

JANUARY 2022 NEWSLETTER



Yolo County Resource Family Approval Unit in partnership with Foster Kinship Care Education, were able to serve our foster families and Transitional Aged Youth for the holiday with the assistance of many generous donors from within the community. This year was extra special as we received a donation from Fostering Unity in Los Angeles County, which helped to create a true Winter Wonderland for our families to partake in. Also, Catalyst Church one of our main donors provided assistance on the day of the event to help set-up all the decorations within our parking lot. We would like to take this opportunity to share some of the pictures that we have from the collection of the gifts, pictures of some of our donors and partners, to the decorations and day of the event. We are looking forward to next year's event and continued partnership within our amazing community of donors.

*Thank you from the Yolo County
Resource Family Approval Team!*



Happy New Year everyone and welcome to 2022. We ended last year on a great high doing an amazing Caregiver Holiday event on December 18, 2021. We had amazing donors and partnership with FKCE to bring this to all that attended. Thank you to everyone that attended and we hope that you all had as much fun as we did. Our team is excited about 2022, as we are kicking off the year with Recruitment and Retention as one of our big projects for the year. Please share any thoughts, ideas, and suggestions that you may have for our Recruitment efforts in Yolo County to Alicia.Wasklewicz@yolocounty.org.

Alicia Wasklewicz, MPA



Caregiver Spotlight: *Jessica and Michael Vroman*



What would they tell a new incoming caregiver?

Don't be afraid to ask questions and lean on your support system. There are so many people willing to help if you just reach out. It can feel intimidating at first, because everyone else seems to know how it all works better than you do, but the only way to learn and get comfortable is to ask questions. Never forget why you signed up to do this in the first place – because a child out there needs you, whether it's for a night or two, a month or six, or forever.

What tips would they have for foster parents?

Be flexible! Things will change and then change back and then change again. Try to roll with it as best you can and remember at the center of all of this is a child who didn't ask for any of this to happen. Don't be afraid to get "too attached" – that's exactly what these kids need. Try to come up with a routine that works for your family and build new ones based on how things go. Remember to communicate with your team – they can't help if you don't tell them what you need. Take care of yourself, and know that whatever you're feeling at any moment in this journey is perfectly valid.

What would they do differently?

Probably the only thing we would have done differently is start the RFA process sooner. It has been emotionally exhausting and incredibly fulfilling at the same time, and we wouldn't change a thing.

What was their experience this far?

We accepted our first placement just a few weeks after completing the process to become an RFA family. We felt ready and terrified all at the same time, and that's completely normal. Things seemed to move so fast at first, and we went through months of not knowing if reunification would happen or not. About a year later, we got the call that a sibling had been born, so we accepted that placement as well and now it's looking like both are on the path to adoption.

Highlighting the positive and negative -

We really haven't had anything negative because we realize the majority of what happens is beyond our control. What we can control is how much we love on these kids and meeting their needs while they're in our homes. And that part is the best part anyway.

Their experience with the Yolo County – Our experience has been wonderful. We have felt so much support along the way from a whole host of professionals and we've been very lucky to work with an amazing team of social workers and attorneys. It truly does take a village!

A Heart can grow -From Sesame Street in Communities

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cJ5pcUsIx5g&t=117s>

Among many great coping strategies for kids is drawing, which is a fine way to share important feelings. Explain that when we have to say goodbye to people (and places), it can feel like our hearts are breaking or shrinking, but that those memories don't need to leave our hearts. As Karli did in the video, help children draw three outlines of hearts. Then help them write or draw in each of the hearts: Among many great coping strategies for kids is drawing, which is a fine way to share important feelings. Explain that when we have to say goodbye to people (and places), it can feel like our hearts are breaking or shrinking, but that those memories don't need to leave our hearts. As Karli did in the video, help children draw three outlines of hearts.

Then help them write or draw in each of the hearts:

1. In the middle heart, children draw "the people and places I miss."
2. In the heart around that, encourage children to draw new, important grown-ups in their lives, new places they're going, and new things they are doing and learning.
3. In the outermost heart, invite children to draw things they would like to do, learn, try, and see—to build optimism as they look ahead.

If they don't already have one, you might also help children create a "My Story" in which children record this type of information. The book belongs to them as they move around. Make a simple one by cutting sheets of paper into heart shapes and stapling them together, or just using a blank journal or notebook. They can add the heart drawing to the book when they're done.

Children might also have a "Memory Box" (it can be as simple as a shoe box) in which children can keep things (including drawings) that help them remember people or places they miss.

Feeling Frames

https://sesamestreetincommunities.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/Divorce_PRIINT_Feeling_Frames.pdf

Sharing Feelings: Sad, worried, mad—adults and kids alike are likely to have big feelings while coping with divorce or separation. These emotions can be overwhelming, and children may not have words to describe them. A feelings chart helps children name and better manage these feelings.

1. Discuss each feeling on the chart. Ask, "Do you sometimes feel sad?" and "What makes you feel sad?" Assure kids that it's normal to feel different emotions at the same time.
2. Ask children if they can think of any feelings that are not on the chart, like worried or nervous. They can draw these additional feelings on the blank squares.
3. Help kids color and cut out the feeling cards one by one. Cut along the dotted lines on the poster to make pockets.
4. Help children think of activities to do when feeling each emotion. Write those ideas on the back of each card. Ask, "What helps you when you're sad?" You can suggest activities by saying something like, "When I'm sad, it makes me feel better to dance." This gives children new ideas and shows them that adults also need to find ways to manage feelings.
5. Hang the poster where kids can see it. When they have a big feeling, ask them to find the card that matches it and tuck it into a pocket. They can turn the card over for an activity that might help (over time, you can add to, change, or get rid of strategies that don't seem to work anymore).