

THP Stories of Success

From beginning to end, our Transitional Housing Program gives young adults the guidance needed to become successful members of the community. Laura-Gene was in foster care prior to entering into the THP Programs. When we asked Laura-Gene to share her story with us, this is what she had to say:

When I first entered into the THP Plus Foster Care Program, I was 18 years old and newly pregnant. I was scared of the future and how I was going to maintain my new family. Up until I was 15 years old, I had both of my parents and a somewhat normal life. In the blink of an eye, things can get flipped upside down, and it was a very harsh reality for me. When entering the program, I realized that adulthood came with more than I expected. I didn't have much of a family to speak of, and very few friends that I could trust.

After I graduated from high school, I got the first job that I could grab, which was at McDonalds. While it wasn't the most glamorous job, I had a baby on the way and I knew I had to start the building of my future. When starting out, the program gave me the tools to build a better life. I got a bank account, and was saving up for a car. Leaning money management is one of the few things that will make all of the difference in the future, especially when you have children. As time went on, I learned more and more of what it meant to be an adult. During my first year of the program, I had given birth to my son, moved onto my second job, and purchased my first car.

These were the positive experiences, but in that year I also went through some tough times with my child, my friends, and my vehicle. THP was with me every step of the way to pick me up as I fell. Having extra money every month that I didn't earn myself was difficult to not foolishly spend, and it will be for anyone who ever grew up not having everything they wanted. I wanted the coolest new phone, or to treat myself to cute new clothes. While I slipped up sometimes, you learn how important money management is, and how it can make or break you.

What I like about this program, is that they will keep you accountable and keep an eye on you, to make sure that what you're doing is aiding your future. In my case it was my social workers Janice Saelee and Kemberly Coley, who were there for me whenever I needed. Both were willing to push me where I needed to be, despite of the other ideas I had in mind. They cared about me and wanted to see nothing but good from me. I was in this program for two years, and I can't ever thank them enough for giving me and my son a fresh beginning. I look at the 18 year-old kids having kids of their own; how they struggle and hurt with no help from anyone, and I am once again grateful for my opportunity.

I've hit many speed bumps along the way, and I have slowly but surely become a better mother, adult, and person because of this program. Kids like us who have had their whole world torn apart, in one way or another, are somehow expected to survive without any sort of help. Families are so easily broken, and in result kids get thrown into foster care through no fault of their own. What this program does, is show these kids there is a chance for them, that they don't have to become a statistic and that despite their circumstance, they can have a bright future like any other kid their age.

There is no better feeling in the world than knowing that the path you're on is a bright one that you are an independent person who doesn't have to ask anyone for anything. Be the best YOU!

I would once again like to thank Children First for this once in a lifetime opportunity that truly changed my life and my son's life. I don't know how to repay you, other than hopefully showing these kids the best way to take full advantage of the blessing placed in front of them, and that they can do absolutely anything they want to do. Thanks again, THP, and good luck to the new kids entering this wonderful program!

About Our Agency

Children First Foster Family Agency has been serving the North state for sixteen years. The agency is proud of the strong family culture that is present among our foster families, staff, and all of the children we serve. With a dedicated team of social workers, the agency is able to service our families with a variety of programs and services. Visit our website to learn more.

Local Children, Local Homes, Local Support for Our Families... We Live Here, Too!

Contact Us

Give us a call for more information about our programs and services.

Children First Foster Family Agency

Red Bluff Office
590 Antelope Boulevard
Red Bluff, CA 96080
(530) 528-2938

Redding Office
2995 Churn Creed Road
Redding, CA 96002
(530) 722-1022

Yreka Office
490 South Broadway
Yreka, CA 96097
(530) 841-1030

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CHILDREN FIRST QUARTERLY

Children First FFA Newsletter NO> 2

September 2015



Our THP Participants Tour Apple!

There are a handful of important companies, in the past or present, to have been founded in or have strong associations with the region of Silicon Valley and the San Francisco Bay area. As the Internet became popular in the 1990s, Silicon Valley became the center of an explosion in the dot-com businesses.

