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**Sent:** Tuesday, September 11, 2012 1:03 AM  
**To:** scott@afamilyforeverychild.org  
**Subject:** AFPEC Matching Assistance Program September 2012

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## A Family For Every Child Matching Assistance



*"We should not be asking who this child belongs to,  
but who belongs to this child."*



### September 2012

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### Donate to AFPEC

Would you like to contribute to AFPEC's cause for helping children? Any amount can have a lasting impact on a child. Click below!



### Register for Matching Events

We have a few upcoming webinars that you may register for! Our next webinar is on September 13th, at 3 PM PDT. It will feature waiting families. You can register for the event [here](#).

### New Books Added to Our Booklist



## Matching Assistance Is Now **FREE!**

By changing our program to a free program, we hope to better fulfill our mission of finding loving, permanent families for waiting foster children.

Our program is designed to assist current approved home studied families looking to adopt waiting foster children. Our goal is to work alongside families, providing them with one-on-one communication, assurance, and support during the submission and waiting process.

We are here to assist families with learning how to best represent themselves in their family biography, and perform national child searches based on information provided in your home study and family biography.

#### How to sign up:

Signing up for Matching Assistance is easy! Click this link, [Sign up for MAP](#) and get started on your family profile and biography today! Request that your worker send in your home study, and request activation. You can follow the how-to guide to help you through the process. It is located under the Matching Assistance drop-down menu on the home page.

#### School Transitions:

When children enter elementary school or a new school for the first time, inevitable questions about their families are bound to follow. This can be very difficult for children who have been adopted from birth or foster care. Often, adopted children are teased by their peers, are told they are not wanted by their families, and that they must have done something wrong to make their parents want to give them up. A lot of blame is placed on the child, and they may feel unwanted.

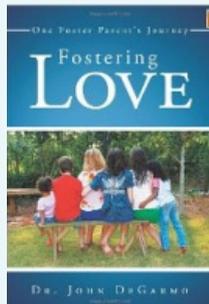
In turn, this affects their self-esteem and their performance and behavior in school. Talking with your child about tough questions that may arise and working with school administration is critical to make sure that your child has a smooth transition into school and to minimize any problems that may arise. At this age, children begin to think about what it means to be adopted, and may realize some of the stigmas that are attached to it. As a result, they may feel a sense of loss or abandonment and negative feelings about why they were adopted, including that they were "given up" because they were bad, not smart enough, they weren't wanted, etc.

This causes them to lose concentration in school, and inhibits their learning. To help your child through this transition into school, it is important to talk to your child's teacher. Let them know that your child is adopted, but you do not have to go into great detail.



### **Hootah's Baby by Joanne Green**

Introducing a very special book, written for very specific children. The children of court-ordered relinquishment. Hootah is a young mother owl whose life-style issue renders her an ineffective parent. Try as she might, she is unable to overcome those problems. Eventually, the great Parliament of Owls steps in to ensure the safety of the baby owl. But does it mean that Hootah does not love her baby? No. Hootah does love her baby, but unfortunately, love alone will not be enough to raise a baby owl. And so, a new, safe and loving home is found.



### **Fostering Love: One Foster Parent's Journey By Dr. John DeGarmo**

Through the sleepless nights with drug-addicted babies, the battles with angry teens, and the tears from such tremendous sadness, John DeGarmo learns that to follow God's call in his life means to take up His cross in his own home. Fostering Love: One Foster Parent's Journey is the true-life account of his experience as a foster parent, along with his wife and their own three children, as he followed God's call to take foster children into his home.

To view these titles and more, visit our [booklist page](#).

## **Volunteer Positions**

### **Matching Family/Child Search Specialist:**

Searches national sites and compiles a list of kids that fit the criteria of our families and produce a list for each family once a week. We provide a

This will allow for your child's teacher to keep an eye on your child and their behavior, and make sure that they are fitting in nicely, making friends, and have high self-esteem. Talking to your child's teacher about art projects like making a family tree is also important. During this activity questions will be raised about the child's past, and it could put them in an uncomfortable situation and invite questions that they may not want to answer. If you have pictures of your child's biological parents, encourage them to put the pictures on their tree if they would like.

