



# The Cog

Rotary Club No. 3503  
P. O. Box 544,  
St. Marys, OH 45885.  
[www.stmarysrotary.org](http://www.stmarysrotary.org)  
June 15, 2016

### Call to Order

President Kathy Sampson opened the meeting and Alex Pittman offered the invocation. The Club then recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

### Guests / Song / Birthdays

Guests included Visiting Rotarian Bob Ruehl and Jan Heinrich

Kraig Noble led the Club in the singing of "Wait Till the Sun Shines Nellie". There were no birthdays.

### Happy Dollars / Fines

Happy dollars for this week came from Kathy Sampson, Ellen Hunter, Bill Maki, Kraig Noble, Linda Haines, Bev Wilker, Tami Sanford, Gary Newton, Frank Klatt, Rita Hilty, Dan Burke, Jim Heinrich and Bob Ruehl.

### Announcements / Presentations

- Annual Banquet June 30. Please RSVP

### Program

By **MIKE BURKHOLDER** (edited for space)

ST. MARYS — A local woman says she and her husband will continue to fight to bring home a toddler they had in their care since she was a newborn while calling attention to what they feel are flaws in the foster care and adoption system.

Kelly Anderson, of Celina, visited the St. Marys Rotary Club on Wednesday and spoke about her experience serving as a foster parent with her husband Brian. The two have three biological children and have adopted four other children. They also have served as certified foster parents with Allen County Children Services. "As we all know, sadly, heroin and cocaine are on the rise," Anderson said. "Children are flooding into the foster care system."

After adopting a boy from South Korea, the Andersons became foster parents to a 3-year-old boy. The boy lived in 13 homes in less than four years before the Andersons took him into their home. The Andersons ended up adopting him. As the adoption process was ongoing, the Andersons received a call regarding the boy. Anderson said Allen County Children Services officials told them the family wanted to take custody of the boy. "Our hearts just sank," Anderson said. "We just could not believe what was happening because we were told over and over and over and over again that we were allowed to adopt him." The Andersons hired an attorney in order to fight to keep the boy.

"We won that case," Anderson said. "He's thriving and he's doing great."



"We were discouraged and pretty disgusted with the system. We understand there are laws and we understand there are rules. What we learned as foster parents is that there is so much stuff hidden, so much that's covered up. Children services really doesn't answer to anyone. They try to get you to not talk about the truth of foster care and they hide behind everything is confidential ... Brian and I really decided we couldn't continue to work for an agency that we didn't feel was truly advocating for children. So we said we were done."

On Aug. 7, 2014, the Andersons received a phone call from Allen County Children Services again pleading with the couple to take in a 13-day-old girl for a few days. Those few days turned into months. "We really thought we were done," Anderson said. The first night with Maddy was spent in the hospital so she could receive the care she needed. The Andersons brought Maddy home and those few days turned into months. Anderson said she was cautious against becoming too attached to Maddy given their previous experience. However, she said Allen

County Children Services assured her that would not be the case.

"They said you don't have to worry about it," Anderson said. "So we decided we would press on and continue to care for Maddy." In November, Allen County Children Services notified the Andersons they were going to initiate visits with Maddy's relative. The call caught the Andersons off guard. Officials also told the Andersons if the visits went well, they were going to place Maddy with a family member.

The Andersons hired attorneys in Celina, Lima and Columbus to fight the decision to remove Maddy from their home. Anderson said while Maddy was visiting with the family member on the weekends, she would come home crying and screaming. Currently the Andersons are awaiting a decision from the Ohio Supreme Court regarding Maddy's adoption. No timeline has been released regarding the court's decision. As they wait, the Andersons continue to bring Maddy's birth mother to Indiana for weekly supervised visits. However, the Andersons have been denied visitation with Maddy.

### Upcoming Greeters

6/22/16 Rick Green

### Upcoming Programs

6/22/16 District Governor,  
Gary Newton  
6/29/16 No Meeting  
6/30/16 Annual Banquet

### Queen of Hearts

Gayle Masonbrink's ticket was drawn, but the Queen lives on.

The meeting was adjourned after recitation of the "Four Way Test".