

Summer 2025



TRUE TO LIFE

A publication of the Evangelical Child and Family Agency

A Legacy of Love in Action: Celebrating 75 Years and Inspiring Hope



On Friday, May 2nd, the air was full of joy, connection, and a sense of shared purpose as ECFA marked its 75th anniversary with our Annual Love in Action dinner. It wasn't just an evening of looking back—it was a beautiful celebration of all that God has done through ECFA and a reminder of the incredible things still ahead.

ways—faithful supporters, dedicated staff and volunteers, and individuals whose lives have been forever changed by the work and love poured out through this ministry over the past 75 years. There was a genuine spirit of gratitude, unity, and hope—a shared belief in what love in action really looks like.

Held at the Abbington Distinctive Banquets, the night brought together a room full of people who have been part of the ECFA story in countless

One of the most powerful moments of the night was hearing personal stories from individuals whose lives have been transformed through

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2025 BENEFIT AUCTION

Mark Your Calendar!

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 14TH AT 5:30 PM

Please join us for a night of auction excitement!

\$40 per person

LET ALL THAT YOU DO BE DONE IN LOVE.

1 CORINTHIANS 16:14



Stride Together for Life

Saturday, September 20th | 9:00 to noon

Herrick Lake | East Pavilion

Enter off Butterfield Road | Wheaton, IL 60189

MAKE A DIFFERENCE!

Make a difference this year by registering for Stride Together for Life! This is a fantastic family friendly opportunity to enjoy the outdoors, learn more about ECFA, and walk around Herrick Lake to affirm life and support our Pregnancy Support Services (PSS) program.

HOW YOUR PARTICIPATION HELPS

By registering and donating to this event, you help us provide crucial emotional, educational, and tangible support to any woman and her family who needs help during pregnancy and until their baby is at least six months old.

Our PSS program also walks alongside moms and dads who choose adoption. Your attendance directly helps those who choose to affirm life through their pregnancy journey.



Come for the walk and stay for snacks, games, face painting, and fun balloon art. Family fun for everyone!

CALLING ALL CHURCH PARTNERS!

We'd love to see our life-affirming church partners join us to show support for the women and families we are serving. Please share this newsletter with your church and/or connect them with Dan Vallaro (danv@evancfa.org) to learn more. We also have registration discounts available for churches and youth groups.

IMPORTANT NEW LOCATION DETAILS

We've moved to the East Pavilion this year, offering more space and amenities. The only change you need to make is to enter Herrick Lake off Butterfield Road. Once you enter the parking lot, we'll be at the very end on the left side.

How to Register

Don't miss out! Scan the QR below, or go to our website, www.evancfa.org. You can also call us at 630-653-6400 and ask for Dan or Renee.



***INDIVIDUAL TICKETS: \$30
CHILDREN (9 AND UNDER): \$10
HOUSEHOLD MAXIMUM: \$90***

Beverly Ozinga 1953-2025



Bev Ozinga dedicated 43 years to ECFA, faithfully helping children find loving, permanent homes through adoption. She began her journey as an adoption caseworker. A few years into her career, she stepped into the role of Adoption Program Supervisor. In her later years at ECFA, Bev continued her ministry as a Post-Legal-Adoption Services worker, walking alongside birth parents and adoptees wanting to be reunited. She poured her heart into every search, which were often-times successful, and that brought her much joy

In 1993 Bev believed the Lord had laid on her heart to become an adoptive parent. Obedient to His calling, she opened her home and heart to two young sisters. In December of 1997, the adoption was finalized. Years later, she would become a proud and

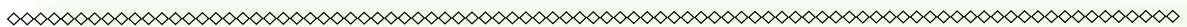
devoted grandmother to four grandchildren whom she adored.

Bev's life touched the hearts of many. At her memorial service on July 2nd, friends, family, and colleagues shared warm and beautiful reflections—each one echoing the deep love and admiration so many felt for her.

Over the years, Bev held many titles: daughter, sister, mother, grandmother, aunt, cousin, friend, board member, and co-worker. But the title she treasured most, and the one that endures, is "Child of the King." Of all her earthly roles, none brought her more joy than being "Mom" to her two girls. Her daughter Julia, speaking for both herself and her sister Amy, said it best:

"She was the best mom any kid could ever ask for."