The Children First Transitional Housing Participants were given an exciting opportunity to tour Apple, located in the heart of Silicon Valley. In August 2011, Apple pushed past Exxon as being the most valuable public company in the world. Who wouldn't want to tour a company like this?

During the tour, our THP Participants were able to hear about the company's history and they learned some interesting facts. Did you know

that Apple has over 80,000 employees worldwide? Their employees also earn about an average of 125,000 each year. One fact that was surprising is that in the first quarter of 2014, Apple earned more revenue than Google, Facebook and Amazon combined!

Who would have thought that one of the Co-founders of Apple sold his shares for \$800.00 in the beginning stages of growth, these shares today would have been worth more than 35 billion U.S. dollars.

Hearing these facts sparked some interest within our youth, and questions were asked of our tour guide. How do I get involved in a company like this? I wonder if I can do something like this with my future? Children First wants to show our young adults that dreams like this can be a reality with hard work, perseverance, and dedication.

Although not all of our participants will venture out into technology based careers; however, it is our hope that they will build a foundation around the career that they choose by creating goals, and then "Holding their toes to the fire until those goals are reached" as our Administrator would say. There is one thing that is certain, all of our THP Participants have the ability to become successful members of the community, and we hope that the Transitional Housing Program will give them the skills needed to grow and flourish in the career of their choice.

Children First will continue to make opportunities available for our young people to see **where commitment to their goals** can take them.

"A story of Success"
Learn how our THP Participants Laura & Symphony have benefited from the Transitional Housing Program, and find out what their future will entail. See page 4 for the whole story.

In This Issue

- Silicon Valley, Apple Tour, an outing to educate and inspire our THP participants to become successful, hard working leaders of the future.
- Transitional Housing Program Participant's stories of success. Learn how Laura & Symphony are able to implement the fundamentals of the program, and how all of their hard work will benefit them in the years to come.

Changing Children's lives, Giving Children Hope

Did You Know???

In 2014, there were an estimated 62,097 children in foster care in California alone.

624 of these children were in Shasta County, and 234 were in Tehama County.

Many of these children will go to a relative and some will be adopted into a loving family. Children will also be reunited with their parents, but what about the children in care who will still need our help?

Foster youth who experience more placements are nearly 15% less likely to complete high school when compared to their peers. The staff at Children First work together to make the most appropriate fit so that disruption of a foster child is less likely to happen.

24% of foster youth struggle with disabilities while in school. Our agency social workers advocate for our foster children, and will work with the schools to identify programs and resources available to help children succeed.

Statistics say that only 50% of foster youth will receive a high school diploma. The social workers at Children First educate both the families and children about the importance of completing high school, and will provide additional support to those children who are struggling.

Only 10% of former foster youth will attend college and, of that 10%, only 3% will graduate. Our Transitional Housing Program is available to assist youth in registering for college, applying for financial aide, grants, and other financial resources so that they can graduate successfully and beat the odds!

...this is why we do what we do — and this is why we need your help.

The Four Reasons Why You Need To Become A Foster Parent

If you are sensitive to the plight of abused children who have been removed from their homes or you see families that have a foster child it might make you think about how fortunate those children are to have a stable family care for them. You may know families that would make great foster parents, or may wonder what it would be like to become a foster parent yourself.



Most families after they decide to look into becoming a foster parent will ask me this question, "Are there that many children who need homes?" It is a great question. Currently as many as 2-20 children each week that are referred to Children First for placement. Needless to say, we are always looking for great foster parents. Some might even wonder, why are we always recruiting? Here are the top 4 reasons Children First has for recruiting new parents on a continual basis.

More families means more appropriate placements. It is important for us to have new foster parents because the more parents we have to select from, the more appropriate placements we can make. The better placements we make, the less disruption of the foster child. We do not like children moving from place to place; no one does. Movements sometimes are necessary, but in most cases the more stable a child's placement, the better the child does in foster care, including school, bonding with the family and getting the services they need.

There are so many children coming into placement that we do not have enough parents.

