

NATHHAN / CHASK

CHASK - Christian Homes And Special Kids
NATHHAN - National Challenged Homeschoolers

Fall Winter 2007—2008

Volume 15 No. 2



Sabrina Carper ridin' trail!

A Blessed Beginning

**Encouraging Speech and Communication
in our Children With Special Needs**

What Can Be Gained Through Heartache?

Adoption And Homeschooling

Articles, letters, and reviews printed in the NATHHAN NEWS are not to be taken as legal or medical advice. Please seek the services of a qualified source.

Also please note: What you read and the resources you find through NATHHAN may not line up with your Christian convictions. Some of the resources we share with you may not be necessarily from a home-schooling perspective. We simply point you, with your shovel, and hope you will dig! Please pick and choose carefully.

Goal and Purpose of NATHHAN

To encourage homeschooling families with special needs children in ways that glorify the Lord Jesus Christ. To find Christian homes for children with special needs.

NATHHAN / CHASK

National Challenged Homeschoolers
Christian Homes And Special Kids

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www.chask.org

Front Cover Picture

Sabrina Carper is now 4 years old.

Sabrina was a CHASK baby in 2003. She is a delight to her entire family. Her mommy says that she loves to do things just like a big girl, including making grape juice with her big sister! She carefully pulled the stems off all the pile of grapes in front of her and was totally thrilled with the juice making process and drinking it.

On the front is a picture of her at 2 yrs old, posing as a cowgirl for the camera.



Letter From the Editors

Being a part of a fun-loving family is just one of the joys we experience. This summer has been no exception. All of us have grown a lot. Yes, this summer had some pretty hard challenges for us (we'll tell you about them in a minute) yet now that we are through it, I can really see God's purpose in leading us in that direction.

First, just like you, we have no greater joy than to see our children serving the Lord, making the time to make Him the most important part of their lives.

Sometimes the way He directs us is surprising, but in trust we are solidly marching on. The changes in our schedules seem to be settling into a winter pattern.

Last Spring Tom started on a journey that is very exciting and interesting to him. After breezing through CLEP tests, he applied and was accepted at Oakbrook College of Law. Since then he has taken his entrance exams and is working through a pretty heavy study load, in addition to working on his NATHHAN and CHASK responsibilities. His goal is to pass the bar exam in California, and then apply to take the bar exam in Idaho, after internship somewhere (not sure where yet). His highest interest is in contract law and of course adoption law. This will dove-tail really nicely with NATHHAN and CHASK.

Along with playing basketball with our son Zack at church on Thursdays and physically working out to keep in shape he is really having a good time exercising his mind and body. Yes, we still keep our every Friday or Saturday date night, for all you who think that he might be overloaded and neglecting his wife!

Jake's new responsibility this fall is volunteering on our ambulance crew as a driver. He likes to serve the community in this

way and has gotten to meet lots of new people. He is also singing in the community Christmas choir, and helping out with the community children's Christmas choir, which Mercy Grace is a part of this year. He is still working as an independent computer consultant and stays busy with work all year. This in addition to working in the NATHHAN office.

Josh, 22 and Zack 16, have both worked all summer and fall on construction crews. They are both looking forward to things slowing down this winter, as long hours and hot days make for hard sore muscles and dark tans. They are both learning great construction skills.

Jordan, with Down syndrome, now 19 years old, is very much loved and is a very important member of our family. As the other children all pass by him mentally, he seems to be reaching a level of wanting to be "big" too. This sometimes clashes with his ability to be "big". He was taking "walks" off the property in the very early morning, until one day, mom, at about 5:30 am, coming home from a birth saw him approaching a house about 1/2 mile away. She caught him just in time before he opened the door to the stranger's. He said he was looking for Sheela! Needless to say, he got in big trouble, and after realizing that maybe it wasn't his responsibility to find his sister after all, decided to stay home after that....

Sheela, now 18 years old, is doing so well and we are very proud of her. She just got back from singing on a chorus tour with Faith Mission Home, in Free Union, Virginia. Living so far from home, she has adjusted and has become a special part of the home she is staying in. It is a blessing to "bloom where she is planted." Her house mom says sincerely that she believes that "Sheela would be happy wherever she lived." This is a tremendous blessing to see that she is growing into a contented person, willing to serve the Lord where ever He has her. She is still reading Braille regularly,

and keeping friendships that she will have for life. We do miss her very much though!

Lynny is 15 years old, with severe cerebral palsy and autism. Her current loves are still jig saw puzzles and coloring. Her drawings are getting very elaborate. She enjoyed quite a bit of time outside this late summer, when it wasn't so hot.

Zeph, is 14 now. He is in 9th grade and is looking forward to skiing at Schweitzer Mountain this winter. He worked hard to earn a season's pass this summer and we all hope that there is an abundance of snow this year.

Sheraya, 12, is in 7th grade and learning to enjoy creative writing and spelling. She is just about as tall as mom now. She is sewing dresses for herself and taking on more responsibility in the house.



Bushell's Home in Northern Idaho

Mercy, 10, is having a new adventure this year. She was accepted into the Community Children's Christmas Choir and is very excited to be a part. She and the other girls around her age spent the summer converting a small tool shed with a cement floor into a play house. Using the left-over garden produce and items from the woods and field, the wood shop, and a hammer and nails, they turned their little shed into a home. (I am still coming up with missing kitchen items and I know where to find them!)

Jayben, just turned 6, is learning his letters and loves to copy his little stories in his reader. He is still as rough and tumble as ever. Making Lego creations, making forts from 2 by 4s and branches, and keeping up with the big kids, he keeps himself very busy.

ShaHannah is 3 now. Cooking with mommy, sisters, or our house help is still high on her favorite-things-to-do list. She loves to be "the baby" when the girls play house. Story time is absolutely the most wonderful idea of all, and it is the cure for all ails, pains and sorrows.

As for Sherry, she is having a great adventure, too. Last year, just about the time Tom started preparing for law school, Sherry enrolled in the Association of Texas Midwifery school. It is done by correspondence. Tests are taken in Texas every 3 months. Joyce Vogel, CPM, Libby Montana, is her supervisor for ATM and for Montana. Sherry is a Montana Licensed apprentice, and is working toward her NARM (National Association of Registered Midwives) certification. Hopefully October 2008 she will be able to take her NARM exam at the National Midwifery Conference.

After dealing with birth moms for 6 years through CHASK, Sherry really felt the need to find out more on how to help them. Midwifery training has helped tremendously with understanding about what is a true complication of pregnancy.

Numerous crisis pregnancy centers are requesting an informational training manual or DVD on how to minister to birth moms with an adverse prenatal diagnosis. In preparation of this, NATHHAN /CHASK is also opening a regular on-site pregnancy resource center (see page 18 in this magazine). We are using the name “A Blessed Beginning”. There is a start-up list of items that we need donated to A Blessed Beginning on page 15.

A Blessed Beginning will be under the NATHHAN / CHASK non-profit status and we have passed our planning and zoning. Please pray that the Lord provides the financial means to put this all together.

As part of her midwifery training, Sherry chose to go to Davao City, Philippines for 6 weeks in the months of August and September to get her clinical birth practice. This experience was one of the most profound experiences of her life. If you want to read about her adventures, go to www.xanga.com/MenoMidwife. Personally living with the women at Mercy Maternity has given her a greater understanding of the commitment and compassion that Christians serving in a foreign country have for lost souls.

Mercy Maternity Center has a unique avenue in presenting the gospel of Christ to the



Sherry doing a postnatal / baby check in the Philippines

woman of the Agdow District of Davao Island, Philippines.

The way to pointing the lost to Jesus is finding a way to minister real help to people. Mercy Maternity Center has found a unique way to do that. Right now around 150 –200 birth moms a month, are receiving prenatal care and delivering their baby in a clean, competent, “lying-in” clinic. This gives poor families access to practically free birthing care. This speaks volumes to these mothers, because the other options are a hospital that they cannot afford, or a ramshackle hut with an inexperienced birth attendant. What better way to get into homes, than to share Christ with a family, compassionately helping them with their birth experience, focusing on the Creator.

Look on page 18 for more information about Mercy Maternity Center.

NATHHAN's Volunteer Program.

We will be looking at bringing in someone in early spring. We do appreciate all of the applications and treasure the willing hearts. May the Lord bless your family during this holiday season.

**Tom and Sherry
Jake, Josh, Jordan, Sheela,
Zack, Lynny, Zeph, Sheraya,
Mercy, Jayben and ShaHannah
Bushnell**

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History and Information About NATHHAN

NATHHAN began with a telephone call from one mother of a child with Down syndrome to another mother homeschooling her son with Down syndrome in the early spring of 1990. Acting on the Lord's prompting to begin a network of parents helping one another, Diane Macbeth in PA wrote Kathy Salars in Texas on March 17th, 1990, thus announcing the birth of NATHHAN.

In the fall of 1992, due to NATHHAN's exponential growth from 2 to over 600 families, it became impossible for these moms to keep up. Tom and Sherry Bushnell offered their assistance and NATHHAN's main office was moved to Olalla, WA. The NATHHAN/CHASK office now operates in Moyie Springs, Idaho.

A board meets periodically to make decisions. Its officers are Jim and Jerri Unruh in Bonner's Ferry, ID; Ralph and Debbie Poole, Cheney, WA; John and Diane Ryckman, Creston, BC; Tom and Sherry Bushnell; and Andy and Linda Dillon, Camano Island, WA. Financial Advisory: Dennis and Linda Lamphere, Moyie Springs, ID; William Byler and Dayton Skrivseth, Bonners Ferry, ID; James and Dana McKenzie in Battleground, WA.

In the Fall of 2002, as an outgrowth of NATHHAN, CHASK was born. CHASK, Christian Homes And Special Kids, matches special kids with families for free, no agency fees or referral costs.

NATHHAN / CHASK's web page and magazine strive to equip and encourage parents with special needs children, assisting them in finding the will of God for their lives.

Fall of 2007, CHASK opened A Blessed Beginning, an on-site pregnancy resource center.

NATHHAN 's Ministry

National Challenged Homeschoolers

NATHHAN NEWS - This magazine, printed twice a year, includes resources, articles from parents and professionals, and lots of letters from families, plus much more.

NATHHAN WEB PAGE www.nathhan.org

Updated quarterly. A full service web page with all the features of the print style NATHHAN NEWS plus a discussion board, and on-line applications for the lending library and family directory. A password is needed to access the NATHHAN membership portion. Hundreds of articles from the last 14 years of NATHHAN are included.

FAMILY DIRECTORY - Although some of us will never meet this side of heaven, we can still encourage and share a bit of our lives with each other. The directory is on-line, password protected, updated once a year and is available to members willing to be in the directory.

LENDING LIBRARY - The library is operated through the mail for NATHHAN members. Members donate postage to and from library when they use it. The NATHHAN Lending Library Catalog can be reviewed on the web site www.nathhan.org. Book donations are gladly accepted.

**All this for only \$25.00 / year.
Unbelievable!**

CHASK's Ministry

Christian Homes And Special Kids

Parents can raise their disabled child with joy and competence. Christ is the answer to making it through any crisis.

Our goal is to *match* every special needs child that God brings to us who needs a home, before-born or already born, with a Christian family. No agency fees.

**www.chask.org
chaskinfo@aol.com**

Gift Memberships

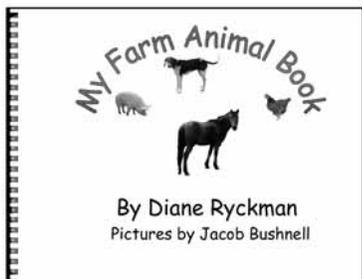
Gift memberships are available for folks facing financial difficulty. A NATHHAN/ CHASK gift membership entitles the family to NATHHAN/ CHASK's internet services. NATHHAN/CHASK's gift program is funded solely by other homes sharing out of their concern and abundance, giving so other Christian brothers and sisters can receive the encouragement they need. We want you to get the support you need. If your home cannot afford the \$25.00, don't hesitate to send us what you can afford and request a gift membership.

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If phonics doesn't click, try **Farm Animal Words Reading Kit**

Designed to assist you in teaching sight reading skills, **Farm Animal Words Reading Kit** consists of a book called **My Farm Animal Book**, a double set of flashcards, and an instruction booklet on how to teach sight reading.



My Farm Animal Book Features

- ⇒ 10 well known farm animals.
- ⇒ Large (8 ½" by 11"), uncluttered pages.
- ⇒ One simple animal photograph per page with large, easy to read print.
- ⇒ Total reading vocabulary of 57 words. 4 new words per page.
- ⇒ Repetition and review of words incorporated into text.

Farm Animal Words Reading Kit has been developed by Diane Ryckman, and has been thoroughly tested on her son Andrew, who just happens to have Down syndrome.

For more information visit www.DownHomeLearning.net

E-mail: ryckman@downhomelearning.net

Phone: (250) 428-7798

John and Diane Ryckman
1453 Evans Rd. RR7
Creston, B.C.
V0B-1G7

\$23.00 Includes shipping and handling.



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ASSOCIATION**
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Special Needs Support Groups

Deaf Ministries List

Earl and Shirley Wilbers
221 W. Gay St.
Harrisonburg, VA 22802
E-mail: EEARL2@aol.com
Website: Deaf Ministries List
<http://deafministriesconnection.netfirms.com>

Especially Yours - a support group for families homeschooling children with special needs. All are welcome.
Call Patricia Rendoff.
(303) 937-3428 or atprdiggie@juno.com

Shepherd Boy - Strategies for Autism

4241 Faye Drive
Olive Branch, MS 38654
shepherdboy.org
Hands-on, practical ideas for working with individuals with autism and related disabilities.

HOPES - Homeschooling Our Precious Exceptional Students. We meet on the first Thursday night of each month. For more information contact Jim and Mary Rees, Traveler's Rest, SC Phone: (864) 834-0264

Bethel Baptist Academy

P.O. Box 10035
Fullerton, CA 92838
Norm and Sharon Wallace (714) 527-5807 or Matthew and Julia Hoch (714) 990-0199. We help Moms write their IEPs through our workshops. Our resource specialist is Marian Soderholm. She can be found at (562) 425-7886 or e-mail at mercedchristian@yahoo.com

Almaden Valley Christian School & AVCS Books

Consulting services, curriculum resources and support for families of special needs children.
Sharon Hensley, MA— Director
16465 Carlson Dr.
Morgan Hill, CA 95037
408-776-6691
sharon@avcsbooks.com

H.A.N.D.S. ON!

Support group for special needs homeschoolers in PA
Newsletter: [_http://groups.yahoo.com/group/handson_westernpa](http://groups.yahoo.com/group/handson_westernpa)
Online forum: <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/wpahandson>

S.N.A.C.K.S. of Delaware

(Special Needs and Christian Kids)
Helping families and churches to minister to their special needs children. Serving the greater Delaware Valley and Tri-State region.
Contact: Tita Wyatt
Email: tewjr@flash.net

Christian Cottage School

(303) 688-6626 Sedalia, Colorado
Mike and Terry Spray founded CCS for diagnostic testing and prescribing curriculum.

Special Children Special Blessings

Jim and Debbie Mills
8266 Leucadia Ave. San Diego, CA 92114
(619) 469-5822

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7217 South Drive Richmond, VA 23225-1622
(804) 323-1786
Strengthuntostrength@juno.com A support group for families homeschooling special needs children. Part of a Christian family-based ministry operated by Dave and Deb Pegram. Also operate a private Christian “umbrella” school that provides transcripts, IEP’s, testing and evaluative services.

PRAISE

Parents Reaching Academically in Special Education
A homeschool support group for parents homeschooling special needs children.
947 Park SW Grand Rapids, MI 49504
(616) 451-3620
Contact Shannon Bloemendaal Email: sbloemen@aol.com

Parents Instructing Challenged Children (PICC)

Allen and Barb Mulvey
700 W Liberty St.
Rome, NY 13440 315-339-5524
picc@twcny.rr.com
PICC has a lending library and publishes an annual directory of families homeschooling special needs children.

O.U.C.H. Ohio's Uniquely Challenged Homeschoolers

(formerly C.H.O.S.E.N. Christian Homeschool Special Educational Needs)
Renee Silvaroli—Support Group Coordinator & Workshop Speaker. Meets at Silvaroli's home.
Phone: (440) 944-4782
Email: RCHOSEN@visn.net
Please RSVP.
“Ohio Special Needs Resource Packet” available (at cost of \$10.00 plus \$2.50 postage/handling); State Newsletter \$5.00 (5 issues); workshops and special needs consultation available (\$1.00 for sample newsletter).