Other activities may include describe your family, think about what you are going to look like in a few years, etc. Any activity that involves families may be hard for your child. Another common activity in classrooms for children at this age is to bring in a picture of themselves as babies. This can be difficult if you do not have any pictures of your child as a baby.

Again, talking to your child's teacher beforehand may ease any sense of uncomfortableness or negative feelings. Letting your child draw a picture of themselves or bring in a recent picture are two possible solutions. Talking with your child at an early age about adoption, talking with your child's teacher, and utilizing the school counselor or other professionals are all ways to make sure your child is well-equipped to do well in school and feel comfortable with their past.

Being open and honest with your child about their adoption is the best; keeping things from them will only make the truth harder later on. However, keep the information age appropriate. If your child asks you questions about their adoption or biological family, encourage them to ask and talk to them about it. The more open you are with your child about adoption, the more comfortable they will be, and they will have an easier time with it at school.

Practicing answering tough questions with your child is one of the best ways to help make your child's transition into school smooth. It is important to practice answering tough questions because it gives the child a chance to learn to establish boundaries about what they want to share and what they don't have to. This can be difficult for some children, especially those who have been abused, as they may feel like they are people's property and have to share everything about them.

In addition, it teaches the difference between privacy and secrecy. You should tell your child that they do not have to answer every question they are asked, and that adoption is their business only. Using humor can also be a good strategy to not answer a hard question and change the subject without creating a more uncomfortable situation. The following are some tough questions that your child may be asked and how they can answer them:

- "Why are you in foster care": your child can answer in a few ways, by saying that they need to live where it is safe for now; they can walk away; or say that they do not want to share personal information.

- "Why didn't your mom want you/do you know your real mom": your child can say that they don't want to talk about this; it is no one's business; or that they are wanted by their family and that is all that matters.

Answering honestly and simply is the best method. It does not lead to more questions, and it does not put your child in a very uncomfortable situation.

## **MAP Success Stories**

large list of sites to search and sample templates for the list and a how-to, plus whatever training you may need. This volunteer can live anywhere in any state, all work is done on the web/email. This is very rewarding as you are actually involved in the matching of families and kids, on your own time and days. Commitment of 5 hours a week for at least 6 months.

Interested? Contact:

[nora.sharp@afamilyforeverchild.org](mailto:nora.sharp@afamilyforeverchild.org)

## Waiting Family Profile



### Meet Janet and Dennis!

We are a fun, positive, down to earth, outgoing family with lots of love to give. We love the outdoors and spend a lot of our time living our dream on a 64 acre horse farm in Walworth, New York. The only thing missing is a child or children to share it with. We love our spending time with our animals.

For fun we like to ride horses, go camping, fishing, swimming and spending time with extended family and friends. They are so important to us. We also enjoy going to the movies, taking in a baseball or hockey game or just spending time together playing around and having fun. We have a very strong support system that includes our friends and extended family that are all very excited and supportive of us adopting a child.

Some of our friends and family have either been adopted or have adopted children of their own and are a great resource of support for us. Any child we are lucky enough to adopt will be greeted with unconditional love and open arms from all of our family and friends.

To learn more about Janet and Dennis, view their complete biography and [profile](#). Note: You will need a web browser other

We have had quite a few of our Matching Assistance families become matched with a foster child over the last month! Here are a few of their stories:

"In 1997 a speaker from the Mississippi Baptist Children's Village came to address our church congregation on orphan ministry opportunities in our community. My wife and I had no prior knowledge and had given little thought about opening our home to help other people's children. Our hearts were deeply touched by the stories the speaker recounted. Immediately after the service my wife and I began to consider becoming involved as an extended family to local children from the village.

The children at the village are not adoptable as the purpose of the ministry was to provide a safe Christian temporary environment for children whose parents for a variety of reasons (incarceration, drug treatment, financial) could not care for their own kids. What the ministry needed was families to qualify and be trained as 'extended families' providing weekend, holiday and summer foster care for the children so they did not have to live 24 x 7 on campus in cottages with many other children. This ministry also allowed children to get one on one adult time and hopefully allowed us to model what a functional, loving home looked like.

My wife and I were only able to have one son of our own.

We always desired to have a daughter but were never able to. With this ministry we were able to help a little girl and my wife was able to have a young lady in the home (even though temporarily) that she could invest in, love on and teach her about being a lady and sometimes just having fun doing girly things. My wife and I ministered to several girls and a few boys over the next 10-12 years working with the Mississippi Baptist Children's Village.

