

Friends of Foster Children



San Gabriel Valley
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February 2012

Issue 6

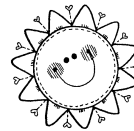
President's Message

Susan Wittmer

There are two words that run rampant through this month's newsletter (besides "Sugar Plum") and they are THANK YOU. We can't seem to say it enough. With a project the size of Sugar Plum, there are so many people involved that we do our best to acknowledge as many as we can, and hope the rest of you understand that we appreciate your contribution as well. Our Sugar Plum donors came from all corners of the San Gabriel Valley and beyond, as did our volunteers. Working together, we brought holiday cheer to more than 430 foster youth and newly-emancipated teens, and collected thousands of gifts for the residential facilities and our own FOFC committee projects.

But the work of FOFC does not end with Sugar Plum. Our committee chairmen are already moving forward with other projects. The Scholarship Committee is distributing applications in search of a new batch of scholarship recipients; the Special Friends Committee is thinking ahead to its Easter project; the Pixie & Tiger project will be distributing grooming and hygiene supplies; and we continue our ongoing collection of cell phones and printer cartridges, earning cash and credits to fund other projects.

FOFC is an all-volunteer group. We have no paid staff, and rely completely on volunteers to man all of these projects and more, including our annual school supply collection drive and our Halloween candy drive. WE NEED YOUR HELP. If you are not a member, we encourage you to consider membership in our group (see Membership article for more details). If membership does not fit your circumstances, we welcome your participation in other ways, including monetary support. We hold 3 or 4 general membership meetings each year, usually featuring a speaker or special work project. Mostly, we communicate through our newsletter, updating our readers on upcoming projects, what is needed, and what can be done to help. We hope you will follow



Calendar

Saturday, Feb 4, 2012 10:00 a.m.	Sugar Plum Wrap-Up Meeting Home of Carolyn Cota 1019 E. Poppyfields Dr., Altadena
Thursday, Feb. 9, 2012 7:30 p.m.	FOFC Board Meeting Conference Room 36 S. Kinneloa Ave., Pasadena
Wednesday, Feb. 15, 2012 10:30 a.m.	Foster Caring Committee Mtng. Call Hanne Johnson at 626/795-862 for location
Saturday, Mar. 3, 2012 TBA	***SAVE THE DATE*** General Membership Meeting
Thursday, Mar. 8, 2012 7:30 p.m.	FOFC Board Meeting Conference Room 36 S. Kinneloa Ave., Pasadena
Sunday, Mar. 18, 2012	Deadline for See's Candies orders
Thursday, Mar. 22, 2012 7:30 p.m.	Scholarship Committee Mtng. Home of Joan Renken 225 Sharon Rd., Arcadia

along, and feel free to join in when and if you are able.

If you have wondered what Christmas must be like for a foster child living at a residential facility, please take a minute to read Susanne Crummey's letter detailing how the children at Hillside celebrate Christmas. And remember, this summer, FOFC will begin preparations for

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our 2012 Sugar Plum project. Perhaps you will be inspired to help us write tags or sit a shift at the tree or sort or deliver gifts.

Finally, I want to leave you with a heartwarming Sugar Plum story. Every one of us should work for employers as caring as Venturelli, Cary & Co, a Pasadena accounting firm. For the past several years, the employees of the firm (numbering approx. 13) have gathered at the Sugar Plum tree on a prearranged morning. Each is given a company-provided cash spending allowance with which to purchase Sugar Plum gifts. Employees select tags, go shopping to fill the wishes, and return to the trees with their gifts. When all the shopping is finished, the group meets at one of the restaurants in the mall to enjoy a festive Christmas lunch. We applaud the generosity of this firm, and their creativity in finding a meaningful way to celebrate the holiday together, while benefiting others.

Save The Date: General Membership Meeting

Plans are being made for our next General Membership Meeting, to be held on Saturday, March 3, 2012. Additional details will be included in our next issue, but we encourage you to mark your calendars now and plan to join us. Our meetings are open to all interested members and friends. Guests are always welcome.

