

April 2007



Hello Champions!

Firstly, I would like to welcome all of our new Champions! We now have 30 Champions representing 30 churches in the Kalamazoo area! The Champions for Children program is constantly growing and becoming stronger thanks to devoted volunteers like you! Please keep me updated on the work you are doing in your churches, and let me know how others are responding. Your feedback is extremely valuable in helping to make this program successful and beneficial for you and your churches. If I have not met with you and your pastor, please contact your church leaders and arrange a time with your pastor (and/or other church leaders who may be interested or have some helpful ideas about where to go from here) to meet as soon as possible. Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays work the best for me though my schedule is somewhat flexible.

For the month of March, I challenged our Champions at that time to consider planning an adoption ministry group or gather Easter baskets for children in foster care. You will be receiving further information about starting an adoption ministry group in your church from the national office in Grand Rapids soon. Just to update you, the Easter basket project was very successful. Thank you SO much for your help! With about 7 churches participating, we will have received around 75 baskets with small things such as toys, candy, books, etc. for our foster children! Thank you again for your help, the children will be very happy and really enjoy them! I have also been asked to pass on the attached flyer for the community-wide Easter Egg Hunt on Saturday, April 7th at 3:00pm for children ages 2-7 at North Park Reformed Church. This should be a great event, and includes entertainment focusing on the real meaning of the Easter season. All are invited to attend.

For the month of April, I would like to challenge you to help or recruit help for our annual Geranium Sale and our annual Run for the Kid of It in May. Please see the information below for further information about volunteering or participating in these events which raise support and funds for our Kalamazoo office. I have also received a couple of emails from staff members whose clients have expressed some essential need. If you or someone you know has a double bed or a stroller they would be willing to donate to these families please let me know as soon as possible. They would be really helpful and appreciated by both staff and clients at Bethany.

Be on the look out for a new section for our Champion emails called "The Big Picture." This will be a special quarterly addition to the Champion email featuring a few of the older/special needs children who have been in the foster care system for years. Hundreds of children in Michigan and in the Kalamazoo area are waiting to be adopted. Approximately 25,000 children are never adopted and move through several foster homes only to be released at age 18 and left without any sense of a true family. Several of you have asked me about the specific needs of these children and truly their biggest need is to be adopted. As Champions, you have a unique role in that you can convey this message to your church. Again, please be on the look out for this extremely important piece – we need families for these children and with your help, we can and we will find them loving, Christian homes.

Please see the attached page for the April Connection and feel free to contact me with any questions or comments. With your feedback (What you've found to be effective or ineffective, suggestions for future improvement, and ideas for ways for your church to partner with Bethany Christian Services) we hope to create a strong and lasting relationship, influencing positive change within your church and our organization. It is going to be a busy month, but be sure to enjoy the sunshine!

Blessings,

Karman Hamlin
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The Champions for Children Connection



APRIL 2007 CALENDAR

- **Monday, April 2, 4:30-8pm**
Older/Special Needs Adoption Orientation – General Information Session
Bethany Christian Services Kalamazoo Branch
6687 Seeco Drive
Kalamazoo, MI 49009
 - If you or someone you know is particularly interested in older/special needs adoption, please have them contact Angela Mitchell at 269-372-8800 to RSVP for this session.

- **Sunday, April 8**
Easter Holiday
 - Please pray for the 143,000,000 children awaiting adoption across the world, that they may find God's peace in a loving Christian home. Also, please pray that all families may know the true joy and meaning of the Easter season.

- **Tuesday, April 10, 1-3pm**
International Adoption Information Session
Bethany Christian Services Kalamazoo Branch

- **Thursday, April 19, 6:30-8:30pm**
International Adoption Information Session
Bethany Christian Services Kalamazoo Branch
 - If you or someone you know is particularly interested in international adoption, please have them contact Mary Holtapp at 269-372-8800 to RSVP for a session.

APRIL 2007 CHAMPION CHALLENGES

CHAMPION CHALLENGE 1: Volunteer to help with the Geranium Sale in May



please

- The Geranium Sale is sponsored by the Bethany Guild, a group of adoptive parents who support Bethany through this annual sale. Proceeds of this sale support families and children in need.

- Volunteers are needed to sell, care for, and transport the geraniums through April and May. If you are interested,

contact Mary Holtapp at 269-372-8800.

- Orders for the plants are due by **Friday, April 27th**.
- They will be delivered **Wednesday, May 9th** and **Thursday, May 10th**.
- The plants may be picked up at either of the following locations and times:

Westwood Fire Station on Nichols Road:

Wednesday, May 9 from 5-7pm or Thursday, May 10 from 9-12pm.

Van Bochoves Greenhouse on Miller Road:

Thursday, May 10 from 9-2pm.

(***Baskets can also be purchased at pick up time with proceeds going to Bethany***)

- Please consider making an announcement in your church bulletin or newsletter like this:

Bethany Christian Services is holding its annual geranium sale with proceeds benefiting local children and families. If you would like to order plants (red, white, salmon, or pink), or have other questions please contact Mary Holtapp at 269-372-8800. *The cost is \$3.00 per plant, and orders are due by Friday, April 27. Plants are available for pick up on May 9 and 10.* Bethany Christian Services provides adoption, foster care, family preservation, and counseling services to Southwest Michigan.

CHAMPION CHALLENGE 2: Help recruit teams for the Run for the Kid of It

- **Run for the Kid of It** is a 5K Run/Walk at Spring Valley Park (2600 Mt. Olivet Street, Kalamazoo, Michigan) held on Saturday, May 5th from 9:00am-12:00pm with proceeds going to Bethany families and children.
- **Volunteers** are needed to be stationed at various locations throughout the course to encourage and direct runners and walkers. Volunteers are also needed to help with registration and donate and/or serve food and drinks to participants. Those interested would need to arrive around 7:30 and may leave sometime between 11:00am and 12:00pm. There will also be post-race door prizes and t-shirts that will need to be distributed. Contact Karman if you are interested in volunteering.
- **RECRUIT TEAMS** and rally support! The biggest key to success for the Run is recruiting people to be a part of it! If you or someone you know is interested in participating by walking or running please sign up with the attached registration form and return it to Bethany Christian Services (6687 Seeco Drive, Kalamazoo, MI 49009 or send it in via fax at 269-372-8855).
 - o The cost of the race, \$15.00 before Saturday, April 28th and \$20.00 April 28th-May 5th includes refreshments and a t-shirt as well as the chance for a post-race door prize (all participants are eligible, and must be present to win).
 - o Packet pick-up and late registration will be available on Friday, May 4th from 3:00pm-5:00pm at the Kalamazoo Bethany Christian Services office (6687 Seeco Drive, Kalamazoo, MI 49009) **OR** before the race from 7:30am-8:45am at Spring Valley Park.

