

# Agape Strong

Agape for Youth, Inc.

Newsletter

March/April 2016

## Why I do what I do

Being asked recently “why do you do what you do?” my thoughts were filled with about a ‘k’ zillion’ (it’s so great talking with little kids) possible responses. In truth this question brought me back to years ago during the beginning years of Agape when we were establishing the very foundation of the agency. The mentors of that period are long gone from the field, some going on to do other things, others sadly have passed away.

In a spirit of great appreciation, I would like to share some memories of those who have influenced ‘why I do what I do’.

Doug Geib Sr., (my dad)-remembering like yesterday his main question during the beginning year of Agape. “Are you scared?” in which I recalled responding with an emotional “well...yeah!!!” His very direct response was an emphatic “good” which based on the look on my face he knew that he had confused me even more than I already appeared. “Fear either motivates, or freezes you....only you can decide”. He followed up with a smile, and said “stay motivated, and stay warm”. Over the years while I have definitely have had to remind myself of his response, it remains in the forefront of ‘why I do what I do’.

Preston McMurry, (a special friend)-who reminded me during a critical time in my journey of the gift that Agape was, and the gift Agape remained....and “why on earth was I considering giving up this ‘gift’ that I felt to be of, and from God?” He was short and to the point....”In that ‘He’ has not said otherwise, do not give away that which is not yours to give away. Get focused!”

Randy Pavlak, (Board President/friend)-for his mentoring of me through good times and times of

challenge. For patting me on the back for work well done, and ‘motivating’ (i.e. providing a proverbial motivation from behind) during times I considered ‘throwing in the towel’. He said one time during a Board dinner....”there’s been times where I have seen him so down, and was concerned he was going to give up; and honestly given the things he had been through would not have blamed him....however I’m glad he decided to stay, and I believe the mission of Agape is where it is as a result of his dedication.”

Rhonda Reagh, (coach)-who has taught me so many valuable lessons; of them the value of getting 10,000 feet above a given situation in order to look at it from above, and map one’s course through the forest of trees before them. Further that “the strength to grow and move forward is within each of us....yet it is up to us to recognize this strength and pursue it”.

Donald Bell, (who I’m honored to call a friend)-for providing me the visual of foster care through the eyes of a youth who had been there....influencing me even more to provide additional opportunities to the youth we are entrusted to serve. One of my favorite ‘Don-isms’ remains “I may not be where I want to be, however I’m better than I was yesterday”. I definitely have shared that phase with youth we serve....remembering always to ‘give hope for tomorrow’.

‘Kid President’ (check out his videos on YouTube) comes to mind as probably the youngest of mentors. One of his encouraging messages concludes with “keep going, keep going...do something to make the world awesome” and has had a life impact upon me!! What a great message!!!...think about it....each of us taking responsibility for creating ‘awesomeness’ in the world!!

While there are many more that have

influenced “why I do what I do”, I would be remiss not to share my heartfelt appreciation for my family. I begin with my ‘kids”, now young adults married, some with children of their own. Stephen, Emily and Kaitlyn have been nothing short of wonderfully amazing. Late nights, early mornings, ‘shared holidays’ and attending most every agency celebration during their young lives, they each independently embraced the serving mission of Agape, and have continued to live out ‘servant serving’ in their adult journeys.

Finally, that leaves me with Sandie (my wife and co-worker)-words cannot express my thanks for this amazing person who has so influenced and supported me, and is absolutely without a doubt one of the major influencers of “why” I do what I do”. Be them the foundational principles of ‘serving with excellence’, being ‘positive, professional and progressive’, and ‘Agape Strong’-Giving Hope for Tomorrow”, she has remained steadfast in standing firm that “the more we serve, the more opportunities we are given to serve”. She has been not only my greatest cheerleader; she has always reminded me that what we do is truly a ‘gift’...we are called to share with others!

In answering ‘why I do what I do’, I can honestly respond that it is because I have been blessed with a passion for serving, encouraged and influenced by amazing friends and mentors, surrounded by ‘service beyond self’ driven warriors, and provided love and support by family that is unmatched which drives me even more to share this ‘gift’ called Agape with those entrusted to our care.

Be safe,



## Agape's Strengths

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

Developer  
Empathy  
Responsibility  
Belief  
Positivity



## Special Interest Articles:

- Agape Coffee Talks
- Featured Foster Parents – Delonda Harris
- AYC Calendar of Meetings
- Meet the Board of Directors Beth Langefels

**Our Mission:**  
*“Providing youth and families with supportive, nurturing services that encourage each other to reach their full potential.”*

## Agape Strong

### Dear Agape Families

As you are reading this spring is just a few days away. It is hard to believe how fast time moves. This is my favorite time of year as I love to see things come to life, see the colors begin to pop up and the smell of fresh spring air. Spring always brings a sense of excitement and we are feeling some of that excitement right here at Agape.

We are thrilled with the results of our second annual Foster Care Conference. Despite the threat of bad weather we had a wonderful turn out and it turned out to be a great day. Agape would like to say thank you to the Hilton Garden in as well as Brendan, Ross, Doug and Linda for volunteering their time to work with our kids on that very special day. Their help was invaluable and we hope to have the opportunity to work with them again.

We are also very excited about our new office in Cincinnati as we are just beginning to reach out to that community and to promote our programs in the Cincinnati area. This is an amazing opportunity to expand our service area and touch the lives of even more families.

The Agape staff has entered the early phases of planning our summer activities which always bring joy to our kids and families. I am not sure what all those activities will look like but I do know that the staff will plan some awesome events.

We have truly begun to settle into our new building and have realized on several occasions the blessings of having more space. On the service side of things, keep your eyes open for some small changes in our respite paperwork requirements as well as potential changes in the area of medical care for the kids. You might also be receiving some confusing messages about the “normalcy or prudent parenting standards”

If you have any questions please talk to your Youth Specialist or give me a call. Remember we are here to help you and we want you to be the best you can be in your role as foster parents. 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](mailto:rstauffer@agapeforyouth.com)

Sincerely,

*Rodger*

*“We are thrilled with the results of our second annual Foster Care Conference. Despite the threat of bad weather we had a wonderful turn out and it turned out to be a great day. Agape would like to say thank you to the Hilton Garden in as well as Brendan, Ross, Doug and Linda for volunteering their time to work with our kids on that very special day.”*



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### Agape Coffee Talks

You are invited to join Steve for the bi-monthly “Coffee Talks: A time of getting to know each other”. These talks will be held at the Dayton and Cincinnati office. Refreshments will be provided.

**Dayton:** Wednesday, April 6<sup>th</sup> 10:00am – 12:00pm and 5:30pm – 7:30pm

Thursday, June 2<sup>nd</sup> 10:00am – 12:00pm and 5:30pm – 7:30pm

Please contact Sandie at 937-439-4406 x1102 to confirm your attendance.

**Cincinnati:** Thursday, March 24<sup>th</sup> 10:00am – 12:00pm and 5:30pm -7:30pm.

Thursday, May 19<sup>th</sup> 10:00am – 12:00pm and 5:30pm – 7:30pm

Please contact Molly at 937-439-4406 x1123 or Tiffani at 937-439-4406 x1124 to confirm your attendance.

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## Adoption Updates

For the many families who have adopted, there is a website you can access to find information you might need!

AdoptUSKids.org has many articles/information regarding various topics, from Adoption Tax Credit to Training and Support after Adoption. This is a national website dedicated to all adoptive families. Once you are on the website you can 'zero' in on Ohio and its offerings to families as far as information and services. Give it a try!

Spring is coming---!

Bridget & Andrea



## Education Updates

Thank you to everyone who has been turning in grade cards for their youth to their Youth Specialists for second quarter! Keep it up! I'm still looking for quite a few, and want to make sure we can coordinator those gift cards for youth who receive grades of C's and above on each report card.

We have two events scheduled for the remainder of the school year. These dates are: April 11<sup>th</sup> and the may date is TBD. All events will be 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.

Thank you again to Alpha Phi sorority for graciously volunteering their time to come in once a month for these events.

Because of these events, we have

been able to connect one of our youth on a more regular basis with a tutor for extra assistance with their academics. They are a great place to make connections and build towards weekly tutoring sessions. We try to make these events so that each youth who attends receives one-on-one learning from our tutors.

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

As always, we continue our search for more 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](mailto: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](mailto:nclark@agapeforyouth.com)

**Upcoming Tutoring  
Events:  
April 11<sup>th</sup>  
May TBD**



"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."

## Upcoming Training Opportunities

The winter training calendar has been out for a while and the spring training calendar should be coming out by the end of March. If you are planning to attend training, contact me at ext. 1114 to register.

We had our Foster Parent Conference on February 15th. We want to thank Brian Lowery for training the event, and for the staff at the Hilton Garden Inn for accommodating and organizing all of the food and space for us to be able to host this event for all. Youth 6-11 were able to enjoy a morning of bowling, while our 12 and up youth were able to go to Laser Tag in the afternoon.

Our next training was on March 5th, where we welcomed Jim Still-Pepper back to Agape. Jim trained

all day on the topic of “Generation MiXed”. This training focused on understanding the teen culture in foster care.

I have received great feedback from foster parents regarding Jim Still-Pepper and we were happy to have him back with us.

And on March 30th, we will have Anthony President back in an afternoon training to discuss “Understanding Autism”.

Coming up in our next training calendar, you will be able to see the skills sessions for CPR & First Aid training.

We want to encourage all of our foster parents to participate in the Blended Learning Course, so that we can have the complete sessions available for our

upcoming foster parents who are in the process of becoming licensed. The Blended Learning Course includes a two hour session online, and an hour and a half session at Agape for a skills session.

You will need to register for these classes through contacting myself, and the online portion of the program has to be completed and the certificate printed out in order to complete the skills session.

Contributed by

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



*And on March 30th, we will have Anthony President back in an afternoon training to discuss “Understanding Autism”.*

## Welcome Cincinnati Families!

Agape for Youth would like to give a Big Welcome to all of our new homes from the Cincinnati area. It has been amazing to meet each of you. Your talents and your commitment will help Agape to meet our vision of “serving families, youth and each other with excellence”.

So let us say Thank You to;

Robert and Mary Jeter, Peggy Scruggs, Ronald and Susanne Salzarulo, Kim Thompson, Ann Matthews, Darlene Hilson, Joseph and Annette Cheatam, Marcia Arentz, Mike and Deena Maley, and Charles and Alesia Brown.

We are so excited that each of you has chosen to join the Agape team and we look forward to accomplishing great things together.

## AYC – Agape Youth Council

AYC is in the full swing of things, this year! We have a lot of new content and fun activities in store for 2016!

Some of these activities include taking a trip to Columbus for a Break Dancing Expo, Pottery Painting for the 2016 Agape Fundraising Gala, movie nights and game nights, as well as learning about Cultural Differences, importance in voting, Goal setting and more!

We also are working on putting together a community service

project of our own, as well as possibly participating in the Air Force Marathon this summer.

We would like to invite youth ages 12- 18yrs old, to get involved with the Agape Youth Council.

If you have a youth who is interested in participating in AYC, please contact Tiffani at (937) 439-4406 X 1100 to RSVP!

We'd love to have you join us!

Contributed by Tiffani Stuart, AYC Facilitator

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

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

## ***Focus on the Rules***

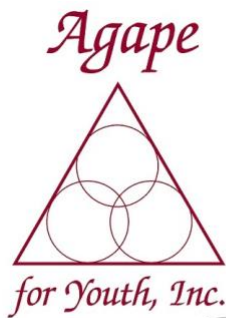
Kids in foster care need our help and guidance to learn skills and grow toward independence. Our youth typically need additional help with social skills, the ability to work as a team, and skills for eventual independence and responsible life in the community. Having a solid foundation also means they need the freedom to continue their chosen faith. Let's build a path for success by providing the opportunities to learn and form relationships. In this process we need to look at how the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services address these issues in this shortened version of the ODJFS rule.

5101:2-7-11 Socialization and Education

- (A) A foster caregiver shall allow privileges and assign responsibilities to a child similar to a family member of the foster caregiver who is of similar age and functioning level.
- (B) A foster caregiver shall make arrangements for each school-age child to attend school in accordance with the child care agreement. A foster caregiver that provides home schooling for a foster child shall do so only with the approval of the child's custodial agency.
- (C) A foster caregiver shall encourage a foster child to participate in community, school, recreational, and cultural heritage activities which are appropriate to the child's age and functioning level and shall, as is necessary and reasonable, arrange appropriate transportation for the foster child to and from such activities.
- (D) A foster caregiver shall permit a foster child to practice the chosen religious faith of the foster child or the foster child's parents, unless it is determined and documented in the child's case plan by the custodial agency that it is not in the child's best interests; and a foster caregiver shall not subject a foster child to any form of religious coercion.
- (E) A foster child shall not be baptized or submitted to any religious procedures without prior consent of the child according to their age and functioning level and prior approval of the foster child's parent, guardian or custodian.
- (F) A foster caregiver shall, as appropriate, teach a foster child tasks and skills required for life in the community.

Thanks for all you do

Contributed by Bruce Bridges, Licensing & Compliance/Intake Supervisor



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[@Agape for Youth](#)

## Meet Our Board of Directors



Beth Anspach Langefels has been the communications and marketing director American Heart and American Stroke Associations since 2006, covering the Miami Valley and Lexington, Kentucky divisions. She began her 25 year career in communications, public relations and marketing with a position in community relations at the Dayton Metro Library. She has worked for several prominent nonprofits, including Hospice of Dayton,

The Girl Scouts of Western Ohio and The Dayton Philharmonic Orchestra. She has also been a freelance writer for The Dayton Daily News since 2004 and today writes regularly for both the Life and Neighbors sections as well as the Dayton B2B digital magazine.

Beth holds a BA in Creative Writing from Ohio University and has a passion for supporting the local community. She serves on the board of Agape for Youth, a foster care and reunification agency, and volunteers as a mentor with Montgomery County College Promise. She is passionate about literacy and anything to do with writing.

She and her husband live in Clearcreek Township with their two Labrador “kids” and love living life in the “country.” You can read Beth’s *Dayton Daily News* weekly Life human interest features on Facebook.com/BethAnspach or by following her on Twitter @BethAnspach.

We are very thankful to Beth for her dedication and support of the mission of Agape for Youth, Inc. and appreciate all that she does as a member of the Board of Directors.

## Featured Foster Family – Delonda Harris

The featured Foster Parent for this quarter is Delonda Harris. She has been a foster parent with Agape since 2007, and has demonstrated that she has a heart and talent for working with kids with special needs.

Delonda has had her current foster child for over three years, and has been skillful in advocating for her to ensure that she has high-quality care and opportunities. It is exciting and encouraging seeing the progress that she has made with Delonda’s constant support and nurturing.

Delonda also realizes the importance of building rapport with her child’s biological family, and has sought to understand and support their role in maintaining a loving and supportive environment.

It is constantly a blessing to see the connection and love between Delonda and her child, and to witness Delonda’s determination in helping her reach new milestones.

Contributed by Abbie Patzke, Youth Specialist