

SVCF NEWS

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE SILICON VALLEY CHILDREN'S FUND



Spring/Summer Highlights

- April - Youth Advisory Board and Xilinx Youth Advisory Board Workshop
- April 28th - Middle School Education Court Press Release
- May 13th - Launched new website courtesy of Taproot
- May - 34 High School students complete Emerging Scholars Program
- June 5th - Silicon Valley Kids-Triathlon
- September 15 - Save the Date for our Annual Scholar Celebration Dinner

PATH CLEARED FOR CHILDREN'S SHELTER PROPERTY SALE

The process for selling the Children's Shelter property on Union Avenue in San Jose took an important step forward when the Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors recently declared the property "surplus" or "an asset no longer required for county purposes." The surplus designation allows the county to offer the property for sale.

Sale Proceeds Agreement

In April the County of Santa Clara and the Silicon Valley Children's Fund (SVCF) reached an agreement on how the proceeds from the property sale would be distributed. The county and SVCF will split the proceeds evenly. The SVCF will reinvest its portion into programs that support foster care children and youth to make a healthy transition to adulthood. The county will use the proceeds to relocate services offered at the property site to a new location.

A Remarkable Collaboration

"The Children's Fund campaign brought together a remarkable collaboration of more than a thousand donors from the private and public sector, to provide services for abused and neglected children during a difficult time in their lives," said Dianne McKenna, a major donor to the Children's Shelter, former President of Silicon Valley Children's Fund, and a former County of Santa Clara Supervisor. "The board action and our recent agreement with the county will enable Silicon Valley Children's Fund to reinvest much of these original funds into programs which will continue to improve

the lives of children in our valley."

"We are very grateful to the Silicon Valley Children's Fund for the generosity of its donors and the good counsel and leadership it has provided throughout this partnership," said Dave Cortese, president of the County of Santa Clara Board of Supervisors. "We look forward to an ongoing collaboration focused on the educational and developmental needs of children in the foster care system."

"I have great respect for how the partnership has responded to the complexities related to the property sale and management of the future proceeds," said Santa Clara County Supervisor, Mike Wasserman, who has played a key role in moving the property transition forward. "Everyone has kept focus on the most important issue, which is protecting the lives of vulnerable children and youth in our county."

Tremendous Leadership and Impact

Since the opening of the Children's Shelter in 1995, more than 40,000 children arrived under the worst of circumstances, including serious abuse and neglect. For almost 15 years, children received residential support, medical and psychological services, and educational and enrichment programs from a dedicated staff of diverse professionals. In 1997 the Silicon Valley Children's Fund expanded its partnership effort by launching the Youth Education Scholars (YES) program. YES provides scholarships and a path to a college education for foster youth.

"The original donors to the Children's Shelter demonstrated incredible community leadership and courage," commented SVCF Executive Director, Elise Cutini. "Thousands of lives were changed for the better because of this unique group of individuals."

Quality Care for Special Needs

The unique public/private partnership between the County of Santa Clara and Silicon Valley Children's Fund started in 1987 to address the special needs of the County's abused and neglected children and foster youth. SVCF took the lead in raising public and private funding to build a \$19 million state-of-the-art Children's Shelter on a site acquired by the county. The partnership continued after the shelter was built to provide the best possible care for children, including innovative healing and educational programs to help youth develop the skills to lead a productive life.

"We are all stakeholders when it comes to the well-being of our children," said Gina Sessions, Ph.D., acting director of Santa Clara County Social Services Agency. "We are very fortunate to have strong partners with big hearts and a relentless commitment to making a difference." To keep up with national changes in child welfare practices, Santa Clara County Social Services Agency began to phase-out residential care at the Children's Shelter in favor of home-based placement for abused and neglected children.



Special thanks to The Valley Foundation for their \$50K 2011 grant in support of YES to Higher Education.

YES POST SECONDARY UPDATE:

YES to a Higher Education

For the 2010-2011 academic year, 95 YES Scholars are attending 35 different schools ranging from community college, public and private four year universities, liberal arts colleges, and vocational programs. This year we are supporting, through case management and oversight, 6 students in their final year of high school as they finish requirements for their diploma or GED and take steps to start college in Fall 2011.

