



# Fostering UNITY

Improving outcomes for children in foster care through child-centered family strengthening programs, enhanced community partnerships, and intentional caregiver support.

Welcome to

**Dorothy Daniels**

Executive Director

*Dorothy Daniels*

**Dayna Freier**

Director of Operations

*Dayna Freier*

**Alexa Weishaar**

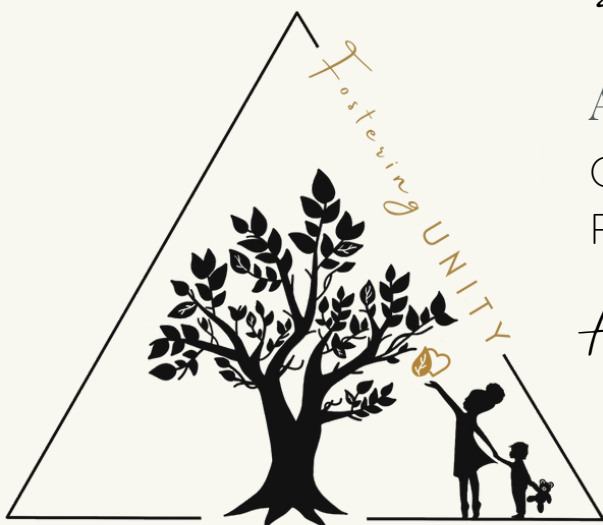
Communications &  
Project Manager

*Alexa Weishaar*

**Joyce Ma**

Program Development  
Manager

*Joyce Ma*



[fosteringunity.org](http://fosteringunity.org)

# About Us



Fostering UNITY is a non-profit organization dedicated to building better tomorrows for children in out-of-home placements.

Our collaborative approach connects caregivers and community service partners, providing real-time support, enhanced education, and resource navigation.

Through our caregiver mentoring program, experienced mentors offer guidance and support to improve caregiver retention and placement stability. We address barriers to success by offering comprehensive support, including mentoring, education, and resource navigation.

Our person-centered approach focuses on key areas such as placement stability, trauma-informed care, reproductive health equity, and support for LGBTQIA+ youth. With our diverse team, reflecting the community we serve, we provide real-time support, effective advocacy, and intentional programming. Join us in creating nurturing environments and making a lasting impact on the lives of children and youth in foster care. Together, we can build a brighter future.

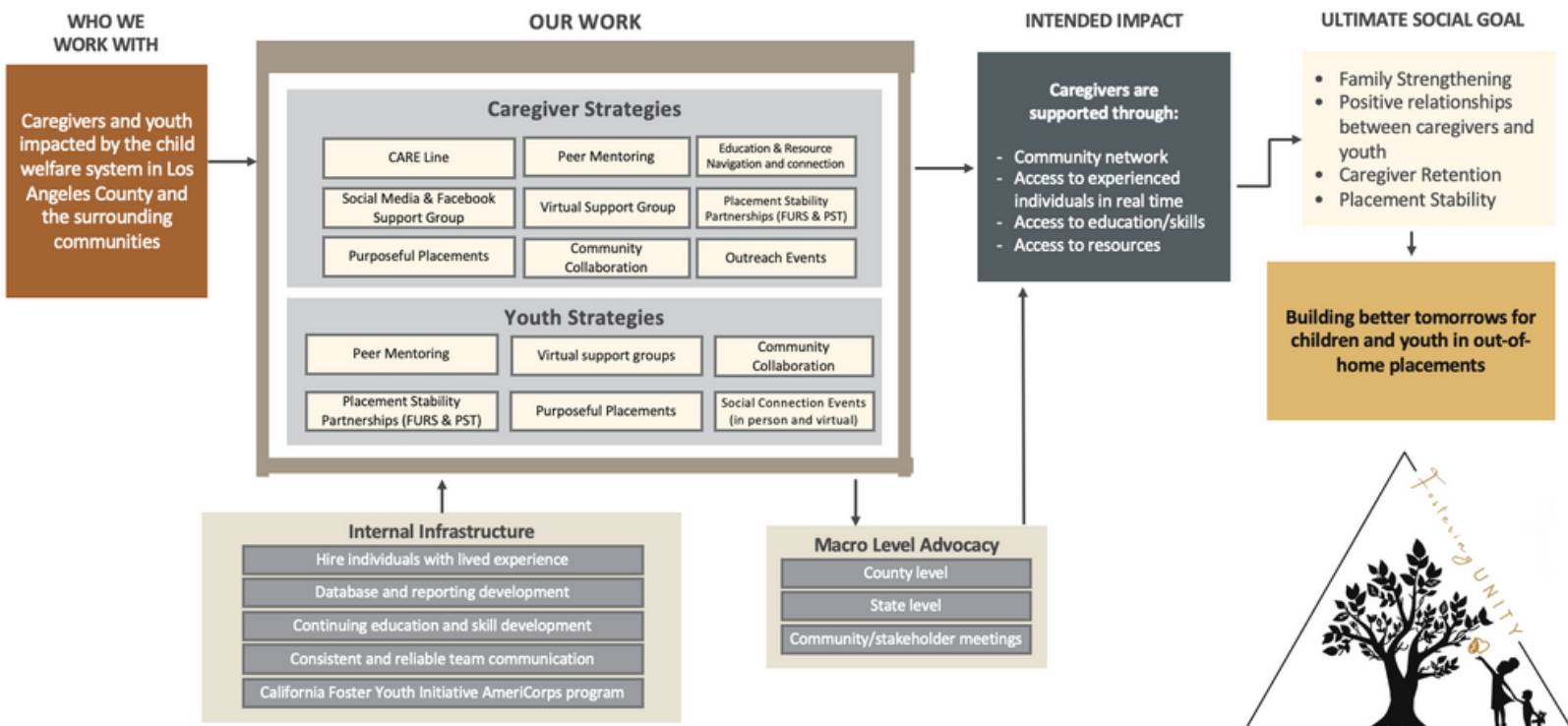
View our Impact Statements at [fosteringunity.org/impact-statements](https://fosteringunity.org/impact-statements) or by scanning the QR code below.

## Fostering UNITY Theory of Change

*Our organization is comprised of individuals who reflect the diversity seen within our community of caregivers and youth.*

*We prioritize hiring individuals who bring lived experience and a passion to serve others. This makes us relatable, trustworthy, and relevant to the needs of our community.*

*We actively listen to caregivers and youth to provide real time support, effective advocacy, and intentional programming to meet their needs throughout their journey.*



# Our Services



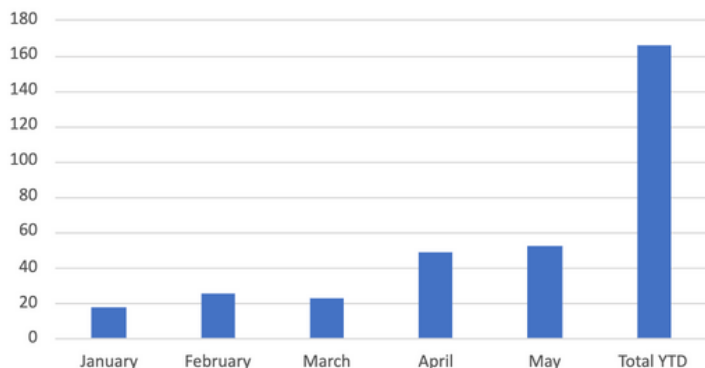
## C.A.R.E. Help Line

This line serves as an initial response of support for Caregivers/Resource Parents. This real-time support is a great first step for all questions and concerns—24/7 Caregiver support.

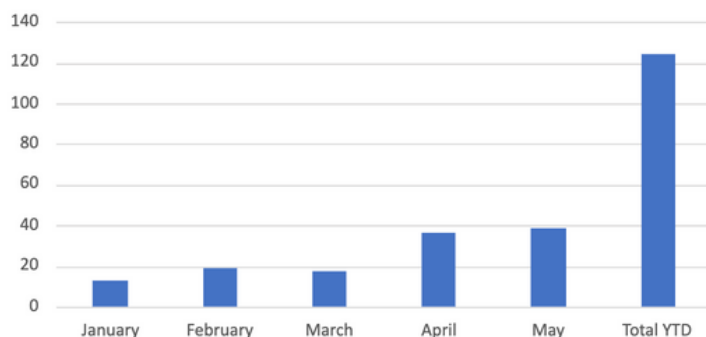
Our C.A.R.E Service Specialists spent 585 Hours supporting caregivers during their journey in 2022.

**C.A.R.E Line (213) 269-0000**

2023 Number of CARE Help Line Calls



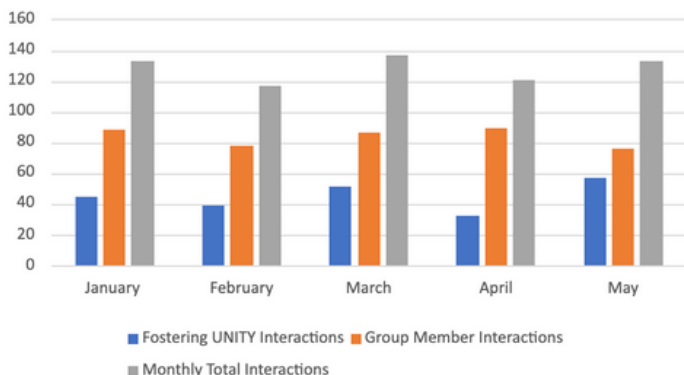
2023 Hours Spent Per Month On CARE Help Line Calls



