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WILLING

Josiah
white's



WINTER 2024

2 • Willing to Follow the Call of Christ

3 • Willing to Meet the Need

4 • Willing Hearts and An Open Home

6 • Employee Spotlight and Church Spotlight

7 • The Power of Individualization in Parenting



WILLING TO FOLLOW THE CALL OF CHRIST

“I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.”

– JOHN 16:33

Our foster care journey began by hosting a foster care information meeting at our church for “other people” to learn about fostering. We knew going into the meeting that it wasn’t the right time for our family, but we wanted to support Josiah White’s. Shortly after the meeting began, with only one other couple in attendance, we knew that this information was not for someone else. The meeting was for us. God was calling us to be a foster family.

By the time we were licensed, our three sons were 6, 4, and 2, and we launched into the unknown world of foster care. Since then, we have had the opportunity to be a temporary home for 8 kiddos. Many people comment how special we are for being a foster family and tell us things like: “We could not do what you do!” “We would get too attached.” “We would not want to give them back.” I often nod and smile but inside, my heart aches. The truth is that I can’t keep doing this without God’s strength being made perfect in my weakness. The truth is

that I am too attached, and the truth is I do not want these kids to go back to an unstable or unsafe situation. Foster care is exhausting and heartbreaking.

We are not a foster family because we love it and we are good at it. Selfishly, we would prefer a life with less chaos, sadness, and intrusions, but God graciously gives us what we need, not just what we want. Our family needs to be willing to choose hard things for the sake of following Jesus. We need to selflessly love others, even when it may result in disappointment and heartbreak. We need to fight for restoration and reconciliation in families and for families that seem beyond repair. We need to learn to trust that Jesus is in control, even when the world feels like it is falling apart. Through fostering, we are learning how to truly and completely follow Jesus together. While the journey isn’t always easy, simply put, obedience to Jesus and walking in the calling He has placed on our lives is always and will always be worth it.

– Amy Cortez, Josiah White’s Foster Parent

Willing to Meet the Need

JOSIAH WHITE'S ROLE IN THE EVERY CHILD INDIANA CAMPAIGN



In an effort to provide persevering hope to more children in need, Josiah White's is participating in a statewide campaign called Every Child Indiana.

Since the COVID pandemic, Josiah White's, and Indiana as a whole, has seen a decrease in the number of foster homes. Every week, Josiah White's foster care team is forced to turn down over 100 children and teens in need of a foster home because they lack the right home, at the right time, and in the right location. Considering these crucial factors, there is an urgent need for more availability.

Every Child Indiana strives to increase the recruitment and retention of families who are willing to open their home to children in crisis. Kurt Gard, Josiah White's Vice President & Executive Director of Family Services, along with other leaders from a select few organizations, were invited to serve on the Executive Leadership Council for this initiative. Indiana's child welfare leadership team, in collaboration with a partner organization known as The Contingent, has developed a comprehensive strategy for recruiting foster families that will benefit all foster care agencies in the state.

This initiative invites people to contribute to the need in their community by supplying tangible goods or services, volunteering, or caring for a child. By offering simple ways to get involved, even those who may not have considered becoming foster parents can now engage with child welfare in meaningful ways. This initiative will involve a well-funded digital media and advertising campaign and a more collaborative in-person recruitment effort. The hope is that this increased collaboration will enhance overall effectiveness and increase the number of families in the state willing to provide care for the right child, at the right time, in the right place.

As we head into 2024, keep an eye out for the Every Child Indiana advertising campaign and inspirational stories. As Matthew 9:37-38 says, "The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field." Please pray that these efforts will expand the number of homes willing to open their doors to children in need.



WILLING HEARTS AND AN OPEN HOME

When Logan and Nicole Grider moved into their new home with their two young daughters, Nicole kept noticing signs that they were called to foster, including a literal yard sign that said “Become a Foster Parent.” Eventually, after some encouragement from their church, they began the foster parent licensing process.

Throughout the licensing process, the Griders expressed they were willing to accept placements of any age or gender into their home. A few months after becoming licensed, the Grider family welcomed Gavin*, a 10-year-old boy, into their lives.

“While other families tend to be hesitant to step outside of their birth order, the Griders have been ready and willing to accept placements of children older than their girls,” said Kinsey Hill, Indianapolis Regional Manager. “Their example is truly an embodiment of the ministry we lead!”

Despite the age gap, Logan and Nicole have enjoyed witnessing their 5-year-old daughter, Dempsey, also open her heart and her home to Gavin.

“Our foster son and our biological daughter have actually become quite close,” said Logan. “It’s been awesome to see how they bonded pretty quickly after he joined us.”

In the morning, Dempsey waits for him to get up so they can eat breakfast together. Every night, she brings her toothbrush and toothpaste into his bathroom so they can brush their teeth together, and she makes sure to tell him goodnight before she goes to bed.

The relationship between the Griders and Gavin has become even stronger through Logan and Nicole developing a relationship with his dad. Gavin’s dad has even talked about wanting Logan and Nicole to continue to be a part of Gavin’s life after their reunification. He has also expressed interest in starting to come to church with them since he has seen the impact it has had on Gavin.

