

March 2015

A Note From Jane

Last year in the March 2014 newsletter, I told you about a terminally-ill mom who was given just 5-6 weeks to live after having spent a decade battling brain cancer. Just 40, Shawn's last wish was to be able to take her two grade-school boys and husband on one final family vacation. The Foundation granted the wish and Shawn and her family spent one week in Florida. Less than a month later, she was gone.

This year, sadly, we have gotten word of another terminally-ill mom, just 36, who has six children. Her husband has taken a leave from his job to help care for her and the kids. As you can imagine, medical (and other) bills are piling up. The Foundation will be making a grant to this family so that in the last phases of this mom's illness she can see some financial relief for her family.

With our mandate to help locally, nationally and globally, I feel very proud of the reach the Foundation has had through its work with many organizations. We've helped, literally, hundreds and hundreds of people through our work. However, I always keep in mind what Mother Teresa said about helping others: "Never worry about numbers. Help one person at a time and always start with the person nearest you." The Foundation will always work to transform lives, whether that life is in Rwanda, Guatemala or Wheaton. Together, with your support, we can continue to do great things to impact lives.

This month we plan on rolling out our new website. Watch for it!



MARCH'S THEME: CHILDREN'S HEALTH & WELFARE

Recently, the DuPage County "Continuum of Care" (a group of over 50 local organizations who are combining their efforts and working together to "develop and support effective strategies to end homelessness in DuPage County") put out a report entitled "Snap Shot". This report covered the period June 2013-June 2014 and discussed things like the causes of homelessness; what's working; and what's needed to end this problem in DuPage County.

The report had a section on children and homelessness. Would you be surprised to learn that from 2006 to 2014, the number of homeless students served in DuPage County has more than quadrupled? (Identified by the Illinois State Board of Education).

The report gave these numbers as well (for the homeless population):

- Number of families with children under 18 years: 182
- Number of children under 18 years of age: 329

- Number of children under the age of 5 years: 128
- Number of single adults 18-21 years of age: 46

In Chicago, there are currently 18,000 homeless children. In the U.S., the figure is 1.6 million. Obviously, this is a growing problem that must be addressed.

Access to a free and appropriate education and ability to maintain stability in school are "two of the most significant ways to decrease homelessness in the future", according to the Snap Shot report. This is why the Foundation works with organizations like DuPage Pads, By the Hand Club for Kids, BUILD, and several other groups working with kids. We also support groups like Almost Home for Kids, Humanitarian Service Project and Tri-City Family Services...all working to impact the lives of children, our most valuable, and vulnerable, future resource.

It's easy to transform lives!

Check out the easy ways to donate to the Foundation:

- **Automatic Payroll Deduction is simple.** Click [here](#) for the form (Click Allow in the Security Warning box that appears).
- **Donate through PayPal any time!** See the Foundation's home page for the PayPal option.
- **Shop on Amazon.com through the AmazonSmile program:**
 1. Visit smile.amazon.com and log in using your regular Amazon.com username and password.
 2. Search for and select **Ft Cares Foundation** from the list of charities.
 3. Begin shopping! AmazonSmile performs exactly like regular Amazon.com except that now 0.5% of your eligible purchases go directly to the Foundation.

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LISA'S CORNER
FINDING PERSPECTIVE

Recently, I had the opportunity to meet with a woman named Patricia Fragen who started an organization after the loss of her teenage daughter to cancer. Named Normal Moments, the organization supports parents with critically ill children by providing them with the resources and service providers to reduce their daily cares such as housecleaning, lawn maintenance, pet care and meals. By providing this support, the organization allows parents to spend more time with their children and enjoy more “normal moments” with them.

After meeting with Patricia, I got to thinking about how many times we tell the kids in our lives to go play, give us some space or find something to do because something else is seemingly more important and needs our attention. Of course, we don't do this maliciously or with the intent to hurt the feelings of our kids but do the kids know that? For those of us who are fortunate enough to never have spent a night in the hospital keeping vigil by a child's

bedside, we may often take for granted the mundane activities that we do with or for our kids. After all, there is always something that needs to be done: the homework that needs to be checked; the sports practices and games that need to be attended; the dinners (and lunches and breakfasts) that need to be made and cleaned up; the bedtime routines that need to be completed. All of it needs to be done. But in reality, we are lucky that all of it gets to be done. For families struggling with children who are seriously ill, these normal moments are a luxury they would give anything to have.

So the next time you are overwhelmed, frustrated or exhausted at the thought of all the things you have to do for your children, realize that each and every “normal moment” is a gift.

“Always be thankful for today because you never know what tomorrow may bring or what it may take away.”

Cards for Katie

Thank you to those who signed birthday cards for four-year old Katie Adams, a sweet little girl diagnosed with brain cancer. We discovered Katie's story on social media, and when her mom posted a request for birthday cards, we decided to send her a whole box!

Here's the list of the organizations the Foundation is planning to work with in March:

- Aiden's Army
- Almost Home for Kids
- Tri-City Family Services
- By the Hand Club for Kids
- BUILD

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