

THE LOVE LETTER



Our Mission

"Agape Villages mobilizes 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."

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John's Story... We are So Proud! By Sabra Thomas

I'm so pleased to share John's story with you as together, with Agape Villages, we've made a tremendous impact in his life. My husband, Dave, and I have been foster parents with Agape for 12 years now. It has been a fantastic journey! I had become disabled and unable to work. However, I was not unable to contribute to society. One thing I realized is that I was good at parenting. This is my talent and passion.

We soon had three placements at the same time. John was our second. The younger years were challenging for him, but a lot of fun! By the time John hit high school, his life began to excel. Although he struggled with his social life earlier, in high school, things really came together for him. He was involved in student government, honors classes and sports. His self-confidence soared. Then came his senior year. Oh he lived, ate and breathed every part of that experience!

John was accepted into Sacramento State University. He had already taken and passed several college level classes in high school, so he was off to a great start. He decided to major in

engineering. This usually takes 5 years to complete, but John finished in 4 years by taking heavy loads and summer classes. How proud we were on May 22, 2016 when John walked across the stage to receive his diploma. He wore a gold sash and rope with a white sash and his hat was decorated with gears with "Mechanical Engineer" written across the top. I had a lump in my throat and tears in my eyes for his accomplishments...all the while wondering how time could have passed so quickly. He came to us at age 11 and is now 23 years old.

He's a grown man at 6'2" tall, 200 pounds and a college graduate!

John then applied for a job and received an internship at an engineering firm. Within six months, the firm was so impressed with John that they hired him full-time. He's got a great job, good income, a growing 401k and a bright future!

(Agape is proud to have played an important role through weekly social work visits and providing support to John and his foster family through the years. We thank our donors that we could help him financially with his sports and other activities.)



Helping Children and Youth Through the Storms of Life

By Danah Nelson, Volunteer in the Sacramento area

"When I think about the kids who are living on the edge Who need Moms and Pops and families to snatch them off the ledge, Kids misused, abused, abandoned, hurt, through no fault of their own, Yep, all they want are families to help them through the storm."

And that's where Agape Villages comes in! Agape Villages and their resource parents (foster parents) are a haven for children who have been hit hard with fear, doubt, grief, sadness, sometimes violence. Some of these kids have been diagnosed with PTSD, like soldiers back from the battlefield! Holding children in arms of security, love and peace is what Agape is all about.

My first acquaintance with Agape was in 1979. Several chil-

dren from Sierra Children's Home started coming to our private school in Graton, CA. Little did I realize that 35 years later, in retirement, I'd be volunteering for the very same agency, although the name has changed to Agape Villages. Now I'm a voice for the kids.

California is filled with children who deserve an Agent of Hope (Agape) to come along so they have a chance to reach their incredible potential. The Bible tells about some foster kids: Moses was a foster child who rose to greatness. Esther was a foster child who saved a nation. Even Jesus was adopted and raised by his step-father, Joseph.

You can be an agent of hope for a needy child. You can breathe for another. In God's economy, there's no such thing as a throw-away kid. *"Yep, all they want are families to help them through the storm."*

Teenage Boy Comes Back into our Care

By Lisa Monk, Agape Social Worker

Five years ago, we served a 10 year old boy, Jeremy, in respite care for six weeks with one of our foster families. At that time, he was in foster care with a county foster home. Due to things not going well with the county foster home, Jeremy asked if he could be placed with the Agape Villages foster family who had provided respite care for him. Things worked out for him to do this and he has now been with our foster family for six months.

Jeremy has been doing very well! He continues to excel in advanced placement classes in school with a 4.25 GPA. He is on the high school football team, the wrestling team and is planning on running track. As his social worker, Jeremy inspires me every time we meet!

Making Progress Through the Storms of Life

By Courtney McAlister, Agape Social Worker

Eleven year old Tracy has been through a lot in her young life. Due to family dysfunction, parental rights were terminated and she was placed with a loving woman who adopted her. Unfortunately, that woman died. Another single mother home was found for her, but this lady passed away also. The county then placed her in other foster homes only for them to fail after a period of 4-5 months.

Yes, Tracy has experienced a significant amount of difficulties and trauma and her behavior has been where she acts out her pain, confusion and insecurity. She was placed in one of our foster homes last July and I am pleased to say that we are making good progress. It has not always been easy, but we are providing Tracy and her foster mother with the services they need to meet Tracy's needs.

Tracy has been able to reconnect with her oldest sister who is in a group home. The county will again be looking for an adoptive home for her and we have hopes for a brighter future for Tracy.

Twin Boys With Plans to Return Home

By Dave Roach, Agape Social Worker

As many know, the goal of foster care is first, if possible, to improve situations in the home so that children can return home. We are hopeful for just that outcome with two 8 year old twin boys in our care. They came into care due to the domestic violence on the part of their father and the mother's failure to protect the boys. The boys have been in care with us for over three months now.

The boy's mother is working hard to complete her case plan. We hope she continues to make progress so that the boys can return home in a few more months. In the meantime, the boys are working on doing better in school and at home.

Every child comes with the message that God is not yet discouraged of man.

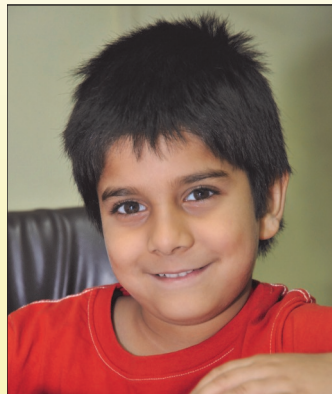
We Need Foster Parents!

— Every Child Deserves a Home —

We receive calls almost daily about children needing a foster home. We serve children who've been abused, neglected, abandoned and mistreated in ways they need to be removed from their own families for their protection. These are children who've been thrust into the foster care system, who depend on the mercy of others for their care.

We need families for children of all ages, especially children 10 years and older and sibling groups. **Consider today** how you can be used to care for children.

For more information on foster parenting, call the Agape Villages office at 800-566-2225. Also, see our website.



In The Volunteer Spotlight!

Carolyn Adams is a faithful member of the Kentucky Avenue Church of Christ in Woodland and an Agape volunteer in the greater Sacramento area. After spending 38 years in various positions in education administration, she retired and now does what she always wanted to do, but never had the time – help people, and especially children. Oh yes, and there are 3 adult children and 6 grandchildren who also keep her busy. She is very close to being certified as an Agape resource parent. As a volunteer, she serves on our Advisory Council. She has helped hand out brochures at various street fairs. She participated in our annual dinner. She was a key part of organizing the toy drive in the Sacramento area for the kids at Christmas. She does just about anything we ask her to do.



Carolyn Adams

Carolyn does it all! And we are thankful!

We Need More Volunteers!

If you would like to be a volunteer, please let us know via our website: www.AgapeVillages.org and use the "Get Involved" button, or call us at 866-922-4273.



Leave a Future or "After-Lifetime" Gift

"CIRCLE OF HOPE AND LOVE" Program

We've established our "Circle of Hope and Love" planned giving initiative to encourage those interested in the work of Agape Villages to participate in extra ways to provide financial support to our efforts. These are gifts that come not from current funds, but from efforts such as listing Agape Villages as a beneficiary in your IRA, as a beneficiary in your will or trust, as a beneficiary of your life insurance policy, as a beneficiary of the gift of appreciated stock or other appreciated asset or in other future gift opportunities.

Many of our Donors acknowledge that they wish they could give more. This is one way to do that! A future gift, planned and implemented, can be a great way to give extra to help the children we serve.

Consider becoming a member of our Circle of Hope and Love initiative! For more information on this opportunity, please fill out and return the coupon below. Thanks!

CIRCLE OF HOPE AND LOVE

Please send me more information on your "Circle of Hope and Love" planned giving program.



Name _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Phone number: _____

Email address: _____

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



Hank Lawson

THE JOY OF KNOWING YOU!

By Hank Lawson, Director, Church Relations

To Joshua, God said "Be strong and courageous! Do not tremble or be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go." (Joshua 1:9)

In Hebrews 13:5 the writer reminds those to whom he is addressing: "For he himself has said, 'I will never desert you, nor will I ever forsake you.'"

To those of us who seek to rely on the LORD, these are such comforting and encouraging words. At Agape Villages, we not only have the thoughts of God being with us and helping us, we also know we have YOU.

The care of children and youth is an awesome task God has given us. It is a work that is close to God's heart! He is beside us and so are you.

As we work with you, side-by-side, **thank you** for: (1) Your **prayers** which are so needed, both from congregations and

from caring individuals; (2) Your **financial support** through generous donations...we had such a tremendous response to help with our children having a GOOD Christmas; and (3) Your **words of encouragement** about the "wonderful" work we are doing.

We hope you are encouraged knowing how IMPORTANT you are to us. We are thankful we have God with us and we are so THANKFUL we have you with us. Truly, this is a UNITED effort to serve our Lord.

With the New Year, our resolution is to continue to SERVE the children and youth of California. It is such an encouragement knowing you are serving along with us. Please continue!

Yes, there is great joy knowing you and the Lord are there as partners with us in this important work. Remember, so many depend on us. We must be diligent for them! May God bless us all in this new year!

Supporting Churches in 2016

We are very thankful for the support we receive from congregations all over California and beyond. Below is a listing of the 29 churches providing support to Agape Villages in 2016 and we are thankful!

Anderson Church of Christ
Central Church of Christ (Sacramento)
Chino Church of Christ
Christ's Church in the Tri-Valley (Dublin)
Church of Christ of Murphys
Davis Park Church of Christ (Modesto)
Elk Grove Church of Christ
Empire Church of Christ
1st Century Church of Christ (Sun Valley, NV)
First Presbyterian Church of Livermore

Healdsburg Church of Christ
Hughson Church of Christ
John Knox Presbyterian Church (Dublin)
Journey Christian Church (Tracy)
Lathrop Church of Christ
Lodi Church of Christ
Los Banos Church of Christ
Martinez Church of Christ
Merced Church of Christ
Metro Church of Christ (Gresham, OR)

North Metro Church of Christ (Sacramento)
Oceanview Church of Christ (Pacifica)
Parkway Church of Christ (Sacramento)
Roseville Church of Christ
Tri Valley Church of Christ (Livermore)
Turlock Church of Christ
Tyler Church of Christ (Sacramento)
United Lutheran Church (Manteca)
Vermont Ave. Church of Christ (L.A.)

Our 4th Annual Dinner and Auction, November 5th

Our annual dinner and auction event was held at the beautiful Pleasanton Marriott on November 5th. The keynote speaker was **Dave Dravecky**, former San Francisco Giants pitcher and a cancer survivor. He delivered an incredibly inspiring message encouraging us all. In addition, **Segrid Williams**, a long-time Agape resource parent spoke about the joys and challenges of being a resource parent (foster parent). **China Juarez**, an Agape foster youth (age 19), spoke movingly of the many challenges of her life and how, with the help of family and Agape, she has persevered to be a successful, happy young woman today. **Brock Roby** was our MC for the evening and did a great job. Nearly \$40,000 was raised in support of our efforts to serve children and youth! We are very grateful!



Dave and Jan Dravecky

are very grateful!



Brock and Anne Roby



Segrid Williams



China Juarez

Another High Achieving Young Man in Our Care By Kourtney Chevalier, MSW

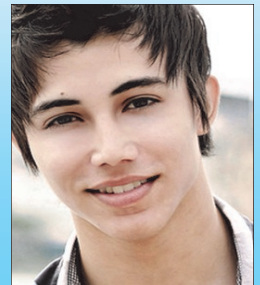
Brian has been placed with his Agape family since 2014. He came into care after both of his parents passed away when he was 12 years of age. He has a younger brother who was adopted, but Brian, for his own reasons, chose not to be adopted by that family. Since being in care with us, he has become an integral part of his foster family.

Early on after coming into care, Brian was more reserved and not very social. This likely came from a sense of insecurity. Through the loving care of Agape, he has grown a great deal and is blossoming. His resource mother continues to verbalize how impressed she is with him and his attitude. He has matured a great deal.

Brian has shown unwavering dedication to achieving high marks in school and consistently pushes himself academi-

cally. Brian's commitment has driven him to become involved in a concurrent enrollment plan with a local Junior College, making it possible for him to graduate with a diploma and an AA degree at the same time. That will be quite an accomplishment!

Brian is a member of the Science Olympiad and the Key Club (service and leadership focused) at his high school. These memberships have led him to local Universities for competitions and activities to expand his horizons. Brian is committed to his future and plans to become a doctor, with full support from his resource family who could not imagine their life without him.



Join Our Key Club Help us Fund our Foster Parent Recruitment and Training Program

Yes, I'd like to commit to help fund Agape Villages' Foster Parent Recruitment and Training Program in the amount of **\$50.00 a month** beginning _____.

Name _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Email _____

Phone _____

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



Our Professional Service Statistics

Current Year Statistics (From 1/1/16 to 12/31/16)

- 188 – Foster Children Served Year-to-Date
- 110 – New Children in Care this Year
- 85 – Foster Children Currently in Care
- 56 – Certified Foster Families

Since We Began in 1958

- 6,100 – Foster Children Served
 - ♦ 4,000 – Through Sierra Children's Home
 - ♦ 2,100 – Through Agape Villages
- 476 – Foster Families who have Partnered with us in Foster Care

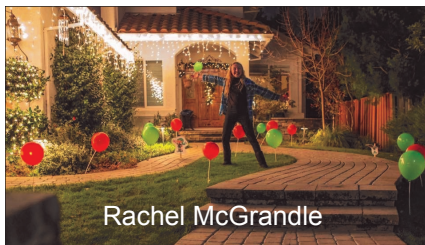
So much to be THANKFUL for!

Major Gifts Received

We are very grateful for the gift of \$5,000 received from **Christ's Church in the Tri-Valley** (Bay Area) and the gift of \$4,000 from the **Empire Church of Christ** (Modesto area). Also, gifts of \$5,000 from the **Raymus Foundation**, \$1,000 from the **Jorgensen Foundation** and \$1,000 from the **Central Valley Association of Realtors** were gratefully received.

"Elfing" for Agape...Again!

We are grateful to the **Youth Group** at the **Tri-Valley Church of Christ** (Livermore) for conducting another "Elfing" fund raising event for Agape. The way this project works is that donors give \$40 and the Youth Group then puts twenty red and green balloons in the designated family's yard with a sign letting them know who selected them to be "elfed." This event raised \$1,210. We are very thankful!



Thank you Rite Aid Foundation

We thank the **Rite Aid Foundation** for their generous grant of \$5,000. We are so appreciative of companies like Rite Aid who support their communities and are willing to make a difference in the lives of foster children in our area.

Shop with a Cop Program – Year Three!

Once again this year, the **Manteca Police Department** coordinated efforts for our foster children to go shopping with a cop at a local Walmart store. Everyone had a great time! The children could shop for whatever gift they wanted. More than \$4,100 was spent! We appreciate these officers for putting their lives on the line every day for us and for the joy they instilled on this special day for children!



Mayor of Manteca, Steve DeBrum, Officer John Moody, CHP Officer Patrick Danipor, Police Chief Nick Obligacion.

Holiday Party for our Families

The Ebony Boat Club of Stockton invited Agape families to their holiday party and provided gifts to all. Thanks!

Give Every Child a Chance Group

Special thanks to **Give Every Child a Chance** who decided to gift one of our families with a wonderful Christmas. Everything from a microwave to bed sheets. What a Christmas they received. Special thanks to Janette Cooper and Carol Davis with GECAC for organizing that wonderful event!



Ladies Group Provides Gifts

Calvary Community Church in Manteca: a group of ladies knit and made blankets, booties, hats, little teddy bears, gowns and little pads for infants to spit up on...2 large bags full!

More Gifts for Children

Premier Community Credit Union chose us again this year for their Adopt-A-Child program. We provided them a list of what our children would like to have and they provided gifts for 20 children. Thanks again!



Amber Larson and Nicole Trevino

Bikes Donated to Agape!

Agape was blessed again this year to have **Turning Wheels for Kids** donate **30 bikes** for our children and youth. Helmets were also provided. There is just something about receiving a new bicycle that puts a big smile on a child's face! You all brightened Christmas for many kids! Thanks again!



Gifts for Children from Caring Family

We are grateful to the **Podesto family** for donating 40 bags of gift items for our foster children. Each bag is individually decorated by a child and includes a Teddy Bear, blanket, coloring book, crayons, tooth brush and tooth paste. Thanks again!



Memorial & Honor Gifts

November 2, 2016 through January 27, 2017

In Loving Memory

ERLINDA ACOSTA
Gene & Mary Copeland
Hank & Betty Lawson

FLORENCE ALLEN
Janet Hames

JOHANN AQUINO-ALFORD
Richard & Judy Deatherage

JIMMY ARCHIBEQUE
John & Nadine Greff

ROY & BETTY BARTLETT
Christopher Nunes

TODD BELL
John Rogers

KATHLEEN BENNER
Angela Benner

BESSIE BLACHLY
Olga Brazzel
Janet Kleyn

LARRY BLUE
Sue Latham

DICK BLYTHE
Thomas Byrne

MARY FRANCES BOW
Daniel & Shannon Bow

JIM BROWNING
Orval & Diane Welch

CHARLES LEROY BRYAN
Demi Orosco

CAROL BUSH
Don & Gwen Minor

EARLIE BUSTER
Gene & Mary Copeland

EARL CHAMBERS
Danah Nelson

ALEX COBLEIGH
John & Nadine Greff

DEANNA COLLINS
Orval & Diane Welch

ELSIE COPELAND
Orval & Diane Welch

JOE CORCORAN
Donald & Barbara Gray
Kathleen Jones

JEFF DENTON
Paul & MaryAnn Clontz

EVERETT FOX
John & Nadine Greff

JUANITO GABIANA
Hazel Sarmiento

KATHY GILBERT
Janet Hames

LARRY GIPSON
Janet Kleyn
Don & Gwen Minor

RON GONSALVES
Orval & Diane Welch

MARGARET HAIRSTON
John & Nadine Greff

JOE HANNAH
Bob & Opal Taylor

HERMAN HOLLAND
Jim & Mary Holland

GEORGA HOUSE
Edna House
Ray & Linda Nelson

HARRY "NORMAN" JADLOT
Vivian Oliver

NITA JAMES
Norman & Rebecca Cole
Les & Peggy Ornelas

WILLIAM & VAUGHNCELE KISER
Rita Blue
Vickie Kiser

FRED KLEYN
Beverly Kleyn

LESTER, MARY & JAMES KYLE
Reta Kyle

GREGORY La MOTTA
Norman & Rebecca Cole

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

GEORGE MARCOTTE
John Rogers

DON MAYO
Bob & Opal Taylor

EDGAR & RUBY POWELL
Judy Powell

GENEVA PROUT
Kellie Morgan

MORRIS RAMONT
Orval & Diane Welch

JERRY ROBINSON
Betty Frazier

JANE ROSS
Don & Mary Ann Dunn

JOHN RUSSELL
John & Nadine Greff

TRUMAN SCOTT
Ferne Scott

DEANNA SENFT
Dorothy Alley

DR. JIMMIE B. SMITH
Doris Smith

BERNELL SNIDER
Orval & Diane Welch

BOBBY LEE SPARKS
Wayne & Peggy Daniel
Ginger Sparks

LOUIS WATSON, SR.
Jim & Caye Randolph

In Honor And Respect

Prayers!
GENETHA ADOLPH
Wyba Nienstadt

Merry Christmas!
KARI CARPER
Jim & Mona Carper

Merry Christmas!
KEN & TRACY CARPER
Jim & Mona Carper

Merry Christmas!
LeANN & CHRIS CARPER
Jim & Mona Carper

Prayers!
MONA CARPER
Wyba Nienstadt

Thank you!
JANET KLEYN
Jerry & Karel Baxley

Merry Christmas!
JACLYN KUENZINGER
Jim & Mona Carper

Merry Christmas!
LANAE & JOSH KUENZINGER
Jim & Mona Carper

A Great Dad!
HANK LAWSON
Jo Lawson
Ray & Celia Lawson

Merry Christmas!
HANK & BETTY LAWSON
Ray & Celia Lawson

With Love and Respect!
JENNIFER OXE
Michael & Carol Pliner

Proud of You, Daughter!
SARAH ROCKEY
Barbara Rockey

Merry Christmas!
LORENE SMITH
Sarah Rockey

With Respect and Appreciation!
MIKE & DONNA STRONG
Vincent & Vonda Denny

Merry Christmas!
STEVE & KAYLA WALSH
Jim & Mona Carper

With Love and Appreciation!
ARTHUR WHITMORE
Geri Whitmore

Merry Christmas!
MEGAN WILLEY
Jim & Mona Carper

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: _____

We Are So Proud of Our Kids

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

Agape Receives Grant from the Sacramento Region Community Foundation

We were thrilled and honored to be awarded an Immediate Need grant in the amount of \$10,000 from the Sacramento Region Community Foundation. We are very excited to have our services recognized by such a prominent foundation in the Sacramento area. While our foster family agency has always been actively working in the Sacramento region and surrounding areas, we are looking to significantly grow the number of foster families and children served in these areas. This grant will help us do that!

Alejandra Bonilla and Jordan Sherry Join Our Staff

We are so pleased to welcome Alejandra Bonilla and Jordan Sherry to the Agape team. Both Alejandra and Jordan are master's level social workers, providing professionalism and guidance to our Bay Area families and youth. Welcome, Alejandra and Jordan, we are excited to be working with you both.



Drive Change. Donate a Vehicle Today.

Our car donation program provides vital support to our work. To donate your car (or trucks, trailers, boats and RVs) call **Car Program** toll-free, seven days a week at **1-800-513-6560**. Or go to our website:

www.AgapeVillages.org

PLEASE REMEMBER
AGAPE IN YOUR
WILL OR
ESTATE PLAN.



For more information:
jkleyn@AgapeVillages.org

www.AgapeVillages.org

Cheryl's Corner Program Activities Providing Many Learning Opportunities

A huge shout out to my fellow advisory committee members in the Bay Area: Kevin Youngblood, Jorge Gomez and our very own Dave Roach. Thanks so much for your dedication, guidance and financial support as well. Gratitude to Kevin and USGA, Inc. for your generosity in providing the funding for our advertising in the Bay Area, in order to recruit resource parents who are opening their homes and families to youth and non-minor dependents. If anyone is interested in becoming a resource parent or a volunteer please contact us at: 888.908.8384.

Cheryl Youngblood, LCSW



Agape Villages' Program Director

This quarter we are pleased to introduce Matthew Fatusi (owner of Moore's Martial Arts). Matthew will be speaking to Agape youth ages 15-21 on the topic of Preparing for the 21st Century Career. His vast business experience including computers and marketing make him well qualified to talk about how a teenager can start a business online and how to build a career online by learning how to code.

Agape's Girls' Group has an exciting 2017 planned including making and selling crafts, movie night, and going to new and exciting places like animal sanctuaries and roller coaster parks! We can't wait to show the girls a fun time while teaching them important life lessons. Our Girls' Group is available to our foster youth and non-minor dependents ages 10-21.

Our social workers continue to receive 36 hours of training a year, three times the required number. Agape is pleased to announce that we have a new trainer, Jean-Paul Eberle, Master of Arts in Body Psychotherapy: Somatic Counseling Psychology, Certified Massage Therapist, and Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist. Welcome, Jean-Paul.

Agape continues to expand and benefit children, youth and non-minor dependents placed in the foster care system. Join us at Agape and make the lives of these kids in care better than ever!

Needed: "misfits, criminals and enablers!"

Jail 'N Bail 2017

Our **Central Valley** Jail 'N Bail event will take place on Thursday, March 30, 2017 from 10 a.m. – 3 p.m. at the **Oak Valley Community Bank**, 191 W. North Street, **Manteca**. This is your opportunity to send a friend to jail, for a good cause! Watch out to see if you get a subpoena in the mail! We ask our caring "criminal" accused of all kinds of "crimes and misdemeanors" to raise bail to get out of jail. And so, if asked, please take pity on these poor souls and foot the bill for their bail.

To participate, contact **Michael Contreras** at Mcontreras@agapevillages.org or call 209-992-8346.

Walk-ins are welcome! The first 5 jailbirds to show up will receive a \$20 Starbucks gift card. This is a **fun fundraising** event! We need all kinds of volunteers to participate as accusers, criminals and donors! Please join us!





Sharing Christmas Joy!

Christmas Parties a Big Hit!

Our foster kids and their foster parents enjoyed Christmas parties in the three major regions where we do our work. The first party was held in **Danville** at the Danville Bowl. The second party was held in **Manteca** at the Manteca Bowl and Family Fun Center. The third party was held in **Sacramento** at the Country Club Bowling Lanes. The kids all enjoyed plenty of pizza, cake and desserts, bowling, Christmas gifts, and of course, pictures with Santa! Kids were able to take home grab bags and cute stuffed animals.

