



Winter 2012

TRUE TO LIFE

A publication of Evangelical Child & Family Agency

MICHAEL CARD AT LOVE IN ACTION DINNER

ECFA's Annual "Love in Action" dinner will feature songwriter and musical artist, Michael Card. In a career that spans 30 years, Michael Card has recorded 31 albums and authored or co-authored 24 books. He composed such favorites as "El Shaddai," "Love Crucified Arose," and "Emmanuel".

His popularity seems a stark contrast to his main ambition in life, to simply teach the Bible. Although music has provided him the opportunity to give insight gained through extensive research, writing only songs limited what he felt called to share.

Michael would frequently agonize over having to condense the vast

depth and richness of scripture into a three-minute song. And so he fell, quite naturally, into the field of book writing where he has garnered numerous awards.

Michael is a graduate of Western Kentucky University, where he earned bachelors and master degrees in biblical studies. He and his wife, Susan, have four children and live in Franklin Tennessee.

Our evening would not be complete without hearing the compelling stories of our ECFA clients.

Dinner is complimentary, but reservations are required (age 16 and over, please).



An offering will be received to help underwrite ECFA's ministry services.

Seating is for tables of 10; table and other sponsorships are available. For information or promotional posters/flyers please call (630) 653-6400 or e-mail mail@evanfca.org.

*FRIDAY, MAY 4TH AT 7:00 PM ⊕ WYNDAM LISLE HOTEL
3000 WARRENVILLE RD., LISLE, IL 60532*

Words of Encouragement

Dear ECFA,

I'll admit that Val and I have been a little out of the loop with ECFA lately. So when we received the letter detailing the change in ECFA's ability to minister to foster kids and families we were quite surprised. We firmly believe in the stance the agency has taken,

but certainly mourn the opportunities lost to serve in the same way that you have in the area of foster care. *But this is not defeat.*

Back in the 80's when we were involved in foster care, we were asked by some who were observing from the outside how it was

possible to pour yourself into the life of a child, knowing that most often they would end up leaving your family to go back to their own family. Wouldn't that be devastating? My answer was this: "Although it could be quite painful to become attached to these young lives you've loved and cared for,

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Important Happenings

**Bowl Classic
February 11**

**Tag Days
April 13 & 14**

**Love in Action
Dinner
May 4**

**Life A Thon
September 15**

**Auction
November 9**

Bowl Classic

"Have a Heart for Life"

❄️ February 11

11:00 am Check In

Pizza Lunch 11:15 am

Bowling at Noon ❄️
Fox Bowl

1101 E. Butterfield Rd.

❄️ Wheaton at Danada

Pack the Place Purple!!

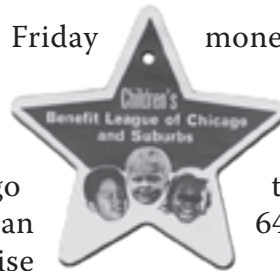
Will you partner with ECFA as we kick off the new year with our annual "Have a Heart for Life" Bowl Classic? We are ready to "pack the place purple" as bowlers come out and fill all 30 lanes of the Fox Bowl in Wheaton on Saturday, February 11, 2012. Funds raised help underwrite Pregnancy Support Services.



For additional information or to register for bowling, call Jennie at 630/653-6400 at ext. 214

TAG DAYS 2012

Mark your calendars for Friday and Saturday, April 13 & 14, 2012, for the 104th Tag Days of the Children's Benefit League of Chicago and Suburbs. Volunteer an hour or two to help raise



money so that ECFA can continue to serve children, individuals or families in need. For more information call Jennie at 630/653-6400 ext. 214.

Be a Star and be Proud!

