

Agape Strong

Special Interest Articles:

- Join Us – Agape Strong – From Adversity to Opportunity Fundraising Gala
- Annual Foster Parent Meeting
- Featured Foster Family

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Serving Beyond... Affirming our Vision

The vision statement for Agape is 'serving families, youth, and each other with excellence'. This is a foundational principle that we have embraced, and promoted over the past few years.

Through our building of the Strength Finders 2.0 initiative, our mentality is that we no longer focus on "problems", we address "challenges". We've also come to recognize, and appreciate that we have an amazing group of "servant leaders" working together that share this strength-based philosophy.

I was recently asked what has made this past year especially rewarding. Was it the continued success of our education component?, the success of having now over 500 families successfully complete our reunification services program?, the success of nine youth being adopted by one our many dedicated and amazing foster families?, the success of our foster care program?,

the success of our licensing unit receiving consecutive 100% compliance audits?, our success in fundraising and grant writing?, or possibly could it be the recognition we've received from the City of Dayton, Montgomery County Commissioner's, and the State of Ohio for 25 years of serving the youth and families entrusted to Agape's care? My response to each and all of these questions was a confident 'yes, all of them were rewarding!!!!

However, moving beyond what I believe to have been a season of being "vision" impaired; hopeful for success, yet our "eyes" were all but closed to the apparent opportunities upon the horizon, has significantly impacted the success of Agape.

With the building of a great support system, we have grown through, and matured through this season I now refer to as a time of "vision" impairment, and have recaptured a unified spirit of

being "positive, professional and progressive" in the serving the youth and families.

As I've come to see, Agape is and will continue to be about our collective "mission" of serving. We recognize and appreciate that we are on this journey together, embracing the very important responsibilities and amazing opportunities we've been entrusted with, and celebrating.....serving together!!

As a co-worker once said..."I get up, come to work, serve youth, families, and each another, go home knowing we are making a difference, and get up tomorrow ready to do the same thing; what a great job!"

Each day we will work to affirm Agape's "vision", and equally live out "Agape's mission". Celebrate "AGAPE STRONG"!!!!

Contributed by

*Steve Geib,
Executive Director/Founder*

Our Mission:

"Providing youth and families with supportive, nurturing services that encourage each other to reach their full potential."

Dear Agape Families



“We have so much to be proud of and so much to be thankful for as we look back over the year.”



It is hard to believe but together we have completed yet another fiscal year, and what a great year it has been.

In the past twelve months Agape has seen 42 of our youth successfully reunify with their birth families, we have seen 9 of our children finalize adoptions in our own foster homes and we have received several calls from county agencies either thanking us for the good work you are doing or asking for a specific Agape family.

Looking ahead we have as many as 12 to 15 adoptions that will happen over the next several months.

As the Foster Care Manager, those are the kind of things I love to see happening. Last year we were able to add eleven new homes to our family; we held our first family night training that was a huge success, we continued to build on our already comprehensive training program, and we took time to honor our families in May with a beautiful banquet.

We have so much to be proud of and so much to be thankful for as we look back over the year. I want to say that it was an honor

and a pleasure to serve so many of you at the annual Picnic and I hope that most of you are making plans to attend the Agape day at the Columbus Zoo.

I hope that your children are getting to take advantage of some of the summer fun that our staff has put together. How exciting that we have had Dragons games, pottery painting, Idle Hour Ranch, with Bowling and a day at Magic Castle still to come.

With all that they have planned there should be something for every child to enjoy and it is my sincere hope that the staff is working hard to make a special day for your kids.

With all that we have accomplished there is still more work to do. On my end I was not able to plan additional family nights for you as I had planned so I hope to renew those efforts over the next year.

I still dream of preparing a foster parent conference which would be an amazing day for your entire family.

Finally, believe it or not, we really need more families to meet the demands of the county agencies. Agape for Youth will continue our

efforts to seek out families who will open their homes to older youth and to sibling groups as these are high in demand. We also need more families willing to work closely with birth families and who will work with children with mental health and behavioral needs.

With that in mind we will be announcing an exciting new recruiting opportunity for our families at our upcoming annual meetings. Last year we gave away a 50 inch television but this year I believe we have an even more exciting plan.

I hope that you will promote the terrific work we are doing, the terrific work that YOU are doing and encourage people you know to consider fostering.

I appreciate you all so much and as always; please remember that I am available at any time if you have comments or concerns or if you just want to encourage me by giving me a great report about your worker.

You may reach me at 439-4406 ext. 37 or email me at rstauffer@agapeforyouth.com

Contributed by Rodger Stauffer, Foster Care Manager

Waiting on a Forever Family

Nay'Juan is excelling in all aspects of his life. He is a respectful, humorous, and thoughtful youth. He loves most sports including football, basketball, and track and his prowess is evident on the sports teams he participates in.

Academically, he has progressed to being in a regular classroom despite being on an IEP. He is very proud of his accomplishment as he has worked hard to get to where he is today. Nay'Juan aspires to graduate from high school and wants to attend college.

