

friends to friends

FALL | 2008

celebrating Faith and her new family

Adoptions are joyful occasions in our office. When one of our families finalizes their adoption, we throw a party for the family and staff. This month we had the privilege of celebrating Faith Hufford-Bucklin's adoption with her new family. We wanted to share some of the pictures of their party with you and share the letter their case worker, Felicia Davis, read to them to commemorate their special day.



*The Hufford-Bucklin Family with
Caseworker Felicia Davis*



October 30, 2008

To the Bucklin-Hufford Family:

Today is the day! Today, October 30, 2008 is the day Faith officially becomes Faith StellaMaria Hufford-Bucklin. I can't begin to express in words what a wonderful affect your family has had on me. Not only were all of you patient, kind and loving, the commitment and love you have towards Faith and one another is amazing!

Having Faith as my very first client here at Friends was truly special. All of you have welcomed me into your lives as if I was an extended family member, which means so much to me. I have grown to love all of you in a very special way which makes me sad that we won't be doing anymore home visits, then again I'm filled with joy because Faith has become an official part of your family. Faith has been blessed with an awesome family. I am extremely excited that I was able to be a part of this beautiful process.

I wish all of the best in the future and I only ask you to continue to love each other the way that you do! I thank you for your kind and warm spirits and continue to wish the best for your family in the future. I know Faith will have an awesome life being a part of her FOREVER family.

"The love of a family is life's greatest blessing."

Sincerely,
Felicia Davis

*A Newsletter of Friends Association
for Care and Protection of Children*

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Martha Boston, *Executive Director*

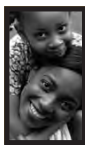
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friends



a new life in a new country

Margaret's story

Margaret* and her children, 9 year old Rachel and 2 year old Sarah, walked into the shelter one day early last summer. After months of abuse, Margaret's husband had locked her and the children out of their apartment. The family had moved to West Chester from Ghana three years earlier and Margaret had been at home caring for the children since that time. She'd never had a job, never had to manage her own bank account or arrange child care for her children. Margaret was frightened. She hadn't learned yet how strong she could be or what she could accomplish with friends to help her.

Our case worker reassured Margaret that she and her daughters were welcome in the shelter and that we would help her find work and get the services she needed to care for her children. We walked her through the process of applying for temporary assistance and food stamps. We helped her put together a resume and she immediately found a job at a nearby senior living community. As soon as she was hired, she arranged for child care for Sarah, while Friends Association enrolled Rachel in Care Center for Christ's Summer Day Camp Program.



Margaret and Her Daughters

Margaret was proud and excited that she was becoming independent and able to take care of herself and her children.

Margaret and her children recently moved into an apartment nearby under the auspices of Building Bridges' "Path Program." Rachel is in school and enjoys her classes and is taking flute lessons. We're keeping in touch and wish them well in their new life.

The family's names have been changed to protect their privacy.

we're looking for a few good families

Friends Association offers one of the best foster care services in southeast Pennsylvania. We maintain small case loads, get to know our children and families very well and use a teamwork approach so that families feel supported and children are kept safe. Unfortunately, we often have to say no when a county case worker calls to ask if we have a family who can take a child. When that happens, children often go to group homes, where they don't experience the same family atmosphere and individual care that a foster family provides.

We want to change that. Our goal is to be able to say yes every time we're asked to take a child into our care. This year, we

are contacting faith communities, play groups, YMCAs, school parent groups and every group in the community with members who might consider becoming foster parents. We want to get two messages out to families. The first is that children in their community need their help.



There are not enough foster families to meet the current need. The second is that fostering can be a powerful experience of giving and receiving love. Every foster family we've worked with—without exception—has said that they've gotten

far more from fostering than they could possibly give their foster children.

How can you help? You can encourage your rabbi or pastor to talk to us about an opportunity for us to speak to an adult education group. Or talk to the moms in your scout troop, play group or service organization about inviting us to give a talk on fostering. Or you may have your own ideas about a group that we could speak to.

Contact Tamara Fox, 610-431-3598 ext. 201 or e-mail t.fox@friendsassoc.org to explore how you can help us spread the word about the need for great foster parents.

