Sierra Forever Families was founded in 1983, and we are celebrating our 30th Anniversary this year! More importantly, we’re excited to celebrate the more than 3,000 children and youth who have found permanency through the efforts of our staff working with families and individuals who opened their hearts and homes to children in foster care. In this 30th Anniversary special edition of Homecoming, we are pleased to share the McIntosh family’s “Then and Now” journey.

On a winter afternoon, the McIntosh siblings sit comfortably in their living room to share childhood memories. Morgan is the oldest (13) and sits calmly on the couch next to her sister Makayla (10). Their younger brother Tyler (8) moves around excitedly. They all agree that the family’s annual participation in a local production of The Nutcracker is a highlight of the year. “We’re all a part of it,” the kids say in unison. Makayla adds, “Both our mom and dad have acted, but usually mom helps with backstage stuff.” Morgan is the official ballerina in the family and begins to recall her various roles when Tyler adds, “Don’t forget the plum fairy!” Smiles and laughter continue as the kids discuss the various productions they participated in.

Bret and Heather are the proud parents of this bunch. Both parents beam with love and pride when they talk about their kids. Heather shares, “They’re just like any other siblings. They love each other, have fun together and fight together, too.”

…continued on page 10
MISSION STATEMENT
We transform the lives of children in foster care by building and nurturing permanent families.

Sacramento Center
8928 Volunteer Lane, Suite 100
Sacramento, CA 95826
Tel: (916) 368-5114
Fax: (916) 368-5157
E-mail: sffsac@sierraff.org

Nevada City Center
138 New Mohawk Road, Suite 200
Nevada City, CA 95959
Tel: (530) 478-0900
Fax: (530) 478-0970
E-mail: sffgv@sierraff.org

Auburn Center (PlacerKids)
275 Nevada Street
Auburn, CA 95603
Tel: (530) 887-9982
Fax: (530) 887-9994
Toll free: 1-888-387-9982
E-mail: placerkids@sierraff.org

Chico Adoptive Family Resource Center
520 Cohasset Road, Suite 140
Chico, CA 95926
Tel: (530) 879-3861
Fax: (530) 896-1792
E-mail: sffchico@sierraff.org

California Department of Social Services/Adoptive Family Resource Center
Warm Line: (800) 268-2967
Fax: (916) 484-0430
E-mail: dfischer@sierraff.org
CELEBRATING 30 YEARS OF SUCCESS

This May, Sierra Forever Families will officially enter into its 30th year of building and nurturing families for children living in temporary care. We are proud of our history and celebrate our achievements and success of the past three decades.

- Sierra serves twelve northern California counties.
- We have placed more than 3,000 children into ‘forever families.’
- We were the pioneers that stated “no child is unadoptable,” and working with Sacramento County, we created the Capital Kids Are Waiting program. This critical program continues to find families for children with one or more barriers to permanency.
- Sierra began the first Adoption Family Resource clinic in Northern California.
- Our partnership with Placer County (PlacerKids) has dramatically increased the percentage of permanency for children in the Placer County.
- We were the first in Sacramento to bring Youth Permanency services to ensure the youth we serve are connected to families.
- We continue our commitment to keep our families strong through the use of best practices.

Still, we want to have an even greater impact in the lives of children in foster care. It is our vision that every child has a lifelong, safe, stable and secure parenting relationship with unconditional commitment. At Sierra, we view our achievements as a guide to help us move forward.

- We are moving from local accreditation to national accreditation.
- We are working with our partners to create a seamless continuum of care model to enhance outcomes for our children and families.
- We continue to raise needed funds to have the capital to share our successful models with others so, together, we can have a systemic impact in the lives of children and their communities.

It is feasible to have a family for every child in our community as long as we continue to work together on behalf of the children. As always, I would like to thank you for your continued support of our mission.

Cheers to 30 years of hard work from staff, volunteers, and dedicated families on behalf of the children in our community!

WHERE THERE’S A WILL, THERE’S A WAY.

PLAN TODAY TO CREATE A FOREVER FAMILY TOMORROW…

Become a member of Tomorrow’s Legacy Club (TLC) by remembering Sierra Forever Families in your will or estate plans. In doing so, you will provide a lasting legacy to help children find forever families for years to come.

For additional information about TLC and ways to support, contact Kerry Wood at (916) 368-5114 x346 or kwood@sierraff.org.
EVENTS: For more information or to volunteer, please call 916-368-5114.