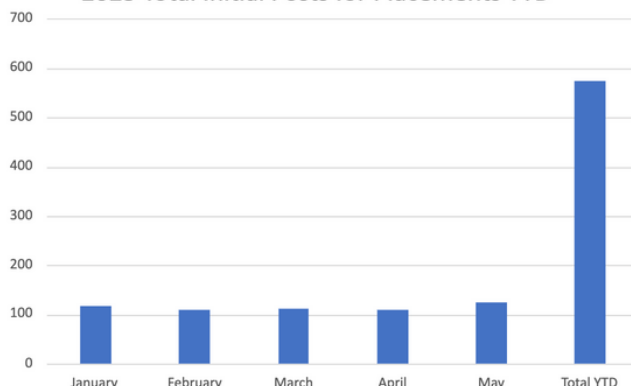
## Purposeful Placements

Fostering UNITY is committed to placement stability and improved outcomes for children and youth through Purposeful Placements. This program intentionally matches the needs of children/youth in foster care with the family best suited to provide an environment to heal and grow. Fostering UNITY posts placement requests for all 19 DCFS regional offices. These can be found in our supportive, private Facebook Group.

Purposeful Placement Interactions 2023 By Month



2023 Total Initial Posts for Placements YTD



## Fostering UNITY Family Events

Our events foster creativity, blossoming friendships, and new experiences that lead to cherished memories. Donation centers are set up at each event to help provide food, diapers, clothes, and a variety of other supplies to help support Resource Families. We encourage participation so that both families and children feel the support of the community and can strengthen relationships and friendships. Our Winter Wonderland event is our most notable event that brings hundreds of families together every year.

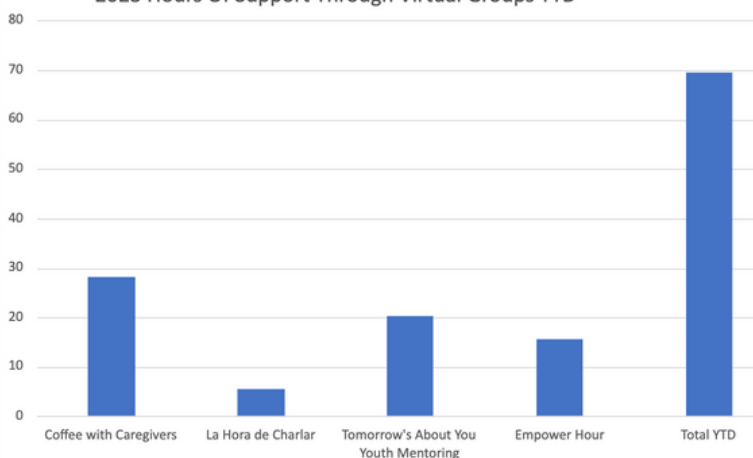
# Our Services



## Weekly Virtual Support for Caregivers and Youth

- Coffee with Caregivers: Open to all relative, non-relative, and adoptive families; these weekly virtual meetings offer caregiver support and resource sharing. Whether you want to talk, listen, or just sip your coffee, it's nice to do it together. Join us every Wednesday 10:00 am on Zoom!
- La Hora de Charlar: Un grupo de apoyo virtual donde los cuidadores pueden reunir para hablar sobre su viaje en el cuidado de crianza, compartir consejos y recursos. Todos los miércoles 12-1pm con Audrey Cruz. Abierto a todos los cuidadores que hablan español.
- Tomorrow's About You (T.A.Y.): Our youth mentoring program is a place to learn life skills, financial literacy, and get ahead on transitional planning while making lifelong connections. Open to ages 12-21 years old. Group mentoring is available Tuesdays at 7pm and individual mentoring is available as requested.
- Empower Hour: A dedicated support group for our DCFS Placement Stabilization Team Resource Parents. This group focuses on the unique higher-need behaviors that these placements encounter. Led by Dr. Melissa Daniels, caregivers will leave each meeting with new skills and approaches to stabilizing placements. This group meets every Friday at 10 am on Zoom.

