baby Supply Drive to help stock the baby supply closet at Evangelical Child and Family Agency.

Due to COVID, Marc had to think of creative ways to gather all the donations. A lot of his project revolved around bringing people to his website ([www.babysupplydrive.com](http://www.babysupplydrive.com)). He received about 40% of his donations from drop-off boxes/events and 60% from online orders delivered to his home and ECFA. Marc worked with local businesses/organizations to obtain donation drop-off locations at: Wheaton Public Library, Wheaton Park District Community Center, Wheaton Warrenville South High School, Edison Middle School, and First Presbyterian Church in Wheaton (his troop’s sponsor organization).

Marc also presented his project (via Zoom) to his Troop Committee, Wheaton Warrenville South HS Key Club, Wheaton North HS Key Club,



*Marc Duebener*

and 7AM Rotary Club of Wheaton. He distributed flyers promoting the baby supply drive at Wheaton Public Library (distributed with book orders) and First Presbyterian Church (included in church bulletins). He created donation drop-off events at First Presbyterian Church on Scout Sunday and in coordination with their food drive drop-off. He volunteered during both events collecting baby supply donations. He also posted flyers around Downtown Wheaton.

Supporting businesses included: Mile Long Records, Shane’s Deli, Gia Mia, Nonno Carms, Kimmer’s, Moveable Feast, Dry City Brew, Starbucks, Hen House, Wheaton Sports Center, Warren’s Ale House, Poor Boy II, Prairie Path Books, and Panera Bread. And finally, Marc created yard signs - Scout volunteers displayed yard signs promoting his event and a few scouts also had donation drop-off bins.

*continued on page 3*

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## Annual Golf Scramble and College Presidents' Cup

Monday, June 14th! Details inside!

# Post Abortion Healing

As a Christian, pro-life ministry, Evangelical Child and Family Agency's Pregnancy Support Services (PSS) workers are saddened when they hear of a client who has chosen to end their pregnancy through abortion. One of the primary goals of the program is to help women in our community carry their pregnancy full term. However, it doesn't always work out that way.

Because we serve a loving and merciful God, the response of the PSS program is one of compassion, sensitivity, respect, and grace for those who have chosen abortion in their past. When statistics indicate that approximately 33% of women have experienced an abortion, that means there are a lot of women with hidden pain from past abortions.

For many, the shame of the unplanned pregnancy is compounded by the shame of the "solution to the problem", the abortion. Now, months or years later, to talk of one decision necessitates the need to talk about both, and many women do not have non-judgmental people with whom they feel safe enough to share such intimate and traumatic details. As a result, these women isolate themselves, pursue self-destructive activities, and encounter emotional struggles such as anxiety, guilt, depression, being easily "triggered", or being consumed with the abortion experience.

Disenfranchised grief, also known as hidden sorrow, refers to grief that goes unrecognized or unvalidated by society. This type of grief is often minimized or not understood by others, which makes it particularly hard to process and work through. Many women who have experienced an abortion must deal with this type of unsupported grief on a daily basis.

When a woman makes the decision to engage in counseling for post-abortion healing, the social worker in the PSS program considers it an honor to walk alongside her through the healing process. Often, the worker will utilize a bible study specifically for women who have chosen abortion. This study leads them through raw emotions, painful memories, hurt and anger at self and others, and asking how God could forgive this transgression when it is so hard for the woman to forgive herself. The goal is for the woman to be released from the bondage of guilt and shame through God's remarkable grace.

Some of our friends at other area pregnancy help centers also provide assistance through support groups, which can be very helpful. In PSS, our services are based on the individual needs of the woman, and are provided one on one, in order to really hone in on

how to best meet the needs of each woman.

It is our hope that each woman who has chosen abortion will receive healing grace and forgiveness from our Lord and Savior. He desires to see her released from the shame and guilt that has held her prisoner. Psalms 103:10-12 speaks of how God shows love and mercy to us, and "as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is His love for those who fear Him; as far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us."

Faith Allman, LCSW  
Pregnancy Support Services  
Supervisor

*"As high as the heavens are  
above the earth so great is his  
love for those who fear him:  
as far as the east is from the  
west so far has he removed our  
transgressions from us."*

*Psalm 103:10-12*



# Prospective Eagle Scout Blesses ECFA

*continued from page 1*

Marc's efforts proved to be very successful! He set a goal of obtaining 75 items, but ended up receiving well over 400 items! These items included close to 100 boxes of diapers, approximately 150 packs of diaper wipes, as well as items such as diaper creams, teething toys, baby bottles, shampoos, lotions, safety and grooming kits, and baby clothes!

Thank you Marc for all your efforts, and thank you to the countless people who donated items as well as the community organizations that helped support Marc's efforts! To say this is a blessing to the families we serve is an understatement.

