



Agape Villages
Foster Family Agency

The Love Letter

"Continuing at Agape Villages the work we began at Sierra Children's Home."

April, 2015

Healing Hearts and Building Families

Volume 57, No. 2

Helping Dreams Come True for Children

"I feel like I won the first prize when I was placed with my foster parents." This is a remark made by Amy, a 9 year old girl who has been in our care for over a year now. Although flattering and encouraging, it is also a reflection of the sad reality of many children in the foster care system...children whose parents have been a disappointment and unable to care for them properly.

There are many children who are abused, neglected and put into harm's way by the very ones who should be trusted to love and protect them. Many of these children have experienced trauma by those who should provide a safe and nurturing environment for them. This is often when we step into the picture.

Amy and her little sister came into our care in 2013 when Amy was 7 years old and her little sister, Susan, was just a newborn child. Their parents were controlled by a debilitating drug habit and severely neglected Amy. Child Protective Services became involved when Susan was born.

Agape Villages was called by Contra Costa County after they



had failed for days to find a foster home for these girls. It can be difficult to find homes for siblings at times. Fortunately, Agape had a loving family waiting for children just like these girls. Agape social worker, Dave Roach, was able to say *"yes, we have a home."* This opportunity is changing the lives of two girls.

As you might imagine, Amy had some adjustments to make when she came into care. She was used to taking care of herself and learned in her short life that she couldn't trust her parents. Over time, Amy did learn to let her guard down and begin to trust her foster parents. They provided her and her sister a safe, loving and predictable (stable) home environment. Amy now laughs and smiles a lot! She is doing well in school and was recently selected to be on the swim team.

Amy recently stated, *"My foster parents have been and always will be the real parents that I dreamed of having."* We are pleased she and her sister are doing so well! The plan is for the foster parents to adopt these girls. This is another example of how, together, we are making a difference in the lives of those who come our way needing help.



Let's Not Hesitate to Serve Children

Rachel Robinson, Agape Villages Volunteer, Vintage Park Church of Christ, Elk Grove

As a child, I knew I wanted to be a part of the adoption/foster community. When I heard how people can save a child from a bad situation or foster them while their parents get better, I knew I wanted to help in some way.

When I was asked to be a part of Agape Villages fundraising and events for raising awareness, I did not hesitate. I thought to myself, finally. It is not surprising I married someone with the same passion for children. We actually met while volunteering with Agape Villages. My husband, Mark Robinson, not only shares the same love of children, but also is adopted. Had his parents not adopted him from Mexico, we would not be raising three beautiful girls.

I see so many people hesitant to adopt/foster a child. We should never be afraid to help a child in need if we are able.

I'm reminded of a passage in the Bible: **Matthew 25:35-40**, *"For I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in; I was naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me; Then the righteous will answer Him saying, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry and feed You, or thirsty and give You drink? When did we see You a stranger and take You in, or naked and clothe You? Or when did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?' And the King will answer and say to them, 'Assuredly, I say to you inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me.' "* Let's help children!

Teenage Girl Stays Connected...

By Courtney McAlister, Agape Social Worker

Sofia is a 16 year old Hispanic female who is placed in the home of one of our loving foster moms, Mrs. Smith. Sofia came into our care due to the inability of her parents to care for her. They were destitute and homeless and CPS got involved. One of the conditions of her coming into our care was that we find a family who would be able to keep Sofia in the same school she was attending. We did!

Sofia is currently in the 11th grade and doing well. She is very engaged at her school. She likes to participate in the extra-curricular activities. She is on the softball team and cheer-leading squad at the school.

Agape Villages social worker, Courtney McAlister, and the foster mother are both in the process of assisting Sofia with obtaining her driver's license, California ID and social security card. Sofia is adjusting well and getting along with the whole foster family!

An Enriching Experience...

By Brian Bossemeyer, Agape Social Worker

Donald (5) is a boy who has been in our care for just a short period of time. He is placed in a single parent foster home with another boy near his age. With the proper approvals, he and his foster family took a camping trip to Don Pedro Reservoir located in La Grange, CA. Our foster mother and the two boys were very excited and it was Donald's first camping trip. The foster mother showed the two boys how to pitch a tent.

They enjoyed s'mores, told camp stories, and did some light hiking. The boys were able to see fish, birds, and other small creatures of nature. The boys were so exhausted that they slept all the way back home. Our foster mother is really enjoying Donald and he is making improvement since he has been in her home.