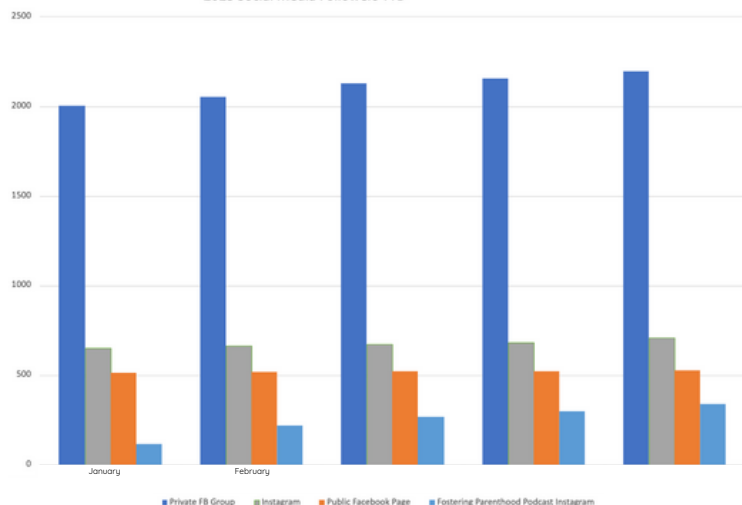
2023 Hours Of Support Through Virtual Groups YTD



## Private Caregiver & Foster Community Facebook Group

Fostering UNITY's Private Facebook group is a vibrant online community where caregivers and foster care community members unite. Join us in this supportive space for resource sharing, emotional support, and educational Q&A. Discover local events, organizations, and job opportunities that empower foster youth and caregivers. Together, we build a community that uplifts, supports, and thrives on the shared experiences of the foster care journey.

2023 Social Media Followers YTD



# Our Services

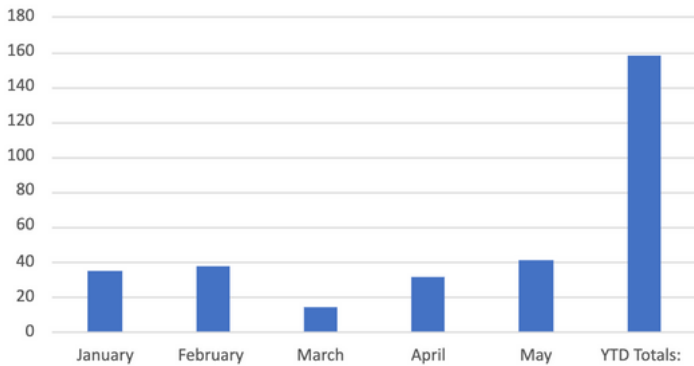


## C.A.R.E. Service Specialists

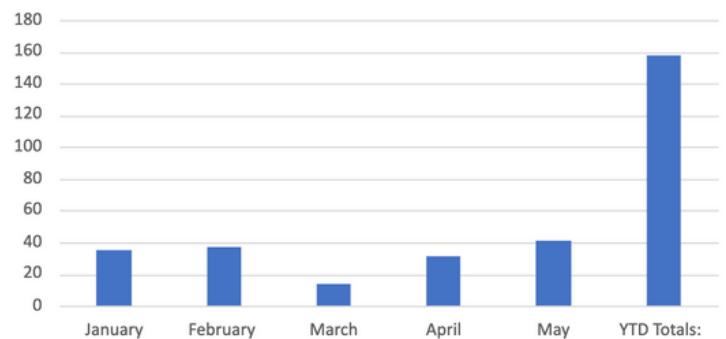
In partnership with the California Foster Youth Initiative AmeriCorps Program, our C.S.S are experienced caregivers who have been trained to support caregivers with the following:

- Trauma-informed parent coaching
- Transitional Age Youth (TAY) Mentoring and Support :
- Child and Family Team meeting support (CFTM)
- Self-care & mindfulness techniques
- Navigating the child welfare system & court system
- Children & youth rights educational support
- Reunification and placement transition support and assistance
- Physical resources through the CarePortal.

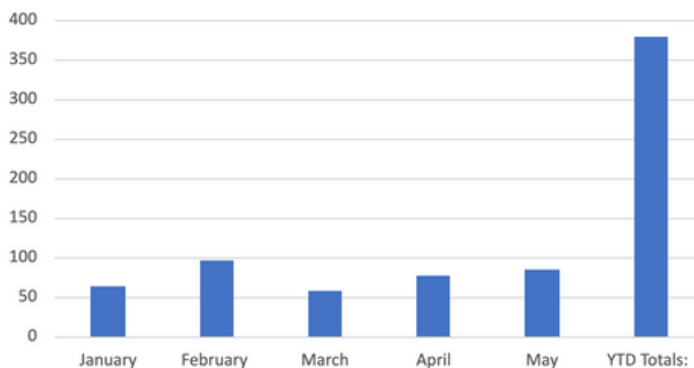
2023 Monthly Youth Mentoring Interactions YTD



