



Part of the
Catholic Charities of St. Louis Family

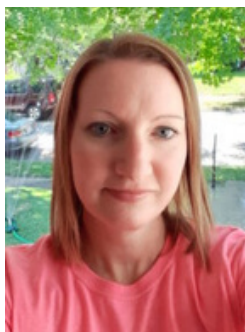
Shepherd's Watch Summer 2022



Specialized Adoption Program: A New Way to Create New Families

There's a thrilling and breathless moment when a child and a family meet for the first time, especially when they've been longing and praying to find one another. It's the joy that comes with a perfect match and knowing their prayers have been answered.

As an agency with a focus on connecting children with families, Good Shepherd is always looking for innovative ways to fulfill this mission. Christina Robb has been a critical part of our team for 10 years and recently transitioned into a position within our Adoption Program. She will utilize her years of experience to help children exit the foster care system and find forever homes through our Specialized Adoption Program. Here, she shares her thoughts:



Christina Robb

What is Specialized Adoption?

This program was created with two purposes: 1) To help children who are languishing in the foster care system find permanent homes, and 2) Create and grow families by matching them with a child and walking alongside them through the adoption process. Good

Shepherd has expertise in both adoption and foster care; we're perfectly suited to help fill this need.

Why is this service needed?

When a child is removed from their home and placed in foster care, many times it is due to instances of child abuse and/or neglect. The foster care system is set up to assign them a case worker, address their immediate needs, and get them into homes where they are safe.

Foster care case workers are at capacity taking care of the daily challenges as well as finding solutions to ensure the children are safe and have a place to heal. Good Shepherd's Specialized Adoption program is for children who are unable to return home, making it a priority to reduce the time the child is in the foster care system and the trauma that is often associated with that experience.

How will you make a difference?

Over 12,000 children entered the foster care system in Missouri last year. Good Shepherd decided to look at the bigger picture. We know there are moms and dads out there who have the desire to grow their families through adoption and kids who have the desire to be in a stable, loving home. We're here, we know the system, and Good Shepherd is giving me the ability to help make these matches happen. It's work that's not being done, like this, anywhere else in Missouri.

Continued...

...Continued from page 1

What is the Specialized Adoption process like?

We'll do home studies just like we have for foster care, but we're developing these families specifically for adoption. They create profiles to introduce themselves to others. We do searches for potential matches with children. I'll be there with them throughout, providing support before, during, and after a match to help ensure things go as smoothly as possible.

Is there a typical type of family you work with?

Specialized Adoption families tend to fall into two categories: those who don't have children and are looking to grow their family through adoption and those who have kids and feel called to welcome another child into their home. In both cases, we make sure they're realistic about what we offer. We work with kids who are around 6-12 years old, sometimes they are groups of siblings, sometimes they have special needs.

And what do you hear from children who may be adopted?

The first thing they almost always ask is, "Will I have my own room?" The questions they have are sweet. They wonder what their new brothers and sisters are like, what their parents are like. But they always want to be wanted. It's a new feeling for them when a family expresses and shows them that.

How does Specialized Adoption fit into the Good Shepherd Mission?

Good Shepherd has been a leader in Adoption and Foster Care work for more than 100 years. We are combining our expertise in these programs and collaborating with our Treatment Foster Care team to provide proper training, education, therapy, and crisis intervention services to families.

.....
"Children always want to be wanted. It's a new feeling for them when an adoptive family expresses and shows them that."

- Christina Robb

We pride ourselves on high-quality, comprehensive, steadfast services, which are incorporated into our Specialized Adoption program. Our agency goal is to surpass 60 adoptions per year by the end of 2025; this program will be an important part of reaching that milestone. We're creating more families in our community and helping these amazing kids heal and thrive.

Why did you choose to help create the Specialized Adoption program?

There's nothing worse than seeing a kid who's been in foster care for years. It seems so unnecessary for them to be left waiting when we know there are families for them. I'm excited for Good Shepherd to be a part of their healing process.

The Good Shepherd Mission
In response to the call of Jesus Christ, the Good Shepherd, to help those in need, we connect children with families and keep families connected.



With your support, Good Shepherd is able to connect children with families and keep families connected. Scan this QR code to make a donation and immediately support life-changing programs like Specialized Adoption. Thank you for being part of our mission.