



AUGUST/SEPT 2012 FAMILY CONNECTIONS CHRISTIAN ADOPTIONS E-HEARTBEAT



During the winter, Forest is a ski and snowboard instructor at China Peak. Spring and summers, he runs his own yard care business, which he has had for several years. Now finished with high school, Forest is pursuing further education and he writes, "I am excited and eager to see what God has in store for me."

The following was posted on Facebook by Forest Beckham, who recently graduated from High School after being home schooled for the past ten years. Forest writes about adoption--a subject which he knows about personally, since four of his five siblings were adopted. His parents, Brad and Jodi Beckham adopted two sons from foster care, a daughter from the Ukraine, and a boy from Kazakhstan.

A POST FROM FOREST

A couple of days ago, I learned of a Bible verse found in the book of James: **"Pure and genuine religion in the sight of God the Father means caring for orphans and widows in their distress and refusing to let the world corrupt you."** This kind of rocked my world in a way. I mean, I have always put a high mark on caring for orphans and widows...The orphans have a particular spot in my heart because four of my siblings were orphans, but I would not have thought this to be true and genuine religion in the sight of God the Father.

With this knowledge, I decided that God puts way more emphasis on this than I ever would have. This led me to research it more in the word of God to find out how much it means to God, for if it means a lot to Him then it sure better mean a lot to me. I wish to submit what I found for you to decide for yourself.

You must not exploit a widow or an orphan. If you exploit them in any way and they cry out to me, then I will certainly hear their cry. (Exodus 22:22-23)

He (God) ensures that orphans and widows receive justice. (Deuteronomy 10:18)

True justice must be given to foreigners living among you and to orphans... (Deuteronomy 24:17)

When you are harvesting your crops and forget to bring in a bundle of grain from your field, don't go back to get it. Leave it for the foreigners, orphans and widows. (Deuteronomy 24:19)

The helpless put their trust in you. You defend the orphans (Psalm 10:14d)

Give justice to the poor and the orphan; uphold the rights of the oppressed and the destitute. (Psalm 82:3)

Don't take the land of the defenseless orphans. For the Redeemer is strong; he himself will bring their charges against you. (Proverbs 23:10-11)

No, I will not abandon you as orphans—I will come to you. (John 14:18)

It could just be me, but I see a trend that ties this all together: God loves the orphans and widows. He could have said, "If you have pure and genuine religion, then you will care for the orphans and widows I love." But he says, "Pure and genuine religion in the sight of God the Father means caring for orphans and widows in their distress." Please understand me. I am not saying that everyone should go and start adopting orphans. This is a great thing, but I do not think that everyone has been called by God to adopt a child. We are, however, called to do something whether that is giving to help an orphan or a widow, spending time with orphans and widows, helping a family who is going through an adoption, or just spending some time every day to pray for those in need.

One last point I would like to bring up is that the followers of Christ have been mandated to care for orphans and widows in their distress. There are roughly 160 million orphans in the world. You might be thinking, "Wow, that's a big number. There is no way I could ever change that." But God has called us all to do our part, not to fix the whole problem. Friends, there is hope. There may be 160 million orphans in the world, but there are 2.6 billion professing Christians! Think for a second about how many millions go into a billion. Can you imagine what kind of an impact we can have if even just one fourth of all Christians lived by this mandate? So the real question is not "Is it possible?" It is whether you are going to feel convicted today and then forget tomorrow. Or are you going to take a leap of faith, live by the mandate, pray about what God's plan is and see where He leads you? For if the followers of Christ do not do that, then who will? We are the light of the world which the Lord will use for His glory.

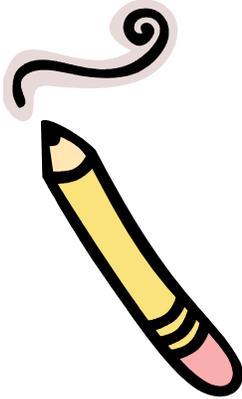


The Beckham Family

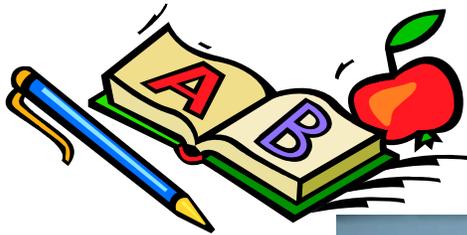
Kindergarten Graduates



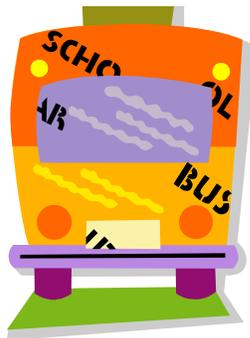
Andrew Bohning, son of Rob and Lori Bohning