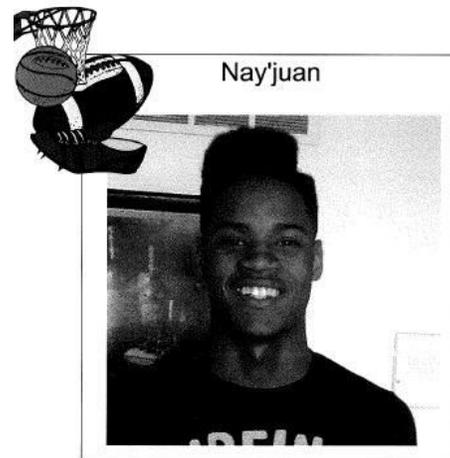
For additional information call Shirley Pagan at 937-276-1665 or email at pagans@odjfs.state.oh.us

Montgomery County Department of Job and Family Services

3304 N. Main St.

Dayton, Ohio 45405

937-224-KIDS or www.mcoho.org/childrenservices



Recruitment Corner

Congratulations to Ms. Lessie Gunn who became the grand prize winner of our 2013/14 recruitment contest winning a 50 inch Flat Screen TV when her name was drawn at our Foster Parent Banquet in May.

With that contest being completed we are ready to kick off a new and exciting recruitment program. Agape will have quarterly drawing for \$100.00 dollar gift cards to a variety of places and all you need to do to get entered into the drawing is refer potential foster parents to our agency.

Each quarter we will draw a name from those who have made referrals and winners will be recognized in our quarterly Newsletter.

Are you ready for some even bigger news? How many of you could use an extra \$400.00. I thought so. Well today we are announcing a \$400.00 recruitment bonus for our foster families.

When a family that you have referred completes the licensing process Agape will pay out a \$200.00 incentive and when they accept their first placement we will pay an additional \$200.00 incentive. How awesome is that!!

You could be \$400.00 richer just for promoting the agency you already know and love. If you are wondering "why do we need so many families"? Let me explain that every year we have families retire, move away, adopt

children or move on for any number of reasons.

For us to continue to meet the demands of the county agencies we have to continuously welcome new homes to the Agape Family.

While we use many different avenues to recruit these families all of you remain our most important resource. You are our most critical recruiting tool. As you tell others of the work that you do and the support you receive they are empowered to take that next step.

I hope that you will be as excited about these new recruiting campaigns as I am.

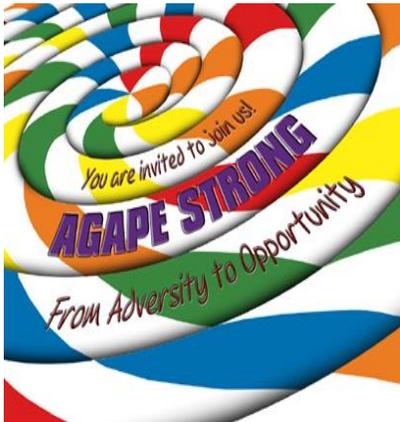
Looking forward to a great recruiting year!!

"You could be \$400.00 richer just for promoting the agency you already know and love"



*Contributed by Rodger Stauffer,
Foster Care Manager*

“help us to continue to provide opportunities for success to the youth and families entrusted to our care..”



You Are Invited to Join US

Please mark your calendars and plan to join us on Friday, August 22, 2014 at the Dayton Racquet Club for the annual Agape for Youth, Inc. fundraising gala, “Agape Strong – From Adversity to Opportunity”.

This annual gala provides much needed support for youth and families served by Agape through the Youth & Family Enhancement Fund. As in past years, our goal for 2014 is to further improve

the lives of children and families in our care. This goal can be realized through your support.

We hope you will join us this year as a sponsor and attendee for the “AGAPE STRONG - From Adversity to Opportunity” fundraiser, and help us to continue to provide opportunities for success to the youth and families entrusted to our care.

There are still donation and sponsorship

opportunities available and we are happy to work with you to find the right sponsorship idea and level for your company.

For details on sponsorship or to make a donation to the silent and/or live auction contact Sandie Geib at 937-439-4406 x22 or email at sgeib2@agapeforyouth.com

To purchase tickets to attend please visit www.agapeforyouth.com.

“It is such a joy to see the hard work of our youth pay off.”



Education Updates

Even though school is out for summer, our youth are still reaping the benefits of their hard work from the school year!

In July, all of the youth who received C’s or above in their classes, or who tried really hard to pull up failing grades were invited to a party to celebrate their hard work. There was Chick-fil-a lunch catered in, cake, movies and prizes to award.

It is such a joy to see the hard work of our youth pay off. In the midst of all the life changes that happen in the lives of

youth in foster care, education is still something that we want them to focus on strongly.

Education provides a path for their future and to jobs. We appreciate the time that foster parents take to help our youth with homework and encouraging them in their studies.

School is also right around the corner! It seems as though summer has flown by and in just a few weeks most of our youth will be back at school.

It has been a joy to serve as the education coordinator and hire tutors for youth

struggling in subjects. That is just one other way that Agape is working hard to make sure that the youth have every opportunity to succeed.

