



All Saints Church Foster Care Project

2024 Annual Report

Mission

All Saints Church Foster Care Project provides community education, public policy/advocacy and direct services for children and youth who have been removed from the care of their parents to the supervision of the state. The Project recruits and sustains volunteers who serve in public and private agencies or work on special projects designed to enhance the lives of foster, homeless, transitional and incarcerated children and youth.

Our work helps All Saints Church further its mission to love without judgment, engage courageously in justice, and joyfully embrace life for the healing and transformation of ourselves, our community and the world by supporting those in greatest need.

Engagement

The Foster Care Project engages in four forms of activities: directly providing support to foster children and youth (for example, through scholarships), providing support to partner agencies (for example, recruiting volunteers to mentor youth at residential programs), furthering community knowledge through our speakers' series, and advocating for legislative support.

Governance

The Foster Care Project is a ministry of All Saints Church falling within its Peace and Justice ministry umbrella. The project is governed by a steering committee. In addition, there are various subcommittees along with "point people" (those who serve as direct contacts with partner and resource agencies). Steering committee members included Alex Ballantyne, Gail Bardin, Connie Chung, Jody Gunn, Margaret (Peggy) Henry (vice-chair), Gail Howland, Rosemary Hyde, Ann Jopling, Jeanette Mann, Kim Miles (treasurer and Peace & Justice representative), Isabel Ramirez, Judi-anne Simmons, Mark Tajima, and Melanie Williams (chair). Auxiliary members included Nikoo Berenji, Susan Flaming, Beth Gertmenian, and Celina Lew. Past member Joe Kelly served as our graphic artist. Subcommittees included Community Outreach, Education & Public Policy, Development, Foray, Governance, Scholarship, Speakers Series and Point Person committees.

When new initiatives are proposed, the point person committee reviews its congruence with our mission along with its feasibility. It then makes a recommendation to the steering committee which in turn votes on whether to make the proposal a "foray." As used by the committee, a foray is an exploration of whether the activity would promote our mission and prove feasible. If so, a foray can become a program. The foray process ensures that we are able to fully explore an initiative before making a commitment.

Financials

Our balance decreased slightly over the calendar year, with a beginning balance of approximately \$54,294 and ending total of approximately \$48,819. (Our fiscal year commences July 1 while this summary analyzes the calendar year-end numbers for the 2024-25 budget year). Income is delineated as restricted (where the donor has designated the contribution's use) and unrestricted. All overhead expenses come from unrestricted funds.

Both donations and expenses remained low due to the limitations on our activities as a carryover from the pandemic. We are able to keep expenses low due to our use of church facilities, our ability (until 2025) to have our fiscal sponsorship from Flintridge Center at no cost (thanks to the volunteer efforts of former steering committee member Celina Lew in providing accounting services), and our use of low- or no-cost efforts to recruit volunteers (for example, through VolunteerMatch and our online e-blast). With the exception of the part-time work of intake coordinator Jane Stockley, former social media coordinator Jadie Delgado, and webmaster Eric del Rosario, all other services are provided through volunteers. We very gratefully entered an agreement from the church to become our fiscal sponsor at no cost. This will not only allow us to proceed with a minimum of cost but to reinvigorate our partnership with the church and its ministries.

However, our activities (and financial needs) are happily increasing with the end of the pandemic lull. We made an annual appeal in 2024, garnering more than \$11,000 in donations.


Activities

The total number of direct contact¹ volunteers was 49; this includes six mentors/tutors, eight coach monitors,² and 31 team event volunteers. The number of volunteers including administrative support totaled 53. Agencies for whom we provided volunteers include ACAC (Adopt a child caseworker through DCFS), CASA, California Youth Connection, Cultural Brokers, Family Connect, Five Acres, Friends of Foster Children, FosterAdopt/RaiseAChild, FosterAll, Hathaway-Sycamores, Hillside, JBAY – Advocates for Youth Tax Prep, Kidsave, LA County Office of Education, Learning Works, My Friend's Place, Optimist Home, Outward Bound Adventures, PCC Stars, PUSD resource centers, Simply Friends, United Friends of the Children, VIP and the Young Center for Immigrant Children's Rights.

Team activities took place throughout the year and included everything from meals for homeless youth to back to school shopping sprees for foster children. A list of team donations and activities shows the following:

¹ A direct contact volunteer is one who volunteered at an event interacting with foster children or youth, volunteered to work with an agency or served as a point person with an agency.

² Coach monitors undergo 24 hours of training approved by DCFS and support family reunification for parents who are permitted supervised visitation with their children.

Service to Foster Children and Youth, 2024		
Organization or initiative	Support	Number of children or youth service instances
ACAC ³	Backpacks – back to school backpacks stuffed with school supplies	80 children and youth served
	Back to school shopping spree ⁴	20 youth served; 15 volunteers
	Holiday gifts and gift cards ⁵  All Saints Church Alternative Christmas market	100 children
	Spring baskets	94 baskets, spring outfits and 20 gift cards
	Support supplies (groceries, blankets, hygiene kits, etc.)	600 youth
	Thanksgiving baskets	50 baskets
	Valentine bags	40 bags; 17 gift cards
ACAC, CASA & Learning works	Mentors/tutors	6 volunteers
All Saints Church	Tickets for Episcopal Dodger night game	75 youth served
DCFS	Coach monitors	20 youth served; 8 volunteer monitors
	Dodger game	75 youth
	Sports funding	11 youth
LA County	Financial literacy event	50 youth; 3 volunteers
My Friend's Place	Lunches served	153 youths served, 16 volunteers
	Support supplies (snack packs, rain ponchos, blankets, clothing, etc.)	350 youth served
NCBW (Nat'l Coalition of 10 Black Women)	Holiday gifts	22 children

³ Adopt a Child Abuse Caseworker

⁴ With \$200 gift cards and volunteer "personal shoppers"

⁵ With support from Friends of Foster Children and Pillows and Plenty

"Nick of Time" Scholarships	Scholarships, tuition payments and dental health care	4 youth served
Sports Funding Program	Swim, gymnastics, volleyball, basketball, soccer, baseball and Jiu-jitsu fees, plus sports equipment, uniforms and shoes	11 youth served

For the first time, the largest source of volunteers was through our website, yielding 48 volunteers. Other volunteers were recruited through various events, e.g. the Cal Tech Y fair (41 volunteers), our lawn table at the church on Sundays (33), VolunteerMatch (25), the e-blast (21) and personal referrals (16).

