



*Volunteer Emergency Families for Children
of Warren, Frederick, Winchester, Clarke and Shenandoah*

Family Newsletter

Vol. V No.

December 2003

Life Books for VEFC Children

Social Services in some areas are keeping Life Books for children in foster care. This would be a wonderful thing for VEFC parents to do also.

Life Books are merely records of the children during their stay with you. It can include school pictures, report cards, pictures they have drawn or crafts they have made. It may include pictures of activities in which the child participated while staying at your home.

A Life Book is similar to a scrapbook you might keep for your own child. But with VEFC children, the time spent in your home could be lost to the child as he or she grows up. You will not be there to tell them the funny things they said or did when they were young. The Life Book can do this for you.

During the Christmas season, we all take many pictures of activities, family and friends. Preserve for your VEFC children the memories of this happy time. If they do any Christmas crafts, these, also, would be wonderful keepsakes for the children.

Give the Life Book to the social worker at the end of the child's visit. It will be helpful to them as they grow up.

Speaking Engagements

Richard Ziemer spoke at the Front Royal Kiwanis on October 22.

Pat Spory spoke at the Clark County Rotary Club, Waterbrook Church of the Brethren, Winchester, and the Downtown Clergy Group in Winchester, a Mothers of Preschoolers Group in Front Royal and Redland United Methodist Church.

Upcoming: Pat is due to speak on December 8 at the Berryville Kiwanis, First Methodist in Downtown Winchester and Faith Baptist Church in Stevens City.

September Placements

There were 25 requests for placements. Thirteen of these were placed. Twelve were not placed because other arrangements were made.

October Placements

There were 19 requests for placements. Nine of these were respites. Seventeen placements were made. Two were not placed because the children were not taken from their homes.

November Placements

There were 10 requests for placements. Four placements were made. Six were not placed because the children were not taken from their homes or other arrangements were made.

Next Council Meeting

The next VEFC Council Meeting will be January 7, 2004

Some Happy Stories of VEFC Care

All names have been changed in these stories.

Lindsay and the Jameson Family: Lindsay was placed in the care of a VEFC family while her mother was involved in moving. No other family members were available to care for an active, three-year-old girl. The Jameson family, chosen to watch over the child for the weekend, absolutely adored her. They called Lindsay a little sweetheart, noting that she was verbally talented, well behaved, and developmentally good. The Jameson's pre-teen daughter especially enjoyed spending time with Lindsay, dressing her and playing with her.

Involved in a county fair during the weekend, the Jamesons were concerned about being in such a high-profile place. The social worker, however, checked and assured them that they would have no problems if they encountered Lindsay's family.

Lindsay was returned to her mother at the end of the placement.

Phillip and the McKinnon family: When Phillip's two-year-old brother was in the hospital with a broken thigh, his mother stayed there overnight to comfort him. With a father working full time, Phillip and his two younger sisters were left with no adult supervision to rely on. The three children were therefore placed with the McKinnon family.

It was an interesting stay—moving to America from their native Mexico just one year ago, Phillip and his sisters spoke no English. Luckily, Mr. McKinnon was familiar with some Spanish and, with a clever use of sign language, these two different cultures were able to communicate.

The children were tremendously pleased upon entering the VEFC home they were to stay in. There were many animals for them to play with and Mrs. McKinnon even took them to school where they were able to stay until they could go home. At the end of the visit, Mrs. McKinnon gushed that Phillip and his sisters were darling, precious, well behaved, and a joy to have.

Sonya and the Rudd family: Sonya stayed with the Rudd family while interviewing for a residential program designed for teenage moms. During this time, Sonya's baby had been temporarily placed with another VEFC family. Though Sonya spent most of her time in her room

or with the social worker during her stay, the Rudds did her laundry and they were occasionally able to sit down to meals together. Relating her high regard for the seventeen-year-old, Mrs. Rudd had this to say about Sonya: "I was impressed with her goals. She wants to be a forensic scientist. She has almost finished her GED; she missed math by only three points and will retake it soon. She did laughingly say that, as soon as she saw a dead body, she might change her mind about her career goal. But for right now, that was what she had in mind. I told her that, if you want to do something bad enough, you can. I told her how I had a baby at seventeen myself, and that I know how hard it was, but that I did finish school and did go on to take a year of college. I told her to step back, take a deep breath, and decide to reach your goals for yourself and for your baby daughter."

After her VEFC stay with the Rudds, Sonya returned to her therapeutic placement.

