Devetta grateful for a second chance at parenting
Grandmother finds joy in raising her three adopted grandchildren

Devetta has three grandchildren, whom she loves. “But I’m not a ‘spoil you, give you candy, and send you home’ grandma,” she says. “The kids live with me, and I’m responsible for them.”

It’s not unusual for grandparents to raise their grandchildren. However, in recent years, kinship care has become much more common because of the drug epidemic in our country. Sadly, Devetta’s daughter is addicted to drugs, and is no longer able to raise her children.

“My granddaughter, Vanessa*, went into foster care, and I never missed a visit,” she says. “I wanted to show her my love and commitment so she would know Grandma would always be there for her.”

In April 2015, when Vanessa was in second grade, she came into Devetta’s care, and her adoption soon followed. Two years later, Yvonne, a second granddaughter was born, and was placed in foster care from the hospital.

“But I wanted to fight for her, to keep her together with her sister,” says Devetta. With the support of Bethany, her church family, and her friends she was able to adopt Yvonne and keep the sisters together in her family.

“I am so grateful for Bethany and

“I’ve been called a lot of things in my life, but Grandma is the best.”
—Devetta, adoptive grandmother of her three grandchildren

continued ...
Important update from our President and CEO
Chris Palusky and our calling to care for the world’s vulnerable children

As I reflect on Bethany’s ministry over the past year, I’m excited by the opportunities we have to show God’s love to vulnerable children in need. We’re focused on three areas where the needs of children have grown exponentially—vulnerable children in the U.S., refugees and unaccompanied minors, and vulnerable children outside the U.S.

The needs of children are daunting. At Bethany, we believe God has called us to be in the middle of the “mess”—to live out the love of Christ.

Foster care crisis makes children vulnerable in the U.S.

Here in the U.S., we’re facing a foster care crisis. Today, about 440,000 kids are in foster care across the country. More than a third of these children cannot return to their families, because their parents’ rights have been terminated. And this number is growing, largely due to the opioid crisis that leaves too many parents unable to care for their children.

Devetta grateful for a second chance at parenting

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everyone who believed in me,” she says, “even when I didn’t believe in myself.” Now she’s in the process of adopting a third grandchild, 6-year-old Jayden, a cousin to Vanessa and Yvonne.

Devetta believes God has given her a second chance at parenting. As a young mom, she struggled with substance abuse, and her own children were raised by her mother.

“My mom left a legacy before she passed, and I understand now what she went through raising my kids,” says Devetta. “I want to leave my grandchildren a legacy that has nothing to do with money but rather love and character.”

It’s not easy raising three children, but the joys of being a grandparent far outweigh the struggles for Devetta.

“I love to hear the kids call me Grandma,” she says. “Sometimes I don’t answer right away, just so I can hear them say it again. What a blessing to have these children in my life.”

We're glad Devetta was willing to share her story and grateful to you for helping make it possible through your generous support.

Note: Names changed to protect privacy

Find out more and donate at Bethany.org/InspiringFamilies
you're helping provide hope for Maria's family

Bethany provides vital support for refugee families in Colombia

Like many others in Caracas, Venezuela, Maria lost her job. The prospect of finding another job was nearly impossible. Businesses were closing, not hiring. She could no longer support her family, 13-year-old Nicola and nine-year-old Miguel.

Maria left everything, took her children, and started a thousand-mile journey to Colombia. But the journey was hard and dangerous, especially for the children. The walk was exhausting. They ate when they could, but not nearly enough. Most of all, Maria feared guerilla groups and sex traffickers who preyed upon children like Nicola and Miguel.

Since the collapse of the economy in Venezuela, more than 4 million people have left the country, most of them heading for Colombia. A vast stream of migrants—including many children—cross the border every day. Many are hungry, frightened, and traumatized.

Thanks to generous donors like you, Bethany helps migrant families with basic needs such as clothing, hygiene, and first aid kits. At our Welcome Center in the border city of Cúcuta, we give refugees access to phones and computers, provide trauma counseling, and help reunite unaccompanied children with their families.

Thank you for helping respond to the needs of those who are overlooked or ignored—the people who need our help the most. We value your partnership as we seek to keep families together.

Visit Bethany.org/InspiringFamilies to learn more about Bethany's history helping vulnerable children.

Note: Photo changed to protect privacy

Find out more and donate at Bethany.org/InspiringFamilies

And I believe the Church can be the answer to this urgent need. Followers of Christ can show God’s love by adopting or providing foster homes for children who desperately need the stability and permanence of a family. I’m so grateful for families who open their hearts and their homes to vulnerable children—and generous people who help make that possible.

Refugees and unaccompanied minors

Around the world there are 71 million people who have been displaced from their homes because of conflict, natural disasters, and poverty. The most vulnerable among the world’s displaced people are children, including 14,000 at our border who have been separated from their parents.

It’s easy to politicize this issue, but we see vulnerable children in need. We want to provide solutions that work for the kids we serve.

I’m so grateful for your support and for making it possible to help unaccompanied minors this past year. In fact, we’ve reunited 90% of the unaccompanied children in our care with a family member, and arranged safe, loving foster families for 2,000 children.

I pray for Bethany, and for myself, that our heart would break for the things that break the heart of God. In describing our God, the Psalmist tells us, “He upholds the cause of the oppressed and gives food to the hungry...the Lord watches over the foreigner and sustains the fatherless and the widow” (Psalm 146:7-9).

Together, with God’s gracious help, we can bring the life-changing power of family into the lives of many more vulnerable children. Thanks for your partnership as we follow Christ where His love is most needed today.
Bethany Christian Services demonstrates the love and compassion of Jesus Christ by protecting children, empowering youth, and strengthening families through quality social services.

You can help change the world through families! Give online today at Bethany.org/InspiringFamilies

Events and Happenings

December 3 • Giving Tuesday
Giving Tuesday is a global day of giving that celebrates and supports the giving work of others. Join us on Giving Tuesday, and each gift to Bethany will help vulnerable kids in the US find loving families. Last year through your support and a matching gift, we raised more than $155,000 to help give children the gift of a family!

Be sure to visit Bethany.org/GivingTuesday December 3rd and show your support by giving generously to bring children and families together!

December 31 • Year End Tax Planning
Need to “spend down” your taxable assets? Have you considered a charitable donation? Don’t know where to begin? Bethany Christian Services Legacy Planning Team can help. Discover ways to put your faith and passion into action for generations to come. We offer free downloads to help you make wise financial decisions, based on a biblical view of stewardship.

Please visit Bethany.org/legacy, call (616) 818-4849, or email bhakim@bethany.org. Bethany’s Legacy Team will be happy to answer your questions.

Find out more and donate at Bethany.org/InspiringFamilies

Bethany Christian Services demonstrates the love and compassion of Jesus Christ by protecting children, empowering youth, and strengthening families through quality social services.

Family sees God’s hand in donors’ generosity

Bob and Alicia thank people like you who help make adoption possible

When Bob and Alicia married, they talked about adoption as something they would do “someday.” Their plan was to adopt a child after their biological children were older.

Anderson was 8 and Joshua was 6 when God disrupted their plans. “In 2012, He very clearly called us on a radical adventure to adopt our son, Bart,” says Alicia. Bart was a 2-year-old boy living in the Philippines with special needs when the process began, and they welcomed him into their family two years later.

“As Bart has opened our eyes to a whole new world,” says Bob, “and with that world came a whole new way of looking at people with disabilities.” That prompted a desire in their hearts to adopt Noel Joy, a little girl from China with Down syndrome.

As you can imagine, life is sometimes hectic in a household with four young children. But the family thrives in the knowledge that God is with them even in the hardest days—especially on the hardest days.

“We are so thankful for the many hands that have made our adoption journey possible,” says Alicia, “especially Caring Connection.” Through Caring Connection, Bethany donors provide funds to help families with the costs of specialized care for their adopted children.

“Receiving the Caring Connections grant felt to us like a wink from God, reminding us that we are not alone on this journey,” says Alicia. “Thank you for providing so lovingly and generously to our family.”