

# 20 Kids in Search of Homes

By JOHN DASH

Joseph and Mary Anne Badamy have been married seven years and are pretty proud of their younger children and their 11-year-old Joey.

Kenneth and Geraldine Bergen are proud of a ten-year marriage that has given them 17-year-old Caroline and 13-year-old Joseph.

Both couples are foster parents.

Last year, the Badamys responded to a Courier-Journal advertisement for someone to love, house and help an older boy who had been left in institutional care by his mother. Mama left town for a year.

The Bergens opened their hearts 10 years ago as both foster parents and adoptive parents.

And while the stories that grow out of the shared lives of these families aren't all sweetness and light, they are full of unusual and special rewards.

The Bergens' Joey is a Boy Scout, an achievement that makes Mrs. Bergen "so proud I glow all over." Joey is also a member of another international group, the Little People.

When Joey first went to a Little People meeting, Mrs. Bergen recalls, he looked under the table and shouted, "Mommy, their feet don't touch either." Joey is a dwarf.

After sailing through some rocky weather, the Bergens' Caroline has "become a different girl, a beautiful and intelligent girl," who is heading for college after high school graduation this June.

The Badamys' Joey is working his way through a recent meeting with his natural mother, whom he thought was dead, and has excellent prospects ahead.

Neither Caroline nor the two Joeys would have stood much of a chance in today's world if it weren't for their foster parents. Miss Catherine Wobus, casework director for the Catholic Family Center, acknowledges.

"Foster parents love, guide and provide 24-hour care: 365 days a year in their own home to homeless children. The natural parents of these children are unable to nurture and supervise them because of physical, mental illness or social problems. In other situations the child's behavior or limitations are beyond the natural parents' ability to cope," Miss Wobus said.

The Monroe County Department of Social Services is the largest provider of foster care in the immediate Rochester community and the Catholic Family Center is the largest private agency providing foster care service, she said.

Mrs. Diane Lenzo, a caseworker at CFC, estimates that there are about 20 children in need of foster homes. These children are troubled adolescent boys and girls, emotionally disturbed school age children and retard-

## Is There Room In Your Heart?

Scott, a bright, healthy 10-year-old boy with an appealing personality is now ready to develop a close relationship with foster parents. His last two years at a local children's institution have helped him in this preparation.

Scott, like most boys his age, enjoys making model cars, planes and, during the summer, fishing.

For more information about Scott and his need for a foster home call Mrs. Diane Lenzo at the Catholic Family Center (716) 454-7220 or Miss Mary Lou Miller at the Monroe County Department of Social Services (716) 422-4000, extension 2409.

ted and physically handicapped children of all races.

Both the county and Catholic agency are able to give expert counseling services to both the foster child and the foster parents and provide for board, clothing and medical care.

Foster parents have also or-

ganized a mutual support group. Any couple interested in learning more about foster homes for these special children are invited to call Mrs. Lenzo at (716) 546-7220 or Miss Mary Lou Miller of the Monroe County Department of Social Services (716) 422-4000 extension 2409.

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