



Dan Reigada, for FLORIDA TODAY

Working his plan. Chief Elder Charles Ford Walker, of Apostolic Ministries, Inc., explains his plans to break the cycle of destruction and victimization of children by opening the congregation's facilities for classes about foster parenting.

Titusville church answers call for foster parent training

BY FLORA REIGADA
FOR FLORIDA TODAY

Last September, when the Titusville offices of the Department of Children and Families sustained major damage during Hurricane Jeanne, the lives of many foster children were put on hold.

In North Brevard, there was no place for the department to hold meetings and classes for prospective foster parents.

That's when the Apostolic Ministries of America, Inc., also known as The Church of the Lord Jesus Christ of the Apostolic Faith, made its facilities available.

"It coincides with our 10-point program to save children of the community and of the world from destruction and victimization, said chief elder Charles Ford Walker. "That cycle needs to be broken. Our intent is to present a plan that will work for all children."

Walker spoke about the need for the restoration of traditional social institutions that were established for the care of children. He also mentioned the need for

parents and guardians to qualify as individuals committed to children's safety.

"Qualification must come through training. This is in accordance with the laws of the land, and spiritual laws that are set in place," he said.

Through a series of classes held each Saturday from 11:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m., this process has begun at Apostolic Ministries.

The classes are being taught by Joanie Johansen, a program manager for Intervention Services, a licensed, nonprofit agency specializing in therapeutic foster care.

"The classes, which run nine to 10 weeks, are mandatory for prospective foster parents, Tucci said. "They are called the Model Approach to Partnership in Parenting, or MAPP for short.

"The classes help applicants make informed decisions about fostering or adopting. Applicants learn about the unique needs of foster children, who often have experienced trauma," Tucci said.

Tucci also holds a more infor-

mal orientation hour-long presentation once a month in North, Central and South Brevard.

"Orientation is open to anyone in the community who would like to know more about foster care, and what a wonderful contribution foster care parents make," she said. "They accept a stranger into their homes and treat that child as if he or she were their own. That is the key to being a good foster parent."

Both the orientation and classes fit in with the 10-point plan of Walker and his congregation. It is a hands-on approach through which they reach out to the children of the community by opening the doors of their church and their homes.

"Ninety-eight percent of our members could become qualified foster parents," Walker said. "We also try to recruit people outside our church in the effort."

The Apostolic Ministries of America, Inc. is located at 1422 Norwood Ave., Titusville.

For more information about the classes, orientation or foster parenting, call Rose Tucci at 652-4354. ■