

Family Times

Christian Family Services



Volume XXXVIII Issue 1

March 2016

The Call

"The Call" that I answered that day is similar to others I have answered in the past... "Baby A" came into this world in a very unique way. His Birth Mother had no idea she was pregnant!...

"Baby A's" 20 year old Birth Mom was very tired when she got off work late one Saturday night. She thought she was cramping so she took a laxative and went to bed. About 3 am, she awoke and went to the bathroom. To her very shocked surprise, she was met with something unexpected. She let out a light shriek. Her father came running to see what was going on and immediately called 911. Mom and "Baby A" were taken to the hospital, where both were found to be fine and healthy.



Baby "A" is the first CFS arrival this year. He weighed in at 6 lbs, 15 oz. He is now thriving with his new, forever family.

People like you have made it possible for Christian Family Services (CFS) to minister to moms with unplanned pregnancies for almost 38 years. You have offered calm, loving support and parenting options to these women.

YOU have provided Christian homes for babies, like "Baby A," through the Adoptive Family list of CFS. YOU helped us to not only provide an alternative to these moms, but also to love on them, encourage them, and to give them hope for a future. YOU helped them discover that they could still give their child everything that they had ever dreamed of as a parent, only in a different home.

YOU helped these moms see God in a whole different light. This ministry could not operate without YOUR godly heart and compassion for God's most helpless.

In a world where nothing is made to last and everything is meant to be thrown away, God's little ones are being preserved, not aborted. God's "little ones" are being given a chance to be all that He created them to be. Only someone like yourself enables CFS to continue reaching out to moms and families during such times.

YOUR prayers and financial support give us the opportunity to continue to answer "The Call." Please consider answering "The Call" and becoming a "Hearts for Hope" sponsor for just \$84 each month.

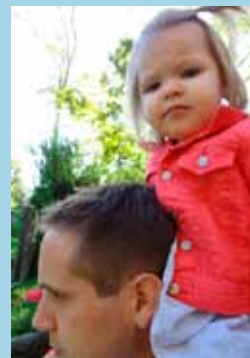
Jerry



Honor the Mother or Father in your Life

"Birth Mother's Day" May 7~Mother's Day May 8~ Father's Day June 19

There are many special people in our lives. Let CFS know how we can personalize an acknowledgement to the person you gift through a donation to CFS! See the last page for details.



Answering the Call to Volunteer

Lane was a Birth Mother in need of counsel about her pregnancy. Like many CFS Birth Moms, Lane was already raising a toddler. She had a demanding job. Dealing with stress at home and her work, she ended up needing hospitalization during her pregnancy. Lane needed a back up sitter for her toddler. CFS Case Workers sent out requests for volunteer sitters to relieve Lane of this worry. While we received several offers to assist Lane, listen why "Kristy" called CFS in answer to "The Call" to volunteer.

On hearing the need of Lane, Kristy recalled how her parents opened their home to Birth Mothers. Having an extra adult in their home was an every day reality. Helping Birth Mothers was modeled and encouraged. Drawing on her faith and upbringing, Kristy was compelled to be of help to this Birth Mother in need.

This was a rare need of a CFS Birth Mother yet God provided yet again! We are thankful to all of you who are prepared to aid Birth Mothers through prayerful intercession, physical interaction, or through donating to the ministry of CFS.



Gisele was a Birth Mother who delivered a special needs child. While Gabe had a lot of love to offer, he had physical needs to tackle. Gabe was placed with a CFS Foster Family. You can appreciate the affect this experience had on others through a note from Kristin, one of Gabe's sisters:

"Your organization (CFS) holds a special place in my heart because of the many babies we were able to care for, including the adoption of my little brother, Gabe. I remember how excited I would get each time we would get a phone call saying we were getting a baby. It is a tough job that you all do, but a rewarding one. I just wanted to let you guys know that I pray for you and I wanted to send a donation to help continue the work you do. Thank you for all your hard work and many hours of dedication. It is such a special ministry and it is awesome how many families you have impacted over the years."

Kristin



Welcome to Spring 2016, which means **Baby Bottle Boomerang Campaigns at area churches.** What a blessing you are to the ministry of CFS by filling your Baby Bottles (see the filled bottles at left!). In 2015, your Baby Bottle Boomerang funds totaled \$20,000!

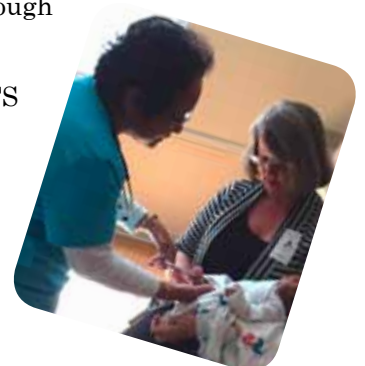
In addition to filling the bottles, volunteers are involved in the planning, organization, collecting and counting of the funds given (a few are counting at right!). YOU answer "The Call" to care for Birth Moms when you participate in the CFS Baby Bottle Boomerang Campaign fundraiser.



