

Watercraft Experience to Remember

Just a few weeks ago, the boys living in our STRTPs went to Buena Vista Lake to ride Sea Doo's, fish, and BBQ. This was the first time for all of boys, none of them had ever driven a watercraft before. According to all the boys, this was the best water activity they've ever experienced. And to top things off, the BBQ was delicious. Also, one of our boys caught a few fish. As you might expect, this adventure provided a tranquil opportunity to reconnect with themselves and lend itself to building positive relationships with their peers and our staff. Furthermore, the list of firsts continues to build at Kern Bridges, and all our accomplishments have had one simple goal- to give our boys a memorable and enjoyable life experience while in our care!



2nd Annual Homeless Youth Sleeping Bag Drive

Help keep our homeless youth warm this winter!

**Drop Off
Locations:**

Kaiser Permanente Farmers' Markets
Saturdays from 9AM-2PM:
"Market on the Hill"
(3700 Mall View Rd., Bakersfield)

Sundays from 9AM-2PM:
"Haggin Oaks Farmers Market"
(8800 Ming Ave. Bakersfield)

Kern Bridges Youth Homes
Mon.-Fri. from 8AM-5:30PM:
(1321 Stine Rd. Bakersfield;
inside Building "A")

Office of State Senator Shannon Grove
Mon.-Fri. from 9AM-5PM:
(5701 Truxtun Ave. Suite 150, Bakersfield)

Dates:

Sunday, September 15th
through Friday, November 15th

Questions?:

Email Allyson Seals at
aseals@gbla.org.



Upcoming Trainings

(please RSVP)

December 5, 6:00PM - 8:00PM
"Cultural Competency & Best Practices
with LGBTQ Youth"
With Jennifer Robbins. RSVP 396-2322

Ongoing Trainings

Mark Dominguez will be offering the following trainings on an ongoing basis (participants must RSVP by the Thursday prior to the training to 661-865-2352):

CPR/1st Aid Recertification (*for anyone who has previously had CPR/1st Aid training*): **First Monday** 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.

ISFC Training/Support Group

Trainings are open to any Kern County approved ISFC Resource Family and include child care (over 2 years old) and dinner. (RSVP to Carrie Wombacher 396-2352)

November 26, 6:00PM - 8:00PM
"Child Development"

December 17, 6:00PM - 8:00PM
"CSEC/Run Away"

Welcome Catherine!

KBYH welcomes Catherine Santerre to the KBYH family. Catherine attended Cal State University, Bakersfield for undergraduate and graduate (MSW) school. She has over 20 years of social work experience, with the majority in Child Welfare and more recently medical social work. During college, she participated in volunteer work at the Bethany Homeless Shelter where her social work experience began. After graduating with her B.A. Catherine spent a couple years working with a volunteer program in San Diego and then back in Bakersfield. During this time, her experience ranged from providing outreach to the homeless to intervention/mentoring in elementary and junior high schools. Catherine has three children, ages 20, 17 and 9 years old and enjoys spending time with her family.

Catherine will be an FFA/ISFC social worker and we are excited to have her skills and experience to add to your team.

Child Birthdays

October

- Mariah W: 15 years old
- Leonor M: 11 years old
- Malaki J: 10 years old



Resource Parent Birthdays

- Sabrina Fowler: October 2
- Janice Rohlfing: October 10
- Lilia Leon: October 12
- David Mongold: October 17
- Daren Brians: October 30
- Ashley Reyes: October 31

KBYH Staff Birthdays

- Justin Smith: October 4
- Leonard Tavares: October 6
- Michael Ramirez: October 15
- Marlon Wilkerson: October 15
- Antonio Balderas: October 18
- Jill Howard: October 19
- Alwayne Mustin: October 20
- Bianca Ruiz: October 20
- Steve Kresha: October 31



KBYH Staff Anniversaries

October

- Jim VanderZwan: 18 years
- Ana Landeros: 13 years
- Michael O'Doherty: 1 year



Foster Child of the Month: King T.

This month we would like to recognize King T. as child of the month. King was placed in the Drummer home in June 2019. King's reason for placement was Shaken Baby Syndrome. King had numerous severe health issues that would scare away most Resource Parents. King's severe health issues required 4 trips to Valley Children's Hospital in the first month of placement and numerous follow-up appointments as well. The Drummer home has also taken King to numerous specialized appointments. King could not have a better advocate than the Drummer's. I am happy to report that King has made tremendous progress in the last 4 months. Two of his severe health issues have been resolved with the unconditional love of the Drummer family. King still has many health obstacles to overcome but he has been given a great start.



**KERN BRIDGES
YOUTH HOMES**



Resource Parent of the Month: Carlos Caudillo

KBYH would like to welcome our newest Resource Parent, Carlos Caudillo. Carlos is new as a Resource Parent, however, he is not new to Kern Bridges.

Carlos's parents, Mario and Anita Caudillo, have been with us for over 30 years and now their son has followed suit. Carlos has 2 biological children and has already taken placement of a teen male. Carlos is a probation officer and is a referee in his spare time. We are truly happy that he now has a new role as a KBYH Resource family and feel he is an asset to our Kern Bridges family.



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How safe is YOUR home?

FIRE PREVENTION WEEK: OCTOBER 6-12, 2019

Fire Safety Checklist

SCORE YOUR HOME: Team up with your family to help prevent fires and protect yourselves in the event of a fire. Complete the scorecard below with your family. Can you turn any of the NO answers into YES answers?



Windows and doors open easily. If smoke or fire blocks your exit through a door, a window may be the second way out. Test them to make sure they open easily.

YES NO

Doors and hallways are free of clutter and obstacles. Nothing should be in the way of a quick, safe exit.

YES NO

Smoke alarm works. Test your smoke alarms once a month. Smoke alarms should be on every floor, in or near all bedrooms.

YES NO

REPLACE YOUR SMOKE ALARM EVERY 10 YEARS!

Ask your parents, "How old is our smoke alarm?" Let them know it should be replaced every 10 years.

Replace the batteries every time you set your clocks backward or forward at Daylight Savings Time.

Make sure there isn't anything near the stove that could catch fire. A grown-up should be in the kitchen when the stove is on.

YES NO

You have a home fire escape plan. Practice your escape plan at least once a month.

YES NO

You have at least two ways to exit each room.

YES NO

You have a meeting place outside that is a safe distance from the home.

YES NO

Matches and lighters are stored out of the reach of children.

YES NO

Electrical outlets are not overloaded with too many plugs and extension cords.

YES NO

though they may live in a world that shuns them or disrespects them or puts them last. They're all about love. They just want a friend and to be a friend. They just want to love. They just want to play. I'm so excited to see who he's going to be, who he's becoming. Just like his dinosaurs, Elijah is the leader of his own pack."

The Stevenson family embraces the challenges that come with Elijah's diagnosis. Nerissa describes herself as a patient person who has developed even more patience and empathy than she knew was possible.

"I tell my son not to worry, because the Bible clearly tells us 'Those who are first shall be last and the last shall be first. Many are called but few are chosen,'" said Nerissa. "You are clearly somebody in God's eyes. You are different and that's okay."

If you would like to donate toy dinosaurs or diorama craft supplies to Elijah, they may be left at Westside Church of Christ, marked "Special delivery for Elijah Stevenson."



Elijah with mom Nerissa, left, and maternal grandparents Kathy & Lloyd Bell Photo by LJ Radon, KCFM

How to Include Children With Autism

Children not wanting to include Elijah and others like him is a major problem kids with autism face in both school and social settings.

"What I wish is that people would stop looking at a book and judging it by its cover. People always are surprised by what our kids can do. I know kids who are going to be broadcasters. We may have an autistic president one day," said Nerissa. Although she tries to avoid showing that she is sometimes offended by others' exclusion and lack of empathy, she does feel that pain at times. "I stopped doing birthday parties when Elijah turned 5. No one would come. I felt alone. We felt the stigma of it," she admitted.

Nerissa's tips for inclusion:

Teach your children how to be a friend: Encourage them to invite children who have different abilities to play and join in by inviting them to playdates and parties.

Know that others may need more time to respond appropriately: A lack of action isn't always a lack of understanding. Some children just take longer to respond. Be patient and remind children that not all kids react on the same timeline.

Take the first step: Simply invite children to play.

Reach out to the parents: "Choose a mother that you know has a special needs child and include her," said Nerissa. "Offer respite care. She may not be able to let you babysit because of the child's needs, but she will appreciate the offer. Inviting her for a cup of coffee or tea is a welcoming thing to do, because it acknowledges that you see her as a person."

Autism in Kern County: FIVE LOCAL RESOURCES

League of Dreams

www.ourleagueofdreams.com

Founded by Kern County resident Tim Terrio of Terrio Physical Therapy and Fitness, this junior sports league helps children on the autism spectrum ages 5 to 22 to find and support each other through organized athletics. Baseball is its main team sport.

M.A.R.E. Therapeutic Riding Center

www.mareidingcenter.com

M.A.R.E. stands for "Mastering Abilities Riding Equines." Arabian horses are part of these equine-assisted therapies for children and adults living with special needs and disabilities, including autism. The riding center describes its work as "hope on horseback," with services in Kern County since 1990. Three decades of working with individuals who need specialized instruction makes an enormous difference in knowing how to help.

The Autism Society-Kern Autism Network, Inc.

www.kernaautism.org

The Autism Society-Kern Autism Network, Inc. is dedicated to providing trustworthy, respectful and caring services that truly impact the lives of individuals on the autism spectrum in Kern County. The group works to help families and the community at large through the autism journey. Specific services include:

- Website and Social Media Support
- Resources for Kern County-doctors, programs, service providers, links for insurance coverage
- Monthly Support groups: parent, siblings, females and adults on the spectrum
- Obtaining diagnosis assistance with referrals
- Educational workshops for parents, educators, & community at large.
- IEP and school support mentoring with parents
- Advocacy at a state/local level
- Holiday giving projects at Thanksgiving, Christmas, and Easter.
- Children's workshops: bowling, art sessions and our most popular, LEGO Workshops, with 4 of them offered throughout the school year.
- Scholarships for parents to attend workshops for FREE
- Scholarships for children and young adults to attend camps during the summer (private swimming lessons etc.)
- Community autism trainings: Law enforcement, foster care, DHS, CPS, SSI, Rotary Clubs, CASA and other agencies
- Community Outreach of awareness campaigns

Valley Achievement Center

<https://autism-vac.org>

The amazing therapeutic offerings at Valley Achievement Center span from pre-school to age 22, with behavior modification programs, after-school care, a full-day Basic Education school, and social and independent living skills programs. Students with autism spectrum disorder and other developmental disabilities can receive a range of therapies into adulthood. Help with job placement is also an option. Its tagline, "Independence, Dignity and Self-Worth" play out across the ages it serves. Valley Achievement Center now has four facilities in Bakersfield.

Transition to Independent Living (TIL) at Taft College

www.taftcollege.edu/til/til-home/general-information

Instruction, training, and support are part of the dorm-style living experience for adults with developmental disabilities on-campus at Taft College. Life skills and social functions are also part of the effort to foster individuals' efforts to live independently as young adults. The program started in 1995 with funding from Kern Regional Center. A staff ratio of 3:1 helps assure adequate supervision. The program runs from Aug. 1 to June 30 each year.