All of the foster kids attending had a fantastic time! They had looks of true joy on their faces during bowling (the first time for many) and were so appreciative of the many gifts. Even the older ones enjoyed the picture time with Santa. The kids continued to reminisce about the excitement at home visits the following week.

We have so many to say “thanks” to, including:

Danville – Tri-Valley Bank, Safety Compliance Management, Santa Geoff Gillette, Tri Valley Quilts, Project Night Night.

Manteca - Turlock Church of Christ, Hughson Church of Christ, Photographer Marian McGlothlin, Santa Don Pascarella from TNT Fireworks, Manteca Chamber of Commerce, Manteca Sunrise Kiwanis, The Giving Tree and Bank of Stockton. *Special prayers for Ben Jetton and his family. Ben has been our Manteca Santa for many years and is currently suffering from pancreatic cancer.*

Sacramento – Shi Boykin, St. Andrews AME Church, Blue Shield of California, Fellowship Chamber of Commerce, Tyler Street Church of Christ, Central Church of Christ, Elk Grove Church of Christ, Kentucky Avenue Church of Christ, Orangevale Church of Christ, Roseville Church of Christ, Real Life Church, and Brian and Megan Bossemeyer.

Thanks to Agape staff, board and volunteers for all you did. Also, thanks to all those “unnamed” people who brought gifts by!



Agape's own Lisa Foster



John McCranie, Minister Turlock Church of Christ

Valentine's Day is Near

By David Lee, Chair, Board of Directors



Do you have a hard time finding just the right gifts for family and friends for birthdays and holidays? Few of us actually need anything. Often the gifts we do receive end up high on a closet shelf, get re-gifted, or put in storage along with previous years' presents.

Valentine's Day will be here soon. Time to order flowers, buy candy or beautiful Valentine cards for our loved ones. It is a time for us to let our family and friends know we love and appreciate them. However, soon, the flowers have wilted, the candy has caused cavities, and the valentines are placed in a drawer and forgotten.

Good news! A simple solution is available. Think about children who really are in need and could actually use a gift. Instead of buying unneeded presents, candy, or cards, think about making a donation in honor of a loved one and at the same time you will be helping take care of kids who really are in need. What a great example for your children to know a gift was given in their name. What a genuine expression of appreciation to your friends and family members to know that you cared enough about them to help others. P.S. This is a great idea for all occasions, all year long.



We Met Our Challenge Gift Again...and More!

We are very thankful for a group of generous donors who came together with a \$25,000 matching gift to challenge other caring donors to support Agape between November 29 and December 31. It was a dollar for dollar match. We are thrilled to report the match was met. We raised nearly \$30,000 that will be on top of the \$25,000 match for total of nearly \$55,000. Thanks!



Agape would like to thank Sleep Train for their continued support of our foster children! We received lots of clothing, toys and school supplies all year. They also provided us with funds to purchase gifts cards so the children can shop for themselves. We are thankful for the many ways that Sleep Train has continued to support us over the years! Sleep Train, you are great!

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.

We received \$1,933 for 2016.

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"Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven..."

**Remember, Online
Giving is Available on
our Website**

www.AgapeVillages.org

From the President

A Winning Team for Kids

2016 was a good year. 188 children served, up 29% from 2015. 17 new resource families (new term for foster family) certified. Many dollars raised in support of these kids, because of generous donors like you. But still, more than 1,000 children were turned away because we did not have resource families to take those children.

Looking ahead to 2017, we anticipate being accredited by the national agency, CARF (Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities), which includes foster family agencies like Agape. We continue to hope that this will be the year that we are licensed by the State of California to be an adoption agency.

We are in the process of implementing the new law that was effective January 1, 2017, Continuum of Care Reform (CCR). The new law will impact our resource parents

and Agape, but our commitment to superior care to the children we serve is unchanging.

We begin 2017 committed to recruiting and certifying more families. The kids are there, needing homes, and we need to be there for them. Some of you will become resource families and provide safe havens for these children. Some of you will be volunteers. Many of you will participate in our work by being donors, and play an important role that way. We hope that each of you will find your place at Agape.

So many great stories of success and overcoming hurdles in 2016. We know that 2017 will bring more great stories.

Please join the Agape ("A") team. Thanks to you and so many others, it's a winning team for kids and families in crisis! Happy New Year!