When we do not have enough foster homes, children sometimes have to go outside of their community to be placed. I think that Children First is unique because in Northern California our agency covers the land mass of some Eastern states. Every year for the last 3 years Children First has had more placements than the year before. This includes children of all ages, from infants to teenagers. It also includes individual and sibling groups of 2-4 children. We have never experienced more placements than what we are experiencing now!

We are called to care for the least! Whether you are looking to adopt or to be a professional foster parent, your heart has to be right. One of the scriptures that has been a life principle to me is John 5:13: "There is no greater love than to lay down one's life for one's friends". NLT

I have not found one thing on earth that is more important than making a child a priority and providing a loving home and a place for the child to heal and get traction to grow up to be a productive member of our community.

Michael Logan
Administrator

NEEDED: Intensive Treatment Foster Care Homes

Intensive Treatment Foster Care serves children and youth who have complex needs that require more support than standard foster care. ITFC homes blend carefully matched ITFC foster parents with the normalizing features of foster care, a variety of services, and an individualized treatment plan, all of which focus on the unique situation and needs of the individual child or youth. ITFC uses a team approach to treatment with the ITFC foster parent(s) being vital members of the treatment team, all of whom are dedicated to positively impacting the life of the child.

There are currently children and youth who need the support of a home environment that we are unable to help due to a lack of ITFC homes. **Have you considered ITFC?** We provide additional training and resources to ITFC foster homes to help you and the child succeed. If you have any questions or feel you may be interested in looking into ITFC, please contact Delrae Hansen at our Redding office.

Children First Auxiliary

Children First Foster Family Agency was thrilled at the idea of creating an Auxiliary team in April of 2014, to increase the awareness of agency events, raise funds to bless our foster families and to help support our foster youth. This incredible group of people is being led by Barbara Davis, MSW, a Children First social worker. All of their donated time and efforts has helped raise money that goes entirely to enhance the lives of our foster families and foster children.

Our goal this year is to make our annual Christmas party a spectacular event for all of our foster families. We are so appreciative of our foster families and the support, time and love they give to children in need, that we hope to raise enough money to make this Christmas party an unforgettable experience for all!

The next fundraiser will be a Dessert Auction, so if you have a sweet tooth, this is the place to be! Join us at this Auxiliary event to help raise funds and to satisfy your cravings for chocolate and ice cream, while raising money to honor and bless those who give back, our foster parents, staff and most important, our children!



A Word From One of Our Social Workers...

I have been with the Children First team for the past ten years. Children First is not just an agency, It's a Family. It's the relationships that we build with each other and with our foster parents that truly impact the children we serve. Making a difference in these children's lives is my drive and purpose. Its why I am a social worker. Every child that is placed in the foster care system experiences varying degrees of trauma. This affects their ability to function at school, in other social settings and within a family. My goal is to develop a connection with these youth so they feel they have a voice. To give foster parents and older youth the skills to navigate the systems in their life. To help them make connections within the community so they have a variety of support. **It takes a village to raise a child, and it is my job to help create that village.** Children First provides trauma focused training to our foster parents so they have a well equipped tool box to help our foster youth. I enjoy working with foster parents and watching them grow and change through experiences and trainings, as I have myself. I have a special place in my heart for foster children and maintain a lot of relationships with "my kids" after they have aged out or returned home. I call them my kids because that's how I feel. They are my responsibility and I advocate for them as I would my own child whether it is in the school system, health care, mental health or any other area. Our children are our future. They are not a number or a client they are our children. *Children First!*
Tina Kemp, Social Worker

DESSERT AUCTION!
Saturday, October 24, 5-7 pm
At the Anderson Veterans Hall
3210 W. Center Street in Anderson

PROCEEDS WILL BENEFIT THE CHILDREN AND FAMILIES OF CHILDREN FIRST FOSTER FAMILY AGENCY

Unable to attend but want to help? If you would like to donate cash, clothing, school supplies, or other goods for the kids, call Barbara at 530-410-2679.

Children
FIRST
FOSTER FAMILY AGENCY