

From: Christy Obie Barrett [christy@afamilyforeverychild.ccsend.com] on behalf of Christy Obie Barrett [cbobie@aol.com]
Sent: Monday, October 29, 2012 2:02 AM
To: scott.corcoran@afamilyforeverychild.org
Subject: AFFEC Adoption Agency October 2012



A Family For Every Child Adoption Agency

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October 2012

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AFFEC Adoption Agency 2012

A Family For Every Child's adoption agency has grown by leaps and bounds. We currently have over 40 families in the process of completing a Foster Care adoption. This last year has brought huge growth for our agency, and a new focus.

With the addition of several new adoption workers, we are making it part of our mission to reach out to all communities in Oregon, this includes diverse communities and single or

By Bob Welch
Register Guard Columnist



When growing up, Chase noticed that his life was different from the lives of his friends.

"They got to have all these good relationships with their parents," he told me last week. "I never had that with my 'bios.' I had a mom who couldn't take care of me and I never had a dad. I never had a grandmother who liked me."

So, why, in our phone interview, is the 15-year-old Federal Way, Wash., boy going on about astrophysics and anti-matter and why I'd be a fool to read only the first book in the "Hunger Game" series?

"The second is better and the third even better," he says. "And all the books are better than the movie."

Why? Because Chase is no longer a "throwaway kid," the kid with Asperger who nobody wanted.

He's an upbeat, knowledge-thirsty kid with hope.

Thanks, largely, to the Eugene-based A Family for Every Child adoption agency, he not only has found a foster home that's working for him but is scheduled for permanent adoption by a Maryland couple before year's end.

"They already love me," he says. "That's the great part. They're willing to tackle my problems with me."

A Family for Every Child concentrates on finding permanent homes for the most difficult-to-place children - those with

communities and single or non-traditional parents.

We believe all families have much to offer waiting children and we are interested in facilitating adoptions for any one that feels foster care is a wonderful way to grow their family.

Scholarship Opportunity!

We have a special offer for our Oregon families who are interested in adopting a sibling group!

Has the cost of the home study kept you from pursuing your dream of expanding your family? Let me take a moment to share something very exciting with you, we recently are able to offer to underwrite the cost of the first forty families interested in adopting sibling groups. What better time to start your adoption journey, with the possibility to have part or all of your home study fees paid for!

It is our mission to find forever families for those children considered hardest to place and with this offer we are able to do this for more children.

1) Family must pay the application fee of \$500.00 & Travel fee's.

2) Family will have an orientation with an adoption worker.

3) Family must be interested in a sibling group.

Family will be offered the ability to search both instate and out of state for a sibling group match.

We will only be offering this free home study for the next two months or when a limited number is met.

If you feel like you may match this criteria, you don't want to miss out on this opportunity. For more information you may contact our office. Now is the time as children are waiting for a "Forever Family."

Please contact linzy@familyforeverchild.org

special needs, those who are part of an ethnic minority or those at risk of "aging out" - the middle-teen kids who, if they don't wind up finding permanent homes, will most likely wind up on the streets at 18.

"Chase is one of those kids," says Linzy Munger, the associate director of the six-year-old organization. "He'd have three years before he'd probably become one of those statistics."

But the matchmaking agency found him the foster home while they worked on shifting him to a permanent solution back East. Such success stories will be celebrated Nov. 1 when the Eugene nonprofit group puts on its third annual "Home for the Holidays Gala: A Winter Wonderland Evening" at Valley River Inn. The silent and oral auctions begin at 5:30 p.m. with dinner and wine to follow.

Though the organization began by serving only Lane County children, it soon saw the need to expand across the Northwest and now matches kids to families nationwide: 700 adoptions and counting.

"We began to build contacts with waiting families nationwide and saw the barriers they faced in trying to adopt from foster care," Munger says. "It's our belief that there are more than enough families for every child waiting in foster care, but there is simply too much red tape, bureaucracy and resistance to collaboration between states working together to make this happen. So we recognized and built a system that helped families and children nationwide to be matched."

Conventional thinking suggests that uprooting a child from one state to another would be disruptive.

"The reality is that it is far more important for children to have the right match in a family than to remain in the same state," Munger says. "A child who lives in foster care moves an average of three times a year and they lose everything. It doesn't matter where they move from Eugene to Cottage Grove or whether they move from Eugene to New York. The important thing is they find the right family."

Which looks like may be the case for Chase. (The agency doesn't allow use of last names.)

"These kids all need a chance," says Kathy Bigelow, 55, who is Chase's foster mother in Federal Way. "Most are coming out of group homes or hospital situations. We want them to feel like they can be part of a family that doesn't beat them or abuse them."

She admits that she'll miss Chase when he's permanently placed.

"He has the most awesome sense of humor," she says. "You can be down in the dumps and he'll come up with that big old smile and his braces and you're all better. He reminds me of that kid in TV's 'The Big Bang Theory.' Sheldon. Smart. Quirky. Funny." Twenty years ago, options for children such as Chase were limited. Not now.

"We live in a world where the Internet makes everyone (be) in your backyard," Munger says.

The organization still believes children without permanent homes are part of a social epidemic.

"We believe foster care is a community crisis and needs to be a community solution," Munger says. "However, the community is not just in our own backyard anymore."

And so it is that children like Chase may find their permanent families 2,000 miles away.

"You feel like there's been something missing in your life," Chase says about life without a permanent family. "But what I want is

linzy@afamilyforeverychild.org
or
christy@familyforeverychild.org
or call 541-343-2856 to get more information or to set up an orientation meetings. We look forward to hearing from you.

Oregon Families

Are you are interested in taking advantage of our scholarship, but would like more information?

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

Portland
Salem
Eugene
Bend
Roseburg

If you are interested in adoption and would like more information, please call 541-343-2856 or email linzy@afamilyforeverychild.org or christy@familyforeverychild.org

News From Our Central Office

We just got word this month that Foundations Classes DO NOT EXPIRE.

If it has been a while since you have taken your classes and were wondering if you would have to re-do them to complete your adoption process, you do not.

November is National Adoption Month

Every November thousands of community organizations plan events, share information, and challenge the myths of foster care adoption to draw attention to the 104,000 children and youth living in foster care who wait for permanent families.

Things Getting Better in Foster Care? Not So Fast

Headlines recently proclaimed that the number

people who share my interests. People there for me. A shoulder to cry on."

A Family for Every Child understands. But it's come to realize that the important thing isn't where that shoulder is.

Only that, for kids with no shortage of heartbreak, that shoulder is available.

LAST CHANCE! You Are Invited!

A Family For Every Child

A Home for the Holidays

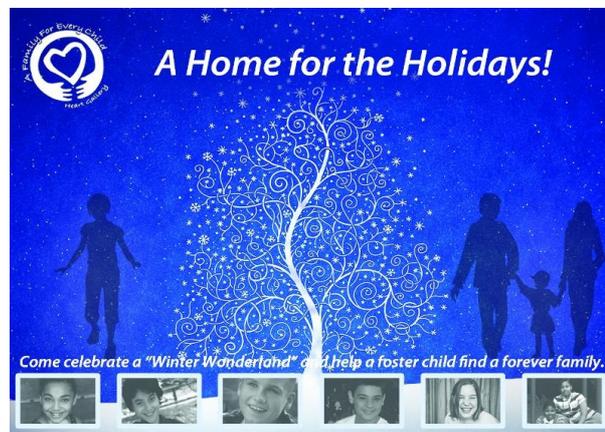
Come celebrate a "Winter Wonderland" and help a foster child find a forever family

November 1st, 2012

5:30pm to 9:30pm

Tickets are \$75.00

[REGISTER NOW](#)



Tax Credit for Adoptive Families Will Lower at End of Year



LAYTON - Time is running out for families who adopt children to receive tax credits.

For 2010 to 2011 tax filings, families across the country can claim a \$13,360 refundable tax credit for adopting a child, under the new Affordable Health Care law. This is money that would come in the form of a check to augment a family's income to care for adopted kids. For 2012 taxes, the credit drops to \$12,650. By Dec. 31, families will only be eligible to claim \$6,000 to help cover adoption expenses.

The cut has many Utahns concerned, especially those who have benefited from adoption and been aided by the tax credits in the past. Among them is Happie Larson. She has a soft spot in her heart for kids in foster care because as a teenager, she too was in foster care.

of American children in foster care has dropped for the sixth straight year, falling to about 400,000 compared to more than 520,000 a decade ago. Unfortunately, this much-repeated headline significantly understates the size of today's foster care population. The number in the news was a single day's count. Looking at the entire year, 646,000 children spent time in foster care.

Yes, there was still a decline in the foster care population: nearly 20 percent since 2002. But 646,000 is still too many kids. Way too many.

Since the recession began, our advocates have been concerned that, as in past recessions, the number of children coming into care would initially decrease, but for the wrong reasons -- a less capable child protection system would screen out all but the worst cases. Later, after financial stresses took their toll on families, the numbers would increase as kids who initially had been screened out start to show up with more serious problems.

The newly released figures raise some concern that this could happen. Last year was the first year in which entries into foster care exceeded exits since 2006 -- the year before the recession started.

Talk with older youth, and you'll hear that foster care often doesn't work well for them. So it would have been particularly satisfying to learn that a larger percentage of foster youth are being reunited with their parents. But no such luck. The data show that the proportion of foster children reunited with their parents has barely changed since 2006, declining from 53 percent to 52 percent. And what age group had the most youth in care? Seventeen-year-olds. In fact, 28,432 youth ages 16 to 21 entered the system in 2011. What will happen to them?