Bev is already greatly missed. We are thankful however that we grieve with hope, knowing we will one day see Bev again.



IMMENSELY GRATEFUL



From all of us at ECFA, we want to extend our deepest gratitude to the *The Christ Foundation, The DuPage Foundation, and Tyndale House Publishers.*

Your partnership and incredibly generous contributions are absolutely instrumental to our *Life-Affirming Programs*. And to every one of our generous donors, thank

you for opening your hearts; your contributions enabled us to reach our *\$50,000 goal* with The Christ Foundation grant.

Because of your support, we can continue our vital work and bring positive, lasting change to so many lives. Thank you for believing in our mission.

75 Years of Adoption Over 3200 Infants & Children Placed

Praise God, that as believers in our Lord, Jesus Christ, we are adopted into His family and have the promise of eternal life! While we are still on this earth, ECFA has a challenge for you. Would you consider providing a “for-ever home” to one of His children in need? Over the last few years, several of the children shared their hearts on what adoption means to them.

***ADOPTION ISN'T SOMETHING YOU GO THROUGH AND FINISH;
IT'S A LIFELONG ADVENTURE!!***

Below are some photos and quotes from children whose adoption journeys we were blessed to be part of.



“ADOPTION MEANS I HAVE A FAMILY. REGARDLESS OF MY MISTAKES, I CAN TRY NEW THINGS AND TAKE RISKS IN LIFE, BECAUSE I KNOW THEY WILL BE THERE TO ENCOURAGE AND HELP ME.” GOD IS HELPING ME TO FORGIVE OTHERS.”



“I am adopted and have a forever family.”



We're waiting on our new sibling!!



"In my family, we spend time together."

"I feel loved and supported in my family."



"I went through many foster homes because no one would give me a chance. Now I have a family who cares for me."

Adoptive parents have shared their heartfelt reflections as well.

We praise God for the incredible gift that He has given us.



"Throughout this past year, time and time again, we have seen God remove obstacles and make a way for our daughter to be forever ours."

It was no coincidence that God would use my wife and I to fulfill His destiny for our daughter.

Since 1950 ECFA has had the privilege of placing, or assisting, in the placement of over 3200 infants/children through its domestic and international programs. ECFA has helped families adopt infants, children, and teens, from IL, WI, and many other states as well as from numerous countries including Bulgaria, China, Colombia, Ethiopia, Haiti, India, Hong Kong, Philippines, Vietnam, and various African countries, etc. If you believe God is calling you to adopt one of His precious children who need a permanent home, we would be happy to assist you in that journey.

Please call or email Barbara Hellmer at (630) 653-6400, ext. 7243 or via email at barbh@evancfa.org.

A Legacy of Love in Action (continued from front page)



Mark Schultz

ECFA. Their words were honest and heartfelt—stories of healing, restoration, and second chances. As they shared, you could feel the room leaning in. It was a moving reminder of why we do this work—because every child, every family, every life matters.

Adding to the magic of the evening was a very special guest—Mark Schultz, beloved Christian singer and songwriter. Through his music and stories, he brought laughter, tears, and so much encouragement. His songs spoke to the very heart of ECFA's mission, and many of us left feeling deeply inspired and spiritually refreshed.

The evening also had a meaningful goal: to raise \$100,000 to support ECFA's life-changing work. While we haven't quite hit that target yet, we are thrilled

to share that nearly \$77,000 has already been raised! That's an amazing show of generosity and faith in ECFA's mission. And we're not done—every gift moves us closer to that goal, and more importantly, closer to helping even more children and families experience the love and support they deserve.

From the bottom of our hearts, thank you for being part of this unforgettable evening and for standing with us as we continue to serve in love. Here's to the next 75 years of putting love into action—together.



TOPGOLF



"We were absolutely thrilled with the turnout and the incredible generosity shown at our Topgolf Fundraiser and Silent Auction," said Dan Vallaro, ECFA Director of Operations. "The support from over 100 registered participants, sponsors, and donors is truly inspiring and will directly impact our ability to continue providing essential life-affirming services to those in need."

