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READY
FOR
LIFE
FOSTER
FAMILY
AGENCY

ANNUAL
REPORT

www.readyforlife.net



LETTER FROM OUR CEO

"Moving doesn't change who you are. It only changes the view outside your window."
-Rachel Hollis

In 2022 we saw lots of 'movement.' Movement in foster care needs and needs for our homeless young adults and movement within our community. Over the last year, the movement in foster care has created many changes, so we are attempting to change with it. Moving with those changes has caused our perspective to change or evolve, which is good. Although we are always looking for resource parents willing to open their homes to children of all ages, we have noticed the increased need for families who can take in sibling groups. In our Host Homes program, we are creating a space for young adults to come and find the resources they need to move forward. In our community, we have challenged ourselves to move toward filling the needs or gaps we have identified.

With all that said, we are so thankful to our monthly donors who continue to give and those who donate throughout the year. I am grateful to our staff, who have worked daily with happy hearts and hands to pitch in whenever and wherever needed. Last but certainly not least, I am so blessed to have the Resource families that we have and for the ones who are in process. You have committed yourselves to the children we serve and this agency, and I am forever grateful. As we move toward new dreams and challenges in 2023, I hope the 'view outside your window' always shows you and me HOPE and HAPPINESS.

Nena Panza
CEO & Co-Founder
Ready for Life FFA

OUR STAFF



Staff Christmas: Megan, Nicole, Jordan, Rick, Adele, Abriana, Jerri, and Nena
Not Pictured: Gretchen & Jennifer

NEW BOARD MEMBERS



Ken Iwamura and his wife have been residents of Redding since 2014 and have two grown boys. He received his BS from CSU Fresno and works for the City of Redding Public Works Department. He also currently serves on the board of the California Land Surveyors Association Cascade Chapter and the Boys Scouts of America Northern Rivers District. Ken joined the Ready for Life board in February of 2022.



Joseph Labbe and his wife have two boys, whom were adopted through foster care. He is currently employed by the Redding Police Department, where he has served in various capacities since 2007. He brings with him not only his experiences as a foster and adoptive parent: but also professional experience working with vulnerable populations in his law enforcement assignments. Joseph joined the Ready for Life board in September of 2022.

ABOUT US

Better Choices, Inc./Ready for Life Foster Family Agency is a private non-profit located in Redding, CA. Ready for Life has been committed to helping provide safe, loving homes to hundreds of foster children in Northern California since September 2000.

It is evident that Rick and Nena Panza, founders of Ready for Life, have a profound desire to see the children of our communities succeed.

Ready for Life was established to provide children with vocational, social, and life skills while providing a safe haven for personal growth and physical care.

Ready for Life Foster Family Agency is a faith-based organization, and as such, strives to support our families, children, and staff with daily prayer, guidance, and encouragement, as we endeavor to raise these precious children together.

As a private foster family agency, Ready for Life receives calls to place children from counties all over Northern California. This includes, but is not limited to Shasta, Tehama, Trinity, and Siskiyou County. We have families in Shasta, Tehama, and Trinity County.



OUR MISSION

Fostering hope and transforming lives, one child at a time

OUR HISTORY



Better Choices, Inc./Ready for Life is a private, non-profit agency, founded in September of 2000. The idea was conceived after the founder, Nena Panza, and her husband, Rick, had been foster parents for approximately ten years, in addition to being group home parents to teen boys. After the realization that traditional foster care seemed to have a few flaws, Ready for Life was made a reality. In an effort to proceed with our mission, Ready for Life went under the umbrella of a larger non-profit to start its foster family agency. In July of 2003, Ready for Life Foster Family Agency decided to venture out on its own. With the help of many community members, our own Board members, and Tehama County (our support county), we began the journey.

On September 11, 2003, Better Choices, Inc./Ready for Life was licensed by the State of California Department of Social Services, Community Care Licensing unit.

