

Macy's Shop For A Cause is coming up again on August 23rd, 2014! This is your opportunity to support Chamberlain's Children Center while scoring some great savings for yourself! We will be selling \$5 passes that will entitle you to receive 25% off on regular, sale, and clearance merchandise, including designer brands you love, throughout the store, as well as 10% off electronics, furniture, mattresses and area rugs. And, you will be eligible to win a \$500 gift card, no purchase necessary! Some exclusions do apply, but many of the brands that rarely go on sale are going to be included! If you would like to purchase a pass from us, contact Kim Meininger at 831-636-2121, ext. 129 or kim@chamberlaincc.org. You can also pick them up at the admin office.

Save The Date!




 Chamberlain's Children Center
 1850 San Benito Street
 Hollister, CA 95023
 www.chamberlaincc.org

Chamberlain's Children Center empowers at-risk children in a home-like environment to heal from past trauma, discover their strengths, and develop the skills they need to achieve life-long success.



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Summer 2014
 Volume 13



Summer Newsletter

- A Look Inside
- Recent Event Success
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 - Easter Baskets
 - Client Story In Her Words

Lessons of Childhood Empowerment

In April, we were very fortunate to have another visit from local author and public speaker, Maria Lynn Thomas. You may remember that she had made a visit to us once before to talk with staff and our teen girls about overcoming childhood trauma and going on to lead successful, fulfilling lives. She also talked about the power of forgiveness. Everyone who came to her talk walked away from it inspired by her own personal story and the wisdom she was able to share as a result of her experiences. That is why when it came time to plan a staff training on child empowerment, we were very excited to ask Maria to come lead it.

She began the training with a special poem that she had written especially for Chamberlain's staff. She has given us permission to share it here. The purpose of the training was to help our staff empower our children to not just heal from the traumatic experiences they have lived, but to become better people despite of, or even, because of the past they have lived. This is a message that all of her work tends to impart. She herself has tried to not only survive bad experiences and situations, not only recover from them, but to live better in spite of and because

of the parts of her life she wished she could just erase. She covered three steps of child empowerment: believing, rebuilding, and becoming. These steps walked our staff through the process of inspiring children to heal by giving them the power to take the healing into their own power. This can be an especially important message for our population of children. They have been taught through experience that they are often powerless, so that is a belief that has to be instilled in them while they are with us. The whole training was enlightening to our staff, many of whom had personal takeaways as well as professional ones. We know that both the staff and children will benefit greatly from having Maria here to put her fresh perspective on a topic that we routinely have to deal with!

Dedication Poem: I wish I knew you then

When I think of my little girl self
 hiding in my closet,
 I wish I knew you then.

When I think of how I used to pretend
 that I was anyone else but me,
 I wish I knew you then.

When I think about how I grew up feeling
 so very scared and very alone,
 I wish I knew you then.

When I think of how I used to dream a way out
 of my nowhere, nobody life,
 I wish I knew you then.

But when I think of the smiling faces
 learning, healing and growing here,
 I am blessed to know you now.

When I think of all your sleepless nights
 helping to chase away bad dreams,
 I am blessed to know you now.

When I think of all shame and despair that
 you have served to conquer,
 I am blessed to know you now.

And when I think of all the flames of hope
 that you have lit in our community,
 We are blessed to know you now.

Maria Lynn Thomas
 April 26, 2014

May Was for Raising Money!

May was a month for two big chances to raise money for Chamberlain's programs. We were able to combine two very successful campaigns to maximize our fundraising efforts this year. Here are some highlights from our 5th Annual Mari's FUNd Day and the 1st Silicon Valley Gives campaign:

May is always a huge month for us because we always hold our annual fundraiser in the third weekend of the month. This year, we were able to combine our event with an amazing local giving campaign to raise even more money! The first ever Silicon Valley Gives Campaign was held on May 6th. It was an online day of giving organized by the Silicon Valley Community Foundation to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the first community foundation in the nation. This was an especially amazing opportunity for San Benito County nonprofits. Although many of our residents work in the Silicon Valley areas, our nonprofits are often not included in the area's fundraising events. Additionally, it can be hard for us to tap into some of the tech company's local giving efforts. SV Gives was an opportunity for us to participate, and there were millions of dollars in potential prizes that we could try tapping into. Through our efforts and our community support, we raised close to \$7,000 in that one day! We might have bombarded our Chamberlain's friends and supporters with reminders that this event was going on, but it really made a difference! When we get that check, that money will be doubled and added to our endowment to ensure Chamberlain's sustainability for future generations of foster youth in our community. As an added incentive, we encouraged people who were already planning to attend our 5th Annual Mari's FUNd Day BBQ Fundraiser to make a donation to be considered payment for their ticket to the event, which many of our supporters did.

