

A Life Filled with Joy, Purpose & Love

By Cassidy Sherman, Agape Foster and Adoptive Mom

Edited and Photo by Kimberly Woodworth

I started my foster care journey as a single, 24-year-old with the hope to love kids and families in my community. Because of my faith in God, I felt inspired to live a non-traditional life of radical hospitality. While working as a nurse, I met children in foster care and their families, all who deserved to be supported and loved. I strongly doubted I was the best candidate to step up and love these families through being a resource parent. After all, I didn't have a husband, parenting experience, or my own home. But God quickly showed me He would work out the details if I was willing to surrender my plans to His.

As a working parent, I had initially decided to request placements in the age range of 4-10 years old. School age placements seemed to make the most sense for my work schedule, my age, and my inexperience as a parent. I quickly learned plans change often in foster care and my first "yes" was a 3-year-old and a 7-month-old. Life has looked nothing like I planned ever since. I have cared for 15 children in the last 4 years, some for a few days of respite, and others I have promised forever. Currently, I am the foster/adoptive mom of 3 kids ages 3-18!

Inviting trauma into my home has been the most heartbreaking, frustrating, anxiety-producing, uncomfortable, and inconvenient decision of my life. But, also, my life could not be filled with more joy, purpose, love, and laughter. While the past four years have held my highest highs and lowest lows, I am encouraged by the fact that each moment mattered.

My former foster daughter "Star" (name changed to protect confidentiality) taught me just that. Star was a toddler when she came to stay with me for 3 weeks. During this time, we would



Cassidy & Star

FaceTime calls with her parents daily and I gave them frequent updates in between calls and visits. We were able to celebrate the Mid-Autumn Festival together, which was an important tradition for her family. Her family taught me so much about generosity, kindness, and gratitude during her short time with me and we truly celebrated her return home. While I missed Star greatly, I was overjoyed she was able to return home where she belonged.

As a foster parent, I know that I represent trauma and the absolute worst and hardest time in a family's journey. So, I never expected to hear from Star again. To my surprise, 1.5 years later, I received a text from Star's mom sharing that Star still regularly talks about our time together. She invited me to a FaceTime date to catch up. I was and am beyond thankful this selfless mama chose to allow her daughter to reach out to me. While it was so incredible to see Star and her family doing so well, I was shocked that she remembered me. It was an incredible reminder that each moment matters and sometimes a small moment of love in our lives becomes a foundational memory in the life of another.

Agape Reaches 64 Years of Service

In October, Agape Villages attained 64 years of service to abused and neglected children and youth in Northern California. How we wish there wasn't a need for our service but we are grateful to our many donors, foster parents, staff and volunteers over the years who have supported us in this vital work. The more than 6,600 children directly touched, and families and others indirectly touched, will never be able to express their appreciation to you personally, so we do. Thank you!

Foster Parents – True Heroes Among Us

We operate under the overriding premise that all children deserve a safe and stable home and are entitled to every opportunity to succeed in life. We are all well aware of the many obstacles far too many children have to endure for no fault of their own. Too many are at a disadvantage in life, having to deal with the challenges and sadness of an unstable home life. Many of these children are thrust into the foster care system. What is to become of them? Their plight hinges upon the love, compassion and involvement of caring people who are willing to voluntarily step into their lives and bring them hope.

Fostering children is an emotional process for all involved. It is

emotional for children who are removed from their home and placed with total strangers. It is emotional for birth parents who are forced to deal with the sad realities of their failures and deficiencies. It is emotional for foster parents as it is always a little scary to say yes when one cannot really know what may be in store down the road. It certainly takes courage to do this!

Foster parents are true heroes among us. They mean everything to the children in their care. It is only through their involvement that doors are open to make a difference in the lives of these children. Every foster parent deserves our encouragement, support and appreciation!

We Need Foster Parents!

There Are Children Who Need A Home Right Now!

We receive calls almost daily about children needing a foster home. We serve children who've been abused, neglected, abandoned and mistreated in ways they need to be removed from their own families for their protection. These are children who've been thrust into the foster care system, who depend on the mercy of others for their care.

