The BIG Day of Giving

GiveLocalNow and Sierra Forever Families are gearing up for the region’s first BIG Day of Giving benefiting the local nonprofit sector. It is a 24-hour giving challenge that will launch on May 6th at 12:00 AM midnight to 11:59 PM. Over 400 non-profit organizations in the region will participate.

Why should you give? Because giving can transform a child’s life!

“Susie” at five-years old, could not walk, knew only ten words, was self-abusive and lived in a regional center since birth. With serious medical issues, including being vision impaired, she was considered unlikely to find an adoptive parent. Because of Sierra’s commitment to find permanency for harder-to-place kids, a forever family was found for her. Susie learned to talk, walk, run and jump. More importantly, she learned how to give and receive love.

How else can you help? Please DONATE then tell your friends!

Please PAY IT FORWARD by telling your friends about the BIG Day of Giving. Use your social media networks, share your love for Sierra Forever Families, and ask others to make a donation. Contact Crystal Brooks at cbrooks@sierraff.org or 916.368.5114 if you have questions or would like more information.

Your funds will be matched up to $15,000!

Sierra Forever Families is also receiving generous matching donations of $15,000.00 from Wells Fargo Bank and Swinerton Builders. These funds will go toward changing the lives of children forever.

This day is also remarkable because in every other community across the nation that has hosted a giving challenge day, millions of dollars have been raised and the number of new donors to the sector has increased exponentially.

Can we do this? Together, YES WE CAN!

Thank you in advance for your generosity to Sierra Forever Families and our community!

You can donate on May 6th at: http://givelocalnow.org/sierraforeverfamilies
Sacramento Center
8928 Volunteer Lane, Suite 100
Sacramento, CA 95826
Tel: (916) 368-5114
Fax: (916) 368-5157
E-mail: sffsac@sierraff.org

Chico Adoptive Family Resource Center
520 Cohasset Road, Suite 140
Chico, CA 95926
Tel: (530) 557-3610
Fax: (530) 896-1792
E-mail: dfischer@sierraff.org

Nevada City Center
138 New Mohawk Road, Suite 200
Nevada City, CA 95959
Tel: (530) 478-0900
Fax: (530) 478-0982
E-mail: sffgv@sierraff.org

California Department of Social Services/Adoptive Family Resource Center
Warm Line: (800) 268-2967
Fax: (916) 484-0430
E-mail: dfischer@sierraff.org

ABOUT HOMECOMING
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Our Mission
We transform the lives of children in foster care by building and nurturing permanent families.

Visit us online at:
www.sierraff.org

Upcoming Events

Sacramento
• Orientation (Exploring Permanency I):
The second Monday of every month 6 – 8 PM
• LGBTQ Adoptive Family Support Group:
The second Wednesday of every month 6 – 8 PM
• Adoptive Family Support Group:
The fourth Tuesday of every month 6 – 8 PM

PlacerKids
• Orientation (Exploring Permanency I):
The third Thursday of every month 6:30 – 8:30 PM
• KSSP Support Group:
The first Tuesday of every month 6 PM – 7:30 PM
• Post Adoption Support Group:
The second Thursday of every month 6 – 8 PM
• Foster/Adoption Support Group (Cirby Hills):
The fourth Thursday of every month 6 – 8 PM

Nevada City
• Orientation (Exploring Permanency I):
The first Wednesday of every month 6 – 9 PM
• Adoptive Parent Support Group:
The first Friday of every month 9:30 – 11:30 AM

Other parenting classes available – please check our calendar on our new website!
Executive Director Message

Follow The Yellow Brick Road

If you have been to one of our offices lately, you might have seen images of the Yellow Brick Wall from the famous story The Wizard of OZ. The Yellow Brick Road is the theme the agency chose as we move towards national accreditation. Although Sierra Forever Families (SFF) has been accredited at the State level since 2002, last year the agency decided to focus on national accreditation.

We are midway through the process with completion scheduled for the end of October, 2014. Our objective in pursuing national certification with the Council on Accreditation (COA) is to become a learning organization. Our goal is to continuously improve our processes to ensure better outcomes for our children and families. Pursuing national certification with COA provides us the opportunity to evaluate our practices and procedures, introduce improvements where needed and increase the agency’s capacity and effectiveness in delivering services on behalf of our clients.

To achieve our goal, we need Heart (Mission), Brain (Learn), Courage (Belief) and Team (Teamwork). Please continue to follow us as we move towards the Emerald City in meeting our mission of transforming the lives of children in foster care by building and nurturing permanent families.

