

the

link

CHILDREN & FAMILY SERVICES / SUMMER 2017 / VOL 9 ISSUE 2

ENDURING LOVE

Former foster parents, Martin and Kathy Harvey, share their heart-touching story of adoption.

By Helen Lindsey
Senior Social Worker, Resource Family Approval

They remember the baby monitor that alerted them whenever he stopped breathing, a complication of pre-natal drug exposure. They also remember his infectious laugh and his genuineness with his feelings. But what they remember most of all is love and it is that same love that actualized their dream of completing their family.

Kathy and Martin Harvey cared for over 40 children during their years serving as active, county foster parents before relinquishing their license a few years ago. Long before that time, they met their 15th foster child, Mikel. As much as Kathy and Martin felt love for many of their foster children, Mikel filled their hearts like no other.

When it was time to consider a permanent home for Mikel, Kathy and Martin knew they were potential caregivers to provide permanency to Mikel given the evident attachment they shared. But, they were selfless and felt deeply that they should allow Mikel to have a home with an adoptive family as they were committed to providing care for children on a short-term basis. Following their separation from Mikel, Kathy describes their emotional pain as, "nearly unbearable; both for the loss and for the guilt of thinking we could have kept him and didn't." They experienced a great emptiness for many years.

Continued on page 2





The Harvey Family: From left - Mikel Harvey, Darleen DeLaRiva (Mikel's wife), Tacari Harvey (Mikel & Darleen's son), (Brian Harvey pictured), Kathy Harvey, Tani Hickman (Darleen's son), Steven Harvey, and Martin Harvey.

Growing up, Mikel faced many challenges and obstacles that are common to foster and adoptive children. Kathy did her very best to maintain contact with Mikel and his adoptive family. Kathy and Martin's foster son, Steven, was the 14th foster child placed in their home after Mikel. Kathy and Martin were faced with the opportunity to provide permanency to Steven. They had loved and cared for him and Kathy said they "knew, when it was time to decide whether to let Steven go that we couldn't make the choice to let go of someone we loved so much again." So, they made the decision to adopt their son, Steven. She also noted that "Mikel is really, partly responsible for Steven's adoption because we had learned when someone touches your heart in this way, you don't let them go if you can help it."

In September of 2006, Kathy and Martin suffered the most devastating and heartbreaking loss of their only birth son, Brian. Shortly after Brian's death, they reconnected with Mikel. He was 20 years old and living with a sister. Kathy and Martin invited him to live in their home and Mikel was open to the support of their family. "Mikel has been like a son to us ever since then and now it's official," said Kathy. On January 27, 2017, the Harveys finalized the adoption of their son, Mikel Harvey. The Harveys are living out what it means to create lifelong connections for children in care.

NATIONAL FOSTER CARE MONTH



In 1988, then President Ronald Reagan began an annual tradition and issued the first Presidential proclamation that established May as National Foster Care Month. These annual proclamations recognize and celebrate the work of resource families, social work staff, community and faith-based organizations, and everyone dedicated to improving the lives of children and youth in care. But this work doesn't just happen in May, it happens year-round. Let's remember to celebrate the successes, big and small, each day of the year. Thank you for transforming lives and restoring families; one child at a time.

RFA UPDATE

What's new in the training part of the process?

By Elizabeth Hutchinson Cervantes
Senior Social Worker, Resource Family Approval

It seems merely months ago, RFA (Resource Family Approval) was the big, new thing coming down the pike. That was some time ago. A lot has happened since then.

Orange County, as a part of the early implementation group, launched RFA in February, 2016. That's an entire year before RFA's official, state-mandated, launch date. RFA is officially underway now, with other counties joining the fray.

To recap, RFA is a streamlined process by which all families go through the same approval process to provide dependent children with care and permanency through foster care, legal guardianship or adoption. As part of this approval process, all families need to take 12 hours of pre-approval training, which consists of the following classes: Orientation, Partnering with Children and Family Services (PWCFS) and Trauma Informed Parenting (TIP). All these classes are offered on-site at the Social Services Agency offices on Eckhoff Street in Orange and are in both English and Spanish. Other languages can be accommodated through a professional translator. To sign up for classes, prospective resource parents can either call the direct line

at (888) 871-5437 or e-mail at rfatraining@ssa.ocgov.com.

The TIP classes are offered twice a month, either in eight hour classes on Saturdays or weeknights for four hours each class. PWCFS classes are offered on Wednesday evenings, with English and Spanish language alternating on a weekly basis. The Orientation classes are offered once a month in English, on the first Thursday of the month, and every two months in Spanish, on the second Thursday of the month. In addition to these classes, people seeking approval as resource families are required to take and show proof of completion of a CPR class, with the emphasis being on infant, adolescent and adult populations.

