

THE LINK

A Resource of the DFW Alliance of Adoption and Orphan Care Ministries

www.DFWAlliance.org

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Your Church & the Orphan Workshop

Saturday, September 27th
9:00 am to 4:00 pm
Irving Bible Church

FamilyLife's Hope for Orphans is offering a workshop entitled *Your Church & the Orphan*. This workshop is a powerful, interactive and fun one-day event that will bring together a group of passionate like-minded people from your church to pray, dream and learn about how God might want to use your church on behalf of the orphan. It's not too late to register online or simply come and register at the door on the day of the event.

Visit www.hopefororphans.org for more details.

Serving Instead of Solving

by Michael Monroe and Matt Donovan

As awareness of the over 143 million orphans worldwide has increased, more and more Christians and their local churches are stepping forward and getting involved. We see this happening all across North Texas – in churches large and small and from many denominations. At the same time, many of us are only now beginning to realize just how sizable the orphan problem truly is. Whether it is the over 500,000 U.S. children in foster care or the countless millions of orphans in Africa, the magnitude of this problem leads us to talk in terms of how it can be "solved" and what we can do to bring about these "solutions." After all, problems demand solutions and certainly that is what God intends for us to focus on, right?

We've come to believe that we, as followers of Christ, are not called primarily to "solve" this problem. The mere notion that we will solve this problem (at least any time soon) seems somewhat misguided – an attempt to apply a distinctly North American mindset to a global problem. Focusing on grand solutions can distract our attention and our efforts, and even prevent us from actually getting started. Truth is, there isn't a single idea, strategy or policy, nor any amount of money that will fully address the enormity of this crisis or remedy its root causes. But this reality should not discourage us in the least. In fact, this reality actually points to what is needed most.

Rather than seeing the orphan crisis as a problem to be "solved," we believe we should see in it a call to love and serve those who God cares deeply and passionately about. Scripture clearly, repeatedly and primarily addresses the issue of orphans in terms of God's people loving, caring and serving. And while we can certainly talk in terms of "solutions" and even work to bring about justice and fundamental change that benefits the orphan, it is important that we always remain focused on what we are called to and why we are called to it.

Loving and serving the orphan for the orphan's sake, and for the

Interested in Joining the DFW Alliance?

Is your church interested in becoming part of the DFW Alliance? Participating in the DFW Alliance is a no cost, no commitment proposition. After all, the DFW Alliance exists to help churches in the North Texas area find the connections, resources and help they need to launch and sustain effective adoption, foster care and orphan care ministries.

If your church ministry is interested in learning more about the DFW Alliance or if you have questions about the DFW Alliance contact Michael Monroe at info@dfwalliance.org or visit www.DFWAlliance.org.

DFW Alliance Churches Involved in Relief Care

Several DFW Alliance churches have helped to launch a relief care network to serve foster children and provide practical support to foster parents.

The idea behind relief care is simple – foster parents sometimes need a break . . . and there are couples and singles in churches all across the area who can offer quality relief care ranging from just a few hours to a couple of days.

For more information about relief care contact Michael Monroe at info@dfwalliance.org.

glory of the One who has called us to serve, is sufficient reason for each Christian and every local expression of the Body of Christ to prayerfully consider how God can best use them. And as we seek to love and serve we might just discover that the orphan, in his lack of power and influence and in her poverty of possessions, is a means of grace and blessing in our own lives.

Michael Monroe and his wife Amy lead Tapestry, an adoption and foster care ministry at Irving Bible Church. Matt Donovan and his wife Kristin lead FAM, the foster and adoption ministry at The Village Church.

Ministry Focus

In each edition of The Link we shine the spotlight on what God is doing in one of the DFW Alliance church ministries. This time we are focusing on Embrace – the foster care and adoption ministry at Rhea’s Mill Baptist Church in McKinney, Texas.

Embracing the Need

by Cindy Coffman

Just over a year ago, we officially launched Embrace – the foster care and adoption ministry at Rhea’s Mill Baptist Church in McKinney, Texas. In the year-plus prior to our launch, we really struggled to understand what God had in mind for our ministry given that our church was small (only 300 members at the time) compared to so many other churches in our area. Due to our church’s size we had a very limited number of members who would directly benefit from this ministry and very limited financial and people resources to run it. However, we knew that God had clearly called us to this ministry. So instead of spending more time on “human planning” we decided to launch in faith and see where God would take us. True to His calling, God has clearly revealed the foster and adoptive needs in our area and continues to bring forward wonderful families with a heart to foster or adopt. God is continuing to define the focus of Embrace. As we have moved forward we have consistently heard one recurring question from those participating in Embrace events – *why don’t more churches have an adoption and foster care ministry?* People constantly comment on the lack of awareness when it comes to the number of “waiting children” in the North Texas foster care system.

