

TRUE^{TO}LIFE

An Evangelical Child and Family Agency Publication



ECFA and Covid19

In Psalm 94:19, the writer tells us, "When anxiety was great within me, your consolation brought me joy." (NIV) These last weeks have changed life in our world. Previously unknown terms are now common: COVID-19, social distancing, PPE's (personal protective equipment). Previously unthinkable trials have become a frightening reality: Unemployment growing near "great depression" levels, massive investment losses, the virus growing quickly in many metropolitan areas, and mortalities greatly exceeding those of the September 11, 2001, attacks. Uncertainty, anxiety, disruption, and loss have become an unwelcomed experience.

Yet, there is much encouragement. Technology allows online "togetherness" in a myriad of ways for churches, families, and employees. Acts of compassion are abounding on both the personal (buying groceries for neighbors, checking on the elderly) and corporate level (re-tooling to meet medical needs, donating resources). Equally valid, ECFA's ministry efforts are continuing in the face of this challenge.

In the Adoption program, staff continue to have contact with couples through phone calls, video conferences, and emails. The international, partner agencies have informed ECFA that they are postponing visits until restrictions are lifted. The social workers look forward to being in the clients' homes soon. The Pregnancy Support Services program (PSS) staff are also keeping in touch through phone calls and video conferences. This is a glimpse of how social distancing with clients looks like at ECFA.

"Stacy and Todd" (not their real names), came to ECFA pregnant and due in April. As COVID19 progressed and the restrictions began to be put in place, they became very anxious about their upcoming delivery. They expressed to their worker, Rachel, the need for more of the "little baby items," but they were afraid to get out, and their funds were limited. Early this year, they secured a pack n' play and car seat.

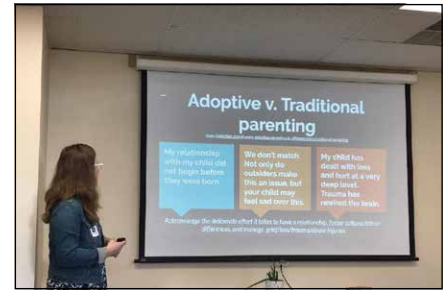
Rachel put together an ECFA "care package", which is usually given to clients in the hospital at the birth of their baby. This package was much larger than usual. It included a large diaper bag, shampoo, lotion, socks, sleepers, fitted sheets for the baby's pack n' play, a children's bible storybook, blankets, towels, bottles, pacifiers, teethingers, washcloths, diapers, wipes, some formula, and gift cards for them to get anything else they may need. It filled three large gift bags.

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2nd ECFA Adoption Training

On Saturday, March 7th, ECFA staff held their second Adoption Training from a Christian Perspective workshop. The day was an opportunity to improve and adapt the topics from the first one, held in October 2019. In all, seventeen people presented, attended, or took part in the training. The areas covered in the six-hour session were: Adoptive Parenting, Grief, Attachment and Conflict-Resolution, a Brokenness and Healing Craft, a Child Development Game, along with an Adoption Panel Discussion. The day was filled with learning, reflection, laughter, good food, and occasional tears. It was a good day.



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Rachel texted them and took the items to their doorstep. Soon, she received a skype call from Stacy and Todd expressing their gratitude for giving them so many needed items for their baby. They were so overwhelmed by the help from Rachel and ECFA that they cried.

Rachel spends nearly two hours every other week with Stacy and Todd via video conferencing, training them utilizing a "nurturing parenting curriculum." During a recent visit, they again expressed their anxiety in giving birth during COVID19. Rachel prayed with them. She also assured them that doctors and hospitals have protocols in place during this time to keep their patients safe.

Recently, Rachel received a call from Todd that Stacy was in labor. The next day, Todd and Stacy skyped with Rachel and showed her their new baby boy. They thanked Rachel again for all the items she gave them to help care for their son.

Though serving ECFA clients in Adoption and PSS might look different, the needs remain the same. Therefore, the generous hearts of the staff - their desire to be "the hands and feet of Jesus," remains the same. In these challenging times, the appreciation of your prayerful and generous support remains the same.



