

2017

Annual Report



New Mexico Friends
of Foster Children

www.nmffc.org |  nmffc



The mission of NM Friends of Foster Children is to help meet the needs of foster children and other youth at risk in New Mexico. Our goal is to help foster children succeed in their education and engage in activities that will make a difference in their lives.

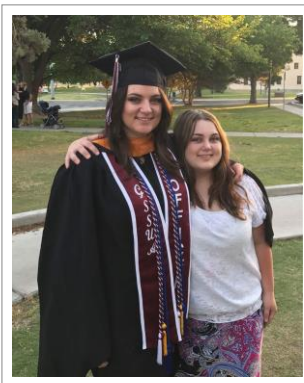
In 2016 we awarded over **\$24,000** to help children who are in foster care and young people who have aged out. Recognizing that education is critical to the growth and future success of all children in foster care, it is not surprising that a great number of our awards in 2016 were in the area of education, including our scholarships. These awards expanded educational horizons and helped young people succeed in school. We, of course, continued to award funds to help foster kids engage in normal childhood activities.

Here are some ways in which you, our donors, made a difference in a child's future: *(Except for the first recipient, the names of the youth are changed to protect their privacy.)*

HOLLY. Holly Raines-Baxter is an outstanding young woman who worked to overcome severe circumstances. She grew up in poverty, often staying in homeless shelters and skipping meals for lack of food. Holly entered the foster care system at 14, was reunified with her mother and then was back in foster care when her mother died a year later.

Her struggles growing up motivated her to go to college, but once there she often had to work two jobs and care for family members, as well as study. She received scholarships from NMFFC for four years; each year she split the money between two semesters and used it for buying books and other supplies. In 2016, Holly was the recipient of our Beth Seewald Memorial Scholarship. Her courage is an inspiration, and her educational achievements are enviable:

Holly received her Master of Social Work degree from New Mexico State University on May 13, 2017, and is now a therapist with the Southwest Family Guidance Center working with at-risk adolescents. Congratulations, Holly! We are proud of you!



JUAN. Juan came into custody with challenging behaviors caused by trauma. His treatment team recommended an

enhanced summer educational program for him. CYFD paid for part of this STEM program and, when CYFD funds were exhausted, NMFFC paid the remaining fees. The experience was so positive for Juan that each day he asked his foster mom to come for him as late as possible because he was having such a wonderful time.

The STEM program staff taught Juan new science and math concepts while showing him that there are many adults whom he can trust, which is a critical issue for him.

PAUL. Often children in foster care need a relatively calm environment to help them feel safe and protected. Paul was moved from a private pre-school to kindergarten in a public school, but the larger classroom with lots of kids proved very stressful for him. Paul's difficult behaviors increased as he became more and more distressed in the new classroom.

Paul's previous school had a place for him in their kindergarten program. It took a partial scholarship, a private donor, his foster parents and NMFFC to make this placement a reality. We covered two months' tuition (at a generously reduced rate) while funding arrangements were put in place. Although we normally do not pay tuition, this was an unusual situation requiring special consideration for a five-year-old.

REBECCA. Rebecca, an NMFFC scholarship recipient, earned a place in her university's choir, which was chosen to perform in Paris and London. Our modest scholarship allowed her to pay some of her basic expenses as she embarked on this once-in-a-lifetime experience – performing in Europe.

Rebecca spent six years in foster care and, in her own words, was an angry and destructive child with learning disabilities when she was adopted into an amazingly supportive and loving family. Together, they discovered that music was the key to unlocking Rebecca's potential and creating a career path for her. She is now working toward a master's degree in music therapy for adolescents.

ERMA and ANDREW. Now brother and *(continued on pg. 3)*

Helping New Mexico's Kids in Foster Care Be Kids

It Takes a Village

We are grateful to all the communities and organizations that contributed in 2016 to New Mexico Friends of Foster Children and the children and youth we serve.

hONEYhoUse Concert. In September 2016, the popular band **hONEYhoUse** held an afternoon concert to benefit Friends on the patio at the Pueblo Harvest Cafe in Albuquerque. The **Indian Pueblo Cultural Center** donated the space and businesses and individuals contributed a variety of raffle items. Donors from Hobbs sponsored the band, which is fronted by Hobbs' own Hillary Smith.

The venue was packed with hONEYhoUse fans, many of whom knew little about the world of foster children before they came. The music was great, the venue was perfect for a lovely fall day, and the listeners were in high spirits and interested in hearing about Friends and the importance of ensuring that foster kids have a chance to be kids, to nurture their potential and build their future.