As a result, we are planning an awareness and “ministry partnership” campaign to connect small to mid-sized churches

The Faith Connection



The Heart Gallery is a unique photographic exhibit that introduces children in our local community who are waiting for a loving, adoptive family they can call their own.

Through the help of The Faith Connection, over 20 churches in North Texas have displayed the Heart Gallery. As a result, these churches have raised awareness of the needs of the many children in our community as well as the many ways people can become involved.

With nearly 4,000 children in foster care in North Texas, there is no doubt that the foster care situation in our area presents many difficult challenges. But it is equally clear that local churches throughout our community can make a meaningful and lasting difference in the lives of these precious children.

To learn more about how your church can host a Heart Gallery in order to raise awareness and help children in foster care, contact Penny Cook at penny@thefaithconnection.org or visit The Faith Connection at www.TheFaithConnection.org.

throughout our county where this type of ministry may otherwise be somewhat limited or non-existent. Through this effort we hope to provide quality foster and adoption information for church leaders and interested families, and facilitate foster and adopt training opportunities among the partner churches. Thankfully, there are already a number of churches in our area that are addressing the needs of orphans, and it has been a tremendous blessing to be able to connect with them and to begin to work together to help build an effective foster/adopt network.

Additionally, we are in the early stages of developing an “age-appropriate” foster and adoptive educational material for children. We believe that early exposure to the needs of orphans – both here and around the world – is a vital step in making an impact on the orphan crisis both now and in the future.

God continues to supply what we need to move forward. Recently, one of our core Embrace families, Bruce and Denise Kendrick, who are parents to three beautiful biological children and veteran foster parents, have decided to go into full-time foster/adoptive ministry with Embrace. They are in the process of raising financial support through private donations as they transition from their role as youth ministers at Rhea’s Mill Baptist Church. While they will be sorely missed by our youth, Embrace is thrilled to be moving forward with the benefit of their immense creativity, vision and love for children.

Our ministry has only just begun, but we are excited to see how God will use our small church to big things for the fatherless - in our community and around the world.



Cindy Coffman helped found Embrace and serves on its leadership team. You can learn more about Embrace at www.embracetexas.org.

Upcoming Adoption & Foster Care Conferences

Two DFW Alliance churches have upcoming adoption and foster care conferences you won’t want to miss.

Tapestry will host the 2008 Tapestry Adoption & Foster Care Conference on Saturday, October 25, 2008, from 9:00 am to 3:00 pm at Irving Bible Church. This free conference is ideal for adoptive and foster parents as well as anyone considering

Check Out the New DFW Alliance

The DFW Alliance has a new website. Be sure to check it out at www.DFWAlliance.org.

The new site includes a list of the growing number of area churches that are participating in the DFW Alliance, and also has information about upcoming events for various DFW Alliance ministries. On October 1st we will also be launching a DFW Alliance blog, so be sure to sign-up for updates once it is live.

About the DFW Alliance

The DFW Alliance of Adoption and Orphan Care Ministries is a network of local church adoption, foster care and orphan care ministries in the Dallas/Ft. Worth area that are committed to living out God's heart for the "fatherless."

For questions or more information about the DFW Alliance, contact Michael Monroe at info@dfwalliance.org or visit us at www.DFWAlliance.org.

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adoption or foster care. The conference includes over a dozen breakout sessions to choose from as well as lunch, materials and childcare, but advance registration is required.

You can find out all of the details about the Tapestry Conference and register on-line at www.tapestryconference.org.

Lake Pointe Adoption & Orphan Ministry is also hosting its annual adoption and foster care conference on Saturday, November 8, 2008, from 8:30 am to 3:00 pm at the Lake Pointe Rockwall campus. This conference will feature Emily Chapman as well as many great breakout sessions covering a wide variety of topics. The conference is completely free and includes lunch and childcare, but advance registration is required.

You can find out more information about the 2008 Lake Pointe Church Adoption & Foster Care Conference and register online at www.adoptionconference.net.

Summit V is Coming to Dallas in 2009

The Christian Alliance for Orphans will be holding its upcoming annual summit at Irving Bible Church on April 30 and May 1, 2009. This annual event brings together churches, parachurch organizations, adoption and foster care agencies and orphan advocates from across the country to be inspired and become better equipped to love and serve the fatherless in Jesus' name.

Visit www.christianalliancefororphans.org for more information about the Christian Alliance for Orphans and to find out more details about Summit V.

Resources for Local Church Ministries

Tapestry, the adoption and foster care ministry at Irving Bible Church, has developed and compiled a wide array of resources to help churches effectively plan and launch adoption and foster care ministries. These resources cover a variety of topics and subjects, including how to launch a ministry, ideas for large and small group events, strategy guides for various aspects of the ministry and how to start and administer an adoption assistance fund.

These resources are all online and can be viewed and downloaded for free at www.irvingbible.org/index.php?id=1522. We hope you will take advantage of these resources.