Braille Sharing Library/ Lydia Schuck

1981 Eden Rd.
Mason, MI 48854 (517) 676-4621
laschuck@juno.com
We have a list of braille to share. Braille can be sent to me. Please label what is in the box and contact me by phone or e-mail before it is sent.

Down Home Learning

Does your child have Down Syndrome? Need someone to talk to? Have some ideas to share? Contact: Diane Ryckman
1453 Evans Rd. RR 7
Creston, B.C. V0B 1G7 CANADA (250)-428-7798
Email: ryckman@downhomelearning.net

Special Needs Support Groups

Rock of Refuge

Resources & support for families coping with Special Needs. Offers caring encouragement for parents/caregivers of those with special needs. Meets 1st Monday each month 7pm-8:30, just north of Tampa, Florida.

Victorious Life Church
6224 Old Pasco Rd.
Wesley Chapel, FL 33544
813-973-2230 church office
Contact : Sheri Nelson 813-996-3366 home
E-Mail: RockofRefuge@aol.com

Carrying To Term Resources

American Association of Pro Life Obstetricians and Gynecologists.

www.aaplog.org

AAPLOG National Office Contact Info:

Phone: (616) 546-2639.

Email: info@aaplog.org

Be not Afraid

www.benotafraid.net

An online outreach to parents who have received a difficult prenatal diagnosis. The family stories, articles, and links within this site are presented as a resource for those who may have been asked to choose between terminating a pregnancy or continuing on despite the diagnosis. The benotafraid.net families faced the same decision and chose not to terminate.

Waiting with Love site

<http://www.eric Chad.com/wwl/>

The Gloria M. Silverio Foundation

“Safe Haven for Newborns”

www.asafehavenfornewborns.com

1-877-767-BABY (2229)

Post Abortion Resources

Rachel's Vineyard Retreats
1-877-HOPE-4-ME (1-877-467-3463)
www.RachelsVineyard.org

Healing Hearts Ministries
(on-line counseling)
www.HealingHearts.org
1-888-792-8282

Ramah International
www.RamahInternational.org

NATHHAN Web page

[NATHHAN Lending Library](#) catalog is arranged by subject.

[Family Directory](#)- Folks are listed by state and list disability. Form your own support network. Find families homeschooling with the same special needs you are dealing with. Search the *entire web site* for a subject of interest when you participate in the NATHHAN family directory. Additional password needed for security.

[Discussion board](#) - Live time. Get your questions answered by moms who are competent and experienced. A variety of subjects and responses makes just reading the discussions of others VERY interesting.

Classified Ads • Letters from Families •
Deuteronomy Dads • Mommy's Musing •
Children waiting for Moms and Dads
Favorite Resources

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www.nathhan.org



1st Straight Talk

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Written by
Marisa J. Lapish, M.A. in Speech Pathology

- Charts explain normal sound development
- The *Consonant Cookbook*, suggestions to help with each consonant's correct sound
- Test forms and score sheets
- Word training lists

An excellent resource for parents wishing to implement a quality speech therapy program without spending lots of money or going to the public school. We've used it successfully for over 10 years.

—Tom Bushnell



\$45.00

Free Shipping!

1st Straight Talk's DVD

Watch Marisa demonstrate the sound "r" using the manual.

30 min. video supplements the manual.

Video is \$20.00 separate from the manual.

Combination Straight Talk 1 + DVD = **\$55.00**

Order online at www.nathhan.org or use the order form on page 38!

2nd Straight Talk

A Parent's Guide to



Language Development A Christian Perspective

Written by

Marisa J. Lapish, M.A. in Speech Pathology
and Tom and Sherry Bushnell, Directors of NATHHAN

- Exercises in Learning to Listen
- Nuts and Bolts of Language Training
- Increasing Auditory and Visual Comprehension
- Language Development Activities for the Christian Home
- Tests to Determine Exactly Where Your Child Needs Help
- Suggestions for Working with Children Ranging from Non-verbal to More Advanced in Language.



\$45.00

112 page manual, free shipping!

*An excellent resource for parents helping their
children overcome language delays.*

Order online at www.nathhan.org or use the order form on page 38!

CHASK—Christian Homes And Special Kids **A Blessed Beginning**

A blessed beginning.... Isn't that what every mother wishes for her unborn baby?

Well... almost all mothers.... How about 50% of mothers...?

The idea of having a baby can be very frightening to a woman. If she happens to be unmarried, un-cared for, or very young, the idea of a new baby can be unwelcome.

Babies are treasures, created by God. (How many of us have grumbled about the "treasures" that we have received from the Lord.)

Here at CHASK we have the unique opportunity to sit in the middle of the road. We hear from birth moms who do not wish for their babies, or cannot care for them AND we hear from potential adoptive parents who would very much like to have a child. A few of our CHASK families have no children at all!

The deep, earnest longing of a mother's heart to nourish a child is instilled by God. What is happening in a birth mom's heart who finds herself in bad circumstances? How does she come to the conclusion that the child within her is better off dead?

Philosophy can't save babies, but love can. Often we can convince birth moms, who are considering abortion, that their baby is too precious to be aborted.

Our personal experience is that it begins with loving a birth mom. She is grieving. Her life and



A CHASK baby in California

emotions are upside down. A comforting reassurance that there is hope and love ahead, if she would consider giving her baby life, may be enough to have her continue in the pregnancy.

How can we effectively communicate this if we are not personally involved?

Sometimes getting down in the trenches is dirty work. By providing a roof,

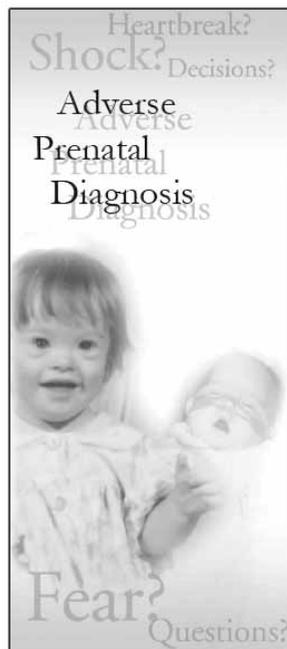
food, and love to an unwed mom, she is being provided for and so is her unborn baby. Is she grateful? Maybe...

In all honesty, we get banged up a little. On more than one occasion, our family has exposure to a rougher kind of life through contact with a birth mom who has different values than we do. Our hearts are ripped out when they leave. But a baby is saved.

It is our heart's desire to provide an on-site outlet for ministering Christ's love to women who are considering abortion and are in need.

A Blessed Beginning, a pregnancy resource center, born out of our hearts.

One purpose of A Blessed Beginning is to minister to our local birth moms. This includes a mommy with an adverse prenatal diagnosis and those who have babies developing normally. With the support from local churches, we are aiming at providing for birth parents' needs both physical and emotional. Our community is very rural, so we do not expect too



much action. However, another purpose for A Blessed Beginning is training for us. Since CHASK began and we started sharing CHASK's Adverse Prenatal Diagnosis brochure with crisis pregnancy centers, we have many requests for training workers how to minister to women with an adverse prenatal diagnosis.

Now for many of us, the idea of speaking with someone about special needs is old hat, but for the rest of the world, disability is frightening. When a woman comes in to a CPC and states that she has a baby with special needs that is "going to die anyway" or "be in much pain", what can a CPC worker say to comfort and encourage a woman to choose life?

We have personally spoken to CPC workers in tears, on the phone, because they do not know what to say to a birth mom facing the death of her baby.

What would you say? Have you walked this journey? What can you say to a birth mom who is needing answers and encouragement.

We are putting together a letter picture album for birth moms that visit us personally to read when they visit A Blessed Beginning. They need to feel the compassion and love you have for them and for your special needs child. We want personal letters and pictures! We also need an experienced scrap-booker to put it together for us, if we provide the materials, pictures and letters.

Can you spare the time to encourage a birth mom today? Be sure to label it for, A Blessed Beginning, An Album of Love.

As we are ministering to birth moms, we are taking notes and learning valuable lessons on how to minister to birth moms in general. The disability-special needs thing we have down.... Well almost.... Face-to-face, we want to get into the minds and hearts of women facing a very difficult decision, finding out what we can share to make a difference.



Tiny Danziel

Here are some CHASK stories:

A lady in Arkansas called us, requesting prayer. She is a Christian. Her husband is not a Christian, and recently left her and their four children. She is 4 months pregnant with their 5th child and feels totally unable to care for the baby. An ultrasound showed a baby boy. We comforted her and shared with her CHASK families in her state that were able to come along side her and minister love and help.

Baby Anna is Chinese and has septo-optic dysplasia, ventricular septal defect and is on an NG tube. She was placed with a CHASK family in California.

A baby boy that was exposed to heroin and meth was placed pre-natally with Jason and Judy Beachy. He was born c-section August 28th and is doing very well.

A birth mom in Georgia was considering adoption versus abortion. Her baby girl has Down syndrome and extra fluid in her kidney. We never did find out

what her decision was, as she did not contact any of the potential CHASK adoptive families.

A mentally disabled young woman contacted CHASK, desperately wanting help with finding an adoptive home for her unborn baby. Her mother was trying to force her to have an abortion. After weeks of working through issues with the grandma, the paternal grandmother came forward to adopt her grandbaby.

So many more stories to share!!! Did you know that CHASK update letters are sent out to CHASK donors of \$25.00 or more? These letters share CHASK stories and let you know more about being a very important part of ministering to birth moms with an adverse prenatal diagnosis.

We appreciate your interest and prayers along with us, working hard to help others see and support the plight of the unborn with disability.

A Blessed Beginning

Pregnancy Resources

We are using NATHHAN / CHASK's single wide trailer to set up a pregnancy resource center. We need to understand how to minister to birth moms and this has led us to actually going through the process of setting up a crisis pregnancy center. All of this is in preparation for next year's project of putting together a curriculum that will teach crisis pregnancy care workers how to meet the needs of parents in an adverse prenatal diagnosis situation. Ministering one-on-one to birth moms will teach us how to teach others. So, as we are learning how to share with birth moms, here is another opportunity for you to help us help the unborn and their mommies.

We are requesting donations for the following:

- New or like-new newborn baby clothing, and newborn diapers.
- Posters or pictures dealing with child birth (like the kind www.childbirthgraphics.com has) to put up on the walls.
- Models of the fetus in different stages.
- Ordinary books, DVD's or videos on child-birth and raising children. Mother friendly cook-books, and books on nursing.
- Supplies for new mommy / baby gift baskets:
 - Blue chux pads,
 - Bulb syringe
 - Thermometer
 - New cotton baby blankets for birth
 - Newborn baby sleepers
 - KY Jelly
 - Baby powder
 - Cotton baby hats
 - Baby lotion, soap, oil

Paper covered, flexible straws
 Peri- irrigation bottle
 Burp pads, cotton
 Bibs for baby
 Massage oil for mom and baby
 Emergen-C packets
 Baby foot printer kits



- Other items new moms find helpful:
 - Cloth shoulder slings for baby
 - Newborn baby front packs
 - Nursing supplies
 - Newborn— 3 month age baby toys
 - Gifts for siblings (small items, child safe, can fit in a basket without taking up too much room...)
 - Baskets to put the gifts to new mom in, should be new or nearly new.
 - New cotton baby blankets to line birth gift baskets.
 - Cards and Envelopes appropriate for gift baskets
 - Rice bags or socks
 - Nice mugs, with raspberry leaf tea
 - Healing, comforting kinds of herbal baths
 - CD of lullaby songs for baby and mom.
- Prefer Christian messages.

If you have set up a Pregnancy Care Center and have some words of wisdom for us, we would be very grateful. We are contacting Focus On The Family and other resources, too.

We have passed our zoning restrictions and have our non-profit status through NATHHAN / CHASK.

Most of all, we ask for your prayers for this busy time. Please pray that in God's timing, birth moms would come and choose life through the love of Christ shown to them, though you.

**Please call for our UPS address.
 208-267-6246**

How does CHASK work?

- Adoptive family fills out a CHASK application (page 17 or www.chask.org)
- A birth mom in crisis contacts us. Are there any NATHHAN families willing to take her pre-born baby or child with special needs?
- We contact adoptive families, getting permission to send the birth mom their information.
- We send the birth mom 3 families to choose from, including their Dear Birth-Mom letters. After choice is made....
- Potential adoptive family and birth mom handle details such as communication, transportation, lawyer fees.
- Some financial help for adoptive costs may be available by private gifts from NATHHAN families.

Adoptive family should:

- Look into having a homestudy. •Adoptive family should locate an adoption lawyer and be aware of their state's laws. (In some states, in order to avoid the appearance of impropriety, the adoption should be handled through an adoption lawyer. We can help you find a pro-life lawyer.)
- Adoptive family should be willing to pray and receive God's will for the birth mom's, baby's, and their lives, no matter what the decision reached by the birth mom.

Please join us in ministering to birth parents.

NATHHAN /CHASK P.O. Box 310 Moyie Springs, ID 83845
www.chask.org

Name _____

Address _____

Phone: (____) _____ E-mail _____

Please send me _____ CHASK brochures.

I am interested in sharing with birth parents in crisis.

They can contact me via e-mail telephone letter

Disabilities I can share about with birth parents:

I am interested in adopting a child with special needs. We are interested in getting more information about how CHASK's matching service works. Please refer to www.chask.org for more information also.

We'd love to help. Included is our donation of \$_____

I want to help share Christ with birth parents in crisis and support CHASK's unique ministry to the unborn with special needs.

NATHHAN /CHASK is a 501 c 3 not-for-profit ministry. All donations are tax deductible and are used to directly assist in saving the lives of babies with special needs and ministering to parents with special needs children. Credit cards accepted. Please make your checks out to NATHHAN / CHASK . (208) 267-6246

CHASK Application

Christian Homes And Special Kids

1. Last Name _____ 2. First Names _____

3. Address _____ State _____ Zip _____

4. Phone (_____) _____ 5. E-mail _____

7. Number of children in your family living in your home. _____

8. Describe your family. (Use a separate sheet if you need to. Pictures are nice.) _____

9. What age of child are you considering? _____

10. Are you open to adopting a child of mixed race or color? _____

11. What disabilities would you feel comfortable with at this time? (For a more complete list to consider, see CHASK application on the internet www.chask.org)

12. Name of Church _____

13. Describe your faith in Jesus Christ: (You may want to use a separate sheet of paper.)

14. Name and phone of pastorName _____ Phone # (_____) _____

15. Please give us a 2nd reference ..Name _____ Phone # (_____) _____

16. What are your reasons for adopting? (Use your sheet of paper.)

17. Dear Birth Mom Letter. (Please carefully write a letter sharing your heart about adoption, special needs, and your vision for your family. For a sample letter see www.chask.org under “Waiting Families”.) We also need 1 family picture that we can scan into the computer with your entry.

CHASK/NATHHAN

P.O. Box 310 Moyie Springs, ID 83845

(208) 267-6246

www.chask.org

Mercy Maternity Center

Are you looking for an opportunity to share with an overseas mission, helping them save souls for Christ?

Ministering to birth moms and families is a unique way to share the love of the Savior. Mercy Maternity Center, in Davao, Philippines, is especially designed to bring about the love of Christ through a much needed service to parents.

Lives are changed and through the ministry of Newlife missions over 200 house churches have been planted. Please go to their web site www.midwifeschool.org to review their information about Newlife International School of Midwifery and how they are training missionary minded families to meet the real needs of the lost.

Newlife Int'l School of Midwifery
P.O. Box 81227
Davao City 8000 Philippines
Stateside Address:

Newlife Int'l School of Midwifery
2511 NE MLK Blvd.
Portland, OR 97212
Tel: 503.493.1301

Email: director@midwifeschool.org
midwifeschool@yahoo.com

NewLife Mercy Maternity is requesting your assistance in purchasing the building that they are already leasing. The owner immigrated to Canada and has agreed to sell the building very cheaply to Mercy Maternity if they can come up with the necessary funding. Total purchase price for this huge-building, in great condition is \$225,000 US dollars.



**6 bed delivery room at
Mercy Maternity**



Pregnant moms worshipping at Mercy Maternity before prenatals

They have payments every 6 months. Their next payment is due December 14th and will be \$20,000.

