

# NAFA News

A Resource and Support Group for Your Adoptive Family

A bi-monthly publication of Northwest Adoptive Families Association,  
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## Volunteer Help Paints a Brighter Picture

The last issue of NAFA News told the story and current plight of Rebekah Adams and her family. NAFA members were asked to step up to help one of our own. Rebekah Adams has been waging a valiant fight against cancer. That's saying a lot for a three-year old. Watching her fighting the side effects of the radiation and chemotherapy treatments as well as the cancer itself has been heart-wrenching for her parents. Adding

to those worries have been the ordeals of just day-to-day living. Maintaining house and yard, fixing meals, securing childcare for baby Sarah while Rebekah makes rounds at various clinics, finding time to run errands, and all the other little things they never thought twice about before have added more challenges. On top of those worries are financial ones. In September, the Adams' medical insurance ran out. Last issue's news article was a rallying cry to NAFA families to lend a hand wherever possible. Happily several families have done just that, pitching in with simple chores, seeing to one-year-old Sarah, and donating much-needed monetary contributions.

One need was to help finish the playroom that Rebekah's dad, Scott, had started just prior to the cancer diagnosis that turned their world upside down. Volunteers had helped here and there. The wiring was done. The dry-wall was finally up. Now all that stood

in front of the room being used was a fresh coat of paint. Plain white would do. In stepped NAFA member Annika Abel of SW Portland. After reading the news article she decided to find a way to help. Being the mother of two little ones she knew that helping care for Sarah at the hospital while Rebekah received treatments was not going to work, but she could find some time to paint.

Annika visited the web site

([www.HelpRebekah.com](http://www.HelpRebekah.com)) and read about Rebekah and her family. Then she contacted Scott.

"I was a little unsure about contacting people I'd never met but I figured lots of other NAFA families would be doing the same so I sent an email."

On September 4, 2005 Annika met Scott and Frances Adams for the first time when she showed up to paint. Not only did she come with brush in hand, she brought additional volunteer helpers, Nolan and Catherine Johnson, her neighbors. Rebekah's story struck a common chord for Annika and the Johnsons.

"My friend, Catherine is battling breast cancer," Annika shared. "So when I said I was going to paint a playroom for a little girl with cancer she understood and wanted to help as well."

The three helped paint the ceiling and the walls on that day. Then Nolan

returned later that week to do some touch-up and deliver groceries Annika had picked up.

Annika was not satisfied with plain, white walls. She wanted to give a spark of life to the room, so she colored in trees, rabbits, squirrels and butterflies. The new playroom enchants Rebekah. Though walking is now hard for her, Rebekah has repeatedly insisted on returning to the room just to check it



Annika Abel adds a touch of fun to Rebekah's playroom.



Rebekah Adams and her mother, Frances, declare the mural "Way cool!"

out. Scott wrote the following account in their weblog.

"Rebekah just kind of slid off the couch and started crawling towards the new room saying she wanted to go in there. Mommy and Daddy were able to help her walk and she was fascinated with the trees and animals Annika painted. Rebekah kept walking along the wall where everything is painted and pointing and making sounds we couldn't quite determine. She noticed

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# Helping Rebekah

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right off that one tree had a squirrel in it and the other one didn't. She also noticed the butterflies were different colors... **she loves it.** As soon as she helped us close the doors she wanted back in. She knows it is her room! **Way cool!**"

"I can't begin to tell you how good it felt to read Rebekah's blog and see pictures of her in the room and 'hear' how happy she is to see the animals on the wall," said a delighted Annika.

"To be able to give a little joy to a child who has been through as much as Rebekah has is one of the most rewarding things I've ever done. It made me feel better to be able to do something concrete for someone after reading about the hurricane. I couldn't build a house for someone on the Gulf Coast but I could help a local family."

"The Adams are great people. They somehow manage to maintain a sense of humor. It is hard for them to be on the receiving end as they are used to being the ones who do the giving."

It's easy to help, she explains. It doesn't have to be a large donation of time or money, just a little caring difference. Drop a grocery store gift card in the mail. Pick up an extra box of diapers at Costco and drop it by the house. Take them a meal. One week have your cleaning service go to their house instead of yours. Spend an hour doing some yardwork. Go to their website and buy a "Reach the Day" cancer bracelet. Small gestures make a huge difference.

"All of the little day-to-day errands and chores take time away from their kids," Annika explained. "Those 'must-dos' cut into the few hours of sleep they are able to sneak in at night."

We are all lucky to have wonderful families and Scott has given so much of his time to support the adoption community.

As Annika put it, "We owe a lot to people like Scott and this is a great way to show our appreciation and give a little girl and her family a brighter outlook."

**Please visit:**  
**[www.HelpRebekah.com](http://www.HelpRebekah.com)**  
to find out how Rebekah is  
doing and how you can help!