



the james project journal

VOLUME 4, ISSUE 2

NOVEMBER 2015

Rewriting the stories of children in foster care

Foster care is the best option for displaced children in our community only **IF** there are dedicated, caring foster parents within the system.

~TJP

A special thank you to our James Project angels M.G. & Donna Nelson for their continued generosity!



Our Fourth House

The James Project has reached yet another milestone in our ministry—we have purchased our fourth home! We closed on this house October 6th and are excited to have even more room for kids within the folds of TJP.



We are also thrilled to introduce you to our newest TJP parent Virsha Allison. She is currently the mother of 4 children (don't use the word 'foster' around her!) and is eager to welcome

more children into her home. Virsha came to our attention when her case-worker called our office and said, "You need to meet Virsha Allison. She's the most amazing foster parent who works miracles with children."

Virsha is a single mom and, although only 28-years-old, has been fostering for 5 years. She is a dedicated, energetic, and hard-working parent. The story of how she became a foster parent is incredible. When Virsha was 12-years-old, she noticed that a house she often walked by always had children inside crying. She never saw any adults around and finally told her sisters she was going to go in

and find out why the kids were crying. She found three little children, one an infant, who were taking care of themselves because their mother had gone to prison and their father was nowhere to be found. She packed up the children and took them home to her grandmother. Her grandmother called the authorities and told them she would take the children if they had no one else to stay with. Those



three children still live with Virsha's grandmother. Virsha embodies our mission "That none be lost..." and we are pleased to welcome her into the TJP family!

Adopt-a-Room in the Newest Home

House #4 is a great house but many of the rooms need a little TLC.

Adopt-a-Room is a great project opportunity for a family, small/life group, Sunday School class, social organization, or business. Here's a sneak peek at what needs to be done:

We have 4 children's bedrooms, a master bedroom,

a new children's bathroom being added, and a kitchen needing minor updates. The backyard could be adopted, as well. These areas need partial or total makeovers. You can participate in any way that works for you; adopting an entire room or part of

a makeover. Some of the areas, like the kitchen, need minimal work. You

can do the work yourself or hire it done, and you can start any time, as long as we are ready for the family to move in on March 1, 2016.

The best way to choose your level of involvement is to let us give you a quick "no obligation" tour.

Please call or email us if you are interested in making this a wonderful place for Virsha and her family to call home.



Lowe's Heroes Lend a Hand



Twenty-five Lowe's Heroes from Springfield volunteered their time and skills to complete work on two home for The James Project. Work included remodeling a bathroom, painting multiple areas, pressure washing, adding shelving, installing new ceiling fans, updating lightbulbs, and completing exterior renovations. The work was completed over the course of 30-45

days, and about 225 volunteer hours were contributed. Lowe's Heroes is a company-wide volunteer initiative that offers Lowe's employees the opportunity to work on a project in their own neighborhood, helping to make their communities better places to live, work, and play.

Lowe's, a FORTUNE® 50 home improvement company, has a 50-year legacy of supporting the communities it serves through programs that

focus on K-12 public education and community improvement projects. Since 2007, Lowe's and the Lowe's Charitable and Educational Foundation together have contributed nearly \$200 million to these efforts, and for more than two decades Lowe's Heroes employee volunteers have donated their time to make our communities better places to live. To learn more, visit Lowe's.com/SocialResponsibility and Lowe'sInTheCommunity.tumblr.com.



Paul Paoni—Contractor, member of Cherry Hills Baptist Church, and proud grandpa.



Robin Pickett—Business owner, member of Lake Side Christian, and outdoor enthusiast.

Meet Paul Paoni & Robin Pickett

The James Project board members are dedicated to giving their time and knowledge to continue the growth of the ministry. As a term of service on the board came to a close, Russ Williams and Bruce Drake passed their torches on to Paul Paoni and Robin Pickett. We are pleased to welcome them to TJP and invite you to learn more about them...

Paul Paoni

Paul Paoni, a native of Springfield, Illinois, has been married to Collen Paoni, for 37 years. Together they have 3 grown children and 3 grandchildren with #4 on the way. Paul is a member of Cherry Hills Baptist Church and also serves as a board member of the Washington Street Mission.

For over 25 years, Paul has been a business

owner and contractor. Paul, along with his wife Colleen, his creative consultant, have been blessed to work on many exciting projects. He hopes his knowledge of house building and renovations will be of value to TJP. Prior to his time in the building industry, Paul was a Licensed School Psychologist.

When he isn't spending time with his family, Paul enjoys gardening, golfing, and traveling. More than anything, he loves to share his faith in Jesus Christ with those around him. His favorite Bible verse is found in Proverbs 3:5-6, "Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will direct your path."

