

# *Fostering:* Families Helping Families

## The Need

### 34,000 Children, Many Infants, in Foster Care

The Office of Life, Justice & Peace is working to promote fostering and adoption in LA, Ventura, and Santa Barbara Counties.

The statistics for foster youth are shocking:

- 34,000 children are in foster care in Los Angeles County
- 21% of foster children in LA are under the age of 2
- 2/3 of foster children in LA are under the age of 10
- 7 in 10 girls aging out of foster care will become pregnant before aged 21
- 1 in 3 foster youth aging out become homeless
- 1 in 5 foster youth aging out become incarcerated
- 70% of trafficked youth come from the foster care system
- 1 in 2 foster youth will not graduate high school
- Just 4% of foster youth will graduate college

### Contact the Office of Life, Justice, and Peace:

(213) 637-7690

[archla.org/foster](http://archla.org/foster)

Presented By:



**Office of Life,  
Justice & Peace**  
Archdiocese of Los Angeles

One Life  
LA

## The Solution

### Families in Our Parishes Want to Be Foster Parents

These young people need the security and support of a loving family to succeed. Foster All, a Christian organization, acts as a bridge between interested families and agencies that train foster families. Last fall during Respect Life Month, we had a trial run of 15 parishes that hosted presentations on fostering.

Out of these 15 test parishes, 323 families stepped forward to foster. This number is truly staggering and encouraging. We believe there was such a great response because our parish families have simply not been invited to foster.

Fostering also brings people from the “pro-life” and “social justice” perspectives together. Fostering creates an environment where everyone can participate. Fostering both encourages adoption and creates systemic change. For many children, foster families provide a way out of multi-generational poverty.

Perhaps most interesting, our Latino families are exceptionally generous and open to fostering. After 43 presentations in English, 63 families expressed interest in fostering. By contrast, after 35 presentations in Spanish, 262 families expressed interest in fostering! The Spanish speakers outresponded the English speakers by a ratio of 7:1.

Fostering is a family ministry, reaching families not already involved in parish ministry. The most likely candidates are families with school-age children at the parish school or in religious education programs.

# May is Foster Care Awareness Month

## How You Can Help

### Invite Your Parish to Support Foster Families

You can promote foster care in your parish this May and throughout the year.

Please participate in the following ways:

- Include intercessions for foster youth during Mass
- Organize a blessing at Mass for foster and adoptive families in the parish
- Tie in foster and adoption in your homily
- Place our bulletin inserts so families learn about fostering
- Place posters in the back of the church
- Invite a speaker from Foster All to present
- Encourage the parish school and religious ed programs to host a parents' night on fostering with a speaker
- Encourage the school to host a drive for foster youth
- Urge families who do not foster to serve fostering families in the parish in other ways
- Order our prayer card to St. Jerome Emiliani, patron of foster children
- Share this information with your prayer groups, ministries, DRE, and parish council

Of the families who show initial interest in fostering, approximately 1/3 will go through training and 1/6 will become foster families. We want to invite the other 5/6 families to support foster children in other ways. They can act as a support team in the parish:

- Bringing meals and material needs to families who foster
- Host drives for duffel bags or clothes for foster youth
- Mentor foster kids through Big Brothers, Big Sisters or KidSave
- Drive foster kids to church with Covenants for Kids
- Host a holiday brunch for kids in group homes at the parish
- Become a CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocate) for a child

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