



**HELP
ONE CHILD**

Dividends

Mission to Children at Risk

June 2005

Issue 52

1-888-KID-HOPE

www.HelpOneChild.org

Sobrato Foundation Bestows Grant

Drumroll, please! In March 2005, Help One Child became the recipient of a Sobrato Foundation Challenge Grant of \$10,000. Sheri Sobrato and Sobrato Foundation Director Diane Ford visited Help One Child in January 2005. The grant was awarded to provide general operating support and must be matched by new or increased donations. Sheri Sobrato and her sister Lisa Sobrato Sonsini also said they would increase the matching grant amount if the original amount can be matched. Help One Child was also invited to participate at a May 21 Vine & Dine fundraiser at Sheri's house organized by Rex Dwyer. We're extremely grateful for the grants. You can help us reach our matching goals!!

One Family's Journey

When Mary Beth Orr became the first employee of Help One Child (then called Childshare) in 1993, she had no idea that her job would add to her family life. While working to match foster families and volunteers, Mary Beth says God confirmed her calling to become a foster parent.



While working to match foster families and volunteers, Mary Beth says God confirmed her calling to become a foster parent.

"God had put a little idea in my head that I could do this," she says, adding that working at Help One Child was just the "stepping stone" and confirmation she needed.

So in August 1997, she became certified with a private foster family agency and opened her home to her first foster daughter. Almost eight years later, Mary Beth's friends and family celebrated the adoptions of 15-year-old Jessikah Elizabeth Orr and 10-year-old Sara Rose Adelina Orr this Mother's Day.

"God called me to this," Mary Beth explains. "I couldn't do it without God."

Having access to resources and support has also been crucial to her family's success.

"Help One Child made me aware of more resources," she says.

As for her daughters, life just wouldn't be the same without them.

"They've taught me more than I've probably taught them," Mary Beth says.

"They've brought me more joy."

Jessikah is an avid singer, performing with a singing group and singing in competitions and Sara enjoys beading, gardening and bugs.

We Came, We Saw, We Held Orientations

Help One Child works every spring and fall to strengthen church partnerships and recruit more good homes and volunteers to join our network. This spring was no exception.

After a stint in January 2005 in South County, Help One Child headed slightly north to South San Jose. In February, volunteers and staff presented the ministry at Cambrian Park Seventh-Day Adventist Church, The Journey, Church of the Chimes, Cornerstone Community Church, Transfiguration, St Julie Billiart and Holy Family parishes, culminating in an orientation at Holy Family. Help One Child tackled the task of making San Mateo County churches aware of the needs in foster care in March holding an orientation at Central Peninsula Church in Foster City. In Sunnyvale and Cupertino, Trinity Church, Sunnyvale Nazarene Church and Peninsula Bible Church also invited Help One Child to speak at their services in May, before an offsite orientation in Cupertino. If you know your church is having a ministry fair or would be interested in having a speaker from Help One Child, contact Beth Walker at bwalker@helponechild.org.

Help One Child seeks new board members with skills in accounting, legal support and fundraising. Board members serve a term of 2 years, are volunteers and expect to spend 6 hours per month typically.

The Journey Church Touches Families with Gift Baskets

When four-month-old baby Lila snuggles into her sleeper she doesn't know that strangers brought her new clothes. But her foster mom Sandi Orlando appreciates it.

"When she came home from the hospital she owned an undershirt, receiving blankets, a few diapers and formula," Sandi says.

Nancy Yeager, who attends The Journey, heard about Help One Child from members of her church and decided she wanted to organize a project to help foster families for her church's Community Impact Day in March. Her group asked for the names of four families who could use new clothes for newly arrived foster children.

"When we contacted the moms and asked what the needs were, they just had needs, hardly any wants," Nancy says.

Would Your Church Like A Project?

For the second year members from San Jose Church of the Chimes lent their labor to fix up foster families' homes and yards.

On April 30, six volunteers arrived at foster parent Leann Connell's house to clear her backyard. Leann left to do errands not expecting the job to be finished before the end of the day. When she returned in a few hours she found a transformed backyard and her helpers gone.

"I was in shock!" Leann says. "They took a huge yard covered in weeds, tree debris and foxtails and cleared it completely. For the past five years I have paid a guy \$300 to do annual clean up and he didn't do half the job these angels did!"

Leann says that her 10-year-old foster daughter Sonya now enjoys playing in the backyard and Leann looks forward to barbecuing and admiring her roses.

"These folks were truly sent to me by God," she says. "The man who has done the clean-up in the past retired, and with my illness and treatments I never would have been able to do this."