For the mid-year application deadline we

received 19 applications for YES. All eligible applicants were interviewed. Through the mid-year acceptance process (application review and interview) we were able to add six new scholars into our program and re-engage two previous participants in the YES program. The students admitted into this the program by this deadline were eligible to receive funding for the Winter/Spring Quarter or the Spring Semester only.

Upcoming Applications- Funding for 2011-

2012 Academic Year

The deadline for the YES Program application for the 2011-2012 was May 2, 2011. The application was distributed to all of our partners throughout Santa Clara County to maximize recruitment. Applicant interviews will occur throughout May and June and all applicants will be notified of their application status by the end of July.

HIGH SCHOOL UPDATE:

Roadmap to Independence

The expansion of the pilot Emerging Scholars has completed its first academic year. In 2010-2011, we have supported 34 high school students in Santa Clara County through our partnership with the Department of Family and Children Services and the County Office of Education, Foster Youth Services. These students attended high schools throughout the East Side Union High School District (ESUHSD). Six interns from San Jose State University's Masters in Social Work program met with their assigned youth as often as once a week to coordinate the development of an academic plan, serve as an educational mentor, and provide career guidance. See the next page article highlighting the College Links event our interns hosted for their youth.

For 2011-2012, SVCF is currently working to secure funding and partner commitments to double the size of the program to impact

the lives of an even greater number of foster youth.

We would like to thank the ladies of the Xilinx Women's Technology group for their generous donation to the youth participating in the emerging scholars program! Prior to Christmas, the Women's group at Xilinx collected donations from individuals at their corporation and created stuffed stockings for all of our high school youth! The stockings included several gift cards as well as usable items for the students such as school supplies and toiletry items.

Summer Bridge Recruitment Announcement

The Silicon Valley Children's Fund in partnership with the Department of Family and Children's Services (DFCS), ESUHSD, Santa Clara County Office of Education – Foster Youth Services (COE-FYS) and De Anza College will be again offering the Summer



Special thanks to the 100 Women Charitable Foundation for their \$37,000 grant in support of Career-kickstart.

Bridge program at De Anza College. Summer Bridge is a unique program designed specifically for high school foster youth who are juniors and seniors. This program works to build skills in critical areas including writing, career development, and preparing for life after emancipation. In addition, youth have an opportunity to visit local colleges to learn about what resources are available to them for higher education. Summer Bridge targets high school foster youth who are juniors and seniors. In the past, students have reported leaving Summer Bridge with a renewed sense of purpose and a desire and belief that they can achieve their dreams! To learn more about Summer Bridge, please contact Sherri Brooks at sherri.brooks@svcf.org.

MIDDLE SCHOOL UPDATE:

Middle School Mandate

In 2010/2011, the Juvenile Dependency Court in partnership with SVCF and other child welfare serving agencies launched the Middle School Education Court (MSEC). Led by the Honorable Teresa Guerrero-Daley, the primary mission of the MSEC is to improve the education outcomes of middle school foster youth and to serve as a nationwide model for system-wide collaboration and accountability.

The expected outcomes of the court include improving overall academic performance, test scores, GPAs and attendance rates of

Santa Clara County middle school foster youth, and bringing these students to grade level standards in literacy and math by the time they enter high school. The MSEC team, comprised of dedicated professionals and volunteers, tracks every middle school student and connects each to resources and tools to help in the achievement of these goals.

Results to Date

- MSEC Pilot launched with 40 students in 2010 with education court hearings beginning in January 2011



Special thanks to CISCO Foundation for their \$15K 2011 grant to support the Middle School Mandate.

- Model for educational assessments of foster youth developed and implemented with pilot students
- Partnership with Child Advocates (CASA) to provide each MSEC student with an education advocate
- San Jose State University model for program evaluation and long-term research established

College Links BY MARIE-CHRISTINE BUSQUE

“Everyone walked away with a ton of information, the idea that college is a possibility, and [the knowledge] that there are resources, monetary and people, to make college possible” said Alexandra Nadeau, one of the interns.



