



CONNECTIONS

July 2021

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*Providing foster care, adoption and
mental health services for Northern
California foster youth and families*

The mission of Alternative Family Services
is to support vulnerable children and
families in need of stability, safety and
wellbeing in their communities.

(800)300-1022 www.afs4kids.org



Foster Learning

A virtual back-to-school drive to ensure youth in foster care are fully equipped with the tools and resources necessary for an equitable education. Individuals, community organizations and businesses can support a youth in care by:

- Adopting a back-to-school wish tag [here](#)
- Donating funds [here](#)
- Buy and ship from the wish list [here](#)



Contact: Director of Development,
Simone West, swest@afs4kids.org

ZETA JACKSON-MAYS

"AFS taught me how to budget, has provided me with financial aid and sometimes staff takes me out to lunch which helps me with social isolation."



**Three Ways
You Can Help
a Transition
Age Youth**
[read here](#)

***Click here** to watch Zeta talk about how AFS has helped him with social, emotional and financial support.*

Benji's Adoption Journey



For over forty years, AFS staff has provided foster care, mental health and adoption services to thousands of youth and families. Everyone we care for has a unique set of circumstances and AFS staff has learned rarely does anything go "as planned." The challenging and unexpected is what we're trained for.

When circumstances around Benji's adoption changed, AFS staff sprung into action and found a permanent, loving solution. **[Read Benji's story](#)**

Resource Parenting



5 Key Steps To Becoming a Foster or Fost-Adopt Parent in California

There are thousands of children, siblings, and teens in California that need a safe, loving and permanent home to live. Every year hundreds of diverse individuals and couples care for thousands of youth in care.

Click here for five key steps to becoming a foster or fost-adopt parent in California.

- Learn about becoming an AFS resource parent [here](#)
- Consider fostering siblings, [watch now](#)
- Help teens in foster care, [watch now](#)

Contact an AFS Recruiter

(800)300-1022
rfarecruitment@afs4kids.org

Si necesita hablar con alguien en español

*Click here to watch
Mary talk about her
fostering journey*



MARY MAGEE

"I love AFS. They have proven to me that I am part of their family. And family is what matters."

How Foster Care Works from Start to Finish

When a youth enters foster care, it is oftentimes because their biological family is in crisis. Addiction, poverty, unemployment and homelessness and common factors that may precipitate a youth entering care.

This blog post and slideshow highlights the main steps of foster care from removal to reunification, adoption, long-term care or emancipation in California.





AFS Staff Spotlight

Alexis Salazar, MS, LMFT

East Bay Mental Health Program Director

Watch Alexis
give the AFS
2020 Year in
Review

What are your main responsibilities at AFS? Supporting day to day operations for intake, case management and risk assessment, meeting with community partners and county representatives to advocate for client needs and agency needs to help reduce obstacles to treatment for youth and families. I also spend a lot of time addressing a variety of needs related to supervision of clinical work and individual staff support to help keep lifted the hearts of the beautiful staff on the EBMH team.

What led you to work in this field? I always had a desire to use my creativity and bring my helpful and giving nature to serve children and families since my early career as a big sister to four younger siblings as well as being a nanny for nine children by the tender age of 15. At the age of 18 I started with research-based work evaluating youth intervention programs in Southern California and that let me see a world of under-served youth

Why did you choose to work at AFS? This was an opportunity to share my gifts and gained wisdom in a setting with other like-hearted people that share joys of the little things. Tricca interviewed me and she was just the spirit that I knew I wanted to work hard alongside!

What are the three best things about your job? The privilege to learn about people's stories, the heart that is at the center of the work we do for families and how it shows up in so many beautiful ways from each team member around me, and the supportive and helpful supervisor I have that I trust and feel understood by.

What are the three toughest things about your job? Closing client cases where all options are exhausted and needs are higher than what we are designed to support with, witnessing people work hard and it still not feeling like "enough" when the system issues run so vast and deep, navigating relationships with partners (county, and other agencies) where there appear to be competing needs and not enough resources- we always get creative but not without a heavy lift from all!

What are three common misconceptions about foster care you would like to address: One is that Resource Parents just do the work for the money, another is that only the minimum is needed and that youth in foster care "should" be grateful for what they have, lastly- that Resource Parents with old school methods just don't get it or cannot learn a new lens to help increase adaptive behaviors from youth in their homes.

Tell us about one impactful moment you've had since working at AFS: I have had so many, and they have been about the heart and spirit of those around me doing the daily work with clients and families directly. The one moment that stands out most is when a clinical supervisor and my supervisor and me all worked hard to track a client situation and make proper reports for support without alerting agencies that might make the circumstances more stressful for the client and the home (calling police). It took many hours and into the night with much consulting and a lot of tears of frustration and pain for the system that we are all trying our best to work within, but more importantly we did it together and I am forever proud of the team that I work within!

What is an interesting fact about you that others wouldn't expect? I had a pet goat growing up and I used to wash my clothes in a river on the best rock, but I had to get there early and watch out for my knuckles!