Family of the Year

Matt and Kari Fries decided to create a family through “the blessing of adoption” as Kari described their decision. “Five years ago, I would never have dreamed that we would have four children, all so beautiful and unique!”

In 2011, working with Sierra Forever Families, Matt and Kari adopted a five-year-old girl who had lived in four foster homes. Wanting a bigger family, they agreed to foster two little boys. The two brothers lived with the Fries for 11 months until they reunified with their mother. A few months later, the brothers re-entered foster care. They were placed back with the Fries with an additional request: would the Fries accept the new five-month-old baby brother?

“Parenting children who have experienced trauma is definitely challenging,” said Kari, who was asked about her experience parenting the children she and her husband, Matt, adopted. Permanency Support Services (PSS) from Sierra was set in place to provide individual and family therapy. The PSS team meets with the family once a week at their home. Matt and Kari implement every strategy they learn in therapy and take additional classes offered by Sierra to improve their parenting skills.

During the past six months, the children have improved considerably and the issues are minimal due to the Fries’ strong commitment for their children. “I think it is important to know that you can never erase their past, but you can build a new future. We can comfort, we can console, and we can protect them. For us, celebrating a small achievement is so important.”

The adoption finalization for the three brothers occurred in November 2012. For their dedication to creating a forever family, Matt and Kari Fries were selected as Sierra’s 2013 Family of the Year.

May is National Foster Care Month, a time to recognize the role each of us plays in enhancing the lives of children and youth in the foster care system. Find resources and information about supporting permanence for families on the 2014 National Foster Care Month website: [www.childwelfare.gov/fostercaremonth/](http://www.childwelfare.gov/fostercaremonth/)
Wonder, Recruitment of Male Guides

It is not every day that you run into a program as significant or unique as Wonder. Guides (mentors) are a special group of people who choose to give their time to children in foster care. With 83% of our Guides being female, male Guides are sorely needed. Oftentimes our caregivers and social workers request a same gender match. In these instances we do all we can to recruit male mentors. Male Guides in our Wonder program are dedicated and go above the call of duty. They are committed in every sense of the word. Why do they volunteer? They frequently tell us they are extremely proud of the work they do, and they did not realize that mentoring could be so rewarding. One Guide even said “lose the fluff, I don’t need to hear all the reasons it’s beneficial, I just want to have fun”. In a nutshell that is what Wonder mentoring is all about, having fun and exploring the world together!

PlacerKids Annual Picnic

Every year the collaborative holds an annual picnic to celebrate their current and past foster/adoptive families. The event will be held on Saturday May, 17th from 11 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. at Meadow Vista Park in Auburn. We are excited to have a rock climbing wall, a bounce house, food and a little appreciation gift for all families who attend. This is a time for PK to say thank you to our families who are transforming the lives of children from foster care. Adoption is a life-long process and this is a time for families to connect and form friendships with other foster/adoptive/kinship families. We hope to see you there.

Race car enthusiasts be on the lookout as you travel I-80! Tupper Hull has branded his Miata racing care in Wonder fashion. He began racing his car early spring to bring visibility to all things Wonder. He typically races at the Thunderhill, Mazda Raceway, Laguna Seca and the Sonoma raceways.

Call to Action - Male Guides Needed!!

Only 17% of Wonder guides are male, and 37% of our explorers are boys. To inquire about becoming a guide contact the Wonder Program at 916-368-5114.
**Kids are Waiting**

*Bruce is 12 years old and he loves playing football!*

*J.T. is a huge football fan, and his other favorite past-times are skateboarding and riding his bike.*

**Recent Finalizations**

This family adopted each of their four children through Sierra Forever Families over a span of several years. Each child came into their home with their own individual story. The family has accepted each new member with open arms and much love. Having recently finalized their fourth child's adoption, their family is now complete.

This young man entered the foster system at age 15. A couple from his church had been a support system for him since he was very young, so when he needed permanency they immediately stepped up to adopt him. Now officially a forever family this young man has love and stability for his future.

“Sue” entered the foster system as an infant, and after being in foster care for approximately two years she was matched with her forever family. Though the transition was difficult at first, “Sue” has bonded with her new parents. Her adoptive mother was also adopted as an infant and always knew she wanted to build her family through adoption.
Volunteers Extraordinaire: Mrs. Francesca Bogetich and Dr. Thomas Bogetich

Fran’s first experience with Sierra Forever Families (then Sierra Adoption Services) began with a knock on her front door in 1994. She was asked to help with a huge project, she gathered her cadre of volunteers to fold, stuff, label, and seal a 4,000 piece mailing. Fran organized work parties for Multiple Sclerosis, Easter Seals, and March of Dimes doing volunteer work involving décor for luncheons, tasks for special events, and, literally, hundreds of mailing projects. She helped to build our database from zero to over 26,000 files.