In 2017, we contracted with Tehama County Child Protective Services and Probation departments to complete RFA assessments. We also were approved as a Resource Family Approval program in early 2017. Additionally, we received accreditation from Council on Accreditation in 2017 and were renewed in December 2021.

Ready for Life Host Homes, a program designed to serve homeless youth (ages 18-24), was launched in 2020.



OUR VISION

To ensure every child has the opportunity for stable, life-long relationships and hope-filled expectations.

OUR GOALS

The primary goal is to meet the needs of children when out of home placement is necessary. We rely on our resource families to provide clear examples of a healthy, productive lifestyle. They teach children boundaries, choices, consequences, and social skills. In addition, Ready for Life requests that our families work intensively with our youth ages 15-21 years of age to give them the opportunity to be as fully prepared to live on their own as is possible.

OUR PHILOSOPHY

Our logo is a symbol of transformation that a child in need can experience with the help and encouragement of the right resource family. The circle is broken, symbolizing the “breaking of a dysfunctional life cycle.” The butterfly shows the spiritual transformation from within that they can experience. When combined, these symbols create a logo that represents our philosophy.



Foster Family Agency

At Ready for Life, we believe treatment should be administered cooperatively between the Administrator, social workers, family workers, therapists, resource family, the foster child, and their county social worker. If possible, the child’s biological family should be incorporated into the treatment plan as well. In addition to our therapeutic social work, counseling services will be made available to foster children when deemed necessary. Ready for Life resource families will be encouraged to participate in the child’s treatment. The social worker will be responsible for adequately informing both the foster child and resource parents of confidentiality issues.

Resource parents will be requested to document behaviors that are of concern after the child has met with their counselor. The resource parents will then be asked to provide this documentation if the social worker deems it is necessary.

In those cases where the biological family is involved in the child’s treatment or a reunification plan is in effect, resource parents will be required to both support and encourage this process. It is our philosophy at Ready for Life that whenever possible, it is in the child’s best interest to maintain contact with their biological family.

OUR VALUES

GOD'S UNCONDITIONAL LOVE

We will show God's unconditional love even when it's difficult. Unconditionally loving as Christ loves.

HOPE

We will foster hope to the hopeless and hurting, through Christ, creating hope where there is none.

HONESTY

Through transparency and honesty we will communicate with the courts, officials and families on behalf of the children in our care.

INTEGRITY

Integrity will stand at the forefront of our activities and we will develop this characteristic in the families we serve and the employees who we employ.

FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS

We strive to nurture healing in family relationships that have been shattered. We promote healthy family relationships with our resource parents, bio parents and children we serve.

SAFETY

We are committed to creating safe environments and upholding safe standards and safe arrangements for the children we foster, resource parents we approve, biological families we serve, and the staff we employ.

COMMUNITY

We commit to teaching community values to those we serve as we continue to establish our roots and be a source of hope. As an agency, we commit to maintaining positive relationships with our community and it's leaders and strive to provide the best service we can.



God's Unconditional Love
Hope - Honesty - Integrity
Family Relationships
Safety - Community

OUR FAMILIES



Sarah

“RFL is personal, efficient, and compassionate. They are looking out for the best interest of both the children and resource families. You can tell they really care.”



Dionna

“We love all the staff and feel blessed to be a part of the RFL family. They help dreams come true.”



Will

“We’ve always been impressed with the knowledge and service provided by our RFL social workers. They have always answered our calls and have creative/constructive ideas to help. They have been a lifeline to us during our more challenging times with our kids.”



OUR FAMILIES



Madison

“If you’ve ever considered fostering kids- DO IT. Especially older kids because they’re awesome and hilarious and have so much love to give. I laughed. I cried. I changed forever.”