Your contribution will make an incredible difference in the lives of mothers and dads that are ministered to everyday.

I did not know what being poor really meant, until I had the opportunity to share in the very lives of parents who could not even begin to afford diapers of any kind for their baby.

They are content with their lack. To them having very little is normal. Would that Christ would be their all in all... Here is a picture of the baby of a Christian couple that attend a Missionary Alliance Church. This was their first baby and they were very happy to have someone who loved Jesus share in their birth experience.



**Newborn baby, cute
as a button**

Without Mercy Maternity, their tender care and cleanliness, her baby might have died, as he was very small (4lbs.). Please consider helping them today. Send donations to their Oregon address.

What Happens to My Son After I Pass Away?

By Tom and Sherry Bushnell

Many times we have pondered the fate of our grown children with special needs. All three of our adopted kids are going to need someone to look after them permanently.

We have spent all these years making sure our disabled children are easy to be around. No, they have not excelled in academics (not that they could have in the first place). And there probably would have been a very different emphasis imprinted in the hearts of our children if we have chosen an easier route such as public special ed.

As a family, our goal was to help these three blessings from God continue to be a blessing to others for the rest of their lives. Now, as we are standing here on the threshold of their adult lives, we peer into the future.

I am sure you have spent some time considering what the life of your child with special needs will be like after you are gone, too. Isn't this almost one of the first things that flood our minds when we realize that we are taking on a disabled child for life?

Then we go on without too much worry because we are so busy just raising them, contending with medical issues, education and trying to make sure our kids have socially appropriate behavior.

So, when the first of our gang with disability turned 18, the first question we had was whether or not to do a guardianship after age 18 for all our children with disability. Next we started answering that question by some more.

1. Are we living in a large city, where exposure to non-Christians could effect the decisions our child with disability may make? For example: where to live and who to live with, who to associate

with, which government programs to be involved in, which entertainment to partake in, what social interaction is positive. Who makes medical decisions? Can they communicate their needs independently?

2. Does our medical community insist on permanent guardianship status (after age 18) before implementing treatment? Can our child communicate medical needs or questions? Can our child take medication faithfully, without help?

3. Do we for see any question about how our child may be treated? Do we trust our relatives to make good decisions? Are there brothers or sisters willing to take on the care in their home, or manage the financial needs of an adult-child in a semi-independent living situation or home for the disabled? Is there someone in our church, our friendship circle, or a

relative that would be interested in being a named care giver in a will?

To complicate matters, besides not knowing all the answer to the above questions, life changes things. So what our answers might be today, may be different a year from now.

So we consulted with a lawyer, drew up a will, named an executor for the adult-children, and those under 18. Next we set about looking into guardianship for those over 18. In our community, we could foresee no problems with the medical side of things. Yet, the psychologist strongly suggested permanent guardianship for Social Security decisions in the future. We looked into this, and decided to do them all at once, when our youngest became 18.

What about families that do not have family to lean on as executors in a will? There is the state who will gladly take on the responsibil-



Thumbs Up!
Jordan and Jayben heading out
for an airplane ride

ity, but will not guarantee a Christian environment or even good care.

CHASK has had several letters from families in the above situation, requesting an answer to a question that troubles their hearts.

Are there some of us willing to be named in the wills of families who do not have good resources for care for their adult-disabled child, or even under the age of 18 child?

Here is a letter from a family that expresses an interest in expanding CHASK's services to families involved with NATHHAN and CHASK.

Dear CHASK,

My husband and I are believers and homeschool our 7-year old boy who has Down Syndrome and Autism. At this point we have no one in our extended families who would be capable and willing to take on the responsibility of being our son's guardian in the event of the untimely death of both my husband and I. Would your services possibly include matching our son with a candidate for guardian? We will be wanting to draw up a new will within the next couple of months.

Thanks so much,
Ruth

Now here is letter from, a lady named Mary Eicher (long-time CHASK / NATHHAN member) that is willing to share her family and life with another family, possibly being named as an executor or even care giver for a child or adult-child.

Dear Tom,

I am very much interested in knowing more about being placed in someone's will as one who is interested in caring for a handicapped individual.

It would be good if families could be sure that there was medical provision in place and some kind of support either from the inheritance or SSI benefits.

I would also like to mention that in the event of someone being incapacitated and no longer able to care for their family member, I would also be open to accepting a person in that situation.

I would not be able to handle a total care individual, but one who is am-

bulatory and fairly self-sufficient to care for his own needs.

Also, I would want to be sure that people would specify in their will a contingency such as if I should be incapacitated at the time of their demise, there would be an alternative made, but perhaps they would have already thought of that!

Mary Eicher
MaryEicher@aol.com

On the CHASK web site, we are going to post a new part on the CHASK web page, that



Mary (Mom), Clifford 17, with cerebral Palsy, and mild mental disability, and Chad, 14 who has spina bifida and hydrocephalus.

lists families (with pictures) that will be a resource for families needing help with finding appropriate long-term care for after they pass away. You can contact them via CHASK if you are interested in getting to know them.

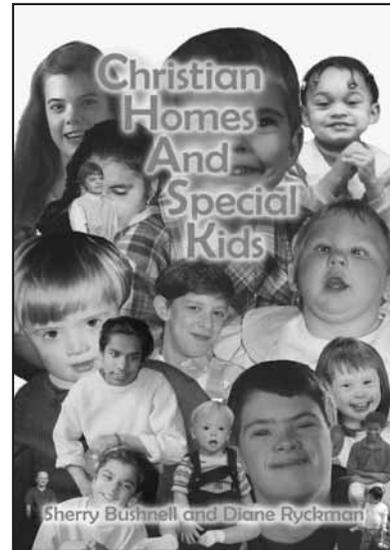
Legally, there is no home study needed, but appropriate letters of recommendation from your minister and a social worker would be recommended, if you do not have a home study.

If you have any suggestions or would like to be a part of this part of ministering to other NATHHAN /CHASK families, please let us know. We always appreciate your input.

A book written by NATHHAN families

Christian Homes And Special Kids

CHASK



Warmly penned, practical resource written by homeschooling parents.

Here are moms and dads, just like you, living Christian lives and raising their special needs child for the Lord!

CHASK is packed full of tips, stories and advice from families that have been there. We know you will love reading it again and again.

Over 270 pages, 6" by 9"
Compiled and edited by
Sherry Bushnell
and Diane Ryckman

Chapter 1 - You Can Do It!

Chapter 2 - How To Begin

Chapter 3 - Pre-School Years

Chapter 4 - Elementary Years

Chapter 5 - Teens/ Adult Vocational Training

Chapter 6 - Therapy / Adaptive Technology

Chapter 7 - Character Development

Chapter 8 - Individual Education Plans

Chapter 9 - What's it Like Raising A Child With...?

Chapter 10 - The Ministry Of CHASK

PLUS a large topical subject and resource index.

See order form on page 38

Has it been a long time since your family enjoyed a restful week together?



Join us for a week of family camp.

Meaningful family life does not come easy. From out of nowhere come stress and pressures that cause strain on your family's relationships. In a family affected by disability, sometimes it doesn't take much to push it over the top. Since 1991 families from around the country have attended

Joni and Friends Family Retreats seeking a time of rest and recreation, Christ-centered encouragement, and the tools to build a stronger family. Held at accessible camp and conference centers across the United States during the summer, Family Retreats provide dynamic five-day programs that refresh and strengthen your whole family. Joni and Friends Family Retreats provide a lifeline to families – families just like yours – who want hope and encouragement that will last. You and your family will be blessed, inspired, and make new friendships that will last a lifetime. Join us this summer at a retreat near you.

www.joniandfriends.org

or call 800-523-5777 and ask for the family information packet

Encouraging Speech and Communication in our Children with Special Needs

By Diane Ryckman

The desire to communicate is the greatest motivator behind learning to speak. For our children with special needs, this desire is no less. It's just that for some, learning to speak is so much more difficult.

For others it will not even be possible that they speak, but this does not mean that our child cannot learn to communicate at all. Rather it means we need to be on the look-out for ways they do communicate. Let's build on these efforts to help them "say" what they want to get across.

Here are some ideas that we used with our son Andrew (Down syndrome) when he was beginning to learn to speak

When Andrew was two, he began to show frustration about not being able to communicate with us. We could tell he had a good understanding of what we would say to him, but just wasn't able to get out what he wanted to say to us. At that time we began to teach him **sign language**, and he was quick to learn the signs...he wanted so badly to be understood! When we knew what he would want to say (at the dinner table, pointing to something he wanted more of, for example), we would use the sign and say the word it represented. Soon he caught on to the signs. Every time he used a sign, we would repeat the word that went with it. In time we noticed that after he had learned the signs and used them for a while, he began to say the word with the sign

(which helped us identify what the word was). The signing seemed to be a bridge to the spoken word for Andrew. Some of the signs Andrew used the most were help, more, all done, thank you, yes, up, book, drink, eat, outside... A good reference book for sign language is **The Joy of Signing**, by Lottie Riekehof.

Children with speech delays often need to hear a word many, many times before they will attempt to say the word themselves. By observing what words are most important for your child to learn first, you can make a point of using these words as you talk with your child.

With Andrew, we made up **picture books of important words** using photographs of family members, pictures of actions, favorite foods, and toys, etc. We would look at them over and over together, saying each target word and doing the sign to accompany it.

This helped both of us to remember the signs, and provided visual, auditory

and kinesthetic input for each word, encouraging speech as well as signing. Picture books or flash cards of words important to our child, can also be made out of magazine pictures cut out and pasted on card stock. The important thing is to review the words together often. For a child who is unable to communicate using sign language, this idea could be adapted to teach symbols that would be used with a communication board – something the child could point at to indicate what she wants to "say."



**Amanda Jones and
her younger sister Isabel**

A few simple things to remember when encouraging your child's speech development are **model, repeat, and expand**.

Model – let your child hear how a word should be pronounced.

Repeat – let your child know you understand what he is trying to say by repeating his word.

Expand – add one more word to expand what your child is saying (example: child says "ball", mom says, "big ball").

If a child gets "lazy" and just sits and cries, or makes noise instead of words, remind him that he can talk, and to use his words. Try to wait until he says what he wants to communicate instead of figuring it out and responding to his noise

In order to help with proper sentence structure and grammar, an easy yet effective idea is to make **little booklets**

that model correct speech. As Andrew's

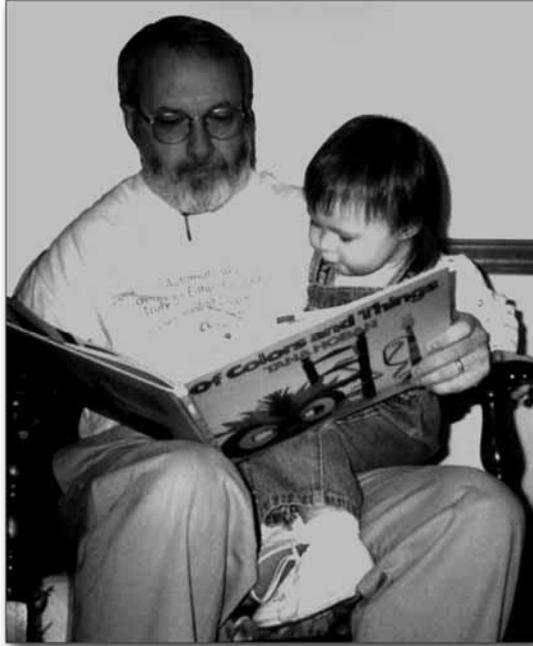
speech developed, he had this habit of saying "me" instead of "I" (me do it, me like it, etc), so I made up a little booklet of simple sentences all starting with "I like..." I printed each sentence out in large, bold print with one sentence on each page, then one of our daughters made a little cartoon picture for the next page, illustrating what the sentence said. Andrew loved it, learned to identify a number of sight words, and also learned proper grammar at the same time.

One very important question to consider with our speech-delayed children is, are they able to hear properly? Here is what one mom of a child with special needs, Becky (who also happens to be a doctor), recommends: "Pay attention to making sure your child can hear! They can't learn to speak clearly if they can't hear what we're saying to them.

"Some ENT's and audiologists may not be as aggressive about rechecking hearing as they should be, and it's up to us to advocate for our

children. Especially while babies, they can't tell us they can't hear -- watch for clues: don't startle to sudden noises, don't follow you with their eyes when you're talking to them or when you're trying to get their attention. When they get older, they may turn the volume up on the TV etc., or they

may talk louder because they don't realize how loud they are. Those are all signs to have their ears checked for an effusion (fluid in the middle ear) even if they don't have the fever, pain, or "sick" feeling associated with a full-blown infection. Anytime they get a cold and have a runny nose, chances are good that the mucous membranes lining the ear (which connect to the ones in the sinuses and nasal passages) are also swollen."



Naomi Kurlowich, Age 2 1/2, and Daddy reading

Another mom, Cindy,

shares her advice about hearing: "I would encourage parents to ask and push about hearing aids if their child has problems passing hearing tests. James (almost 8 with Down syndrome) got tubes 5-6 times before they decided on hearing aids And I think that it was mainly because both ear drums now have large holes in them. He was only able to *barely* pass a hearing test right after he got new tubes. His speech has so improved with the hearing aids. I wish he had gotten them at 3 or 4yrs instead of at 6yrs."

There are a number of resources available to help with speech development. Books that give parents ideas that can be used at home are: [Language and Thinking for Young Children \(Ruth Beechick\)](#)

[The Language of Toys, Teaching Communication Skills to Children with Special Needs \(Sue Schwartz\)](#)

Early Communication Skills for Children with Down Syndrome (Libby Kumin)

Ready, Set, Go: Talk to Me (DeAnna Horstmeier)

1st Straight Talk: A Parents Guide for Correcting Childhood Mispronunciations (Marisa Lapish)

2nd Straight Talk: A Parent's Guide to Language Development (Marisa Lapish and Tom and Sherry Bushnell)

The video series Love and Learning is a simple, helpful tool for encouraging speech development. From a promotional flyer: "Love and Learning is an innovative technique for teaching language and reading skills to infants and toddlers...the technique combines the use of special audio tapes, video tapes and books with an easily achievable amount of parental involvement."

Many parents recommend materials developed by Dr. James MacDonald. Judy shares, "I've just started using Dr. MacDonald's First Words. It is in a workbook form, giving a small task to work on each day, cycling through them every 30 days. It's teaching me to use his techniques.

1. Waiting for Simon (age 8 with Down syndrome) to speak,
2. Giving Simon a word to use in place of nonverbal behaviors that he uses to communicate,
3. Making sure that I take opportunities in a playful way to let him initiate half of the conversation,
4. Incorporating new words into our day's natural activities."

Dr. MacDonald's program. Communicating Partners

By Linda Rau

What do we do, Lord? This is a question I've asked over and over since our youngest two children were born with DS.

Jacob and Jonathan were "fearfully and wonderfully made" within my womb just like our other three children, but life has presented so many challenges for them especially in the area of speech.

Let me tell you about our speech journey with them so far.

When Jacob and Jonathan were preschoolers we enrolled them in an expensive, very intensive program that covered PT, OT, academics and speech, along with their older brother Sean who needed help with reading. It was a program we could do at home which intrigued me since we chose to home school Jacob and Jonathan as we did their two older sisters and brother.

The program was great for Sean, but too challenging for Jacob and Jonathan.

Through supportive staff, I learned a lot about discipline, PT and OT, but the academic portion was too difficult. We weren't working on communication, just oral-motor exercises and vocabulary building. My main interactions with them were flashcards and other directive tasks.

After three years of using this approach, I knew we needed to do something different. A big clue came the day Jacob and Jonathan both hid from me under the kitchen table when I wanted to do flashcards.

I needed to get back to play and having sons that wanted to spend time with me. They liked playing with the rest of the family, but mom had become too directive. I didn't want their life to be one where they were constantly told what to do, and that's what I had ended up doing.

A series of circumstances lead us to a visit with Dr. Jim MacDonald, a professor emeritus of Ohio State University with over 30

years of experience "showing parents that they were their child's best language teachers."

We went home with the assignment to imitate and to take turns with them, and do this through their favorite activities.

I loved the favorite activity idea as we had never tried that before, and I knew this way they would let me into their world.

Jonathan, who was six years old, loved the computer so I started copying his actions and taking turns with him playing Blues Clues Treasure Hunt game. We had so much fun trying to find the treasure together and he gave me lots of eye contact.

