

# NEWS

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May 23, 2023

For Immediate Release

## County Celebrates National Foster Care Awareness Month

### *Volunteers needed to support youth in foster care*

**Redwood City** – The San Mateo County Board of Supervisors today joined a growing national movement to declare May 2023 as [Foster Care Awareness Month](#), a time to recognize that everyone can play a part in enhancing the lives of children and youth in foster care.

At a meeting this morning in the Board Chambers, members of the County’s Foster Youth Advisory Board shared their stories to raise awareness about challenges faced by youth in foster care – particularly the impacts of trauma -- and the need for critical supports to their well-being.

Speakers included Marlene, who was formerly in foster care and, now a young adult, is dedicated to using her experiences to help others.

“I feel like my purpose is to speak out to youth about their trauma and how we can use the tools that I used to help them through their journey,” Marlene said.

About 140 children and youth are in foster care in San Mateo County. Over the past decade, local child welfare practices have focused on reducing foster care entry when possible and reunifying families once safety and supports are re-established, practices that have helped to reduce the number in foster care by 40 percent in recent years.

“Children and youth are in foster care to no fault of their own. We owe it to them to build a public child welfare system that allows for them to thrive,” said John Fong, director of [Children and Family Services](#) at the Human Services Agency.

There is strong need for Resources Families, formerly known as foster families, and dedicated volunteers to support youth in foster care.

**Want to learn more?**

Go to <https://www.helpsanmateokids.com/> (an official site from the County's Human Services Agency).

You can also call 650-802-7637 or send an email to [ResourceFamily@smcgov.org](mailto:ResourceFamily@smcgov.org).

If you suspect child abuse or neglect, please report it to the local hotline at 650-802-7922 OR at 1-800-632-4615.

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