

FAITH PARTNERS OPEN HEARTS AND SUPPORT TO CHILDREN AND FAMILIES IN FOSTER CARE



Irene Capen and Noemi Amezcua of the Faith in Motion program help guide and support prospective parents to become a resource family home in Riverside County.

It's more than a year into the pandemic and the phones at Faith in Motion (FIM) haven't stopped ringing. When a prospective foster parent calls, they may reach Irene Capen, manager for Riverside County's FIM program.

Faith in Motion contracts with Children's Services to be a bridge to Riverside County's faith-based communities, helping them recruit and retain foster families for children and youth who need out-of-home care. The program partners with more than 70 churches and religious organizations countywide and is always looking to expand its partnerships by connecting with local churches and faith organizations. May is Foster Appreciation month, when foster parents are celebrated and recognized for their contributions to children and families.

"It is usually a calling a family has felt, and they are ready to take the next step," Capen says of the families who contact her organization about fostering. Capen, a foster mom who has also adopted, knows how much care and support is needed to guide families in their journeys. FIM is working with more than 300 potential foster parents right now. Although the pandemic has made recruitment more challenging, prospective families are still calling to find out how they can open their homes to a child or youth in need.

DID YOU KNOW?

Faith In Motion, a collaboration between the Department of Public Social Services (DPSS), Children's Services Division and Riverside County's faith-based communities, helps to recruit and retain foster families for children and youth who need out-of-home care. The program was established seven years ago and partners with more than 70 churches and religious organizations countywide.

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—Noemi Amezcua

When a family prefers to navigate the process in Spanish, Capen refers them to foster parent Noemi Amezcua, who recruits and supports other foster parents who are sometimes immigrants like herself.

In her nearly 30 years as a foster mom, Amezcua has cared for about 100 kids. "This is definitely a vocation, something you feel in your heart to do," Amezcua said in Spanish. "The best part is being able to transform the life of a child while they are in your care."

Even though there are hundreds of prospective parents, Capen emphasizes the ongoing need for foster families and relative caregivers, also known as "resource families."

Finding a home for every foster child has evolved into a regional campaign called Love Has No Limits (LHNL). Faith communities hope to activate thousands of families to foster or adopt over 40,000 kids across Southern California. The LHNL website says that without intervention, many foster kids who age out of care are more likely to experience homelessness, incarceration, early parenthood, poverty, and human trafficking.

Back at the Faith in Motion headquarters, Capen says she hopes the phones will continue ringing with families whose hearts are drawn toward helping Riverside County children. Interested families or faith communities can contact FIM at (951) 228-5553 or e-mail icapen@fosterall.org.

LOVE HAS NO LIMITS

The need for finding a home for every foster child has turned into a movement led by communities of faith across Southern California called Love Has No Limits (LHNL). Without intervention, youth who age out of care are at-risk for homelessness, incarceration, poverty, and human trafficking. To find out more about LHNL, please visit lovehasnolimits.com. Families who are interested in fostering or adopting can also text HOME to (213) 523-3352.