

Possibilities

EMQ FamiliesFirst

Help and hope for kids in crisis

Fall 2011



Foster Mom Holds, Heals Broken Child

Savannah was severely neglected by her drug-abusing mother in a home without plumbing or running water. By age four, she was still not potty-trained. Her teeth were rotted so severely that she was in constant pain. Allegations of sexual abuse by her father only painted a darker picture of sadness, loneliness and despair. Placement in an EMQ FamiliesFirst foster home would be her salvation.

Sue had been a certified foster parent for nearly 15 years when she got the call. She already had three foster children in her home and welcomed Savannah to her family. When Savannah arrived, Sue could see how traumatized and malnourished she was. Savannah didn't know the simplest things, like how to eat with silverware or play games. "I could see torture behind the eyes of this beautiful child, and I vowed that no one would ever hurt her again," Sue said.

Sue dove into the formidable task of getting services for Savannah. First, she required extensive dental surgery. Sue quickly found new meaning in the words patience and persistence. When Savannah made progress and then regressed, Sue helped with each step forward, got her to therapy sessions and helped her learn social skills. Perhaps most important, Sue simply stayed by Savannah during the frightened nights when she would lie in bed, bright eyes wide open, afraid to sleep and dream of the past.

Over time, Savannah began to smile a little, run and jump and play as a child her age should. There were trials and tantrums and yet small signs of progress. As two years passed, Savannah had over 250 hours of trauma-based therapy.

"Post-traumatic stress, flashbacks, jumping at certain sounds, haven't gone away. But she is learning to cope." Because Sue knew the work with Savannah was far from over and because "she is so full of life," Sue made a permanent commitment and adopted Savannah.

While Sue devoted her time to Savannah's progress she continued to nurture her other three foster girls. Dedicated foster parents like Sue—and the children they help to raise—need your support, especially at the holidays. Your donation means hope and lets them know people right in their community care. To find out how you can help, go to www.emqff.org/newsletter. ♥

What's going on in your region...

Central Valley	Inland Empire	Bay Area	Los Angeles (Hollygrove)	Capital	Foster Care & Adoption
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Los Angeles/Hollygrove (323) 769-7142

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www.emqff.org/employment

Foster Care and Adoption Services

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For complete locations and services information, go to www.emqff.org. To view our list of recent donors, please go to www.emqff.org/help.

Possibilities is published three times a year for the supporters of EMQ FamiliesFirst.

Confidentiality of EMQ FamiliesFirst children and families has been preserved through the use of models and by changing identifying details.

To update your mailing information, please call or email Judi Umbreit at (408) 364-4048 or judith.umbreit@emqff.org.

From Darrell Evora, LMFT, President & CEO

Six Months Later, Kids Still Successful



I'm often asked why I choose to work in a field where there's a constant struggle to provide enough resources for an ever-expanding number of children. But the answer is easy when I get to hear great news like this: exciting results delivered by our community-based Wraparound program in a recent agency-wide, post-discharge study of youth and families. Six months after services ended, 78 percent of the youth served were still *at home*, 83 percent *in school*, and 75 percent were still *out of trouble* with the law. Most important, that's consistent with their

results at discharge. We would normally expect some fall-off when there is no longer professional support in these kids' lives, but we were able to help them successfully transition from the system to more "natural" supports like their families, schools and communities.

This is more than our success—it's yours and our community's as well. To further highlight these great outcomes, we have included a more detailed individual story for you on page 4. It tells how a young woman's life turned around with the help of her agency team and donor support. When asked what else she needed, she said that she missed being part of a family and her team then helped her find her siblings—which ultimately helped her feel even more confident.

It's the season for celebrating family and good friends, and we're remembering all the people it takes to make our work successful. Thank you! ♥

Meet: Donald B. Russell, Board Member



Childhood Hero: Don's childhood hero was his dad. A man who was "selfless and solid," his dad ran facilities for the developmentally disabled and other state hospitals giving Don the unique childhood opportunity of living on the grounds and playing with some of the children. Don admired his dad's passion and tireless dedication to the cause and the kids.

Life and Work: Don and Linda, his wife of over 30 years, enjoy family with their two kids and three grandkids. In Don's career, he has started four companies, "each successful in its own way." After 20 years in construction management, Don got into the energy industry and most recently started Sacramento Natural Gas Storage, LLC.

