



Alternative Family Services

# IMPACT REPORT

FY '22-'23



ALTERNATIVE  
FAMILY SERVICES



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*FAMILY is the compass that guides us;  
it is the inspiration to reach great heights  
and our comfort when we falter.*

*~ Brad Henry*

*To protect the privacy of our clients, aliases and stock  
images may be used to represent their stories.*



## CEO's MESSAGE



*We can do no great things,  
only small things with great love.*

~ Mother Teresa

To this profound statement,  
I humbly add that it is the sum  
of these small things that ignite  
transformational change in the  
lives of those we serve.

**Marsha Lewis-Akyeem, CEO**  
Alternative Family Services



It has been a privilege and a joy to lead as CEO of AFS for the past 18 months. Building upon a solid 45-year legacy, we have continued strengthening and expanding our programs, providing vital support to those in need. Together, we have advanced our mission, fostering hope and facilitating healing for families, children, and communities.

This past year marked a significant milestone as we commemorated AFS's 45th anniversary with a gala, which successfully raised funds to assist Transitional Age Youth and to invest in specialized programs that help prevent homelessness. Our efforts at the event will resonate for years, impacting many lives.

We achieved a monumental success with completing our Council on Accreditation review, reaffirming our commitment to excellence in service delivery, continuous improvement, and robust agency governance.

Our systems have been strengthened by implementing a new Electronic Health Record (EHR) for our foster care and social service documentation, streamlining our processes, and enhancing our ability to serve.

In our ongoing quest for excellence, we've established the Learning & Growth Pillar, embracing promising and evidence-based practices such as Wisdom Pathways, the Safe and Sound Protocol, Motivational Interviewing, Thinking for a Change, and comprehensive Wraparound training.

We are proud to have pioneered innovative programs to respond to community needs. In San Francisco, our Intensive Family Preservation and Specialized Placement Juvenile Justice Program is making great strides with Wrap principles to provide alternative solutions to incarceration. Similarly, our expansion of telepsychiatry services in Alameda now supports around 90 children across the county, a testament to our adaptability and reach.

The growth of our specialized foster care programs in Sacramento and San Joaquin, along with the initiation of our first Family Finding Contract in Sacramento, demonstrates our dedication to resource and support networks for children and families in crisis.

Furthermore, the introduction of Enhanced Care Management in Alameda and San Francisco represents a significant leap forward in providing a continuum of case management services, supporting our youth up to the age of 26.

Our commitment to professional development is evident in the structured Internship and Apprenticeship Programs led by CRITA and HR, which fulfill educational goals and bolster our workforce. Our training initiatives continue to evolve, bringing new intervention techniques and expertise to meet the specific needs of our children and communities.

We celebrate the permanence we've facilitated through over 35 adoptions this year, a clear indicator of our unwavering commitment to the children in our Foster Care and Mental Health programs.

Together, we are making a remarkable difference. Thank you for your continued support.

Sincerely,  
Marsha



## BOARD of DIRECTORS

### AFS EXECUTIVE STAFF

**Marsha Lewis-Akyeem**  
Chief Executive Officer

**Craig Barton**  
Chief Program Officer

**Martha Duarte**  
Chief Financial Officer

**Beverly Johnson**  
Chief Operating Officer

### BOARD OFFICERS

**Nathan Lipkin**  
President

**Inverleith Fruci**  
Vice President,  
President Elect

**Maurice Mitchell**  
Board Secretary

**Peter Wentworth**  
Board Treasurer

### BOARD MEMBERS

Adam Reiner  
Don Rath  
Elizabeth Arbuckle  
Inverleith Fruci  
Jeffrey Ford  
Julio Flores, CIA  
Marsha Lewis-Akyeem  
Maurice Mitchell  
Nancy Lelico  
Nathan Lipkin  
Peter Wentworth  
Rohan Bafna  
Scott Staub

### BOARD COMMITTEES

#### Executive Committee

Nathan Lipkin  
Inverleith Fruci  
Marsha Lewis-Akyeem, CEO  
Julio Flores  
Nancy Lelico  
Peter Wentworth

#### Audit Committee

*Jeffrey Ford, Chair*  
Adam Reiner  
Brian Cooper (non-board member)  
Erik Busby (non-board member)  
Erin Cooper (non-board member)  
Inverleith Fruci (*Ex Officio*)  
Julio Flores  
Nathan Lipkin (*Ex Officio*)

#### Compensation Committee

*Nathan Lipkin, Chair*  
Inverleith Fruci (*Ex Officio*)  
Peter Wentworth  
Rohan Bafna  
Scott Staub

#### Resource Development Committee

*Adam Reiner, Chair*  
*Elizabeth Arbuckle, Co-chair*  
*Scott Staub, Co-chair*  
Don Rath  
Inverleith Fruci (*Ex Officio*)  
Marsha Lewis-Akyeem (*Ex Officio*)  
Maurice Mitchell  
Nathan Lipkin (*Ex Officio*)  
Peter Wentworth

#### Program Committee

*Nancy Lelico, Co-chair*  
*Julio Flores, Co-chair*  
Inverleith Fruci (*Ex Officio*)  
Jeffrey Ford  
Kamaria Wells (non-board member)  
Marsha Lewis-Akyeem (*Ex Officio*)  
Maurice Mitchell  
Nathan Lipkin (*Ex Officio*)  
Rohan Bafna

#### Finance Committee

*Peter Wentworth, Chair*  
Elizabeth Arbuckle  
Inverleith Fruci (*Ex Officio*)  
Marsha Lewis-Akyeem (*Ex Officio*)  
Nancy Lelico  
Nathan Lipkin (*Ex Officio*)  
Scott Staub  
Steve Stone (non-board member)



AFS' remarkable team of staff and resource parents continually innovates to make a significant impact in our communities. As clients' needs evolve towards more comprehensive and holistic care, AFS has adeptly responded by introducing new programs, extending reach across multiple counties. This expansion is a testament to our team's talent and unwavering commitment to serving children, youth, and families in need.

Our focus is particularly acute on supporting children in communities of color, who require robust backing to grow, succeed, and smoothly transition to independence. Our transition-age programs are a prime example of this, having shown considerable success this year in meeting the escalating needs of these young individuals.

We extend our deepest gratitude to our entire AFS family — staff, resource parents, donors, sponsors, and partners. Their collective efforts ensure that the children and youth in our care receive the comprehensive support they rightly deserve. Our communities continue to place their trust in AFS through their dedication and hard work.