I controlled the mouse on my turn so he had to tell me where to go. He started saying, "This way" and pointed the way to go. It was the first time we had connected for an extended period of time.

Jacob, who was 8, loved watching movies, so we would watch a portion with him, pause it, and act it out together. We also played with stuffed animals the same way he did.

Upon our next visit to Dr. MacDonald, he asked what we had done to make Jacob and Jonathan so much more interactive with him. Getting into their world through their interests had made a noticeable difference in a few months time.

I loved the way Communicating Partners (CP), involved the whole family; in fact, Dr. Jim said its success is up to the family. He showed us what to do and then we put his five CP (Communicating Partner's) strategies into practice. The strategies progressed from:

Interacting non-verbally through imitating actions,

To communicating with sounds,

To developing a personal language through books and everyday activities,

To having real conversations,

On to civil behavior.

We used Dr. MacDonald's **Before Speech** manual, and then progressed to his **First Words** manual. These manuals taught us how to do the techniques of balancing, matching, responding, turn-taking, and waiting through our daily activities.

Each family member began doing one activity a day with each boy. When everyone did their part, Jacob and Jonathan interacted at least 5 times with different people. This avoided monotony and burnout. The boys interacted a lot more when we involved them in our daily activities. This way the

focus was not on their speech but on the activity, and interacting came more naturally.

I remember Dad (a master at play) making shadow monsters on the wall. They all took turns making monsters with lots of imitating and monster growls.

Before college, Bethany involved the boys in her music interest: playing the piano, dancing, and singing favorite worship songs.

Our oldest, Kristi, loved sports and involved them in basketball and football.

Now that both girls live away, they communicate with the boys over the phone and write e-mails in a CP way. Sean used to spend many hours in the back seat of the van in the middle of his brothers. This was a perfect time for him to imitate and play with the boys. Now he works out with them after breakfast. We have the joy of knowing them better, and the boys are learning a lot through our conversations.

One of my favorite interactive times with the boys, has been having conversations with books. I would read a page or two to Jacob then we would pretend to be the characters. We took turns talking like the characters and ad-libbed with our own imaginations. This helped me see how Jacob thought, and it opened us up to some great conversations. His eyes lit up and he really loved connecting



Jacob and Jonathan Rau

with me.

With Jonathan we began interacting with storybooks by acting the pictures out since he wasn't talking much. Curious George books were Jonathan's favorite. After reading a page we would practice articulation by saying high interest words together and acting out the page we just read. After reading a page about George chasing the man with the yellow hat, I (the man) chased Jonathan (George) around our ping-pong table as he made "oo-oo" monkey sounds.

Along with experiencing the concept "around", this was fun sounding practice, and we had a great time interacting.

Recently I've come to realize the best communicating partners are right here in our family, as they care the most and will be life-long partners no matter where they go. But as our older children got busy and moved, we had to find new partners for the boys. We found high school and college students who desired to work with Jacob and Jonathan.

This year we have a 12 year old boy from our church playing with the boys once a week. Mrs. B (alias Libby), a special ed. teacher, also spends one morning a week with us. One morning after coaching her for a few weeks in CP methods, she set aside her agenda, got down on the floor and copied Jonathan's actions and sounds. It was the first time they'd really connected, and they've been close friends ever since. She enters their world first by joining in their activity, then both boys want to do the learning activities she's brought in her bag.

I realized Jacob and Jonathan needed to try their communicating skills out in public more so we started volunteering at the Alzheimer's unit of a nursing home. Rather than walking around visiting people which would put pressure on our guys to talk, I offered our help during the activity time. Our visits have become

enjoyable for the residents; some treat Jacob and Jonathan as they would their grandchildren, coaching and getting excited over their progress in throwing a ball or whatever else we're doing. Even though they don't always like going, once we get there they have fun and they're learning other people have challenges, too.

These ideas spring from hours of counseling with Dr. MacDonald as well as getting ideas from others on his Communicating group on yahoo.com, and prayer.

Looking over the past fourteen years with Jacob and Jonathan, we've come a long way, but we still have a long way to go. We've tried lots of different and sometimes expensive therapies, but due to its success, family involvement, and wealth of information, Communicating Partners is the one we've stayed with the longest.

When we started, Jonathan was pretty isolated but is now initiating contact with people and raising his hand to do "Jonathan talk" in a group. Jacob

had a few "school" words or words for needs, but was not conversational. Today he was telling me what to make for supper tomorrow night and he loves having meaningful conversations with us.

Our journey is not over. Some would say this process of becoming a communicator is taking a long time. To me, the best things in life aren't instant. They are homemade or homegrown, and that takes time. In the same way, our dream for our two sons to someday carry on a conversation with whomever they want is taking time. It's a process we will continue no matter how old they are. And as we daily work on our communicating goals with Jacob and Jonathan, doors of communication are opening for them, with us and now with others.

Having Jacob and Jonathan has made James 1:5 come to life for me. ("Ask God what to do and He will gladly tell you...") I'm learning to daily ask the



Jacob and Jonathan Rau

Lord, "What do I do?" God has and will continue to answer that question. Whatever your situation, ask the Lord what to do, and He will show you. That's an adventure in itself!



Jacob and Jonathan Rau

Linda Rau is beginning to work with families, helping them to learn the Communicating Partner's program. For more information contact Linda @ linda-rau7@yahoo.com

For free information and practical guidelines on encouraging communication with your child, look @ www.jamesdmacdonald.org . Dr. MacDonald's new book, Play to Talk, A Practical Guide to Help Your Late Talking Child, is designed for parents. (2007 James D. MacDonald, Pam Stoika, Kiddo Publishing, Madison, WI)

Thoughts On Communication

By Diane Ryckman

Communication is both expressive and receptive, and is vital to every relationship in life. The strength of my relationship with family and friends is proportional to the extent we communicate our thoughts, frustrations and joys with each other. In the same way, communication is central to my relationship with God.

God has expressed Himself to me through the Bible. Through faith in Christ's work on the cross, communication with God is established. The *strength* of my relationship with Him depends now on how receptive I am to His Word. How willing am I to really listen? How much time will I invest in reading and meditating on what He wants me to know?

God has established prayer as the means of expressing myself to Him. Psalm 62 encourages us to "Pour out your heart before Him..." What a wonderful invitation to communicate! And the more we communicate, the deeper our relationship with our heavenly Father becomes.

God's receptiveness to my communication with Him, however, is dependent on me. As in every relationship, sin and selfishness build barriers to communication, yet God has done His part to destroy these barriers through the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. Now it is up to me to maintain communication with Him. "If we confess our sins He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9). The Lord has put everything in place! It's up to us to "Draw near to God, and He will draw near to you" (James 4:8). And that's a promise!



Currently in America, thousands of families are homeschooling children whose special needs range from attention deficit disorder to severe multiple handicaps. Parents often find that when they bring these children home to be educated, they come out of the "deep freeze" that has kept them from making significant progress in traditional settings.

For children who are learning disabled, who function best with "real-life problems" rather than artificial worksheet tasks, homeschooling may be ideal. For children who are medically sensitive, learning at home provides the opportunity for careful monitoring. For children who have attention deficit, who function best with uniquely structured time and fewer distractions, homeschooling usually proves to be the answer.

After hundreds of hours of research, writing, and thoughtful graphic design, HSLDA is proud to announce the latest addition to the Home School Legal Defense Association website: Homeschooling a Struggling Learner.

HSLDA's special needs coordinators Betty Statnick and Dianne Craft, and the HSLDA communications department and web department have partnered to produce this innovative approach to helping families homeschooling students who learn differently.

We all struggle with learning in one way or another, but most of us have learned how to compensate. In the case of struggling students who learn differently from the majority of children, the goal is to discover how they learn best, and then to motivate them as they learn.

The decision to homeschool a child with spe-

cial learning needs is a weighty one. Parents may meet pressure from the school district, or even the state, to enroll their child in the "system." Many encounter criticism from well-meaning family and friends, and most must deal with their own fears of inadequacy. Nevertheless, in record numbers, parents of children who have special needs are choosing to home educate, and most are finding that the rewards far outweigh the costs.

Here is help. The heart of HSLDA's new online resource is a series of tools that allow parents to do some analysis on their own. They begin by trying to help parents understand the learning process, so they in turn can understand why their children may not be responding to conventional teaching methods. Then, based on the latest brain research, we explain what experts call "the four learning gates" and offer checklists to help diagnose why a child's particular "learning gate" isn't functioning correctly.

Equally important, they are compiling tried-and-true resources, from techniques parents can implement on their own to programs, books, videos, and organizations offering insight into correcting and compensating for learning difficulties.

Their hope is that the new web pages will be a great aid to many homeschoolers—and minimize the amount of time and money they spend in search of information.

Help may just be a click away!

www.hslda.org/strugglinglearner

What Can Be Gained Through Heartache?

By Lynnette Kraft

It seems like a lifetime ago, but there was a time when I was a self-centered, materialistic, newlywed. I thought too often of my career, my clothes, my future dream home, and all the other things in life that don't give a person true joy. I didn't know Jesus and I didn't realize just what kind of life I was missing out on. I was lost and on my way to an unhappy marriage and ultimately an unfulfilling life.

God began to intervene. In January of 1990, I found out I was pregnant. It wasn't a planned pregnancy, in fact I was still on the birth control pill, but God was beginning to do a work in our lives and his plans would supersede ours. My husband and I had talked about having children, but we only discussed what we thought would be the most attractive blend of our features... his green eyes with my dark hair seemed like the most beautiful combination for our future child. I think we thought we could place our order.

It was while I was carrying our first son that my husband and I both began to think about our relationships with God. We didn't deny God. We also knew that Jesus died for the salvation of all those that believed on him. However, we were fickle in our faith. It was merely head knowledge and hadn't penetrated our hearts. We discussed what we would teach our son about God and decided we needed to know more, so we began to go to church.

After attending my childhood church for a few weeks and soaking in the word of God, we both became excited about learning more and we both re-

ceived Jesus as our Lord and Savior. After Jared was born, I became a stay at home mommy and I loved it! God was continuing to grow us up in him and we were excited about growing and serving, but he had much more to teach us!

When Jared was almost a year old we began to think about adding another baby to our family; a brother or sister for Jared. It didn't take long for me to be pregnant with our second baby. The pregnancy was very different and I had a feeling from very early on that something wasn't right, although I couldn't say what. A sonogram at 6 months revealed that our baby had a neural tube defect called anencephaly. We didn't know what that was, but we were told that our baby would not survive. We were devastated, but we knew where to turn. Kyle and I clung to one another and leaned heavily on God and his word.

We had learned some scripture and felt that we were beginning to gain new insight as to 'who' our Savior was and what his character was like, but during the three months of carrying a baby that we knew would die, we began to seek comfort and understanding with more fervor. We opened the word of God, hurting, but also excited to see what new insight we would gain. It was a somber but exhilarating time in our lives.

When Samuel was born, we shared



Samuel Kraft, around 13 days old

him with our family and friends. We knew his time on earth would be severely limited and we wanted everybody to have the opportunity to meet this child that God would very soon take to be with him. Samuel touched the lives of many people and when he was just thirteen days old, he left us and entered into God's presence.

We missed our precious baby, but we thanked God for a life that taught us to depend on the God we were learning to adore. We praised God for teaching us to value life and family in a way we hadn't before (Psalm 128:3). We delighted in God for showing us that we are all fearfully and wonderfully made and that before he placed us in the womb, he knew us (Psalm 139:13-18). Samuel was no mistake. He was planned by a sovereign God that uses all situations for our good when we love him (Roman 8:28).

After Samuel died, God blessed us just eleven months later with a healthy and beautiful daughter, Abigail. We had made the decision to let God plan our family since he had proven to us, through his word and our personal experience, that his ways were better than ours. (Psalm 127:1) We had a wonderful time with our baby girl and were very content with life. But God was ready to do some more work to mold us into the vessels that he wanted us to be.

When Abigail was eleven months old, we discovered I was carrying our fourth child. The sonogram revealed a healthy boy, but the night that Josiah was born, it was evident that something was wrong with our nearly nine pound baby. It was



Josiah Kraft, around 5 days old

obvious that Josiah didn't have anencephaly and that gave us immediate comfort, but after his initial cry and taking in his first breath, Josiah was not able to breathe. He was immediately taken away to NICU. My husband, Kyle, followed. I didn't worry too much because there was nothing visibly wrong with him. I comforted myself by thinking that he just had some fluid in his lungs, but hours later, he was still in NICU hooked up to a ventilator. We hadn't been told yet what was wrong.

Nearly five hours later a doctor finally came in and told us what we didn't want to hear, "Your baby is very sick." Kyle listened to the doctor while I just stared out the window in disbelief. How could we be dealing with yet another problem unrelated to Samuel's? It just didn't make sense. We were told that Josiah had a diaphragmatic hernia and may or may not survive. If he did survive, he would most likely live a normal and healthy life.

Josiah had good days and bad, but after just five days, God took him to heaven. We



Josiah and Mommy

would have to suffer heart-ache again. My heart was heavy, but my spirit told me that God would not leave us or forsake us. Just as he had helped us through our previous loss, he would also help us through this. Because it wasn't a pre-diagnosed problem, I was less prepared and the days following Josiah's death were difficult. I felt a deep sadness, but that all began to change when a friend

of mine came over one day and turned my thoughts around and made me view my trial with a new perspective. She told me to picture the Lord asking me if I was willing to accept a new trial for his glory. Was I willing to hurt in order to draw eyes and hearts toward Jesus? Was I willing to do God's work and suffer because he needed me to? When I looked at it that way, it gave me strength. Rather than feeling like a weak and hurting mommy, I began to feel like an honored soldier; somebody willing to suffer for the better good. It pulled me out of my despair. I would miss Josiah and look forward to being with him again one day, but for now I would carry on and continue to walk alongside my Savior.

That might make a great ending to my story, but the story continues...

After Josiah came my sweet little Cecily. A healthy and very contented little girl! Unique challenges came with her, but not the heartache. Cecily was healthy until she was about nine months old. She came down with something that was never diagnosed, but the symptoms pointed to whooping cough. She would have attacks in the night and would stop breathing. After vomiting very thick and sticky mucous, she would begin to breathe again. It was terribly scary. It took her weeks to recover completely and it was following this illness that she changed. She began to be distant and I felt she began to look right through me. She had been very content as a young baby, but now she just wanted to do her own thing with no boundaries and she disobeyed over and over again. No matter how consistent I was in teaching, training and disciplining, she just didn't seem to learn.

She struggled most between the ages of one and three and made improvement year by year beyond that. She is eleven now and has overcome many of her issues, but continues to be quite challenged in many areas of learning. I've found that a non-accusing, patient and understanding heart is what is needed with her. It helps to realize that her problems in learning and behavior have not been because of rebellion but be-

cause of something that she cannot help. I've tried to focus on building in one area at a time rather than too many subjects all at once and this helps her to be successful at something and feel good rather than feel like a failure at everything. We are becoming victorious and things are beginning to click with her. We've used some neurodevelopmental exercises to attempt to trigger things in the brain that were perhaps never "turned on". These have made a difference. I've also discovered that repeating things until they click, and not over stimulating her brain all at once if she's not getting it, are helpful. We can always come back to it! Active, exciting learning times are most beneficial, and daily success is critical. I'm not perfect and admittedly I don't always have patience, but I plan to become victorious over my weakness through much devoted prayer. I know that God will give us both victory!

When Cecily was two years old, another beautiful daughter was added to our family. Anna was diagnosed in the womb with heterotaxy and congenital heart defects, including single ventricle, coarctation of the aorta, total anomalous pulmonary venous return and other related heart problems. When we were given this diagnosis, we couldn't believe it. Yet a third and unrelated problem! While Samuel and Josiah both died shortly after birth, there was more hope for Anna. We were told that with a few surgeries, Anna could survive and do well.

When Anna was just a few hours old she and her daddy flew to Children's Mercy Hospital in Kansas City, MO. My parents took me and our other children to K.C.. Anna had her first 'closed heart' surgery when she was just three days old. It went very well and we returned home when she was ten days old.

We moved to the country when Anna was a baby. We felt that the fresh air would be good for her health. We got cats, a dog, Nubian dairy goats, and chickens. We had a great time and enjoyed our new life with a fragile baby and lots of fresh air and fresh foods to keep the family healthy.

