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July 2023

Issue
Fourteen

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 **Spending Spring with some-bunny special!**

The Heart Matters is proud to announce that over the Easter season, we were able to fill the easter baskets of

over 130 foster youth!

We could not have done this without our amazing donors and those who hosted Easter Drives throughout the Inland Empire.

Thank you so much to everyone who participated in making this a special Spring season for foster youth and families.

Our youth received their overflowing Easter baskets during our Easter Eggstravaganza hosted at Cal State University of San Bernardino. During this event, our youth and families had the chance to participate in various activities, enjoyed lunch at the In-N-Out Truck with others in the foster care community, and searched for Easter eggs that were hidden around the garden area. They had a blast and were extremely grateful for everyone involved in making this fun day happen!



Monthly Fundraisers with Enduring Creationz!



The Heart Matters Fundraisers

Monthly themed collaborations with
Enduring Creationz



\$20

Plus Tax
*Prices with designs
may vary*

**GET YOURS
TODAY!**

All proceeds go towards The Heart Matters Foster Family Agency. Our mission is to provide safe homes, healing and healthy environments, and encouraging youth empowerment.

*Please visit www.enduringcreationz.com
to place your order today!*

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This year we have partnered up with Enduring Creationz to help raise funds for our agency by raising awareness on topics that affect not just our foster youth, but people from all walks of life.

Each month, The Heart Matters and Enduring Creationz will design a specialty themed T-Shirt that correlates our mission and visions, all while highlighting very important causes.

You can be part of making a difference and raising awareness in style with shirts that support make an impact on our foster youth's lives.

To purchase a shirt, please visit www.enduringcreationz.com and click "The Heart Matters Fundraisers" on the SHOP Tab!

Agency Spotlight – Fathers Day at TopGolf!

On June 10th, 2023 our Resource Dads attended their first Father's Day Event at Top Golf in Ontario! The Heart Matters and the team at Top Golf worked closely together for months to provide this opportunity to our Resource Dads who deserved this amazing event.

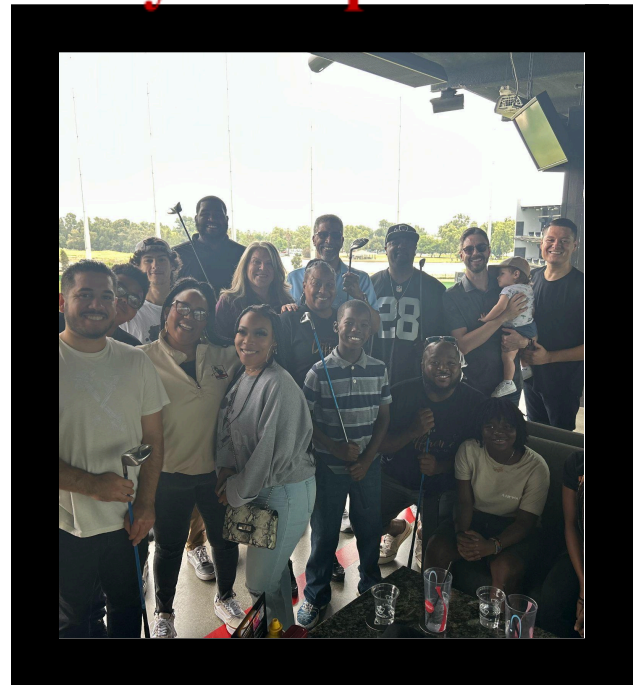
It was great to see how excited our families were to receive such a fun experience. Top Golf provided a BBQ lunch as well as a full session of golf where our Resource Dads went head-to-head to compete for the most points to claim victory for their group!

Our agency has found that providing these special event days to our Resource Parents helps strengthen their bond together in this shared experience and gives them the boost that they need to progress towards their parenting goals.

We want to give a special thank you to

Top Golf Ontario

for making this special day possible.



Donor Spotlight: The Hearts of our HERO'S

The Heart Matters would like to highlight some of our marvelous Donors:
The Nature of Things Flower Shop & ChildHelp Beaumont

We would like to give a huge THANK YOU to The Nature of Things Flower shop in Riverside and ChildHelp in Beaumont for the amazing donations they have given to our agency this past Spring and Summer season.

The Nature of Things was able to provide our agency with all of the flowers that we needed to surprise our Resource Mothers and gift them each customized mini-bouquets with their beautiful assortment of fresh flowers and foliage. Our moms were delighted and went home feeling seen and a little extra special!

ChildHelp Beaumont graciously donated hundreds of backpacks for Back To School, Toys for intake bags, and even specialty items for our Heart Matters offices! Our staff and foster youth have been so very thankful for all of their support.

Tips for Parents



Strategies for a Successful Summer Break

Writer: Beth Arky

Clinical Expert: Clark Goldstein, PhD

While your average child may be thrilled by the end of the school year, anticipating lazy days and sleeping in, the prospect of summer break isn't quite that unalloyed pleasure for parents. And if you have a child with emotional or developmental issues who is challenging in the best of times, nothing calls on whatever extra powers you might possess more than the long break that lies ahead.