36th Anniversary Celebration Banquet

It comes as no surprise that ECFA's major gathering and fund-raising event, the 36th Anniversary Celebration, that was to be held on Friday, May 15, 2020, is being postponed.

The event has been rescheduled for Saturday, May 1, 2021, at 9 am at the Marriott West in Waukesha. A new and exciting aspect of this gathering will be a delicious brunch in place of a dinner. The program will include the music of Point of Grace, along with hearing Agency updates and wonderful testimonies from clients. More information will follow in the coming months.

Since the agency cannot meet its donors in person this spring, it was decided to hold a "virtual banquet." Generous donors have supplied a matching (dollar for dollar) grant of more than \$18,000. The prayer is to receive enough funds to maximize this opportunity. As enough support is received, the impact on families and clients is assured. In a recent letter to ECFA donors, it was asked if a timely gift to the agency would be possible. Would you consider giving a gift to ECFA as well? If personal circumstances make giving difficult now, we understand. Prayer on behalf of ECFA would be appreciated now more than ever before. As one pastor recently wrote, "The value of portfolios is falling, the value of prayer is rising."



ECFA's website now includes the following: During this unprecedented time of dealing with COVID-19, ECFA continues to offer our services to clients and families. We are still available 24/7 by phone (262) 789-1881 and email info@ecfawisc.org.

If this is a time in your life when you need prayer, the staff would count it a privilege and joy to pray for you. Please feel free to use the enclosed envelope or communicate online at www.ecfawisc.org/contact.

The staff and clients are blessed beyond words with your kindness and encouragement. "When we look back at this moment in history, would we be filled with joy as we remember the revival, hope, and peace that came out of this season. Continue to draw this hurting world back to you." (from A Prayer for God to be Glorified)



Like

us on



ECFA has two pages on the social media networking site.

Evangelical Child & Family Agency of Wisconsin
and **Pregnancy Support Services of Wisconsin.**

News is posted from the office. We are also trying to "drive more people" to our pages. "Like" and "Share" them with friends and family who would like to hear about ECFA's pro-life efforts.

Hidden Treasure

In the ECFA office, there was a “hidden treasure,” the Adoption and Pregnancy Support Services’ (PSS) files. These documents represent people’s lives - the couples who came to the agency to grow their families through adoption, and the moms and dads who made the choice to place their child for adoption. In cabinets, filled with files, were their stories. They are vital, private, and priceless.

On May 15, 2019, the agency received a memo from the Wisconsin Department of Children and Families that stated, “all child-placing agencies must maintain their records in a safe place protected from fire damage, theft, and unauthorized scrutiny... the records must be in fireproof cabinets or containers and must be locked and not accessible to unauthorized personnel.”



For 36 years, ECFA staff have kept these files private, orderly, and safe (under lock and key) in five-drawer cabinets in the basement, conference room. The new, state directive required keeping them in fireproof cabinets. The difficulties that this created for ECFA were clear. To purchase four-drawer, fireproof cabinets would be very expensive and consume much more space than the agency had available.

A detailed plan was put in place. Beginning in the summer, ECFA staff and volunteers meticulously went through the files from beginning to end four times, using different methods. The files were opened, checked, and rechecked against the Adoption and PSS database with names added and notes clarified. The entire process was repeated and finalized in February of 2020.

After this careful plan was executed, the files were placed into 84 banker’s boxes. On March 4, 2020, a representative from the File Center, a record storage facility located in Frankfort, Illinois, loaded the boxes into their truck and took them away. The files are now in a safe, secure, and fireproof facility. It was a good feeling to have completed such a huge project. If a file is needed, a request is initiated, and the documents are received the next business day.

These precious files and records represent the journey of many loving moms, dads, and ECFA’s faithfulness. Though this “hidden treasure” is not close at hand, it is never far away, especially from the hearts of those who served these dear ones.



amazon smile

On March 6, 2020, ECFA received its first check from AmazonSmile \$14.39, for the last quarter in 2019. These amounts will continue to add up. What a great start for the agency!

If you are an Amazon.com customer, you may choose **“Evangelical Child & Family Agency”** as your favorite charity on AmazonSmile. AmazonSmile will donate 1/2% of your purchase to ECFA of Wisconsin.

Make sure your browser is:

<https://smile.amazon.com/>

ECFA's COA Accreditation

ECFA has been accredited by the Council on Accreditation (COA) since 1980. Every four years, documents need to be uploaded into the COA website and placed in binders for review. Our most recent site visit occurred December 8 -11, 2019. Team leader, David Cook, from Parsons Child and Family Center in Okemos, Michigan, and peer reviewer, Teresa Hayner, from Good Shepherd Children and Family Services in St. Louis, Missouri, were assigned as ECFA's reviewers. The time was well spent with these professionals as they poured over files, met with board members, interviewed staff, and spoke with clients.



David and Teresa said that though there are minor things ECFA could improve upon, overall, they were quite impressed. Listed are a few things they observed:

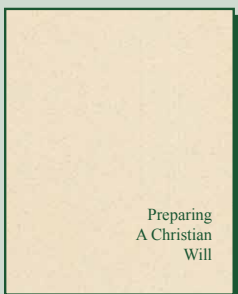
- There is a very good, working relationship between the Board and Executive Director, Ken Withrow
- The personnel files were consistent, and every file had an up-to date performance evaluation
- The Performance Quality & Improvement (PQI) plan is one of the best they have ever seen
- It was clear that clients were aware of their "Rights and Responsibilities"
- They were impressed at how often supervisors meet individually with staff members
- They sensed a genuine feeling of care and concern for the well-being of staff
- The case files were the best-kept records Teresa had ever seen.
- They found that the scope of services for the size of our staff was impressive.

From these comments, it is evident how hard the ECFA staff works and how important it is to them to offer quality services to clients. The observations of the reviewers came as no surprise. God has directed amazing staff to Illinois and Wisconsin.



At the end of February, we received our Final Accreditation Report (FAR) from COA as well as our beautiful plaque showing we are accredited through March 31, 2024. The FAR is a valuable document that contains observations and recommendations from our Peer Reviewers, as well as noted organizational strengths and areas for opportunities!

We value being accredited by COA because we know, as COA said to us in our letter, "it is a process by which we are able to consistently strive for and achieve new levels of excellence."



Is it Time to Make Your Will?

You need no longer delay this critical matter.

Call 262-789-1881 to request our workbook "Preparing a Christian Will." It will guide you through the process to gathering the information that is needed by your attorney to draft your personal document.

There is no charge or obligation.

BACK HOME AGAIN!

On May 26, 2018, a massive fire broke out in our ECFA office building in Wheaton. The building was engulfed in flames and severely damaged by fire, smoke, and water. Approximately 15 fire trucks and emergency vehicles from at least five municipalities arrived on the scene to help the Wheaton Fire Department extinguish the blaze.



Fire inspectors later determined that the fire was caused by an electrical failure in the wiring above the ceiling of the children's playroom. Fortunately, no one was in the building at the time of the fire.

The interior of the building was completely gutted before the work of restoration could begin. For more than twenty-one months, our staff was relocated to temporary facilities. Over the course of our displacement, we made several new friends who came to our aid.



We owe special thanks to Glenn Kosirog who provided us with office space in his building in downtown Wheaton, along with Rich Vogt and Bob Cook from Resource Communication, Inc., who assisted us with space in their company's building on Main Street in Lisle. Nathan Hancock from Hancock International also provided us with much-needed storage space in his company's building in Carol Stream, and Lombard Gospel Chapel allowed us to hold monthly staff meetings in their church building for over a year and a half.

On March 2nd, our entire Illinois staff was able to once again meet together at our newly restored building at 1530 N. Main Street in Wheaton. We are most grateful for the Lord's provision for all this time and so glad to be back home! After we are settled and can furnish and decorate our building, we will plan an open house for our friends and supporters to visit us at our restored facilities.