Now, A Bright Future...

By Jim Neal, Agape Social Worker

I've been the case manager for a wonderful foster family for close to a year now and I must say they are one of the most kind and loving couples I've ever met. They have 3 children themselves who range from 8 to 11 years of age. They are fostering a 9 year old Asian girl whom they intend to adopt, hopefully, by the end of the year.

The young girl came into their home a year ago. She had been removed from her parents over 4 years ago and, unfortunately, endured 3 miserable placements until coming to us. Once having arrived at her current home, she has done extremely well. The entire family loves her and she has been accepted as a member of the family.



Volunteer Spotlight

Volunteers are Priceless!

Our Volunteer Spotlight this month is on **Manteca Sunrise Kiwanis**. Service groups are so important to Agape. They provide critical funds and they also help us by donating their time. Manteca Sunrise Kiwanis has been serving the community for 35 years. Each year Kiwanis clubs around the world have a day of service. It's called Kiwanis One Day. **Manteca Sunrise Kiwanis Club** decided to dedicate their service day to Agape Villages in February. We maintain a supply room for foster parents in San Joaquin County. We keep clothing, toys, school supplies, jackets, etc. in this room.



However, with the amount of donations, the supply room was in desperate need of help. The Kiwanians built, installed and helped to create a beautiful, organized shelving system so our foster families can see the items available for their foster children. Thank you Manteca Sunrise Kiwanis!! Agape's **Nina Payne** is a member of this Kiwanis club...she is standing second from the left in the above picture.

We Need Foster Parents!

— Every Child Deserves a Home —

We regularly receive calls about children needing foster care. We serve children who've been abused, neglected and mistreated in ways they need to be removed from their own families for their protection. These are children who've been thrust into the foster care system, who depend on the mercy of others for their care.

We need families for children of all ages, especially children 10 years and older and sibling groups. Consider *today* how you can be used to care for children.

For more information on foster parenting, call the Agape Villages office at 800-566-2225.





Hank Lawson

SHARE YOUR GOODNESS WITH US!

By Hank Lawson, Director, Church Relations

Psalm 34:8 – “Taste and see that the Lord is good.”

Psalm 100:5 – “For the Lord is good and his love endures forever...”

Yes, GOD is GOOD. We "know" that. One of our challenges is now to “realize” and experience His goodness. As God is good, so is it that GOD'S PEOPLE are good. We know that. However, I believe we need to open our eyes to “see” that more often.

In my new role as the Director, Church Relations, I get to visit congregations all over California and enjoy the fellowship of our brothers and sisters in Christ. One thing I am looking for, and finding, is to see the goodness of His people. One aspect of goodness I am looking for is WILLINGNESS.

1. **WILLINGNESS** to support and to help. Congregations and individuals committed to the success of the work that God is doing though Agape Villages.

2. **WILLINGNESS** to be involved. In congregations, I am looking for a "can lady." One who will distribute coin cans and keep track of who has them. Then the "can lady" will determine when the time of collecting and counting will be. At that time, Agape Villages will come with a counting machine and count each can. The one with the most money in their can will be crowned "TOP CAN" until the next counting!
3. **WILLINGNESS** to help with the mailing of our quarterly newsletter. Yes, it is a big job, but an important job. We are thankful for congregations and individuals who make the effort to get the job done!

It causes me to reflect:

GOD IS LIGHT --- 1 John 1:5

GOD IS LOVE --- 1 John 4:16

GOD IS GOOD, HIS PEOPLE ARE GOOD --- 1 Hank 1:1

Please contact me if you can help in any way, (209) 484-1377. We appreciate all who share their goodness with us!



24 HOURS - MAY 5TH - WE NEED YOU!

Agape Villages is Participating ♦ Save the Date!

Taking Place all Over America ♦ A BIG Day for Agape!

A national event with a local impact!

Northern California will join hundreds of community foundations across the country in a 24 hour giving challenge through the national campaign called “Give Local America” which will benefit Agape Villages.

The event is a one day, 24 hour time frame to make gifts online to charities. For the one charity who receives the most donations on that day, an extra \$5,000 will be awarded. So, we’d love to be that charity!

Give Local America is a social media campaign, so all donations must be made on-line. It runs from midnight to midnight on Tuesday, May 5, 2015.

In the greater Sacramento area, the local event is called “**Big Day of Giving.**” In the East Bay (Bay Area), it is called “**East Bay Gives.**” However, people anywhere, all over America, can participate.

2015		May				2015	
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	
					1	2	
3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
10	11	12	13	14	15	16	
17	18	19	20	21	22	23	
24	25	26	27	28	29	30	
31							

So, **mark your calendars, set your clocks** for Tuesday, **May 5th**, midnight to midnight! We will post a link on our facebook page and on our website. Please help us be number 1! We hope to receive over \$30,000. This is ambitious. To accomplish this, we will need many gifts, including gifts of a larger size! Please join in this effort!

Nothing will ever be attempted if all possible objections must first be overcome.

Hank Lawson is on the Go!

Hank and Betty Lawson enjoyed attending the West Coast Preachers and Leaders Conference in San Diego last February. As our new Director, Church Relations, Hank is hoping to spread the news of our work with churches and church leaders all over California.



Shop at the New Leaf Community Market in Pleasanton on June 6th and 5% of the sales will go to Agape Villages!

Applebee's Breakfast in Elk Grove

We will have our 3rd annual fundraising breakfast at Applebee's in Elk Grove on July 11th. Yum Yum! Come enjoy the food and support Agape at the same time!

A Great Need Remains



David Lee, Chair, Board of Directors

I am honored to be back on the Agape Villages Board of Directors. My Uncle, Arvil Lee, dedicated many years of his life to Sierra Children's Home/Agape Villages and I hope to do the same. The need for Christian homes for children is as great today as it ever was before. Agape Villages continues to provide for these children in foster care with exceptional services not found in most agencies.

We are always in need of Christian foster parents who will take part in loving, caring and shaping young lives. Please call if you can volunteer, encourage, give, or help in any way. Thank You!



Order until
June 6th

There's still time to purchase high quality eco-friendly, re-usable tote bags, travel bags, kitchenware, home goods, and more through
mixedbag designs

Agape will receive 40% of each purchase that will help us reach our fundraising goals!

Shop the online store:
www.mixedbagdesigns.com/Retail-Home

Use fundraising code: 403008 at checkout

Thank you for supporting foster kids!
Questions? Contact: jenoxe@agapevillages.org

amazonsmile



Can Benefit Agape Villages

AmazonSmile is a way Amazon.com offers caring people to purchase items and support their favorite charity at the same time. To participate, just go to their web site, smile.amazon.com, and start buying! A portion of the purchase price will then go to Agape Villages. For more information on this program, go to the following link:

<http://smile.amazon.com/about>

There are seven days in a week and "someday" is not one of them!

Our Professional Service Statistics

Current Year Statistics (So Far) (From 1/1/15 to 3/23/15)

- 83 – Foster Children Served Year-to-Date
- 7 – New Children in Care this Year
- 74 – Foster Children Currently in Care
- 63 – Certified Foster Families

Since We Began in 1958

- 5,913 – Foster Children Served
 - ◆ 4,000 – Through Sierra Children's Home
 - ◆ 1,913 – Through Agape Villages
- 454 – Foster Families who have Partnered with us in Foster Care

Annual Dinner & Silent Auction

❖ Sacramento ❖

Featuring:

Austin Stoker

Come and hear Austin Stoker, a former Agape foster youth, former U.S. Airman and, now, a beginning professional! Austin will share his courageous story of how he took the hand that life dealt him and made something very significant for himself, with God's help.



Where

Parkway Church of Christ

5511 Tangerine Ave,
Sacramento, CA 95823

When

Friday, May 1, 2015

Cost

\$15

Contact

Church office
@ 916-427-7443

www.AgapeVillages.org

Grocery Shopping for Agape

The following grocery stores have a donation program which will send a percentage of the total receipt to Agape: **SaveMart, Lucky, Food Maxx, Food 4 Less, Ralph's and Food Co.** Call us at 866-922-4273 and we will send the special card to use.

We received \$1,170 during the 1st quarter of 2015.



Donate a Vehicle Today!

Our car donation program provides vital support to our work. To donate your car (or trucks, trailers, boats and RVs) call **Car Program** toll-free, seven days a week at **1-800-513-6560**. Or go to our website:

www.AgapeVillages.org

So much to be **THANKFUL** for!

Grant Received

Heffernan Foundation's mission is to grant funding to charities that provide direct support and services to their local communities in the areas of shelter, food, education and the preservation of the environment. Agape Villages was very pleased to receive a \$2,500 grant from the Heffernan Foundation this past February.



Some Encouraging Notes from Our Supporters



- Agape is a work that is near and dear to our hearts.
- God bless all that you do for the children. Love and prayers.
- This gift is for the precious children.
- Praying for you and so thankful for what you do.
- We love what Agape is doing for children.
- I always enjoy the Love Letter.

Gift from Pleasanton Weekly

Thank you so much to the Pleasanton Weekly holiday fund and to the generous Tri-Valley community. Agape Villages is thrilled to be the recipient of a \$4,047.00 check. Pictured are publisher Gina Channel-Allen, editor Jeb Bing, and Jen Oxe from Agape Villages. It is great to be recognized and supported by the communities in which we serve!



New Advisory Council –

San Ramon/Danville Area

We are excited to announce that we have a new advisory council of volunteers who are passionate about Agape and our kids. This new council will focus on the San Ramon/Danville area of the Bay Area. They will augment the efforts of the existing Pleasanton, Manteca and greater Sacramento area advisory councils. Charter members of this council include: Mary Whipple, Melanie Bartoletti, Will Doerlich, Marcella Silva, James White, Stephanie Sposeto, Patty Diaz, Geoff Gillette, Barb Zeller, John Zeller, Karen Lochner and Elvina Lui. This new council is already hard at work on events in the area. Thank you!

Our Sponsor Spotlight!

The Business Community Helps us Help the Kids in Foster Care!

- ◆ Sleep Train Mattress Centers
- ◆ United Way of San Joaquin County
- ◆ South San Joaquin Irrigation District
- ◆ Dell' Osso Family Farm
- ◆ The Rose Hotel, Pleasanton
- ◆ Livermore-Pleasanton Firefighters Foundation
- ◆ American Chevrolet, Modesto-Stockton-Turlock
- ◆ Oak Valley Community Bank
- ◆ Crystal Down State Farm Insurance
- ◆ Office Spots
- ◆ Sondra Perry
- ◆ RPM Mortgage
- ◆ Sharon Robinson, Realtor, Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices - Drysdale Properties
- ◆ BTS Consulting Group

- ◆ n2 publishing
- ◆ Safety Compliance Management
- ◆ Restore and Renew Couples Counseling
- ◆ Active Family Magazine
- ◆ Shir Martial Arts
- ◆ Whipple, Mercado & Associates
- ◆ Melissa Pederson, Realtor
- ◆ Tom Dote, Farmers Insurance
- ◆ Mary C. Hanson, Horizon Wealth Solutions
- ◆ Sports Gallery

Become a Facebook friend of Agape Villages. Just sign into Facebook and search for Agape Villages Foster Family Agency

Memorial & Honor Gifts

January 3, 2015 through March 20, 2015

In Loving Memory

ERLINDA ACOSTA

Gene & Mary Copeland
Hank & Betty Lawson

RUDY ACOSTA

Gene & Mary Copeland

KEVIN ALLSUP

Gene & Mary Copeland
John & Nadine Greff
Janet Kleyn
Hank & Betty Lawson
Wyba Nienstadt
Gregg & Stephanie Pino

ROY & BETTY BARTLETT

Christopher Nunes

PAUL CANNON

Betty Robertson

BEN CARRANZA

Gene & Mary Copeland

PENNY COBURN

Janet Kleyn
Hank & Betty Lawson
Nina Payne

JOE CORCORAN

Kathleen Jones
Matt & Jill Ormond

SUE DENNY

Janet Kleyn
Don & Gwen Minor
Bill & Dalena Samuel

IRENE DRINKWATER

Virginia Gordon

NORMAN FOSTER

Dan & Shannon Bow

LAVERN HAGER

Hank & Betty Lawson

NADINE HAGER

Hank & Betty Lawson

MARY HOWEY

Jenny Buccellato
Carol Cattolico
Loyce Foster
Joyce Stephens

DALE IRVING

Ann Butler
Karen Cardwell
Lisla Damoulos
Madaline Johns
Janet Kleyn
Hand & Betty Lawson
Joe & Joy Mears
LaVonne Sibert

FERN JENKINS

Ann Butler
Madaline Johns
Janet Kleyn
Hank & Betty Lawson
Joe & Joy Mears

WILLIAM & VAUGHNCELE

KISER

Mark & Dianne Kiser

FRED KLEYN

Beverly Kleyn

GINGER LAWSON

Gene & Mary Copeland
Hank & Betty Lawson
Jo Lawson
Ray & Celia Lawson
Debra Miller

