

Agape Strong

Agape for Youth, Inc.

Newsletter

January/February 2016

2015.....REFLECTING UPON AGAPE'S YEAR OF CELEBRATION!!!

As I've written throughout the year, this has been, and continues to be an amazing journey for Agape!

During 2015, we served over 160 youth through our Foster Care program, had 19 of our youth adopted by one of our many dedicated foster families, and had more than 100 families (which included over 240 youth) be served through our Reunification Services program. Our belief that "the more we serve, the more opportunities we will be given to serve" played out ten-fold.

Realizing I cannot begin to individually thank everyone involved because there will never be enough space to include all of you, in behalf of our Board of Directors, my Agape Co-workers, and the families and youth we serve here at the Agency I would like to highlight what your support has made possible during this past year.

Early in 2015 we began the quest to find a new home for Agape. After touring a number of properties, the decision was made to relocate the agency to 2300 S. Edwin C. Moses Blvd, Suite 140 here in Dayton. The outpour of donations of desks, chairs, file cabinets, conference table, white board, televisions, and other furnishings was beyond measure. 'Gifted' artwork from a local airbrush artist enhanced our new 'home'. Referral Agency representatives, Business leaders, along with Local and State dignitaries came together to celebrate our Open House and this new beginning.

Agape youth and families participated at events including the Vectren Dayton Airshow, Columbus Zoo, Idle Hour Ranch, Dayton Dragons game, Young's Dairy, Laser Tag, and bowling made possible through Agape's Youth and Family Fund built through the "Agape Strong" fundraiser bringing in a record breaking over \$50,000, and additional community donations.

The youth we serve were provided with education incentives for their success, tutoring services again made possible through our community support. We again celebrated the seniors in our care receiving their diploma, and were able to financially support youth who choose to further their education through our Advanced Education Fund that was also supported through our Youth and Family Fund.

During the holiday season we have been so blessed to provide events such as Santa's Secret Workshop, where over 125 children shopped for more than 600 gifts provided through donations and financial contributions from the community; matching more than 140 youth through our Giving Trees Program where we partnered with donors in the community; families being provided the opportunity to attend the Nutcracker, and PNC Festival of Lights at the Cincinnati Zoo.

The Annual Agape Christmas celebration was hosted at the Miami Valley Golf Club complete with a Winter Carnival for the over 300 who were in attendance!!

Having bi-annual food drive donations sponsored by a local doctor and his staff, and what has become an annual outreach to

reunification families from the BJKids91 Foundation, along with receiving over \$400,000 in donated household items and merchandise through our partnership with Good 360 was provided those we serve, and made available to other non-profits in our community.

Grants from the Reynolds and Reynolds Foundation, Vectren Foundation, PNC Foundation, and Hossie Martin Foundation, along with a significant 'employee' outreach donation from CareSource (where they provided needed items to fill comfort bags for the youth we serve), all provided additional and needed opportunities.

The blessings continue.....as a result of continued growth, in January of this year Agape will open another office in the Cincinnati area. We are extremely excited about the outreach opportunities this will provide.

Agape's success in serving the youth and families entrusted to our care would not have been possible without the generosity of all of you who have supported Agape's mission of serving through your donations, grants, sponsorships, and prayers!

We will be always Agape Strong--"serving families, youth, and each other with excellence", and even 'Stronger' as a result of you!



Agape's Strengths

The combined top five Strengths of the staff at Agape are:

Developer
Empathy
Responsibility
Belief
Positivity



Special Interest Articles:

- 2016 Foster Care Conference for Families and Youth
- Featured Foster Parents – Eric & Lucinda Flinn
- AYC Calendar of Meetings
- Meet the Board of Directors – David Donaldson
- Recruitment Corner

Our Mission:

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

Agape for Youth, Inc. Opens office in Cincinnati

DAYTON, OHIO – January 26, 2016 Agape for Youth, Inc. to open office in Cincinnati, Ohio

Agape for Youth, Inc. a Foster Care, Adoption through Foster Care and Reunification Services agency headquartered in Dayton, is announcing the opening of a new office in Cincinnati, located at 10979 Reed Hartman Highway, Suite 337. Agape's expansion into the Cincinnati area is the result of several foster families living in the area, making the decision to work alongside of Agape to provide services to children in the community.

