



Foster Care & Adoption News

Spring 2010

Issue 12

Children's Bureau Reaches Milestone of 1,000th Child Adopted!

Children's Bureau reached a wonderful milestone in its vast history on September 25, 2009 with the 1,000th adoption of a child in its foster care and adoptions program. On that particular day, there were actually six children who were adopted by four families. Two of those children were sisters, Jazmin and Sarah who were adopted by a couple in Los Angeles.

"We were in our mid-40's when we got married and decided that adoption was a way to grow our family. We were trained and certified by Children's Bureau and soon after received the call that two sisters, ages two and three at the time, were available. The transition from being newlyweds to new parents has been amazing. The laughter and joy in our home is contagious," said Mrs. N.

Children's Bureau places more than 450 children in caring foster homes and finalizes more than 100 adoptions like those of Jazmin and Sarah each year. The agency also provides additional support to families through therapy, mentoring and support groups.

"Finding a permanent home for 1,000 children is a huge accomplishment for Children's Bureau and our families. It's also a wonderful testament to the positive end result for a child in foster care who becomes adopted. These children will now have a chance to succeed in life thanks to the loving family who brought them home," said Lou Graham, Children's Bureau director of foster care and adoptions.

"Our lives have changed because of Jazmin and Sarah. The support we received from Children's Bureau was wonderful, and in fact, we are being recertified for another adoption in the future," said Mrs. N.

To learn more about becoming a foster or adoptive parent, please visit www.all4kids.org. *(Names have been changed at the family's request.)*



Save the Date --- Children's Bureau to Host Appreciation Luncheon for Certified Foster and Adoptive Parents on July 17th!

Children's Bureau will host its annual Foster and Adoptive Parent Appreciation Luncheon and Training on Saturday, July 17th at our showcase facility, Magnolia Place Family Center in Los Angeles. The day will include a continental breakfast, inspirational and educational speakers and luncheon - plus raffle prizes! Training credit will be given for six hours (9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.).

Foster and adoptive parents are expected to attend from all of the areas served by Children's Bureau including Los Angeles, Santa Clarita, Ontario, Antelope Valley, Lake Los Angeles, Anaheim, Thousand Oaks and Carson. A prize will be given to the parents who come from the furthest location!

We look forward to spending time with the foster and adoptive parents who give so much of themselves to children in need. Our staff will be present to personally thank each of you for a job well done! You all are truly valued and cherished by Children's Bureau.

Reservations are required and can be placed by calling Helen Flores at (213) 342-0165. Children's Bureau at Magnolia Place Family Center is located at 1910 Magnolia Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 90007.



Adopted Child on the Way to Stardom!

Adrian enjoys telling others about his experience as a foster child with Children's Bureau and the details about the day when he was officially adopted and screamed with joy, "My Mom and Dad Adopted Me"! Adrian will also tell you what he wants to do in life and that is to be an actor.

An enthusiastic and beaming young boy with a knack for memorization, Adrian knew that he wanted to act after attending the taping of an annual television show called, "A Home for the Holidays", that features family stories about the journey to adoption. Soon after,



Adrian's parents signed him up with The Hollywood Group, a program designed to help children and their parents navigate the entertainment industry.

Adrian started landing small parts in television shows and feature films including "The Ghost Whisperer", "Entourage", and "Parks and Recreation". He also appears in the television series, "Hawthorne", directed by Will Smith.

Children's Bureau celebrates Adrian's success and wishes him the best as he pursues his dream of acting!

Anniversary Dates Often Trigger Misbehavior in Children

If a child is acting up, ask him or her to share with you what's going on to bring about their behavior. Oftentimes "anniversary dates" --- exact dates or just times of the year during which a traumatic event occurred --- trigger an unconscious negative response. Adults and children can experience symptoms of sadness or anger surrounding these times such as the death of a loved one or close friend occurs or the loss of a school, home or even a beloved pet.