When Anna was nine months old she went in for her first big and scary open heart surgery –

the hemi-fontan. This surgery didn't have the same outcome as the first. It seemed to go well, but when the surgeon took the ventilator off of Anna, she went into respiratory arrest and would have died had they not resuscitated her. She barely clung to life for over a week, and when she was not so fragile, another heart catheterization was performed to try to figure out what went wrong. When it was discovered that her veins had become obstructed following the previous surgery, they decided to go back in the following day to repair them. This surgery would be her only hope.

I remember reading the Psalm for that day which was Psalm 21. Referring to God delivering David and giving him strength, Psalm 21:2 says, "Thou hast given him his heart's desire, and hast not withholden the request of his lips". I hoped and prayed that God would give me my heart's desire and would not withhold my request for Anna to come through the surgery well and be able to return home with us. God did just that. Anna did come through her surgery and after three long weeks in the hospital finally got to go back to her home in the country with her brother and two sisters.

The next five years were peaceful. God didn't allow many trials. Our health was good, our home was happy, and two new healthy boys, Silas and Jonas, were added to our home. God had brought us unhealthy babies with every even numbered child in the past (numbers two, four and six), but Jonas was baby number eight and he was healthy. We didn't know if there was any real pattern, but we half expected number eight to have some health issue. He didn't and we were grateful!

Anna's long-term prognosis was unknown. The medical books said that children with heterotaxy and heart defects weren't expected to live very long, but her doctors changed their diagnosis every time they saw her. We were told she could live "two years" to "decades". So, we just determined to not think about it. What is life if you worry through every day? No, we would see Anna in our future. We couldn't survive any other way.

When Anna was a baby, we prayed for her heart problems to go away, but as she got older, we began to pray for God's strength for her and for us, and we quit asking God to take her heart problems away. We wanted to teach Anna to be content with the way that God created her. He knew what he was doing and had a purpose for his design. She needed to know that we loved and adored her just the way she was and



Anna Kraft

that she was not a reject. The term "birth defect" has always bothered me because when we think of something defective, we think of something inadequate or weak. Anna was certainly NOT that! God used her heart problems to make her stronger in many ways, and to help her see her need for him. She was an incredible young lady and truly lacked nothing in character, love or beauty.

Anna grew into a smart, witty and beautiful little girl. She had a huge vocabulary at a very young age. When she was barely two years old, we went to a friend's house for fellowship. Usually Jared or Abigail would unbuckle her car-seat. When I realized she hadn't popped out of her seat I said, "Anna what's taking you?" She said, "I can't get this contwapshun to work"! It was so funny! As she got older she loved to mother her little brothers. When Silas was being ornery she'd firmly say, "Silas John!" She made us laugh often. She was just a huge blessing to each member of the family.

When she was almost six years old, Anna accepted Jesus Christ as her Savior and was baptized by her daddy. In August, Anna's health began



to deteriorate. On November 19th, 2004, Anna breathed her last breath at home in her mommy's and daddy's bed. There were signs of a failing heart, but nothing could have prepared us for that day. How can you ever be ready for your precious child to die? You can't. However, in the midst of all the pain, God was faithful! (I Cor. 1:9) I've never felt his presence so strong. I've never felt his love so great. He walked beside each of us along a very sorrowful path. I can tell story after story of things the Lord did to give us hope.

Watching my children suffer heartache was worse than suffering my own heartache. But that is how it is with God, too. He isn't happy about our suffering. He hurts with us and for us. That is why he is ever so near to us through those times. He will not let us hurt without his loving arms around us and without a purpose behind it. He will not let us suffer without hope. He will not leave us comfortless. (John 14:18) I'm so thankful for my heartache, because "I'm confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in *me* will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ." (Phil. 1:6)

I've since given birth to another precious and healthy son, Harrison, and I find myself satisfied, completely and utterly satisfied. Why? Because I've lost and I've gained. I've suffered and

I've recovered. I've mourned and I've laughed. I've learned to be content. If Harrison would have been born unhealthy, I would have hurt, but because of my trials, I would have been able to endure the affliction with more confidence. I would have known how to survive. Through our suffering we gain patience, experience and hope (Romans 5:4).

Trials and afflictions (that are not sin trials) are not the enemy, they are God's way of teaching us and we should be grateful for the opportunity to learn

to serve him and minister to others because of them (II Cor. 1:4). Last year I completed a book that tells our story in more detail. I'm in the process of looking at options for publishing. I think about what my life would be like, had I not experienced these trials. I'm so happy to have a story to tell; a story that can not only help others who are hurting, but a story that reveals God's character through the way he cared for me and my family down our road of challenge, heartache and victory. It's an exciting life to walk with God, a life I'm excited to share with others. I leave you with a couple of my favorite verses: Psalm 119:75 "I know, O LORD, that thy judgments are right, and that thou in faithfulness hast afflicted me." Psalm 119:67 "Before I was afflicted I went astray, but now have I kept thy word." What a privilege to be used of God – even to suffer for his glory!

Lynnette Kraft, Sedgwick, KS
growingthruaffliction@yahoo.com

Wife to Kyle and Home-Schooling Mom to:
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503-761-1690 nommie@iwon.com**

Classified Ads

Special Needs Educational Consulting (including ABA program assistance for children with autism) Would you like some extra help designing an effective homeschooling program for your child with special needs? I am a Christian mom of 2 children and have been homeschooling for over 8 years. My youngest son is 11 and has autism. I am listed as a Special Needs consultant with HSLDA and as an autism specialist. I can complete the quarterly evaluations recommended by HSLDA for families who are homeschooling a child with autism. I offer AFFORDABLE help in determining appropriate educational goals for your child, choosing and/or modifying curriculum, as well as individualized teaching tips and educational strategies. I can also help families who would like to implement ABA therapy themselves for their children with autism but cannot afford to pay outside therapists and/or ABA professionals. I have been doing ABA and Verbal Behavior (among other therapies) with my son for 8 years and have learned from the best professionals. All consultations are by phone and e-mail so I work with clients across the U.S. *Mention NATHHAN and receive a free 30-minute phone consultation! To learn more, visit www.ochomeschooling.com/specialneeds or contact Mary Gusman at homeschoolhelp@hotmail.com or (949) 888-5953.

ICAN-DO

It's a great program! National website is www.icando.org

National phone number is: (253) 588-5177

ICAN-- International Christian Association of Neurodevelopmentalists Email: Wash_ican@hotmail.com
My personal info is: CAN-DO Cyndi Ringoen P.O. Box 9822 Spokane, WA 99209 www.ican-do.net 509-292-2937 cdarling@icehouse.net

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I am Christian, homeschool supporter and a facilitator with the Davis Dyslexia Association International
Free informational packet
Uniquely Gifted
Janet Confer
949-589-6394
uniquelycreated@cox.net
www.dyslexia.com

Resource for teaching children with Autism about the Bible.

(or any age child who is a visual learner).
David C. Cook Ministries
Scripture pictures.
www.davidccook.com
Reference from NATHHAN member, Donna Glick 920-296-5462

Drymids Bibs

7 used Drymids bibs for child age 5-10ish. Some have pockets, some don't. Colors: lavender, yellow, blue. Free, but you pay shipping. Contact: Paula Black at kpblackmail@cs.com

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Activity Card sets for early reading skills in **Phonics and Basic Sight Word recognition**. Each card is designed as a mini-lesson for better focus of attention. Free catalog available at caroljeankoch@yahoo.com or write to C Koch, 503 Madrona Way NE, Bainbridge Island, WA 98110

Beyond Speech Therapy

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www.bstlearning.com
Michael Ann Baylor
(866) 395-1911
Dr. Lou Fein in Florida
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.....
Helping kids with autism and ADD remember more of what they study....

Memory Skills Made Easy

Endorsed by Dr. Temple Grandin and has various testimonials from families whose kids struggle with learning issues.
www.MemorySkillsMadeeasy.com

Letters From Families

Kristen

bcairns@a2bmail.net

Christian in Muslim country seeking help for families dealing with special needs.

Hi my name is Kristen. I am an American Christian living in Morocco. I have been using your Straight Talk book with my 5 year old over the last year. I have found it very helpful and practical.

I have some Muslim friends I am sharing your information with, and I am hoping that the Christian emphasis in the included newsletter will spark their interest in Him. I shared recently with one of them Psalm 139- as she is pregnant.

Also, I have a British Christian friend who started a school for children with special needs here in this Muslim city. Children with special needs have traditionally been locked away or even chained up at home, so it is exciting to see more and more things done for them. This friend has created Redouane Center, where the children learn how to communicate with pictures if they are unable to speak while others are doing more advanced things. I have been meaning to ask if there are people in the U.S. who would be interested in helping this center out in anyway, or if you have unused materials that could apply to Arabic/ French speakers. I will talk to the British friend again to see what needs she may have, but I was just curious if this would be any interest to you all.

Thank you so much for what you are doing!

God Bless you.

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Handwriting Instruction Service Provider

Of interest to homeschoolers with handwriting concerns:

Kate Gladstone, director of the Handwriting Repair handwriting instruction/improvement service, travels nationwide and internationally assisting homeschoolers and others by:

— Evaluating and improving handwriting skills of children/teens/adults

— Evaluating and improving handwriting skills of educators (including homeschooling parents)

— Providing individualized services in curriculum recommendation, selection, and modification. (The handwriting program that suits one homeschooling family or child may not suit another. Even the top-quality program that you have selected may need modifications and individualized changes to work best with your child or children:

handwriting programs come "out of a box," but children do not.)

Like anyone else, Kate has her preferences in handwriting style: like many of her clients, she has a love for Italic handwriting. However, she works with any approach or program preferred by the homeschoolers and other educators who seek her services, and will make recommendations/suggestions for improvements specific to any selected program. When you want to enhance, simplify, or modify an "out of the box" program so that it will completely meet the unique needs of YOUR child or children , call on Kate.

To reach Kate —

PHONE: 518/482-6763

E-MAIL: handwritingrepair@gmail.com

WEB-SITE: <http://www.learn.to/handwrite>

ADDRESS:

Kate Gladstone

6-B Weis Road

Albany, NY 12208-1942

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Question concerning cerebral palsy therapy

Tami Harriman

nealsnews@peoplepc.com

I am an adoptive mother and have contacted you before about my daughter and some problems we were having.

Now I have a question for someone

else. We have friends that are in the Kyrgh Republic. They are working in an orphanage there and have a little girl who is 5 who has cerebral palsy. It is a very mild case and has just affected her right side. The doctor there said that she needs therapy to help her, but they are in a very remote location and there is no way to get her to a therapist.

Is there somewhere we can find a manual to send them so they can do physical therapy with this little girl. My nephew has cerebral palsy and I remember my brother having a manual with pictures of balls in it, etc. and detailed explanations of how to do things with them to help their spastisity. My nephew is long since grown and the manual gone, but I thought possibly some of the parents in your organization would know and could help me get the needed item to this couple in less time.

Thank you for your time and help.



Travel by car needed for mom with child who has cerebral palsy.

My name is Cinderella Brown I live in Baltimore, Maryland. I have a 12 year old daughter who has Cerebral Palsy. She is the sweetest and most loveable little lady that you would ever want to meet. My question is, Is there any organizations that helps parents in need of a car so that they can get the kids around to different events and things like that? I know that the cars are not brand new, but one that can get you from point A to point B will truly be a blessing. Can you email me back at this email address? Thank you for any information that can help me. My email address is cbrown@amertechcorp.com



**Help for Behavioral Issues
Debra Ropp, OR
berdr@yahoo.com**

We have 5 adopted children from Korea, ages 12, 10, 9, 8, and 6. All have special needs. My most special needs one, though, is the 12 year old who has been tested for everything from ADHD to autism / aspergers, depression, and everything else under the sun, but no help. I am in desperate need for answers for this child. It is behavioral issues and more towards mom and a sister than dad or anyone else in the home.

Thank you for being there.



Top 5 Adoption Transition Tips (Used with permission from Home School Enrichment magazine www.HomeSchoolEnrichment.com)

#1: Set your top family rules. Decide on your top family rules and commit to sticking to them from day one. If it is important to you that no one wears shoes in the house, for example, on the first day of arrival, explain this to your new child/children and enforce it from the outset. Do not cause confusion by having a few “special” days and then laying down the law.

#2: Establish a schedule for your home. Begin following your routine before new children arrive. This does not have to be an hour by hour list of events, but a general flow for how your days will work. When the new child enters the home, you can discuss the daily routine with him, and he will feel some comfort in knowing that he won’t have to figure out all the rules on his own. The other children will find comfort in having a schedule they are used to when their family begins to change.

#3: Allow all the children de-stress times You can do this by having 15-minute alone times on certain days or a special Saturday morning breakfast date. All the children need some time alone with Mom and Dad to express their frustrations and find ways to cope, as well as being reassured of Mom and Dad’s ongoing love.

#4: Don’t forget to de-stress yourself! Adjusting to the issues of a hurt and possibly traumatized child, dealing with homeschooling and trying to lead the family in bonding and attachment—you need to recharge your batteries. Do what will help you rest. Sit in a library for an hour, go to a local coffee shop, or take

your spouse out for dinner. If getting out of the house is not feasible, then make an agreement with your spouse to have an hour alone for a nice bath, nap, or walk.

#5: Have family fun times. Good family memories are important to everyone. Visit the zoo, play catch in the backyard, take everyone to the park for a picnic. Physical activity helps relieve stress, and having Mom and Dad in on the fun is a great bonding activity for everyone.

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Help for Classic Child with Dyslexia

Jennifer jenmary@verizon.net

I read your letter in the NATHHAN NEWS about your daughter. Is your daughter homeschooled? I have a 10-year-old daughter with reading problems and wanted to share my experience with you and what I am doing to help her. First, if you haven't yet, you should have your daughter read to you out loud and see what mistakes or problems she is having.

Example: 1. Does she have trouble sounding out words? 2. Does she skip words or lines when reading? 3. Does she turn letters around? an example would be to read the "ar" sound as "ra" 4. Does she have vision problems? 5. Does she combine two words together (vision problems) or stick letters from one word onto the next?

I brought my daughter to an eye doctor to check her vision first of all. Her vision turned out fine.

I then had her tested by an educational eye doctor that tests for dyslexia and other visual problems related to reading. He said she needs vision therapy. Her eyes have trouble tracking. We only went to a couple of therapy sessions. It was too expensive and she hated it, so we stopped. I found that books with a little larger print help her and also reading a little and taking a break when her eyes get tired and then starting again a little later. And also reading at a level below her grade level for gaining speed in reading and working on tracking. Even letting her read simple easy readers and a lot of them will

improve her vocabulary and spelling. Sometimes she reads level 1, 2, or 3 of easy readers in between her grade level reading. My daughter writes backwards sometimes also. Today she wrote "bed" as "deb". When I asked her to read what she wrote she did notice it was written wrong. Because of that she has a hard time remembering phonics. Since "ar" will often look like "ra" to her, she doesn't make sense of the phonic rules. I was told she is not dyslexic and most of the time she gets it right now, but it still comes back in her writing and reading sometimes.

I have bought "reading rod" (www.learningresources.com) books for my younger daughter. They cover one phonics rule for each book. Book 1 covers short "a" words. It has 16 books in each box. They are very, very simple reading. I have decided to have my daughter read a book a day and then dictate the words and some of the sentences in the book that she has read. It is simple dictation, but she sometimes forgets how to write simple words. Today she read the long "O" book and I dictated words like rose, hole, pokes, boat, coat, goes and some simple sentences.

Then I started reviewing "Little Stories for Little Folks" from Catholic Heritage Curricula (www.chcweb.com) first grade phonics. They are a really good phonics review of the basics. In the back of the pamphlets it has rhyming words that I dictate to my daughter. One of the pamphlets has; soon, noon, moon, spoon, and hook, cook, look, book. Another booklet has badge, fudge, budge for the dge words. The idea is that I am reviewing one phonics rule at a time and then dictating the words to her and dictating sentences with the words in them. This is just a review for her because she is reading at a 5th grade level, but she sometimes forgets her phonics and has trouble spelling. I try not to tire her though. When she gets tired her brain works slow and even things she knows well she forgets when she is tired.

"Explode the Code" are a series of books I have used with her as well and am considering getting them out again and reviewing certain pages. They give a lot of practice on each phonics sound. Some children need things broken up

into one rule at a time and need a lot of practice instead of the typical spelling book that covers many rules in one spelling test.

