

# Fostering Hope

Fall / Winter 2017



## Grant Wishes for Children Affected by Foster Care



There are more than 3,500 wish requests from children in foster care this year. Can you help make the holidays brighter for area children? Little Wishes kicks off with Shopping Day at the Kirkwood Walmart on December 3rd. Pick your favorite holiday wish from one of the Little Wish Trees at the front of the store and FedEx volunteers will be on hand to mail your gift directly to the child in foster care! After your purchase, you will receive a card in the mail that is perfect to present to your favorite family member, friend, or teacher as a holiday gift! You can also visit [www.foster-adopt.org](http://www.foster-adopt.org) anytime before December 21st to grant Little Wishes online; we will make sure the gift is sent to the child in time for the holidays!

Keep your eyes on [www.foster-adopt.org](http://www.foster-adopt.org) to see how many wishes have been granted as we count down to our deadline of Dec. 21st!



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# From the Board President



Dear Friends,  
It is hard to believe that 2017 is practically in the rear view mirror! It's been a busy, productive, and exciting year at the Foster & Adoptive Care Coalition. Our 30 Days to Family® program underwent a rigorous independent evaluation and the findings were even better than we hoped. In a nutshell, children

served by 30 Days to Family® spend fewer days in foster care, have more placement stability, were much less likely to need residential care, had a higher chance of maintaining connections to their paternal relatives, and more. I hope you'll read the full study on our website. This is very good news for our kids.

Because 30 Days to Family® is so successful, other child welfare organizations want to implement this program. Recently, the attorney general of Ohio announced plans to launch 30 Days to Family in 10 counties throughout the state and contracted with the Coalition to train their staff.

What a year of growth this has been. Even though walls were torn down to add staff for Educational Advocacy, Family Works, and for

our partners at Cornerstones of Care, the needs of our children and families continue to steer the addition of programs. Typically, at the end of a year we also look forward to what's coming next. Here's a hint: we anticipate there might be more walls coming down and more cubicles going up in 2018. You'll be one of the first to know!

YOUR support is what makes it all happen. Do we say "thank you" often enough? I hope so. We certainly think "thank you" a hundred times a day. How could this important work happen without volunteers who help with childcare during parent trainings, plan incredible fundraisers like Sizzle and Old Bags, work for Little Wishes and Cinderella Project, serve customers in ReFresh, and more? Or without our Junior Board members who host fundraisers, serve as community ambassadors, and play with the kids at Training Extravaganzas? Or without you, our generous donors, who contribute the funds that fuel this important work. Thank you all!

*John Phillips, Board President*

A handwritten signature in purple ink, appearing to read "John Phillips".

P.S. I invite you to read the enclosed story of how one woman created a new, forever family. Please consider a year-end gift to help more children just like these.

## Volunteer Spotlight: Joe Eickmeier



Joe Eickmeier, our Featured Volunteer this Fall, is an amazing photographer and editor at KSDK NewsChannel 5 who has filmed A Place to Call Home for the last 10 years. We love Joe because he knows how to engage kids, highlighting what makes them special so prospective parents

can fall in love at first sight. Our staff couldn't stop raving about Joe's incredible work. Summer Renne says that with Joe, "Nothing is an afterthought. He is always completely present with our kids." That presence of mind produces clear results for children in foster care. Over 200 children featured on APTCH have been adopted, with over 175 more on their way to adoption. And what does Joe want everyone watching at home to take away from APTCH? Joe says, "I'd want everyone to know that these are typical kids just looking for the love of a family. Every kid deserves that." Well said, Joe, and thanks for all you do!

Joe also runs the Erin Eickmeier Foundation, named after his daughter with special needs. They host about 75 children a year for a summer camp specifically designed for kids with special needs.

# Help Build Self-Esteem and Confidence Through The Cinderella Project



*“What I love most about this experience is trying on the dresses. I loved it because this is my first time trying on dresses and I looked so beautiful.”*

*- 2017 Dress Recipient*

The Coalition is gearing up for Cinderella Project 2018! The Cinderella Project provides dresses to those in the St. Louis metropolitan region who cannot afford to purchase a formal and to all girls attending prom who are currently in foster care. The girls are referred to the Cinderella Project by high school counselors and case managers.

With the help of everyone in the community, the project has been extremely successful. We need your help again! We are now collecting new and gently used dresses at our resale boutique, ReFresh for our 2018 girls. (Drop off sites will be listed on our site beginning December 1st and more added through January. Check back to our website for more information. [www.foster-adopt.org](http://www.foster-adopt.org) or [www.refreshstl.org](http://www.refreshstl.org)

## Save the Date for Old Bags



**Grab your friends for the best night out in town!  
There will be designer bags, sparkle & shine,  
treats & sweets, and even wine!**



# YOU CAN GIVE THE GIFT

Changing the world happens slowly, but you can change it today.  
**Please donate today** using the enclosed envelope.

