



FALL 2010 NEWSLETTER

NORTH POINT COMMUNITY CHURCH LAUNCHES “FOSTERING TOGETHER”

This fall, North Point Community Church joined the FaithBridge family, partnering with us to address its communities’ foster care crises. Together with FaithBridge, the church has begun recruiting and equipping foster parents and volunteers through their ministry “Fostering Together.”



After almost a year of continued relationship development and awareness building of the current foster care situation, North Point began raising awareness in late summer. An email blast surveyed more than 11,000 members’ interest in supporting this type of ministry. More than 3,500 responded and over 1,700 members expressed interest to participate in some fashion.

On August 29, Andy and Sandra Stanley announced the ministry, showed a three-and-half minute video in each worship service and made an appeal for those seeking more information to attend one of three scheduled orientation meetings. Again, North Point’s belief in this cause was evident with total attendance at these introductory information meetings reaching over 1,000 and 600 looking to take an active role in fostering.



Sandra Stanley at orientation

In early October, FaithBridge conducted the first IMPACT Training at the Alpharetta campus with 44 families in attendance. The first North Point foster family has already been approved and currently has three children in placement. Twenty-five new foster families from North Point are projected to be approved by the end of the year.

“FaithBridge is a remarkable organization making a big difference in the foster care system. We are excited to partner with them, lending our resources to help them go further faster,” said North Point Community Church Pastor Andy Stanley.

Partnering with North Point is an extraordinary opportunity for FaithBridge to showcase our mission to change foster care in the United States. The success of our partnership with North Point is expected to continue as future awareness and training sessions are scheduled with their ministry team. For more information on recruitment and training efforts, and how you can join North Point’s “Fostering Together” ministry, please contact David Shaw, Chief Church Relations Officer with FaithBridge Foster Care at dshaw@faithbridgefostercare.org or 678-690-7115, or visit North Point online at <http://www.northpoint.org/foster>.

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Upcoming Training Events

FaithBridge hosts orientation events and IMPACT training for prospective foster families and volunteers each month. Please visit our website to find a training event in your area.

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Follow us: @CommunityofCare

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Visit our channel: www.youtube.com/CommunityofCare



Visit us online at: www.faithbridgefostercare.org/newsletter-sign-up.aspx

FAITHBRIDGE FAMILIES

TEN FOREVER FAMILIES



THE BARTOWS

From participation in a mentoring project at Goshen Valley Boys Ranch through the James Fund, the Bartows were drawn to 13-year-old Tylor. He was a sweet and engaging kid who touched the Bartows’ heart. Tylor came to live with the Bartows on Christmas Day 2009. As their bond developed, the Bartows knew that God had opened a door for them to provide permanent placement in their home for Tylor, which came true March 18, 2010.

THE EVANS

Chad and Angela Evans entered foster care training with the intent to foster teenagers. Once approved, the family became aware of a child in foster care through their church pastor, and learned that he’d had experienced several unsuccessful placements. The Evans became determined to give Chris a loving environment. Chris quickly became like a son to the family. Before they knew it, the Evans began the adoption process and Chris joined his “forever family” with the finalization of his adoption on March 31, 2010.



THE HARDINGS

The Hardings embraced their role as parents of sisters, Jacqueline and Lisabeth, even before the completion of their adoption on March 31, 2010. In fact, Heather was integral in the lives of Jacqui and Lis, along with their six brothers (see McKisson) long before she adopted them. She knew the family from her work as the school nurse at the elementary school where some of the children attended and felt called to be part of their lives. While living in Alabama, with her husband Jerry, Heather became aware that the children were in foster care. The Hardings made arrangements to move back to Georgia with the intent of fostering and adopting these two sisters. In addition to adopting these sisters, the Hardings also foster their niece from another state, and they are looking forward to the best Christmas present this year, the completion of her adoption, finally completing their family.

THE LOTTS

The Lotts were blessed to expand their family on June 17, 2010 with the adoption of Emory Faith Lott. Baby Emmy caught their attention through Courtney’s involvement with her adoption consulting business. After months of paperwork and uncertainty, the Lotts were thrilled to add Emmy to their family. The Lotts are also currently fostering two sibling boys and are awaiting the court date for their adoption. This amazing family of eight (the Lotts welcomed their newest addition to the world right before the Thanksgiving holiday) includes foster, adopted and birth children of different races, demonstrating God’s love for all His children.



THE BAKER / SHEAHANS

After mentoring teenager, Karen Anderson, over the course of a year and a half, Jeanne Sheahan knew she could provide a better environment than a group home to spend one’s teenage years in. The family completed foster training in order to provide placement for Karen and her sister. The Baker/Sheahan family officially adopted Karen on June 18, 2010. The family has committed to providing these girls, and even their older brother, a loving family that will able them grow into strong, independent young adults. They are all blossoming in their second chance of life.