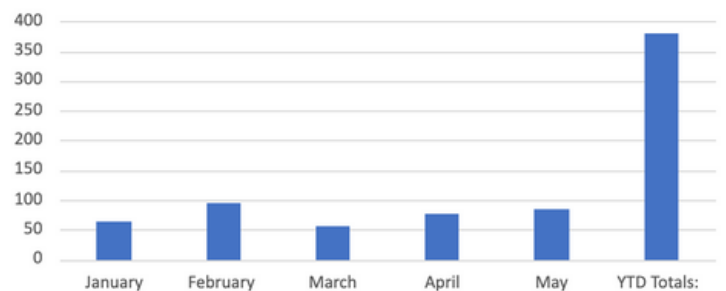
2023 Monthly Number Of Youth Mentoring Hours YTD



2023 Monthly Peer Mentoring Interactions YTD



2023 Monthly Number Of Peer Mentoring Hours YTD



# Our Partnership Projects



## FURS Referrals

### with the Family Urgent Response Team

Goal: We will provide post-FURS Urgent Response, by providing peer mentoring support for aftercare and prevention services for youth, foster families, birth families, and kinship, including free Mental Health services for caregivers/kinship and/or youth through our partnership with Harbor UCLA Medical Center's Trauma Recovery Center.

#### Progress:

- January-May: 21 Referrals
- January-April: 13 families have been referred
  - 7 relative caregivers
  - 6 non-relative caregivers
- January-April: 61 interactions offering education and support
- January-April: 30, 60, and 90 day follow-ups
  - x7 30-day follow-ups
  - x3 60-day follow-ups
  - x1 90 day follow-up
- We have a dedicated CSS, Dr. Melissa Daniels, who utilizes her knowledge and experience as a Licensed Clinical Psychologist so that our referrals are getting the most experienced guidance for their situations. She provides 30, 60, and 90 day follow ups.

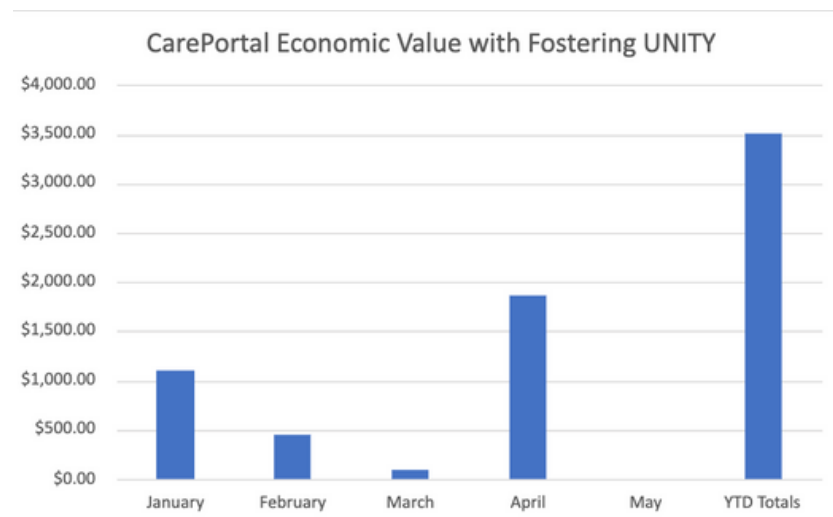
## CarePortal Resource Referrals

### with the CarePortal Team

Goal: Our CSS team connects with a network of local churches to leverage their dedication and generosity to their foster community in order to meet the emergency resource needs that often arise when placements occur.

#### Progress:

- Monetary value of all 6 fulfilled request YTD: \$3,513
  - Each request is fulfilled by a network of churches so that the financial burden doesn't fall on the caregiver



# Our Partnership Projects



## Fostering Parenthood Podcast

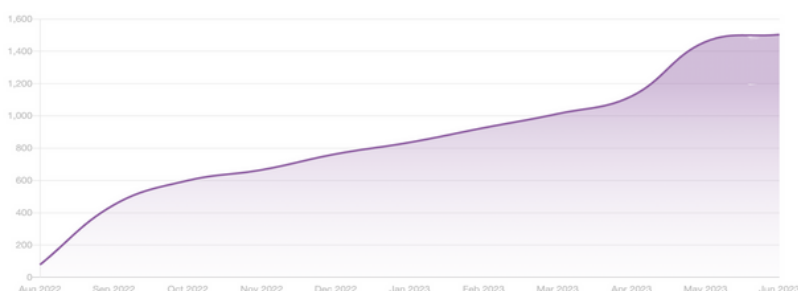
with The Reproductive Health Equity Project & the National Center for Youth

**Goal:** Bridge the gap in education and resources for Foster Parents regarding youth in foster care's sexual and reproductive health through a free and accessible platform.

