

If you are interested in submitting an article for upcoming newsletters, or have suggestions on improving the newsletter, contact Emily Stewart at [steware@kerndhs.com](mailto:steware@kerndhs.com) or (661) 873-2303 or Melissa Soin at: (661) 873-2382 or email [soinm@kerndhs.com](mailto:soinm@kerndhs.com).

## Ombudsman Corner

**DID YOU KNOW** the first documented case of child abuse in the United States can be traced back to 1874 involving the case of Mary Ellen Wilson who was a victim of abuse? Mary Ellen's case led to the creation of the New York Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children.

April is National Child Abuse Prevention Month. During the entire month communities, families and advocates across the country acknowledge the importance of working collaboratively to prevent child abuse and neglect, and promote the wellbeing of children and families. The first observation of National Child Abuse Prevention Month, also known as Child Abuse Prevention Month occurred in 1983 when President Ronald Reagan made the proclamation. In 2016, President Barak Obama continued the tradition when he issued a Presidential Proclamation stating: "During National Child Abuse Prevention Month, we recommit to giving every child a chance to succeed and to ensuring that every child grows up in a safe, stable, and nurturing environment that is free from abuse and neglect." ([https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the\\_press\\_office/Presidential-Proclamation-Marking-National-Child-Abuse-Prevention-Month/](https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the_press_office/Presidential-Proclamation-Marking-National-Child-Abuse-Prevention-Month/))

Child abuse and neglect is a community problem and we all know or have heard of someone who has experienced it. Each of us can join the fight to end child abuse by making a commitment to be a part of the solution. Below are a few simple steps that can make a big impact:

- Educate yourself and others on recognizing the signs of child abuse and neglect
- Report your concerns to KCDHS Hotline (661) 631-6011
- Help a family under stress
- Volunteer your time to a local organization

*If you believe you can make a difference, then you will make a difference. Believe in yourself, your family and your community and you will win -Lindsay Fox*

# Melissa's Message

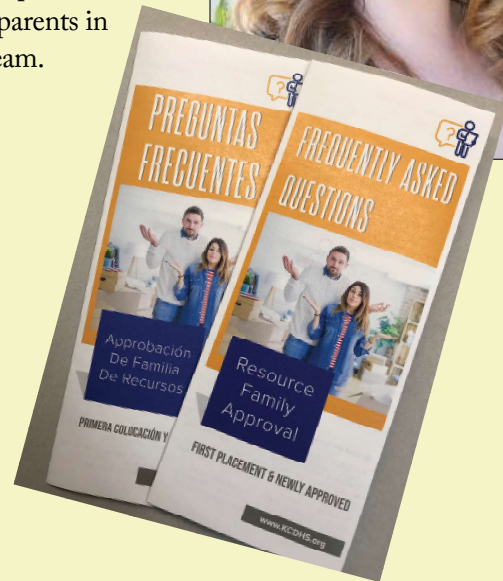
## Great News Resource Families!

The Kern County Department of Human Services (KCDHS) is pleased to announce the creation of our new Frequently Asked Questions brochure for Kern resource families. This new resource provides families who are newly approved and families who receive their first placement with commonly asked questions to help in the navigation of being a resource family. This brochure also aids resource parents in encouraging on-going communication within the child and family's team.

Here are some examples of questions you can find in the brochure:

- When can I expect my first placement?
- Do I have to accept any placement?
- Can I ask questions about a child before considering placement?
- Whom do I contact about behavior concerns of the child I care for?
- Can I receive information for the child's attorney?
- How will visits be arranged?

To obtain a copy of the Frequently Asked Questions brochure, please contact your assigned Resource Family Approval (RFA) social worker or the foster youth's primary social worker. This brochure is offered in both English and Spanish.



## Breakfast with Santa Recap

The Kern County Department of Human Services' (KCDHS) Breakfast with Santa event for 2021 was a great success! The drive-thru event was held in the parking lot at Canyon Hills Church on December 11, 2021. Eighty-nine resource families and three hundred and forty-three children took part in the event. The lot was decorated with Christmas trees, candy canes and all the festive colors of the season. Resource families were provided a hot breakfast, treat bags, snacks, a gift for every child in the home and, for randomly selected resource parents, a raffle prize! Families were greeted by Santa Clause who gave out candy canes and posed for photos. KCDHS would like to thank Canyon Hills Church, Lowes, the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW), Target and the Kern Partnership for Children and Families for their generous donations to the event. Another "thank you" goes out to all our resource families who participated and made 2021's Breakfast with Santa such a wonderful experience. We look forward to seeing you all at Breakfast with Santa 2022!



# Guardian Scholars Program at CSU Bakersfield

**W**ith the school year nearing an end, it is never too late to talk with your youth about continued education after high school. For current and former foster youth, there are many resources to take advantage of to assist them in earning a college degree. The Guardian Scholar's Program at California State University of Bakersfield is one such resource.

