

Winter 2025



TRUE TO LIFE

A publication of the Evangelical Child and Family Agency

*75 Years!! Come Celebrate on
May 2, 2025*

Celebrate 75 years of Love in Action with us at our anniversary dinner on Friday, May 2nd! Join us at Abbington Distinctive Banquets for an unforgettable evening featuring musical artist Mark Schultz leading worship, powerful testimonies, inspiring stories, and plenty of fun. We invite all who have been impacted by ECFA or support our life-affirming ministry to join us. This complimentary dinner requires reservations, and seating is limited, so register early!



Call Dan at 630-653-6400 or email danv@evancfa.org to make your reservation today.



Scan the QR code or visit our website at <https://www.evancfa.org/loveinaction> to register online.



*Double Your Impact in Our 75th Year
\$50,000 Matching Grant*

We're thrilled to announce a \$50,000 matching grant from The Christ Foundation! Every dollar you donate will be matched—up to \$50,000—until May 31, 2025. This means we have the incredible opportunity to raise \$100,000 for our Life Affirming ministry. Scan the QR code or visit our website at www.evancfa.org/donate. Donations by check should include "Matching Grant" in the memo. As of December 31, 2024 we have raised \$24,151.00. Help us reach our goal.



Matching Grant

INTACT FAMILY SERVICES

Intact Family Services provides vital support to children who have experienced abuse and/or neglect, and their parents. We strive to keep families together and ensure children grow up in safe and nurturing environments. Currently, ECFA is working with nearly 80 families, offering intensive home/community-based support.



For Illustration Only

“Lucy” and “Jack” were referred by DCFS to ECFA due to substance use by Lucy. Lucy often displayed

violent behaviors when she would drink which would put their young daughter, Molly, at risk of harm. Thankfully, “Molly” was never physically hurt, but we know the entire family has been impacted emotionally by Lucy’s drinking.

We are happy to share that Lucy has made incredible progress! She completed an in-patient treatment program, is actively engaged in long-term supportive services, and has maintained sobriety for 5 months. This has had a profound impact on her family. Lucy is more engaged as a mother, and her relationship with Jack is strengthening. Molly is thriving in day-care, where she’s happy, playful, and loves interacting with other children. The family is now enjoying precious moments together, such as trips to the park and spending time with loved ones.

Please join us in praying for Lucy and her family. Maintaining sobriety and healing as a family is an ongoing process.

VOLUNTEERS

WE HAVE SOME VOLUNTEER NEEDS!! IF ANY OF THESE OPPORTUNITIES ARE OF INTEREST TO YOU, PLEASE CONTACT DAN AT [DANV@EVANCFA.ORG](mailto:danv@evancfa.org) OR CALL 630-653-6400.

- ◆ **VOLUNTEER RECEPTIONIST - THIS IS OUR CURRENT GREATEST NEED!**

- Tuesdays and Thursdays from 4:45 pm to approximately 7:00/8:00 pm at the latest. Greet guests as they arrive for appointments
- Answer phones and greet guests during our regular office hours. Our greatest needs are Tuesday afternoons, or Thursday and Friday either morning or afternoon. We could also use someone who is willing to be “on call” to help out if one of our receptionists is not able to come in.

- ◆ **MAILING VOLUNTEERS**

- Approximately four to six times per year the agency sends out large mailings to those who support ECFA. This task normally requires eight to 12 volunteers and the more we have, the faster it goes. It takes us 2-1/2 to 3 hours to complete a mailing. Could we reach out to you? If so, call and give us your phone number and we will let you know when our next project needs to be mailed.



NEW EVENT!!

Support ECFA at our newest event: Pickleball!!

Support pregnant mothers and their families by joining us for our Inaugural Pickleball Heart for Life Fundraiser! On Saturday, February 8th, from 10am to 1pm, we'll be at Pickled! in Wheaton (just down the road from our office) where everyone will enjoy pickleball, games, prizes, and family fun. This event benefits our Pregnancy Support Services, which offer free services to those who are pregnant and need guidance and assistance. Tickets are \$25.00 per person. Register via the QR code or call (630) 653-6400.

PICKLEBALL!!

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 8, 2025
10AM - 1 PM
288 E. GENEVA RD. | WHEATON



www.evanca.org/pickleball

WHETHER YOU ARE AN EXPERIENCED PICKLEBALL PLAYER, OR TRYING IT FOR THE FIRST TIME, THERE WILL BE GAMES FOR ALL SKILL LEVELS.

!! OUR NEW CAR !!



WE ARE SO GRATEFUL TO GREGG KUNES OF KUNES AUTO GROUP. GREGG SECURED US AN EXCEPTIONAL DEAL ON THIS 2025 HYUNDAI SANTE FE. THIS WOULD NOT HAVE BEEN POSSIBLE WITHOUT THE GENEROSITY OF THOSE WHO SUPPORT ECFA.

Christmas Toys

Christmas is a season traditionally brimming with joy and cherished moments with loved ones as we commemorate the birth of our Savior. However, for many, this is a time filled with stress and anxiety. There are broken relationships; grief over the loss of a loved one; illnesses; and people struggling with mental illness, substance abuse, homelessness, and so many other crises. Yet, even amidst the darkness, glimmers of hope persist.

At ECFA, this hope comes in the form of our annual toy drive. During this 17th year of this event, hundreds of people opened their hearts and embraced the spirit of giving by buying gifts for kids they have never met. Over 265 children received gifts this year, and though many children asked for practical items such as socks, coats, boots, and even snack boxes, kids also received fun gifts such as dolls, remote control cars, Legos, art kits, playdoh, and soccer balls.

