Forever Family Success

Sierra Forever Families (SFF) has found a forever family for over 3,200 children living in foster care. This story highlights a family living in Nevada County that opened up their hearts and home to Kayla.

Two years ago, Beth and Jeffrey* came to SFF seeking to adopt. They had both reviewed their lives. They had worked hard to come to terms with their losses and were healthy and ready to move forward and parent together.

Just after they had finished their home study, a social worker in a nearby county was looking for a family for a 4-year-old girl. Kayla* was removed from her birth parents because they used drugs and engaged in domestic violence. She had been moved from foster home to foster home, and in the process had been separated from her two younger siblings and a beloved foster family. Kayla was an angelic-looking blonde, sassy and smart as a whip, but with a bottomless sadness in her bright blue eyes.

The county social worker had many prospective adoptive families to choose from but Beth and Jeffrey’s home study caught her eye. She wasn’t looking for the “perfect family”—she was looking for the right family for Kayla. She believed that the obstacles they had overcome in their own lives would assist Kayla in overcoming some of her travails. The social worker said that SFF’s skill and attention to detail in assessing the family’s readiness to adopt gave her confidence they were prepared. And, with SFF’s training, guidance and support, they were.

“She was an angelic-looking blonde, sassy and smart as a whip, but with a bottomless sadness in her bright blue eyes...”  

Continued on page 3
Our Mission
We transform the lives of children in foster care by building and nurturing permanent families.

Visit us online at: www.sierraff.org
Exciting New Partnerships

Sierra Forever Families is excited to announce a new partnership with Sacramento County that will allow more children to find a forever family while providing on-going support to strengthen these families. Starting in January 2015, Sierra will be assisting 100 children who are considered to have ‘delayed permanence’, children who have been in foster care for over two years and who have one or more barriers to adoption. This new contract will allow us to serve 25% of the children in foster care who are in this category.

The new partnership will also provide pre and post placement support for families to strengthen attachment and provide the services families need to be successful. Together, this new partnership will have a tremendous impact on children in foster care so they can truly have a forever family.

Both of these services will need on-going support from our community. Together, we can grow these services until all children in foster care have the ability to live in a forever family.

Continued Forever Family Success...

Beth and Jeffrey met Kayla (instantly falling in love) and she transitioned into their home. The team collaborated on finding Kayla a suitable kindergarten class and therapist. Beth and Jeffrey worked hard to form an alliance with Kayla’s siblings’ family so that she could always have a connection with her once-lost birth family. Beth started a memory book for Kayla to help her make sense of her confusing start in life. Most important of all, Jeffrey and Beth gave Kayla a secure, stable home to help her start to learn to trust again. Within a year, they finalized the adoption before the judge.

Pure serendipity brought this trio together, but wisdom born of more than 30 years of adoption practice helped forge them into a forever family.

* Names changed due to confidentiality

Over 3,000 local children are in need of a forever family today!

Poem by a 14 year-old girl in foster care:

Love can feel lost
But we have to have hope
To live another day
Because without hope
There is nothing to live for
Don’t give up
Because you are truly loved
No matter what you believe
Just know that other people
Have been there
And there is still hope to be loved
Family of the Year: David and Sheree Davis

“Our road to adoption took us on a journey that we will cherish forever. Thank goodness for Sierra Forever Families as they guided and assisted us through the challenges of adding three wonderful children to our family. Adopting three children at the same time has changed our lives forever. We know there will be challenges along the way as we continue with our journey, but the road is already filled with love and laughter.”

Also honored as Family of the Year:
The Lugena Lynch Family and the Joseph and Tiffany Weaver Family

Exemplary Guide of the Year: Lisa Meadows

Maria’s personal growth from early childhood to adolescence. They have established a life-long friendship and relationship based on trust and respect.

“The story of our journey with Wonder spans almost nine years. It seems just like yesterday that Maria and I were going to camp for the first time. We were both scared and excited. We have now gone to Camp Wonder six times!

