



# CHAMPIONS FOR CHILDREN

A SIERRA FOREVER FAMILIES CAMPAIGN

## Champions for Children Team Resource Packet



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

**Sierra**  
FOREVER FAMILIES

Build. Nurture. Transform.



## Who Are Champions for Children:

In 1996, Sierra Forever Families (formerly Sierra Adoption Services) established the Champions for Adoption program for individuals, corporations, and businesses who raise \$5,000 or more annually to help provide the support needed to place a child or sibling group with a permanent loving family.

The success of Champions for Adoption, renamed Champions for Children, relies on teams of individuals or groups, formed by businesses or their employees, a school, church, or other organizations. The teams, led by their captains, devise a variety of ways to raise their \$5,000 goal. Strategies may include a single donation, mailings to friends, event fundraisers, employee gifts matched by their companies. . . the possibilities are endless.

Since the program began, *Champions for Children* has helped place over 450 children with permanent families. Just last year, the Champions program raised over \$250,000 helping more than 50 children find forever families.

### **Champions for Children (CFC) Participants Receive:**

- Recognition (including company name if applicable) in widely circulated business magazines and inclusion in Sierra's annual report
- Donor or company name listed in press releases as appropriate/ applicable
- Special recognition at annual donor appreciation event
- A CFC kit, including items with CFC logo and fundraising ideas
- Support and encouragement from Sierra's fund development staff who will serve as your liaison
- CFC donor or company profile may be included in a Sierra newsletter, if appropriate and available.
- Satisfaction knowing a child will receive a permanent loving family



## How You Can Help:

### Companies...

- Coordinate an employee giving campaign at your workplace
- Match employee donations
- Donate a percentage of company's sales for one day
- Give through your Foundation or Community Giving Program
- Send a mailing to your company's vendors requesting contributions

Company CFC teams in the past have created these **fun**draising ideas:

- Hosted event fundraisers such as a book sale or bake sale
- Had employees donate to wear jeans to work on Fridays
- Coordinated Hot Fudge Sundae Days for donations
- Sold snacks from a goodie basket in their employee lunch room

### Individuals...

- Make your own generous donation
- Become a team leader
- Ask ten people to raise or donate \$500 each
- Donate a gift of stock
- Send a mailing to your friends, family, and colleagues
- Increase your donation, if your company has a matching gift program
- Host a reception where your guests will be asked to give
- Ask your club or church members to donate
- Request donations be made to Sierra in lieu of birthday, anniversary or holiday gifts
- Introduce Sierra to local foundations or other prospective donors

**\$5,000**

WILL TRANSFORM  
THE LIFE OF A  
CHILD...FOREVER!





## Why Should You Support Sierra's Mission:

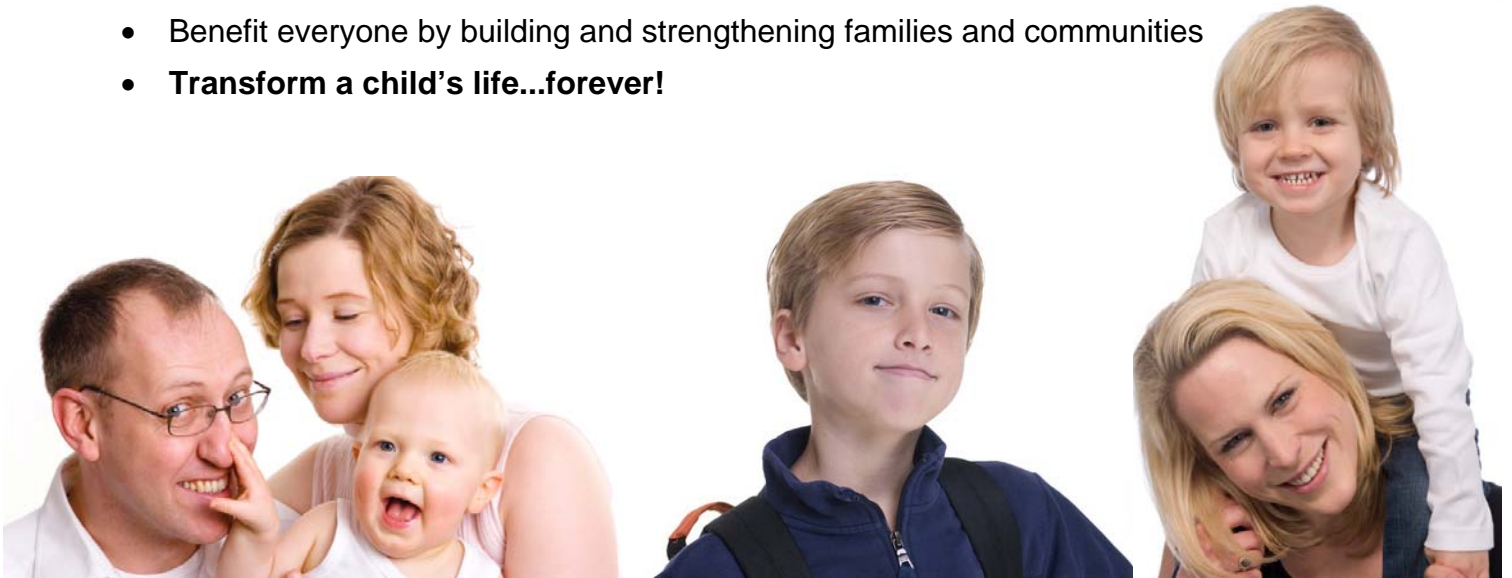
### Scope of Need:

