

# Foster parents fulfill children's special needs

By Lisa Nutting  
Daily Nebraskan Staff Reporter

When Lee and Norma Baler of Holland, Neb., agreed to take 3-year-old Johnny into their foster home nearly three years ago, they never imagined that one day they would be adopting him.

Johnny went into foster care when hospital reports showed he had been repeatedly and severely abused. Doctors concluded he was a multi-handicapped child. Now, three years later, 6-year-old Johnny looks and acts like any other 6-year-old. And he is equally curious.

November is national adoption month. This week, Nov. 18 to 24, has been set aside as "Adoptive Family Week," by Gov. Bob Kerrey, in order to honor the hundreds of Nebraska families who have adopted children — especially special needs children.

Special needs children are those who may have physical or mental limitations, who may be members of a minority group, or those who are a little older. The need for families to help these children is continuous.

To date, the Balers have fostered 41 children. They adopted Michelle eight years ago and are in the process of adopting Johnny. They have three "natural birth" children who are grown and on their own. Three foster children, Brenda, Cheri and Stacey currently live with the Balers.

When Johnny came to the Balers, he was quite a different little boy, the Balers explained. Because he was an abused child, he was always defensive. Whenever he was corrected, he was ready to fight back, Lee says.

"He wasn't used to being corrected without abuse," Lee says. "It was hard for him to understand nonviolence."

Often Johnny would pull his fist back, ready to protect himself. And many times when he became frustrated, he would hit, kick and scream at the Balers.

But now, things are better for Johnny — and the Balers.

"It was a long hurdle, but we think he has come a long way," Norma says.

Although Johnny does have some problems — the right side of his body is not as quick as his left because of minor brain damage, and he has trouble learning — the Balers say they have a lot of hope for him. His school has "just been thrilled by his progress," Norma says. Johnny will begin occupational therapy to help overcome some of his physical limitations.

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Michelle Baler was adopted eight years ago, but has been their foster child since she was three months old. When the Balers took Michelle into their foster home, she was a ward of the state and was considered "unadoptable." Michelle has Spina Bifida and is paralyzed from waist down.

Through Nebraska's subsidized adoption plan, the Balers were able to adopt Michelle. The adoption plan provides for Michelle's health and care costs, which the Balers could not afford on their own.

Michelle's natural family was poor when she was born. Because the costs of raising a child with special needs are so high, Michelle's mother had to give her up. Michelle also knows that she has two brothers and a sister. She knows that her natural father is a redhead and that he played in a band. The Balers say they give her the best knowledge of her background to ease her mind.

"This shows Michelle that her mother didn't not love her," Lee says, "but she realized it was a lot more than she could handle."

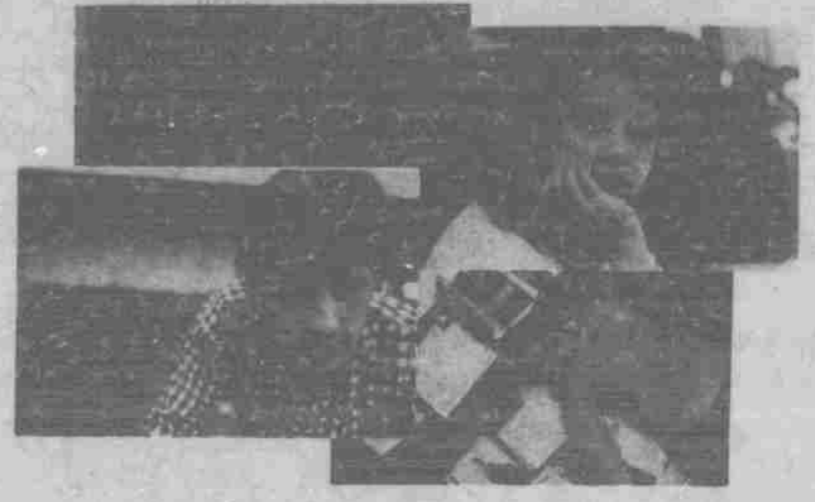
And when the day comes that Johnny asks about his past, they say they plan to be open with him.

