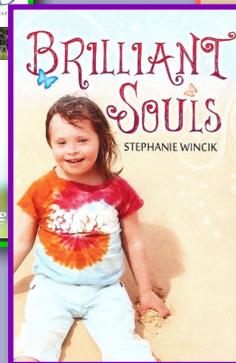
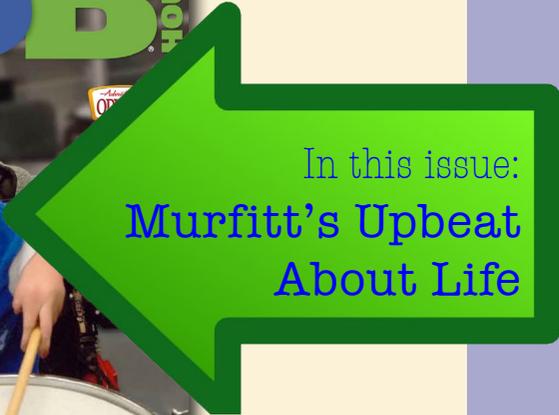


Special-Needs Kids: Tweens, Teens, Adults? What to do . . .

BOOK & MEDIA REVIEWS:

- The Lost Mandate by Dan'l Markum
- Documentary: *unPlanned*
- Brilliant Souls by Stephanie Wincik



Tucker shares her understandstanding of living with a disability



Goal and Purpose of NATHHAN/CHASK

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

Dear READERS:

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

Articles and resources contained in the NATHHAN & CHASK News are from a perspective not always conducive to homeschooling.

Please consider the resources and the articles contained in this magazine — some of the content may not coincide with your Christian convictions and/or beliefs.

Editor reserves the right to modify, omit and/or edit content to meet design layout, length and available space.

Thank you

ON THE COVER

Photos courtesy of our NATHHAN & CHASK families; Focus on the Family

Special to NATHHAN & CHASK News
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Editor/Assistant to the Director

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CHASK.org

History of NATHHAN & CHASK

NATHHAN began with a telephone call from one mother of a child with Down syndrome to another mother, who was 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 Pennsylvania wrote Kathy Salars in Texas on March 17, thus announcing the birth of NATHHAN.

In the fall of 1992, because NATHHAN's family base increased from two families to more than 600 families, it became impossible for the two mothers to keep up.

Tom and Sherry Bushnell offered their assistance and NATHHAN's main office was moved to Olalla, Washington.

In the fall of 2002, CHASK: Christian Homes and Special Kids, began matching special kids with families free-of-charge — no agency fees and/or referral costs.

The offices of NATHHAN & CHASK now operate in Moyie Springs, Idaho. Later CHASK formed a pregnancy-resource center in the fall of 2007 — A Blessed Beginning.

NATHHAN & CHASK Websites and magazine strive to equip and encourage families with special-needs children, assisting them in finding the will of God for their lives.

NATHHAN Ministry

The NATHHAN & CHASK News is issued twice a year as an online e-Magazine.

The magazine includes resources, articles and letters from families, parents and professionals — plus much, much more!
NATHHAN.org

Quarterly letters are sent to donors interested in reading more stories about children saved from abortion and current needs of these organizations.

CHASK Ministry

Christian Home 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 or after they are born — with a Christian family.

No agency fees.

CHASK.org
Info@CHASK.org

Letter from the directors:

Bushnell family update —

Welcome baby Rosalyn! Our biggest and most exciting news is that a new member of the Bushnell family has arrived. We have been blessed with a sweet baby girl for us all to enjoy.

Tom has finished law school, graduated and is now licensed in California and Idaho. Washington state is next, Lord willing. He is working downtown at a local attorney's office and is just starting his practice. Getting paying clients is the challenge in our low-income community, but steadily, things are picking up.

Sherry is working alongside her mom in the NATHHAN & CHASK office a couple days a week and practicing as a licensed midwife in Montana and Idaho. Taking only a few clients a month, she is able to spend time doing all the other tasks a mother and grandmother loves to do.



Tom & Sherry Bushnell

Jake and Renita are doing an amazing job with their two children, Klyer, now 2-years-old and baby Rosalyn. They are about the sweetest grandchildren anyone could ask for. We love spending time with their family as often as we can — any excuse will do.

Josh, now 27-years-old, is in Sydney, Montana, driving a water truck for a company that services oil wells. He is with a really great group of men and although we miss him lots, we are really glad that he has good work.

Zack and Zeph, now 22-and-20-years-old, are in Texahoma, Oklahoma working with a construction crew putting up a Quonset hut. The heat is sure different there than the summers in Idaho.

Sheraya is almost 18-years-old! She has finished her first semester of community college and loves it! She has signed up for the fall semester and is looking at being ready to jump in for a full year. She is working towards a degree in counseling. This summer she is looking for ways to minister to families around us, helping her sister-in-law at her home and working with different mothers in need in our community.

Jordan, Sheela and Lynny love many things, but the most fun for them is when all the family comes home for dinners — they love celebrations of all kinds. They are happy and healthy and are looking forward to camping 4th of July weekend on a lake.

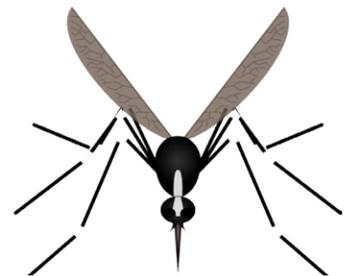
Mercy finished her school year and has enjoyed her art/school tutor very much. She loves painting with Acrylics most of all. She is working at A Blessed Beginning, CHASK's local crisis pregnancy center two-times a week and has gotten to know some of the single moms who come in. She is taking Driver's ed this summer (how can this be???) and is saving up for a car.

Jayben is 11-years-old and has learned basic programming on the computer. He is our right-hand man, with all the bigger guys out of the home working.

ShaHannah is 8-years-old and has a great love of things that crawl, walk and jump. Her newest project are two-baby geese that she takes for a swim in the kiddie pool. The turkeys she cares for are named "Thanksgiving" and "Christmas" — their purpose is certain.

We have a lot of family time planned for this summer. It is pretty amazing to have Daddy back

Spring & Summer



32 | My Journey and Vision
for our Mentally Challenged,
Special-Needs Adults

In this issue:

12 | The experiences of
a Learning Disability

16 | Clear Direction:
Upbeat about life

22 | Sheela & Lynny,
match ordained by God

36 | Of Conservatorship
and Guardianship

36 | dōTERRA®: Essential-Oil
Research — Autism,
ADD and ADHD



Book Reviews

10 | Book Review: **The Lost Mandate**

14 | Book Review: **Simply Classical**
— a beautiful education for any child

26 | Book Review: **Brilliant Souls**

Life with Jordan,
our 26-year-old
son with Down
syndrome

Pg 20

Homeschooling a struggling learner



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The 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.

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e-mail: info@aaplog.org

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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.

Waiting with Love

www.erichad.com/wwl

Prenatal partners for life

www.prenatalpartnersforlife.org

Living with Trisomy 13 or 18

www.livingwithtrisomy13.org
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Perinatal Hospice

www.perinatalhospice.org

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Healing Hearts Ministries

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www.HealingHearts.org
888 792-8282

Ramah International

www.RamahInternational.org
Save One, www.SaveOne.org
866 329-3571



Hello Everyone!

The NATHHAN.com Website is finally complete and has been launched. Taking longer than I had expected, I managed to upload as much content as possible before the launch. Every week I will be working to add some-old-and-some-new content here-and-there.

Brief update —

- By mid-June 2013 I've answered more than 2,500 e-mails for the NATHHAN & CHASK organizations, this does not include e-mails I've initiated.

- Inasmuch as seven months we have received more than 175 CHASK Adoption Applications, more submissions every week, for families new to the organizations and those revising their outdated CHASK family profiles. "Aunt Peggy" has been working hard to process the applications, upload profiles to the CHASK site, provide families with their personal passwords and update our files! Aunt Peggy has also sent more than 300 requests to CHASK members to update their adoption profiles with us.

- Since January 1, 2013, CHASK has worked to find homes, help, support and/or forever families for 50 (this number does not include the e-mail and phone inquiries from parents seeking a family for their child, sometimes we never hear from them again) kiddos — unborn, born, of disruption or in need of temporary respite care.

Not wanting to put too much pressure on myself, I try not to reflect on the number of successful matches versus the unsuccessful matches. However, I must say, more CHASK families are considering children with more severe special needs, especially the ones with emotional-special needs.

It's a beautiful thing to watch families

look outside their original comfort zone, let go, and let God determine the outcome. A little girl and success story I think of often, went from one foster home to another; was adopted by a family, disrupted and adopted again by another family, only to be disrupted and adopted again by the time of her sixth birthday.

A CHASK adopting family considered adopting her for awhile, yet continued to pray about whether or not they should. One day while talking with the CHASK family about the little girl it became apparent, even to me, that their family was the one called to adopt this precious girl.

It has been six months now since this little one arrived to meet her forever mommy and daddy, brothers and sisters too! She is thriving, unconditionally loved, nurtured, cherished — above all she has bonded, and attached.

All these years she was misunderstood and overlooked. It was a long nine months to try and find the right match, God's timing was evident.

Every day I prepare myself to listen to a parent(s), to read e-mails about their pain and suffering, shock and despair, resentment and exhaustion — the same parent(s) that is looking to place their baby for adoption, terminate their pregnancy because, "Who would want a child with special needs?" or expressing desire to disrupt/dissolve their current adoption.

Sounds bleak, perhaps even depressing doesn't it?

After 1 1/2 years with NATHHAN & CHASK, initially *yes* it was somewhat depressing and at times seemed bleak, I now realize that if there is a baby, born or not-yet-born, a child who desperately needs a forever family... God has a plan. If He uses me to just answer an e-mail or call, so be it — yet, I'm always prepared to do more!

I had the privilege and honor to meet with a family locally a few months ago who had a son, born with Trisomy 18. The birth parents were poor and very young, however, their optimism and hope for their child was phenomenal. Throughout the pregnancy they knew their child was going to be born with Trisomy 18. The doctors had spoken

openly and honestly with them about the possibilities their baby might die inside the womb, die during the labor and delivery — best-case scenario, live only a few hours after birth.

Joy and excitement never left the face of this young mother, she was proud of the baby inside her; she never gave-up hope that somehow the doctors would be mistaken in their diagnosis of her unborn baby.

Baby Gregory was born in the early afternoon of March 5, 2013. His birth was surrounded by love and support from family, friends, doctors and a birth doula.

I arrived at the hospital the following day to take newborn photographs for the family. The experience was one not to be forgotten, I was humbled by the birth mother's composure — her unconditional love and adoration for her baby was more than clear, and covered this special child in peace. Never leaving this child, her fingers were there to touch him, her hands to hold him and eyes to gaze at him.

I worked quickly and tried diligently to capture with my camera his small frame while dodging the oxygen tanks and tubes, the computers and much of the family's belongings from home.

I overly concerned myself with the quality of my photos versus Gregory's abnormal skin color — knowing this might be the only pictures ever taken of him, I was fearful they would be unsatisfactory.

Sherry reminded me that the family would not be looking at coloring — they would be looking at pictures of their son.