WONDER MENTORING NEW GUIDE ORIENTATIONS (SACRAMENTO) FOR OUR FALL 2013 CLASS:
Thursday, September 5, 6-7pm · Saturday, September 14, 10-11am · Tuesday, September 17, 6-7pm
If you wish to attend the Fall 2012 Orientations, please RSVP to wonderinfo@sierraff.org.

CLASSES: Classes, trainings and support groups require a reservation.

SACRAMENTO
Second Mondays
EXPLORING PERMANENCY I. (Orientation). 6:00-8:30pm. Sacramento SFF office. Call (916) 368-5114.
Second Wednesdays*
SINGLE & GAY/LESBIAN ADOPTIVE PARENT SUPPORT GROUPS. 6:00-8:00pm.
Sacramento SFF office. Call (916) 368-5114.
Second Thursdays*
ADOPTIVE PARENT SUPPORT GROUP. 6:30-8:00pm. Sacramento SFF office. Call (916) 368-5114.
March 20 & May 15*
ADOPTION MODULE Part 1. 5:30-8:30pm. Sacramento SFF office. Call (916) 368-5114.
March 27 & May 22*
ADOPTION MODULE Part 2. 5:30-8:30pm. Sacramento SFF office. Call (916) 368-5114.
March 23 & May 18
EXPLORING PERMANENCY II Part 1. 9:00am-5:30pm. Sacramento SFF office. Call (916) 368-5114.
April 6 & June 1
EXPLORING PERMANENCY II Part 2. 9:00am-5:30pm. Sacramento SFF office. Call (916) 368-5114.
April 17
CONCURRENT PLANNING. 5:30-8:30pm. Sacramento SFF office. Call (916) 368-5114.
Call for dates
MANDATED CHILD ABUSE REPORTING. 6:00-8:00pm. Sacramento SFF office. Call (916) 368-5114.

PLACERKIDS
Two Saturdays*
PRIDE/PRE-SERVICE TRAINING. 8:30am-4:30pm. PlacerKids, Auburn. Call Donna (530) 308-3283 for dates and more information.
First Tuesdays*
KSSP SUPPORT GROUP. 6:00-7:30pm. Placer Kids, Auburn. Call (916) 774-6802.
First Thursdays*
FOSTER/ADOPTIVE SUPPORT GROUP. 6:00-8:00pm. PlacerKids, Auburn. Call (530) 308-3283.
Third Tuesdays*
KSSP SUPPORT GROUP. 6:00-7:30pm. Kids First, Roseville. Call (530) 774-6802.
Third Thursdays*
PK ORIENTATION FOR FOSTER CARE & ADOPTION. 6:30-8:30pm. PlacerKids, Auburn. Call Donna (530) 887-9982 for information and reservations.
Fourth Thursdays*
FOSTER/ADOPTIVE SUPPORT GROUP. 6:00-8:30pm. South Placer at Cirby Hills. Call (530) 308-3283 for more information.
TBD
ADOPTION MODULE. 9:00am-4:00pm. PlacerKids, Auburn. PRE-REGISTRATION IS REQUIRED, call Theresa Bardakjian at (530) 889-6758 to register.

NEVADA COUNTY
First Wednesdays
EXPLORING PERMANENCY I. (Orientation). 6:00-9:00pm. Nevada City office. Call (530) 478-0900.
First Fridays*
ADOPTIVE PARENT SUPPORT GROUP. 9:30-11:30am. 138 New Mohawk Rd, Nevada City.
Open to all adoptive families who live in Nevada County. Childcare provided. Call Diana at (800) 268-2967.

YUBA/SUTTER COUNTIES
Second Thursdays*
ADOPTIVE PARENT SUPPORT GROUP. 10:00am-noon. Open to all adoptive families living in Yuba and Sutter Counties. Call Diana at (800) 268-2967 for location and childcare needs.

CHICO
First Tuesdays
Second Wednesdays
PARADISE ADOPTIVE PARENT SUPPORT GROUP. 9:30-11:30am. Paradise Family Resource Center, 6241 Skyway. Call (530) 879-3861.
First Thursdays*
CHICO ADOPTIVE PARENT SUPPORT GROUP. 6:30-8:30pm. 520 Cohasset Rd., Suite 140. Call (530) 879-3861.

*Childcare available, please make childcare reservations when calling in to sign-up for class.

