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www.sbcommunity.org/life/community_one

Foster Care

In the United States there are 500,000 children in foster care. In 2008, 68,127 of the children lived in California and 580 children in Santa Barbara.¹ The amounts each year grow and there are not enough foster care homes. Without a home for these children to go to, who is taking care of them? The problem right now rests on the state, but the problem should not solely rest on the state and needs to be taken care of through the community and by the church.

Why should we care? Eventually these children in the foster care system grow up to be adults. 20,000 foster youth age out of the system when they turn 18 years of age. Without a long life connection to a caring adult the stats of foster youth are shocking:

Only 54% earn a high school diploma, 2% earn a Bachelor's degree or higher, 84% become parents within 2 years, 51% are unemployed, 30% have no health care, 25% become homeless, and 30% receive public assistance.² These children grow up without the support they need to be productive and caring citizens. Furthermore, they grow up not knowing Christ. This population in our community is ready to be harvested for the Kingdom.

In my role as a parent I try to raise my children in a greenhouse environment by providing them with enough water, food, sunlight, and spiritual nourishment and protecting them from the harshness of storms, wind, or too much sun. That way when they enter into the outside world they will be strong and rooted deep in the soil to grow and bear good fruit, providing nourishment for others. Foster care youth are not in greenhouses. They are in the desert surviving as a cactus would.

¹ Needell, B. et al. (2009). Child Welfare Services Reports for California, University of California at Berkeley Center for Social Services Research. Accessed online at http://cssr.berkeley.edu/ucb_childwelfare (Dec. 2009).

² Casey Family Programs National Foster Care Month, Facts About Children in Foster Care, [http://www.fostercaremonth.org/AboutFosterCare/StatisticsAndData/Documents/FCM07_Fact_Sheet_\(national\).pdf](http://www.fostercaremonth.org/AboutFosterCare/StatisticsAndData/Documents/FCM07_Fact_Sheet_(national).pdf) (last visited Mar. 23, 2009).

They have too much sun, not enough water, and survive on very little. They grow thorns to protect themselves from others who try to hurt them. The foster youth grow thorns for self-preservation and continue through their lives harming themselves and others.

Our community and our church needs to care for these children and provide them with life-long mentors and forever families. Please consider how you can help. The number one need is for more people to become foster parents and forever families for these children. Can you commit to praying about your fears and see how God calls you to help these children?

Resources for Foster Care and Foster/Adopt:

Angels of Santa Barbara

The Angels Parenting Program places needy babies with the very best foster families and helps those families provide loving care until the court decides the child's fate.

Angels Foster Care Of Santa Barbara
www.angelssb.com
3905 State Street
Santa Barbara, CA 93105
(805) 898-0901

County of Santa Barbara: Department of Social Services

We have classes for anyone interested in becoming a licensed foster parent and or adoptive parent. Please note the schedules are for both North and South County. We are also pleased to also announce a Spanish class for licensure in Santa Maria.

1-866-899-2649
www.countyofsb.org/social_services/

Arrow

Arrow Child & Family Ministries serves children rescued from abuse through Arrow Christian Foster Care by recruiting, training, licensing and supporting Ambassador Foster Families as they provide therapeutic services from a Christian worldview.

621 Via Alondra, Suite 608
Camarillo, California 93012
805/482.2423
805/482.9301 fax

Heart Gallery of Santa Barbara

The heart gallery is a collection of photos of foster youth in Santa Barbara that have been adopted.

<http://www.sbheartgallery.org/>

Santa Barbara County Foster Parents Association

The Santa Barbara County Foster Parents Association (SBCFPA) is a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt, non-profit organization dedicated to the support and advocacy of foster families in Santa Barbara County. We sponsor various events and promote services for foster families including monthly training meetings, food pantry, Parent's Night Out and social events throughout the year. We team with community agencies to offer valuable resources including clothing, food and support services.

www.fosterfamilysupport.org/