Hal the Happy Bulldog. The Haltom family and the staff at **Haltom Orthodontics** in Albuquerque learned about the needs of foster children from one of their patients, former Protective Services director Jared Rounsville. Wanting to help, the Haltoms ordered 200 stuffed bulldogs and, every time a patient or friend bought one, the Haltoms donated the entire amount to Friends. Hal the Happy Bulldog (who has braces!) now resides in the homes of Haltom Orthodontics' patients and friends, where he is a reminder that his purchase is making a difference in the lives of foster children -- one smiling bulldog at a time.

Anyone interested in buying one of these cute dogs to benefit Friends can contact Haltom Orthodontics at 505-299-4458.

Haltom Orthodontics' Sherina Hunt with a patient who kindly adopted 10 dogs – one to keep and 9 to give to other families!

Bowling Tournament. The communities of Elephant Butte and Truth or Consequences came together yet again to support NM Friends of Foster Children and raise funds for foster kids. The first weekend in November, Bedroxx Bowling Center hosted the Second Annual Southern New Mexico Open, a bowling tournament for Friends, with sponsors from the Roadrunner Women's Golf Association and other businesses and community members. Artist Chantal Elena and the musicians who performed at Art Jam that Saturday night also dedicated the evening to Friends. Special thanks to Teddy Dorland, who worked tirelessly to organize the many contributions from the community and to Victor Torres, the Bedroxx staff, the bowlers, and the generous sponsors, donors of raffle items and raffle ticket buyers - all of whom made the event a terrific success!

The 2017 tournament is scheduled for November 11-12. Check nmffc.org for details.

Project Linus. The volunteer knitters in Project Linus continue to knit hats for the baby dolls we sell at child welfare conferences. The hats are a big hit, attracting foster parents, case workers and advocates to our table, where we can inform them of the resources we have for foster children.

Eagle Scouts. Friends joined with Eagle Scout candidates from Boy Scouts of America, Great Southwest Council, Troop 722, in 2016 to build a playground for family visitation at the Sandoval County CYFD office. The three Scouts designed and built the playground with financial help from Friends and other supporters: an example of great community teamwork!



A STEP AHEAD FOUNDATION and THE NOTAH BEGAY III FOUNDATION

Both of these foundations have supported NMFFC with unexpected gifts in 2017. We are extremely grateful for their help on behalf of children in foster care in NM, and we look forward to sharing details in next year's annual report.

2016 Donors

We thank you, our donors, for believing in a happier tomorrow for New Mexico's foster children. Your support changes young lives in both small and large ways and helps children understand that others care about them and their futures.

American Legion Auxiliary Unit 44	Cunningham, Mikey	Griego, Patrika	Mendoza, Josephine L	Sadie's of New Mexico
Aronson, Rita & Eugene	Davis, Rebecca K	Guerin, Vanessa A	Michalski, Candy	Salazar, Dolores M
Arndt, Sheryl	Day, Pat	Haltom Orthodontics	Midway Boat and RV Storage	Sanchez, JoAnn
Baca, Amanda R	Delao, Annabell G	Hamilton, Virginia	Mogen, Norbert & Karen	Schutze, Suzanne
Barr, Madonna	Distasio, Vincent & Pod Rena	Hanson, Carl & Mary Ellen	Montano, Andrea	Scoggin, Michael
Bartoo Sand & Gravel, Inc	Dolan, Marilyn	Hayes, Beth	Montgomery, Rose	Shaening, Mary Ann
Bassett, Sara	Domeij, Susan	hONEYhoUSe	Montoya, Vanessa	Sheppard, Hari
Bedrox Bowling Center	Dorland, James & Teddy	Hotel Albuquerque	Moritz, Carol H & Jarud, Mark	Sierra del Rio Golf Course
Benevity Community Impact Fund	Dowling, Margaret V	Hoy, Dennis & Beth	Morrison, Shirley	Sierra Managers, LLC
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Berger, Diane	Duran Central Pharmacy	Iandiorio, Michelle	Nokes, Anne	Smith, Sacheen
Best of ABQ City Tour	EB Locksmith	Il Vicino Wood Oven Pizza	Oakwomon, Lhyv	Sons of the American Legion Post 44
Bierner, Bretan M	El Pinto Restaurant	International Hairport	O'Connor, Daniel	Spectrum Pottery
Blake, Virginia & Tom	Estes, Charles	Jewish Federation of New Mexico	Olmos, Letha	St. Clair Winery & Bistro
Bonner, Carl & Vivian	Estrada, Barbara	Johanson, Jodi	Padilla, Marina N	Sumthin's Ice Cream & Sandwich Shop
Bouchard, Bebeann	Fenoglio, Ella Joan	Keeseey, Ben	Painter, Diana L.	Truth or Consequences Lodge 2050 Loyal Order of Moose
BPOE Las Cruces Lodge #1119	Fernandez, Alaina T	Keisling, Carol	Palm Trading Company	TorC Municipal Golf Course
Brandt, Lauren M	Filosa Law Firm	Kent, Eunice	Passion Pie Café	Tomlin, Clyde
Braun, Anita	Flynn-O'Brien, Judy & Tim	Kirikos Family Funeral Home, Inc	Peinado, Angela M	Trader Joe's
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Bruening, Mark	Freeman, Patrick	Kraft, Molly	Pistone, Andrea	Tucker, Terry
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Bustamante, Katie J	G.T. Evans American Legion Post 44	Landers, Cynthia J	Ramirez, Eddie	Weaver, Mary Ann
Cadena, Denicia S	Garcia, Joshua	Leitner, Pamela	Rand, Miriam	Weber, Kim R
Cantrell, Kenna & Pace, Karen	Garcia, Mary & Ruben	Little Slice of Heaven	Riverbend Hot Springs	Whitehead Chevrolet
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Castillo, Ruben & Nancy	Garrett, Dawn A	Maestas, Carmen	Robie, Ananda	Wimberly, Guy & Alice
Center for Action & Contemplation	Gaston, Patricia A	Martha's Gifts	Rogers, Annie	Women of the Moose Truth or Consequences Chapter 1646
Chambers, Joe & Sara	General Mills	Martin, Sophie	Ronca-Washburn, Jane	Woodka, Nancy
Chantal, Elena	Glen, Carolyn Jo	Martinez, Anthony	Roots Salon	Zavala, Ismael
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Cote, Patricia	Goodfellow, Robert	McCrary, Dede	Ruggles, Kelly	

