

LOUISVILLE ORPHAN CARE INITIATIVE

Issue 2, Summer 2009



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Do you want to get involved?

Call us!

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CHRISTIAN ALLIANCE FOR ORPHANS SUMMIT [RECAP]

Several people from the Louisville area visited the Orphan Summit in Irving, Texas on April 29th and 30th. For anyone who hasn't been, this is a place to connect in many ways to those with a common passion for the fatherless. Don't go to the Summit with a plan to rest, as the schedule is two full days of 8:30 am to 8:30 pm with enough information to challenge anyone's to do list with what to do next. There much information on how to grow and enhance your ministry. Also, most are willing to share what not to do so that others can avoid painful mistakes.

For those who have been at the Summit, it looks to be a great chance to catch up with acquaintances from previous years, a chance to be reinvigorated that you aren't in this challenge to awaken the church on your own, and certainly an opportunity to enhance the direction of your efforts.

The first night of the Summit was Louisville night with Lightning Ahlers providing his testimony, followed by Dr. Russell Moore speaking to make the evening extremely special.

There were opportunities to engage a variety of sessions throughout both days. Our group was able to divide and conquer covering a broad variety of topics.

LOCI was able to assemble much information from the conference to guide the direction of our efforts in Louisville. It is certainly worth attending for anyone who is able. Next years' conference will be held in Minneapolis on April 29 - 30, 2010.

- Darren Washausen

[Other testimonies of the 2009 Summit can be found on pages 2 and 3 of this newsletter.]

Christian Alliance For Orphans Summit [Recap]

Key Takeaways - by Kris Zoeller

The following is a summary of a few key takeaways that Kris gleaned from the Summit.

I pray they bless you as they did me!

Prayer

It seems so fundamental but I feel there is lack of prayer in our ministry and for orphans in general. We can move mountains when we call on God. And since adoptions are so in tune with the heart of God we should expect opposition in form of spiritual attacks.

Empower the Youth

As Dennis Rainey says, [the youth] get it. They can help especially in the area of orphan care. They can be included in mission trips and local community service.

Adoption must be grounded in the Gospel

Dr. Russell Moore from Baptist Theological Seminary says the adoption culture needs to teach the churches how to grasp the gospel. Joseph is portrayed in the gospel and the real father of Jesus. His role is never minimized. We, who are in the ministry, have to be able to thoroughly be able to explain the “why” of adoption. We need to know the character of God to do effective ministry. Adoption is an outgrowth of a healthy church.

The church is the only answer to connecting the orphan to a permanent home and to Jesus.

1/3 of the world is Christian. It is the largest force for good on earth. Do everything by, for and through the local church. The local church can be the hero. Christ gets the glory through His church. Rescue is not God’s plan. Seek permanency for orphans through the church.

Think big while keeping it small

Most ministries think big events, big crowds and big impact. While this is a good idea the most effective way to get big results in to create safe small groups for people to connect and find encouragement

Use technology to promote your ministry

A web site is the best tool to promote and educate and the most cost effective. The web site also qualifies your ministry. Use a database for contacts to promote events.

Should we charge for large group events?

Most churches we connected with do not charge for events and they also provide free childcare and meals. The thought is that adoption is already so expensive they want to eliminate another burden for the families. Free also increases attendance. The costs for most events are only the childcare costs and meals. (You can get many food sponsors like Chick-Fil-A and Sam’s). Funds come from the local church and from families who are passionate about adoption and orphan care. They may have a speaker who speaks for no charge. They promote through web sites, databases, church resources and both private and state agencies. They spend no money on advertising. Another main point is do not do large group events until you have your small groups established so they is somewhere to direct the attendees to.

Hope for 100

Green Acres Baptist Church just launched a program to reach a goal of 100 adopted children. They have a complete program that starts with sermon notes, a pastor-to-pastor DVD and complete step-by-step guide for

duplication. They charge \$59-\$99 for materials and support is free.

4KIDS of South Florida

This program started by Calvary Chapel Ft. Lauderdale by the persistence of one woman who pestered the senior pastor about the state of the local foster care children. It has grown into the largest private foster care agency in the county supported by dozens of churches and Christian volunteers. They have done such a good job that every child in the county now receives Christian care while “in the system”. Children in crisis are connected to hope, the church of Jesus Christ.

Loving Shepherd Ministries

I did not attend this workshop but listened to the CD. This ministry is an incredible adoption resource ministry. They have a questionnaire for pre-adoption families to fill out that will help guide them through the process. They have done extensive research on agencies, countries, financing and even what type of adoption is best for their families.

