The Joys of Being a Resource Parent

By Theresa Geoffroy

I grew up in a small house (about 1200 square feet) along with my parents and eight (8) brothers and sisters. It was a bit cozy! However, my Mom always found room at our kitchen table to feed others or provide a “bed” for a lost child to spend a night or two, at a safe place, until they straightened out their problems at home.

I remember when I was just about 5 years old my father’s best friend and family were involved in a fatal car accident while traveling to the midwest. My parents instantly provided a make-shift room for the oldest son to stay with us. He stayed in our dining room turned bedroom for over a year, where he mourned the loss of his mother and awaited his father’s rehabilitation.

With every person that crossed our threshold for a meal or a safe place to stay, my mother treated each of them with the same love, kindness, and nurturing she bestowed upon her birth children. Whatever she gave to us, she gave to those who had chosen her. She always gave something of herself to each person and I know they left much better than when they came.

I became a resource parent partly because of how I was raised and how I saw my parents, my mother in particular, care for those who needed love, kindness and nurturing. I have been blessed with my mother’s uncanny ability to unconditionally love every child who has come into our home and to make them feel very special. My husband and I give them a safe place, for as long as they need it, along with tools to help them thrive in the world. Being resource parents has been very rewarding for my husband and me.

We have been blessed far more than we give — hearing the laughter of a child; watching the excitement of a child on Christmas or when they score 100% on a test at school; trying new food or going to a new place; taking a child to the snow or the beach for the first time; or watching a child ride a bicycle for the first time. All of this and much more brings so much joy to our hearts.

Seeing things we used to take for granted through their eyes has been a great learning experience and has taught us to be very grateful for the people and the things we have in our lives. For example, we have been using the same artificial white Christmas tree for over 18 years. It has seen better days. However, last Christmas was the first time one of our sons saw it. After it was decorated and the lights were turned on, the look of wonderment and awe was absolutely priceless. He taught me to be grateful for that tree like I was on the very first Christmas we used it in our home.

I now realize that my parents were receiving much more than they were giving. Yes, it was a sacrifice for them, and for us as their children, to open their doors to those who needed a safe place. However, the reward of caring for those who need you the most far outweighs the sacrifice. I will be forever grateful to have been a Resource Parent for the twelve children who have crossed our threshold, hopefully leaving better than when they came.

Hank Lawson Honored

Hank Lawson was honored as the Manteca Chamber of Commerce Ambassador of the Year at the annual chamber installation event. Pictured is Hank with Mike Anderson, Chief of Staff, San Joaquin County Board of Supervisors. Thank you, Hank, for being such a great representative of Agape in the community.
Agape Youth Receives “Student Citizen of the Year”

We are thrilled to tell you about the accomplishments of one of our youth who has been in foster care for 5 years. We will call her Susan. Susan is now a freshmen at an area high school. After completing three years at a middle school for 6th, 7th and 8th grades, she was nominated by her teacher, guidance counselor and principal to compete for the “Student Citizen of the Year” award.

The following activities engaged in by Susan can give us some indications for why she was nominated. She has been in the honor society for all three years. She has been active with a year-round competitive swim team. She is the co-captain of her cheerleading squad. She plays the saxophone, trumpet and piano. She was involved with the “Big Brother/Sister” program to the 6th grade and was involved with the school leadership of her class.

Nominees for the award had to submit an essay about their strengths, extracurricular activities, how they have helped the school and what they have learned from that process. The school’s principal, vice principal and head counselor reviewed the essays and narrowed the field of candidates down to ten. They then individually interviewed all finalists about their essays and Susan spoke about how “each person matters.” From this, Susan was chosen as the “Student Citizen of the Year” for her school.

We join with Susan’s family, school, friends and community in congratulating her for such an accomplishment. She certainly is worthy for such accolades. Winners at the various schools were featured on the front page of their local newspaper. Susan was given the privilege to be one of three students to speak at her 8th grade graduation ceremony.

Susan’s foster mother states that Susan is enjoying her first year as a freshmen. She made the JV cheer team, joined the debate club and a civic club. She is also continuing competing with her swim team. She and another girl are in charge of the process to build the freshman float for the homecoming parade. All of this keeps her very busy! We join with Susan’s foster family in expressing how pleased we are with the choices she is making!
Preparing for the end of life is one of those things you know you should do – but have you actually sat down and done it? Probably not, according to the “Caring.com” survey done in 2017. This survey found that only 4 in 10 American adults have a will or living trust.

Fortunately, older adults appear to lead the pack in reading these important documents. Of those who are of the age of 72 or older, 81% have estate-planning documents. For the baby boomer generation (ages 53-71), 58% have estate-planning documents. For Generation Xers (ages 37-52), 64% do not have a will. For Millennials (ages 18-36), 78% do not have a will.

Establishing a will or estate plan has many benefits for people of all ages. It provides the only way to be proactive in protecting your assets and children while ensuring your wishes are followed in many areas.

One area of your wishes may be in how you want to divide up your estate to share it with family and organizations close to your heart. We’d be honored to be remembered by you in this special way.

To remember Agape Villages in your estate planning, a simple clause in your will (called a codicil) directing that Agape Villages receives a share of your estate will work. This will bless boys and girls for years to come. Most often, these gifts are a win-win for everyone as gifts to Agape Villages will likely reduce the taxes on your estate. There are other ways that gifts to charities are a benefit. Talk to your financial advisor and attorney to see how this could be a blessing to you and “our” children.

David Lee Resigns from Agape Board

Due to lingering health issues, David Lee has decided it was best for him to resign from the Agape Board of Directors where he was serving as the Chairperson. David has been involved with Agape Villages/Sierra Children’s Home for many years. He has been a great ambassador for the agency and a generous donor. We will miss his leadership on our Board and wish him well as he recovers from his health conditions. Agape has been blessed in so many ways because of David’s involvement. Fortunately, he will continue to do what he can to help us in the coming years! Thank you David for your service!!

Mark Anglin Becomes New Board Chair

The Agape Villages Board of Directors is pleased to announce that Mark Anglin has been elected as the new Board Chair. In this role he will lead the Board in fulfilling its duties as the Board governs the affairs of the agency. He holds a Bachelors degree in Animal Science and a Masters degree in Vocational Education. Mark is a recently retired college administrator. He and his wife, Patty, attend the Church of Christ in Turlock.

Fireworks Stand Raises Funds

Every few years Agape is given the opportunity to run a fireworks stand to raise funds for the agency’s programs. This event took place in Manteca. Thanks to Hank Lawson, Nina Payne and volunteers, the stand raised $12,700. These funds will be used to bring a sparkle of hope to children’s lives!

Goodbye to a Special Friend

Wilma Flach, a long time former Agape board member and board chairperson, passed away on July 23 after a short illness. Wilma was a generous and faithful donor to Agape who had a genuine concern for the less fortunate children around us. She would always ask about the "kids." Current board members would seek her advice about various matters. Not surprisingly, Wilma remembered Agape very generously in her estate plans. We are thankful for her life of service and generosity. She will be missed and never forgotten.

Donate Your Car Today!

Our car donation program provides vital support to our work. Call Car Program toll-free, seven days a week at 1-800-513-6560. Or, go to our website below.

www.AgapeVillages.org
Care of Little Children
By Mark Anglin, Board Chair

"Then He took a little child and set him in the midst of them. And when He had taken him in His arms, He said to them, **Whoever receives one of these little children in My name receives Me; and whoever receives Me, receives not Me but Him who sent Me.**" (Mark 9:36-37)

Based on these words spoken by Jesus to his Apostles, it is evident that children are held in high regard and it is apparent that it is our duty to care for them. The mission of Agape Villages is to do just that by mobilizing 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.

As the newly elected Board Chairman my goal is to do all that I can to assist the Agape Foster Family Agency to accomplish this mission. I am humbled that the Board would elect me to serve in this capacity and pray that I am up for the challenge. I look forward to working with the current Board members, Agape President Janet Kleyn, the entire Agape staff, and our Foster Families in meeting the need of the children in our care.

**Additional Grants Received Recently**

- Phi Gamma Chapter of Omega NU - $1,000;
- Ticket to Dream Foundation - $750

**Support Agape While Grocery Shopping**

The following grocery stores have a donation program to benefit Agape: SaveMart, Lucky, Food Maxx. Call us at 866-922-4273 and we will tell you how this works.

$625 was received to date in 2019.

**Thanks For Helping our Kids!**

During her reign as **Miss Pumpkin 2018, Maanavi Dua, (Molly)**, twice chose Agape as her beneficiary, collecting stuffed animals in hopes the foster children would be comforted by them as she was during a difficult time in her life, and book bags filled with school supplies. She has a bright future ahead of her.

Pictured is Hank Lawson presenting Molly with a plaque of appreciation at a Manteca Chamber of Commerce event.

**Our Professional Service Statistics**

**Current Year Statistics**
*(From 1/1/19 to 9/30/19)*

- 164 – Foster Children Served Year-to-Date
- 65 – New Children in Care this Year
- 92 – Foster Children Currently in Care
- 67 – Certified Foster Families
- 7 – Adoptions Facilitated

**Since We Began in 1958**

- 6,383 – Foster Children Served
  - 4,000 – Through Sierra Children’s Home
  - 2,383 – Through Agape Villages
- 525 – Foster Families who have Partnered with us in Foster Care

www.AgapeVillages.org
Gift of Appreciated Stock

Agape received a gift of donated stock which had appreciated since it was purchased. Agape sold the stock and received nearly $10,000! And the donors received a nice tax benefit for having donated the stock rather than selling it themselves. If this is something that might work for you, just call Janet Kleyn at 866-922-4273.

Practical Items for our Kids

We are very grateful for the donation we received from Together We Rise. They gave us 20 superhero boxes, 40 birthday boxes and 30 duffle bags. Pictured at right are items that were in the teen duffle bags. Thanks again!

Teenager Raises Funds for Agape

Brian Petross, an amazing teenager living in Texas, raised $800 and donated it to help the kids at Agape. Thank you, Brian!

Brush n’ Brunch

Courtney McAlister and Brian Bossemeyer, Agape social workers, hosted a fundraiser in the Sacramento area, “Brush n Brunch.” Sixteen people participated and had the opportunity to connect with their inner Leonardo DaVinci while enjoying good food, drinks and having a lot of fun! Thanks to Courtney and Brian and all those who participated!

River Cats Acknowledge Agape

Agape Villages was featured at the Sacramento River Cats baseball game on Saturday, August 10. Sacramento area families and staff attended the game. Brian Bossemeyer, Agape social worker, threw out the first pitch. Thanks to Goldrush Getaways for making this event possible.

Generous Grant Received

We are so thankful to ClearPath Business Advisors for their very generous grant of $10,000 to support Agape kids. One of their employees, who is also an Agape volunteer, suggested Agape to the company! Thank you so much!

100 Backpacks

The Northern California Christian Women’s Conference Rally had as their service project donating 100 backpacks, stuffed with age-appropriate school material, to Agape Villages. What a blessing for the Agape kids to start school with exactly what they needed. We appreciate this very much!!

Backpacks Donated

Thanks to the Journey Christian Church for again donating backpacks to Agape kids. Our children certainly need these for school! John with the church is pictured at right with the backpacks. Thanks again to all for this generous act of kindness!

Personal Hygiene Kits for Kids

Volunteering and giving back to the community is important to Wente Vineyards! As part of their August Town Hall (all hands) Meeting, employees came together and assembled hygiene kits for Agape Villages and the children they support who are entering the foster care system. Employees assembled kits of toothpaste, toothbrush, socks, combs & brushes. These kits will help children with the transition into the foster care system. Thanks again!
**June 16, 2019 through October 2, 2019**

### In Loving Memory

**ERLINDA ACOSTA**  
Gene & Mary Copeland  
Hank & Betty Lawson

**GLEN ALSUP**  
Janet Kleyn  
Hank & Betty Lawson  
Scott & Lorene Smith

**ARTHUR ANGLIN**  
Agape Villages Board of Directors

**ROY & BETTY BARTLETT**  
Chris & Brittney Nunes

**CHARLES BAXLEY**  
Jerry & Karel Baxley

**ONIE BAXLEY**  
Jerry & Karel Baxley

**BOB BEAL**  
Norman & Rebecca Cole  
Norman & Mary Wilson

**EARLIE & MARY BUSTER**  
Gene and Mary Copeland  
Hank & Betty Lawson

**ELEANOR COFFEY**  
John Rogers

**PATRICIA COLLINS**  
Raymond & Linda Nelson

**DAVID DAWSON**  
Norman & Mary Wilson

**EARL DUDMAN**  
Fred & Jenny Ricker

**WILMA FLACH**  
Agape Villages Board of Directors  
Central Church of Christ  
Central Church of Christ — Ladies Bible Class  
Norman & Rebecca Cole  
Melvin & Iona Dutra  
Beverly Kleyn  
Norman & Mary Wilson

**REBA GIFFORD**  
Dale & Marsha Gifford  
Norman & Rebecca Cole

**JARET SAMUEL GREFF**  
Norman & Rebecca Cole

**JOHN GREFF**  
Norman & Rebecca Cole

**WILLIAM & VAUGNCELE KISER**  
Mark & Dianne Kiser

**FRED KLEYN**  
Beverly Kleyn

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

**STEVEN LINO II**  
Ernest & Jackie Hillman

**CD MOATES**  
Jerry & Jackie Hillman

**BILL MORGAN**  
Joe & Joy Mears

**LUISE MUDRINICH**  
Christine Rice

**LES ORNELAS**  
Peggy Ornelas

**LAVERA OTYO**  
Beverly Kleyn  
Janet Kleyn

**DICK PERCIVAL**  
Scott & Lorene Smith

**IRENE SOUZA**  
Bill & Debi Souza

**BOBBY SPARKS**  
Tom & Sue Hardy

**EVYLIN TUCKER**  
Peggy Jo Tucker

**CLIFFORD WHEAT**  
Ernest & Jackie Hillman

**CHARLES BRYANT**  
Happy Birthday, Dad!  
Lori Bryant & William Thornburgh

**JAN ESTES**  
With Honor & Respect!  
Wyba Neinstadt

**JANET KLEYN**  
With Honor & Respect!  
Ray & Leatrice Green

**HANK LAWSON**  
A Great Dad!  
Jo Lawson

**HANK & BETTY LAWSON**  
With Love & Respect!  
Ray & Celia Lawson

**BRIAN PETROSS**  
Proud of You, Son!  
Jason & Becky Petross

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### In Honor And Respect

**CHARLES BRYANT**  
Happy Birthday, Dad!  
Lori Bryant & William Thornburgh

**JAN ESTES**  
With Honor & Respect!  
Wyba Neinstadt

**JANET KLEYN**  
With Honor & Respect!  
Ray & Leatrice Green

**HANK LAWSON**  
A Great Dad!  
Jo Lawson

**HANK & BETTY LAWSON**  
With Love & Respect!  
Ray & Celia Lawson

**BRIAN PETROSS**  
Proud of You, Son!  
Jason & Becky Petross

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### Save the Date!

**1st Annual Crab & BBQ Tri Tip Dinner & Auction**

**Friday, March 20, 2020**  
**6:00 p.m.**  
**Manteca Senior Center**  
**295 Cherry Lane**  
**Manteca, CA 95337**

**MEMORIAL OR HONOR GIFT**

The enclosed gift of $_____ is given in □ Memory of, or in □ Honor of:

**PLEASE NOTIFY:**

Name_________________________  
Address_________________________  
City/State/Zip_________________________  
Relationship to deceased/honoree:_________________________  
Email address:_________________________

**Providing a Safe Place for Children**

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

www.AgapeVillages.org
Justice Has Been Served...Again!

