

2016

Annual Report



New Mexico Friends of Foster Children

www.nmffc.org |  nmffc



Our mission is to help meet the needs of New Mexico's foster children and other youth at risk. In 2014 and 2015 your generosity funded \$38,621 in awards and scholarships for foster children and former foster youth.

Here are some of the ways in which you, our donors, make a difference:

A 17-year-old needed to take online classes to complete her GED. At the time, she was placed with her aunt and uncle, an arrangement that provided much needed stability for her, but the family did not have a computer. We provided the laptop to support this young woman's dream of completing her GED.

One by one, three siblings came to live with a foster family. All of the siblings loved soccer and soccer became, for them, a great vehicle for making friends and helping them become more comfortable in their new community. Your donations covered soccer league fees for each child, as well as an ACT prep class for the oldest.

A non-verbal autistic child's days are better because of the tablet the child received from Friends. "Picture Exchange Communication" software was installed to help the child communicate better at school, at home and in public surroundings. With the aid of the new tablet, the world of this child has become richer and more rewarding.

A young woman living in a treatment foster care home (TFC) was doing well in school and working diligently to meet her TFC goals but truly missed having music in her life. Music both motivated and inspired her. Fortunately, she was allowed to have an iPod in treatment foster care so Friends funded one to bring music back into her life.

A foster family felt it was important to include the two youngest children in the family's daily neighborhood outings. The older of the two could ride a trike but the youngest needed to be pulled in a wagon. There is a wagon designed for this purpose so we bought the wagon, as well as the trike and helmets for both children. Now they can be part of the same outdoor activities as the older foster children, one happily riding the little trike and the other enjoying the neighborhood from the safety of the little wagon.

Before he went into foster care, a young boy was hit by a vehicle while riding his bike. This was a bike he and his grandfather had restored together. After recovering physically, he wanted to have a bike just like the one that had been lost in the accident. The replacement bike, provided by Friends, looked the same as his other bike and helped him overcome his fear of riding a bike again.

A child with behavioral issues and difficulty focusing was taking martial arts classes and swimming lessons, which were helping the child immensely. The CYFD case worker, the CASA and the foster parent had done an exceptional job in accessing resources to pay for these activities but they had run out of funds. Fortunately, they came to NMFFC. We were able to fill the gap and provide funding. The collaborative efforts of the child's team proved effective in helping to stabilize the child in a strong, loving foster home.

A foster youth was unable to pay the visitation exchange fee required for her to visit with her young child. (The child's father had received custody when the young woman's foster family could not provide housing for the child.) She wanted very much to be with her child but the court had ordered her to use a visitation exchange service that charged fees, which she couldn't afford. NMFFC paid the fees for several visits. The young woman's dedication and consistent visits led to a transfer of custody back to her when her new foster family was willing to provide shelter and safety for both her and her child.

In 2015 we were thrilled to see our work come full circle. A CYFD caseworker submitted an application for a youth who needed help paying for GED prep classes. Other financial resources had been exhausted. We were happy to help this motivated young person, but we were also excited because - as it turned out - the caseworker who submitted the application was herself a former foster youth who had received a scholarship from Friends to assist her in completing her college education. It touched our hearts to know that our foster youth are making progress, reshaping their own lives and helping to impact the lives of other foster children.

Helping New Mexico's Kids in Foster Care Be Kids

It Takes a Village

The funding we use to help meet the needs of foster children and to provide scholarships to older youth comes entirely from you, our donors. Without you, we could not do this work.

Most of our donors are individuals who have a soft spot in their hearts for children – especially children in foster care. We also have the good fortune to partner with the most incredible hard working and concerned community groups who not only support children in foster care but also reach out to others who care as much as they do. We wish to acknowledge some of these special groups here:

The Jubilee Retirement Community of Los Lunas decided that it wanted the proceeds of its 2015 arts and crafts fair to benefit foster children in Valencia County. Jubilee partnered with CYFD and Friends to ensure the best use of these funds and, as a result, foster parents in Valencia County are receiving additional specialized training to assist them in helping the foster children in their care. A number of the children will also be attending summer activities utilizing these funds. Thanks go to the residents of Jubilee for their generosity and concern for the children who are in foster care in their community.