Wait No More

This is another workshop I did not attend although I did know a little about the project and have been in contact with Focus on the Family upon hearing of the program. Focus on the Family partnered with the State of Colorado and independent foster care agencies to try to find homes for the 770+ legal orphans in Colorado. The Wait No More event is turnkey event that would be tailored to the local community. Focus does all the planning and covers the expenses. A local team would need to be set up to track and follow up with commitments.

- Kris Zoeller



Christian Alliance For Orphans Summit [Recap]

The Experience - by Alicia Ahlers

Were you unable to attend the Summit?

Here's a taste of what it was like for Alicia.



My husband, Glenn, and I had the awesome privilege, of both attending the 2009 Summit put on by the Christian Alliance for Orphans, and seeing our son, Lightning, share his adoption testimony at the start of a main session.

What an encouragement it was to be around so many wonderful people with HUGE hearts for the fatherless!

We spent the entire weekend being blessed - beyond measure. Meeting people who are working tirelessly around the globe, giving voice to the too often voiceless orphan. The energy and passion was incredible! We felt like God was utilizing every minute of our time away from home, even the travel both ways, and we are hoping to attend every year, from here on out.

Glenn and I truly wished we could have brought along all of our children old enough to enjoy the Summit. We did however, bring home the DVD & CD recordings of many of the sessions we attended. As we have shared them with the rest of our family, it was like setting hearts aflame for Christ once again. Many of our children begged us to get involved with mentoring foster children because THEY want to show them Jesus' love. They all have been very touched by the sessions they saw.

The Summit is really for ALL Christians. It serves to further equip us to serve Christ as James 1:27 call out for us to do.

It was such an honor for Lightning to share the podium with all of the leaders at the Summit. We've posted a

recording of his testimony, online if you would like to see it.

It seems the consensus is to continue to see the Summit blossom! From what I understand, it started as a group of about 35 committed, devoted people and has doubled over and over in the past 5 years. It is growing past it's grassroots stages but has room for every church in America to be properly represented.

Hope to see you there next year!

- Alicia Ahlers



Lightning's testimony can be seen at www.theahlersfamily.com.

About the Adoption Seminar

April 25, 2009
Southeast Christian Church
By Kris Zoeller

The latest adoption seminar was held on April 25 at Southeast Christian Church. This seminar is geared to pre-adoptive couples who are just starting their adoption journey by gathering facts and is led by adoptive parents who have experienced the journey first hand.

Lightning Ahlers shared his very moving testimony about time in war-torn Liberia and how God sent a wonderful couple to adopt him and

his sister (plus three others). Lightning was almost reaching the age to be "adoptable" reminding us that adoption is not always about cute little babies but there are children all over the world like him hoping to be adopted and loved by a Mom and Dad.

The General Session is geared for all the attendees and included the topics God's Heart for Orphans, Preparation for Adoptions, Adoption Support, Home Studies and Financial Assistance.

After the General Session the couples are directed to breakout workshops to learn more about specific types of adoption; including Foster to Adopt, Domestic and International Adoption.

There has been a growing interest in Foster to Adopt and Domestic Adoption in the last several seminars. The cost and waiting times for many foreign countries discourages many families. Foster to Adopt is becoming much more accepted especially with the great training and financial stimulus provided by the State.

The experts in the Domestic Adoption workshop easily answered the questions of eager parent's-to-be. Couples learned the difference between closed, semi-open and open adoptions and many fears were dissipated.

Overall there were 8 churches represented from three states. God continues to stir the hearts of His church to care for the orphans (James 1:27).

[The next Adoption Seminar will be held Saturday October 10 at Southeast Christian Church. LOCI is interested in holding the seminar at other churches as well. Please contact Kris Zoeller at 245-8353 for more information.]

Praise Report: How God has been using LOCI



Reaching Out

God is definitely at work in Louisville!

The LOCI network is growing in the number of churches interested in stirring congregations to God's command to help the fatherless. LOCI is currently speaking to 11 church leaders or lay people that represent these congregations. We look forward to a meeting on June 30th that gathers us all together for common interest in the orphans in this world.

The churches represented at this time are:

- Southeast Christian Church
- Northeast Christian Church
- LaGrange Baptist Church
- Emmanuel Baptist Church
- Highview Baptist Church
- Graceland Baptist Church (Indiana)
- Sojourn Church
- Grace Evangelical Free Church
- Kingdom Christian Church
- Trinity World Outreach
- Evangel Christian

May God bless and lead this ministry!