## **What is the purpose/goal of Guardian Scholars?**

The mission of the California State University of Bakersfield (CSUB) Guardian Scholars Program (GSP) is to support current and former foster youth who are college bound by providing access, maintaining a support network that promotes student academic success, and connecting students with their potential to become successful and productive world citizens. We currently have 25 students in GSP, and we are very proud of our growing alumni of 30 GSP graduates.

The Guardian Scholars Program helps students overcome economic immobility and breaks the cycle of generational poverty in low-income communities with high-risk populations. Education is key to economic mobility and improved quality of life. We provide an affordable education, a safe place to live, and access to ongoing financial aid on the path to graduation.

Nationwide, 3-5% of foster youth achieve a Bachelor's degree. The lack of economic opportunities combined



with low educational achievement in our county disproportionately affect foster and homeless youth, and we are working to correct that.

## **What are the requirements to enter in the program?**

The Guardian Scholars Program is for current and former foster youth, as well as youth who experienced displacement and homelessness during adolescence, and it is intended for incoming CSUB students between the ages of 17-24. For foster youth, our requirement is that the student spent at least one day in foster care — we feel this level of displacement and complex trauma was enough to derail a student's education, and we believe we can provide the extra support students need to be successful academically and persist until graduation.

Our program serves the greater Kern County region with direct connections to graduating high school seniors who are in foster care or certified abandoned or homeless by their school.

## **Is there a deadline to apply?**

As a supplemental program, the Guardian Scholars Program has its own independent application separate from the CSUB undergraduate admission application. The bad news is that it is one more application to fill out—the good news is that we accept applications all through the year, not just during the college application-filing period. To receive the greatest benefit, students should apply to GSP as early as possible, preferably before high school graduation.

## **What are the benefits of being in GSP?**

We can combine the efforts of Guardian Scholars with the Educational Opportunity Program (EOP) to provide assistance with admission to the University. In other words, we can grant special admission to students who may not be regularly admissible to the University because of placement in multiple schools or homes. Foster youth also receive priority registration and priority housing consideration. In addition to offering EOP's Summer Bridge Program, Guardian Scholars have access to early move-in and summer housing, as the campus guarantees year-round housing to foster youth. Finally, we have staff dedicated to providing educational counseling, student success training, and independent living skills workshops.

For more information about the Guardian Scholar's Program, visit <https://www.csub.edu/GSP> or contact Steve Walsh at 661-654-3218.



# Getting to Know ISFC

In this month's edition of Getting to Know Intensive Services Foster Care (ISFC), we are going to focus on the passion, dedication and determination it takes to be a resource parent in ISFC. ISFC is a state licensed service model for eligible children whose needs for safety, permanency, and well-being require specially trained resource parents. It takes a unique dedication and resolve for this program, as the parents will steward youth with high needs stemming from trauma, emotional disturbance and/or specialized health care needs.

As such, an ISFC resource parent may encounter issues outside normal age appropriate behavior such as; adverse risk taking behavior, impaired decision-making skills, emotionally and socially restricted growth etc... While a lot is required of ISFC resource parents, Kern Bridges Youth Homes is an excellent resource for assistance, as well as providing extensive specialized training to ISFC resource parents.

The training for an ISFC parent is ongoing. As mentioned

in the previous article, training for an ISFC resource parent includes but is not limited to:

1. You will need to attend 40 hours of training the first year and 12 hours a year thereafter.
2. You will attend all CFTMs as scheduled.
3. Effective communication between ALL team members is essential.
4. Case Plan implementation is crucial to your child's success.

It may seem an overwhelming undertaking to become part of the ISFC program at first, but the rewards are significant. As an ISFC parent, your status is elevated to that of "professional" with all of the intrinsic and extrinsic rewards that come with that status. As you begin this journey and all along the way, you have 24/7 access to your ISFC team for guidance. Good luck on your new journey. Please be on the lookout for the next edition of Getting to Know Intensive Services Foster Care.

For more information about becoming an ISFC resource parent, please contact Carrie Wombacher at 661-396-2352.




Are you a caregiver of a current or former foster youth?  
Are you feeling frustrated? Would you like additional support?

## FURS

The Family Urgent Response System (FURS) is available to resource families as well as current and former foster youth. This statewide hotline provides immediate, trauma-informed support 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and 365 days a year. If you are in need of additional support, please call or text 1-833-939 FURS (3877) or go online to [www.cal-furs.org](http://www.cal-furs.org).

## YES Conference 2022

The 7th Annual Youth Empowering Success (YES) event is just around the corner! Hosting virtually on March 25, 2022, YES provides foster youth opportunities to propel their future success with peer-to-peer collaborations, amazing messages of inspiration from keynote speakers and interactive workshops to answer questions a youth may have about their future. Caregivers are encouraged to attend and will receive two hours of training credit. To register, please visit <https://bit.ly/3KBmfle>



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