



### FOSTER CARE PROJECT STEERING COMMITTEE

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### 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.

## 3-2-1...Launch!

### FCP Supports the Official Kick-Off of Pasadena as an Early Learning City



A young participant proudly displays her "finger family" at FCP's information booth at the Launch of Pasadena as an Early Learning City, held in September at Brookside Park, next to the Rose Bowl.

On September 23, members of the Foster Care Project (FCP) joined parents, grandparents, caregivers, educators, advocates and more at the Launch of Pasadena as an Early Learning City, held in Brookside Park, next to the Rose Bowl. Five hundred attendees were anticipated, but that number quickly expanded, with several thousand gathering to learn about the city's newly minted Early Learning Movement, sponsored by the City of Pasadena, Office of the Young Child. The purpose of this ambitious effort is to unify and support the array of services available to young children and

their families to improve early childhood education outcomes.

More than 80 booths were staffed by a variety of organizations, including FCP, with the overarching goal of promoting strong families and underscoring the benefits of early childhood education. Activities and entertainment included an early childhood bilingual music class; a karate demonstration; two Pasadena Unified School District (PUSD) jazz combos; a healthy cooking demonstration; parenting tips; and multiple resources for children and families.

PUSD Superintendent Brian McDonald, Congresswoman Judy Chu, and State

Senator Anthony Portantino addressed the crowd, offering support and enthusiasm for the City of Pasadena's formation of the Office of the Young Child and its commitment to the well-being of children and families.

Rosemary Hyde, Jeanette Mann, and Judi-anne Nash staffed a booth for the Foster Care Project, with a two-fold goal: 1) increasing awareness of FCP as a resource for families and community members and 2) recruiting potential volunteers. The venue provided an excellent opportunity to discuss the needs of families and share some of the activities and services FCP

provides, including:

- Annual Art Show, featuring art of foster children and youth
- The Birthday Club, serving more than 300 children
- Family Connect Pasadena Visitation Centers, featuring volunteer monitoring and support of family re-unification visits
- Scholarships, including Jane Mabie, 10th Anniversary, and Women's Community Scholarships
- Ongoing mentoring and volunteer placement opportunities
- Ongoing support and donations to the Pasadena Department of Children and Family Services, including food, clothing, hygiene items and diapers
- One-time-only volunteer opportunities at agencies or FCP-sponsored activities
- Advocacy on behalf of foster children and youth on legislation before city, county, state, and federal governments.

In addition to publicizing resources and services, each agency was asked to provide a fun, child-centered activity. At the FCP booth, children created "finger



**Give her a Hand!** Hannah Nash designed the "finger family" template for children to use at FCP's information booth at the Launch of Pasadena as an Early Learning City. Her imaginative example appears at left.

families," an art activity where young participants were encouraged to draw family members on a piece of paper featuring fingertips of a traced hand. Many children took up the challenge—some very enthusiastically (see photo). All kinds of delightful family configurations and art styles emerged.

Jeanette, Rosemary, and Judi-anne spent a busy, fun-filled morning representing FCP and interacting with educators, families, and, of course, the children. And—bonus—six potential volunteers were recruited. We tip our hats to Pasadena's groundbreaking Office of the Young Child, as it seeks to bring direction and a comprehensive approach to early education policies and services in our city.

To learn more about the Early Learning City movement or to obtain further information on Foster Care Project's services and volunteer opportunities, please contact: [inbox@fostercareproject.org](mailto:inbox@fostercareproject.org)

## *Save the Date:*

## Join us for a Foster Care/Adoption Reception, May 6, 2018

*"Every child deserves a champion—an adult who will never give up on them, who understands the power of connection and insists that they become the best they can possibly be."*

--Rita F. Pierson

On Sunday, May 6th, FCP's Foster/Adopt program and its partnering agency Five Acres, will help kick off Foster Care Awareness Month with a reception for those wishing to learn more about the foster/adopt process. Staff from Five Acres will offer a brief presentation, respond to questions, and assist prospective parents in taking the first steps toward becoming foster/adopt

families. The reception will take place in the Guild Room at All Saints Church from 12:30 p.m. to 2:00 p.m.

Foster/Adopt coordinator Rosemary Hyde says, "We've received feedback from a number of attendees, who were quite pleased with the support and information they obtained from past Foster/Adopt receptions. We've witnessed many success stories, and it's gratifying to play a small role in the formation of loving, new families." Whether you are ready to initiate the foster care/adoption process or have just begun to explore the idea, helpful information and support is available. Please join us on May 6th.

For further details, please contact:  
[inbox@fostercareproject.org](mailto:inbox@fostercareproject.org)

## A Christmas Memory



Putting on a show! On December 17th, actors Jim Jansen, Dale Raoul and Ray Thompson will perform a reading of Truman Capote's charming classic, *A Christmas Memory*, at All Saints Church.

## Comes to All Saints Church on December 17th

*"It's fruitcake weather.  
Fetch our buggy. Help me  
find my hat."* --Aunt Sook

On Sunday, December 17th, All Saints Church will host *A Christmas Memory*, Truman Capote's tender tale of two innocents—one young, one old—who fill a void in each other's lives. The performance will begin at 2:00 p.m. in Sweetland Hall, with a suggested donation of \$10.00 at the door. Proceeds will benefit Family Connect Pasadena, a part of the Foster Care Project Ministry at All Saints Church. The show will feature three seasoned actors, who are also All Saints parishioners.

- Jim Jansen, a veteran of film and television work, is perhaps best known for his role as the Rev. Archie Skinner on the original series, *Gilmore Girls*, as well as last fall's reprise on Netflix.
- Dale Raoul, is well-known to fans of *True Blood*; she played Maxine Fortenberry during the show's entire seven-season run. She did another series after that, *Under the Dome*, and works continually on TV and in the movies.
- Ray Thompson is the lighting designer for CBS' *The Young and the Restless*—for which he's won nine Emmy Awards. He's also married to Dale Raoul.

You may not have a fruitcake, a buggy, or a hat—but join us anyway, on Sunday, December 17th, for what promises to be a delightful holiday presentation of Truman Capote's charming classic, *A Christmas Memory*.

## FCP Receives a \$25,000 Grant from the Weingart Foundation

In June, Foster Care Project was pleased to receive a grant of \$25,000 from the Weingart Foundation, which will benefit both the Family Connect Visitation Program and The Foster Youth Council. Both programs were seen as a good fit for the Weingart Foundation, an organization that seeks to build inclusivity and opportunity for all Southern Californians, especially those who have faced historical exclusion as well as structural barriers to equity.

A little over four years ago, FCP partnered with the Pasadena Department of Children and Family Services to create the highly

praised Family Connect Visitation Program, which was recently named as a pilot program for all of Los Angeles County. The program's seven centers serve as conveniently located, "safe spaces" for monitored court-ordered visits between children and parents engaged in the reunification process. FCP also supports The Foster Youth Council, which was established in 2016 by the Board of Education of the Pasadena Unified School District, with the goal of helping foster students achieve academic success. The Foster Youth Council addresses issues such as transportation to after-school programs for special needs children; mandating trauma training for school employees; and increasing

CON'T. ON PG. 4

## FCP VOLUNTEERS IN ACTION

### SHARING HEARTS ENSURE THAT OTHERS ENJOY A THANKSGIVING MEAL

*“If you are really thankful, what do you do? You share.”*

-- W. Clement Stone

On the first two Sundays in November, All Saints Church parishioners and community supporters donated cash, checks, grocery store gift cards, and a variety of food items to Foster Care Project’s annual Thanksgiving food drive. Ten days before the holiday, FCP volunteers spent an enjoyable morning decorating Thanksgiving baskets and filling them with small hams, turkey and mashed potato dinners, cranberry sauce, canned fruits and vegetables, applesauce, desserts, and more. Ten of the baskets were delivered to Rosemary’s Children’s Services for distribution to families in need. An additional seven bags of food were provided to our case worker at the Pasadena Department of Children and Family Services. Finally, a substantial food donation was made to Lancer Pantry at Pasadena City College, which provides healthy, non-perishable food at no cost to currently enrolled students in need, a category which includes both current and former foster youth. Many thanks to the sharing hearts who helped bring a joyous Thanksgiving feast to children, youth, and families in our community.



**New volunteer Kitty Bergel helps ACAC coordinator Beth Gertmenian organize donations for Thanksgiving food baskets.**

#### **“GRANT” CON’T. FROM PG. 3**

academic focus for foster youth with IEPs to strengthen the transition from Special Education to mainstream. The Foster Youth Council meets at Pasadena City College on a monthly basis, and lunch is provided by FCP.

Funds from the \$25,000 grant will be used to finance: 1) short videos about Family Connect and FCP, which will appear on FCP’s website and in presentations to community groups; 2) recruitment, training, and management of volunteer coach-monitors for Family Connect; 3) lunches at

Foster Youth Council meetings; and 4) attendance and presentation by foster parents at the annual California Foster Youth Education Summit in 2018.

Heartfelt thanks to the Weingart Foundation for their generous grant. And a special shout-out of appreciation to the FCP Development Committee, chaired by Gail Portrey, who identified the Foundation, made the contact, and wrote the proposal. Kudos to all!

# A Profile in Caring



Sylvia Cortez,  
ACAC's "Adopted" Case Worker

For the past nine years, coordinators of FCP's Adopt a Child Abuse Case Worker (ACAC) Program have had the good fortune to work with "adopted" case worker Sylvia Cortez, a Children's Social Worker at the Pasadena Department of Children and Family Services. Sylvia's enthusiastic input and guidance, coupled with generous FCP donor support, has enabled ACAC to provide ongoing, targeted assistance to children, youth and families impacted by the foster care experience.

Sylvia was exposed to the model of helping others early on. "I had two family members who were social workers," she says. "I remember them talking about the families they served, which included lively discussions of obstacles, strategies, and possible solutions. It sparked my interest and desire to help. Furthermore, I had a childhood friend who was removed from an abusive home and placed with caring relatives. These people really stepped up, providing warmth, affection, and protection. I got to see the positive side of foster care."

Sylvia attended California State University Long Beach, receiving a bachelor's degree in Social Work in 2002 and a master's degree in the same field in 2011. Her involvement with the ACAC Program began in 2008 and extended through August 2017. During that time, her cases involved Family Maintenance, Family Reunification, and Permanent Placement. Duties included investigating allegations of abuse/neglect; assisting parents with reunification services; helping match foster children with prospective adoptive parents; providing support for the adoption process; and linking families to resources (including the ACAC Program). Anne Riffenburgh, an ACAC coordinator, notes, "Sylvia consistently went the extra mile. Whether it was pursuing baseball cleats for a child, helping with a college application, or obtaining food for a hungry family, she was always right there, on the front lines, advocating for others with grace and compassion. We have been very fortunate to work with such a wonderful human being."

This fall Sylvia took on a new challenge—she remains a Children's Social Worker, but now works with the DCFS adoption division. Our ACAC coordinators salute Sylvia Cortez for her passionate commitment to improving the lives of foster children and families and express profound gratitude for her contributions to the ACAC Program. Here's to a job well-done!



Foster Care Project  
Volunteers  
at the annual  
Celebration of  
Ministries Sunday at  
All Saints Church



### Partnering Agencies

50/50 Leadership  
Aspire West, Pasadena  
Barrio Action Youth and Family Center  
California Youth Connection  
Cal Tech Y  
CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocate)  
COLORS  
County of Los Angeles Department of Children and Family Services  
County of Los Angeles Probation Department  
EOPS Resilient Scholars Program, California State University Northridge  
First United Methodist Church  
Five Acres  
FosterALL  
Friends of Foster Children  
Hathaway-Sycamores  
Hillsides  
Hillsides YMO  
Holy Family Services Adoption and Foster Care  
Imagine LA  
Kidsave Los Angeles Weekend Miracles  
Learning Works Charter School/Home Boys  
Maryvale (Rosemead address)  
My Friend's Place  
National Congress of Black Women  
One Simple Wish  
Optimist Youth Homes and Family Services  
Pasadena YouthBuild  
Public Counsel Law Center  
Raise-A-Child, US  
Rosemary Children's Services (Pasadena address)  
STARS at PCC  
The Alliance for Children's Rights  
Violence Intervention Program  
Vista Del Mar Child and Foster Care Program  
Young and Healthy

## LEGISLATIVE UPDATE:

Jeanette Mann, FCP Public Policy and Community Relations Chair

2017 was an outstanding year for FCP's legislative advocacy. Fifteen of the nineteen bills we supported were signed into law by Governor Brown. Our attention was focused on five issues: 1) solitary confinement of minors; 2) increased funding and support for foster youth in college; 3) foster parents' access to their children's school records; 4) housing for transition-aged youth; and 5) repealing existing law that requires the Division of Juvenile Justice to cooperate with the United States Bureau of Immigration in arranging for the deportation of undocumented children and youth.

California law has permitted youth under the age of 18 to be sentenced to life in prison without the possibility of parole. In *Miller v. Alabama* (2012), the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that the Eighth Amendment's prohibition against cruel and unusual punishment forbids the mandatory sentencing of life in prison without the possibility of parole for juvenile offenders. In *Montgomery v. Louisiana* (2016), the Court ruled that *Miller* was retroactive, that every person who was sentenced to life without parole as a juvenile must have a full resentencing hearing or the state must provide a legal mechanism to provide for parole hearings. SB 394 (Lara) will remedy these now unconstitutional sentences for the approximately 290 people currently serving them. They will be eligible for an initial parole hearing after 25 years of incarceration. There will be no guarantee of parole, only an opportunity for the person to work hard and try to earn the chance for parole.

SB 12 (Beall) will bring new federal funds to California's foster youth by increasing access to Pell Grants, a federal program that provides full-time college students \$5,815 annually. SB 12 is a smart investment for California. The total annual cost for SB 12 will be less than \$60,000, and the bill will leverage \$29.5 million annually. Currently, only half of foster youth attending college in California are receiving the benefit of these grants, although all are eligible. A recent study shows this



failure of access is due to a lack of information and assistance in applying for financial aid while in foster care, a byzantine verification process that disqualifies foster youth, and is further hampered by a lack of campus support. Without adequate financial assistance, too many foster youth struggle and ultimately fail to graduate from college. By age 26, just four percent of former foster youth have achieved a college degree, as compared to 36 percent of the same-age population of young adults.

"In the 2017-2018 legislative session we plan on addressing the issue of hunger on community college campuses," said Jeanette Mann, Chair of the Foster Care Project Public Policy Committee. "The University of California and the California State University both have initiated programs to address the needs of hungry students. Although there are food pantries on many community college campuses, there have been no system-wide efforts to address this issue. We believe hunger is a major obstacle to student success and invite everyone who is interested to join with us to combat this serious problem."

All Saints Church

**Foster  
Care  
Project**

For Volunteer Opportunities visit our website:  
[www.fostercareproject.org](http://www.fostercareproject.org)  
or email  
[inbox@fostercareproject.org](mailto:inbox@fostercareproject.org)