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**April 2022**

**Issue  
Nine**

*Our Mission: To provide safe homes, healing and healthy environments and encouraging youth empowerment.*

# **The Heartbeat**

**The Official Newsletter of The Heart Matters Foster Family Agency**

## ***Around the Agency***

***Here we GROW again!***

The Heart Matters continues to grow our family to be able to provide the best care to our children and families.

We would like to introduce our newest team members:

**Jami S.**

Transitional Housing Administrator

**Jennifer R.**

Transitional Housing Social Worker

**Nicholas M.**

Mental Health Administrative Assistant

**Briana P.**

Accounting Clerk



While the newest members of our Heart Matters family are just getting their feet wet, they have tremendously helped the children within our agency. These members have been essential in preparing our teens for adulthood and helping them obtain essential mental health treatment.

# Heart Matters Recruitment Open House



Heart Matters foster parents have 24 hour access to their agency social worker.

**DID YOU  
KNOW?**

The Heart Matters hosted our first Recruitment Open House on March 27<sup>th</sup>! During this event, attendees were able to tour our offices, speak with agency staff, begin the process of becoming a resource parent, and enjoy food, snow cones, face painting and music.

Over half of the families who attended this event have begun the process to begin fostering children. Out of those who have started the process, all are already halfway through their trainings. We are excited to have met wonderful families who are able and willing to open their hearts and homes to the foster youth of the Inland Empire. If you, or anyone you know, is interested in fostering, please contact us at (909) 906-1023. You can also learn more about fostering on our website: [www.heartmattersffa.org](http://www.heartmattersffa.org).

# **\*\*Adoption Spotlight\*\***

*Our hearts are full of joy as we proudly announce  
our recently adopted children!!!*

*"A family isn't made from blood; it's made from love."  
-Unknown*



Dominic Alexander Jones  
Adopted by The Jones Family

# Agency Spotlight – California Legislature Assembly Certificate of Recognition

On April 16, 2022

Assembly Member Eloise Gomez Reyes presented The Heart Matters Foster Family Agency with a California Legislature Assembly Certificate of Recognition.

We were extremely proud to have Assembly Member Eloise join us during our Easter Eggstravaganza to present this award. She was able to walk around our event, interact with our children, speak with our community partners, getting to know some of our staff members, and sharing lunch with our families.

The Assembly Woman has done great work in supporting woman and child-based organizations and is currently supporting one of our grantors, the California Family Resource Association, in their fight for additional funding for local resource centers.



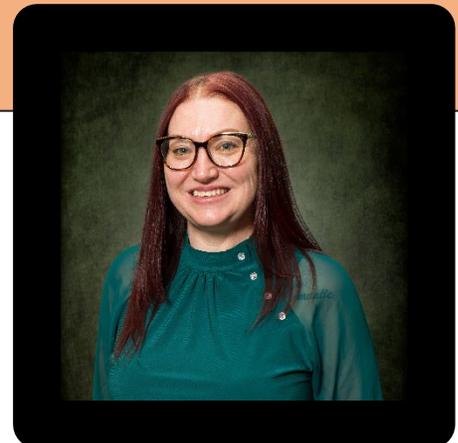
## Employee Spotlight

The Heart Matters would like to announce our Employee of the Quarter, Jessa!

We would like to honor and recognize Jessa for all she has done to help grow The Heart Matters into what it is today. Jessa has been with us since 2017 and has not only been the Queen of Compliance but has worn many other hats. There are not many positions here at The Heart Matters which Jessa has not done herself during the early stages of our agency. Her efficiency, humor, and energetic personality has made the process of expansion that much easier for our management and office staff.

“I love that everything that I do ensures that a child is safe and feels loved at the end of the day. Even when I have to do the most mundane Human Resource tasks, I know it is all for the sake of helping children and it makes it all worth it.”

Congratulations Jessa!



# Tips for Parents



Credit: Getty Images/iStockphoto

## 10 Tips for Parenting Teens

Being a parent isn't always easy. The teenage years can be particularly difficult as teenagers may behave like adults one minute and children the next. Here are some tips which you may find helpful.

1. Conflict is normal. Conflict with your teenager is not always a bad thing - your teenager is learning to become independent. Try to stay calm. Listen to your teenager's point of view and decide what is worth taking a stand on and what isn't.
2. Give clear guidelines. Set out clear guidelines about what is acceptable. Tell teenagers where you're going, who with, and when you'll be back - expect them to do the same.
3. Respect their views. Don't expect teenagers to agree with everything you say. The teenage years are a time of testing opinions and people. Sometimes parents and teenagers must agree to differ. Your teenager is more likely to respect your views if you respect theirs.
4. Show interest. Let your teenager know that you are interested in what they do at home and at school. Encourage them to talk about how they feel - but beware of turning interest into pressure.
5. Spend time together. Your child is maturing, and your relationship may be changing. Spend time doing everyday things together. The teenage years are exciting and enjoyable. Have fun - they'll soon be grown up.
6. Make time for talking and listening. Teenagers say that their parents do not listen to them. Let your teenager know that you have time to talk. Share your values with them but don't impose them. If your teenager wants to talk, make time to listen.
7. Give them space. We all need time for ourselves. Teenagers need their own space, time for themselves and the right not to tell their parents everything about their lives. Respect your teenager's right to privacy and try to remember what it was like to be a teenager.
8. Encourage them. Giving encouragement and taking an interest in your teenager is as important as praising them. Praise them for their efforts and let them know when they do something that pleases you. Don't be afraid to tell them that you love them, even if you get no response.
9. Share your life experiences. Let them know that you've made mistakes and tell them some of the things that you would do differently if you had the chance. Let them learn from the consequences of their actions - don't protect them too much.
10. Look after yourself. Parents today have a difficult job to do but parents don't need to be perfect. Make sure you look after yourself and have people to talk to when you need to.

