

An area of debate in adoption practice has been the advisability of combining adoption and foster placements in one family.

Adoptive families have often sought acceptance as foster families and foster families have applied for assessment for adoption. Workers in these fields have had reservations about blending the two

forms of placement. These reservations have related both to the effect on the children who have differing placement status *within the family*, and to the motivations of the parents in both situations. Are the adoptive parents wanting a foster placement to be a quasi-adoption? Do the foster parents feel ambivalent about the lack of permanency in fostering?

The involvement of one adoptive family with a family welfare agency as a foster family, is presented here as a *personal statement of experience*. *Anne Jeffrey*, of the Copelen Street Family Centre of the Uniting Church, introduces the family's account with a brief explanation of the Family Centre's involvement with adoptive families who move on to fostering.

ADOPTION CASE NOTES

Introduction

The experiences of The Copelen Street Family Centre of the Uniting Church, "Family Sharing Programme" have been with families who have adopted then fostered, fostered while trying to adopt, or fostered then adopted. Only the first category will be discussed here.

We have two families who have adopted a child and then become foster parents. The first family had three of their own children and then adopted a baby. When their children were 17, 16, 13 and 10, they decided as a family to foster babies who would be going to adoptive homes. They wanted to help other adoptive parents in gratitude for their own adoption.

The second family involved a single woman who had adopted a child from

by Anne Jeffrey
The Copelen Street Family Centre

Kampuchea. When her daughter was nearly 8 years of age and had been with her for over 6 years, together they decided to foster a child. The foster mother's interest in fostering was to provide her daughter with the experience of living with another child, and her commitment to helping those in need. The family was accepted initially for short term fostering, although they wanted to foster on a long term basis. The Agency believed that in fairness to the family it was important to see how they coped with grieving and how the daughter felt about sharing her mother

with another child. The family will now foster a long term child.

For both these families there were several important factors in determining their success as foster families. Firstly, the foster parents were mature and sensitive. Secondly, they discussed openly with their adopted children about their status and origins. Thirdly, they and their own children were able to grieve. Fourthly, all the children in the foster families were secure with their own interests and friends and high self-esteem. Fifthly, the families were accepting of natural families with different values and attitudes to their own, and could be flexible about access arrangements. Finally, the decision to foster children was made in each case by the whole family.

AN ADOPTIVE MOTHER AND HER DAUGHTER'S EXPERIENCE OF FOSTER CARE—Irene Robinson

We're doing fine.

Seven years ago I was unmarried, working full time and living alone in a luxury flat in Toorak. Today I am still unmarried, haven't worked for two years (owing to an accident) but my home is a small terrace in Richmond cluttered with blocks, dolls, "Weekly Readers",

pushers and potties.

My name is Irene Robinson and I am a single adoptive and foster mother. I don't really know when I decided to adopt, I had nurtured the idea for some years and on making general enquiries about adoption found that I was either too young or too old but mainly I was single and working. In the early seventies there were articles appearing in newspapers

about war orphans in Vietnam, orphanages which couldn't cope with the numbers of children and small children found wandering in the streets of Saigon. I made up my mind that I would adopt a child from Vietnam but: where did one start, where did you go, that was my number one question. All enquiries I made met with a blank wall, either no one wanted to know or didn't

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THE CHILDREN'S BUREAU
OF AUSTRALIA

THE ANNUAL REPORT

PRESENTED AT THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
AT CANBERRA ON FRIDAY, JULY 23RD 1982.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

I have pleasure in presenting to you the 10th Annual Report of the Children's Bureau of Australia. The past year has seen the basic services of the Bureau maintained, and some efforts made to consolidate the rather precarious financial situation.

Highlight of the year no doubt was the completion and the launching of 'Particular Care', which was the report of the National Survey into Children's Homes and Foster Care (including Homes for Physically and Intellectually Handicapped Children).

BOARD OF MANAGEMENT

The following Board Members resigned at the last Annual Meeting and we thank them for their contribution to the Bureau.

Sharon Low (N.S.W.)

Sister Agatha Rogers (N.S.W.)

Mr. Ray Jenkins (N.S.W.)—May 1982.

During the year Mr. W.R. Huges passed away while holidaying in Northern Australia. Mr. Huges or "Bill" as he was universally known, was a foundation member of the Bureau and a dedicated worker for almost all of his life. We record his death with regret and our sincere condolences were expressed to his wife, Hope, and family. A very large congregation was present for his funeral service held at Nunawading Uniting Church, Melbourne, where he and Hope were members.

