

2020 GRATITUDE REPORT and HFS HEROES



HFS Adoption & Foster Care

Celebrating Over 70 Years
of Creating Forever Families

MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD PRESIDENT

Hello HFS supporters and families! It's not a stretch to say that 2020 has been an incredible year; incredibly difficult but incredibly fruitful as well. As Martin Luther King Jr. said, "The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy." Both as a community and personally, we have faced many challenges, overcome obstacles, and hopefully found we have greater resilience than we ever thought possible.

Long before the pandemic and the polarizing issues of this year, HFS has been engaged in creating loving families for all, while embracing diversity and inclusion. This Gratitude Report reflects our shining stars, the "heroes" of HFS. I am grateful for their stories, service, and dedication.



Armen, Gabriel and Susan Chakmakian

With thanks to our exiting **Board of Directors Heroes**, the Rev. Jenifer Chatfield and Marti Farley, board members for 6 years, both past Treasurers; Carolyn Barnes, board member for 3 years, who offered her legal expertise; and John Thies, board member for 6 years, and long-time supporter of HFS, who brought his "youthful enthusiasm" to the table. We recognize **Retiring Staff Heroes**, Linda Shirley, LCSW, who worked tirelessly for over 29 years in various positions with HFS, ending her career as our Infant Program Supervisor; and Linda Cota-Kumagai, our Outreach coordinator, who for the last 18 years was HFS's link to the wider community. We welcome **New Staff Heroes** April Rushing, our Communications and Development coordinator with her focus and determination to create more community connections, and Roxana Alarcon, a clinical social worker, joining the Infant and Adoption Program. And last but not least, our **Community Heroes**, The Adoption Guild of Southern California, who have supported HFS over the last 59 years so we can continue to support our families.

I would also like to acknowledge our active Board of Directors and welcome our newest board members to the team and extend our thanks to our staff who serve our organization demonstrating our mission in full. We invite you to be a part of HFS by serving on our board, supporting us with your donation, or through volunteering.

Part of HFS' mission is to create loving families. The family pictured on the front of this Gratitude Report is the Desloge family, Armando Skye and Elizabeth. Their wonderful story is on our website and as Armando says, "my Mom is the best one for me." This year our plan is to bring more focus to our Foster-Adopt program and throughout the year you will see more information and updates about this wonderful program.

Find us on our website hfs.org; follow us on social media on Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter at @hfsadopt; or email us at info@hfs.org. **Do you have a hero story to share with us? We would love to hear from you!**



Linda Shirley, LCSW

Susan Chakmakian, LMFT

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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FOST ADOPT

Our Fost-Adopt program was created to bridge the gap between a child's initial need for temporary care and the long-term need for a permanent home. HFS works with public social services to assist in these placements. In California, foster parents are now called Resource Parents. Even if you are only interested in having foster youth placed in your home for the purposes of adoption, you will still be considered Resource Parents.

HFS social workers train Resource Parents and place a child in their care before the parental rights of the child's biological parents have been permanently terminated. Resource Parents make a commitment to adopt the child if and when those rights are terminated, and the child is legally free to be adopted.

THE GODFREY FAMILY

When we first met Jade, we absolutely fell in love with her. We told her we were in it for the long haul. We wanted to foster her but we also wanted to adopt. She was 9½ at the time. When you foster a child at that age, they have a lot of memories. She was in 14 or 15 different homes and experienced a lot of trauma before that. We wanted her to make a decision for us to be her adoptive parents. On the day of the finalization paper signing, it really sunk in that she finally wasn't going to be placed anywhere else. When I was tucking her in that night, she looked up at me and said, "Does this mean I can have a childhood now?" I said, "Absolutely!"

- Emily Godfrey



INFANT ADOPTION

The adoption process begins with two-hour orientation that walks participants through the adoption process. Holy Family Services provides monthly orientations to prospective adoptive parents seeking information about the infant adoption and foster-adopt programs. We equip prospective parents with a step-by-step overview of the legal, financial and emotional process in becoming adoptive parents. HFS lays out a clear framework for what's required by state law to qualify to become adoptive parents. The following steps need to be taken to complete the process: Registration, Submit an Application, Training, Home Study, Matching and Placement, and Post-Placement.

THE NAPLES FAMILY

We met Kianoa, our son, the night he was born. I think it was 11:00 at night. Jen and I were asleep on the couch. Julie (HFS Executive Director) had called us once if not twice to try to wake us up. She finally woke us up and asked, "Would you like to come and meet your son?" When we got to the hospital we were led to a room that they had made up for us to stay overnight. They weren't going to let us leave without taking him with us. We didn't have a car seat. So I had to leave in the middle of the night to go get the car seat. Jen had a wonderful experience with the nurse teaching her how to change a diaper and how to feed him. We were afraid we were going to break the baby. This was a long journey for us, almost three years waiting and two years to finalize. None of that was how I planned it. My plan was we would sign up and two weeks later we would have a baby and we would be happy ever after. Instead, we went on this journey that changed us and opened our minds and made us willing to accept new ideas of family. We're just not the same people we were when we started the journey. I think that is probably the biggest way adoption has changed our lives.