All correspondence should be sent to:

Evangelical Child & Family Agency
1530 N. Main Street.
Wheaton, IL 60187

Phone: (630) 653-6400
Fax: (630) 653-6490
TTY: (630) 653-0180
Email: mail@evanfca.org
Web Site: www.evancfa.org

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ECFA Foundation

Through the foresight and vision of our past board member, the late Henrietta Van Der Molen, ECFA has an endowment fund which is managed by the ECFA Foundation Board of Directors. It is the Board's desire to raise sufficient funds through wills, bequests, and investments to make the Foundation a significant funding source for ECFA services.

The recent changes at ECFA have made us more appreciative of Mrs. Van Der Molen's foresight and we invite you to share her vision and be part of ECFA's future. For details on how you can participate, call Teri at 630/653-6400 to request the *Evangelical Child & Family Agency Foundation* brochure.

Inspiring, Stirring, Galvanizing

My name is Jessica Chin and this semester, I served as a Pregnancy Support Services Intern. I am currently studying at National-Louis University for my Bachelor's degree in Applied Behavioral Science, and I hope to go on for graduate studies in counseling ministries.

The experience I had at ECFA was wonderful. Right away, I was welcomed with open arms and I felt like I was at home. I really enjoyed being able to work under Krista Bradt, Julie Johnson, and Dave Lundberg. They have inspired me in so many ways and I cannot thank them enough for how they have helped me. The time I spent at ECFA solidified my dreams of becoming a counselor because at PSS and ECFA, I was really able to see love in action. *1 John 3:18 says, "Dear children, let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth."*

This is definitely true at ECFA because they are led by the love of Christ to help others. During my internship, we were able to help provide mothers and their babies with clothing, diapers, and even a crib and changing table for one family. God is so good and He is definitely using the ministry of PSS to show His love.

Thank you God, for the wonderful ministry of ECFA and PSS. It has been such an honor and privilege to be able to serve you here.

— Jessica Chin



Pregnancy Support Services

Just as Jessica was inspired by our program, there are many ways that we, too, have been inspired by our clients in the past year.

We've learned through our time in PSS that it takes a lot to be a mom. A lot of emotions, a lot of dedication, a lot of self-care, and a lot of self-sacrifice. One of the ways that we have seen women make sacrifices is by deciding to make an adoption plan. To see a mother place her child in the arms of the family she has carefully chosen is inspiring. It takes a lot of honesty for the client to take a look at her resources and circumstances and see that she isn't a failure, but that the most loving plan

is for her child to grow up with the adoptive family.

Another example includes the choices our clients make to meet with their worker and share their fears, their triumphs, their pain, and their joy. Through counseling, our clients are asked to share themselves. We believe that healing begins with healthy relationships with others. We have the opportunity to join our clients in their journey and to be an example of Christ's love. It takes a lot of courage to invite someone into your life, and we are very blessed to be trusted in this way.

Lastly, we are inspired by you, by your faithfulness, generosity, and

commitment. We have confidence that we are able to go to our Rattles N' Things closet and look for a pink sleeper and that 9.5 times out of 10, it's going to be there, waiting for our client's baby girl. And we know that if it isn't there, that we are able to use our Benevolence Fund to fulfill our clients' requests. We are the hands and feet, but you are the arms and legs, and together we are all the body of Christ.

"For as in one body we have many members, and not all the members have the same function, so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually we are members of one another." Romans 12: 4-5.

— Julie M. Johnson, MSW, LCSW, PSS Supervisor
Krista Bradt, MA, LSW, PSS Social Worker

Words of Encouragement *continued from page 1*

and then be separated, they belong to God. We're just trying to love them like they need to be loved as long as God has them in our home. Then when He decides to move them, we'll have to trust Him to do what's best for them from here on out. They belong to God."

The same is true of children born into our homes. They aren't ours, they're God's. Isn't that what we agree to in our baby dedications? They belong to Him, we're just the caretakers while they're in our homes, doing the best we can with the time we have. But in the end, they're His.

We know it's a dark and evil world and a tough place for some of these kids to be exposed to. ECFA has been a beacon of hope in the foster care world. But Christians can still be foster parents, still minister to these kids. It'll just have to be through different avenues, more creative means.

