



STEERING COMMITTEE

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Rosemary Hyde

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Judi-anne Simmons

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Eric del Rosario

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Joe Kelly

Three Young Men and a Baby: How Your Support of FCP is Making a Difference

Although the more serious effects of Covid-19 appear to be better controlled, the negative economic impact of soaring gas, rent, and grocery store prices continues to make itself felt. Many of our youth and families find themselves locked in an ongoing struggle to pay bills, put food on the table, and obtain basic necessities. When urgent needs arise, our “adopted” Department of Children and Family (DCFS) caseworkers—Thomas Nolan, Ruth Lee, Sylvia Cortez, and Nirvana Castenada—reach out to Foster Care Project on behalf of their clients. We, in turn, reach out to you, our FCP donors and volunteers.

In the paragraphs below, we highlight four individuals—Michael, Damyan, Anthony, and JJ-- who have benefited from your support and caring. Now more than ever, your donor dollars and tangible donation items are making a difference in people’s lives.



Photo: Thomas Nolan

Michael, 20, is living in his own apartment and working as a barista in a cafe. When Michael needed help stocking his kitchen, FCP was able to provide pots and pans, silverware, glasses, and dishes. When DCFS caseworker Thomas Nolan dropped off the supplies, Michael was eager to practice his cooking skills. And he didn’t waste any time. Within minutes he whipped up a delectable batch of tamales.

Hats off to Michael!

Master chef: Michael uses his new cookware to whip up a batch of tamales.

Mission Statement

All Saints Church Foster Care Project provides community education, public policy/advocacy and direct services for children and youth who have been removed from the care of their parents to the supervision of the state. The Project recruits and sustains volunteers who serve in public and private agencies or work on special projects designed to enhance the lives of foster, homeless, transitional and incarcerated children and youth.

“None of us can help everyone. But all of us can help someone.”

—Max Lucado

Three Young Men and a Baby (cont.)

Damyan, 20, has started school at Pierce College in their automotive program. This young man loves cars! Taking this educational step has already helped him feel happier and more fulfilled about his life and goals. When Damyan reported that a grip of tools was needed for class, FCP's Rosemary Hyde sprang into action. Using donor dollars, Rosemary purchased safety goggles, wrenches, pliers, and screwdrivers—as well as a toolbox in which to store everything. Damyan was “super thankful” for the donations and referred to Rosemary as a “GOAT”--Greatest Of All Time.

Anthony, 18, graduated from high school in June. DCFS caseworker Sylvia Cortez describes him as “an excellent kid who got all straight A's.” Anthony was accepted at a college in Utah where he is majoring in computer science. Our team was able to provide a backpack, school supplies, towels, and bedding. One additional purchase--luggage—helped him travel in style. We wish Anthony every success.

JJ, 2½, is an active toddler who loves blowing bubbles, splashing in the wading pool, listening to stories, and making new friends at preschool. Her mom, Evelin, who was in foster care as a teen, is committed to making a better life for herself and her daughter. Evelin has an apartment and attends college at UC Merced, where she is interested in science and medicine. Occasional care packages of diapers, clothing, and gift cards help offset some of Evelin's expenses and let her know we're rooting for her and JJ.



Photo: Thomas Nolan

Nailing his classes: Damyan now has the tools he needs to help him succeed in his automotive program.



Photo by Anne Riffenburgh

Toddler at Play: a little water and a few pots and pans—Ms. JJ makes magic!

Foster Care Project: What We Do

The Foster Care Project (FCP) provides opportunities for donors and volunteers to offer support and resources to foster families and children/youth in foster care. Our donors step up year-round, helping to supply gifts and gift cards for Valentine Baskets, Easter Baskets, the Summer Backpack Program, the Back-to-School Shopping Spree, and Thanksgiving Baskets. In addition, donated monies are used to purchase groceries, clothing, and hygiene items on a monthly basis. FCP partners with local agencies to connect volunteers with meaningful opportunities to mentor foster children and transitioning youth, monitor families in the reunification process, participate in one-time events, and learn about becoming a foster parent.

“For more information on how you can get involved with FCP, please contact inbox@fostercare.org or visit our website at fostercareproject.org.

FCP Summer Stats

Our FCP team stays busy meeting the requests of our “adopted” DCFS caseworkers—especially during the high-demand season of summer--and this year was no exception. As our children and youth prepared to return to school, their parents and guardians geared up for the challenging task of providing backpacks, school supplies, new clothes, shoes, uniforms, and more—on top of managing regular needs and living expenses. Stressful? Yup. Expensive? You bet. But with support from our Foster Care Project donors, our team was there to help. Here are the statistics for our third quarter of activity, which includes July, August, and September:

- 98:** Number of fully packed backpacks, plus several bags and boxes of extra school supplies.
- 20:** Number of children and youth who each received a \$200 Target gift card for new clothes and shoes as part of our Back-to-School Shopping Spree.
- 16:** Additional clothing items/outfits.
- 3:** Additional pairs of shoes and sandals.
- 27:** Hygiene bags for children and youth (containing shampoo, conditioner, toothpaste, toothbrushes, body wash, deodorant, and more).
- 2:** Pieces of luggage for a young man going to college out of state.
- 17:** Bags of groceries.
- 24:** Household items (pillows, bedding, pots and pans, kitchen supplies).
- 13:** Pieces of furniture, including two twin beds, two nightstands, a table and four chairs, a dresser and more to help a young father make his apartment safe and comfortable for himself and his young daughter.
- 22:** Number of handmade baby blankets for infants and toddlers.

As you can see, the list is long and varied. Every donated item was very much appreciated. Many thanks to our amazing FCP supporters for bringing joy and tangible help to our young people and families. We count on you, and you always come through!



Photo: Thomas Nolan

Happy surprises: Donated household items are useful and make a house or apartment feel more like home.



Photo by Anne Riffenburgh

Quilty Pleasures: Patsy Robeck with two of the many handmade blankets she has donated for infants and toddlers.

“Thank you so much for the new clothes and shoes! I appreciate it so much!” -Trinity

“Thank you so much for the new clothes.”
-Angelina

“Thank you so much for the wonderful work and kind donations. The youth have so much because of your love and kindness.”
-Thomas Nolan, MSW, DCFS social worker

FCP Welcomes a New Member to the Steering Committee

Meet Margaret Henry

Foster Care Project is pleased to welcome Margaret (Peggy) Henry to the Steering Committee. From 2001 until her retirement in 2018, Peggy was a Los Angeles Superior Court Judge, serving primarily in Juvenile Dependency, which has jurisdiction over abused and neglected kids -- the state's foster care system -- and as Supervising Judge for ten years. With a strong emphasis on child advocacy and social justice, her judicial accomplishments are numerous and noteworthy. Highlights of her work include:

- Spearheading expansion of Edelman Children's Court as a community center with services to families to help speed return of children to parents or relatives, including a Grandparents as Parents program, DNA testing for paternity, and a Department of Public Social Services office to assist with signups for Covered California health insurance.
- Improving parent representation in the Dependency Court with creation of the Los Angeles Dependency Lawyers to represent parents in the Dependency Court; chairing the Torts Committee of the court, which helped ensure that children received money to which they were entitled; and improving access to pediatric dental care.
- Establishing and chairing the Funding and Benefits Committee to help resolve issues between advocacy groups and the Department of Children and Family Services and to educate judicial officers and attorneys on funding issues affecting children and families.
- Creating and overseeing implementation of a geographic system of assigning cases to courtrooms to improve courtroom knowledge and coordination of services to children, their families, and caretakers, as well as to enable the creation of drug courts.



Photo by Anne Riffenburgh

- Proposing and presiding over the 18 & Up Court which handles the cases of virtually all youth in L.A. County who are in extended foster care between ages 18 and 21. The court was created to assist youth in receiving the benefits to which they are entitled. With approximately 2,500 youth on this caseload, the consolidation of these cases in one courtroom has resulted in increased services for the youth, as well as more efficiency and consistency in their treatment for better outcomes.

Peggy is married to Conway Collis. The couple has two adult children, Rocky and Luke Collis. Peggy retired from the bench to become a “granny nanny” to her grandson Chase. Now that he is 3 ½ and in preschool fulltime, Peggy has more time for volunteer projects. She and her husband are politically active, particularly with the Karen Bass for Los Angeles Mayor campaign.

We salute Peggy for her remarkable contributions, which have benefited the lives of so many. We look forward to her creative and enthusiastic participation in Foster Care Project, as we work together to improve the lives of foster, homeless, transitional, and incarcerated children and youth. Welcome!

FCP Hosts a Healthy Breakfast at My Friend's Place



Photo courtesy of My Friend's Place

BREAKFAST OF CHAMPIONS: Volunteers Elizabeth Emmanuelli, Celina Lew, Joan Manasjan, Art McDermott, Judi-anne Simmons, and Tom Dennis keep the breakfast sandwiches coming at My Friend's Place.

On September 30, members of Foster Care Project's steering committee and other FCP supporters hosted a delicious breakfast for young people at My Friend's Place, a comprehensive resource center in Hollywood that assists 1,000 homeless youth and their children each year. Tom Dennis, Art McDermott, Judi-anne Simmons, Joan Manasjan and Elizabeth Emmanuelli met up at Tom and Art's place the night before to get ready for the endeavor. For two and a half hours the group turned the apartment into a combination prep kitchen/assembly line as they put together a variety of breakfast sandwiches—for meat-eaters, vegetarians, even vegans.

Our FCP volunteers arrived at My Friend's Place at 9:00 a.m. the next day with 96 sandwiches in tow. FCP's Celina Lew joined them, and the group began setting up on the open-air patio. Over the course of the morning, 45-50 young adults were served, and leftover sandwiches were refrigerated for those arriving later or over the weekend. One young man asking for seconds, announced, "These are the bomb!"

We think our FCP volunteers are the bomb, too. Thanks to all who participated and extended a little TLC to these young people, along with a delicious, healthy breakfast.



My Friend's Place in Hollywood has been a partnering agency with All Saints Church Foster Care Project for 19 years. My Friend's Place offers a comprehensive range of services to 1,000 youth between the ages of 12 and 25, and their children, each year, who are experiencing homelessness and striving to attain wellness, stability, and self-sufficiency.

To learn how you can assist My Friend's Place, please contact: inbox@fostercareproject.org

Take Me Out to the Ballgame!

Many thanks to All Saints parishioners and FCP supporters who helped donate 65 tickets for foster youth and their caregivers to attend Episcopal Dodger Night at Dodger Stadium. On September 23, a large group of exhilarated children and youth, who reside in residential facilities at Sycamores and Five Acres, arrived at the stadium, eager to enjoy refreshments and root for their team.

Andrea Ledesma LMFT, a Five Acres manager, said, “These children are beside themselves with excitement.”

Alas, the Dodgers were not playing at full strength and lost the game to the Cardinals, 11 to 0. Ouch! Despite this defeat, fans of both teams were in for a treat, as they witnessed a spectacular achievement: Albert Pujols knocking one out of the park to become the fourth MLB player to hit 700 homeruns. Cue the pandemonium!



Photo by Janet Toohey

‘Cause it’s root-root-root for the Dodgers: True Blue fans -- Raymond and Billy.

In a thank you letter to FCP, Debra Manners, CEO of Sycamores, wrote, “We are so grateful for your efforts to make a fun activity available to Sycamores’ foster youth. Having exciting experiences, like an outing to Dodger Stadium to look forward to during the week, means a lot to the boys.”

A tip of the baseball cap from FCP to the generous donors who helped provide so much fun to these young people. You hit a homerun!

With a century of compassionate care behind them, Sycamores is a leading behavioral health and child welfare agency, creating life-changing programs and services which impact some of the most vulnerable children, young adults, adults and families in our community.

To learn how you can assist Sycamores, please contact: inbox@fostercareproject.org

Since their beginnings as an orphanage in downtown Los Angeles, Five Acres has been committed to strengthening children and families and empowering them within their communities. Now as one of the county’s oldest nonprofits, today Five Acres strives for permanency: a permanent, loving family for every child in their care.

To learn how you can assist Five Acres, please contact: inbox@fostercareproject.org

“A lot of people are waiting for Martin Luther King or Mahatma Gandhi to come back—but they are gone. We are it. It is up to us. It is up to you.”

--Marian Wright Edelman

Public Policy:

2022 A Good Year for Child Welfare in California

The year 2022 was a successful one for FCP's legislative advocacy. Six of the ten bills we supported were signed into law by Governor Newsom. One bill was vetoed, and the other three were held in committee in the legislature.

We focused attention on six issues:

- 1) racial disparity in removing children from their homes (Note: in Los Angeles County 23.6% of the children in foster care are Black compared to 9% of the population of the County. Black children remain longer in foster care and are less likely to leave foster care through reunification with their families, adoption, or legal guardianship. Forty percent of the children who age out of foster care are Black);
- 2) the rights of young people caught up in the juvenile justice system or facing suspension or expulsion from school;
- 3) housing for youth transitioning out of foster care;
- 4) funding for foster youth in community colleges;
- 5) Transparency of the use of funds allocated to the public schools to address the educational needs of "disadvantaged youth:" low income, English language learners and foster youth.
- 6) tax credits for employing a youth between the ages of 16 and 26 who spent time in foster care after the age of 13.

One of two bills addressing the issue of racial disparity, **AB 2665 (Carrillo) Child Welfare System: Racial Disparities**, was vetoed by the Governor. This bill would have established pilot programs for blind reviews to ensure that decisions to remove children from their homes would not be influenced by the gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, address, or income of the child's parents. Children's Law Center of California, which sponsored and lobbied for this bill, plans to support the bill in the 2022-2023 legislative session.

The other bill addressing racial disparity also focused upon the process by which children are removed from their homes. **AB 2085 (Holden) Crimes: Mandated Reporting** was signed into law by the Governor. This bill addresses the issue of racial disparities by revising the standards for mandated reporting. Most children in



Photo: Andre m - Own work, CC BY-SA 3.0

foster care are removed from their homes because of neglect rather than abuse. (Existing law defined general neglect as the negligent failure of a person having the care or custody of a child to provide adequate food, clothing, shelter, medical care, or supervision where no physical injury to the child has occurred.) This bill limits the definition of general neglect only to include circumstances where the child is at substantial risk of suffering serious physical harm or illness and provides that general neglect does not include a parent's economic disadvantage.

Three bills signed by the Governor established or ensured the rights of youth caught up in the juvenile justice system or of foster youth facing suspension or expulsion from school.

AB 2644 (Holden) Custodial Interrogation prohibits law enforcement officers from employing threats, physical harm, deception, or psychologically manipulative interrogation tactics during a custodial interrogation of a person 17 or younger. This bill would have originally applied to youth up to the age of 25 but was reduced to the age of 17 during the legislative process.

AB 2417 (Ting) Juveniles: Youth Bill of Rights makes the rights guaranteed to youth confined in a juvenile justice facility applicable to all confined youth, including county and city facilities, not just to youth confined in a facility of the Division of Juvenile Justice in the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation. The Youth Bill of Rights includes the right to live in a safe, healthy and clean environment conducive to treatment and rehabilitation; the right to contact attorneys, ombudspersons, and other advocates regarding conditions of confinement or violations of rights; and the right to receive a quality education.

AB 740 (McCarthy) Foster Youth: Suspension and Expulsion requires the minor’s attorney and the appropriate representative of the county child welfare agency to have the same rights a parent or guardian of a child has to receive suspension and expulsion documents and related information and to attend suspension and expulsion meetings and conferences.

The Committee is very pleased that two issues, for which they advocated over the past several years, were passed through the budget act.

AB 1615 (Ting) Foster Youth: Housing extends eligibility and priority for the program to help young adults who are 18 to 24 with priority given to young adults formerly or currently in the foster care system.

SB 885 (Laird) Community Colleges: Current and Former Foster Youth Support: Next Up removes the existing cap on the number of California Community College districts that can receive monies for NextUp, a support program for current and former foster youth, and gives the California Community Chancellor’s Office the flexibility to award monies to additional colleges as the funding amounts allow.

Unfortunately, **SB 3 (Portantino, Quirk-Silva) Education finance: Local Control and Accountability Plan Portal**, which we have advocated for since 2014, was held in legislative committees and did not reach the Governor’s desk. The bill sought to establish a method for reporting back to the community how local school districts actually spend the funds allocated for programs for “disadvantaged youth” (low income children, English language learners, and foster youth) as opposed to merely reporting how they plan to spend the monies.

“We want to thank our local legislators, Assemblymember Chris Holden and Senator Anthony Portantino, for their hard work on behalf of foster youth and youth caught up in the juvenile justice system,” said Jeanette Mann, Chair of the Public Policy Committee. “We very much appreciate the time they dedicate and the commitment they have made to issues facing children and youth who have been removed from custody of their parents to the custody of the state. Foster kids really are all of our kids.”

All Saints Church

**Foster
Care
Project**



*“Do your little bit of good where you are;
it’s those little bits of good put together
that overwhelm the world.”*

--Desmond Tutu

For Volunteer Opportunities
visit our website:
www.fostercareproject.org or email:
inbox@fostercareproject.org

Joe Kelly: Art/Design
Jeanette Mann: Writing/Editing
Anne Riffenburgh: Writing/Editing

Partnering Agencies

- 50/50 Leadership
- Alliance for Children’s Rights
- Aspire West, Pasadena
- Barrio Action Youth and Family Center
- Biddy Mason Charitable Foundation
- California Youth Connection
- Cal Tech Y
- CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocate)
- Children’s Law Center of California
- Children’s Law Center of California Fresh Outfitters
- County of Los Angeles Department of Children and Family Services
- County of Los Angeles Probation Department
- Cultural Brokers
- EOPS Resilient Scholars Program, California State University Northridge
- First United Methodist Church
- Five Acres
- FosterAll
- Friends of Foster Children
- Hathaway-Sycamores
- Hillsides
- Hillsides YMO
- Kidsave Los Angeles Weekend Miracles
- Learning Works Charter School/ Home Boys
- League of Women Voters
- My Friend’s Place
- National Congress of Black Women
- Optimist Youth Homes and Family Services
- National Congress of Black Women, Inc. San Gabriel Chapter
- Neighborhood United Universalist Church
- Pacific Clinics
- Public Counsel Law Center
- PUSD Math Power Hour
- Raise-A-Child, US
- Simply Friends
- STARS at PCC
- The Alliance for Children’s Rights
- Violence Intervention Program
- Vista Del Mar Child and Foster Care Program
- United Friends of the Children
- Young and Healthy