

## Mollie Jelks, Adoption Mentor

Mollie Jelks loves having a house filled with children. She has two biological children who live out of town (Vaughn, age 32 and Khalia, age 28) and four adopted children: Kendra, age 12; Amy, age 10; Tyler, age 9 and Sean, age 6. Her journey as a foster, adoptive and mentor parent began in 1994 when she was hired as a temporary worker at Children's Bureau. Mollie asked about the foster care program and got an application.

Several children were placed in Mollie's care, one of them being Amy. Amy was three months old when Mollie took her into her home. Amy was withdrawn, malnourished and suffering from drug exposure. With help from Children's Bureau, Mollie worked with Amy giving her the love, attention and nurturing that she needed. While Amy's progress was slow, Mollie's persistence and patience helped the fragile child develop into a thriving girl with lots of personality. Mollie adopted Amy on August 2, 2000 and the other children soon followed.

Once her adoptive family was complete, Mollie continued to attend training and support groups. However, she still wanted to find ways to help more children. Mollie's experience as a successful foster and adoptive parent could help others in the process so her social worker recommended that she join Children's Bureau mentor program.



"My heart jumped for joy when I heard about the mentorship opportunity. I still wanted so much to be a part of Children's Bureau and the children who needed help even though I could not bring them home to stay," said Mollie. "Now I get to share my experiences with new and potential foster and adoptive families, giving them the hope, courage, resources and support they need to get through the oftentimes long and challenging process of adoption. I wish there was a program like this when I became a foster and adoptive parent."

Mollie says that for 13 years she's loved working with Children's Bureau and that everyone supports each other like a family. She also is grateful to Children's Bureau for giving her four loving, beautiful children that give her pure happiness.

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## Homes Needed for African American Children!

Many of you may not know that African American children are overrepresented in the foster care system. At Children's Bureau, we've re-examined our recruitment efforts to specifically target families for these children. If you have a friend or family member who might be interested in learning more about the African American children we have who are needing a home, please contact us as soon as possible!

## 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 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 an 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.



*Cynthia Elliott,  
Matching Team Coordinator*

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## November is National Adoption Month!

Once a year on a special Saturday, Children's Court is filled with balloons, teddy bears and arts and crafts while family after family finalizes their adoption. This is not only a happy time for the families, but also for attorneys and judges whose weekdays are filled with difficult decisions. For that one day, social workers, attorneys and judges are on the same team, enjoying the end result of months, sometimes years, of adversity and hard work. Congratulations to all of the families who will finalize their adoptions on this wonderful and emotional day!

## Children Waiting for Adoption



*Damarco and Tyrone,  
age 8 and 10*

*Tanay,  
age 9*

*Wayne,  
age 15*

## Children's Bureau Adoptions Rise 42% in 2007-08!

We are proud to share with you that **120** adoptions were completed in fiscal year 2007-08, an increase of **42%** over the last year! Fost-Adopt parent and employee referrals have hit an all-time high! The staff is grateful and realizes that it takes many satisfied individuals within our family at Children's Bureau to attract positive interest in our cause. We strive to educate, motivate and encourage the outside world to realize the importance and high need for caring families to provide stable, nurturing foster and adoptive homes to children who need them. Even parents who have completed their adoptions, continue to refer us to their family, friends and acquaintances. A special thanks to you for mentoring those new parents! We also thank you on behalf of the children who remained with you for brief, but sweet times, and also on behalf of the children who have been or will be adopted by you.

children's bureau  
provide a:  
dream  
adopt or foster a child  
800.730.3933  
all4kids.org

### INFORMATION MEETINGS:

Nov. 8th or Dec. 6th - 10:00 a.m. – Noon  
Children's Bureau at Magnolia Place  
1910 Magnolia Avenue, Los Angeles 90007

Nov. 15th or Dec. 20th 10:00 – Noon  
Children's Bureau's Carson Office  
460 East Carson Plaza Drive, Suite 122  
Carson, CA 90746

(800) 730-3933, Ext. 1168 or [www.all4kids.org](http://www.all4kids.org)

## Matching Team continued from page 1

"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 Elliot. "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."

Children's Bureau is in need of foster and adoptive parents and offers monthly informational meetings in Palmdale, Santa Clarita, Thousand Oaks, Ontario, North Hollywood, Carson, Santa Fe Springs and Los Angeles. Counties served include Orange, Los Angeles, Riverside, San Bernardino and Ventura. Children's Bureau's mission is to find good homes for children in need. Qualifying families receive training, financial assistance and 24-hour support to aid in the care of their foster or adoptive children.

Founded in 1904, Children's Bureau provides professional treatment and prevention services to more than 14,000 abused and neglected children and their families each year throughout Southern California.

## New Legislation Affecting Foster Children

New legislation has been passed that now allows foster caregivers to possibly receive funds until the foster child becomes 21 years of age. This law is beneficial to foster children because many of them become homeless or get into trouble after leaving a foster home at age 18. This gives these children some much-needed time along with a safe and nurturing home they need to successfully start a college education or career. Attorneys, child advocates and the executive directors of foster care agencies have worked hard to change this legislation and society will benefit from their efforts as these children grow into thriving, productive adults.