THE SMITHS

Coming from large families themselves, the Smiths had a wonderful experience fostering Stephanie. When Stephanie became available for adoption, there was no question they would become her permanent family. The Smiths has reason to celebrate as her adoption was finalized this summer on June 23, 2010.



THE MCKISSONS

The McKisson family united six foster siblings under one roof, demonstrating that God never gives you more than you can handle. The family’s continued faith and a few adjustments along the way were well rewarded. On July 22, 2010, the McKissons and their son officially welcomed James Ray, Alex Charles, Jonathan Joshua, Joseph Allen, Michael Glenn, and Alberto Samuel to their family.

THE ROBERTSONS

The Robertsons expressed that fostering has had its many challenges, one of the greatest being letting go of a child when unsure of the environment he or she will be returning to. After several foster care placements, the family has had to learn to say goodbye and continue to place their trust in the Lord. The Robertson’s had always been willing to give a child a loving permanent home if needed and their prayers were answered on August 23, 2010 when the adoption of Leti Hope was finalized.



THE HOLLOMANS

Not being able to have children of their own, the Hollomans answered the call to become foster parents in 2008. Two years later, the family continues to celebrate their decision. On October 28, 2010, RJ was added to the Holloman family, joining their two previously adopted children from last year.

THE HOTZES

From their work with the Goshen Valley Boys Ranch, the Hotzes found a home in their heart for Robbie, and made him “one of the family” with his official adoption on November 9, 2010. They discovered that their affection for each other grew significantly over the two years that Robbie lived with Steven and Denise at the ranch. It didn’t take much for the Hotzes to hear God’s call to pursue adopting Robbie as their own son.



2010 AT A GLANCE

This year, FaithBridge expanded its reach and deepened its roots. Since our inception, we have:

SERVED
190
CHILDREN



PARTNERED
WITH 15
CHURCHES



CREATED
12
FOREVER FAMILIES
THROUGH ADOPTION



ADDED
89
FOSTER FAMILIES



NEWS BRIEFS

FAITHBRIDGE RECOGNIZES OUTSTANDING SERVICE

On Thursday, October 7, COO Mark A. Washington and CEO Bill R. Hancock surprised two outstanding award recipients at First Baptist Church of Woodstock. FaithBridge recognized First Lady Mary Perdue and First Baptist Church of Woodstock.

STANDING IN THE GAP AWARD

Georgia's First Lady Mary Perdue is committed to the welfare of all Georgians – but perhaps, most of all, to the state's foster children. She has been a tireless champion for Georgia's foster children, believing it is critical to reach children in their early years to avoid potential social problems as teenagers or adults. Having served as a foster mother to eight newborns awaiting adoption in the late 1990s, the First Lady had personal experience and inspiration for the launch of several statewide initiatives such as the "Our Children" campaign and First Lady's Children's Cabinet.

Each of these efforts helped to raise awareness about the need for foster care programs in Georgia and to encourage individuals, corporations and faith-based organizations to take an active role in addressing community needs. She also was instrumental in turning the heart of her own church leaders, especially Pastor Johnny Hunt, to the issue of foster care.

For those reasons, we celebrate and recognize her contributions with the Standing in the Gap Award, an award given by FaithBridge to individuals exhibiting outstanding advocacy and selfless service to the betterment of our community's children.



Georgia's First Lady Mary Perdue



First Baptist Church of Woodstock's Johnny Hunt

CHURCH PARTNER AWARD

FaithBridge also recognized First Baptist Church of Woodstock for serving the foster care community as well. Founded in August 2008, the church's foster care ministry set out to serve Cherokee County's at-risk children, eliminating the capacity gap between the number of foster children and the number of necessary families to serve them. Since its inception the ministry has served 72 children and has had 38 foster families and 75 volunteers involved.

Pastor Johnny Hunt accepted the award on behalf of the congregation and reaffirmed the church's commitment to changing Cherokee County's foster care system from one of crisis to one of community.

FAITHBRIDGE HEROES IN THE NEWS

Foster parents, volunteers and ministry leaders often serve our community's children as unsung heroes. Yet it's our privilege to share their stories with others. It's particularly rewarding when the media takes notice, bringing attention to their accomplishments and inspiring others to get involved.

Over the summer and fall, several articles highlighted the good work of FaithBridge friends in Marietta, Rome and Woodstock. The full text of these news articles, and others, can be found on our website under the News and Events tab in the section called "In the News."



