NATHHAN / CHASK

CHASK - Christian Homes And Special Kids
NATHHAN - National Challenged Homeschoolers

Spring Summer 2007

Volume 15 No. 1

Chad Lautzenheiser, age 9

Our Kids Can Do Anything!

Elijah Appel—Our Blessing on Earth and Now in Heaven

Mommy Needed…For Embryo with Medical Concerns

It's Not All About Academics—by SuDawn Peters

Joy Faith—Our Daughter with Spina bifida

Goal and Purpose of NATHHAN

To encourage homeschooling families with special needs children in ways that glorify the Lord Jesus Christ. To find Christian homes for children with special needs.

NATHHAN / CHASK
National Challenged Homeschoolers
Christian Homes And Special Kids
P.O. Box 310
Moyie Springs, ID
83845
(208) 267- 6246
NATHANEWS@aol.com
www.NATHHAN.org
www.chask.org

Front Cover

This is a picture of Chad Lautzenheiser, age 9, riding his bike one handed. Yup! Chad has Down syndrome but that doesn't seem to stop him. Read his family's story on page 18.

When people tell us that our kids may "never", look beyond the never and expect even more!

Letter From The Editors

We are sitting here smiling, thanking our Heavenly Father. Besides barely squeaking by to get the $13,000 needed for this magazine…(the Lord is never late, but seldom early), we have needed extra funds for some special projects we have taken on this summer. Thanks to the Neal Family Foundation and others contributing generously this quarter, you are reading this magazine.

It is a great issue and I am so glad that we can spend a few minutes together here. Pull up a chair and a glass of ice tea and get ready for some interesting insights on raising children with special needs, saving babies from an early death and coping with life on a unique level.

First a little about our family. The brief run-down…

Jake, 23, is still working in information technology, networking solutions and occasional computer repair.

Josh, 21, is building portable sheds this summer with a friend, James Byler.

Jordan is 19. His Down syndrome is just part of who he is. We love to have him be a part, as he wants to participate. He loves to go camping and to church. He plays his guitar, along with his CD's (mostly kid's worship songs). Actually he is fairly good at the piano and can play relaxing chords???...or what ever they are called. He is a good imitator.

Sheela, 18, totally blind and mildly mentally disabled, is still at Faith Mission Home in Free Union, VA. She is happy and getting along really well. She has acquired many special friendships she will never forget.

Zack, 15, is working full time for a friend building metal pole buildings. His big interest right now is fresh water fishing. He bought a row boat, installed bass seats and loves to figure out how to catch trout (mom's favorite), and would love to hook the elusive tiger musky!

Lynny, 15, with autism and cerebral palsy, is loving summer now that it is finally here. We took her camping with us to Winchester lake. Using the porta potty was a little rough on someone who only has use of her right hand, and no legs. Still, she kept a good attitude and had a great time.

Zeph, 13, is the main helper doing most of the maintenance, mowing and tending to the needs of our household and vehicles. He and Zack built a go-cart that goes really fast. As it zooms around the house, up and down the driveway and around the fields, they have big smiles on their helmeted faces (covered with muck and grease from head to toe).

Sheraya is 11 and is a big help with little ShaHannah. She is navigating through 7th grade work and would prefer to read, sew and swim this summer.

Jayben caught two fish right after each other!

Mercy is 9, and as with all my girls, decorating is a favorite pastime. Bouquets from the field or flower beds, our table is never without some form of fancy. I bought doilies, candles, material, ribbon, and silk center pieces, filling a cupboard with stuff to stir their creative juices.

Jayben is almost 6. He loves to fish with the boys (he caught 4 sun fish on our trip). He loves story time and will do just about anything to get to snuggle with mom or dad in the evening.

ShaHannah is almost 3. Helping in the kitchen has got to rank #1 on her list. As soon as mommy is getting food together, swoosh comes the chair from across the kitchen, pushed up to the counter. Her little eyes sparkle, and eager helping hands (sampling tongue, too!) make cooking take twice as long and twice as fun. “Sorry about those shells in there daddy.. .” “Hey mom, what’s wrong with these muffins?”

North Idaho Adventure Now Available!

Unique volunteer opportunity for young women, 18 years or over, with a heart for the disabled and pre-born with special needs. Help us minister to families dealing with disability. These are supportive roles for NATHHAN and CHASK.

There is one volunteer opening for the Fall Term; October—December 15, 2007; one for the Winter Term; January 6th—March 29th 2008;

Warmly welcoming you, Kootenai Valley Mennonite church, in support of NATHHAN / CHASK, wants to include you in their regular sponsored youth activities, chorus, home Bible study nights and gym for volleyball. Enjoy the Northern Idaho Fall setting. If you like incredible fall color, and a spectacular Indian summer, this is it!

We are paying $200.00 per week, and providing warm, cozy housing, all utilities, and food. (Lunch and dinner provided in main house if desired.) Also the use of a sturdy, winter-worthy vehicle and a cell phone will enable the volunteers to have some freedom to and from church and activities. The NATHHAN /CHASK office is only 4 minutes to church!

Living quarters: private rooms with bathroom, shared kitchen in our single wide mobile home office just 300 feet from the main house. Position #1 is open for Fall quarter.

<u>Household help for the Bushnell’s:</u> Main house including cooking and laundry, teaching semi-independent living skills like making menu’s, shopping, and overseeing help for Jordan and Lynny. This position would best be described as

Bonner's Ferry, Idaho, Arial view

general support for Sherry, where ever she needs help the most, for that day. This person needs to have a heart for helping in the home.

We provide pick up from the airport. (It is a 2 1/2 hour drive from Spokane International Airport to Bonner's Ferry, ID.)

Each of our volunteers over the last year has written a short paragraph or two about her stay with us. Please see our web site **www.nathhan.org** and click on Volunteer Introductions in the middle of the index page.

We have really enjoyed each of our volunteers immensely. I think we all have learned so much from each other.

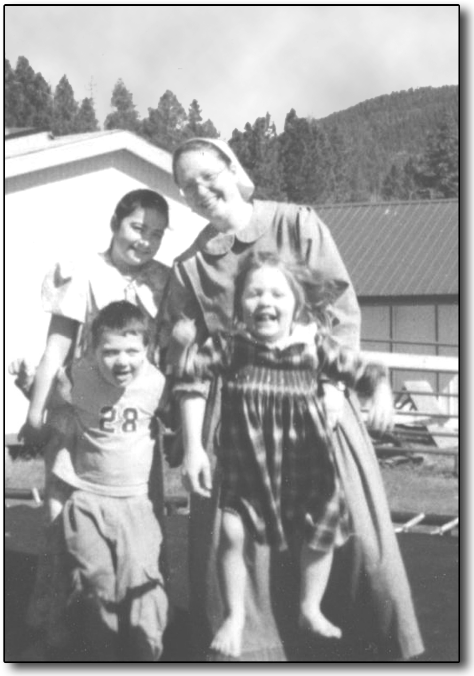
From our point of view, the typically confusing first few weeks of adjustment have been very smooth for all of the ladies that have shared their time. They have all been wonderful!

For more information or questions, or if you know of anyone interested in these positions, please have them call the NATHHAN / CHASK office at 208-267-6246 or e-mail **chaskinfo@aol.com**

May your summer be full of wonderful memories and may you move gracefully into another school year..

We are praying for you and would appreciate your prayers,

The Bushnell family



Beth Protiva from Missouri (one of our winter voluntary service helpers), on the trampoline with Mercy Grace, Jayben and ShaHannah Bushnell

Kimberly Yoder, from El Dorado Springs, Missouri, our Spring / Summer volunteer, and ShaHannah Bushnell

Resource Listing

History and Information About NATHHAN

NATHHAN began with a telephone call from one mother of a child with Down syndrome to another mother homeschooling her son with Down syndrome in the early spring of 1990. Acting on the Lord's prompting to begin a network of parents helping one another, Diane Macbeth in PA wrote Kathy Salars in Texas on March 17th, 1990, thus announcing the birth of NATHHAN.

In the fall of 1992, due to NATHHAN's exponential growth from 2 to over 600 families, it became impossible for these moms to keep up. Tom and Sherry Bushnell offered their assistance and NATHHAN's main office was moved to Olalla, WA. The NATHHAN/CHASK office now operates in Moyie Springs, Idaho.

A board meets periodically to make decisions. Its officers are Jim and Jerri Unruh in Bonner's Ferry, ID; Ralph and Debbie Poole, Cheney, WA; John and Diane Ryckman, Creston, BC; Tom and Sherry Bushnell; and Andy and Linda Dillon, Camano Island, WA. Financial Advisory: Dennis and Linda Lamphere, Moyie Springs, ID; William Byler and Dayton Skrivseth, Bonners Ferry, ID; James and Dana McKenzie in Battleground, WA.

In the Fall of 2002, as an outgrowth of NATHHAN, CHASK was born. CHASK, Christian Homes And Special Kids, matches special kids with families for free, no agency fees or referral costs.

NATHHAN / CHASK's web page and magazine strive to equip and encourage parents with special needs children, assisting them in finding the will of God for their lives.

NATHHAN 's Ministry

National Challenged Homeschoolers

NATHHAN NEWS - This magazine, printed twice a year, includes resources, articles from parents and professionals, and lots of letters from families, plus much more.

NATHHAN WEB PAGE www.nathhan.org
Updated quarterly. A full service web page with all the features of the print style NATHHAN NEWS plus a discussion board and on-line applications for the lending library and family directory. A password is needed to access the NATHHAN membership portion. Hundreds of articles from the last 14 years of NATHHAN are included.

FAMILY DIRECTORY - Although some of us will never meet this side of heaven, we can still encourage and share a bit of our lives with each other. The directory is on-line, password protected, updated once a year and is available to members willing to be in the directory.

LENDING LIBRARY - The library is operated through the mail for NATHHAN members. Members donate postage to and from library when they use it. The NATHHAN Lending Library Catalog can be reviewed on the web site **www.nathhan.org**. Book donations are gladly accepted.

**All this for only $25.00 / year.
Unbelievable!**

CHASK's Ministry

Christian Homes And Special Kids

Parents can raise their disabled child with joy and competence. Christ is the answer to making it through any crisis.

Our goal is to ***match*** every special needs child that God brings to us who needs a home, before-born or already born, with a Christian family. No agency fees.

**www.chask.org
chaskinfo@aol.com**

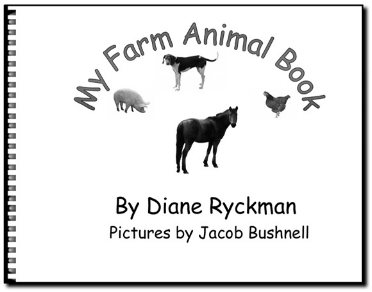
Gift Memberships

Gift memberships are available for folks facing financial difficulty. A NATHHAN/ CHASK gift membership entitles the family to NATHHAN/ CHASK's internet services. NATHHAN/CHASK's gift program is funded solely by other homes sharing out of their concern and abundance, giving so other Christian brothers and sisters can receive the encouragement they need. We want you to get the support you need. If your home cannot afford the $25.00, don't hesitate to send us what you can afford and request a gift membership.

In This Issue

If phonics doesn't click, try
Farm Animal Words Reading Kit

Designed to assist you in teaching sight reading skills, **Farm Animal Words Reading Kit** consists of a book called **My Farm Animal Book**, a double set of flashcards, and an instruction booklet on how to teach sight reading.



My Farm Animal Book Features

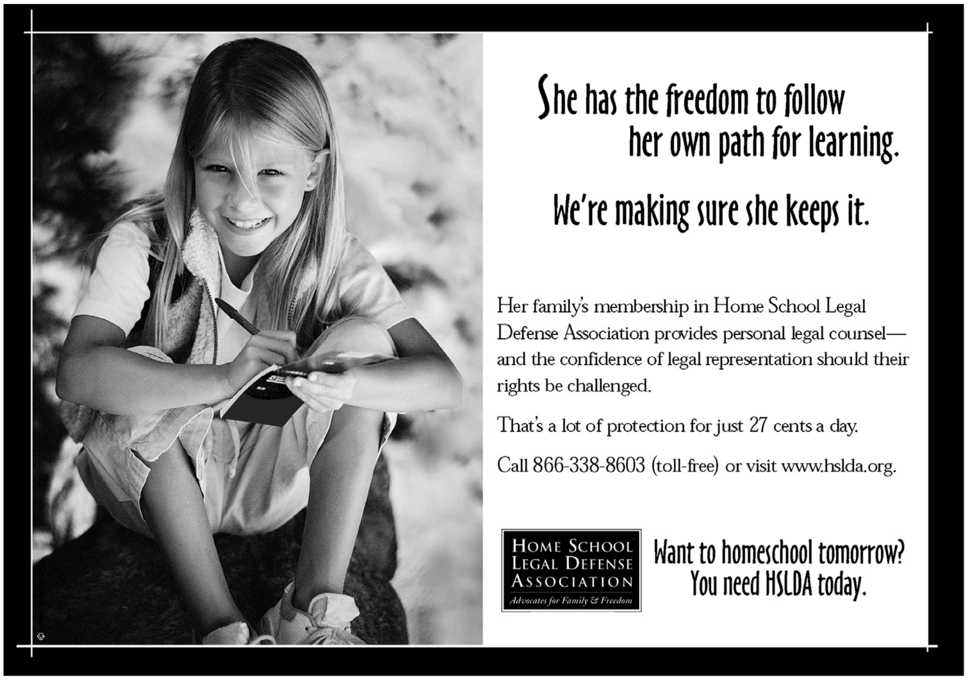
⇒ 10 well known farm animals.
⇒ Large (8 ½" by 11"), uncluttered pages.
⇒ One simple animal photograph per page with large, easy to read print.
⇒ Total reading vocabulary of 57 words. 4 new words per page.
⇒ Repetition and review of words incorporated into text.

Farm Animal Words Reading Kit has been developed by Diane Ryckman, and has been thoroughly tested on her son Andrew, who just happens to have Down syndrome.

For more information visit **www.DownHomeLearning.net**
E-mail: ryckman@ downhomelearning.net
Phone: (250) 428-7798

John and Diane Ryckman
1453 Evans Rd. RR7
Creston, B.C.
V0B-1G7

$23.00. Includes shipping and handling.



Special Needs Support Groups

Deaf Ministries List
Earl and Shirley Wilbers
221 W. Gay St.
Harrisonburg, VA 22802
E-mail: EEARL2@aol.com
Website: Deaf Ministries List
http://members.aol.com/deaflist/web.html

Especially Yours - a support group for families homeschooling children with special needs. All are welcome.
Call Patricia Rendoff.
(303) 937-3428 or at prdiggie@juno.com

Shepherd Boy - Strategies for Autism
4241 Faye Drive
Olive Branch, MS 38654
www.shepherdboy.org
Hands-on, practical ideas for working with individuals with autism and related disabilities.

HOPES - Homeschooling Our Precious Exceptional Students. We meet on the first Thursday night of each month. For more information contact Jim and Mary Rees,
Traveler's Rest, SC Phone: (864) 834-0264

Bethel Baptist Academy
P.O. Box 10035
Fullerton, CA 92838
Norm and Sharon Wallace (714) 527-5807 or Matthew and Julia Hoch (714) 990-0199. We help Moms write their IEPs through our workshops. Our resource specialist is Marian Soderholm. She can be found at (562) 425-7886 or e-mail at mercedchristian@yahoo.com

Almaden Valley Christian School & AVCS Books
Consulting services, curriculum resources and support for families of special needs children.
Sharon Hensley, MA— Director
16465 Carlson Dr.
Morgan Hill, CA 95037
408-776-6691
sharon@avcsbooks.com

H.A.N.D.S. ON!
Support group for special needs homeschoolers in PA
Newsletter: http://groups.yahoo.com/group/handson_westernpa/
Online forum: http://groups.yahoo.com/group/wpahandson/

S.N.A.C.K.S. of Delaware
(Special Needs and Christian Kids)
Helping families and churches to minister to their special needs children. Serving the greater Delaware Valley and Tri-State region.
Contact: Tita Wyatt
Email: tewjr@flash.net

Christian Cottage School
(303) 688-6626 Sedalia, Colorado
Mike and Terry Spray founded CCS for diagnostic testing and prescribing curriculum.

Special Children Special Blessings
Jim and Debbie Mills
8266 Leucadia Ave. San Diego, CA 92114
(619) 469-5822

Specially Gifted c/o the Pegrams
7217 South Drive Richmond, VA 23225-1622
(804) 323-1786
Strengthuntostrength@juno.com A support group for families homeschooling special needs children. Part of a Christian family-based ministry operated by Dave and Deb Pegram. Also operate a private Christian "umbrella" school that provides transcripts, IEP's, testing and evaluative services.

PRAISE
Parents Reaching Academically in Special Education
A homeschool support group for parents homeschooling special needs children.
947 Park SW Grand Rapids, MI 49504
(616) 451-3620
Contact Shannon Bloemendaal Email: sbloemen@aol.com

Parents Instructing Challenged Children (PICC)
Allen and Barb Mulvey
700 W Liberty St.
Rome, NY 13440 315-339-5524
picc@twcny.rr.com
PICC has a lending library and publishes an annual directory of families homeschooling special needs children.

O.U.C.H. Ohio's Uniquely Challenged Homeschoolers
(formerly C.H.O.S.E.N. Christian Homeschool Special Educational Needs)
Renee Silvaroli—Support Group Coordinator & Workshop Speaker. Meets at Silvaroli's home.
Phone: (440) 944-4782
Email: RCHOSEN@visn.net
Please RSVP.
"Ohio Special Needs Resource Packet" available (at cost of $10.00 plus $2.50 postage/handling); State Newsletter $5.00 (5 issues); workshops and special needs consultation available ($1.00 for sample newsletter).

Braille Sharing Library/ Lydia Schuck
1981 Eden Rd.
Mason, MI 48854 (517) 676-4621
laschuck@juno.com
We have a list of braille to share. Braille can be sent to me. Please label what is in the box and contact me by phone or e-mail before it is sent.