Board that Excels: Just like his dad, Don has a vital interest in helping children. Don joined the EMQ FamiliesFirst board this summer. After serving on and observing other boards, he's well qualified when he states that our board is like few others: committed to the agency's mission; well-informed; representative of both business and community; committed to raising awareness, raising money and talking with legislators; and engaged in a healthy, transparent dialogue of questions and feedback with the executive team.



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Your Gift Brings Hope



Your gift makes a tremendous impact to a child recovering from abuse, trauma or severe neglect. Especially at this time of year, it lets each one know someone cares. It creates a sense of hope. Children and their families need not only holiday gifts but food and other necessities to help turn their lives around. Your cash donation makes the vital difference in a child's life, health and safety.

Gift Cards

By giving gift cards, you empower families to maintain dignity and make their own choices. Call your local representative below to find out what is needed: stores such as Target and Toys R Us, or local grocery stores, gas stations and public transit. Here's a fun and generous holiday idea - throw a party with friends or coworkers, and have everyone bring gift cards to be donated to the children!

The need is urgent throughout California and close to home. Your donation makes the difference, ensuring that families receive:

- Shoes, warm clothing and coats
- Holiday gifts for children or teens
- Grocery gift cards for families struggling to keep food on the table
- Emergency help with housing

4 Easy Ways to Donate

Choose how you want to donate. You can designate your gift to local programs or give a general gift that will be used where the need is greatest:

- Use the enclosed envelope and mail your donation to our secure lock box
- Make a donation online at www.emqff.org—click "Donate Now" to access our secure donation page
- Provide much-needed gift cards—find out more by calling your regional contact (below)
- Sponsor a holiday drive through your business—call your regional contact today

Every gift, every dollar directly helps a child in crisis. ♥

A Simple Gift of Time

Take a few minutes to follow us on Facebook and Twitter, or sign up to receive timely updates by email. Take another minute to help spread the word. Tell your friends how they can make an impact and help a child in crisis this season—encourage them to read this newsletter, follow us online or sign up for emails. Sign up today at www.emqff.org/newsletter.

Bay Area

Contact:
Darren DeMonsi
(408) 364-4058 or
Antoinette Harris
(925) 325-3336

Capital Region

Contact:
Richelle Donaldson
(530) 747-3122

Central Valley

Contact:
Laura Mock
(559) 246-8223

**Hollygrove/
Los Angeles**

Contact:
Cathy Kort
(323) 769-7142

Inland Empire

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Keshia Vann
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Macy's Community Shopping Day Is November 12

Shop, Save, Share

Here's an easy, fun way to support children in crisis and their families in the Central Valley. Support the Macy's Community Shopping Day, get your own holiday shopping done, and give back to those in need. Last year the event raised \$2,500 for EMQ FamiliesFirst.

That money supported children and families struggling not only to recover from abuse or trauma but also with the reality of living at or below the poverty line. Last year a single mother needed help finding a job to support herself and her two young kids. With your gifts, she was able to buy clothing appropriate for a job interview. Our staff also advised her in her job search and conducted mock interviews. Now she's working in an office and supporting her own family.

To help similar families, all ticket sales from the Macy's Community Shopping Day will go to EMQ FamiliesFirst. Join us on November 12 at Fashion Fair and River Park locations in Fresno. Simply purchase your \$10 ticket and use it on November 12 for 10-20 percent savings plus \$10 off one purchase. Enjoy complimentary food sampling, giveaways, live entertainment and more. EMQ FamiliesFirst will host a free face painting booth and have information about our services.

For all the details or to purchase your ticket, contact Laura Mock at (559) 246-8223 or visit www.emqff.org/newsletter. ♥



Sense of Self Found with Family

Tina is about ready to graduate from our Wraparound program as well as high school. She has made a huge turnaround since she entered the program—from substance abuse and acting out to better relations with her aunt, healthy friendships, and looking toward college and potentially a career in medicine.

As Tina began to make progress with the support of her Wraparound team, they asked her what might still be missing. Tina expressed that she felt the loss of all her siblings, both on her mom's side and her dad's. Since her mom was in jail and her dad mostly unavailable, Tina had lost track of all her siblings.