~ Wendy Payne, Director of Professional Services



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## In Support of ECFA Services ECFA Foundation

For many years the ECFA Foundation has come alongside the Agency to provide for a number of special needs. Among other ways, this year the Foundation has subsidized counseling services to many economically challenged individuals and families. Martin (not his real name) first contacted ECFA's Counseling Program after being hospitalized for a suicide attempt. Recently divorced and having three small children, he felt extremely hopeless, depressed, and emotionally overwhelmed from the changes and stresses in his life.

Over a period of several months in counseling with Arnold, his ECFA therapist, Martin began to find a new perspective on life. He developed a better way of communicating with his children's mother and took on the role of an involved, loving and supportive father. He learned to value himself more and became increasingly caring and empathic toward others. He has a strong work ethic and takes pride in his job. He is friendly and welcoming of others and has become meaningfully involved in his church. He enjoys participating in a small bible study group and volunteers as a Sunday morning usher.

We are thankful for the support we receive from the ECFA Foundation that makes it possible for many individuals to receive Christian counseling services who would otherwise not be able to afford it. ECFA partners with Barnabas Foundation to assist individuals in preparing wills and estate plans which prudently provide for bequests to Christian Charities. Please consider investing in the ECFA Foundation, a gift that keeps giving back to fund services for children, parents, and families in the future.

For information about the ECFA Foundation, please contact Tim Carrick at (630) 653-6400.



*Illustration Only*

# Reflections on Oluwatoyin's Adoption Into Our Family...

There is no doubt in my mind that Oluwatoyin's adoption was divinely ordained. Every time I reflect on her coming to our home and family in the United States of America, I acknowledge the power of the Almighty God in using us to become a soothing balm to a beleaguered little girl, whose story is a graphic testament that "with God all things are possible".



*Oluwatoyin*

Oluwatoyin was orphaned at the age of one when her parents transitioned into glory on August 21, 2004. This was sad and traumatizing for her, but through God's ordained destiny for her, He empowered my wife, Adeola, and I to fill the void left by her parents. This was another testimony of God's infinite mercy over us. We were not able to adopt Oluwatoyin until many years later, so she was able to live with her maternal grandmother during this time. We visited her as often as we could and remained in contact through phone calls and Face Time.

I had been living in the United States since June 1999, and met my wife, Adeola, during my many trips back to Nigeria. After meeting Adeola on one of those trips, I also became acquainted with Oluwatoyin, who is my wife's niece. It was during my dating relationship with Adeola that we learned the terrible news of the

car crash that took the lives of Oluwatoyin's mother and father when she was only one year old. After Adeola and I were married, we knew it was God's design that we adopt Oluwatoyin, and we thought she would be our first child. In 2007, however, our first daughter, Ayokanmi was born in Nigeria. In 2010 my wife and daughter were able to immigrate to the United States. Then in 2012 and 2014 our two sons, Irebambo and Eyotayo were born. Our lives were full, but we still did not have Oluwatoyin with us. My late father oftentimes counseled me in my formative years that I should always remember that "whatever I make happen to other people, God will make happen to me too". My love for others would be the catalyst that would shield me from the darts the enemy tries to inflict on me and my family. This sacred counsel has remained a cardinal principle in my life ever since. We knew we needed to bring back that missing parental affection in Oluwatoyin's life. We needed to provide her with the love, affection, joy, happiness, parental care, and protection that all children need. We needed to work through the obstacles of adoption and immigration to have her join our family.

What a blessing it was for us when a Judge in Ilorin, Kwara State, Nigeria approved and signed the Order of Adoption on January 18th, 2017. She was now officially our daughter. In the spring of 2017 I contacted ECFA to conduct our home study, which was the first step in the process of bringing Oluwatoyin to the United States. The agency assisted us through many challenges and obstacles, and on October 15, 2020, Oluwatoyin's immigrant visa was finally approved. On January 9, 2021, Oluwatoyin arrived in the United States, accompanied by my wife, Adeola. What a day of rejoicing as Ayokanmi, Irebambo, and Eyitayo welcomed and embraced their sister with love.

The circumstances surrounding Oluwatoyin's early life and her adoption into our family echoes many life lessons that sometimes in life, we see and witness the worst. Yet, Almighty God is there to turn our worst moment into something that is beyond any dream and human comprehension. I am eternally thankful

*continued on page 5*



## Oluwatoyin's Adoption *continued from page 4*

to God for the glorious turnaround and perfecting everything we needed to enable Oluwatoyin to reunite with us again as one indivisible family here in the United States of America.

As a firm believer in the existence and power of the Almighty God, I know that there are no coincidences in life. Every breath, every step, is ordained by God. It was no coincidence that Adeola and I would be the channel through whom God will use to help Oluwatoyin fulfill God's ordained destiny on earth for her.