**Nathan Lipkin**  
AFS Board President

The AFS Board of Directors is steadfast in maintaining the highest standards of ethical and legal responsibility, aligning our leadership and governance with our mission. We prioritize diversity, equity, and inclusion, acknowledging their crucial role in our agency's effectiveness and integrity. Our board composition reflects the diverse communities we serve, enriching our perspectives and affirming our commitment to inclusivity. This dedication is essential in guiding AFS towards its vision and maximizing the impact of our services.



## AFS MISSION

The AFS Mission is to support vulnerable children, youth and families in need of stability, safety and wellbeing in their communities.



## AFS VALUES

The AFS actively lived out in every facet of AFS's work, embodying the agency's commitment to providing clients with equitable, compassionate, and supportive care. This commitment is summed up in the acronym HEART, symbolizing the human touch AFS brings to every interaction, both within and outside the agency.



**H**onesty & integrity

**E**quity, diversity, inclusion

**A**ppreciation, supportive

**R**espect

**T**eamwork



## AFS PILLARS

The five pillars of AFS are the foundation of our agency, crafted from our shared vision and strategic direction. They are designed to guarantee that the needs of those we serve are met with equity and compassion. These pillars form the core of our approach, guiding our actions and decisions to ensure we consistently deliver the highest standard of service.



***At AFS, the culture is not just client-centered;  
it's a catalyst for personal and professional growth.***

*I've honed a multitude of skills, significantly improved my soft skills, and found a wellspring of inspiration in my colleagues. Their readiness to share knowledge and wisdom creates an enriching, collaborative environment that fosters individual and collective excellence.*

*~ East Bay Mental Health Clinician*



**SERVICE  
EXCELLENCE**



**INNOVATION**



**PREFERRED  
EMPLOYER**



**FINANCIAL  
STRENGTH**

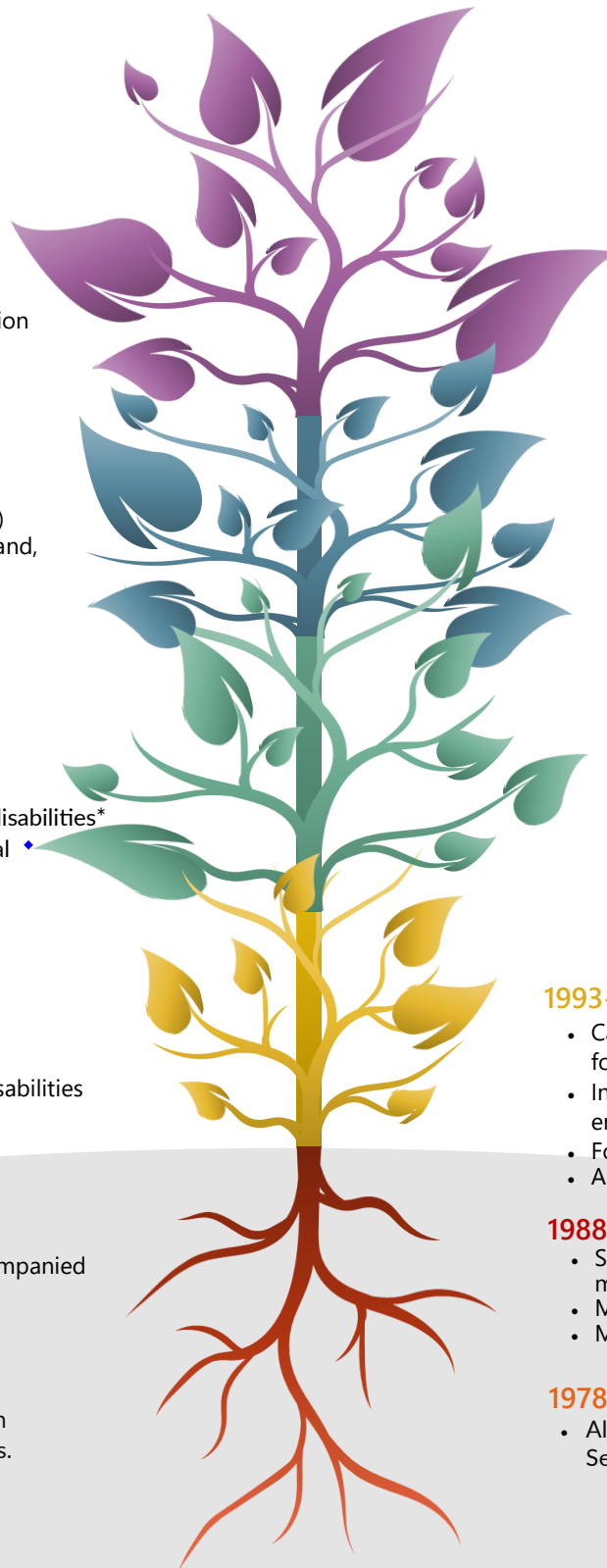


**LEARNING  
& GROWTH**

# AFS TIMELINE

\* program discontinued

♦ program operational & renamed



## 2021

- Homes for Youth: San Francisco County Juvenile Probation

## 2010-2013

- Foster Care Services (Sacramento, San Joaquin Counties)
- The Gathering Place Therapeutic Visitation Center, Oakland, Pleasanton
- First funded Training Program
- Mental Health Services (Sonoma County)

## 2003-2005

- Therapeutic foster care for adults with developmental disabilities\*
- Pathways to Permanence, first EPSDT outpatient mental health in Alameda County ♦

## 1990-1992

- All AFS programs open to 0-18yo
- Intensive Family Reunification Program\*
- Family Alternatives for Children with Developmental Disabilities (FACDD)

## 1981-1986

- Marin Extended Family ♦
- Special Populations (SF County): foster care for unaccompanied refugee minors & independent living skills for teens. ♦
- Client age lowered to 5yo (younger if a sibling group)

## 1973

- Jay Berlin begins Alternative Living Project under Youth Advocates, Inc., foster care for SF & Marin County teens.