I.R.A. and 401K Giving Opportunity

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 I.R.A. 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 ECFA Foundation, Inc., you may want to take advantage of this IRA opportunity. If you are 70 1/2 or older, you can instruct your plan administrator to make a direct transfer of all or a part of your annual 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 towards your minimum distribution requirement.

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

ECFA Foundation, Inc. was established in 1995. Its mission is promoting and supporting the interest and purposes of the Evangelical Child & Family Agency as it offers compassionate, Christ-centered services to children, families, and individuals



WITH A GRATEFUL HEART

There is a continual outpouring of blessings received by this ministry.
As a result, there are many individuals to be grateful for in each quarterly newsletter.
"I will give thanks to the Lord with all my heart; I will tell of the wonders." Psalm 9:1

- ♥ Thank you to all the dedicated volunteers who assembled a mailing for the agency on January 30th:

Sally Boya
Barb Chernouski
Jeanne David
Char Duranceau
Ruth Engelhardt
Sharon Fuller
Pamela Grande
Genelle Missurelli
Nancy Roets

Jane Runnels
Micki Schmitz
Dave Tietjen
Ginny Wagner
Margo Whitcomb
Carol Yule
Judy Zwitter
Anonymous friends
of ECFA

Serving at Our Office:

- ♥ The installation of a new "Reverse Osmosis" water filtration system in the office, by Dave & Pam Poglitsch
- ♥ Seven gently used monitors for Staff – a 2nd monitor for each workstation by Ascendnet-Ed Magaw, owner, Kira and Steve
- ♥ Helping staff during the ECFA "File Project"- Carol Yule, Jerry & Judy LeVan, Annette Cernohous, Tina Wienss, Dave Tietjen

Pregnancy Support Services/Baby Blessings Boutique:

- ♥ Diaper bags from Aaron & Karen
- ♥ Car booster seat from Ron & Jan Baer
- ♥ Diaper bag backpack, pants, blankets and cases of diapers from 2 anonymous donors
- ♥ Girls leggings from Dr. Labunski
- ♥ Baby layettes from Holy Apostles Anglican Church
- ♥ Baby leggings/pants from Jennie Tietjen
- ♥ Diapers, wipes, bottle, formula dispenser, bibs, pants, & book from Lori Cottrill
- ♥ Child safety lock, child pillow, & tag quilt from an anonymous donor
- ♥ Two infant gown/sacks from Nancy Farrell
- ♥ Five childrens books from Tina Wienss

Miscellaneous Gifts:

- ♥ Becca Schwartz and her new designs for ECFA Newsletter – Consistent "Branding" with brochures and newsletter
- ♥ 5 Washable Protective Masks donated for social workers to use with clients-No Better Friend Corp – Nonprofit in Waukesha

Memorials

In loving memory of: Louis "Louie" Linsmeyer
From: Louie's mother, Mary Dixon; Maria Agena; Linda Lieburn; Anonymous loved one



In loving memory of: Nona Schlamann
From: Dave & Jennie Tietjen



In loving memory of:
My dear wife, Janet Schley
From: Jerry Schley

Tributes

In honor of: My friend, Nancy Farrell - birthday
From: Carol Honeyager



WISCONSIN
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Choose Life

CHOOSE LIFE license plates help support pro-life centers in the state of Wisconsin.
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Evangelical Child
& Family Agency
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New Berlin, WI 53151

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MARK YOUR CALENDAR

34th Bike & Hike Fundraiser, Supporting Moms, Dads, & Babies
Saturday, September 12 at 9 am, on the Fox River Trail at
Bethesda Park Shelter in Waukesha

ECFA's
**Bike
& HIKE!**
Supporting Moms, Dads & Babies



3rd Annual ECFA Benefit Auction, on November 20th,
Sheraton 375 S Moreland Rd, Brookfield

37th Anniversary Celebration, Saturday, May 1, 2021 Doors open-8:30 am, Brunch-9 am
with Point of Grace, Client Testimonies and more!
Marriott Milwaukee West, W231N1600 Corporate Court., Waukesha

For information about these events, contact Sue at the office 262.789.1881 or suec@ecfawisc.org