

Operation Starfish Winter Newsletter 2009

As I look back over the year 2008 one thing strikes me as especially significant. The fact that the economy is struggling has not stopped those who feel they are called to adopt from stepping out in faith and searching for ways to make that adoption happen.

Many countries are making it more difficult and more expensive to adopt; others have stopped their programs altogether. Lending institutions are giving less help and grant foundations are struggling. This does not mean there are fewer children, perhaps there are even more than previously that need forever families to love and care for them. What I see from the families who are asking Operation Starfish for help is a new creativity in searching for a child and financing the adoption.

One of our families recently shared an idea they are using to help with the funding of their adoption from China. They are planning a Soup and Sandwich Supper. They live in a relatively small community and feel that an event such as this will not only help them raise funds but will give the community members a chance to ask questions and learn more about adoption.

In searching for a child, several of our applicants have widened their parameters to include older children and children with medical needs. Those who are called to adopt (some of you reading this newsletter know what I mean) find you have an amazing heartfelt passion and determination to bring your child home.

We are seeing applicants who are adopting from different countries like Ethiopia and Mexico and Poland. There are children needing families and families wanting children. Putting these two groups together has always been the main goal of Operation Starfish.

Volunteer Opportunities or How Can I get Involved?

We need the help of all of our Operation Starfish families and supporters to keep the dream of a forever family alive for those children who are still waiting.

Spring is a great time for a **yard sale**. Plan one at your church or with a few neighbors. One of our supporters had one at her house last summer and earned over \$600 for Operation Starfish.

Plan a **community event with music** or a well known local personality. Many churches are willing to donate their facility and artists are often willing to donate their time and talent for a worthy cause.

Talk to a **youth group**. Last year our youth group earned nearly \$3000 for Operation Starfish by holding a 30 hour fast and soliciting pledges from the community. Youth groups are often looking for causes to support.

Spring is also a good time to hold a **bike-a-thon** or a **race** or **walk** for a cause.

A **silent auction** (although it can be some work) is also a great way to involve the community in a fundraiser.

These are just a few ideas. I'm sure many of you have other creative ideas of how you can help.

Any funds raised for Operation Starfish are **tax deductible**. If you need a letter stating that or, if you need a CD or literature telling about Operation Starfish, let us know and we can get them to you. Start planning your Operation Starfish event now! The children are waiting!

A Word from the Bible

By Lisa Simpson

Adoption is often a poignant testimony to the world. Taking in orphans mirrors the way in which God rescues wayward sinners. If this is so, then adopting special-needs children can show forth the love of Christ even more evidently.

When people choose to adopt those who are not outwardly lovely or who will inevitably bring with them years of unappreciated effort, the world looks on and wonders. "Why? Why would you make the decision to bring heartache into your lives? Why would you invest so much with no obvious return?" And there is the opportunity! Not only can you sacrificially give to this child, you can share with others that it is the love of Christ that compels you to do so and to do so with joy. God will be glorified!

Book Look

Reviewed by Nancy Dubois

Three Little Words by Ashley Rhodes-Courter

This heartfelt memoir tells the story of a child who spent nine years of her life in fourteen different foster homes. It details the unpredictability of her life, the abuses, the horrors, and the feelings of a child living life in "the system". At the age of twelve, Ashley is finally adopted, but the years of uncertainty make it difficult for her to accept the love of her forever family. Through her courage and the persistence of her adoptive family, Ashley overcomes and thrives. If you ever wondered if adoption makes a difference, this true story will inspire you.

The Year 2008 in Review

In 2008 Operation Starfish helped bring home children from Haiti, China, Korea, USA, Russia and Ethiopia.

Operation Starfish was honored as an **Angles in Adoption** by the **Congressional Coalition on Adoption Institute**. (www.ccainstitute.org).

National Adoption Month was celebrated with a fundraiser which featured the Christian band **Thirsty Ground** and motivational speaker **Ray McElroy**.

We updated our website to include a donate button and posting of our newsletters.

Several families and the Charleston Community Church have begun to pledge regularly to Operation Starfish.

Supporters of Operation Starfish, wearing their newly printed Operation Starfish T-Shirts, marched in the Charleston, Illinois Fourth of July Parade and the Eastern Illinois University Homecoming Parade.

...”when you did it to one of the least of these...you did it to me!”
(Matthew 25:40)

Some Starfish Children



Helping One Child at a Time