



OFCA Family Selected to Receive Angels in Adoption Award

Peter and Angela Schoepflin from Saint Paris, Ohio have been selected to receive the Angel's in Adoption Award in Washington D.C. by the Congressional Coalition on Adoption Institute. The Schoepflin's were nominated by U.S. Senator George Voinovich at the recommendation of the Ohio Family Care Association.

"The Schoepflin's do family in a big way. They have raised eight biological and one adopted children. They have been foster parents to dozens of children over the years, including many with medical handicaps. In 2001, they adopted three-year-old Jordan, who has behavioral and emotional challenges," said Dora Sterling, Director of Programs for the Ohio Family Care Association. "The Schoepflin family is more than a big family. It is a family with a big heart when it comes to caring for kids and their parents in Ohio."

In addition to their efforts on behalf of the children in their home, the Schoepflin's have made a tremendous difference in the lives of children throughout Ohio. Peter serves as the Chairman of the Board of the Ohio Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health and Angela serves as a member of the Board of the Ohio Family Care Association. In addition, Angela has been a primary mover in the growing parent advocacy movement. She serves as the Administrator of Education for the Parent Advocacy Connection, which is administered by the National Alliance on Mental Illness of Ohio. The Parent Advocacy Connection provides advocacy to families with children served by multiple child caring systems. Advocates help families in crisis feel less isolated and assist them in having their voices heard.

This week the Schoepflin's travel to Washington D.C. to participate in three days of events all designed to train them in using their personal experience to affect change on behalf of children in need of homes and to celebrate their hard work and dedication to the issue. The cost of their travel is being generously underwritten by the Public Children Services Association of Ohio.

OFCA Spearheads Letter Writing Campaign

Are you angry about the recent cuts to Ohio's Adoption Program and want to do something to fix it? If you answered yes, consider writing a letter to your legislators in Columbus urging them to support S.B. 155. See sample letter below. If you are not sure who your legislators are, go to www.legislature.state.oh.us and enter your nine digit zip code. The addresses are:

Senator's address:	Representative's address:
The Honorable (name)	The Honorable (name)
Ohio Senate	Ohio House of Representatives
Statehouse	77 S. High Street
Columbus, OH 43215	Columbus, OH 43215

SAMPLE LETTER TO STATE LEGISLATORS

Dear _____,

I am writing to you out of concern for Ohio's children waiting to be adopted to urge you to support S.B. 155, which partially decouples Ohio law from recent changes to the federal tax law and directs some of the resulting savings to the state's adoption program.

I was stunned when I learned the extent of the cuts to Ohio's Adoption Program that were made earlier this year in H.B. 1, the biennial budget bill. I understand that Ohio is in an economic recession, but the state has an obligation to ensure that children who have been permanently removed from their birth families as a result of abuse and neglect are found new families. In fact, the General Assembly passed a law in 1998 that said children should have permanent homes within two years of their removal from their birth family. Slashing funds to Ohio's adoption program makes a mockery of that law, and leaving kids to linger in foster care is not only cruel, it's costly. Passage of S.B. 155 would help right this wrong.

Thank you in advance for giving S.B. 155 your serious consideration. I look forward to hearing from you regarding your position on this bill.

FREE OFCA MEMBERSHIP OPPORTUNITY—LIMITED TIME ONLY

Are you a member of the Ohio Family Care Association? September 1— November 30, OFCA is offering a free membership to adoptive, foster care, kinship and respite caregivers and child advocates. To take advantage of this offer, please send your name, address and e-mail address to us at office@ofcaonline.org.