That's when our Family Finding Specialist, Joel Martinez, joined the team. Joel did the hard work of searching through the foster care system and negotiating for time to meet with some of the siblings. One connection took five months to locate in an old case file. Other siblings were hard to find because of the strained relationship with her father. By chance, Tina met a family member and got contact information. With the support of Joel and her Wraparound team, Tina was able to connect.

While Tina had already made great strides in turning her life around, the connection to her sisters and brothers only strengthened her emotional well-being and her self-identity. Family helped her better know who she is.

Family Finding seeks to create emotional connections and a support network of safe family members or even family friends when a child or teen is no longer living with parents or is in foster care. Family Finding depends entirely on donations. Make your donation this holiday a gift of finding family. See page 3 for ways to give, or find out more at www.emqff.org/newsletter. ♥

Thanks...

to the Inland Empire United Way for a \$5,000 donation toward emergency food and shelter for our families.





Thanks to Ray and Liza Beshoff for hosting the Fifth Annual Beshoff MotorCars Mercedes-Benz Golf Tournament benefitting the children of EMQ FamiliesFirst. Celebrity golfers included Todd McClellan, San Jose Sharks coach (shown, center); Sharks team members; and Frank Yallop, Earthquakes coach (photos online).

So Much Need, So Many Ways to Give

Help a Child Feel the Joy

As a child recovers from abuse, trauma or neglect, your holiday gift may help them feel much-needed joy and hope. Your donation may also provide that child's family with food, shelter or warm clothing and help them get back on their feet. There are many ways to give and every dollar helps create change for the good.

Individual Donations

Last year, private donations from community members like you provided for hundreds of children. For example, one family was able to get not only toys but a holiday meal, warm jackets and shoes, plus a Christmas tree for their two young children. This year, your donation of cash or gift cards will help ensure that every family gets the help needed to make this holiday season special. See page 3 to find out **4 Easy Ways to Donate**.

Businesses and Groups

Whether you represent a corporation, business or community group seeking to support a worthwhile nonprofit, there are many ways to engage with the specific needs and programs of EMQ FamiliesFirst and directly help children in crisis.

For the holidays:

- Gift cards—for children and families; lets families provide for their own, including gifts and basic needs like groceries, gas cards and more
- Adopt-a-Family—provide Contra Costa County families with basic needs and fun holiday gifts
- Kinship gifts—sponsor a toy drive for children living with their grandparents
- Older foster youth in transitional housing—provide gifts/gift cards

To provide gift cards or support holiday giving programs, please contact the representative in your area: Santa Clara County, Darren DeMonsi at (408) 364-4058; Contra Costa County, Antoinette Harris at (925) 325-3336.

All year:

- Adopt-a-Cottage, in Santa Clara County—help make the 24/7 residential cottages feel like home to the 50 children who live in them. Contact: Bettina Kohlbrenner at (408) 364-4051
- Wings for Foster Youth—donations help support 600 foster youth make the successful transition to adulthood each year; keep them from becoming a statistic. Most foster youth are soon homeless, in jail or become young parents on welfare—research shows that with support and resources, these statistics can be reversed. Contact: Bettina Kohlbrenner at (408) 364-4051
- Supplies for transitional age foster youth such as linens, dinnerware, luggage, or diapers and wipes for parenting teens—please contact Antoinette Harris at (925) 325-3336 to find out our current need

Thanks for all you do for kids in crisis! ♥



The Campbell Rotary came through with 220 backpacks, making the difference this fall for school children who otherwise would have been without needed supplies.



Congratulations to the winners of the 4th Annual C. H. Reynolds Golf Tournament. Thanks to CEO Chuck Reynolds for hosting the event which raised thousands of dollars for children and families served by EMQ FamiliesFirst.

For more event photos, visit www.emqff.org/newsletter

Thanks to Families Helping Families Communities, Inc., who partnered with us to offer a summer reading and math tutorial program to 12 children in our Kinship Support Services in Contra Costa County. All of the children improved their reading fluency by 26% (this was three times the anticipated goal for the summer). For more visit www.emqff.org/newsletter.

Camp Benefits Extend All Year in After-School Program

Hollygrove Begins 'Endless Summer'



Kids learn that literacy can be fun!