He lived three days. He died at home with his family. The following day we celebrated his short life and mourned his quick departure from this world. *How do we make sense of this?*

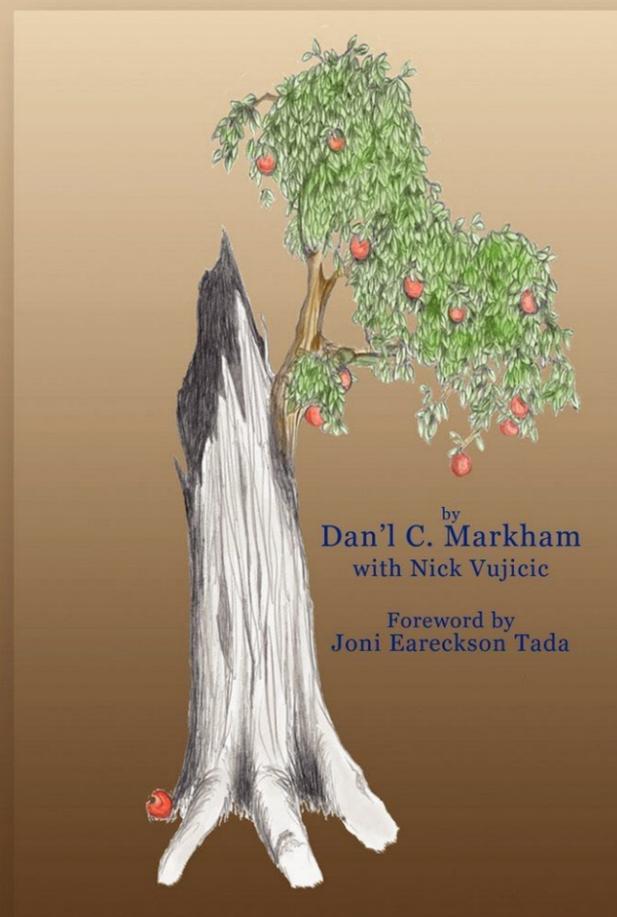
A simple answer may be found in our perspective. I'll summarize Dan'l Markham's overall message found in his book The Lost Mandate — it should not be our intention to identify the ministry we may provide to children with special needs, rather we should seek to identify the various ways in which the special-needs children are ministering to us.

In Him,

Sandra Faye Douthit

THE LOST MANDATE

A Christ Command Revealed



Book Review by
Peggy

special to the

NATHHAN & CHASK News

An estimated one billion people worldwide are affected by disability according to the World Health Organization.

The 2004 Forum for World Evangelization declared that only 5-10% of the world's people affected by disability are effectively reached with the gospel, making the disability community one of the largest unreached, some say under-reached or hidden, people groups in the world.

The scope for ministry to the suffering and disabled is enormous.

Did Jesus speak specifically about ministry to the disabled? In his book, *The Lost Mandate*, author Dan'l Markham seeks to drive home the message of Jesus' words in Luke 14:12-24.

Markham focuses in particular on verses 12-14 which he calls "the lost mandate" from Christ to the Church and to all Christians to reach out to the suffering, the disabled, the weak, the poor and the marginalized with the gospel, their lives and their love.

Individual Christians are challenged to come face-to-

face with Christ's words and to examine their hearts and lives accordingly, "... to see how much you really want to make a difference in the world [and to] test the mettle of your faith."

The Church is challenged to evaluate its own commitment and ministry to the disabled and given practical direction on implementing what Markham sees as a lost or, at best, often neglected portion of the Great Commission.

Dan'l Markham and Joni Eareckson Tada worked together for Joni and Friends International Disability Center for many years.

Joni, founder of Joni and Friends, has written the Foreword to the book in which she states that it, "...will be an encouragement to families and individuals affected by disability - consider it a primer of sorts."

Nick Vujicic, the founder of Life Without Limbs who was born with tetra-amelia syndrome, provides his own

excellent personal insights in "Nick's Notes" at the end of each chapter. He gives us some good practical ideas to implement.

At the book's end are the Addenda which include good articles on God and suffering, the sanctity of life, a helpful ministries list, and notes. Although some lack of proofreading is evident in spots, the overall message of the book is heartfelt, genuine, thought-provoking, convicting, and useful.

Throughout the book, Dan'l Markham transparently shares his personal testimony in many areas of his life and work.

His real life examples and experiences can be gritty, unflinching and blunt, but through them we see his heart for Christ and his desire to live as a true, authentic, radical disciple who takes Christ at His word and seeks to live it out accordingly — in this case, the word is the *lost mandate* of Luke 14.

While ministry to the suffering and disabled is the main theme, Markham covers a lot of related topics along the way such as: an exegesis of Luke 13-17; God's sovereignty and suffering; true Christianity vs. hypocrisy; legalism; the effects of power, money, and the abuse of authority in the Church, and the cost of true discipleship.

In one chapter, he highlights the importance of touch in Jesus' ministry and miracles reminding us that loneliness is often the companion of those with disabilities and encouraging us to be like our Savior who "touched the untouchable."

"Disability Ministry" has a twofold meaning; both as ministry to the disabled and also as ministry by the disabled.

God uses suffering and those who are weak to accomplish amazing things through His strength. All of the members of the Body of Christ are indispensable, including those who seem insignificant or weak, and we are to honor them.

From his own experiences, Markham knows that when we minister to the disabled, we ourselves end up being ministered to. He states that those with disabilities are, "God's gift to the Church, to you and me, to help us grow in Christian character... (They) are God's chisel and hammer used to break away our impatience, pride, and veneer of spirituality, chip-by-chip."

Nick Vujicic, whose motto is *From no limbs to no limits*, comments,

"Life is short. Yet it can be very, very good if we begin setting our eyes upon the horizon of God given dreams and then do something about it... relentlessly."

Markham challenges and encourages us to be "radical dream makers and dream fulfillers" who embrace the, "Irrefutable command and clarion call of Luke 14 to bring the Good News to the poor and people affected by disability, drawing them into our daily lives and the

life of the Church... The work to be done could easily be overwhelming, seemingly impossible. But this is right where God wants to meet us, demonstrating His power in our weakness."

Dan'l Markham compellingly communicates to each individual the urgency and magnitude of the need when he states,

"There are one billion plus people affected by disability worldwide, including some fifty-eight million people in the U.S., waiting to hear and feel the touch of Christ through your voice and your hands."

We are exhorted to pray and see how God could use each one of us to carry out the "lost mandate" in our own lives even in some small way.

Determine how you and your church can reach out to those with disabilities and their families. Nick Vujicic provides some practical suggestions to get us started.

[The Lost Mandate: A Christ Command Revealed](#)

By Dan'l Markham

With Nick Vujicic

Foreword by Joni Eareckson Tada

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The Experiences of a Learning Disability

By Stacy Tucker

Hi! my name is Stacy Tucker. I am 34-years-old and I have a disability.

The kind of disability I have is speech and language. It is hard for me to find the right words to say at times. My parents never told me about my learning disability when I was growing up. I just figured it out from my family when I asked questions like, "Why am I this way?"

They did their best to explain everything to me. Even with their explanation, I still didn't know all about my disability.

When I was in school it was really hard for me. Spelling, math and reading were all hard for me. I was always behind all the other students and was never caught up with the rest of the class. The worst part was when we all took tests.

I had a very special friend in school, named Shannon, from the first grade to the fifth grade. She would grade my tests for me because the other kids always made fun of me when they saw my bad grades. They thought I wasn't good enough because I was slow and stupid.

It truly crushed my heart just to hear that from them. Even to this day, I still hear that and I am 34. I keep asking myself,

"When is it going to stop?" Sometimes I just want to yell "YES, I'M DIFFERENT, BUT I'M JUST A HUMAN JUST LIKE YOU!"

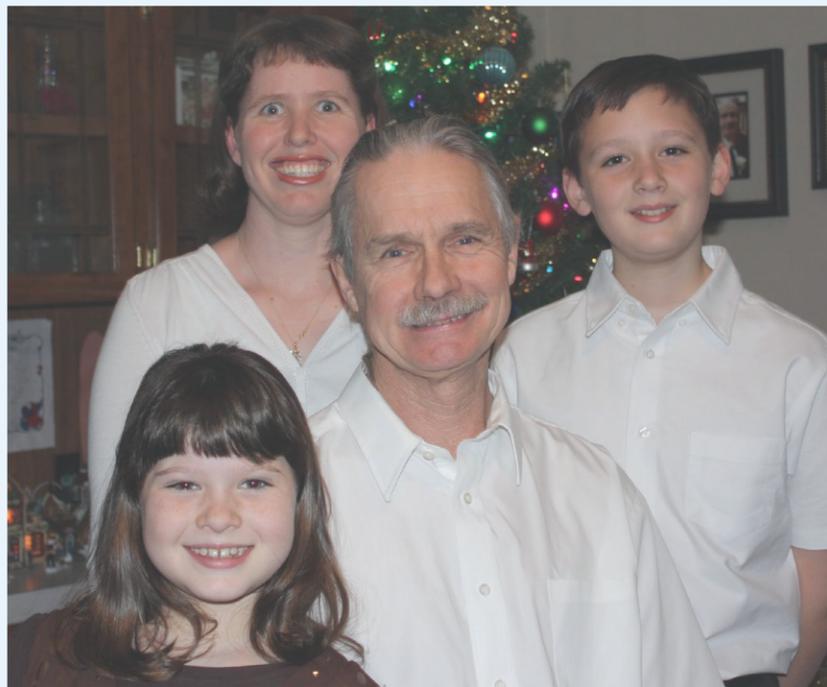
Well, a terrific thing happened to me in my life. I got remarried to a wonderful man named Ken. When I met Ken, I was nervous to tell him about my disability. I thought if I told him about it, he would run away because he found out the truth about me.

The great thing is he wasn't afraid of my disability, he wanted to know more about me. Ken says he is grateful to have this opportunity to have met me and that I'm a very special person.

When I'm around my husband, I try to act like a grown-up, but it is so hard to do. Sometimes I just act like a kid. The reason is because I have a child-like brain. Sometimes he does it with me so I don't look funny. I know that I do strange things — I talk funny, act funny and probably much, much more.

People stare at me, talk behind my back or just don't want to talk to me because I'm different. I really don't know why! I say to myself,

"I'm just like you, but I act a bit different. Isn't



different okay?"

Apparently, not to them! When I'm at work, I see a lot of people whispering a lot and staring too. Why can't I be like everyone else; like the "Normal people?"

You might ask, "What are Normal People?"

To me, "Normal People" are smarter with higher degrees, like college or even talk smart. I get very saddened because I wish I could have the brains like everyone else.

When I see my brothers and my dad with their degrees, I get very jealous of them sometimes. I'm very happy for them that they are so smart. I feel like my brothers get all the attention because they are smarter than me. I sometimes feel left out.

Have you ever noticed when you are at a store, a restaurant or just anywhere different and see a person with special needs that NO ONE comes up to talk to them or gets to know them!

Most people will just walk on by us, stare at us, but the worst is when I see them talk behind our backs. In my mind, I think they could be saying behind my back,

"Look at that strange girl. Why is she always talking to herself?" or "She acts really different from everyone else. Why can't she just grow up like the other grown-ups?"

Ken says, "It upsets me to see you go through

the struggles when others are making fun of you behind your back or even to your face."

I do have two wonderful, beautiful children. Their names are Michael, who is 11-years-old, and Elizabeth, who is 9-years-old. My son, Michael, has special needs like me, but just a bit different. He is smart in math and I am very proud of him. I do see his struggles in spelling and sometimes reading.

Michael says,

"When people pressure me, I feel like it's harder to do the task. I'm more pressured in my weaknesses than my strengths. I don't like that when they do that."

Sometimes I see my mom pressure him too much with his homework. My mom wants him to be perfect just like her. Michael says that he even notices the perfections when he does homework with her.

I remember when I was young doing homework with my mom, she wanted me to be perfect also. Maybe that is why I strive to be perfect so much. I don't want people to judge me because I'm not perfect. It's hard to be perfect. I want to be perfect so I can try to look and be like other people.