I have found that she needs that for math also. Our math book has her do a whole page of multiplication problems in 10 minutes. She was tired and frustrated. I finally realized to have her study one number times table per day. Her 9x's tables one day and then I make a page of 9 times tables mixed up and she has to do that in 10 minutes instead of all the time tables together. Then the next day I go to the 8's for a couple days, then the 9's and 8's together, etc. My daughter is now learning her times tables the same as if she followed the book, but has it broken down into an easier way of learning them.

I would rather my daughter get 100's in work that is a little below her grade level than c's or d's in her grade level. Then I can spend a couple hours each day getting up to where she is supposed to be in the summer.

Maybe she also needs to read to you out loud every evening so you can check for errors and help her pronounce difficult words and remind her of her phonics rules. God Bless, Jennifer

.....

Susanna Tate tatemishawaka@aol.com

ABeCeDarian Company

Michael Bond, Ph.D. 607-266-3310

I was very interested in your letter about your daughter's academic challenges. Smart in math, smart in general life skills, slow in reading? Have you considered dyslexia? She sounds like a classic dyslexic. There is help and hope. Dyslexic children generally are of above average intelligence, and with the right help they can learn to compensate for their reading challenge... It takes a lot of patience, but it is possible for them to succeed. Spelling may never be her strong point but she should be able to master reading.

I have found **Pathway Readers** the best source of stories for oral reading practice because they use a lot of simple wording and reinforce what the students already know before advancing to a more difficult level. This is precisely what a dyslexic reader needs ... the feeling of "I CAN do this! I am not dumb!" Don't push ahead until your child is **THOROUGHLY** competent at her current level of

work. Patience is the most necessary thing if you want to help her succeed and win.

Dyslexic children struggle with the intense frustration of a brilliant mind trapped in an uncooperative body. They are SO intelligent, yet why are some things SO hard?

One suggestion to simplify efforts at reading: take a large index card and cut out a hole that will allow only one line of print about 2 inches long, to appear, and slide this along over the page as she is reading. This allows her to zero in on decoding about 3 words and their own gymnastics, without the rest of the page dizzying the matter.

Another suggestion is to read out loud to her any work that is not specifically designed to judge or sharpen her reading abilities. **THIS IS NOT CHEATING!!** It may unlock her genius and allow her to make grades that more accurately reveal her true level of comprehension. It is also acceptable to write down the answers as she dictates them. She should not have to fight through the frustration of trying to decide how every word is spelled on every assignment all day every day.

One suggestion I got from an older teacher was to practice spelling, spelling words orally, front wards and backwards, using the pictorial memory. I do this using small flashcards with one spelling word on each card. I had printed them in large print, bright colors, with each syllable a different color. I told them to study the "picture" until they could close their eyes and see every part. The results were amazing. It takes a lot of time. We would only tackle 3-4 words each day. It was SO worth the extra time and effort!

So many parents refuse to admit that their child has a challenge and go on prodding them to keep up with others their age, and it is so unfair. In effect it educates the child that they are just lazy and dumb and if they really tried they could be like everyone else... causing so much needless pain.

Adoption and Homeschooling

Our Family's journey, and the lessons we learned along the way.

By Debbie Googeg



When my husband and I first decided to adopt, we were so excited at the prospect. We could only think of how wonderful it would be to add more children to our family.

We had been to all the preparation classes that explain the grief and pain that

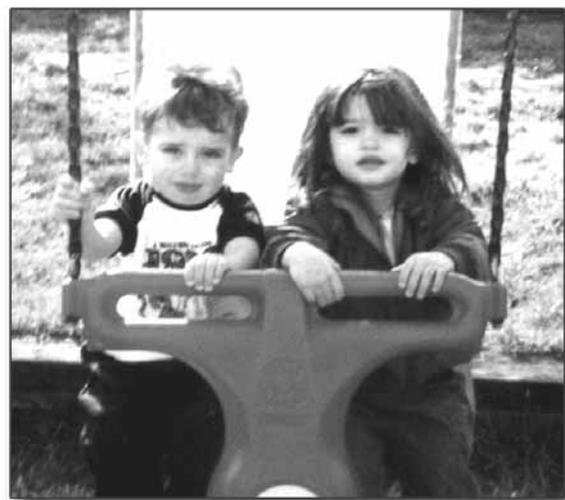
many children bring to new families. Our heads understood, but our hearts couldn't grasp it. It is like being told about labor, but not really understanding the pain of delivery until you have been on the table. We were blissfully ignorant about what was about to hit us as we added to our family. Don't get me wrong—we don't regret our decision to adopt. We simply didn't fully comprehend the challenges we would face as we embarked on the journey.

We had two birth children and had always homeschooled them. We delighted in being their parents. The thought of bringing more children into a joy-filled Christian family was awesome. We put a lot of prayer into our decision and felt led to adopt through the county foster care agency. We also felt that we could accept children up to the age of our youngest—we were not asking to adopt an infant. Our two youngest children were placed in our home as an emergency foster placement. We were schooling at the table when the phone rang, and in 15 minutes our lives changed forever. At that time, my birth children were 5 and 7, and the entering children were 18 months and 2 and a half. Reality and fantasy collided. Our lives were blindsided by the reality of adding two abandoned, neglected, emotionally-challenged toddlers to our family. This was March, and school at our house was still in full

swing as we sought to get our footing.

I think my "homeschooling mother" traits served me well, in that I was always researching, reading, and searching for ways to understand what had hit us. However, as most things tend to go, I learned a lot by trial and error. I found things that worked so well I couldn't believe it, and other things that failed so dismally I just sat and cried over them. We did foster infants prior to our children arriving, and adding them into the homeschooling mix was physically tiring, but I didn't find it as hard to continue on with the needs of the day as I did when our children arrived. These toddlers added a dimension I did not expect. I was emotionally and physically drained. My birth children were withdrawing, my marriage was straining under the stress, and we had to struggle to make our family back into a family. We came to a point of true crisis, and after a difficult night of prayer my husband and I determined that God intended these children for our family and we were not going to disrupt their placement. I had to come up with solutions that would allow us to maintain our homeschooling lifestyle and forge new family bonds in the process.

I knew our methods of homeschooling had to



Adela and Ricky swinging, right after they came home.

change, but I wasn't sure where to start. We had two children who loved the idea of school, and in the preschool years they begged to do more and have worksheets. They loved to sit and listen to me read. I had time to play all sorts of made-up games with flash cards and such. We had switched from a very traditional curriculum to a literature-rich curriculum, and this was working well. However, two toddlers were not going to sit well through hours of read-alouds. These new toddlers were going to require a lot of my time and energy, and they had needs I wasn't sure how to address. I was overwhelmed with all that was taking place.

Instead of immediately diving into school changes, however, I dealt first with the younger children's behavior. Most of it was so odd. I really never knew what to expect next. I didn't realize then that I was dealing with attachment disorder. The toddlers had no clue what a routine was or how to have one. The only thing that had been consistent in their environment was chaos. They never knew who, if anyone, would be taking care of them today. Violence and anger were the norms. Survival was what you had to worry about for the moment.

The kids arrived on high alert. Their frame of reference for life was so different from ours that none of us could understand them or their behavior. They gave wide berth to my husband since they perceived men as people who readily come and go and often are violent. If food was in the room, they felt that it must be time to eat as much as possible because they never knew when they might get some again. If things weren't loud and angry they did not feel comfortable. In their minds, no one should be trusted, and they certainly hadn't known us long enough to even try.

Obedience was avoided at all cost. It was important for them to maintain what they felt was

the upper hand, and they would only obey if there was a definite benefit to them. The two-year-old felt very protective of the one-year-old and would not let him out of her sight. Neither child wanted to be touched or comforted, and they avoided eye contact. This may seem like quite an advanced list for the ages of the children, but they had been indoctrinated into a way of life that was unpredictable, painful, and dark. I was perplexed, tired, and angry. I desperately needed to get a footing, get back on top of

things, and continue some basic schooling.

In order to retain my sanity and not let anger rule the roost, I had to learn not to let the children rule my emotions. No matter what awful thing they could think to do, my job was to not get angry. This I often failed at, but the days I maintained calm, we made progress. The two-year-old would often hurt herself if



she was not the center of attention. She would bang her head on the table or bite or scratch herself. Giving her attention for negative behaviors would, of course, promote more of them. I learned to tell her it was ok if that was what she wanted to do, but she would need to do it in the playpen. I would place her in the playpen and then ignore what was going on in there. This was so effective that I began to use the playpen to manage much of our school time. I set it right behind the area where I taught. One child would be assigned to playpen time with an open-ended toy, like wooden blocks. The other child would be given a different area in the room and a different toy. I would allow a time of about 15 or 30 minutes for each of them, and then they could switch. After the allotted time I would get

out two more toys and the rotation would begin again. They were not allowed to get out their own toys, and they were not allowed to stop playing before the end of their time. They could sit and yell next to their toy or complain loudly, but there they would stay until time for rotation. Outsiders thought that I was too rigid, but I knew from the success I was having that they needed this type of structure. I began to implement rigid structure in all of our routines. In the end, it helped our school too. We had 15

or 30-minute blocks for each school activity, and then I would rotate the older children and the younger children on to the next activity. My birth son was only in kindergarten, so when he didn't need to work I would assign him play-time with one of the younger children. We spent our days rotating around and

around, with a timer beeping every 15 or 30 minutes. I was able to control my emotions because everybody had a place to be.

What this ultimately taught the youngest children was something they had never experienced before—routine.

The idea behind playpen time now spilled over into the creation of a “scream room.” Having experienced neglect, the new children had received little to no attention unless their behaviors were extreme or noise was loud. Using the playpen for behaviors worked, but what to do with all that screaming became a pressing issue. We went through and removed any dangerous items in the laundry room from reach. When the screaming started, I would

take the child to the laundry room and let him know that he was allowed to scream all he wanted, but it had to be in the scream room. The first few sessions were not productive for me as I hovered outside the door wondering what was going to happen next. What happened next was the biggest rage I had ever seen out of little ones—and a whole lot of screaming. I wondered how long the offender could keep it up and was always amazed by the stamina. When the

screaming stopped, I would step inside the scream room and let the child know that, since he was finished, he was welcome back to whatever activity was scheduled at the moment. As with all new techniques, I was shaky at first as to whether it was having any effect, and I worried that the effect might be detrimental. I was pleasantly surprised, however, that we needed to use the scream room less and less and for shorter periods of time.

With things becoming manage-

able in the younger children's behavior and noise level, I realized that instead of always focusing change on the younger children, we needed to step up and make changes in the older children too. Now with four children, and two rather needy, I didn't feel like I could be “Mom on the Spot” at all times. I began to see areas where my older two could take a little bit more responsibility. My oldest could read well, and so I gave her an assignment sheet for the day with items she needed to work on. Then I set up meeting times during those rotations. If I was working with my kindergartner, his sister could be reading or



The Gooege Family

working her math review section. She would check off assignments as she went. My kindergartner learned that all time was not free time as I began to assign him areas of playtime also. Every child needed to learn to help at his or her level of ability. The very youngest could put a new trash bag in the trash can when someone emptied it. The older children began to faithfully make their beds, put away laundry, and work diligently on school papers when it wasn't their turn to sit with Mom.

Gradually, I realized that the younger children had forced us to become more organized and structured with our time. The small chores that the children were doing was building a family team, and this team mentality helped us as we decided that some things we had loved before had to be tailored to our new family. I just couldn't read as many hours in a day, and so we combined history and studies and had just one read-aloud per subject. The older children really desired to continue their bedtime reading of a long chapter book. The younger children, not used to listening to any story, weren't going to make it through this ordeal. I struck a compromise and read shorter, younger stories to all four, and then put the younger ones to bed and went back to read a passage from the older kids' book.

We also needed to work on bonding and loving each other, not just managing and timing out our day. Since physical contact was something the younger children really despised, we had to do a lot of work in that area. I spent time holding and cuddling the younger children and getting them to look me in the eyes. I always called it our eye time. I sang all the nursery songs and little Bible songs I could think of. They had never heard any of them. I could see that all the children needed to have one-on-one time. I started assigning "Mama Night" to each child. My husband worked at night, so I was alone with them and would put everyone to bed except the designated child. We

would spend a short time doing something that child wanted to do. Sometimes we played a little game, got out a special toy, or just talked. We have now outgrown all of these activities, but I look back fondly on those days of songs, stories, and games.

My husband was the rock that kept us going during these difficult times. He listened as I cried and bounced ideas off of him. Since he was home in the mornings, he would take



Adela and Ricky eating ice cubes on the porch this summer.

certain children with him as he worked on projects around the house or ran errands. This gave me a break from a full load and gave him some bonding time with each child. Sometimes he would just get down on the floor and be silly and wrestle with the children. The oldest children loved it, and the younger ones learned that men could be fun, gentle, and always there. He taught them to ride bikes and play football in the backyard. He never shied from discipline, and we made sure

we were a team in our decisions. A social worker once commented to me that the children needed to learn to live in a family. With both parents home in the morning and the kids not sent off to school, we had family going 24 hours a day.

My adopted children still bear emotional scars from their first environment, but our worst days of adjustment are long behind us. In the beginning, there were many tearful days when I thought I wasn't getting through at all and nobody was learning anything, but in hindsight I see we learned much. Every child is doing school now, and all are learning to read and write and do math. Our homeschool did change. I learned to organize time, take more

of a unit study approach, and appreciate the differences in children's learning styles.

However, we have learned so much more about compassion, sacrifice, and family bonding. Most importantly, my children have learned that all children are a blessing from the Lord, whether given by birth or adoption. The experience has been difficult at times, and I have wondered how it's affected all my children.

Recently we learned the answer—when all four came to us and begged to have more children. I wasn't sure what to say. I figured it was just a flight of fancy, and I tentatively mentioned how difficult it was five years ago for all four of them. My oldest adopted child was sad and said that any new kids would be so sad to leave their birth families, but felt that it would be good for them to have a nice family to teach them about God and love them. I had no answer and told them they should pray. Pray they did! Much to our surprise, God moved the hearts of my husband and I and we prayerfully entered the adoption process again.

Debbie Googeg and her husband Jerome have been married 20 years and currently reside in Ohio. They have always homeschooled their children. Debbie and Jerome have two, two and two—two boys, two girls, and two on their way from Liberia, Africa.

This article was originally published in the Nov/Dec '07 issue of Home School Enrichment Magazine. For more information, visit www.HomeSchoolEnrichment.com

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Mary and Wokelle waiting to come home from Liberia

Unborn Babies Lie Waiting For Mommy...

Adopting unborn babies that are still embryos???

In the last issue of the NATHHAN NEWS, we shared with you a new avenue of saving babies through CHASK. In all honesty, we must say that the response of CHASK families, about the whole idea of accepting embryos, was mixed, but almost overwhelmingly positive. Several families came forward to say that they would most certainly be happy to become parents for the embryo with possible missing limbs.

Now we have another situation that we hope you will also be as enthusiastic about. Nightlight Christian Adoptions contacted us about 4 months ago.

Real babies lie waiting for parents. They shared with us a situation that they are asking CHASK families to consider.

Currently, 8 embryos lie frozen, needing a special family. Here is their story.

The genetic parents have conceived three healthy children together, one girl and twin boys. The twin boys were born after a frozen embryo transfer, created at the same time the above mentioned 8 embryos were.

Another embryo transplant, from the same batch, was implanted and they were successful. Baby Ryan grew in his mommy's tummy, but sadly passed away as a still-born at 25 weeks. Genetic testing done on Ryan had a confirmation of skeletal dysplasia. This diagnosis was not definite, but Conradi-Hunermann type of chondrodysplasia puncta or an unclassified form is suggested.

Anyway, 8 embryos remain. All eight embryos will be adopted by the same family. Upon signing the adoption agreement, the adoptive parents would be promising to transfer all embryos which survive the thaw process. If any embryos remain after the adoptive family does not wish to do further transfers, the responsibility remains with the original genetic family and Nightlight.

Parents can use their own home study with the addition of Embryo Adoption Education done by their social worker or Nightlight's social worker over the phone.

Nightlight will not be charging adoption fees for this particular set of embryos. Anticipated costs are:



Emma, Ryan's full sister

\$2,000 -- Home study (if needed)
 \$400 – Fed Ex fees for transporting embryos
 \$0--\$1,200 – Lab work on the genetic parents for tests required by adopting parents' doctor
 \$3,000--\$5,000 – Frozen embryo transfer
 \$5,400--\$8,600 – Total estimated cost

The adopting parents can expect to pay approximately \$400 for Fed Ex fees (\$0 if they travel to the embryos), and anywhere from \$0-\$1,200 for lab work on the genetic mother and father depending on what the adopting parents' fertility doctor requires.

