



AGAPE NEWSLETTER



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DAYTON – Agape for Youth, Inc. is pleased to announce the appointment of Nicole Sturk as their new President & CEO. Sturk has served as Agape’s Vice President of Strategy since January 2024. She is taking over for retiring Executive Director Stephen Geib and will officially begin July 1st, 2024.

Sturk was unanimously chosen by the Agape Board of Directors after a competitive search. “On behalf of the Agape Board of Directors, we are thrilled to have Nicole step into this new role at Agape to carry out the agency’s mission in the years to come. Her strategic and futuristic leadership style and demonstrated talents align perfectly with Agape’s mission, culture, and strategic direction.” said Agape Board President Timothy McKinney.

Sturk is a Dayton native and Wright State University Alumni, with over 15 years of marketing, nonprofit program & business development experience. She has a heart and passion for pursuing innovative solutions that help those around her succeed.

Sturk said, “I was first introduced to Agape in 2012 when Sandie Geib became one of my mentors, and I have been a friend and supporter of Agape ever since. Agape has a rich 35-year history of ‘Growing Families Together’ in Greater Dayton. I couldn’t be more honored to serve alongside the incredible staff, foster families, and community partners, and look forward to carrying forth the mission and legacy of Agape for Youth.”

“As we approach our 35th-anniversary celebration in September 2024, we’re confident that under Nicole’s guidance, Agape’s legacy will continue to flourish. We believe she will uphold and enhance our dedication to foster care, reunification, family stabilization, adoption, staff and foster family engagement, and business efficiency for the decades to come,” said McKinney.

Sturk will assume the position permanently, effective July 1st, 2024.

Board of Directors

President

Timothy McKinney,
Retired

Vice President

Nancy Wilson,
Cox Media

Treasurer

Mark Mazer,
Self-Employed

Tom Gunlock,
Retired

Amy Gantt,
Owner/Artist Lulu Bell

David Stacy,
Retired



Nights were crazy. This poor child would never sleep. This meant I did not sleep. I spoke to our Agape and county caseworkers and doctors trying to come up with a solution to be able to keep her safe and in a bedroom at night.

“
One night, we found her sitting in the freezer in our basement eating ice cream with her hands.”

ADVOCATING FOR OUR KIDDOS NEEDS

by Debbie Sain, Agape Foster Parent

My name is Debbie Sain and my husband is John. We have been foster/adoptive parents for 28 years. During that time, we have had over 200 kiddos placed in our home. We have 3 biological daughters, have adopted 9 kids, and have had guardianship of 2.

I am going to share with you some highlights of what caring for a special needs kiddo looks like. Three years ago, we were blessed with a severe, non verbal, autistic 5 yr old daughter. When the county caseworker brought her to us, it was very late at night. They had some old clothes that were sent with her from the previous foster home. The county caseworker started to pull clothes out of a bag. To our surprise, all the hands of clothing were duct taped closed. I was a bit shocked because this would be against all rules with a child.

G had suffered abuse, and we were told she was kept in a closet in a basement. She was very violent and if you got close to her, she would bite, pinch, scratch, or kick you. She is a very strong and fast girl. She could not walk and would only crawl. She could not use words to communicate and screamed very loudly.

Thank God I woke and realized she was not in her bed. Soon after that, we finally were approved for a special needs bed.

Driving anywhere with G was difficult. I would have to pull over often because she would bite and hit other children in the van. Soon we were approved for a special needs car seat. This improved our travel and everyone's safety. Taking G out to stores or other places was nearly impossible because of her behaviors. I had her evaluated again and this time received a special needs stroller.

It was impossible to keep G in a highchair, and she was really too big for one. Her behavior revolved around eating and drinking and the tantrums she would have because I wanted her to eat in the dining room with us seemed to never end. After 2 years with us and pushing the system, we finally were approved for an activity chair for G to eat and play in.

The special needs equipment is never simply given to a foster home. There are no special funds for these needs, and I had to be a very good advocate in order to get her needs met. It was a long, hard, and time-consuming journey that took months to years for us to get all of the tools to be successful.



All children need physical, dental and vision appointments when placed in a foster home. G had not received any dental care and had to have 8 teeth surgically removed soon after moving here. It would break our heart to know she was in pain, but unable to communicate it to us.

With time and support, G began walking and then running after only being able to crawl for so long. She was the most severe toe walker I had seen. Her orthopedic specialist decided she would go through casting on her legs for eight weeks. Each week we would take her to surgery for new casts to be put on. This slowed our little angel down. I was able to get some more upper body strength because she had to be carried and lifted so much. After going through 2 months of casting she had to wear leg braces all the time except during her short sleep time. Things were going well until she got into school and they would not keep her braces on her feet.



A few months passed, G had to have surgery to lengthen the Achilles tendons on both legs. Our poor girl had to go 8 weeks with no walking on her legs. This change created more stress for her and that meant more behaviors. Now she was not only hitting her head and biting and scratching, she also was making herself throw up several times a day and playing in her feces. The school would no longer work with G in the classroom setting so G stayed home and after a month we started having 20 minutes 4 times a week of home instruction. During the 3 months she has been home and not in school, she has made great strides. She has begun to learn some letters, signs, and her colors. She is saying a few words for us now. We see this as the beginning of great things for our sweet girl.

G has worked hard and has made so many changes since coming to our home. The violent little girl is now a lover and laughs often while interacting, in her own way, with those in our home. She hums and whistles music like no other. I always tell folks that if they take time to spend with my kiddos, they will surely be blessed. God only picks smart, good kids for our home. We're excited for the future God has for G and our other special kiddos.



“The Sains are a wonderful family with a sweet testimony, and it has been a blessing to be able to work with them. I always feel welcome in their home, and that is the experience they provide every placement and respite and stranger to come through their door. Agape cannot accurately describe our appreciation for this selfless family as they have served and continue to serve so many children well.”

Abbey Cooksey, LSW
Agape Youth Specialist





Growing Families Together

35TH ANNIVERSARY EVENT

Benefitting:  **Agape**
for Youth, Inc.

Presented By:  **Midwestern Wealth Management**



DATE: THURSDAY, SEPT. 19TH 2024 FROM 6-9PM
LOCATION: THE DAYTON STEAM PLANT

Join us for a night of celebration as we recognize 35 years of growing families together!

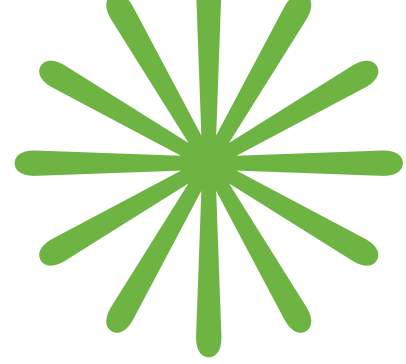
Save the Date!



Join Us!
Scan Here to Buy
Your Tickets Now!



2023 IMPACT REPORT



13
HOMES
LICENSED

75
PLACED IN AN
AGAPE FOSTER
HOME

69
REUNIFIED

90%
PERMANENCY
RATE

To find out all
the ways to
help



BECOME A RECURRING DONOR

Click the picture above to set up your account on our new donor database!

PAYROLL DEDUCTION

Contact us if we are able to be a member of your payroll deductions for your employer!

CFC Charity #56730

ADD US TO YOUR REWARDS

Are you a member of a rewards program? Add us to your Amazon, Kroger and Dorothy Lane Market cards!

HOST A COMFORT BAG DRIVE

Contact Jamie Fisher at jfisher@agapeforyouth.com

Interested to know how your organization can host a comfort bag drive? Contact us to get a large barrel to place in your office or meeting space. You and your team can help youth feel comforted during a difficult time in their lives.