My husband gets frustrated when I think I have to be perfect or when someone else thinks that I have

to be perfect or that I am expected to be that way. Sometimes I put that perfection on my kids. Let me tell you, "Don't do it!" It frustrates us or them a lot.

Let them make mistakes — it's hard to do (let me tell you). I have learned more patience with my children because of my learning disability. Be encouraging to them no matter where you are they need to hear that. Also, they need to know that you are on their side when people judge them in the real world. They truly need that from you. You are their Coach, be that Coach for them.

I always wondered if I embarrassed my family. My kids told me, "Yes, you do!"

My son told me that I "embarrass him when I give him hugs at school." My daughter says that I embarrass her "when I call her out in a store." My husband says, "I have never been embarrassed by my wife, Stacy."

I'm glad I don't embarrass him, but I really don't know when I do embarrass people, like, for instance, my kids. I feel bad when I do these things.

We came into this world like this, looking

Continued... bottom of page 15

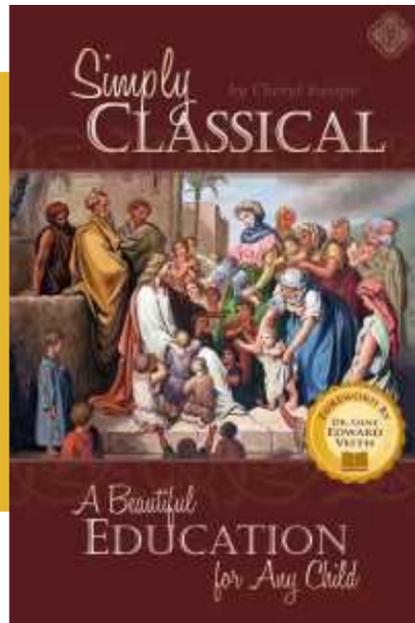
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“Cheryl Swope has convinced me that classical education truly is a beautiful education for every child. This book is a treasury of inspirational stories and practical advice. I am already seeing her ideas bear fruit in our home.”

— Joanna Hensley Latin Teacher, Veritas Press Scholars Academy Homeschooling Mother of a Special-Needs Child.

As a classical educator, I have seen what classical education can do for my students; however, as a mother of a special-needs child, I was initially unsure whether this education was right for my own son.

Some parents and educators have the misconception that classical education is only for “smart kids.” It is easy to understand why someone might think this way. Latin at age 8? Herodotus by 14? With such standards, one might reason, surely classical education is only for born geniuses—the brightest and best of our children. Certainly for advanced performance at the highest levels of classical study, this theory has merit.

But what about those children who are not born geniuses? What about those who, far from being intellectually gifted, are living with cognitive challenges, language disorders, or physical disabilities? Does classical education have anything to offer them? Can classical education benefit any child?

The special-needs child’s humanity—any child’s humanity—must determine the education he receives. Some suggest that as many as 1 in 5 children have special educational needs. Each of these children is a human being, created in the image of God.

An abundance of resources has been included in the Appendix, arranged by special-needs conditions, disorders and diagnoses. This revolutionary new book guides parents and teachers in implementing the beauty of a classical education with special-needs and struggling students.

Cheryl is an advocate of classical Christian education for special-needs students. The love of history, music, literature, and Latin instilled in her own

children has created in Cheryl the desire to share the message that classical education offers benefits to any child:

- Increase your child’s academic success
- Restore your child’s love of learning Regain confidence to teach any child
- Renew your vision of hope for your special-needs child
- Receive help navigating the daunting process of receiving a diagnosis
- Learn how to modify existing resources for your child’s needs
- Find simple strategies any parent or teacher can implement immediately
- Appreciate a spiritual context for bringing truth, goodness, and beauty to any child

Who Will Benefit From This Book? This book was written for so many different individuals and groups:

- In the most heartfelt way – for parents of special-needs children, whether the needs are mild and common or more severe and complex. This group includes those parents familiar with classical education who wonder whether their own children can benefit, and this includes those who have never heard of classical education but who want the best possible education for their children.
- Just as importantly – for those in any setting (classroom teachers, parents, pastors, headmasters, school administrators, special education teachers, tutors, and more) – anyone who would appreciate a straightforward, accessible explanation of classical Christian education, its significance, and its implementation for any child, with or without special needs.

— With practical purposes – for anyone who already teaches special-needs children in a classical school or homeschool setting and needs

encouragement, strategies, and inspiration to be even more effective.

— To offer classical Christian education instead of some less appealing special education alternatives – for parents who wish to homeschool or supplement their special-needs child’s education. This book explains why and how classical Christian education will benefit any child.

— To help with screening – for parents and teachers who wonder whether a specific student might need further assessment. This book provides navigation through both informal and formal testing.



Cheryl Swope, M.Ed. has home-schooled her 18-year-old adopted special-needs twins from their infancy with classical Christian education. She holds a lifetime K-12 state teaching certificate in the areas of Behavior Disorders and Learning Disabilities. She has worked with special-needs children, youth, and adults for over thirty years.

Stacy Tuckercontinued

different, speaking different, acting different or just being different.

We can’t change who we are and that’s the way it’s going to be. So my question to all of you is, “Why, then, do you still stare, talk behind our backs or think you are better than us?”

Sometimes, I even see or feel that people are thinking,

“Why can’t they just leave us alone, they don’t need to be around us, they act really strange or they even look strange, too.”

We are people with feeling just like you, but with a little bit of struggles. Can’t we all just get to know one another and get along, too. I would make it a lot easier.

As my son says he feels like a ‘regular person’ with his disability, but with a few struggles once in a while.

I’m glad God brought him here and I pray that he finds what he is looking for in his life.

One talk, one praise to a special needs person that you don’t know makes a HUGE difference. They will remember it always, even if you don’t think they do.

To this day, I still remember a great friend named Shannon. She always stuck by my side when I got teased or got hurt at school. Those kind of

— To support classical schools – for those classical schools who know they are not meeting the educational needs of some struggling students. Rather than ask such students not to return, classical schools can begin to bring classical education to these students at their own pace. The strategies and methods offer help for children integrated into classrooms or for those in a “school within a school,” in which classical schools offer a smaller classroom or two, perhaps K-3 and 4-8, for students who will continue to need a much slower pace overall. This book offers practical assistance and support for such endeavors.

— To inspire and encourage anyone already engaged in the excellent pursuit of bringing classical Christian education to any child. •

memories always stay with you — make those memories with us.

As my son Michael says,

“Don’t stop trying — you’re like everyone else. If they don’t accept you, then they’re probably not your friend.”

I’m going to stay me for the rest of my life and I have to accept it. With a smile and with real hard work, I truly know that God will get me through anything. •

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CLEAR DIRECTION

by Eleanor Fazzari

Gabe Murfitt wants to change the definition of **NORMAL**.



During his childhood, Gabe Murfitt loved to ride his scooter, play soccer with his brother, shoot hoops with friends and play the drums in the school band.

Sounds pretty ordinary, right?

But take one look at Gabe and it's obvious he's extraordinary.

Gabe was born with a

birth defect that keeps his arms and legs from growing. His legs are bent at the knee and permanently fused as if he were sitting cross-legged. Bone covers his ear canals, forcing him to wear hearing aids.

Growing up, it took Gabe longer to learn certain tasks, but he didn't let his disabilities affect his ability to accomplish what any other kid could do.

Sure, he had to work harder, but Gabe found God's strength and a positive attitude helped him achieve whatever he put his mind to.

"When I'm having rough days, I try to remember that I can do everything by the power of Christ," Gabe says, quoting Philippians 4:13. "Jesus is right there to help me. He can help me overcome any difficulty."

NORMAL KID

Although Gabe entered the world with a unique body, his parents were excited about the addition to their family. The doctor told them the best thing they could do for their new child was to treat him like his older brother, Zane.

"My parents never threw a pity party for me," Gabe says. "I got in trouble just like my brother and had my

own chores to do. It was pretty normal, whatever normal is."

Gabe's parents and brother encouraged him to accomplish whatever he wanted. Zane was a friend and mentor to his little brother, pushing him to do his best at all of the sports they played.

Gabe got so good at dribbling a basketball—even with 3-inch arms—that he played point guard for his seventh-grade basketball team.

Because of his family's constant support, and because they didn't do everything for him, Gabe learned how to live a normal life.

SCHOOL DAYS

Before starting kindergarten, Gabe's parents worried how the other kids would treat him. Many people pointed or stared the first time they saw Gabe.

Would the other kids want to play with him? Gabe's parents wondered. Would they tease him because he was different?

The teachers at Gabe's school helped him fit in by



Gabe and Zane bonded over sports.

educating kids about his differences. Though he experienced tough times, Gabe never felt like an outcast. Sometimes he'd see kids run around the playground and wish he could join them. But he didn't let his disabilities affect his attitude. He didn't dwell on what he couldn't do but on what he *could* do.

When Gabe was in sixth grade, his family made a video of him jumping rope, playing baseball, being the goalie in floor hockey and doing other activities. At the last school assembly, Gabe was called to the front as his video played for

the whole school to see.

"I felt like a rock star with everyone watching me," Gabe says. "I got a standing ovation."

Gabe received even more notoriety when he appeared on "The Oprah Winfrey Show" and "Good Morning America," sharing a clear message of hope.

CLEAR MESSAGE

In high school, Gabe came up with a CLEAR message for his life. The letters stand for:

- C**ourage
- L**eadership
- E**ndurance
- A**ttitude
- R**espect

"Thinking about what CLEAR stands for really helped me become the person I am," Gabe says. "Even today, it helps me have the courage to try new things, surround myself with good leaders and be a leader, endure through my hard times, have a positive attitude and respect myself and other people."

Recently, Gabe and his

mother wrote a book called *My Message Is C.L.E.A.R.* to encourage people to overcome their struggles.

"We all have our different issues," Gabe says. "Whether it's physical or emotional, we all have to deal with something."

Gabe's positive attitude, CLEAR vision and strength from God have given him hope to overcome any difficulty.

Now as a 22-year-old, Gabe speaks at schools. He plans to become a full-time public speaker, traveling to different places in the United States and around the world. He hopes that audiences will see an ordinary young man who serves an extraordinary God . . . and that the impact on their lives will be clear. ▀

Gabe's outgoing personality and can-do attitude helped him fit in with other kids at school.



PHOTOS COURTESY MURETTI FAMILY AND JIM BATES

GABE'S FAVES

Food: Beef stroganoff

Animal: Cheetah

Color: Blue

Board game: Life

Sport to play: Baseball

Sport to watch: Football

DESIGN BY MIKE HARRIGAN

Life with Jordan

our 26-year-old son with Down syndrome

By Sherry Bushnell

An adult with special needs may not be as “cute” as when they were little, but I know that my son with Down syndrome believes that I see him as adorable as ever! We adopted Jordan at 7-days-old from his mom and dad, 6 months after our own daughter, Tally, also born with Down syndrome, passed away after open heart surgery.

26-years-later, living with Jordan has been so much more fun than I imagined — and a lot less work. There are some constants: he pretty much needs 24/7 supervision, at least from a safety standpoint.

He feels very capable, and that can be his downfall. And he prefers to live his life self-guided and unencumbered by a routine.

On some days he acts like the man he is, needing appropriate respect — like the rest of the adult males around here. However, other times he just wants to curl up onto my lap, putting his head on my shoulder, and be the 6-year-old that he really is. Can't say I blame him.