Emma and the Travis family: A single parent, Emma's mom raises her six children on her own. The VEFC provided her with a chance for a break in caring for such a large family on her own. Her task was made more difficult when thirteen-year-old Emma was diagnosed with ADHD and bipolar disease.

Despite these problems, the Travis family, whom the VEFC placed her with, enjoyed Emma's stay. They noted that she was intelligent, insightful and seemed quite willing to talk about herself and her sibling relationships. She freely explained that her father had been abusive and now lived in another state.

Mr. Travis described Emma as an energetic child who explores the world by feel. He remarked that she was a lively girl, flitting about the house, investigating everything in sight thoroughly but carefully.

The Travis's took Emma to a town festival. She delighted in touching the items for sale, after first obtaining permission. The VEFC family not only bought her lunch, but a small stuffed animal as well.

She returned home to her own family after her stay.

A little girl was talking to her teacher about whales. The teacher said that it was physically impossible for a whale to swallow a human because, even though it was a very large mammal, its throat was very small. The little girl stated that Jonah was swallowed by a whale.

Irritated, the teacher reiterated that a whale could not swallow a human: It was physically impossible. The little girl said, "When I get to heaven, I will ask Jonah."

The teacher asked, "What if Jonah went to hell?" The little girl replied, "Then you ask him."



A Kindergarten teacher was observing her classroom of children while they drew. She would occasionally walk around to see each child's work. As she got to one little girl who was working diligently, she asked what the drawing was.

The girl replied, "I'm drawing God." The teacher paused and said, "But no one knows what God looks like."

With no hesitation, or looking up from her drawing, the girl replied, "They will in a minute."



A Sunday school teacher was discussing the Ten Commandments with her five- and six-year-olds. After explaining the commandment to "honor thy father and thy mother," she asked, "Is there a commandment that teaches us how to treat our brothers and sisters?"

Without missing a beat, one little boy (the oldest of a family) answered, "Thou shall not kill."



A three-year-old went with his dad to see a litter of kittens. Upon returning home, he breathlessly informed his mother that there were two boy kittens and two girl kittens. "How did you know?" his mother asked. "Daddy picked them up and looked underneath," he replied. "I think it's printed on the bottom."



The children had all been photographed, and the teacher was trying to persuade them each to buy a copy of the group picture. "Just think how nice it will be to look at it when you are all grown up and say, 'There's Jennifer; she's a lawyer,' or 'That's Michael; he's a doctor.'" A small voice at the back of the room rang out, "And there's the teacher. she's dead."



A teacher was giving a lesson on the circulation of the blood. Trying to make the matter clearer, she said, "Now, class, if I stood on my head, the blood, as you know, would run into it, and I would turn red in the face."

The class nodded in agreement.

"Then why is it that, while I am standing upright in the ordinary position, the blood doesn't run into my feet?" A little fellow shouted, "'Cause yer feet ain't empty."



Did you hear about the Texas teacher who was helping one of her kindergarten students put on his cowboy boots? He asked for help and she could see why. Even with her pulling and him pushing, the little boots still didn't want to go on.

Finally, when the second boot was on, she had worked up a sweat. She almost cried when the little boy said, "Teacher, they're on the wrong feet." She looked and, sure enough, they were.

It wasn't any easier pulling the boots off than it was putting them on. She managed to keep her cool as together they worked to get the boots back on, this time on the right feet. He then announced, "These aren't my boots."

She bit her tongue rather than get right in his face and scream, "Why didn't you say so?" like she wanted to. And, once again she struggled to help him pull the ill-fitting boots off his little feet. No sooner had they got the boots off when he said, "They're my brother's boots. My mom made me wear 'em."

Now she didn't know if she should laugh or cry; but she mustered up the grace and courage she had left to wrestle the boot onto his feet again. Helping him into his coat, she asked, "Now, where are your mittens?"

He said, "I stuffed 'em in the toes of my boots."

Christmas Crafts

My children's favorite Christmas craft was always cutting paper snowflakes—real six-pointed snowflakes. All it takes is a piece of paper (copy paper is fine) and a pair of scissors. When teenagers, my children used aluminum foil, which is much more difficult because it tears so easily. For small children, you could do the folding yourself and they could cut the designs.

I searched the internet and found these to be the easiest instructions to follow. This is from kinderart.com, and there are many more craft ideas at this site. Go to : kinderart.com, under art lessons go to seasonal, then December and there is a quick link to Christmas.

