



All Saints Church Foster Care Project

Newsletter

All Saints Church

**Foster
Care
Project**



May 2016

FOSTER CARE PROJECT STEERING COMMITTEE

Gail Bardin

Jay Belloli

Nikoo Berenji

Nancy Dannevik

Patrice Gibson

Rosemary Hyde

Laurel Lambert

Celina Lew

Jeanette Mann

Kim Miles

Judi-anne Simmons

Anne Riffenburgh

Nicole Rodger

Lacreta Scott

Melanie Williams

Pamela Wilson

Anne Wolf

Trula Worthy-Clayton

Foster Kids are our Kids!

FCP GETS SUPPORT FROM THE NATIONAL CONGRESS OF BLACK WOMEN, INC., SAN GABRIEL CHAPTER FOR ITS BIRTHDAY CLUB

For over nine years, FCP has maintained a Birthday Club to supply gifts to Pasadena area foster youth who might not otherwise receive birthday gifts. As a new partnering agency, members of the NCBW San Gabriel Chapter are now giving five gifts a month to the club, and their junior group is making cards to go with the gifts. In addition, all children receiving these birthday gifts are sent Christmas gifts from the chapter.

Lorraine Cain, the recently retired manager of the Birthday Club for FCP, is thrilled to have the NCBW San Gabriel Valley Chapter participate in this program. "Recently, there has been a dramatic increase in the need for contributors. It's truly wonderful to establish this kind of partnership that helps take care of children who are most in need."

The National Congress of Black Women, Inc., San Gabriel Valley Chapter is a 501© non-profit organization dedicated to

the education, economic and cultural development of African American women, their families and the community, inclusive of all people. SGVC is the second chapter to charter in Southern California. It serves Pasadena and its surrounding areas in San Gabriel Valley. The NCBW is comprised of individuals in local and national chapters across the nation.

"NCBW is concerned about foster youth because these children are important to the future welfare of our country. We are happy to join FCP and show them that there are people out there who truly want to invest in their lives and well-being. It is the members' objective to demonstrate our chapter's mission to engage in community development with civic leaders to support initiatives and programs that improve the quality of life for all residents," says Judy Matthews, NCBW National Membership Chair and Founder and Chair of the San Gabriel Valley Chapter."

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.

PLEASE JOIN US FOR A FOSTER CARE/ADOPTION RECEPTION

Foster Care Project and its partnering agencies, Five Acres and RaiseAChild, will celebrate Foster Care Awareness Month on Sunday, May 22, with a reception for all those interested in learning more about the foster/adopt process. The reception will be in the Guild Room from noon – 1:00 p.m. Staff from Five Acres and RaiseAChild will be on hand to present a brief program, respond to questions, and help prospective parents take the first step toward becoming foster/adopt families. For further information: info@fostercareproject.org.



THE FOSTER CARE PROJECT'S 8TH ANNUAL ART Show, held last April 3rd in Sweetland Hall at All Saints Church, was once again a tremendous success.

8th ANNUAL

Art Show

The Art Show began in 2009 to celebrate and encourage the artistic efforts of foster youth, with students from five of our partnering agencies: Five Acres, Hillside, Hathaway-Sycamores, Maryvale and My Friend's Place.

An unprecedented number of young artists, forty-eight in all, presented their work this year. All of the art came from children within the foster care system and was available for purchase, with 100% of the proceeds going to the artists. Needless to say, the fact that total strangers wanted to purchase their work was very exciting to these young students.

Upon entering Sweetland Hall one was met with an onslaught of color and design, sculptures and paintings – and a buzz of excitement as the public circulated from piece to piece – deciding which one they might purchase for their own home.

One particularly eye-catching painting was entitled "You Are Beautiful". The artist was a 14-year-old girl, Lizbeth, from Maryvale. She explained what her painting meant to her: "A lot of people feel like they don't like who they are but, really, we're all perfect and beautiful in our own way. And when I feel sad painting relaxes me." When asked who inspired or encouraged her she quickly answered: "My mom and sister. They have always encouraged me." The eloquence and simplicity of her answer was impressive.

Addressing the above comment, Jay Belloli, FCP Steering Committee member and professional art curator, who has been the organizer of the Art Show since 2011, said: "Of course! These kids are very interesting people. Just because they have had a tough time doesn't mean they aren't able to express themselves articulately and creatively."

Jay added, "What is wonderful is, you can see the effect of new influence at an institution – their work just blossoms because the kids are inspired."

The cornerstone of the exhibit was a trio of works



by Jessie Castillo. Jessie is 27 and was raised in the foster care system. He is a very talented and successful artist and one that FPC has had the joy of watching mature as a young adult and artist. Jessie had his original art inspiration in street graffiti, but has now moved into working on canvas, with his paintings and murals hanging in galleries and public spaces all over Los Angeles.

All the youthful artists were honored with a lunch during the show, where they had an opportunity to mingle and chat with the patrons who purchased their art. The smiles on the faces of these young people and the joy in their conversation and laughter spoke volumes to the positive effect this Show has had on their self-esteem.

In the end, the event was a sell-out in all ways. All of the youths' art was purchased – and at times the crowd was so overflowing that people had to leave to make room for others. If you were unable to attend this year, don't forget to mark the date for next year!

The Art Show and beautiful brochure for the show were made possible by a generous grant from the Tournament of Roses Association, and by the generosity of Susan and John Caldwell, Maureen and Bob Carlson, Russ and Hannah Kully, and Gretel and George Stephens.



“... we're all perfect and beautiful in our own way.” Lizbeth, from Maryvale

TWO CHURCHES SERVE AS NEW COLLABORATORS WITH FCP BIRTHDAY CLUB



FCP
BIRTHDAY
CLUB

We were very pleased to have Neighborhood Unitarian Universalist Church and NewHeart Four Square Church recently join the FCP Birthday Club as new contributors.

NewHeart Four Square Church requested to begin by donating one gift a month to a child, which will make twelve gifts a year. They began participating last February. Michelle McMahon, the lead pastor at NewHeart said, "We are very excited to participate and bring joy to kids in difficult circumstances."

Neighborhood Church also requested to participate with twelve gifts for the year, which were all assigned and given to twelve children all in one month last July.

Gail Barden, Steering Committee Point Person for the Birthday Club points out how important it is to be partnering with more churches and organizations. "This will help to fill the much needed gap in gifts as well as build community relationships for us and the kids."

With these new contributions, there are now approximately 374 children in the Birthday Club and 166 volunteers.



EASTER BASKETS FOR FOSTER CARE PROJECT CHILDREN



To celebrate Easter this year we filled baskets for 25 foster children, including babies through older teens. Members of the FCP steering committee and community supporters donated stuffed animals, art supplies, candy, coloring books and magazines as Easter Bunny treats for our baskets.

Our Department of Children and Family Services "adopted" caseworker said one little girl excitedly told her, "I look forward to my Easter basket every year." In the accompanying picture you can see our case worker, Sylvia Cortez, with her car filled to the brim as she makes her Easter Bunny deliveries

REMEMBERING TOBY McMANMON

Foster Care Project (FCP) recently received word from Toby McManmon's family that we would receive a wonderful and very generous gift of \$42,000 from her estate. Toby passed away in the spring of 2015.

Toby joined FCP in the fall of 2003. She became a founding member of the first Steering Committee, and served as our Project Consultant, drawing upon her vast experience and background in social services.

A long-time resident of Sierra Madre, she received her master's degree in Social Work from St. Louis University. Her social work career encompassed many facets, including training, administrative, grant-writing and therapy for children and families. She had particular interest in culture and the immigration experience and how it affected families.

In FCP, Toby was invaluable in assisting in the evaluation of potential partnering agencies and programs. She served on the Steering Committee until 2007, when her medical condition forced her to resign and move to a resident home in Claremont-Pomona.

Toby had been very involved in local cultural activities, having helped initiate Shakespeare in the Park and The

Arts & Crafts Fair in Sierra Madre. One literary endeavor close to her heart was a book group at All Saints Church where she led the group on a discussion of the novel "White Oleander", a coming-of-age story about a teenage girl who is separated from her mother and placed in a series of foster homes.

The depth of her commitment to the foster children and young people we serve never wavered during the years she served on the Committee. Following her resignation, Toby continued to provide regular financial support for the Foster Care Project. Her family has told us that she often spoke fondly of us.



WELCOME JUDI-ANNE SIMMONS TO FCP STEERING COMMITTEE

Judi-anne emigrated here from England in 1991 and has been living in California, with her husband and two children, for almost 25 years. She has been in social work and child welfare for twenty-nine years. The first six years were in the UK, followed by over twenty-two years served in LA County Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS).

Judi-Anne's enthusiasm is infectious when she says "I am a proud social worker. I realized early on after receiving my Degree in Psychology and M.S. in Social Work that child welfare was for me."

She believes strongly in the DCFS mission of ensuring safety for all children, which, in view of the challenges facing many parents to achieve this outcome for their children, often involves providing intervention in the form of services, supervision

and support. And she believes this can be offered in an empathetic, sensitive and meaningful form.

Judi-anne recently took early retirement from LA County DCFS but says: "I could ramble on about DCFS child welfare work and all the social work stuff I love but I better not! I am so happy to become involved in the Foster Care Project because I believe I have a lot more to offer and, I hope, a positive contribution to make."



Partnering Agencies

Aspire West, Pasadena
California Youth Connection
CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocate)
Child S.H.A.R.E.
COLORS
County of Los Angeles Department of Children and Family Services
County of Los Angeles Probation Department
First United Methodist Church Five Acres
Friends of Foster Children
Hathaway-Sycamores
Hillsides
Hillsides YMO
Holy Family Services Adoption and Foster Care
Kidsave Los Angeles Weekend Miracles
Learning Works Charter School Maryvale
My Friend's Place
Optimist Youth Homes and Family Services
Pasadena Well Being and Economic Prosperity
Pasadena YouthBuild
Public Counsel Law Center
Raise-A-Child, US
Rosemary Children's Services
STARS at PCC
The Alliance for Children's Rights Violence Intervention Program
Vista Del Mar Child and Foster Care Program
Young and Healthy

All Saints Church

Foster Care Project



Join Us!

For information about FCP and to learn what Volunteer Opportunities are available, visit our website: www.fostercareproject.org or email inbox@fostercareproject.org

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

Jeanette Mann, FCP Public Policy and Community Relations Chair

Enhancing the quality of the lives of homeless youth is an essential component of the Foster Care Project's (FCP) mission.

In Los Angeles County there is a critical need for housing for Transitional Age Youth (TAY)--young people between the ages of sixteen and twenty-four who are in transition from state custody or foster care. DCFS Transitional Housing Program, which provides furnished apartments and paid utilities for former foster youth, has a capacity of 244 beds. In addition, there are approximately 50 units of private housing for TAY in the county. In November of 2105 there were 2,647 youth 18 and older in foster care, and an additional 3,128 between the ages of 16 and 17 in foster care for a total of 6,675 young peoples in need or soon to be in need of housing.

Last fall FCP was contacted about a housing project, including housing for TAY, on property formerly owned by Fuller Theological Seminary. Seven buildings with 192 units occupied by Fuller tenants were scheduled to be demolished and replaced by 440 market-rate, multi-family units (developed by Carmel Partners) and 56 affordable housing units (developed by Bridge Housing Corporation). Thirty-eight of the affordable units would be for seniors, 17 would be for TAY, and one would be for a manager.

The developers took the position that this project would not have any impact on the city of Pasadena's affordable housing stock. The units vacated had been occupied by Fuller students, who would be housed in other Fuller facilities. The leaders of the affordable housing community in Pasadena took the position that the developers should replace the 192 units lost with 192 units of affordable housing since there is no exemption under a state law (AB 2222 Density Bonus) for housing provided by non-profit institutions. The City of Pasadena supported the developers who have now withdrawn the request for the density bonus and will instead pay the in lieu fee instead of developing the affordable housing units.

All Saints Church did not take a position



on this issue. However, as individuals, Jeanette Mann and Jay Belloli met with Councilmember John Kennedy and six members of the City of Pasadena's Planning and Community Development Department. Members of the Public Policy Committee also met with Senator Carol Liu, Supervisor Michael Antonovich and Assemblymember Chris Holden to discuss finding a way to provide housing for TAY. All three supported amending the density bonus statute to include housing for TAY for which developers could receive a density bonus.

In January Assemblymember Holden introduced AB 2442 which would allow developers to obtain multiple density bonuses if the development set aside 20 percent for TAY, disabled veterans, or the formerly homeless. One hundred and twenty-seven letters by All Saints Church parishioners were submitted to the Assembly Housing and Community Development Committee in support of this bill. Jeanette Mann, at the request of Mr. Holden's staff, testified in support of the bill on April 13. "We have found that homelessness lies at the heart of the challenge facing foster youth in becoming productive, self-supporting adults," Mann said. "Not having a place to live impacts their opportunities to complete job training and/or college programs; it limits their access to medical care. Not having an address interferes with their ability to find jobs and keep them. Too often living on the street leads to the crimes necessary to survive on the streets--prostitution, theft, and drug dealing--and into the pipeline from foster care to prison."

The bill passed out of the Committee on a 6-1 vote, passed the Assembly Local Government Committee 7-0 and is now before the Assembly Appropriations Committee