After the first Sunday Logan and Nicole took Gavin to church, he couldn’t stop talking about how great it was and how he couldn’t wait to go back the next Sunday. Logan and Nicole have even found Gavin voluntarily reading his Bible by himself many times.

“If I have one hope if and when he leaves, that he remembers the impact church and God has had on him, and he keeps that with him and allows that to continue driving his lifestyle and his decisions and that he continues to go to church,” said Logan.

Logan and Nicole recently accepted a second placement into their home, a 2-year-old boy and 5-month-old girl, making them a family of 7!

“It’s challenging, and it’s hard, and you may not see the rewards right away, but knowing that you have an impact on these children, even if it’s for a short time, is definitely worth it,” said Nicole.

*name changed to protect foster child’s identity

EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

MATTHEW PURKEY



In a significant transition at Josiah White's, the organization recently welcomed Matthew Purkey as its new President and Chief Executive Officer. Matthew succeeds Ron Evans, who retired after nearly six years of service to the organization.

Purkey, a United States Marine Corps veteran, most recently served as the Vice President of Regional Operations for The Mission Continues, a veterans service organization where he led 59 operations across 48 locations nationwide. Throughout his career, Matthew's approach to leadership has involved simplifying complex systems and aligning people towards a common mission, including in his recent role as the President and CEO of the United Way of Allen County.

While enlisted, Matthew pursued his education, completing a bachelor's and a master's degree, both in human services. Purkey is a PhD candidate in Strategic Leadership, a featured TedX speaker, and has received multiple 40 Under 40 awards.

When asked what excites him most about taking on the President and CEO role at Josiah White's, Purkey said, "I am nothing more than a product of the redeeming love and power of God. Now, I have the honor of serving on an established and accomplished team that extends that same opportunity to others."

With his faith, commitment to service, and passion for the mission of Josiah White's, Matthew brings a unique perspective to his new role. We look forward to what God will do through Matthew's leadership at Josiah White's!

CHURCH SPOTLIGHT

STAND SUNDAY

In 2004, Stand Sunday was created as a day to **STAND UP** for children and families impacted by the child welfare system. On this day, many churches throughout Indiana welcomed representatives from area child welfare agencies to raise awareness of the need and to provide information on becoming a foster parent to help care for Hoosier children in crisis.

This year, Stand Sunday took place on November 12th. The Merrillville office hosted a foster care question and answer session after both services at the Bethel Hobart/Portage campus. Also on November 12th, the Wabash office had representatives at two separate Crossroads Church locations to discuss awareness and the need. On December 2nd, the Fort Wayne team joined Pathway Church for their Stand Sunday service. The Indianapolis office sent out materials to several area churches regarding Stand Sunday and the need for homes in the faith community to stand-up. If your church would like information on how to become involved with awareness and is open to discussing the need for foster homes, please visit JosiahWhites.org to find contact information for your nearest office.

THE POWER OF *individualization* IN PARENTING

“If it ain’t broke, don’t fix it.”

Many of us are familiar with this common saying. What can so easily be utilized as a quirky phrase or a deflection of responsibility often becomes the repetition of our parenting style. Our foster care team regularly works with parents who have raised children in their home for years and approach foster care and the placement of children in their home with this same attitude: “What I’ve been doing has been working, so I’ll just do the same thing and get the same results.” What we miss when we apply this mindset in our

homes is the unique and beautiful gifts that the Lord has given each of us.

1 Corinthians 12:15 says “Now if the foot should say, ‘Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body,’ it would not for that reason stop being part of the body.” This passage is such a perfect representation of the children we serve, each having such unique strengths and struggles and each bringing a beautiful reflection of Jesus and of the brokenness of humanity. Every part of the body is needed! When we apply a “one size fits all” mentality to our parenting, we are ultimately

missing out on the opportunity we have to experience the wholeness of Christ.

Through the Teaching Family Model, we learn the principle of Individualization. This principle highlights that not only do we need to have an individualistic approach when it comes to the redirectives we are using in our homes, but also in the ways we are encouraging children in our homes. When we default to this “one size fits all” mentality, we are short changing the ability we have to significantly impact the lives of children in our care, all of which are going to need different things from us as parents.

Just as the Father uniquely sits with each of us and hears our individual cries, worries, desires, we are also called to do that for the children in our home. When we take the time to identify the individual strengths and struggles of our children, we will experience the fullness of all God has for us in this parenting journey.



Josiah white's

5233 South 50 East
Wabash, Indiana 46992
260-563-1158
www.josiahwhites.org
www.compassroseacademy.org

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South Bend, IN 46614

Become a foster parent!

- Call the office nearest you to speak to a Josiah White's representative
- Fill out an inquiry form on our website

UPCOMING TRAININGS •••

For the most current details and schedules, visit: www.josiahwhites.org

Josiah white's FOSTER CARE

how to SUPPORT

- Become an advocate and spread awareness about the need for foster parents
- Contact your regional office to learn about our foster families' needs in your community
- Like us on Facebook

NEWSLETTER ARTICLE CONTRIBUTORS:
Amy Cortez, Kurt Gard, Becca Andrews, Dave Kristofzski, and Kinsey Hill