Ralphs Community Contribution Program

Reminder: If you are a Ralphs shopper, you can help earn money for FOFC by registering your Ralphs Rewards card to our group. Each quarter, FOFC receives a check from Ralphs Community Contribution Program, based on the purchases of our registered households. To register online, all you need to know is FOFC's assigned non-profit organization (NPO) number #92558. Or, if you prefer, we can provide a letter showing our Scanbar code that you can take with you on your next shopping trip, to be scanned by the cashier. Contact Susan Wittmer at 626/358-2070 or wittmerbiz@altrionet.com or Treasurer Kathy Stokes at 626/798-4536 for a copy of the letter. (Anyone who signed up prior to Sept. 1, 2011, was required to re-register after Sept. 1 for FOFC to continue receiving benefits.)

To date, FOFC has received over \$1,000 from this program. With your help, this can continue to be an effortless fundraising program for our group.

See's Candies Spring Fundraising Program

Carole Rodenbucher



If you are thinking of spring, then thoughts of Easter are sure to follow close behind. And if your thoughts of Easter conjure up visions of sweet treats, we hope you will take advantage of FOFC's annual spring fundraiser offerings from See's Candies. Proceeds from the sale of these candies support our general operations, which provides funding for our Foster Caring, Special Friends and Pixie & Tiger Committees.

The enclosed flyer features all of the See's Candies Spring Fundraising Program items. This year, See's is offering two new items: Marshmallow Eggs and the Bunny & Carrot Box (which replaces last year's Fluffy Chick Box). FOFC will take orders for all these items thru Sunday, March 18, 2012. (Easter falls on Sunday, April 8, 2012.)

To place an order, use any of the following options:

1. MAIL your order and check (payable to FOFC) to Carole Rodenbucher, 5936 Reno Avenue, Temple City, CA 91780.
2. CALL Bob or Carole with your order at 626/285-2030 and mail your check to the address above.
3. FAX your order to 626/285-0070 and mail your check to the address above.

Orders will be available for pickup on Saturday, March 24, 2012 at the Rodenbucher residence. Additional details will follow in next month's newsletter. We look forward to hearing from you!

Committee

Reports

Membership News

WE WELCOME A NEW MEMBER: Friends of Foster Children welcomes new member Ann Martinez to our group. Ann has known about our group for some time, having formerly worked for Children's Services. She attended our Sugar Plum Kick-Off meeting in October, and has already logged volunteer time writing out Sugar Plum tags. We look forward to getting to know her better. Please add Ann to your roster:

Associate Member:

Ann Martinez
Home phone: 626/449-5167
Email: danda70@earthlink.net

Sugar Plum News

Carolyn Cota



I am happy to announce that this year's Sugar Plum project was again a success! I would like to thank all of the FOFC volunteers for their dedication in making this project successful. A very special thank you to all of my fellow chairmen who made my first year as Sugar Plum Chairman a wonderful experience. I truly appreciated all of your help and your important contributions to the project.

A few numbers to report:

- Total Children's gifts collected: 1791
- Total Facility gifts collected: 1258
- Total Committee gifts collected: 1855
- Total of all gifts collected: 4904

These figures are down slightly from 2010 (which totaled 5,312). However, factoring in the state of the economy and the 1 ½ days that the trees were closed due to the power outage at the mall, we are very pleased with the outcome and the generosity of our Sugar Plum shoppers.

We owe continued thanks to the staff of Westfield Santa Anita for allowing us to once again have a wonderful location within the mall. We have enjoyed a holiday home at the mall for 36 years now, and look forward to many more.

From Our SP Committee Chairs

Thoughts and thank you's from Sugar Plum committee chairs.

From the Tag Writing Chair (Sherrill Leavitt)

A word of thanks to all of you who volunteered to write tags. Even if you didn't get the opportunity to help with the writing, remember--those also serve who stand, with Sharpie in hand, and wait. So saying, thanks to Carole Kolla, Aileen Koskovich, Donna Puccio, Debi Mistretta, Diana Grajeda, Debbie Fairman, Susan and Cheryl Peralta, Sandi Beebe, Mary Nelson, non-member Jacquie Catching, and new member Ann Martinez. I have a sinking feeling that I may have left someone out. If it was you, my apologies, and let me know.

From the Scheduling Chair (Susan Peralta)

Many thanks and much gratitude to all of our sitters at the Sugar Plum Trees. Special thanks for the groups that sat: National Charity League, the Altrusas, Ettie Lee Youth and Family Services, the Shakespeare Club, the San Gabriel Valley Noblettes and the Women's Auxiliary for the American Legion. Four individual tree sitters went above and beyond in the number of times they sat at the tree: special thanks to Cheryl Peralta who sat 6 shifts, Heather of the Noblettes (5 shifts), Sherrill Leavitt (5 shifts) and Cathy Cota (4 shifts). Many thanks to all of our members who sat, and many thanks to all the husbands, children, relatives and friends who helped out.

I hope every tree sitter witnessed and felt the joy of the season in regards to the overwhelming generosity of the shoppers, who took tags and brought back gifts for children living in the foster care system, to ensure a merry Christmas for them. Happy New Year to all.

From the Outside Group Chair (Carole Rodenbacher)

Thank you to all our Outside Groups that participated in the 2011 Sugar Plum Project. The outpouring from the customers, staff members, church members, Boy Scouts and businesses participating was so very generous. I was still receiving items after Christmas from generous individuals wanting to make a difference in the life of a foster child.

I would like to thank and acknowledge the following for their efforts:

- American Trust Escrow, San Marino, Alhambra, Pasadena & the Sunset office
- Boy Scout Troop 448, West Covina
- Dodger Booster Club
- Coldwell Banker, Arcadia office
- Hope Christian Fellowship Church, San Gabriel
- Los Angeles County Sanitation District employees, Whittier
- Moog, Inc., Chatsworth
- Polytechnic School, Pasadena
- St. Luke Italian Catholic Federation Branch #326, Temple City
- Sam's Family Hair Styling and his loyal customers, Alhambra
- San Gabriel Valley Noblettes, San Gabriel
- The Outlet by ELS, Monrovia
- Winston & Strawn, Attorneys at Law, Los Angeles

We wish you all a healthy and happy 2012!

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From the Sorting and Shopping Chairs (submitted by Susan Wittmer)

Our dear friends at the Shakespeare Club of Pasadena helped us stock our shopping area once again with items purchased at Toys R Us using funds donated by their members. Under the leadership of Philanthropy Chair Annette Arce, the group collected more than \$3,000 in support of the Sugar Plum project. Although Annette was out of town the day of our shopping trip, Shakespeare members Tanya Danforth, Barbara Kerr and LouAnn Heintz came along to assist in filling the carts with dolls, remote control cars, Legos, musical toys, puzzles, art kits, DVDs and other gifts. Many thanks to all of our friends at the Shakespeare Club for their generosity.

It was truly a family affair in the sorting room this year, with 4 generations of the same family working at one session. Peggy Ulbrich brought along daughter-in-law Joanne Ulbrich, Joanne's daughter Tiffany, and Tiffany's daughter Serenity to help with sorting duties. Tiffany and Serenity also won the distinction of having come the farthest to help, visiting from their home in Florida. Candy Puchta had 3 generations of her family working on various days, with daughter Michelle DeMarco and granddaughters Rachel and Aubrey in attendance.

It was great to see old friends back at work in the sorting room: Judy Gabelman (who has been living in Hawaii until recently), Diane Tucci, who brought along her sister-in-law Joy Ann Highfill to help out, and Cheryl Pascua and Marta Vizcarra (who now live in Arizona). Ken Hanks (co-worker of Steve Wittmer) brought his family to help. It was wonderful to see some new faces too: Bailey Stokes brought her friend Meaghan Paschall; Michelle DeMarco introduced her friend Vera to the Sugar Plum project; Angela Liang and Shirley Yuan helped sort gifts; and several of our FOFC members joined us for the first time. The sorting process takes a lot of manpower, and we had many hard-working volunteers lending their hands to the effort. We gratefully thank you all for a job well done.

And finally, many thanks to our gracious host, **D.J. Anawalt** and the staff at A&B Brush Mfg. They provided us a spacious work area and a secure and convenient location for sorting and organizing the thousands of gifts collected.

From the Closing Chair (Cynthia Juvinall)

As Closing chair, I would like to thank all my volunteers, particularly Candy Puchta, who covered closing for me as my mother's ill health took a turn for the worse. I appreciate everyone pitching in and taking care of closing, and I apologize for my inability to respond this past season.

My mother, Marian Miller, passed away a few days before Christmas. Perhaps a few long time members may remember her, as she attended some events many years ago (dime auction, etc.).

From the Delivery Chair (Steve Wittmer)

The Sugar Plum delivery crew worked hard, devoting their time and vehicles to make sure the gifts arrived safely at their destinations. The dedicated crew also helped pick up gifts, set up and clean up our sorting area. Many thanks to:

John & Peggy Ulbrich	Rick & Mary Morales	Paul Gibson	Candy Puchta
Kurt & Joanne Ulbrich	Tom Ebert	Candyce Columbus	Larry Brakebush
Allen Kizuka	Jack McCrea	Bob & Carole Rodenbucher	Ralph Rochenbach
Jack Alm	Joe DeMarco	David Kading	George Fairman
Pete & Donna Bonorris	Stuart Shaklan	Chris Koutsakos	

Special Mention All year round, but especially at Sugar Plum time, we receive a terrific amount of support from the Pasadena chapter of the National Charity League. Their volunteers sat many shifts at the trees, and mothers and daughters helped in the sorting room. In addition, the group donated stuffed animals and board games to help stock our shopping room. Thank you to all of our NCL friends – you truly make a difference!

Acknowledging Our Donors

The following list represents only a small portion of our Sugar Plum donors and supporters. To the many anonymous donors whose names we do not know, you are no less appreciated.

Arcadia Ultimate Automotive	Dokson & Gale Arvanites	Lynn Chen	Geraldine Gagnon
James R. Esther, M.D., Inc.	Debra Barnett	Marianne Cherkas	Keri Gavin
San Gabriel Valley Newcomers Club	Raul Bega	Ben Dequina	Louise Gilreath
The Shakespeare Club	Janette Bocus	Lorraine de la Torre	Cynthia Glaser
Temple City Professional Pharmacy	Melanie Bowles	Eva Demirjian	Diana Grajeda
Venturelli, Cary & Co	Ted Bryan	Stephanie Doerning	Brenda Hallie
	Peter Carlson	Chris & Melissa Dominguez	Debbie Hamilton
	Erika Macias Carrillo	Ann Durgerian	Ingerlise Haney
	Jaime Castaneda & Family	Tom Ebert	Shane Hapuarachy
Marsha Adamson	Annemarie Cavallaro	Margaret Ettenheim	Rukie Harris
Lynn Adkins	Jessica Chavez	Dan & Jan Fairman	Fran Hermann
Dan Arrighi	Karen Chavez	Patti Feldmeth	Stan Hertel

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Ann Hinch	Steven Kruse	Patricia Nijjar	Susanne Spangler
Kristyn Hiyake	Grace Lee	Sandra O'Karma	James Stevens
Cynthia Holbrook	Harriet Leppke	Cynthia Orozco	Khanh Tran
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John & Sarah Kobara	Don & Olga Moler	Lisa Shih	
Aileen Koskovich	Doug & Tritia Murata	Leigh Smyth	

Additional year-end donors are included in the Acknowledgements section.

From Our Mailbox

To the Sugar Plum Committee,

Many thanks for all the wonderful gifts received by our residents at Helen Evans Home! I was astounded at the generosity despite the current economic times. We had plenty of gifts for our children to enjoy on Christmas morning! What a joy it was for my staff to see the smiles of the children! Truly – it demonstrated the true spirit of the holiday! The hard work of your many volunteers is appreciated...I know it started well before December! Thank you for all you do for these special kids – not just now, but throughout the year!

Grace Kano, Administrator, Helen Evans Home

From the boys at LeRoy Haynes Center:

“I want to give thanks for the amazing presents. I really loved them. Thank you very much.” *Juan*

“Thank you so much for the Christmas presents. They meant a lot to me.” *Eric*

“I would like to thank you for donating to us, you made this year special for us all.” *J.T.*

“I am deeply grateful for everything you have given me this Christmas.” *Gustavo*

“I really enjoy the gifts you provided me with this Christmas. I make sure I use them every day. THANK YOU SO MUCH.”
Ronnie

“I would like to thank you for all the presents you have provided for the LeRoy Hanes Center, and God Bless You.” *Jose*

“To the Giving People at Friends of Foster, From all of us here at LeRoy Haynes Center–Dow Cottage:

We would like to say THANK YOU!

Thank you for taking the time to care and show generosity to us,
Thank you for helping to make a Christmas away from home special,
And Thank you for your Giving.” *Dow Cottage residents*

Dear Hanne,

On behalf of everyone here at Hope House, I want to express my deepest appreciation to you for your contribution of gifts for our Christmas wishes. We always need these types of gifts to keep the children busy and learning. With your help we can continue to teach our kids but most importantly you have made Christmas a very special day for our children.

Once again, we are fortunate and thankful to you for supporting our program. Because of your thoughtfulness, kindness and continued support our children can continue to learn...

*Dorothy Gonzalez, Assistant Administrator
Hope House for the Multiple-Handicapped*

The following excerpts from a letter from Hillside gives an idea of how the Christmas holidays are handled at a residential facility:

Hello, everyone: I want to take this opportunity to thank you and everyone who helped make it possible for us to receive gifts for the children, including Steve and his helpers who delivered our gifts....

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The Christmas for the children was very successful. Almost all the children received the wishes on their list. In my own walk through the cottages on "Hillsides Christmas", it was clear that each group was having fun with their toys, kicking balls on the playfield, riding their scooters, putting Legos together, etc. I wish I could capture the image and the feeling of that afternoon. We have many new children at Hillsides this year and some of the young ones still 'believe' in Santa. They were very excited.

It is true that once again this year we did not receive as many donations as we had been used to in past years. But we received gifts that pleased each child whether they wanted a fishing pole, a Baby Alive, or a CD player. ...On Hillsides Christmas, the children get the major gifts that they will receive from Santa. Then children who have family to go to begin to go on their visits. On the 25th, the children receive small gifts like board games, Legos, and other items they can enjoy playing with but are not their 'big wishes'. This plan prevents the children who go on visits from feeling like they 'miss out' by not being at Hillsides.

To also help with the process, each child gets a stocking filled with small treats and gifts. Those at Hillsides on the 25th receive their stocking that day. The other children receive their stockings as they come back from their visits. This small step in the holiday process helps ease the children's return. They have one small thing to still look forward to after their visits with their families.

I am very grateful to each of you and to everyone who helped to make this Christmas a joyous time for a group of children who do not realize all the work that goes into making their day such a wonderful event. But we do. I wish everyone who gave of so much time and resources could see their faces when the children gathered around the tree that morning and opened their gifts.

Happy New Year to everyone.
Susanne Crummey, Hillsides

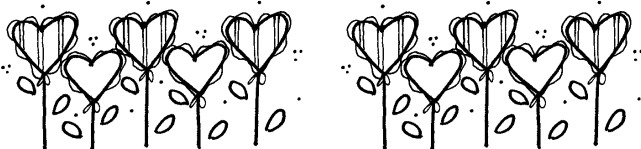
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FOFC accepts new members year-round. We offer several categories of membership, designed to accommodate varying time and commitment levels. For more information, please send us an email at fofc@earthlink.net, call Mary Morales at 626/444-1959, or visit our website, www.fofcsangabrielvalley.com, to download a membership application.

CONGRATULATIONS ARE IN ORDER: Our very own Sugar Plum Chairman Carolyn Cota, Marketing Assistant at Green Hasson Janks, has been awarded the company's 2011 Community Service Award. The award is presented annually by Green Hasson Janks to the employee who has actively volunteered at one or more local nonprofit organizations and has made an outstanding contribution to the community. Employees are nominated by other employees or employees can nominate themselves. A voting committee selects the winner and finalists. Carolyn was nominated and won for her work with Friends of Foster Children.

In recognition of Carolyn's accomplishment, Green Hasson Janks is pleased to present a \$1,000 contribution to Friends of Foster Children. Carolyn will also receive a \$1,000 Community Service Award bonus.

From all of your friends at FOFC: Congratulations, Carolyn – we are proud of you!



Pixie & Tiger

Ingerlise Haney

It is a new year and like everyone else I have been busy getting all my little ducks in a row for 2012. Among my jobs is preparing to distribute all of the Sugar Plum items donated to the Pixie & Tiger Committee this year. As in the past, my target date is mid-February. Until then, I will be counting, sorting, packaging, and shopping for items to put into the toiletry kits.

We will be sending items to Trinity Youth Services, Hathaway-Sycamores, Hillsides, Leroy Haynes Center, and Rosemary Children's Services. Our toiletry kits include toothbrushes, toothpaste, Chapstick, soap and body scrubs, deodorant, shampoo and hair conditioners, body lotions, wash cloths, cosmetics for the girls, and sleep pants and t-shirts for the boys at Hathaway-Sycamores. We have also been given a generous supply of hotel samples throughout the year which we will divide between the homes. Any extra donations we were given will also be divided and sent to the homes.

I would like to thank all of the people who continue to remember our committee during the holiday season and the people who have so diligently collected hotel samples for us all year long. Our little committee could not exist without all of your thoughtful donations.

Lastly, I would like to send out a call for help to sort, count, and package up all of the items. This is a two

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step process and will involve two separate meetings to accomplish. Past Pixie & Tiger members and anyone else interested in helping out, please contact Inky Haney at douglas.haney@att.net or call 626/281-2054.

Scholarship/Emancipation Committee

Steve Wittmer

The FOFC Scholarship Committee is currently collecting student information for the second semester of the 2011/2012 school year. Our students need to submit their grades and class registration to stay current with the Scholarship Program and receive their scholarship awards. The committee also is preparing for the 2012/2013 year by mailing out renewal applications to current students and applications to prospective students.

In November, Daysi E. and Alicia G. were awarded the Christopher Ulbrich Award. This monetary award is given each year to the student or students that the committee feels exhibit "Special Qualities". Daysi is in her third year at UC Irvine, majoring in Communications. She is active in community groups and volunteers on-campus. Alicia is a third year student at UC Santa Barbara, majoring in sociology and maintains a B average.

From Our Mailbox:

*Dear Friends of Foster Children, I want to take this time to thank you for providing all of the items I requested on my list. I was in shock when I saw all of the gifts for me, it was literally like Christmas and I couldn't help but want to cry out of joy. My transition to independent living could not be any easier without all of your help. In fact, when I arrived to Youth Moving On... I had zero personal items to call my own, so I humbly and gratefully relied on my roommate by using her supplies. Now that I have my own kitchen appliances as well as bathroom and cleaning supplies, I feel truly independent and comfortable in my living space. I also received a target gift card which is also VERY much appreciated. I must say that the juicer is my favorite gift! I have been wanting to start making juices to improve my health and have already begun to do so – I have been juicing up a storm! Thank you so very much for every thing.:-) Sincerely, Michelle V. **Several months ago, Michelle was the recipient of one of the emancipation packages prepared by the Scholarship/Emancipation Committee for the youth at YMO.***

To Friends of Foster Children, Thank you so much for selecting me to receive the Christopher Ulbrich Scholarship. I just want to say I used the money to purchase a ticket to Idaho, so that I could spend the holidays with

*most of my siblings on my father's side of the family. If it was not for this scholarship I would not have had the funds to splurge on a trip to Idaho. Thank you so much for giving me the best gift I could have asked for this holiday season. Always, Alicia G. **Alicia's sponsor is Joan Renken.***

The Scholarship Committee is always looking for dedicated members to serve as mentors to our scholarship recipients and help with the emancipation program. For more information, please call Steve Wittmer at 626/358-2070.

Acknowledgements

Many thanks to the following individuals, businesses and foundations for their recent generous donations to Friends of Foster Children:

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|---|------------------------|
| Arcadia Real Estate Professionals | Janet Fitch |
| Forest Lawn Foundation | Barbara Granucci |
| Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation | Linda Grim |
| Kroger (Ralphs Community Partner Program) | Holly Imler |
| Charles Pankow Foundation | Robert & Joyce Knott |
| Rosemead Women's Club | Frederick Locke |
| United Way | Ann Martinez |
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| Robert DeVore | Kurt Ulbrich |
| Audrey Doran | Brandon Willis |
| Joe & Kathy Eginton | Thomas & Arline Willis |
| | Irvin Wittmer |

Thank You for Your Help! **See's Candies Christmas Sale**

Carole Rodenbucher

Many thanks to all of you who participated in the Christmas See's Candies fundraising project, either by purchasing candy for yourselves or collecting orders from your friends and co-workers. We made \$372.90 in profit. Our top seller was FOFC member Harriet Leppek, while our friends at the LA County Sanitation District (LACSD) came in second place with their orders. Thank you all for supporting FOFC!

See our related article for the announcement of the spring See's Candies offerings, just in time for Easter.



**FRIENDS OF
FOSTER CHILDREN**

San Gabriel Valley

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Friends of Foster Children is a non-profit, all volunteer organization founded in 1976 to enhance the quality of life for abused, abandoned, and neglected children in the San Gabriel Valley.

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Are you a Ralphs shopper? Help raise funds for FOFC by registering your Ralphs Rewards card to our organization. Details inside.

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