MEMBERSHIP

There are 150 members of the Bureau.
The State totals are as follows:

N.S.W.	46	S.A.	4
Vic.	60	W.A.	8
Tas.	5	N.T.	3
Qld.	24		

Members fees remain the same as before—individual \$28.00, organisational \$60.00.

PUBLICATIONS

The quarterly Journal of the Bureau continues to be published on a regular basis. During the year Mr. Graeme Gregory resigned from the Chairmanship of the Publications Committee and he was replaced by Mr. J. Edwards who was a Foundation Member of the Journal Committee. We express sincere gratitude to Mr. Gregory for his contribution to the *Publication Committee over a number of years*.

Subscriptions for the Journal remain at about 1,000. A concerted attempt is to be made to increase the subscription list over 1982. We express our thanks to Mr. Lee Richmond for his work in maintaining the subscription and membership lists. Mr. Richmond has been undertaking this task for the past four years—he is quietly efficient and is very much in the background. For his excellent service we thank him most sincerely.

JOURNAL AWARD

The Journal Award was presented at a Cocktail function held at the Victorian Children's Aid Society on the 26th October, 1981.

The award was won by Ms. Rosemary Kiely, a freelance writer who contributes to the Melbourne Age. The winning article was entitled "Incest—The Last Taboo".

The award was presented by Dr. Don Edgar the Director of the Institute of Family Studies whose remarks were supported by the Chairman of the Committee, Mr. Graeme Gregory.

It has been decided by the Publications Committee that no

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award will be made in 1982, and that the matter will be reviewed with the Australian Journalists Association. The Bureau is very grateful to the editor Ms. M. Frederico and the members of the Publications Committee for their continued efforts in publishing a Journal of such consistent high quality.

NATIONAL MARRIAGE AND FAMILY WEEK

During May 1981, 26,000 copies of the brochure entitled "Family Time" were circulated throughout Australia.

The brochure took on a new format this year and the use of illustrations enhanced the appearance of the brochure and made it attractive and readable. The Bureau expresses its gratitude to Dr. Cliff Wright who wrote the brochure—to the Churches who distributed it and to Mr. Jeff Gilmour who handled the layout and art work. The Bureau also expresses its gratitude to the Australian Medical Association, Victorian branch for making an allocation that covers the cost of the printing of the brochure.

National Marriage and Family Week was launched at a function held at the conference centre at the Mission of St. James and St. John by Dr. D. Edgar from the Institute of Family Studies. Dr. Edgar spoke on the theme of the week "Families have the Strength".

The week did create a level of activity in many local places around Australia—many local papers carried press articles related to the week, a TV interview with Dr. Wright was screened on the Catholic Hour. Special seminars were conducted in many places and special church services were also held to celebrate and support the week.

RESEARCH

As already reported, the research project which was commenced in early 1979 under the title — 'National Survey of Non-Government Children's Homes and Foster Care (which includes homes for Physically and Intellectually Handicapped Children) was launched at a special function held at St. Johns Home for Boys and Girls on the 29th March, 1982.

The survey which covers over 250 non-government organisations involved with children throughout Australia, was under the direction of a steering committee comprising members of Government Department Welfare Agencies and funding bodies.

The report entitled 'Particular Care' was launched by Professor Peter Boss of Monash University, he paid compliment to his staff who worked on the Report, particularly to Mr. G. Gregory and Mr. Norman Smith the authors. The report has been well received and it is hoped that it will provide a basis for action in many areas where quality of services to Children is less than desirable.

The Bureau acknowledges the contribution made by funding bodies, The Myer Foundation, the Office of Child Care, Commonwealth Department of Social Security and others.

Special thanks are due to Mr. J. Edwards who assisted in the final preparation of the report, Mr. J. Gilmour who was responsible for layout and art work, and to the typists, Mrs. J. Davis and Mrs. R. Smith.

The report was typeset by Eagle Stationers and printed by Standard Newspapers and the staff in these two organisations are to be complemented on their willingness to meet

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unreasonable deadlines.

The Bureau also acknowledges the organisations who participated in the Report and the large number of individuals who are too numerous to record here, who made the report possible.

It is the desire of the Bureau to do a follow-up in 1984.

COMMITTEES

The executive and Finance Committee comprising the President, Secretary, Treasurer and Victorian Board Members has met on a monthly basis over the year at St. Johns Homes for Boys and Girls and the Melbourne Family Care Organisation and thanks are due to the members of staff of these two organisations for their hospitality.

Board meetings were held at:

St. Johns Homes for Boys and Girls, Melbourne—3/4/1981.
Department of Youth and Community Services—3/7/1981.
Tuffnell Children's Homes, Brisbane—29/10/1981.

And we thank these organisations for allowing us the use of their premises.

FUND RAISING

A limited fund raising campaign has been conducted to business houses and we thank those who have so generously contributed to our work.

CONCLUSION

The Bureau, because of the difficult financial situation and the lack of any full time staffing, had taken no major initiatives during the year. The year 1981 could be described as a year of consolidation and there was much discussion about the future of a national non-government Children's Agency and the difficulties of developing a sense of cohesion amongst the States. As children's Services in Australia are on the whole organised on a State basis, the relevance of a National body has been the subject of much spirited discussion. No doubt this will continue and out of this, hopefully we will come closer to a resolution of this issue.

There are still many issues that continue to be matters of concern as far as the care and the welfare of the Children of Australia are concerned. The National Survey pointed to many serious anomalies in the residential care of children, the lack of commitment to permanency planning on the part of many agency services, and the discrimination against some children, particularly aboriginal children in some States.

The worsening economic situation, the rise in unemployment, the lack of housing in some areas, the inadequate provision of child health, particularly in isolated parts of Australia, are all matters of continuing concern to the Bureau as they seriously affect the quality of life for many children and their families.

In conclusion I would like to thank especially the staff of the Victorian Children's Aid Society—Jan Davis, Judy McCulloch, Louise Thackray, Jane Kiely and Jill Cameron for their work on behalf of the Bureau.

To all those who have allowed the Bureau to continue to function we offer our sincere thanks, especially those who financially contributed.

Alan Williams,
PRESIDENT.

GENERAL ACCOUNT

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE STATEMENT FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 1981

	1981	1980
	\$	\$
INCOME		
Affiliation Fees	—	2,420
Donations	660	3,588
Consultation fees	—	900
Administration Charges	—	3,000
Sundry Income	\$ 107	136
	<u>\$ 767</u>	<u>\$10,044</u>
EXPENDITURE		
Salaries and Wages	—	5,229
Superannuation	—	430
Annual General Meeting	10	—
Bank Charges	35	152
Conference Fees	32	—
Depreciation	134	134
General Expenses	68	261
insurances	—	157
Interest	4	271
Legal Expenses	115	—
Light, Power, Gas	455	194
Postages	218	349
Printing and Stationery	956	830
Subscriptions	170	—
Telephone	—	391
Travelling Expenses	522	—
Loss on Sale of Fixed Asset	—	370
	<u>2,719</u>	<u>8,768</u>
SURPLUS (DEFICIT) for the year	<u>\$ (1,952)</u>	<u>\$ 1,276</u>

PUBLISHING ACCOUNTS

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE STATEMENT FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 1981

	1981	1980
	\$	\$
INCOME		
Donations	805	—
Journal Dinner	350	—
Sales of Publications	617	—
Subscriptions	9,152	6,744
Interest	105	63
	<u>\$11,029</u>	<u>\$6,807</u>
EXPENDITURE		
Bank Charges	2	2
General Expenses	35	31
Journal Award	750	—
Journal Costs—Printing & Production	5,000	5,754
Journal Dinner	—	449
Postages	529	332
Printing and Stationery	1,193	455
Publications	1,105	23
	<u>\$8,614</u>	<u>\$7,046</u>
SURPLUS (DEFICIT) for the year	<u>\$2,415</u>	<u>\$ (239)</u>

RESEARCH AND EDUCATION ACCOUNT

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE STATEMENT FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 1981

	Children's Homes National Survey	Foster Care Conference	1981	1980
	\$	\$	\$	\$
INCOME				
Fees and Accommodation	—	15,701	15,701	—
Grants	—	7,776	17,000	—
Donations	—	—	—	1,000
Lecture Fees	—	—	—	213
Interest	1	132	133	55
Sales of Tapes	—	628	628	—
Transfer to Sydney Committee	—	700	700	—
Sundry Income	—	—	—	15
	<u>1</u>	<u>24,937</u>	<u>24,938</u>	<u>18,283</u>
EXPENDITURE				
Salaries and Wages	—	—	—	15,399
Accommodation for Participants	—	6,239	6,239	—
Administration Charges	—	—	—	3,000
Computer Fees	—	—	—	1,176
Depreciation	10	—	10	10
Editing Fee	—	500	500	—
Fieldwork/Consultants Fees	—	—	—	1,000
General Expenses	47	282	329	—
Insurances	—	30	30	—
Light and Power	—	—	—	53
Meals	—	2,036	2,036	—
Postages and Freight	—	330	330	26
Printing and Stationery	—	7,099	7,099	—
Secretarial Assistance	—	2,100	2,100	—
Social Activities	—	2,689	2,689	—
Speakers Honoraria	—	1,277	1,277	—
Subsidies for Victorian Foster Parents	—	496	496	—
Tapes	—	277	277	—
Telephone	—	570	570	664
Travelling and Entertainment	—	746	746	8
Transfer to Sydney Committee	—	—	—	700
	<u>57</u>	<u>24,671</u>	<u>24,728</u>	<u>22,036</u>
SURPLUS (DEFICIT) for the year	<u>\$(56)</u>	<u>\$ 266</u>	<u>\$ 210</u>	<u>\$(3,753)</u>

BALANCE SHEET AS AT DECEMBER 31, 1981

	\$	1981 \$	1980 \$
Accumulated Funds			
Balance brought forward:			
General Account	1,289		13
Publishing Account	811		1,050
Research and Education Account	<u>(1,500)</u>	600	2,253
Add Surplus (deficit) for the year:			
Publishing Account	2,415		(239)
Research and Development Account	<u>210</u>	<u>2,625</u>	<u>(3,753)</u>
		3,225	(676)
(Deduct)/Add Deficits for the year:			
General Account		<u>(1,952)</u>	<u>1,276</u>
		1,273	600
Add Specific Funds:			
National Marriage and Family Week		<u>557</u>	<u>583</u>
		<u>\$1,830</u>	<u>\$1,183</u>
Represented by:			
FIXED ASSETS			
Office Furniture and Equipment			
General Account	1,337		1,337
Research and Education Account	<u>95</u>		<u>95</u>
	1,432		1,432
Less Provision for Depreciation	<u>355</u>		<u>211</u>
		1,077	1,221
CURRENT ASSETS			
Bank Balances:			
General Account	187		1,038
Publishing Account	1,035		855
Research and Education Account	<u>295</u>		<u>28</u>
	1,517		1,921
Petty Cash	30		30
Deposits: Gas Supply	<u>—</u>		<u>30</u>
		1,547	1,981
Total Assets		2,624	3,202
Less:			
LIABILITIES			
Sundry Creditors		<u>794</u>	<u>2,019</u>
		<u>\$1,830</u>	<u>\$1,183</u>

NOTE TO AND FORMING PART OF THE ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 1981

Specific funds relate to special events organised by the Bureau and which are funded from donations and special fund-raising activities. The balance of these accounts represents the unexpended balance of amounts raised which are carried forward towards the cost of these activities in future periods.

Movements in these funds during the year are as follows:

National Marriage and Family Week	\$
Brought forward	583
Receipts	976
Expended	1,002
Balance carried forward	<u>\$ 557</u>

AUDITORS REPORT

We report on the accompanying balance sheet and statements of income and expenditure of the Children's Bureau of Australia for the year ended 31st December, 1981.

In our opinion, these accounts are properly drawn up in accordance with the Constitution of the bureau and so as to give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the bureau at 31st December, 1981 and of its results for the year ended on that date.

COOPERS & LYBRAND
Chartered Accountants

know, as again I was single and working. It was becoming increasingly clear to me that I was living in the wrong State. In South Australia, it appeared to be quite a straight forward matter for a single working person to at least be assessed and often approved. Then, my breakthrough: in early 1974, a newspaper article about a single mother in Victoria doing an adoption from Vietnam. I was determined to track this mother down and on showing the article to a friend was delighted to learn that he knew her through business connections. The following Friday I was talking to her.

At the end of 1974 I was not in Vietnam but in Cambodia and on February 25th 1975 my daughter, Kandall, arrived in Australia. She was 22 months old, weighing 6 kilos and beautiful. Physically she went from strength to strength, put on weight and grew tall and as her pediatrician says, "If I hadn't seen it for myself I would never have believed it". For the first six months she stayed with friends during the day while I worked and then went into a day nursery where she could have the company of other children. The couple who looked after her in the first six months have become an extended family to us. Of course, as I saw Kandall developing into a beautiful, healthy, bright child my desire to adopt grew again. But again I was up against the same problem, I was single and working. And of course, having purchased a house and now having the upkeep of a small daughter I didn't have the money required to be travelling to South East Asia for two to three months to arrange my own adoption. Then, two years ago I had an accident that rendered me unable to work and with a long term prognosis of maybe never working again. After the initial adjustment my thoughts turned to adoption again, but no, I would be up against a medical and at that stage I didn't have enough money for a child's airfare plus the cost of an escort from South East Asia to Australia. One day a friend suggested fostering to me, something I had never thought of. The same friend lent me books on fostering from her extensive library and the more I read and learnt, particularly about the need in my own community, the more I became convinced this was something we could do. I had many long talks with my daughter who was then 7 years old, about having the long desired brother or sister but not on a permanent basis, a child that would come and stay with us and then go home to its family, having a part-time sister or brother. I had honestly explained to her why we

couldn't have a permanent sister or brother and during talking with Kandall it became increasingly clear that she was accepting the concept of a part-time brother or sister. I explained to her the various reasons why children went into foster care—the one reason I knew she fully understood was: "when a mummy has to go into hospital and some children don't have an Auntie Adelia or Rosemary to stay with like where you stayed when mummy was in hospital, then they stay with a nice family who will look after them until their mummy is better".

Having got that far I decided it was time to call the Department of Community Welfare Services. After a pleasant conversation, I was told to contact Copelen St. Family Centre (Child Care Service) as foster care was zoned to areas. I often smile when I think of my first phone call to Copelen St. It was on a Friday, near the end of 1980, and a social worker explained to me that I had just missed out on a foster parent's night but she would like to come and see me on either Wednesday or Friday. Being used to adoption I waited for her to go on to say in July 1982 or maybe, as a wild thought crossed my mind, she might even say July 1981. As the silence increased I suddenly realised she meant this coming Wednesday or Friday. I made a date and put the phone down saying to myself, "I don't believe this". Then the day came, I was nervous and, thinking over interviews for adoption, I was more so. The allotted time came, two social workers arrived and we spent a very pleasant hour talking and laughing a lot. I recall the laughter for, in my adoption interviews, no-one laughed. When they left with a date to return and see me again with Kandall I couldn't help comparing the difference between my initial interview on adoption to my initial interview on fostering. Four weeks later I was approved as a foster mother.

How excited we were. Then came the waiting period for our first placement which took about four months, how that time dragged. Then it happened, a little girl aged 4 who was to be with us for a period of up to 8 weeks as her mother was having problems with accommodation. I was so proud of my two daughters, then it came time for her to go home. I was happy for her as she was going home to a mother who loved her dearly and when the final moment came it was the natural mother who was sobbing and thanking me as she led her daughter to their car for her journey home. We have

now had six children in foster care, the shortest placement being for one night, the longest for three months.

During that time I have watched my own daughter grow and mature; being an only child in a one parent family, our relationship was very close with Kandall having my undivided attention at most times and being unable to cope when other people were present. At seven she still demanded my undivided attention. During our first placement I was delighted to see how quickly Kandall slotted into the big sister role, helping the little one to dress and generally protecting her and looking after her. When we had a placement of a two year old boy, how she loved playing mother, changing his nappies, helping me with the potty training, wheeling the pusher and accepting the moment of parting. Now and then she has occasionally said "wouldn't it be nice if John or Jane could stay with us forever" and I have agreed with that passing sentiment but have pointed out that this is not possible and the reasons why, which she accepts quite happily. Kandall is no longer demanding of my undivided attention and has accepted, without either of us realising at the time, that she is now part of a family of three, an ever changing threesome but still a structure where there was someone else to consider. Our bonding and love for each other is such that not once has Kandall intimated any feelings of insecurity that maybe she would have to go to another family, as she knows full well that if her mummy has to go to hospital she has a lot of friends who love her dearly and she has a choice of homes where she could go and stay.

Through my work with refugees and inter-country adoption Kandall has been aware for some time, not from me actually telling her, but from going to various meetings and playing around during long conversations with friends on current happenings that some children's lives overseas were very sad, but she is now aware that some children's lives in Melbourne are also sad and that came about by one child in the first five minutes of being in our home telling us both what her mummy had done to her. I looked at Kandall, whose eyes were as big as saucers, and gently explained to her, out of earshot, that there were some children who had a sad life and it was up to us to make their time with us as happy as possible so they would have some nice memories. So with one beautiful adopted daughter and a variety of beautiful foster children the three of us are doing fine.