SONNY LEE

Vernon & Novella Vignolo

TED MANN

Doris Beard
Olga Brazzel
Cliff & Marie Channell
Norman & Becky Cole
Richard & Judy Deatherage
Melvin & Iona Dutra
Wilma Flach
Ron & Peggy Fullen
Virginia Gordon
John & Nadine Greff
Mary Hawley
Ron & Sherry Jones
Janet Kleyn
Hank & Betty Lawson
Bessie Lee
Ed & Sharon Mann
Jeannette Mann
Jer'e Mitchell

Elmer & Geneva Prout
James & Ruby Reynolds
Barbara Stoffle
Norman & Mary Wilson

WILLIAM PIERCE MILLER

Norman & Becky Cole

SHAWN NORRIED

Kyra Norried

KATHLEEN POTTS

Jerry & Karel Baxley

RHONDA ROGERS

Madaline Johns
Joe & Joy Mears

OKALEE SCHREIBER

Jean Royal

FRANCIS SUMPTER

Wilma Flach

JUDY TROTTER

Hank & Betty Lawson

KAREN ORNELAS WEBER

Norman & Becky Cole
Virginia Gordon
Elmer & Geneva Prout
Norman & Mary Wilson

ALAN WIDDICOMBE

Virginia Cook

In Honor And Respect

Happy Birthday, Sweet Daughter

KARI CARPER

Jim & Mona Carper

Christian Friends

GAYLAND & PAT

KLEVELAND

Wyba Nienstadt

A Good Friend

BEVERLY KLEYN

Phyllis Trudeau

In honor of the time and resources spent honoring the memories of Ted & Syble Mann

THE LADIES AT THE CENTRAL CHURCH OF CHRIST (SACRAMENTO)

Ed & Sharon Mann

A Great Dad!

HANK LAWSON

Jo Lawson
Ray & Celia Lawson

Congratulations on Your Marriage

HANK & BETTY LAWSON

Wayne & Jerry Formby

Praying for Your Recovery, Sister

ALMA WILLIAMSON

Wyba Nienstadt

Please Remember Agape Villages in your Will or Estate Plan.

www.AgapeVillages.org

Mother's Day



Mother's Day is May 10th. Make a gift in honor of your mother for Mother's Day and AGAPE will send a touching letter to her with very special thoughts of love and appreciation.

MEMORIAL OR HONOR GIFT

The enclosed gift of \$_____ is given in Memory of For Mother's Day or in Honor of: _____

PLEASE NOTIFY:

Name _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Relationship to deceased/honoree: _____

Email address: _____

Helping Dreams Come True for Children

Agape Villages • 3160 Crow Canyon Place, Suite 120 • San Ramon, CA 94583



"It's A Family Affair" Festival and BBQ Competition

Summer time is almost here. Are you ready to enjoy great BBQ and live music? Join Agape Villages and the **Sacramento** community at "It's A Family Affair" Festival & BBQ Competition on **May 30th** at

the Village Green Park in Rancho Cordova for the best tasting barbeque in the region. The festivities will be from 11:00 a.m. until 6:00 p.m. There will be lots of fun activities for everyone, including a BBQ competition with some of the best Q'ers in the region competing for the **"Best BBQ" trophy.**

Activities for the children include a huge water fountain to splash around in, jump houses and face painting. There will be opportunities for shopping with local arts and craft vendors, health information and screenings, live music and much more.

Would you like to showcase your BBQ'ing talent? Register to enter the competition. Do you want to be a vendor? For registration information or details about becoming a vendor, call Velma Sykes, Community Engagement Director at (916) 643-5031. **Sponsorship opportunities are available.**



Sleep Train continues to support our foster children! This quarter, Sleep Train donated school supplies, toys, and clothes. Our kids (and their moms) love to come to our office and "shop." Thank you, Sleep Train!

Farewell to Long-time Friends

By Janet Kleyn, President

Ted Mann of the Central Church of Christ in Sacramento passed away in January. His wife of 70+ years, **Syble**, passed away in November of 2013.

They were both devoted servants of the Lord and faithful donors to Agape for many, many years. We found in our archives a letter dated November 4, 1977 from Arvil Lee (uncle of Agape Chairman David Lee) thanking them for their "nice contribution." Faithful donors for more than 40 years!



