



Miracle Hill[®]
MINISTRIES



Miracle Hill seeks resource foster parents to nurture children and families

By Rebecca Howerton
Contributing writer

When children must be temporarily removed from their home due to abuse or neglect, the Department of Social Services turns to foster care licensing agencies to provide safe, caring homes to welcome them. Miracle Hill Ministries, one of only three Level 1 licensing agencies in the Upstate, has provided this service for 25 years. This year, the ministry met a significant goal set in 2012 of having 100 resource foster families on its roster.

“We’re excited and grateful, but when we set that goal we weren’t expecting the increased needs that we have today,” said Lori Bailey, Miracle Hill’s vice president of children’s ministries. “The ideal would be to have more families than there are children needing care, so that we could make placements that take into account community, culture, and individual needs and preferences, rather than choosing the only available home with an open bed.”

Sharon Betts, foster care coordinator, said there are more than 1,100 foster children in the Upstate, and that number typically increases around the beginning of the school year. Miracle Hill Ministries recruits and supports resource foster families to care for them until they can be reunited with their birth family in a safe, healthy situation.

“Although the goal is reunification, many of these children will become available for adoption, and those families who adopt may no longer be able to take additional foster children. Other families will need to stop fostering for personal reasons, and will need to be replaced,” Betts said. “In addition, respite foster parents are needed to provide temporary care. So no matter how many foster parents we have, we can always use more.”

The greatest needs are for families who can take toddlers, sibling groups and teenagers, Betts said.

“There will always be a need for more families to share the love of Christ with foster children. They have a remarkable impact on these children’s lives both now and in the future,” she said.

Rebecca Moore, foster care recruiter, said a number of local churches have partnered with Miracle Hill to create meaningful foster care ministries, and many more are needed.

“The whole church can be involved—not just those called to become foster parents—whether by providing meals for foster families, volunteering at a children’s shelter, or going out that first night to shop for diapers and pajamas for a family who is getting a new foster child,” Moore said “We come in and help a church to craft a program to include all of their members, to show how they can wrap around them in support and prayer. There’s something for everybody.”

For more information about foster care, visit www.miraclehill.org, or contact Sharon Betts at 864-878-9987 or sbetts@miraclehill.org.