What's one piece of advice you would provide to someone just starting out in a similar role? I would say be kind to yourself, have patience with all that your brain is trying to learn, and un-learn. Being kind is important, and the response from others is delightful!

Interview by, Matt Kaplan, AFS Content Manager

A Virtual Success



Although we missed seeing all of our supporters in person, the virtual AFS Masquerade Gala was a success! Because of you, the event raised over

\$109,000

that will directly benefit youth cared for by AFS

[Watch Gala Here](#)

Thank you to our sponsors!



Corporate Partnerships

Now more than ever, companies are seeking to get involved with organizations whose mission is to support underserved populations.

AFS is looking to partner with organizations who are seeking to improve the lives of the most vulnerable youth and families.

[Learn about Corporate Partnerships here.](#)



New Board Member Spotlight

Jeffrey Ford was adopted with his brother from South Korea when he was five years old. He spent time in Colorado, Texas, and Tennessee during his formative years before settling in California post college.

The mission and values of AFS really drew him to the organization. Supporting vulnerable children and families in need of stability, safety, and wellbeing in their communities is an important mission. He has seen first-hand how this mission can be life-changing and life fulfilling for the most vulnerable in our community.

Jeff is a partner in the Silicon Valley technology practice of KPMG, a large multinational professional services firm.

Foster Care Trends

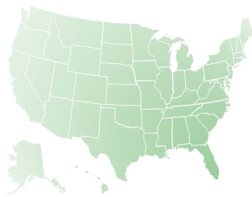


What Makes the AFS San Francisco Emergency Placement Program Unique?

AFS partners with the City and County of San Francisco to run their Emergency Placement Program (EPP) that provides 24/7 on-call emergency care to San Francisco County children, siblings and teens 18 years old and younger. The EPP provides a temporary home with specially trained resource parents while San

Francisco County tries to identify relatives or a longer-term foster home for youth in care. **Read what makes this program unique.**

United States



Approximate # of youth involved in a welfare investigation

3,500,209

Entered Foster Care

251,000

Median Length of Stay

391 days

Exited Foster Care

249,000

Adopted

66,000

Average Age in Care

7.2

California



Approximate # of youth involved in a welfare investigation

360,040

Entered Foster Care

28,138

Median Length of Stay

537 days

Exited Foster Care

26,622

Adopted

6,981

Average Age in Care

11

AFS



Approximate # of youth involved in a welfare investigation

NA

Entered Foster Care

543

Median Length of Stay

45 days

Exited Foster Care

556

Adopted

27

Average Age in Care

9

- Source for U.S. and CA data, [Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System \(AFCARS\)](#) FY: 10/01/2019-09/30/2020
- AFS FY: 07/01/2019-06/30/2020

ADOPTION TAX CREDIT OVERVIEW



The federal government supports adoption in two primary ways: federal grants to state governments and tax benefits for individual taxpayers that help offset the costs of adopting a child. This report focuses on federal adoption tax benefits, which consist of an adoption tax credit and an income tax exclusion for employer-provided adoption assistance. Consult with a professional tax advisor to address your personal situation.

[Click here for
Adoption Tax Credit
Overview](#)

— JOIN THE TEAM —
We're hiring!

AFS Office Locations

Alternative Family Services - Oakland Facility #015201154

401 Roland Way #150, Oakland, CA 94621

Homes for youth in the following counties: Alameda, Contra Costa

Programs: Foster Care, Adoption, Mental Health, Training for Alameda & Contra Costa Counties

Alternative Family Services - San Francisco Facility #385201811

250 Executive Park Blvd. #4900, San Francisco, CA 94134

Homes for youth in the following counties: San Francisco, Santa Clara

Programs: Foster Care, Adoption, Mental Health, Emergency Placement, Parenting for Permanency College (training for SF County resource parents)

Alternative Family Services - Santa Rosa Facility #496803276

1421 Guerneville Road #218, Santa Rosa, CA 95403

Homes for youth in the following Counties: Marin, Napa, Sonoma

Programs: Foster Care, Adoption, Mental Health

Alternative Family Services - Sacramento Facility #347005069

8795 Folsom Blvd #101, Sacramento, CA 95826

Alternative Family Services - San Rafael Facility #216803574

361 3rd Street Suite G, San Rafael, CA 94901

Caring for youth from: Marin County

Programs: Transition Aged Youth, Transitional Housing Program

Alternative Family Services - Vallejo Facility #487005364

160 Glen Cove Marina Road #102, Vallejo, CA 94591

Homes for youth in the following counties: Solano

Programs: Foster Care, Adoption, Trainings for Solano County

The Gathering Place: Alameda County Visitation Center - Oakland

401 Roland Way #100, Oakland, CA 94621

Caring for families from: Alameda County

Programs: Therapeutic Visitation

The Gathering Place: Alameda County Visitation Center - Pleasanton

5167 Johnson Drive, Pleasanton, CA 94588

Caring for families from: Alameda County

Programs: Therapeutic Visitation

Stockton Office Space

2529 W March Lane 95207

Used as needed for trainings and visitations for San Joaquin County families. Not staffed, does not receive mail.