We have received a lot of positive feedback from people who have taken these classes so far. It seems the material covered in the classes, especially relating to the trauma experienced by the children, has proved very informative to folks. We are glad to hear that.

Do you know of anyone who may be interested in joining this process? Pass the word along! Would you be interested? We welcome you!

SLICES OF THE RFA PROCESS



TRAINING

Prospective resource families will complete the following three classes: Orientation, Partnering with Children and Family Services and Trauma Informed Parenting.

APPLICATION

As part of the application process, prospective resource families will be asked to show proof of CPR certification, complete a health and TB screening, provide personal references, income expenditures as well as other requirements.

ASSESSMENT

The approval process also includes a comprehensive background check on every person, 18 and over, living in the home, a home safety inspection and a psychosocial study with all family members and individuals in the home.



July 29
&
September 30

As an approved resource family there are ongoing requirements that need to be met in order to remain in compliance with the Resource Family Approval (RFA) status. One of the requirements is obtaining training hours every year, beginning from the date that you were approved through RFA. During your first year of approval, the requirement is to complete 12 hours of training. Every year there-after, the requirement drops to eight hours of training.

In the first year, six of the required hours must be on the following topics:

- Prudent Parenting
- Creating Safe Spaces
- Visitation

The remaining six hours can be on the topic of your choice.

If you are currently a licensed foster family, you are required to complete eight hours of training annually. All eight hours may be completed through on-line training courses or a combination of on-line and in-person classes.

If you have any questions related to these training requirements, please contact Lorena Rodriguez at (714) 704-8293 or e-mail her at lorena.rodriguez@ssa.ocgov.com.



Super Saturday Trainings

The RFA Training and Recruitment Team will provide two more Super Saturday trainings in 2017. The trainings are typically held from 9 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. and offer all resource families the opportunity to obtain valuable training and support and receive credit towards the required, on-going training hours. Training topics and more specific information will be announced as it gets closer to the training dates. Hope to see you there!

Unable to attend a Super Saturday? Check out Saddleback College's Foster & Kinship Care Education program for more training options.

The Foster and Kinship Care Education program at Saddleback College provides quality education and support opportunities to caregivers of children in out-of-home care. The free classes are designed to assist the caregivers in meeting the children's educational, emotional, behavioral, and developmental needs.

In order for resource parents to meet their annual training hours requirement, monthly classes are offered throughout Orange County. To view classes, visit www.saddleback.edu/hs/fkce or call (949) 582-4884 to request a class catalog and to register for classes.

Knowledge at your fingertips

Training you need when and where you need it.

Quality Parenting Initiative California Just in Time Training

Just in Time is a free web based program designed by QPI California to connect resource and kinship caregivers with training all from the comfort of their homes or offices. For Orange County Children and Family Services, four hours can be taken on this website and counted for credit. Watch a video, take and pass the test at the end of the module and print the training certificate in order to receive credit. Be sure to select a training module that includes a test at the end.

Visit www.qpicalifornia.org.



Education Travel Reimbursement

Keeping children's connections alive and strong.

Foster children have the right to remain in the school in which they were last enrolled for the duration of the involvement of the Juvenile Court. This promotes educational continuity and may be in the best interest of the children, including non minor dependents.

Reimbursement is provided to resource parents for transporting foster children to their school of origin over three miles each way. If the child has an individualized education plan (IEP) that specifies the district will provide transportation to school, the child is not eligible for the education travel reimbursement.

Resource parents are expected to transport the children to school activities such as sports



or social events, as well as attending any required school meetings or conferences. The child's assigned social worker needs to submit a request for reimbursement (School of Origin Transportation Expense Form) to the child's assigned Eligibility Technician. Reimbursement is on a monthly basis and flat rates are paid based on the distance from the placement to the school of origin.



Mentor program builds connections for foster youth

Orangewood Foundation needs youth

Orangewood Foundation's Mentor Program is looking for current or former foster youth who would like one-on-one support and encouragement from a caring adult mentor. Orangewood mentors are available to Orange County foster youth ages 12 to 25 who reside in Orange County. Youth are matched with mentors based on the youth's hobbies, career interests, life goals, or other shared interests. The mentor/youth pair agree to meet together at least twice a month for at least a year.

Youth receive help and support in all areas of their life and especially during critical periods, such as in high school, college or trade school, or as they transition out of the foster care system into a life on their own. "I love the fact that I can share my feelings with my mentor," says Alicia, a 19 year old former foster youth with an Orangewood mentor. "I want her in my life forever." For more information, visit www.orangewood4you.org/mentor-program/.



Transitional housing available for youth

Orangewood Foundation’s Rising Tide Communities currently has several openings at locations in Orange, Tustin and Garden Grove. Rising Tide is an affordable and supportive transitional housing program for young adults (single or with children) who are at least 18 years of age and who have transitioned out of the foster care system or are AB12 eligible. Orangewood’s goal is to help youth learn and experience the skills that are necessary to live independently.