They are too often surrendered to the world after age 18 unprepared to live without a permanent, legal family connection. The

"This is not about building roads, this is not about a city park," Larson said. "This is about a child finding a home; that's being threatened and that's just not OK."

Larson and her husband Rich have adopted 15 kids, many of whom have special needs. In total, the couple has 19 children who range in age from 3 to 39.

"There are hundreds of children in foster care that don't have families," said Larson. "Those children are going to continue to remain in foster care if a family does not feel they can financially support the child."

As far as taxes go for families adopting kids, Larson said foster care kids are considered "special needs."

"These are people that are not looking for typical 'healthy,' 'normal' children," Larson said. "These are people that are willing to take children that are abused, neglected, and are delinquent. That is important."

Therefore, the change in tax credits for adopted families, especially those in foster care, would affect many middle-income families who could really use the tax break to buy necessities for the kids.

"That's going to buy you the bed. It's going to buy you the clothing. It's going to set the child up," Larson said. "It's going to open up your heart and your home because you know you can afford to have this child in your home."

And Larson feels many of these foster kids should remain with their siblings, which the drop in tax credits affects.

"Many of the children available for adoption are sibling groups, so you're taking on two, sometimes three children into your home," Larson said. "And the adoption tax credit is just a small incentive to offset some of those expenses."

Since 2011 taxes credits drop to just over \$12,000 dollars in non-refundable taxes, that means the credit goes towards any tax liability a family owes. Larson said it helps, but it wouldn't benefit people like her.

"I have no tax liability because of the amount of children that I have, so I would never have a situation where I would have to have a tax to be off-set," Larson said.

While there is bi-partisan support across the country to re-instate the plan, Utah lawmakers haven't signed on to co-sponsor the bills. Instead Utah is working to promote kinship adoptions, which would place foster kids with close relatives. Larson says will hurt kids in foster care.

"What happens when a child doesn't have a grandparent or an aunt or an uncle or can't move out-of-state with a distant family member? That child is here in Utah, and we're limiting that child so it can't be adopted," Larson said.

Larson said many families were adopting foster kids before the Affordable Health Care Act adoption tax credits, so they're not in it for the money.

"Adopting a child and giving them a permanent home now keeps them out of prison. It keeps them from becoming homeless. It keeps them from becoming drug addicted," Larson said. "So the money we spend now to get children into a permanent home saves us in the long run."

The House (HB 184) and Senate (SB 82) bills have been in committee since January 2011 and some Utahns like Larson are not confident any progress will be made to handle the adoption tax credit before Congress resumes.

numbers speak loudly here. Fewer than two percent of foster youth over 17 were adopted in 2011, while 26,286 youth had to leave foster care because they were too old to stay. This trend, too, hasn't improved. Eleven percent of youth aged out in 2011, up from 9 percent in 2006.

Don't let the headlines lull you into believing foster care has entered some bright new age. Now more than ever, foster youth need advocates willing to tell the truth about what is happening. Because what is happening is that too many kids are living for too long without a permanent family and a fair start in the world.

Your local Representatives:

Sen. Jeffery A. Merkley (D)
District: OS2
United States Senate
313 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510
Phone: (202) 224-3753
Fax: (202) 228-3997
Website: <http://merkley.senate.gov/>
E-Mail: <http://merkley.senate.gov/contact/>
Salem District Office
495 State Street, Suite 300
Salem, OR 97301
(503) 362-8102

Sen. Ron Wyden (D)
District: OS1
United States Senate
221 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510-3703
Phone: (202) 224-5244
Fax: (202) 228-2717
Website: <http://wyden.senate.gov>
E-Mail: <http://wyden.senate.gov/contact/>
Salem District Office
707 13th St., SE Suite 285
Salem, OR, 97301
tel (503) 589-4555
Federal Representative

Rep. Kurt Schrader (D)
District: 005
U.S. House of Representatives
314 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515
Phone: (202) 225-5711
Fax: (202) 225-5699
Website: <http://schrader.house.gov/>
E-Mail: <http://schrader.house.gov/email-form1/>
Salem District Office
494 State Street, Suite 210
Salem, OR 97301
Phone: (503) 588-9100
Fax: (503) 588-5517

It Takes a Village and We Need You!

We want and need your help to spread the word! Here are ways you can help us recruit for kids:

- Email us any supports, training's, activities, blogs, anything that could help. Contact: Christy@afamilyforeverychild.org
 - Become a [volunteer](#)
 - Donate, attend, or become a sponsor at our [event](#)
 - Host a Heart Gallery. joanne@afamilyforeverychild.org
 - Become a mentor. christina.parra@afamilyforeverychild.org
- Questions? Ideas? Christy@afamilyforeverychild.org

How Can You Contact A Family For Every Child?

Call, email, or visit us online or in person!

info@afamilyforeverychild.org

1675 West 11th.
Eugene Oregon 97402



office - 541-343-2856
toll free - 877-343-2856
fax - 541-343-2866



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