## 2022-Present

- AFS Founder/CEO, Jay Berlin, Retires
- Marsha Lewis-Akyeem becomes new CEO
- Beverly Johnson becomes new CFO
- Mental Health (non-CPS) Awarded (Sonoma County)
- Telepsychiatry Services (Alameda County)
- Intensive Family Preservation (San Francisco County)
- Emergency Shelter Program (Sacramento, San Joaquin Counties)
- National Reaccreditation: Council on Accreditation
- Specialty Mental Health (Sacramento County)
- Emergency Shelter (Sacramento County)
- Family Finding (Sacramento County)
- Enhanced Care Management Services (Alameda, San Francisco Counties)

## 2015-2018

- National Reaccreditation: Council on Accreditation
- Stockton resource family meeting space
- Emergency Shelter Program (San Francisco County)
- Parenting for Permanency College (San Francisco)
- Intensive Treatment Foster Care renamed by State of CA to Intensive Services Foster Care ♦

## 2006-2008

- Mental Health Services (Contra Costa County)
- Solano Independent Living Program\*
- AFS begins Mental Health Services
- Transitional Housing Plus Program (Marin County)
- Therapeutic Visitation Services (San Francisco County)

## 1993-1999

- Casas con Corazón (Homes with Heart) Spanish-speaking foster care program
- Intensive Treatment Foster Care: program for youth with enhanced emotional and/or behavioral needs
- Foster care Services (Alameda, Contra Costa Counties)
- AFS Adoption Services Agency Wide

## 1988

- Special Populations programs combined to Extended Family model ♦
- Marin Extended Family now Marin/Sonoma Extended Family ♦
- Marin Independent Living Program for transition age youth

## 1978

- Alternative Living Project reincorporated as, Alternative Family Services, Inc.: foster care in SF, Marin & San Mateo Counties



## AFS SERVICES

*Each year, AFS facilitates care for over 1,500 children, teens, young adults and families.*



### ADOPTION

Fost-adopt  
County Adoption Support Services

### FOSTER CARE

AFS Homes for Youth (JPD) San Francisco  
Emergency Shelter (SF, Sacramento, San Joaquin Counties)  
Family Alternatives for Children with Developmental Disabilities (FACDD)  
Family Finding (Sacramento County)  
Intensive Services Foster Care (ISFC)  
Parenting for Permanency College (San Francisco)  
Treatment Foster Care  
Therapeutic Foster Care

### MENTAL HEALTH

Community & Home Based Mental Health  
Enhanced Care Management  
Individual & Family Therapy  
Intensive Care Coordination  
General Outpatient Mental Health (Sonoma County)  
Office Based Mental Health  
Specialty Mental Health (Sacramento County)  
The Gathering Place Therapeutic Visitation Centers (Oakland, Pleasanton)  
Therapeutic & Supervised Visitation  
Telepsychiatry Services (Alameda County)

### PREVENTION

Enhanced Care Management (Alameda, San Francisco Counties)  
Intensive Family Preservation (San Francisco County)

### TRANSITION AGED YOUTH

Independent Living Skills Program (ILSP)  
Marin Transitional Housing Plus (THP+)

## INNOVATIVE CARE



### Intensive Family Preservation Services

Intensive Family Preservation Services are crucial in supporting kinship and home trials, aiming to establish lasting permanency and reduce dependency on formal support systems. Our comprehensive services include:

**24/7/365 Immediate Response:** Round-the-clock support to youth, including crisis intervention and stabilization.

**Needs-Driven, Family-Informed Solutions:** Prioritizes permanency within family and community settings.

**Empowerment through Education and Engagement:** Educate clients about the Child and Family Team (CFT) process, actively involving them in developing their Child and Family Plan.

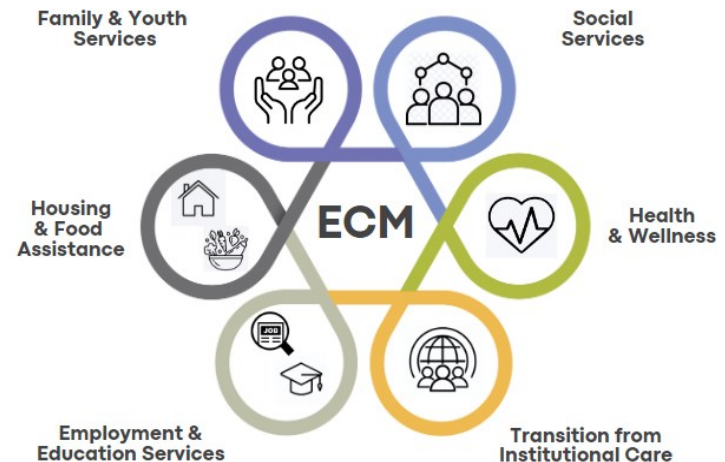
**Behavioral Interventions Aligned with Probation Plans:** Incorporate Integrated Core Practice Model elements, aligning with existing probation plans to ensure consistency and effectiveness.

**Sustainable Interventions for Independence:** Interventions that promote long-term independence and self-sufficiency.

**Community Resource Connection:** Family Partners serve as vital liaisons, guiding clients to appropriate community resources and support.

## Enhanced Care Management (ECM)

*Supporting individuals and families through coordinated care.*



AFS is participating in Enhanced Care Management (ECM) in Alameda and San Francisco Counties. ECM is a new service offered by MediCal offering help to people who are facing life and health challenges such as:

- Mental, Physical & Behavioral Health issues.
- Food insecurities, unstable housing, transportation challenges
- Employment and education assistance.
- Interactions with law enforcement or crisis intervention due to mental health and/or substance use.
- New moms Transitioning home from hospitalization.

### Emergency Placement Program

The Emergency Placement Program provides 24/7 on-call emergency care to youth ages 0-18. The program provides temporary placement with specially trained resource parents while the county works to identify relatives for placement or a longer term foster home.

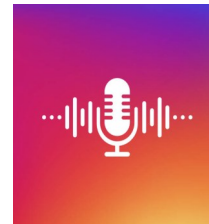


## INNOVATIVE CARE



### AFS Homes for Youth

**AFS Homes for Youth** is a collaboration between the San Francisco Juvenile Probation Department (JPD) and the Department of Children, Youth and Families (DCYF). AFS coordinates, places and supports emergency and long-term placements for youth referred by the San Francisco Juvenile Court, in coordination with the Juvenile Probation Department (JPD). Resource parents are approved and licensed Intensive Services Foster Care (ISFC) caregivers.