Building on the continued success and popularity of Camp Hollygrove and in response to overwhelming need in our community, this fall we launched a new after-school program on our campus called Endless Summer. It offers many of the same therapeutic and enrichment activities as Camp Hollygrove, along with a focus on literacy and school achievement.

For many children and teens, Camp Hollygrove—and now, Endless Summer—may be the first place they feel valued, surrounded by staff that focus on their strengths and nurture their burgeoning talents. These are kids who normally don't participate in team sports or plays at school, who turn to gangs for affirmation and a sense of belonging. At Hollygrove, they discover how to make positive choices, to mentor a young child instead of bullying, or write in journals instead of expressing their feelings with violence.

Consistently in fights and unable to sustain friendships, Dana found something new at Camp Hollygrove—an environment that develops healthy peer relationships. For the first time, she had many new friends. During the graduation ceremonies, Dana tearfully expressed gratitude for staff and friends, "It's only been four days and I already love you guys so much. All of you guys were so sweet and generous to me, even the campers."

For children living in the neighborhoods surrounding Hollygrove, playing outside of the house is not a safe option. One mom sent her two children to camp, for the first time trusting them to be out of the house and beyond her watchful eye. To her surprise, she saw a remarkable improvement in her kids' behavior. Her voice filled with emotion as she recalled picking up their play clothes after a camp outing to the beach and seeing sand spill from the pockets.

When typical after-school programs are not an option because of a child's emotional and behavioral challenges, Endless Summer meets the need. Our partners include Larchmont Charter School, which shares our campus, and Vine Street Elementary, where we already offer on-site mental health services and with whom we have a decades-long history of collaboration. We work closely with teachers to improve the academic performance of the students they refer while also helping kids learn positive behavior and social skills.

Endless Summer depends entirely on your financial support. We also need volunteers to help on our campus with homework, tutoring, art projects and more. For details, please visit www.hollygrove.org/ newsletter. ♥

HOLLYGROVE

100

Celebrating 100 years in the Heart of Hollywood

Announcing... this Spring 2012, be ready to celebrate Hollygrove's 100 Years in Hollywood! For sponsorship opportunities call Cathy Kort at (323) 769-7142.

Variety Grants \$20K for Family Finding

Thanks to Variety and Young Variety for their long-standing support! Variety—The Children's Charity of Southern California has helped the children of Hollygrove for over 10 years. Their most recent and generous grant promises to continue the vital work of our Family Finding program, which helps connect foster kids lost in the system with safe family members.

Young Variety members have hosted many holiday parties for Hollygrove children and their families. These create a rare holiday experience for families living in financial hardship and often in unsafe neighborhoods. Families have fun, enjoy some healthy bonding and take home

priceless memories. Young Variety is an organization for entertainment industry professionals over age 21. ♥



Heard it on Facebook: Hollygrove is a favorite among Young Variety volunteers who return every year to host a Halloween carnival.

Join the Holiday Gift Drive

Give Hope Where There Is So Little

“Adopting a nursery family has been a favorite part of my family’s holiday traditions. Our four (now adult) children have been involved in contributing what they can, both monetarily as well as doing the shopping, for our adoptive family. It is humbling to see what the nursery families ask for: shoes and socks, underwear, blankets, books. The experience presents such a wonderful opportunity to stop and reflect on what is truly important and always helps to put the holiday in perspective.”

Becky Heard, co-president, Friends of the Yolo Crisis Nursery

Poverty only compounds the struggle a child and family face as they heal from the emotional challenges caused by trauma, abuse or addiction. When you join in our holiday gift drive, you directly help that child and family enjoy a little holiday magic they otherwise would not have. Your support adds to their sense of hope on the road to healing and directly benefits children and youth in these programs:

- Residential Treatment Program provides 24-hour

psychiatric treatment and a nurturing environment to severely emotionally disturbed children, ages 6-17

- Yolo Crisis Nursery protects the youngest, most vulnerable children (birth to age 5) from abuse and neglect
- Community Based Services offer in-home counseling, resources and support for kids in crisis and their families

Whether you’re looking to give back, give in honor of a friend or family member, or collaborate with coworkers on a holiday giving campaign, get in touch and we’ll help make it happen. Please call Richelle Donaldson at (530) 747-3122. You can also check out our holiday wish list at www.emqff.org/newsletter. Thanks for all you do for children. ♥



Foster Santa



You and Santa Bring Bikes to Kids

Remember the joy and freedom of riding your first bike? Remember the confidence and independence it inspired? Your gift to our Foster Santa program may provide the first bicycle a child has ever had.