- Rob Naples



HFS INITIATIVES

PREGNANCY CENTERS

Our objective is to foster an ongoing relationship with pregnancy centers in the five counties that HFS serves; Los Angeles, Orange, Ventura, Riverside, and San Bernardino. The initiative will include targeted outreach to pregnancy centers and HFS will provide training to their staff. Training covers adoption basics, as well as sensitivity considerations about issues that can impact children and their adoptive and birth families. Your donations will help our social workers to be able to offer more hours of training to pregnancy center staff.



HFS GIVES BACK

HFS is celebrating the heroes that help us create forever families. The objective is to show our appreciation to the nurses, doctors, hospital case workers and our alumni adoptive parents by giving them a Essential Protection Kit (EPK). This initiative is driven by your donations of \$350 and more, which will cover the cost of five Essential Protection Kits. Help us celebrate our heroes!



BLACK FAMILIES MATTER

Over 6,000 black children are under the care of the Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services. Black children represent roughly 32 percent of the children in care while the black population in Los Angeles county is roughly 10%. Our objective is to recruit resource parents for black children currently in the foster care system in Los Angeles County as well as the other four counties HFS services. The initiative will include targeted outreach programs and partnerships that will highlight this desperate need. Your donations will help our social workers reach and train as many families as possible in the coming months.



FOSTER CARE

We have two programs for people interested in fostering children in care.

(1) Fostering children who are dependents and were removed from the care of their families for as long as the children need out of home care and (2) Interim Fostering (short-term) for those who are open to caring for newborn babies who need a loving home while a birth mother is considering making an adoption plan. Usually these placements are just a few days, but can last up to a few months.

These programs are for families who are not looking to adopt the children in their care: they're adults who want to make a positive difference in a child's life.

For these programs you will need to be approved as Resource Parents. Training, emotional support, and financial reimbursement of assessment costs is provided. A social worker and agency nurse provide additional support.

If you're interested in becoming a Resource Parent and opening your home to children in need, HFS can train and prepare you.



HFS UPDATES

Like everyone across the globe, COVID-19 has not only impacted daily interpersonal relations, but it has affected the course of everyday operations in nearly every professional industry. Early on in the pandemic, HFS staff quickly recognized the threats that public health restrictions might have on the adoption and foster care process for our clients. State laws effectively mandate in-person engagement with those seeking to adopt or become foster parents as well as regular visits to youth placed in foster homes. Initial stay-at-home orders raised questions about how HFS staff could continue to provide services in a safe and secure manner.

HFS took immediate steps to establish a “Pandemic Response Plan” and submitted it to state and county regulatory bodies to ensure that families could continue to be served in the safest possible ways. Some of these efforts included stocking up on Personal Protection Equipment (PPE) and supplies for clients in need and for our staff. In-person meetings were carefully planned to take place outdoors and with appropriate social distancing to limit contact or exposure. Backup plans were developed in preparation of clients that might become sick with COVID.

Moreover, staff initiated Zoom orientations twice monthly for individuals and couples seeking adoption or foster care services. Similarly, applicant interviews and many client services were switched to virtual platforms. The results of these and other efforts have proven successful. Thankfully, none of our staff or clients have become sick with COVID. In fact, since the start of the pandemic, there has been an uptick in orientation attendance, perhaps due to the ease of online access, interested individuals having more time, or a combination of both factors.

Yours,
Julie Brown, MSW
Executive Director

YOUR DOLLARS AT WORK: THE “PADDLE RAISE” REPORT

The ubiquitous Paddle Raise. A mainstay now of annual fundraisers. If an attendee doesn't want to return home with an arm load of “stuff” from a live or silent auction, it's a way for organizations to pinpoint their greatest needs, and have supporters answer that need with donations, no stuff to load in the car! HFS's hopes for enhancing our communications and fund development capacity at the agency were answered two years in a row, with the enthusiastic support we got from our paddle raise at the Circle of Hope Gala's in 2019 and 2020.

In 2019, the agency realized the necessity of hiring a staff member to manage our social media and development needs. Research shows 69% of adults online use social media, as do 99% of individuals between ages 18-24. HFS simply cannot sustain itself without being available on social media networks. In January 2020, HFS welcomed our new Communications and Development Staff member April Rushing!

And at our Virtual Circle of Hope Gala in June of 2020, the agency sent out another wish, to provide April with donor software so that she could make the most of her time and efforts on behalf of the agency. Board member Marianne Wright and her husband Matt challenged HFS supporters to match their \$3,000 donation, and it was more than met! April has been busy all summer with the purchase of DonorPerfect software.