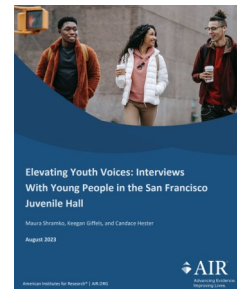
### In-Home Restorative Justice Podcast

[Listen to the episode](#)

This episode of the Child Welfare Information Gateway podcast highlighted the groundbreaking work Alternative Family Services (AFS) is doing with justice-involved youth.

This engaging episode explores the profound effects of restorative justice on juvenile offenders within the child welfare system. Featuring insightful discussions with Craig Barton and Dr. Rita Washington from AFS, the podcast delves into the organization's unique approach to offering highly personalized support services. The episode is a must-listen for anyone interested in understanding the transformative impact of restorative justice and the positive changes it can bring to young lives entangled in the justice and welfare systems.

### Elevating Youth Voices: Interviews With Young People in the San Francisco Juvenile Hall. [Read the report](#)



This report provides critical insights into the experiences of detained youth. Conducted by the American Institutes for Research in collaboration with the Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF) and the Juvenile Probation Department, this evaluation focuses on the equity of access to support services and the hall's effectiveness in fostering a developmentally appropriate environment.



AFS DEMOGRAPHICS

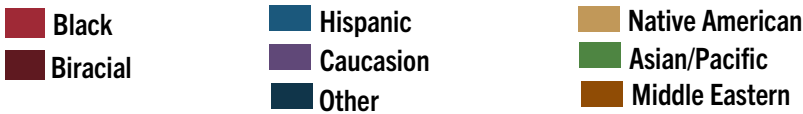


“Our ability to reach unity in diversity will be the beauty and the test of our civilization.”  
~ Mahatma Gandhi

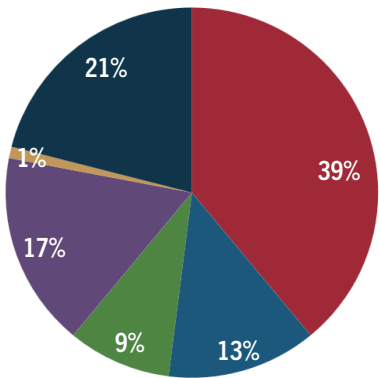
AFS thrives on a mosaic of diversity, woven through the fabric of our devoted staff, the unique clients we support, and our resourceful parents.

This rich tapestry of varied backgrounds and perspectives is far more than a mere statistic; it embodies our deep-rooted commitment to fostering a nurturing, inclusive, and equitable atmosphere for all associated with AFS.

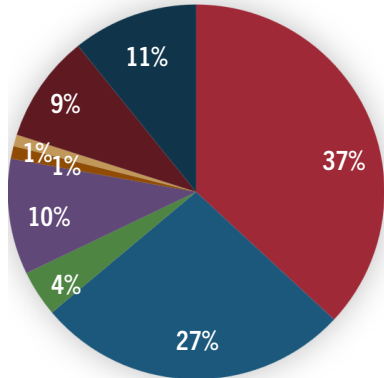
Our pride in this vibrant diversity is profound, as it stands as a cornerstone that not only fortifies our agency but also magnifies our capacity to serve the community with unparalleled effectiveness and empathy.



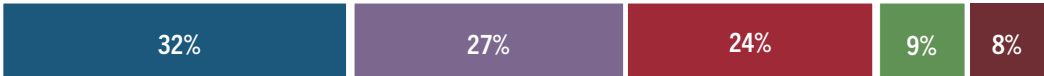
Mental Health Client Ethnicities



Foster Care Client Ethnicities



AFS Staff Ethnicities



AFS Resource Parent Ethnicities



## CRITA: Certification, Recruitment, Intake, Training, Adoption



### AFS Resource Families

Resource parents at AFS are diverse, compassionate and dedicated to improving the lives of the children and teens in their care. They are a community of individuals and couples who support one another and strive to change the trajectory of the lives of the kids they parent.

In California, a Resource Parent is approved to provide care on a temporary (foster care) and/or permanent (adoption and legal guardianship) basis and includes all types of caregivers in the child welfare and probation systems formerly known as foster parents, approved relatives or Non-Relative Extended Family Member. They may be related, have a familiar or mentoring relationship, or no previous relationship with the child.<sup>1</sup>

### Resource Family Approval

The CRITA and program teams perform the following measures to approve a resource home:

#### In FY '22-'23 AFS CRITA



## ADOPTION



### Adoption Statistics United States<sup>2</sup>, California<sup>2</sup>

	<u>United States</u>	<u>California</u>
<b>Waiting to be adopted</b>	<b>114,000</b>	<b>15,386</b>
<b>Adopted</b>	<b>54,200</b>	<b>6,242</b>

### Fost-Adopt

AFS staff strives to find permanent, loving homes for all youth in our care. When a child, teen or siblings are unable to live with biological family, adoption from foster care (known as fost-adopt) may be an option. Children, teens and siblings in care who are eligible for adoption may find their forever home with

- Resource parents who choose to adopt youth in their care
- Individuals or couples seeking to adopt from foster care

### County Adoption Support Services

AFS staff assists designated families through the adoption process on contract with Sonoma and San Joaquin counties.

### AFS Adoptions Facilitated

# 30





## *Theo's Journey From Loss to Hope*

In the world of foster care and family services, there are stories that touch our hearts and remind us of the transformative power of love, support, and resilience. Theo's journey is one such story – a story of triumph over adversity, healing through community, and the promise of a brighter future.

Ten-year-old twins, Theo and Mateo, entered AFS care due to medical neglect stemming from juvenile diabetes. Their father, battling alcoholism, was unable to provide the specialized care they needed. AFS, committed to finding the best possible placement, connected the boys with Ms. Avery, a compassionate nurse capable of managing their diabetes.

Tragically, just a month into their new life, Mateo succumbed to his illness. It was an indescribably painful moment when AFS caseworker Monica had to break the news to Theo. The loss was profound, and Theo's world was forever changed. However, even amid grief, Theo's journey toward healing and hope had only just begun.

Over the years, he not only learned to manage his diabetes but also began to thrive. A key source of strength and support came from the Barlow family, who offered respite care for Theo when Ms. Avery needed a break or had to leave town. The Barlow's' unwavering commitment and love provided Theo with a sense of stability and belonging.

Now, at 18, Theo is attending community college, a testament to his resilience and determination. But he didn't want just any future – he wanted a forever home. With gratitude and love, he asked the Barlow family if they would consider adopting him, making him a permanent part of their family. Without hesitation, they agreed.