Robin Pickett

Robin Pickett is husband to Sue and father of three grown children: Maggie, Annie, and Luke. He owns and operates an insurance agency which specializes in partnering with/insuring ministries. In his spare time, he enjoys hunting, shooting sports, and spending time at his farm. He serves at Lake Side Christian Church in leadership roles applicable to the mission team, small groups, and a variety of Sunday morning responsibilities. He has been on two mission trips to Myanmar with a ministry he wholeheartedly supports. Robin considers it an honor to serve within The James Project ministry that is committed to partnering with and supporting the "least of these" and their foster parents.

Why Did We Have to Say Goodbye?

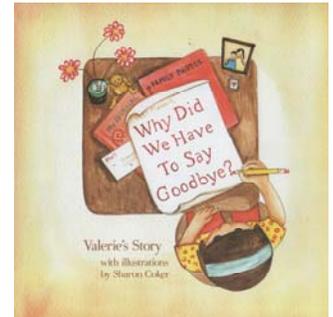


The James Project recently met a bright and compassionate 11-year-old author named Valerie. When she

was just four years old, Valerie's two-year-old brother Maxwell was tragically killed, a victim of child abuse. She entered foster care at that time and was adopted 4 years later. The book **Why Did We Have to Say Goodbye?** was initially composed just for Valerie, in verse by her adoptive mother. It references journal letters to her brother and relates her words and experiences as she grieves the loss of "Baby Maxwell" and life as she knew it. Through a tragic and life-changing

experience, it is Valerie's hope that by sharing her story in this book, it will help other children who live life at risk. To honor her incredible spirit, TJP Quilter Lu Ann Groesch gave Valerie a quilt. The book is available by contacting:

valspal2014@aol.com or by calling (217) 245-1013. The cost is \$24 for hardcover, \$18 for soft cover, and discounts are available for orders of 25 or more copies.



Beautiful illustrations grace the pages of this life-changing story.

Hello from Hawthorne Place *By: Julie Lundberg, foster mom*

Sometimes God calls us to do something unique to our own families. In those times where we know God is clearly speaking us, it can be hard for others to understand our decisions and choices. God called our family to foster; and now He has called us to adopt. When we moved into The James Project house with our three boys, we had no idea what God's plans were. As it turned out, His plans included adding 2 of our boys' brothers to our household, and we are happy to know God's plans for

these 5 boys and our family. Four years ago I felt the call to be a stay at home mom and with the help of The James Project, it has become a reality. We've had a few additional kids come to live at our house, but the five brothers remain. The 3 older boys go to school and enjoy basketball, piano, and hanging with friends in their down time. I am able to continue staying home with the younger two babies because of how The James Project has provided for us. God has provided thus far and we are

confident He will continue. Although our plans also now have more college tuition to think about in the future, by God's guidance we know we are exactly where we are suppose to be.



Support from Springfield Area Businesses

The 30th Non-Annual Caddyshack Golf Outing was held June 17 at Piper Glen Golf Course. The event benefits different local charities each year. Charities are selected based on the level of impact the proceeds will have in the community and TJP was one of 4 local charities receiving a check for \$5,000! The first Caddyshack Golf Outing was organized by two

local businessmen who wanted to raise money for local charities. Over the years the event has evolved and is now organized and sponsored by Bank of Springfield, Giganti & Giganti Fine Jewelry, Midwest Office Supply, and Staff Carpeting. Thank you to the event sponsors for choosing TJP as a recipient. We are humbled and grateful for your support!



Teen Home *By: Angela Trowbridge, foster mom*



Teens having a great time at a Young Life gathering. This is the one and only YL Group in Springfield and we are grateful to YL Director Alex Metz for his help!

This year has been extremely busy yet equally amazing. The hustle and bustle of our lives has left us not expressing enough thanks to all those who have been so supportive. The impact of all your kindness on our household has been invaluable. From the bottom of our hearts Darius and I thank you all for your prayers, time, donations, and overall generosity. This year has been filled with stress, adjustments, sleepless nights, and

meltdowns; and that is just us, you should see how much these kids have been through! But it has all been worth it. After months of efforts and prayers we are currently seeing huge transformations in two teen lives. One has gone from F's to A's, B's, and C's. This teen now sees a future and has goals. Another has grown in self awareness and recently mended a broken family relationship. It is so rewarding to see God's hand in action. We have started hosting the Springfield area's Young Life ministry on

Monday evenings in our home. Our 17-year-old girl attends this group and has been so pleased to have it held in her home. The first night after the return to school I believe we had about 40 people at our home. We are pleased to see this home being used by this group to bring more teens to know the Lord.



eScrip & Amazon Smile



The dollars you spend shopping leads to supporting TJP! Schnucks participates in the eScrip program, where 3% of your total purchase goes back to TJP. To sign-up, visit the service desk at Schnucks and ask for a membership card. You can also register the card through eScrip.com. Our group # is: 500044106.

Amazon also offers a reward program called **AmazonSmile**. Instead of visiting amazon.com, log onto smile.amazon.com and you will be able to choose your charitable recipient. Please select "James Project, Inc. in Pawnee, IL" as that was our address when we were first founded.

Almost everything you order from Amazon is available on AmazonSmile, so as you shop for Christmas gifts, remember to shop AmazonSmile to earn 0.5% back to TJP on your total purchase. While this may not seem like a lot, every dollar goes directly towards helping more fostering families.



Kaesen with his birthday gifts to TJP.

Kids Helping Kids

We are fortunate to have the support of some Junior TJP Angels...

Kaesen took up a collection of items for foster children in lieu of birthday gifts. Our hearts overflowed when he delivered the boxes and bags to Closet 1:27.

Ashlyn makes sun catchers and sells them for \$5 at Murphy's Loft in Downtown Springfield. All proceeds benefit TJP!

Inara just celebrated her 9th Birthday. Instead of presents for her birthday, she asked her guests to bring twin sized sheets and blankets to

donate to The James Project!!

Inara's gifts of bedding for the Closet.



Closet 1:27 Wish List



If you, your small group, or business would like to help bless the many foster children who come into care during the holiday season, the following is a list of **new**

items we desperately need to keep in stock:

- Adult size pajamas, underwear, & socks (for larger teens)
- **Gift cards from Shoe Carnival, Walmart, Target, Kohl's & Old Navy**
- New crib sheets, regular twin sheet sets, zipping waterproof mattress covers—vinyl & non-vinyl
- Feminine hygiene products for teens

If you would like to donate or need more information, please contact Closet 1:27 Manager Brandi Tolley at:

(217) 416-3550.

Help make this Christmas a better one for a foster child in need.



We love our volunteers who help keep Closet 1:27 stocked and organized!

The Importance of a Mattress

When Closet 1:27 began, we knew that newly placed foster children would arrive at a foster home with nothing. With this in mind we stocked the Closet with clothing, shoes, backpacks, underwear, pajamas, and diapers. What we did not anticipate was how many foster children would need beds once they arrived at a foster home. Families receive very little

notice when a child is to arrive and may not be able to get a bed in time. Now that we know the need for mattresses is so great, we want to continually help foster families in this way. Currently our stock of mattresses is very low; however, thanks to TJP supporter Bemco President Michelle Buyan, we are able to purchase a mattress and box spring for only \$100.

To make a donation to the mattress fund, give us a call at (217) 546-3532.



Mark Peters is a TJP angel as he makes regular deliveries of mattresses and other items to foster families, always with a smile on his face.

Thanks to Our Committee Volunteers

It is the mission of The James Project to give maximum support to the foster families in our homes by providing extra care and love so that the job of fostering feels a little less overwhelming. We do this by delivering meals and birthday gifts, arranging work days, and lifting prayers up on behalf of the foster family. In addition to our board members, the committee leaders lend us their special

talents to organize their teams of support in the following areas:

- Birthday Committee: **Kari Gardiner**
- Prayer Team Leader: **Jennifer Hardwick**
- Box Lunch Committee: **Sarah Harkness**
- Volunteer Coordinator: **Kara Kincaid**
- Closet Managers: **Brandi Tolley & Susan Sunley**

- Donor Acknowledgement: **Sherri Barry**
- Meal Program: **Karun Tillett**

Thank you all for giving of your time and talent!



Our Neighbors

While you may not live near one of The James Project homes, you can become a Neighbor just the same, with a \$1000 donation or more. We humbly thank the following supporters for being a part of our Neighborhood:



Blake Anderson
B.O.S Caddyshack Event
*Marianne Bartholomew **
Gary and Paula Borah
Robert and Lisa Burris
Ray and Anne Capestrain
*Cherry Hills Baptist Church **

Hospital Sisters Health Systems
Kyle Killebrew
Jason and Kara Kincaid
Lakeside Christian Church
*Lowe's Home Improvement **
John Gauer Merrihew
Midwest Office Supply
Gary and Jane Nelsen
*M.G. and Donna Nelson **
*Paul and Colleen Paoni **
Ron and Therese Romanelli
Sangamon County Medical Society Alliance
Staff Carpet
*Curtis Tillett **
Curt and Debra Trampe
*Russ and Jan Williams **

*DreamMakers Bath & Kitchen **
Thomas and Linda Dunne
Enterprise Holdings
Giganti & Giganti Fine Jewelry
*Nilesh and Monica Goswami **
Mark W. Groesch Family Foundation
Jason and Jacquelyn Ground with the
Macy's Foundation
Larry and Rose Haas
Tom and June Harmon
Forrest and Mary Lou Holsapple

(* denotes giving of \$5,000 or more)

"That none be lost..."



