



# CHILDREN FIRST QUARTERLY

Children First FFA Newsletter NO. 4

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## Be The Change You Want To See: Join Our ITFC Treatment Team!

In today's society there are so many environmental factors that cause a tremendous amount of pressure to families, and especially to the children. When families fail to meet the needs of the children - either emotionally, mentally, or physically - who will be there to help them?

**WILL IT BE YOU?** There has never been a greater time than right now for these children to have a stable and safe family environment with parents that understand trauma and will support them through their healing process.

Children First's Intensive Treatment Foster Care (ITFC) program has provided services to Tehama, Shasta and Siskiyou Counties since 2009. An ITFC home is an *alternative* to group-based residential treatment or psychiatric hospitalization for children 5-18 years of age who require services greater than general foster care. Eligible children have the following challenges: multiple placements, serious emotional/behavioral issues, possible group home placements or are being stepped-down from a group home environment.

How can you get involved? Do you know an individual who is experienced in working with abused/neglected children? Do you know someone who is eager to learn and develop new skills on an ongoing basis? Is there someone that you know who is resilient and will view themselves as members of our "treatment team" and someone who will understand the value of parenting-flexibility to best serve each child? Perhaps that someone is you.

Our program reduces exposure to a group home environment with similar challenges by taking children out of the institutional setting and placing them in a supportive home environment. When getting to the root of the problem, these children need someone they can trust, someone who will help them heal from their pain.

Every ITFC family is provided with an in home specialist and a support counselor who, through experience, are quick to establish a relationship with the child and are highly skilled at working with our foster parents. Our ITFC foster parents receive 60 hours of training that prepares them for working with higher level children. The program will also provide the framework for safety, limits, boundaries, consistency and predictability for individualized treatment.

The primary-change-agents in the child's life are the "substitute parents" who are providing constant and consistent care in a family environment in which the child is a valued member.

*Be the caring adult who not only serves on the front lines of behavioral change but also as the role model who provides the care and love needed to healthy development and a sense-of-belonging.*

Do you want to be a part of a program that encourages the development of healthy values and adaptive skills necessary for the child's return to their biological families, and to return to the community as a productive member? Contact Children First now!

**Creating Leaders of Tomorrow: Our THP+ Program has been helping young adults in our community become successful in many areas of life. See back page for the whole story.**

## In This Issue

- Learn how you can support our children and become a provider in our ITFC program
- All About Siskiyou: Become familiar with our agency locations and employees and how the "Fantastic Four" make it all happen
- Educate yourself on our programs and services, and decide if our Transitional Housing Program is for you or for someone you may know.

# Children First in Siskiyou County

In 2008 “Children First” opened its Siskiyou office in Yreka, California. Our Siskiyou office has been serving the entire North State with a variety of services ranging from general foster family placements to Intensive Treatment Foster Care.

Our Siskiyou office provided a visitation program for Siskiyou County families who were in reunification for over seven years. We still provide family visits for individuals with services that were either recommended or mandated by the family law court mediator and we still assist the county when they have a specific visitation need.

Children First has over 30 homes in Siskiyou County. Our mission is to support these families through their fostering journey and we are proud to say that we have a retention rate of over 96%.

We have a team of women who are dedicated to making the agency in Siskiyou to be efficient and therapeutic for our foster families and for the children.

This special team is helping and equipping our foster families to provide a great service for the children of Siskiyou County. Often times these ladies find themselves with multiple job titles because Siskiyou County is quite large in terms of its geographic region from families in Happy Camp, McCloud, Etna and Doris, Our Siskiyou team has taken on these many roles to ensure our families and children get the support,

advocacy, and resources needed to make our foster parents successful.

This wonderful team includes Regional Director Shannon Pierce, M.S. Psy.; Social Worker Caitlin Bennett, A.S.W.; and administrative staff Amy Neesby, B.A. and Anna Christie who will be completing her bachelor’s degree in criminal justice in June. Anna is not only an employee, but a foster parent, mentor and provider. She can relate to many of our foster families and any questions they might have.

We like to refer to these ladies as “The Fantastic Four”! Children First and all of its employees have a strong desire to help change lives by providing a safe place for children to heal in a culture of love, acceptance and consistency.