- Approximately 58,000 children are currently in the state's foster care system at an annual cost of \$25,000 to \$75,000 per child.
- Over 3,300 local children are in foster care awaiting their permanent families.
- Every 24 hours in the greater Sacramento area, 5 to 8 children are removed from their homes due to neglect, abuse, abandonment and/or illegal activity of their parents/caretakers.
- Over half of the youth who emancipate from foster care will be homeless, in prison, victimized, or dead within two to four years, and 60% of the unwed females will have given birth, according to the California Partnership for Children.
- According to the National Prison Project, 90% of men in prison today grew up in foster care, were abandoned by their birth parents, or were abused.

## Your Support Will Help:

Place a child or sibling group with a permanent loving family,

- Ensure that children we serve will not age out of foster care alone
- Break the cycle of abuse, poverty, and homelessness
- Provide a loving and nurturing environment for a child
- Benefit everyone by building and strengthening families and communities
- **Transform a child's life...forever!**



## SIERRA THROUGH THE YEARS...



## Mission

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

Sierra Forever Families (Sierra) is a nonprofit agency that was founded in 1983 by adoptive parents. They saw that traditional adoption practices stood in the way of the placement for many children. Twenty-eight years later, the agency has a staff of 62 and serves families in 12 Northern California counties: Auburn, Butte, El Dorado, Nevada, Placer, Sacramento, San Joaquin, Sierra, Solano, Sutter, Yolo and Yuba. Sierra has centers located in Auburn, Chico, Nevada City and Sacramento.

Sierra serves the harder-to-place children: those with tragic histories of abuse, neglect, and abandonment, as well as those lingering in the foster care system for years. Our programs are designed with one goal in mind – to provide the best possible permanent families for children of all ages who are in the foster care system, from newborns to teens.

Many of the children and youth languishing in long-term foster care are school-aged. Many are from ethnic minorities and some have brothers and sisters, desiring to be placed together with a family. Others have physical or developmental disabilities or emotional challenges due to their experience with neglect and abuse. Each child shares a common bond – the need for a permanent family to call their own.





## The Morris Family

Don and Cindy, a mature couple who share a successful law practice, decided after 16 years of marriage, that it was time to begin their family. They had a deep desire to adopt and began researching options. They were introduced to Sierra Forever Families while watching A Place Called Home, a segment on FOX40 TV that features children who are living in foster care and in need of a permanent family. They had also heard of Sierra through the Heart Gallery of Sacramento that shows professionally photographed children and youth who are living in foster care awaiting a permanent family.

The couple liked what they learned and in December 2005 chose Sierra as the agency to help them build their family. Sierra social work staff worked with Don and Cindy to complete the application and homestudy processes. In December 2006, they were approved as a foster/adoptive family (which we now call a resource family). In January of 2007, they began their search for the children they hoped to join their family. Three months later, two siblings, Kaitlyn (9) and Abbygale (5) were placed into protective custody due to abuse and neglect by their birth parents.

Removal from their birth family is incredibly difficult for children. They are confused, and often feel guilty that they are the source of the problem. Kaitlyn and Abbygale were no exception. The girls were placed into a temporary foster home. Soon they began visiting Don and Cindy. In June 2007 the girls moved in with the couple. Initially, the goal was adoption. That soon changed when the County reconsidered and wanted to work toward reunifying the girls with their birth family. Don and Cindy agreed to support this plan feeling the best interest of the girls was most important.

In the months that followed, Don and Cindy made sure that the girls were available for scheduled visits with their birth family. While increased visitation was taking place, their goal remained to do what was best for the girls, even though they felt as though they were on an emotional roller coaster. The Morrises continued to maintain the girls' school, community and church activities.

After a period of time, plans once again changed and the County believed that adoption would be in the best interest of the girls. In May 2009, parental rights were terminated and Kaitlyn and Abbygale were available for adoption. By September, the Morrises were in Adoptive Placement and by November, their adoption was finalized. Don and Cindy are now the proud parents of Kaitlyn and Abbygale.