Mari's FUNd Day also turned out to be another amazing event for us. It was a beautiful day and everyone really enjoyed themselves. We were lucky enough to have two amazing dance per-

formances. Yamamoto Hula Ohana came back for a second year in a row, gracing us with more beautiful hula dancing. Their group has become amazing supporters of Chamberlain's over the last year and we are grateful! Sammy's Automation Dance Community also came out to show off their moves and included a former client of ours during their show. It was heartwarming to watch. We dedicated a larger portion of our program this year to honoring individuals who impact our success. We honored Hollister Rotary for their dedication to helping the children here. Phil Fortino accepted the award on the group's behalf. 2014's Rosemary Cardinali award to an outstanding employee went to Cottage Supervisor Octavio Lucatero. He was more than deserving of the recognition received, as the impact he has made in his role has been outstanding. We are always very excited when Mari's FUNd Day rolls around each year, and this year was even more successful by combining our efforts with a second campaign. The whole month of success made us especially appreciative of everyone who supports us in May and throughout the year! Thank you!



Our Children Speak...

Excerpts of personal writing from one of our current clients
(Published with permission)

Hello—I'm NC and this is the story of my life. When I was 3 years old, I was burned in a fire really bad. At the age of 7, I was taken from my mom. She would smoke, drink and hit me a lot of times. When I left, I was very sad. I went to a foster home and I would move a lot. When I got a home, I was 11 years old. I was in a group home named Chamberlain's Children Center. I live there today. I am 14 years old and just graduated from middle school in Hollister, California. It is a small town but it is home to me. I have been here for four years.

Today I talk to my mom. I used to blame myself but it was her that got punished, not me. Sometimes I sit outside, write in my notebook, and listen to music but then I stare at the clouds and see my life pass by without my parents. I have twin sisters now. Not by my mom but some other lady. My dad made me a promise that he broke. It hurt me very bad. He said, "N, I will love your mom and never have no one else." He lied so bad that I cried my eyes out but he got what he deserved, three years in prison. I'm not trying to sound mean to them but I am so angry at them for what they did to me. To tell you the truth, I've been hurting for a long time and don't know what to do with myself but God is on my side.

I get ready each day and prepare for the obstacles I will have to face. Also getting teased, laughed at, called names. It hurts so bad but I keep my head up everyday. I can't help having burns. No one's perfect. Just know that God is with you every day. You know you are beautiful so don't let it put you down at all. Sometimes I come home crying but to let you know words don't hurt. . Some people say that but it does hurt so much. They don't understand what I went through or what you went through...

...School is easy for me. Straight A student, yeah that's me but it's hard so people make fun of me for being so smart. Ever wonder why that is? Well I think they have nothing better to do or just mad at their own life. At least I have some friends! I have 6 friends, misfits, but they're cool.

Life isn't easy but you must pick yourself up and try everyday. Make the most of it while you can!

Local Volunteer Groups Get The Job Done!



Though we are graced with volunteer help throughout the year, April once again played host to our big, once a year work day. This amazing day of volunteerism is always a favorite of ours, not only for the amount of work that gets accomplished or the projects that are completed, but also because it is truly inspiring to see so many people ride in, set up, and do amazing work for the benefit of the children that we care for. One staff member commented that she gets goose bumps the moment the group begins rolling through the gate. The LDS Church of Hollister usually spearheads a majority of the volunteer recruitment for this event through their Justserve.org website.

There was a long list of projects on our "to do" list that day, and we got many of them finished. Of course gardening projects were on our list and we were able to make great progress in the tranquility garden carving out pathways and ripping out some ice plant that needed to be removed. We also had a generous donation of time AND most materials from Starkweather Painting who brought out

prep materials, paint, and a professional crew to give two of our four cottages a fresh coat of paint and have the two other cottages ceiling's done. Kohl's Associates in Action from both the Gilroy and Salinas stores gave our administrative office a much needed coat of paint and helped finish painting the walls of one of the cottages they had worked on for a different event. We also had a crew of volunteers who helped rearrange Keith Thompson's classroom, installing new partitions and began the process of upgrading the room's technology. After most of the work had been accomplished, everyone got together for lunch which was provided by both Chamberlain's Children Center and members of the LDS Church! At the end of the day the campus was transformed. It is truly a beautiful thing to see so many people come together and accomplish so much in just one day. The kids were delighted to see all the changes when the day was done.



Mari's Day Acknowledgements

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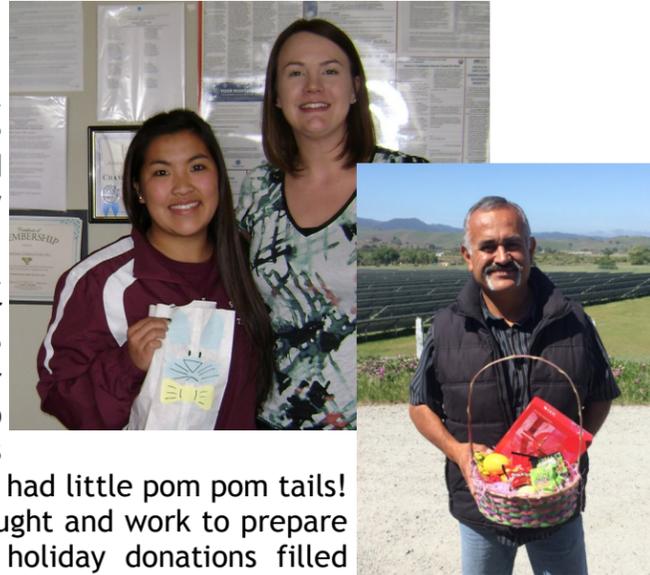
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Community Love & Support for Easter

