



KERN BRIDGES
YOUTH HOMES

NEWSLETTER

May 2015

kernbridges.com

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KERN BRIDGES YOUTH HOMES

ENDLESS POSSIBILITIES



When it comes to adventure, nothing holds back the KBYH group homes. From self-esteem activities to therapeutic and team building activities, KBYH embraces them all. To kick off the beginning of this year's spring events, our boys went on several high profile outings. These included a Dodger game, the Toyota Grand Prix of Long Beach, and fishing in Ventura California, just to name a few. The boys described the coastal scenery as breathtaking. One of the boys was in a wheelchair, but this did not stop him from fishing. He even caught a fish! How resilient is that? These activities give our boys educational experiences away from the group home environment. Learning in assorted ways can appeal to various learning styles. This in turn, affords each boy the ability to learn something from the outing whether they are visual, auditory, or kinetic learners.

A special thank you to our friends at North Bakersfield Toyota and Scion for the tickets to the Long Beach Grand Prix.



Save the Date

KBYH's annual foster parent appreciation dinner will be the evening of Thursday, May 21, 2015, 6-8PM



Upcoming Trainings

(please RSVP)

May 13, 6PM-8PM: "Positive Discipline/Self-Esteem" with Ruth Jackson

May 20, 6:00-8:00PM: "Managing Aggressive Behavior" with Mark Dominguez

June 6, 9:00AM-1:00PM: "Case Management/Accessing Children's Services" with Joe Ortega

Ongoing Trainings

Mark Dominguez will be offering the following trainings on an ongoing basis (participants must RSVP by the Monday of the week of training):

CPR/1st Aid Recertification (*for anyone who has previously had CPR/1st Aid training*): First Thursday of every month from 10:00am-Noon and from 6:00-8:00pm.

CPR/1st Aid-Initial Course (*for those who have never had the training before*): First Saturday of February, May, August, and November, 10:00am-3:00pm.

KBYH Staff Spotlight

Jim VanderZwan, LCSW

Jim earned his MSW from SDSU in 1997 and became licensed in 2001. After working in residential treatment in San Diego for over 7 years, Jim joined KBYH in 2001 as the group home clinical director. Since 2004 he has worked as KBYH's FFA and Adoptions Director. Jim has also worked as a federal grant reviewer, federal child welfare reviewer (CFSR's), private practice therapist, adult day health care consultant, and provides supervision to MSW's earning their hours. Recently he was seen on the Scott Cox "First Look" program (pictured) discussing the issue of human trafficking and the need for foster parents who would take placement of youth coming out of these types of situations.



CONGRATS!!

Anthony M.-Doing well in school
 Trinity L.-Doing well in dance class
 Nathaniel G.-Progressing well in speech therapy
 Cheyenne G.-Improving grades
 Miguel M.-Good grades
 Anjelica M.-Good grades
 Marlin V.-Honor role
 Haley C.-Good grades



CAMP FOREVER

August 28-30, 2015

KBYH and the KCDHS invite you to join us for a weekend of fun and relaxation with fellow adoptive families at the Canyon Creek Retreat Center facility located near Lake Castaic.

Download a brochure and registration form at www.kernbridges.com

Eligibility requirements for a family to attend include:

- *The family has adopted (or completed adoptive placement) through the Kern County foster care system and the adoptee is still a minor
- *All children attending are **ages 5-17 only**
- *Families are willing and able to share bunkbed accommodations with other families
- *Participants are able to navigate a campground setting
- *Camp registration is \$20/person (maximum \$100/family). Space is limited, so register as soon as possible.
- * Caregivers will receive 1.5 training hours
- *Para información en español acerca de este evento, por favor de comunicarse con Gaby Lazos-Johnson al 661-868-8892 o con Yolanda Covian al 661-633-7045

Child Birthdays

May 3: Halen W.
 May 7: Alexandria C.
 May 10: Angel M.
 May 15: Cassandra C.
 May 19: Gerardo M.
 May 21: Angel G.
 May 24: Trinity L.



Foster Parent Birthdays

May 6: Frances Cortez
 May 13: Graciela Pardon
 May 27: Amanda Ayala

KBYH Staff Birthdays

May 2: Keisha Davis
 May 11: Joe Ortega
 May 14: Reggie Phillips
 May 24: Ronny Copeland

Foster Child of the Month: Alex V.