Foster Santa is 100 percent donor supported and provides a brand new bicycle, helmet, lock, and other holiday gifts for hundreds of children each year. Foster Santa parties are held in local communities where children are served by EMQ FamiliesFirst. Every bicycle and gift is provided directly through donors like you.

Foster Santa Locations Near You

Foster Santa offers a great opportunity for individual or corporate giving. Party locations include Alameda, Fresno, Sacramento, San Joaquin, Santa Clara, Solano, Stanislaus and Yolo counties. To donate, contact Richelle Donaldson at (530) 747-3122 or find us online at www.emqff.org/newsletter. ♥

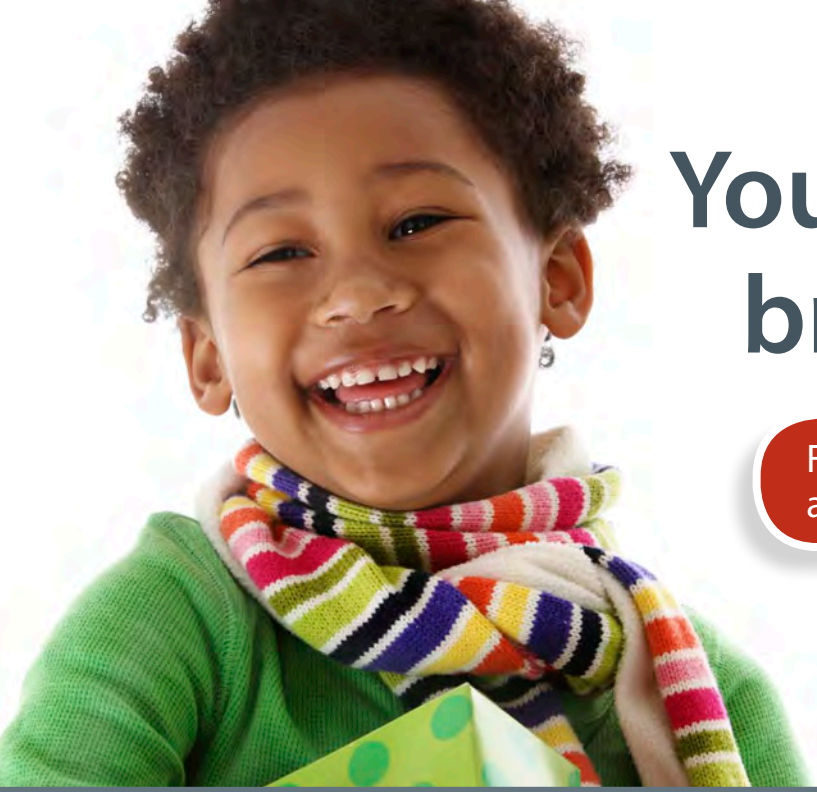
**Nearly
500
Holiday
Meals
Needed**

During this Thanksgiving and holiday season, nearly 500 families in our Capital Region programs need your help. Every dollar you give helps us provide a complete Thanksgiving or holiday meal to a family in need. Please contact Richelle Donaldson at (530) 747-3122.

Meet: Donald B. Russell *continued from page 2*

What Do People Think?: While the need increases and government funding tightens, more people need to understand that for every \$1 invested now in prevention and healing for children, society may well be avoiding \$7 dollars of expense later that would go for custodial care, juvenile programs or prisons. Don said that most people believe in programs for

children in crisis but don’t know how those programs are funded or realize how much they’ve been cut. Even though private donations are becoming harder to secure, the need for them is increasing so that agencies like EMQ FamiliesFirst can fill the funding gap and continue to do what’s best for children, their families, and ultimately our society. ♥



Your gift brings hope

Friendraise for the holidays! Find us on Twitter and Facebook, and pass it on to a friend!

Inside:

- Success: foster mom holds, heals broken child
- CEO letter: Wraparound shows long-term results
- Holidays: 4 easy ways to give



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You make hope happen

Mailing Corrections:
To make a name/address correction or if you receive multiple copies, please contact Judi Umbreit at (408) 364-4048 or judith.umbreit@empff.org.

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