We need families for children of all ages, especially children 10 years and older and sibling groups. Consider today how you can be used to care for children. For more information on foster parenting, call the Agape Villages office at (833) 221-1061. Also, see our website at AgapeVillages.org



A Legacy Gift

*Remember Agape Villages
With The Ones You Love!*

WILLS AND ESTATES

For more information:
jlkleyn@AgapeVillages.org

The Miracle of Foster Care

Given the amount of change, transformation and incredible improvement in the lives of many children in foster care, some may ambitiously claim that foster care is full of miracles! We certainly see children overcoming physical and medical maladies. We see children being healed from serious emotional trauma. We have much evidence to show that children are resilient if given the right care, love and support. Children learn better coping skills from the habits they've been forced to develop in order to cope with their dysfunctional families. We've seen children's minds come alive and recover from significant educational deficits. We've seen children's hearts come alive and respond to the stable and loving relationships which enabled them to trust again and form strong emotional bonds with their foster families. Whether or not these are true miracles, we hear foster families, adoptive families and social workers use this term often! How great it is to be associated with such amazing work!

VOLUNTEERS IN THE Spotlight

We want to introduce our shining volunteer, Tiffany Saucedo. Tiffany is the owner of Chit Chat Café and Bakery in

Manteca at 273 W. Louise Ave. Chit Chat has delicious pastries, delightful beverages and the amazing tea party experience. Tiffany has blessed Agape Villages with many kind gestures, such as donating over 300 cupcakes to our dinner drive thru, having our kids take part in a baking class and giving our Girls' Group memorable tea parties. Tiffany has shown so much love to the agency. Thank you for all you do for Agape Villages, Tiffany! We are blessed.



WE NEED MORE VOLUNTEERS!

If you would like to be a volunteer, please let us know via our website: www.AgapeVillages.org and use the "Get Involved" button, or call us at (833) 221-1061.

But rejoice inasmuch as you participate
in the sufferings of Christ... *1 Peter 4:1*



Is There a Crisis in Foster Care?

By Mark Anglin, Board Chair

Across the United States there are over 400,000 youth in foster care. This number changes continually as children are reunited with their families, adopted, or age out of the system. Turnover results in many children entering annually into the foster care system. It was reported that in 2020 alone over 200,000 children under 18 entered foster care in the US.

This places a considerable challenge on the foster care system. Furthermore, other public health issues can impact the number of children in the system. The link between foster care and parental drug use, for example, is well documented. According to a 2015 study, approximately 1/3 of all foster placements is based on parental substance abuse.

It is estimated that ninety percent of children in the Foster Care system experience some form of trauma. This trauma is defined as occurring “when children and adolescents are exposed to events or situations that overwhelm their ability to cope and interfere with daily life and their ability to function and interact with others.” This trauma may adversely affect these children for the rest of their lives. It may result in suicide, incarceration, unplanned pregnancies, homelessness, and chronic poverty. This makes attaining stable foster care placements as critical for these children to have a positive experience in foster care and a change to the negative consequences listed above.

Is there a Foster Care crisis? Yes, most definitely nationally, and in California specifically. The shortage of foster parents is increasing to record numbers as the number of children being placed in the system continues to grow. The crisis is exacerbated by the difficulty in recruiting new foster parents, as well as in retaining existing foster parents. Presently there are not enough homes for the number of children in need of placement. Please join us in our efforts to manage this crisis. Strongly consider joining us in this fight. Help us to solve the crisis by signing up to serve as a foster parent or by donating to the cause to help rebuild precious lives.

The Blanket

By Mark Cameron, Agape Foster and Adoptive Dad

On a busy Friday afternoon when my wife and I received the news our foster care certification was approved, it was a joyful day! We had been told to expect it to take a few months to get the call for the placement of children with us. But at least we were one step closer to our dream of helping young people in their journey. Two days later, we received a call asking if we could take a baby girl who was 6 months old. The shopping spree for all the necessary supplies was crazy. Clothes, crib, bed and bedding, car seat, the lot. My wife Jamie did it all in 3 hours with me in tow, probably looking dazed and dumb-founded at the pile of stuff we had. Five hours later we received the tiny little thing we now call “Bugs.” Nina from Agape presented us with some toys and blankets and let us know that as soon as we were settled, she would take us to the storage unit they have and we could get whatever else they had that we might need.