Today, Theo looks forward to a future filled with promise and opportunity, surrounded by the love and support of the Barlow family. His journey is a powerful reminder of the vital role that organizations like AFS play in transforming the lives of children in need and of the incredible difference that caring individuals and families can make in a young person's life.

Theo's story is not just about loss and adversity but also about resilience, hope, and the enduring bonds of family – a shining example of the impact of foster care, adoption, and family services on the lives of those they touch.

\* Names changed to protect identities



*Having a place to go is home.  
Having someone to love is family.  
Having both is a blessing.  
~Unknown*

We support clients through every step of their foster, adoption and behavioral health journey.

If you're interested in fostering or adopting

**CONTACT US**  
(800) 300-1022  
rfarecruitment@afs4kids.org

Si necesita hablar con alguien en español

## FOSTER CARE



### Foster Care Data FY '22-'23

United States, California, AFS

	<u>United States</u> <sup>3</sup>	<u>California</u> <sup>3</sup>	<u>AFS</u>
# of youth that ENTERED care	207,000	22,621	579
# of youth that EXITED care	215,000	23,049	563
Average AGE of youth in care	7yo	11yo	10yo
Median STAY in care	22 MONTHS	25 MONTHS	88 DAYS

The paramount objective for every child or teen placed into care is to ensure they are in a safe, stable, and permanent environment that fosters hope and healing. The ideal scenario often involves reunifying them with their biological parents or placing them with a relative, as these familiar bonds can significantly enhance their chances of flourishing during their formative years.

When reunification or kinship placement isn't feasible, foster-to-adopt arrangements or placement with a trusted non-relative emerges as positive alternatives. These options offer the warmth of a family and the stability necessary for the child or teen to thrive, grow, and develop into their full potential as young individuals.

264 SF Emergency Placements

101 Youth in Intensive Services Foster Care

5 Youth in the AFS Developmental Disabilities program

75% Average percentage of youth in care with AFS who have a positive permanency outcomes

### Permanency Options for Youth in Foster Care

**Fost-Adopt:** Fost-adopt (adopting youth from care) families provide a permanent, loving home when biological placement is unavailable.

**Kinship:** When reunification with a parent is not possible, legally appointing family or non-family as guardians may be a positive option.

**Reunification:** The goal for a majority of youth is reunification with biological family.

**Non-relative Guardianship:** Permanent placement with a non-relative.

**Transition to Independence/Emancipation:** Transition Age Youth (TAY) refers to young individuals aged 16-24 who require tailored support to successfully navigate the journey to independent adulthood.

## MENTAL HEALTH



At AFS, we recognize the complex web of challenges faced by the youth and families in our care, encompassing poverty, food insecurity, trauma, racism, substance abuse, mental health struggles, and sexual exploitation. Our skilled clinicians are dedicated to fostering healing and resilience, offering a range of therapeutic services tailored to address a spectrum of needs, including:

**Healing from Complex Trauma:** We address the deep-seated impacts of abuse or neglect, the loss of close family members, exposure to chronic illness, and the trauma of violence in homes and communities.

**Navigating Disruptive Transitions:** Our services guide children and teens through the tumult of removal from their homes, schools, and communities, managing the emotional aspects of family visitations, and adapting to long-term foster care after the termination of parental rights.

**Breaking Negative Family Cycles:** We empower our clients with skills to manage emotions, communicate effectively, and cultivate respect and cooperation, thereby interrupting the perpetuation of harmful family patterns.

### Evidence-informed Practices

**High Fidelity Wraparound** uses strengths-based planning in a team setting to engage with children, youth, and their families. Wraparound shifts focus away from a traditional service-driven, problem-based approach to care and instead follows a strengths-based, needs-driven approach.

**WisdomPath Way Reparative Parenting** evidence-informed, therapeutic parent-child coaching model for caregivers and resource/adoptive parents raising children who experienced early childhood trauma, are living with sensory processing difficulties or other emotional, behavioral or cognitive challenges.

**Integrated Listening Systems** research-based, non-invasive multisensory programs include music, movement, breathing, meditation, and language exercises designed to support individuals experiencing social, behavioral and learning difficulties.

**Thinking for a Change (T4C)** is a cognitive behavioral change program that is designed for justice-involved youth and adults. The program is intended to address some of the issues that lead to recidivism.

335

**Community-Based Outpatient Clients  
received mental health services**

### Evidence-based Practices

**Trauma Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy** specifically designed to help individuals suffering from PTSD or other significant traumas.

**Motivational Interviewing** helps individuals fight antipathy and instigate self-directed behavioral changes.

**Positive Parenting Program (Triple P)** helps biological and resource parents understand mental health needs in youth and provide thoughtful, relevant support.

**Positive Behavioral Intervention & Supports Model (PBIS)** is a proactive approach to behavioral management that focuses on teaching and reinforcing positive behaviors in educational settings. This model emphasizes the creation of a supportive school climate through the integration of data-driven strategies to reduce behavioral issues and improve overall student learning and wellbeing.



## MENTAL HEALTH



**AFS's community & home-based mental health care** is a dynamic and effective approach that enables clinicians to foster family stability and strength directly within their natural environments — in schools, homes, AFS offices, or broader community settings.

By integrating our services into the daily lives of those we serve, AFS ensures that each intervention is tailored to individual needs and seamlessly woven into the fabric of everyday life, maximizing effectiveness, and fostering long-term well-being. Our services encompass both preventative and reactive measures:

- **Preventative Services:** Designed to support families proactively, ensuring children and teens can safely remain in their homes by addressing potential issues before they escalate.
- **Reactive Services:** Implemented for youth who have already been placed in care, these services focus on addressing and managing the challenges that led to their placement to facilitate healing and possible reunification.

### AFS School and Community Based Care Includes

- On-site Collaboration in Schools
- Assessment, Intervention & Stabilization Services
- Medical Experienced (billing, regulation, knowledge)
- 24/7 Whole Family Support
- Cultural Humility & Honoring of Diversity
- Implementation Experience: capacity for outreach, engagement and mental health expertise with high needs, high risk populations

**174** Total youth cared for at The Gathering Place

**56** Families participated in Therapeutic Visitation at The Gathering Place

### The Gathering Place (TGP)

Oakland, Pleasanton

The Gathering Place (TGP), a joint initiative of AFS, Alameda County Social Services Agency, and Alameda County Behavioral Health Care Services, stands as a beacon of hope and safety.

