



the james project

...homes and support for fostering families...



April 2018  
Volume 7, Issue 1

# The JP Journal

*Rewriting the stories of children in foster care*

## THE FIFTH HOUSE CAMPAIGN

We are pleased and honored to introduce our newest James Project Foster Parents—Dion and Lisa Crites. They are ready to move into House # 5 when it is purchased, and bring with them their strong mission of caring for teenage girls. Both Dion and Lisa are retired from the Department of Corrections and the Springfield Housing Authority, respectively. Their two children are grown, and together they pastor the Word and Spirit Worship Center. They have cared for many foster children, as well as girls in their church and neighborhood who needed a place to stay for a while. Lisa has known for a long time that her heart is for teenage girls in the foster care system who desperately need a family to guide them into adulthood. The Crites will also accept teenage foster girls with babies of their own.



There are many pitfalls and dangers for teen girls who do not have someone to advocate for them and teach them how to be successful in today's world. Foster children are extremely vulnerable when it comes to being lured into sex trafficking and are often preyed upon because they do not have anyone to protect them.

Lisa and Dion will provide this security while guiding them to achieve an education, create a foundation of good sense, and promote self-confidence as children of God. The Crites may also become the "forever family" for these girls after they are out in the world, with their home being a place to go for holidays, seek advice, and receive much needed praise as they achieve independence.

Lisa and Dion are ready to open their home and hearts to more teen foster girls as soon as we can purchase a fifth house. We need the assistance of all those who have a heart for children and families to help us raise the money to purchase a large, wonderful home with the necessary bedrooms, bathrooms, and welcoming spaces ideal for teenage girls. The JP and the Crites feel it is crucial to bring these girls in from danger and neglect to a place of security, love, and a hopeful future.

### Please Feed the Fifth House Fund!

Make checks payable to:  
The James Project  
907 Clocktower Drive, Ste. C  
Springfield, IL 62704

Donate online via Paypal:  
[www.thejamesproject127.com/support](http://www.thejamesproject127.com/support)

All donations are tax deductible as we are a 501(c)(3) organization.

## Our Mission

The James Project recruits and supports dedicated foster parents through the provision of homes and services.



## MAKING A DIFFERENCE

Our über high school volunteer, Maddie Mckeown, is graduating from SHS this spring and going on to nursing school at Millikin University. We thank Maddie for all she has done for the James Project families. She is the best cookie baker ever!



## Thank You Supporters

West Side Christian Church was recently filled with a number of small groups walking through a transformational experience called *Rooted*. As part of the class, participants were challenged to be a part of a service opportunity. Our JP Families were chosen to be a part of a fun afternoon at Sky Zone Trampoline Park in Springfield. The kids had a blast while the parents enjoyed seeing the miles of smiles on their faces. Thank you West Side!



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You shop. Amazon gives.

Shopping [smile.Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com/smile) for your regular Amazon purchases earns dollars for the JP! Simply choose James Project, Inc. in Pawnee, Illinois and 0.5% for every dollar spent is donated to the JP. While it may not seem like a lot, every dollar goes toward helping more fostering families.

## JP VOLUNTEER—ELIZABETH MITCHELL



As a high school student, I volunteered to help students with special needs. Immediately I knew this was my calling and I have been working with students who need additional support for the past 25 years.

A couple of years ago, I found I had more time on my hands as my youngest reached driving age, and decided to find an organization to volunteer with. After looking at the JP web site, I thought it would be a good fit for me. My first task was to run errands, which meant delivering items to The Closet or to DCFS for caseworkers. Then, I began helping with the weekly meal delivery to the JP

homes. Meal delivery gave me the first opportunity to meet with foster families. It was such a joy to see how appreciative a foster family is to have someone bring by a meal so that they can just enjoy family mealtime without all the work of preparing it. After making many Closet deliveries, I now train others to do this fun and rewarding job. It makes me feel so good to be able to go to The Closet and find much-needed clothing, bedding, hygiene items, and other necessities for a foster child recently placed into care, and then deliver the basket to the child in need.

We are so very fortunate in Springfield to have this resource to support foster children and families. Within 24 hours of receiving a request, to be able to provide a family with the immediate needs for a child who has experienced trauma, is something of which I am proud to be a part. Seeing the smiles on the kids' face and the heartfelt appreciation from the families, never gets old!

## WHAT'S THE BEST WAY TO SUPPORT & ENCOURAGE FOSTER PARENTS?

There are many great ways to support a fostering family, but we asked our JP parents, "What is the most encouraging thing that someone could do for you or say to you as a foster parent?"