Four years later, that baby is a beautiful little girl and ours permanently. She still carries around and sleeps with that blanket she received on that very first day.

I wondered where the blanket came from so I gave Nina a quick call. She told me that a group of ladies hand stitched them at the

local church my wife and I had spent years serving at, but were completely unaware of this ministry. What a small world we live in!

That blanket has been literally everywhere. The emergency room when she had an allergic reaction to an antibiotic. The numerous car rides back and forth to visits with biological parents in the beginning. The soccer games to watch her big brother. BBQs, camping, even her most recent trip

to England on her first airplane ride and laying snuggling with her grandma in that strange land where everyone talks like her dad (her words). Now we are close to five years later. Our little one still takes that blanket to bed every night. The security and feeling of calm it brings her is so wonderful.

So we would like to say “thank-you” to all those ladies spending countless hours making those blankets. I wonder if you realize just how important your work is. God bless and know that your blankets are truly loved. (This is one story about one blanket, but we are grateful to all the ladies who so patiently sew, crochet and/or quilt blankets for our kids. They are treasured and stay with them, wherever they go.)



Memorial & Honor Gifts

JUNE 22, 2022 THROUGH OCTOBER 8, 2022

IN LOVING MEMORY

ERLINDA ACOSTA

Gene & Mary Copeland

H. M. BARNES

Don & Barbara Barnes

ROY & BETTY BARTLETT

Christopher & Brittney Nunes

TAHJ BRUCE

Rich & Malia Bruce

EARLIE & MARY BUSTER

Irvin Buster

Gene & Mary Copeland

TRACY BUSTER

Irvin Buster

SHERMAN & ELMA CANNON

Jim & Caye Randolph

HENRY ODELL CATHEY

Norma Benson

RETA CLARK

Michael & Rena Avedikian

ERNIE HARDMAN

Sue Kingsbury

PHILLIS HOOPER

Rick & Jeanette House

CHUCK HUGHES

Cheryl Lee

BILL JANKORD

Charlie & Donna Peth

CAROL KINKLE

Donna Hodges

Barbara Stoffle

WILLIAM & VAUGHNCELE KISER

Mark & Dianne Kiser

FRED KLEYN

Robbie Bentley

HANK LAWSON

Mary Louise Fields

HANK & GINGER LAWSON

Gene & Mary Copeland

Jo Lawson

Ray & Celia Lawson

Debra Miller

PATRICIA SHAMOON OLSON

Andrew Ware

GWEN PUGH

Jeanne-Marie Jones

CAROL RIPPETOE

Jim & Caye Randolph

LARRY UNDERWOOD

Cheryl Lee

STEVE WATTS

Austin Watts

DONALD WEERSING

Judy Price

MYRNA WESTMORELAND

Mary Muniain

RAY & LENORA WILSON

Kyra Norried

Dora Robinson

David & Kathy Spegal

TRI-VALLEY JAIL n BAIL FUNDRAISER

We held Jail 'N Bail on Thursday October 6th at the SideTrack Bar + Grill in downtown Pleasanton. It was our 8th year holding this event to raise money for the critical foster care programs that help our kids. Jailbirds showed up to joyfully "go to jail" and post on their social media that they were looking for bail money. Our hardcore judge Kathy Narum, Pleasanton City Councilmember, gave out some high bail amounts - keeping our jailbirds behind bars all night! Great food and drinks were served, along with ideal weather on the beautiful outdoor patio at SideTrack. A huge thank



you to everyone that donated towards this event and to Todd Utical, the owner of SideTrack, for once again hosting our event. At the end of the day, we raised over \$13,000! We could not be more thrilled with the outcome. We're already excited for next year!!!

Generous Estate Gift Received

We recently received a generous gift from an estate. These gifts are also referred to as "planned giving" as they reflect making decisions over the years regarding one's financial wealth to go to places where the heart directs. In this case, years ago a woman wrote her trust, providing well for her family and also remembering Agape. It's a win-win situation for the family and the work of Agape. We are so grateful for this gift that will bless the lives of many children.

IN HONOR AND RESPECT

WALT & TERRY BRUCE

Happy 50th Wedding Anniversary!