REGISTER ONLINE AT SIERRAFF.ORG
WELCOME HOME: RECENT FINALIZATIONS

THE PEREZ FAMILY
Tony and Max are pleased to announce the adoption finalization of their new son and brother, Zachary (11) on June 25, 2012.

THE CRAWFORD FAMILY
Walter and Janet finalized the adoption of their daughter Faith on June 1, 2012.

THE BROWN FAMILY
On December 31, 2012, Rigo (14) and his father Robert received the best start to a new year: they became a forever family!

THE MURREY FAMILY
On November 20, 2012, Paul, Karen and Jalen celebrated the adoption of their new sons and brother, Le’Andre (5) and Janoel (4).

THE AUSTIN FAMILY (not shown)
On July 16, 2012, Bob and Jennifer were thrilled to maintain sibling connections through the adoption of their daughter Dejon (11) and her brother Lincoln (10)

THE WEBSTER FAMILY (not shown)
On July 17 2012, Wendy welcomed Angel (10) as her adopted daughter.
LAEMAY (8) is a little girl who is in need of a forever family. She is warm, smart, outgoing and is a natural leader. She enjoys talking to peers and easily makes new friends. She loves to ride her bike, read books and complete puzzles. Laemay has a beautiful voice and loves to sing with her favorite songs on the radio, especially any song by Justin Beiber.

Laemay has a sister who is very important to her, so any family who adopts her will need to value that relationship as well. She is in need of a forever family who recognizes her beauty, strength, and reciprocates the love she deserves.

SIERRA (11) is an active young lady who is engaging, helpful and fun. When problems arise, Sierra is skilled at taking the space she needs to find solutions. Sierra is very sensitive and helps her peers when they are upset.

For fun, she enjoys fashion and loves to go shopping, try different hairstyles and paint her nails. However, she’s not all malls and magazines—Sierra also enjoys the outdoors, especially playing in the sunshine, camping and skating. If you are an “outdoorsy” family, she may be the child for you.

She is looking for a forever family who allows her personality to shine and supports her dreams and aspirations. She has siblings and her relationships with them are very important. She would do well with a family who understands this and would do their best to honor her family ties. Sierra is excited to find a forever family who can provide the love and support she needs to help her grow into a young woman.

ISAIAH (10) is a delightful young man who is patiently waiting for his forever family. He is an active guy with a great imagination and loves robots, trucks and monsters. Isaiah also likes to help in the kitchen, especially when it comes to making cookies. Of course, his favorite part is cleaning up by eating them.

Isaiah has two brothers who have already been adopted by families in Sacramento. He wants a loving family of his own, but one who would honor his relationships with his brothers.

*Information current at time of newsletter production

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CALL SIERRA FOREVER FAMILIES AT (916) 368-5114 OR VISIT US AT SIERRAFF.ORG.
THE ART OF ADOPTION

Do you know an adopted child with a flair for art or poetry? HOMECOMING wants to hear from you!
To submit artwork or poems by adopted children, contact Sierra Forever Families at (916) 368-5114.

SEE MORE ARTWORK ON OUR WEBSITE AT SIERRAFF.ORG

I Am Me... Who Are You?
By Kaylor

I am a jaunty girl. I am a friend.
I am a chocolate lover.
I am a student. I am a daughter.
I am a 49ers fan.
I am a reader. I am a pet lover.
I am courteous. I am a neat person.
I am fun to be with.
I am unique. I am punctual.
I am a brunette.
I am a proud Hispanic.

I believe in family values.
I believe it creates a foundation.
I believe family values allow me to make good choices.
I believe family values become my moral guide.
I believe family values leads me to become a better person.

I am funny and serious.
I am generous and thrifty.
I am happy and sad.
I am affectionate and withdrawn.
I am obedient and defiant.

I am not like anyone else.
I am who I am.
I am me.
Who are you?
DEVELOPMENT UPDATE

30 Years in the Making

In its infancy 30 years ago, Sierra Forever Families (known then as Sierra Adoption Services) began humbly in a small in-home office in Nevada County with two staff members who were passionate about providing permanency to children waiting for adoption. This passion has grown over the years to include support for all paths leading to permanency for children and youth in foster care. Today, Sierra has a staff of 75 professionals now serving 12 counties with three offices throughout Northern California.