“I think I’m going to consider De Anza.” And there it was. The event had been a success. Prior to “College Links”, Andres(*), who is a 15 year old high school sophomore, had not been open to talking about college.

February 10th, 2011 was an exciting evening in the lives of the youth who attended College Links, an event organized by five of the six master’s level social work students who interned this year as academic mentors in the High School Roadmap to Independence program. The program aims to support high school age foster youth in the development of a graduation plan and the exploration of post-secondary opportunities, both academic and vocational. This year, 34 youths have been matched with the interns who contact them weekly to discuss life, school, and the future.

The purpose of College Links was to expose the youth who are participating in the program to the different California higher education systems, as well as introduce some career opportunities. About twenty-five high school students came to hear presenters from several universities talk about the opportunities they have to offer incoming students, and particularly the services available to support former foster youth in their transition to post-secondary education. Two panels were organized to cover each level of post-secondary academic options (community colleges and four year universities). Representatives from TeenForce and Americorps formed a third panel, offering information on vocational avenues. The evening ended with an animated conversation between the participants and two former foster youths, Brandy Wright and Mario Keener, who shared their stories and educational experiences.

Though this informational meeting was not unique, one 18 year old senior did remark that “I’ve been to a lot of presentations, and this one was actually good.” One difference was an emphasis on the majors and certificate programs that are offered at each institution. This helped ignite interest in youth who are more accustomed to hearing about how to get to college than about what college has to offer them. Also, since College Links was open to all high school age youth, “for many of [the participants], this was their first exposure to college information”, said Aura Jimenez, one of the interns working with the youth.

“Everyone walked away with a ton of information, the idea that college is a possibility, and [the knowledge] that there are resources, monetary and people, to make college possible” said Alexandra Nadeau, one of the interns. Several interns reported that in the weeks that followed the event, the youth who had participated spoke more about college than previously. One 17 year old senior is now registered at San Jose City College.

Connie Hernandez-Robbins, of San Jose State University, stated “the scholars asked some great questions.” Some, according to Kellie Richards, another intern, reported “enjoying the evening and learning a lot about ways to plan the next few years of high school.” An unanticipated outcome was the forming of relationships between participants. Already some have met outside of school and are encouraging each other toward academic and life success. Others are now working together at The Terraces in Los Gatos.

The Silicon Valley Children’s Fund and the interns hereby express their sincere appreciation to all who contributed to making the evening a successful event. The following presenters generously donated their time and materials: Brandy Wright (UCSC, and former foster youth), Tempest Jones (CSU East Bay), Connie Hernandez-Robbins (SJSU), Katy Fitzgerald (Mission College), Xiomara Martinez (San Jose City College), Daniel Baldwin (West Valley College), Annette Ruiz-Esparza (Evergreen College), and Donna Fung (De Anza College). John Hogan (TeenForce), and Ashley Krueger (Ameri-corps) provided valuable information on vocational and job opportunities. Costco and Trader Joe’s donated food items. A coupon for driver’s education, a \$100 gift card to a movie theater, backpacks, and gift cards to various stores and food outlets were donated for raffle prizes. Many thanks also to Mario Keener.

(*) Youths’ names have been changed to protect their identities.

Special thanks to Webb Family Foundation for their \$50K 2011 grant in support of YES to Higher Education.



Youth Advisory Board

YES Advisory Board Updates

The YES Advisory board continues to hold monthly meetings. The Board has completed two professional development workshops, instructed by the Xilinx Women's Technology Group (MS Excel use and Effective Communication). The board continues to provide valuable feedback on the services we provide within the YES program. Representatives on the advisory board have identified the need to develop the mentoring component of the program as well as re-instate the emergency fund. We will be fundraising to implement programs that will address these issues and better support the scholars in the YES Program.

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SILICON VALLEY CHILDREN'S FUND

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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.

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