We continue to rebound from pandemic lulls. The number of direct contact volunteers, while rising from previous years, did not approach the number we had prior to the pandemic. However, the number of child/youth service instances exceed pre-pandemic numbers.



Year	Direct Contact Volunteers	Child/youth Service Instances ⁶
2024	49	1,932
2023	41	1,792
2022	32	2,421
2021	21	1,277
2020	26	1,096
2019	135	1,276
2018	126	849



Happily, we were able to involve more direct contact volunteers than we had during the pandemic. Less happily, the number of child/youth service instances declined from the previous year (although still robust). As we noted in the past two years, an increased number of volunteers should result in increased advocacy, appreciation, and financial support for foster children. As a ministry of the church, we want to increase opportunities for people to support those who need help.

We had significant success in public outreach, including our Speakers' Series and various community events:

Speakers' Series panel February, 2024 Attendance: 50	The Foster Care Project held its second Speakers Series event with a panel of three foster youth who will transition from the Department of Children & Family Services (DCFS) program and its service at age 22. The program included a preview film, <i>No Tomorrow Life</i> , Foster Care's Cycle
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⁶ This awkward term refers to the number of instances when a foster child or youth received support from us. This could include anything from getting VITA tax preparation assistance to receiving an Angel Tree gift card at Christmas. We are unable to count the number of foster children or youth who benefit because privacy requirements prohibit us from knowing the identities of children receiving items through DCFS.

	<p>of Homelessness and Incarceration by USC student Zazriel, and ended with the song, <i>What About the Children</i>, sung by Allisonne Crawford.</p>  <p>TAY youth: Alex, Trinity, Thomas Nolan (DCFS CSW), and Zazriel</p>
<p>Family Connect Faith Collaborative February, 2024 Attendance: 55</p>	<p>Presentation about our Coach Monitor program at this event</p>
<p>PUSD March, 2024 Attendance: 5</p>	<p>Foster Care Project introduction to the staff at the Pasadena Unified School District Foster Youth Services coordinators.</p>
<p>LA County Office of Education, Foster Youth Services. April, 2024 Participants: 90</p>	<p>“Bite of Reality” gave exercises in financial literacy to current foster youth.</p>
<p>Foster Care Project 20th Anniversary April, 2024 Attendance: 150</p>	 <p>Celebrating 20 years as an All Saints Church ministry with parishioners, elected representatives, and community members honoring: Foster Care Project Co-Founders Gail Bardin, Sara Hoover, and Jeanette Mann.</p> <p>Featuring: Foster Care Project’s 20th Anniversary Celebration Angel Award Recipients: MaryAnn Ahart, Trula Worthy-Clayton and Lorna Miller.</p> <p>Recognizing: Invited elected officials who have supported and worked for foster care policy change at the city, county, state and national levels.</p>

	<p>With a special preview of the documentary <i>Possible Selves</i> with former foster youth and Foster Care Project Steering Committee member Alex Ballantyne and Film Director/Producer Shaun Kadlec. This amazing documentary went on to win an Emmy and get picked up by streaming services.</p> 
<p>Pasadena City College May, 2024 Attendance: 100; volunteers: 2</p>	<p>Foster Youth Next Step Resource Fair</p>
<p>KCAL news May, 2024 Participants: 3</p>	<p>Alex Ballantyne, discussed his role in the PBS documentary <i>Possible Selves</i> with director/producer, Shaun Kadlec to KCAL News. Participants: 3 (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LJUSZ3qBNZc)</p>
<p>Foster Care Project Speakers Series Event June, 2024 Attendance: 65</p>	<p>David Ambroz discussing his book, <i>A Place Called Home</i>.</p>  <p>David Ambroz</p>
<p>Foster America Spotlight Speakers' Series September, 2024 Attendance: 50</p>	<p>The Foster Care Project Steering Committee members, Connie Chung and Alex Ballantyne were co-presenters at the Foster America Spotlight Speakers Series. The event featured author, lawyer and former foster youth, Andrew Bridge. Andrew Bridge discussed his two books, <i>The Child Catcher</i> and <i>Hope's Boy</i>.</p> <p>Attendance: 50 ((https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kAq02EnSCu0)</p>

Going Forward

Banner programs: We are recovering from the lull caused by the pandemic, particularly with increased efforts in reestablishing Family Connect and increasing support for ACAC. But while

the number of volunteers has declined since pre-pandemic days, the number of child service instances has increased. This trend therefore meets our goal of serving children and youth but falls short in achieving greater community engagement.

Family Connect and Fiscal Sponsorship: We are grateful and relieved that the church has agreed to serve as our fiscal sponsor. We hope that the church can serve as a host site for Family Connect in the future.

Angel Tree: We are working with CYF's new director to see whether we can return to our previous practice of collecting Christmas gifts (including gift cards when the child requests them) to deliver to children.

Birthday Club: We are no longer able to have gifts left with First United Methodist Church and must find a new location.

Leadership

As hoped, we have slightly increased the size of the steering committee and now have two more members of the Vestry who are kind enough to serve.