



# TRUE TO LIFE

A publication of Evangelical Child & Family Agency

## Love In Action 2022



Abby Johnson

We are thrilled to announce that we will be getting together for our next Love in Action Dinner. Two years ago because of the pandemic, the appearance of featured speaker Abby Johnson, at our 70th Anniversary Dinner, was postponed until this year. Abby's passion surrounding a woman's right to choose led her to become a spokesperson for Planned Parenthood. During her eight years with the organization, she rose in the ranks to become a clinic director and was involved in 22,000 abortions.

Desperate and confused, Abby sought help from a local pro-life group. She swore she would begin to advocate for life in the womb and expose abortion for what it truly is. Planned Parenthood knows that workers who leave are their greatest threat. They took immediate action to silence Abby with a gag order and brought her to court. However, the lawsuit was ultimately thrown out.

Abby is the author of the nationally best-selling book, *Unplanned*, which chronicles her experiences within Planned Parenthood and her dramatic exit. The book has become the movie, *Unplanned*. From the writers of *God's Not Dead* came a film that speaks to one of the most polarizing topics of our day. *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 in transitioning out of the business.

However, Abby became increasingly disturbed by what she witnessed. Her life changed on September 26, 2009 when she was asked to assist with an ultrasound-guided abortion. She watched in horror as a baby in its thirteenth week of development fought, and ultimately lost its life to an abortionist. At that moment, the full realization of what abortion is occurred to Abby and a dramatic transformation took place.

Friday, April 22  
Abbington Distinctive Banquets  
Glen Ellyn, IL 60137

## Sharon Irving

"I take a deep breath and step out on faith." Those words have been the motto for Chicago south side native Sharon Irving, songstress/songwriter/poet, voice-over artist, worship leader, and actress since she was a little girl, performing in front of the congregation at the south side church in Chicago where her grandfather was a pastor.

truth and inspiration, singing songs of life and love motivated by her personal experiences, and undergirded by her Christian beliefs. Sharon has been part of the worship team at Willow Creek Community Church in Barrington, Illinois for several years and has contributed songs and words of hope before thousands at liturgical and corporate events and youth conferences.



Sharon Irving

She is an inspiring "voice for the voiceless," a passionate wordsmith spewing

Story Continues on Page 4

# Heart for Life Fundraiser Coming Soon!!

*Saturday, February 12th 2022*

Make plans now to join us for the annual *Heart for Life* bowling fundraiser at Fox Bowl in Wheaton on Saturday, February 12, 2022. This is a fun-filled event for bowlers of all skill levels and ages. A great activity for families, small groups, and youth groups. We'll have a pizza buffet



with soft drinks before three games of bowling, along with prizes! Tickets are \$60 per person (\$20 dollars covers the

bowling and \$40 meets the minimum "donation"). Participants are encouraged to solicit "sponsors," and those with sponsorships of \$250 or more will receive a gift card of their choice as a "thank you." Register by January 21st to guarantee your event t-shirt!

For information on this event, and to buy tickets, keep an eye on the "Events" section of our website ([www.evanca.org](http://www.evanca.org)) or go directly to the event site to purchase your tickets at <https://HFL2022.givesmart.com>. If you have any questions regarding this event, please contact Tony Malandro or Hayes Anderson at 630-653-6400.

## Scenes from Christmas



# Toy Drive Tradition with a New Addition!

This year marked our 14th Annual Toy Drive! What started out as a group of friends getting together to celebrate Christmas by bringing toys to a dinner out, has turned into a huge online event with hundreds of friends and family of ECFA buying gifts for over 250 children!

This year we added a special new feature – the Jenna King Toy Drive. Jenna was a case manager and part of the ECFA family for many years. She passed away unexpectedly and left behind many people who loved her dearly. Jenna's parents, Julie and Phil, attend Lombard Bible Church. The church wanted to find a way to honor Jenna for her love of ECFA and the families she served. After much prayer and consideration, the Toy Drive came to mind!

Since Jenna loved wrapping and delivering gifts every Christmas, Lombard Bible Church decided to place 100 tags for presents on their Christmas tree that were all spoken for within a week. This clearly demonstrated how much her church family loved Jenna and loves her family. We are so grateful for this new tradition!

This year we collected over 1500 toys and gift cards. Even as new cases opened the week of Christmas, people stepped in to make sure all of our kids had presents. We are humbled by the kindness of everyone who took part in this event. We love delivering gifts and seeing the expressions of pure joy on the faces of the kiddos. It is a lot to manage but worth every minute.

We are thankful to all who gave so generously this year: friends and family of ECFA staff, moms from the Wheaton Mom's Facebook page, H4 Training in Wheaton, Electronic Transaction Consultants, Wheaton Town Square, Red Mango, the Kipfer family, Calvary Lutheran Church of Wood Dale, Ms. Atkinson's 4th grade class at St. Petronille's in Glen Ellyn, FTX Fitness in Wheaton, Orange Theory Bartlett, and Lombard Bible Church.

Our hearts are full of joy and gratitude witnessing how blessed our children and families have been during this holiday season. We are humbled by this outpouring of love and generosity. Thank you so much.

~ Wendy Payne, MSW, LSW  
Director of Professional Services



*Left to right: Julie Twohill, Faith Allman, Julie King, Barbara Ahlgrim, & Kathy Carwell Delivering and wrapping presents from Lombard Bible Church*



## Sharon Irving (cont'd.)

Sharon has also performed at the popular “CHIC”, (Covenant High in Christ), NFL Increase Conference, in small clubs and intimate settings all over the country, at Angola Prison in Angola, Louisiana, and even entertained millions while a participant on Season Ten of “America’s Got Talent”, where she received the coveted “Golden Buzzer” at her first televised audition, and was chosen by America to compete in the Semi-Finals.

Sharon poured her spirit into her debut album, *Bennett Ave.*, which premiered September 29, 2017. “I like to blend different art forms when I’m writing songs and, with this album, I’ve drawn inspiration from every genre. I have a passion for shaping words and everyday phrases to melody. *Bennett Ave.* is an expression of my thoughts on issues of justice, love and redemption in the darkest situations. It’s about what it means to be human when we’re at our lowest and highest points.”

### Love in Action Dinner

Our event would not be complete without hearing compelling stories from some of our ECFA clients. Dinner is complementary, but reservations are required. An offering will be received to help underwrite ECFA’s services. Seating is for tables of 10; table and other sponsorships are available. For information or promotional material please call:

Tony at 630-653-6400 ext. 7210 or email [tonym@evanefa.org](mailto:tonym@evanefa.org).

## TOUGH STARTS



*Illustration Only*

*Some kids experience tough starts in life and now need an adoptive home. They need a mom and a dad who will “go the distance” with them and not give up on them when they demonstrate challenging behavior. Praise God He never gives up on us! Can you be that permanent home for a child(ren) who is seeking to belong to someone?*

*If so, call Barb Hellmer, Supervisor, Adoption Services at 630-653-6400 x 7243 or email [barbh@evancfa.org](mailto:barbh@evancfa.org).*

# Volunteers

Supporting ECFA comes in many forms. Some bless us financially, but many others bless us with their time, which frees us up to concentrate on our regular job duties.



*Hard at work!!*

In one particular case, several children and their moms gave us the gift of organizing items donated to our Pregnancy Support Services

program. After a busy holiday season and an outpouring of donations, the closet was in need of attention. They did a wonderful job and now we can see what we have to distribute to clients in need.

In addition to closet organizing, we have occasional needs around the office for help with copying and collating, or cover our reception desk during the day or the early evening. Volunteers help out with our annual auction and anniversary dinners. This very newsletter is prepared for mailing by volunteers.

If you have time and would like to discuss what needs we currently



*Left to right: Evia Fuelling, Kalli Lewis, Anna Loreda, Henry Wehlisen and moms Breanne Fuelling and Lisa Lewis*

have, call Tony at 630-653-6400 or email [tonym@evanfca.org](mailto:tonym@evanfca.org).

## Generosity Abounds ECFA's Annual Auction 2021

Returning to an in-person format for the first time since 2019, on Friday, November 19 we welcomed 160 ECFA supporters to a beautiful auction setting at The Abbington in Glen Ellyn. The abundance of smiles signaled the joy of seeing old friends and making new acquaintances as participants enjoyed browsing the over 200 silent auction items, sipping on the traditional hot cinnamon cider with whipped cream, and partaking in a variety of delicious hors d'oeuvres.

The fun continued as Ken Withrow, ECFA's Executive Director, introduced our auctioneer, Jonathan Kraft, whose energy and humor kept everyone entertained as 25 "live items" were bid. Our generous winning bidders won items such as

a week's stay at the Marriott Ocean Pointe Resort in Palm Harbor, Florida, an electric snowblower, an electric motocross bike and of course Donna's Famous Cinnamon Rolls, our highest grossing item of the night!

The end of the evening was enhanced by our new mobile bidding platform which eliminated those long checkout lines and allowed winners to simply grab their items and head home. We were blessed to net approximately \$70,000 to support ECFA's ministry. Thank you to all who supported this event, and mark your calendars for next year's auction on **Friday, November 11, 2022!**



*Jonathan Kraft, auctioneer, was an excellent new addition to the event.*

# Intact Family Services at ECFA

ECFA provides Intact Family Services (IFS) to families who often face multiple crises in their lives. They may be struggling with mental health concerns, job loss, unstable housing, domestic violence, substance abuse, and other significant issues. Our intact family services case managers often put in long hours and at times become emotionally spent. However, they press on and continue to serve the parents and children on their caseloads.

At times our caseworkers face precarious and even potentially dangerous situations. ECFA remains committed to providing protective measures for our staff, while also staying focused on keeping children safe. Despite the challenges our case managers face, we also pause to reflect upon the successes of families



*Illustration Only*

in the Intact Family Services Program.

One of our families include both parents who have a history of heroin and cocaine abuse. Our IFS caseworker assisted them in engaging in treatment programs which they completed. We are pleased that they have remained sober for an extended period of time. Although maintaining sobriety will not be easy for this couple, we see a bright future for their family with supportive services in place.

One of our case managers has a teen mom on her caseload. "Julia" was just 18 when she became involved with DCFS. The protective services caseworker did not substantiate that there had been abuse or neglect in Julia's case. However, supportive services were offered to her through ECFA, which she gladly accepted.

Julia engaged in parent coaching that provides her with one-on-one parenting support on a weekly basis. She is being helped to understand appropriate disciplining, child development, nurturing techniques, and other parenting skills. Julia



*Illustration Only*

also is benefitting from individual counseling from a trained therapist. We believe that these services are assisting her in meaningful ways to become the best mom she can be for her three-year old child.

We continually pray for our two IFS supervisors and eight case managers and the families they serve. Currently, that is 82 families comprised of 138 adults and 207 children. We also would like to hire two additional case managers to serve our increasing caseload. We know that all our IFS staff are encouraged by the prayers of the friends and supporters of ECFA as well.

~ Wendy Payne, MSW, LSW  
Director of Professional Services

*The parents and children in our IFS Program often can use a little extra encouragement and tangible support from time to time. Donated gift cards to Walmart, Target, gas stations, and the like are always welcomed and are distributed judiciously to families with the greatest need.*

# Meet the Staff

Sarah Borowick joined the Adoption Program on August 23, 2021. During her undergraduate studies in social work at Aurora University, Sarah interned with ECFA's Safe Families Program and Intact Family Services. After her graduation in 2016, Sarah worked as a foster care case manager for two years at Children's Home and Aid in Chicago. In 2017, Sarah began her Master's Degree in Social Work at Aurora University and received her degree in 2019. Sarah aspires to receive her social work license and eventually take the LCSW exam.

Sarah and her husband, Josh, attend Crossroads Community Church in Carol Stream, Illinois. They have a fourteen month old son, Ethan, who inspires her passion for helping to grow families.



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## Save the Date for Golf!! Monday, June 6, 2022 Elgin Country Club

We have a date and a location. As winter turns to spring, we will have more details. Until then, mark your calendar, plan on joining us, and dream of warmer weather. See you on the links!



## IRA & 401K Giving

Are you wondering how to handle your IRA and 401k Required Minimum Distribution (RMD) this year? You may already know that the Protecting Americans from Tax Hikes Act, popularly known as the IRA charitable rollover, has been made permanent. This gives you the ability to make charitable gifts directly from your IRA or 401K 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.

If you are considering a gift to Evangelical Child and Family Agency or ECFA Foundation, Inc., you may want to take advantage of the IRA opportunity. If you are 70½ or older, you can instruct your plan administrator to make a direct transfer of all or a portion of your RMD. The annual RMD charitable distribution has a cap of \$100,000. When your gift is

transferred directly to the ECFA Foundation, you do not personally receive the funds, and therefore the distribution is not included in your taxable income. Your gift counts toward your minimum distribution requirement.

If you have questions about this charitable procedure please contact Tim Carrick at (630) 653-6400 so that we can answer your questions and provide instructions for completing your gift.

# Memorials and Tributes

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## In Loving Memory

**Evelyn Boonstra**

From: Charles and Deborah Slager

**Edna Brandt**

From: Suzy McLaughlin

**Bruce D. Cronin**

From: Janis Cronin

**Beverly Ebenroth**

From: Lawrence Ebenroth  
Hamrin Family

**Bonnie Jo Fisher**

From: Gregory Fisher

**Willa Mae Fletcher**

From: Pamela Fletcher

**Kurt Gattmann**

From: Jeff and Rhonda McCracken

**Rev. Herbert and Eleanor Gotaas**

From: June White

**Phyllis Gotaas**

From: June White

**Ed and Jean Griffiths**

From: Mary Moravec

**Shirley Gurney**

From: Lynn Peterson

**Maurice Hellmer**

From: Joel and Amy Carrera

Lois Eldridge

Barb Hellmer

Ruth Lloyd

Paulette Mannella

Bill and Marilyn Newell

Wendy Payne

Dave Pikel

**Eleanor Hill**

From: Mr. and Mrs. Edmund  
Covarrubias

**Joyce Drechsel Lane**

From: David Bolhuis

Roger DeYoung

James and Carol Strickland

**Alberta Larson**

From: Howard and Jane Torkelson

**Don and Gloria Lehman**

From: Byron and Ella Behrens

Don and Nancy Behrens

Roxana Behrens

Lee and David Fischer

John and Kate Gebo

Paula Moore

Doris A. Strom

Earl and Bettie Fields Automotive  
Group Foundation

**Donald Miller**

From: Judy Schulz

**Carole Noonan**

From: Suzy McLaughlin

**Jaclyn Peterson**

From: The McParland Family

**Ray Reneau**

From: Richard Reneau

**Elisabeth Ruth**

From: Janice Barthel

**David Edward Salstrom**

From: Mr. and Mrs. David W. Salstrom

**Jean Schultz**

From: Denise Hawkins

Nelson and Betty Vanderzee

**Byron Shores**

From: Teresa Shores

**Evelyn Boonstra**

From: Charles and Deborah Slager

**Wade W. Smith**

From: Rosemary Smith

**Jeff and Lori Teason**

From: Mr. and Mrs. John McParland

**Ralph Todd**

From: Mrs. Jessie Todd

**Doris Wheeler**

From: Bob and Linda Wren

**Don and Sylva Worsham**

From: Suzanne and Don Wratney

**Lee Wright**

From: Darlene Wright

## In Honor of

**Mr. and Mrs. Lane Hudson**

From: Gary D. Ashman

**Thomas and Mary Idichandy**

From: Alex Idichandy

**Larry Niepon**

From: Ms. Arlene Bowland

**Deborah Wollard Swift**

From: Robert and Verna Wollard

**David Wollard**

From: Robert and Verna Wollard

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