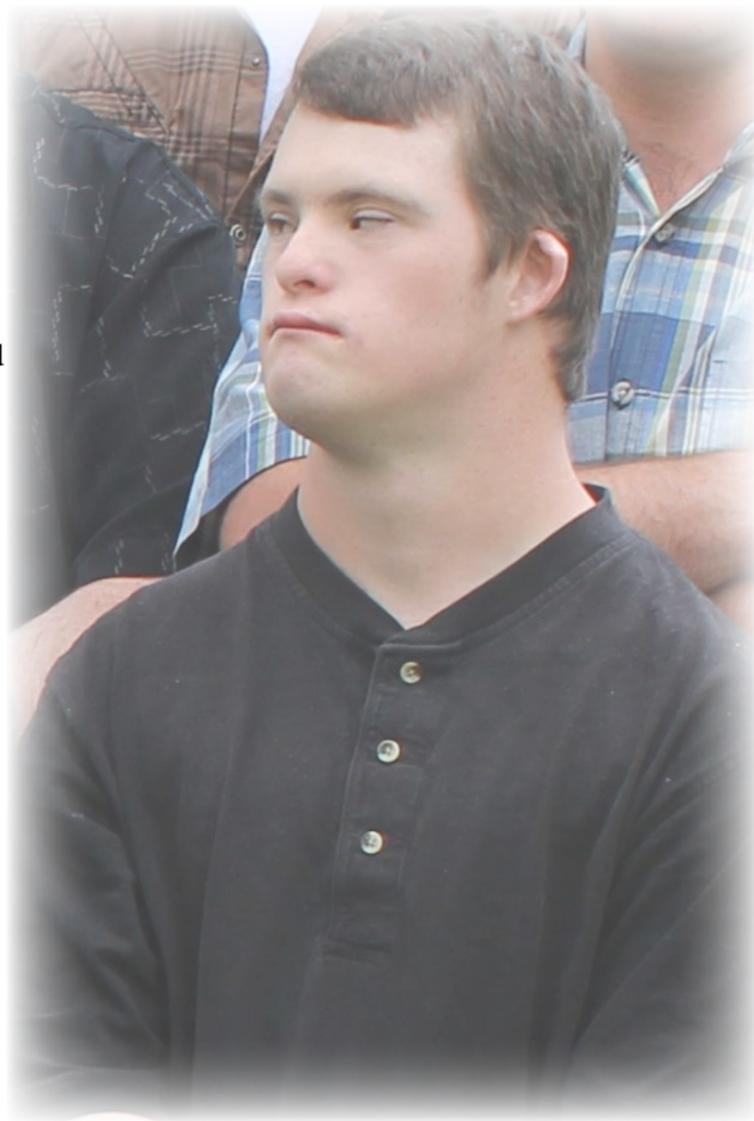
So, I guess I see my special-needs son as case-in-point — how in-born the need for respect in man is, in general. Although he cannot always perfectly verbalize his frustration at occasionally being treated rudely by his younger brothers and sisters, he sure gets his message across to them. If he senses that someone is stepping on his manhood, he will confront that person with all seriousness and insist on making it right.

If he cannot get results, he will appeal to the higher authority around at that time. Of course his appeal is not always remedied to his satisfaction, but I gotta' give him an “A” for trying. Once retribution is made, the thunderclouds disappear and all is perfectly right in his world — this can take a total of 30 seconds. He truly holds no grudges.

Take for instance the Television/DVD screen in the living room — Jordan lives in Mayberry. Yes, he relates very well to Barney in the old TV show Andy Griffith. An all day of watching the series can turn sour for him, if the conclusion to an individual show is not fully completed.

We have tried to explain to him again and again that he can just push the stop button and continue later, but he doesn't see that as being a reasonable way to end. So, we have all worked around the show conclusions and have learned to give him warning not to start another session, as dinner is about ready. That works.

Jordan's world revolves around music. He loves gospel music of all kinds. He loves to sing, or croon along with his head phones on, to CD after CD. Lately he has taken



to strumming on the 6-string guitar along with the songs. He really feels like a part of the worship team. So rapturous, yet serious, is the look on his face.

Now, we all think this is perfectly spiritual and a wonderful way to worship... except when he raids our personal CD caches. I have personally witnessed him looking around for anyone watching, open my car door, sit in my seat, close the door and thumb through my CDs. I can hardly get mad at him. He loves them as much as I do. Thankfully his tastes run slightly more hymnish than mine, so I give up my CD's after a while and buy some more after about the 3rd-or-4th personal raid on his cache to retrieve my CDs back. He is actually pretty careful with them, and the wear-and-tear I see on them is more from over-use, than scratches from rough handling.

Jordan's health has been exceptionally good thus far. He is able to perform most of his personal health hygiene tasks. Yes, he does miss patches occasionally while shaving, but he does do an adequate job.

If he can locate his clothing either in his drawer or in the pile of laundry left to be folded in the laundry room, he feels very successful. There are times when he will come to me with a completely exasperated look on his face and say, “Can't you please get me some underwear!?”

Part of Jordan's mischievous nature includes wearing different clothing from various brothers and sisters. Almost every weekend, he will find a person to torture with wearing their stuff. This is pretty much ignored by the boys, unless we are going somewhere and he is wearing something completely outlandish. His younger teen sisters are not impressed with this however.

Coming out in the morning with our 17-year-old's pair of skinny jeans (how he got them zipped up, I will never know) is sure to raise the roof. Besides looking like Elvis Presley swiveling his hips just to walk with a smirk on his face, he can ruin a few garments.

I implore the girls to do their own laundry and to not leave things around to tempt him. But mostly he loves to wear his bigger brother's jeans (with a big belt cinched up to keep them up), fancy leather church coat, sun glasses, grandpa's hat and, of course, the T-shirts with the cool pictures on them.

Getting Jordan to help around the house is relatively easy if he sees everyone else working. He loves to work along side us, especially if we have company coming or he catches the vision for cleaning up for something special coming up.

Oh, how he loves the holidays. He is a particular blessing Sundays, when he is very motivated to have church, either home church or going somewhere to worship. This is probably Jordan's highlight of the week. Almost every church service we will catch him taking a cat-nap or nodding off. But he sure loves the whole church feeling.

Although he cannot read fluently, he can choose his music CDs with accuracy. He can also preach gospel messages with his open Bible and perform a long, perfected oratory style, that is unmistakably good-old fashioned hell-fire preaching. He loves to expound the urgent message to an audience of believers. He doesn't care if they have four legs and long ears or two legs and feathers. The message is still the same, REPENT!

Jordan loves to eat. He is not a big sweet eater, but he does love pudding, ice cream, and Monday morning oatmeal with chocolate chips. I was so concerned about his weight when he was younger. I breastfed him for the longest time, hoping that he would be able to avoid any allergies — for the most part, we have avoided any major issues. He despises avocados. His most emphatic

comment regarding a food was after eating a bite of the rich, green, smooth fruit, “This is disgusting!” He honestly eats just about everything else — salads, veggies, meat, whole wheat breads, he loves it all.

One Thanksgiving, one of our sons seated next to him (a long ways away from me) decided to see just exactly how much Jordan would eat. He just kept dishing Jordan up, and dishing up. Jordan just kept shoveling it in... until Jordan started crying at the table from uncomfortable tummy pains. That was the last time this particular brother tried that, as I made him tend him for the next few hours while Jordan moaned and groaned laying on the couch — happy Thanksgiving, Mom!

This particular brother said, “Can't we just get him to throw up and be done with this?” Perhaps that would have worked, but Jordan's huge fear of vomiting creates a big problem itself. The dramatics involved in that whole procedure is really not worth discussing.

Outside of a dry skin condition during the winter, that is about all he contends with. Or do I say, we contend with, because Jordan could care less! As a teen he got acne like all of my other children. This was familiar territory. He saw himself as majorly grown up, just like his younger brothers and sisters dealing with the same. And I honestly feel like he eagerly pointed them out to us to show us he was big, rather than garnering sympathy.

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Life with Jordan continued...

An interesting thing about Jordan and small “owies.” He will become completely panic stricken over a sliver (a small one) and refuse help from certain people, cry, moan, and become red in the face with anxiety. But, when he is truly in pain or sick, he just gets pale, very quiet and sleeps.

As for being an important part of our family, Jordan is very unique and a loved member that we wouldn’t want any different than he is. Although, I do have a few questions to ask him about when we all get to Heaven... like, *What was he thinking at the psychologist’s office when he refused to talk and just sat there grinning like a hyena?* The concerned doctor labeled him severely mentally retarded. In walking out of the office I grabbed Jordan by the arm and said, “*Why wouldn’t you say anything?!*” Jordan just shrugged his shoulders and said, “*Our secret!*” — “*Great,*” I thought.

Or the time he was found running down the street, ½ mile away, in the snow, with his Bible in his hands. He was determined to so somewhere. Later we got more of the story and found out he had had a fight with his sister and that had motivated him to leave. *Where did he think he was going?*

Being Jordan’s mom is everything I had hoped it would be, plus a lot more. Besides finding secret skills that I did not know I possessed, I have realized that with God’s help, I have more patience, more compassion and more understanding. Or maybe raising Jordan was just a way for me to gain it all. I have some amazing talents. Skills like understanding gibberish. Somehow I can make sense of a lot of verbalization that sounds nothing remotely like English. I have skills in comforting my man-child that nobody else has. If mom says, “*It’s OK,*” then it is OK — that’s a lot of power!

I can overlook my type A personality traits and look at my

son’s attempts at cleaning and be proud enough to pop the buttons on my jean jumper. If Jordan did it and he worked sooooo hard on cleaning the living room, then it is good enough.

Somehow my oldest daughters don’t see the connection.

IF THEY CLEANED LIKE THAT, it wouldn’t pass muster.

I am looking forward to the next 20–30 years with Jordan. With his strong constitution, he may out-live me!

But, life is frail and we don’t know what is in store for any of us. I have resolved to love my son everyday, for the gift of just being himself.

If he could add to my article, I know that he would probably tell you that raising a son with Down syndrome is not always easy. In fact, the tears and just not-knowing the end results in the beginning, made parenting a big question in our future.

When Jordan was 4-years-old, I imagined myself cleaning mashed peas off the floor for the next 50 years. But that is because that is all that I knew then.

Do any of us really know what is in store for the future? Jordan would also say that he is a gift from God to us. He knows Jesus personally and loves Him dearly.

If I spent the amount of time he spends in worship each day, I’d be a lot closer to hearing His voice. As we all grow old together, I pray for God’s wisdom for the coming changes.

And, the grace to be able to say, “Your will be done, Jesus, in the life of this amazing little man named Jordan.” •

Please see page 24 to learn more about Life with Jordan and his sisters Sheela and Lynny, who also have special needs. Links to articles from back issues of the NATHHAN & CHASK News about the Bushnell family’s children with special needs are available on page 25.

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Sheela and Lynny, a match ordained by God

By Sherry Bushnell

Sheela and Lynny were a match ordained by God. Sheela was born in India, a tiny baby with no eyes in her sockets, left at Mother Teresa's orphanage a few days after birth. We traveled to India and adopted her at 21-months-old from a hospital in Madras, through an agency in Washington — she was beautiful.

Her sweetness in that touching beginning hid the major-emotional handicap that has colored her entire life — Reactive Attachment Disorder (RAD).

We had about three days of “honeymoon bliss.” You will just have to read about all the stories our family shared in past issues of the NATHHAN & CHASK News to get a picture of what our family struggled with as we worked through years of RAD.

Sheela is now 25-years-old. She truly holds my kitchen together with her consistent work of love. Yes, help with cleaning and laundry is as good as a hug in my house. She is faithful, cheerful, willing, and has incredible stick-to-it-ness.

She is so positive in her attitude that everyone admires her. Yes, she still has emotional issues and is considered mildly mentally challenged, but she is perfect the way she is.

RAD is only a small part of who Sheela is now and it no longer colors everyday so vividly.

Lynny, our amazing 21-year-old daughter, was adopted at 14-months-old from Pune, India. We adopted her through an adoption agency in the states.

Our thought pattern was to adopt a blind sister for Sheela. Our reasoning was that if we are teaching one child Braille, mobility, and all, it would be really a good idea to include another sibling. They would have each other to play with and relate to.

That is, the child we assumed we had chosen through the agency was our idea that seemed good. But that was our idea, not God's.

Instead, Lynny was born to a teenage mother, was injured on the side of the head at birth, and ended up with “stroke-like” cerebral palsy and moderate autism. Contrary to what the medical reports from India said, she is neither blind nor deaf.

She has full use of her right hand; she is in a wheelchair; does not walk, and her left arm is consistently

tight and is used for gross motor movement. Fluctuating muscle tone creates days of hypertonia or hypotonia, depending on a lot of things — most of which we have not figured out.

She is generally very content. She is smart enough to figure out when she is being left out of activities, and she is quick to convince someone to push her chair into the action.

She can read, write and make special cards. With all the birthdays and other holidays around our house, this keeps her pretty busy. She remembers almost everyone's name and birthday that she meets, if they divulge that information to her.

She is particular about some things, like keeping cupboards closed, cleaning the coffee machine, where she sits at meal time, and that she gets the same foods that everyone else gets on her plate (portion size doesn't matter).

Yes, Sheela and Lynny make a great team. Sheela has both arms and legs and great dexterity. Lynny has good eyes and watches the kitchen like a hawk for Sheela for anything out of place. Lynny keeps an eye on Jordan and alerts Sheela to any activity that Sheela can't guess on her own.

Sheela's unique gifts astound me. A fun game of ours is to have me start dinner with Sheela sitting in the living room around 4:30 p.m. She loves to try to guess what I am making — 9-times-of-out-10 she will be able to guess within just a few minutes of my starting. Now, this tells you something about my rather limited dinner menu repertoire over the years, but I suppose making tacos



does sound a bit different than meat pie. But adding up the different clatter of specific pans, dishes, utensils, and odor of foods cooking all just might be her clues.

If you could have told me that Sheela would be the incredible blessing to me she is today 10-years-ago, I probably would have rolled my eyes like one of my teens. Not that I did not love her, but getting through the age of about 2-to-18-years-old about killed me.

How can one quiet daughter with RAD send one mother into negative intense emotional overload? Read back issues of the NATHHAN & CHASK News — maybe you can relate. Yet here we are, all grown up. I am so pleasantly happy with her, that all of those years of intense training, tears, anger, bitterness (mine, not hers) have all washed away. Like an ugly painting made of washable paint, only tiny stains are left.

Stains enough to remind me of the trial, enough to gently be on guard, but not dark enough to call out and distract us in our present work-together relationship.

— What sort of RAD behaviors do we notice now that she is an adult? I think that only subtle things remain.

I would not put it past her to deny truth, if she was truly put on the spot. She can fixate on things such as reminding everyone to say thank-you after a meal. At first I thought that all my younger kids and special needs kiddos had suddenly been overcome with gratitude. But after a few weeks, I noticed that big sister Sheela was mumbling reminders to everyone to say thank-you.

As close as I can figure it, she enjoys the warm vibes a happy mom exudes. She could feel that when the kids were grateful, I was pleased. So, too much of a good thing later, mandatory thank-you's were instated — I left it all alone. I enjoy a little thankfulness around here.

This was so like her in childhood, as she herded or manipulated people around her in her own quiet way. I can remember her choosing to obey one parent over the other or purposely causing discord



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in our family. Little did I know that this very irritation would bloom into a gift that brought me happiness.

Sheela does not experience home sickness or function in deeper social relationships. Normally a relationship would grow as two people give and take, sort of ping-pong fashion. You share information or a story, and the other person relates with a similar story or appropriate response to the information. Sheela is emotionally one-sided.

She gives and gives and does not receive from others, or she takes and takes and takes, without giving in return. She is not able to gauge a social debt.

Example: *My big sister helped me clean my room, so I would like to do something in return on the same level.* If she is prompted to think about something to do in return, it usually is either way too much or too little (I'll be your slave for the next 5 days, or I will wipe your place at the table.)

So as near as we can see, the residual-emotional ravages of RAD that are probably here for life, but very manageable with our expectations being reasonably set because we know her. On the other hand, she has learned to respond appropriately to social interaction on a surface level.

She is polite and smiles beautifully when greeted. She can respond with good answers to spontaneous questions on a surface level.

Lynny loves to do crafts. One-handed crafts are often easily done with adaptations. Knitting on a small loom round is one of her favorites. The local neighborhood girls love it when she makes them headbands, hats or arm tubes. Not sure what those are, but Lynny has created a local fashion statement.

Our hardships with Lynny have more to do with her physical handicap and not her autism.

Last year, over a period of six months, Lynny gained a bit of weight. Perhaps sitting in her chair everyday hid the extra volume and we did not really understand the entire picture. Sitting in her wheel chair is paramount to functioning.

Not just sitting, but eating, everything. Being sick and weak with a virus. Lynny tried for two hours to get into her seat — nothing doing. So, in order to get breakfast done, now that it was 10:00 a.m., I decided to just lift her up into place. Mistake. At 150-pounds, needing to be held out to avoid crashing her legs into the chair and tangling them in the wheels, I felt my back go "twinge" (or maybe it was that sting down my left leg that warned me all was now not well and started a week of laying in bed.)

So, a new diet plan was instated. No snacks, less carbs, more salad and no Sheela's motherly sharing after-meal or between-meal tidbits. No sweet-laden coffee made for herself as she cleaned out the coffee maker each morning. That alone was enough, over several months, to take off 25-pounds.

Lynny can cook on our huge gas stove simple things like eggs. She takes one hour to do so, but then again, nobody is in the kitchen from 9-to-11 a.m. anyway.

My mental torture when it comes to simple household tasks, surrounding the time it takes to "just get the thing done" has been easily solved. I just leave. This goes for the four hours it takes Sheela to do a sink full of dishes. Or the three hours it takes to take a bath, the two hours on the toilet or one hour to cook an egg by Lynny. For all I know it was all completed in a "reasonable" amount of time, because when I get back, it is done!

The girls love sunshine. Sheela likes the warmth on her face — she used to call the sun the "heater". Lynny's wheel chair out on the deck under the awning is like a permanent fixture all summer. This is her command center. From there she can watch the dogs, grand kids, parakeets, the adults working on the lawn, assess visitor arrivals of all ages, (and who sneaks out!), who goes by on the road and when the UPS man comes — nothing escapes her notice; Sheela is kept fully informed.

How does Jordan fit into the triage of "Amigos"? He is their mascot.

I don't mean that in a demeaning way. He carries the air of authority in a sort of "allowed" way for the three of them. He has mostly reasonable requests and can be their helper in a physical way with chores — they look after him... he looks after them.

I know he sees himself as "in charge." Sheela can usually manage him, but Lynny not so good. She, of all the people in the house, can get under his skin and vice-versa. Perhaps it is because they are in competition for entertainment like the screen in the living room or the choice in music.

My cousin, a few years ago, adopted three children with Down syndrome from Ukraine. Through her present experiences I see myself 15-years-ago. I remember when big question marks hung over the heads of my special-needs kids.

Would I always be changing diapers for three at once? And if I were, exactly how big would those diapers need to be? Or a more pointed question, how much bowel movement would they

contain? Would I always be cleaning up scattered peas, smashed rice crispies made into powder under the wheel chair, or living with a screaming little person, wanting something, but none of us sure exactly what? Guess what? They all grew up.

All are potty trained, all communicate, and all have become a blessing to our family, and especially to me. Now they clean up the scattered peas with a broom and dust pan.

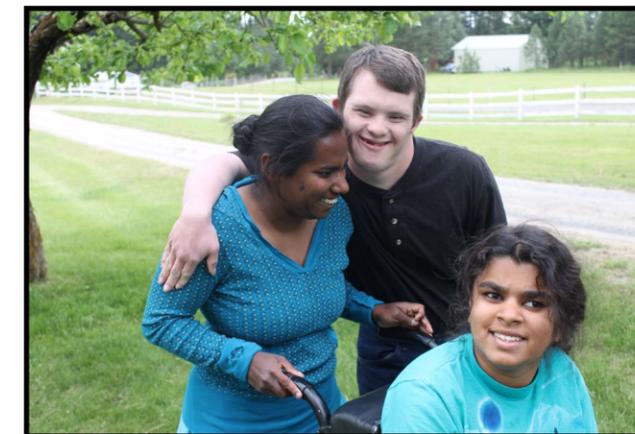
The Rice Crispies that their 8-yr-old little sister has just accidentally poured onto the floor and stomped on with her foot, are cheerfully mopped up... by them!

That recent visit with my cousin lasted an entire day and a half with constant visiting (*boy, how did we talk that long?!*)

It ended with the typical good-byes, my kissing the top of each of her kids' heads with shiny, clean hair "Snickerdoodle No. 1", "Snickerdoodle No. 2" and "Snickerdoodle No. 3."

I could feel inside that I was happily looking forward to getting home to my

own Snickerdoodles. Yet, I have to admit there were days in the midst of those trying years as we lovingly guided their footsteps, that I wondered if my sanity would ever return and there would be joy and in my heart. There sure is! I am so looking forward to making more great memories with the three "Amigos" and our growing extended family. •



The Three Amigos: Jordan, Sheela, left and Lynny, right.

Interested in learning more about Jordan, Sheela and Lynny Bushnell?

Links:

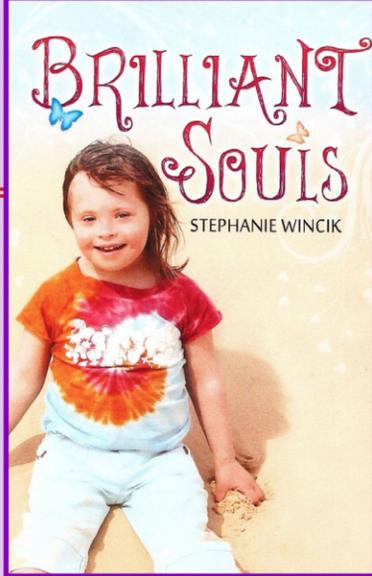
Is it always happily, ever after?
By Tom & Sherry Bushnell

Jordan, and I
By Tom Bushnell

What's it like to parent a child with Reactive Attachment Disorder (RAD)?
By Sherry Bushnell

Stained Glass Crosses
by Linda Dillon

www.pegasusglassonline.com



Book Review by Leticia Velasquez

Brilliant Souls by Stephanie Wincik

her extensive experience with the disabled.

Not only does she prove that such individuals present as many benefits as they do burdens to society, but she forces the reader to question some of society's values.

Who is of greater use to society, a rich person who is unhappy or a disabled person who cannot hold a job but spreads joy wherever he goes? Is it too much burden to pay for the cost of the extra medical care an innocent individual with Down syndrome needs versus that of a drug addict or criminal, whose care we readily provide?

She questions assumptions about what constitutes a happy childhood by asking if raising children who expect life to be without challenges and are thus unable to give of themselves is a good idea.

And the most challenging of all, ... *what if the attitude of those with Down syndrome is superior to our own, providing the world the humanity it is lacking?*

Stephanie interviews speaker and advocate Bridget Brown, a young woman with Down syndrome, about a letter, written to the Washington Post, comparing the abortion of babies with Down syndrome to Hitler's death camps — thrusting her into the spotlight. Brown's group "Butterflies for Change" challenges that rejection of those with Down syndrome.

Stephanie describes how a little girl named Chloe Kondrich along with her father, Early Intervention Specialist and advocate Kurt Kondrich, has touched thousands of hearts, and met such luminaries as Governor (Alaska) Sarah Palin and, former, Pittsburgh Pirate baseball player Andy LaRoche.