- Janet Kleyn

WALT & TERRY BRUCE

To honor your love and compassion for children in need.

- Harvey & Pamela Lewis

GEORGE & MAXINE MORTENSEN

Happy Anniversary!

- Lois Robinson

JACOB & LISA PARNELL

You guys inspire me! Miss you and love you!

- Kim Chapman

JIM RANDOLPH

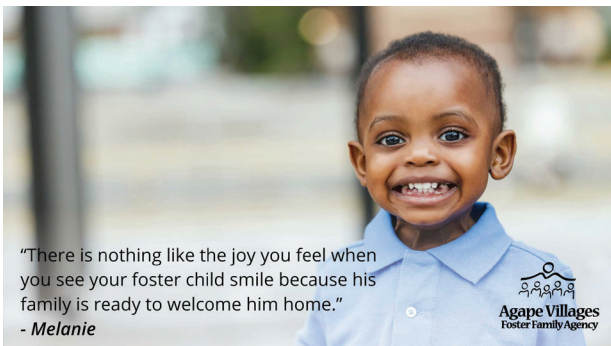
Happy Birthday, Jim!

- Gene & Laura Consolo

DORINE WARREN

Happy 100th Birthday!

- Cheryl Lee



Memorial or Honor Gift

The enclosed gift of \$ _____ is given in

Memory of, or in Honor of:

PLEASE NOTIFY:

Name: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Relationship to deceased/honoree: _____

Email Address: _____

A Life of Joy, Purpose & Love

Agape Villages • 3160 Crow Canyon Place, Suite 120 • San Ramon, CA 94583

Planned Giving Through Qualified Charitable Distribution

Are you aware that if you are age 70½ or older, you can make annual gifts of up to \$100,000 per year from an Individual Retirement Account (IRA)? This Qualified Charitable Distribution (QCD) provision allows you to give to one or more charities (such as Agape Villages) without incurring income tax on the withdrawal.

This means that you can direct any amount up to \$100,000 to Agape Villages with no federal income tax liability. Married couples with separate IRAs can donate up to \$200,000. A QCD may provide you with an excellent opportunity to make a gift during your lifetime from an asset that would be subject to multiple levels of taxation if it remained in your taxable estate.

Here are some details and restrictions for you to be aware of:

- You must be 70 ½ or older when you make your gift, and you must make your gift from an IRA – no other retirement plans (such as 401k, 403b or SEP accounts) qualify.
- If you don't have an IRA, you may be able to roll other retirement assets into one in order to make a QCD.
- Your gift must come to Agape Villages outright – tax laws do not permit you to establish a life-income arrangement or support a donor -advised fund.
- The distribution will be free from income tax. It will not also generate an income tax charitable deduction.
- Your gift to Agape Villages will qualify as all or part of your Required Minimum Distribution (RMD).
- You will have the joy of knowing that you have blessed the lives of children in need.

If you would like to make an IRA rollover gift, just let your IRA plan provider know to make a distribution to Agape Villages. To qualify as a 2022 gift, your gift must reach us by December 31, 2022.

We recommend that you discuss this option with your own financial advisor to determine whether a QCD is right for you.

If you have any questions, please call Janet Kleyn, President and CEO, at (925) 866-3020



Alexis, Austin and Lillian Hooper

Thank You To The Austin Hooper Foundation

We are so grateful to The Austin Hooper Foundation which has been made possible because of the tremendous athletic ability of Austin and the loving guidance of his mother, Lillian. Austin was an all star football player in high school. He played college football at Stanford and excelled there. He then entered the NFL football draft in 2016 when he was picked by the Atlanta Falcons. He played 4 years in Atlanta, then two years with the Cleveland Browns and is now in his first year with the Tennessee Titans. He's a two time pro-bowler who has a heart for children in foster care. His foundation continues to bless our youth with amazing experiences whether it be a "meet and greet" with pro football players, granting wishes of the children, or making our youth feel special. We are truly blessed to have him in our corner!



All non-profit organizations depend upon a good response to year-end giving each year. Remember, financial support is the fuel that keeps our engines running. Please help as you can!



Donate Your Car Today!

Our car donation program provides vital support to our work. Call CARS toll-free, seven days a week at 1-855-550-4483. Or, go to our website below to reach them. Every donation makes a difference!

WWW.AGAPEVILLAGES.ORG



AgapeVillages.org/Donate

SO MUCH
TO BE

THANKFUL

FOR!

School Supplies

We are thankful to the many people who donated school supplies for our kids! Having the right supplies is so important to doing well in school!



Women's Club

Once again the Dublin/San Ramon Women's Club is honoring the work Agape does to help abused and neglected children in the area. We are truly grateful to them for their generous \$750 gift. Such a great group of women! Pictured are Pat Anderson and Jennifer Oxe.



Anonymous Gift

In September, an anonymous man walked into the Agape office in San Ramon and handed a staff member an envelope with 7 crisp \$100 bills. He refused to give his name. He refused a thank you receipt. He pointed to the sky and said, "He knows." We are grateful. This gift will help some wonderful children.

Raymus Foundation Grant

We are so thankful to the Raymus Foundation for giving us a \$5,000 grant. We will use these funds to provide basic necessities when children enter one of our loving foster homes. Many kids come to us with literally just the shirt on their back. Giving them new clothing items such as socks, shoes, underwear, shorts, pants and jackets as well as basic toiletries, backpacks and school supplies makes a huge positive impact on a child coming into a foster home for the first time. Thank you, Raymus Foundation.



Superhero Boxes and Skateboards

We had the privilege of meeting Brenda de la Cruz Henderson, who works for Workday, Inc. She and her coworkers assembled 45 skateboards and packed 100 Superhero boxes for our kiddos. What a wonderful gesture from Workday! This software company strives to help organizations in the community. Workday spreads the message of love and happiness with their kind hearts. Thank you so much for everything you have done.

Generous Donation

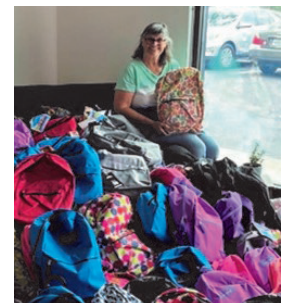


Diane Nguyen is a mentee at Close the Gap, a structured mentorship program which empowers rising 11th and 12th graders from low-income upbringings to find mentors, give back to their community, and build confidence. Diane donated 40 boxes to Agape youth with a notebook,

pens, toothpaste, nightlight, stuffed toy, and a personalized note. Diane says, "My goal is to leave an impact on their lives, in general, as humans to brighten their day." You certainly brightened our day, Diane! Thank you.

Journey Christian Church

We received a wonderful visit from Journey Christian Church in Tracy. We were surprised with the 200 filled backpacks received! We were able to pass out a backpack to each kiddo for their first day of school. Thank you so much Journey Christian Church for your kind and loving hearts! We are so grateful.



Ticket to Dream

Thank you so much to Ticket to Dream and Project Glimmer for your gifts to help us celebrate our graduates. What a fun way to recognize the accomplishments of our graduates. We are so blessed. Thank you!



Girls' Group Makeup Seminar

The San Leandro Office Staff held a Girls' Group Makeup Seminar for the teen girls in our agency. There were 16 sponsors in total (Bay Area makeup artists and brands) that donated hundreds of brand-new makeup items, including goodie bags, jewelry, essential oils, and even mini charcuterie boards! Some sponsors made monetary donations.

Over \$1,400 was raised to build each girl a fully loaded makeup kit with any makeup items they might need, a light up vanity mirror, accessories and tools for makeup application, and a \$50 gift card to Ulta Beauty to shop for any other makeup items! The girls that attended had so much fun learning and playing with their new makeup kits. Our thanks to everyone who participated! Pictured below are Dani and Breanna, sponsors.



Dani



Breanna

Chit Chat Café for Girls' Group

Chit Chat Café and Bakery in Manteca blessed our Girls' Group with a beautiful tea party experience. Owner Tiffany Saucedo showered our girls with delicious cookies, sandwiches, and tea. We were so excited to stir the blue tea with sugar rock candy sticks. To the girls' surprise, Tiffany provided hats to wear during the tea. The girls stated, "This is the best tea party we have ever been to!" We would like to thank Tiffany for sharing her gift and talent with the Agape Villages Foster Family Agency Girls' Group. A memorable experience for all.