And your workers who had to return to the secular end of foster care can still minister to families, but in a far different setting. Not unlike what many of our missionaries in non-receptive lands are doing. But God is in control.

What Joseph said about his brothers is still true today, "what you intended for harm, God intended for good..." Gen. 50:20a.

Thanks ECFA. Keep loving, keep serving and God will continue to bless.

From a grateful ECFA child,
Steve Worsham

Steve was adopted through ECFA. He, and his wife Val, have been foster parents. They have four adult children and two granddaughters. Steve is the pastor of Bethel Bible Church in Evergreen Park, Illinois.

BENEFIT AUCTION 2011

A wonderful evening was enjoyed by those who gathered for our 26th Annual Benefit Auction held at the Abbington Banquets in Glen Ellyn. More than two hundred guests browsed the bountiful and varied items displayed for bidding and purchase. The mellow sounds of the piano playing jazz, show tunes, classical, and sacred songs filled the room as our patrons sipped their warm cinnamon cider. A delicious four-course dinner was served, with a variety of cheesecakes for dessert.

Following the silent auction and dinner, Greg Parker, our auctioneer and adoptive dad, led our live auction in his usual professional manner. We raised more than \$30,500 at the event with a special spot auction that raised nearly \$15,000 for our new Safe Families program. Wouldn't you like to be a part of an evening like this? Mark your calendars and join us Friday, November 9, 2012, for the 27th Benefit Auction at the Abbington in Glen Ellyn.



The Miracle-ometer and Safe Families

mir•a•cle/'mirik'l/ Noun: A surprising and welcome event that is not explicable by natural or scientific laws and is considered to be divine.

Christmas is the one time of the year that we all pause to reflect on a miracle, the birth of Jesus Christ. The problem is that when Christmas is over, the strings of lights unplugged, the decorations stored in tightly sealed Rubbermaids, and the pine needles swept away, I think we also tend to unplug and neatly tuck away our ability to recognize the miraculous. I'm calling this ability our "miracle-ometer."

This past year, my miracle-ometer had to be pulled out and dusted off much sooner than usual. Though I didn't appreciate the disruption of

my normal routine, I had no choice. Without it, there was just no way to make sense of the things I was seeing with my own eyes.

For instance, I saw firsthand a complete stranger go out and buy an entire carload of household items from Costco for another complete stranger, because the first stranger read a two-line email that said the second stranger needed it. I saw a volunteer mom spend the entire night, 8 pm to 6 am, in a hard chair at the ER with the mother of the child for which she was caring. Another family opened their home to four year-old TRIPLETS, because they didn't want the children to have to be separated. The list goes on and on...

I realized that these people not only believe in the miracle of Jesus, but they are being used by Him to do the impossible, the inexplicable, right here in the western suburbs of Chicago two thousand years later. Maybe you can understand why I now hold onto the words of the following quote:

"Suffering is everywhere. Don't ever think it isn't. So are miracles. Don't ever think they aren't."

Thank you, volunteers, for teaching me to always keep my miracle-ometer in the ready position.

— Sarah Carroll, Hub Manager
Safe Families for Children

Joy Ryding at Christmastime

Children served by ECFA were blessed in abundance this year. The Joy Ryders, a local band, donated their time and talent hosting its 4th Annual Toy Drive and Concert at Ballydoyle's Irish Pub in Bloomingdale. Friends of the Joy Ryders donated over 150 toys and gifts, a very Merry Christmas indeed!

Many more donations poured in for the Intact Family Services program, as well as our Safe Families for Children, and Pregnancy Support Services programs. Additional toys and over \$1000.00 in cash and gift cards were donated by: The Unknown Few, Calvary Lutheran Church (Wood Dale), Lombard Gospel Chapel, Water's Edge Bible Church (West Chicago), the DuPage County State's Attorney's Office, Craig & Sue Myrup and family,



Sonnet Schultz and friends, and friends and family of Wendy Payne.