For perspective, you may find it interesting that, 30 years ago in 1983, retailers were selling out of Rubik’s cubes and Cabbage Patch dolls, Ronald Reagan was serving as president, a gallon of gas cost $1.29, and teenagers across the country were listening to their favorite songs on the newly invented “Boom Box.” At the same time, the founders of Sierra were facing the important task of finding permanent homes for youth in California’s foster care system, which was on the brink of growing from 30,000 children in the early 1980s to a peak of over 100,000 in the late 1990s.

Beginning this May, we will launch a year of 30th anniversary activities to recognize and celebrate Sierra’s children, families, board members, donors, staff and volunteers who have worked tirelessly to carry out Sierra’s mission of “transforming the lives of children in foster care by building and nurturing permanent families.” With the philosophy that no child deserves to grow up in temporary care and every child needs a permanent home and a loving family, Sierra is proud to announce that nearly 3,000 children have been placed into permanent homes over the past 30 years.

In celebration of our 30th anniversary, we hope you will join us at the following events and help us spread the word to others in the community to get involved.

TUESDAY, MAY 7
WORLD PREMIER PERFORMANCE OF “A LITTLE PRINCESS”
Reception and Auction: 5:30-6:30pm · Show begins at 7pm.
The Sacramento Theater Company (STC) has opened its venue to Sierra to host the World Premiere of A Little Princess. This is a musical based on the classic story by Frances Hodgson Burnett about the journey of a young girl who lost her family, her wealth, and her home and how you can overcome loss by opening your heart. Special event tickets are $45. For tickets and more information visit www.sierraatstc.eventbrite.com.

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 21
FAMILY EXPEDITION AT THE SACRAMENTO ZOO
This family-oriented event offers a fun-filled opportunity for kids of all ages to explore the Zoo by way of a scavenger hunt with contests and prizes for everyone. The event will culminate with a BBQ, entertainment and recognition of key contributors to Sierra. Stay tuned for more information.

SIERRA THROUGH THE YEARS…

Sierra Adoption Services founded in Nevada County. Capital Kids are Waiting public/private partnership is established. Sierra collaborates with Placer County Children’s System of Care to create PlacerKids. Sierra receives the Presidential Adoption Excellence Award. Sierra launches highly successful Destination Family Youth Permanence Project. Sierra is honored at the Congressional “Angels in Adoption” Gala in Washington D.C.

Kerry Wood, CFRE
Chief Development Officer
kwood@sierraf.org
SHARING “THEN AND NOW” STORIES

We want to share our story by sharing your story. If you are a family who has created a safe, loving family for a child in foster care, we would like to hear from you. If you have stories, photos, children’s artwork or poetry to share, we would like to include you on our online “Family Photo Album,” as part of Sierra’s social media activities, and/or as part of the 30th anniversary celebrations. Please contact April Johnson at 916.368.5114 or ajohnson@sierraff.org for more information.

As Sierra continually evolves and grows to meet the current needs of children and families, your support will make it possible for Sierra to find permanent families for even more children in the next 30 years. If you are interested in donating auction items, volunteering, or contributing to Sierra, call us at 916.368.5114 or visit us online at www.sierraff.org.

ESSENTIAL SUPPORT

Sierra Forever Families gratefully acknowledges 24 corporations and foundations supporting programs this fiscal year. Funds received or pledged from July 1, 2012 to February 28, 2013, total $135,447 and provide essential support for services to families and to children and youth in foster care.

- **Supporting Permanency Services**
  - Pfund Family Foundation, and the Yocha Dehe Community Fund
- **Supporting Placer County Adoptive Parents**
  - Placer Community Foundation Wellness Program
- **Supporting Family Preservation in Nevada County**
  - United Way of Nevada County
- **Supporting the Wonder Mentoring Program**
- **Supporting Sierra Forever Families’ 30th Anniversary**
  - Kaiser Permanente, Sutter Health Sacramento Sierra Region, and United Healthcare
- **Supporting Infrastructure**
  - Hewlett Packard (two gifts this year)

To learn more about becoming a supporter through our grants and foundation programs, please contact: Juli Kramer at 916.368.5114 or jkramer@sierraff.org.


**Then:** Before such living room laughter, it was just Bret and Heather. The two were happily married and decided to grow their family. Their timing, however, was not exactly cooperating with their plan. They both had hearts for adoption, and after several years of not conceiving, they began to research options.