*"The thing I appreciate most is when people give my kids grace. If they see us in public and my kids are acting out, I appreciate when people don't glare at us, but smile at us. I'm encouraged when I know people are praying for us and when people provide forums for foster parents to talk together about their issues." ~T. Lee*

*"We appreciate it when people help us stay positive. The first words I hear from people when they learn that I am a foster mom are usually "Are you crazy?" I always reply, "It hasn't been confirmed yet...waiting on a few tests!" I appreciate it when people don't make negative judgments about the birth family. I have yet to meet a bio family that didn't want their kids back." ~B.J. Martin*

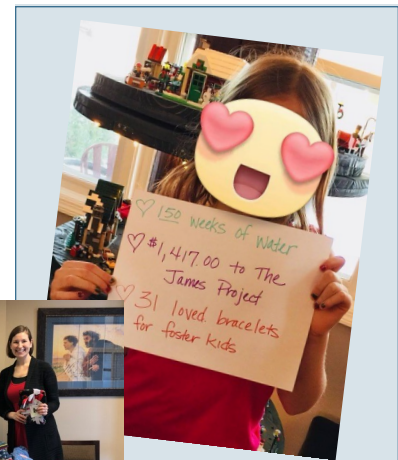
*"We are most encouraged when people tell us they are inspired by the love we have for our kids. Instead of showing disapproval, they tell us that they are praying for us." ~R. Miller*

*"Community support is so encouraging. When someone reaches out with a meal, house cleaning, laundry help, it not only eases our work load, it tells us that they know what we are doing matters and we are lifted and encouraged." ~ A. Trowbridge*

## KIDS HELPING KIDS

**Jordan Schneider**, age 7, was asked what she would do with \$100. Her response? Buy bracelets from a company called Mudlove. Why? The company donates a week of water to Africa for every product sold. What did Jordan then do with all of the bracelets? She sold them and raised \$1417 for the JP! The 31 bracelets she had left over will go to foster children as each bracelet has a tiny piece of wood attached to it which says "LOVED." How much do we love her heart and ingenuity? A whole bunch!

The **children at Cherry Hills Church** earned Bible Bucks for reading through the entire Christmas story in the Bible during the month of December. They could then use their Bible Bucks to buy pajamas for The James Project—70 pairs of PJs to be exact! From left to right, Jessica Schildman, Sarah Homeier, and Heather Cremeens proudly display the comfy jammies.



## THE NEED FOR FOSTER PARENTS IS REAL

When people begin to consider becoming foster parents, it can be quite a daunting thought. There are many myths, untruths, and unanswered questions surrounding fostering. Call 1:27 exists to answer these questions and equip interested parents so that when they embark upon the fostering journey, they can do so with confidence. Experience has taught us that a very honest and open approach to recruiting foster families creates a more positive outcome of stability and longevity for both foster parents and foster children.

Call 1:27 meets one-on-one with individuals and couples who are interested in learning more about how to become licensed for foster care and what life is really like when fostering. We mentor families through the entire process, examining everything from becoming licensed, to what it is like working alongside case workers and agencies, and determining whether a child is a good fit for their family. If the family desires, we can also mentor them through their first placement. Many times, a foster family has a majority of their questions come up when their first foster child arrives at their home and this is when contacting us for advice is incredibly helpful.

The JP has received an overwhelmingly positive response from families and agencies who have been a part of Call 1:27 mentoring. Agencies have said that they can tell when a family was recruited by Call 1:27 because they are more invested in their foster children and the process even before children arrive at their house. Their desire to foster comes from a deeper place.

The need for loving, supportive foster homes is real. Kem Bakunas, who is a Foster Parent Support Specialist with DCFS, confirmed this great need when we spoke with her this past winter. *"We are in desperate need of foster homes, especially teen foster homes. In Sangamon County, The James Project is available for placement of children of all ages, race and sometimes, even disabilities. This is an undeniable resource. There are so many counties that I work with in Central Illinois without such a resource. This makes it even more apparent to us how wonderfully served Sangamon County is to have all that the JP provides."* We are proud to help cultivate quality foster parents so that foster children can be a part of a loving, stable home with a smaller chance of experiencing multiple placements.

### CLOSET 1:27 WISH LIST

Currently, Closet 1:27 is well stocked, except for a few specific items:

- Gift cards to Kohl's and Old Navy
- Men's and Women's Large and Extra Large Pajamas
- Waterproof, zippered mattress covers
- Packages of new men's underwear & socks

We ask that any item donated be **new or like-new** as we want all foster children to have a truly fresh start with their foster family, which includes the items they receive from The Closet.

We appreciate your consideration!

## CEREAL FOR JP

Gifts to The James Project come in all shapes, sizes, and flavors! Our friends in the Gazdziak Small Group at Southside Christian Church in Springfield collected boxes of cereal for our JP families. Foster families go through a lot of cereal, especially those with growing teen boys, so this gift was spot on. Thank you for your generosity!



## PRAY FOR THE JP

Prayer is an essential part of the JP ministry. We pray for each of our foster parents—for patience, wisdom, and energy for their task. We pray for the foster children as they go to school and are mentored in their homes. We thank God for our volunteers and their gifts and abilities. Become a part of our prayer team by contacting Jennifer Hardwick at [turtgirl@live.com](mailto:turtgirl@live.com) and we'll place you on our prayer team email list.