We have bonded over many special Wonder Moments like trips to the zoo, pottery classes, ice-skating and simply hanging out together. These experiences represent the building blocks of our relationship and journey together.”

Also honored as Exemplary Guides:
Yulia Kolomyza and Susan Giddens
Program Updates

Wonder, a mentoring program for children in foster care, is celebrating its tenth year of adventures through Camp Wonder!

Camp was created in 2006 to provide an outdoor camping experience, deepening the relationship between the adult mentors (Guides) and the children (Explorers) with whom they have been matched.

Camp activities are designed for each Guide-Explorer match to experience nature together and spend quality time with each other. There are group activities allowing the Explorers an opportunity to build self-confidence and meet other children also in foster care.

Over the decade, more than 200 children have attended camp. In 2008, Wonder created a leadership program for teen Explorers to become junior counselors at camp and act as role models for the younger Explorers.

Our newest camp location, Tuolumne Trails, is nestled in the tall trees of the Tuolumne River Canyon with vistas of Yosemite. These accommodations provide a wonderful way for the children to appreciate and enjoy nature with their Wonder mentors.

PlacerKids

PlacerKids Welcomes New Foster Parent Liaison, Lisa Elliott

As a parent who adopted three foster children, Lisa Elliott has the ability and experience to help others who are adoptive parents. While her children are now adults, her memories of the challenges she faced will be helpful in her position as Foster Parent Liaison.

Lisa has a unique perspective since she was once in foster care at the age of 16. As an adult, she volunteered for the Children’s Receiving Home and learned of the critical need for foster parents. She and her husband became foster parents. Their hope was to help children reunify with their birth parents, but reunification failed, so they decided to adopt. Three siblings were in their care for four years before the adoption finalized.

A long-time resident of Nevada County, Lisa is familiar with the support systems needed for successful parenting of children who have lived in foster care.

Lisa spends half of her time at the Placer County Children’s System of Care (CSOC) office and half at the PlacerKids office. She organizes, facilitates, and conducts foster parent support groups and participates in orientation and training sessions. She is planning a range of topics to help parents, such as, Social Worker Q & A, Medical Information & Providers, Fetal Alcohol Syndrome, Healthy Eating, Getting to Know the Foster Parent Association, and Things Every Fost-Adopt Parent Should Know.

Lisa joined PlacerKids on January 28, 2015, and is quickly learning her multi-faceted job. Welcome, Lisa!

Become a Guide. Bring a world of Wonder to a child in foster care.
Development Department News

The Development Department is excited to announce new ways to keep in touch with our supporters! In addition to our hard copy newsletter, which is published twice a year, you can now look forward to our monthly e-newsletter which will have heart warming stories that highlight Sierra’s mission of transforming the lives of children in foster care. You won’t want to miss it! Sign up today at sierraff.org.

In April, we started a weekly blog on our website. The blog will feature real life stories about the children we serve and their journey to find a forever family. We will also be sharing adventures from participants in the Wonder Mentoring Program. Other topics will be educational, including “Lessons Learned”– insights from social workers, and “Myth Busters” – debunking common misconceptions about adoption and foster care. And finally, there will be a special section on “Our Community Our Children” where blogs will provide information about changes in child welfare, special programs, and how the community is supporting children in foster care. Check out our website to read our new blog and let us know what you think.

You can also see frequent updates on Facebook, Twitter & LinkedIn. Get connected, share information and help raise community awareness so all children can have a forever family!

We are very grateful to all of our adoptive families, guides, volunteers and donors!

Please contact me at 916.368.5114 or cshorrock@sierraff.org to see how you can help ensure that no child emancipates from foster care without a permanent, safe and loving family.

In Loving Memory...

