



Volunteer Emergency Families for Children
Northern Valley Region

Family Newsletter

Vol. IX No. 1

September 2004

Condolences to the Hrbek Family

We were saddened this summer with news of the sudden death of David Hrbek on July 29.

Mr. Hrbek had been a teacher for 30 years, 27 of those years in special education. During this time, he also coached baseball, football, basketball, track and softball. He was a strong role model for children and youth.

The Hrbek's have three grown children and one grandchild. The youngest, a daughter, just graduated from JMU, where her father had received his Masters degree. She majored in Special Education and was plan

Placements

June: 17 requests
11 placements

July: 14 requests
9 placements

August: 20 requests
8 placements

Last Fiscal Year there were 205 requests and 142 placements.

Churches Contribute to VEFC

Redland United Methodist Church, Ladies of Bethel Lutheran Church, and the Youth of Good Shepherd Lutheran Church all contributed hospitality bags or items for hospitality bags during the summer. Grace Lutheran Church, Winchester, contributed \$200 to VEFC.

We thank you very much for your generosity and support!

Training Sessions

Two training sessions are planned for October and November; one meeting on weekday evenings and the other meeting on Saturdays.

Orientation sessions are scheduled for September 10 from 7:00 to 8:30 pm at Riverton United Methodist Church and October 8 from 7:00 to 8:30 pm at Calvary Church of the Brethren, Winchester.

The first training sessions will be held from 7:00 to 9:30 pm on October 21, 26, 28, and November 2 at Calvary Church of the Brethren.

The second training sessions will be held Saturday November 6 and Saturday November 13 from 9:00 am to 3:00 pm.

VEFC families, please see Pat's Corner on page 2 for information about attending a presentation at one of these sessions to serve as in-service training.

Quilt Raffle

The Skyline Quilters Guild, who are donating proceeds of their quilt raffle to VEFC (July 2004 *Newsletter*), will have a booth at the Front Royal Festival of Leaves. The date of the Festival is October 9. If you and your friends attend the festivities, be sure to see the quilt—and buy some raffle tickets!

Next Council Meeting

The next meeting of the Northern Valley Region Council of VEFC will be held on Wednesday, October 6, 2004 at 12:00

Pat's Corner

VEFC families living in Frederick, Clarke or Winchester recently received a letter from CFW Foster Care explaining new in-service training requirements. Both VEFC and regular long-term foster families will now be required to receive 12 hours of additional in-service training each year in order to continue serving children in their homes. CFW Foster Care is charged with approving both regular and VEFC families for that area.

Much of the 12-hour requirement can be completed at home by reading articles or watching videos provided by CFW. It is expected that a portion of the requirement will be completed by attending an in-service session provided by CFW or VEFC, or by attending any other training which increases fostering/child-care skills.

To give all VEFC families—in Frederick, Clarke, Winchester, Warren or Shenandoah—in-service options, I am inviting them to attend a portion of VEFC's pre-service training, in which CFW is assisting. You may choose either of the dates listed below; the material covered at each of these sessions will be the same. We will be learning about various behaviors presented by the children in our care and ways in which to cope with those behaviors. For instance, we will discuss such topics as working with children who have been sexually abused, those diagnosed with attachment disorder, or those with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder.

The training dates are:

Thursday October 28 at Calvary Church of the Brethren, 7:00 to 9:30 pm. The church is located just south of Winchester on Route 522, on the right side past the Elks' Lodge if you are coming from Winchester.

Saturday November 13 at Stephens City Mennonite Church, 9:00 to 11:30 am. The church is located just south of Stephens City on Route 11. The meeting will take place in the fellowship hall in the basement.

Please register with Pat Spory at 540 636-9858 if you plan to attend.

VEFC families living in Shenandoah or Warren are also encouraged to attend either of these training opportunities to complete their in-service requirement. The current requirement is one in-service per year, though that could be expanding in the future.

CFW is also offering other in-service opportunities, which all VEFC families in any locality are invited to attend:

Separation and Loss Issues for Foster Families

September 16, 2004, 6:30 to 8:30 pm

Winchester Training Center

Downtown Loudoun Street Mall (near Wilkins Shoe Center)

RSVP to Michelle Schubert at 540 955 5171 by September 10.

This training will offer valuable insights and sound advice on helping children adjust to foster care. It will include ways to strengthen children's relationships with foster and birth parents.

Love and Logic Training

September 30, October 7, 14, 21, 2004, 7:00 to 9:00 pm

Refreshments provided

Winchester Training Center (see above)

RSVP to Michelle Schubert at 540 955-5171 by September 28.

You will learn the specific "how-to's" of successful parenting. Love and Logic puts you in control, teaches children to be responsible, and prepares them for the real world. Love and logic is easy to learn, changes lives, and raises responsible children who are fun to be around. It works great with both biological and foster children.

Some Pleasant VEFC Experiences with Teenagers

All names in these stories have been changed.

Mary with the Smith Family

Mary (14 years old) was placed with a VEFC family because the foster family she was staying with went away for a week and was unable to take her along. DSS wished to place her in respite with a VEFC family close by so that Mary could visit with her mom during the week. Her mom is mentally unstable and is unable to care for Mary. They were able to visit for several hours during the week.

Ms. Smith, the VEFC mom, said that Mary was a great kid who got along well with her girls. They liked the same music and the same television shows. Since she was notified of the respite well in advance, Ms. Smith was able to adjust her schedule to make sure she would be able to work out of her home the entire week. Mary went with the family every morning to take one of the Smith girls to Cross Country practice. When they went to the birthday party of a 90-year-old relative, Mary had fun interacting with a 14-year-old niece who was also there. At another family dinner, she played cards with the other teens.

The Smith's daughters were to be in a wedding the next week. Mary likes doing people's hair and experimented with the Smith's daughter's hair. The daughter liked Mary's styling so much that they took pictures of her hair so that the stylist could copy it the next week for the wedding.

At the end of the placement, Mary returned to her foster family.

Bob and Bill with the Jones family

Bob and Bill (16-year-old twins) were placed with a VEFC family because their father was arrested for

drunkenness in public and their mother was unavailable.

The VEFC family already knew the boys somewhat because their daughter had sung in the school choir with Bill and they had performed together in the musical Grease. The family's son knew Bob from being in classes with him at school. The twins came for an overnight stay; longer term placement was scheduled for the next day.

Bob has cerebral palsy and sometimes uses a walker, but he is very able to care for himself.

Bill has a beautiful tenor voice and can play the piano a little by ear. The VEFC mom showed him how to play some songs on the piano and taught him some basics of reading music since he seemed interested. She gave him a music theory primer that he would take with him to study.

Although their stay was brief, Bill and Bob entered into family life. They found a shared faith with the VEFC family and talked about their church. Bill offered to say the blessing for the meal.

Bill helped the VEFC son with his algebra homework and both boys enjoyed playing computer games with the VEFC son. And they were very interested in knowing how and why the family had gotten involved in sheltering children.

The boys were polite and neat: they folded up their sheets and blankets in the morning and were very mannerly.

The VEFC mom took the boys to school in the morning along with her son. They were to go to a long-term foster family at the end of the school day.

Sally with the Brown Family

Sally (14 years old) went to stay with the VEFC family because she had earned a weekend of respite for doing so well in the primitive residential camp where she had been placed.

A Little Humor

A boy had reached four without giving up the habit of sucking hi thumb. His mother had tried everything from bribery to reasoning to painting it with lemon juice to discourage the habit.

Finally, she tried threats, warning her son that, "If you don't stop sucking your thumb, your stomach is going to blow up like a balloon."

Later that day, walking in the park, mother and son saw a pregnant woman sitting on a bench. The four-year-old considered her gravely for a minute, then spoke to her, saying, "Uh-oh ... I know what you've been doing."



A preacher was wired for sound with a lapel mike. As he preached, he moved briskly about the platform, jerking the mike cord as he went. Then he moved to one side, getting wound up in the cord and nearly tripping before jerking it again. After several circles and jerks, a little girl in the third pew leaned toward her mother and whispered, "If he gets loose, will he hurt us?"



My grandson was visiting one day when he asked, "Grandma, do you know how you and God are alike?" I mentally polished my halo while I asked, "No, how is we alike?" "You're both old," he replied.



A ten-year-old, under the tutelage of her grandmother, was becoming quite knowledgeable about the Bible. Then one day she floored her grandmother by asking, "Which Virgin was the mother of Jesus? The Virgin Mary or the King James Virgin?"



A father was at the beach with his children when the four-year-old son ran up to him, grabbed his hand, and led him to the shore where a sea gull lay dead in the sand. "Daddy, what happened to him?" the son asked.

"He died and went to Heaven," the Dad replied.

The boy thought a moment and then said, "Did God throw him back down?"

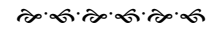


A wife invited some people to dinner. At the table, she turned to their six-year-old daughter and said, "Would you like to say the blessing?"

"I wouldn't know what to say," the little girl replied.

"Just say what you hear Mommy said," the wife answered.

The daughter bowed her head and said, "Lord, why on earth did I invite all these people to dinner?"



Little Leroy came into the kitchen where his mother was making dinner. His birthday was coming up and he thought this was a good time to tell his mother what he wanted. "Mom, I want a bike for my birthday."

Little Leroy was a bit of a troublemaker. He had gotten into trouble at school and at home. Leroy's mother asked him if he thought he deserved to get a bike for his birthday. Little Leroy, of course, thought he did.

Leroy's mother, being a Christian woman, wanted him to reflect on his behavior over the last year and write a letter to God and tell him why he deserved a bike for his birthday. Little Leroy stomped up the steps to his room and sat down to write God a letter.

Letter 1: *Dear God: I have been a very good boy this year and I would like a bike for my birthday. I want a red one. Your friend, Leroy*

Leroy knew this wasn't true. He had not been a very good boy this year, so he tore up the letter and started over.

Letter 2: *Dear God: This is your friend Leroy. I have been a pretty good boy this year, and I would like a red bike for my birthday. Thank you, Leroy*

Leroy knew this wasn't true either. He tore up the letter and started again.

Letter 3: *Dear God: I have been an OK boy this year and I would really like a red bike for my birthday. Leroy*

Leroy knew he could not send this letter to God either, so he wrote another letter.

Letter 4: *Dear God: I know I haven't been a good boy this year. I am very sorry. I will be a good boy if you just send me a red bike for my birthday. Thank you, Leroy*

Leroy knew, even if it was true, this letter was not going to get him a bike. By know, Leroy was very upset. He went downstairs and told his mother he wanted to go to church. Leroy's mother thought her plan had worked because Leroy looked very sad. "Just be home in time for diner," his mother said.

Leroy walked down the street to the church and up to the altar. He looked around to see if anyone was there. He picked up a statue of the Virgin Mary. He slipped it under his shirt and ran out of the church, down the street, into his house, and up to his room. He shut the door to his room and sat down with a piece of paper and a pen. Leroy began to write his letter to God.

Letter 5: *I Got Your MAMA. If You Want To See Her Again, Send the Bike, Signed You Know*