Program Activities

Foster Family Annual Trainings



Cheryl Youngblood,
LCSW
Program Director

As we strive to operate quality programs, I put a strong emphasis on training for our youth, staff, and resource parents. In our Living Skills Program (for foster youth ages 15 -21), recent topics included (1) Life Coach Tim Kemptner teaching the foster youth how to deal with grief and anxiety; and (2) Agape ISFC Support Counselor JoRita Isola leading the youth in creating their own personal vision boards. These vision boards are to help them to visualize and motivate them to achieve their goals, dreams, and affirmations. The Living Skills Program also involves youth learning about healthy interpersonal relationships, including communication, building relationships, empathy, boundaries, respect, active listening, teambuilding, and red flags to guard against unhealthy relationships.

Recently our resource parents learned about Understanding and Managing the Resource Parent's Own Emotions and Self Care. This is important so they can be there for the children who need them. Another recent topic was Aggression and Disruptive Behavior: Best Practices In Handling Them. Our goal is that resource parents are equipped to handle whatever situation may come their way.

Combined Effort



We have received \$230 from Amazon Smile so far in 2022. Thank you to everyone who has signed up for a portion of their purchases to be donated to Agape! Please remember Agape with your Christmas purchases.

Our Professional Service Statistics

Current Year Statistics

(1/1/2022 to 10/10/2022)

- 117 – Foster Children Served Year-to-Date
- 38 – New Children in Care this Year
- 63 – Foster Children Currently in Care
- 56 – Certified Foster Families
- 11 – Adoptions Facilitated

Since We Began in 1958

- 6,601 – Foster Children Served
 - 4,000 – Through Sierra Children's Home
 - 2,601 – Through Agape Villages
- 579 – Foster Families who have Partnered with us in Foster Care

Agape Villages

3160 Crow Canyon Pl. #120
San Ramon, CA 94583
(833) 221-1061

Janet Kleyn, MBA
President and CEO

Cheryl Youngblood, LCSW
Program Director

Board of Directors

Mark Anglin, Chair
Walter Bruce, Secretary
Cindae Hull, Treasurer
Janet Kleyn
Cheryl Lee
Danah Nelson
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Our Mission

"Agape Villages mobilizes community resources to provide quality homes, innovative solutions and the highest of professional services to disadvantaged children and their families to meet their needs, maximize their potential and lead toward a better and brighter future.

64 Years of Caring Through Sierra Children's Home/Agape Villages



Return Service Requested

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U.S. POSTAGE
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Janet Kleyn, President

TITUS 3:8

"This is a trustworthy saying. And I want you to stress these things, so that all those who have trusted God may be careful to devote themselves to doing what is good."

Remember,
Online Giving is Available
on our Website
AgapeVillages.org

Living a Joyful and Meaningful Life

From the President, Janet Kleyn

Have you seen how some people seem to live as though a successful and meaningful life is to have it "easy?" They view affluence, comfort, few hassles and not having much suffering and heartache to be the gold standard. It's as if the goal is to live life to minimize complications, inconveniences and hardships while maximizing pleasures and comfort.

Well, from one perspective, it depends upon what provides "pleasure." As Christians, our joy comes from an active, productive life of service, a life pleasing to our creator and God. We know that much is expected of us as we live a life of faith and service.

As I think of our foster parents, I am constantly struck by how they sacrifice their comfort and conveniences for the sake of children in need. They open their hearts and homes to children who complicate things for them, no doubt! Yes, they get much in return, but it is based on the love they share and their courage to get

involved. This is pure religion and a tremendous example of those who put faith into action!

I think of a foster family who is serving a sibling group of three boys, ages 8, 10 and 11. Now that is not the "easy life!" But you know, with all of its challenges, it is full of rewards.

I think all of our foster families deserve medals each year. But you know, they don't see themselves as "extraordinary." They would say that serving others is what everyone should do (in various ways). We are thankful for all those who serve with Agape as foster parents, but also as staff, donors and volunteers, as together, we practice "pure religion!"



AgapeVillages.org/Donate