Shyanne Grass-Polin, daughter of Guy Polin and Monika Grass



Naomi Houston, daughter of Glen and Sarah Houston

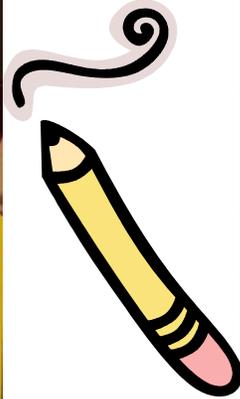


Riley McCord, son of Alan and Stacey McCord

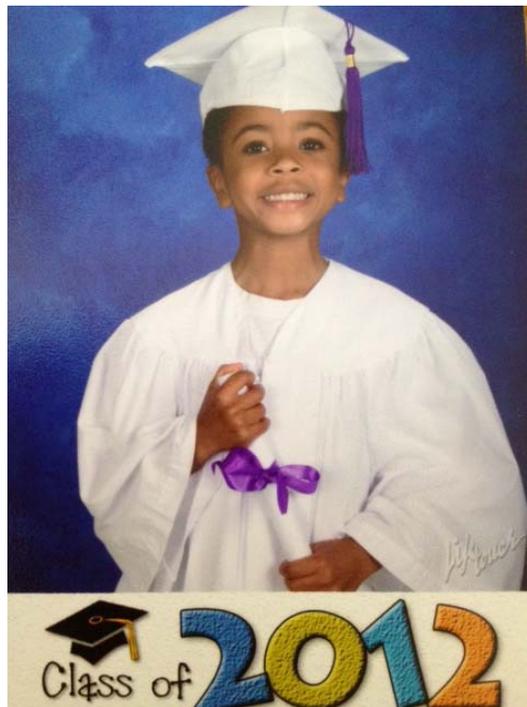
PreSchool Graduates



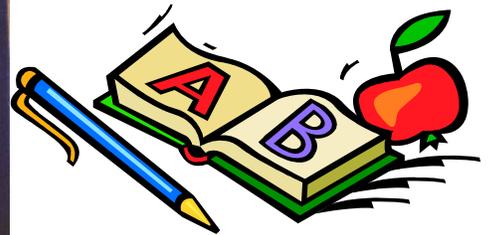
Masen Hogue, son of Chad and Michelle Hogue



Gabriel Krikorian, son of Jim Krikorian and Susan Napolitano



Joseph Holiday, son of Derek and Sarah Holiday



High School Graduates



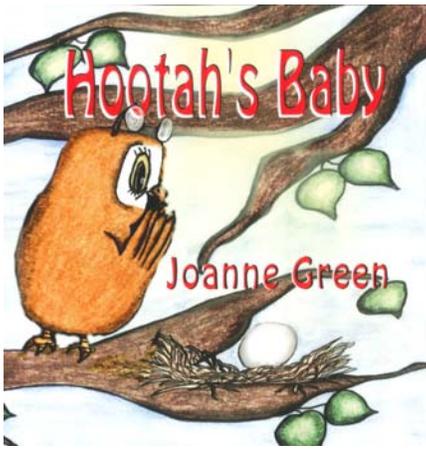
Lianne Remen, daughter of Allison Branscombe and Bob Remen, graduated from Mira Loma High School in Sacramento.



Nicholas Hanson, son of Sharon Hanson, graduated from Christian Brothers High School in Sacramento.



Phoebe Neuburger, daughter of Cathy Ewing and Noel Neuburger, graduated from Bella Vista High School in Sacramento.



BOOK REVIEW: HOOTAH'S BABY by Joanne Green

It is not often that we review a book with an adoption theme and then tell you that you can buy one at one of our picnics and meet the author, who will sign your copy. Hootah's Baby is written by Joanne Green, an FCCA adoptive mother of three children from Korea. Joanne wrote this book for a friend who was lamenting the fact that there was no meaningful adoption book to read to her children who had been removed from their U.S. birth family because of court ordered termination of parental rights.

Hootah's Baby is an allegorical story, a tool to help children understand the concepts of this complex issue. Hootah loves her baby, but love without proper action is not enough to raise a baby owl. The community steps in to ensure the baby's safety and a safe, loving home is found. It is clearly not the baby owl's fault that he could not stay with his birth mother; the

owl court is acting to protect the baby, not to be mean to Hootah; and Hootah is portrayed as loving her baby, but lacking the ability to take care of it.

The message is given in a way that children can understand these basic concepts. At the end of the book, there is a section that gives practical help to the adult reader on how to use this book with children, lists common misunderstandings that children have about their circumstances in foster care and then concludes with ways to encourage the healing process.

Joanne Green will be attending the Modesto FCCA annual barbecue on Saturday, August 25 at Freedom Park in Modesto. The picnic is 11a.m to 2 p.m. with free hamburgers, hotdogs, snow cones, jump house, games and more. Joanne will sign all books purchased at the event (discounted price is \$12)



Editor's Note: Here is a letter that came to us from someone who was NOT adopted and wished she had been. She is sharing her story so she can remind people that adoption can make the difference between a child's enduring a lonely life of brokenness or living a life where the support of a loving family provides strength to meet the challenges. Adoptive parents who care can fill the empty spaces in the hearts of their children.

DEAR FAMILY CONNECTIONS,

I have been praying as the Lord has been placing on my heart to step out more and share my story. I wanted to share with you just a bit. I was placed in an orphanage at a very young age. Neither my mother nor my father desired to be the parents they were called to be. And because of not having a loving home when I was a child, it opened a door to trouble. You see, my mother was married and divorced 8 times, which brought so much confusion in our home. I went from an orphanage, to a girls' school and later to a place like a woman's prison. WHY? Because there was no home or someone to help shape my life while I was growing up.

I was married at age fifteen, taking all that rejection into my marriage. Of course, this could only lead to a failed marriage. Broken and hurting, I was walking in a world blinded by not knowing who I was or what I was born for in this life. I have so much to share, but to make a long story short, I became a Christian and my whole life changed. I want to share how important it is to have parents to love and shape a child. My story is a story of God's amazing grace, but many other children will never be able to share that story of grace. They will never see a happy home and will possibly end in the terrible depths of rejection, unless someone reaches out a hand to them. Children are a gift from above, treasures in the hand of God Almighty. They need someone who will say, "I love you and believe in you and together we CAN make it through because you were born for something special.

In His love and mine,
Dr. Luauna Stines

You can read more about Dr. Luauna, her story and her ministry to hurting people on www.atouchfromabove.org