## NEWEST EMPLOYEE—AMY EDWARDS

We are so excited to welcome Amy Edwards to the James Project staff. Amy will serve as our Operational Manager and starting in June will be in charge of the day today business of the ministry. We are very blessed to have found Amy, who has all the skills, work experience, and gifts that we could ever hope for. She has also served as a foster parent for many years and will have the empathy and insight needed to serve the foster families in Sangamon County. Amy is moving back to Chatham, her hometown, with her husband Dave and son Isaac. The Edwards family has lived in Hannibal, Missouri for the past 19 years. Welcome to the JP family, Amy!



## OUR NEIGHBORS

While you may not live near one of The James Project homes, you can become a Neighbor just the same, with a \$1000 donation or more. We humbly thank the following supporters for being a part of our Neighborhood:

American Business Club of Springfield	Shaun & Shari Hill	Rotary Club of Springfield
Marianne Bartholomew	Forrest & Mary Lou Holsapple	Cathy Sallenger in memory of Jackie Hamilton
Blake Anderson	HSHS	Al & Sandy Stevens
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***Our Neighbors are the backbone of our ministry as their regular giving provides stability to our ministry as a whole. Won't you be our Neighbor?***

Donate online via

**PayPal**

[thejamesproject127.com](http://thejamesproject127.com)

Click on the Support tab

## JP VOLUNTEERS

As April is National Volunteer Month, we wanted to recognize all the individuals who gave so generously of their time and talents to the JP this past year.

Tracy Armstrong	Andy Dodine	Susan Kepner	Debbie Rigg
Hannah Bachmann	TJ Heavisides	Kingsley Keys	Adena Rivas
Susan Bachman	Kate Dunne	Michelle Keys	Roger Ross
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Mary Ann Dehart	Emily Jewell	Katie Patsche	Katie White
Karla Dirks	Darrell Jackson	Jacob Perry	Missy Whiteley
	Angela Johnson	Mark Peters	Susan Williamson

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## FRIENDS OF THE MINISTRY

We are grateful for the following churches, businesses, and groups who supported the JP in a variety of ways in recent months:

Blessings on State	Goodman Fence	Lowes
Café Moxo	Grace Lutheran Church— Women's Group	Peace Lutheran Church
Crystal Lynn Photography	Lu Ann Groesch	Peace by Piece Quilters
First Christian Church— Springfield	Heartland Credit Union	Mario Perrino
Bunn Capital	Hope Presbyterian Church	Randy and Marianne Setterland
Carol Diedrichsen	Hope School	Springfield Clinic Accounting Department
Cherry Hills Life Groups	Illinois Bankers Association	Tailored Printing
Dillon Pizza	Lakeside Christian Church Community Group	United Way Days of Action
First United Methodist Church Transform Your Local Community Initiative Group	Living Faith Baptist Church	

## The James Project

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[www.thejamesproject127.com](http://www.thejamesproject127.com)

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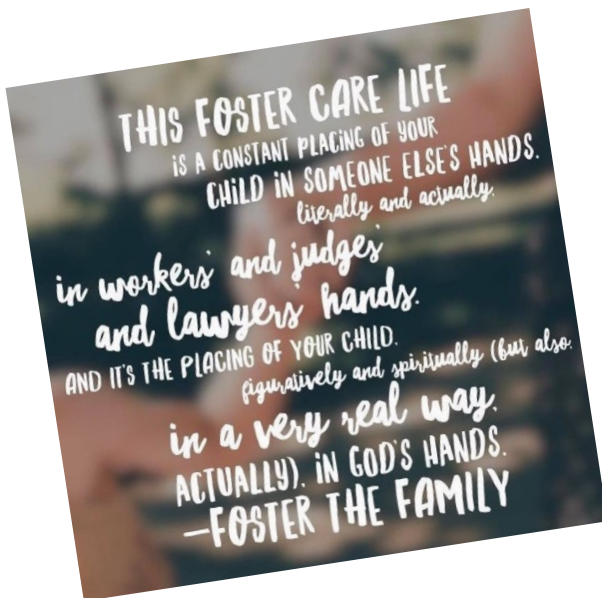


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*"Whosoever receives a child in My name, receives Me."*

~Matthew 18:5



## EMPOWERED TO CONNECT CONFERENCE

PRESENTED BY SHOW HOPE  
APRIL 27-28, 2018

The James Project, along with First United Methodist Church, hosted a simulcast of the Empowered to Connect Conference on April 27 and 28th. This conference is designed to equip families, churches, and professionals to better serve children who have experienced trauma or loss, which includes children impacted by adoption and foster care. The conference was well attended and the information was incredibly pertinent to the fostering and adoptive parents who attended.

# \$12

*This is roughly the amount of money (per child, per day) given to foster parents to supply their foster child with 24-hour care, housing, clothing, transportation, school supplies, and food. By supporting a foster family, you help fill in the resource gap.*