YOU help Birth Mothers in so MANY ways through your prayers and support of CFS.

• At left, Bob & Joan brought items to bless CFS Birth Moms and Adoptive Families alike.

• At right, Loni and her family opened their home to a CFS Case Worker when a Birth Mom went into labor. Loni also shuffled her schedule to assist at the placement to serve as a witness during the Birth Mother's signing of Consent.



Recent Placements



January 10th, 2016

Zac & Ashlie were happy to bring Abram home so quickly in the New Year!



February 29th, 2016

It was a leap day celebration for Greg & Donna as they welcomed Emmeline Faith into their home.

Adoptive Families Receive THE CALL

Christian Family Services has ministered to Birth Mothers in need since 1978. A ministry overseen by a Board of Directors in Gainesville, Florida, CFS has tax exempt status as a 501 (c) 3 organization. **CFS reaches out to Birth Mothers with the love of Christ, offering hope, pregnancy options, spiritual, emotional and physical support during and after their pregnancy.**

Licensed by the Florida Department of Children and Families as a Child Placing Agency, CFS maintains a list of Christian couples and families who desire to grow their family through adoption. CFS families trust in God's timing as they wait for a child. CFS staff keeps all Birth Mothers and the Adoptive Families in their prayers.

Once the home study is complete for an Adoptive Family, they are legally ready to receive a baby.

Adoptive Families wait in anticipation for a call that a baby has arrived to be placed in their home. The wait for a child can be difficult. Yet, life must go on. Therefore, many of our Adoptive Families are surprised when they receive The Call from Jerry!

Here are the stories of the families of the babies shown in the center-fold, and how the family reacted when Jerry let them know a baby was waiting for them!

♥ After two failed adoptions, **Clary's** family was thrilled to learn she would be part of their family. The entire family came to Florida to bring her home.

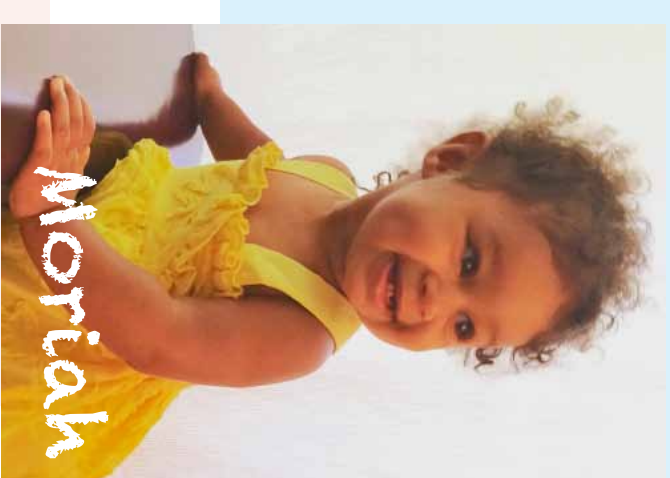
♥ **Joshua and Jacobs'** parents were overjoyed to hear they would be receiving twin boys! So excited, in fact, that they hung up on Jerry!

♥ Heading out the door to work and taking children to school, **Ella's** family happily re-shuffled their day when she arrived earlier than planned.

♥ While CFS caseworkers focused on the family match and placement of **Damon & Dexter**, another child was delivered ready for a family. **Carter's** parents, overjoyed with the news of his birth, made quick plans to make their first trip to Florida.

♥ **Moriah's** entire family had been praying for a daughter and a sister. They were faithfully awaiting the placement and eventual finalization of this little girl into their family.

♥ On vacation on the opposite coast of the US, Karissa called **Ariel's** family as she arrived sooner than expected. The family left from a Christian Camp they were attending, and drove two days to meet their newest addition to the family.



2015 A Year in Review

- ♥ 9 Babies placed into 7 Families
- ♥ The average age of Birth Moms was 22.4 years
- ♥ 29% of CFS Birth Mothers were attending school
- ♥ 71% of CFS Birth Mothers had other children.
- ♥ 57% of CFS Birth Mothers had significant financial need

2015 Finalizations



December 18, 2015

Ariel officially became Roger & Jackie's youngest child! Abigail, Miriam, Daniel & Jonathan were pleased to add another sibling to their home.



December 21, 2015

Tony & Amy were welcomed into Judge Catlin's courtroom for the finalization of Moriah. Isaac, Symian and Julian are happy to have a sister!



July 17, 2015

Steve & Jenny returned to Florida to officially make Damon & Dexter their sons. Wyatt & Madison are thrilled with their brothers.



July 17, 2015

Derek & Jessica were able to finalize in Florida via the phone. Carter is the younger brother of KaitLynn & Christian. His G'ma Virginia came to visit for the celebration!



May 22, 2015

Troy and Erin were welcomed into Judge Brasington's chambers for the finalization proceeding to add Landon into their family.



April 20, 2015

Kate looks over the room as her mom, dad and brother (Brook, Elizma and Ben) smile for the camera with Judge Brasington.