While all kids do better with structure and routine, those with mental health issues including anxiety, ADHD, and Autism spectrum disorders are especially dependent on the predictable "safe zone" that school provides. Without it, they're more prone to anxiety, oppositional behaviors, and tantrums. For the parents who care for them, "vacation" can be anything but. Here are some tips to help keep your child on track so summer can be as rewarding as possible for everyone in the family.

Pinpoint your child's anxieties: Summer can bring camp, new activities, and different authority figures like new sitters, all which can be stressful. First, says psychologist Clark Goldstein, you need to figure out your child's fears, whether it's separating from you, or striking out at baseball. If you're having trouble doing this, try asking open-ended questions. Rather than pose a yes-or-no question like "Are you worried about camp?" ask "How are you feeling about going to camp?" Once you know, you can encourage them to face their fear. The goal is to teach her that feeling anxious is uncomfortable but anxiety will ebb if you push through it.

Maintain—or create—a behavioral system: Children and teens, especially, may act like they want to be in charge, but the truth is they feel safer knowing exactly what you expect of them and the rewards that result from good behavior. This is never truer than during the seemingly boundless—and boundary-free—summer break. You should choose the two or three most desired positive behaviors to nurture with consistent and positive reinforcement, and try to ignore as many of the negative ones as possible. This teaches kids the definite rewards of desired behavior, and that acting out gets them nothing—not even negative attention.

Make plans: Try to schedule as many activities as possible, as early as possible, and keep your kids posted. This can mean having a set routine that every day, weather permitting, you'll be going to the playground or pool. Even one such activity can give kids a center of gravity, so to speak, around which the rest of the day can be structured.

It can be tough finding playdates for kids who have difficulty socializing with peers, but some parents have found success through meetup groups and other online sites. There, you can get to know other like minded parents who "get" your kids and won't be offended if a play date has to be cut short. Of course, if you are lucky enough to have family members who are great with your child, don't be shy about taking them up on offers of help

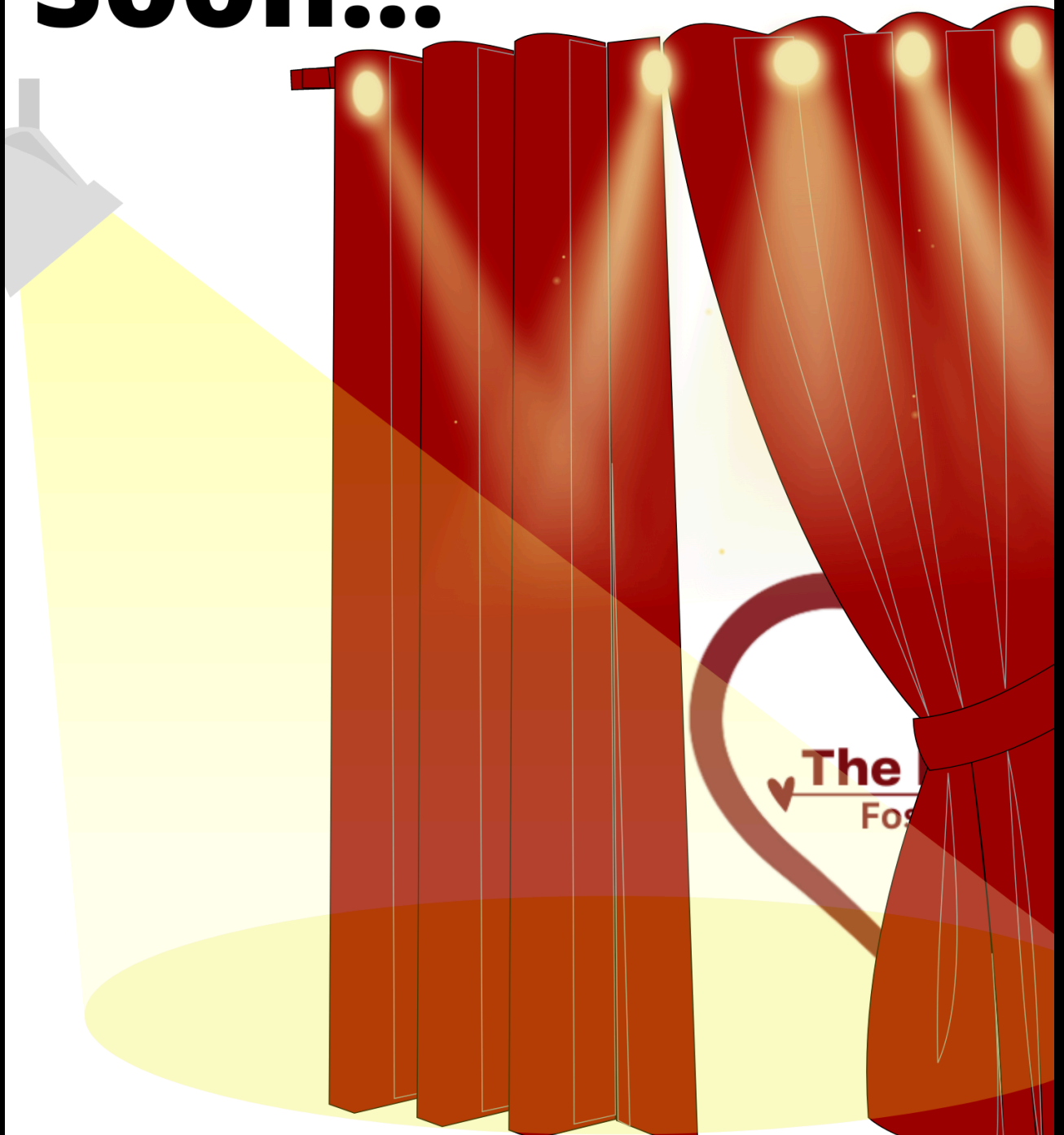
Prepare yourself for tough times: Even with the best-laid plans, you may see some regression and worsening behavior over vacation. Give yourself a break for not being able to magically avoid it. And be ready to hold your ground in as calm, firm, and consistent a manner as possible. Yelling or becoming physical only escalates things, while giving in teaches your child that if they scream loud enough, they'll get what they want. Though these moments may not always be avoidable, always remember if you can maintain a sense of fun, there will be many moments of learning and development of the kind that can't happen in a classroom.