Foster Family Outing / Job Fair

LOCI held a Foster Family outing and job fair on May 23rd at Thurman Hutchins Park on River Road. We were happy to see approximately 80 people attend the picnic in May. The events of the day included a partnering with You Opportunities Unlimited (Y.O.U.) where both foster parents and children were addressed in separate sessions. Parents learned how to support kids in their efforts to find a summer job. Kids were able to learn about summer job and volunteering opportunities along with information about interviewing and the job search process. Younger children were able to enjoy games throughout the day and lunch was served to everyone. The day ended with a drawing of door prizes for the children.

- Darren Washausen

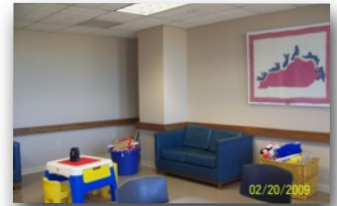
[The next Foster Family outing will be held July 25th from 10:00 am - 2:00 pm, also at Thurman Hutchins Park. The focus of the outing will be to distribute school supplies for the children. Please contact Stacia if you can volunteer. srwash@insightbb.com or calling 502-500-3028.]



Kinship Care Room

More than ever the Department of Family & Children reaches out to LOCI for help. Recently, Stacie Jones from the Kinship Care Department sought help in refurbishing their visitation room at the L&N Building. *[before]*

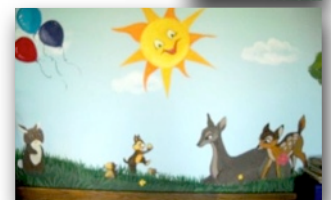
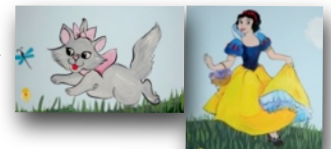
This room is just no ordinary room - but its sole



purpose is to provide a neutral place for parents who have lost custody of their children to foster care to come once a week and visit with their child/children, while they are in the process getting of completing whatever courses or counseling services in order to bring their child/children home.

With the help of Patricia Watson and 15 students from the Christian Academy Art Club, paint donated by Home Depot and an anonymous donation for the other supplies needed such as brushes, rollers, drop clothes, etc., and in just about five Sundays, the room *[after]*

has been completed with beautiful Disney-themed murals.



The once drab and very outdated room has been revitalized it is bright, cheerful and just walking into the room gives a feeling of hope.



Praise Report: How God has been using LOCI



TheAhlersFamily.com



Oretha, 12

Marjourite, 14

Welcome Home!

The Ahlers family has 2 new additions! Originally from Liberia, West Africa, Marjourite and Oretha spent 3 years with an adoptive family in Florida before coming to our home due to a sensitive situation.

We weren't quite prepared for these girls like we were the first time we adopted. Our first adoption was deliberate and took 9 months before the kids came home, giving us plenty of time to do all the rearranging and preparing we needed too. This time we had less than a week!

The girls needed placement immediately and we had a lot to do.

One of the more important elements we wanted in place were beds for the girls. We felt that would really help

make them feel welcome. But we had a lot of questions. Where would we find beds for a decent price in the short amount of time we had? Not only that, but we had no idea where those beds would go! (. . . or how we would get to church in our already maxed out 15 passenger van. . . or how we would even try to fit around the dinner table anymore. . .) but God is good. One of the signs that He was with us in this seemingly crazy adventure was through LOCI.

I sent an email to LOCI that told of my need for beds. I really didn't think anyone had time to make this all happen, but within the day of my call, LOCI had contacted COIT Furniture on Hurstborne Lane, who generously gave us two brand new mattresses and box springs. With Glenn at work and

unable to pick up the mattresses, LOCI arranged for delivery to our home.

Praise God! Within a matter of days, (and after plenty of rearranging) these precious girls each had a bed of their own and a place to now (once again) call home.

Thank you LOCI, COIT Furniture, and the many individuals that helped make this transition as beautiful as possible.

- Alicia Ahlers

[Alicia lives in Pendleton, KY with her husband, Glenn, and their (now 15) children; Shepherd, Botianna, Andrew, Prayse, Lightning, Cherish, Kabiera, Marjourite, Oretha, Joshua, Robert, Hope, Noah, Liberty and Rhane]

WE STILL NEED YOUR HELP!!

Over the past year LOCI has distributed thousands of diapers and touched just as many families through the neighborhood centers. Our supply has significantly dwindled, to the point of perhaps having enough for one more delivery.