(cont'd from pg. 1) sister by adoption, Andrew and Erma each came into foster care for many reasons, some of which made learning an on-going struggle for them. Both Erma and Andrew were awarded scholarships by Friends and are thriving at Haskell Indian Nations University in Lawrence, Kansas. Erma is working on her bachelor's degree in American Indian studies after receiving an associate degree in liberal arts and Andrew is scheduled to complete his associate degree in the fall of 2017. Their dedication to their education is inspiring.

MARISOL. Marisol is a teen who has physical challenges and spent much of her life in specialized foster care. The Make-A-Wish Foundation generously granted her dream of visiting Hawaii. Marisol's foster parents are snorkeling enthusiasts and Marisol asked if she could learn to snorkel while in Hawaii. NMFFC provided a wet suit, diving mask and life jacket for Marisol so that the family could enjoy this exceptional opportunity together. And, since the foster parents love water sports, they will continue taking Marisol on diving and swimming adventures.

THANK YOU. Education and its importance to children who have been in foster care cannot be emphasized enough. We believe all educational experiences should be available to children in foster care. We are deeply grateful to our donors for helping provide these life-changing experiences!

Special Gifts to NMFFC

In Memory:

Beth Seewald
Janice Trujillo
Becki Uribe

In Honor:

Hillary Smith
Jay and Lori Chambers
Will and Laura Chambers
William and Mary Chambers
Fred and Patricia Jaeger
Sally and Ed Pais
NMFFC Board Members

Please help us help foster kids be kids. With every bike or skateboard, sports uniform or swimming class, music or art lesson, a foster child becomes a kid again. They become a part of their community and they feel like a kid – exactly how we want every child to feel.



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New Law to Help Foster Youth Succeed in School

Foster youth often find their education disrupted and the track to graduation derailed. When they must change schools, their new school may not have their old school records, they may not get credit for classes they have completed, they may not be placed in the correct classes and, as graduation approaches, they find that they can't graduate. A group of former foster youth here in New Mexico lobbied the 2017 Legislature to pass a law to change all this.

The **Support for Transferring Students Law**, SB 213/HB 301, requires that a foster child's old school provide the child's records to the new school promptly upon transfer.

The law also gives the student whose education has been disrupted:

- priority placement in classes that meet state graduation requirements, and
- timely placement in elective classes comparable to those in the previous school.

For foster youth who are in high school, the new school must also ensure:

- equal access to extracurricular activities, career and technical programs, and other special programs for which the student qualifies,
- timely advice from counselors to improve college or career readiness, and
- that the student can graduate if he or she meets state graduation requirements, even if the new district has different standards.

Three years ago former foster youth advocated for the law that waives tuition and general fees at NM state colleges and technical schools for many youth aged 17 – 25 who have been in foster care. Friends commends the youth for both of these outstanding achievements!



Questions about these laws can be addressed to NMCAN at 505-217-0220.