Down Home Learning
Does your child have Down Syndrome? Need someone to talk to? Have some ideas to share? Contact: Diane Ryckman
1453 Evans Rd. RR 7
Creston, B.C. V0B 1G7 CANADA (250)-428-7798
Email: ryckman@downhomelearning.net

Special Needs Support Groups

Rock of Refuge
Resources & support for families coping with Special Needs. Offers caring encouragement for parents/caregivers of those with special needs. Meets 1st Monday each month 7pm-8:30, just north of Tampa, Florida.
Victorious Life Church
6224 Old Pasco Rd.
Wesley Chapel, FL 33544
813-973-2230 church office
Contact : Sheri Nelson 813-996-3366 home
E-Mail: RockofRefuge@aol.com

Carrying To Term Resources

American Association of Pro Life Obstetricians and Gynecologists.
www.aaplog.org

AAPLOG National Office Contact Info:

Phone: (616) 546-2639.
Email: *info@aaplog.org*

Be not Afraid
www.benotafraid.net
An online outreach to parents who have received a difficult prenatal diagnosis. The family stories, articles, and links within this site are presented as a resource for those who may have been asked to choose between terminating a pregnancy or continuing on despite the diagnosis. The benotafraid.net families faced the same decision and chose not to terminate.

Waiting with Love site
http://www.erichad.com/wwl/

The Gloria M. Silverio Foundation
"Safe Haven for Newborns"
www.asafehavenfornewborns.com
1-877-767-BABY (2229)

Post Abortion Resources

Rachel's Vineyard Retreats
1-877-HOPE-4-ME (1-877-467-3463)
www.RachelsVineyard.org

Healing Hearts Ministries
(on-line counseling)
www.HealingHearts.org
1-888-792-8282

Ramah International
www.RamahInternational.org

NATHHAN Web page

NATHHAN Lending Library catalog is arranged by subject.

Family Directory. Folks are listed by state and list disability. Form your own support network. Find families homeschooling with the same special needs you are dealing with. Search the *entire web site* for a subject of interest when you participate in the NATHHAN family directory. Additional password needed for security.

Discussion board. Live time. Get your questions answered by moms who are competent and experienced. A variey of subjects and responses makes just reading the discussions of others VERY interesting.

Classified Ads • Letters from Families • Deuteronomy Dads • Mommy's Musing • Children waiting for Moms and Dads
Favorite Resources

Just $25.00 / year for membership!

www.nathhan.org

1st Straight Talk

A Parents Guide for Correcting

Childhood Mispronunciations

Written by
Marisa J. Lapish, M.A. in Speech Pathology

- **Charts explain normal sound development**
- **The *Consonant Cookbook*, suggestions to help with each consonant's correct sound**
- **Test forms and score sheets**
- **Word training lists**

> *An excellent resource for parents wishing to implement a quality speech therapy program without spending lots of money or going to the public school. We've used it successfully for over 10 years.*
> *——Tom Bushnell*

$45.00

Free Shipping!

1st Straight Talk's DVD

Watch Marisa demonstrate the sound "r"using the manual.
30 min. video supplements the manual.
Video is $20.00 separate from the manual.

Combination Straight Talk 1 + DVD = $55.00

Order online at www.nathhan.org or use the order form on page 32!

2nd Straight Talk

A Parent's Guide to

Language Development

A Christian Perspective

Written by
Marisa J. Lapish, M.A. in Speech Pathology
and Tom and Sherry Bushnell, Directors of NATHHAN

- **Exercises in Learning to Listen**
- **Nuts and Bolts of Language Training**
- **Increasing Auditory and Visual Comprehension**
- **Language Development Activities for the Christian Home**
- **Tests to Determine Exactly Where Your Child Needs Help**
- **Suggestions for Working with Children Ranging from Non-verbal to More Advanced in Language.**

$45.00

112 page manual, free shipping!

An excellent resource for parents helping their children overcome language delays.

Order online at www.nathhan.org or use the order form on page 32!

CHASK—Christian Homes And Special Kids

Getting to know some of you has been a wonderful privilege. It is good to hear your stories about how God is blessing you… and of course the trials and hard things that He has brought you through, too.

Would you like to read some of the stories that families have sent in, telling about their experience with CHASK? There is always so much to the stories between these written lines. The families here cannot possibly write about all the moments of panic, confusion, sheer joy, and vulnerability that they have gone through in getting to the place they are at now.

Kathy Fayhe and baby Charity

We trust you will pray for those who are adopting, and for those who are waiting for a child to bring home. May the Lord grant you wisdom and peace when your turn comes. Kathy Fayhe, of The King's Cleft in Wrightsville, GA, brought home a sweet little baby girl, two weeks old, born with hydranencephaly (absence of the cortex of the brain.) last year.

The birth mom did not want to know where she went. Little Charity Grace is such a treasure to her family… here is a letter from Kathy:

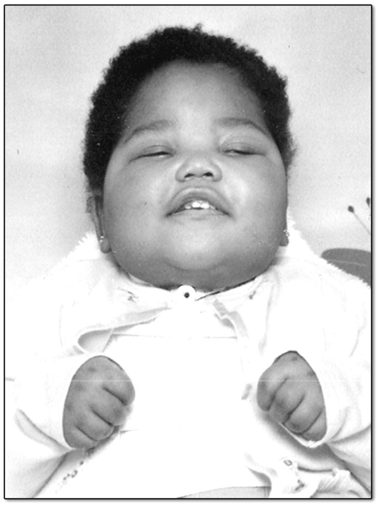
"...You asked if the little one placed with us a few months ago was still alive. Here is a picture of the little blessing that God allowed us to keep for a time. Although we don't know how long, we cherish each and every moment. Her health is very fragile. She not only has the absence of the cortex of the brain (hydranencephaly), but also diabetes insipidis, and the absence of the endocrine system (thyroid, adrenalin, pituitary, hypothalmys,etc). We love her so much and are so happy to have this opportunity to love her for our Lord until He calls her home. We all hope that is not for a long time.

I don't know if I told you the story about bringing her home… We brought her home from Integrity Baptist Hospital in OK City, OK back in August of 06. She is now 9 months old. We started home on the 16th from OK, only to end up at an ER on the way home in Atlanta ,GA, with a ruptured, infected incision from a very sloppy G-tube surgery done before we were able to be with her.

It was then 5 weeks in the hospital before we were able to bring here home. She has undergone 8 more surgeries for various things, mostly shunt related. She has red hair and a beautiful smile, when she is feeling well.

She has a lot of ups and downs. Many days are hard. The hardest time for us lately has been that our attorney keeps trying to complete the adoption, but the mom will not respond to phone calls or documents sent for her to sign and return. We haven't even been able to get her a birth certificate because of the legal stuff with her mom not being involved at the birth.

Please remember to pray for our family as we minister to God's special treasures.



Aaliyah Tolin

Many of you may remember one of the first babies with anencephaly CHASK matched with a family. Her name is Aaliyah Tolin.

Here is a note sent to us regarding her home-going-to-heaven from her mom, Sue.

Aaliyah M. Tolin of Ruth left our hearts, arms and family into the arms of Jesus at 12:45 p.m. Friday Nov. 10th, 2006 at Hurley Medical Center in Flint, MI.

She was born Oct. 29th, 2003 in Oklahoma City, OK, without a brain and with multiple medical issues.

Aaliyah was what most would consider severely disabled, yet she taught us so much! She taught us about love, strength, resilience and most especially that people with disabilities are not scary, but wonderful. Because of her influence, our family grew in amazing ways.

She was keenly sensitive to the Spirit and had a direct line to heaven. She was given a grim prognosis at birth and was not expected to live more than a few days. She gifted us with 3 years and 12 days. She stayed with us through pain and difficulty over the first three years and has changed us all forever. How we will miss her.

Over the last 5 years, CHASK has grown to be not only a place where birth parents can find hope and help, but also where parents who have adopted, but cannot parent a child for one reason or another, can find help.

There are so many ways that children can be in a situation where they need to be placed in another home. Even birth parents, with children who have special needs, occasionally need help in finding a new home for their child. This is terribly painful. We do have situations like this several times a year. CHASK gets calls from hospital social workers, or birth parent where the child is just born and still in the hospital. So far, state social workers have respected CHASK's role in matching babies.

Did you know that in the United States, there are still babies that are placed in institutions? Aaliyah was almost one of them. We are still thanking God for a caring hospital social worker who knew about CHASK. The Tolin family dropped everything and flew to OK. Aaliyah got to spend her 3 years cherished and loved by a mommy, daddy, brothers and sisters who felt she was a tremendous blessing. Isn't that just like our God to place orphans in loving homes.

CHASK needs your help. Would you like to be in-the-loop as far as what is happening here at NATHHAN / CHASK? Every few months we send out an update letter to donors. If you wish to be on the inside (other than just the magazine) simply be a NATHHAN /CHASK donor!!

Welcome!
Christina Anna Grace Hahn

She is growing and doing wonderful. Christina has Prader Willi syndrome and was adopted by Jason and Rose Hahn, Olney, IL. Christina and the Hahn family found each other through CHASK.

Debbie and Jonathan David Olpaka

Here is a letter from another adoptive mom, Debbie Olpaka:

"On November 3, 2006 we received a phone call from you asking if we would consider taking in an eight-month old baby boy. I am writing this letter to give you an update and also to thank you for all you do for children and families.

A couple from Long Island had recently (October 18, 2006) adopted little Juan Diego from Guatemala. Upon seeing a retina specialist for his crossed eyes (which they had hoped to have surgically corrected) they were told that the baby had scars on both retina and was without center vision. The doctor went on to say that Juan's peripheral vision was fine but he would none the less be considered legally blind. Nothing could be done, the doctor said. This sweet, young couple had a two year old biological daughter, and felt that Juan's medical problems were more than they could handle. They called CHASK to find another family for him.

When I received your call, I immediately sensed that Juan was to be apart of our family. One reason I thought this might be the case had to do with the timing of your call. My husband Dave and I had just finished praying ten minutes before you called. We were supposed to be at our lawyer's office at this time in order to close on our new home. However, the closing suddenly postponed for the third time! My husband had taken the day off from work, most of our possessions were in boxes, the U-Haul truck had been rented, all our helping hands were ready and our young adopted children were with a babysitter. Yet there we sat. We prayed for God to make "all things work together for good" on this confusing, disappointing, chaotic day. Then around two o'clock, when we should have been at the closing, the phone rang. As soon as I spoke with you, I realized that God wanted us home in order to receive your call. You said that this was an emergency and you needed a family A.S.A.P. I suddenly knew why these things that seemed so chaotic and disappointing happened to us. This call regarding Juan (whom we have renamed Jonathan David) was appointed by God and His timing is always perfect (Proverbs 16:9).

It is for this reason that I was ready to say "yes" to you about this very special baby. First I had to check with my husband. Dave had cold feet initially, but agreed to pray about taking such a young child, as we are both in our mid 50's. Providentially, the next morning Dave was reading in the book of Luke and came across chapter one where Zechariah questioned God's wisdom in choosing him to have a special son. Zechariah was an "old man" and his wife was "well advanced in years" and yet God chose them to be parents to John, the last prophet before Jesus' ministry. My husband decided we should trust God and say "yes." So we welcomed Jonathan David in to our home and we could not love him more. He is sweet, happy, calm, bright, smiley and cute as a button. Jonathan is our seventh child (in addition to our four biological children and two adopted children) and he is a blessing to us.

The two other adopted children came to us with special physical needs. Ben, age seven, is from the Philippines and has been with us for 3 and a half years. He came to us with a colostomy and has had several surgeries to correct problems associated with this. Kendy, age 4, is from Haiti and has been with us for 3 years. Kendy has mild cerebral palsy. Ben's favorite activity now is to play "Rock n' Roll Ball" with Jonathan and see how many belly laughs he can get from him. Kendy, who is very affectionate, likes to give big hugs and kisses to Jonathan. He also likes to be the first to introduce his "new brother' to people who have not yet met Jonathan."

How does CHASK work?

•Adoptive family fills out a CHASK application (page 17 or www.chask.org)

•A birth mom in crisis contacts us. Are there any NATHHAN families willing to take her pre-born baby or child with special needs?

•We contact adoptive families, getting permission to send the birth mom their information.

•We send the birth mom 3 families to choose from, including their Dear Birth-Mom letters. After choice is made….

•Potential adoptive family and birth mom handle details such as communication, transportation, lawyer fees.

•Some financial help for adoptive costs may be available by private gifts from NATHHAN families.

Adoptive family should:

•Look into having a homestudy. •Adoptive family should locate an adoption lawyer and be aware of their state's laws. (In some states, in order to avoid the appearance of impropriety, the adoption should be handled through an adoption lawyer. We can help you find a pro-life lawyer.)

•Adoptive family should be willing to pray and receive God's will for the birth mom's, baby's, and their lives, no matter what the decision reached by the birth mom.

Please join us in ministering to birth parents.

NATHHAN /CHASK P.O. Box 310 Moyie Springs, ID 83845
www.chask.org

Name ____

Address ____

Phone: (____)__________________ E-mail ______________________________

Please send me _____________ CHASK brochures.

○ I am interested in sharing with birth parents in crisis.

They can contact me via ○ e-mail ○ telephone ○ letter

Disabilities I can share about with birth parents:

____

____

○ I am interested in adopting a child with special needs. We are interested in getting more information about how CHASK's matching service works. Please refer to www.chask.org for more information also.

○ **We'd love to help.** Included is our donation of $__________________
I want to help share Christ with birth parents in crisis and support CHASK's unique ministry to the unborn with special needs.

NATHHAN /CHASK is a 501 c 3 not-for-profit ministry. All donations are tax deductible and are used to directly assist in saving the lives of babies with special needs and ministering to parents with special needs children.
Credit cards accepted. Please make your checks out to NATHHAN / CHASK . (208) 267-6246

CHASK Application
Christian Homes And Special Kids

1. Last Name_______________________________ 2. First Names __________________________________

3. Address ____ State ________________Zip__________

4. Phone (______)__________________________ 5. E-mail __________________________________

7. Number of children in your family living in your home. ___________________________________

8. Describe your family. (Use a separate sheet if you need to. Pictures are nice.) _______________

____

____

9. What age of child are you considering?____

10. Are you open to adopting a child of mixed race or color?________________________________

11. What disabilities would you feel comfortable with at this time? (For a more complete list to consider, see CHASK application on the internet www.chask.org)

____

____

12. Name of Church _________________________________

13. Describe your faith in Jesus Christ: (You may want to use a separate sheet of paper.)
____

14. Name and phone of pastor ……..Name_______________________Phone # (_____)____________

15. Please give us a 2nd reference ..Name_______________________Phone # (_____)____________

16. What are your reasons for adopting? (Use your sheet of paper.)

17. Dear Birth Mom Letter. (Please carefully write a letter sharing your heart about adoption, special needs, and your vision for your family. For a sample letter see www.chask.org under "Waiting Families".) We also need 1 family picture that we can scan into the computer with your entry.

CHASK/NATHHAN

P.O. Box 310 Moyie Springs, ID 83845
(208) 267-6246
www.chask.org

Yep! Our Kids Can Do Anything!

By Barbara Lautzenheiser

Yep! Our Kids can do anything! That is what I wrote about the picture of my son Chad, riding on his bicycle with one hand. That is one of many tricks that he does on his bicycle.

Here is my story.

Psalm 139:13-18

For Thou didst form my inward parts; Thou didst weave me in my mother's womb. I will give thanks to Thee, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made;
Wonderful are Thy works, and my soul knows it very well.
My frame was not hidden from Thee, when I was made in secret, and skillfully wrought in the depths of the earth. Thine eyes have seen my unformed substance;
And in Thy book they were all written,
The days that were ordained for me,
When as yet there were not one of them.
How precious also are Thy thoughts to me, O God! How vast is the sum of them!
If I should count them, they would outnumber the sand. When I awake, I am still with Thee.

Chad, 9, Joe, 11 and Erin, 4

Contrast God's word with the advice our baby doctor had given to Bruce and I upon discovering that my lab results showed a real good chance of us delivering a baby with D.S.:

1). Lab work is not always reliable and our baby could be born without a handicap.

2). Your baby would have D.S. but support is available and there are families who do not see handicaps as a problem.

3). Abortion - Although we *will not* perform one (then why mention it).

4). Amniocentesis and\or genetic counseling.

I wondered how much of this medical advice was out of concern for Bruce and I and how much was being given to us to avoid medical malpractice? How can anyone in a professional practice dare to mention abortion as a solution to anything? What was the problem here in the first place?

Pregnancy, with all its challenges, should be a time of joy and encouragement in a woman's life. (Let me hasten to add that I did respect my doctors.) CHASK is a lighthouse of hope across America for every expectant parent who is told the lie about abortion.

I was concerned about the possibility of having a child with a disability.

Regrettably, my concerns were more about my fears about raising a child with a disability than for my child. After two weeks of treading through a full range of emotions, it was time to snap out of the fog. It was time to bring every thought captive to the obedience of Jesus Christ my Savior. It was time to apply the Word of God to yet another chapter in the book of my life. Our conclusion is that every child God gives to me is a gift and reward from Him. Children are *perfect* gifts coming down from the Father of lights from whom are no variables or shadows of turning. It was time to trust my Savior. My joy was returning.

The wonderful moment had come. I trained myself to have a drug free delivery (if at all possible). The entire birthing floor at the hospital was impressed that I knew my ordinal numbers up to 10. I got my wish and Chad arrived without any complications—-(unless you count the fact that Bruce had broken his foot from being thrown from my horse minutes prior to me experiencing birth pangs).

So while I was busy counting out loud (wanted to make sure Chad knew his numbers when he arrived...ha, ha) Bruce was in E.R. getting his foot bandaged. He was wheeled into my room just in time for Chad's arrival.

We should have named him "son of laughter". Our son was healthy. The doctors were very supportive. Chad had an atrial septal defect that is common with D.S. children that has closed in time.

I read that 80 to 90% of pregnancies diagnosed with D.S. are terminated through abortion. For anyone who views our children as anything but custom designed by God (perhaps too low functioning to give birth to) let me tell you that God is the one who gives life. May I share with you the following?

Chad speaks with reasonable clarity (crystal clear when mad). He writes and colors notes, cards and pictures. He is a fluent reader (need I say we love books). He is learning math. He types wonderfully. Adores music (sings loud to Jesus).

