

## Giving a 'Good Night's Sleep' to Family is all in a Good Day's work



Natalie Mendez Aguilar, Social Services Practitioner III, takes a selfie as she delivers three bed sets to a family of seven on her caseload in Desert Hot Springs.

When Natalie Mendez Aguilar heard that Ashley Furniture had just delivered 25 brand new beds and bedding sets to DPSS offices in Indio, she quickly put in a request for a family of seven she was working with to reunite.

Mendez Aguilar, a social services practitioner III, wanted to ensure the large family had enough beds to accommodate the children as they returned home.

"They needed help and both parents were extremely grateful," said Mendez. Throughout the pandemic Mendez Aguilar says the livelihoods of many families in her caseload have been negatively impacted by economic uncertainty and job loss.

"A bed is essential and a bed requirement for a family to be able to reunify, but they are not

cheap," Mendez Aguilar says. "You have no idea how useful these beds can be for our children and families."

Ashley Furniture's Colton-based store donated 50 beds to Riverside County foster children in December as part of the corporation's Hope to Dream program. Since 2010, Hope to Dream has provided more than 100,000 twin beds to at-risk children across North America. Corporate executives say every child deserves

*"We are grateful our community, business and faith-based partners are working together to bring support and resources to our foster youth. Through a spirit of caring, we work together to help children achieve stability, healing and hope at an extremely difficult time in their lives." -- Charity Douglas, Assistant Director Children Services.*

a good night's sleep and a bed to call their own. Each year about 200 bed requests come in to help with relative placements and emergency situations but finding enough to go around can be a challenge.

Irene Capen, manager of Faith in Motion, coordinated the contributions from Ashley Furniture in Riverside and Indio. Faith in Motion contracts with DPSS to recruit foster families and ensures children and caregivers have the resources and support they need to thrive.

"When a child is placed in care, they don't know what to expect, but having a bed to sleep in gives them that extra sense of comfort and stability they really need and deserve," said Capen.

» [To donate a new bed to a family in need, learn more about Faith in Motion or how you can support kids in foster care email Irene Capen at icapen@fosterall.org or call 951-228-5553.](mailto:icapen@fosterall.org)