The evening was filled with friendly competition, delicious food, and a vibrant atmosphere as attendees showcased their golf swings and mingled with fellow supporters. From seasoned golfers to first-timers, everyone enjoyed the engaging Topgolf experience, contributing to a truly memorable night.

A highlight of the evening was the silent auction. Bidders enthusiastically vied for everything from unique experiences to coveted gift baskets, further boosting the fund-raising efforts. An exciting game of Heads or Tails raised the excitement level even further with almost half of the attendees participating.

The funds raised from this event play a critical role in sustaining ECFA's programs. ECFA extends its deepest gratitude to all who attended, sponsored, donated, and volunteered to make this event such a success. We continue our mission with renewed energy and resources thanks to all of you.



NEW STAFF



Sarah Howell is one of two new staff members that joined ECFA on April 21st. Sarah studied Human Development and Family Sciences at Northern Illinois University, and completed her MSW at Aurora University. Sarah is an experienced therapist and has a heart for children in foster care. Her background makes her a wonderful addition to our Intact Family Services team.



Sherry Khalil is the other staff member that started on April 21st. Sherry's journey to ECFA began in her home country of Egypt where she earned her BS in mechanical engineering at The American University in Cairo. Her work and life experience brought her to World Relief where she assisted refugees. Sherry has learned that her passion in life is connecting with and helping others. ECFA is thrilled to have her join the Intact Family Services team where she will continue to assist people in improving the quality of their lives.

INTERNS

Nicole Bach began her internship with ECFA on May 5th and will be with the agency through December. She is a graduate student at Aurora University working toward her Masters in Social Work. As part of our Adoption Program, Nicole is learning the processes that are required to facilitate an adoption. In addition, she will be assisting in our Pregnancy Support Services program.



Rebekah Williams completed a summer undergraduate internship in our Intact Family Services program. She is a junior at Cedarville University studying social work. Rebekah has a heart for children and desires to work with children experiencing poverty. Her long-term goal is to possibly complete her Master's Degree, but has "open hands," and is open to whatever God has planned for her.



Eva Tweeten also completed a summer undergraduate internship. She is a student at Cedarville University. Eva is very familiar with ECFA as she has done volunteer work here at the agency. She joined our Pregnancy Support Services team where she was able to gain valuable client experience. Eva's long-term interests lay in counseling. She will be pursuing further education as a therapist, and hopes to utilize that training in under served rural communities.



ECFA is proud of our ability to welcome interns into our programs. It is our hope that our efforts in exposing them to how we integrate our faith values, with professional excellence in serving others, sets them up for success in their futures.

Memorials and Tributes

In Loving Memory

Janice Anderson

From: Gloria Dearing

Evelyn Boonstra

From: Charles and Deborah Slager

Jean Durand

From: Frank and Beverly Kvasnicka

Hank Huizenga

From: Mr. and Mrs. David Kramer

Evelyn Jannenga

From: Jeremy Wynn

Bob Maleski

From: Diane Maleski

Clayton and Elsie Moore

From: John and Tamara McParland

David E. Salstrom

From: David W. Salstrom

Geri Sorensen

From: David Sorensen

Jenny Tietjen

From: David Tietjen
Evangel Baptist Foundation

Henrietta VanDerMolen

From: Ginger Johnson and Jeff VanDerMolen

Beverly Ozinga

From: David and April Edwards

Marie Burger

Grant Carnett

Mark Gierczak

Doug & Linda Haney

Scott Harris

William Hoffman

Fran Iskra

Susan Johnson

National Christian Foundation

Michael Wilburn

Jay de Boer

Dan Bostrom, Providence Class of Wheaton

Bible Church

Erlene Willis

Stephen and Kathy Soneson

Barbara Hellmer

Janet Blomberg

Nancy Molenhouse

Richard and Wilma Molenhouse

Jim and Jan Ozinga

Marvin H. Lich

In Honor of

Virginia Kendrick and Jeanine Kendrick

From: Gregory and Linda Haney