Athletically he runs track, jumps on a trampoline, races on a hoppy-ball, swings, swims, plays baseball, basketball, rides his bike for miles on the trails, drives a 4-wheeler by himself and horseback rides.

Sounds like a typical boy to me. Chad is now nine. His strength has always been athletics. It is his mom and dad's strong point, too. He has accomplished some things a whole lot earlier than others but doesn't that sound like everyone?

Everything has a season to it. I am learning not to force things before my son is ready for it. I think introduction and brevity would fit his learning style the best.

His older brother Joe (11) has been a tremendous mentor in Chad's life. One of my biggest fears was if Chad would be able to play with Joe. Ahem! Did I actually think that? What a laugh. They are the best of friends. Joe is his hero.

An acquaintance of mine is limiting the size of her family because she said her child was requiring a lot of her time and energy. Please don't limit the size of your family due to having a child with a Disability. Increase it! Chad is blossoming because of his brother and younger sister (Erin 4).

In the early years of Chad's life I became out of balance by putting too much emphasis on his developmental accomplishments, making myself a slave to certain programs I was using at the time. Regrettably I started viewing my son as a project. I knew something had to change real quick. I decided to play more with him. Joy was returning.

Bruce and I home educate our children so we had a lot more flexibility in this area. Remember, our children are blessings from God and His load is light. Check yourself on this one. My special needs boy requires a lot of repetition and patience from his dad and I to accomplish a goal, and the beauty of this is that so do we, especially from our Father in heaven who would have us walk more in the Spirit and less in the flesh.

Speaking of patience, Chad's preferred mode of personality is silliness. Bruce and I recently hauled our children and two neighbor boys with tools back to our woods with our 4-wheeler to cut more walking\riding trails. After two hours of hard work we decided to pack it up and head home (which wasn't exactly close by any stretch of the imagination) for some much needed food and water….O.K… so I should have anticipated the need and packed these in the trailer. One more thing to do; lets just go!

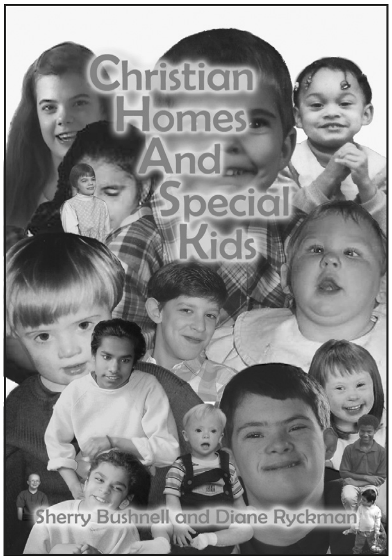
Upon returning to the 4-wheeler I noticed our son looking around on the ground. Unsuspecting, I reached for the keys only to find out that a certain young man had taken them and had forgotten where he had hidden them. To make a long story short, we sent Dad home to get the spare key only to return with a wire to hot-wire the ignition. No keys to be had anywhere! Chad had a GREAT TIME!

We have since spent (wish I could say invested) many more hours rootin' around in the woods with rakes and rented metal detectors bound and determined to find that which was lost. I did say our kids can do anything, didn't I? My oldest son has always been quick to remind his parents to always abundantly praise the Lord in situations like these. We have not found the keys-yet! But we know who owns the key to our hearts and we will PRAISE HIM ABUNDANTLY!

A book written by NATHHAN families

Christian
Homes
And
Special
Kids

CHASK



Warmly penned, practical resource written by homeschooling parents.

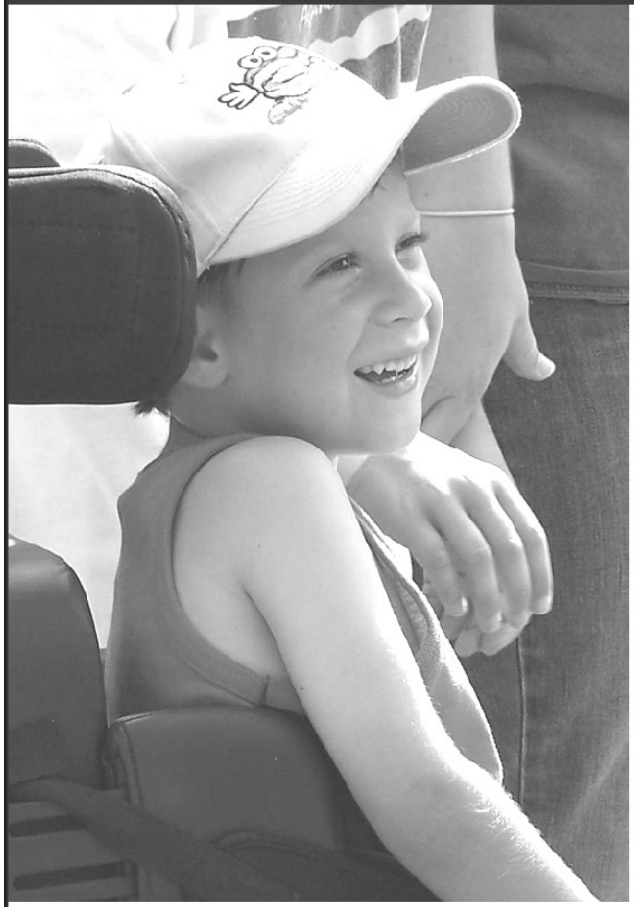
Here are moms and dads, just like you, living Christian lives and raising their special needs child for the Lord!

CHASK is packed full of tips, stories and advice from families that have been there. We know you will love reading it again and again.

Over 270 pages, 6" by 9"
Compiled and edited by
Sherry Bushnell
and Diane Ryckman

See order form on page 37

PLUS a large topical subject
and resource index.



Self– Stim Behavior
Combined NATHHAN Family Responses

This article is a combination of wisdom shared by several NATHHAN families. This topic never fails to generate quite a bit of response. It is a subject that is of great interest to all of us.

For our family, when our children were younger, the presence and severity of socially inappropriate self stims might have been the deciding factor as to whether our family would choose to attend certain social events. Whether it was screaming, hand movements that distract or draw attention, or even masturbation, we carefully chose where to go, with whom we would be around, and what time of day.

So, with this topic in mind, let us share with you what several families have to say about self –stim. They've been there!

Teri Forbes writes...

Marc Forbes

Could it be that our children with special needs exhibit self-stimulating behaviors, as do many young children, when tired, bored, or frustrated? Many persons who are autistic go on self-stimulating, but it is not uncommon, as others have noted, that children discover their bodies all over when age 1-3 years old.

What I have learned from my children is, especially when they are bored, tired, or frustrated, to actively engage them in restful activity or steer their interests, without guilt, into other areas of pleasure-gaining that are positive, such as: swimming, soccer, dance, mini-trampoline, Suzuki music (piano or children's play piano with lights is very stimulating in a positive way).

And simply repeat the boundary: “Let's focus on our whole body and all the muscles in it - not just on muscles in a particular place. We have 300 or more muscles that can be flexed to build strength, flexibility and joy of movement.”

If we find our children touching themselves in inappropriate places, we can remind our children that if we touch those places, we get some germs on our hands -- body fluids -- and because it gets under our nails or etc., even if we wash, we also might get germs on ourselves and others. So let's not touch them...you can see all your private parts when you are in the bath; that kind of thing. No guilt trips, just good boundaries.

Hope this helps. I am a Christian woman, a Lutheran (ELCA) pastor raising children... I adopted a five year old boy through CHASK who is MR/DD and autistic; please, feel free to communicate with me.

Rev. Teri Lynn S. Forbes and children: Imre, Linnea and Marc, and Meaw, our Thai foreign exchange student and "big sister,"
300 Shady Lane Drive
Bellefontaine, OH 43311
Forbesfaithfour@aol.com

Here is an update on Marc: Marc came to be with us in Feb. of 2005, through CHASK and is now 7 1/2, and is doing great.

Marc is still MR, still autistic, but he is a blessing. He continues to grow and is now expressing his own FEELINGS with sign and pictures, as well as his desires. HE KNOWS he is loved. He has a new care-giver on Sundays. We are focusing on social skills and communication at school, rather than academics, which for him at this point is producing good stuff. Those are the keys to relationships, most important for him; he can pick up the skill concepts and reading along the line as we read, play, and communicate with spelling board in addition to the OT and Speech / Sign approaches. I know that by the time he is a teen, we will see his true gifts emerge as he is able to communicate fully!

Marc is going through a growth spurt and eating like a horse. His front teeth are emerging. Growth takes a lot of energy from a MR person's overall store of it. And he is testing the boundaries! Yet he has made great progress this month.

As of November, the Speech folks have helped and he is qualified for a communication device, which is a computer with layers of pictures to communicate wants and needs to others. He has a very patient aide and a great teacher. He has a regular bike he rides at OT, and PT is working with his eye-hand coordination to improve all kinds of things. He is swimming, and will be part of the Special Olympics track and field division in the spring.

Best of all, his nephrology (potential kidney stones) is under control, and his deeply far-sighted left eye, long unused, is now working perfectly in tandem with the other eye. You can see it on the picture (even with glasses askew).

Here is a note from Amy in Michigan...

We all have self stims. Before we homeschooled I was sitting in an IEP talking about my son's stim issues and I looked down to find my hand covered with ink. I had been picking at the pen in my hand! What a demonstration. I honestly believe there is a place for them. My son likes many stims. Two major ones are spinning and feeling my hair. On the spinning, I try and give him plenty of opportunities to do that where I take the lead. He also has an inner ear malformation, so keep in mind that this could be a physiological reason for a stim. I am now trying to substitute the hair touching with sensory objects because it is starting to bother me and is not always possible in public or when I am away. At the present time I am picking one stim per week and finding a way to minimize or make it socially acceptable.

Kasia writes to share with you...

I have three children that have had various self stim behaviors growing up. They are now all at puberty age. They were born close together and I went through agonizing about their self stim behaviors when they were younger.

I want to share with you the lessons I have learned. I have a son who is now 14 and a girl who is 12 and another girl who is 11. Each of the children were diagnosed with autism and mental retardation.

When they were younger I would try to stop all of them from self stim type behaviors. I would try to redirect them so these behaviors wouldn't "stick." The behaviors with the girls did not stick. But the behavior of my son did. His was a constant clapping tic. In fact he went on to do damage to his hands and now has contractures in his arms. What happened is that the muscles shortened due to not getting their full range of motion due to the repetitive motion. I tried to stop my son from his behaviors as much as I tried to stop his sisters. So it wasn't due to lack of effort on my part.

My mistake was in not getting my son into splints sooner. He is just now getting them after the damage has been done. His elbows are now stuck at a 30 degree angle. His fingers cannot fully bend either. I had asked the Occupational therapists before about splints but was foolish enough to listen to them as they thought my son would just tear them off.

Looking back, I think that it would have been at least good to give them a try. A splint is a device which is put on the elbows or hands or both to hold the arms in place in the opposite posture of the repetitive stim to give the muscles a chance to properly stretch so they won't end up shortening. It keeps the child more limber. You know how people learn to do splits in gymnastics if they keep on stretching each day. This is the same idea. It is daily stretching to keep the muscles from getting stiffer and shorter. My son is now going to wear the splints for an hour a day. I hope he tolerates them. We are going to see if he will tolerate wearing them in his sleep. They make them as comfortable as you can possibly get a splint made mostly with straps.

You can keep trying to redirect the child but if you see it being so repetitive that it might affect the muscles then don't delay into looking into the splints.

A letter from Nancy Sturm shares her thoughts and a picture of her family…

I'm sure I'm preaching to the choir here, but many times our children are just the person God intended them to be, including the self stimming. Relax and enjoy your children.

Sturm Family

So that's the easy part. We have five adult children and four at home ranging from age 21 to age 13. All of the still-at-homes are disabled with primary diagnosis for each being cerebral palsy. However, except for our 13-year-old Stephanie, who "only" has severe athetoid CP, each of the others is a bundle of complicated medical, social and developmental issues, including self-stimming.

Our son, Arontae, is the most challenging in each area. We adopted Ron when he was three and he is now fourteen. He has gone through a myriad of self-stimming behaviors, and I don't think we have ever caused him to quit a single one. His head banging was scaring us to death, but it's now long in the past. For the things that are socially inappropriate (mostly involving hands in diaper) we have chosen to dress him in one piece clothing. Right now he is wearing very cool NASA style flight suits.

For more acceptable types of stimming, we have had good luck distracting him with some other activity. Since he has the attention span of a flea, sometimes this is a lot of distracting.

We thank God for Ronnie every day. He is an absolute delight in our lives and brings much joy and laughter into our homes - just being the rather unique guy the Lord allowed him to be.

The photo I am sharing is part of our crew celebrating Stephanie's adoption. Cam and his wife and children live in Maui, Dale returned to Viet Nam. Our foster daughter Jenny is not in the photo.

Editor's contribution:

Our experience with self-stim over the years has been moderate in severity. As a family we have chosen to eliminate as many as the self stim behaviors as we could within reality. The hands in the pants issue was totally forbidden… and our children with special needs are very aware that this is wrong for them to do.

Laughing hysterically at nothing in particular, odd body movements, repetitive speech sounds and such, we tolerate until we go crazy… They then transfer to something else… but anyway.. and, we have found that as our children got older, the self stim behavior gradually diminished. Although not altogether.

For the most part, Lynny, our daughter who is 15, can keep herself under control when she wants to. Of main importance to us is that our children quit when we ask them to. This might be impossible for those who are more severely affected by autism.

I know that each family needs to find their own way on this issue. Our tolerance level for unusual stim grows as we get used to that particular stim and person's habits. I think this might be to a slight disadvantage, as we forget that others might be distracted or concerned.

"Include Us!"

Families Affected By Disability in Church

As usual, we welcome your comments on this issue. Please send them to: Self-Stim comments nathanews@aol.com

Include Us! Ministering to families affected by disability in your church children's program

(Ideas for mainstreaming children with disabilities into your existing program and what to do when mainstreaming isn't appropriate.)

Be a Luke 14 church

"Go out quickly into the streets and alleys of the town and bring in the poor, the crippled, the blind and the lame…compel them to come in, so that my house will be full." ~Luke 14:21 & 22.

It is estimated that 85% of marriages affected by a disability will end in divorce. The DNA of mothers of children with special needs shows that, due to stress, they have a 10 year shorter life expectancy than mothers of typically developing children. Only 15% of churches in America have a disability ministry. There is a definite need!

For disability ministry to be truly successful, the entire church needs to be supportive, from the senior pastor to the custodian. If your church leadership is not yet on board, go ahead and minister as God has called you, but pray for hearts to become as God's heart for the disabled.

Please don't ask the parents to start, run or volunteer in the disability ministry unless they really want to and are so gifted! Disability ministry is one of the only ministries where we ask the people being ministered to, to be in charge.

Disability Ministry needs to be visible, included in the main Worship service, and accepted by the entire congregation. God will bless our churches when we value all human life as created in His image and when we value the "weaker parts" as indispensable parts in the body of Christ. The following resources will help the children in your church to become more aware and compassionate of those with disabilities:

1.**On a Roll for Jesus** (a missionary project that can stand alone or be incorporated into any other program. Order from Joni and Friends at www.joniandfriends.org)

2.**My Masterpiece Adventure: Making the Most of Spiritual Gifts, Talents and Disabilities** (a 13 week curriculum for ages 6-14, available soon at www.discipleland.com)

3.**Come Feel What I Feel** (directions for putting together an 11 station interactive workshop on disability awareness, available from Joni and Friends, Southern Oregon. soregonjaf@juno.com or 541-482-8644)

Mainstreaming is ideal

(inclusion, integration, peer education)

If the family of a child with a disability shows up unannounced at your church and you have nothing available to meet the needs of their child, the odds are likely that they will never return. First impressions are important, so have a designated "buddy" ready to help that child through their first visit to your church.

Ask the parents to meet with you during the week so that you can make a plan with them about how to best meet their child's needs at your church. Ask them what their hopes, plans, desires and dreams are for their child. Ask about special accommodations, any allergies, and about any behavioral issues. Ask them what works at home and how that can be duplicated at church. Never discount anything they say. Sample forms can be found in the following books: **Friendship Program Guide**, and **Autism and Your Church**, both available at www.Friendship.org and from **Exceptional Teacher** by Jim Pierson, available from www.joniandfriends.org.

Provide one on one support for the child, if appropriate (mentor, friend, buddy, helper, aide, shadow). Find volunteers from your Jr. High, High School and College ministries. If you can't find volunteers, hire someone, possibly a Special Education Major at your local college who might be looking for practical experience. Who knows? They might get saved by coming to church! Keep in mind that people with disabilities are abused at a much higher rate than the general population, so have an application process in place with required references and background checks. Having the senior pastor preach a sermon on disability ministry and asking for volunteers from the pulpit is much more effective than a bulletin announcement.

Include children with disabilities in your worship time, whether it is the children's worship or the main service. Provide ribbons for a nonverbal child to use in praise of our God or provide rhythm instruments. We know a family who was asked by their new pastor to keep their adult daughter with a disability home from church because she sang loudly and off key. How sad! As if her praise is less pleasing to God. The parents never went back to that church again.

Be flexible when including children with disabilities in your Sunday School program. If the student can't sit for the story time, have a buddy walk him around in the back of the room. Be creative in your flexibility to create a successful experience for this child.

Provide a de-stimulation room or area that an overly stimulated child with sensory integration disabilities can use to calm down or feel safe. Adapt it to what this particular child might need. Some ideas are: making it a quiet place with soft lighting, soft music, a tent or table, a fuzzy rug, sand play, books, etc. Again, make sure that communication with the parents is ongoing so that you know what works with the child at home.

Make reasonable accommodations for these students. Does he need special scissors in order to participate in craft time? Buy them. Is the classroom table too high or too low for a child in a wheelchair? Fix it. Does a student have a latex allergy? Make your church a latex free zone. Again, don't ask the parent to make or provide the accommodations. They will be blessed because of your efforts to meet their child's needs.

Think outside the box! If you find that what you're doing isn't working, keep trying new ideas. Get the parents' input again and again and again and again, until everyone is satisfied. This book is wonderful to get you to think of creative ways to make the church experience work for any child with special needs, not just ones with autism: **Autism and Your Church: Nurturing the Spiritual Growth of People with Autism Spectrum Disorders** by Barbara J. Newman, www.Friendship.org.