Early in the process, a blessing came and Heather became pregnant in 2000. They called Morgan their “miracle baby” and were a happy family of three. Eventually they made the decision that Heather would leave the workforce and be a full-time mom. After a few years, Heather began to feel another change coming. She recalls, “I didn’t know what it was, but one day Bret mentioned reading an article about the Heart Gallery of Sacramento and children in foster care. I knew this was the change I had been feeling.”

The Heart Gallery combines the art of photography with a passion for recruiting ‘forever families’ for children. After reading the article, Bret and Heather attended an adoption information session through the Heart Gallery. Sierra Forever Families is a partner with the Heart Gallery and it was at this orientation that the McIntosh’s learned about the services Sierra provides. Shortly after, they attended one of Sierra's monthly orientations.

It was 2006, and Morgan was in first grade when they asked her what she thought of having a brother or sister. She excitedly replied, “What a brilliant idea!” Everyone was eager, and working with Sierra staff, the McIntosh family diligently went through the process to provide permanency.

“The kids are night and day different from when we first met them.” It’s hard for Bret and Heather to imagine Tyler as the shy and quiet toddler they first met. Now, he is outgoing and enjoys all types of sports; as Heather puts it, “He’s all boy.” Makayla has a wide array of interests and talents. “She couldn’t color a picture when we first met her, but now she’s an artist.” She’s also involved in girl scouts and sold nearly 600 boxes of cookies last year. “Bret took her to his office, and she walked right up to people in suits and wasn’t afraid to ask them if they wanted to buy cookies.” Morgan began ballet at age five and has continued to pursue that joy since.

While each child has their unique interests, the entire family loves the outdoors. Family travel is important and they enjoy camping and activities together as often as they can. When asked what she would tell others interested in adoption, Heather pauses for a moment and says, “While adoption can be challenging—especially the first year—it keeps getting better and better.”

*Find more stories and information on upcoming 30th anniversary events on our Facebook and Twitter pages.*
Sierra Staff Actively Recruit Families for Children and Youth

OUR NEVADA CITY OFFICE IS LOOKING FOR A FAMILY FOR DANNY

Sierra serves 12 counties throughout northern California: Amador, Butte, El Dorado, Nevada, Placer, Sacramento, San Joaquin, Sierra, Solano, Sutter, Yolo and Yuba with offices located in Sacramento, Auburn and Nevada City. Working with the same mission, vision and focus, each office maintains a unique, yet collaborative culture. And each office stands as a beacon of support to those who are part of creating and maintaining permanency for children.

The offices and individuals who are part of Sierra Forever Families share a strong passion for children and youth to have permanent loving homes. This passion began in 1983, in an in-home office in Nevada City. We maintain an office in this special region and diligently serve the local and surrounding communities.

Michelle Young is a social worker in our Nevada City office. She is currently recruiting a family for Danny and other youth in Nevada City. Danny is a 15-year-old who is engaging, cooperative, creative and fun. He is also quite a conversationalist. Danny spends his spare time enjoying advanced Lego building and doing activities teens enjoy. He’s particularly fond of animals and sports.

This young man is waiting for his forever family. He is extremely adaptable and would make a great addition to many types of families. He would thrive in a home with older kids; yet, Danny would also do very well with active empty nesters.

Danny is a shining star and upon meeting him many have thought: “This is a kid who could do anything and be a success.” Still, Danny, like all youth, needs the guidance and love of a family who can be supportive during the dynamics that occur in teen years.

Danny is currently living in a group home and is ready for a permanency-focused foster home. Such a family would be open to not only being a foster family to Danny, but also one who is interested in providing permanency as time progressed.

Michelle and others believe in Danny, and they would like to see him stay in Nevada County, his home. If you think Danny may be a good fit for your home, please call Sierra Forever Families’ Nevada City office at (530) 478-0900 and ask for Michelle at extension 203.

If you are interested in helping provide permanency for youth throughout the region, like Danny, please call the office nearest you: Nevada City: (530) 478-0900; Auburn: (530) 887-9982; Sacramento: (916) 368-5114. Sierra staff look forward to sharing more information and answering your questions. We also hold no-obligation orientation classes at all of our sites every month. You can find the dates online at www.sierraff.org.

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Turn that Clunker into a Caring Home

DONATE AN UNWANTED VEHICLE TO SIERRA FOREVER FAMILIES TODAY!

Thanks to our friends at Car Program, you don't have to worry about a thing. Call 24/7, and they will tow your vehicle the following day. You get the tax write-off and, thanks to you, Sierra receives a donation.

