FFAS Benefits from Fashion’s Generosity

In fall of 2012, IIIBeCa by Joy Gryson launched a line of handbags designed with not only beauty and affordability in mind, but charity as well. Three percent of wholesale proceeds from the handbag sales is being donated to each of three charities for a total of nine percent charity giving: Family Focus Adoption Services, The 9/11 Fund, and Memorial Sloan Kettering.

The first results of this generous endeavor were seen this week when Gryson President and CEO Peter Gryson, and his wife, Creative Director Joy Gryson presented Family Focus with a check for more than $30,000. With positive sales forecast nationwide and internationally, IIIBeCa (a play on the word Tribeca, the New York City neighborhood where the company is based) hopes this will be only the first of many donations to come.

Peter Gryson said that he and Joy, who is the daughter of Family Focus Executive Director Maris Blechner and Advisory Board member Stewart Blechner, got the idea when they attended the agency’s charity gala last year. Adoption is a big part of their family (Joy is adopted), and this was a way for them to honor and support the work of Family Focus.

To find out more about the charitable campaign, and about the handbags and how to order, please visit www.familyfocusadoption.org or www.illbeca.com.

“We tell the children: Authentic adoption is like chocolate milk... Once that chocolate is mixed with that milk, there is no way ever to separate them again.”

To join The Chocolate Milk Club, visit www.familyfocusadoption.org.
Program Updates

Waiting Child Programs

Our Nationwide Internet Adoption Help program is reaching out to new areas. We are close to confirming placements of children from Ohio and Georgia. FFAS is also pleased to announce that we are piloting a new program for pre-adoption services. It is called RAD: Relationships Are Decisions. More to follow as this program develops. Our Certification Program is in its fourth cycle, and we have received very positive feedback from our survey of participants.

Direct Placement Program

Our Direct Placement Program families are now taking Part B of our Certification Training as part of the approval process for adopting a newborn. The information and insights learned are necessary for raising any child who joins a family through adoption. We continue to see confirmation that the newest innovation in newborn adoption is still growing and adapting: birthfamilies are finding adoptive families for their newborns on profile websites on the internet, online ads, and even Facebook!

Family Services Program

Family Focus Adoption Services has received notification that it has once again achieved Hague Accreditation through the Council on Accreditation (COA) as authorized by the U.S. Department of State. The agency has also recertified in New Jersey and Connecticut.

Child Welfare Training

Executive Director Maris Blechner is being interviewed and doing a one hour internet-based radio show, broadcasting on March 27th. The show is part of VoiceAmerica.com, and comes under their health and wellness programming. The show broadcasts every week, and is called "Inspired Journeys: Overcoming Adversity and Thriving." Maris’s hour is titled, "How Adoption Changes Lives."
Agency News...

New Board Members...
Family Focus Adoption Services is pleased to announce two new Board members. A warm welcome to Earl Hassel and Kathy McQuown. Visit our website and click “About Us” to learn more about them.

Staff Changes...
After 14 years of dedicated service, Sandra Conor will no longer be working two days in our office. She will, however, continue to work with us as a contractor, visiting and writing studies for our families. The office will greatly miss her big smile, sense of humor, and always available boxes of chocolate!

Our New Training Room Is Complete!
We are proud to announce that we have completed construction and furnishing of our new training room. Here is what it looks like now... a suitable place for our wonderful Certification Training.

Seeking Volunteers...
Family Focus always welcomes volunteers, from students looking for community service credit, to retirees who feel they wish to “give back.” We can often use an extra hand with some of our office tasks and special projects. Please call or email us if you would like to help at FFAS.
More Agency News...

With Our Gratitude...

Two of FFAS’s Board members, Denise Pilgrim and Earl Hassel, have secured for the agency a $5,000 grant from retail giant Macy’s. This grant will be used in furthering the work of our Waiting Child Programs. Our heartfelt gratitude to Denise and Earl, and to the generous folks at Macy’s.

Federal Tax Credit Made Permanent!

We were very excited to hear that the Federal Tax Credit, which was set to expire at the end of 2012, was made permanent on January 2, 2013 as part of the bill that kept us from going over the “fiscal cliff.” This is good news to families who did not finalize their adoptions before the end of the year, and encouraging to families who have considered adoption but were not sure that they could afford it. Speak with your accountant about how to take advantage of this credit.

Chocolate Milk Club Update

The CMC is up to 50 members! Family Focus is still very excited about the future prospects for achieving financial independence as our membership grows.