July 18 – Rome News-Tribune
 "Families First: Eight Rome churches unite to provide training, resources for local families eager to foster a child"
<http://bit.ly/c5YuNi>



PARTNER CHURCHES FOSTER COMMUNITY

When we say that our churches stand in the gap for our community’s foster children, their commitment extends beyond their connection with FaithBridge. Two of our partner churches held fall fundraisers that raised tens of thousands of dollars for two fellow foster care organizations. We applaud their dedication to the call and are honored to have had representatives in attendance at both of these events.



WOODSTOCK GOES WILD

On October 7, First Baptist Church Woodstock hosted the ninth annual fundraiser for Open Door Home in Rome, Georgia. The event provided safe, exciting family entertainment for more than 1,500 people and raised more than \$40,000.

Approximately 100 foster children and their families attended a pre-show Meet and Greet with Peter Gros and his numerous wild animal friends from Mutual of Omaha. The main performance included musical guests, plus a chance for children to touch and see animals, ranging from giant reptiles to soft, fuzzy mammals.



JEFF FOXWORTHY'S BACKYARD BASH

On October 28, North Point Community Church held a night of family entertainment and laughter. Well-known comic and North Point member Jeff Foxworthy was the headline entertainment and had attendees hooting with trademark Southern comedy—and several Redneck jokes to close the show.

This first-ever event was held at the church and 100% of the proceeds went to three area charities. Total monies raised exceeded \$150,000. One of the beneficiaries was the Foster Care Support Foundation, a Roswell-based organization that serves foster families across the state and provides free clothes, toys and infant-care equipment to support Georgia’s foster children.



September 25 – Cherokee Tribune
“County aims for ‘permanency’ for children in foster care”

<http://bit.ly/dvD77m>



October 15 – Cobb Life
“Cobb county Girl Scouts earn A+ for collecting school supplies”

<http://bit.ly/dhDKMq>



November 2010 – Good News
“Leading the way in foster care”

<http://bit.ly/dCgXR2>

DIVINE APPOINTMENT

FAITHBRIDGE WELCOMES NEW CHIEF CHURCH RELATIONS OFFICER

David N. Shaw joined FaithBridge in April of this year as chief church relations officer. Shaw brings the experience of 30 years in the corporate world, having led business development efforts for companies in healthcare and banking. He is responsible for business development activities at FaithBridge including the recruitment of church partners and foster families and also directs the ongoing management of our church relationships.



Prior to joining FaithBridge Shaw served as senior vice president of Coker Group, a national healthcare consulting firm based in Alpharetta, GA. David and his wife Lauren have been married for 38 years and have two children and three grandchildren.

WHY DID YOU CHOOSE FAITHBRIDGE?

I was looking for and praying about what God's will was for my career. I met with FaithBridge Chairman Rick Jackson as a trusted advisor and explained that I wanted to pursue something that would be a direct benefit to people. Rick introduced me to FaithBridge and Bill Hancock and my decision was made. I'm confident that through God's working, FaithBridge chose me.

WHAT MAKES FAITHBRIDGE "WORK"?

From a practical standpoint it's the coming together of an organization that understands the foster care system with the compassion and people resources of the local church. We often speak about the current crisis being one of capacity, quality and stability. The marriage of FaithBridge providing the "how to" with the church providing the "want to" becomes the secret sauce. But beyond the practical, it's the will of God that the needs of hurting children be solved by his people, the church.

WHAT PREPARED YOU FOR THIS?

I was fortunate to grow up in a home where I always felt safe, secure and loved unconditionally. My father was a minister who lived his life in the service of others. Those models, gifted to me by my parents, have provided strong reference points throughout my life.

I was equally blessed to find a wife who has modeled servanthood throughout our marriage. We have two wonderful children, a fantastic daughter-in law and the three best grandchildren in the world. These gifts, I am convinced, were given by God--not because I am anything special but that they could be used to bless others.

I know what it is like to be part of a loving, nurturing family, and this fuels my passion to help every child to experience that.

TELL US A BIT MORE ABOUT YOU.

I am a sports fanatic and I am a homer. I love, in order, the Falcons, Bulldogs, Braves and Hawks. Lately I have become something of a political junkie because like foster care, most of us have been observing from the sidelines far too long.

WHAT IS YOUR LIFE VERSE?

"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life." – John 3:16 (NIV)



FAITHBRIDGE WELCOMES NEW CHIEF OPERATIONS OFFICER

On October 1, FaithBridge welcomed Mark A. Washington to our team as chief operating officer. A veteran of the child welfare industry with significant achievements in both public service and private endeavors, Washington is responsible for all aspects of our strategic and tactical operations, including finance, family recruitment and training, government compliance and outcomes management.