These costs plus the \$2,000 (approx) for a home study and the \$3,000-\$5,000 for the frozen embryo transfer, puts the estimated cost between \$5,400 and \$8,600.

If there are any other questions, Megan would be glad to answer them for you. Her contact information is below.

Megan Corcoran
 Snowflakes Program Coordinator
 Nightlight Christian Adoptions
 801 E. Chapman Ave. Suite 106
 Fullerton, CA 92831
 (714) 278-1020
 megan@nightlight.org



Jacob and Adam, Ryan's twin brothers

What If Babies With Special Needs Were No Longer Born?

By Sherry Bushnell

Have you ever thought about what will be happening as the recent recommendations by the (ACOG) American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists that all pregnant woman, regardless of age, be given a prenatal test to detect a variety of special needs (January 2007) is implemented?

At first glance, it sounds like a great medical advancement.... to be able to “find” genetic problems. Getting rid of babies that have defects does not mean that a cure has been found for special needs! It just means that nearly all unborn babies with Down syndrome and other special needs will be aborted in the first or second trimester. With this present recommendation, people with Down syndrome will no longer be.

Can this medical advancement truly be considered beneficial? There certainly are people who are very much in favor of getting rid of unborn babies with special needs. Why?

Are their lives inconvenienced with caring for children who have special needs? Will they make more money if unborn babies with special needs become rare? Are they sorry about all the suffering in the world? (Is this their way of coping with their own hurt?)

Apparently the idea of death is more attractive to people who cannot see past their own imperfections.

When my daughter Tally was born with Down syndrome 20 years ago, I admit to being really scared. I didn't mind the idea of raising a child with special needs, but her suffering and upcoming surgeries frightened me. Yet the peace that covered our home, our lives and those surrounding her, was incredibly tangible.

After she passed away right after open heart surgery, I began a journey of growth that is

lasting even now. I cannot imagine what life would have been like without her influence and God's endless demonstrations of love, firm calling and then blessing in obedience, if I had not been willing to give her up.

If my baby with Down syndrome had not been born, if I had aborted her instead, I might still be selfish, centered on my own pleasure and focused on the “ideal life”.

I worry about that in the search for “perfect” babies and with all the very sophisticated prenatal testing, medical doctors who approve of killing unborn babies just because their chromosomes are different, or that they have a cleft lip, or spina bifida.

At this rate, medical ethicists will soon justify the abortion of fetuses with genetic markers for a whole variety of things parents may not want to face. Mental-health issues, a tendency toward addictions to alcohol or drugs, childhood cancer, obesity, arthritis, autoimmune diseases such as Multiple Sclerosis, Alzheimer's and a whole host of other unknown syndromes and problems. The idea of raising a child with special needs frightens expectant moms and dads.

But think about this, even with advanced testing, we will never be able to prevent disability. What about car crashes, strokes, sporting and hunting accidents, or even just falling off a cliff? Will we some day euthanize children or even adults who become cognitively or physically disabled by accident?

Raising a child with special needs can be challenging. Watching them fall behind in ability compared to others their age, is only the start of accepting what is meant to be. The gap widens as our children get older and the difference in mental, social, and physical ability becomes strikingly obvi-



ous. Watching them try to socialize and be rejected hurts us as much as it is confusing to them!

But our children with disability are also very much a blessing. I remember Jordan's first smile, (Jordan is our son with Down syndrome whom we adopted when he was just a few days old, 6 months after Tally died). His little lop sided smile and his funny shell shaped ears made him look like the cutest little elf you ever saw. Our hearts swelled with pride as we watched his blossoming attempts to communicate his love to us. The love Jordan gave back to us more than healed our broken hearts. We began to see that the love a special needs child bestows on someone is like a precious jewel. Extra blessings, extra comforting, extra meaningful.

Just 2 generations ago, parents were told to put their babies with Down syndrome in institutions like Pennhurst. Some, like my great aunt in Rhode Island who had a special needs child, refused. In the mid-1970's when the horrifying realities of these places were made public, they were all closed.

At the same time, parents with children who were disabled at home started fighting for public education and therapy for their children. The Individuals With Disabilities Education Act was implemented in 1974.

By the early 1990's inclusion into regular classrooms in the public school became a mandatory ruling.

The pendulum swing has had many pluses and yet a few minuses. Unfortunately, not all public schools and teachers are equipped to handle all special needs.

Has our demand for tolerance for special needs people made our "helper" less compassionate?

Our cry for government program funding to help children and families with special needs has created federal mandatory spending.

Has our push for "full potential" created a monster?

Just as we have discovered how much children with special needs can learn and contribute to society, they are being endangered!

We need to share our enthusiasm for living with disability with expectant parents, physicians, and bioethicists who profess to define quality of life and define "perfection".

What ACOG's recommendation means is that there will be a real need for more families like you and I, willing to educate and comfort women in record numbers who will be receiving a prenatal diagnosis of Down syndrome or other genetic disability.

While the quality of life for citizens with disability is better than ever, the atmosphere that often surrounds the delivery of a diagnosis of Down

syndrome or other medical concern is not.

Studies show that medical professionals often use negative language and rely on outdated information to scare birth moms into a quick decision. They may encourage moms to have an "early birth" for the sake of the child, or have an abortion to preserve their family life.

As NATHHAN and CHASK families, we can be prepared to share with those in contact with birth parents in crisis. Woman's care centers, crisis pregnancy centers and Christian OBGYN's need to know that CHASK exists. With your help, your crisis pregnancy center and the moms in your area will know about positive resources. Please take the time to get CHASK brochures to your local pregnancy resources. Just call us, or e-mail your pregnancy resource's address, and we will send them out free. God bless you as we work together to protect and save "the least of these".



Welcome Home Julia!

By Jim Unruh

Looking back, the idea of adoption surfaced many times in our marriage. In fact, even before we were married, Jerri and I talked about it seriously, in reference to my own experience of being an adopted child.

Not all adoption experiences are positive. Even when someone is blessed to be found by loving parent, as I was, there are still questions to answer and adjustments to make. Compared to my other siblings' adoptions, the family that raised me was fairly secure. My parents were not perfect, but in retrospect I know that I was loved and that they did their best with what they had.

There were times when I felt rejected and worthless because of the stigma associated with adoption. I yearned for my dad to call me son. I desired more affection and approval from my mom. I wanted a deeper, closer relationship with my parents. I still do. But any child might have similar feelings whether they were adopted or not.

After receiving Christ, I began to see things from a much different point of view... from the perspective of Scripture. The Bible teaches that all believers were predestined by God the Father to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the kind intentions of His will (Eph 5:1). I realized by God's grace, regardless of my parent's intentions for me and what my life would become, God had a plan

for my life in Christ. I saw that all the fulfillment I longed for as a child could only be found in Christ. I was accepted in the beloved. The Spirit testified that I was God's son crying Abba Father.

What a wonderful comfort it is to be a child of God. But the price of adoption was huge. It cost God the life of His one and only Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. When I consider what God did to rescue me when I was a lost and homeless orphan with no hope and no inheritance, my heart is filled with gratitude and indeed cries Abba Father. He did this for us knowing that there was nothing of ourselves we could ever give Him in return;



that without His strength we could never do anything of worth to please Him. That's just amazing! But that is who our Father God is. He is gracious and merciful and He has compassion for the lost, the orphan, for those who cannot help themselves. He not only saved and accepted us; He also enables us to bear the fruit of the Holy Spirit for His glory.

Why did we adopt baby Julia? Why would we adopt a baby with special needs?

Our little Julia is a child that, from the world's perspective, has little worth and little to offer. She will probably have high needs and high medical expenses. She may not live very long.

So why would we do such a thing? It's very simple. That's what God did for us! For while we were still helpless, at the right time, Christ died for the ungodly. (Rom 5:6)

It is our conviction that as Christ died

for us we should die to self by laying down our lives for others. We know that His love, manifested through us to a baby with needs, will bring Him glory.

We are depending on the Lord for His help and strength in the days ahead. He is faithful!

Some of our relatives don't understand, but their view of life is different than ours. We have heard things like, "how can you do this to yourselves and your family" "isn't there someone else who can raise it" IT!! Her name is Julia, not IT! Sure, there are others who might be called, as we are, to this kind of ministry.... but that's really the point, isn't it. When God calls you to serve Him in a particular sphere of ministry, He makes you open to it. He gives you a desire to do it. He enables you, and provides the specific opportunities. He opens the doors, and you just trust and obey Him. Everything we do as Believers in Jesus Christ should be based on the revelation of Christ's sacrificial love displayed on the cross. The world hates true self sacrifice. It doesn't understand it; it's a direct contradiction to the lust of the world, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life. Yet this is the wonder of the grace of God in the believer's life. That the glory of Jesus Christ exposes and convicts and pierces the darkness of this selfish fallen world. Those who see the sacrificial love of Christ in your life are impacted, some people will get angry, some will say, "How foolish." Still others



will say, "Where does this kind of love come from?" And they will be drawn to the love of the Savior.

Julia, we love you!

Editor's note: Jim and Jerri, long time board members of NATHHAN / CHASK, brought 5-week-old, baby Julia home from Arizona, in October of this year. Julia has an undetermined genetic disorder. She is a very beautiful baby.

Her birth mom was very, very young, and the father is unknown.

Currently, Julia is tube fed and requires someone to keep a close eye on her at all times, as her little seizures are almost constant. We are hopeful that she will be able to wake up and visit more, once they are under control.

She is gaining weight, and just had a successful replacement of her G- tube for feeding.

It is such a wonderful blessing to be a part of an adoption (in the form of support and encouragement), as usually we in the office don't get to see CHASK babies with their families. We look forward to sharing more in later issues of the NATHHAN NEWS about the adventures of Unruh family and baby Julia.



Resource Reviews



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Dear NATHHAN and CHASK Families,

I spent a long time at your websites and was verrrryyy impressed by what your organization is doing. It is marvelous that people are willing to make such sacrifices for these special children. It is definitely God's heart shown in the flesh. Amazing.

I would like to add, that for families that mention they are from NATHHAN, we will a 40% discount on the Sign Language DVDs and Books.

Please contact me, Sandy, directly and do not order on the website. The offer that I am shar-

ing with you is not available on the website.

I would love to be a part of what you trying to do by giving you as much discount as I can.

My husband and two boys are "Aspies" (Asperger's). I wish I had had the resources when the boys were young that are available now. God Bless you, Sandy.

Color Of Language
6130 Norris Rd.
Bakerfield, CA 93308
661-393-4658
coloroflanguage@bak.rr.com

Too Wise To Be Mistaken Too Good To Be Unkind

Written By Cathy Steere - A family dealing with autism, professionals, homeschooling and successfully using Biblical child training

—An excellent book recommended by many NATHHAN families. This book has literally changed the lives of many families dealing with autism or special needs children with extra challenging behavior.

Grace and Truth Books 3406 Summit Boulevard Sand Springs, OK 74063
(918) 245-1500

Waiting With Gabriel: A Story of Cherishing a Baby's Brief Life

By Amy Kuebelbeck

This book is a memoir about my son, who was diagnosed prenatally with an incurable heart defect. We chose to carry him to term and to provide hospice care once he was born. The book also addresses larger issues including questions about heroic medicine; continuing a pregnancy despite a devastating diagnosis; and attitudes and practices regarding miscarriage, still-birth, and infant death.

As you know, with prenatal testing becoming more sophisticated and routine, more parents are learning devastating news before their babies are born. I wrote the book in part because while I was pregnant, I could find very little available to help parents with a lethal prenatal diagnosis prepare for their journey.

The book has received many positive endorsements including the National Perinatal Association, and the National Perinatal Bereavement Conference. Most of all, I am hearing from parents who say that the book really helped them.

Amy Kuebelbeck
1927 Juliet Avenue
Saint Paul, MN 55101
(651) 698-5554

Waiting with Gabriel: A Story of Cherishing a Baby's Brief Life
www.loyolabooks.org/store/title.asp?isbn=082941603X

Pictures to Teach a Thousand Words

Stages® Learning Materials' real photographic picture cards are ideal for teaching basic language skills to children and adults with learning delays.

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The **Language Builder: Picture Noun Cards** include 350 cards divided into nine categories of animals, foods, vehicles, clothing, furniture, toys, shapes, colors and everyday objects. The set includes similar and identical images designed to teach basic matching skills, as well as individual images which are perfect for teaching receptive and expressive language, sorting, adjectives, functions, storytelling and more. Some images are on plain white backgrounds to reduce confusion, while others appear in their natural settings to promote generalization.

The **Language Builder: Occupation Cards** feature 115 cards depicting both men and women in the most common occupations. Meeting the NAEYC (National Association of Education for Young Children) standards for gender and ethnicity within education, these cards are great for labeling, role-playing, storytelling and other imaginative play.

The **Lang-O-Learn® Series** includes the most popular cards from our large Noun Set, broken down by category into five smaller sets. You can get a 50 card food set, a 50 card everyday objects set, a 30 card animal set, a 20 card vehicle set and a 20 card clothing set. As an added feature, the Lang-O-Learn® cards are also labeled on the reverse side in 17 common languages. This set is great for ESL and foreign language learners, as well as basic language and speech practice in English.

Stages® most recent addition, the **Real Life Learning Posters**, consist of four sets: 10 farm animals, 10 wild animals, 14 fruits & vegetables and six community helpers. Enlarged to 14" X 19" and printed on heavy cardstock, the posters are great for small group discussions and decorating the walls of classrooms, doctors' offices, nutritionists' offices and therapists' offices. The posters also provide a great transition for students going from one-on-one learning to a classroom setting.

Stages® Learning Materials is committed to offering you the best photo teaching tools possible. For more information on any of Stages® products, call us toll free at: **888-501-8880** or look for our products in educational stores and catalogs.

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The Story of Sugar Buttons, Joshua, and Their Mommy

By Tom and Sherry Bushnell and Penny Vlahon

We have always found it amusing (and sometimes disquieting) how one phone call or conversation can change our lives.

A birth mom, calling from a crisis pregnancy center in South Carolina, was faced with a dilemma. She was a new Christian. Very sick with morning sickness, alone, and caring for a son that was severely disabled (terminally sick), she was needing answers.

From a medical standpoint, her obvious choice was abortion. As a Christian now, she knew that as hard as carrying this baby might be, she could not terminate the pregnancy with a clear conscience.

She felt that even though she made a wrong choice did not mean that another bad choice should be made to “make life easier” for her. She was ready to start doing right!

After assessing her needs, making several phone calls to South Carolina, and coming up with no immediate help, we prayed that God would provide for Penny right now, in a real way.

We could hear Penny’s heart-wrenching cry for help. Her immediate family didn’t seem to be an option for her.

We re-thought over her present situation. Penny had recently moved in with a lady who agreed to care for her and Sugar Buttons in ex-

change for the baby. Now, few weeks into the agreement, after Penny had already let go of her government housing, the lady decided that caring for them was too much work and asked her to leave. The SC government housing waiting list was a mile long and emergency housing wasn’t appropriate for a child who was slowing dying.

The bottom line was, Penny was in a hard situation and we were not coming up with help for them. CHASK, committed to ministering to the unborn and birth moms, was about to feel first hand the blessing of stepping out and sharing.

Our family flew Penny and Sugar Buttons (His real name is Stephanos, almost no one calls him that!) to our home in Northern Idaho, way up by the Canadian border. It was a very big step in faith for Penny, as medical help was further away and she did not know us.

Getting off the plane in Spokane, it was cold. Snow fell occasionally, as it was early Spring.

We gave her a downstairs room to herself and her son. It was very plain. We did not have very much to offer her. She seemed

grateful and spent much of her time either feeding and caring for Sugar Buttons, or sleeping in exhaustion from pregnancy.

Sugar Buttons was diagnosed with a mitochondrial, neuro-degenerative disorder. He had respiratory issues and needed occasional suctioning to keep breathing. He was tube fed. We were able to get the right kind of formula (and enough of it!) from Idaho Medicaid right away. Penny was devoted to Sugar Buttons. It was easy to see that she felt really over-



Penny and Sugar Buttons

whelmed with the idea of caring for a brand new baby, along with his constant needs. We assured her that we were committed to the idea of life for her unborn baby. We were prepared to prove it by giving our love and care to this unborn baby's mommy and brother!