<https://www.parentingacrossscotland.org/publications/top-ten-tips/parenting-teenagers/>

# How To Talk To Your Teens About Marijuana

Where do you start? What do you say? We're here to help. Between legalization, increased normalization in pop culture and new ways of using (edibles, vaporizers, concentrates), it's becoming more and more complicated to know how to address marijuana use with your kids.

## Get in the right frame of mind

Whether you are planning to discuss marijuana or other substance use, the following are keys to setting the stage for an effective conversation:

- Keep an open mind. When a child feels judged or condemned, they will be less receptive to the message. Try to project objectivity and openness.
- Put yourself in your kid's shoes. How would you prefer to be addressed when speaking about a difficult topic? Try to remember how you felt as a teen.
- Be clear about your goals. Know what you want to get from the conversation.
- Be calm and relaxed. Approaching the conversation with anger or panic will make it harder to achieve your goals.
- Be positive. Approaching the situation with shame, anger or scare tactics will be counter-productive. Aim for curious, respectful and understanding.
- Don't lecture. It will most likely lead to shutting down, tuning you out, anger or worse.
- Find a comfortable setting. Announcing a sit-down meeting will likely be met with resistance, while a more spontaneous, casual approach will lower anxiety (including your own).
- Be aware of body language. Finger-pointing and crossed arms are closed gestures, while uncrossed legs and a relaxed posture are more open.

## What do I say?

Unfortunately, there isn't a script for talking about marijuana, but there are some common arguments and questions that you're likely to hear — and suggestions for how to respond.

**They say:** "I'm only doing it once in a while on weekends, so it's not a big deal."

**You could say:** "What would make it feel like a big deal to you?"

**Why this works:** This gets them to think about the future, and what their boundaries are. It will give you insight into what's important to him or her. If use progresses and some of these boundaries are crossed, you can bring that up at a later date.

**They say:** "Would you rather I drink alcohol? Weed is so much safer."

**You could say:** "Honestly, I don't want you doing anything that can harm you. I'm interested in knowing why you think weed is safer than alcohol."

**Why this works:** This reminds your child that you care about his or her well-being.

Expressing genuine curiosity about their thought process is going to help them open up.



*Carrie Mathews, MPA*

*Executive Director*

Dear Amazing Families,

I was scrolling through Pinterest one day and came across a poem that touched my heart. As I read it, I thought about each of you and all you do for the children in your homes. I would like to share this poem with you and thank you for your patience, strength, and ability to help heal our foster youth.

**Come close, little one, and sit by me;**

Your thoughts are precious, and my time is free.

Let's chill together and sit a while

And share a tear and share a smile.

Set down your pack of worries, dear,

And reach inside. You need not fear.

Each parcel we'll unpack together, you and I' no stress, no pressure.

We'll talk as long as you desire,

And mull the problems by the fire.

And when you're done, I'll take a few

And carry those worries myself, for you.

Don't ever think that you're alone.

That this sack of fears is just your own.

For bags like this can weigh you down,

Can make you scared and make you drown.

But I am here, my little one,

Your confidante, your friend, your parent.

Let's talk them through together, dear,

For problems shared can lose their fear.

And though them all, I cannot fix.

There will be some in that bag of tricks.

Others I can help you bear

Or empathize for I've been there.

Come close little one, and sit by me'

Your thoughts are precious, and my time is free.

# Recipe of the Month

## Kids Can Make: Strawberry French Toast Roll-Ups By Food Network



### Ingredients

Cooking Spray  
1/4 Cup cream cheese, at room temperature  
2 Tablespoons plus 1/2 cup Sugar  
6 slices stale white sandwich bread, crust removed  
5 or 6 strawberries (about 1/2 cup), diced  
1/4 cup heavy cream  
2 large eggs, beaten  
1 Tablespoon ground cinnamon  
Maple syrup, optional

**Serves 4**  
**Prep Time 20 Minutes**  
**Cooking Time 30 hours**

### DIRECTIONS

Preheat the oven to 375 degrees. Line a baking sheet with parchment and spray the parchment with cooking spray.

Mix together the cream cheese and 2 tablespoons sugar in a small bowl. Roll each slice of bread flat with a rolling pin and spread with 1 heaping teaspoon of the cream cheese mixture. Place 2 heaping teaspoons of the diced strawberries at one end of each slice. Starting at that end, roll up each slice. Pinch and press the seam and ends so each roll-up is sealed and push back in any ingredients that may have snuck out of the ends.

Whisk the cream and eggs together in a small bowl. Combine the remaining 1/2 cup sugar and the cinnamon in a shallow dish. Dip each roll-up in the egg mixture until completely submerged, shake off excess egg, then cover completely in the cinnamon sugar. Arrange the roll-ups, seam-side down and evenly spaced, on the prepared baking sheet.

Bake the roll-ups until they're golden brown and the cinnamon sugar forms a crunchy layer, about 15 minutes. Let cool for 5 minutes, then transfer to a cutting board. Trim off any excess caramelized sugar and slice each roll-up in half on the diagonal (be careful when slicing, as the filling is hot). Serve the roll-ups on a platter, with maple syrup on the side if using.



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