



Foster Care Awareness Campaign
Make A Difference...One Child at a Time

How Congregations Can Get Involved

- **Mentor a Foster Youth.** Being a mentor is a unique opportunity to show a young person that he or she has someone to rely upon, even through challenging times. New Philadelphia AME and All Saints Episcopal Church are two of many congregations that bring together foster youth with adults who provide supportive relationships and a connection to the community. Call the Department of Children and Family Services at (213) 351-0106 to learn more about mentoring opportunities.
- **Recruit Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASAs).** Trained CASAs are appointed by the court to visit their assigned foster child and advocate for his or her best interests both inside and outside the courtroom. Congregations including First AME Church have helped recruit volunteers for this invaluable program. To get more information about becoming a CASA contact (323) 526-6306.
- **Support and Assist Foster and Adopting Families.** Families in the congregation or the local neighborhood may be providing a warm home environment for foster youth – but could benefit from being part of mutual support groups or getting help with respite care during busy times. Baptist Church of the New Covenant has developed support groups for foster and biological families involved in the foster care system, and Agape International Spiritual Center has an Adoption Support Ministry. For more information about supporting and assisting families, contact the Department of Children and Family Services at (888) 811-1121.
- **Set Up a Tutoring Project.** Foster youth too often change schools and fall behind in classes. Spending a few hours helping children living in foster care learn to read or working with them on homework can make a difference in their life and give them a better start toward a stable future. Ascension Lutheran Church conducts an extensive tutoring program. Call (323) 292-9955 to learn more.
- **Hire and Train Foster Youth.** By investing in hiring young people from the foster care system and helping to train them for successful careers, employers provide these youth with a critical start toward a lifetime of self-sufficiency. Congregations can support these efforts by reaching out to employers in their congregations and community. To find out about programs that can help subsidize and support a job or an internship for youth in foster care, call United Friends of the Children at (213) 580-1823.
- **Donate to Foster Youth.** Youth living in foster care are often prevented from participating in extracurricular or enrichment activities because they lack the funds to pay for sports uniforms, musical instruments, or art supplies. Many congregations and church groups collect funds or contribute items to enrich the lives of youth living in foster care. For information on donating, contact the Children's Law Center at (323) 980-1700.

- **Help Remember a Foster Child's Birthday.** While it is inconceivable for most children to imagine a birthday without celebration, cards, and presents, this occurrence is the norm for a significant number of foster children. To ensure that *every* foster child experiences a birthday as a moment of happiness rather than despair, congregations such as All Saints Episcopal Church assist by collecting gift certificates or birthday gifts for youth in foster care. For more information about the Children's Law Center Birthday Project call (323) 980-1700.
- **Host a Speaker on Foster Care for Meetings or Services.** Hear from former foster youth, foster and adoptive parents, attorneys, and others involved in the child welfare system who will discuss how our community can better meet the needs of children living in foster care. Call the Children's Law Center at (323) 980-1700 to schedule a speaker.