As the baby in her womb grew bigger, our love for Penny and Sugar Buttons grew too. They became a special part of our family.

Jim and Jerri Unruh also grew in friendship with them. Due to a warmer living situation for Sugar Button's health, they decided to move into a room that the Unruh family had.

Next, CHASK and Pennies From Heaven, a non-profit organization, raised money to buy a car for Penny. This

made it much easier for her to get to the numerous doctor's appointments for Sugar Buttons, without relying on asking for rides each time.

As her time to give birth grew near, Penny decided that she felt strong enough to drive out-of-state to stay with friends to have her baby. They would care for her while she was resting after having her new baby, and care for Sugar Buttons at the same time.

On God's appointed date, Penny had a baby boy and named she him Joshua. The birth went very well. She was immediately in love with her precious bundle. The Lord worked it all out. The care for both the new baby and Sugar Buttons became a manageable routine.

We are all very blessed to have played a part in meeting the needs of Penny and her family. After that, we only heard from them once in a while over several years, until recently, when we got a special letter and some pictures from Penny. Penny gave us permission to share her story with all of you.

Penny, our family, and the Unruh's, would like you to see what great things God can do when we obey His voice. We believe it was God's will that Penny come to stay with us and

with the Unruh family. It was not always easy and there were definite challenges. We can all attest that God's love covers it all.

Dear Bushnells, the Unruhs and NATHHAN / CHASK,

I'm not sure how to start this letter. I guess I should start with a very big thank you for sharing the Lord with me in your home, in a way I had never seen Him shared before. Thank you for all of your generosity and kindness.... Especially for showing that kindness to someone like me. I can't even express in words what all that means to me especially now, since I've been making such an attempt to get acquainted with our God.

I'm finding out more and more everyday how little I know about the Lord. I do understand about how much darkness I was in all of my life. All I see now is the light of His love shining on me. He is teaching me more everyday and I am go grateful. As I pray and read His word everyday and die to myself, I find Him showing up more and more in me. His word says that if I draw close to Him, He will draw close to me. And He truly does. It's hard to believe, He's really REAL!!! But He is!! This amazes me, because I always thought that people with "faith" in God meant worshiping "something" and to "believe" in something meaningful to each individual. And that we might never know if this "something" existed at all. Now I know that's not true. It's not a "blind" faith.

I prayed and asked God to explain some things in His word to me, if He was real... AND HE DID! Just Him and no one else. Now all I want to do is to become what He wants me to become. I want so much to know more about Him. I want to know how I can make Him happy with me and what I say, think and do.



Sugar Buttons

Please pray for me and my family, that we would somehow become the kind of people He could use for His purposes.

Love,
Penny, Sugar Buttons and Joshua

Today Penny, Joshua, and Sugar Buttons live in South Carolina. They are doing well. Sugar Buttons was re-diagnosed with an enzyme deficiency and has greatly improved with a new way of treating his symptoms. He is growing and gaining skills. Little Joshua has become a huge blessing to Penny, helping his mommy with Sugar Buttons' needs.

We at NATHHAN / CHASK want to thank you for supporting us in ministering to birth moms like Penny. Without you behind us, we could not have offered Penny help.

Please continue to pray for birth moms who are making life choices for their baby, in spite of difficult circumstances. It is very true that God provides. He always makes a way, even when the future looks bleak.

Have you ever thought about the long term consequences of being used by God?

Being used by God means making yourself available to others. This means that we need to share our homes, our finances, our food, our time and our friendship.

What a blessing we received from Penny and Sugar Buttons. When she left, we all felt a big hole in our lives. Letting go hurts. Being content with where God has someone spiritually can help us "lean not on our own understanding." Serving Christ by serving others can bring a roller coaster of emotions. Especially if we are not centered on why we are giving of ourselves.

Are we giving of ourselves to look good? To get something in return, or because we pity someone? Burn-out guaranteed. We need to serve Christ and He alone to avoid getting bitter.

Do we believe that HE truly is in charge of even the little things that occur daily?

Do we worry when someone we are ministering to doesn't make the life choices we feel they should? God isn't finished with them yet!



Little Joshua

Does ministering to someone mean that we run their lives (or they ours??).

I would be glad to hear about your experiences ministering to birth moms in crisis. What has happened in the lives of those you have shared with? Here is your opportunity to encourage brothers and sisters in Christ that may be tired-out, burned out, or just plain scared of being all used up. Are you all used up and empty? It happens.

Perhaps one of the most astounding things to me is finding out that God actually used our family's humble efforts to help Penny. Not just physical help, but miraculously he brought about spiritual fruit in His good time.

Years later we can see that God used our love for Penny to minister His love to her heart. God's Word did not return void. Our efforts in reaching out to her was His plan. Little did we know that the Lord was creating a special reward for us, years later. Penny's deep love for the Lord and her commitment to Him is being brought to life in His way and in His time.

Penny's letter is a reminder to us to be prepared to minister in small ways (a dinner, child-care, a sweet letter, a hug, a smile) and not to be afraid of ministering in big ways too.

Let's all be ready to plant seeds and not be impatient for the harvest!

Swing Low....

By Dick and JoAnn Lang

Swing low....sweet chariot..... was our adopted son, Jordon's favorite song. He especially loved the part where we said his nameI looked over Jordan and what did I see, comin' for 'ta carry me home, a band of Angels comin' after me, comin' for ta' carry me home.

It was a bitter cold day in East Chicago, Indiana. On January 16th, 1985 Jordon made his entrance into the world, a day that should have been filled with joy and praise, but for Jordon's birth family all they felt was helplessness and sorrow. Soon after Jordon was born he experienced breathing difficulty, doctors soon found he'd been born with a collapsed lung and air around his heart. If that news wasn't enough to send a family whirling Jordon also had a VSD (hole in his heart). Doctors also suspected he may also have Down syndrome.

Jordon's birth mother had an addiction to crack cocaine; years later we learned that she blamed herself for Jordon's diagnosis. The doctor told her Jordon wouldn't live to be five years old and offered her and her family the option of adoption. Soon thereafter, we received a phone call from a woman in White Plains, NY who helped babies and children born with Down syndrome find families to adopt them. All we were told was that there was a black baby boy born with Down syndrome who needed a family, would we take him? I explained I would need to talk with my husband, but that we would call her back. With careful thought and much prayer we felt led to say, yes. "I will not leave you orphans, I will come to you." John 14:18. I called the lady in NY back and arrangements were made to pick the baby up. We



Baby Jordon Lang

met at the airport and our baby, whom we named Jordon, was placed in my arms. He was sleeping soundly. I told my husband that something was wrong with this baby. He felt stiff like he had cerebral palsy, unlike the lower muscle tone that children with Down syndrome typically are born with. But we were so taken by emotions the thought left as quickly as it came.

The days following Jordon's homecoming were challenging yet wonderful. Jordon's tiny body would tremor and his cry was intense. Little did we know he was experiencing withdrawals from crack cocaine. We tried everything we knew of to comfort

him, from Indian style wraps to formula change, with no relief. At age two months we took Jordon to the Therapy Center for evaluation and recommendations. It would be years before we would open our son's adoption to find answers to our many questions.

Growing up, Jordon was happy all the time and stubborn most of the time. He flourished with our family and in spite of the obstacles he faced, he came to know Jesus. Jordon was always included in everything we did as a family; he attended Sunday school, parties and gatherings. Jordon had a smile that could warm the coldest heart, and his personality sparkled. Anyone who knew Jordon couldn't help but love him and he thrived on attention. Jordon could not handle much stimulation though; it was as if sounds

and motion hurt him in some way. Jordon also experienced challenges unrelated to his Down syndrome. Jordon's behaviors became increasingly dangerous and disruptive. He was asked to leave the Parks & Rec. program for children with disabilities; he was sent home from a handicapped camp for children with physical limitations. Jordon had limited speech, he talked like a parrot reciting speech he'd heard from a cartoon or at school, and he answered "yes" to everything. He could sing songs word for word and carry a tune. Many times Jordon helped us to see God's grace; we learned that in times of deep sorrow, like the day the pediatric cardiologist told my husband and I that Jordon was terminal, no cure, no operation that would fix his broken little heart or repair his lungs, God's grace truly is sufficient. 2 Corinthians 12:19 "And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness"

By age 11, Jordon had a history of violent behaviors. The elementary school sued us as a way to remove Jordon from school. They had been using an "adverse therapy" protocol without our knowledge which included isolation, which only compounded his behaviors. Eventually, Jordon's behaviors endangered those around him. Jordon needed in-patient care and treatment at a children's behavioral health facility. The Doctors and treatment team recommended Residential Rx. for Jordon's well-being and that of those around him.

Sadly, the doctor's and treatment teams' recommendations went without being addressed by those in positions to be of assistance. Jordon's body continued to grow, however, his mind stayed that of a two-three year old. Jordon loved the mu-

sical Christmas bells we hung over the doorway each Christmas. His favorite cartoon was Pete's Dragon and he could sing every song. Jordon also had a mobility scooter due to his decreased oxygen levels. He loved to ride that scooter. One winter we let him pull his two younger brothers around the cow pasture in the snow as he drove the scooter. Jordon never liked the cold weather, much less snow, so this was the only way to get him to come outside (he was the driver).

By the time Jordon was twelve years old, his dad needed neuro surgery on his spine. As much as it hurt to let Jordon go we knew with my husband's upcoming operation and Jordon's behaviors, staying at home wasn't an option. We signed Jordon into state care hoping he would receive the mental health care he so desperately

needed and doctors had long recommended. We tried relentlessly to have the child welfare workers comply with doctors' recommendations as to Jordon's care. Unfortunately, the child welfare workers choose to place Jordon in a foster care home and offered nine days respite care at a facility in another town. Jordon was very repetitive: anything out of routine could easily create a

problem for Jordon and those around him. Jordon had significant medical and mental disabilities, he didn't have the capacity to understand or control his behaviors; he was extremely repetitive in all he did. After my husband's operation, recuperation and auto accident Jordon returned home. On May 1, 2000 while at respite care, Jordon became out of control and police were summoned. Jordon was taken by ambulance to a local hospital where his dad and I picked him up and brought him home (on sedating medication). On May 8, 2000 after hitting



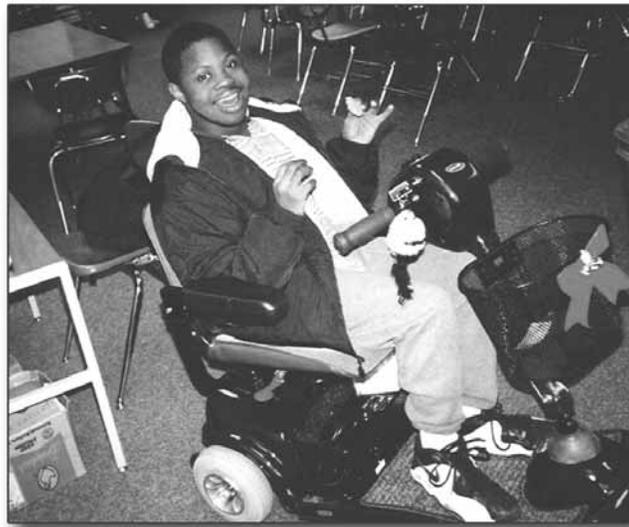
Jordon in the middle with brothers AJ & Ty

his dad in the face and pounding on his sister's back as she tried to pick up his O₂ equipment off the floor, the police came and took Jordon in handcuffs. The police officers determined that Jordon was a danger to himself and his family. Next we found ourselves in a Court Dependency. Again, we asked the Lord to direct us, strengthen us, and give us wisdom to help our special son. The court found that Jordon had severe behavioral and emotional issues that were beyond the parents' ability to handle. We realized we could no longer care for Jordon and keep everyone safe, we'd been told that the only way to get help for Jordon was to sign him into care. On that day, we prayerfully let go. Sadly, Jordon remained in foster care and endangered other children. Our prayer was that Jordon would receive the mental health care he required and be able to come home.

While in care, Jordon had a sprained ankle and sustained a broken jaw, things we didn't learn until after his death. I believe that God looked down on Jordon and said, This is enough, Jordon, it's time to come home. On June 3, 2006 Jordon looked over the "river Jordan, and saw a band of angels comin after me, comin for ta carry me home." My husband and I had prayed that when his time came that the Lord would take him home gently and peacefully. Jordon went to bed that Friday night and the angels came, our sweet son went home to be with the Lord. We are at peace knowing that Jordon is with Jesus and we have the blessed hope of seeing him again in heaven. Even in death God answered our prayers.

Note from Jo Ann: When I felt lead to write this article I first thought how negative, why would anyone be interested in our family's

joys and struggles? Would it prevent families from adopting children like Jordon? Or would it let families who are struggling know that not every story has a happy ending... but that's not the end? I also would like those reading our story to know that children like Jordon so very much need a voice; their families need support and encouragement. God desires us to reach out to children like Jordon, their families and their birth families. After Jordon went home to be with the Lord, I knew I needed to contact his birth family. Sadly, his birth



Jordon loved his scooter

mother was in a drug rehab, however, one of Jordon's biological sisters was open to keeping in touch. As I ministered to her she told me she was looking for Jesus! Our God is an awesome God! Even in death he can and does use his children to minister to the lost. I quickly ordered Rick Warren's book "Purpose Driven Life" and mailed it to her. We pray for her and her family's salvation and believe that God will, through Jordon's life, touch his birth family and bring them to him. I can only praise God for all the wonderful things he has done for me and my family. I feel blessed and privileged to have been entrusted with Jordon's little life. He is greatly missed, but he no longer has a hole in his heart and his lungs are filled with oxygen because of the greatest physician of all-Jesus!

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Grandpa and Grandma's Corner

(Editor's note: Grandpa and Grandma are Dennis and Linda Lamphere, Sherry Bushnell's parents. They have graciously chosen to spend their golden years serving the Lord and their family through NATHHAN / CHASK.)



Handling Offenses

How we handle offenses can make the difference between a peaceful heart and home, or one full of stress and unrest.

The first question we need to ask ourselves is, "Who has the problem?" when someone offends us.

Since our life goal is to become more like Jesus, we are learning that if we are offended we may have the problem. (Or a good part of it!) Looking at the life of Jesus, He was never offended. So as we look at the Word, being offended is not an option for us. It simply wasn't part of Jesus' mind set.

Only with His help can we be pure in our response to others. It is a work done inside of our hearts, not just a control issue on the outside.

By being offended, we are talking about "getting our feelings hurt" by what someone says or does towards us or someone we care about. Have you ever experienced a rising anger

when someone pokes fun at your child with special needs?

It may also mean that someone opposes our values or standards...or questions our integrity...or doesn't meet our expectations.

Our culture says that we have a right to be offended, but do we?

Life is for real. If we are busy living and working with other people, there will be opportunity for being offended. How we receive offensive behavior is up to us. If what is said or implied is true, then we must change. If it is not true, can we let it go and allow someone else time to change their attitude? (That does not mean that we grow unresponsive and uncaring.)

"Jesus loves me, this I know" is a confidence we can have on the inside, in the face of offenses or hurts.

Is there a difference between hurt and offense? Jesus was hurt, but he did not get angry. He did not sin. He used his

hurt as an opportunity to trust God for strength and to be an example of true love.

Could it be that the Lord might use an opportunity for offense as an opportunity for ministry? Or maybe this particular offense is a test to see if we have gotten the principle yet!

There are many hurting people out there needing a kind word. How suddenly a situation can be changed into a witness for Christ, expressing Jesus' love, instead of an offense that grows into anger.

All of us need to be on guard that we watch our subtle responses to a perceived offense. Our facial expressions, side-ways looks or glint in our eyes can betray the state of our heart quicker than a spoken word.

As Grandpa and Grandma it is in our hearts to teach this concept to our children and grandchildren...but are we modeling and practicing it ourselves?

Well, unfortunately we did not learn this concept at age 9... or 29... but rather 69! But it is never too late to start on a journey of becoming more Christ-like.

How freeing and healing this understanding of choosing not to take offense is. We can all let go of stuff in our lives. "You shall know the truth and the truth shall set you free."

How about you? Could you stand for more peace and stillness in a busy life? Let go and let God handle it. He can turn anything into good, for His name's sake.

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