



Finding permanency for vulnerable and orphaned children.

AGAPE



**ADOPTION
CELEBRATION
PICTURES**

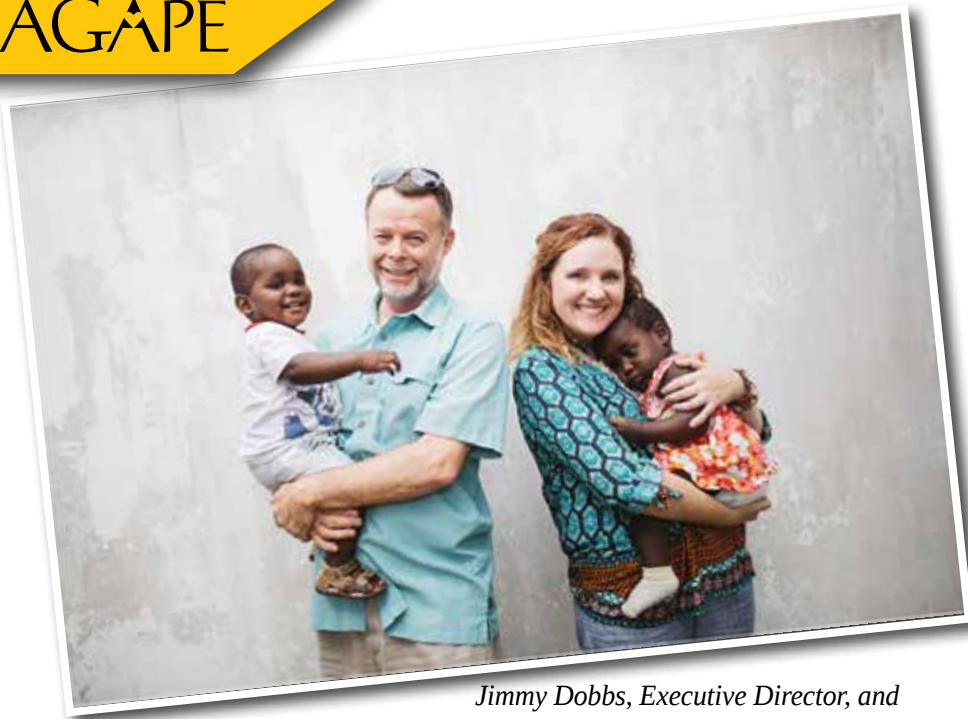
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**THE CARE CLUB
NEEDS YOU**

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**FAMILIES
TOGETHER FOR
THE HOLIDAYS**

Page 4 & 5



Jimmy Dobbs, Executive Director, and Megan Malinoski, Director of Permanency Planning, visited Mwana Villages in the Republic of Congo recently.

AGAPE: THIS YEAR AND INTO THE NEXT

By Jimmy Dobbs, Executive Director

Just days into 2015, I walked into my first meeting to discuss a little orphanage in Point Noire, Republic of Congo. Who would have thought that I'd be traveling to that amazing place within the year and watching as one of our families adopted and came home with their two children from the Congo?

In February, I shook the hand of a man who spent his childhood in and out of foster homes, running away from the people who were trying desperately to help him. Listening to Micheal Oher's story at our first Connecting Hearts event in February made a life-changing

first time in Agape's history, we have too many families. What?....too many families? I have always said that our primary barrier to serving more children was the number of families willing to be foster parents. That's no longer true. We've stopped recruiting for families to serve children in traditional foster care. **Christians are rising up and answering His call to help these children faster than we can serve them.**

Our primary barrier is now something none of us like to talk about. Money. But this is not a dirty word in a

in order to help more children. But, we need your help. We need more social workers, to train and support more families, so we can care for more children. We also need to increase our support staff to maintain quality services and stewardship. Agape needs you. Pray. Act. Give. Please.

Will you go through these open doors with us?

While our donations have risen by 65% over the past two years, the demand for our services has risen faster.

impact not only on the children we serve, but also on the people who are called to serve these boys and girls . . . like me.

After 41 years as a social worker, I'm surprised that there are still "firsts" for me to experience. But this summer's surprise was shocking to me: for the

Christian's world. It's actually just a gift He's given us to fulfill the work He's given us to do. While our donations have risen by 65% over the past two years, the demand for our services has risen faster.

We've asked God to help us go through each open door He gives us

SAVE THE DATE

Agape's
2nd Annual
Connecting Hearts
Event

February 23, 2016

www.connectinghearts.org



CELEBRATING ADOPTION

By Gina South, foster & adoptive mom

The 7th Annual Agape Adoption Celebration at Dream Field Farms was held on Saturday, November 14th. It was a wonderful day, despite being rained out a week earlier. What a delight to see the children bouncing along in the cow train, sliding down giant bales of hay, rekindling old friendships, chasing pigs and making new friends.

Celebrating adoption is our primary reason for gathering. It is so important for adoptive families to connect and create a supportive community for each other. The Agape Adoption Celebration is the perfect event to encourage the development of those relationships.

"The Agape Adoption Celebration feels like a big family reunion," said Karla Amos, adoptive mom. "I absolutely love being reacquainted with old friends year after year and seeing how each family has grown and flourished. I appreciate the fact that so many adoptive families can meet together on this special day each year to share our unique adoption journeys with each other. For any adoptive family that needs support from other adoptive families please know that we are here for you. If you have never been to an Agape Adoption Celebration in the past please consider joining us next November. We would love for you to be a part of our growing adoptive family."

Thank you to Agape's donors for helping us strengthen our families and have fun at the same time!



HOME FROM CHINA!

by Daniel Turner, adoptive dad

Meredith and I recently returned from China with our beautiful 2-year-old daughter, Sophia. She is such a happy child and has made remarkable progress in her new home. Her two older brothers, 12-year-old Nolan and 5-year-old Mason, have been so excited to welcome her into the mix. This is actually our second adoption in the family. Mason joined our family at 8 days old.

When we decided to adopt from China, we found out that our home study would have to be completed by an adoption agency who is Hague accredited. We reached out to the friendly staff of Agape. They hold the required accreditation and took great effort to provide an efficient service.

We started the adoption process back in 2010 because we wanted to be a blessing to a child. We quickly learned that we were the actual recipients of innumerable blessings. God has allowed us to care for these children and name them as ours, much like He cares for us and calls us His own. If you are considering adoption, may God bless you and continue to lead your heart. At a minimum, please consider the significant need of your prayers and support for the orphans in this world and for those who open their homes through adoption.



Agape is excited to welcome home Sophia Turner. Sophia is pictured above playing with her new brothers, Nolan and Mason.

ADOPTING FROM FOSTER CARE

By Jasmine Hoggle, adoptive mom

Our adoption journey had some ups and downs, but ended with so many blessings. We were surprised at both the doors God shut and the ones he opened through the process. We felt certain we were called to international adoption in the beginning - He closed that door. Then we felt like infant domestic adoption was what He had placed on our hearts, but that was not the case either. Turns out, He had a precious preschool boy waiting to come home! I'm not sure we remember what life was like prior to our wild man.

For anyone who is interested in adopting or fostering a child, please consider what we've learned. First, do not be afraid. You will have an unbelievable community of support surrounding you. Accept help, and lean on your support group.

Second, do not hesitate to ask for help. There will be times when you need it. Help is just a phone call away! The hardest part is making the phone call to ask.

Third, do not be discouraged! Adoption brings about spiritual warfare and the enemy will pull out all he has to deter you from continuing in the journey. Stay on your face before The Lord.

When you make the commitment to adopt, you must understand it is for life...through the sunshine and the storms!



Agape is thrilled to celebrate the adoption of Ayden Hoggle. Jeremy and Jasmine welcomed Ayden into their home in June 2015 from the foster care system.



GOD'S PERFECT PATH

By Melinda Speece, foster mom

A relationship sparked at a construction site, steeped in patience and planning, and strengthened by a habit of prayer surely makes a strong foundation for a family!

Wesly and Latoya Jacques, both engineers, started the adoption process after attending the Agape Adoption Awareness Event in Auburn. During the months of waiting and preparing, Latoya's mom often reminded them: "When God has something for you, He's going to clear the path for it!"

That perfect path was cleared on what the Jacques describe as a surreal day last February. Holding their son, Mason, for the first time stirred strong, immediate feelings of abundant joy and great relief for Wesly and Latoya: "He was ours."

Now ten months old, Mason is happy, talkative, and loves people! Mason's adoption was finalized on September 29, 2015, and Wesly reports, "Everything's been golden." (*The Jacques' Family, pictured above*)

BUILDING THE BRIDGES

By Melinda Speece, foster mom (*The Bridges' Family pictured on cover*)

Each one of Nathan and Melissa's four adopted children has a set of very special names—one given by their birth family, one given by their adoptive family, and one that binds them all together as a family: Bridges.

"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you a hope and a future." (Jeremiah 29:11) Melissa says these verses have particular meaning for their big family because they have seen again and again that God has a plan.

One part of that plan was a phone call from Carol Esco, Adoption Specialist at Agape, letting them know that their nine-month-old daughter, Ruthie, had a little brother on the way. Would the Bridges be ready and willing to open their home and hearts again? Yes!

On October 20, 2015, William's adoption was finalized (in front of the same judge who had helped them with Ruthie's adoption the year before)!

VOLUNTEER Spotlight



All-around Volunteer Spirit!

By Amber Duke,
Maternity Services Coordinator

Eric and Meloney Gwin, Montgomery, Ala., have served as foster parents with Agape since 2010. Meloney grew up hearing about Agape at church and has always wanted to be a foster parent. As with most families, they are pretty busy with both parents working and caring for their three (with one more in the adoption process) children.

"We are a busy family but helping out does not always mean that a lot of time is needed," said Meloney. "It could be just picking up some diapers and wipes while at the grocery store or taking a meal or sending a gift to a family with a new placement."

"We love God by loving others," Meloney said. When they asked their children how they would define love, their answers included: "Putting someone else's needs over yours," "being happy with someone," and "caring for someone very deeply."

Whenever a need is presented for one of our birth mothers or partnering ministries, such as Troy Sav-a-Life, they are always quick to respond with donations. Thanks to everyone who recently helped us meet some of the needs of Troy Sav-a-Life!

iCARE FOR GOD'S CHILDREN!

Helping a child is as simple as giving \$1 a day.

By Rachel Hunt, volunteer

Are you looking for a way to give consistently to Agape without having to write a check each month with your contribution? Then the Care Club is for you!

Join the Care Club this Christmas season and help dozens of women receive the counsel they need in a crisis situation as well as helping children find families to love and care for them.

Your recurring donation enrolls you in the Care Club by simply visiting our website at www.agapeforchildren.org/careclub and following the easy steps to setting up your new Care Club membership. Your gift will be a gift that keeps on giving.

Thank you for your willingness to be the hands and feet of Jesus. You help Him “place the lonely in families.” (Psalm 68:6)



iCARE FOR ORPHANS
and giving Ava* a Christian family through adoption.



iCARE FOR FOSTER CHILDREN
and caring for Mika and Lily* in their foster home.



iCARE FOR PREGNANT WOMEN IN CRISIS
and supporting Kyra* as she makes a plan for her unborn child.



**Names, details and images changed to protect identity and privacy.*

CURRENT CARE CLUB MEMBERS: 40

OUR GOAL IS TO HAVE 111 MEMBERS ENROLLED BY THE END OF 2016.
WILL YOU BE A PART OF HELPING TO CHANGE THE LIVES OF OTHERS?

Sign up today by going to agapeforchildren.org/careclub

CLINIC SPOTLIGHT:

Wiregrass Emergency Pregnancy Services

By Amber Duke,

Maternity Services Coordinator

Can you help the Wiregrass Emergency Pregnancy Services in Enterprise, Ala.? Please consider donating diapers (especially sizes 5 and 6) and an infant carseat (either new or used ones as long as they aren't expired).

Pictured Right:

Director Yolanda Austin and her staff and volunteers recently completed an Adoption Awareness training with Amber Duke, Agape's Maternity Services Coordinator.



MEMORIALS August 2015-October 2015

In Loving Memory

Dr. Conrad Adair
Dr. Tobias and Janet Atkinson

Martha Allen
Genelle Dale

Dolorus Andrews
Genelle Dale
Jimmy and Annette Huett
Joyce Gullely

Louise Boswell
Bobby and Patsy Owens

Barbara Buford
Prattville Church of Christ

Christine Burton
Sandra and Harold Evans

Sam and Mildred Canerday
Don and Norma Canerday
Virginia Kirby

Ann Clakeley
James Nixon

Bob Donahue
Genelle Dale

Jimmy Glenn
Genelle Dale

Rod Hall
Vaughn Park Church of Christ

Ebby Halliday
The Realty Alliance

Opal and Dean Holmes
Jimmy and Annette Huett

Jerome Knowles
Dale and Jackie Gentry
Linda and Milton Slauson

Benjamin Loudermilk
Genelle Dale

June Ludwick
T.J. and Bobbie Pedigo

Emma McGuire
Carroll Russell
Dale Gentry
Linda and Milton Slauson

J.C. Norman
Milton and Linda Slauson

Harold Pierce
Leon and Kathy Cheshire

Bill Pugh
Mac and Carol Otts

Marc Pugh
Linda and Milton Slauson

Cheryl Rogers
Alabama Power Customer Service Center
Pauline, Dennis and R. Frank Baker
Jeff and Laurie Helms
Clint and Shannon Johnston
Greg and Sharon Kegley (Red Bazzell & Son)
Teresa, Charles, and Doug Kelly
Elaine Lassiter
Patty Kelly Liles
Stephen and Loretta Martin
Richard and Karen Popwell
Carroll Russell
Linda and Milton Slauson
Bob and Onie Wallace & Family

Macio Smith
Landmark Church of Christ

Ron Smith
Genelle Dale

Fannett Stinson
Landmark Church of Christ

Bill Wallace
Karen Popwell

Lillian Wilson
Genelle Dale



In Honor Of

Cody and Briana Adair
Billy and Doris Adair

Chase Adair
Billy and Doris Adair

Kristen Adair
Billy and Doris Adair

Debbie and Lani Bailey
Bell Road Preschool

Jon and Niva Harrison
Ferrell and Elaine Walton

Naomi Wallace
Richard and Karen Popwell

Donations as Gifts

I would like to make a special contribution to Agape

In Memory of **OR** In Living Honor of

Name: _____

Please send Notification to:

Name: _____

Street: _____

City, ST, Zip: _____

This gift is from:

Name: _____

Street: _____

City, ST, Zip: _____

Please send to

Agape, PO Box 230472, Montgomery, AL 36123

AGAPE Staff By Office

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Marlea Johnson, Business Manager | Buddy Renahan, Foster Care Supervisor
Emily Thames, Director of Operations

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Megan Malinoski, Director of Permanency Planning

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**CONTACT US IF YOU WOULD LIKE A STACK OF
AGAPE NEWSLETTERS OR BROCHURES FOR YOUR OFFICE.
INFO@AGAPEFORCHILDREN.ORG • 334-272-9466**



LAST CHRISTMAS



My wishlist:

1. A house with running water.
2. I want food.
3. Don't get drunk.
4. Don't hit on me.
5. A clean bed with covers.

I WANT A FAMILY FOR CHRISTMAS.



THIS CHRISTMAS



I can't believe this is real!

1. I have a real tree!
2. I sleep in a warm bed.
3. No one hurts me.
4. There is plenty of food!
5. I have a family of my very own!

THANK YOU FOR MY FAMILY!

AGAPEFORCHILDREN.ORG/GIVING