

Cornerstone Quarterly

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You matter.

*Our Mission:
 Helping people meet life's
 challenges by providing the
 skills, support and hope
 needed for effective fulfilling
 lives.*

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Cornerstone Board Member Shares Story of Adoption

Stevee Sohn is a very busy lady. This working mom of three is also active in our community, so Cornerstone got lucky when she committed to serving on our board. "I have experienced firsthand the good work that Cornerstone does for children and families, especially adoptive families like ours. That's why I'm here."

Stevee and husband Chad's story of adoption is one of loving dedication to family that begins when the Sohns stepped in to foster two of Chad's half sister's children. The kids had been in and out of foster homes for two and half years since being taken away from their mother when the Sohns got the call. They knew right away they would adopt their niece Jocee and nephew J.D., who were five and eight at the time. Chad's feeling was, "You can't let family go elsewhere."

Though the adoption process took over two years, Stevee and Chad were not aunt and uncle but Mom and Dad right away. There was an immediate connection, but developing a lasting bond of trust takes time with children who have not developed a close attachment to a caregiver during infancy. The kids were both in counseling at Cornerstone when the Sohns got them, and the new parents opted to continue treatment. "J.D. was very protective of Jocee because he had raised her," says Stevee. "He had that real 'you're not the boss of me' thing!" Cornerstone's Adoption Support and Preservation program helped Stevee and Chad learn about the profound effects of the children's early life experiences on their behavior. They gained insights into the unmet needs of infancy and early childhood which helped them understand the behaviors and overwhelming emotions that disrupt home and school. "Their fight or flight was so strong," Stevee recalls. Whenever they would act up, she would hold them closer. "There were lots of hugs!"

When Stevee found out she was expecting their first biological child, the other kids were excited at first, but then started to doubt and wonder whether Mom and Dad would still be there for them too. Once at one of Stevee's doctor's appointments J.D. was so upset he threw up in the waiting room. Stevee had them feel her belly all the time, working through those feelings. When baby sister Bryn came along they were totally in love with her. "She was the little tie that kept us all together," says Stevee. "It was God's plan for sure."

It's years later now, and the Sohns are doing well! Bryn is now five and loves dance; Jocee is a sophomore at QND and on the honor roll and in choir; and J.D. is a sophomore at Maryville University in St. Louis on a soccer scholarship. Last year J.D. was even honored as Freshman of the Year for the Great Lakes Valley Conference for Division 2 soccer. Mom and Dad are very proud of all of them!

Cornerstone's Adoption Support and Preservation (ASAP) program provides intensive, family-centered intervention designed to empower and strengthen families with unique challenges that often result from their decision to grow by adoption or subsidized guardianship. Services include comprehensive assessment, therapy, case management and financial assistance for specialized services. All services are offered at no cost to the family. If you or someone you know could benefit from the ASAP program please call us at 217-222-8254.



Stevee and Chad Sohn with their kids, from left: Bryn, Jocee and J.D.

"I have experienced firsthand what Cornerstone does for children and families... That's why I'm here."

-Stevee Sohn, Cornerstone Board Member

"You can't let family go elsewhere."

-Chad Sohn

Some programs funded in whole or part by the State of IL Department of Human Services, Department of Children and Family Services and the United Way of Adams County.

13th Annual Golf Benefit Another Winner!

In spite of a bit of the wet stuff May 18th turned out to be a great day for Cornerstone's 13th annual golf outing. Spring Lake Country Club did a great job (again!), providing delicious food and beverages, great service and a beautiful course. We wish to thank their staff and all of the golfers and sponsors who come out year after year to support us during this cherished fundraising event.

Thank you all!

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First Place Winners of Cornerstone's 13th Annual Golf Benefit, from left: Mark Reuschel, Casey Hill, Greg Frieden and Charles Scholz



Congratulations to Casey Hill for also winning the Chipping Contest and scoring a new iPad, Sponsored by Jim Titus and Chuck Mahon of Winters Insurance

Cornerstone Welcomes New Staff Members



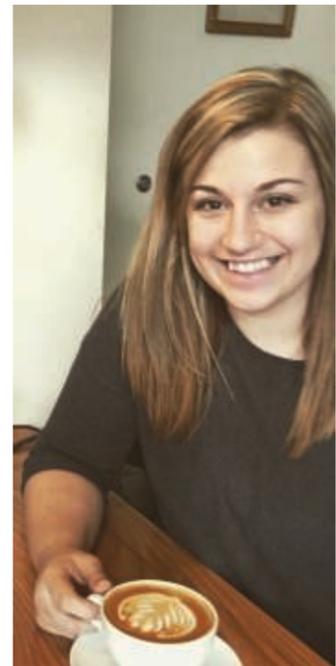
Therapist Kim Wheelock

Kim was raised in Quincy and immediately embarked on her career after graduating from Quincy University with a Bachelor's Degree in Criminal Justice. Working with children and families involved in child welfare, Kim became a strong advocate for children achieving permanency through adoption. She was appointed to serve on the Illinois Adoption Advisory Council by the Director of the Department of Children and Family Services, serving the maximum of two terms (four years). While working in the Illinois Child Welfare System, Kim received additional training and expertise regarding core concepts in adoption and subsequently provided Adoption Core Training to families pursuing adoption through foster care. After gaining years of experience in the field of child welfare, Kim then furthered her education by earning a Master degree in Social Work from the University of Illinois in Champaign with a focus on Children, Youth and Family Services. Kim is pursuing licensure in the State of Illinois as a Licensed Clinical Social Worker, and has specialized training in Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy and Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing.

"To work with children and families as they grow in their relationships, their development and overall health and wellbeing is an honor. Each person's ability to be vulnerable and share their story is empowering. It is a blessing for me to guide them in their journey. When I am not working, I enjoy spending time with my husband and daughter typically at one of her many sporting activities. To unwind and relax, a good book is usually involved!"

Though born in Michigan, I grew up in Canada where my family worked helping First Nation Families. Through this time I began to see the need for helping families find their strengths and be able to work as a team. I attended Moody Bible Institute in Chicago where I obtained a BA in Counseling. While in Chicago, I worked with Urban Youth at an after school community center. I moved to Quincy in the fall of 2016 when I got married. Shortly after, I start working as a Child and Adolescent Case Manager and Juvenile Justice Liaison. I joined Cornerstone as a Case Manager in July of 2018. I enjoy working with the First Steps program and building relationships with growing families. I am passionate about working alongside families so that they can reach their goals and grow together as a family.

While not working, I enjoy spending time with my family and friends, church ministries, baking, being outdoors and a good cup of coffee!



Caseworker Emilee Mally