Victoria

“It’s no secret that being a resource parent can be fun & rewarding at times, but it can also be exhausting and emotional. Most families do it with the help of their spouse, but every now and then, you meet a gem whose heart is big enough to do it on her own. Those gems are the true unsung heroes, in my opinion, and it’s a blessing to cultivate friendships with other mamas who just... “get it.” ”



ADOPTIONS

The goal of foster care is to reunify children with their biological parent(s) or with other family members. When that is not a viable option, adoption is explored. We love to see families grow through adoption. Here are the children that were adopted in 2022.



Ezekiel
February

Zeke was a starter for basketball this year and will be doing football next year.

Mahaylah has made the principal's list each trimester this year and has been winning awards for her art projects repeatedly.



Mahayla
February



JJ
April

Kayden
April

Kayden has just turned 3. She's finished with speech therapy, loves helping in the garden and playing with her baby chickens. JJ has just turned 2. He loves following Kayden around and all things with an engine.



Kinslee
March



Malcom
May



Elijah
June

Elijah is a happy, goofy kid who loves to make people smile, sports, cooking, singing & his big brother.



A YEAR IN REVIEW

EVERY NUMBER REPRESENTS A CHILD AND A FAMILY'S STORY. EVERY NUMBER IS A LIFE CHANGED.

26 CHILDREN PLACED WITH RESOURCE/FOSTER FAMILIES AT READY FOR LIFE FFA

34% OF CHILDREN REUNIFIED WITH A PARENT OR WERE PLACED WITH A FAMILY MEMBER



7 CHILDREN WERE ADOPTED



683
CALLS FOR CHILDREN
NEEDING HOMES

54% OF THOSE
CALLS WERE
FOR TEENS

39% OF THOSE
CALLS WERE
FOR SIBLING GROUPS



READY FOR LIFE HOST HOMES

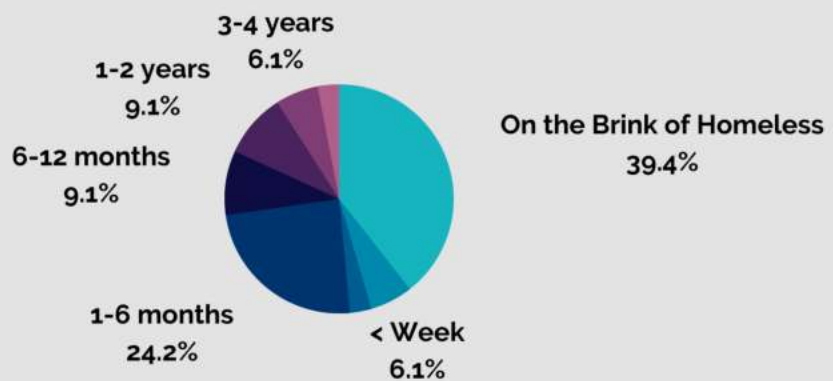
The Host Homes Program is an innovative, grassroots approach to addressing our community's homelessness crisis. By pairing transition-aged youth (ages 18-24) with community members who have underutilized spaces in their homes, young adults not only obtain access to short-term shelter, but are also able to build meaningful connections to caring adults in their community. While staying in Host Homes, young adult Guests are able to engage in the long-term housing search safely and save any income earned toward their future.

Not everyone who inquires about Host Homes gets placed with a Host, but everyone is connected to additional resources and provided with support to navigate their unique situation.

Number of Host Inquiries	9
Number of Guests in Host Homes	7
Number of Approved Hosts	5
Number of Guests Exiting the Program	7



Length of Time Homeless

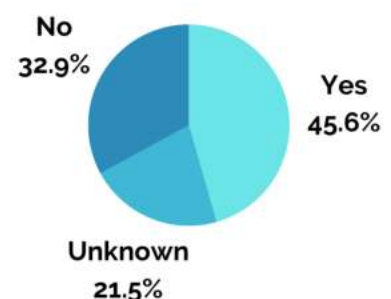


Number of Guest Inquiries 2022

42



Formerly in Foster Care



HOST HOMES

JERRI & STEPHANIE

The best part about Ready for Life Host Homes is the people we've met so far. Host Jerri and Guest Stephanie both took a chance on Host Homes and learned a lot.