- Progress:
  - 2 Seasons & 14+ Episodes (14 currently released at the end of May with more still dropping)
  - Total Downloads: 1,463
  - Fostering Parenthood Instagram: 338 Followers
  - Presented at 2 conferences on the podcast
- Features former foster youth voices, stories, and lived experience
- Created to meet caregivers where they are at
  - Busy schedules, On the go, Multi Tasking
  - Want to pick what they learn when they need it
  - Need there to be something useful from it (tools, resources. etc.)
- Topics were chosen by caregivers based on what they've identified as a gap in training
- Hosted by Dorothy Daniels, Executive Director of Fostering UNITY and an experienced caregiver
- Guests are topic experts and/or have valuable lived experience related to the topic
- Each episode contains 3 tools/resources that caregivers can implement with their youth in care
- Fostering Parenthood is fully supported by grant number 1 TP2AH000066-01-00 from the HHS Office of Population Affairs. Contents are solely the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official views of the Office of Population Affairs.

**1,504 downloads** since published.

LAST 7 DAYS   LAST 30 DAYS   LAST 90 DAYS   **ALL TIME**   CUSTOM



### TOP EPISODES (All Time)

Dorothy and her adopted son have 'the talk'	245
Baby powder snow flurry: A holiday special edition	170
Welcome to Fostering Parenthood	156
Consent: Can I get some FRIES with that?	127
Trauma, triggers and trying: Trauma-informed parenting	127

### TOP APPS (Last 5 Episodes)

Apple Podcasts	56%	124
Web Browser	9%	20
Spotify	8%	18
Instagram	5%	11
Your Buzzsprout Site	5%	11





# Our Partnership Projects

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## Therapeutic Shelter Home (TSH) Pilot Program

With The Department of Child and Family Services (DCFS) and Optimist Youth Homes and Family Services

- Goal: Eliminate the need for group-setting Shelter Care by temporarily placing youth in individual foster homes focused on healing and resiliency skills. Identify 2 Therapeutic Shelter Homes by the end of July 2023.
- Progress: Over 20+ interested caregivers with 2 confirmed in the program who checked every box necessary for the program
- Caregivers will be compensated each month with a specialized rate to acknowledge their commitment to keeping a bed readily available at all times
- Services will be activated immediately upon placement
  - This unique collaborative real-time model of care will provide 24 hours a day, seven days a week of intensive family support that is available at the ready, for any needs involving the youth.
  - The team will help with school enrollment, transportation, medication pick up, respite, issues surrounding the JV 220 and any other necessary tasks to ensure the family's wellness and success.
- Youth will have a quicker transition into a home which will reduce the number of youth having to wait for a placement in a DCFS office or similar location.
- Caregivers are aware upfront on the requirements, the types of cases, and will be briefed on each child in order to readily accept a placement with the goal of a stable home and therapeutic care.

## Placement Stabilization Team (PST) Resource Parent Program

With The Department of Child and Family Services (DCFS)

- Goal: Identify and enlist 40 Foster Caregivers to willingly accept harder-to-place youth
- Progress: Over 60 identified Caregivers who are willing to accept harder-to-place youth through the PST Program
- The LA County DCFS PST Team works very closely with children between ages 10-19 years old, who are considered higher-need placements with their complex behavioral needs. This program increases the services available to caregivers/kinship parents with their partnership with Fostering UNITY.
- With the PST Program, caregivers would have:
  - 24/7 access to a Children's Social Worker who is assigned to the youth and will respond at all hours, for any emergencies, via phone or in person
  - Dedicated weekly check-ins with the youth and caregiver for placement stability
  - Assisted resource and program navigation to ease the stress of locating support
  - Weekly support group with specialized topics related to these higher-need placements hosted by a Fostering UNITY CARE Service Specialist and Licensed Clinical Psychologist, M.A., Psy.D.



# Our Partnership Projects

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## FKCE Parent Trainings and Classes

### Partnership Program

Fostering UNITY and FKCE have partnered to offer enhanced caregiver training and support. Our CSS provides follow-up support for RFA parents attending FKCE courses. Resource Parents who are identified as needing additional resources and education will receive ongoing CSS support.

## CarePortal Resource Referrals

### Partnership Program

Care Portal brings the needs of children and families in your community to the attention of local churches, giving them the opportunity to respond and meet the need.

Through a partnership with the CarePortal, Fostering UNITY CSS staff can assist with registering the specific caregiver need into the CarePortal system and giving the community an opportunity to respond.

## Brain and Body Lab

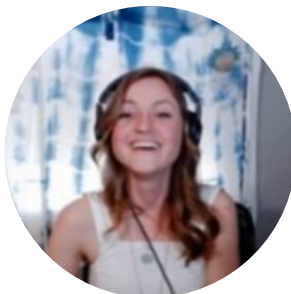
### Partnership Program

The Brain & Body Lab at UCLA is a developmental psychology research lab that studies how early experiences with their caregivers influence children's mental and physical wellbeing. They work with families of children and teens aged 6-18 years who have experienced a range of caregiving, including those who have been in foster care, have been adopted, and those who have always been with their birth/first family. The lab aims to use the information gained from their research to create better services and provisions for young people who are struggling with their physical and mental health.

## Transitional Aged Youth Mentoring Program

### Partnership Program

Fostering UNITY and CA Foster Youth Initiative have partnered to offer the AmeriCorps Youth Mentor Program. This collaboration offers independent life skills mentoring, financial literacy training, tutoring, and academic success support. Youth identified as transitioning age will be encouraged to participate in a mentoring program focused on independence and leadership skills. After successfully completing this 44 hour, one-on-one mentoring program; youth will have the opportunity to apply for CA Foster Youth Initiative AmeriCorps positions. Combining lived experience with newly developed leadership skills, youth will have the opportunity to achieve their goals and pursue their dreams.



# Our Educational Support

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## Education and Training Data YTD

- Goal: Empower caregivers with knowledge and resources pertaining to LGBTQIA+ youth, enabling them to effectively integrate these insights into a nurturing and supportive home environment
- Progress: 31 classes serving 150 caregivers
- Collaboration with FKCE
- Accessible class information on our website and Facebook group

## List of Classes:

### Navigating the Reunification Process

This class helps navigate the reunification process by understanding court hearings, giving you a strong voice in court, the importance of healthy attachments, and long-lasting connections. We will provide the tools to build a long-lasting bridge with the biological family so that the child can have continued connection after reunification,

### Heart 2 Heart: Healthy Sexual Development for Caregivers of Foster Youth

A course designed to help provide the tools needed for Caregivers to successfully teach healthy sexual development to their foster youth.

### Allegations

It is often said that it is not “if” a caregiver receives an allegation but “when” a caregiver receives an allegation. Are you emotionally prepared for the potential of an allegation against you? What does the process look like? What are your rights as a caregiver?

### Prenatal Exposure to Substance Abuse

A thorough look at the anatomy and physiology of pregnancy and the placental barrier between mother and baby. Participants will learn helpful resources to assist in determining whether the infant in your care has prenatal exposure and if the exposure requires additional assessments and interventions. This class is essential for anyone wishing to care for newborns in the child welfare system.

### Building Your Family’s Crisis Toolkit

This interactive workshop helps parents and caregivers identify triggers that lead to crisis moments, assist in understanding the impact of COVID-19 on caring for trauma-affected children and youth, and learn effective de-escalation techniques to avoid those moments. This workshop offers strengths-based parenting techniques and tools for managing crisis moments.

During the training, you can create an individualized crisis plan specific to the parenting styles and needs of your family, identify the de-escalation techniques that will work for your family system, and highlights the importance of the post-crisis recovery period to build resilience and strengthen relationships.

# Our Educational Support

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## **Learn to Form Long Lasting Sibling Attachments between Foster and Biological children in a Foster Home**

Together, we will discuss ways in which you can establish a foundation of trust and respect for each member of the family. Upon this newly formed foundation, you will be able to create a peace-filled environment in which to flourish.

## **Balancing the Whole- Meeting Individual Needs Within the Family System**

This presentation addresses the tougher issues and intense behaviors that are associated with long-term trauma, PTSD & RAD. Balancing the existing trauma and healing without additional unintended traumatic events that affect the whole family.

Ensuring a steady state of physical, psychological, and emotional safety when a child who has experienced intense trauma joins the family. Focuses more on a long-term to permanent placement issues faced when a child with severe trauma enters the family.

## **De-Escalation & Harm Reduction Strategies for Caregivers**

Join Dr. Melissa Daniels, PsyD as she demystifies what is meant by both and how caregivers can utilize each as an effective crisis intervention practice to promote the safety of the children and youth in their care, particularly for targeting dangerous behaviors, including exposure to Commercial Sexual Exploitation (CSEC). We will also highlight the FURS “Family Urgent Response System”, which is in place to support Resource Families. Dr. Daniels is a part of this crisis intervention program and can give real examples of how to best handle stressful situations that may occur in a resource home.

## **Neurodevelopmental Disorders: Autism Spectrum Disorder, Intellectual Disability, and ADHD**

Join us as Dr. Melissa Daniels shares an overview of the diagnoses, symptoms, assessment, and treatments associated with Neurodevelopmental Disorders, specifically Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), Intellectual Disability (ID), and Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). Briefly, we will discuss the different types of disorders and impact on the brain and neurodevelopment, leading to difficulties in social, cognitive, and emotional functioning. This workshop will also include a review of parenting strategies and interventions to help support your child’s development and advocate for resources.

