

CHILDREN FIRST QUARTERLY

Children First FFA Newsletter NO> 1

June 2015

Our Girl Goes to Hollywood!!

When are children able to discover their true talents? When they have the support of a good home environment. Foster care is an amazing journey that takes hard work and the patient expectations of every family member. So, we want to know, how does the Blue family make it possible for all children in the home to live, love and grow together?



Leia Blue has been fostering children in her home since 2005, and when meeting them for the first time, it is difficult to tell the foster children apart from the biological children in her home because she says, "all children in my heart are treated the same way."

Leia also shares that in order to meet the everyday challenges associated with balancing her time and support between her biological and foster children, she will take things one day at a time, or when necessary, one moment at a time. Leia expresses that it is hard work, love, patience and dedication. Sounds like foster parenting, doesn't it?

Leia Blue has an amazing skill set for helping all of her children achieve their dreams, and Starla Blue, Leia's

biological daughter has definitely played a role in mentoring her foster siblings while at the same time, working towards pursuing her dreams in acting. To help make her foster siblings feel important, Starla gives her time in their classrooms, working as a teacher's aide, putting together special projects at their school to raise money for the community, and most important, being an inspirational tool in the growth and healthy development of her foster siblings.

Leia's ability to be a foster parent, mother, mentor and friend has been instrumental for the success of all of her children, including the foster children that have touched her life over the years. Having a single, working mother of three biological daughters, and five adopted children is a true asset to our agency. With this kind of love and support, anything is possible. These are the dynamics of a family that will produce strong, positive, and successful young adults.

Starla Blue is a perfect example. With the help and support of her mother and family, she has been able to build a portfolio of successes. At the age of sixteen, Starla has taken and completed classes for self-development, has had an opportunity to work with an International photographer, Eddie Cotilon. Recently, she was given an opportunity to work behind the scenes at the I.S.S.L.A 2015 Indian Film Festival, taking pictures and interviewing actors, all while standing on Hollywood's famous red carpet. Working on the set of one of Hollywood's more prestigious events is quite an achievement. Amazing work Starla!

Foster parents and their children are key to successful foster homes, and at Children First, we care not only about our foster children, but we care deeply for our families biological children as well. The agency has no doubt that any children that Leia Blue will open her home and heart to will also receive the same kind of support and love.

Look for the Blue family to continue to be a significant part of our agency, and for Starla in film land in the future. We are so proud of all they have done!

"I just want to see that foster children are happy, and I want to make them smile..."

This was just one of the reasons why McKayla Shukis decided to do what most of us only think about doing. See page 4 for the whole story.

In This Issue

- "Our Girl goes to Hollywood, a story about one of our kids with extraordinary dreams that become a reality with the support of her mother.
- Children First Agency Events and Training Calendar.
- "A Young Lady With a Big Heart" Find out how Makayla Shukis gave to the agency in a big way.

Events Calendar:

Yreka Family Activities

Gold Rush Day
Description: **Historical activities, events, and live music**

Contact Info:
Phone: (530) 842-1649
Online:

Ages: **0-Adult**
Location: **Miner Street, Yreka**

Date/time: **Sat June 20, 10:00am- 5pm**

Fee: **FREE**

Redding Family Activities

Freedom Festival
Description: **Live music, fireworks, and vendors**

Contact Info:
Phone: (530) 229-0036
Online:

Ages: **4-Adult**
Location: **700 Auditorium Dr, Redding**

Date/time: **July 4, Sat- 3:00pm-10:30pm**

Fee: **FREE FIREWORKS START @ 10PM**

Red Bluff Family Activities

Slimy, Slithery- Amphibians and Reptiles
Description: **Reptiles and Amphibians education and activities**

Registration Info:
Phone: (530) 527-1196
Online:

Ages: **6-12**
Location: **1000 Sale Lane, Red Bluff**

Date/Time:
July 6- July 10
Mon- Fri, 7:45am – 12pm

Fee: **\$60** per student/ per week
They have full scholarships and partial payments assistance available.

July 6- July 10
Mon- Fri, 7:45am – 12pm

Fee: **\$60** per student/ per week
Full and partial scholarships available.

See our website,
www.childrenfirstffa.com
For more information

WaterWorksPark

Join us for some fun in the sun!

The warmer weather is approaching, and summer is here. That makes this the perfect time to lounge around and soak up the sun at our annual foster family event at Waterworks park in Redding, taking place on June 20th from 6:30-10:30pm. This event will give our foster families the opportunity to share their experiences, form lasting friendships, and see our children smile, play and have a wonderful, fun filled adventure while exploring the park and all of its featured attractions.



During the time spent at Waterworks Park, it is our hope that you will see the dedication of the agency to honor and bless our foster families, the willingness of our staff to make this event and every event a positive experience, and the strong family culture that is present throughout our agency.

It's also a time to watch our children interact, play and make new friends! The only people that will be present at this event is our foster families, their children and foster children as well as our staff. We hope to see you there!

NEEDED: Intensive Treatment Foster Care Homes

Intensive Treatment Foster Care serves children and youth who have complex needs that require more support than standard foster care. ITFC homes blend carefully matched ITFC foster parents with the normalizing features of foster care, a variety of services, and an individualized treatment plan, all of which focus on the unique situation and needs of the individual child or youth. ITFC uses a team approach to treatment with the ITFC foster parent(s) being vital members of the treatment team, all of whom are dedicated to positively impacting the life of the child.