*Adesoji & Adeola  
Ayokanmi, Irebambo, Eyotayo  
Oluwatoyin*



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## ECFA Golf Scramble and College Presidents' Cup

Prairie Landing Golf Club ~ West Chicago  
Monday, June 14th ~ Registration at 7:30 am

Finally!!! After taking a one-year hiatus due to the Covid pandemic, we're thrilled to be able to host our Annual Golf Scramble and College Presidents' Cup Invitational event on *Monday, June 14th*. The event will be held at the Prairie Landing Golf Club in West Chicago, rated 4.5 stars by Golf Digest. In addition to offering an amazing golf experience, we'll be hosting an *online auction* during the golf event that allows non-golfers to participate.



*18th Hole - Put yourself in this picture!*

This will be a great day of golf, offering a chance to win prizes on numerous holes, including two hole-in-one new car holes!! Don't miss out on this chance to support ECFA's ministries, enjoy the outdoors, and reconnect with old friends. Online registration for golf and/or the auction is available by clicking on the "Events" tab on our website ([www.evanca.org](http://www.evanca.org)), and selecting "Golf Scramble and College Invitational." If you have any questions regarding registration, sponsorship, or donations for the silent auction, please contact Tony Malandro at [tonym@evanca.org](mailto:tonym@evanca.org) or 630-653-6400.

See you on the greens!!

# Volunteers are a Blessing

At ECFA we minister to children and families every day, but we don't do it alone. We're able to serve as many people as we do, due to people who have chosen to volunteer their time and talents to take some of the burden off of our full-time staff, allowing them to do even more good work!

Lynn Peterson is one such person. After working for over 40 years, Lynn felt the isolation of the pandemic weighing on her. But rather than giving in to that emotion, she chose to reach out and help out. Lynn serves as a volunteer receptionist every week, which enables our paid administrative staff to focus on additional tasks that serve our mission.



If you would like to be a blessing too, please contact Tony Malandro at 630-653-6400, or check out our website: [www.evanca.org/opportunities/volunteering](http://www.evanca.org/opportunities/volunteering)

**Mark Your Calendars!!**

## *Stride for Life*

Join us for a day of outdoor fun and "fundraising" as we host the 2021 "Stride for Life" event on *Saturday, September 18th*, at Herrick Lake in the beautiful Danada Forest Preserve in Wheaton.

This event will feature fun for all, as you run, walk, or bike in support of ECFA's life affirming services. Whether you're an experienced runner or just looking to tire out the kids, this event will fit the bill!



## *Auction 2021*

And...we intend to hold this year's annual benefit auction in person, on *Friday, November 12th*, at Abbington Distinctive Banquets in Glen Ellyn.

We missed getting together with everyone last year and look forward to you joining us later this year. Keep an eye on the events section of our website ([www.evanca.org](http://www.evanca.org)) for the most current information on all of our special events.





# Meet Andrea & Evon



**ANDREA LOPEZ** joined the Intact Family Services Team on February 1st as a case manager. She is a former ECFA intern and graduated from Greenville College with a Bachelor's Degree in Social Work and also a Bachelor's Degree in Spanish. She is bilingual Spanish-speaking and has experience working with victims of domestic violence. Andrea attends Calvary Church in Naperville.



**EVON CHARLES** is our newest ECFA staff member. She joined the Intact Family Services Program as a case manager on February 15th. She has a Bachelor's in Social Work from Western Illinois University and a Master's in Social Work from the University of Illinois in Champaign. She has experience working in early education and case management. Evon and her family attend Everlasting Word Church in Aurora where she serves on the worship team.

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## Books, Books, and more Books!!

Kayson Garn is a Junior at West Chicago Community High School. He desired to conduct a book drive as part of his service project for National Honor Society.

We are so thankful that Kayson chose to bless our families with books – close to 700 of them! He had drop-off boxes at the West Chicago Library as well as at the High School. The efforts of Kayson as well as the generosity of those who donated are greatly appreciated!





# Memorials and Tributes

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## In Loving Memory

### **Corey Anderson**

From: Mrs. Sharon Watson

### **Evelyn Boonstra**

From: Charles and Debbie Slager

### **Phyllis Chase**

From: Deanna Chase

### **DeYoung, Calvin**

From: Jonathan and Beth Ishmael

### **Sylvia Kietzman**

From: Deanna Chase

### **Gertrude Manning**

From: Nancy Zarzecha

### **Jeff Newell**

From: Bill and Marilyn Newell

### **Joel Spann**

From: Dave and Jennie Tietjen

### **Mary Steege**

From: Mr. and Mrs. Al Hafeman

## In Honor of

### **Our Five Children ~ Margaret, Madeline, Patrick, Will, and Jane**

From: Shelly and Greg Temple

### *Family Values*

Shelly and Greg Temple, along with their five children, exemplify the word *service*. For many years they have coordinated several service projects, and well over 200 neighborhood and school friends have been involved in their efforts.

Most recently, the Temple family has blessed ECFA's Pregnancy Support Services program with their kindness and generosity! They collected 60 gift bags filled with diapers, formula, and many other baby necessities! These gift bags will be a huge blessing to our families when given as a gift to them after the birth of their baby!



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### **ECFA True to Life – Spring – Second Quarter 2021 Vol. 49, No. 2**

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