What to do when mainstreaming isn't appropriate

Always let the parents decide what is best for their child. If inclusion isn't working, please don't just give the child back to the parents. Most parents in this situation will not return to church, ever! Many of these parents haven't been to church in years or have tag-teamed church with their spouse or other children. They need a break and they need to worship together as a family. The evangelical church has been strongly pro-life and has encouraged people with adverse prenatal diagnoses to let their children live. And yet only 15% of our churches minister to these families once they've chosen to keep their children. Work with and decide with the parents what to try next.

Offer a separate class for children with developmental disabilities (DD). Offer a class for teens and adults with DD. Adapt existing curriculum or use some of the following resources:

*__Friendship Ministries__ www.Friendship.org
*__Family Bible Study/Access Learner Guide__ www.lifewaystores.com
*__God Loves Me__ (The Bible in 52 Storybooks) www.faithaliveresources.org
*__Beyond Limits__ www.christianity.com/visionnewengland
*__Breakthrough__ www.blhs.org
*__Mephibosheth Ministry__ www.mephibosheth.org

If no other options that have been tried have worked and the parents are in agreement, offer a Special Needs Room, which is like a nursery for kids with disabilities. But do not discount what these children can learn, even if they are nonverbal, nonambulatory and non-responsive. We may be surprised when we get to heaven to learn that these people had their own relationships with God through the Holy Spirit. So, if you have a Special Needs Room, continue to read Bible stories, play Christian music and pray with and for the child.

Joni and Friends

Make sure that families affected by disability know about Joni and Friends, the ministry of Joni Eareckson Tada. Become involved yourself! Search their web page at **www.joniandfriends.org** to find out about Family Retreats, Special Delivery, Through the Roof Disability Ministry, Disability Awareness Sunday, and many other resources that are available for your church to use in order that “His house might be full”!

*Rachel Olstad volunteers with Joni and Friends Southern Oregon, ministering to families and individuals affected by disability and encouraging churches to become Luke 14 churches. She and her husband Brent began their journey into the world of disabilities in 1990 when their first child was born with spina bifida. Rachel teaches a Friendship class for teens and adults with developmental disabilities at Ashland Bible Church in Ashland, Oregon. She also helped create “**My Masterpiece Adventure: Making the Most of Spiritual Gifts, Talents and Disabilities**”, a curriculum for ages 6-14, available soon at www.discipleland.com. Rachel can be contacted at riolaolstad@juno.com or 541-535-8479.*

Another letter from a family responding to the letter “finding a church family”..

Dear friend "in Christ": My child had the same symptoms along with Tourettes (no medicine due to severity of the mental state). We did "O.K." with a large church that had classrooms for individual instruction 1-6 and then a large group 7 yrs-13 yrs. It is a sad commentary on the born-again churches when some of us don't feel like we fit in. To the person who wrote this letter: There is nothing wrong with you if you have made Jesus Christ your Savior! Ask Him to be your personal Lord, or boss, each day. It is time to "get intimate" with Him. He will lead you out/over all problems as you learn to make the Holy Spirit "your best friend."

I have discovered that most Christians "walk by sight" even though we are commanded to "walk by faith." I’ve discovered most people do not do this. In my situation, I desired the "free time" from my child so I placed him in the classroom situation. He did O.K., but needed personal 1 on 1 on everything so that many people said, "What is he doing in here?" or "He shouldn't be in here." I ignored them or responded, "Try walking, by faith." We had a teen & adult "special needs" class at our church but nothing special for young children or parents. I tried and am still trying to have a Parent-to-Parent program but I hit the walls. It is most fascinating to see the spiritual battles at the church!

It saddens me to see the spiritual and physical division within the Body of Christ. I believe that due to the management of buildings, etc. many have thought they could push the weaker members aside. I believe God is not pleased with what He is seeing when he hears the cry of His children saying, "Where do I fit in?" Every born-again church should welcome the weaker members of the flock and we should be able to "learn together" and "love together" with one another, but most people hang-out with someone "like themselves". We all have a limited amount of time per day so most people find others that they can also socialize with. Our family had to choose carefully which activities to participate in. Most of our time has been "by ourselves". From home schooling to cleaning the home to learning how God’s ways work...we were quite busy here. We physically worked on the church property picking up litter or physically planting plants and doing mulch. We also tried a number of churches!

If you want to overcome an obstacle in the Kingdom of God it is mandatory to understand that you and your child are redeemed from the problem of building on your knowledge of the Word of God and your own personal "right-standing" with God. Like Paul with the snake, we all have stuff that we need to "shake-off" and we do this with our speech and authority in Jesus Christ. The Bible commands us all to "work out our salvation with fear and trembling." Salvation means "wholeness or completeness." Col. 2:10 states: " I am complete in Christ." As you learn to build on your knowledge of who you are in Christ, there will be times that God gives you break throughs and times to "fight" for the truth of the Word of God. It is like your child is hiding under a bunch of dirty blankets and you will unwrap him as you make your daily confessions of faith and keep your "right standing" with God. We have been "unwrapping" our child these past 6 years. We built on our child's faith since the age of 10. He is now 21.

This is a spiritual war as you live in a natural body. It is up to you to get your Victory. I would recommend that you start at a website **www.ficm.org** They have a page entitled "Who you are in Christ". Start reading it out loud everyday. Ask the Holy Spirit to get His Words into you and your child. Start unwrapping your child. God doesn't make junk; sin does. Love your child. Hate the problem.

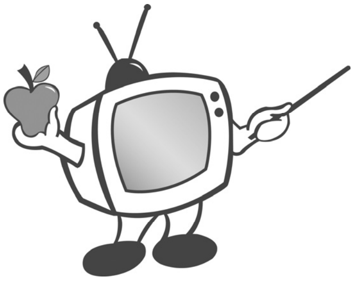
My pregnancy lasted 21 years! With God's grace our family will soon birth a new teacher of the faith, as he has worked out his wholeness with fear and trembling. Sincerely and with His Love,

I'm "the Momma"... Clare Worth

One last letter on Finding A Church Family…

Try not to use labels that can sound scary to Sunday school teachers. Try saying, “when my son does that.... what we find works is this.” Explain that your son needs to have things repeated many times, and use specifics about the things that will help him have a successful, positive experience. You mention that it's your son that really wants to go, so could you and your spouse take turns sitting with him in Sunday school on alternate Sundays while the other attends the service? For Sunday school workers I recommend the feature article at **www.shepherdboy.org**

sainthood11@juno.com



The TV TEACHER

P.O. Box 71926
Marietta, GA 30007
770-313-3019

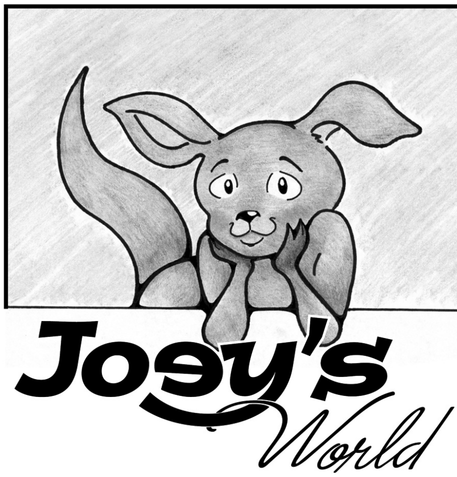
A new handwriting approach is finally here—a fun and educational DVD called *Alphabet Beats*.

Created by the mother of an autistic child, and an occupational therapist, this product combines writing demonstrations with catchy rhythmic chants that parallel the actual writing strokes. This unique multi-sensory approach is not only motivating children to write, but also helping them to motor plan correctly-- making the video a huge hit for special needs children all over the country.

In this video, each letter is a separate chapter that showcases the very entertaining “Miss Marnie” who demonstrates how to write both on the chalkboard and on lined paper. The video keeps the child entertained and focused by also incorporating 8-10 vocabulary words and concepts per letter through skits or pictures introducing animals, colors, opposites, shapes, body parts, creative play, sensory issues, etc. For over 2 hours of total video production time (not to be watched in its entirety), $35.00 is a great price.

Ages: 2 ½ - 7.

Visit their website at www.thetvteacher.com where you can also see a small video demonstration, or call them at 770-313-3019.



Currently in America, hundreds of families are homeschooling children whose special needs range from attention deficit disorder to severe multiple handicaps. Parents often find that when they bring these children home to be educated, they come out of the "deep freeze" that has kept them from making significant progress in traditional settings.

For learning disabled children who function best with "real-life problems" rather than artificial worksheet tasks, homeschooling may be ideal. For medically sensitive children, learning at home provides the opportunity for careful monitoring. For attention deficit children who function best with uniquely structured time and fewer distractions, homeschooling usually proves to be the answer.

After hundreds of hours of research, writing and thoughtful graphic design, HSLDA is proud to announce the latest addition to the Home School Legal Defense Association website: Homeschooling a Struggling Learner.

HSLDA Special Needs Coordinators Betty Statnick and Dianne Craft, and the HSLDA Communications Department and Web Department have partnered to produce this innovative approach to helping families homeschooling students who learn differently.

We all struggle with learning in one way or another, but most of us have learned how to compensate. In the case of struggling students who learn differently from the majority of children, the goal is to discover how they learn best, and then to motivate them as they learn.

The decision to homeschool a child with special learning needs is a weighty one. Parents may meet pressure from the school district, or even the state, to enroll their child in the "system." Many encounter criticism from well-meaning family and friends, and most must deal with their own fears of inadequacy. Nevertheless, in record numbers, parents of special needs children are choosing to home educate, and most are finding that the rewards far outweigh the costs.

Here is help. The heart of HSLDA's new online resource is a series of tools that allow parents to do some analysis on their own. They begin by trying to help parents understand the learning process, so they in turn can understand why their children may not be responding to conventional teaching methods. Then, based on the latest brain research, we explain what experts call " the four learning gates" and offer checklists to help diagnose why a child's particular "learning gate" isn't functioning correctly.

Equally important, they are compiling tried-and-true resources, from techniques parents can implement on their own to programs, books, videos, and organizations offering insight into correcting and compensating for learning difficulties.

Their hope is that the new web pages will be a great aid to many homeschoolers—and minimize the amount of time and money they spend in search of information.

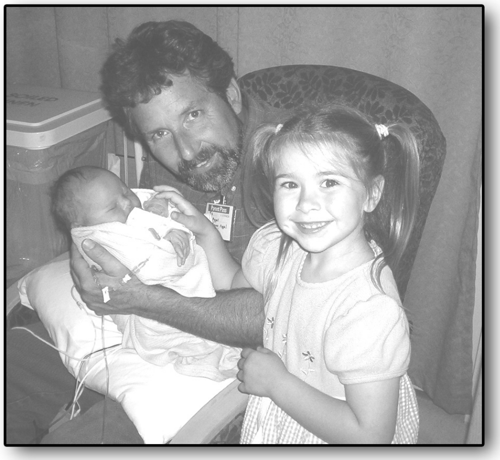
Help may just be a click away!

www.hslda.org/strugglinglearner.

Elijah Appel — Our Blessing Here on Earth…. and Now In Heaven

Fall 2005

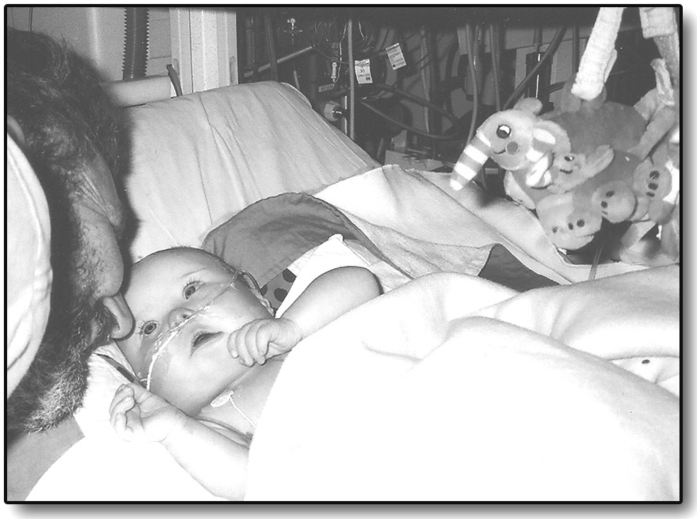
When we found out I was pregnant with our sixth child we could not have been happier. The midwife suggested we get an ultra sound to get a better idea of the due date. We agreed and at 18 weeks I went in for an ultra sound. The ultra sound technician was very quiet while taking a peak at our baby. He seemed to be having trouble seeing our baby's heart. I finally asked him if he could tell if it was a boy or a girl. He said it was a boy. Having four girls and one boy I was so excited for the happy news. The technician was still silent. I thought it a bit odd, but maybe he was just a quiet man. Then he suddenly got up and said he needed to get the doctor. Lying there alone in the silent room I had a sinking feeling in my stomach. What was going on? The doctor came in and took a look himself. The first thing he said was "I'm sorry" then he went on to tell me our baby had swollen kidneys, no nasal bone, shortened long bones and a major heart defect. He said I needed to immediately go to see the perinatalogist for more extensive testing and to make the decision whether to terminate the pregnancy. My mind was numb. What are they saying? My baby is deformed? They want to kill him? As I drove home I didn't know what to tell my husband and family. I was not home a few minutes when my midwife called. She said "I'm so sorry." She then went on to tell me how serious this diagnosis was and that "they probably will recommend termination due to maternal health issues". What are maternal health issues? I am perfectly healthy and have had perfectly healthy pregnancies. This baby can't hurt me. She urged me to go immediately in to see the perinatalogist.


Elijah Appel with Daddy and big sister

That evening as I told my husband and family, my husband's immediate response was "you are not going in immediately!" As much as we wanted to know more about what was wrong with our baby, termination was NOT an option for us. We believe that God made this baby for a reason and we have no right to take his life. We decided to wait until we believed termination would not be pushed on us as an option.

Two weeks later, after a lot of prayer, my husband and I did go see the perinatalogist. Dr. Fastering's demeanor was very sympathetic but straight forward. The news he gave us was pretty bleak. Our baby had many signs of Down syndrome and a major heart defect. He said our son, if he survived the pregnancy and birth, would probably only live a few hours. There was a chance with major intervention that he could live, but he said "How much do you want your baby to suffer?" He then said that he could tell by looking at us that termination was probably out of the question. We confirmed his observation and made it very clear that termination was NOT an option. He still went on to paint a picture of despair for the life of a child with Down syndrome. We left with heavy hearts but with the conviction that God makes no mistakes. The creator of all things was knitting this child in my womb at that very moment. So I did the only thing I could do as a Christian who loves and trusts the Lord, I put this little boy in His hands. This wasn't always easy but in doing so I found peace. With the knowledge that God is in control and this is His plan, I found the grace I needed to get through.

The next few months I sought out people outside of the medical profession who could tell me more about what was going on with our baby and what we could expect. What I found was a whole different story. Heart surgery had come a long way and most heart defects were fixable. I also found families that celebrated the lives of their Down syndrome children and found that they were joyful happy children. I even found an old copy of the Remnant magazine that was entitled "God's Special Children" which featured testimonies of families with children with Down Syndrome. What a blessing! I also sought God for comfort and His promise that He would never leave me or forsake me or my child. We decided to name our son Elijah because Elijah the prophet did not die but was taken up by God in a whirlwind.



Elijah and Daddy

By the time Elijah was due to be born my faith was strong and my hope was great. We could no longer deliver with the midwife because my pregnancy was deemed "high risk" so we were scheduled to deliver Elijah at a big urban medical center. While in labor a man came in the room, sat on a rolling stool and rolled over to my bedside. I was shocked to see the man was Dr. Fasterling. I really believed we had seen the last of him when he gave us the very biased and deceiving information during our appointment. Here he was sitting in front of me. I felt numb as he began to paint an awful picture of all the things that may go wrong. He said he just wanted us to be prepared. There is so much I could have said to this man looking back, but I just sat there feeling like I was going to cry. He left as swiftly as he had descended upon us. My faith took a nose dive. I looked at my husband and he looked as ashen and shocked as I did. But God in His all knowing and merciful way had given us a nurse who was a strong Christian. She came in a while later. Noticing that we were a bit shaken she asked what was up. After we told her the story she said "do not let Satan steal your faith! Dr. Fasterling is not a Christian, he does not know our God and does not value life." Our nurse told us that Dr. Fasterling was the head "Guru" of Obstetrics and usually does not attend births so we probably would not see him again. Relieved, we began picking our faith back up and reaffirmed our effort to look to God and NOT man for Elijah's birth.

Labor progressed and everything was going smoothly. As I began to birth our son, who should come in and start coaching me? Dr. Fasterling. I could not believe my eyes! I guess I could have insisted he leave or used labor as an excuse to give him a piece of my mind, but God gave me peace and from that moment on I just focused on having our baby.

Summer 2006

Elijah came into the world on July 12th 2006. He was put on my belly and I could see he was breathing. I could also see his precious eyes looking at me. He was adorable. He had a round face, button nose and at 8 pounds was chubby. The pediatric docs took him to look him over and I could hear his beautiful cry loud and clear. My husband and I were praising God and thanking him for Elijah's safe arrival.

I never saw Dr. Fasterling again. But later I came to realize that God wanted him at the birth of Elijah to witness the love we have for our son, our faith in God, and that God is beyond any medical diagnosis. God has given me a heart to pray for this man that he will come to know the great Creator of life and that he will speak life to those in our situation. Ephesians 5:14 was the verse I would sometimes pray for him "Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light."

The next eight days we spent at Children's Hospital in Seattle. Elijah's heart defect was diagnosed as a complete AV canal defect and pulmonary vein stenosis. He was doing great other than low blood sugar, jaundice and difficulty feeding. All these things were resolved except the feeding so he went home with a feeding tube in his nose. They said, best case scenario he would be back in 3 to 6 month for heart surgery. Again we were grateful to God for Elijah's health. I really believed that God had performed a miracle and that our son was going to prove the doctors wrong.