Once my son was grown and moved onto college, my wife and I were deciding what's next and began for the first time earnestly considering adopting a daughter of our own. We thought we knew something about adoption (only too quickly learn we knew little at all). We made all the usual early mistakes by thinking we could venture out on our own but made little headway. Working at the church I had missionary connections all over the world and began to make contacts and let people know that my wife and I were looking to open our home to a Latino girl.

We contacted various people in Central and South American countries and were learning about international adoption but were put off on the cost and time it took. We knew we were on the high side of the adoption age and didn't have time for a two or three year process. I am in my early 50's but lucky for me I have a wife who is 7 years younger than me. I think because of her age we were at least considered at times.

In the summer of 2011 we happened across a local couple that had connected with an adoption agency in a town close to ours. It was a non-profit organization that assisted families with fostering and adoption at no costs. No cost? Hey that sounded good to us. We at least owed it to ourselves to look into it. We made an appointment with the agency and the head lady said all the right things so we signed on excited about this new opportunity. Unfortunately we did not ask a lot of the right questions. The agency said it would be no problem for them to locate a Latino girl here in the states that needed adopting. They also said they could have a child in our home in about 12 weeks from the time we signed on.

So we began the cumbersome process of 'getting approved'. Most anyone reading our story would have that story also. We began in late October 2011 and in March 2012 we got the final process completed. We now knew a whole lot more about adoption but still were very naive about what challenges still lay ahead. Our agency gave us the green light to 'begin the search'. We clumsily logged through

than Firefox to view their biography.

## Waiting Agency Profile



### Meet Bill and Jessica!

We are Bill and Jessica- a laughing, loving, and creative couple living in Oregon.

We are ready to add to our family and we can't wait to help a group of siblings learn, develop, explore, and blossom under our guidance and with our unconditional love. We live in a beautiful small university town with many amenities for families.

Eugene has a 'Saturday Market' event every weekend that has live music, family activities, local artisans, and local farmers-it's like a free carnival every weekend. We are within walking distance to parks, playgrounds, basketball courts, and the river bike path (which goes all the way to the coast!). We live in a very safe neighborhood and we couldn't ask for better neighbors-it's a great community where everyone looks out for one another.

We are good friends with several neighboring families that have children spanning all ages (infants to 9-year-olds).

To learn more about Bill and Jessica, view their complete biography and [profile](#). Note: You will need a web browser other than Firefox to view their biography.

## Oregon Families: Interested in Taking Advantage of Our Scholarship?

We are currently setting up "Informational Adoption Meetings" in the following areas. Please let us know if you would like to attend.

Portland

various Internet websites teaching ourselves along the way about setting up accounts and filtering criteria that helped us narrow the search. Another important factor at this point was our decision to search for sisters. Instead of opening our home to a girl we decided to open our home to girls.

One thing we didn't realize was that using a non-profit organization had its advantages but they owned our home study, which meant they could be our only advocates during this endeavor. We also had no idea that there would be almost a competitive challenge to being matched with the right children. Sometimes a sister group in our desired age range would show up on line and be removed the same week after as many as 80 families submitted their home study. We wondered how are they going to ever match us (old people) when so many families are actively looking for the same siblings?

In the summer of 2012 we happened across the AFFEC website and like many others signed on. But this site was different. This was the first time we were able to include our home study and had some control on when and how our information was forwarded for possible matches. This site also allowed us to customize information and photos about our family and our desires to become a forever family for children needing healing, time and a lot of unconditional love. We found children on the AFFEC site that were not listed elsewhere. We also found the site contacts fast and helpful in sharing information and providing useful suggestions. We were very thankful for locating and using this helpful site.

Fast forward to August 2012. A new sister sibling group appeared online and like many before them my wife and I submitted our home study. About 10 days later we were contacted by our agency worker asking us to review the details on these girls and see if we still wanted to be considered as a match. Like many children they had come from a traumatic background of unfortunate abuse and neglect. But our hearts immediately were drawn to them as we knew that what these precious children needed more than anything was honest love, time to heal, a safe environment where they could flourish and achieve their dreams and goals in life.

