



SUNBEAMS

NEW ADDITION



Fall Edition 2006

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It is hard to imagine how a young girl feels when she is not able to be at her home. Scared, lonely, and sad are a few of the emotions that most children go through after coming into placements.

A few years ago I had the opportunity to meet with a man who had spent most of his childhood growing up in a boys home. As we talked, I asked him what he felt had the biggest impact upon him when he was placed out of his

mothers home. He thought for awhile and said that what he remembered most was his first day in placement. He could still remember the car ride, the first person he met, and even the smell of the new paint in the kitchen of the home. Then over the next few minutes he described his first day and how that time was etched in his memory.

I have never forgotten that conversation. Can you imagine being placed in a facility with old musty carpet, chipped paint on the floor and holes in the walls? (Continued Pg 6)

Abbott House Owes Much to Pickering

Dedication, loyalty, caring, compassion and commitment are a few words that don't begin to describe former director Perry Pickering. Mr. Pickering led the organization as its Executive Director from 1947 to 1974.

Mr. Pickering was the type of man who set the example for others to follow. He left a legacy that continues to drive this organization to provide the very best services possible. During his tenure he held everyone at a high standard even when resources were scarce.

In 1949, after much effort and sacrifice, Mr. Pickering helped open a new Abbott House, after the old home had burned in 1945. This was a very important event in the history of the organization as it cemented its presence in the state of South Dakota and demonstrated that the agency was on the right path.

So, you might ask "What makes Perry so special?" It was his love for the children and his willingness to go that little bit extra to ensure they felt important. Examples of this were: (Continued Pg 2)

The Man Who Had No Will

I asked him straight out, "Jim, do you have a will?"

He replied without blinking, "No, and I don't need one either."

I swallowed. Here was a married man in his late 50s who was either grossly misinformed about the need for a will, or who simply didn't care. Instead of backing off, I decided to press on. Perhaps I could persuade him to change his mind. If so, I could do both him and his family a favor.



"You know," I began, "you're wrong about not needing a will."

He blinked.

"That's right," I said. "If you die without a valid will or other appropriate documents, state laws will determine the disposition of your estate. And the state's will for you may be a far cry from what you yourself might want."

"Since they must 'go by the book,' they will not be able to consider your desires. Nor will they provide anything for the charities you have supported so faithfully over the years. Probate costs will likely be greater, and a stranger may be named to represent you. Your lack of direction concerning your desires will likely cause confusion and frustration among your relatives. In short, you could leave behind a mess."

I told him about estate taxes and how they could diminish what passes through to his children after his wife's death. "By making certain provisions in *your* will," I explained, "these taxes could (Continued Pg 3)

Pickering (Continued)

- On July 4th, he put on a fireworks show ranging from sparklers to firecrackers to exploding sky rockets in the backyard.
- Every year on Christmas Eve he stayed late into the night in Abbott House's basement wrapping presents so that each child could have a joyful Christmas.
- He traveled extensively visiting foster children who had been placed throughout the state.
- On Sundays with the help of others, he delivered children to different churches so they could attend the church of their choice.
- He brought children into his own home for temporary stays during periods when there was no room at Abbott House.

These activities were typical of Perry's commitment to Abbott House and the children of South Dakota. And, they are traditions that we carry on today.

No one could have foreseen the vast changes that would impact child care in the course of 27 years. In the end the legacy of Perry Pickering was that the agency that he loved and served remained as a tribute to him and the thousands of children that were saved and enriched by his life. Abbott House continues to serve children and we all strive to keep the same standards that Mr. Pickering set for us over 30 years ago.

Abbott House Welcomes New Board Member

Amanda Fay grew up in the Black Hills of South Dakota. As a teen, Amanda was a resident of the Abbott House where she benefited from individual and family counseling, groups,



chemical dependency, and educational programming.

After being discharged from the Abbott House Amanda moved to Armour, South Dakota and graduated from Armour High School in 1997. She

enlisted in the Navy and was stationed in San Diego, Ca aboard the USS Bon Homme Richard.

Amanda was honorably discharged after a four year enlistment and returned home to South Dakota to attend Dakota Wesleyan University. While attending college Amanda worked as a staff member at the Abbott House as a teaching counselor.

In 2003 Amanda became a police officer for the City of Wagner South Dakota. She continued to work as a police officer for the remainder of her schooling. She graduated in 2005 from Dakota Wesleyan University with a Bachelor degree in Human Services and Criminal Justice cum laude.