<https://www.childmind.org/article/strategies-for-a-successful-summer-break>

We are looking forward to...

**Coming
Soon...**

**The Heart
Matters
REBRAND!**





Everyone is Employee of the Quarter!

As the time to pick an Employee of the Quarter drew near, Miss Carrie could no longer bear the thought of having to pick just ONE person in the entire agency to be highlighted for their hard work and efforts. Until one day she thought,

“ Why CAN’T WE just celebrate EVERYONE!?”

And thus, the Heartfelt Moments Board was born. The traditional rules of picking a single staff member to celebrate were broken, and now everyone that works at the Agency is recognized for all the things they do. Big, or small, routine or random.

All staff members are given the opportunity throughout the quarter of the year to write down their “thank you’s” on a cut-out heart to a person that had impacted them in any positive way. We read them aloud and hand them out at our Luncheon that everyone is invited to!

Our *Employee Quarterly Appreciation Days* are what we have titled these special events here in the office. This day is filled with good food, energizing music, big laughs, and a friendly (but competitive) game where each department can battle for bragging rights and obnoxiously fun-sized prize now nicknamed “The Big Dub” to display with pride in their office.

This day is always so well deserved, and by making the decision to highlight and showcase everyone's hard work efforts every quarter, the staff morale is always ⁸⁸⁶ high and it is always a place to look forward to work in because of our peers’ consistent support and care.

RECIPE OF THE

Popcorn Shrimp Tacos by Taste of Home



Ingredients

- 1 box Kroger Brand Popcorn Shrimp
- 1 Packet Corn Tortillas
- 2 cups Cole Slaw Mix
- 1/4 cup minced fresh Cilantro
- 2 Tablespoons Lime juice
- 2 Tablespoons Honey
- 1/2 Teaspoon Salt (or more to taste)
- 1 Large Ripe Avocado
- Cooking Spray

Prep time: 30 min

Bake

DIRECTIONS

Preheat the oven to 375 degrees.

Cover a sheet pan with aluminum foil and spray with cooking spray.

Arrange the Kroger Popcorn Shrimp pieces in a single layer on the sheet pan and spritz the shrimp with cooking spray.

Bake at 375 degrees for 5 minutes. Then, when golden brown, flip the shrimp and continue to bake for an additional 5 minutes.

As the popcorn shrimp bakes, combine coleslaw, cilantro, lime, honey, salt, and jalapeno(if desired). Mix well and set aside

Warm your tortillas on the stovetop

When Popcorn Shrimp is ready, place 3 shrimps on a warmed tortilla, top with Coleslaw mix and slices of Avocado



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Carrie

Greetings Resource Families!

Time is certainly flying. Can you believe we are more than halfway through the year? We are so grateful and proud of the work you all do with the youth placed in your homes and we appreciate each and every one of you. Many of you are aware there have been many changes throughout the agency, to include additional programs, administrative offices, and personnel. As you know, our agency prioritizes providing you with the absolute best services, staff, and programs, which sometimes requires us to make changes to your assigned Agency Social Workers. We pride ourselves in making sure the best people are in place to help you throughout your fostering journey and that your Agency Social Workers are a good fit for your family. We know how important consistency is and how much time it takes to build a rapport with a new social worker and want to thank you all for your patience and willingness to work with us through these transitions.

As you have already noticed in this newsletter, there are other big changes on the horizon. We have been thinking long and hard about our agency's branding and image, and how this represents the youth we serve. In an effort to ensure all of our youth, programs, families and staff are well represented, we are launching a rebranding campaign which will include the unveiling of our new agency logo. Please stay tuned and make sure you follow all of our social media channels to ensure you don't miss this big announcement!

Again, I cannot tell you how much I appreciate each and every one of you and how dear you are to our agency. We truly cannot do what we do without you!

With Love,
Carrie