Dennis McGuire, Ph.D challenges the reader to rethink assumptions about the place of people with

Down syndrome in society by his essay included within *Brilliant Souls* entitled, "What Would Happen if People with Down Syndrome Ruled the World?" — it inspires the reader to go out and make the world a more welcoming place for babies with Down syndrome.

Brilliant Souls is a compelling read, challenging in its content and uplifting, especially if you are fortunate enough to know someone with genetic diversity.

A caution to faith-based readers: Ms. Wincik's unorthodox spirituality is evident when she asserts that individuals with Down syndrome communicate with the dead and may be reincarnated.

I agree that my seven-year-old daughter Christina expressed startling awareness of the presence of Christ despite very limited ability to communicate and that I have heard such accounts from other parents, yet we must discern such experiences within the wisdom of Church teaching.

Still, Ms. Wincik's insights into society's perception of disabled individuals is an important and penetrating read, and may move a person who does not come from a particularly strong moral tradition.

Share it with someone in the medical profession and open a heart. •

Leticia Velasquez is a wife and homeschooling mother of three daughters. Leticia is a freelance writer whose articles have appeared in Faith and Family magazine, a columnist for Celebrate Life magazine, and blogger at Cause of Our Joy and at Catholic Media Review. She is the editor of A Special Mother is Born: Parents Share How God Called Them to the Extraordinary Vocation of Parenting a Special Needs Child.

Special Needs Support Groups

Deaf Ministries List

Earl and Shirley Wilbers
221 W. Gay St.
Harrisonburg, VA 22802
e-mail: EEARL2@aol.com
www.deafministriesconnection.netfirms.com

Especially Yours - a support group for families homeschooling children with special needs in Colorado. All are welcome.
Patricia Rendoff
303 937-3428 or e-mail at prdiggie@juno.com

Shepherd Boy - Strategies for Autism

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

HOPES - Homeschooling Our Precious Exceptional Students

We meet on the first Thursday night of each month. Jim and Mary Rees
Traveler's Rest, South Carolina
864 834-0264

Bethel Baptist Academy

We help moms write their IEPs through our workshops.
P.O. Box 10035
Fullerton, CA 92838
714 527-5807
714 990-0199
562 425-7886
e-mail: 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
e-mail: sharon@avcsbooks.com

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Support group for special-needs homeschoolers www.groups.yahoo.com/group/handson_westernpa forum: www.groups.yahoo.com/group/wpahandson

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

Special Needs and Christian Kids
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Tina Wyatt
e-mail: tewjr@flash.net

IGGHS: In God's Great Hands Homeschoolers!

Christine
337-214-5594
e-mail: Jaynhisgirls4@suddenlink.net
Lake Charles Louisiana

Specially Gifted

A support group for families homeschooling special needs children. Part of a Christian family-based ministry operated by Dave and Deb Pegram. They also operate a private Christian "umbrella" school that provides transcripts, IEPs, testing and evaluative services.
c/o the Pegrams
7217 South Drive
Richmond, VA 23225-1622
804 323-1786
StrengthuntoStrength@juno.com

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
Shannon Bloemendaal
e-mail: sbloemen@aol.com

Parents Instructing Challenged Children LEAH

www.piccnys.com
e-mail: piccleah@verizon.net

New York state's Loving Education At Home

Special needs support and chapter for families homeschooling struggling learners.

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

Renee Silvaroli — Support Group Coordinator & Workshop Speaker. 440 944-4782
e-mail: RCHOSEN@visn.net
Please RSVP if you plan to attend a meeting.

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
ryckman@downhomelearning.net
www.downhomelearning.net

Arizona - West Valley Autism Support Group

Shelley
623 572-5289
Meets at New Life Community Church in Peoria, AZ second Tuesday of every month.

Christian Cottage School

Sedalia, Colorado
303 688-6626
Mike and Terry Spray founded CCS for diagnostic testing and prescribing curriculum.
www.christiancottage.com

Earthen Vessels Ministries

A support group in Central Maine, for families who home school special-needs children.
http://groups.yahoo.com/group/earthen_vessels_ministries

Adoption disruption, and dissolution By Sandra Faye Douthit

— an interview with Charlott Reynolds

Charlott Reynolds, and her husband Eldon, have been long-time members of the NATHHAN & CHASK organizations. I had the pleasure of meeting and becoming better acquainted with the Reynolds family almost immediately after accepting my position with the organizations. Reynolds never ceases to amaze with her ability to follow the Lord's calling to care for the children, some claim, nobody else wants... Is Reynolds a humanitarian? Hero? Servent?

Sandra Faye Douthit: How many of the children you've adopted have been a product of disruption or dissolution? If any, how many times were they disrupted or were their adoptions dissolved before you adopted them?

Charlott Reynolds: At this point God has blessed us with 10 beautiful children through adoption. The oldest of them now 25-years-old is married and has a family of her own.

Of the 10 children adopted, four have suffered adoption disruption prior to coming home to our home. In 2006 we adopted a sibling group of three, they had three failed adoption placements and more foster placements than even they can remember before coming home.

In January 2013 we met our daughter through CHASK. She was 5-years-old and was in a failing adoption placement. When she came home to us we were her 9th placement in four years — guess what?... she suffers from post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). We love her very much and she is settling in very well.

Douthit: How are disruption/dissolution adoptions different to you in comparison to an adoption through a birth family?

Reynolds: Children who enter your family from birth or very early childhood learn to trust you from early on, as long as you do not give them a reason not to trust you. They feel secure in your love and know that you will always meet their needs. It does not mean they will not have questions and want to know why they were adopted as they grow, but as with all things in life, honesty, "well-seasoned with love," is the best way to preserve the trust and bond between parent and child.

All children who suffer an adoption disruption/dissolution come in to a new family hurt, and broken — their trust has been broken. They may be suffering from many hurts you know nothing about, and have triggers that make no sense to you but to the child are real, and painfully scary, even horrifying. Children are not born with PTSD or reactive attachment disorder (RAD), it develops as their needs are not met, and by major hurts in their lives caused by care givers. Examples: abuse, neglect, abandonment, failure to protect, and indifference to the child's needs. These are challenges you face as you began to parent the hurt child.

... I want to note, I do understand that sometimes it is necessary and in the child's best interest to disrupt or dissolve an adoption, however, it should be the exception, not the norm.

Douthit: Do you feel called by the Lord to adopt, in particular, children of disruption/dissolution?

Reynolds: We do feel the Lord has called us to adopt children with special needs and all children who are going through a disruption/dissolution have many special needs.



I have a picture in my mind of beautiful pottery, and little china cups that have been broken. With the guidance of the Lord we (our family) began piecing them back together, some go back together so well you would never know it had ever been broken. Others, you can see tiny lines where they are now glued together but work well... yet there are some with small missing pieces, or chips and cracks that cannot be totally fixed but they complete the set and are very valuable.

This is our family, our children came to us in different degrees of brokenness. Some just need a lot of love to polish

them up, and they are ready for the world, others have visible cracks (scars) but with the help of the glue applied by the Lord, and a lot of hard work they too are ready to face the world. Although some were so badly broken or have missing pieces, they are so precious and valuable that we are blessed by the Lord to be able to care for them the rest of our lives.

Douthit: If you could tell a family considering adopting a child from disruption/dissolutions just one thing, what would it be? Your advice to them?...

Reynolds: Life is not like a fairy tale, love does not always fix everything. The most important thing to know is it takes time to heal, and even more time to trust. Just because you already love them remember they do not know you; the other people in their life made promises they did not keep... so they do not yet trust you.

Douthit: What are the first steps you take when a child of disruption/dissolution has entered your home, their new home? As a new parent and for them as your "new" child...

Reynolds: When a "new child" first comes in our home we remember that they are scared and overwhelmed. We start by showing them the house, starting with the bathroom, then their room and where their stuff will be kept. Next we explain if they need us they may come to us anytime. We let them know we have rules and we will explain how our home works as we begin life together. We then keep them very close to us so we can teach them how we live. We continue to keep them close until a trust-bond is formed for them and us.

Douthit: Do you have a particular program, book, Bible verse, motto, quote and/or prayer you use in the difficult times you face with your child of disruption/dissolution?

Reynolds: The Bible verses we live by are,

"But Jesus said, Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven"

— Matthew 19:14

and also,

"Lo, children [are] an heritage of the Lord: [and] the fruit of the womb [in his] reward"

— Psalms 127:3

We have learned so much through the training classes we took while fostering. We also like James Dobson's books.

Douthit: Have you ever considered disrupting or dissolving an adoption yourself? If so, why? If not, there must have been some difficult times! What did you do?

Reynolds: We have not considered disruption. This however, does not mean we have not had hard times. We pray a lot and seek help from Christian counselors. We remember we are not perfect either; we mess up and disappoint the Lord at times. We remind ourselves that it is not a personal assault against us when a child acts out, but the child is reacting to hurts in his/her life — it does not make it easy but it is more understandable.

Douthit: What family dynamics do you believe create a better chance for success in adopting children of disruption/dissolution?

Reynolds: It is a real plus for us that we are able to have a stay-home parent; we also believe it helps that we are home educators; there needs to be careful consideration as to age and abilities of children already in the home and new children; clear rules with an understanding of consequences

We become Mom and Dad the very second the disrupting parents steps out the door — we begin the way we intend to end.

are a must; schedules need to be set so that a child knows what to expect — yet flexible enough to accommodate the need of the family, and we believe a period of very close monitoring is essential at the beginning of every placement.

Douthit: We've talked before about your "cocooning period," can you tell me a little bit more about this theory and how it's implemented in your family/home?

Reynolds: We implement, what we call, a "cocooning period" when small children or children diagnosed with RAD or PTSD come into our family. Our goal is to help the child learn to trust us, and depend on us, to be their parents. When these two things happen the child can bond more easily.

So, here is how it goes: the child cannot be out of our reach/sight, depending on age, during this period of time. The only people that can meet the needs of this child are the parents — Mom and Dad. All drinks, food, toileting, clothes, medicines, treats, etc... must be handed to the child by mom or dad. We educate our older children family, friends and church ahead of time so they understand what we are trying to do, and that it will not be a permanent situation.

During this time the child is not left with anyone but mom and dad — no baby sitters. When the child goes to Sunday

school Mom or Dad goes and makes sure their needs are met. The same is true with parties, meetings, and all social events. The children are allowed and encouraged to go play, to have fun and participate. We are just there to meet all their needs. When the child is use to us, and looks to us



to meet their needs, we slowly loosen the holds and allow others to help the child.

Douthit: What do you think are the biggest misconceptions when individuals think of disruption/dissolution?

Reynolds: I believe the biggest misconceptions about children involved in disputations are No.1, that it is entirely the child's fault, or that if one set of parents could not handle the child and their issues that no one can; No. 2, that it is the entirely the disrupting parents fault. Sometimes the parents did not know about or understand what it was going to be like to parent a broken and hurt child.

Knowledge is power, and the lack of knowledge can be devastating, and No. 3, though love is essential it does not in-and-by itself make an adoption work.

Douthit: Is it scary, terrifying or traumatic in any way for a child to be placed with you, a stranger to them — both for you and for the child? If so, how do you handle this?

Reynolds: It is terrifying to a child in a traumatic way, and somewhat to the new family. This child has just lost everything,... imagine if it was you. Pretend you just came home and were told for any reason, because the reason does not matter, "You are moving to a new home all by yourself— no one you know will be there. I am sure they will take good care of you. You make take only the personal things that belong to you."

They are told, they may or may not have even met these people before, and as you are a child you have no way to choose, change your mind, or leave.

I think there are no words to describe how awful that would feel.

It is also somewhat scary for the new family; you'll know you are getting a hurt and frightened child. You may or may not have been given enough information to properly prepare to help this child, and whatever problems this child had will now be much worse.

Douthit: Do you instantly act as their parent? Friend? Or, just an "adult figure" they will be living with forever? How do the adopting parents and the newly introduced child to the family interact initially?

Reynolds: When we adopt a child we have made the commitment to be that child's parents. We become Mom and Dad the very second the disrupting parents steps out the door — we begin the way we intend to end. When we meet family, friends, acquaintances, or the general public we introduce the child as, "This is my son 'Name', or, my daughter 'Name.'"

Douthit: What about other kids in the family, already established either biological or previously adopted, how do they react? If not well, what do you say to them?

Reynolds: We talk about adopting a "new child" with our children way before they come. All the children in the home are excited about the coming of a new child and understand the needs of the new child to the ability of each child's capacity.

Douthit: Does birth order matter? Gender mixing? Race mixing?

Reynolds: Birth order matters in how it affects the dynamics of the home, not so much oldest to youngest. You may have an older child that does not want to have a child older than them, but the baby is happy being the youngest, and some time they may want a child very close to their own age, it depends on the family and the child.

The same is true of gender. We always say, "We do not see skin color; just children." We believe all people are created equal. •



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This company Website was recommended to me by a member of our NATHHAN organization. What an amazing resource it has been — it's recently been added to my list. This company has so much too offer... there's too much to tell! You will just have to see for yourself. — Sandra, NATHHAN & CHASK

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My Journey and Vision for our Mentally Challenged, Special-Needs Adults

By Imelda Goedecke

As I ponder the years of training my special-needs children who are now adults, I am encouraged by the Lord. In the past I have felt remorse and regret for times I had wasted in anger and fear for things that brought difficulty in my life, yet God in His mercy broke the pride that held these destructive things to my heart.

He pounded and made me, pliable so that I could become the vessel He desired and I desired. When that was accomplished I was set free to love, set free to hear what Father had planted in my heart for His special-needs adults.

I remember the biggest obstacle of fear that the Lord had to destroy was when the boy my husband and I adopted came to our home at the age-of-9 with many issues that disrupted our home.

He had major tantrums and sexual-abuse issues that we did not know about. One night he committed a hideous act on one of my sons.

If it had not been for the Holy Spirit I could have beaten my adopted son to death.

I thought my biological son would be mentally tormented for life. I wanted to send my adopted son back from where he came. But God! In His great love and mercy reminded me of a vision/dream He had given me when I was 19-years-old, four years prior to meeting my husband.

In my vision/dream I was married and had five boys. There were three-young men and two-older boys in their teens.

The youngest had curly hair and I sensed that one was my son,... yet wasn't,... yet he was.

My boys were standing on the upstairs' balcony in our home which had two stairways. I stood at the bottom of the stairway and told my boys to come to the library, which was across from the stairs.

My husband was sitting in a winged-back chair. I stood behind the chair and my boys sat

in front of their father who opened a book and read to them.

When the Lord reminded me of that dream, in it I had five boys, the youngest had curly hair and one was adopted.

He said to me, "I gave you that dream so that you would know that everything would be alright."

Everything would be alright. Though it took quite a few years before I really learned to love my adopted son where he was from the heart, the underlying sense that God was in this adoption and was working in our family gave my husband and I a steadfast peace as well as courage and determination to run the race He had set before us.

During these years God taught me to see my adopted son through the eyes of Jesus, which enabled me to help him to overcome his tantrums.

Sexual issues left as we unconditionally loved him to life. God had to reveal to me that my education degree, learning disability training and interpreting skills were nothing but 'clanging cymbals' without His love.

I couldn't see that I was that way for many years — I was religious.

Everything had to be conducted in an unquestionable way — my way. If I presumed my children were wrong, they had to be strictly disciplined. I disciplined according to the form the Scriptures give but it was not always in the grace and power of love, especially when it came to my adopted son.

He (God) had to break my heart as He lovingly exposed to me my pharisaic behavior, which seemed to be turning the hearts of my children away from desiring Him. I then believed that my behavior was stronger than God; so much so that I could actually turn them away from Him.

He lovingly told me no, the seeds of His love had been planted deep. He is the One who

finishes the good work He starts, not us. His plans of mercy and grace were much bigger. He not only wanted to capture the hearts of my children with His love, but mine as well. Showing me how to love was His goal. Setting me free from pride, resentment and the shame that chained me to the fear that kept me from confessing my sinful behavior was His delight.

As my boys grew older, one who needed much love rebelled. During this time I cried out to the Lord and He gave me another dream.

In my dream He told me that I would have no influence in any way except through prayer. Although God had said not to say anything, I didn't listen.

I told my husband what we needed to do. I was really nagging, but I called it exhorting. I prayed and prayed commanding God and my husband. This put a strain on our marriage.

We both reacted to our son out of fear in opposite extremes clouding our ability to hear God, which almost broke up our marriage.

The whole time we still had to deal with the problems that parents confront concerning their special needs children.

At this time we moved our family from New England to a southwestern state. Things became worse, and fiery darts of divorce were thrown at me often. We didn't have much money and I remember thinking, "I'm too broke to leave." I couldn't believe that I was even thinking these thoughts about my best friend. Of course at that time he didn't seem like a best friend.

Oh the great mercy and love of God that keeps us where we need to be!

When I finally began to be obedient to the heavenly dream and learn to quiet my spirit, rest in Him and surrender my efforts knowing that God was in control and I wasn't, He began to bring me into a deeper relationship of love to Him.

It was then as I began to sit quietly before Him (listening not talking), learning to rest in His joy, that things began to turn around for my family. I couldn't believe that God didn't need me to say anything. He could talk to my husband without me! Can you imagine that?

In that resting place God gave His love, and I received it because I could hear — I wasn't busy talking. In that quiet and still time He

poured His peace and joy upon me, and I began to learn to properly love my husband and boys in a deeper way.

I began to truly forgive my adopted, special-needs son and love him for who he was.

It was then that I saw that all the things I thought were problems were not. They became problems because I had tried in my own effort to make things better. But God showed me it was and is only as we rest in His presence that He fills us with His love, joy and peace.

He brings us to that place where His will is our will, desire and delight. It is only then that we will be able to reach our loved ones, and specifically our special-needs adults — to enable them to enter into that beautiful rest with the Lord so that they can learn and grow.

It is the goodness of God that leads to repentance, (Romans 2:4). Growing more in love with God has helped me to see my family through the eyes of Jesus.

As a result I have been able to hear their hearts. Our natural sons are learning to dwell in the presence of God. And it has been a tremendous blessing that has caused us, as a family, to work together in the power and love of God.

As I said, my adopted special-needs son was exposed to many gross and horrible things as a child before he came to us, which paralyzed him in many areas of his life. Because the love of Jesus has flowed through my husband and I along with our natural-born sons we have been able to minister to him.

The bitterness and anger he had for his biological mother and father has been released to God. His growing love for God and his learning to dwell in the presence of God has enabled him to learn more practical things, such that we are now able to concentrate on areas of learning that had been almost impossible to learn before because of the major tantrums.

Whenever he is tempted to revert back to his old ways, we gently lead him back to the One-who-loves-him, and he is soon at peace and ready to learn.

We now look forward, with the help of the body of Christ, to training and apprenticing our special-needs adults, that they may become even more of a blessing to others.

Continued ...

As a family we have seen God use us as a team to bring healing and hope to others who are broken. This is what we believe God would have for all our families.

We are the feet, the hands the body that brings the answer of hope to our neighborhoods and the nations. God has commanded us to train our children in the way that they should go — some of those children, however, take a little longer than others.

In Matthew 28:19–20 Jesus said, “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”

Though there may be some government programs that are helpful, God did not command them to train and disciple our children but rather God gave that authority to the family and the church.

How can our children observe all things He has commanded us if they are not trained by us but by government programs?

The answer is obvious, they won't. Their worldview is not the same as a believer, nor do they have the jurisdiction from God to educate or disciple. Most people have the heard the famous line quoted from William Ross, who wrote a long poem praising motherhood as the preeminent influence for change in the world — “The hand that rocks the cradle rules the world.”

This saying is true of mentally challenged special needs adults, though much of their character is formed while young, they are easily influenced by those around them because of their childlikeness/naiveté that believes so readily.

How may we accomplish what God would have us to do for our mentally challenged, special-needs adults?

The world, in general, considers them as non-contributors to society, but God sees them in a different light. He sees them as He sees all of us, as His children that may enter into that deep encounter with Him.

They are those who are and can become

blessings to the world bringing, His kingdom wherever they are. To bring this to pass, I believe that we need to build teams of people in the church who have a heart of compassion and the willingness to develop their skills to serve the least of these my brethren in various capacities.

The special-needs adults obviously are not least in God's eyes; however, they are not always easy to work with physically and emotionally.

Thus, our teams will be those who will help the special-need adults to first gain the ability to enter into God's presence as well as gain an understanding of God's principles that apply in every area of life.

Teams can gather at a home base where they may be trained in how to minister and train the special-need adults in reading, writing and basic math skills for life, cooking, etc. as needed. These teams will consist of those in the church and business community who will be willing and able to apprentice them a few hours a week in different skills that will help them to earn a living and begin to help others.

Another possible goal for those special needs adults who do not have a family is to be placed with loving families who will disciple them in family life.

This compassionate vision of enabling mentally challenged, special-needs adults, I believe, is one that is on the heart of the Father, not only for special-needs adults in this nation, but for the nations.

The Father preparing the hearts of those whose desire is to follow Him in this area is one not to enter lightly. Our hearts must be all His, that He may bend us whatever way He desires.

In that way our love may be given sweetly and powerfully to accomplish His desire for each one, we will bring in His love to Him.

In His Eternal Love. •

For individuals who feel called by God to support special-needs adults, much the way Imelda has described in this article, you may contact her directly by e-mail at KeyTutor@Hotmail.com

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A sinister movement is growing in America to criminalize biblical parenting. We can be victims or victors. An anonymous tip is all that separates your family from a social services investigation based upon your parental decisions on issues like corporal punishment, sanctity of life, medical choices like vaccinations and midwifery, and applications of biblical standards in church and family.

Heritage Defense was established to protect Christian families against unfounded and illegal intimidation by organizations like Child Protective Services. The threat is real, and preparedness is critical. Heritage Defense is committed to defending our families against such wrongful state usurpations of family jurisdictions.

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HERITAGE DEFENSE



Heritage Defense is a nonprofit legal advocacy organization established to protect Christian families across the country against illegitimate and unconstitutional attacks on their parental rights by government agencies. Heritage Defense works diligently to defend the rights of parents and to shield the arrows that God has entrusted to us.

HERITAGEDEFENSE.ORG

dōTERRA®: Essential-Oil Research

Autism, ADD & ADHD By Julie Apsey

— Essential Oils and Autism/ADD/ADHD:

Like other health concerns these disorders may be helped at multiple levels. Since many of the symptoms (behaviors) are common between the two disorders there will be benefits from the same oils. As you work with the oils you will find what works best for your child as well as the mode of application.

Did you know that the olfactory sensory nerve in your nasal area is directly connected to the amygdala area in your brain? — The amygdala is part of the limbic system and is responsible for processing the memory of emotional and social responses.

That is why you can calm someone with the therapeutic properties of essential oils through the nasal passage. As a result, the aroma of an essential oil has the potential to exert a powerful influence on those who deal with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD), Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD) and Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder (ADHD).

Since essential oils have between 200-800 chemical constituents and there are countless applications and uses for oils. Regardless of the oil or blend that I use on my son, it may vary as we are each individuals and our chemical make-up is different.