Austin Barker:
• PHCC Education Foundation
• Barker and Sons Plumbing & Heating
• Susan Bergstrom
• Jennifer Betz
• Annie Birnie
• Geno Caccia
• Richard and Elaine Carrington
• Paul Charles
• Laurie Crigler
• Beth Dobkin
• Alicia Dover
• Jody Elrod
• Greene & Associates, Inc.
• Theresa Hedrick
• Kitty and Mark Lakis
• Steven Lord
• Marianne Marquez
• Debra McKernan
• Lisa Mees
• Ron Miller
• Minuteman Plumbing and Drain Services
• Quality Service Contractors
• Sarah and Tim Randall
• George Salet Plumbing
• Tracy and Jerry Threlfall
• Justin Wagoner
• Charles Wallace

Patti King:
• Andeen Lovett

Lionel “BQ” Lee, MD:
• Tori Lee
• John Spencer
• XiaoXiao

In Honor of...

Chloe Myers:
In celebration of her 4th Forever Day
• Richard and Laurel Myers

Robert (Bobby) Myers:
• Richard and Laurel Myers

Chuck Nicholson and Tatyana Teenova:
• Anonymous

Would you like to honor a loved one?

Sierra Forever Families invites you to participate in Expressive Giving, as a meaningful way to honor or remember a loved one. Expressive Giving gifts may also celebrate an occasion, birthday, anniversary or graduation, or commemorating a special moment in someone’s life. Your gift reflects your wish to make a lasting impact on the lives of others, just as your honoree has done for you.

Expressive Giving
Sierra Forever Families sincerely thanks the following corporations and foundations who provided generous grants for specific programs. We are grateful to our funding partners for supporting our mission. To learn more about our grants program and how you can make a difference in the lives of children in foster care, please contact Juli Kramer at 916.368.5114 or jkramer@sierraff.org.

In support of:


- **Destination Family/Placement:** Capitol Adventure, City of Roseville Citizens Benefit Fund, DesCor Builders, Enterprise Holdings Foundation, Frank M. Booth, Inc., Golden 1 Credit Union, Kaiser Permanente Foundation, Loveall Foundation for Children, Nicholson & Olson CPAs, PHCC Education Foundation, Setzer Foundation, Sierra Health Foundation, Sleep Train Ticket to Dream Foundation

A special Thank You goes to Umpqua Bank’s Power of an Hour Fund created as a complement to their Connect Volunteer Network. Umpqua Bank associates are given up to 40 hours of paid time each year to volunteer in the community. Our Umpqua Bank volunteer, Jennifer Duff, nominated us and Sierra Forever Families was one of 200 organizations to receive a surprise cash award. For more information about Connect, visit www.umpquabank.com/connect.

Start the conversation today! Does your employer offer an employee giving program?

Secret Santa

During the Holiday Season, many wonderful people donated toys and gifts to bring joy to children in foster care served by Sierra Forever Families. We are grateful to the following generous folks:

- Employees of Mercy Hospital who filled 140 personalized requests
- Sleep Train Ticket to Dream Foundation & Toy Drive
- Inner Wheel of East Sacramento Rotary who personalized gifts for teenagers
- Board Members of Associated Plumbing & Mechanical Contractors of Sacramento (APMC)
- CA Lottery Office
- CA Apartment Association
- Board Members of Sierra Forever Families
- Diamond Pacific
- Employees of AmeriGas
- Employees and guests of Iron Mechanical, Inc.
- Employees of Lewis Apartment Communities
- Social Media Friends
- Stella & Dot

…and many more individuals
Sierra Forever Families invites you to help a child in foster care on May 5th

Your gift during the 24 hour BIG Day of Giving enables Sierra to find permanent loving families for children in foster care. YOU can help in three ways:

• Make a donation
• Ask 10 friends to give
• Like and share posts on Facebook and Twitter

For more information about the BIG Day of Giving contact Crystal Brooks at cbrooks@sierraff.org or 916.368.5114

Check Us Out!
We have a new website! Sign up for our e-newsletter to get the latest updates and event details.
sierraff.org
placer4kids.org

Follow Us On: