

# Becca's Loving Hands Backpack Ministry helps foster children in need

## Donations are always needed

By ARIANA R. CHERRY  
Staff Writer

According to the National Foster Youth Institute, more than 250,000 children are placed into the foster care system each year in the United States. What one might not realize, that when these children are placed into a home - especially if it is an immediate or perhaps an emergency transition, they won't have many items of their own. This can include anything from clothing, toys or even personal hygiene items.

With the help of their youth group and seeing this truth unfold from a personal experience of their own, Larry and Tammy Noble were inspired to help foster children in local area communities have personal items of their own.

The inspiration began about three years ago when some girls in their church youth group (Arthur Southern Baptist Church) attended what is known as AW-SOM Conference. During these conferences, the youth participate in "break-out sessions," where discussion and ideas are discussed. Their youth members heard about a group who created toiletry draw-string bags and dropped them off at their local DCFS offices. After seeing a cart full of \$2 back-packs at Wal-Mart though, Tammy was inspired to do so much more - but she just wasn't quite sure which direction the Lord was pushing her at the time.

One evening, an opportunity for Tammy and her husband Larry to take in a foster child presented itself. The child was facing a very difficult situation that involved abuse and possible charges with the law, so Tammy decided she would

let the child stay with her until something came about.

When the step-mom was asked to gather the child's items, he was given trash bags that were filled with his father's clothes. There were no personal belongings or even hygiene items such as a toothbrush. "We have seen that when kids are taken out of a home in a rush, they don't have time to grab items such as toiletries, stuffed animals, and blankets, etc.," commented Tammy.

After such a personal eye-opening experience, Tammy knew what she wanted to do with the back-packs. Back-packs with specific items were needed for foster children in transition that they could call their own. She and the youth began the new ministry with 20 back-packs and dropped them off at the DCFS in Charleston. After that, the youth took off with the ministry, wanting to help so many foster children in need.

Before COVID, their church's youth had taken a mission trip to Nashville to see what homelessness was like with their own eyes. They immediately learned what it was like not to have anything of your own. The youth members began creating lists of items to put in the back-packs. With a large number of children in the Illinois area not attending school physically, many back-packs were still available for purchase, and stores began to mark them down to \$2 and then down to \$1. To move forward with their mission, they purchased most of the back-packs, filling them with toiletry items, school supplies, stuffed animals, blankets and a Bible in October, 120 back-packs were distributed to the Charleston DCFS of-

fice. Recently, they gave the office in Macon county, 121 back-packs.

Shortly after, they began to realize that they needed supplies for babies as well. Back-packs were then also filled with receiving blankets, pacifiers, bottles and bibs. They would supply the DCFS office with a variety of bulk diapers in different sizes, so those could be handed out with the back-packs.

After a while, it was decided that this ministry needed a name. It took almost a year to come up with a name that felt right. With careful thought and consideration, they decided to name the ministry after a foster family's daughter that they knew. Their daughter, Becca (Rebecca) had been killed in a car accident, but had been very active in the church's youth group. She used to love all of the little children and there didn't seem to be a time that she didn't have a child in her arms. Children often warmed up to her first before anyone else. Becca had been one of the driving forces behind the backpack ministry when it first began. To honor Becca's memory, the ministry was named, "Becca's Loving Hands."

"It has grown beyond us," noted Tammy. "We have 600 back-packs that we need to fill and have storage units for them," she added. "It is amazing how God has provided us all the things that we need to fill them with. 'It amazes me every time,'" Tammy commented. Larry Noble, the youth pastor at Arthur Southern Baptist Church said that with COVID, their youth have not been able to go on mission trips. "We are putting everything we have into the back-packs," he said. "We've been relying on donations to fill the back-packs. It has been a good year for it,"

Larry added. Larry is also an employee at AgroFab. "The plant donated four cases of Bibles to put into the back-packs," he informed.

If you would like to donate money towards "Becca's Loving Hands Backpacks," you may write a check to the Arthur Southern Baptist Church and put "backpacks" in the memo area. If you'd like to donate specific items, there is a list of needs on the Arthur Southern Baptist Church's Youth Facebook page:

<https://www.facebook.com/Arthur-Southern-Baptist-Church-Youth-Group-1621165674776737/>

Some of those items include specific school supplies, body soap, deodorant, 2-in-1 shampoo/conditioner, Bibles, coloring books, sippy cups, baby shampoo, and toothbrush and toothpaste.

"It is getting bigger than us. We've been blessed. God will provide whatever we need to take care of them,"



Becca's Loving Hands backpacks at Arthur Southern Baptist Church

## Winfields retire

(Continued from Page 1)  
practice in Arthur.

One might ask why he chose a small town like Arthur? There are a couple of reasons for that, the first one being that his father was a bookkeeper for the company which owned the Arthur Lumber Company and Jim says that he knew about Arthur as being "The Clean Little Town" early in his life and thought of moving here before going to dental school.

The other had to do with Fred Helmuth who arranged for him to rent Dr. Jones's old office building and had his maintenance man plumb the building for dental equipment.

Back in 1992 when he introduced himself to the Arthur community, Jim stated that, "for many years it has been my goal to be a small town dentist. Living in Arthur and becoming part of your community is an answer to a dream."

Jim had, as previously mentioned, been working in a dental lab and Connie had been a dental hygienist for many years when both decided to go to dental school where they met. They were atypical dental students as both were in their forties at the time. Connie had four children from her first marriage and Jim had two. Eventually Connie had to drop out of dental school because of medical issues. Connie came to Arthur with Jim to help him set up his dental practice and they were married on October 31 in the Methodist church. They lived in the back of the dental office for seven years before buying their home in Morningside Addition where they still live.

Jim would be the first to tell you that he could not

have done all he has done without Connie. She was not only his dental hygienist but also office manager, secretary, receptionist, bookkeeper, janitor and many things more for the practice. She was also a friendly voice on the phone and a friendly face welcoming patients to the office.

From 1967 to the present day, just some of Jim's professional involvement has included spending five years on the visiting faculty of the L.D. Pankey Institute for Advanced Dental Education in Miami, Florida and giving lectures and clinical demonstrations throughout the United States on related dental subjects. Places like Ohio State University, the Minnesota Dental Laboratory Association, the Illinois Dental Laboratory Association, the Iowa Dental Laboratory Association and the Illinois State Dental Society have benefited from his knowledge of all things dental related.

Jim has served on several boards and written articles related to his chosen field. He was on the board of directors for the L.D. Pankey Institute and on the editorial board of Lab Management Today magazine and the board of directors of the Illinois Dental Laboratory Association. He has published articles for Dental Laboratory Review, Dental Laboratory News and Dental Lab Management Today, among other publications.

He has worked in the Lake Land College Dental Hygiene Department as a clinical instructor and was a member of the Lake Land College Dental Hygiene Advisory Board. The honor that I would guess he is most proud of, and rightly

so, is having received the LLC Distinguished Alumnus Award in 1997.

Jim's hobbies include sailing, computers, cycling, reading, photography, video and 'building things.' He also wrote a column for the Graphic in the 1990s titled "Ask the Dentist." Connie keeps busy taking care of and finding homes for stray cats. Our own cat Chloe used to like to spend time over at their house where I had to go get her a couple of times because she liked it better over there.

Jim and Connie have been active in the community with their involvement in the Arthur Lions Club for several years and were in charge of all clean up for the Arthur Cheese Festival for over five years. The two have been a valuable asset to Arthur and we hope they will continue and be able to be even more active now that they have retired.

Their future plans are to relax (!) and live out their lives here in Arthur.

Jim plans to work for a time, as he has been doing at the Douglas County Health Department making dentures.

While Connie has not finalized any plans for her future those who know her know she will not be idle and will be finding plenty to do to keep busy.

Know the couple's former patients wish them well as does all of the Arthur community. We look forward to you being a part of happenings and activities around here for a long time to come. We are also happy that you chose Arthur as the place you wanted to live and work and stay. Best of luck to the both of you and hope you enjoy your retirement to the fullest!

## Zion News

"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!" - 2 Corinthians 5:17, NIV

The apostle, Paul, wrote that Christ's death for sin changed the way he looked at people. Instead of looking at each person as a mere human being, he says we should view those who have faith in Christ differently. Such people are new creatures and have become something they were not before.

Not only that, the old version of a person before they knew Christ is gone forever. The old is gone, the new is here. All the old plans and agendas have been replaced by Christ's plans and agendas in a new creature called a "Christian."

Wouldn't this be a great

way to start a New Year, to become new and to view others in a different light? This would not be easy and probably be the hardest New Year's resolution ever to fulfill, but what a change it would make to your small world of family, friends, acquaintances, business associates, and community. The ripple effect of more and more people viewing others in a new way would be felt by the entire world. Isn't that God's agenda?

January 6 is also Epiphany which is the twelfth day after Christmas. It commemorates the Magi's visit to the baby Jesus. The importance of this event is that it is viewed as the first indication that Christ is the savior of Gentiles as well as Jews. That indicates that God sees everyone in a dif-

ferent way than we often do, a reminder again that we should do that, too.

We have enjoyed having more people join our Sunday Zoom activities, and especially enjoyed those who were with us for our Christmas Eve Zoom service. We miss being with our extended church family on special occasions and hope that 2021 will give us greater opportunities to be together.

People on our prayer list include: Natalie Lynn Harris, Arnold and Marlene Schultz, Jean White, Leland and Dolores Lust, John and Trudy (Beauchamp) Feyereisen, those in the Arthur Home and Eberhardt Village like Patty Heit, B J and Jerry Hale, Dorothy (Maxine) Jurgens, and George and Brian Dukeman.

Birthdays coming up include: Jan 10-Darlene Harshbarger, Jan 10-Haley Crist, Jan 15-Barb Smith, Jan 19-Natalie Harris, Jan 22-Megan Lebetter, Jan 24-Phyllis Romine, Jan 26-Jerry Hale, and Jan 26-Rod Randall.

New Year's resolutions can come and go quickly. It's only been a week into the New Year and probably many people who had made resolutions have already failed to keep them.

For the most part people view resolutions as "Casual promises to myself that I am under no legal obligation to fulfill." An alternative to this attitude would be to simply make resolutions like this: "My New Year's Resolutions: 1. Gain weight, 2. Save less money, 3. Set realistic goals." - Fowl Language Comics.

Zion's Sunday Zoom version of Christian Conversations begins at 10:30 AM. If you would like to participate in our Sunday morning devotionals or receive our weekly Good News email, send a request to ramona-carlyle@yahoo.com.

### Southern Piatt

## RECORD-HERALD

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