GUEST: STEPHANIE

How did you find out about Host Homes?
A Shasta College counselor

Tell me a little about your housing situation before. I was living in the Shasta College dorms, but they are closed over the summer, so my plan was to live in my car.

What surprised you about moving into a Host Home? At first I was a little nervous- it's a new environment and awkward and I was nervous at first. I tried my best to feel comfortable with both of my Host Homes. I was really surprised how fast I became friends with both of them and how fast I became comfortable with them- It was just a few days after I moved in with them I felt very comfortable with them and I think it was because we both put in the effort to make it comfortable.

What advice would you give to future Guests who are about to move into a Host Home?
I know it's very awkward, very nerve racking. Just know that the Host Home and HH staff are there to help you. It feels a lot better than going through it alone. Your Host is putting in the work to make you feel comfortable- it's the least you can do to put in the work to make them feel comfortable.

What's in the future for you?

I can finally focus more on school. I have a comfortable place to study. I can pursue my career- the job I want, not just a job to get by. The job I'm in the hiring process for - I couldn't have done that without you. It just means a lot.



HOST: JERRI

What made you decide to open your home?

We have the space to be able to do that. Second, I wanted to give back to the community- something that I know I was capable of doing - that was offering a safe space for a young adult.

What was it like to have strangers move in to your house?

Honestly, it wasn't a big deal. I almost thought of it as operating an AirBnb. Just making her feel welcome- the little touches I like to do for people. It just fit right in. It didn't feel awkward or strange or scary once it happened.

What advice would you give to future Hosts?

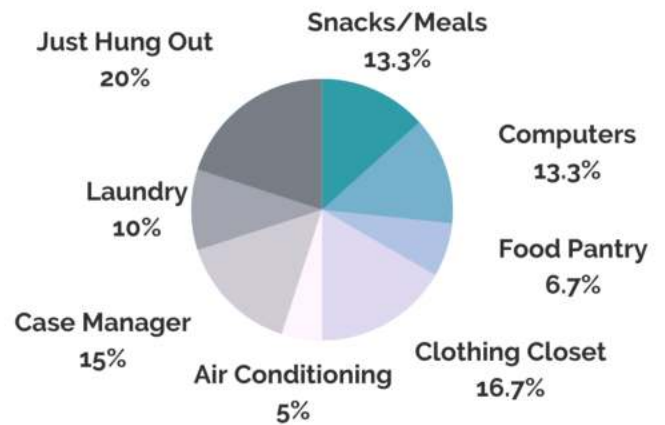
If you're thinking about it, then just do it. You won't know unless you do it. Not to say that every experience is going to be great, even through the not so great experiences we can still learn and grow.

Just go with your gut on what you think that person needs. Be willing to take the chance of opening your home to somebody.

HH RESOURCE CENTER



RESOURCES ACESSED



2022 VISITS

First Time Visitors	38
Returning Visitors	53
Total Number of Visits	91

GIVING TUESDAY



During this year's North State Giving Tuesday event, generous people like you declared that philanthropy is resilient and that nothing can touch our region's giving spirit.

Thank you for your part in supporting Ready for Life Foster Family Agency and Ready for Life Host Homes this past Giving Tuesday!

THANK YOU FOR GIVING!



FOSTER FAMILY AGENCY
FOSTERING HOPE

GIVING TUESDAY
2022

READY FOR LIFE
HOST HOMES

TARGET CIRCLE

#SUPPORTLOCAL #GIVEWHEREYOU LIVE

Target Circle members earn a vote for each Target trip. Guests can then use those votes to direct where funds go in support of nonprofits in their community and across the nation. As each voting period wraps, Target awards grants to the nonprofits based on the percentage of votes they receive. Different nonprofits rotate through to provide community giving options. Thank you to all the community members who voted for us! Through Target Circle, we raised:

\$5,002.13



GRANTS RECEIVED

We are so grateful to the organizations that partner with us.

