November is National Adoption Month

November is recognized as National Adoption Month. With over 400,000 children and youth living in foster care across the country there is a tremendous need for families to come forward to provide permanence through adoption. In California, there are nearly 60,000 children and youth living in foster care and approximately 3,000 reside in the Greater Sacramento Region.

For many of these children, they have been removed from their birth families due to neglect, abuse and/or abandonment. Left to the system, these children will languish in foster care until they turn eighteen. If a family or permanent connection is not found for these children, they are more likely to become part of a dire statistic—over 50% of youth who emancipate from the system at the age of eighteen will, within 2-4 years, be homeless, addicted to drugs, in prison or dead. Our children deserve a much better outcome.

On November 3, a seven-hour public awareness event was held on the north steps of the California State Capitol. Throughout this meaningful event, more than 50 participants including government officials, child advocates, community and business leaders, adoptive families and former foster youth participated in the Calling Out of Names, each reading aloud over one hundred names and ages of children living in California foster care. Over 5,000 names were read in the seven hours. By reading aloud the names and ages of the children who wait, participants provided a voice, an identity, for the children who are waiting for a family to call their own. In addition to the Calling Out of Names, four area families were recognized for their dedication in providing permanence to youth in foster care. A candlelight vigil to honor the waiting children concluded the event.

On November 19, National Adoption Day, PlacerKids hosted a special event at the Historic Courthouse in Auburn, joining family courts across the nation that opened their doors and volunteered their time to finalize the adoptions of thousands of children in care. Several local children finalized their adoptions at the event in Auburn. The day also served as an adoptive family celebration complete with entertainment, an appearance from Dinger the Sacramento River Cats mascot, crafts and games, face painting by the Sugar Plump Fairies, and much more!

As the year quickly comes to an end, we ask that you continue to recognize the tremendous need for families in our communities across the nation. For every child that finds a forever family, one less child will grow up in foster care and will have a far greater chance at a positive outcome in life.

In honor of National Adoption Month, Sierra Forever Families wishes to THANK all of our families, mentors, volunteers, donors, and staff for creating hope in the lives of children living in foster care.

For a list of the national events, visit: http://www.nationaladoptionday.org/
Every year Sierra pauses to recognize those who are part of our Sierra Family. On Saturday, October 15, Sierra hosted our first ever APPRECIATION PICNIC with 300 guests including families, mentors, board members, donors, volunteers, and staff. In the past, Sierra thanked these individual groups in separate ways. This year, the agency decided that Sierra can offer appreciation and be the best stewards possible with an all inclusive event. Plans were made, invitations were sent, and the Sierra Family joined together. “It was heart warming to see so many families coming together and having such a great time,” shared Executive Director, Bob Herne.

The event was full of fun for all and included dancing and a disc jockey, face painting by the Sugar Plump Fairies of Auburn, balloon artistry, and a lively bounce house and obstacle course. The Roseville Fire Department arrived in a fire truck and the sight of it made everyone feel like a kid again. Thanks to the catering staff at Raley’s Family of Fine Stores, the food was tasty and plentiful. Our guests were surprised and delighted to discover that the beautiful cakes were actually comprised of cupcakes. The snow cone machine and popcorn maker were kept busy all day. Combined, the day’s festivities were fun for kids and adults alike.

The most often heard comment was that this needs to become an annual event. One adoptive mom said, “I know how happy my child is but it’s amazing to look around to see all of these other happy kids.” Another parent thanked us for the opportunity to meet other adoptive families in a social setting and shared how meaningful it was to their family. Our faithful volunteers relaxed and enjoyed a day off thanks to the efforts of over forty volunteers who came to us from the Roseville Kiwanis Key Club, UCD Lambda Omicron Xi, UCD Epsilon Sigma Rho Brothers, Woodcreek High School, and SureWest. For donors, this was a unique opportunity to witness the fruits of their gifts.

This event was also the perfect venue to rollout our new Ambassador Family recruitment program. Thirteen families signed up to become an Ambassador on behalf of Sierra. These families are coming forward to recruit other families who might be willing to open their hearts and homes to provide permanency to children in foster care. Many other attending families spoke with staff and gathered information for later consideration.

Bob Herne and our staff shared a similar sentiment of joy in seeing Sierra’s Family. The agency exists because of everyone who is part of it. We are so grateful to all of you who make up the Sierra Family. Thank you all for the many ways you offer your support. We hope everyone who attended had as much fun as we did.

Over 300 guests including families, mentors, donors, volunteers and youth gathered to celebrate at Royer Park in Roseville.
DESCOR BUILDERS HOSTS INAUGURAL OKTOBERFEST FOR CHAMPIONS FOR CHILDREN

Recently, the staff of DesCor Builders joined together to organize an authentic Bavarian Oktoberfest to raise money for our Champions for Children program. DesCor Builders is one of our newest Champions Teams and brainstormed to come up with such a fun idea for their first fundraiser!