Designed as a welcoming and family-oriented space, it serves children and teens who face separation from their parents. At this nurturing haven, they can engage in meaningful visits while accessing a spectrum of services that include therapeutic support, supervised interactions, and careful observation, ensuring holistic care and support during challenging times.

## *Together We Rise*

### The Vedala Sisters Journey to Hope and Healing



*Families are like branches on a tree.  
We grow in different directions  
yet our roots remain as one.  
~Unknown*

We support clients through every step of their foster, adoption and behavioral health journey.

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Si necesita hablar con alguien en español

When Jen, an AFS caseworker, first met the Kali and Harmony Vedala, their world was steeped in uncertainty. The loss of their mother to an overdose and their father's struggle with emotional and financial challenges had left the children in a vulnerable state. The imperative was clear: these siblings needed to stay together to maintain the only semblance of family they knew.

Enter the Hagen Family, compassionate and experienced members of the AFS resource family network who opened their hearts and home to the Vedala sisters. The journey, however, was far from straightforward. Each child, carrying their unique burden of trauma, expressed it differently – defiance, withdrawal, and intense emotional fluctuations were their unspoken language of pain.

But through unwavering love, consistent support, and dedicated therapy, a transformation began. The Hagens, alongside AFS's comprehensive support, created a nurturing environment where the siblings gradually found safety and stability. This change was not just emotional; with the help of tutoring, they bridged the academic gap that had widened in their turbulent past.

Perhaps the most poignant testament to their healing journey was the discovery of joy in extracurricular activities. Generous donations from AFS supporters enabled each child to find an outlet for expression and growth – dance for grace and strength and soccer for teamwork and resilience. These activities were not mere pastimes; they were vital pathways to healing.

The story of Kali and Harmony reached a heartwarming milestone when, after several years, their father, recognizing the stable and loving environment the Hagens provided, made the profound decision to relinquish custody. The Hagens, who had already provided a home, now offered a forever family through adoption.

The journey of the Vedala siblings, guided by the dedication of AFS and the Hagen family, stands as a beacon of hope and resilience. It's a story that not only highlights the transformative power of love, support, and community but also underscores the critical importance of keeping siblings together in foster care. Their story is a resounding affirmation that together, we can rise above adversities to create a future filled with hope, healing, and belonging.

\* Names changed to protect identities



## TRANSITION AGE YOUTH (TAY)



ILSP  
Clients  
33

### Independent Living Skills Program (ILSP)

#### AFS ILSP Client Program Goals

- AFS staff establish & maintain contact with eligible ILSP youth in Marin County
- Client's educational goals are supported
- Employability of participating youth will be enhanced
- 100% of eligible clients will secure at least one lifelong connection

#### ILSP Highlights

- 100%** of eligible youth who requested ILSP services received services.
- 100%** of ILSP youth received a HS diploma or equivalent.
- 100%** of eligible ILSP youth enrolled in college or a vocational program.
- 100%** of ILSP youth obtained employment
- 97%** of ILSP youth identified & maintained contact with one caring adult

**Transition Age Youth (TAY)** programs cater to young individuals aged 16-24, a critical period where tailored support is essential for a smooth transition to independent adulthood. These programs encompass a comprehensive array of specialized services for youth exiting foster care including:

**Addiction Recovery:** TAY programs offer substance abuse recovery initiatives. These encompass counseling and practical support, helping youth overcome addiction challenges through personalized treatment plans, group therapy sessions, and access to recovery resources.

**Mental Health Care:** TAY programs provide dedicated services to address various psychological issues including one-on-one counseling, group therapy, psychiatric evaluations, and ongoing mental health support tailored to individual needs.

**Healing and Rehabilitation:** For youth who have endured homelessness, abuse, neglect, or sexual exploitation, TAY programs offer compassionate, rehabilitative services. These focus on holistic recovery and empowerment, incorporating trauma-informed care, therapeutic interventions, and resilience-building activities.

**Life Skills Training:** Essential life skills are imparted to equip youth with the necessary tools for independence. This includes training in cooking, budgeting, time management, and other practical skills essential for daily living.

**Health and Wellness Education:** Physical health is a key focus, with programs offering nutrition education, fitness activities, and access to medical and dental care. This holistic approach ensures that physical well-being is integrated into the transition plan.

**Legal and Advocacy Support:** Many TAY individuals require legal assistance, whether for emancipation processes, accessing government benefits, or other legal matters. TAY programs provide legal counsel and advocacy to navigate these challenges.

**Community Engagement and Social Support:** Encouraging community involvement and building a supportive social network is vital. Programs may include mentorship opportunities, group outings, and community service projects to foster a sense of belonging and community engagement.

**Career and Educational Planning:** Tailored guidance in career development and educational pursuits, including college application assistance, vocational training, and job placement services, ensures that TAY clients are prepared for professional success.



## TRANSITION AGE YOUTH (TAY)



THP+  
Clients

10

### Transitional Housing Program Plus (THP+)

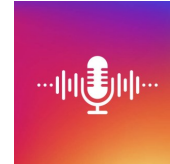
THP+ clients are between 18-24yo, have aged out of foster care and lack support systems. THP+ gives clients access to:

- 1-1 counseling, educational and employment support.
- AFS leases apartments which it rents to youth at sub-market rates.
- Training in essential life skills for successful independent living.
- Assistance securing health care & community based resources.

### THP+ Client Program Goals

- Clients will have secure and stable housing.
- Improve client's employability to secure a stable job.
- Guiding client to complete educational goals.
- Connect clients to health care & essential community based resources.
- Facilitate at least one consistent relationship between client and caring adult

Secure and stable housing is critical for successful independence. TAY programs assist in finding suitable housing options and may provide financial support or guidance on managing rental agreements and responsibilities.



### Emerging From Foster Care

[Listen to the episode](#)

In this episode of the Child Welfare Information Gateway podcast, Marsha Lewis Akyeem, CEO of Alternative Family Services (AFS), and Patty Cala, Director of AFS Transition Age Youth Services, delve into the multifaceted challenges faced by youth as they make the critical transition to independent adulthood.

For those emerging from foster care, the path to self-reliance is often strewn with unique hurdles, necessitating a robust support system and a diverse skill set. The conversation illuminates the pivotal role of caseworkers and child welfare professionals in guiding these young individuals toward vital resources such as employment, higher education, stable housing, and financial literacy.