## **Mood Disorders: Depression, Anxiety, Suicidality, & Self-Harm**

Depression and Anxiety Disorders and Suicidality and Self-Harm are commonly reported mental health concerns seen in children and adolescents today, especially those who have experienced early abuse and involvement in the child welfare system. Learning how to cope with adversity is an important part of healthy child development. This workshop will review risk and protective factors, warning signs and symptoms, diagnosis and treatments for mood and disorders, including discussion on crisis interventions and resources for suicidality and self-harm. Dr. Daniels will provide an overview of coping skills for caregivers to use to support their own mental health as they address concerns and advocate for resources and treatment for their child/youth.

CPR, First Aid & AED 2-Year Red Cross Certification

# Our Community Partners



CALIFORNIA  
ALLIANCE of  
CAREGIVERS



LOS ANGELES  
MISSION COLLEGE



Champions for System-Involved Scholars



SAVING  
INNOCENCE



FOSTER CARE COUNTS



PENNY LANE  
CENTERS  
*Transforming lives*



OPTIMIST  
YOUTH HOMES & FAMILY SERVICES



National Center  
for Youth Law



LOS ANGELES  
MISSION COLLEGE





# Get Involved



## WE NEED YOU:



### REFER

CONNECT FAMILIES AND YOUTH TO OUR SERVICES WITH OUR REFERRAL FORM ON OUR WEBSITE



### VOLUNTEER

LEND A HAND DURING ONE OF OUR ANNUAL EVENTS



### DONATE

DONATE FINANCIALLY TO SUPPORT THE ONGOING SERVICES OF FOSTERING UNITY



### SHARE

CONNECT YOUR ORGANIZATION OR EXPERTISE TO OUR CAREGIVERS AND YOUTH BY OFFERING FREE/DISCOUNTED SERVICES, SPEAKING AT OUR VIRTUAL SUPPORT GROUPS, OR OFFERING MENTORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES.



# Your Support

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## Collaborative Partnership

We believe in the power of collaboration and expertise. When we bring together our collective knowledge and provide a platform for expertise to shine, our clients receive exceptional care beyond imagination. We value your unique area of expertise and invite you to collaborate with us. By joining forces, we can ensure that our foster caregivers and youth in foster care benefit from your valuable knowledge, experience, connections, and resources.

## Events

We understand the power of connection and the joy that comes from engaging with like-minded individuals. Events provide a wonderful platform for people to come together, forge relationships, explore their passions, and foster a sense of belonging within their community. We believe that collaboration is key to creating impactful events.

We invite your organization to join forces with us in hosting, funding, or supporting future events. Together, we can create meaningful experiences that bring people together, empower foster caregivers and youth, and make a lasting impact in our community. Let's explore how we can collaborate to make these events even more extraordinary.

## Volunteer

We recognize the significance of time as a precious resource that can profoundly impact the lives of others. Your expertise and knowledge are highly valued, and we warmly invite you to contribute your time to our foster community. As a volunteer, you have the extraordinary opportunity to make a meaningful difference by speaking at virtual support groups for caregivers and foster youth. Your insights and experiences can provide invaluable guidance and support to those who need it most. Additionally, you can host virtual events where our foster community can actively engage with you, ask questions, and benefit from your expertise. Alternatively, you can join us at events and fundraisers, standing alongside Fostering UNITY to create memorable experiences and raise awareness for our cause. By donating your time and sharing your expertise, you have the power to inspire and uplift our foster community. Together, let's make a difference and create a brighter future for those in need.

## Donations

Supporting your foster community can be as simple as making a monthly commitment. By becoming a monthly donor, you play a crucial role in fueling the dreams of foster youth and providing essential support to foster parents. Your contribution opens up a world of possibilities.

We believe that sustaining impactful change requires the long-term success of supportive organizations. By donating to Fostering UNITY on our website, you directly contribute to the growth and stability of our programs. Your generosity helps us create a lasting and meaningful impact on the lives of those who are often overlooked.

## Other

At Fostering UNITY, we believe in the power of partnerships to create lasting change. If you have an innovative idea or a unique perspective on how we can work together to build better tomorrows for youth in out-of-home placements, we would love to hear from you. The door is always open for collaboration at Fostering UNITY, and we are excited to explore new opportunities and create impactful initiatives that positively impact the lives of foster youth. Reach out to us today and let's start making a difference together.

# Get In Touch



Discover all the latest information, programs, events, and classes conveniently available on our website. Unlock a world of resources by scanning the QR code or visiting [fosteringunity.org](http://fosteringunity.org).



## Follow us on social media!

 Fostering UNITY  
Los Angeles County

 @fosteringunityla

 @FosteringUnity



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