

SIERRA HEARTBEAT

Spring/Summer 2010

A FOREVER FAMILY FOR MAX



Max is a typical 11-year-old boy; he likes to play outdoors, go to the park and slide on the slides or swing on the swing set. Riding bikes and skateboards are two of his favorite pastimes. But what he really likes are bugs. He doesn't just like bugs, HE REALLY LIKES BUGS! Max likes all kinds of bugs, from earthworms and snails, to tarantulas and scorpions. He says that he likes scorpions because they only sting when they are scared. Max can get anxious sometimes and, just like the scorpion, when he does, he might feel like protecting himself... by stinging.

Max entered the foster care system when he was three years old due to neglect and abuse by his biological family. As is true for many of the children living in foster care, Max has had many foster placements including two group homes, and sadly, one failed adoption placement, all by the age of eight.

Unfortunately, Max has experienced major trauma at the hand of adult males in his short life beginning with his birth father, then followed by foster care givers and even by the father figure in the failed adoption. Consequently, Max has a huge barrier in trusting men. He once shared that he would be okay living with a single mom or in a house with two moms, but that

he didn't want a dad. No child should be scared to live in a family with a father or big brother, but too often, children living in foster care are confronted with negative role models in their lives.

After the failed adoption, Max was referred to Sierra Forever Families' Destination Family Youth Permanency Program so that he could prepare for a permanent family - a family who would nurture him, help him gain self-esteem and work with him on his trust issues. Knowing that Max was fearful of adult males, the decision was made to partner him with one of our great adult male social workers, Rob Griffin. Rob has done a tremendous job in working with youth similar to Max, who have suffered abuse by male figures in their lives. Rob worked one-on-one with Max for almost a year, helping him to identify healthy interactions and friendships with men. This proved to be quite successful. As Max began to trust Rob, he opened to the idea of having a father.

In 2009, Rob introduced Max to a single gentleman who had wanted to be a father and had always intended to adopt a child from foster care. In the beginning, Tony would meet with Max and simply hang out and talk, go to the park, play video games; all with the support of Rob who would attend each of the get-togethers.

The visits proved to be quite successful, and with each one, Max began to trust and enjoy Tony and the activities they would share. It took a lot of time to prepare Max for a forever family and a relationship with a father figure, but through understanding and dedication, Rob helped Max to heal and grow so that he could open up and benefit from having a positive male in his life.

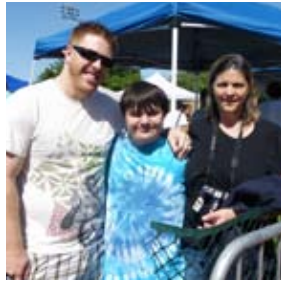
Rob felt strongly that connecting Max and Tony would benefit both individuals, and it did. Max finalized his adoption in April 2010. After signing all of the papers during finalization, Max turned to Tony, and through a huge smile, said "I love you so much." The judge then asked, "Do you have anymore questions before we end?" Max said, "Yeah, why do I have to wear a helmet when I ride my bike?" Simply put, Max now has a loving father to nurture him through childhood and into adulthood, where he can now become a strong father himself in the future.

Sierra
FOREVERFAMILIES
sierraff.org

We transform the lives of children in foster care by building and nurturing permanent families

New Name. New Website. Same Great Mission! Visit: sierraff.org

GIVING BEAT



Rob Griffin, Joey and his new mom. Joey participating in the games. Celebrating with friends

On May 7th, Chico State coordinated with Special Olympics Butte County (SOBC) to host a day of games for youth living with disabilities. Joey (14) participated in the games this year, and staff of Sierra Forever Families (Sierra) were on hand to cheer him on. Joey and his friends had a great time participating in the games. The spirit at the Chico State track was amazing and all of the youth participants received ribbons for their accomplishments.

Joey has lived in the foster care system for several years, moving from care homes to group homes. He was referred to Sierra's Destination Family Youth Permanency program in 2005, with the hope of finding a family to call his own. Rob Griffin, social worker with Sierra Forever Families, has helped him immensely over the last few years; helping him to identify and improve difficult behaviors that has helped him learn positive ways to interact with adults.