With the addition of these new homes, Agape is now serving youth living with foster families in Montgomery, Miami, Clark, Greene, Butler, Hamilton, Brown and Clermont Counties.

"We have been working with youth and families in Cincinnati and the surrounding counties for many years," said Stephen Geib, Executive Director/Founder of Agape for Youth, Inc. "The opening of a physical location in the city represents a terrific opportunity for us to expand the Agape mission and to offer our services to the families and youth in the area who are entrusted to our care."

Agape for Youth has hired two full time staff members with significant history of working with the families in the community to be onsite at the Cincinnati office. "We believe this will help with continuity as we welcome the families to the Agape culture of serving," Geib said.

"We have an ongoing goal to work as a team with every child's biological family, the foster and adoptive parents, the youth and each county service agency to build greater opportunities for growth and development," said Randy Pavlak, President of the Board for Agape for Youth, Inc. "We are excited about this expansion into the Cincinnati area and look forward to continuing to grow the agency."

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If you would like more information about Agape for Youth, Inc. please visit their website www.agapeforyouth.com, call Sandra Geib at 937.439.4406 or email sgeib2@agapeforyouth.com.

Dear Agape Families

"This is an extremely exciting time at Agape for Youth as we have adjusted to our new building, welcomed new families, and now, now we are expanding to Cincinnati."

HAPPY NEW YEAR!!!! Can you believe that it is really 2016, amazing! Well, I hope you are all recovering from what was most likely a very busy Holiday season and that you were you blessed by the season of giving. I truly enjoyed watching all of your kids run around and have a great time at the Agape Christmas Party. It was great to get to talk to many of you and hear of the good work you are doing.

Now that Christmas is passed please do not forget to mark your calendar for our Foster Care Conference which will be Monday February 15th at the Hilton Garden Inn in Beavercreek. Registration begins at 8:15 and it will be an amazing day.

This is an extremely exciting time at Agape for Youth as we have adjusted to our new building, welcomed new families, and now, now we are expanding to Cincinnati. I am sure Steve will share more but, we have been blessed with a wonderful opportunity to open an office in the Cincinnati area. We have two new staff; Molly and Tiffany who are handling our Cincinnati expansion and our office will open on January 25th. We have 10 families in that area and we would ask all of you to give them a big welcome when you meet them at our conferences, picnic, or other agency wide events.

"It is evident to me that all of you, together with your workers truly are providing quality care to the kids that we place."

I shared with the staff last week that I am very proud of the success you all are experiencing. We had 40 children leave our agency the first 6 months of our fiscal year and maintained a 75% success rate with 16 youth reunifying with family, 10 youth being adopted and 4 youth emancipating from their foster homes. That truly is very good work. You should also know that we received great praise from Montgomery County this week as they asked us if they could use our monthly reports as model reports for other agencies. They explained that our Youth Specialists write excellent reports and provide the best information. This is quite an honor and represents the commitment that our staff has to provide the best case management services to you and to the foster youth. It is evident to me that all of you, together with your workers truly are providing quality care to the kids that we place.

Thank you so much for all that you do. 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. 1101 or email me at rstauffer@agapeforyouth.com

Rodger

Adoption Updates

Happy New Year!

Here is to a great 2016!

Did you know that if you adopted in 2015 you may be eligible for a tax credit?

We have included the link to the web address with information from the IRS regarding the tax credit. We also suggest you speak with your 'tax person' regarding your eligibility.

The tax credit has been in place for a number of years for those who have adopted special needs children. The IRS link also includes the meaning of 'special needs'.

Here is the link:

<https://www.irs.gov/taxtopics/tc607.html>

It's always good to get a bit of a break from the IRS!

Have a wonderful 2016!

Bridget & Andrea



Recruitment Roundtable

Agape is very pleased to share that good things continue to happen in the area of recruiting. While we continue to run our ad in the Theater at the Green we also had a tabling event which allowed us to talk to several people about the work that we do. Bruce is thrilled because we have lots of people coming to pre-service classes and we continue to get calls for information. Believe it or not it would be impossible to have too many families as the need is that great?

I am excited to share that Agape was one of seven agencies invited by Montgomery County to be a part of a work group to develop a foster care program that can meet the needs of children with autism and children with mental health issues. This is quite an honor,

the work is just beginning but we look forward to one day sharing how you can help make a difference in the lives of these very special children.

During October, November and December of 2015 we received 2 inquiries that came from foster parent referrals but were happy to receive a few more that came from friends or people going through the licensing process. Thank you to all of you who continue to promote our program. I am pleased to announce that Logan and Leslie Mailoux are our quarterly recruiting contest winners and will receive a \$100 gift card so they may be able to enjoy a night out. Logan and Leslie recently received their first placement with Agape and they are doing a great job with a tough little guy. Leslie stated that

she really enjoyed the training program as they were licensing but more importantly she appreciates the support her family has received since accepting a placement. Leslie also added that between her Youth Specialist visiting, phone calls, encouraging emails, and words of support from people at the Christmas party they know that they are not in this alone. Thank You Logan and Leslie and enjoy your night out. Remember, you can earn your chance to win a gift card simply by referring friends and family and other people you talk to encouraging them to explore being a foster parent. We are so thankful for all of you and the great work that you are accomplishing in our children's lives.

Contributed by Rodger Stauffer,
Foster Care Manager

I am pleased to announce that Logan and Leslie Mailoux are our quarterly recruiting contest winners and will receive a 100 dollar gift card so that they may be able to enjoy a night out. “



Contributed by Rodger Stauffer,
Foster Care Manager

Please Remember

- Register Early
- Arrive between 8:00AM - 8:15AM to check-in, have breakfast as a family and get your children settled in their classrooms.
- Bring diapers, formula, bottles and baby food if appropriate for your child.
- Please make sure to pick-up your children and any items they brought with them at the close of the conference.

Upcoming Tutoring

Events:
February 22nd
March 14th
April 11th



"We are still seeking additional tutors that are able to work with youth on a regular basis. We could benefit from tutors in all subject areas and grade levels."

You are invited to attend the Agape for Youth, Inc. 2016 Foster Care Conference for Families & Youth

"Maximizing Honesty and Honest Behaviors in Children" **Featuring Brian Lowery**

The second annual Agape for Youth, Inc. Foster Parent Conference will be held on **President's Day, February 15th** at the Hilton Garden Inn in Beavercreek, Ohio. Brian Lowery will be training on **"Maximizing Honesty and Honest Behaviors in Children"**. We are planning a day of fun for our youth, and a day of learning for our foster parents! A hot breakfast buffet will be provided before training begins, so if you register, plan to arrive by **8:15am** to sign in and enjoy a delicious breakfast with your family. At **9:00am**, we will dismiss the youth to their rooms for fun activities that staff will plan for the event. We will share lunch together as a group from **12:00pm-1:00pm** for a lunch buffet and immediately following lunch the training and youth activities will resume.

Please register as soon as possible with Nicole Clark at 937-439-4406 x1114 or with Valerie Baker at 937-439-4406 x1113.

Education Updates

Hello Winter!

The second quarter is coming to a close and we are into the second half of the school year. First quarter went well, and we had over 30 youth have grades of C's and above. Thank you to everyone who turned in their grade cards for first quarter, and I'm looking forward to receiving even more for second quarter.

We have had three successful Tutoring Nights so far this school year, and we have seen an increase in participants each month. Let's keep it growing! We continue to be so grateful to have Alpha Phi Sorority from the University of Dayton, volunteer their time each month towards helping our youth with their educational needs. They are also willing to volunteer additional time, if needed, for youth who may need more than a once a

month group tutoring session.

We have three tutoring events scheduled for the remainder of the school year. These dates are: February 22nd, March 14th, and April 11th. All tutoring events are from 6:00pm-7:30pm and food will be included for all youth attending. Please remember to have your youth, both foster and biological, bring at least ninety minutes worth of homework. If you plan to have any youth in your home attend, please let your Youth Specialist know ahead of time so we can plan accordingly with our tutors.

We are working on confirming dates for January and May with the availability of our tutors. Once these dates are confirmed, we will be sure to pass it along to your Youth Specialists to share with you.

We are still seeking additional tutors that are able to work with youth on a regular basis. We could benefit from tutors in all subject areas and grade levels. If you or anyone you know is interested in providing tutoring for our amazing youth here at Agape, please have them contact me by email or phone number.

Please feel free to contact me with any education questions or concerns at nclark@agapeforyouth.com or 937-439-4406 ext. 18.

Contributed by Nicole Clark,

Nicole Clark, LSW
Licensing Specialist/Training
Coordinator
937-439-4406 ext.1114
nclark@agapeforyouth.com

Upcoming Training Opportunities

Happy New Year!

By now our foster families have received the winter training calendar and we have lined up fantastic trainers to come into Agape over the next three months. If you are planning to attend training, contact Val Baker at ext. 1113 to register.

The big event occurring in February is our second annual Foster Parent Conference, which will be on President's Day, February 15th. It will be held at the Hilton Garden Inn in Beavercreek, Ohio. It will be a day of fun for our youth, and a day of learning for our foster parents! A hot breakfast will be provided before training begins, so if you register, plan to arrive by 8:15am to sign in and enjoy a delicious breakfast with your family. At 9:00am, we will dismiss the youth to

their rooms for fun activities that staff will plan for the event. We will share lunch together from 12:00pm-1:00pm before training resumes and youth continue with their activities. Brian Lowery will be coming in for training and will be teaching on "Maximizing Honesty and Honest Behaviors in Children".

Please register as soon as possible with Val Baker or myself. We will need names and ages of all household member and foster youth who will be attending this event at time of registration.

Our biggest change that we have occurring this year is the start of our in-house CPR & First Aid training. I, along with Val and Shane have become licensed CPR & First Aid trainers through the American Red Cross. This allows for Agape be able to

arrange and conduct our CPR & First Aid trainings at the agency. We are working on a blended learning course for everyone who is refreshing their certification. This would include an hour and a half class online, and then an hour and a half time in the office to complete the skills portion of the class.

Please note that the online portion will count towards your online hours that you are allowed to complete within your recertification period.

I look forward to seeing you at the conference in February.

Contributed by

Nicole Clark, LSW
Licensing Specialist/Training Coordinator
937-439-4406 ext.1114
nclark@agapeforyouth.com



"The big event occurring in February is our second annual Foster Parent Conference, which will be on President's Day, February 15th."

A Special Thank You to CareSource

Thank You to CareSource Employees for your Incredible Donations

We are honored to be one of the recipients of the Giving Tree project at CareSource. Each December the employees at CareSource come together for this common cause and this year their focus was on foster children. These incredible donations will be placed in duffel bags; we call them Comfort Bags, which each child receives when they come into foster care at Agape for Youth, Inc. Your generosity will make a child's transition to a foster home a bit easier with items they can call their own. Thank you for making a difference in the life of a child in foster care.



AYC – Agape Youth Council

2016 kicks off an exciting year for AYC! We ended 2015 with a Holiday celebration of a star-shower dinner and a movie! We're happy to welcome back Danelia Moyer-Griffith, who will be helping to co-facilitate for AYC.

We plan to have a curriculum very much like last year, where we mix important life-lessons with fun activities and socialization with our peers.

Our first lesson of 2016 will be an extended lesson [from November's Meeting] on Social Media Do's and Don'ts with a segue into the traps & dangers of Human Trafficking. Our goal is to provide information that will raise red flags if/whenever our youth

encounter such situations and hopefully prevent them from making wrong choices. If you think you have a youth who would like to participate and could benefit from attending AYC- please give Tiffani a call at (937) 439-4406 Ext. 1100 or speak with your Youth Specialist. If your youth will be a first-timer to AYC or hasn't attended a meeting in 3mos or more, please RSVP with Tiffani, as well.

We like to keep an idea of who is coming, as we have a meal every meeting and periodically provide information packets on our lessons. We look forward to seeing you in this New Year at AYC!

Contributed by Tiffani Stuart, AYC Facilitator

AYC Schedule for 2016
Please note: All meetings are held at the Agape for Youth, Inc. office.

January 19
February 16
March 15
April 19
May 17
June 21
July 19
August 16
September 20
October 18
November 15
December 20

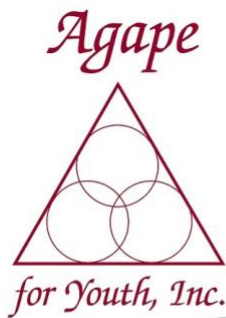
Focus on the Rules

Let's make sure we are keeping kids safe, please review the abbreviated rule below from ODJFS.