In addition to the clothes, Nancy's group went beyond their allotted budget by digging into their own pockets to provide games, toys, snacks and treats for the other siblings in each home.

Foster parent Laurie Kruczynski says that the gifts meant a lot to her 13-year-old foster son Eric. The act made Eric realize that "strangers care for me," she says.

Delivering the gift baskets and meeting the families established a greater connection, Nancy says.

"It was so fun," she says. "We got way more out of it than they did."

Besides the beautifully arranged baskets, Sandi says she was very touched that the volunteers took an interest in her foster daughter, Lila, who had been born three months prematurely.

"It's wonderful that people of faith can reach out," Sandi says. "We may not be the same denomination, but our hearts for the baby are the same. Throughout her life, she's going to have people praying for her."

Attachment/Adoption Support Group Looks at:

Fetal Alcohol Syndrome

Help One Child co-founder and adoptive parent JoAnne Morris and therapist Linda Ikeda decided that adoptive parents may need to take a closer look at the effects on their children of in utero drugs, especially alcohol. With all the training on therapeutic parenting, brain development and attachment issues, parents in the support group were still having difficulty. So Linda decided to focus the April and June support group meetings on what part Fetal Alcohol Syndrome could be playing in their children's development and behavior.

"I had a lot of questions," Linda says. "When parents are really diligent with therapeutic parenting techniques, why is it not having an effect? Fetal Alcohol Syndrome can be the missing piece."

JoAnne adds, "So many children who have been adopted internationally and through foster care have been exposed to alcohol in utero."

Alcohol is a teratogen, which is toxic to a baby's developing brain at any time during the pregnancy and can cause lifelong disabilities. Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (FAS) can manifest itself in facial characteristics and problems with short-term memory.

Memory problems and forgetfulness can often be interpreted by parents and teachers as willful defiance, which can lead to the child's frustration and avoidance of homework, JoAnne says.

She adds that it is helpful to understand the problem so a parent can communicate it to a teacher in order to ar-

range a specialized school program that works for the child. "It is tough because you can't expect and don't want teachers to treat your child differently," she says.

While there is no treatment for the disorder, the symptoms can be treated through sensory motor integration, special education and neurofeedback, Linda says.

Learning more about the syndrome has brought both relief and concern to the parents. This is brain damage with long-term effects.

As with the plethora of issues our children are dealing with there is the ultimate hope that Christ will make "all things work together for the good of those who love Him." (Romans 8:28) Therefore it behooves the adoptive parent to put special focus on sharing the love that Christ has for each of us and the need to form our identity by following Him.

Parents divided specific topics about FAS amongst the group and will present what they researched at the June 16 meeting. Parents are encouraged to attend the June 16 meeting.

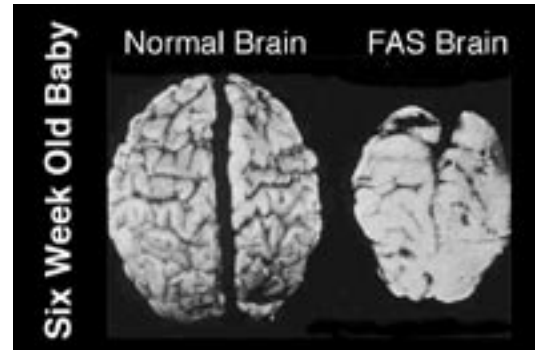


Photo courtesy
of Sterling
Clarren MD

Siblings Reunite in the McGee Home

One day last fall Dorothy McGee got an unexpected phone call from a social worker. She had already adopted her five children so social workers no longer visited her home. Fifteen-year-old Shanice, 14-year-old Desiree, and 11-year-old DeShawn were one sibling set. Seven-year-old Roger and 6-year-old Linda came from another biological family.

The social worker informed the McGees that two siblings of Shanice, Desiree and DeShawn were in a foster home in Merced County that didn't want to do long-term care. Social services wanted to know if the McGees were interested.

"My kids were ecstatic," says Dorothy, adding that they had known younger siblings existed, but had no way of locating them.

The McGees were told that the 8-year-old girl and 6-year-old boy would spend Thanksgiving with them and possibly be in their home by Christmas 2004. Those holidays passed without any word.

In February, the family was still waiting.

"If it's still open, we'd love to have them," Dorothy had said. "We're just waiting for them."

Then during the first week of May, the social worker brought 6-year-old Isaiah to the McGee's home.

"It's just like he was always here," says Dorothy, adding that she plans to adopt him as soon as possible.

