

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 25, 2013



## Common Ground | National Adoption Day honors those who give love

by Rufus Woods | Nov. 23, 2013, 2:41 p.m. | Comment

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When it comes to making a difference in the lives of children, those who serve as foster parents and adopt children deserve a special note of recognition.

There is a labor of love, sacrifice and commitment and those ideals were honored at a celebration Saturday in Wenatchee that brought together local families that have opened their hearts and homes to foster kids. The occasion was National Adoption Day.

From the folks at our local Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) organization, I learned about Manda and Matthew Payne.

Before coming to the valley where Matthew Payne took over as pastor of the Dryden Community Church, the Paynes were doing missionary work overseas. They have two kids of their own — Caleb, 13 and Benjamin, 11.

The Paynes had more love to give and served as foster parents to several children, but hoped to eventually adopt a girl. When Antonio was born and needed a home, “we agreed to add another boy and to bring him home,” Matthew Payne wrote. Later, Antonio’s mother became pregnant again and a girl was born who also needed a home, so the Paynes welcomed Agape into their growing household.

Getting the adoption done was vastly more difficult than integrating the kids into the family.

“It is a broken system,” Matthew Payne wrote. “There is a reason why there is a bigger need for families than there are families. I pray that the state can spend as much time fixing the mess as it does in recruiting additional foster/adoption families.”

“The process was frustrating, but was it worth all of the disappointment and frustration?” Manda Payne wrote. “ABSOLUTELY! We won the “Adoption Lottery”! We have two beautiful, healthy siblings to join their brothers. We were blessed with a fantastic son and doubly blessed with his sister, the girl we had been waiting for.”

These young children have a chance to grow up in a stable and loving home, thanks to the efforts of the Paynes.

Adoptions don’t happen without a lot of help. Diane Breeden was the guardian ad litem appointed to the children, through the local Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) program. These advocates play a crucial role in looking after the rights and needs of children. She described the Paynes as “a delightful family.”

In this Thanksgiving season, we appreciate what the Paynes and others like them have done to help children in our communities.

If you have any questions about becoming a CASA volunteer, contact the CASA office at 509-662-7250. If you are interested in becoming a foster parent please call 509-667-6100.

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