This path to permanency took place over multiple years. Throughout this journey, Don and Cindy held on to their faith and their intent to do whatever was best for the girls. The two feel blessed with their beautiful family. Kaitlyn and Abbygale have continued to grow into a happy addition of the Morris family. Contact with their birth family has remained and the girls have been able to work on their feelings of loss through therapy.

Sadly, the various health problems of the girls' birth mom took hold of her and she passed away this past summer. The entire Morris family attended the memorial and the girls were able to meet many of their extended family, including biological aunts and uncles. Kaitlyn continues to work hard in school and receives compliments from teachers. She is passionate about singing and is part of her school choir. Abby is now in third grade and enjoys her involvement in Brownies. Both girls are active in sports and have just earned their red belts in karate.

It was a long journey for everyone involved, yet permanency and the best outcome for the children were guiding forces that led to a happy ending.



## What People Are Saying:



“Helping children and youth living in foster care find a permanent loving family is important. I am delighted that we have been able to help transform the lives of children over the years,” said Paddon. “Champions for Children is a great way everyone can get involved. I am amazed at how committed all of our staff have become to raising support throughout the year to help the kids that Sierra serves. I encourage everyone to become a Champion for Children.”

*Jack Paddon, Senior Partner, Williams + Paddon, Architects + Planners, Inc.  
Chair, 2009-2011, Champions for Children*

“Being the Chair of the Champions for Children campaign for 2008-2009 was a wonderful and rewarding effort. We all know that the true champions are the many parents who adopt and nurture children from the foster care system. Also, it’s the efforts of hundreds of Sierra’s supporters whose collective donations have produced and funded many new champions. Even in these challenging economic times, collectively with your generosity, we continue to have a great impact on so many young lives.”

*Alan G. Wolf,  
Preconstruction Manager, Harbison Mahony Higgins Builders, Inc.  
Chair, 2008-2009 Champions for Adoption*



“As an adoptive parent and past board member for Sierra, it has been so important to me that Sierra has focused on the children in foster care with special needs. I’ll never forget the couple that chose to adopt a child with spinal issues. It made me feel that through Sierra, I was able to help the so-called “unadoptable” kids in foster care.

I became aware of Sierra through a mailing that intrigued me, so I attended a board meeting where I was recruited to help raise funds for a program called Champions for Adoption conceived by Donna Benner in 1996. Friends and associates helped with donations.

Every year since then, we send an annual appeal. I say “we” because I could not have done this without the organizational skills of Cyndi Sievers, my Administrative Assistant. I am proud to be part of Sierra Forever Families.”

*Chuck Nicholson, CPA, Nicholson & Olson, CPAs  
1996-2011 Team Captain, Champions for Adoption*



## Champions for Children - 2010-2011

**THANK YOU** for your commitment to transform the life of a child living in foster care.

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- Air Systems
- Julia Amaral and Mark Strate
- Bank of the West
- Catholic Healthcare West
- City of Roseville Grants Advisory Commission
- Bobby and Cheryl Cobbs
- Brad Des Jardin
- Robert “Bob” and Nancy Earl
- Jim and Janet Eldridge
- Evergreen Flexible Bonding Solutions
- Greg Finch and Shirley Thomas
- Elfrena Foord and Bruce Hester
- Friends for Kids
- Joe and Dee Hartzog
- Bob Herne
- Chuck and Brenda Horton
- Jerri Hunt
- Sarah Krevans
- M&M Whitmire Family Foundation
- Massie Family Foundation
- Mechanics Bank
- Merrill Lynch/Bank of America
- Nicholson and Olson CPAs
- Debra Panattoni and Mark Tabak
- RCA Foundation
- Jeanne Reaves
- Eric and Patrice Ratinoff
- Kate Renwick-Espinosa
- R.W. “Skip” Reynolds, Jenkins Insurance Group
- Lou and Barbara Riggs
- Ronald McDonald House Charities Northern CA
- Dan and Suzy Root
- Sacramento Metropolitan Air Quality Management
- United Way California Capitol Region
- US Bank
- Waste Connections
- Parker White
- Williams + Paddon, Architects + Planners Inc.
- Alan Wolf, Harbison Mahony Higgins Builders, Inc.

\*Represents gifts and pledges of \$5k – \$24,999  
received July 1, 2010 – Jan. 31, 2011.

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Please note: Champions for Children are still being accepted for 2010-2011.

For information on becoming a **CHAMPION FOR CHILDREN**, contact:

**Juli Kramer at [jkramer@sierraff.org](mailto:jkramer@sierraff.org) or 916.368.5114 x 343**



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