

SPRING 2010

SVCF NEWS

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE SILICON VALLEY CHILDREN'S FUND



MAY IS NATIONAL
FOSTER CARE MONTH



Spring 2010 Highlights

- March 5th - Youth Advisory Board Kick-off
- April 3rd KGO - April Vance, YES Alumna
- April 28th Middle School Coffee
- April 30th - May 1st - Relay for Life
- May - Celebrate FY Awareness Month
- June 6th - Silicon Valley Kids-Triathlon
- June 21st - High school/Higher Ed Coffee

Kids helping Kids

Silicon Valley Kids-Tri

"Kids helping Kids - One thousand kids raising money for the Foster Youth in Silicon Valley."

The Silicon Valley Kids Triathlon (SVTK) is hosted by the Silicon Valley Triathlon Club (SVTC), the south bay's premier triathlon and multisport club. Joining SVTK is a great way for kids and parents alike to continue a fun, competitive, and healthy lifestyle through the sport of Triathlon.

Each year one thousand kids between the ages of 4 - 15 converge on the De Anza College campus. A triathlon is a race that consists of three events: Swimming, Cycling, and Running. Kids start the race with the swimming event at the De

Anza College pool in waves of between 25 to 50 kids. From the swim, they'll run to the transition area put on their helmets and shoes and anything else they need. They'll then mount their bikes and head out to the bike course on the De Anza College campus. When the kids are done with the bike, they'll head back to the transition area to put their bike away, then head to the run on the De Anza College Track. They'll finish the course on the infield of the track.

This year, SVCF will have our youth, the beneficiaries of

this event, on site to video tape and interview these young athletes racing their hearts out for a good cause. The money raised by these children will go directly to providing foster youth with the educational support they need.

Whether it is tutoring, mentoring, summer academic camps or scholarships they need, the opportunity to receive this support is made possible in part by these young athletes.

Thank you SVTK for your continued generosity and hard work! Good luck to all of the Athletes!



Come join the fun!

- June 6, 2010
- At DeAnza College, Cupertino, CA
- Become a sponsor
- Volunteer or cheer them on!
- Visit www.svkiidstri.org

"We conduct this great annual event with two objectives. First, we want to encourage the youth of Silicon Valley to adopt a healthy, active lifestyle. and second, we want to financially benefit the Silicon Valley Children's Fund support the education of foster youth in our community."

"The money raised by these children goes directly to providing foster youth with the educational support they need."

Robert Jones, Race Director
Silicon Valley Triathlon Club

YES POST SECONDARY UPDATE:

YES to a Higher Education

By the Numbers

For the 2009-2010 academic year, 82 YES Scholars are attending 35 different schools ranging from community college, public and private four year universities, liberal arts colleges, and vocational programs.

Outreach

For the 2010-2011 academic year, we will be accepting YES program applications for the first time from high school juniors to ensure that these youth will have the support needed during their senior year in high school to

progress to programs of higher education.

YES Mentor Orientation

The YES Mentor Orientation was held in February as a refresher course to our mentors on how to best reach out and support their YES Scholar mentees.

Program Eligibility

YES accepts applications twice a year – Deadlines are April 30th and October 31st. To learn more, visit www.svcf.org or contact Sherri Brooks at sherri.brooks@svcfc.org.



Special thanks to Xilinx for their \$25K 2009 grant in support of YES to Higher Education.

Newest Addition to the YES program Staff team

Sherri Brooks joined the SVCF team as the YES program Coordinator in December 2009. Sherri brings with her a background in higher education recruitment for minority high school students, high school education, and non-profit program support. Sherri received her MSW from Washington University in St. Louis.

Welcome to the team Sherri!

YES HIGH SCHOOL UPDATE:

Roadmap to Independence

YES Application and Personal Statement Workshop

SVCF in partnership with the Department of Family and Children's Services (DFCS) and Family and Children's Services Independent Living Program (ILP) hosted three YES Application and Personal Statement workshops to encourage youth to apply for YES and to provide guidance on how to write an effective personal statement for YES, college, and other scholarships.

