

# Friends of Foster Children



San Gabriel Valley  
P.O. Box 1105, Arcadia, CA  
91077-1105  
626-445-4542



December/January 2012

Issue 5

## President's Message

Susan Wittmer

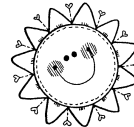
When you lead an all-volunteer organization like Friends of Foster Children (FOFC), there are many frustrations, but there are also many moments of inspiration and gratitude and joy. And at this time of year, many reasons to be thankful. I would like to share with you my list:

*I am thankful* for the wonderful turnout at our Oct. 15<sup>th</sup> Sugar Plum KickOff meeting. I am thankful that our speaker, Jim Adams, director of Trinity El Monte, was willing to sacrifice his Saturday morning to inform and educate us about Trinity and the youth that they serve. I am thankful for our very talented Marianne Milch, and the beautiful Christmas cozy quilt that she donated as a drawing prize.

*I am thankful* for the members who give of their time to speak on FOFC's behalf in front of other local groups. We rely on the assistance of other community groups, especially during Sugar Plum, but we need to educate them about what we do and how they can help. You make that happen. I am thankful for *every* member who shares the vision of FOFC with friends, family and co-workers.

*I am thankful* for our FOFC leaders – board members, committee chairmen, and project leaders. We count on your guidance to channel and focus the energy and enthusiasm of our members to its best possible use.

*I am thankful* for our tireless volunteers. You come to us in all shapes and sizes and interests and life circumstances. You are working people and retirees and family members, and you donate your time to make life better for others. Where would we be without your efforts?



## Calendar

Friday, Nov. 25, 2011 10:00 a.m.	Sugar Plum Trees open Westfield Santa Anita 400 S. Baldwin Ave., Arcadia
Wednesday, Dec. 7, 2011	Deadline for See's Candies orders
Thursday, Dec. 15, 2011 9:00 p.m.	Sugar Plum Trees close for the season
Thursday, Jan. 12, 2012 7:30 p.m.	FOFC Board Meeting Conference Room 36 S. Kinneloa Ave., Pasadena
Wednesday, Jan. 18, 2012 10:30 a.m.	Foster Caring Committee Mtg. Call Hanne Johnson at 626/795-8962 for location
Thursday, Jan. 19, 2012 (Tentative)	Scholarship Committee Mtg. Home of Joan Renken 225 Sharon Rd., Arcadia

*I am thankful* to my friends and family, who have been very understanding and forgiving when I sometimes spend a little *too* much time on FOFC business. They seem to understand the importance of what we are all working hard to accomplish, and that support means a lot.

Happy Thanksgiving, friends, and may you all find many things in your life to be thankful for.

## **Be a Friends of Foster Children Santa This Year**

*Candyce Columbus*

You may have noticed the small envelope in this issue of the Friends of Foster Children newsletter. Small it may be, but its potential power is mighty! You can use it to be an FOFC Santa by enclosing a donation. Whether you have \$5 or \$500 your contribution can do wonders and every penny is welcome.

Since FOFC is an all-volunteer organization with minimal overhead, approx. 94% of monies received will directly benefit local foster children. Your donation may be used in a number of wonderful ways:

- ❖ You might make a foster child's holiday gift wish come true.
- ❖ Enable FOFC to provide local foster care facilities with large items like flatscreen televisions, musical instruments, ping pong tables, Wii exercise technology, bicycles and more.
- ❖ Help purchase DVDs to entertain the children who aren't able to spend the holidays with their families.
- ❖ Support the efforts of the FOFC committees that work year-round to help meet facility needs such as bedspreads, dishes, recreation equipment, and more.
- ❖ Make a student's dream of college education come true with scholarship assistance.
- ❖ Pay for a group outing such as to dinner and a movie, Knott's Berry Farm or maybe even Disneyland.
- ❖ Provide the children with backpacks, calculators and school supplies.
- ❖ Give assistance to recently emancipated youth to help them turn their first apartments into homes with dishes, pots and pans, small appliances, towels and bedding.
- ❖ Allow FOFC to respond to special needs and requests throughout the year.