This month's Child of the Month resides in the Espinoza Certified Home. We take great pleasure in presenting Alex V. as the Child of the Month. Alex is a well-mannered, polite and cheerful little boy who is happy in his placement with the Espinoza's. He is proud of his room which is decorated in super-hero style. His room has always appeared clean and orderly. Alex attends preschool. He has enjoyed preschool and has always received laudatory comments from the preschool staff. Alex is a gentlemen and he interacts well with those who visit him and the family. We wish Alex the very best the future has to offer him. Congratulations Alex on your selection as Child of the Month.

Foster Family of the Month: David and Arturo Espinoza

This month we recognize David and Arturo Espinoza. The Espinoza's became foster parents for the purpose of growing their family. They have already adopted a son. They may adopt additional children, but at present, are fostering two boys. The Espinoza's left Bakersfield briefly last year to live in Northern California; however, they returned to Bakersfield to settle. They enjoy participating in activities as a family. The Espinoza's treated their boys by decorating their rooms in action figure decorum and providing many toys. The Espinoza's have also enrolled the children in school and preschool and have taught the children at home when the boys are not attending school. The Espinoza's have raised their children well. They encouraged them to study hard at school. They have also taught their children good manners and how to behave in public. We thank the Espinoza's for their dedication to child care and wish them the very best for any future adoptions.

DHS Social Worker of the Month: Margie Santiago-Check

This month we are proud to present Margie Santiago-Check as Kern Bridges Youth Homes selection of Social Worker of the Month. Mrs. Santiago-Check has served several clients who have been placed in KBYH homes. The majority of the cases are complicated, delicate and require frequent coordination. Mrs. Santiago-Check is experienced and highly competent. She is always available to assist and contribute to the case management of her clients. She is also a personable and customer service oriented Social Worker who has gained the respect of the social workers of this agency. We thank you Mrs. Santiago-Check for being there for us, always.



Elise Johnson

Elise is an intern at Child Guidance who has been the therapist for three of our children at KBYH. According to one foster parent, she has been a caring individual who understands the needs for foster children to thrive and has given caregivers the parenting guidance which has made placements more smooth. Additionally, she has given the children emotional support and behavioral guidelines to provide more security as foster children. You know that you have a great counselor when the kids are doing so much better, yet they still want them to receive counseling because they are so happy to see her. Elise has wonderful intuition for the job and will have a great future wherever she goes. Two foster families and three children are thankful for your efforts Elise.



The Warren family on a recent trip to the happiest place on Earth.



CLOSURE

A DOCUMENTARY ABOUT ADOPTION

KERN BRIDGES YOUTH HOMES CORDIALLY INVITES YOU TO A SPECIAL SCREENING

TUESDAY, JUNE 16, 2015
 BAKERSFIELD MARRIOTT AT THE CONVENTION CENTER
 5:00-9:00PM
 \$10.00/PERSON

REGISTER AT WWW.KERNBRIDGES.COM



THE EVENING INCLUDES THE FILM SCREENING, DINNER, AND A Q&A WITH ANGELA TUCKER (SUBJECT OF *CLOSURE*) AFTER THE FILM

THIS EVENT IS BEING PROVIDED THROUGH THE GENEROSITY OF THE CALIFORNIA CHILDREN'S HOME SOCIETY

SAFETY

SAFETY

As a reminder, please keep ALL medications and hazardous materials, liquids etc. including soaps and cleaners, locked.

A Special Note of Thanks

Sometimes we overlook those who are always there to answer our questions and route us in the right direction. Often these individuals go unrecognized.

This month we would like to express our thanks to the special people who direct traffic at the Special Services Reception Desk and Children's Visitation Center. We greatly appreciate your services.

Human Trafficking

You may not think human trafficking is prevalent in Kern County, however, as awareness of this issue improves, it is clear that this issue affects our community. This includes affecting foster children, who can be particularly susceptible to becoming victims of sex trafficking. KBYH is actively looking to recruit families who would consider taking placement of youth who have been rescued from trafficking situations. If you or someone you know would be interested in meeting this very important need, please have them contact Jim VanderZwan at 661-396-2360 or jimv@kernbridges.com. As a reminder, KBYH has an incentive program for individuals who refer potential foster/adoptive families to KBYH.