DesCor Builders, located in Rancho Cordova, is headed up by Brad DesJardin and Neal Cordeiro. “At DesCor, our mission is to be a Model of Success and a Leader in our Community,” stated DesJardin. “We believe there is no better place to create success than in a loving home and that’s why we have partnered with Sierra Forever Families.”

Event Team Captains Katie Gill and Sue Rasmussen completely threw themselves into the planning and execution of the event—from the decorations to the perfectly planned menu which included handmade, authentic German sausage. “We’re proud of the success of our first annual Oktoberfest, and look forward to finding more ways to make it even better in the coming years. Beers, Brats and Fundraising! We think we’ve found the winning combination,” remarked Katie.

“We’re proud of the success of our first annual Oktoberfest, and look forward to finding more ways to make it even better in the coming years. Beers, Brats and Fundraising! We think we’ve found the winning combination!”  KATIE GILL, TEAM CAPTAIN

Nearly 200 guests enjoyed an evening of good food, beer, and music—all while supporting Sierra Forever Families Champions for Children. We are so proud to announce this event raised $7,500! It was such a huge success DesCor Builders is planning to make it an annual event.

On behalf of all the children and families we serve, Sierra Forever Families wholeheartedly thanks the tremendous efforts of DesCor Builders!

Sierra Forever Families gratefully acknowledges the 11 corporations and foundations that have contributed to our Annual Fund through grant awards from July 1, 2011 to November 1, 2011. The funds donated ($65,850) help provide essential support for program and services to families and children in foster care.

Grant award received:

• Supporting Permanency Services: Deacon Charitable Foundation, Pfund Family Foundation, Massie Family Foundation, and The Swinerton Foundation
• Supporting Placer County Destination Family Program: Placer Community Foundation Youth Development Program
• Supporting Placer County Adoptive Parents: Placer Community Foundation Wellness Program
• Supporting Recruitment of Families: City of Roseville Citizens Benefit Fund
• Supporting the Wonder Mentoring Program: Ronald McDonald House Charities Northern California, The Sacramento Bee Book of Dreams, U.S. Bank and Wells Fargo

To learn more about becoming a supporter through our grants and foundation programs, please contact Juli Kramer at 916.368.5114 or jkramer@sierraaff.org

SPECIAL THANKS: We have received two grants from the Placer Community Foundation in support of programs at PlacerKids: one for Youth Development and one for Community Wellness. “The Placer Community Foundation is a public trust established to assist donors in building an enduring source of charitable funds to meet the changing needs and interests of the community.” We are grateful for this validation of services provided by PlacerKids to children and youth in Placer County and to the families who adopt children from foster care.
From Our Family with Thanks

November is National Adoption Month. On November 3, members of the Sierra family participated with other community leaders and sister agencies at the State Capitol in calling out names of the children and youth in foster care statewide who continue to wait for a forever family.

On November 19, our Sierra family celebrated National Adoption Day at the historic Auburn courthouse by witnessing several adoption finalizations...new forever families!

Family is the heart of Sierra Forever Families. While we celebrate our successes, we still have much to do! As we approach the holiday season, we pause to be thankful for what we have and express our appreciation to very special members of our extended Sierra family. Thank you...

...to each one who opened their heart and home to become a forever family for a child;
...to each mentor who provided many Wonder moments for a child in foster care;
...to our very special volunteers; and,
...to each who has given of themselves so that Sierra can fulfill its mission to transform the lives of children in foster care by building and nurturing permanent families.

If you are interested to see first-hand the impact a forever family can have for a youth in foster care, I invite you to read “Rebekah's Story” in our upcoming Winter 2012 Homecoming newsletter.

The children remaining in foster care need your continued support more than ever so they can experience one of life’s most precious gifts—a family of their very own.

There are many ways you can give:

- Give online by visiting our website at www.sierraff.org
- Give by check or credit card
- Make an automatic monthly contribution from an existing bank account
- Consider a planned gift such as appreciated securities
- Take advantage of the IRA rollover before December 31, 2011

If you would like more information about ways to give, contact me today at bcobbs@sierraff.org or by calling (916) 368-5114.

GiveLocalNow Movement

Every year, the average Sacramento region household donates 11% less to charity than the average national household. This means reduced services from organizations like Sierra Forever Families which are already hit hard by budget cuts.

Through early research, GiveLocalNow discovered that Sacramento regional residents, as a whole, are less likely to give and donate fewer dollars than the national average. In fact, only 62% of households in the Greater Sacramento Region give to charities and, of those, only 63% donate to local organizations that help those in our communities.

Sierra Forever Families has partnered with GiveLocalNow because we believe the Greater Sacramento Region can do better—and with your help, we will. GiveLocalNow seeks to educate and inspire our region to give more, give local and give now.

As a local nonprofit, we value all donors, large and small, and thank you for your continued support. We believe that philanthropy is an active process that has benefits for the giver as well as those who receive. Please visit: www.givelocalnow.org to find out more about this movement and how you can inspire those around you to engage in local giving.