This episode is a deep dive into the compassionate and comprehensive approach AFS adopts to empower youth in foster care, guiding them towards a future marked by resilience and independence.

### THP+ Highlights

- 100%** of clients successfully maintained housing
- 100%** of clients were employed or secured employment
- 100%** of high school age clients received diplomas
- 100%** of clients enrolled in health insurance
- 60%** increased their income while in the program

## AFS TRAINING



### Parenting for Permanence College (PPC)

Training for all SF County Resource Parents not just AFS

The Parenting for Permanency College (PPC) is a training contract with San Francisco Human Services Agency and Children and Family Services to provide prospective San Francisco County (not AFS) approved resource parents support and resources as they navigate the Child Welfare system.

PPC provides loaner laptops, tablets, and hotspots for resource parents to complete their Pre-Service, CPR, and Advanced Training. One of our elderly caregivers needed a computer for training and notified us a day prior. Unfortunately, she did not have transportation. She offered to take the bus, but due to her geographic location, our team worked diligently to ensure her safety by delivering the laptop to her.

**"I am so happy that you care about my well-being and safety and are willing to help when I am in need."**

## County Training Contracts

(all trainings provided in English and Spanish)

AFS Training Programs provided the following:

### Alameda County

- 144 trainings
- 1,156.5 hours of training and curriculum development
- 2,653 attendees

### Contra Costa County

- 55 trainings
- 230 hours of training and curriculum development
- 554 attendees

### Solano County

- 57 trainings
- 389.50 hours of training and curriculum development
- 1,007 attendees

## WELCOME!



### Heather Priebe PPC Program Director

My primary role is to run PPC and make sure we provide the right amount of training to meet our contract deliverables.

Working with families in need has always been my passion. I feel like I can help them make the process a little bit easier. After looking at some of the values of AFS and really seeing that they focus on the family and the well-being of their families, and really value and appreciate their staff, I wanted to give it a try.

I'm really grateful I did because AFS has been super helpful and accommodating. Seeing the project run in this efficiency is completely different than how it was before, and it definitely makes a huge difference in how we support our families.

[Read Heather's full interview here](#)

## RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT



### Impact

Every donation is a direct investment in the safety, stability, and future success of the youth and families we serve. These funds are allocated to ensure comprehensive support across various critical areas:

**Equitable Education:** Donations provide essential educational resources like laptops, cover course fees, and supply tutoring services and backpacks, ensuring that every child has access to quality learning opportunities regardless of their circumstances.

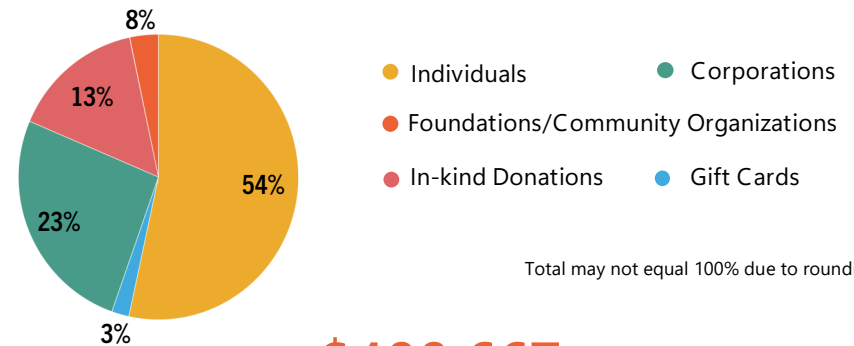
**Enrichment Activities:** Contributions enable participation in diverse enrichment activities such as sports, arts, dance, science, cosmetology courses, and various camps. These programs are pivotal in fostering well-rounded development, self-expression, and discovery of new passions.

**Essentials for New Placements:** Immediate needs for new placements are met with donations, offering children new clothing, shoes, and toiletries. These essentials help ease their transition and provide a sense of dignity and comfort.

**Housing and Transportation Assistance:** For Transition Age Youth, donations are crucial in providing stable housing and transportation assistance. Including aid for rent, groceries, utilities, and transportation, forming a support system for young adults as they navigate toward independence.

**Therapeutic Support:** Funds are utilized for therapeutic interventions such as art therapy, therapeutic dolls, sand trays, and one-on-one caseworker support. These therapies are vital in addressing emotional and psychological needs, promoting healing and resilience.

### Constituent Giving Data



Total may not equal 100% due to rounding

**\$400,667**

The amount including in-kind, raised by generous individuals, corporations, foundations and community organizations.

The unwavering generosity and commitment exemplified by our donors, corporate allies, community affiliates, and foundational partners, form the bedrock of support for children and youth navigating the complexities of foster care.

Each contribution acts as a beacon of hope, offering not just stability and resources but also the nurturing love essential for their growth. These young lives, often marked by trauma and upheaval, find in your support a transformative power that not only aids in their emotional and behavioral healing but also lays a foundation for resilience and strength.

Your investment transcends immediate needs, extending into the realms of education and personal development, thereby disrupting the cycle of generational poverty. Together, we are not just changing individual lives; we are sculpting a future where each child can realize and embrace their full potential.



Learn how your organization can invest in the lives of foster youth.

**CONTACT: Angela Taylor, [ataylor@afs4kids.org](mailto:ataylor@afs4kids.org) (510)988-3006**



## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT



Kaiser Nurses, Oakland held a holiday gift drive for youth in care.

**THANK YOU!**  
**\$122,526**

raised by corporate and community partners

At Alternative Family Services (AFS), our dedicated staff, resilient youth, and committed families deeply appreciate the invaluable contributions made by companies and community organizations. Your investments of time, energy, and funds are vital in enhancing the lives of youth in foster care, creating tangible, positive changes. By partnering with us, your organization not only achieves its philanthropic objectives but also generates significant impact through various meaningful opportunities:

**Foster Learning Initiative:** Participate in our Education Equity Drive, a powerful movement ensuring every young person in our care has equitable access to educational resources and opportunities, leveling the playing field for their academic journey.

**Foster Joy Program:** Bring the spirit of celebration through our Holiday Drive, where your contributions provide each youth in care with a special holiday gift and a festive meal, infusing joy and warmth into their lives during the holiday season.