The next few months were pretty rocky. Elijah would not nurse enough to keep him growing. He had to stay on the NG feeding which was a great disappointment. He developed congestive heart failure and had surgery which temporarily fixed the problem but then other problems arose. He was having difficulty breathing due to problems unrelated to his heart. We spent a month in and out of the hospital. Through all this we continued to see Elijah as a blessing. He was such a sweet little guy who despite all the poking and prodding at the hospital began to smile. He was very alert and seemed very interested in what was going on around him.

There were many lonely nights spent at the hospital away from our home and family as I would stay with Elijah in the hospital. During this time, when I needed it most, God gave me verse after verse of promise, comfort and guidance. He gave me a picture of Matthew 11: 28-30, of Jesus right beside me carrying my burdens with me. He showed me from Hebrews 3, that holding fast in confidence to the hope I have in Him is imperative to Christ dwelling in me. And when I was faltering and forgetting to take my burdens to my Lord in prayer he gave me Philippians 4:6-7 " Be careful for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." And He was so good to keep His promises. Still, my flesh was weak and would falter.

One night in the hospital I was leaning over Elijah's crib listening to him struggle to breath. In my experience one of the most painful things to go through as a parent is to see your child suffer. I cried out to God to help him to breath. "Where are you God?" At that moment I felt His presence. It was like He was standing right beside me with His arm around my shoulder. I felt Him saying "I am right here, I know how you feel." I strongly felt His peace and grace at that moment. Of course He knows how I feel. He watched His son struggle to breath on Calvary. He watched His son die. I have never felt so close to the Lord in my life. All of a sudden I knew why the Lord did not just heal Elijah.

That I may know Him…

April 2007

Today I took our crib down. Just another reminder of lost dreams. Now there is an empty space next to our bed. Empty in the present time, but so full of memories. The crib is down, the clothes are boxed up and the toys are without a baby to hold them. But our hearts are full and our memories rich with the remembrance of a very special baby. A baby who's big blue eyes and beautiful smile will be forever imprinted on our hearts and minds.

As I look back on our experience this past year, I see that in the beginning I could not have imagined the impact Elijah would have on our lives. When we were told we were going to have a baby with Down syndrome and a major heart defect, I was terrified to say the least. Our lives were taking a turn into unknown territory. The world first told us it would be a mistake to bring this baby into the world. The baby would suffer, our family would suffer. But

God in His wisdom has told us in His word that He is in control. Give Him the reigns of our lives so He can do His work. We did, and we are so very glad.

We have five healthy children, so baby Elijah's diagnosis was scary to us. The first doctor we saw was very negative. He said IF our baby survived pregnancy and IF our baby survived birth that he would probably die within a few hours without major intervention. This was scary. How would we handle this? How would our children handle this?

Elijah did not die. He lived for 7 months. Yes, he did suffer some, and yes we suffered some too, but the joy of knowing this little baby outweighed it all. He loved us and we loved him, so there was much joy. I would not trade the time I had with Elijah for anything on this earth. He had such a beautiful spirit and I thank God for every moment. In many ways our lives were turned upside down, but in a wonderful sense our lives will never be the same.

Elijah Appel

I have to say glory to God for this. I don't ever want to be the same. Jesus became so real to me during our time with Elijah. He walked with me and talked with me. He comforted me in times of loneliness and sorrow. He asked me to give up some of my own desires and plans. He showed me that everything that I or Elijah could ever suffer He has felt and knows. He showed me Himself in the flesh in the form of His people who ministered to our needs and loved us during a very difficult time.

Rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing instant in prayer;... Romans 12:12

We had such hope for Elijah. Hope was our watchword. The moment he was in our arms we knew we wanted to see him grow up. The challenges he would face didn't seem so big. We loved him so much we didn't care that he was different and that he may never reach the potential of other children. To us he was a miracle, a supernatural gift and we were thankful.

Elijah had his second heart surgery in November. Initially he did well. He was out of the ICU and on the surgical floor, which meant we were on our way home. He then developed complications and ended up back in the ICU and on a breathing tube. It seemed he just needed more time. But time kept going on. One month and then two. Then he got a major infection. We almost lost him. I prayed. I have never prayed so hard and so much in my entire life. He came through and seemed to be getting better again. They took him off the breathing tube but he just couldn't handle it…..

On February 16th the doctors in the Cardiac ICU felt he needed the tube put back in. As they prepared to do this Elijah's heart just began to beat slower and slower...until it stopped.

They did what they could but it was apparent that his little heart could not take any more. I believe that Elijah somehow communicated with God and said "I have had enough". God in His mercy said "come home little one". During all this I stood not far from the bed praying, not for healing anymore but for God's will. In some way I knew that it was his time for Elijah to go see Jesus.

After he passed to heaven, they placed Elijah in my arms, as we waited for his daddy to arrive. The next hours were filled with sweet goodbyes. Nurses, doctors, and friends came to comfort us and to say goodbye to our precious little boy. They all talked about how special he was and how much they loved him. We bathed him and dressed him and then we went home without him.

Our family has always had the traditional American way of dealing with death. We decided for us it didn't have to be that way. The night before the funeral we brought Elijah home in his little white casket. We sat around him in our living room and talked about what a special little boy he was. We stood and prayed around him with sadness, but with thankfulness that God gave us the opportunity to know and love such a special baby.

The funeral was such a beautiful tribute to Elijah and to his Creator. We were surrounded by the love of our community of friends and family. They cried with us, prayed with us and sang with us. The burial was in a little country cemetery. The sun was shining and the birds were singing. Again, we prayed and sang. There were also times of silence and times of tears. During one of these times our pastor handed us a shovel and asked if we wanted to put the first dirt on the tiny grave. We did, then our older three children followed. Again there was silence. Then, one by one almost everyone there shoveled dirt until our son was buried. This was not planned on this earth but I know it was orchestrated by our Lord in heaven. They carried our burden. They helped us bury our baby. What a gift.

I can't say life has been easy since Elijah's passing. There have been times of great grief. We miss him. But God has poured His mercy and grace down upon us and we are living in it. Our joy now lies in the fact that Elijah is with Jesus. He is without pain and free from this earthly body that held him. Our hope lies in the fact that we will see him again. There will be a heavenly homecoming and a celebration when our lives are done on this earth. He is waiting for us.

Appel family and friends at Elijah's grave-side service.

I count knowing Elijah as one of the greatest gifts I have ever been given. To have held him, comforted him and to have looked into his big blue eyes was a little glimpse of heaven. His soul was so alive and so connected with God. He gave us a connection to our Heavenly Father and our heavenly home that we did not feel before. The joy was a mountain compared to the pain and sorrow. We will gladly never be the same again. "The Lord will give strength to his people; the Lord will bless his people with peace. Psalm 29:11

Lori Appel
brappel5@juno.com
Lori, wife to Chris, mom to 6 blessings, one in heaven. www.elijahsblessing.blogspot.com

Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we in the world.
1 John 4:17
www.elijahsblessing.blogspot.com

Mommy and Elijah

Phonics
Plain & Simple

…..Needing *something* to put down on your child's IEP as a curriculum for teaching your disabled child?

Plain & Simple Part A and B was designed by a homeschooling family with severely disabled children.

Using it successfully in their own children with Down syndrome, autism and learning delays, they have made it available for other homeschooling families whose children may not be able to read, write, speak or even point.

These work sheets are black and white, simple in design. Child does not need to be able to write, but does need to be able to affirm a "yes" or "no" answer to questions regarding pictures and sounds.

Part A - includes colors, shapes, left/right and up/down, etc.., abc's, early phonics (the vowels).

$20.00 Postage is included in the price.
No tabs, or binder, it is 147 pages

Part B - includes review of vowels, consonants, consonant blends, and early words. $30.00 Postage included in price.
(No tabs, or binder, it is 204 pages)

——This is not a complete phonics program, but created for children with delays that need to move V..E..R..Y slowly. Some of our special children CAN learn to read via the phonics method. This is an excellent (and cheap) way to practice. Find out if phonics is possible for your child.

—— A great program for children needing lots of repetition. No hand printing required. Photo copying encouraged for your own use!

See order form pg. 38
More info at www.nathhan.org

NATHHAN Membership Form

NATHHAN NEWS - Print and internet style. Find new resources, read letters from families like yours, adoption of special needs children, articles pertaining to raising and homeschooling challenged children with joy and competence. Printed 2X a year.

NATHHAN FAMILY DIRECTORY - Families willing to correspond with each other. Internet style, password included with membership.

LENDING LIBRARY - Operated through the mail. Users donate postage each time they use it. www.nathhan.org

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☐ CHASK Book—Christian Homes And Special Kids __________
$17.00. Price includes shipping. www.chask.org

☐ Yes, I want to help save the life of babies with special needs, who are not yet born. I am including a CHASK donation. (Tax deductible)________

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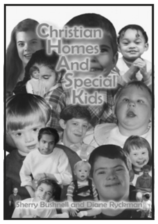
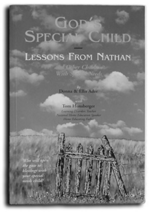
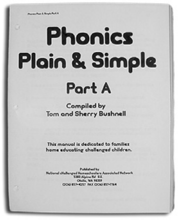
NATHHAN Resource Room


Christian Homes And Special Kids
Sherry Bushnell and Diane Ryckman

Christian Homes And Special Kids - Warmly penned, written for parents by parents, with a goal in mind...to raise children with disabilities, who love the Lord. This is a great book to share with new moms, or parents who are facing giving birth to a child with special needs. It is realistic, encouraging and full of a feeling of "Welcome to the world of disability, it's not so bad!"
By Sherry Bushnell and Diane Ryckman..........................$17.00

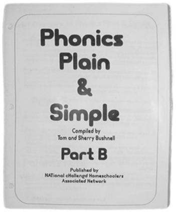

God's Special Child
Lessons From Nathan

God's Special Child - This is the story of a family, working with their son who had Prader Willie syndrome. They candidly share their success and failures. The results are an encouraging book that shows God's faithfulness and the wisdom of following His ways.
By Donna Adee... $10.00


Phonics
Plain & Simple
Part A
Compiled by
Tom and Sherry Bushnell
This manual is dedicated to families
home educating challenged children.
Published by
National cHallenged Homeschoolers Associated Network

Phonics Plain & Simple Part A - includes colors, shapes, left/right and up/down etc.. abc's, early phonics and the vowels.

No speech or handwriting required, although activities do require pointing or "x's". Comes shrink wrapped in plastic and drilled for three ring binder. See ad on page 33. Printed on one side only for ease of copying. No tabs or binder included. **147 pages...................$20.00**


Phonics
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Compiled by
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Published by
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Phonics Plain & Simple Part B - includes review of vowels, consonants, consonant blends, and early words

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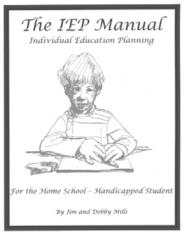
The IEP Manual
Individual Education Planning
For the Home School - Handicapped Student
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Individual Education Planning Manual For the Homeschool Handicapped Student - IEPs are now easy! Create your child's professional looking IEP specific to the special needs of your student.
By Deborah Mary Kathleen Mills..................................$67.00

NATHHAN Resource Room Order Form

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	Phonics Plain & Simple Part A	$20.00	
	Phonics Plain & Simple Part B	$30.00	
	1st Straight Talk (See page 9)	$45.00	
	1st Straight Talk with DVD	$55.00	
	2nd Straight Talk (See page 10)	$45.00	
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Please e-mail your ad to nathanews@aol.com and send a check. Ads must be received by the deadline date below, to be printed in upcoming issues. Please phone first, as we fill up very fast.

We hope you understand... we reserve the right to refuse ads we feel are inappropriate. (Please, no multi-level style products or companies.)
$500/ full page, $250 / half page, $125/quarter.
Deadline dates: Sept 15th, January 15th

Please call to verify ad space and arrangements.

Phonics Plain & Simple

Back by popular demand! And Cheaper!

Part A - includes colors, shapes, left/right and up/down, etc.., abc's, early phonics (the vowels). $20.00 Postage is included in the price. (No tabs, or binder, it is 147 pages)

Part B - includes review of vowels, consonants, consonant blends, and early words. $30.00 Postage included in price. (No tabs, or binder, it is 204 pages)

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—— A great program for children needing lots of repetition. No hand printing required. Photo copying encouraged for your own use!

See order form pg. 38
More info at www.nathhan.org

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NATHHAN Members!

Thousands of NATHHAN families read this section. This is a great way to get support or questions answered from a Christian homeschooling perspective.

Sell your used curriculum, therapy equipment, used Kitchen Aid or grain grinder, educational toys, or set of 1950's hymnals!

Need a pen pal? Here's your chance to find one before they are all gone!

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Letters From Families

Any good resources for educational DVD’s or videos that are for children who have Down syndrome?

John & Lisa Schlaack
johnlisa@grahamchurch.org

We were wondering if you know of some good resources for educational DVD's or videos that would teach children with Down syndrome. We home school and are looking for some videos to supplement and reinforce learning. We have an 11-year old and a 5-year-old.

. . . .

“The Hamburger Story” by Ruth Mast

Yesterday was one of those “work outdoor times”, so not having the time or energy to cook, it was decided to have our son Lyle (with special needs) grill hamburgers. Dad had picked up a smoker grill at a thrift store and bought a new rack for it. Now Lyle was itching to try it out. He cut up some pear branches to use for smoking, anticipating some delicious burgers.

At suppertime, Lyle brought in a plate of juicy burgers wafting with the wonderful aroma of smoke. We quickly built our whoppers. The taste was great! But……. Lyle wasn’t so happy with his treat. “Something is gritty in here,” he said… “Maybe the turner touched the dirt.”

Michelle and Mom split a second burger and proceeded to eat (without a bun). Hmmm….this one was gritty too.

Michelle looked down and declared, “There’s legs on my plate!”

Rhonda quickly tore open her sandwich and screeched, “There’s legs and a BODY in mine!” Quietly Lyle stated, “There was a mud dauber nest in the grill lid. Maybe the heat made it fall down.”
A quick inspection of the burgers revealed the HEAD, too! Mom was struck funny and began to laugh and laugh.

Minutes later, after using a brush, running water, and a microwave, Lyle chewed his burger and declared, “This tastes pretty good!”

Does she have a learning disability? Is there a test that she can take to determine what is causing her confusion?

The Storm Family
res8mby2@verizon.net

We have an eleven year old daughter who is in the sixth grade. She does very well in math, can cook a full meal on her own, and when talking with her, she seems to be a very intelligent girl. However, her reading is well below other children her age as well as her brother who is in the fourth grade. She has a hard time in English and is constantly stating that she just does not get it. We must read to her in her Spelling and English classes. If she does it herself, she gets confused and very aggravated. Her spelling is awful. We have tried "Hooked on Phonics", SSRW, etc...My question is... Does she have a learning disability? Is there a test that she can take to determine what is causing her confusion?

We as the parent - teachers have no idea what to do here. Any suggestion would be greatly appreciated.

"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control"
Galatians 5:22-23

. . . .

Down syndrome resource

Leticia Velasquez,
http://cause-of-our-joy.blogspot.com

I'm a Catholic homeschooling mom of three girls, one of which, Christina, has Down syndrome. I have a blog, http://cause-of-our-joy.blogspot.com, in which I describe life as Christina's mom. I also link to other parents of children with DS, so that anyone faced with adverse prenatal diagnosis will choose life for their child based upon the joy they see in the eyes of our families.

If you would refer parents who are curious about the potential of these children, how they will develop, what they'll look like, and what family life will be like, they may be happy to find out life's not as grim as some medical professionals picture it.

I would also be happy to receive emails from parents with any non-technical questions. Those you can handle, I'm sure. I am an English as a Second Language teacher and former social worker with some Birthright counseling experience. I also speak (and write) Spanish fluently. My email is leticia77@optonline.net, and I live on Long Island, NY.

For four years, since my daughter's birth, I have offered this assistance to local professionals at all institutions I came across, and not one took me up on it. That's why I took to blogging, to be able to give back what a lovely mom of 10, including her youngest with DS gave to me, namely the reassurance that life goes on, I can do this, and that God, and many others will walk with me "Down the Road to Bittersweet" (love that song!)

Thank you for the work you do,

……

I'm a regular contributor on the NATHHAN forums (I post under the user ID of cbollin) . A friend sent me this link. It tells the story of Ethan Mooney who was born with T-18 and lived for 99 days. I watched it and felt like it needed to be shared with CHASK. http://www.ignitermedia.com/products/iv/singles/570/99-Balloons

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Question...I am in a deaf interpreter training program. I am also a former homeschooling mom (my youngest graduated last summer).

I keep hearing about how important it is for deaf children to have deaf role models. Apparently, this is something of a problem for mainstreamed deaf kids. Is there a similar problem for a hearing parent who wants to homeschool their deaf child? Or would the very nature of a homeschooling parent be to go out and look for and participate in the deaf community? Would a homeschooling parent be more likely to do this than a parent whose deaf child is mainstreamed or at residential school? I am curious and I would like to propose homeschooling as a viable option for deaf children. I know personally that I would be very torn between all the options. I don't know what I would do. Thank you.

Sincerely,
Lynn Holmes mholmes0@alltel.net

……

I am writing in response to letters from your Letters From Families section of the fall/Winter 06/07 issue of NATHHAN News.

I just wanted to share that I have had some of the same issues that you are dealing with. We adopted our two boys about four years ago. It has been a struggle and a joy.

I recommend that you check out the Nancy Thomas website at **www.attachment.org**. Her site has a lot of information that may help you. She is a specialist on Attachment disorders but I think that much of her information can be applied without there being an attachment issue. She or someone on her staff, or someone recommended by her site can probably help you find someone who can get you the help you need or direct you to where you can get it. But DO get help!

I have learned some things along our journey.

1) Go to the Lord daily for your strength to get through the day.
2) Talk to others who are dealing with the same issues you are. Find a local support group.
3) Pray over your children. Speak God's words over them when they are sleeping.
4) Look at where you were compared to where you are now. My motto is "Progress, not perfection." None of us can obtain that until we reach heaven.
5) Children need to play outside a lot! Unless it is thundering and lightning, etc…. they can find something to do outside. Be sure that your yard is safe. Mine is enclosed. We had to put locks on the gates so the boys could not open them. But

they were able to go outside and play, play, play. Wear them out.