Foster children especially have experienced more than their share of loss and parents may find that certain times of the year are really difficult for them. Try to find out if there is an activity that might help, such as looking at old photo albums together, talking about what they miss and validating the good things in their life. You might also work together on creating a Life Book for the child, a photo album with letters and stories from the birth parents and former foster parents and including pictures and stories about the child's adoption. Your social worker is available to help guide you this project or others that might be helpful to your child.

Tips on How to Protect Your Children from Dog Bites

According to the American Humane Society, half of all children in the U.S. are bitten by a dog before they reach age 12 -- and the most seriously injured are under age seven. Teach children to avoid dog bites by showing them proper behavior and explaining these basic rules: (1) Never approach a dog you do not know or one that is alone without an owner nearby. (2) Ask the owner's permission before petting a dog. (3) Do not go near a dog that is sleeping, eating, nursing puppies or playing with a bone or toy. (4) Do not tease a dog in any way -- the dog may not realize that you are being playful.



Cindy, 12
Felipe, 15



Hugo, 10
Danilo, 13
Keaty, 11



Arnulfo, 14
Alfredo, 12
Javier, 9



Matthew, 12



Join our Adoption Promotion and Support Services Program!

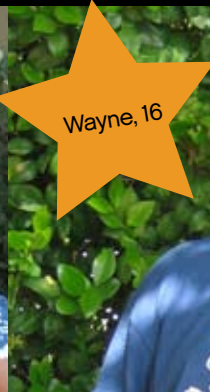
Our Adoption Promotion and Support Services program gives more than 250 foster care and adoption families each year additional help through therapy, mentoring and support groups. We also invite you to become mentors as part of the program. Mentors help new adoptive families with vital support, information and shared experiences as they go through the adoption process and afterwards. For more information, please call (800) 730-3933 or (661) 272-9996. We would love to hear from you!



Michael U.,
13



Brenda, 13
Tiffany, 7
Danielle, 4



Wayne, 16

Children's Bureau Finds Success with Matching Team Approach For Children in Adoption Program

Matching an adoptive child with a potential family isn't easy. There are several factors to consider including the child's age, gender, health, history and special needs as well as how the child might fit in with a family's interests, activities and beliefs. Children's Bureau developed a "matching team" approach for placing adoptive children with families and has noticed a higher success rate of children staying with families.

"Each child or group of siblings (brothers and sisters) is assigned a team of our Children's Bureau professional staff to review their case and match that child's temperament with a family's temperament. For example, a child who has special needs (such as infant born with drugs in their body) might be placed with a family that can handle the range of emotional and physical

demands of that child," said Cynthia Elliott, Children's Bureau's matching team coordinator.

A child and their prospective adoptive parents get to know each other over a gradual period of time meeting two to four times before a decision is made to pursue adoption. Children's Bureau has been using the matching approach for several years now and has placed many children in loving, adoptive homes.

"This process is working well for the children and families that we work with. It allows everyone involved time to get to know each other to ensure that this is the best match for them," said Elliott. "At the present time, we are also searching for adoptive homes for African American children who are part of sibling sets of two or three children and also, for children who are older."



Robert, 7
Ashley, 9

Angel, 16



Raul, 10
Alexis, 4
Anais, 3

Kimberly, 15
Rebecca, 14
Janelle, 13
Raquel, 10



Tyree, 11

Sonia, 11
Dulce, 9
Maria, 7

Support Groups Offered

Children's Bureau provides support groups each month for families throughout the Southland! These groups provide a great opportunity for you to meet, learn and share your experiences with other foster care and adoption families. Oftentimes families in our support groups build lasting friendships outside of the group. Certified parents receive two training hours for attending a meeting. We are currently offering support groups (Spanish & English depending on site) in Palmdale, North Hollywood, Los Angeles and Ontario. Ask your social worker for information on exact locations, dates and times.

Referral Fee \$500 per Family

To further encourage you, our excellent foster and adoptive families, to refer quality families to become foster and adoptive parents, we have raised the referral fee to \$500! When a family attends an Information Meeting or turns in their application, ask them to write your name as the Referral Source --- it's that easy! When the family becomes certified, you will receive \$250 and when a child is placed in their home, you will receive an additional \$250! Referrals are our best resource for finding quality families, so please share our program with your family and friends. For more information, please contact your social worker.