A POSSIBLE DREAM: ending homelessness in Chester County

In the next year, Friends Association will launch a groundbreaking new program for families in Chester County who are homeless. Friends Association staff members have been researching programs in other communities for over a year and in July, Marty Boston, Regina Horton and Tamara Fox attended the National Alliance to End Homelessness's annual conference in Washington DC. Speakers at the conference presented information about dynamic programs around the nation that are decreasing homelessness among families.

Now we are ready to create our own "Housing First" pilot program. This program will move families quickly from shelter into permanent rental housing and then provide counseling, rental subsidies and any other support the families need to help them regain stability in their new homes. We will have to start small, but if we succeed on a small scale, we will be able to expand over the next few years and eventually meet the needs of most families in the county who find themselves in a housing crisis.

This approach makes good sense, both for families and for the community. Families who feel secure in permanent housing are better able to deal with other issues, such as continued education, learning to maintain a budget and improving family dynamics. In addition, they tend to use fewer expensive community resources such as emergency room care and interventions from county children and youth services.

In other communities similar programs have decreased family homelessness by as much as 40% over a few years. Many of these communities have made a commitment to end homelessness in the next 10 years. It may sound ambitious, but cities like Minneapolis, Denver and San Francisco have signed on. If they can hope for an end to homelessness, we think Chester County can too, and we intend to lead the way.



our fall appeal:

a great investment in the future

If you're looking for a good investment in an uncertain market, consider investing in a child's future. When Friends Association helps homeless families find permanent homes, or provides loving families for children in foster care, we improve children's chances to grow into healthy, successful adults. This is a good investment for these children, but it's a great investment for the whole community. Our children—all of our children—will create our future. Let's invest in that future now.

If you haven't made your gift to our fall campaign yet, please give now. We'll use your gift to help families achieve a better future for their children and for your community.



WHO WE ARE

AT FRIENDS ASSOCIATION FOR CARE AND PROTECTION OF CHILDREN, WE BELIEVE EVERY CHILD DESERVES TO GROW UP IN A SAFE ENVIRONMENT, SUPPORTED BY A LOVING, NURTURING FAMILY. IN ORDER TO REALIZE OUR VISION, WE PROVIDE FOUR CORE SERVICES:

HOUSING

The goal of our housing services is to keep children and their parents together by helping families in crisis get back on their feet. In addition to basic shelter, we offer a program that combines life skills training with referral to a variety of services for low income families.

Emergency Shelter for Homeless Families

Our shelter can accommodate as many as six families at a time. Families may stay in the shelter up to 60 days.

Transitional Housing Services

We offer six affordable apartments to families making the transition to self-sufficiency. We seek to provide support to families who have graduated from our housing programs at scattered sites when possible.

CHILDREN'S SERVICES

When it becomes necessary to find safe foster or adoptive families for children, Friends Association offers two additional services. We carefully recruit, train and support both foster and adoptive families who can create healthy, loving environments where children will grow and thrive.

Specialized Foster Care Program

Friends Association provides foster care services for hard to place children, including teenagers and sibling groups.

Specialized Adoption

Our adoption program serves children with special needs. We are the only Statewide Adoption Network (S.W.A.N.) affiliate in Chester County.



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to make your reservation!**



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g.brion@friendsassoc.org**

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www.friendsassoc.org

check out *our new look*

Nineteen years ago, when Friends Association moved into the former Keshet Israel Synagogue on Church Street in West Chester, there wasn't much money in the budget for new signs. For years, the only information in front of the building was the small letterboard sign left behind by the synagogue, which was half hidden by the shrubbery.

This summer, we came out of hiding with bold new signage including new trim colors, banner-style signs featuring our logo and key program areas, and artwork designed to convey the essence of our mission to care for homeless and at-risk children.

The new facade design is the first step in Friends Association's campaign to raise awareness of the needs of homeless families and foster children in Chester County. We are designing new brochures and creating a new website. In the coming year we will be hosting Open Houses to introduce new friends to our work with homeless families. We will also visit faith communities, schools and YMCAs to talk about the need for more foster families.

Thank you to everyone who contributed to our beautiful new signage: talented volunteer designers Karen Watkins of Gecko Group and Susan Frens of Frens and Frens, LLC, Restoration Architects, Cockerham McKinley Painting Contractors who volunteered their painting services and the Sherwin Williams store in Exton, which provided paint for the trim.