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Adoption: Making it Legal (Part 3)

The Birth Father

by Mitch Albaugh

Because the adoption process begins with the surrender of the child by the birth mother, the termination of her rights is simple. The potential problems during the TPR stage lie with the child's father or fathers. Yes, I said *fathers*, plural.

If the birth mother was married, her husband is the child's legal father. The legal father is not required to do anything to preserve his parental rights. The law attributes parental rights to the husband even when he is not the child's biological father. In some cases, it is difficult to find the husband. If he cannot be located, I must conduct what Florida statutes call a "diligent search." It is rarely that simple.

To notify the husband, I am required by law to serve papers using a deputy sheriff or a process server. It comes as no surprise that for most of these men, a deputy sheriff or a process server at the door is not a welcome sight. So they avoid service by not opening the door. This can become extremely problematic, because the TPR cannot be completed without the husband being made a party to the case (the U.S. Constitution calls this "Due Process"). Sometimes, I can back-channel with another relative (if I'm lucky enough to know of one) to explain to the husband that he's not in trouble. If the legal father is served, he is required to file a response. As a practical matter, however, legal fathers rarely have any interest in the child and rarely file a response; a default is entered against them and their parental rights are terminated on that basis.

If I cannot locate a legal father to serve him, I must publish a notice for four consecutive weeks in a newspaper published in the county of the legal father's last known residence. The final TPR hearing cannot occur less than 20 days following the last publication date. Accordingly, an unlocateable legal father adds about three months to the TPR stage. It also adds the costs of the diligent search and the publication.



If the birth mother was not married, the child's father is deemed an "unmarried birth father" or UBF. The biggest difference between a legal father and a UBF is that Florida law fairly well establishes what a UBF must do. A UBF is required to have demonstrated a "full commitment" to the child and the birth mother to preserve his parental rights to the child. If a UBF does not meet the "full commitment" threshold, his consent is not required.

There are three (3) categories of UBF: Unknown (UNK), Identity Known/Location Unknown (IK/LU), and Identity and Location Known (I&LK). As with a legal father, I am sometimes fortunate enough to have a cooperative UBF who signs either a Consent or an Affidavit of Nonpaternity (claiming no parental interest in the child). But, again, it is rarely that simple.

UNK is the simplest category of UBF, I don't have to do anything further.

However, when a UBF is IK/LU, I must have conducted a diligent search to find him. If he is found, he becomes an I&LK and must be served with a Notice of Intended Adoption Plan (NOIAP), giving him thirty (30) days to meet specific statutory requirements to preserve his parental rights to the child.

Like their legal father counterparts, UBFs do not like deputy sheriffs or process servers and can be difficult to serve. Unfound IK/LUs are treated the same as UNKs; their consent is not required and no further action by me is required.

In some cases, upon notification, a UBF will object to the adoption and, in those cases, there must be a trial to determine whether the UBF abandoned the birth mother and/or the child. Such trials are expensive and time consuming with varying results, generally adding hefty legal fees and months or years to the TPR stage.* Fortunately, these cases are the exception rather than the rule. The great majority of UBF's either consent, are UNK, or default after notice.

*In recent years, CFS has dealt with such legal fees.

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For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable.

Romans 11:29

From the President of the Board Jesse Wilson



I think everyone needs a calling— I believe when someone has a calling, personal desires take a back seat to this higher purpose.

“The Call” for me to be involved in the ministry of CFS came from having friends who adopted children, and also in the experience that my wife and I had in caring for children waiting to be adopted. It is a blessing for me to be able to help in some small way for a child to have a forever home with loving Christian parents.

One of my main contributions to this call on my life is by helping raise funds for CFS by parking cars in the church parking lot for the Gator football games. For an early Saturday morning football game, I leave home around 7:00 a.m. to set up for parking.

Believe me, after a long week at work I would enjoy a few more hours of sleep, but the joy of helping raise funds for CFS erases that feeling. There are several others who share this same “Call” and join me in parking cars on their day off from work.

When we answer a calling which helps others, we receive much personal satisfaction, regardless of the outcome. My prayer is that each of you have a calling that takes you to a higher level in life and provides a blessing to others.

CFS is blessed with many people who have answered the “Call” to help CFS! We greatly appreciate your help in supporting the ministry of CFS. May God bless you and your family!

Jesse T. Wilson

Memorial or Honor Gifts ; One Time Gifts ; Hearts for Hope

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Your relationship to the deceased or person being honored

‡ All gifts/donations to Christian Family Services, Inc. are tax deductible.

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It may be the Friend of a Friend who needs CFS to answer their call!

Since 2015, CFS has 11 of the 50 new "Hearts for Hope" partners needed to support this ministry.

"Hi Jerry,

thank you for checking on me. It has been a difficult experience for me, it was even harder to inform the couple that i have been speaking to about being adoptive parents. My heart breaks for them. Thank you for your prayers please include them as well. I can not thank u and your team there you all have been the best at helping me through this difficult situation. You guys are a true blessing." -CFS Birth Mom