- I had to separate them (and still do sometimes) or they would play so rough they would hurt each other.
- Give them each something different to do, i.e. one plays soccer, the other in the sandbox. Switch them every 15 minutes or they will get bored and into trouble.
- Certain toys can only be played with in certain areas. Let them each choose.

6) It will seem as if you are a hard taskmaster at times (maybe even most of the time), but all kids need boundaries and to learn that you are the one in charge of them, that you will never let anyone hurt them and that if they get hurt playing you will take care of them and that they can come to you for everything.

I hope this helps in some small way.
I can be reached at http://RuthTluzek.com

Go to the blog and post a comment and I can get back to you through that or privately if you prefer. Just ask for a private response.

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Private Service Dog Training

Kati Warren, Director
RetrieveLife! Service Dog Training Options
P. O. Box 130
Boones Mill, VA 24065
Kkatiwarren@aol.com

I read an article about "Anne" and her family, and their work with a private service dog trainer in Washington. As a service dog trainer myself, I do not usually encourage families to get a young puppy in the hopes it might grow up to have service dog aptitude and abilities, but I do certainly empathize with the frustrations of this family and their desire to have a dog trained for their daughter.

I am a trainer in southwest Virginia, and work with both children and adults with disabilities. I worked as a trainer for both a state non-profit here in Virginia, and for “Paws With A Cause”, the large national non-profit service dog foundation in Michigan. I have trained mobility assistance, seizure response, hearing, and autism assistance dogs.

As I worked with the larger organizations, I realized many families have frustrations with long waits, difficult travel schedules, and often public access certification with their service dogs not being granted for children under a certain age. It is very important that families fully understand their options for obtaining assistance dogs.

It is also important that private trainers are reputable and not seen as a way to circumvent any of the standards of training which serve to protect all those who currently or in future may partner with an assistance dog.

If you know of families here on the East coast, especially the states of Virginia, North and South Carolina, Maryland, D.C. area, West Virginia, who are interested in obtaining a service dog........perhaps I can offer information to them about options available to them. I do not breed or sell dogs, and do not do protection or other training......i.e., training service dogs is not a "side line", but is the primary work that I do.

I would also be happy to provide an information packet to you, if you would like to see the information that I send out in response to inquiries about assistance dogs and training options.

Suggestions for NATHHAN NEWS

Howdy from Texas,

We are long time members of NATHHAN. Almost without fail, in every issue there is a family dealing with a highly disruptive, hitting, unruly and basically unhappy child. Certainly in each situation there are circumstances of which we aren't aware, and particular issues that are unique to that child that play into that behavior.

I suggest this, not as a sure fire answer to folks' problems, rather as something they might want to look into as a possible cause or contributing cause of their child's behavior. I'd love to see you do an article on the behavioral effects of food and airborne allergens on children! Especially our special children, whose bodies may be stressed by medications, medical conditions, etc., can be more fragile and sensitive to their surroundings.

In our home, child # 7 (age 5 and without disability) suffers from several airborne/dust allergies, and food sensitivities. We only discovered it a year ago. Prior to our discovering this, he was a Jekyll/Hyde personality. He would hit me, hit himself in the head, draw on walls, cut things, and generally be out of control and unhappy. This behavior gradually started when I weaned him around 1 year of age. Since we practice Biblical training and discipline with our other six children (and they're well behaved, controlled, and happy), we were pretty certain that it wasn't a lack in that area.

Then I read Is This Your Child? by Doris Rapp. I saw my kid! Never in a million years would I have attributed Jack's behavior to allergies. My husband has allergies, and he has symptoms! The only "symptom" Jack had was dark circles under his (swollen) eyes (environmental allergies), and eczema (food sensitivities). But he'd looked that way for so long, and it had come on so slowly, that we hadn't noticed. He didn't have a runny nose, congestion, watery eyes, itchy eyes, drainage, cough....nothing you'd typically associate with allergies.

We had him tested for allergies and found out what he was allergic to. We installed quality air filters and took other steps to lessen his exposure to the offending substances. We saw a big improvement in his behavior. Additionally, the allergist prescribed medications. It was like night and day! Jack was a completely different child while on the meds. Happy, feeling well, SWEET! But after a short time he had problems with the meds (which we'd rather not use unless absolutely necessary), so we began looking for other contributing offenders.

Then we noticed a connection between what he ate and immediate behavior changes.

After a lot of research and trial and error, we've figured out what foods really bother him and have eliminated them. He's a different child. Still stubborn and willful, and some days are still not so great, but the changes we've made in his and our lives have made such a difference in him.

There are so many resources that directly link food sensitivities to antisocial behavior! And our food sources are so corrupted now with chemically treated food, nutritionally depleted food, and families feed themselves JUNK! You've had articles about healthful eating, and I'd love to see one with the emphasis on "just check this food sensitivity and allergy thing out and see if it might be an issue with your child - if it isn't, no harm done."

Bev Parrish parclan@sbcglobal.net

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Blog entry by mom who has adopted a baby through CHASK

I just wanted to let you know that I wrote a blog entry today about CHASK and our daughter we adopted. I put the link to your website on my blog site and am hoping that it will generate some interest. I include CHASK in my blog entries regularly. We are so thrilled with all that you do to help give all children the "right-to-life" Thank you for your hard work, tireless efforts, and great example. We are always encouraged by your letters and updates. Have a wonderful weekend! Elizabeth Goulding
Our Family Homeschool Blog
http://www.homeschoolblogger.com/HouseFullofJoy

Mommy Needed... for Embryo With Possible Upper Arm Shortening

When couples go through fertility treatments such as in vitro fertilization, there are usually an excess of fertilized eggs (embryos) that are cryopreserved - frozen and stored for later use.

It is estimated that 500,000 human embryos are currently in cryopreservation in the United States. When the genetic parents decide that their family is complete and embryos are still available, they are faced with a dilemma: donating their embryos to research, thawing them and letting them die, or donating them to a couple who is unable to conceive. Many believe that embryo donation and adoption is the most life-honoring solution to this difficult choice.

Tom Bushnell, director of NATHHAN / CHASK, received a call from Dr. Jeffrey Keenan, a highly respected specialist in infertility and reproductive medicine. He leads the NEDC (National Embryo Donation Center) team as the Center's medical director and is a fertility specialist at the Southeastern Fertility Center in Knoxville, TN. He is board certified in Obstetrics and Gynecology, as well as Reproductive Endocrinology and Infertility.

The National Embryo Donation Center (NEDC) at Knoxville's Baptist Hospital for Women, is a non-profit organization whose mission is to protect the lives and dignity of human embryos by promoting, facilitating and educating about embryo donation and adoption. NEDC's phone number is (865)-218-6600. www.embryodonation.org

Dr. Keenan's concern right now is that he has an embryo that has potential medical concerns. Here is the story behind this waiting embryo.

A couple that could not conceive naturally, underwent IVF and created a number of eggs. They had some implanted, which resulted in a viable pregnancy. 9 months later, the baby girl that was born had a birth defect called bilateral upper arm shortening. The little girl has no other special needs except very short arms.

The remaining embryo that is from this couple is no longer desired by them, and yet they are not wanting to destroy the baby. Because a full sister to the embryo has a birth defect, no one wants to chance that the embryo will have the same defect. Dr. Keenan is just not sure what to do with it.

Presently there is no genetic research done on embryos that are waiting. Believe me, when it does arrive, it will be a search and destroy mission, much the same as abortion.

So what happens to embryos that are in storage?

Should a couple choose not to donate their embryos, the options are to destroy them in the process of medical research, allow them to thaw and die, or do nothing.

Not making a decision is much the same as making a decision to destroy the embryos. Frozen embryos have a limited life span in storage. They will eventually die.

There are many centers that offer to store embryos across the country. Some require that parents relinquish all control once the embryos are stored. In addition, certain centers sell embryos for profit.

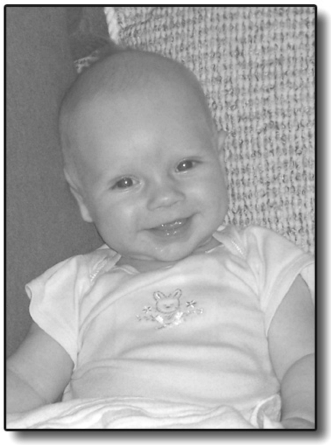
But for now, over 500,000 frozen embryos await a mommy to grow them into a baby.
They have a life span of at least 13 years, but no one knows for sure exactly how long.

Several other factors are question marks also such as, can Hepatitis B, syphilis, or HIV be transferred to the mommy from the embryo. So far there has not been any reported cases of this occurring, but it is at least a theoretical possibility.

Are you interested in trying to save the life of this embryo?

The NEDC has a web site that is much more informative than the quick relay of info here. Go to **www.embryodonation.org** for the full scoop.

Basically NEDC, unlike other storage centers, actually requires that the host mom has a home study done. Age limit is 45 years old, parents must be non-smokers, no alcohol or drugs, not addicted to any pain medication and have a 20 year life expectancy.



The normal cost for an assisted reproduction cycle is $4,500. Dr. Keenan said that for this particular embryo, he would only charge $3,500.

As far as the procedure, NEDC's success rate for implantation is 48.7%, which is a whole lot higher than the national average which is 25% - 30%.

The NEDC presently has about 100—150 sets or about 400 frozen embryos in their center waiting for parents. They are implanting about 10—20 sets a month. Embryo's are planted in sets in case one doesn't make it.

Fresh embryo implantation success rate is about 35% which is higher than the success rate for frozen. Only 2/3's of the embryos survive through the thawing process.

So, is this really adoption? Based on current law, adoption only refers to the placement of a child after birth. So, instead of using adoption laws, legal agreements are used to handle the process of embryo donation. The birth parents who carry the baby to term have a relationship with the child that is just as binding as a legal adoption.

Surveys estimate that only 9,000 of the 500,000 embryos that are currently in cryopreservation in the U.S. are available for donation to another couple. Many or most of the remaining embryos will likely not be transferred into the genetic mother, and so will eventually die.

The National Embryo Donation Center (NEDC) is a nonprofit organization whose goal is to give life to these tiny embryos.

There are other Christian agencies with embryo adoption programs, such as "Nightlight's" program called "Snowflakes," in California. You can contact Megan Corcoran at (714) 278-1020. They also have tiny babies available for adoption. Some may have the possibility of genetic differences, depending on the parents genetic make-up.

Currently, the issue of embryos with special needs has not been dealt with. No research. No genetic testing yet.

What are your feelings on this issue? Is it just an embryo or a real baby? If you would adopt a baby with special needs, would you also agree to carry one in your womb?

What about this baby with potential upper arm shortening? Can CHASK find a home for babies, who are still embryos, with potential special needs?

(*Editor's note about the pictures in this article. These are real photos of babies and children conceived via an assisted reproduction cycle. They were given to us to share with you from one of the embryo adoption programs. These are not just "embryos" , but real babies waiting for mommies.*

Trevor’s Sweetheart

By Debbie Mills

“Do you have a sweet heart Trevor?” I was half teasing and half cajoling him for information as we drove down the road in my car. He sat in the passenger seat giggling and admitted that “yes” indeed he did have a sweet heart! Ha-ha! I thought, wondering who she could be. “Is she pretty?” “Is she tall?” “Is she nice?” I asked, thinking it was a particular girl he knew at St. Madeline Sophie Center (SMSC) adult day program. He nodded and continued giggling. “What’s her name, Trevor?” I queried. At that point he just smiled and turned his head away from me to look out the window. “Hmmmm….Trevor has a sweet heart…” I mused.

Trevor and Gretchen

As the SMSC Valentine’s Day dance approached, we had caught glimpses of Trevor attempting to dance in the privacy of his bedroom. He was always a wallflower and never a dance-participant at these social events, yet I knew in my heart that Trevor really did want to join in the fun with his friends. So thinking that I could help him get over the fear of dancing at the party, I asked Trevor if he wanted me to come to the Valentine’s Day dance with him. And to my surprise he said an enthusiastic “Yes!”. He usually didn’t want me to be at SMSC. St. Madeline’s was his place and in his mind, my place was at home . But this time, he really wanted me to come. “Oh darn!” I thought, “I’ve got a million other things to do today.”

That morning as I helped him get ready for his day, Trevor insisted upon wearing his black church pants, a hot red and orange dressy shirt and his church shoes. “Okay….this is different,” I thought. As he got on the bus to go to the program, he was excited to tell his friends that his mom was coming to the Valentine Dance. And as usual, they all laughed hysterically about it, as the bus departed. A few hours later, I left for the party wearing my “church” clothes, too.

I arrived to find St. Madeline’s beautifully decorated with red, white and pink balloons. Tables were set with festive place settings and centerpieces. The staff was serving lunch to the consumers and their guests. I found Trevor at a poolside table sitting with some friends, including the one whom I suspected might be his sweet heart.

They had been friends for quite a few years, even before SMSC. Her parents had been part of our Special Children support group. She is the same age as Trevor, their birthdays falling in the same week. She also has the same interest in cars that Trevor has. She was “tall”. She was “pretty”. And she was “nice”… “Yup!” I thought, “Gretchen, must be the one!”

Shortly after lunch, the DJ arrived and the party began with the sounds of rock and roll! Trevor got so excited that he jumped up, and grabbed my hand. We literally, ran down to the Giho room where the loud music was coming from.

Upon entering the auditorium, I noticed that something very different was going on in there on that dance floor. The first thing that I noticed was all the consumers and staff in a dancing frenzy! Upon second look, I noticed the uniqueness of each individual. There were wheelchairs with whirling passengers and people rockin' with their walkers. Dancers gyrated in pairs and groups or moved to the music alone, while others slipped out of their wheel chairs and "stood" on their knees to move in time to the beat. Then there were the "smooth movers" gliding across the floor, twirling and dipping with their partners. Never before have I seen a group of people get to that level of excitement and action so fast; AND without the aid of intoxicants. The fun of the event was intoxicating enough. It was wild!

Trevor and his Sweetheart

I asked Trevor if he would like to dance and we tenaciously stepped into the mix of people. We held hands and sort of bounced at the knees. Trevor and I both laughed and enjoyed being part of it all. This was a first.

During the break, it was time for sweet heart photos. We had our picture taken, then I suggested that he and Gretchen have one taken together, and they did.

The music began again and so did the energetic dancing. Near the end of the hour the music slowed down. Lights were dimmed as the DJ announced the last song, a recording of Anne Murray singing "Could I have this dance?"

Trevor and I stepped on to the dance floor, he slipped his arm around my waist and held my hand. We swayed to the music, my eyes welling up with tears as I listened to the lyrics…

I'll always remember the song they were playin', The first time we danced and I knew, As we swayed to the music and held to each other, I fell in love with you.

My thoughts floated back in time to when I first held him in my arms as a little baby boy. I fell in love and knew that my life would never be the same.

I'll always remember that magic moment, When I held you close to me, 'Cause we moved together, I knew forever, You're all I'll ever need

I reflected upon all the growing years between the then and now, remembering all the love, the daily care, and assistance that has been required to bring Trevor into adulthood.

Could I have this dance for the rest of my life? Would you be my partner every night? When we're together, it feels so right. Could I have this dance, for the rest of the night?

I thought of all the continued care that he will need every day for the rest of his life. And as the words of the song asked for a lifetime commitment, my heart burst with love for my son, knowing that we would be dancing this dance for a long, long time.

The dance ended. We got into my car. As we drove down the road, I asked Trevor if he had a good time at the dance. He smiled and nodded that he did. I was still wondering about his sweetheart. So I asked him directly, "Trevor, is Gretchen your girl friend?"

He laughed at the prospect and responded with an emphatic, "No mom, I don't have a girlfriend! YOU are my sweetie!" He had told me this before, but I guess I didn't really believe him until then.

Summertime - A Great Time for Streamlining

by Diane Ryckman

It's just about summertime. School is winding down, and right now I'm very aware of the aspects of our family life that have contributed the biggest challenges to our homeschooling. Summer is a great time to zero in on some of those "trouble spots", working on establishing good habits or routines or attitudes during those months that are "school free' in order to get next year's homeschooling experience off to a smooth start.

Because of changing family dynamics, the areas that may need to be worked on through the summer vary from year to year. Some areas to concentrate on could be establishing chore routines; getting meal plans and shopping lists worked out; practicing a basic academic skill with one child; teaching our little ones how to keep themselves occupied on their own; obedience training; teaching respect for other's belongings, or whatever else you identify as a priority for your family.


Andrew Ryckman

Sometime near the beginning of summer I like to take some time to write down **summer goals for our family**. My journals are full of "proposed daily schedule" plans – most of which have been too idealized to actually achieve. For me, along with good intentions there inevitably comes the realization that I can't bring about change on my own. This can feel very discouraging until I remember to look to the Lord for the wisdom where to begin and for the grace to follow through. Then if even one aspect of the proposed schedule does become a reality in our family routine I know that progress has been made, by the grace of God.

One very important goal I like to aim for during the summer months is **memorizing a portion of scripture** together as a family. This is how we do it:

At breakfast time I first read the complete passage, with the children quoting what they are able along with me.

Next we go back to the verse (or part of verse) that we need to work on, and say it over a number of times until it begins to sink in, then take turns quoting that verse and correcting each other.

Next we quote the whole section together as far as we've memorized.

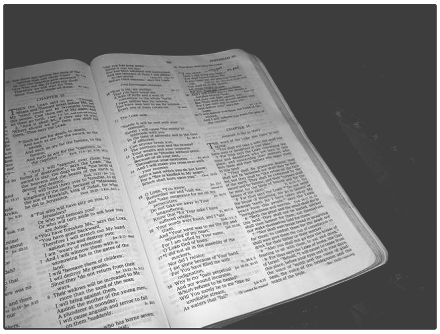
We also make up actions to go with the verses, a great help for memorizing, especially for our strong visual or kinesthetic learners.

One year we memorized Luke 8:5-15, the parable of the sower and the seeds. At the time Andrew, our son with Down syndrome, was 3 and not yet speaking more than one or two words at a time. One evening as I was lying beside Andrew at bedtime, I figured I would practice the memory work (slowly, to help lull him to sleep!). To my surprise, as I came to the end of a verse or sentence, Andrew would say the word before I did. He had been memorizing the passage along with us, he just wasn't able to get all those words out!