We have told you before how thoughtful our supporters are around Thanksgiving and Christmas, but did you know that our children receive extra love and attention around Easter, too? Over the last several years, we have gratefully received donations of Easter baskets and other holiday treats and this year was no exception! This year, Sunnyslope Christian Center & Yamamoto Hula Ohana each donated a basket for each of our children. In addition to that thoughtful gift, the Cienega 4H club made goody bags for each of our children plus a few with little extras to be spread around for the children. Each bag was handcrafted with a bunny or a chick - some even had little pom pom tails! It was obvious that the group put in a lot of thought and work to prepare these treats for our children! Each of these holiday donations filled our children's Easter with extra joy and cheer. We are so thankful for all those who thought of our kids this Easter!



First Presbyterian Church of Hollister Volunteers!



April was a month that saw many gracious volunteers pass through our gates to help us with various projects. The first group to help us out that month was connected to the First Presbyterian Church of Hollister. About 50 youth from here in town and from Sacramento came on April 12th. Anita Sarringhaus helped us coordinate the event. We were able to complete various painting and yard work that needed to be done. After they were done with the projects, they enjoyed a well-deserved BBQ lunch and performed an impromptu sing-along performance. We are so grateful for all of their help!



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 Chamberlain's Children Center, Inc.
 Federal Tax I.D. Number 94-2357401
 Mail to: Chamberlain's Children Center
 PO Box 1269, Hollister, CA 95024-1269

Executive Director Report:



The greatest glory in living lies not in never falling, but in rising every time we fall. — Nelson Mandela

I think of that quote often when I interact with the children in our care because I know our children are resilient and they persevere! They have been through so much in such a short period of time. I can really empathize with them on days they are not so motivated to do the things we set as norms. Getting up each day with a positive outlook, school demands, peer interactions, sports, technology, clothing, adults, physical appearance, all play a part in our daily lives and even the best of us have days where we 'fall'.

The past couple of weeks gave my staff and me the opportunity to be proud of our young people. We recently had three middle school graduates and one graduate from our program. All four of these children came to us having experienced severe trauma. All four of them came to us with poor self-esteem, no self-confidence and an inability to trust others. For them getting out of bed was challenging enough let alone buying into our program. The one child who graduated our program last week had very little to say for her first several months with us, little to say to her therapist, case manager, house supervisor, house staff, teachers, managers, and fellow residents. At some point she was able to "rise above her falls" and started expressing herself, believing in herself and trusting others. When we had her campus-wide graduation ceremony recently, a key theme were the bonds she made in her house, the friends she had made here and at school, the ability to confide in and count on adults and the leadership and role modeling she provided to younger residents.

Our middle school graduates also incurred several obstacles to get to the finish line of cap & gown and scroll!! There were several events prior to arriving to Chamberlain's and plenty of 'falls' once they arrived that they all could have "stayed down". But each time, with the support of the Chamberlain's Team, they showed their resilience and got back up! I am especially proud of our recent graduate who allowed us to use an excerpt of her diary entries in this newsletter where she reflects on her time with family, with Chamberlain's and in school. You will see she had plenty of opportunity to and reasons to 'fall' and not get back up. But resilient, strong, and confident, and with family and her Chamberlain's family on hand, she walked up and proudly accepted her well-deserved 8th Grade diploma!!

These are the examples of why we do what we do here at Chamberlain's! I would like to acknowledge the huge support system in place: The Hollister School District and individual schools, San Benito County Office of Education Special Services, Foster Youth Services, Social Services, Chamberlain's Mentors, and of course our Team: House Supervisors, House Staff, Case Managers and Therapists, Management Team and everyone else who work tirelessly and selflessly in order for the children in our care to succeed!

Finally, thank you to everyone who participated in SV Gives and Mari's FUNd Day! Special thank you to our Event Sponsor United Agencies (3rd year in a row) and our Food/Activities Sponsor Teknova (all 5 years!) and to our Recognition Award winner Hollister Rotary who not only cooked our lunch for the 5th year in a row, also for many, many years has supported Chamberlain's with grants, volunteer labor, and goods! Between the two events we raised nearly \$25,000!!! The funds raised by SVGives will be matched by the Community Foundation for San Benito County and placed in our endowment fund. With the match, our endowment fund is now at \$105,000!!! Less than two years ago it was only at \$12,000. The endowment allows us to have a sustainable source of funds for many, many years to come!! So that when our children fall, we will always have the resources to pick them up, dust them off, and say "Go get 'em!".