In 2009, Sierra identified a family for Joey. This great family has a lot of experience raising youth with special needs. Joey is excited to be adopted soon and to become an official member of the family. Joey's story is in keeping with Sierra's focus to find permanence for harder-to-place children and youth living in foster care. To find a family who can nurture and support Joey and his individual special needs is something worth celebrating. Congratulations to Joey and his family!



With only two weeks notice, Sierra's Wendy's Wonderful Kids social worker found out that two sisters were being moved from their seventh foster home in four years to, yet again, a temporary foster home.

At the same time, a Sierra social worker was working with a single woman who wished to adopt a child. After two meetings with the girls, aged 8 and 10, our family was eager to proceed with the placement except that she did not have the required two beds.

With only three days before the sisters would be moved, Sleep Train came to the rescue through its program "Mattresses 4 Kids through Mattress Discounter's" with a donation of bunk bed mattress sets. With this donation, these girls will have, for the first time, beds of their own and a sense of belonging. Executive Director Bob Herne remarked, "This donation was a huge help in allowing the timely transition for two young girls to a home that has the promise of a forever family. Thank you, Sleep Train."



**DAVE THOMAS
FOUNDATION
FOR ADOPTION**

Finding Forever Families for Children in Foster Care

Wendy's Wonderful Kids is making a difference for thousands of children - one child at a time. As a selected partner since 2005, Sierra Forever Families receives an annual grant of \$65,000 from the Foundation. The grant supports the hiring of adoption professionals who execute aggressive, child-focused recruitment programs targeted exclusively on moving children from foster care into adoptive families. Sierra has assisted 20+ through the grant support.

The Foundation's vision is that every child will have a permanent home and loving family. To bring that vision reality for America's waiting foster care children, the Wendy's Wonderful Kids program has an ambitious goal of matching 8,000 - 10,000 children.



**SPECIAL THANKS TO SUREWEST FOR DOUBLING THEIR GIFT SUPPORT TO \$10,000 FOR 2010
SINCE 1998, SUREWEST HAS HELPED 15+ CHILDREN FIND PERMANENT FAMILIES!**

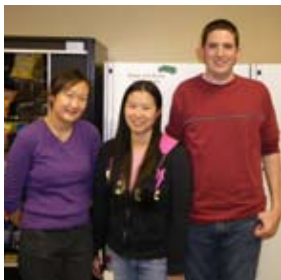
GIVING BEAT



Walk 'N Rock 2010. Youth representatives for participating nonprofits groups. Dorene and Jordan. Walkers at Tower Bridge.

On Sunday, May 30 at Raley Field, Sierra Forever Families participated in the 2nd Annual Walk 'N Rock presented by Hope Productions. The event was a huge success! Thanks to our many team captains, generous donors, and participating walkers, Sierra Forever Families generated over \$24,000 for the Wonder Mentoring Program – a program that matches caring, consistent adults with children and youth (ages 6-12 years) living in foster care.

During the festivities, each participating nonprofit was asked to have a youth representative at the event. Proudly representing the Wonder Mentoring Program was Jordan (14), who has participated in the mentoring program since she was 8 1/2 years old. Jordan was matched with Dorene six years ago and the two of them continue to share in their journey through Wonder. Jordan is no longer living in foster care. She reunified with her birth family and her family supports her continued relationship with Dorene. Jordan is now a C.I.L.T. (Counselor in Leadership Training) and is acting as a mentor to younger youth in the program.



**CHAMPIONS
FOR CHILDREN**

A Sierra Forever Families Program

Walk 'N Rock 2010. Youth representatives for participating nonprofits groups. Dorene and Jordan. Walkers at Tower Bridge.

Sierra Forever Families is pleased to feature the creative efforts of the Sacramento Metro Air Quality Management District Champions for Children Team! Under the direction of its Charity Committee, this dedicated staff of more than 100 employees have been supporting Sierra Forever Families since 2003. Their support has helped at least seven children prepare to join forever families.

This team has used rather unconventional ways to raise their annual fundraising goal. The staff bands together to host a monthly in-office luncheon – so while they're enjoying a fun lunch they're also raising money to help children in foster care! But the culinary treats don't stop there – during the summer they host Root Beer Float Thursdays and every few months they host a Nacho Friday – just for good measure! This office clearly enjoys food and fun times!

