

To: Sonoma County Board of Supervisors
Department or Agency Name(s): Human Services Department
Staff Name and Phone Number: Nick Honey, 565-4343
Vote Requirement: Majority
Supervisory District(s): Countywide

Recommended Action:

Adopt a Gold Resolution Declaring May 2022 Foster Parent Recognition Month in Sonoma County (Countywide)

Executive Summary:

The month of May has been designated as National Foster Parent Recognition Month. The Board of Supervisors is requested to recognize all Sonoma County caregivers who have taken on the invaluable role of caring for infants, children, and teens that are separated from their families due to abuse or neglect.

Discussion:

Excellent parenting is the most important intervention that we can provide to children as they learn and grow. When parents are unable to care for their children, foster parents or relative caregivers' step in to provide loving and committed care to meet a child's needs in partnership with the child welfare system. Children become a part of the family for as long as they need out-of-home care. When possible, caregivers' partner with the biological parents to provide support and mentorship. When children cannot be returned home safely, caregivers may provide permanency, including adoption or guardianship. Foster parenting requires patience, consistency, flexibility, love, and often a sense of humor.

Foster Parent Recognition Month acknowledges the dedicated caregivers in Sonoma County who provide "around the clock" love and care to children. In January of this year, 210 County foster homes, including relative homes, cared for 207 children. Local foster family agencies also approve and support foster homes, and these homes provided care for 109 children. During 2021, 26 children were adopted and 42 children found legal permanence through guardianship, which allows children to find permanent homes without termination of parental rights.

The work of foster parents is difficult and challenging, but their dedication changes the lives of many youth in our community. They ensure that children attend weekly family visits and therapy appointments, support them when they are struggling in school, and console them when they miss their birth family. They help children learn new skills, celebrate milestones such as birthdays or graduations, and read favorite bedtime stories. Through their skilled care, children can grow and heal. Even during the pandemic, our foster parents have welcomed children into their homes and families and have continued to provide loving care.

The Human Services Department values the role of local community partners who help support and develop new caregivers, including TLC Children's Services, Alternative Family Services, Seneca, and Lilliput-Wayfinders Family Services. Since 2017, through our collaborative efforts, over 375 new families have been approved by the County or through local foster family

agencies. Through this collaborative approach, we continue to recruit and support new families so that every child who enters the child welfare system has the opportunity to be in a family home. We have an ongoing need for more foster families in Sonoma County so that children can remain in their own communities whenever possible. Community members interested in finding out more about becoming a foster parent can call 707-565-4274 or visit our website at www.sonomafostercare.org.

We appreciate the generosity of community members who are willing to take on the very important role of opening their homes to care for Sonoma County children and youth. The County is grateful for the compassionate care that foster parents provide to the community's most vulnerable children.

Prior Board Actions:

Each year the Board of Supervisors has expressed appreciation for the outstanding contributions our caregivers make in caring for our dependent children by declaring the month of May Foster Parent Recognition Month in Sonoma County.

FISCAL SUMMARY

Expenditures	FY 21-22 Adopted	FY22-23 Projected	FY 23-24 Projected
Budgeted Expenses			
Additional Appropriation Requested			
Total Expenditures	0		
Funding Sources			
General Fund/WA GF			
State/Federal			
Fees/Other			
Use of Fund Balance			
Contingencies			
Total Sources	0		

Narrative Explanation of Fiscal Impacts:

N/A

Narrative Explanation of Staffing Impacts (If Required):

N/A

Attachments:

Resolution

Related Items “On File” with the Clerk of the Board:

N/A