Jail ‘N Bail 2019

Pleasanton –

Jail ‘N Bail was Thursday July 18th at the SideTrack Bar + Grill in downtown Pleasanton. It was a beautiful afternoon raising money for the foster kids. Jail birds wore jail costumes and reached out to family and friends for "bail" money while enjoying tasty appetizers at SideTrack. The side patio was an ideal location for this event and we look forward to next year. A huge thank you to Todd Utical for hosting our event and being so gracious and accommodating. We raised over $10,000 for the kids of Agape Villages. Thank you to everyone who participated and/or donated. We are truly grateful for your support.

Another Story from Our Foster Care Program

Four Sisters in Our Care

This is a follow-up to the story in our last newsletter about four sisters, ages 5, 6, 7, and 8 years, coming into our care. They've been with us for about 6 months now. They've bonded well with our foster family and are doing very well overall. Test scores and school grades have all improved.

Their mother has been working hard to fulfill her case plan to get the children returned back to her. The judge will decide soon about this. While in care, the girls have had several "firsts:" visits to Six Flags Discovery Kingdom, concerts and the California Academy of Sciences in San Francisco.

Agape Youth Attend Bible Camp

Nine Agape foster youth attended camp at Sierra Bible Camp this past summer. They enjoyed the mountains, trees, food and fresh air and had a very meaningful experience. Thank you to the Martinez Church of Christ for including them with your group!

Program Activities
Adoptions, New Staff, Life Skills, Enrichment and Trainings

Agape is so pleased to announce that since April 2019, which is when we received our adoption licenses, we have completed 7 adoptions, and we are currently in the process of completing two more. Providing children and families with a forever home is true joy!

We want to give a warm welcome to the new additions to our Agape team: Pamela Reeves, and Brittany Barnes, both of whom are MSW's, and Sarah Wilson, our new casework auditor in the Bay Area. Welcome aboard!

Next up for Agape's Living Skills Program for youth and young adults is Matthew Fatusi. He will be speaking to the foster youth about their credit report and credit score, how they can leverage it, and how it improves their living skills. In November, the foster youth will be learning about human trafficking awareness with speaker Debbie Johnson from Without Permission.

Our Girls' Group is planning a bowling excursion. It's a celebration to and for all of the amazingly talented, intelligent, creative young ladies, who are participating in the group and who are in our foster care.

This month our resource parent support meeting in the Bay Area will be a training on Positive Discipline. And in the Central Valley our resource parents will be learning about child development and milestones for youth in developing ages. Resource Parents have the opportunity to obtain vital information regarding the foster care system, such as: rules, ethics, laws, interventions, tools that are useful in helping our families and children, diagnoses and what that means and how to help traumatized youth. In addition the resource parents gain required post annual certification hours.

Mattress Firm and Foster Kids

We thank them for their very generous donation of clothing, school supplies, backpacks, duffle bags filled with blankets, hygiene products, toys, and coloring books for the children and youth in our foster homes!

www.AgapeVillages.org
Albert Einstein once said, “Try not to become a person of success, but rather, try to become a person of value.” This is an interesting twist on these concepts. Although we would all say we want to be successful, I think what Albert Einstein was saying, in part, is that one way to be a person of real success is to have life guided by the important values we hold dear in order to be valuable.

Part of living a life of success and significance is a function of how many people truly value us. This comes from being engaged in people’s lives in ways we make a real difference. Opportunities for this are all around us and include how we engage with family members, friends and others in need in our communities.

As people of faith, we would want to engage with those who God would have us be of value to...to whom He wants us to care about. We know from the scriptures how much God cares about the fatherless, the poor, the disadvantaged and those who Jesus called, “the least of these.” God identifies Himself with the cause of the weak and the oppressed. He often declares Himself as their protector. As God’s children, He calls on us to do the same.

Being engaged with vulnerable and needy people is one of the primary ways we live by our Christian values. One of the obvious ways to do this is to partner with organizations who are serving these people. And yes, that would include Agape Villages!

We are all about finding loving foster homes to serve children and youth who are thrust into the foster care system. We train and support these families as together we meet the needs of each child in our care. We are valuable to each of them. We mean the world to them while they are in our care. As donors and volunteers, you also mean the world to them!