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## His mission: Healthy food for babies in homeless shelters The Boston Globe

By Megan Woolhouse, Globe Staff | October 1, 2006

Dozens of foster children have passed through the Levine home in Shrewsbury, sometimes twice, and each of their stories affected 17-year-old Dan Levine.

Levine saw kids with broken bones. He listened to others tell tales of abuse. For them, he could offer little more than sympathy. But when it came to the babies who had been raised on junk food, he thought he could make a difference.

“People in general need to realize that life is pretty good if you can feed your kid Gerber food,” he said, “that you’re fortunate.”

Levine has launched the Massachusetts Children’s Fund to collect baby food and distribute it at shelters in Worcester County. His parents, recently named foster parents of the year by the state’s Department of Social Services, helped him recruit an advisory board that includes DSS Commissioner Harry Spence.

“There’s a generosity gene in this family,” said Spence, who got to know the Levines at a benefit concert they organized to reunite siblings in foster care.

The Levines provide emergency care for foster babies while DSS determines their future. Dan Levine’s mother, Jamie, visited a Worcester shelter last year to check up on one of the babies and learned that the shelter had nothing more than dry baby food and formula -- no cooked and mashed vegetables or fruit -- and that young mothers often fed their young children french fries and diced hot dogs.

The family discussed the situation around the dinner table that night and Dan Levine said he was appalled. “Chopped hot dogs and mashed french fries? Ugh!” he recalled thinking.

He suggested organizing a food drive -- something the family had done many times before. But his father said there were drawbacks.

“I said if you want to do it, then do it, but a food drive is a one-time

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