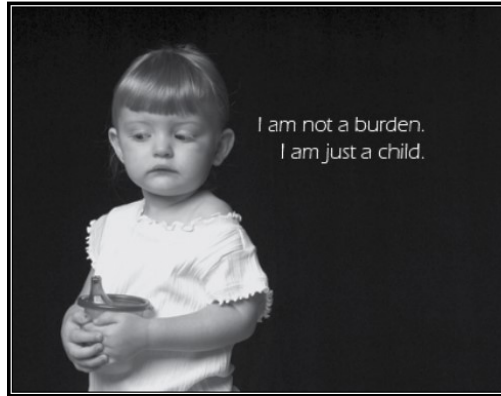


HOMELESS IN PARADISE

May 5, 2017

Column #134

Hear Our Voice! - Part 14



GIVING NEEDY CHILDREN A SECOND CHANCE FOR A FUTURE

By Wanda Sue Parrott

KEEPING pace with the Pink Pussyhat Movement's "10 Actions/100 Days" project reminds me of my daddy's Ozarks hound dog. If Blue really knew what he was hunting, he'd have brought back a duck or a squirrel instead of biting off his own tail.

That's a metaphor for the presidential honeymoon that ended Sat., April 29.

Actions 8 and 9 were announced together on Friday, April 28.

Action 9 suggests followers attend a May Day protest of choice last Monday.

Action 8, "Let's Talk: Why We Resist" suggests one-on-one discussions.

Mine marries this column to last week's theme: "Where have all the homeless children gone?" after I wrestled with how to get started.

Daddy's old Ozarks saw came to mind, "Get it straight from the horse's mouth."

"You know horses can't talk, Dad."

"So, don't be a grump like Trump. Ask a kid." And so I did.

Homeless Kids Need The Same Things We All Do

Only a few of Monterey County's 270 homeless children (per the 2015 Homeless Census and Survey) wound up in foster care or with adoptive families like those provided by Kinship Center, a member of the Seneca Family of Agencies serving Monterey, San Benito, San Luis Obispo, Santa Clara, and Santa Cruz Counties.

According to Barbara May of the Kinship Center's Family Development team, "Every child deserves a family."

A child can't be removed from parents just because they're homeless, she says. Grounds for placement in foster care include neglect, abuse, and abandonment.

Kinship Center's bookmark speaks for Monterey County's 109,355 children ages 0-17 as of 2016. They include 53,177 girls and 56,178 boys.

Hispanic/Latino constitutes 74.6 percent; White, 17.1 percent; Multiracial, 3.3 percent; Asian American, 3.2 percent; African American, 1.2 percent; Other (Native American, Pacific Islander, etc., .6 percent. Each says:

10 Things I Need Every Day from You

I need you to *really* listen to me.

I need you to know I *am* important.

I need to have structure, to feel *safe*.

I need to be *claimed* by you and feel we belong together.

I need *affection* and *comfort*.

I need to *play* with you every day.

I need to know it's *okay* to make mistakes.

I need your help in finding the gifts of my potential.

I need to make choices, so I feel *empowered*.

I need you to be my *emotional tutor*.

Is Foster Care Or Adoption In Your Future?

If you're considering foster parenting or adopting a child, the Kinship Center can provide education, training, and support to help you prepare for this very special kind of parenthood and support.

Single parents as well as couples of every race and ethnicity 21 or older are welcome. Neither minimum income nor home ownership is required.

Last year through Kinship Center programs, 102 children on the Central Coast were cared for in therapeutic foster homes and 133 kids found new Forever Families through adoption.

More than 400 children participated in therapeutic programs at one of Kinship Center's three mental health clinics, and more than 759 benefitted from safe homes and strengthened ties with relatives through the Family Ties and the Guardianship programs.

"By becoming an adoptive or foster parent," Barbara May says, "you can give a child a second chance for a future."

For more information, visit www.kinshipcenter.org or call toll free 1-800-4-kinship.

How About Becoming A CASA Volunteer?

Children in foster care who move from foster home to foster home have a 50 percent chance of becoming homeless after age 18.

Superior Court wants a volunteer court-appointed special advocate (CASA) for every child in foster care. Currently there are 400 foster children in Monterey County, and a waiting list of 80 children needing CASAs.

On a one-on-one basis, would serving as a CASA work for you?

If yes, you'll be recruited, trained and then appointed by the Superior Court of Monterey County to a child in need whom you will befriend. You'll watch over the child's foster placement and make recommendations for permanency to the presiding judge.

Voices for Children CASA (VFC-CASA) of Monterey County will host “Hike for CASA” to recruit and train more CASAs on Saturday, May 20, 10 a.m., Toro Park, 501 Monterey-Salinas Hwy. 68, Salinas. Admission covers hiking the trails and a barbecue lunch: Adults: \$35; kids 12-18, \$15; under 12, \$5.

For further details contact Patty Ross, 831-236-4513 and Linda Foster, 408-670-5616.

As to Action 8’s question of why you resist, try this answer “I oppose Trump’s plan to defund Planned Parenthood?”

To seal your commitment, sign the Pink Pussyhat Movement’s new Pledge of Liberation at www.womensmarch.com and e-mail comments to resist@womensmarch.com.

Is it Action 10? Stay tuned!

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