For those most familiar with Georgia foster care, Washington’s name is most likely not new. Prior to joining FaithBridge, Washington was assistant commissioner for Georgia’s Department of Family and Children’s Services. We asked him several questions about why he made the move.

WHY DID YOU CHOOSE FAITHBRIDGE?

FaithBridge presents the perfect intersection of my past experience in child welfare and a lifelong calling to ministry. I believe I can influence God’s Kingdom more here and now through FaithBridge than any other way.

WHAT MAKES FAITHBRIDGE “WORK”?

The real difference about FaithBridge is the Community of Care model that couples church support (the time and talent of the local church) with a great provider organization to support families and children in an unprecedented way. I believe in the call of the local church to serve the least, last and the lost.

When we say “with God all things are possible,” that’s not a personal statement or profession of faith, but a call to action. We can literally move mountains. Whatever seems like it was impossible or immovable, like changing the way America does foster care, becomes doable in Christ.

WHAT PREPARED YOU FOR THIS?

Like many people who chose family and child welfare as a profession, I grew up in a situation where the community stepped into the gaps of my home life. Church members were critical in my upbringing and as I matured, I sought similar opportunities. From a career standpoint, I’ve worked in child welfare and private sector, managing corporate acquisitions and child adoptions in the same decade. Now, at FaithBridge it’s just nice to bring the business/operational side together with personal impact side.

I’ve endeavored to serve in ministry much of my life. In high school, I worked with school aged kids in a downtown Dallas church where few spoke English and some received their first toothbrush. In college, I spent time at a Christian youth sports camp and saw a lot of kids come to know Christ. My wife and I have co-labored in ministry, working with couples and creating marriage ministries at two different churches and also helping plant a church. Today, we are both currently involved with teens in our local church.

Getting really personal, growing up without a dad in the home drives me to helping men say “yes” to kids they’ve never met because it’ll change their lives. Both the dad and child or teen.

TELL US A BIT MORE ABOUT YOU.

I’m one of those fortunate people who married “up.” My wife Kristie is an amazing, beautiful woman whose talents exceed my own. I am the father to four girls, ages 2 – 14, who are equally wonderful and individually gifted. It must be my life penance to be surrounded by women because I had three sisters growing up.

WHAT IS YOUR LIFE VERSE?

“The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners.” – Luke 4:18 (NIV)

The following families have joined FaithBridge since our spring newsletter was published in April 2010 and the following associates have joined our team this year. Please join us in prayers of thanksgiving and intercession on behalf of these caring individuals.

WELCOME TO FAITHBRIDGE FOSTER CARE

New FaithBridge Families

Tim and Lora Agopian – North Point Community Church
Travis and Janet Ballagh – Corridor Church
Daniel and Christina Bennett – Perimeter Church
Patrick and Lynne Bowers – Project 127 Rome
Steve and Kim Boyett – First Baptist Church of Woodstock
Samuel Judd and Nancy Brannon – First Baptist Church of Woodstock
David and Rachel Dupee – All Souls Fellowship
Duane and Marci Fickel – Corridor Church
Catherine Fineis – Corridor Church
Jorge and Cathy Genty – Perimeter Church
Bryan and Lori Heerde – Perimeter Church
Steven and Denise Hotze – Project 127 Rome

Joel and Pamela Lackey – Mt. Bethel United Methodist
Walter and Suzanne Littlefield – Corridor Church
Keith and Linda Mann – First Baptist Church of Woodstock
Ryan and Stephanie Martin – Stonecreek Church
Barry and Stephanie Miller – Project 127 Rome
William and Cynthia Moultrie – Mt. Bethel United Methodist
Raymond and Sharon Padron – Perimeter Church
Roy and Bess Rhoades – Heart of Life
Bill and Pom Skinner – Perimeter Church
Paul and Mistee Smith – Project 127 Rome
Patrick and Deanna Stewart – First Baptist Church of Woodstock
Daniel and Katie White – Stonebridge

List of foster families is current as of November 1, 2010

New FaithBridge Associates

Lindsey Dorner – Community of Care Resource Coordinator
Theresa Gardner – Executive Assistant
Elaine Hancock – Generalist
Chris Hayes – Foster Family Consultant
Inise Mayfield – Foster Family Consultant
Jennifer Moye – Home Study Specialist
Maribeth Nolan – Foster Family Consultant
Kerri Shaw – Generalist
Kimberly Shaw – Marketing Assistant
Andrea Shoemaker – Director of Media Recruitment
Chelsea Taylor – Home Study Specialist



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