Not only has Fran devoted many years as a Volunteer to Sierra Forever Families, her husband Tom Bogetich joined her efforts. After a 40-year career with the California State Board of Education, and 20 years of strategic planning for them, Tom was asked by then-president Chuck Nicholson to chair Sierra Forever Families’ first Strategic Planning Committee. Tom was instrumental in helping to organize the first four years of the annual Golf Classic for Kids. Tom organized and chaired the events which raised nearly $400,000 towards helping children find forever families. He faithfully served on the committee for four other golf events. Tom continues to serve on the Fund Development committee.

Everyone here at Sierra would like to sincerely thank both Tom and Fran for their dedication which has helped Sierra find forever families for more than 3,000 children in the foster care system.

Saying Farewell.....

Fran began her journey with Sierra in the role of Receptionist, and later became a valued member of the Finance department and our data collection expert. Her ability to get the job done while keeping a sense of humor endeared her to everyone. We also appreciate that she continued to provide support to the agency after moving to Oklahoma.

The entire Sierra Family bids you a heartfelt thank you for your dedication on behalf of the children and families we serve.

Wishing you all the very best, it’s truly been a blast!
Thank You!

Sierra Forever Families gratefully thanks 29 corporations, foundations, and organizations supporting programs benefiting children and youth in foster care. Funds received or pledged from July 1, 2013 to March 1, 2014 total $190,000 and provide essential support for services to families and children. Grant awards were received supporting:

- **Permanency Services**: Beneto Family Foundation, Deacon Charitable Foundation, Enterprise Holdings Foundation, Kelly Foundation, Golden1 Credit Union, Pfund Family Foundation, Redmond Foundation, Setzer Foundation, Ticket to Dream Foundation, and the Yocha Dehe Wintun Nation Community Fund

- **Family Recruitment in Nevada County**: Sierra Health Foundation

- **PlacerKids**: Thormund & Hanna Miller Fund with the Silicon Valley Foundation and United Auburn Indian Community Fund


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

Expressive Giving

Jennifer Pulliam – In honor of Patrice Ratinoff
Ranny Eckstrom – In honor of Marge Eckstrom
Geraldine Willis – In honor of Diane Stanton
Jack Duffy – In honor of Janet Duffy
Alan Banfield – In memory of Lucy Banfield
Joel Leong – In memory of Aunty Amoy
Andrew Corr – In honor of Deborah Corr
Brandie Vincent – In honor of Corbin Henderson

Dominique Cargill – In honor of Corbin Henderson
Scott Conway – In honor of Chloe Fillinger
Marcine Friedman – In honor of Patrice Ratinoff
Allison Guerrero – In honor of Lucy Diliberto
Cecelia Delury – In memory of Joe Hartzog
Myers Family – In honor of Chloe Myers
Carla Morace – In memory of Juleen Morace
Andeen Lovett – In memory of Nancy Mitchell

A Big THANK YOU to Santa’s Helpers!

With everyone’s help, the nearly 800 children we serve had a wonderful Christmas! We would like to thank Mercy Hospital staff who generously gathered personalized gifts for 100 children, and the East Sacramento Inner Wheel who filled 20 huge Christmas stockings with personalized gifts for teenagers in the Destination Family program. Sleep Train’s toy drive brought in 200 toys and funds for gift cards. A big thank you to all the guests who brought toys to the Iron Mechanical’s holiday party.

Simi Hunjan, an active Guide for Wonder, used social media and engaged other Santa’s Helpers who brought 36 gifts. The Child Abuse Prevention Council in Sacramento donated 5 gift bags for teenagers. For our Nevada City foster families, the cycle of giving began through the thoughtful idea of a Dad, who built his family through the adoption of foster children with the help of Sierra Forever Families. An employee of Macy’s, he was aware of a donation fund available through Macy’s Foundation, so he emailed a member of our Nevada City staff saying, “The Sierra Family did so much for our family, I am so thankful I can help.” He sponsored a “Magic of Macy’s” grant which brought joy and surprises to more than 30 Nevada County kids and their families. We sincerely thank all the “Secret Santas” who made the Holidays so extraordinary for the children we serve.
Check Us Out!

We have a new website!
Get the latest news, updates and event details.

sierraff.org

Follow Us On: