

May 2, 1997

To Whom It May Concern,

I have just retired from working with children in institutional settings for 39 years. My last position was with Bethel Bible Village, a children's home in Chattanooga, Tennessee. I was Executive Director for 26 years and Chancellor for 6 years - a total of 32 years.

Our organization had Mark Durham's 3 children for a number of years to give Mark time to get back on his feet. As administrator, I only had limited contact with Mark and occasionally visited in his home in Illinois after the children were returned to him.

He is a father who cares deeply for his children and is truly committed to them. He has always sought to keep them together. This evidence of commitment is much more common for the mother's of our children, but rarely found in our fathers, if you can even find them.

Mark has learned a lot of lessons the hard way, but he's learning and is making steady progress. He's a hard worker and whatever he does he does it to the best of his ability. As a single father, he has been kept very busy providing for his family. I have told him I think he's a 'workaholic' and if possible needs to spend more time with his children. However, as a single parent he is caught between a rock and a hard place.

One of the greatest social problems we face in America today is the fatherless home. By the year 2000 50% of our children will not be living with their natural fathers. This exodus of the father is probably the leading cause of the declining well being of children and their mothers in our society today.

Fortunately here we have a father who wants to take responsibility for his child. I hope that he will be given that opportunity.

Sincerely yours,



Ike Keay
Author CHILD OF PAIN CHILDREN OF JOY

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