The generosity of many supporters of ECFA, greatly bless the families we serve, during the Christmas holidays and throughout the year. Thank you.

LEAP YEAR

As we begin the year 2012 we notice that February has 29 days - it is leap year. Actually, one extra day doesn't seem like a "leap" to me. But leap year has another meaning to us at ECFA; it is the year our accreditation expires. The actual date is March 31st.

Accreditation is very important to many public and private not-for-profit organizations such as ECFA. Accreditation bodies establish "best practice" standards. Being accredited is an important benchmark because it means that we meet multiple standards of excellence.

ECFA has been accredited by the Council on Accreditation for Children and Family Services (COA) since 1980. COA was established in 1977 and accredits over 1,500 human services agencies in the U.S., Canada, and in several other countries.

Every four years (every leap year) we go through a comprehensive re-accreditation process that encompasses all agency operations. In December, ECFA completed the final step in the re-accreditation process, the Site Visit.

Two Peer Reviewers from other states spent over three days at our New Berlin, Wisconsin and Wheaton, Illinois offices. They reviewed files, interviewed staff and clients, checked the facility, and reviewed policies, procedures and data.

The Site Visit concluded with an exit conference that was attended by approximately twenty board and staff members. At that meeting the two reviewers provided us with an overview of their findings.

The following are some of their positive comments:

- ⊕ Our clients appreciate the services we provide.
- ⊕ Our staff are very good at what they do.
- ⊕ The Board of Directors is a committed and involved group of people.

- ⊕ The facilities are welcoming and clean.
- ⊕ We are ethical in the manner we practice our craft.
- ⊕ We are good stewards of the financial resources entrusted to us.

The reviewers described several areas where we can improve:

- ⊕ The entire staff should have direct involvement in the way Performance and Quality Improvement (PQI) is measured and implemented.
- ⊕ Greater consistency and continuity is needed between our Wisconsin and Illinois districts.
- ⊕ We received several suggestions on how we might improve some of our services and how we can better document the services that we are already doing well. The COA says, "If it isn't documented, it didn't happen."

The positive feedback affirms what we already believe. The areas for improvement create opportunities to do even better, something we are striving to do all the time.

We are thankful that the positive areas greatly outnumber the areas where improvement is needed. The COA Peer Team Leader at the Exit Conference summed it all up when she said, "If I were looking for a job, I would want to work at ECFA."

As most readers know, we are smaller than we were just three months ago. But that has not diminished the quality of our services or the commitment to excellence of our Board and staff. "To God be the glory."

— David Lundberg, MSW/LSW
Director of Clinical Services

Staying Connected with ECFA!

For additional information about ECFA, please visit our website www.evancfa.org. There you will find details regarding our programs, events, and making financial contributions. On the front page you will find links to our blog, Facebook page, and to sign-up for email about ECFA's upcoming events, its needs, and stories of celebration.

Christmas Brunch and Baby Shower *Saturday, December 3, 2011*

We had a delightful time at the Annual Auxiliary Brunch & Baby Shower! Sixty-four women, men, and children were on hand to welcome this year's guests of honor, John & Valerie Hacker and their children. John provided the Christmas musical program, accompanied by pianist Glen Ramsborg. Valerie shared the story of the family's incredible adoption experience that brought two precious siblings from Ethiopia to become part of their family.



Our heart-felt thanks to Bob & Bev Stotz and family for hosting this annual event at the Schuamburg Marriott Hotel. Thank you to Gloria Sterkowitz for providing craft materials to make the annual souvenir Christmas ornament.

Lastly, our Pregnancy Support Services staff is thankful, on behalf of our clients, for all the beautiful items donated to our "Rattles 'N Things" closet.