“Rising Tide has allowed me a chance to grow in a way no other could ever,” said one resident recently.

“They have showed me how to work for the things I need. I’ve been able to budget better with my income and start a savings for my car. Rising Tide just allows me to do so much I would have never been able to do on my own and is a perfect way to set a foundation for a path to success”

Youth are encouraged to apply to Rising Tide at 17 years old so Orangewood staff can begin to work with them before their 18th birthday. More information can be found at www.orangewood4you.org/rising-tide-communities/.

ILP event calendar

Orangewood’s Independent Living Program (ILP) has several upcoming events:

MAY 20 BOYS2MEN

An employment readiness workshop empowering young men. All participants leave with professional clothing.

JUNE 8 ILP GRADUATION

A graduation ceremony to celebrate youth graduating from an ACCESS high school, home school, getting their



GED, and all other graduating seniors. Family and friends are welcome. A dinner and dance for ILP youth only will follow the ceremony.

More information can be found at www.orangewood4you.org/independent-living-program/.

Foster Care Auxiliary


Orange County

The Foster Care Auxiliary always strives to offer the most possible in ways of providing services, opportunities, events, products and services to our resource families. Presently, we offer the following from our resource and distribution center:

- Lending Library of Foster and Child Care Related Material
- Baby Gear Lending Program
- Computers for Students in Foster Care Program
- Fun Family Events
- Educational Scholarships
- Birthday Corner
- Luggage Program
- Fun Days providing respite for foster/adoptive/kinship families
- Academic Mentor Tutoring available for qualified youth
- Monthly Distribution Days of new items obtained from community resources
- Various free tickets to plays, sporting events, ballets, concerts, comedy clubs, and more
- Thrift Store with deeply discounted used donations
- A network of foster families to ask for support and help

If you'd like to receive services from one of the programs, contact us! If you'd like to volunteer to help serve on one of the programs, contact us! And if you have ideas on other services and programs for our resource families, contact us!

FosterCareAux@yahoo.com
(714) 778-3383
333 S. Brookhurst St, Anaheim 92804
www.FosterCareAux.com



SWIM CLASSES

Australian Swim School is offering swimming classes for \$5 for children ages 6 months to 4 years. Classes are held Mondays and Wednesdays from 8:45 a.m. to 9:15 a.m. Call (714) 491-1450 for more information.

Anaheim Red Shield Corps
Community Center
1515 W. North St.
Anaheim 92801



OPEN ARMS

ADOPTION RESOURCE GROUP

FOUNDATIONS, FRIENDSHIP AND FOREVER FAMILIES

Open Arms provides an opportunity to be together with others in a caring and understanding environment. Get straight answers to questions from people who have been there and learn creative and caring problem solving techniques. *Adults only, please!

Meets the 2nd Saturday of the month at
Keller Williams Realty
17822 E. 17th St., Suite 102, Tustin 92780
9 a.m. to noon

To register or for questions, please e-mail Guiselle Scott at gmquiel@hotmail.com or call (714) 599-4473. Facilitated by Darren and Guiselle Scott, County resource parents.

RESOURCES

KINSHIP SUPPORT SERVICES A PROGRAM FOR RELATIVES RAISING CHILDREN

If you are a grandparent, uncle, aunt, sibling, extended family member, or family friend who is raising your relative's child, free support and resources are available to you.

Kinship offers:

- Mentorship and advocacy
- Caregiver and teen support groups, workshops and family-focused events
- Tutoring and emotional support for you and your children
- Community resource information, including counseling services
- Support for permanency plan for the child in your care
- Legal guardianship assistance

To learn more, contact Olive Crest at:
(714) 543-5437, ext. 1154
kinship@olivecrest.org
www.olivecrest.org/kinship

Olive Crest
2130 E. Fourth St., Ste. 200
Santa Ana

Orange County One Stop Centers - Young Adult Services



Knowledge2Career
A C A D E M Y

Contact:
Joseph Lopez (949) 375-8581
Rachel Campbell (714) 988-2241
K2COC@krd.com
17891 Cartwright Rd., Irvine 92614

Serving Aliso Viejo, Laguna Hills, Laguna Beach, Laguna Niguel, and Laguna Woods

Looking to start a career?
Need a career change?
Want to advance in your career?

- K2C Academy offers:**
- Education
 - Certificates
 - Work experience (paid/unpaid)
 - Learn how to get and keep a job

K2C offers a fully funded program for youth between 17 and 24. Contact us today for more information and to apply.