Most people agree that children are at the heart of the

holidays. We hope you will open your hearts this winter through a donation that will fill the hearts of foster children, and the extraordinary professionals who work with and care for them, with joy.

*Note to our Email Readers: Donations may be mailed to Friends of Foster Children, P.O. Box 1105, Arcadia, CA 91077-1105*

## **See's Candies Winter Fundraiser**

*Carole Rodenbucher*

FOFC is again offering See's Candies for your holiday gift giving. We are offering all the items in the enclosed flyer including Gift Certificates. These make wonderful gifts for family, friends, co-workers or yourself! We hope you will support our candy sale this season.

To place an order, please complete the order form and collect all the money (checks made payable to Friends of Foster Children or cash). Deadline for orders to be turned in is Wednesday, Dec. 7, 2011 at the home of Bob & Carole Rodenbucher, 626/285-2030. (Orders may be faxed to 626/285-0070, Attn: Carole, but your payment must be received by Dec. 7th.) Candy orders will be available for pickup Dec. 16th – 19th. We look forward to hearing from you!

## **Thank You for Your Help! Halloween Candy Drive**

*Susan Wittmer*

It was all treats and no tricks as FOFC's annual Halloween candy drive netted more than 260 pounds of delightfully delicious candies and snacks, all donated by FOFC members and friends. For the youth at Trinity El Monte, LeRoy Haynes Center, Hathaway-Sycamores, Rosemary Children's Services, Ettie Lee Youth & Family Services and Hillside, it meant that parties, holiday carnivals, and on-campus trick-or-treaters had a wide assortment of candy bars, pretzels, fruit snacks, and novelty treats to choose from. Many thanks to Steve Wittmer and John Ulbrich for delivering all the treats – that makes them Halloween's equivalent of Santa Claus! We also thank our many generous donors who made our little project such a BIG success:

Eva Arrighi  
Dana Barbour  
Sandi Beebe

Pam Boucher  
Candyce Columbus &  
Dan Bullard

cont'd on page 3

Cathy, Richard & Carolyn Cota	Marianne Milch
Debbie Fairman	Lillian Miraya
Jerry Gagnon	Debi Mistretta
Diana Grajeda	Leona Nakayoshi
John Gulledege	Cheryl Peralta
Christine Gurga	Susan Peralta
Rukie Harris	Sharie Pike
Susan Joyce	Donna Puccio
Cynthia Juvinall	Carole Rodenbucher
Doris Kading	Andrea Scorsone
Aileen Koskovich	Franca Scorsone
Marie Lambert	Jan Seymour
Sherrill Leavitt	David Shui
Harriet Leppek	Susanne Spangler
Ginger Loesch	Kathy Stokes
Kris & Steve Mathison	Diana Tran
Mary Ann McClain	Kurt & Joanne Ulbrich
Betty McFarland	Elizabeth Whelan
	Steve & Susan Wittmer

## Committee

## Reports

### Special Friends

*Debbie Fairman*

**Thanksgiving Project:** Thank you to all the people who shopped and donated DVD's, popcorn and soda for the six homes for the Thanksgiving break. The youth at Hathaway-Sycamores, Hillside's, Rosemary Children's Services, LeRoy Haynes Center, Trinity El Monte, and Ettie Lee Youth & Family Services will be entertained over the long holiday weekend thanks to our annual tradition of providing movies and snacks. As we go to press, my volunteers are still out there shopping, but I am confident that we will surpass last year's totals. Each facility should receive at least 27 DVD's, thanks to the efforts of Donna Puccio, Mary Nelson, Diana Grajeda, Susan Peralta, Cheryl Peralta, Carolyn Cota, Aileen Koskovich, and MaryAnn McClain.

**Year-round Activities:** During the year, the Special Friends Committee has many activities that require volunteer assistance. If you are inspired by the Sugar Plum trees and would like to do more, please consider helping out on one or more of these worthy projects:

- Monthly Bingo at Hathaway-Sycamores (call Sherrill Leavitt at 626/791-8032)
- Sewing Projects: Tote bags, Pillow cases and Laun-

- dry bags
- Springtime Easter Baskets & gifts
- Summer Fun Beach towel and sun tan lotion distribution
- School Supplies collection drive
- End-of-the-year Party at Hillside's
- Thanksgiving Break DVD's & Treats
- Halloween Candy collection

For more information, contact Debbie Fairman at 626/285-4305 or [crafterdeb@aol.com](mailto:crafterdeb@aol.com).

