



United Way
California Capital Region

Sierra Forever Families

Dispelling the Myths of Adoption Through Foster Care

Dec. 7, 2010 -- There are plenty of excuses not to open up your home to a foster child waiting to be adopted. Unfortunately, most are based upon false myths: adoption through foster care is expensive; if your past isn't spotless, then you can't qualify to adopt; children end up in foster care because they get into trouble with the law; and if you actually do adopt a child, you're on your own. "These are all myths," says Sara Hanson public relations specialist for [Sierra Forever Families](#), a local organization whose primary goal is finding and nurturing permanent families for children in foster care.

"The children and youth in foster care end up in the system through no fault of their own," Sara continues. "They get placed into foster care, taken from the only family that they know, taken from the only type of love that they know, and it's often because of parental neglect or abuse."

Since 1983, Sierra Forever Families has helped more than 2,500 foster children find permanent homes. Noting that in the Sacramento region alone there are approximately 1,700 children between the ages of six and 18 in foster care, Sara says that the focus of Sierra Forever Families is "to find families for the harder-to-place children – including those who are age six and older, part of a sibling group, or medically fragile."

Dispelling another myth about cost, Sara explains that foster care adoption is virtually free. Even more important to many parents is the support after adoption that Sierra Forever Families offers. "Our work really begins once the adoption is final," she says, negating another common myth. The agency works closely with parents, developing their family skills, preparing them to work with the unique needs of a child from foster care, and offering a support system to help families before, during, and after the adoption. "We work hand-in-hand with families from the community," Sara says, "to strengthen, educate, train, and support them."

What does Sierra Forever Families ask for in exchange for this guidance and support? They require that families have a strong sense of commitment. Responsibility, resilience, and a great sense of humor also go a long way.

Most of all, it is the lasting commitment that matters to children living in foster care. They often feel a sense of abandonment as a result of being placed into foster care, and the need to know that the new people in their lives are committed to them. Sierra Forever Families works with both the children and parents for the most successful outcome of all: a permanent, safe, and loving family.

If you think you might have what it takes to help a child in foster care, either through adoption or one-on-one mentoring, please contact Sierra Forever Families.

If you'd like to help in other ways, consider donating your used or unwanted cell phone to the West Sacramento IKEA recycling drop box. The money raised will be donated to Sierra Forever Families. This effort has raised over \$6,000 to help children living in foster care.