Making a Difference ... Volunteers

Volunteers have contributed much to the success of ECFA and there are many ways, large and small, to be part of its continued success. Needs at the agency include the following:

- ⊕ Collecting donations in your community for Tag Days
- ⊕ Answering our overnight phone calls
- ⊕ Being our receptionist during the evening hours (5-8) or on Thursday during the day
- ⊕ Helping with mailings
- ⊕ Assisting with fund-raising events
- ⊕ Pregnancy Support Services can use donations of hooded bath towels, diapers (sizes NB, 1,2,3), baby powder, warm girl clothing and sleepers (size 0-9), wipes, and gift cards to Target, Walmart, and Jewel.

You can make a difference. Be part of our volunteer family by calling Jennie Tietjen for details. She can be reached at 630/653-6400 xt. 214 or email at mail@evanfca.org.



Safe Families ... making a difference

Safe Families for Children volunteers at ECFA can have a powerful impact in the lives of others while being transformed themselves by practicing biblical hospitality and extending the love of Christ to families in crisis.

Because this program is continuing to grow, we are in need of more *host families* to open their homes temporarily to children, *case coaches* to visit placed children and host families, and *family friends* to offer support to parents during difficult times. Training is provided to volunteers. If you would like to learn more, please contact Sarah Carroll at 630/653-6400 ext. 221.



Is it time to make your will? You need no longer delay this critical matter. Just call Teri at 630/653-6400 to request our workbook *Preparing a Christian Will*. It is designed to walk you through a step-by-step process of gathering all the information that is needed by your attorney to draft your personal document. There is no charge or obligation. Call today to request your free, easy-to-use workbook. You will be glad you did. For information on *Planned Giving and Estate Planning*, see our website: www.evanca.org/PlannedGiving/intro.htm.



Memorials and Tributes

ILLINOIS MEMORIALS

ILLINOIS TRIBUTES

Mrs. Maxine Bonneau

From: Mr. and Mrs. Edwin Buikema

Kathleen Burkman

From: Mrs. Devon G. Hollingsworth
Mr. and Mrs. Carl Burkman

Herman Cook

From: Mr. and Mrs. Ted Bandstra

Marion Egeland

From: Mr. James A. Staniels

Rev. and Mrs. Herbert Gottas

From: June White

Christene Hartz

From: Ms. Edith Williams

Mr. Mark King

From: Mr. and Mrs. William King

Mrs. Johanna Kortenhoven

From: Betty A. Beenes

Mr. Stanley Larson

From: Mrs. Lorraine Mickelson

Mr. Ted Nordsell

From: Mr. and Mrs. Wilbur Anderson

Mr. David Novaez

From: Mr. and Mrs. Roger Gouwens

Mrs. Veronica Ann Rettke

From: Kurt H. Rettke

Mr. John Schuman

From: Mrs. Donna Muehlfelt

Mr. Wade W. Smith

From: Mrs. Rosemary Smith

Mr. James Spann

From: Ms. Jacquelyn Anderson
Mrs. Joel Spann
Mr. and Mrs. Robert Stotz
Rev. and Mrs. David Tietjen

Nancy Staniels

From: Mr. James A. Staniels

Paul Westlund

From: Mr. and Mrs. Gary Tredup

Doris Wheeler

From: Mr. and Mrs. Robert Wren

Shirley Jackson

From: Dale Jackson for his deceased wife

Thomas and Mary Idichandy

From: Alex and Jenny Idichandy

Irene Christine Koehler

From: Mrs. Edith Williams for her deceased mother

Sonnet Schultz

From: Mr. and Mrs. Erwin Schulz

Jennie Tietjen

From: Mr. and Mrs. David McDonald

If you wish to remember a relative or friend with a Tribute or Memorial, just send this coupon to ECFA. A letter will be sent to the person you indicate and your gift will be listed in the next issue of True to Life.

My Name _____ Amount of Gift _____

My Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

Memorial or Tribute to _____ Occasion _____

Send Card and Letter To _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

PLEASE PRINT OR TYPE ALL INFORMATION Send with gift to: ECFA, 1530 N. Main Street, Wheaton, IL 60187