If you are interested in either buying a box of diapers and/or wipes or making a financial contribution to LOCI for these items, please contact the LOCI Hotline at (502) 238-1093. All contributions are tax deductible.

UPCOMING EVENTS

JULY / AUGUST

Camp Freedom

July 6 - 10, (Counselors Arrive on July 5) - Please call for more details / Lions Camp Crescendo

Kentucky Family Services is looking for LOCI volunteers to attend and work at Camp Freedom with Foster children this summer. If you are interested in volunteering please contact Billie Flannery, the administrator, at (502) 833-3554 or (502) 833-4427 and see more information at <http://www.lions-campcrescendo.org/campfreedom.html> If you do volunteer, please share your story by emailing Amy Coleman at amyc@tdm.cc or call the LOCI Hotline at (502) 238-1093.

The Foster Care/Adoption Informational Meeting

July 7 / 6-8 PM / Southeast Christian Church This session provides an opportunity to find out more about the children in our state's care that may be fostered or available for adoption. To find out more call 595-KIDS.

International Adoption Playgroup

International Adoption Playgroup has begun its summer hours! See below for details regarding changes:

July 10th and Aug. 14th / 11:00 - 1:00 / At the SECC campus, at the playground, by the softball fields

Bring a picnic and join us! If it is raining, we will meet in Noah's Ark. Anyone having adopted internationally or is interested in adoption is invited to attend. For information call Kathy Brooks 254-7049.

Back to School! - LOCI Foster Family Picnic

July 25 / 10:00-2:00/ Thurman Hutchins Park (on River Road)

The focus of this outing will be to distribute school supplies for the children. Volunteers will be needed to oversee various games for kids, serve food and help hand out school supplies.

Anyone who is interested in helping, please contact Stacia Washausen at 500-3028, or at srwash@insightbb.com.

The Foster Care/Adoption Informational Meeting

August 4 / 6-8 PM / Southeast Christian Church This session provides an opportunity to find out more about the children in our state's care that may be fostered or available for adoption. To find out more call 595-KIDS.

SEPTEMBER

International Adoption Playgroup

We will resume regular play group hours the first Friday in September. See below for details regarding changes:

Every Friday beginning September 4th / 11:45 - 1:00 / Noah's Ark at the Sports and Fitness Center on SECC campus

This is a closed session, open only to the playgroup, so it is a safe, fun, supportive time to gather information and form lasting friendship and bonds. Please feel free to pack a lunch and eat downstairs in the snack room before or after play group. No food is allowed in Noah's Ark. This is open to all families who have adopted internationally and their children are birth to 6 years of age (siblings always welcome) or to anyone interested in adoption. Call Kathy Brooks for details 254-7049.

LAFS - Louisville Adoption and Foster Support

Every 2nd Saturday, beginning in September (the 12th) / 6 - 9 PM / Sports and Fitness Center on SECC campus

Bring your own picnic dinner and join the fun! This is open to all families who have adopted, foster or foster to adopt. We'll have games, food, and fellowship for the whole family. For information call Kathy Brooks 254-7049

FUTURE EVENTS

Together for Adoption Conference 2009

October 2-3 / Christ Community Church, Franklin, TN - For more information visit www.TogetherForAdoption.org

Adoption Seminar

Saturday, October 10th / 8:30 a.m. – Noon / Southeast Christian Church

Christians interested in expanding their family through adoption are invited to The Adoption Seminar. The General Session will include: Pre-adoption education, financial assistance awareness, Empty Bedrooms video, and adoptive support. Workshops representing various adoption options will include Foster-to-Adopt, Domestic and International adoptions.

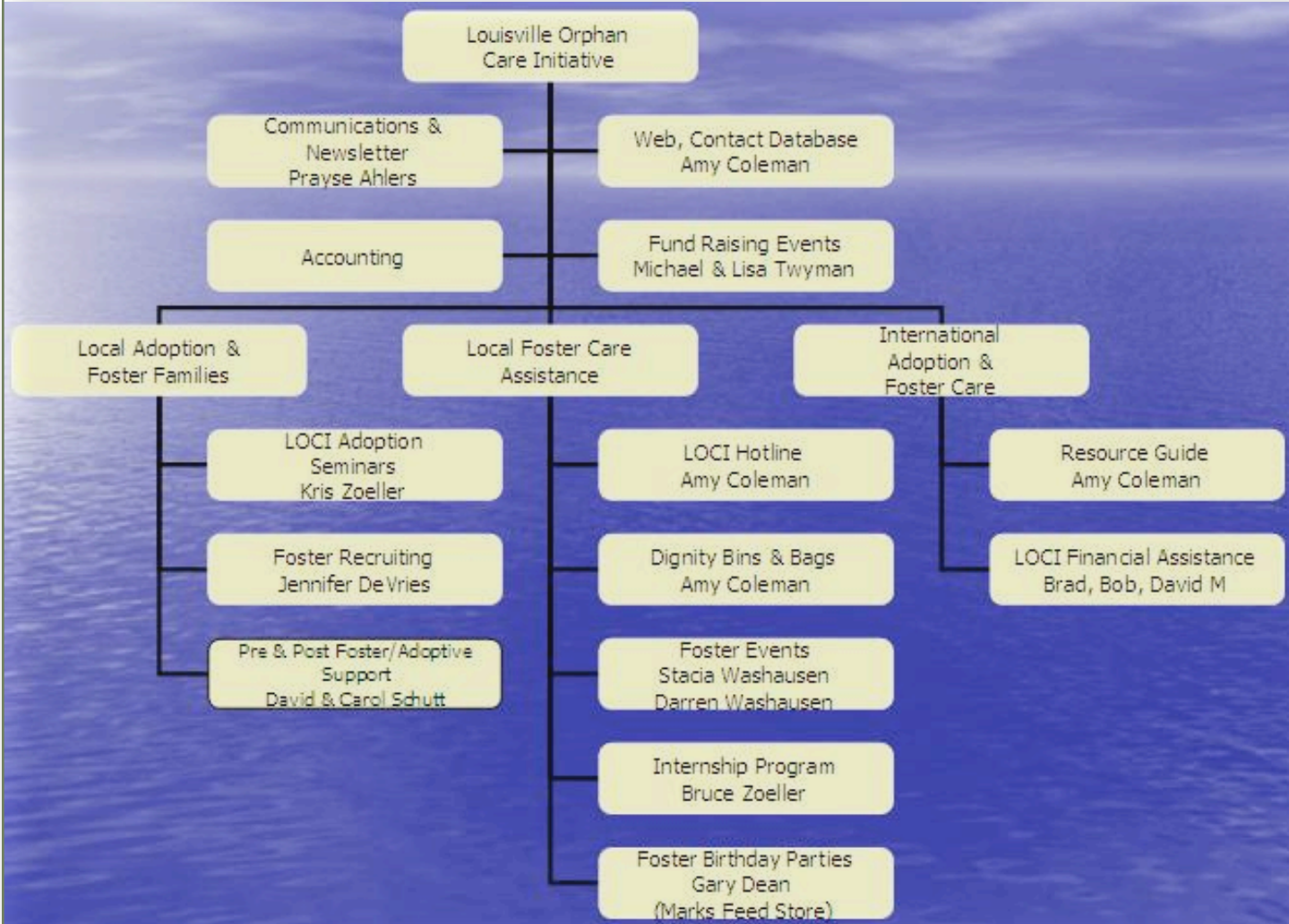
To register: call (502) 253-8446 to have a registration form mailed to you. Registrations and fees should be mailed to Southeast Christian Church, Attn: Parenting Groups 920 Blankenbaker Parkway, Louisville, KY 40243. Although walk-ups are welcome, we can best plan your day if you will have your registration back to us one week prior to the seminar. For additional information, contact Peggy Henderson at (502) 253-8446 or at phenderson@secc.org.

Adoption Conference

Saturday, October 24 / Highview Baptist Church - For more information visit www.highview.org

Who's Who In LOCI?

Below is a loose description of the LOCI organization and the key people leading various efforts. We will announce volunteer opportunities through newsletters and email distribution. In the mean-time, if you have an interest in volunteering for LOCI, please call the LOCI Hotline at (502) 238-1093 with your interest, or contact one of the key people listed below.



WE NEED YOUR HELP!!

As many of you may know, LOCI has been blessed with an international adoption fund that we use for matching grants or loans to Christian Families interested in adoption. However, these funds have a narrow application and when it comes to funding our various activities for the local foster and adoption support, LOCI really has no funds.

We are in the process of receiving a 501c3 so that we can collect funds and goods that can supply the various needs of the orphans and foster children in our own community. Officially, we can begin taking those tax deductible donations right now. If you are interested in making financial donations to the international adoption or local foster care initiatives or donating goods to the local foster community, please call the LOCI Hotline.