Their dedication and efforts don't stop there. They have also removed the soda vending machine from their office and now sell sodas on an honor snack basis for Sierra Forever Families. Last year they also created a cook book to sell – a compilation of staff members' special recipes.

We applaud SMAQ for their unwavering support of Sierra Forever Families. They display a perfect example of how a CFC Team can work together to raise money using fun and creative events!



On March 18, Sierra Forever Families and Circle Design were honored with four CAPPIE awards from the Sacramento Public Relations Association (SPRA). Sierra submitted pieces reflecting their rebranding efforts from 2009. The extensive rebranding effort was a culmination of hard work from our board, staff, and consultants and these efforts were recognized with two gold and two silver awards. With the help of Kate Renwick of Vision Service Plan, Circle Design and public relations firm Runyon Saltzman & Einhorn, Sierra successfully transitioned to its new identity...and these efforts were rewarded at the 2009 SPRA CAPPIE awards.

DONOR BEAT

DEVELOPMENT REPORT



I hope you have received our Annual Report for fiscal year 2008-2009. It is a small token of appreciation for the generosity and support Sierra received from friends like you. What amazed me most from that report was that during a time when organizations like Sierra faced a difficult economy, we actually increased the number of children and youth served by 20% compared to the previous year!

A total of 333 children and youth were served during the fiscal year. . . lives transformed. We are grateful for the generous support we received from so many individuals, corporations, businesses and foundations. These accomplishments were made possible because of you!

As we approach the end of our fiscal year on June 30 and look ahead, we remain committed to serving more children and making the most of the resources available to us. I hope you will help!

There are three things you can do:

1. Become a resource family either to provide a forever family or to mentor a child or youth living in foster care.
2. Help spread the word by telling others about the amazing work of Sierra Forever Families.
3. Give generously!

We have several ways you can help support our mission to transform the lives of children in foster care by building and nurturing permanent families:

- Renew or become a Champion for Children with a commitment to give/raise \$5,000 (check out our website for details about donating).
- Become a sponsor at our 6th Annual Golf Classic for Kids scheduled for September 27 at the Serrano Country Club.
- Consider non-cash ways to give, such as appreciated stock, real estate, personal property, etc.
- Include Sierra Forever Families in your estate plans.

Your generosity is critical in helping Sierra find permanency for children. Please give today.

Thank you for all you do to help us fulfill our mission to children. Our fund development staff would be happy to discuss ways you can help.

Thank you,
Bobby Cobbs,

Development and Public Relations Officer
bcobbs@sierraff.org

RUBICON BREWING COMPANY 501C WEDNESDAY: Sierra Forever Families™ JUNE 23, 2010 (all day)

A portion of the day's proceeds will benefit Sierra Forever Families.
2004 Capitol Avenue - Midtown Sacramento
Join Sierra Forever Families at the Rubicon Brewing Company for food, brews and fun!

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON HOW YOU CAN HELP A CHILD LIVING IN FOSTER CARE:

- visit our website at www.sierraff.org
- call me at 916.368.5114 ext. 346
- or email me at bcobbs@sierraff.org



SUPPORT SIERRA FOREVER FAMILIES WITH A PLANNED GIFT

The footprints you leave today will have a tremendous impact on the future!

Planned giving can provide a legacy of support. By including Sierra Forever Families in your will, trust or other type of planned gift, you insure that Sierra will continue to transform the lives of children in foster care.

For Planned Giving information, contact Kimberly Cox at 916-368-5114 ext. 341 or kcox@sierraff.org

SACRAMENTO STAFF

8928 Volunteer Lane, Suite 100
Sacramento, CA 95826
Phone: (916) 368-5114
Fax: (916) 368-5157

PLACER KIDS STAFF

11990 Heritage Oak Place, Suite 3
Auburn, CA 95603
Phone: (530) 887-9982
Fax: (530) 887-9994

NEVADA CITY STAFF

PO Box 361
Nevada City, CA 95959
Phone: (530) 478-0900
Fax (530) 478-0970

CHICO STAFF

520 Cohasset Road, Suite 140
Chico, CA 95926
Phone: (530) 879-3861
Fax: (530) 896-1792