DIRECTORY

FOSTER CARE INFORMATION LINE
(888) 871-KIDS (5437)

CHILDREN & FAMILY SERVICES RECEPTION
(714) 704-8000
(714) 935-7171 (emergencies & after hours)

ADMINISTRATION

Mike Ryan
Social Services Director

Anne Bloxon
Children & Family Services Director

Scott Burdick
CFS Deputy Director

Denise Churchill
CFS Deputy Director

Ken Santini
CFS Deputy Director

Christine Smith Snapper
CFS Deputy Director

RFA & SERVICES PROGRAM

Norean Lubchenko, Administrative Manager II

Victor Chavez, Administrative Manager I

Susan Collins-Rogers, Administrative Manager I

Sylvia Cordova, Administrative Manager I

Marlene Telegadas, Administrative Manager I

RECRUITMENT & TRAINING

Angela Santos, Senior Social Services Supervisor
(714) 704-8952

**Lianne Vu, Social Services Supervisor
(714) 746-8433

Rick Bazant, Community Program Specialist
(714) 944-6473

Roylyn Burton, Community Program Specialist
(714) 746-2778

*Nena Casis, Recruiter/Trainer
(714) 833-0179

*Elizabeth Hutchinson Cervantes, Recruiter/Trainer
(714) 704-8911

Geeta Karir, Recruiter/Trainer
(714) 697-6098

*Yazmin Leal, Staff Specialist
(714) 704-8828

Helen Lindsey, Recruiter/Trainer
(714) 704-8997

*Lorena Rodriguez, Information Processing Technician
1-888-871-5437 (RFA Training Hotline)

Andres Torres, Information Processing Technician
(714) 704-8921

Diemmy Tran, Recruiter/Trainer
(714) 380-8361

*Angelica Zikoor, Recruiter/Trainer
(714) 746-7762

RESOURCE FAMILY LIAISON

*Joanna Hussey (714) 704-TALK (8255)

LICENSING

Brent Payne, Supervisor
(714) 704-8887

Stephanie Aspgren, Analyst
(714) 746-6038

*Paul Sanchez, Analyst
(714) 697-2895

FOSTER CARE ELIGIBILITY

Manuel Roa (714) 704-8441

BIRTHDAY GIFTS FOR FOSTER CHILDREN

(714) 679-2438
Call for an appointment

TRANSITIONAL PLANNING SERVICES

Jaime Muñoz, Administrative Manager II

*Lourdes Chavez, Supervisor (714) 704-8058

Robert Kelekian (714) 940-5704

TREATMENT FOSTER CARE OREGON OC

Dr. Mary Eason, Program Supervisor
(714) 704-8238

Terry Maher, Program Supervisor
(714) 704-4122

Michelle Medina, Recruiter/Trainer
(714) 746-1774

SPECIAL MEDICAL PROGRAM

Karen Werno, Placement Coordinator
(714) 704-8533

Mary Ewart, Medical Intake Coordinator
(714) 704-8531

Cindy Hutchison, Medical Intake Coordinator
(714) 704-8531

TIME OUT FOR PARENTS (TOPS)

Pat Reese, Program Coordinator
New Alternatives, Inc. (714) 245-0045

WORKING CAREGIVER CHILDCARE

*Karen Pinkerton (714) 704-6145

FOSTER & KINSHIP CARE EDUCATION

Saddleback College
Jorge Razo, Interim Director
Gail Janisch, Program Assistant
(949) 582-4884

RESOURCE FAMILY SUPPORT GROUPS

Open Arms Adoption Resource Group
Meets at Keller Williams Realty in Tustin
Darren & Guiselle Scott (714) 599-4473

Spanish-Speaking Resource Parent Support
Meets at OCSSA Eckhoff Office in Orange
*Joanna Hussey (714) 704-8255

ORGANIZATIONS

California Children's Services (CCS)
(714) 347-0300

CalOPTIMA

Cydney Weber, Liaison
(714) 796-6132
Member Services (714) 246-8500
Claims Department (714) 246-8885

Child Health & Disability Program (CHDP)
(800) 564-8448

Denti-Cal (800) 322-6384

Foster Care Auxiliary of Orange County

Kathy Harvey
(714) 778-3383
www.fostercareaux.com

Kinship Center

(714) 957-1004

Olive Crest Kinship Support Program

(714) 543-5337 ext. 1154

Orange County Mental Health

(714) 834-5015

Orangewood Foundation

Linda Levshin, Director Youth Transition Services
(714) 619-0239

Vision Services Plan

(800) 877-7195

*Spanish Speaking

**Vietnamese Speaking

THE LINK

the link is published quarterly by Orange County Social Services Agency, Children and Family Services. We invite your news items. Any correspondence becomes the property of Children and Family Services and may be used in any media. We reserve the right to edit. Editor: Roylyn Burton / Roylyn.Burton@ssa.ocgov.com / (714) 746-2778.

Follow us!



OCLetsFosterTogether



@OCLetsFoster