*There are currently children and youth who need the support of a home environment that we are unable to help due to a lack of ITFC homes. **Have you considered ITFC?** We provide additional training and resources to ITFC foster homes to help you and the child succeed. If you have any questions or feel you may be interested in looking into ITFC, please contact Delrae Hansen at our Redding office.*

Children First Auxiliary

Children First Foster Family Agency was thrilled at the idea of creating an Auxiliary team in April of 2014, to increase the awareness of agency events, raise funds to bless our foster families and to help support our foster youth. This incredible group of people is being led by Barbara Davis, MSW, a Children First social worker. All of their donated time and efforts has helped raise money that goes entirely to enhance the lives of our foster families and foster children.

In the past, we have received many generous contributions from the community. Last year, Coca-Cola, along with many other local business, donated over 100 bikes to our foster children in Shasta County just in time for the Christmas holiday. DaVita, a dialysis center in the Tehama and Shasta area has generously donated funds for the last two years to make it possible to rent Waterworks park in Redding, not once, but twice during the summer months.

Our goal this year is to make our annual Christmas party a spectacular event for all of our foster families. We are so appreciative of our foster families and the support, time and love they give to children in need, that we hope to raise enough money to make this Christmas party an unforgettable experience for all!

Upcoming Auxiliary Events

We are planning some amazing fund raisers for the upcoming months and are hoping that we can get more foster parents to be involved in the planning and execution of these events.

The agency would like to plan a dessert auction fundraiser in September to raise money for our Christmas Event.

To help make this fundraiser a success, we will need two things from all of our foster parents and volunteers. Help, and of course, a donation of one or two of your favorite desserts. These deserts will then be auctioned off to the highest bidder at our "Dessert Auction".

The agency is fortunate enough to have a wonderful team of foster parents, but we need your help. Do you want to become a part of a team of Foster Parents dedicated to making this year's Christmas Party Super Spectacular? If your answer is yes, contact the office or one of our Auxiliary Team Members, listed below to find out how you can help.



Auxiliary Team Members Margo Hewitt and Alice Dunn

**For more information
or to help, contact:**

Barbara Davis

530-410-2679

Alice Dunn

530-347-0631

Virginia Call

530-347-4473



A Word From The Director...

There is no greater gift or reward than laying down your life for the life of a child. If you're a parent of your own children or foster kids you know this to be true. Leia Blue, who you read about on the cover, is just one of the many examples of this that we see everyday at Children First.

Many kids in our community wouldn't have the opportunity to know the safety and comfort of a stable home if it weren't for the sacrifices of a foster family. Providing a home, meals, help with their schooling, and above all else, the love of a family, foster families make a huge difference in the lives of these kids.

At Children First, we are happy to be able to support families. Whether it's arranging fun events at the water park, helping fund programs through the auxiliary, or providing support for the kids and families through our agency, we want to see kids lives changed for the better.

To all who help — from our Foster Parents and their children, our staff and dedicated team of Social Workers, to the children that we work for that have touched our lives in so many ways, Thank you.

Mike Logan, CEO



A Little Girl Who Gave Big

It all started with 1933 boxes of Girl Scout Cookies and a special young lady with an inspiration. McKayla Shukis, a member of Girl Scout Troop 70062 wanted to give to foster children in the area by pledging \$100 of the "Cookie Credits" she earned in 2014 by tying for the 2nd place North state region winner in the Annual Girl Scout Cookie sale. McKayla came up with the idea to "cash out" a portion of her cookie credits and put together gift baskets for our agency foster families instead of spending the credits earned in the Girl Scout Troop store.

We were surprised to learn that her gift of giving and hard work didn't stop there. McKayla also put up a booth more than once at her local community Walmart where she received even more donations. Throughout the year, McKayla came up with ideas to earn money for the children that she says, may have less than she does. McKayla's mother says that she capitalized during the Thanksgiving holiday when a woman who had won the lottery donated a basket full of supplies at a collection booth at Walmart in Redding. McKayla's personality and bright smile made it hard not to share in the spirit of giving.

At our annual Christmas party, McKayla and her family were able to share in the happiness of our foster families as the baskets that she donated, "and put together herself" were presented. It is an admirable feeling for all to see the appreciation and gratitude that resulted from McKayla's hard work.

It was an exciting end to a new beginning. McKayla plans on donating to the agency this year as well and has already started planning, preparing and saving. She has even inspired her troop members to get involved this year. We are excited to see the magic they will make this year by their generous donations!

There isn't many children like McKayla, and she has truly blessed our agency in a "Big Way". Many thanks to the Shukis Family.

About Our Agency

Children First Foster Family Agency has been serving the North state for sixteen years. The agency is proud of the strong family culture that is present among our foster families, staff, and all of the children we serve. With a dedicated team of social workers, the agency is able to service our families with a variety of programs and services. Visit our website to learn more.

Contact Us

Give us a call for more information about our programs and services.

Children First Foster Family Agency

Red Bluff Office

590 Antelope Boulevard
Red Bluff, CA 96080
(530) 528-2938

Redding Office

2995 Churn Creed Road
Redding, CA 96002
(530) 722-1022

Yreka Office

490 South Broadway
Yreka, CA 96097
(530) 841-1030

Visit us at:

www.childrenfirstffa.com

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Local Children, Local Homes, Local Support for Our Families... We Live Here, Too!