**Special Events Collaboration:** Engage with us through corporate sponsorships and the donation of auction items for our events. These collaborative efforts play a crucial role in raising essential funds, addressing critical needs, and enhancing the services available to our youth and families. Your partnership with AFS is more than a contribution; it's a commitment to nurturing hope and fostering positive growth in the lives of young individuals and families navigating the foster care system. Together, we can create lasting impacts and celebrate the triumphs of those we serve.

### Corporations and Community Partners

- 1st United Credit Union
- Amazon Smile Foundation
- Armanino
- Atlas Project
- California Amateur Hockey Association
- Clorox
- Comerica Bank
- Doctors Company
- KDC Construction
- KPMG
- ProCo Insurance Services
- PwC
- Ropes & Gray
- Sakura of America
- Third Wave Analytics
- Ticket to Dream
- Turbo Shine Car Wash
- United Way
- Varsity Technologies
- VM Ware
- West Bradley Electric, INC.

### Foundations

- Clorox Foundation
- Greater New Orleans Foundation
- Hannah B. Quimby Fund
- Horner Foundation
- Mann Foundation
- Sonoma Community Foundation
- Walter S. Johnson Foundation
- Wendy's Wish Giving Fund

FINANCIALS



Julio's Journey: From Foster Care to Empowerment

Julio's story is one of resilience, transformation, and hope. Entering foster care at the tender age of 10, he faced a turbulent start. Moving between several homes due to disruptive behavior, he struggled to find stability and understanding in his young life. This pattern continued until he was placed with the AFS resource family, a turning point that would redefine his path.

The Morris family, unlike any before, provided Julio with something he had long yearned for: unwavering support and a nurturing environment. They recognized his challenges not as obstacles, but as opportunities for growth and healing. Complementing this familial warmth, AFS played a pivotal role in Julio's transformation, equipping him with therapeutic tools and resources. These interventions were instrumental in addressing his emotional and behavioral needs, fostering a sense of belonging and self-worth.

Upon reaching 18, a critical age for any youth in foster care, Julio embraced the Transitional Housing Placement Plus (THP+) program. This program offered him not just a roof over his head but a foundation for his future. It was here that Julio began to harness his experiences, channeling them into a newfound purpose.

Today, at 22, Julio stands at the cusp of a significant milestone – graduating from Sonoma State University. His college journey, marked by determination and hard work, is a testament to his strength and the positive influence of those who supported him. But for Julio, this is not just an academic achievement; it's a stepping stone towards a larger goal.

Inspired by his own journey, Julio aspires to become a social worker. His ambition is fueled by a desire to give back, to be the guiding light for others who face similar challenges as he once did. He envisions a career dedicated to helping foster youth find their path, offering them the same support, understanding, and opportunities that he was fortunate to receive.

Julio's story is more than just personal triumph; it's a beacon of inspiration. It showcases the profound impact of compassionate care, the transformative power of support systems like AFS and THP+, and the incredible resilience of the human spirit. As he prepares to embark on his next chapter, Julio stands as a living embodiment of hope, ready to extend his hand to uplift others.

Operating Expenses

Program/Department	Dollars	% of
Program	\$21,072,637	87%
General and Administration	\$ 2,932,104	12%
Resource Development	\$ 231,441	1%
TOTAL	\$24,236,182	100%

## SERVICES and LOCATIONS

Alternative Family Services provides various family services, foster care, adoption, mental health, and training in Northern California. Established in 1978, AFS has built strong relationships with county partners with the unified goals of strengthening families and providing safe and permanent solutions to youth in foster care.

### Foster Care Services

- Treatment Foster Care
- San Francisco Emergency Placement
- Family Alternatives for Children with Developmental Disabilities (FACDD)
- Intensive Services Foster Care (ISFC)
- Therapeutic Foster Care
- Juvenile Justice System Impacted Youth (San Francisco)

### Adoption Services

- Post-adopt
- County Adoption Support Services

**AFS has Foster Care and Adoption Services in the following counties:**

- |                |                 |
|----------------|-----------------|
| • Alameda      | • San Francisco |
| • Butte        | • San Joaquin   |
| • Contra Costa | • San Mateo     |
| • El Dorado    | • Santa Clara   |
| • Kern         | • Solano        |
| • Lake         | • Sonoma        |
| • Marin        | • Stanislaus    |
| • Napa         | • Sutter        |
| • Placer       | • Yolo          |
| • Sacramento   | • Yuba          |

### County Adoption Support Services

- |               |          |
|---------------|----------|
| • San Joaquin | • Sonoma |
|---------------|----------|

### Transition Age Youth Services

- Independent Living Skills Program (ILSP)
- Transitional Housing Plus (THP+)

### Mental Health Services

- Community & School-Based Mental Health
- The Gathering Place (Therapeutic Visitation)
  - Oakland & Pleasanton (Alameda County)

### Counties with Mental Health Services

- |                |                 |
|----------------|-----------------|
| • Alameda      | • San Francisco |
| • Contra Costa | • Sonoma        |

### County Training Contracts

- Alameda
- Contra Costa
- Solano

### Parenting for Permanency College

- San Francisco County





## 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, Tele-psych, Training for Alameda & Contra Costa

### **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, Juvenile Probation

Parenting for Permanency College (training for SF County resource parents)

### **Alternative Family Services - Santa Rosa Facility #496803276**

131B Stony Circle #1200, Santa Rosa, CA 95401

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

Programs: Foster Care, Adoption, Mental Health (community & school based)

### **Alternative Family Services - Sacramento Facility #347005069**

8950 Cal Center Dr. Bld. 2 #340, Sacramento, CA 95826

Homes for youth in: Sacramento, San Joaquin

Programs: Foster Care, Adoption

### **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 (TAY), Transitional Housing Program (THP+)

### **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.





## CITATIONS

1. California Department of Social Services, "Resource Family Approval Program"; <https://www.cdss.ca.gov/resource-families>
2. Children's Bureau, "Trends in Foster Care and Adoption FY 2012-2021"; <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/cb/report/trends-foster-care-adoption>
3. Child Trends, "State Level Data for Understanding Child Welfare in the United States"; <https://www.childtrends.org/publications/state-level-data-for-understanding-child-welfare-in-the-united-states>





“

Every child deserves a champion — an adult who will never give up on them,  
who understands the power of connection  
and insists that they become the best that they can possibly be.

**~Rita Pierson~**