The workshops occurred on March 31st and April 15th in San Jose and on April 6th in Gilroy. Workshops were attended by youth and care providers alike.

De Anza Summer Bridge Program

We are currently recruiting 25-30 youth to participate in this year's De Anza Summer Bridge program. Summer Bridge is a six week program that will offer courses on Life Skills for Higher Education and Nonfiction and Memoir writing.

Participants will be eligible to earn up to 18 high school elective credits and 8 transferable college units. In addition to the skills learned in class, students will have an opportunity to visit local colleges and universities including San Jose State University, UC Santa Cruz, and UC Berkeley.

The De Anza Bridge Summer Bridge pro-



Special thanks to the Franklin Templeton for their \$5K 2010 grant in support of High School Roadmap program.

gram is a partnership with De Anza College, Santa Clara County Office of Education – Foster Youth Services (COE-FYS), DFCS, East Side Union High School District, and SVCF.

Emerging Scholars Expansion

SVCF is currently working to expand the Emerging Scholars program to provide MSW intern support to a pilot group of foster youth in high school. This expansion is a partnership with the COE-FYS, DFCS, and SVCF. Stay tuned for more details as we prepare to launch this expansion in Fall 2010.

YES MIDDLE SCHOOL UPDATE:

Middle School Mandate

In 2009, SVCF spearheaded a unique partnership with the Santa Clara County Juvenile Dependency Court to launch the Middle School Education Court (MSEC), the first problem solving court in the nation charged with overseeing educational outcomes for foster youth.

Under the leadership of the Honorable Teresa Guerrero-Daley we have made significant steps toward the launch of the MSEC. Over the last year, we have identified the pilot group of students, developed the MSEC program

model including the case management and advocacy process for the creation and implementation of personalized academic plans, and established a partnership with San Jose State University's Research Institute for Foster Youth Initiatives (RIFYI) for outcomes measurement and research.

The MSEC is currently in the process of gathering educational records and developing academic plans for the pilot group of students, with educational review hearings planned for Fall 2010. The

goal of the MSEC is to serve 100% of middle school students in foster care by 2012.

Results to Date

- Creation of Middle School Education Court, the nation's first problem solving court focused on school success for foster youth
- Spearhead collaboration model for education case management that will impact 100% of all middle school foster youth in Silicon Valley
- 100 academic plans
- 2000 tutoring hours



Special thanks to CISCO Foundation for their \$20K 2009 grant to support the Middle School Mandate.



"The Silicon Valley Children's Fund continues to be a luminary that, together with the Courts, has brought to light the needs of our foster children." Judge Theresa Guerrero-Daley Santa Clara Superior Court

YES Scholar Spotlight

Facts, Creativity and a Little Bit of Spanish Pixy Dust

BY AANDRA FUJITA

“All it takes to change from passively wanting something to having it, is to get your facts straight and use some creativity”

In Spain, at midnight, on New Year's Eve, when the clock strikes twelve, they eat 12 grapes for each strike. Fútbol is the only sport and healthcare is free. Walk around the streets and you will see all the girls in leggings, boots, and leather jackets; parents allowing their children to live at home until marriage or are able to afford to live on their own—even if that means they do not leave home until age 30. All of these observations are not from textbooks or even second-hand information of someone who came back from Spain spouting the details of their travels; but from my own experience. I could have related Spain to you as a list of verbs in the various tenses that have been drilled into my brain (which I would not willingly do and subjugate my readers to cruel and unusual learning punishment), but I was able to live the life that I had read so much about. Studying abroad in Spain was something I never thought would happen, it was just a thought I entertained from time to time. I think that is what too many people envision when they think about college; that it is this hard, mysterious process or something that needs to be analyzed and broken down in its parts in order to be fully capacitated.

I remember when applying for colleges I was incredibly intimidated by the application. I wrote off any college that required an essay or interview, because of my feelings of intimidation. I was so convinced that there were so many other people more qualified than me to gain acceptance. In the process of gaining confidence of what college to go to, which is a long story in itself, I realized that most things that stay with us are things that come naturally. Like I said before, it was those small desires that led me to what I am doing now. I took Spanish for two years in high school, took two years off, and found myself in college missing Spanish. That may sound weird, but I honestly missed taking Spanish classes. I felt like it was something I had to decode and look for meaning in, and that is essentially what a language is—a search for meaning.

I think one of the most defining characteristics of my college experience is the opportunity to travel and to see another culture. And all those things I listed in the beginning are things I personally witnessed. All it takes to change from passively wanting some-



Aandra Fujita, YES Scholar
Oral Roberts University, Oklahoma

thing to having it, is to get your facts straight and use some creativity. By getting facts, I mean not dismissing what you want before understanding all that it entails. Creativity is needed because each case or situation is different. By getting all the facts, I discovered that studying abroad for me was actually a cheaper route than a semester at my conveniently priced college of \$30,000 a year. The problem was, I had to come up with the deposit money and plane ticket to Spain. My original plan was to work over the summer, save up money, and buy a ticket; that did not happen! While working over the summer hours were few, pay was bad, servers were not tipping. On top of this, my parents themselves were attempting to stay afloat—which meant no support and nothing came free. This is where my creative side had to kick in, or rather, contacts kicked in. I talked to my mentor, (kudos to the YES program for stressing the importance of a mentor) my former social worker, and spoke about my dilemma. She gave me a number to call in ILP (Independent Living Program) for a resource that could possibly finance the plane ticket and deposit. I was able to get approved for funding after weeks of convincing the school in Spain to accept my deposit late. After this, everything seemed to fall into place. As of now, I am currently working on trying to get my trip to El Salvador and Costa Rica counted as an internship for my social work major. I do not know if it is possible, but I am willing to put forth the effort to find out.

College has opened priceless opportunities I could never have experienced otherwise, and has helped me gain a confidence I never had before. In the end of my college search, I did write that essay that I so dreaded, I did apply for something that required an interview—the YES program to be exact—and am scheduled to graduate next year with a double major in Social Work and Spanish. I will never regret my decision to seek higher education and encourage anyone else thinking about it, to explore all the possibilities the college experience has to offer. Who knows, with a little support and pixy dust you could find yourself eating 12 grapes on New Year's Eve!

About YES

YESTM | **YOUTH
EDUCATION
SCHOLARSHIP**

Nationwide less than 1% of foster youth graduate from college. YES helps foster youth fulfill the dream of obtaining a 2-year/4-year college degree or vocational training.

YES provides educational support, connections to mentors and financial scholarships to help foster youth succeed in higher education.

YES Advisory Board

YES Advisory Board (YAB)

The YES Advisory Board comprised of YES Scholars has been redesigned to formalize roles and to better incorporate our YES Scholars into the mission of SVCF. The board will support SVCF in outreach, program evaluation, planning for scholar events, and fundraising. In addition, board members will receive training in professional skills to develop leadership and public speaking experience.

The first meeting of the YES Advisory Board on March 5th, 2010, was met with great enthusiasm by both the staff and the newly selected YES Advisory Board members. For the 2010-2011 year, we have 12 YES Advisory Board members who will actively participate on the board. Current board members are: Tadiyos Assefa, Maria Guadalupe Diaz, Natalie Holbert, Geneva Holloman, Mario Keener, Amanda Madrid, Matthew Morgan, Aleshe Oberlton, Unique Thomas, April Vance, Brandy Wright, and Aileen Maring (our alumni advisor). The scholars are eager to create the foundations of the board's bylaws and elect officers within the next month.

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OUR MISSION

Silicon Valley Children's Fund is a catalyst and partner to develop and support special programs and projects for foster youth – those fragile children in our community who ultimately will share the responsibility for the future of our society.

The Fund is dedicated to helping vulnerable kids heal, become productive members of the community, and achieve their dreams for the future.

Contact Us

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