For the past month, our front door has been a joyous whirlwind of generosity, that transformed our conference rooms into wonderlands of over 1500 gifts waiting to be wrapped and delivered.

There is a saying that a picture is worth a thousand words. I hope you enjoy the pictures that are a testament to the kindness that unfolded. Thank you to those who gave so generously. All of us at ECFA are deeply grateful and the kiddos we serve were blessed immensely.

On behalf of everyone at ECFA, I extend a heartfelt thank you to each and every donor. Your generosity has brought immeasurable joy to the lives of these children.

302 South
H4 Training
Orange Theory ~ Bartlett
MSP - FTX CrossFit
MSP - Wheaton
G-Cat Contruction
Wheaton Warrenville South Choir
Nick Denning & Jolene Nork
Park View Elementary coordinated by
Sandy Mulay ~ Pajama Drive

180 Red Fit
Lombard Bible Church
Orange Theory ~ Roselle
MSP ~ Lisle
The Bradford Exchange
Compass Church ~ Wheaton
The Wheaton Moms Facebook Group
Friends & Family of ECFA
Katy Bach & Community ~ coordinated
winter coat & boot drive

Angel Tree at 180 Red Fit



Toy Drive 2024



Gift Delivery!



Organizing!!



Gift Wrapping!



Happy Children!!!



AUCTION 2024

What a night! Our benefit auction on Friday, November 8th was a tremendous success, thanks to the generosity of nearly 200 attendees and online bidders who helped us raise over \$58,000 after expenses. The good news doesn't stop there! Thanks to the incredible generosity of our paddle raising heroes, we're thrilled to announce we've acquired a brand new 2025 Hyundai Santa Fe! We're deeply grateful to Todd Scheel of Exciting

Events for his outstanding auctioneering as well as his connection to Gregg Kunes of Kunes Auto Group who helped us secure an exceptional deal. This new vehicle will be instrumental in allowing our dedicated staff to continue serving our clients safely and efficiently.

**YOUR GENEROSITY KEEPS
US GOING!!**



ECFA Foundation

The ECFA Foundation was established to provide long-term support to ECFA. This year the Foundation is providing support to our counseling program in order to provide affordable counseling to those facing economic challenges.

The Foundation is also providing support to our PSS and Adoption programs, our fundraising events, and

our marketing efforts. A true "Foundation" for ECFA as we serve our communities.

For information about how to direct a gift to the ECFA Foundation, please contact Dan Vallaro at 630/653-6400.

Adoption is Beautiful

Adoption was something I dreamed about since 3rd grade! I had a teacher who adopted a child, and I have a few cousins who are adopted as well. At such a young age, I saw adoption as beautiful and I could not imagine starting my family any other way.

When I met Andrew, he had the same vision for wanting to have a family through adoption. We started the adoption process in February of 2022, and we adopted our two sweet girls in March of 2023. At the time, Halo was 22 months, and Mya was 9 months. They brought us more joy than we could ever imagine.

Life is now crazy, and filled with sleepless nights, picking up toys, and potty training, but it is also filled with afternoons at parks, bike rides, trips to our favorite ice cream shop, and chasing around two silly girls that make our lives so much brighter. It is worth all the risks and the unknowns along the way because what's on the other side is truly beautiful. You just need to take the next step!

Stephanie, Andrew, Mya, & Halo

If you have questions about the adoption process, please call Barbara Hellmer at 630-653-6400 or email barbh@evanfca.org. We would love to talk to you.



Meet the Staff

Elianna Tuggy joined our Pregnancy Support Services team on January 2nd. A recent graduate of Wheaton College, she has a desire to serve others.

The daughter of missionaries, Elianna has lived abroad as her parents served in locations such as Cambodia and Uganda. She has worked for and volunteered at World Relief.

Our PSS program is excited to welcome Elianna, as her education and lived experiences will be an asset serving the women, children, and families in our community.

Memorials and Tributes

In Loving Memory

E. Karin Anderson

From: James D. Anderson

Kathleen Burkman

From: Devon and Carol Hollingsworth

Lyman Didrichsons

From: Gloria Dearing

Willa Mae Fletcher

From: Pamela Fletcher

Rev. Herbert Gotaas

From: June Gotaas White

Eleanor Gotaas

From: June Gotaas White

Phyllis Gotaas

From: June Gotaas White

Ed and Jean Griffiths

From: Mary Moravec

Mrs. Eleanor Hill

From: Mr. and Mrs. Edmund Covarrubias

Carol Huizenga

From: David and Beverly Kramer

Addie Jurs

From: Jerry Jurs

Jenna King

From: Robert and Meredith Capocci

Dr. Marianne H O'Donoghue

From: Thomas Nelson

Geri Sorensen

From: David Sorensen

Robert Stotz

From: Margaret Koenig

Joseph Trujillo

From: Esther Pikel

Doris Wheeler

From: Robert and Linda Wren

Don and Sylvia Worsham

From: Don and Suzanne Wratney

In Honor of

Edna Brandt, My Mother – (Gone too soon)

From: Suzy McLaughlin

Carole Noonan, My Sister – (Gone too soon)

From: Suzy McLaughlin

Michael Noonan, My Brother-in-Law – (Gone too soon)

From: Suzy McLaughlin