In fact, Ted and Syble were honored in March, 2013 at our annual dinner in Rancho Cordova for their long-time, faithful support. At the memorial service for Ted, it was observed that a lot of the passion Ted had for the work at Agape was because of experiences in his childhood. He wanted it to be different for other children! Farewell, Ted and Syble, we love you and we miss you.

Cheryl's Corner

So Many Activities and Events to Serve our Youth!

Agape would like to announce a new addition to our team of professionals. Brian Bossemeyer comes to Agape Villages as a highly recommended, experienced and dedicated Master's Level social worker.



Cheryl Youngblood, LCSW

Agape Villages' Program Director

This month Emily, Kara and the Girls' Group, have an educational field trip planned for the Animal Sanctuary. The girls will have the opportunity to feed, care for, love and learn about the various animals that have been rescued. Pets and animals alike have been proven to be quite calming for folks of any age while eliciting joy, compassion and decreasing anxiety. The girls are quite excited to be attending.

Next month the girls will have the opportunity to attend an authentic Cirque Du Soleil event, as Cirque Du Soleil is coming to Stockton. The Girls' Group will also have the opportunity to attend the show Varekai. Varekai is noted for receiving wonderful reviews with a vivid performance that has a magical theme, filled with adventure, creativity and fantasy.

Please keep in mind that our Girls' Group continues to make decorative and fragrant body mists, lip balms and body scrubs which make wonderful gifts for folks of all ages all year around. All proceeds go to Agape Villages so that we can continue to better serve our children and families.

Agape continues to be excited and proud to have Paul Gibson conducting the agency's monthly mental health trainings. Mr. Gibson is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker who has over thirty five years of experience of training in the mental health profession. Next month our social workers will be trained on interventions for emotional regulation, distress tolerance and mindfulness. These techniques will help us assist our youth with handling the stressors of everyday life.

Agape Villages

3160 Crow Canyon Place
Suite 120
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925-866-3020
866-922-4273

www.AgapeVillages.org

Janet Kleyn
President and CEO

Cheryl Youngblood, LCSW
Program Director

Other Admin. Staff:

Hank Lawson
Director, Church Relations

Jennifer Oxe
Community Engagement Director
(Tri-Valley/East Bay)

Velma Sykes
Community Engagement Director
(Greater Sacramento Area)

Nina Payne
Outreach Coordinator (Manteca)

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Don Thomas

Our Mission

"Agape Villages mobilizes community resources to provide quality homes, innovative solutions and the highest of professional services to disadvantaged children and their families to meet their needs, maximize their potential and lead toward a better and brighter future."

56 Years of Caring Through Sierra Children's Home/Agape Villages



Agape Villages
Foster Family Agency

3160 Crow Canyon Place, Suite 120
San Ramon, CA 94583

Return Service Requested

Non-Profit Org.
U. S. POSTAGE
PAID
Permit No. 103
San Ramon, CA



Janet Kleyn, President

1 Corinthians 15:58

"Therefore, my dear brothers, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord..."

Remember, Online Giving is Available on our Website

www.AgapeVillages.org

From the President

The Power of Hope

I recently saw the movie, "McFarland USA." Perhaps you've seen it. It's the story of Jim White, a cross country coach in McFarland, California (near Bakersfield). His team? Well, it was made up of the teenage children of migrant farmers. Yes, an unlikely team. They had to work in the fields to help support their families, and go to school, and add cross country running on to that – a lot!

Coach White's teams won 7 state championships, going against teams with far fewer challenges. Of course, the boys practiced hard. But a critical success factor was that Coach White believed in them, instilled in them an expectation for success and a hope of a better future. They believed and rose to that challenge and won championships.

As I watched the movie, I saw similarities to the children and youth in our care. Our chil-

dren come out of tough situations, usually abuse and/or neglect. Many times they have bounced around the foster care system before coming to Agape. They often have cynical attitudes, and understandably so.

Our foster families and staff face many challenges. But as we show them stability, consistency and love, we begin to earn their trust. We instill in them an expectation for a better life. We offer them enrichment programs like sports and music, or talk about college, or how to write a resume. All of this is about trying to give them hope. This hope is about better days ahead, that their future will be different than their past.

Please remember, every time you make a gift to Agape, you participate in being a hope-giver to the children and youth we serve who need others to care about them. Thank you!