From left to right, HFS Board Member Marianne Wright, Adoption Guild Executive Board Member Katie Richardson, HFS Outreach and Development Staff Member April Rushing, and HFS Board President Susan Chakmakian.

THE ADOPTION GUILD OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

After hosting a patroness tea for many years, the Adoption Guild held an evening affair in early March at the Balboa Bay Resort in Newport Beach with 175 guests attending. The 59th Annual event, themed “Cocktails for a Cause”, featured wine, cocktails and hearty appetizers, a whiskey tasting, raffle items, and a magician that kept everyone entertained. The annual Roy Emerson Adoption Guild Tennis Classic, usually scheduled over Memorial Day Weekend, was cancelled due to COVID-19. HFS is grateful for the work of the members of the Adoption Guild, especially the Adoption Guild president Chris Garber and her amazing Executive Board. The Adoption Guild's sole mission is to support the work of HFS. We look forward to their fundraising and “fun”raising events in the coming year.



CIRCLE OF HOPE GALA: THE MAGIC OF FAMILIES

Everyone who participated in our annual Circle of Hope Gala is a star. Thank you for making it a magical event! To each person who donated money, recorded a video, bid on an item, provided services, volunteered their time, watched the livestream of our virtual gala, and laughed and cried watching our alumni family videos, we thank you for helping us continue our mission to create forever families. Our gala raised over \$25,000!

THANK YOU FOR SUPPORTING HFS

*HFS Board member

\$40,000

Adoption Guild of Southern California

\$20,000

Anita Busald Revocable Living Trust

\$10,000

Mozilo Family Foundation
Weingart Foundation
Marianne* & Matt Wright

\$5,000

Caiozzo Family
Susan* & Armen Chakmakian
KLM Foundation

\$1,949 - \$4,999

Facebook Fundraisers
Fidelity Charitable
Pauline & Phillip Han
Mary & Lawrence Kent
Saint Marks Episcopal Church, Glendale
SaraJane & John* Thies

\$1,000 - \$1,948

Susan & Bob Anderson
Elaine Tumonis & Edward De La Rosa
Marti* & John Farley
The Rev. Kate Lewis & The Rev. Patricia Henderickson
Yayoi & Don Matsumiya
Randall Mehl
Judy & Dick Rubin
Kathleen O'Connor & The Rt. Rev. John Taylor
Joseph Zanetta*

\$500 - \$999

Carolyn Barnes*
Peggy & Mike Cordero
Deborah Newquist & Joseph Dimento
Carol & Brian Drake
Janet & Dr. Vincent Esposito
Carol & Fred Gregory
Nan Heard & Paul Krogstad
Karen & John Higgins
Cynthia & Bill Hsu
Rosemary & David Humphrey
Michael Kanne
Nancy Kearney

Douglas Kendall
The McGrath Family Foundation
Pamela & Joe Mendoza
Jennifer & Robert Naples
Isabel & Richard Oxford
Pledgling Fundraisers
Traudi & Claus Preute
The Rev. Thomas* & Frank Quijada-Discavage
Nancy & George Rothwell
Terry Seidler
Irene & John Sharpe
Trecia* & Kendall Simmonds
Saint Mark's Episcopal Church, Altadena
Saint Mary's Episcopal Church, Lompoc (In Honor of The Rev. Michael Cunningham)
The Church of the Epiphany, Oak Park
Marilyn & Ronald Trepp
Jo-An Hawley-Verstraete & Eric Verstraete

\$200 - \$499

Irene & Fred Binggeli
Diane Carey-Schmitz & Marion Schmitz
Robert Casalegno
The Rev. Jenifer Chatfield*
Kenneth Chow
Anne & John Cohen
Marna & Robert Cornell
Marci & Tom Cox
Georgia Coye
Eve & Gerald Cunha
Brendan Dixon
Sandra & Mark Fischer
Beatrice Floyd
Alma Fowlkes
Melissa & Neri Garcia
The Rev. Carri Patterson Grindon & Al Grindon
Michael Grizzi
Lana & Peter Hassett
Nancy & Keith Hauge
Karen & John Higgins
Natalie Hoag
Mary Louise & Robert Hohne
Lori & Sean Hunter
Paula Kelly

Deno Kidde*
Nancy Porras & Dr. Anthony Knight
Anahid & Shant Koumriqian
Mara Lague
Maura* & Craig Lemon
Linda Lopez
Debbie & Terry Mammen
Susan and Charles Maness
Gregory McCormick
Maria & Wallace Novack
Lauren Parker & Paul Green
Clare & David Pegues
Kenneth Robbins
Mary Anne & Joseph Robinson
Cynthia Aziz Russo
Pam Selber
Donald Sevilla
Justin Smith
Jennifer & Anthony Stanley
Kathleen & Charles Stewart
Cynthia Sherman & John Stipanov
Jill & Dan Tauber
United Way Los Angeles
Valerie & Robert Weil
Wells Fargo Matching Funds

2019-2020 FINANCIALS (unaudited)