Helen Englehard Adventure Fund

May we all
 live a life of
 adventure
 as Helen
 Englehard
 did!



The Helen Englehard Adventure Fund was set up in memory of a bold and adventurous lady by her four daughters. This fund is available to foster children living in The James Project homes for the purpose of allowing the children to pursue their talents, interests, and hobbies. They may ex-

plore art, music, sports, science, camps, lessons, and classes offered locally, outside of school.

We hope the enrichment they find and the growth they see in themselves will take them to a place of personal accomplishment and help them know they can find their place in the world. We extend a huge thank you to the following donors:

M.D. and P.A. Archer
Marianne Bartholomew
Kathleen Byrne
Michelle Carmen

Alex Crisafulli
Thomas and Linda Dunne
John Eichholtz
Cynthia Frisch
Gregory and Patricia Gerber
Donald & Marybeth Granholm
Ed and Jan McManus
Conni Pocus
Phyllis Scalia
Kathleen Slavik
Jordan Williams & Katherine Dunne
Russ and Jan Williams

Friends of the Ministry

We are grateful for the following churches, individuals, businesses, and groups who supported TJP in a variety of ways in recent months:

- | | |
|--|--|
| <i>Alpha Delta Kappa Teachers Sorority</i> | <i>Laurel Methodist</i> |
| <i>Auburn United Methodist Church</i> | <i>Sam Nichols—NIA True</i> |
| <i>Bemco Mattress</i> | <i>Dr. Jack Luker</i> |
| <i>Bank of Springfield</i> | <i>Patrick and Diane McCormick</i> |
| <i>Café Moxo</i> | <i>Justin, Andrea & Marissa Perry</i> |
| <i>Cherry Hills VBS</i> | <i>Mark Peters</i> |
| <i>DreamMakers Bath & Kitchen</i> | <i>Anna and David Pittman</i> |
| <i>Jason Fletcher</i> | <i>SCS Students</i> |
| <i>Lu Ann Groesch</i> | <i>Randy & Maryann Sutterland</i> |
| <i>Harvest Moon Landscaping</i> | <i>Tailored Printing</i> |
| <i>Henry's Appliance Service</i> | <i>Brandee Toliver</i> |
| <i>Kathy Lutkehus</i> | <i>Curtis Tillet & Rita Victor, Realtors</i> |
| <i>Jason and Victoria Kegg</i> | <i>Kim Uden's Bible Study</i> |
| <i>Kyle Killebrew Group, Inc.</i> | <i>Underfanger Moving</i> |
| | <i>United Trust Group</i> |



This INCREDIBLE group of ladies collected SIXTY FOUR sets of BRAND NEW pajamas for Closet 1:27! Thanks to Kim Uden for leading this group and encouraging them to serve in this way!

Church Partnerships

The James Project is deeply appreciative for many area churches who help us sustain our ministry.

Cherry Hills Baptist, Hope Presbyterian, and Lakeside Christian have entered into partnership with us, giving regular financial support throughout the year. **Central Baptist** is a faithful supporter of the Meal Ministry and provides a drop-off service for donations. The Sunday school classes at both **West Side Christian Church** and **First United Methodist Church** regular-

ly support The James Project through a variety of collections for Closet 1:27. We have also had support from various individuals and groups who have assisted with everything from home projects to direct help for the families from the following churches: **Hope Presbyterian, Laurel Methodist, St. John's Preschool, Chatham Christian, and Auburn Methodist.**

These types of church partnerships are such significant blessings as we plan for the future.



If your church would like to partner with The James Project, please contact us by email at: info@thejamesproject.com or by phone: (217) 546-3532.



the james project

...homes and support for fostering families...

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Office Staff

Terri Enno

Editorial Staff

Sarah Chandler, Editor

www.TheJamesProject127.com
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Office Assistant Terri Enno wants you to know our office has moved! We are now located at:
907 Clocktower Drive
Springfield, IL 62704



Grant Awarded from SCMSA

The Sangamon County Medical Society Alliance (SCMSA) is an organization of physician spouses whose educational and charitable purpose is to assist the Sangamon County Medical Society in its program to improve the quality of life through health education and services, encourage the participation of volunteers in activities that meet health needs, and cultivate friendly relationships and promote mutual understanding among physicians' families.

The James Project recently received a grant from SCMSA

to purchase infant formula for foster families. This is a significant donation as it helps ease the financial burden of foster



The grant for infant formula will help many infant foster children!

families who have infants placed in their care. Often-times is a lengthy and expensive process to find the correct formula for an infant. And many times, for a variety of reasons, a foster family does not immediately receive a WIC card to assist with formula purchases. We are grateful for a grant of this nature as it enables us to fill in this "formula gap" for fostering families. Thank you, SCMSA, for choosing us as a recipient!