READY FOR LIFE FOSTER FAMILY AGENCY

- \$2,848 Visitation Playroom Enhancement
First 5 Shasta
- \$250 for Duffel Bags & Stuffed Bears for children entering foster care
Evelyn's Angels - Community Foundation of the North State



READY FOR LIFE HOST HOMES

- \$20,000 Homeless Emergency Services
In & Out Burger



Thanks to the grant awarded by First 5 Shasta, we had the opportunity to overhaul our visit rooms. This improvement allows for a more engaging, imaginative, child-parent focused environment.



Duffels & Bears: Evelyn's Angels

VOLUNTEERS



We've enjoyed being able to open our doors to volunteers again.



*Pictured:
Heart
Matters
Bible
Study
from
Pathway
Church*

Thank you to our all of our volunteers who have invested in the Host Homes Resource Center via purchasing and assembling shelves, donating shelf stable food, organizing donations, hanging up clothes in the closet, mentoring young adults, assisting with creating graphics, etc. We couldn't do what we do without you!



Thank you especially to the students from Simpson University who invested their time and talent into our program! We appreciate you giving back to the community.

If you are looking for a volunteer opportunity, please email us at info@readyforlife.net.

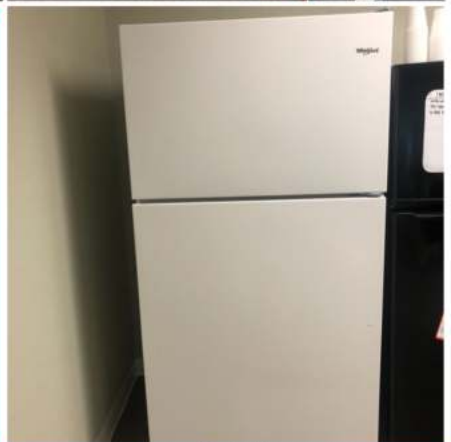
DONATIONS

A huge thank you also goes out to the individuals who have offered support through in-kind donations and to our financial donors who help sustain us. Your dedication and investment into the work we do at Ready for Life does not go unnoticed, and we are so grateful you have chosen to partner with us. Thank you!



DONATIONS FROM:

- Shasta School of Cosmetology
- Shasta Lake Pizza Factory
- Pajama Program
- T & S DVBE INC
- Evergreen 4-H





WAYS TO GIVE

DID YOU KNOW monthly giving is one of the best ways you can show support?

Giving has never been easier! Check out these ways to give on our website:

WWW.READYFORLIFE.NET/DONATE

MONTHLY

Don't want to have to think about giving? Make it automatic. Sign up to give monthly.

EMPLOYEE MATCHING

Many employers match employee giving. To make your donation go even further, contact your employer.

TEXT TO GIVE

Give from anywhere. Text 530-561-5444 to start giving today!

TAX ID: #68-0462072

WWW.READYFORLIFE.NET/DONATE

THANK YOU

2022 was a year of growth, change, and tons to be thankful for. We are so grateful for the countless individuals who pour into the lives of children, youth, and families in our community. We have the privilege of working with some of the greatest unsung heroes in our community. Individuals and families who step into the gap, and volunteer their time, energy, home and love to serve the most vulnerable among us. What could be more selfless than this? We ask people to do hard things everyday. We ask them to open their hearts and their homes to children and youth in the foster care system, and to young adults experiencing homelessness. This feels like an impossible ask, and yet somehow, there are countless people who are willing to take that step into the unknown, into the messy, the hard, the sometimes scary, and to say "yes" to that sibling set, and to say "I have extra space, and I'd love to help a young adult." THANK YOU! We quite literally could not do this without you.



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