So if you have a vehicle collecting dust, no longer running or not needed, please call our toll-free direct line at 1-866-321-(KIDS) and schedule a pick-up today. Car Program accepts most vehicles, including cars, trucks, trailers, boats and RVs. Vehicles do not need to pass current inspections.
Destination Family Parent Partner Receives 2012 Angels in Adoption™ Award

Manuel Garcia Frausto, Jr. (Manny) was honored by California Congresswoman Doris Matsui as an Angel in Adoption on September 12, 2012. The Congressional Coalition on Adoption Institutes’ Angels in Adoption™ Program provides Members of Congress the opportunity to honor an individual, couple or organization from their district who have made an extraordinary contribution on behalf of children living in foster care.

Although Manny has worked in child welfare for more than 16 years, he recalls, “When I received the call that I had been nominated, I was so surprised. Never in my wildest dreams could I imagine receiving such an honor.”

Sierra Forever Families has been privileged to have Manny on staff for the past three years as our Destination Family Parent Partner. His goal is to offer support to parents looking to provide permanent homes for youth, ages 11-18. Manny also works to support reunification of biological families.

Throughout his career, he has managed mentor programs, family reunification for tribal communities and also worked as a group home administrator. These are only a few of the contributions Manny has given to the community. His background of social work also allowed him to work with California assembly members in extending foster care to the age of 21 (AB 12).

He was always surrounded by people who encouraged him to help others. Growing up, his mother provided kinship foster care and his uncle was a foster parent. “It doesn’t take blood to make a family, it takes love,” said Manny.

Eleven years ago, Manny provided permanency to a 14-year-old who has now grown into a wonderful 25-year-old gentleman. Manny is both a father, and recently a grandfather of a beautiful one-year-old. At only 34, he has accomplished more than most at his age.

“Sierra Forever Families is thrilled to have such a passionate and accomplished professional as a member of our team. He not only gives 100 percent and strives for excellence, he cares,” said Bob Herne, Executive Director of Sierra.

Manny’s Angels in Adoption™ Award is well-deserved and proof of his dedication to break the perception that teenagers are unadoptable.

“Thank you for all that you do Manny, you are truly making a difference in our community,” Congresswoman Doris Matsui stated after meeting with our Angels in Adoption™ honoree.

Congratulations, Manny!
10 Years of Wonder

Wonder is thrilled to share we have been providing mentoring relationships specifically for children and youth in foster care for over a decade! Since its beginnings, Wonder has matched and supported nearly 400 children in foster care with a one-on-one caring and consistent adult mentors. Wonder’s success is due to the continued generosity of our supporters and the long-term matches that invest their most precious resource: time.

Wonder Guide Phil Hinson recalls the first day he met his explorer Brian, “I was so scared that he wouldn’t want anything to do with me, could you tell?” he gestured as Brian chuckled. “No way, I don’t even remember it was so long ago!” Although the six years passed quickly, Phil and Brian have grown so close that Phil admits “I wouldn’t know what to do if he wasn’t in my life. I thought I was doing this for him, but I have grown more than ever from the experience.” The guys spend their time just hanging out and having fun. A typical outing for the pair is Phil watching Brian complete 10 consecutive Kendama* rotations while he eats a burger and the two chat. They have a bond that continues through the test of time.

Phil and Brian have enjoyed several years together, yet they are just part of the 46 percent of long-term Wonder matches who have been matched two years or longer. Donors can be confident they are investing in a child’s future when supporting the program. Wonder ensures Sierra’s vision that no child served will go through foster care alone. This vision is magnified by Sierra’s mission to transform the lives of children in foster care by building and nurturing permanent families.

“I thought I was doing this for him, but I have grown more than ever from this experience.”

Guides also contribute to healthy adoptions as the time spent with their Explorers increases their social and emotional stability; this important investment helps prepare youth for their forever families.

After an era of mentoring, Wonder continues to evolve to serve the needs of children waiting. Three years of planning and collecting feedback from Guides and Explorers has led to program enhancements, which were pioneered by Wonder supervisor Jennifer Highley and previous Coordinator Julie Gustafson. These enhancements support the distinct needs of long-term matches, focusing on providing lifelong connections to youth in foster care.

Brian is now in his teens and doing well in high school. He credits Phil for his positive attitude and confidence.

As Sierra Forever Families embarks on its 30th year, we are thrilled to celebrate Wonder’s 10th Anniversary of providing experiences for foster youth that bring wonder and support into their lives.

*Kendama is a traditional Japanese toy which consists of two wooden cups of different sizes with a ball connected by a string and bears similarities to the classic cup-and-ball game.
STAFF UPDATE

SFF SACRAMENTO WELCOMES ALLISON GUERRERO

Sierra Forever Families is pleased to welcome Allison Guerrero as Permanency Manager. “I oversee the Sacramento Adoption Unit, the Post Adoption Services Program and the Ambassador Program. Of course, I have the privilege of working with dedicated supervisors and qualified staff who help ensure the programs run smoothly.”

Before joining Sierra, Allison worked as a social worker and manager at Lilliput Children Services for nearly six years. She is enjoying her time at Sierra and excited to continue the office culture of maintaining a balanced work and personal life. She recognizes, “If staff members are strong and refreshed then we will be better equipped to help children more efficiently.”

Born in Pennsylvania and commonly referred to as an “army brat,” Allison has lived all over the map. She earned a Bachelor of Social Work from the University of Missouri-Columbia and then worked with immigrant and refugee youth in inner city St. Louis, MO. In May 2002, she obtained her Master of Social Work from St. Louis University and spent six years working in the domestic violence field. Allison also earned her Licensure Credential (LCSW) in Missouri and California.

After her junior year of college, Allison joined the Army Reserves. She served for six years, which included a temporary duty assignment to the Defense Language Institute in Monterey, California and also a seven-month deployment to Iraq.

While serving in Monterey, she met her husband Tim. In 2007, the two moved to Sacramento. Happily married, Allison lives with Tim and sons ages four and two. In her spare time, she enjoys kid-friendly outings and occasionally tries to sneak in date nights. She has recently taken up the ukulele and plans to entertain her co-workers in the near future with her playing abilities.

Sierra welcomes you, Allison!

SFF NEVADA CITY WELCOMES SUZANNE SKRABO

Suzanne Skrabo joins Sierra Forever Families as the new Permanency Clinical Manager for our Nevada City and PlacerKids offices. She oversees a staff of 14, which includes staff and supervisors from the Therapeutic Support Services Program, the Family Preservation Program, the Permanency Support Services Program and a Clinical Supervisor. Her main responsibility is to continually develop, improve and manage program and service delivery in order to meet the vision, mission and philosophy of Sierra Forever Families.

Suzanne received a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Psychology and a Master of Science Degree in Marriage, Family, and Child Counseling from California State University, Sacramento. She earned the certification for Licensed Marriage and Family Therapy in October 2003.

While attending CSUS, Suzanne worked as a Marriage Family and Child Counselor Trainee at the White House Counseling Center in Carmichael, California. Her first internship after graduation was in a private practice model setting at The Family Study Center in Sacramento. Acquiring community mental health agency experience, Suzanne worked ten years, collectively, at the Children’s Center South (CCS) headed by Mercy, Catholic Healthcare West, which recently became Dignity Health. She left CCS to work for one year with UC Davis in their new Infant Mental Health program then later returned to CCS to become Clinical Supervisor.

Suzanne has an active personal life, enjoying the outdoors with family and friends as time permits. She is most proud of her four children and the adults they have become. Suzanne recalls being raised in a loving home, and still feels her parents’ support in her accomplishments.

“The mission of Sierra Forever Families is in line with my values and my dreams of becoming a therapist,” says Skrabo. She hopes to accomplish helping children and families feel safe, loved, worthy and valued.

“My perfect career search has ended,” she says.

We’re thankful to have her on our team!
EXPRESSIVE GIVING
EXPRESSIVE GIFTS MADE BETWEEN JUNE 16, 2012 AND FEBRUARY 15, 2013

“The loss of someone you love is very difficult, and when my husband Joe passed on, I was so moved by the generosity of others to honor him with gifts to Sierra Forever Families. When something positive can result from such a loss, it acts as a form of love that touches the heart.” Dee Hartzog

In Memory Of…

Joe Hartzog
Anonymous
Nancy & Bill Barton
Gay & Stan Betzer
Jack & Anne Marie Bruner
Katy & Dale Carlsen
Sandra & Steven Felderstein
Daniel & Carla Flamm
Elfrena Foord & Bruce Hester
Derek Girling
Tina & John Glynn
Pat & Mimi Kearns
Dr. Raph and Marjorie Koldinger
Julianne Kramer
Eric & Sevim Larsen
Terrie Lind & David Blicker
Vonnie Madigan & Richard Osborn
Stephen Mann
Ann & Michael O’Connell
Perkovich Family
Jeanne Reaves
Bob & Darle Tilly
Van Erp, Petersen & Babcock, LLP
Belan Wagner
Diane & D. Thomas Woodruff

Chris Walker
Nicole Amador
Dawn Bateman
Veronica Blake & Kirk Lovejoy
Nichole Bowden
Michelle Chalmers
Happy Chastain
Miriam & Nancy Childs
Bobby & Cheryl Cobbs
Joseph & Shannon Deinhart
Elfrena Foord & Bruce Hester
Barry Goold
Gus Guichard & Esteban Fernandez-Gomez

In Honor Of…

Amy Heilman
Robert & Laura Heintz
Robert “Bob” Herne
Kathy Humphreys
April Johnson
Lee Joiner
Michael & Elizabeth Kenney
Julianna Kramer
Richard Lesse
Darlene Nipper
Harold & Adele Ohls
James Ozanich
Will Rubin
Rebecca Salon
Katie Shaw & Tara Wintermeyer
Kim Stevens
Glynis & Andy Stone
Shirley Thomas
Jeanette Thompson
Kerry Wood

Lucy Banfield
Anonymous

Mary E. Grady
Gloria Lucas
Anonymous

Delores Sweeney Herne
Resonate Insights

Lionel “BQ” Lee, MD
Tori Lee

Gisela Spigel
Scarlet La Rue Edber

Miles Treaster
Ann Aune

George “Bob” Wolf
HMH Builders / Swinerton Builders, Inc.
Debbie Jayne
Donald & Dianne Pauser
Jeanne Reaves
LaVonne Wolf

Rita Zorn
David & Rose Zorn

In Honor Of…

The McIntosh Family
Chris & Rebecca Bach
Scott & Lori Carl
Michael Carter
David Evans
Fredonia Graves
Brock & Nancy Hinton
William & Stephanie Kenney
Stacy Leutner
Noel & Susie Magana
Richard Massi & Patricia Lacaze-Massisi
Greg & Margaret McIntosh
John & Anita McIntosh
Carla and Julius Morace
Thomas Mulvaney
Mike & Gail Sillers
Chris & Kathryn Sorroels
Mike & Linda Stewart
Bill & Donna Swett
Connie Weatherholt
Zaro Family

Ashley & Haley Bussard
West Coast Environmental/ Kevin Bussard

California
Anonymous
Frances Brolan

Deborah Corr
Andrew Corr
Marjorie Eckstrom
Ranny Eckstrom

Tupper Hull
Anonymous

Diane Knorr
Dick & Doris Knorr

Mr. & Mrs. James LaTendresse
Randy & Patricia Getz

Lisa Meadows
Priscilla Wallack & Don Colbourn

Case Nichols
Scott & Kathy Nichols
Chuck Nicholson
Anonymous
Scarlett Nielsen
Anonymous
PlacerKids
Anonymous
Tatyana Teenova
Anonymous
OJ & Tammy Vallejo
Deon & Elizabeth Stein
Becky & Austin Westall
Christine Westall
Chloe
Richard & Laurel Meyers

Special Mentions…

All of the Children
David Vallejo
Happy Birthday Dajion Jacobs
Ruenell & Joseph Jacobs
Happy Birthday Darien Jacobs
Cora and Ruenell Adams
Happy Birthday Mathew Quady
Nancy Fenton & Richard Karlsson
Mazel Tov! Tyler Koenigsberg
His Rhythm ‘N Rims Walk Team

Merry Christmas Dottie Schmidt
Clay & Cyndi Schmidt

Sara Hanson for her years of dedication to the kids
Garrett Davis
April Johnson
Juli Kramer

Sierra’s Special Volunteers
Tom & Fran Bogetich
Juli Kramer
To Fran Bogetich, the Best Mom Ever!
Shelly Bogetich
Join us for an exclusive night celebrating Sierra Forever Families’ 30th Anniversary

Community Partnership Performance

Tuesday • May 7 • 2013
PRE-EVENT RECEPTION 5:30-6:30pm • SHOW 7pm

For tickets and more information: www.sierraffatstc.eventbrite.com