Summer is a great time for **teaching new chores**, and establishing a new chore routine for our children. Little ones especially enjoy doing their chores with mom or with older siblings who are patient enough to help them learn. I like to have a good household routine in place before September arrives, so that when school begins the children are already well aware of their home responsibilities. In the last NATTHAN issue a number of chore ideas were shared – it might be a good time to re-read the article on practical chores for ideas on which ones you'd like to work on with your children.

Depending on the existing state of my personal organization, summertime is a good time to improve my own **system for keeping the household running smoothly**. I've found the most effective system for me has been the creating of what I call my “Brains Book”. I use a 9”x 6” spiral bound note book, and transform it into a weekly calendar which I use for planning meals week by week, listing groceries needed (I just bring my “brains book” along with me to the grocery store), listing weekly and daily “to do” lists, jotting down any appointments, and also recording special things that occur that day. The only drawback I’ve found with this system is if I misplace my notebook – then I’m in big trouble!

Sometimes, one child in particular may need a little help cementing a **basic academic skill**, and summer is a great time to concentrate on developing it. Daily flashcard practice is one way of reviewing and reinforcing skills that require memorization. Math facts, number recognition, and sight words especially work well with flash cards. Begin by showing a card and reading the word or number sentence on the card to your child, then repeating it again with your child. Go through a small pile of cards this way until interest begins to drop, then put them away until next time. As time goes on, try waiting a few seconds before reading each card, giving your child the opportunity to read it before you if he’s able. Count the cards you work through, and celebrate that day’s accomplishment. Make it fun, and watch as progress is made through the summer.



In our family, when one of our children needed extra reading practice, we’ve had our own summer reading club. Everyone has participated, and we’ve kept track of each time someone completed an entire book. When our daughter who was in most need of practice had read a set number of books, we celebrated by all going out for ice cream. We let our daughter choose the books she read, at the reading level she was comfortable with, because our goal was that she practice reading. She did, and she remembers that summer as being when she first really started reading. Now it’s hard to get her to stop!

Summertime is also a great time to work on **obedience training**. If there is a “rule” that a young child needs to learn to obey that would make your schooling in the fall less stressful, now is the time to establish it, before school begins. Set aside a day for some concentrated one on one time together. Clearly lay out what you expect of your child, and also what your child should expect if he disobeys. Set up training sessions, and have your child practice obeying you. When he obeys, reward him with praise. Using visual reminders can help your child remember your expectations for him. When he disobeys, mete out the consequences. The use of a small switch lightly across the back of the hand can be a very effective tool for training in obedience. Follow up your training session by daily reviewing the “rule” and the consequences of disobeying, then practice some more. Some rules that could be learnt this way are: coming when told “Come to Mommy”; sitting quietly for a period of time; stopping when told “stop”; holding hands when told "it's a hold a hand time. You may also want to teach your child to observe boundaries. Inside boundaries involve respect for others’ rooms or belongings. A line of tape on the floor could act as a visual reminder not to step over the line. Outside boundaries are the limits to where your child is allowed to go. Survey tape makes a good visual reminder for this. Whatever rules you may choose to work on with your child, practice and consistency are vital.

Sometimes our little ones need to be taught **how to spend time on their own**, another worthy goal for summertime. I’ve found that some undivided positive attention from Mom first makes them much more willing to be on their own. Begin by thinking up activities that your child would be interested in and able to do on his own, then do that activity together. Colour together, build with blocks together, play with play dough together, do puz-

Continued on page 62...

"It's Not All About Academics"

By SuDawn Peters

There can be no job on earth more humbling than being a parent, unless it is being a homeschooling parent. The eternal significance of soul building, the effort to impart academic excellence (whatever we perceive that to be), keeping our home organized and pleasant, and teaching life skills can seem mountainous most days.

In case those things don't challenge us enough let me sprinkle in an above average number of children and living on one income. At our house we blend in adopted, foster and birth children all with unique learning styles and personalities. Then along the way came the reality that some have not only physical challenges, but learning delays as well.

Peters' Children

We have moved 6 times, lived in 3 states and added 6 adopted children to the 8 children we initially had when we started home schooling over 15 years ago. We have experienced many job transfers, under employment and more recently unemployment as my husband, John, has undergone two surgeries for treatment of a brain tumor.

I have spent many a prayer time beseeching God for wisdom, strength and specific instructions on how He would have me do all that I have to accomplish on a given day. All of the familiar scriptures have been poured over and applied: "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me", "God will not give us more than we can endure"--you know the scriptures I write of. Scripture is my fuel, God is the source. Still, day to day, what does that look like?

I am both an avid reader and a prolific list maker. I love organization and the power having a plan and goals give to our day. For a very long time I felt the learning delays had to be due to selecting incorrect curriculum, not working long enough hours at planning or teaching, or simply, gasp, I could not teach! At one time or another I have tried just about every approach.

I have poured over books on teaching special needs children, and organized to the point of exasperation at times. Looking back, all were an integral part of building our lifestyle of learning, so don't despair if you find yourself studying and organizing and list making, it's all good when we are following the leading of the Holy Spirit. The best teachers are those with teachable spirits themselves. Hopefully, as Christian parents we are sensitive to the leading of the Holy Spirit as we create, design and implement our schools at home.

Many of our children who learn differently also do not learn in sequential fashion. For example, they do not apply the knowledge that basic alphabet letters become words, which become spelling and reading lessons, which become information we apply in daily life. Our differently-abled children could not learn in an unschooling sort of teaching environment. So, I would swing to more structure and assume different curriculum would be the key. I hoped if I found the right workbook, Bible lesson or made chores more doable and discipline more consistent I would see academic progress.

I wanted desperately to spare my children having to face questions about what grade they were in or from being asked to read aloud in Sunday School when they could barely find the page number of the lesson being studied. I wanted my children to 'main stream'…after all, when I embarked on the home school journey I did so because I thought schooling at home would allow excellence that would exceed that which they would have attained in public school. Some of our children have graduated college by now with 4.0 successes. I was wrong when I hoped schooling at home would ensure every child similar results.

An element of pride had to be relinquished before I could understand differences and effectively teach. I feel it is safe to say that parents who have the tenacity and personalities to parent many and special children seem to frequently struggle with finding a balance of strength, humility and supposed success. I have personally struggled with my pride when my children did not measure up to the academic success I saw in fellow home school families. I confess it probably bothered me more than the children who struggled with the delays. When I would ask God what He wanted me to teach (and I consider this the single most important factor in teaching at home—seeking God and His wisdom) I felt His answer was 'it's not all about academics'. But, Lord…what does that **mean**? What does that look like in my day-to-day teaching, cleaning, cooking, and laundry?

I started by lowering **my** standard some. I set goals that had less academic challenges, thus reducing the stress on our entire family. I created a notebook and my own version of an IEP for each child so that I could not only set goals, but see progress, albeit not always academic. For lack of a better term, I began teaching to the whole child; I practiced creating a lifestyle of learning that was totally out of the box I had first put my plans and ideas in.

All too soon, (where do the years go?) we faced the ultimate parenting test. You know the one, your emotions play against your logic and all of that is in contradiction to the things in life you want to protect your child from. Our teens who were chronologically in the 9th grade were reading and reacting to life at about a 3rd grade level on a good day. Here they were, suddenly old enough to go on a week long mission trip with the church youth group. Oh Lord, how did they get to be teens so quickly and why are they still so unprepared? My own pride and feelings of defeat about not helping them be as successful as I had hoped began to surface.

How could we let them go? They could not make change when spending money; they could not read menus or directions. They had minimal phone skills and certainly would be unsafe. Fear raised its ugly head and my mommy heart hurt as the decisions I had avoided for so long now loomed on the horizon.

My husband felt it was time to release the boys, to let them go. We went to our youth pastors and tried to explain our concerns. At best they took note. However, because our children live daily in a large family their survival skills are excellent, as far as following others and appearing to function within that normal box. This is their greatest disability, appearing normal but being so delayed in unseen areas. The danger is much greater for our 4 children that have logic and learning delays than our child with severe cerebral palsy who is visibly disabled. I knew that I needed to follow my husbands' leading, but it was hard, oh, so hard for me to release them to travel so far.

I prayed and interceded all week while the boys were gone. I mused and I wondered at what it looked like for them on an expedition to the unknown. How is it to be handsome healthy young men, leaders by personality, delayed for unknown reasons in academics and logic? How does one find a path with such a combination?

As I walked down the church corridor on the Sunday the youth returned, I was greeted time and again with hugs and huge smiles from knowing adult sponsors returning from the mission trip. By the third or fourth greeting my heart began to flutter. Was it true; were our sons really awesome on this, their first mission trip? Was it true, had they prayed prayers that touched the hearts of man and God? Had they really been the spiritual leaders one sponsor beamed about when she whispered the news to me?

One glance at my nearly 6 foot tall twin sons confirmed in my spirit that indeed there had been a huge transformation. They stood tall and confident, peaceful with the afterglow we have all experienced upon completion of a powerful Bible study, beautiful time in prayer, or in this case, a spirit led mission trip.

As I drove from the church parking lot the Holy Spirit came over me in a profound fashion. Tears streamed down my face as God spoke to my heart in a most healing way. Past memories of struggles and disappointments waved across my mind. The moves, the difficulties with finances, their challenges at learning even the simplest of math computation flowed through my memory. God showed me that even though I thought my efforts had been futile, my lists unnecessary, my curriculum dilemmas wasted, my chore chart anxieties and our discipline useless, it had all worked together for good, just as He had promised.

When I had felt we should have been drilling academic concepts one more time, but instead we were rewriting scripture or talking for the hundredth time about accountability and a more logical way to accomplish a goal, we had inadvertently been achieving goals. I realized that day I had misconstrued the goals, not failed at teaching. Our goals of excellence for our children were happening.

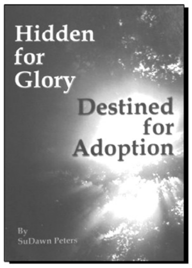
Gently the Lord had nudged us toward teaching to the soul of the child. I had been mistaken when I thought my primary responsibility as a home school teacher was about academic success. We had been making eternal differences, though my eyes had initially been on academics failures, not all the other less obvious lessons of life.

I was so humbled that day as the ‘light’ finally went on for me! I finally understood what God meant when He said, “It’s not all about academics”. I was empowered and excited to press forward peaceful in my new found knowledge.

Since that revelation, our school has taken on a whole new concept. Guess what? When I truly understood what God desired for our school at home, when I let go and let God direct more intricately, academics s-l-o-w-l-y increased! We see continued spiritual growth, and that was always the goal. I just hadn’t understood.

Book Review

Hidden for Glory…Destined for Adoption



by SuDawn Peters

Though I am not a missionary, nor even a bold witness in approaching strangers, I can make the difference in the lives of many by touching and investing in the life of just one child. In her book, SuDawn Peters shares testimonies of God's faithfulness and love, even in hurtful situations and valleys of uncertainty. Facing head on such excuses as unemployment, age, race, size of their family, and health issues, they have found that nothing could stop God's plan as they obediently followed Him....

This book is one that no Christian should miss reading. As everyday challenges and seemingly insignificant events mesh into stories of inspiration and great spiritual significance, you will realize anew, that conception is purposed and each life is incredibly special in God's eyes.

SuDawn, her husband John and their children live in rural ,NW Arkansas. SuDawn is available to speak at adoption and home school conferences. hidden4glory@juno.com

Joy Faith—Our Daughter With Spina Bifda

By Hope Baker

Our daughter, Joy Faith, was born on July 8, 2005 with Spina Bifida. She has been an absolute, wonderful blessing and miracle. People comment all the time that her name is so true of her personality. She *is* a Joy.

Joy is our 6th child. We found out when I was about 22 weeks pregnant, by routine sonogram, that she had spina bifida. I remember when the doctor told us, we really did not know what it was. Our doctor made an appointment for us to see a specialist and get a level 2 sonogram. The soonest appointment that we could get was 2 weeks away. It was a long 2 weeks. I remember going home from the doctors' appointment. All I was hearing in my mind was the words "Spina Bifida". I woke up in the middle of the night with the words "Spina Bifida" being repeated in my mind over and over again. The next day my husband and I did some research on the internet. We found that there was a wide range of possible disabilities. The best case was that she would walk with some braces; the worst case was she would not walk and be wheelchair bound. Most websites indicated that hydrocephalus is almost always present. Club feet are a possibility. There were even a few websites that said 25% of babies die by age 5. It was very frightening information. The prognosis depended on the level in the spine that the opening was at. We would have to wait 2 weeks to find out anything. Well, finally we had the level 2 sonogram. Her level was S1 – L5. They told us that it was low on her spine, which was good. The doctors were puzzled that she did not have the Chiari malformation in the brain, there was no hydrocephalus, no club feet. She did have a mylomeningecele, spina bifida. They told us the best case was she would need bracing to walk and hydrocephalus would probably show up at some point in our pregnancy and club feet could as well. They scheduled us for monthly sonograms and even a sonogram of her heart. Everything remained the same. There was no hydrocephalus, no club feet.


Steve and Joy Faith

We decided on a name for her so that we and others could pray specifically for her. Her name is Joy Faith. We chose Joy because we were joyful to be blessed with her and to keep her; Faith because we trusted God to watch over her. Her name is so fitting. Joy was born naturally (no c-section) on July 8, 2005. She had a bubble on her back, her spinal cord was exposed but covered. The surgeons operated on her a few hours later. The neurosurgeon was very hopeful. He said she did well in surgery, her spinal cord was out a bit but it did not look too bad. She spent only 6 days in the NICU. That is apparently a short time for a spina bifida baby. It was not an easy experience but God is good and we had peace through it. Joy had a

Joy Faith Baker

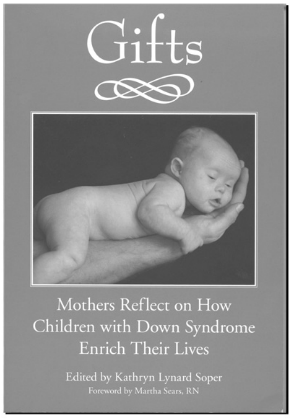
few issues with reflux to her kidney when she was discharged. At that time she was prescribed an antibiotic to take daily. We also had to catheterize her once a day. This was hard to get used to, but after a few weeks it was pretty routine. She had several specialist appointments her first year. At her 1 year checkup we learned that the reflux in her kidney was better, but her bladder was not working well. It had not grown at all since she was born. The doctor said she would need to be catheterized every 3 hours as well as taking another medication 4 times a day. This really was a big adjustment. It took us a little longer to get used to this but realizing *what could have been,* we were very thankful that Joy is so healthy.

God has truly worked a miracle in Joy's life. Through this experience I have learned to take one day at a time. My husband and I have always had a great relationship but through this experience we have grown closer. When I was pregnant with Joy we committed to pray *together* every Sunday evening. We would pray for Joy, our other children, each other and God's strength. We still do this every Sunday evening. I love that God is strong when we are weak.

Joy is now 18 months old. She is so funny. I have heard people say many, many times that she is a true joy (of course, we feel that way!). She is daddy's little girl and Gramma's favorite. She never developed hydrocephalus. She is very smart/sharp. She runs, jumps and dances. She has none of the disabilities that 'should have been'. Nothing like what we really thought or told could happen. If you met her and did not know she had spina bifida you would not suspect it. Joy is truly a best case scenario health wise for spina bifida. There is a wide range of possibilities, but I was not told by doctors that it would be this good. Actually they portrayed a very bleak picture and continually pushed for abortion, even after we told them that there was no chance we would do that. God has blessed us with 7 children. From my experience, I must say that even though our children are healthy, there is no such thing as *perfect. Every child has special needs*; each one requires different attention. We have no guarantees that one of our healthy children will not require special help at sometime in their life. We have no guarantees of health or even life. God promises, if we *know Him and walk with Him,* He will not put more on us than we can bear. What God creates is not by mistake. I believe God's intention is blessing not burden.

Hope Baker (Mommy) and baby Joy

Resource Reviews



Gifts

Mothers Reflect on How Children with Down Syndrome Enrich Their Lives

By Kathryn Lynard Soper. Forward by Martha Sears, RN.

With the national abortion average at 90% of children who have Down syndrome, we are very happy to share this resource reflecting life choices.

Most of the birth moms sharing here knew in advance that their baby would be born with medical concerns. They chose life.
Interestingly enough, not all families represented here are of the Christian faith.
We wish more families would choose to embrace the challenges of special needs, but having a baby with Down syndrome is not something most parents would willingly choose.

Many who travel this path discover rich, unexpected rewards along the way. In this candid and poignant collection of personal stories, sixty-three mothers describe the gifts of respect, strength, delight, perspective, and love which their child with Down syndrome has brought into their lives.

The contributors to this collection have different personalities and perspectives, world views and religions. Their experiences point to a common truth: the life of a child with Down syndrome is something to celebrate.

These woman have something to say—not just to other moms, but to birth parents who may be trying to decide whether to terminate their pregnancy or travel the path of special challenges with their child.

If a birth mom you know is expecting a child with Down syndrome, here is a resource to have on hand. Specifically addressing the blessing of Down syndrome, this book could be just what a mom needs to read to make a life decision for her baby.

This book , along with other great books for families dealing with disability, is published by Woodbine House, and is just a part of their Special Needs Collection. 800-843-7323 www.woodbinehouse.com

Too Wise To Be Mistaken
Too Good To Be Unkind

Written By Cathy Steere - A family dealing with autism, professionals, homeschooling and successfully using Biblical child training

—An excellent book recommended by many NATHHAN families. This book has literally changed the lives of many families dealing with autism or special needs children with extra challenging behavior.