The Roadrunner Women's Golf Association of Elephant Butte and Truth or Consequences is at it again. In 2015, the Lady Roadrunners hosted the Annual New Mexico Senior Women's Golf Tournament, where each team provides a raffle item and the money raised goes to a charity picked by the host. The RWGA chose Friends and sent us a generous check to help New Mexico's foster children. Thank you, RWGA and the **New Mexico Senior Women's Golf Association**.

The NMFFC board and the **Lady Roadrunners** and their friends joined forces last year with the great folks at the **Bedroxx Bowling Alley** in Truth or Consequences for the inaugural Southern New Mexico Open, a competitive bowling tournament and fundraiser for Friends. The resourceful women of Elephant Butte and T or C obtained sponsorships and raffle items from businesses and individuals in the community, and a portion of every entry fee at Bedroxx and all the sponsorship and raffle money went to Friends. Again, the spirit of the communities of Elephant Butte and T or C comes through in a big way.

In December 2014, **Kids Under Construction**, the preschool at **St. Stephen's United Methodist Church** in Albuquerque, made Friends one of the two beneficiaries of its annual "Breakfast with Santa" fundraiser. This wonderful community of teachers, parents, children and church members raised funds for foster children at their breakfast. What a wonderful way to nurture the spirit of giving in the children attending the preschool! Thank you to Kids Under Construction and everyone involved.

Beth Ann Seewald Memorial Scholarship

Foster children in New Mexico and the New Mexico Friends of Foster Children lost a wonderful, compassionate Friend this year. Beth Seewald shared our desire to enhance the lives of foster children and actively supported our fundraisers in Elephant Butte and Truth or Consequences. As a Lady Roadrunner, she helped organize the annual raffle and was a generous sponsor of the golf and bowling tournaments.

She made all of us happy to be in her joyful, loving presence.

We are grateful for the opportunity to have known Beth and to have seen her commitment to children in action. It is with bittersweet pleasure, and undeniable sadness, that we honor her dedication and kindness by creating a scholarship in her name. Beth was a true Friend of New Mexico's foster children.

Project Linus and the Little Knit Hats

Did you know that NMFFC sells small baby dolls at conferences? These dolls help raise money to accomplish our mission – helping foster kids be kids. The dolls are of different ethnicities, and have a variety of facial expressions. Foster parents love finding dolls that actually look like the children in their care.

Two years ago, a group of volunteers in Project Linus, who knit and sew blankets to give comfort and security to children who are in traumatic circumstances, learned about NMFFC's mission to help fulfill foster children's needs and wishes. Soon the "Blanketeers" began knitting hats for the dolls. And when little knit hats are added to the display of dolls, interest in them increases and more people come to the NMFFC exhibit table to see the dolls and their delightful little hats.

There are 500 Blanketeers in the Albuquerque area who make blankets - and now: little knit hats. To learn more about Project Linus, visit www.projectlinusabq.org or call Pat at 505-884-7142.

NMFFC is so grateful to the Blanketeers and honored to partner with the volunteers of Project Linus!



2014 - 2015 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.

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NMFFC Scholarships Reach Recipients Statewide

Friends started its annual scholarship program five years ago and last year awarded scholarships to eleven young people who had once been in foster care. We have scholarship recipients attending five of New Mexico's universities and several of our junior colleges, while three recipients attend colleges in other states. We are especially pleased to report that scholarship recipients come from all across New Mexico. Take a look at the map!

We started our scholarship program for former foster youth before the legislature passed legislation in 2014 to waive tuition and general student fees for foster youth at New Mexico's public colleges. We supported the legislation and the youth who worked so hard to get it passed into law. Now, young people who are eligible for the waiver and awarded an NMFFC scholarship can cover their tuition with the waiver and use our scholarship to help with books and other expenses, giving them a better chance of building a future for themselves.

For information about our scholarships, visit our website at nmffc.org. For the tuition waiver, contact the Youth Services Bureau at CYFD (505-827-8400) or the NM Child Advocacy Networks (505-217-0220).

The stars indicate the communities where our 2014-2015 recipients lived when they submitted their scholarship applications.

