

HELLO ADOPTION AMBASSADORS!

The Value of Ambassadors

As the snow falls and accumulates on the sidewalks waiting to be swept in many directions, so do children waiting in foster care await their fate. Some snow is thrown into the street and other is saved to make snow men, snow forts or even spectacular sculptures. The children in foster care waiting to be adopted can be spectacular sculptures. It takes caring people such as ourselves and many more like us. Those of us who have adopted and are foster parents have our hands full, but we must remain aware of the **542,000** children in foster care in the United States and the **118,000** plus who are waiting to be adopted. As spring arrives and the rising temperatures melt the snow, time runs out for the snow creations we have made. Time is running out for many of these children also. They will soon turn 18 and leave the system without the guidance of parents.

Many of you have Ambassador Kits with table tents, fliers, faith-based tools, outreach tools and more. Let's get this information out to the public. Let them see it. Give our neighbors, friends, relatives, church family, and folks in your local community a chance to be informed. Then it is up to them. If you need any materials please let me know and I will get them to you. The snow will soon melt. Let's not let the dreams of waiting children melt away with it.

- **20,000 of the 542,000 children in foster care nationwide are discharged to live on their own each year**
- **12-30 percent struggle with homelessness**
- **40-63 percent did not complete high school**
- **25-55 percent were unemployed**
- **30-62 percent had trouble accessing health care**
- **50 percent experienced extreme financial hardship**
- **31-42 percent were arrested**
- **18-26 percent were incarcerated**
- **40-60 percent of the young women were pregnant within 12-18 months of leaving care**

According to a National Adoption Attitudes survey

WINTER IS A TIME TO PLAY

Family, fishing and fun ... what else could a person want on a cold Minnesota weekend? REACH/PATH held an ice fishing contest at Lake Washington near Mankato MN February 02, 2008 to raise awareness about the need for adoptive parents for children in foster care. The weather was great, we had a lot of fun and we made the 6 o'clock news! The *Explore Minnesota* magazine took pictures and talked to some of the anglers. I set my old camper up as the registration and booth area. We gave out over \$1,000 worth of donated prizes and door prizes. The \$100 prize for the biggest fish went to a foster child! The event ended with a chili feed donated by Rich Draheim, the owner of Westwood Marina. A fishing contest is just something I thought of, and I went with it. It did not cost anything and it served its purpose. It made people who were not aware about the foster care/adoption community ask questions.

If you have ideas for something you'd like to do in your area, give me a call or send me an email. We can probably make it work. I am willing to come to your area and help you out any way I can. Let's do it!



FEATURED AMBASSADOR

Our featured ambassador this month is Jenn Knopp from Wildrose, North Dakota. Jenn is married to Greg Knopp, pastor and farmer in the Wildrose area. They have two adopted children, Josiah, age 7, who has spina bifida and Isaac, age 3 born with schizencephaly. Both of their boys were adopted through North Dakota's AASK program. Jenn bases her calling to be an ambassador of adoption on Proverbs 31:8-9, which says "Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves - for the rights of all who are destitute, speak up and judge fairly, defend the rights of the poor and needy." Jenn has always had a soft spot in her heart for special needs people, but did not know she was being prepared to adopt special needs kids until she and Greg watched the movie "Simon Birch," a story about a special needs boy and his real worth. Jenn felt God was calling them to provide a home for children who would be considered "the least of these." A few short months after receiving that calling, Josiah came to be a part of their lives. He and brother, Isaac, have brought so much joy to the Knopps. They continue to provide respite foster care for children in northwest North Dakota. Jenn is available to speak at group meetings for women, children and church and school groups. Her goal is to simply get the message out about the waiting children of the world who need their forever families. Thank you Jenn and Greg and welcome to the REACH team.

COMING EVENTS AND TRAININGS

You are cordially invited to participate in REACH Chat Sessions on the third Thursday evening of each month from 7-9 PM CST. The facilitator is Mary McGowan and the topics are all adoption-related. To register, contact Mary Shea Kodluboy at 612.259.1602 or mkodluboy@pathinc.org

Generations' FASD Social Skills Group Spring, 2008
Collaborative Problem Solving: Parents of challenging kids...this is for you!

March	3	2008	Creating Sexual Safety for Adopted and Foster Children and Their Families	Rick L Gertsema
March	4,	2008	Traumatized Children/Parenting	Deena McMahon
April	1,	2008	Attachment Issues	Krista Nelson
April	15,	2008	Sensory/Occupational Therapy	Naomi Siegal
April	29,	2008	Transracial Adoption	Robert/Lenora O'Connor
May	5,	2008	ADHD	Dr. Michael Reiff

If you are interested in any of these trainings contact me (866 number below) or florentz@pathinc.org and I will get you more information about them.



**For more information on adopting a child from foster care
call 1-866-79-REACH or log on to www.adoptinfo.org**

