



**Fostering Hope,
Fulfilling Dreams**

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THE FOUNDATIONS HISTORY

Established in 2001, the Mary Graham Children's Foundation strives to improve the quality of life for the disadvantaged and at-risk foster children of San Joaquin County.

The Foundation provides **enrichment funds** for the children placed in the protective custody of the Shelter. While government funds cover basic living expense-food, shelter, clothing-there are no funding streams for the little "extras" that enrich childhood-birthday and holiday parties, outings to the movies, and sports events, prom dresses and tuxedos, and educational field trips.

In 2004, the Foundation added our **Trade School and College Scholarship Program** which provides former foster youth the chance to pursue higher education. The scholarships make it possible for the youth to attend the college or trade school/certificate program of their choice. The Foundation also assists the students with housing, employment, and health care needs, as well as providing each student with a mentor for support.

THE ISSUE

There is a significant void in the care for foster youth. When they turn 18 and officially "age out" of the foster care system-there is no provision for continued education and after-care. These youth are literally thrown out into a world with no family to fall back on, no financial resources and limited education and job skills. Without the guidance and financial support systems, the odds of these children becoming successful and self-sufficient adults are low.

Children's welfare studies confirm that foster youth emancipating from the dependent care system are at risk of poverty, homelessness, drug use, mental health problems, and criminal activity. A 2004 study by the Department of Social & Health Services revealed that:

- 40% of the homeless population is made up of former foster youth
- Over 1,500 youth are in foster care in San Joaquin County Alone. Over 500,000 nationwide
- Approximately 100 youth age out of care each year, many without any means of support
- Over 50% do not graduate from high school
- Only 11% have an opportunity for a higher education and only 1 in 100 attain their degree
- Nearly 33% had been incarcerated and/or arrested
- 12-18 months after aging out of the foster care system, only 33% are employed and fewer than half have ever held a full time job.

Partner with us and invest in our foster youth's futures. Please join us and take the first step by contacting us today. Thank you for your support.

MARY GRAHAM  CHILDREN'S FOUNDATION

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