## ***THEO AND ROSA***

Baby Theo and his sister Rosa grew up in a home where their mother had a substance use problem. One morning the police stormed the home. Tests showed Theo had been

Cisely, a 30 Days to Family® Special Agent, was called to investigate a report for relatives. What she found was a family with a problem of addiction. Then, one day, Cisely was called to investigate the family. She'd heard the

# T OF A FOREVER FAMILY

change the world for a child in foster care right now.  
hope, or online at [www.foster-adopt.org/donate](http://www.foster-adopt.org/donate).

## **AND ROSA**

grew up in a meth lab. Early one  
home and arrested their parents.  
n directly exposed to drugs.

ist, immediately began the search  
was a family ripped apart by  
received a call from a friend of  
children needed a home. . .



# Volunteers are the Heartbeat of the Coalition

Many organizations organized backpack and school supply drives this summer to help over 300 foster/adopted kids start of the school year on the right foot. A big thank you to **Bene'-Kelly Insurance, Cornerstone Employer Solutions, Level 3, Memory Care at the Sheridan, the HR Systems and Analytics team from Mercy, Thirty-One Gifts, Vantage Credit Union, Verizon, and White Castle** for their donations.

The kids had a fantastic time at our all-day Extravaganza event in August, thanks to several volunteer groups who did all sorts of fun activities with them. We so appreciate Centene Corporation, Cornerstone Employer Solutions, our Foster Friends, our Junior Board, and White Castle for their help.

We're very grateful for Boeing Corporation volunteers who filled duffel bags full of goodies for the children we serve. They also surprised us with a \$1,000 check! Thank you!

We greatly appreciate our terrific group of Foster Friends volunteers who took 30 kids on an outing to Grant's Farm. We're also very apprecia-

tive of the Thrivent members of Lutheran Church of the Living Christ for donating to the outing.

We are so blessed that Circus Flora donates tickets every year so that foster/adopted children can experience the wonders of the circus. We are also thankful for our Foster Friends volunteers who make sure the kids have a terrific time there.

Volunteer groups ensure that ReFresh and Resource maintain a fantastic clothing selection for foster/adopted youth. A big thank you to the following organizations for their help: Aetna Insurance Company, Cornerstone Employer Solutions, Great Southern Bank, Liberty Mutual Insurance, Peabody Energy, St. Louis University, the United Way's Women's Leadership Society, and Washington University.

We were honored to be chosen as Parkway West High School's charity for the 2016-17 school year. The students worked hard all year long to raise awareness and more than \$9,000 for the Coalition. Students circulated through the crowds at basketball and football games to ask for

## Foundations Transforming Foster Care

Everyone here at the Coalition is so grateful to the following foundations for their steadfast support of our 2017 programs, 30 Days to Family®, 30 Days to Life Long Connections, Educational Advocacy, Extreme Recruitment®, Family Works, and Trauma Training.

AMC Cares Charitable Fund  
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St. Louis County Children's Service Fund  
St. Louis Mental Health Board  
Stifel Foundation  
TEGNA Foundation  
Ticket to Dream Foundation  
Trio Foundation of St. Louis  
Vassia Family Charitable Foundation

donations, organized a holiday toy drive, and coordinated 3 big events - a powderpuff football game, a dodgeball tournament, and the Mr. Longhorn male talent pageant where participants collected donations for fos-

ter/adopted children. Faculty member Susan Anderson said the students, staff, and community worked really hard and poured their hearts out to support and truly embody the school's altruistic mission.

## Angela Wakefield: Wells Fargo Advisors' Volunteer of the Year



We were thrilled that super star volunteer Angela Wakefield was recognized as Wells Fargo Advisors' Volunteer of the Year. Angela has volunteered in about every way possible for the Coalition and she's always willing to put her hand up and offer to do more. Angela reports "I've always had a strong passion around advocacy for children. Volunteering with the Coalition gives me the opportunity to channel my energy to their mission and show support for children in foster care. No child on this earth should ever feel like they are not wanted or loved and that's what I see that this organization does for each child; they treat them as if they are their own." We are so grateful to Angela for the many ways she has impacted the children we serve.

### The Coalition Salutes Our Monthly Donors!

We'd like to give a special Thank You to some of our most loyal monthly supporters. Your ongoing commitment to our kids allows us to plan strategically with our resources, meaning more of your gift will find more families for children in foster care. We love our monthly donors!

- |                             |                        |
|-----------------------------|------------------------|
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# FOSTERING HOPE



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