



Connie Beck, Director  
Social Services | Public Health | Mental Health

## news release

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April 15, 2016

### Be a hero to a foster child

In response to a chronic need for foster homes in Humboldt County, the Department of Health & Human Services (DHHS) is reaching out to the community and asking for some heroes to step up.

Emergency short-term homes are needed in addition to long-term foster care families throughout the county.

To help meet this need, DHHS has produced an outreach campaign that features community members who are local heroes in their day-to-day lives—doctors, firefighters, paramedics and police officers—joining the recruiting efforts.

“Families are facing hard times in Humboldt County,” said Michele Stephens, DHHS deputy director of Child Welfare Services, adding that substance abuse plays a big role in the impact on parents and their children.

“When it reaches the threshold of children needing to be removed, it is critical that we respond not only as a department, but as a community,” Stephens said. “Right now the need for short-term and long-term foster homes is significant.”

When a child must be removed from his or her family of origin, social workers first attempt placement with a relative, someone known to the child, or a tribally-approved home for tribal children. When this is not possible, a committed, loving foster home is needed for placement.

Placement for older teens is particularly important, as are homes that keep siblings together.

Foster families are needed for various lengths stay, from emergency shelter care to permanent placement. Adults of all ages and backgrounds and families of all types are encouraged to apply. Single moms and dads, gay and lesbian couples—anyone able to open their heart and home is being sought.

DHHS staff provides applicants with assistance navigating the licensing underprocess. Children in foster care are eligible for Medi-Cal, which includes no cost medical and dental care as well as counseling services. Monthly stipends are paid to the foster parents.

“We have a diverse group of foster parents here; from all areas of the county, those who care about children and want to support parents and families in our community overcome barriers to safely parent. They are an incredible group of Humboldt County people,” Stephens said. “We’re looking for more of the same.”

Currently, there are 339 children in foster care in Humboldt County. The county has 130 active relative, non-related extended family or tribally-specified foster homes and 59 active, licensed county foster homes.

For more information about becoming a foster parent, call DHHS’s foster care hotline at 707-499-3410.

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**There's more than 1 way to be a hero**  
**Become a Foster Parent**  
 When Humboldt County children can't be kept safe in their homes, foster parents are needed to help.  
 You can be a hero by opening your heart and home to a foster child in need.  
 Foster children receive a monthly stipend, paid to the foster parent. Medical and dental costs for the child are covered. Social workers are available to support you along the way.  
 Call today to find out how you can be a hero to a child.  
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 Humboldt County Department of Health & Human Services

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