- A foster home shall be maintained in a clean, safe, and sanitary condition, outdoor recreation equipment on the grounds shall be in a reasonable state of repair. Hazardous areas safeguarded,
- Weapons kept on the grounds of or in a foster home shall be stored in an inoperative condition in a locked area inaccessible to children.
- A foster home shall have a working telephone or be able to demonstrate to the recommending agency reasonable access to a working telephone for emergency situations. Emergency telephone numbers including fire, police, ambulance, poison control, the recommending agency, and each agency with a foster child placed in the home shall be posted
- All locks to at least one door to any room or storage area inside a foster home in which a person could become confined, shall be able to be unlocked from either side
- A foster home shall have a continuous supply of safe drinking water. The home must have working bathroom and toilet facilities located within the home. Garbage shall be disposed of on a regular basis.
- A foster home shall have a working smoke alarm approved by "Underwriter's Laboratory" on each level of occupancy of the home. A foster caregiver shall have a written evacuation plan
- All escape routes shall be kept free of obstruction.
- Household heating equipment used in a foster home shall be equipped with appropriate safeguards
- Unvented kerosene heaters may be used, if the heater has been approved by "Underwriter's Laboratory," and they are not prohibited by any local zoning ordinances.
- A foster home shall have an "Underwriter's Laboratory" approved portable fire extinguisher in working order in or near the cooking area of the home.
- Pets or domestic animals shall be kept in a safe and sanitary manner in accordance with state and local laws. A foster child shall be protected from animals potentially dangerous..
- Interior and exterior stairways accessible to children shall be protected by child safety gates or doors according to the child's age and functioning level.
- A foster home shall provide a smoke free environment for foster children.

Compliance with these rules will help insure protection of our youth as well as foster families. If you need guidance just call 937-439-4406 ext. 1111 or email bbridges@agapeforyouth.com . Thanks for all you do

Contributed by Bruce Bridges, Licensing & Compliance/Intake Supervisor



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Find us online at:
www.agapeforyouth.com

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Meet Our Board of Directors



David Donaldson is the Regional President for WesBanco Bank in Southwest, Ohio managing all business lines, 140 employees, and an 18 branch network in Cincinnati, Dayton and Springfield.

He has 28 years of banking experience and is a graduate of the prestigious American Bankers Association Stonier Graduate School of Banking and also earned the Certified Treasury Management designation.

He has a diverse banking background from Retail Management to Government Finance to Small Business Lending to Regional President.

David is a lifelong Dayton resident, is a graduate of West Carrollton High School and Wright State University's College of Business with a B.S. in Marketing and Finance.

He is active in the community serving as Chair of the Dayton Better Business Bureau, Wright State College of Business Advisory Board, Agape for Youth Board Member and Treasurer. His past involvement includes Junior Achievement, the Rocking Horse Center and the United Way of Greater Dayton. David is proud to have won the Special Wish Foundation "celebrity" Dancing with the Stars competition. He lives in Springboro with his wife of 20 years Pam and two children Rachel and Kyle. David's hobbies include golf and supporting his kids in their numerous activities.

We appreciate having David as a member of the Board of Directors and are thankful to he and his family for their volunteerism at agency events and outreach opportunities for the children and families we serve.

Featured Foster Family – Eric & Lucinda Flinn

The featured Foster Parents for this quarter are Eric and Lucinda Flinn. They have been foster parents with Agape for more than five years. Together they have served multiple foster youth in their home. Eric and Lucinda have demonstrated the ability to "hang in there" when situations with and the behaviors of the children they are working with get tough. On December 29, 2015, Eric, Lucinda, their family and the staff at Agape celebrated the adoption of two of their children. This interstate adoption was a four year journey, which was not without its challenges. But those challenges were met with determination, unconditional love and the ability to continue moving toward the goal. As a result of their heart for these two youth and their refusal to quit, those two children now have a "Forever Family" in the Flinn home. Their fighting spirit and heart for youth have been a blessing to this agency and all of the staff.

Contributed by Jennifer Mayo, Youth Specialist