If you have a current placement with a youth struggling in different subjects, contact Nicole Clark at 937-439-4406 ext. 18 or via email at nclark@agapeforyouth.com

Nicole will be heading up the Education Department at Agape for the 2014-2015 school year.

Contributed by Sandi Wagner, Youth Specialist/Education Coordinator

Summer Training Updates

Hopefully everyone is enjoying their summer and enjoying much needed relaxation as well as taking advantage of the opportunities to enhance your parenting skills through your monthly trainings. Please mark your calendars for the classes available this summer. I would like to take a moment to highlight a few upcoming trainings. As we prepare for children to return to school we are offering two education/school services related classes.

August 9, 2014 at 9am, **“Working with Schools & Understanding Their Services”**, with Margaret Frey and September 20, 2014 at 1pm **“Educational Advocacy: Helping Your Child to Succeed in School”**, with Brian Lowery. Education

is an essential part of our children’s success in life. These classes will provide the information needed to help you understand the role and responsibility you have in advocating for your child’s educational needs as well as help you to understand the educational challenges our children may encounter.

On September 23, 2014, from 6:30pm – 9:30pm we will offer the training entitled **“Foster Youth Rights: Making Sure You Stay Compliant”**. There have been rule changes at the state level and we want to ensure you are familiar with these changes, and are following rules as well as meeting the expectations of Agape and your child’s referring county agency.

We want to remind you to keep track of your

Individual Training Needs Assessment (ITNA) codes. You need to have attended trainings that include these codes (in addition to other trainings of interest) in order to meet your recertification requirements. , Within your recertification period once you reach 60 hours of reimbursed training hours (40 hours for family level foster parents) you will not receive stipends for additional trainings you attend. This means that you need to take the time to make sure you have met your ITNA. If you have any questions or need additional information please contact me at cjohnson@agapeforyouth.com or 937/439-4406 ext. 34.

Blessings to all!

Contributed by Carmella Johnson, Licensing



“These classes will provide the information needed to help you understand the role and responsibility you have in advocating for your child’s educational needs as well as help you to understand the educational challenges our children may encounter.”

Annual Foster Parent Meeting

The 2014 Foster Parent meeting will be held on **Tuesday, September 16, 2014**. We will hold two sessions that day. The morning session is from 10:00am – 12noon and the evening session is from 6:30pm – 8:30pm.

We ask that a foster parent from each foster family attend one of these meetings.

At this meeting you will have the opportunity to meet new staff, connect

with friends old and new as well as receive agency updates and updated foster parent policies.

This year you will receive two hours of training credit for attending the meeting.

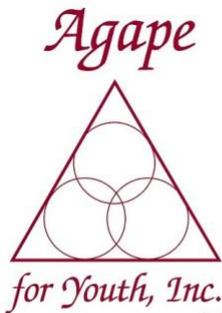
Breakfast will be provided for the morning session and dinner will be provided for the evening session.

Please RSVP your family’s attendance to Val at (937) 439 - 4406 x13

We look forward to seeing

you there and are excited to share with you the fantastic things that are going on here at Agape.





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Find us online at:
www.agapeforyouth.com

Agency Facebook



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[@Agape for Youth](https://twitter.com/AgapeforYouth)



AYC – Agape Youth Council

AYC has had a great summer so far! We've painted pottery and had several lessons regarding independent living and planning our future.

We have also had financial sessions with GE Capital representative, Nancy Slezak, discussing our financial future.

Some of us have also been to Idle Hour Ranch, where we were able to see all kinds of exotic animals and even ride an elephant or a camel. What an experience! On

August 5th, we will have the opportunity to go to the Columbus Zoo, with others from Agape for Youth.

Tiffani, Shane & Sharee will also be discussing more fun activities and ways we can serve our community.

Be looking for more AYC updates and listening for One- Calls to see what's happening next. If you have a youth that is interested in attending AYC, please contact Tiffani at 937-439-4406 ext. 10.

Contributed by Tiffani Stuart,



Focus on the Rules

When we think about child welfare and the primary goal, most people think about giving children a safe place to live, grow and develop. Part of the responsibility of keeping kids safe is making sure they are safe when they are riding in our vehicles. Ohio law and ODJFS rules require insurance and child restraints. Please help us

help you by providing copies of updated insurance cards and by making sure that children are properly restrained when transporting.

If you have questions about proper restraints just call 937-439-4406 ext. 12 or email bbridges@agapeforyouth.com

We encourage your adherence to Agape for Youth, Inc. Policy and the ODJFS rules as they are in place for the protection of our youth in care as well as our foster families Thanks for all you do to help keep everyone safe.

*Contributed by Bruce Bridges
Licensing & Compliance/Intake
Supervisor*

Thank You!

We want to thank Dr. Van Merkle, Tracy Merkle, the staff and patients of the Back to Health Center in Centerville, for the incredible donation of non-perishable foods we received for the families and children we serve through the Agape for Youth, Inc. Reunification Services program.

The annual Christmas in July Food Drive makes a difference in the lives of these families and we are thankful to Back to Health for their support of our mission of serving.