My wife and I understood more than ever that adoption was never about filling a void in our lives but about filling the void in a child's life. Giving children a permanent home. These girls had been in many foster homes and a few disrupted placements. My wife and I prayed hard about this decision and made the commitment to open our home to them if they would accept us as a match. We committed that even if the girls didn't heal we would make our commitment a forever commitment. Yes, we expect that in time they will get better. Yes, we will support their continued counseling. Yes, we want them to heal. But we need to be their family no matter how difficult the future may be.

We offered our commitment. We went through another few weeks of questions and discussions about specific plans and situations. And then it happened. The phone call that changes many lives. We got "the" call. We had been selected as a match for these precious girls. Are you kidding me? Us? Out of all the people that put in for these children they want us? Thank you, thank you, thank you Jesus! How awesome that God would entrust us with their care, safety and future.

Then it keeps getting better. We were told we could call them on the phone. No way I can begin to tell you about the first time we heard their voice. Then it keeps getting better. Then they told us to go to their state and meet them. Wow! Last week we spent the week with *our* daughters. Unbelievable. Sadly we had to leave at the end of the week without them. But we call them most every night. We are told that within the next 30 days they should be in our

Salem  
Eugene  
Bend  
Roseburg

If you are interested in adoption and would like more information, please email or call--

Linzy

[Linzy@afamilyforeverychild.org](mailto:Linzy@afamilyforeverychild.org)

541-343-2856

or

Christy

[Christy@afamilyforeverychild.org](mailto:Christy@afamilyforeverychild.org)

541-343-2856

### Questions?

Feel free to call at 541-343-2856 or email:

[info@afamilyforeverychild.org](mailto:info@afamilyforeverychild.org)

home...permanently. Let the spoiling begin. We are going to love the hurt right out of these girls." -A MAP Family

"We greatly appreciate the support we have received from AFFEC over the past year during our journey. Your staff has been a tremendous support, especially when our state required us to switch to a private agency." -Jocelyne and Michael

"I clicked on his picture on June 6th. The next day we were headed down to Dayton. I called her up she said that she would look at our home study but many people were looking at him. A week and a half later she called and said we should meet him when we came up. We met him the next week at a park in Dayton, without him knowing who we were. We liked him and we told her so when we got home. She called back and arranged a time in July when we could come down and meet with him on his area.

The day before we left we had a call from her and she said his foster mom was really burn out and could we take him home with us. He was to visit with us later that month for two weeks. We did end up taking him home with us and he has not left since."

-Sharon and Leslie

## Agencies: Partner with Our Matching Assistance Program

We work with many adoption and state agencies throughout the United States and are now offering an exciting opportunity to partner with A Family For Every Child to further benefit your families. Over time we have developed valuable relationships with many of you; working together to assist families and therefore have found homes for children. All we are asking is your willingness to let your families know about our Matching Assistance Program and partner with us to better serve families in a time of large workloads for all. Let's work together and change the life of a child by building a family.

This program will offer your families support that compliments what you are already doing. As a team we can work to match them sooner and perhaps support them through the process. We all know this is a big job and often requires a team.

How our team will benefit you as the family's worker:

1) Your family will be able to create their own family biography page that will be viewed by children's workers. This page reflects their personality and current status, training and experience which is often hard to write on paper in a home study and certainly hard to update as much as families would like to. Families can update daily if they desire.

2) Families will be able to submit their interest and family biography for themselves based on your recommendations and guidance. Even though you will not be required to do these daily submissions, we will cc you on all of them. We will also track these submissions and inquiries and be able to provide you with monthly reports if requested, this should also free up some time.

3) Your family will feel empowered to be their own advocate and hopefully more engaged during this difficult "searching/waiting" part of the adoption process. We all know how hard this can be on families.

4) You as their worker will be able to log on and review your

family's profile and submission account at any time.

5) Your family will always have up to date adoption materials, online training information and new photo listings for their continued education, meaning you will not need to hunt for this information for them. When they register, they receive a list of over 50 photo listing sites and a "loaded" welcome packet with adoption information for their review.

6) And best of all your family will be matching faster!

If you would like to talk to us further about partnering we are very interesting in exploring these options with you, contact Nora Sharp, Matching Assistance Coordinator or Christy Obie-Barrett, Executive Director.



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