Grace and Truth Books 3406 Summit Boulevard Sand Springs, OK 74063
(918) - 245-1500

NATHHAN Resource
Review

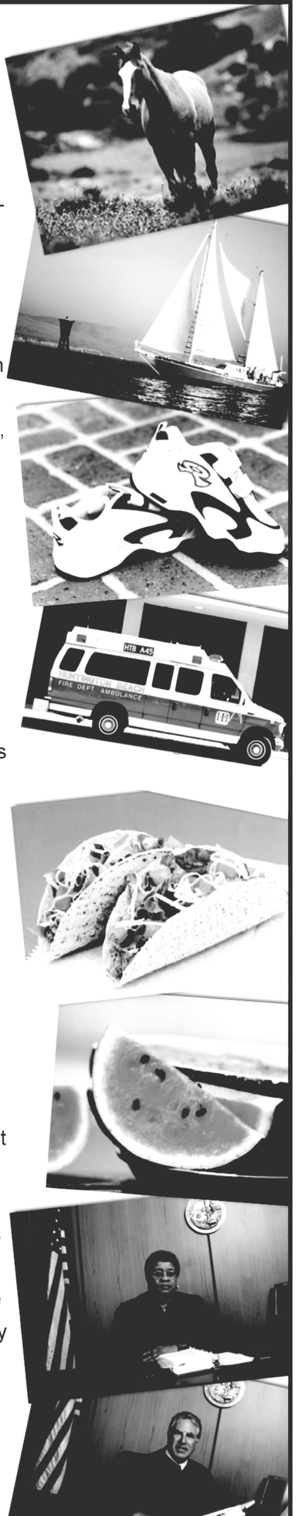
PAK's Keyboarding Gloves

This multi-sensory tool can be used with any existing keyboard computer program to accelerate keyboarding mastery. In addition, this product also serves as an effective tool in teaching young children letter sounds and keyboarding simultaneously. The challenged learner's obstacles (dyslexia, dysgraphia, autism, general anxiety, etc.) necessitate the mastery of keyboarding at a young age. Using PAK's gloves integrates the brain pathways together., making early phonics skills easily mastered. Physiologists say that once a child learns keyboarding, learning related anxiety is greatly reduced. Please visit us at **www.pakseducation.com** Or call Christi at (765)-635-3527

1—5 pairs $14.95 each
S & H $2.99 each

Gloves are washable on gentle. They are 92% cotton and 8% spandex. They are a one-size-fits-all.

Pictures to Teach a Thousand Words



Stages® Learning Materials' real photographic picture cards are ideal for teaching basic language skills to children and adults with learning delays.

Stages'® product line features up-to-date, real pictures that capture and hold the students attention. The products include: The Language Builder Noun and Occupation sets, The Lang-O-Learn® Series and now, Real Life Learning Posters.

The **Language Builder: Picture Noun Cards** include 350 cards divided into nine categories of animals, foods, vehicles, clothing, furniture, toys, shapes, colors and everyday objects. The set includes similar and identical images designed to teach basic matching skills, as well as individual images which are perfect for teaching receptive and expressive language, sorting, adjectives, functions, storytelling and more. Some images are on plain white backgrounds to reduce confusion, while others appear in their natural settings to promote generalization.

The **Language Builder: Occupation Cards** feature 115 cards depicting both men and women in the most common occupations. Meeting the NAEYC (National Association of Education for Young Children) standards for gender and ethnicity within education, these cards are great for labeling, role-playing, storytelling and other imaginative play.

The **Lang-O-Learn® Series** includes the most popular cards from our large Noun Set, broken down by category into five smaller sets. You can get a 50 card food set, a 50 card everyday objects set, a 30 card animal set, a 20 card vehicle set and a 20 card clothing set. As an added feature, the Lang-O-Learn® cards are also labeled on the reverse side in 17 common languages. This set is great for ESL and foreign language learners, as well as basic language and speech practice in English.

Stages'® most recent addition, the **Real Life Learning Posters**, consist of four sets: 10 farm animals, 10 wild animals, 14 fruits & vegetables and six community helpers. Enlarged to 14" X 19" and printed on heavy cardstock, the posters are great for small group discussions and decorating the walls of classrooms, doctors' offices, nutritionists' offices and therapists' offices. The posters also provide a great transition for students going from one-on-one learning to a classroom setting.

Stages® Learning Materials is committed to offering you the best photo teaching tools possible. For more information on any of Stages'® products, call us toll free at: **888-501-8880** or look for our products in educational stores and catalogs.

Stages® Learning Materials provides quality teaching tools for every stage of development.

STAGES®
learning materials

The Bailey Family

Life is a Journey of Faith

By Dorothy Bailey

Both of us were raised in church from an early age. I gave my life to the Lord at 13 and was baptized on my 14th birthday. My husband gave his life to the Lord at a young age, and rededicated his life to the Lord at the age of 24.

I look back and see God's faithfulness to our commitments and to each other as a married couple. We celebrated our 19th wedding anniversary on June 6th. We were blessed with two beautiful children. Steve is our oldest; he is 18 and is finishing his last year of high school. We have homeschooled him since 5th grade. He was born 8/8/88 through an emergency c-section because a routine fetal monitoring showed his heart rate declining to a dangerously low rate. When he was delivered, it was found that he had that cord wrapped around his neck and his leg. Every time he moved he was choking himself.


Daniel, Dorothy, Steve and Nicole Bailey

One early event in his life at 2 weeks old showed us that God had a special plan in Steve's life. We were on our way home from visiting my parents and were 6 miles from home when we were hit by a drunk driver. We were so young, and no one had educated us on the proper use of a car seat. We had placed it in the car facing forward. There wasn't much traffic that night so I held Steve on my lap wrapped snuggly in his blanket. Being hit broadside everything was such a blur, but I remember someone reaching out and enfolding Steve and I in their arms. The peace that surrounded me was so gentle I felt like I melted and wanted to stay there forever. The next thing I remember was sitting on the floorboard screaming my head off. I looked down and saw nothing but the baby blanket covering my lap. I was so scared that our son was injured or worse. I just kept screaming, "The baby, the baby". My husband took me by the shoulders; he had to yell over my screaming, "Stop screaming, he's crying, you just can't hear him until you stop." When I was quiet, sure enough, he was crying. I couldn't move the blanket because I didn't know what I'd see. My husband lifted the blanket, Steve was nestled between my leg and the floorboard, just lying there crying his little eyes out. He had no injuries what so ever, no scratches, he was perfect.

My head had hit the windshield, my elbow had busted a tape deck off the bracket just above Steve's head. I found out from my husband that he never took his hands off the steering wheel. We were hit from the front left mid line of the car, the other car veered off and broadsided us all the way to the back at 60 miles an hour. To this day, I know in my heart that Steve and I were wrapped in protection, because under normal circumstances he would not have survived.

Steve, our son, has a heart for God and doing His work. He gave his life to the Lord at the age of 5, and rededicated his life at the age of 17. He has felt the Lord's calling into the pastorate since the age of 5. Looking at the well adjusted young man he is now, you would never guess the struggles he has overcome. He went to school through the fourth grade, he had ADHD, and a mild case of Tourette's Syndrome. His teachers were caring, but they didn't have the freedom to work with him one on one having so many students in class. He was pushed away by many peers because of his Tourette's and their not understanding the ticks and nasal noises. We worked with Steve and lifted him up by helping him to know that he was created special, perfect for the Lord. I began homeschooling him in the fifth grade. Through one on one teaching, and helping him to learn control over his body, he was never on medication for ADHD. He went from having to be instructed on keeping his schedule to being a self starter today. He gets up, does his devotions and prayer time, then starts with his day. He reaches out to other children whom he sees the signs of being pushed out and takes them under his wing. He encourages them and lifts them up. He does the same with adults he sees that are down. Truly God protected this young man. Steve has been accepted into Pensacola Christian College majoring in Pastoral Ministry. We will be taking him to Pensacola Florida Sept. 1, 2007.

Our daughter, Stephanie was born Dec. 5, 1990. She was our little blue eyed whirlwind. She was born with a sparkle in her eye, smile on her face, and running through life. At the age of 4 months she contracted RSV and it almost took her life. She was in the hospital for a week. At that time it didn't show, but when she stopped breathing on the way to the hospital it would cause her to have seizures later on. Stephanie was autistic, had ADHD, and seizures that her doctor couldn't control. She was due to be re-tested and placed on new meds when she turned six, but God chose to set her free Oct. 7th, 1996.


Stephanie Bailey, gone to be with Jesus

Stephanie's language skills were delayed, she didn't have the ability to tell us how she felt etc. She was also delayed in other areas, she wasn't potty trained fully until she was past four years old and even then she wasn't able to hold her bladder at night time, and sometimes had accidents during the day. She had no fear of authority, and didn't understand why she couldn't do certain things, especially dangerous things. We caught her one time during a family reunion climbing a baseball fence that was approx. 7 feet tall. She had her leg over the top getting ready to go down the other side, we caught her before she got that far or surely she would have broken an arm or leg. Stephanie never met a stranger, everywhere we went she would hold out her hand and say, "Hi, I'm Stephanie, what's your name?" In the store she would want to bring all the children home with her. We worked with Stephanie with a group of people consisting of a speech pathologist, personal aide, and teacher who helped her learn cognitively. By the time she finished the one year class, the 36 month delay had been closed to within 6 months of her age. We were told she would never go to a regular kindergarten… she went to kindergarten at her brother's school. She was the first kindergarten student to learn the school song, "This Is the Day" (private Christian school). She went on her first and last field trip to the Pumpkin farm.

Two weeks before she passed away, the Lord laid it upon my heart to teach the children about heaven during our Bible story and prayer time. I found a story, read it and talked about heaven and how we would live there one day. Stephanie asked when Jesus was going to come and get us. I told her that He was building our house and when it was done, He would come get us. I asked her what her favorite color house would be? She said red. I asked if she'd like to pray and ask Jesus for a red house. She smiled and said, "Yes". I helped her ask for her house, and to say her bedtime prayer. I kissed her, tucked her in and took our son to his room. My heart was peaceful and I never thought anymore about it. A few nights later after our routine, I was leaving Stephanie's room, and she called out, "Mommy, Jesus has my house done." I asked her to repeat what she'd said, she couldn't. Stephanie had learned to talk in sentences, but still had a little delay in conveying a thought like she had called out. I said, “Yes, Jesus will come and get us when He’s ready.”

The following week, Stephanie clung to everyone and told them how much she loved them. On Oct. 5th, she had her first and last grand mal seizure. I never left her side at the hospital. In the early morning hours of the 6th, she raised her arms over her head. I put her arms down and covered her up. She raised her arms back up like she was reaching for someone, then gently laid them down. At that point she had to be placed on life support. My husband had been on a trip for the weekend and had gotten to the hospital late on the 5th. He’d gone home to try to sleep, and got there right before they life flighted her 100 miles away. We had to drive out, taking over an hour. I knew in my heart she wasn’t coming home. When we got there, both of us leaned down next to her ear on each side. We whispered in her ear that if Jesus or His angels came to get her, it was okay to go. We told her how much we loved her and how proud we were to have her for our little girl. We told her we would see her in heaven one day. Stephanie never woke up; she was declared brain dead after an extensive amount of tests. She loved life and people, so we donated her organs. A little girl received her liver, a little boy her heart and lungs, and two men each a kidney. All are doing well except the little boy who lost his battle after five years due to unrelated issues.

Raising our children was a blessing; we learned all we could with each of their special needs. Life for us was never dull, but we felt it an honor and privilege that God sent them into our lives. We never thought of them as anything but God’s gifts. We’ve wanted to adopt for a very long time, but weren’t ready until a couple of years ago. The Lord has done a lot of healing in my life as a mom, because when Stephanie went home she took a piece of my heart with her.

Before our little girl went to be with the Lord, she proudly “helped” me make a quilt. She sat under the table and pushed the foot pedal to my machine and wound the bobbins for me. We picked berries, and made applesauce. I miss having a little one climb on my lap in the rocking chair to read a story, or just have a quiet time watching a video. My husband misses having a little one to put on his shoulders and spend time with just being a dad. We miss the laughter and patter of feet running through our home.

We’ve always felt that there were two children missing from our family even before losing our little girl. Due to complications of two c-sections I can’t have any more children. Over the past couple of years we were considered for six children. As each child was placed with the family God had for them, it hurt so much, but we praised God that He had placed them where He knew they needed to be.

When my husband saw Nicole’s photo, we were drawn to her beautiful, expressive eyes. As we read her profile, we felt that we could and can devote to her all the time in the world she needs to working with her one on one.

Nicole is a precious blessing in our hearts and lives and is flourishing and growing in our home and care. She is four years old and is a fetal alcohol and drug child.

Presently, Nicole has been praying and asking for a little sister or brother to share her life with. Nicole is gentle and loving toward other children, and would be a great big sister. With our son going to college soon the desire of our heart is to open our home and hearts to loving a precious little one to share our lives with and enable Nicole to have a sibling to grow up with. We walked through ten years of watching our son being an only child and the loneliness he walked through.

Daniel and Dorothy Bailey. Keyser, WV
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zles together, listen to tapes together, look at books together (not reading them, but looking at pictures) – spend time teaching your child what you expect of them. Then begin to leave them on their own at their chosen activity for a time. Set a timer so they can know how long they are expected to play quietly, then reward them for time spent on their own, perhaps by reading their choice of a story when the timer goes off. Gradually increase the time set on the timer, until you are happy with your child's accomplishment.


Diane and Andrew Ryckman

Perhaps a couple of your children need some **attitude adjusting** over the summer. Arguing is often a result of not speaking respectfully or politely to a brother or sister. Teach your children to use please and thank you when talking with each other. Choose a day when you can consistently monitor their conversations together – have meals prepared ahead of time. Lay out your expectations of your children. One idea is to use a stack of pennies as a visual help and reward. Begin by giving each child a stack of 100 pennies. Every time you observe a child speaking or acting politely, add a penny to their stack. Every time a child forgets to use their manners, remove a penny from their stack. At the end of the day, the pennies become their reward. Of course, something like this means your undivided attention, but it may prove worthwhile in the long run!

If you have a child who will be starting school for the first time this fall, summer time can be a good time to slowly **get your child used to "doing school"**. Don't plan to do a lot, just enough to begin establishing a routine, so by the time fall comes along your child will be used to the idea of sitting and doing school work for a short time, and you can then begin to increase the time.

Summer time is a great time for **establishing daily care routines** – clearly laying out what you expect your children to do when they wake up, what you expect them to do to get ready for bed, etc. Rewarding them for consistently following their morning or evening routine could take the form of a goal chart – placing a sticker beside a goal each time it's remembered. I've heard it said that it takes 21 days to establish a new habit, so a 21 day goal chart seems reasonable.

Perhaps there are some aspects of your own morning or evening routines that need to be changed. **Personal Bible study** can sometimes become neglected. Perhaps summer can be a time to re-establish a time of daily reading the Word. There was a time when I found it so difficult to begin my day reading my Bible. No matter how early I woke up, it wasn't long before someone was up needing my attention. I was determined to make it a priority, so I began to read the Bible to myself, out loud, first thing in the morning, while our little early birds where playing around me. It worked so well! And what amazed me the most was that the children, though not specifically being read to, were soaking up the Word while they played. No embellishments, no simplifying it, no story telling – simply reading the scriptures out loud, sometimes a few times over to help me "get it". And they were getting it, too. Now our little ones are getting bigger and able to be up before me without supervision, so I do have time to spend on my own with the Lord. Nevertheless, when I do join the rest of the crew, they still expect as part of our morning routine that I simply read the Bible with them – which of course I love to do!

With all these suggestions for summertime streamlining, don't loose sight of the break and refreshment that summertime brings. Remember to take time with your family just to relax, or to travel, to garden, or to work on some at home projects together. But as you go through the summer, also keep an eye open for opportunities to work on one or two of those "trouble spots" that need attention. The value of making a list of family goals at the beginning of summer becomes apparent as summer draws to a close. It is then you can pull out that list and see what you have accomplished. And you just might find that when school begins once again in September, it will be your smoothest year yet thanks to a little summertime streamlining.

Grandpa and Grandma's Corner

(Editor's note: Grandpa and Grandma are Dennis and Linda Lamphere, Sherry Bushnell's parents. They have graciously chosen to spend their golden years serving the Lord and their family through NATHHAN / CHASK.)

Talitha's Job

How happy and joyful we were to hear the good news of a new grandchild on the way. We prayed, waited and planned. We sewed pajamas, made a crib, some baby toys, saved ideas for baby food, found blankets at garage sales, and even helped Tom and Sherry remodel their home.

It seemed like everything in our lives came to a stop the evening Tom called and said that baby was on the way. At home, Sherry and Tom labored all night with a midwife attending the birth, while their two little boys slept away in the next room. We prayed. With such eagerness we waited for our new little grandchild to be born. After a quick labor, Tom called… He sounded excited, tired and a little sad, "Tally may have Down syndrome…"

We prayed immediately for Tally's life and Sherry, Tom and the boys. Little did we know the path we were to follow soon and how much this sweet little girl would teach us.

Tally struggled to gain weight. Sherry nursed and nursed, but the progress was slow. On oxygen at three months, she entered the hospital for congestive heart failure while she waited surgery. We visited the hospital and watched her play happily amidst the tubes and wires attached to her body (the times she was awake. She slept a lot!). I remember the pain we all felt as it stretched us to our limits. Days went by and we watched her fight for her life...yet she had such an intense peace about her. God was already teaching us something very wonderful through her. Trust.

Then finally came the day we had eagerly waited for. Today Tally was going to get that broken heart fixed. We anticipated the relief of getting through surgery and going on in life.

Tally was quiet, peaceful, trusting, lying still on her bed. The pain of suffering, I think, was more in our hearts as we watched her and knew what she was about to go through. She faced possible death… and in a way so did we. Could we go through this with the same trusting peace that Tally was having?

The Lord had indeed given us "peace that passes every understanding." But we still all had questions. "Why God?" "Do I believe in eternal life?" We each had the option of receiving the peace, comfort and trust, for His providence in Tally's life, or to grieve without His grace.

She didn't make it through surgery. It has now been 19 years since Tally went to be with Jesus. At the time, we could hardly bear the hurt. It seemed so sad to say good bye so soon.

Looking back now, we can more clearly see the incredible plan that God had for Tally, Tom, Sherry and all the children.

Did you know that because of Tally, you are reading this magazine? Tom and Sherry's hearts were softened and their eyes were opened to the needs families with special needs may have. Yes, God's plan is good. We just wanted to let you know just one of the awesome ways God can use those hard times in life. He uses hearts that are trusting in faith… even when it hurts.

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