Amanda now resides in Redwood Falls, MN where she works as a child and family counselor. She lives with her boyfriend and dog, Honey. She keeps busy as a member of the National Guard and is currently awaiting foster care licensure.

The Man Who Had No Will (Continued)

be reduced or avoided altogether."

I sensed he was having second thoughts about his no-will mindset. I pressed on: "By the way, have you considered what would happen if you and your wife should both die in a common disaster?"

He looked down. He had never allowed for that possibility. He just assumed he would die first and that his wife would then do some estate planning with the help of the kids and an attorney.

I could see the wheels turning as he imagined the various scenarios of a common death. Where would the estate go? How would the children and grandchildren benefit? What about the court-appointed administrator and the expenses of selling property and gathering records? What about all the misun-



derstandings and family problems that could develop? And what about those charitable organizations he supported? What about Abbott House?

Finally, Jim spoke. "How do I go about making a will?"

If you find yourself without a will, or with a will that is out-of-date, contact a reputable estate-planning attorney and make an appointment today. If you want assistance in finding a good attorney or some helpful literature about making a will contact us at the information below.

Dial **(605-996-2486 Ext 114)** and ask for Eric Klooz, Abbott House's Executive Director. You can also contact him through our Web site at:

www.abbotthouse.org

Directors Comments

Two words that make the hair on my neck stand up are: **I CAN'T**.

I have heard so many young people utter that short phrase. It is one of those things that will make me stop whatever I am doing and take time to talk.

As a young man in high school I can remember chastising my brother for saying those words as he felt that he would never make it through college.

Have you ever heard a two year old say "I Can't". Neither have I. If you ask a child starting kindergarten if they could be President of the United States most of them will say "yes". However if you ask a room full of sixth graders that same question you will only get a few hands that will go up. Normally those young children believe they can do anything. However, from that innocent age many are taught to believe that there are so many things they can't do.

Last week a young lady from our foster home program stopped in to exclaim she had gotten her first paycheck. In her amazement she exclaimed "I never thought I could earn this much". As she starts to realize her potential



Eric Klooz
Executive Director

we will step aside and watch her blossom.

I and the staff at Abbott House don't accept "I Can't". This year, through the grace of others we added a beautiful Therapeutic Garden. A place of solitude and healing for our children. We also started a scholarship fund to begin helping young ladies attend college or advanced training after completing our program.

There is no room for "I can't" when working with kids and families. As we close out 2006 I hope that you will continue to support our programs because together we **CAN** accomplish so much!

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abbott
House

Providing Premier Services for Girls and Families

NEW ADDITION (Continued)



Neither can I and that is why we spend so much time making Abbott House a warm, comfortable and safe place for children. "We need to provide an environment that the children feel safe in, and one that

shows them we care. It is not enough to say you care. You must show it each day." stated Lana Andersen, Program Director.

The recently added Therapeutic Garden adds a beautiful dimension to the programming at Abbott House. Now the young ladies of Abbott House have a place to come and heal. Over the next few months there will be many therapy sessions, family meetings, and quiet time spent in our healing garden. When a new girl comes to our facility it will always be clean, neat and welcoming.

Our garden was the result of an outpouring of memorials for Ernie Peters after his passing. With the direction of a planning committee these funds were put into a lasting memorial that will provide so many good memories for young ladies that need them so desperately. Thank you to all those who gave so that South Dakota's most needy could benefit.

ABBOTT HOUSE WELCOMES NEW BOARD MEMBER.



Yvonne Palli is a native of Madison, South Dakota and received her high school diploma at Lake Central High School. She then received a Bachelors of Science and Secondary Education Major in Mathematics in 1980 from Dakota State University in Madison. She later obtained her Masters in Science in Education from Northern State University in 1990. Yvonne is the Principal for Mitchell High School and has worked in the Mitchell School system for 23 years.

Yvonne and her husband, Tony, have two children, Levi who works as a Chef in Seattle, WA and Maria who is a student at DSU. Yvonne is active in many organizations to include the NASSP, SASD/SDASSP, ASCD, South Dakota Area Principals, Beta Sigma Phi and Delta Kappa Gamma. Yvonne is also a member of the local Exchange Club.

Abbott House welcomes Yvonne and her leadership to our Board of Directors.