— Essential oils [I have found] to help with ASD, ADD/ADHD:

The list of oils and blends that I use on my son daily:

A Peaceful Child Blend: is my go to oil for my son. I make the blend at home since the one online has the fractionated coconut oil in it and my son is allergic to coconut.

It contains 6 oils: Vetiver, Lavender, Frankincense, Marjoram, Clary Sage, Ylang Ylang

To order this blend with fractionated coconut oil: www.peacefulchildblend.com

This combination of oils helps to calm my

son on long car rides, helps in crowded places when his anxiety increases. I also apply this oil blend at night time before he goes to sleep. I apply to the bottoms of his feet and he applies it to his wrists and his chest by his heart. He loves this oil blend. I also gave this oil blend that I made up to a friend of mine whose son is severely Autistic and is 3-years old.

Her son has no speech and at the time was only sleeping about 3-4 hours a night since birth. *Can you imagine how sleep deprived you would be as a parent?* The first night she applied the oil blend to her son — he slept 12.5 hours. Yes, consecutive sleep for multiple hours — she was so excited! This blend has been a game changer for the sleep of the entire family. She has since fallen in love with other oils from dōTerra!!!

Calming Mind Blend: I have selected the oils for this blend to help with anxiety, and emotional balance. It also seems to help with bad attitudes and helps to minimize compulsive or obsessive behavior. I just started to experiment with the oils for this blend to try to find oils that react well to the situations that I go through on a daily basis with my son.

Contains 5-essential oils: Vetiver, Frankincense, Marjoram, Patchouli and Bergamot.

Meltdowns: Balance: I usually rub this oil on his feet, back of neck, wrists. Another great way to use the oils is diffuse them into the air, for you will have powerful results! I know when I diffuse my son gravitates towards the diffuser.

Balance: This blend brings a feeling of calmness, peace, and relaxation. It can aid in harmonizing the various physiological systems of the body and promote tranquility and a sense of balance (Modern Essentials). This oil is my go to oil during the day for melt downs. I usually rub it on my son's feet, on his wrists, the back of his neck or on his temples.

— Other Oils that I Have Tried

White Fir: I diffuse this oil to help with over excitement. It creates a feeling of grounding, anchoring and empowerment. It can stimulate the mind while allowing the body to relax. (Modern Essential Book)

For frustration, impatience, and anger use oils and blends that calm:

Balance, Serenity, Lavender, YlangYlang. Applying to the feet, back of the neck, behind the knees, and diffusion are all suggested.

I have used Serenity and Lavender before, but I try to keep certain oils for certain times of day. So for us I use Serenity and Lavender at nap or bed time.

Serenity: This relaxing blend contains essential oils that are often used to help calm and soothe feelings of stress, excitement, and anxiety in order to help the body maintain its natural state of health. (Modern Essential Book)

If your child is having a meltdown, I would put this oil on their feet (a foot massage before nap will help him sleep), all around the neck and up the throat will help in times of distress.

Lavender: is the universal oil that has traditionally been known to balance the body and work wherever there is a need. (Modern Essentials Book)

Ylang Ylang: provides an emotional Balance & Hormonal systems. (Modern Essential Book)

Citrus Bliss: The blend of oils can be calming and sedative...depending on what the body needs. (Dr. Sue Lawton)

Solace: Helps to restore emotional balance and harmony. Many people of all ages are in need of chemical balancing for various reasons. (Modern Essential Book)

— Oils that Help with Focus

Vetiver: is a thick oil, but the effects it has on focus is amazing!

Peppermint Oil: I diffuse this in the air when I am trying to get my son to focus on flash cards or a learning activity. It could also be diffused for your children while they do their homework.

— For Anxiety, Tension or Too Much Stimulation

Make a roll-on of 2/3 CITRUS BLISS + 1/3 PEPPERMINT - have child rub onto wrists and rub wrists together.

In Tune: is a proprietary blend of essential oils, carefully selected for their ability to enhance focus and support healthy thought processes. This blend helps those who have difficulty paying attention to stay on task and sustain focus. With it being so new I have not yet had a chance to try it on my son. I have heard great things though.

For all of the oils mentioned above:

I usually apply to the feet first. Our feet hold most major nerve endings and have the largest pores.

Did you know that when you put the oil on topically by

applying it to the skin that it takes 30 seconds to get into the blood stream? After I have applied the oil to his feet, I then apply oils to his wrists, or the back of his neck unless otherwise stated above.

Since many with [anytype] of ASD, ADD or ADHD are highly sensitive to smells and sometimes touch — do not force the application of essential oils.

With that said, if it is a negative experience, it could build resentment towards essential oils for future use. I also use the diffuser a lot for it doesn't have such a strong sensory impact on my son. If your child is sensitive to smell try applying the oils to their feet after they are asleep.

I am so happy I found dōTERRA Essential Oils so I can help my son. I have seen a dramatic difference in my son — for he can focus or become calm after an outburst within a matter of moments.

His Speech Therapist has noticed a *big* difference in him for he was able to do something most kids his age can't do unless medicated. My son continues to make great strides because of Essential Oils.

Finding and trying oils that have worked for my Autistic son has not been an easy task. It is much easier for me to write down the oils I have used ... then to try all of them. I have my favorites and go to certain oils and prefer some over others. I gave you all of the oils I have tried — for some may work better for you than me.

When we have children on the Autism Spectrum, we need to love them no matter what, give them our time and attention, have patience and keep the faith. With Essential Oils and God's help I am able to turn my son's weaknesses into strengths. •

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Of Conservatorships and Guardianships

By Tom Bushnell, Esq.



THE BASIC TOOLS

The two basic tools for maintaining long term control over decisions for a disabled adult child are a Conservatorship (sometimes called “Conservator of the Estate”) and a Guardianship (sometimes called “Conservator of the Person”).

Laws vary from state to state. For example in Texas the word Conservator has a very different meaning than most other states, so you should seek the advise of a local attorney before you execute one of these tools.

Here is the general differences between the two:

— **Conservatorship (Conservator of the Estate):** Normally a conservatorship has to do with real and personal property. This devise is used if the incapacitated person is capable of living on their own, but need help managing their finances. It is much more limited than a full blown guardianship.

— **Guardianship (Conservator of the Person):** This is a tool employed when the incapacitated adult needs someone to not only help them make financial decisions, but all other decisions as well.

These could range from where to live, whom to live with, medical decisions, what to eat, how much to eat, who they may associate with, when to get up and when to go to bed. If you get one of these you will probably have to “report to the court” yearly.

What this involves is providing an accounting report of what monies the person has taken in (for example from SSI, a Trust Fund, inheritance or work) and how the money was spent.

THE REASONS WHY

Here are some of the most common reasons that people get guardianships for their adult children:

— Medical decisions -- In order for you as the parent to make medical decisions for your adult child you must have a guardianship. If you live in a smaller town and are well known and liked by, or are part of the medical community, then this might not be neces-

sary as a matter of practicality.

However, if you ever end up in a big city hospital then you will have no legal control over the medical decisions to be made on your child’s behalf. With whom your child lives — this issue normally arises when your adult child is living in a group home or participating in a job program for the disabled (basically they are more exposed to the general public).

If your adult child is in one of these situations and some person wants your child to come live with them, then it would take a very costly court battle, with no guarantee of success to get your child out of a bad living arrangement, or one that goes against your sincerely held religious belief.

— Finances - So the parents can keep control of the adult child’s finances and use them in the best interest of the adult child.

THE MECHANICS OF ESTABLISHING A GUARDIANSHIP

Once again, these vary from state to state and you should seek the assistance from a local family law attorney. With that said here is a general blue print of how the process works.

Attorneys: You will need one attorney to represent you and one to represent your child Guardian ad litem — sometimes called “Friend of the Court”.

This person will be either a social worker or a lawyer depending upon your jurisdiction. They will make one or more home visits and talk with the parents and the person in need of a guardianship.

• Psychological evaluation — This will be performed by someone licensed to do psychological evaluations. Many parents apply for SSI for their child and have the psychologist’s report that is used for SSI purposes used for Guardianship purposes as well. *Note: if the psychologist’s report is stale, one or more years old depending upon your jurisdiction then the Court might not allow it to be used.*

• Medical evaluation — Some jurisdictions require a physician’s report as well Filings - There are multiple documents to file with the court which your attorney will handle.

• When to start the application process — I would recommend starting the process of getting a Conservatorship or Guardianship after your child’s 17th birthday and before your child is 17 ½-years-old.

• *What if we move to another state after getting a guardianship?* — The answer to this question can

vary from state to state. A conservatorship and a guardianship are not closed after the letters of guardianship are issued and accepted, they remain open.

Generally therefore the existing court (the sending court) will have to transfer jurisdiction to another court (the receiving court) AND the court in the receiving court will have to accept the case. This is not a very complicated procedure and is mostly pro-forma.

However, if there are other parties involved (for example social services, or non custodial parent that objects) then it could get complicated.

THE EXPENSE

As you can see there is quite a bit of work involved in securing a guardianship for your adult child and the price will vary.

However, just to get you in the ball park, be prepared to spend around \$7,000.00 (as of this writing June 2013).

If someone is contesting the guardianship and you have to go to court the you probably won’t get out for under \$20,000 and perhaps more, much more.

ANOTHER WAY AROUND FOR HIGH FUNCTIONING ADULT CHILDREN – GENERAL POWER OF ATTORNEY

If your biggest concern is for making medical decisions then you might consider a General Power of Attorney (POA). In order to be able to use this tool your adult child MUST be able to understand that they are giving you the power to make medical decisions on their behalf if they become incapacitated and can’t

make their own medical decisions.

Before attempting a POA discuss this with your local family law attorney. For high functioning adult children the POA is a much simpler and less costly approach. •

Christian Access to Neuro- Developmental Organization

I can do all things through Christ
which strengthens me

~ Philippians 4:13

Cyndi Ringoen
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Teaching Your Special Needs Student: Strategies and Tools That Really Work

Effective ideas to help parents teach a child who has special needs. You may feel that you lack preparation or training to help a special needs student, but this resource will truly equip you to help your child without spending endless hours of your precious time.

The chapters are well organized for easy reference:

- Choosing Appropriate Curriculum Materials — reveals how to match a curriculum with the child’s specific weaknesses. Judi explains why it is not a good idea to buy single grade level curriculum packages.
- Study Strategies — contains many effective ways to help students acquire, organize, store and retrieve information. Parents learn how Bloom’s Taxonomy individualizes assignments for students whose skills fall almost anywhere along the continuum of ability.
- Graphic Organizers — powerful, visual-teaching materials helping students see abstract concepts and relationships.

In addition, the book provides you with important alternatives to paper & pencil or writing assignments and written tests – a key struggle for many students with special needs.

HIS Place c/o Judi Munday
1204 Murray Drive
Chesapeake VA 23322
757-482-5709
HisHelpInSchool.com

Teaching Your Special Needs Child
is a valuable resource for parents.
Recommended by Betty Statnick,
Special Needs Co-ordinator for the
Home School Legal Defense



Individual Education Planning Manual

For the Homeschool-Handicapped Student

- **IEPs are now easy!**

Create your child's professional looking IEP specific to the special needs of your student.

- **Menu of IEP goals!**

Chronological Age-Appropriate Activities

for students with handicaps offers a nonexhaustive menu of ideas from which to draw.

- **"Springboard" for ideas.**

Its purpose is to function as a resource for designing, adapting, and validating skill requirements.

- **Listing of professional terms**

that equal ordinary skills (folding socks = fine motor, 3-sequence directions = giving your child three tasks to accomplish in order).

By Deborah Mary Kathleen Mills

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