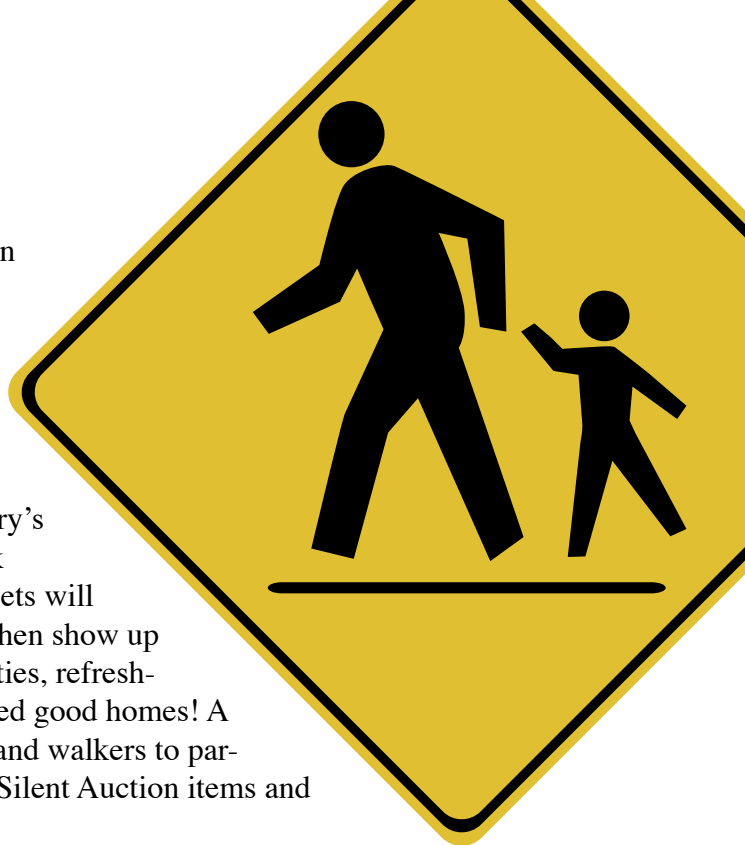
Now with their little brother in the home and his sister hopefully on her way soon, the McGees are almost ready to make their family complete.

"I think for the kids it's not going to seem real until they're all together," Dorothy says. She adds that it has been hard on her children to wait for their 8-year-old sister Keisha, who is not in their home yet. But the family rejoices for the miracle of reuniting with Isaiah.

Dorothy sums up the experience as "God is just blessing us. But they say He does when you take in His kids."

Walk, Run or Volunteer for October Walk-A-Thon

Help One Child's annual Walk-A-Thon fundraiser is coming up on Oct. 1. But it's not too early to get a jump on getting your friends involved! To make our Walk-A-Thon a spectacular success we need your participation! Invite your small group, neighbors, friends and church members to join you in touching the lives of foster children and the families who embrace them. It's simple! Through word-of-mouth communication, share about the ministry and the chance to benefit young lives through our ministry's only annual fundraiser. Organize a group of people who will walk together and collect your sponsorships before Oct. 1. Sponsor sheets will be available on the website at www.helponechild.org by July 1. Then show up Sat., Oct. 1 for a lively morning of exercise, entertainment, activities, refreshments, a raffle and Silent Auction—all to benefit children who need good homes! A free T-shirt will be given to the person who organizes volunteers and walkers to participate from their church. New this year will be a way to bid for Silent Auction items and raffle tickets online, as well as in person at the event.



Run the San Francisco Marathon or Half Marathon

Run the San Francisco Marathon or Half Marathon for Help One Child on July 31st with Director Mark Morris. Call or see website for details.

Prayer Partners Needed!

Our kids and families have prayer needs. If you can pray and would like to receive specific prayer requests on a weekly basis, please e-mail Judy at jholmes@helponechild.org to join our prayer list!!

Upcoming events

Orientations & CPR / 1st Aid

	<u>Orientations</u>		<u>CPR & First Aid</u>
	7 PM Wednesday	9 AM Saturday	8:30 AM Saturday
June	22	25	25
July	20	23	23
Aug	17	20	20
Sep	21	24	24
Oct	19	22	22
Nov	16	19	19

Orientations 2 hours • CPR & First Aid 5 hours
Call for Childcare: 650-917-1210

RAD Support Group

The support group meets the third Thursday of every month from 6:30 PM to 8:30 PM

June 17-19

Foster Family Weekend Camp @ Mt. Cross

July 31

San Francisco Marathon
and Half Marathon



October 1
Help One Child
Annual Walkathon

October 15
Adoption Symposium