**Bingo Volunteers Needed (from Sherrill Leavitt):** Beginning in February, I need to recruit some Bingo players. To refresh your memories, the Special Friends Committee hosts a monthly Bingo Night at Hathaway-Sycamores on the 4th Wednesday of the month. The time commitment is about 1 1/2 hours, from 6:45-8:15 p.m. FOFC volunteers (2 preferred) will be asked to provide snacks for no more than 30 kids, and I will provide the sodas and cups. Open dates are Feb. 22, Mar. 28, Apr. 25, and May 23. I will post future dates as they approach. Please call me at 626/791-8032 to schedule your date. Thanks in advance for your help.

### Pixie & Tiger

*Ingerlise Haney*

Dear Friends,  
I would first like to thank all of the people who have remembered the Pixie & Tiger Committee throughout the year and saved hotel samples. We currently have a generous stock pile of toiletries that will be passed on to the homes we support.

As in the past, our committee wishes will be on the Sugar Plum Tree with the code letter "P". We are asking for our usual toiletry items; toothbrushes and toothpaste, socks, wash cloths, chap sticks, shampoo, conditioner, soaps, deodorant, lotions, cosmetics for the girls, and for the boys at Hathaway-Sycamores, sleep pants and t-shirts.

Sorting and counting all of the items we are so generously given can be a daunting task. If any of our members would like to assist in cataloging and bagging up donations in the sorting room, I would sincerely appreciate the help. Because our wishes are small, we end up with a lot of individual items. If you can help, please contact Inky Haney at 626/281-2054.

## Sugar Plum Is Here

Carolyn Cota



It's finally here!! The time of year we've all been waiting for – SUGAR PLUM!! Personally, this is my favorite project of the whole year. I love Christmas and everything the season represents. I'm so glad that we are able to bring a bit of Christmas cheer to children in foster care.

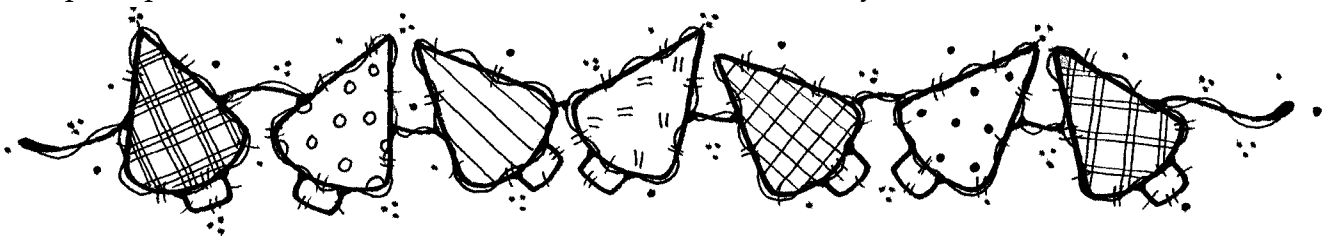
**General Information:** The trees will be open daily at Westfield Santa Anita (located at 400 S. Baldwin Ave., Arcadia) from Friday, November 25th until Thursday, December 15th. Hours of operation will be 10:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. Monday thru Saturday and 11:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. on Sundays. We are in our usual spot on the lower level, Nordstrom wing.

**We invite everyone to participate in Sugar Plum.** This newsletter is going out to our expanded mailing list, which includes old and new friends who have supported us in various ways throughout the years. Many of you are familiar with our Sugar Plum project, while others are not. We invite all of you to drop by the Sugar Plum trees and check out this year's crop of Christmas wishes. All of the wishes on our trees fall into one of 4 categories: **Children's Wishes:** Christmas wishes of specific foster children residing in local residential treatment centers (group homes); **Facility Wishes:** items requested by the group homes themselves for the benefit of the children in their care; **Committee Wishes:** items used by FOFC's own committees throughout the year in projects benefiting the children; and **Large Special Wishes:** expensive items that the group homes may otherwise have difficulty affording (such as TV's and computers). Please help out by taking a tag (or two) and make the holidays brighter for a local foster child.

Thank you in advance for your help in making this year's Sugar Plum Tree a success, and Merry Christmas to you all!!

**Sorting room volunteers needed:** Sorting Chair Susan Wittmer reports that volunteers are still needed for weekday shifts. If you can help out on Dec. 6, Dec. 12, Dec. 13, Dec. 15, or Dec. 16 from 9:30 a.m to 11:30 a.m. (approx.), please give Susan a call at 626/358-2070 or email [wittmerbiz@altrionet.com](mailto:wittmerbiz@altrionet.com).

**Delivery volunteers needed:** Steve Wittmer, Delivery Chairman, is still on the lookout for delivery drivers and helpers. Steve organizes two-person teams to deliver the bags of gifts to the homes, one to drive and one to co-pilot. If you are interested in helping with this final step in the Sugar Plum process, please give Steve a call at 626/358-2070, especially if you have access to an SUV, pickup truck or van. All deliveries are made on weekdays.



## **Scholarship/Emancipation Committee**

*Steve Wittmer*

**Our year so far:** The FOFC Scholarship Committee started another exciting program year with 35 students. In August, 2011, one late renewal student was readmitted to the scholarship program, bringing our total to 36 students. This includes one student in graduate school, one student enrolled in an accelerated paralegal program, eleven students on track to graduate within the next year, and four students nearing the end of their academic programs. Our scholarship program proudly boasts thirty-one graduates since May 2003.

Our students are spread out all over the country. In California we have students attending UCLA, USC, Cal Poly Pomona, UC San Diego, Cal State LA, Cal State Northridge, University of La Verne, Humboldt State, UC Irvine, San Diego St., UC Santa Barbara, UC Berkeley, Mt. SAC College and Citrus College. We also have students at Grambling State University (Louisiana), St. John's (New York), Liberty University (Virginia), Virginia State University, and West Point Military Academy (New York). Our students' interests and majors are as varied as the schools they attend. We have students majoring in computer science, criminal justice, business, social work, history, biology, accounting, political science and liberal studies.

**Emancipation News:** The Emancipation program, also administered by the Scholarship Committee, offers three basic forms of assistance:

- Agency grants to support programs preparing foster youth ages 16-18 for their upcoming emancipation;
- Crisis funds, which provide emancipated foster youth with financial assistance for extraordinary expenses (car repairs, medical bills, etc.); and
- Assistance in furnishing apartments when emancipated foster youth move into transitional housing.

In the past year, a total of 9 young people received assistance from FOFC. Two emancipated youth living in the Youth Moving On (YMO) transitional housing apartments were provided with household items including dishes, cooking utensils, linens, food gift cards and cleaning supplies. Six young women emancipating from Rosemary Children's Service into transitional living programs received similar assistance with household needs and school supplies. Also one emancipated youth in crisis was provided funds for housing and food. We continued

our support of Ettie Lee Homes by issuing the first \$2,500 installment of an agency grant (total grant \$5,000). The Ettie Lee program provides the youth at their facility with job interview training, computers for school, interview clothing, drivers training and other similar items to help make the emancipation process smoother.

**Our mission:** In addition to financial support, the FOFC scholarship program prides itself on the emotional and moral support we offer to our students. Each student is assigned a "sponsor" on the committee, a personal contact to whom they can address their questions and concerns. These students often do not have a significant or strong support network and it is important for the committee to offer them encouragement to help them achieve their educational goals. 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.

## **Foster Caring**

*Hanne Johnson*

For the benefit of our newer holiday readers I would like to explain a bit about this committee. We began in 1983 when we realized that there were many needs falling through the cracks at local residential treatment centers that we could help with - we just did not have a system for it. As a result, we created this committee and have been able to help the Homes (listed below) with what they need most and cannot always afford. Each of our 6 committee members serves as the liaison to one of the Homes. At our monthly meetings they present the requests from their facility and provide us with the detailed information needed to help us make good decisions. We rarely have enough money to give everyone everything they need, but we try. The need for help during the holidays with Christmas trees, holiday parties, outings and decorations all costs a lot of money. In order to help as much as possible, we combine our November and December meetings into one so that we have a bigger pot of money to distribute. We want the Homes to have as much advance notice as possible of what we can help with so that they can make their plans early. At our November meeting we considered **\$17,132** worth of requests and were able to fund **\$12,280**. We want to ensure that all "our kids" have the best possible holiday season.

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**Ettie Lee Homes (60 Boys in 6 group homes)** received **\$1915**. They hope to be able to plan their annual outing to Disneyland on Christmas Day for the kids not able to go home for a visit. We sent **\$1440** to help with the tickets. On the practical side, we sent **\$175** for new winter jackets for one group home. Another needed a new DVD player, movies and board games. We sent the requested **\$150**. They are in constant need of toiletry items for the new boys, who often arrive with nothing, and asked for **\$150** to start a small inventory from which they can pull the needed items. We hope that will tide them over until they get some supplies from our Sugar Plum Tree through our Pixie and Tiger project.

**Hathaway-Sycamores (34 Boys in 2 cottages)** received **\$2150**. Almost all their requests were for the holidays. We sent **\$400** for a tree trimming party in Hunter Cottage. They can buy decorations, linens, centerpieces, ornaments and party treats now. Rowland Cottage asked for **\$300** to have special activities over the holidays. Small weekend outings to the movies, bowling, and ice-skating were mentioned for both Thanksgiving and Christmas time. Christmas trees will be needed for the cottages and the dining hall. We sent the requested **\$250** for the trees, fireproofing, decorations and lights. They are currently discussing whether going to Disneyland on Christmas Day would be a good choice this year, because it falls on a Sunday. There will be so many people there. Their request was presented such that they can choose another event and/or day for their big outing of the season. Often, all the boys are not available at the same time. Planning in advance is difficult. We sent the requested **\$400** to use as needed. They have created a new "family room" where parents and other family members can spend time with their child in a private, relaxed space. A television and DVD player are needed to help create a more relaxed atmosphere. We sent the needed **\$800**.

**Hillsides (64 Boys & Girls in 8 cottages)** received **\$2760**. They would like to plan outings and events for the children during the holidays and asked for \$20 per child. We funded the needed **\$1280**. In addition, they received **\$150** for batteries to be used for electronic gifts, radios, and remote control cars some of the kids will undoubtedly receive. They also needed **\$320** for 8 Christmas trees so each cottage can have their own tree. New children continue to come and they are once again in need of more bike helmets. Children leaving the facility take their helmets with them for hygiene and safety reasons. We gave them **\$160** for 8 new helmets. The

Art Center staff received **\$200** to purchase Christmas craft supplies for the children to get involved in for the holidays. At the end there were 2 non-holiday needs. A new basketball backstop was badly needed for **\$300** and Arroyo cottage's TV broke. A new one will cost about **\$350**. We funded these as well.

**LeRoy Haynes Center (72 Boys in 6 cottages)** received **\$2000**. They only had one big request this time. Plans are under way for a festive Christmas Eve dinner. This will be for all the boys not going home for a holiday visit. Some have no one to visit. The staff goes out of their way to make sure the boys have a memorable evening. When all the boys are back on campus together, they traditionally like to do a big New Year's Eve event also. They will have catered food, a carnival atmosphere with a DJ, prizes for games, etc. Our **\$2000** donation will help cover almost half of the expenses.

**Rosemary Children's Services (44 Girls in 5 cottages)** received **\$2055**. They too are planning ahead for the holidays. They requested **\$625** for 5 trees including fireproofing costs, and another **\$250** for Christmas decorations. They also received **\$150** for Christmas wrapping paper and bags. Two of their cottages still need more hair straighteners, blow dryers and curling irons. With 44 teen girls and lots of turnover it is no wonder. We sent **\$250** to buy some more. Once again they are in need of more bed-in-a-bag sets. We funded **\$780** and hope they find some good holiday sales.

**Trinity El Monte (53 Boys in 4 units)** received **\$1400**. All their requests had to do with the holidays. We funded **\$500** for winter break activities. Christmas Trees and decorations can now be purchased with our **\$300** and another **\$250** will be used to buy stocking stuffers. They would like to take some of the boys out to a nice dinner so they can practice their "etiquette skills". We sent the requested **\$200** and another **\$150** for holiday gift-wrapping paper and bags.

Reminder: If you wish to make a donation to FOFC, please consider designating it to our committee's "Special Activities Fund" so that we can continue to make the holidays, summer vacation, Spring Break, and other special events possible for the children.



## Membership News

Members, please update your rosters with new contact information for our Treasurer, Kathy Stokes. Her new cell phone number is 626/993-5629 and her new email address is [kathy.e.stokes@gmail.com](mailto:kathy.e.stokes@gmail.com).

## Acknowledgements

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

Cynthia Juvinall  
Marie Lambert  
Philip Lo  
Diane Perrow  
J.R. White  
The H.N. and Frances C. Berger Foundation  
Kathryne Beynon Foundation  
Kroger (Ralphs Community Partner Program)  
United Way  
Wells Fargo Community Support Campaign  
Woman's Club of Temple City

*In memory of Harley & Kathy Bogle*

Estella Austin  
Shirley Bush  
Joe & Kathy Eginton  
Marianne Huffer  
Robert & Charmion McKusick  
United Methodist Church, Glendora

*In memory of Mike Puchta*

Anonymous  
Scott Batstone  
Jim & Sherry Bullard  
Betty Conner  
Jeffrey C. Hutchens  
Hanne Johnson  
William & Virginia Luman  
John Renken  
Jeanine Wiese

Many thanks to an anonymous friend who gifted a portion of his postage stamp collection to FOFC member Carole Rodenbucher. Through another friend, Carole found a buyer for the stamps, and donated the resulting \$300 to FOFC. This was a creative way to support the group, and we appreciate the efforts of everyone involved.

## Ongoing Projects

FOFC has projects that continue on an ongoing basis. Here is a brief recap, along with a contact person.

Hotel/sample sizes of soap, shampoo, conditioner & lotion – Collected for use in welcome kits assembled by the Pixie & Tiger project. (Ingerlise Haney 626/281-2054)

Cell Phone Recycling – Used cell phones are recycled for cash, which supports our general fund activities. (Carole Rodenbucher 626/285-2030)

Ralphs Community Contribution Program – Register your Ralphs REWARDS card to our organization, and Ralphs will donate a percentage of your spending to FOFC. (Susan Wittmer 626/358-2070)

Used printer cartridges - Cartridges are turned in for store credits, which are used to purchase school supplies. (Kathy Stokes 626/798-4536)

## FOFC Participates in DWP Charity Fair

On Tuesday, October 4, FOFC participated in the annual Donors' Welfare Plan Charity Fair hosted by the Los Angeles Water and Power Employees' Association. This event, held in downtown LA at the Water and Power building, is designed to increase awareness among DWP employees about the beneficial work that the supported charities do for the local community. With 6,000 employees working at that location, FOFC welcomed the opportunity to promote our programs. Sherrill Leavitt, Sandi Beebe, Leona Nakayoshi and Steve Wittmer manned the FOFC table, passing out brochures, answering questions, and encouraging interested individuals to sign up for more information.

Participating DWP employees designate a portion of their paycheck to go to the Donors' Welfare Plan. At the end of each quarter the donations are divided among the supported charities. FOFC receives sizable financial assistance from this fund, and wishes to thank the Employees' Association for their continued support and for allowing us to participate in the fair. It was a day well spent.



**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.*

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

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<b>Layout Editor:</b>	Donna Bonorris



*Visit the Sugar Plum Trees at Westfield Santa Anita, 400 S. Baldwin Ave., Arcadia. Trees open Nov. 25th thru Dec. 15th. Help us bring holiday joy to local foster children!*

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