Our Siskiyou team is making this happen and are the “superheroes” for many of our children and families... Keep up the good work Ladies!



Amy Neesby, Anna Christie, Shannon Pierce, and Caitlin Bennet





## The Starfish Story

Original Story by: Loren Easley

One day a man was walking along the beach, when he noticed a boy hurriedly picking up and gently throwing things into the ocean.

Approaching the boy, he asked, “Young man, what are you doing?”

The boy replied, “Throwing starfish back into the ocean. The surf is up and the tide is going out. If I don’t throw them back, they’ll die.”

The man laughed to himself and said, “Don’t you realize there are miles and miles of beach and hundreds of starfish? You can’t make any difference!”

After listening politely, the boy bent down, picked up another starfish, and threw it into the surf. Then, smiling at the man, he said,

“I made a difference to that one.”



## A Word From One of Our Social Workers...

It has been my pleasure to serve as the Regional Director for Children First in Siskiyou County for almost three years. In my capacity as a social worker, I have had the opportunity to guide, train, and support children and families in Siskiyou County as they navigate the Child Welfare System. Social workers are problem solvers, trainers, coaches, and advocates. People come to the field of social work for a wide variety of reasons. I chose this field because of my fierce desire to help protect the vulnerable population of abused and/or neglected children. However, the role that social workers play is just one piece of the puzzle. Foster parents are the vital link between a child’s success and how they adapt to foster care placement. For those special individuals that chose to become foster parents...**we thank you!** Thank you for sharing in our common goal, that is to change lives and give hope to the children who need it the most. The collaboration between foster parents and the staff at our Agency, leads to a partnership that builds bridges that help take the children in our care to where they need to be; whether it means being reunited with their family of origin or finding permanency with a loving family. In the ten years I have been working in the field of social services, I have had the privilege of seeing the impact we all have in the lives of the children we serve. I am fortunate to maintain connections with children who have successfully reunited with their parents, as well as those who have been adopted by loving foster parents. When I think about the challenges that sometimes come with working in this field, I am reminded of the Starfish Story. Every child’s life that we touch is important and can have a lasting impact. If we are agents of change for even one child, we have done something worthwhile in this world.

Shannon Pierce, M.S.Psy., Siskiyou County Regional Director

# Creating Leaders of Tomorrow!!

If you have ever fostered or cared for a child who is nearing the age of eighteen you will know that this is an important milestone in their life. This is the time where responsibility and commitment will play a key role in their success as a young adult. What every parent wants for their children is to see them become strong, mature adults who are a respected member of their community.

Each year in California, over 4000 young adults exit the foster care system when they turn 18. These "emancipated foster youth" commonly leave the foster care system without a place to live, a job, a high school diploma or the consistent support of a caring adult.

Our Transitional Housing Plus Foster Care (THP+FC) works with youth between the ages of 18-21 and our Transitional Housing Program Plus (THP-Plus) works with youth who are between the ages of 21 and 24. These programs were designed to help in the preparation and responsibilities of adulthood, and we have had some pretty good success stories over the years.

The THP+FC Program provides up to three years of rent and utility payment assistance along with a monthly grocery allowance. Our social workers will help guide these young adults and will teach them skills such as budgeting, job attainment and career search and training. Our participants are required to work or be enrolled in school.

Along with guiding them into the world as we know it after foster care ends, there has to be a way to show these young adults that they can be successful in whatever they choose to do. The agency does this by educating our participants, touring colleges, businesses, and allowing them to have the opportunity to listen to other "stories of success".

Do you want to know how you can get involved and help? Become a mentor, rent a room in your home to a young adult who is transitioning from foster care into our THP + Program; or talk to someone that you know who may be willing to do the same. For more information on our programs or services, contact Children First now! You can be the difference that can change a young adult's life forever!



## About Our Agency

Children First Foster Family Agency has been serving the North state for sixteen years. Our 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, our agency is able to serve our families with a variety of programs and services. Visit our website at [www.childrenfirstffa.com](http://www.childrenfirstffa.com) to learn more.

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

## Contact Us

Please call us 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**  
2608 Victor Avenue  
Redding, CA 96002  
(530) 722-1022

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

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