A WORD FROM LOU GRAHAM: Fun in the Sun – Attachment and Bonding



Summer break is a perfect time for strengthening the attachment between parents and their children. There are many activities that directly contribute to healthy attachment and bonding. Just as “child’s play” develops large and fine motor skills and stimulates brain development, helping a child to learn to play a game, or swim or ride a bike, develops trust and attachment with their adoptive or foster parent.

Turn off the movies in the van and talk to children when driving on short trips or errands. Restrict the amount of distracting stimulation surrounding children with radio and television, by turning everything off as often as possible. A simple conversation when driving to soccer may uncover issues such as bullying, discrimination or exclusion and can give you the opportunity to help your child work through a problem. Problem-solving is a valuable life skill that is learned and one that does not “magically appear” because a child ages. You can also improve their interactions with others by being consistently accessible and responsive to them.

Play games that demand interaction and eye contact, such as cards or board games. You are simultaneously teaching them positive interpersonal interaction and serving as a role model, especially in regards to winning or losing. They are learning to take turns, to be patient, to focus on the task at hand and to be respectful of others. Improve their behavior through showing or “modeling” good behavior. They will apply relationship building skills they learn to friends and eventually to their relationships with other adults.

My personal favorite activity with my children has been jigsaw puzzles. A card table is set up that can remain undisturbed for a long period of time. We can work on the puzzle during down time, either together or alone. The satisfaction of finding that piece and contributing to a group effort is invaluable! Make sure the puzzle is age appropriate and upgrade them as your children age. Puzzles have been found to stimulate brain activity, generate problem solving skills and simultaneously bring the family together as a unit.

Have a wonderful summer and have fun fun fun!

Fewer Children Bullied or Beaten Up

According to the Associated Press, there has been a sharp drop in the percentage of America’s children being bullied or beaten up by their peers, according to a new national survey by experts who state that anti-bullying programs are having a positive effect. The incidences of both assault by other youths and by siblings has dropped significantly.

“Bullying is the foundation on which a lot of subsequent aggressive behavior gets built,” said David Finkelhor, the Director at the Crimes Against Children Research Center. “If it’s going down, we will reap benefits in the future in the form of lower rates of violent crime and spousal assault.”

Children’s Bureau encourages you to discuss incidents with your children and with their teachers. Bullies need help with their behaviors and the person being bullied needs support and encouragement. If you need further guidance or tips on how to talk with your children about bullying, please contact your social worker.

An Update on Mollie Jelks



Read the update on Mollie Jelks and her family at [huffingtonpost.com](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2010/05/03/it-just-takes-one-foster_n_559435.html). Visit http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2010/05/03/it-just-takes-one-foster_n_559435.html

Helpful Materials Available for Parents

New parents might not be aware of the extensive library of materials that are available to them in our Los Angeles, Palmdale, Carson and Baldwin Park offices. For several years, Children’s Bureau’s Adoption Promotion and Support Services Program has been reviewing and ordering materials that address issues that are common among adopted children and their parents as well as general parenting issues.

Children’s Bureau’s social workers and mentors can help you to determine what issues you would like to review through books, videos or even books on tapes. Parents might also be interested in knowing that using our resource library counts for training hours. Please ask your social worker for details. These resources can offer invaluable insight and knowledge in how to raise successful, happy children.

Independent Domestic Adoption Studies Now Available

Children’s Bureau now offers the service of completing independent domestic adoption studies for families adopting outside of Children’s Bureau. For more information or to refer a family, please contact Cindy Stogel at (213) 342-0117.

**Interested in learning more about
Children’s Bureau’s foster care, adoptions
or mentoring programs?**

**Please give us a call at
(800) 730-3933 or
(661) 272-9996 or visit us at
www.all4kids.org.**

We would love to hear from you!