"We want him to know his past — good or bad," Lee says.

The Balers don't plan to adopt any more children after Johnny. They think they'd like to slow down on fostering children.

"But dog-gone — that phone rings and we just can't say no," says Norma. "There's a need. And it's so hard not to fulfill that need."

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We're looking for a few good people to help us put out our high-quality newspaper. As one of our staffers put it, the DN isn't just an adventure . . . it's a job. And that's where you come in!

The Daily Nebraskan needs staffers for the spring semester.

Editor positions are open in all departments: news, editorial, sports, arts and entertainment, photography, copy desk, art and special supplements. We'll also be hiring four senior reporters and several editorial columnists. Applications are available in room 34 of the Nebraska Union, and will be accepted beginning November 20 through the 29th. Please sign up for an interview when you pick up your application.

Reporters, copy editors, artists, and photographers will be hired at a future date.

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## Daily Nebraskan

Nebraska Union, Room 34 472-2588

## Cold winter weather changes local farmers into repairmen

By Dan Stehlik  
Daily Nebraskan Staff Reporter

"The north wind doth blow and we shall have snow and what will the robin do then?"

According to some local farming experts, many Nebraska farmers are asking themselves that question.

With harvest finished and the weather dry, many area farmers are repairing and building pipelines, field lanes, drainage channels and fences, the experts say.

Others are plowing fields and installing terraces and other conservation improvements.

Several farmers are putting up temporary fences to pasture their field stubble and some are using the time to apply fertilizer to their fields.

In spite of all this activity, some days remind farmers of the approaching winter.

For livestock producers this means

making feed, water and shelter available for their animals.

Because water is essential for livestock and susceptible to freezing, tank heaters, water pumps and pipes must be serviced.

With shorter daylight hours, experts say, lights in buildings and on feeding and snow-removal equipment need to be checked. The machinery also must be winterized.

For farmers with a lot of field equipment, winter provides a good opportunity for a lot of shop activity.

As the cold weather drives more farmers indoors, the opportunity to study management decisions becomes available. Many farmers will close out books and prepare tax estimates. Others will do enterprise summaries.

By doing the off-season work early, like the early bird getting the worm, these farmers can get off to a successful start next year.

## Police Report

The following incidents were reported to UNL police between 12:15 a.m. and 9:03 Sunday.

12:15 a.m. — Loud music reported at 425 University Terrace. Noise had subsided when officers arrived.

12:52 a.m. — Noise disturbance reported at Selleck Quadrangle. Noise had quieted when officers arrived.

1:33 a.m. — Persons reported tampering with the emergency phone at Parking Area 3 near 14th and New Hampshire streets. Persons had left when officers arrived.

1:41 a.m. — Windows reported broken at Selleck Quadrangle.

1:51 a.m. — Fire alarm reported sounding at Nebraska Union.

2:12 a.m. — Disturbance reported in the metered lot near Nebraska Union.

2:57 a.m. — Accident reported at 16th and West streets. A car reportedly hit a pole. No injuries were reported.

3:23 a.m. — Gasoline reported stolen from a vehicle in Parking Area 1 near 17th and Q streets.

9:14 a.m. — Window reported broken and items reported stolen from a vehicle in Parking Area 2 at 1640 Y St.

9:17 a.m. — Broken window and alleged entry reported into a vehicle in Parking Area 2 at 1640 Y St. Nothing reported missing.

9:23 a.m. — Broken window and alleged entry reported into a vehicle in Parking Area 2 at 1640 Y St. Nothing reported missing.

11:44 a.m. — Alleged entry and attempted theft from a vehicle reported in Parking Area 2 at 1640 Y St.

6:49 p.m. — Disturbance allegedly caused by juveniles reported at Temple Building.

**TUESDAY**

**UNIVERSITY I.D. CARD**

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*Diann Tugo T'Stooges*

10 PM  
Soo's Bull-A-Brew Contest

11 PM  
Union Tap-Fu-Juan Contest

12 AM  
50¢ 1st Place Prize  
125 2nd Place Prize  
50¢ Soo's Drags  
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