

# San Francisco Foster Youth Fund



NEWSLETTER | FALL 2020

## Annual Wine Tasting Event Goes Virtual in 2020

THE SAN FRANCISCO FOSTER YOUTH FUND will not let COVID stop us from raising funds to support our youth in foster care!

Although we are sad that we can't host our popular annual Mighty Fine Wines tasting and auction event in person this year, you can still pretend you are there with us and support our kids by participating in our online auction. To commemorate our foster youth who are in care, we are going to host a 21-day open silent auction with an array of items to bid upon. The grand opening of the auction will start on Thursday, October 8th and the final bids will be accepted on Thursday, October 29th. Every dollar raised from the auction will go directly to a child in need.

This year's auction items will be worth the bidding wars and will include many sought-after items such as: airline tickets, B&B stays, virtual tutoring, IT sessions, artwork, jewelry, sports memorabilia, restaurant certificates, a private wine country vacation getaway property, a sailing excursion on the Bay, virtual and in-person outdoor wine tastings and much more. We will also have a host of wines available to bid on with our own board members arranging deliveries of your purchased items. The best part about this auction is that you will feel good about doing your part to help a youth struggling during these difficult times --- a San Francisco foster youth.

A special thanks to this year's sponsors for their generous donations: Nektar, Argot Partners, HDMZ, ab Media, Pure Communications, and the San Francisco Police Officers Association.

So have your glass of wine and credit card in hand and visit our auction website below on Thursday, October 8th and be among the first to place a bid that says "I support San Francisco foster youth."

**Please join the auction by visiting**

[SFFosterYouthFund.ejoinme.org/2020](https://SFFosterYouthFund.ejoinme.org/2020)

**from October 8th - 29th, 2020**



## Impacts of COVID19 on Youth

COVID-19, CORONAVIRUS, SARS-CoV-2, OR THE "RONA", no matter how you refer to the current pandemic, there is no denying the profound impact it is having on all of us. After the shelter in place order was called for, we have been forced to be creative and flexible in handling the uncertainty of daily life. Our most vulnerable young people in the foster care system, are experiencing an overwhelming loss of employment, lack of access to healthcare and mental health services, isolation from their support networks and have increasingly experienced housing and food insecurity.



Our social workers quickly mobilized to support the youth with food boxes, helped with navigating financial resources, and stabilized housing, while staying focused on the emotional well-being of the youth. The social workers gave first hand reports of seeing the devastating impacts of Covid-19 and the shelter-in-place. There was a noted increase in anxiety and depression, and an overall fear for the future. Schools and colleges quickly shifted to distant learning-and everyone partnered to ensure every foster youth had access to the necessary technology, to prevent disruption to their educational path. Despite the grand efforts, the impacts have been devastating and has resulted in many of our youth falling behind in their learning.

The widespread loss of employment within industries such as food service and hospitality, where many of our youth were gainfully employed overnight saw loss of wages and financial instability. Our youth were movie theaters ushers, servers in restaurants, house cleaners, security guards at local malls, and due to the pandemic,

our youth found themselves unemployed and many without an income they desperately depended on.

Tula is one of our Non-Minor Dependents who has chosen to stay in foster care past 18, in order to receive the continued support needed to transition successfully to young adulthood. She is a hard worker, holding two jobs at two ice cream shops in the Bay Area, a treat for both herself and her social worker who enjoys the ice cream perks. Unfortunately, with the sudden overnight impacts of Covid-19 and the shelter in place orders, she was quickly let go from both jobs, as the shops shuttered for business. Tula maintains an apartment

with one of her close friends, who also worked in the food industry, and immediate panic set in around paying rent to keep a roof over their heads, as well as the necessities of food, and paying their bills. They quickly depleted their savings, and began to rely on programs that assisted foster youth with their basic needs, while they searched for other opportunities for employment. Those opportunities have been hard to come by with the closure of so many businesses, but Tula is not giving up and continues to search and apply to every opening she sees.

Many of our youth are isolated from their communities and support networks while sheltering in place. The San Francisco Foster Youth Fund has stepped up to support the youth in remaining connected and productive, while they maintain safely in their placements. While we are not supporting many of our regular activities this year, such as senior proms or camps, youth and social workers have gotten creative with identifying alternative ways to provide support

during this difficult time. We have been able to fulfil requests for art supplies, jewelry making kits, subscriptions to meditation websites, cooking classes, bicycles, interview clothes, and start-up items for on-line entrepreneurship, as well as ensuring all the youth have the technology they need to transition to online learning and stay connected virtually to their loved ones.

Jay and his 3 siblings all live with Sickle-Cell Anemia, there is almost never a time where one is not spending time hospitalized for complications with pneumonia, pain or organ failure. With Jay being the oldest, he tries to set an example for his siblings of how to live with Sickle Cell and not to let the disease dictate his life. Jay was one of our seniors, graduating Class of 2020, impacted by the pandemic. He was more than devastated about missing out on the end of his senior year. Prom, senior trips, sports and time with his girlfriend before she went away to college. While many teens, still found an outlet during the shelter in place, because Jay and his siblings were in a highly

vulnerable group, there was no flexibility for him to go easy on the precautions. Jay remained in the house for months, struggling greatly through the online learning of the last semester of his senior year, due to feeling depressed and a bit envious of those around him that could go out. Jay utilized the SFFYF to acquire some home activities, books, and movies. He shared that his next endeavor will be to learn magic tricks to keep his siblings entertained.

Our mission to serve the foster youth of San Francisco remains at the forefront and we are dedicated to ensuring the foster youth of our community remain safe and cared for during this difficult time. The San Francisco Foster Youth Fund recognizes the current impact of Covid-19 on many of our regular donors, and we hope, in addition to taking care of yourself and your loved ones, you find yourself in a position to support the foster youth of San Francisco. As always, 100% of your generous donations go directly to supporting youth impacted by the current pandemic.

## Social Worker Spotlight: Jonathan Newsom

DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING

once said “Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter.” Jonathan Newsome is a current Protective Service Worker and Acting Supervisor for the San Francisco Human Service Agency and is a strong advocate for youth and families involved with CPS.



Jonathan was born and raised in the Mission District. His mother was a Social Worker for CPS in San Francisco and worked extremely hard to provide for him after his father left when he was 8 years old.

Growing up, Jonathan participated in sports (football and basketball) to stay out of trouble and keep him busy. He mentioned, “Sports kept me straight.” After high school, Jonathan continued to play football at Chabot Community College and then transferred to San Francisco City College. After getting hurt playing football and, after receiving his A.A. degree, he began exploring what career opportunities were available to him. He wanted to be of service to others and to be an agent of change.

Following in his mother’s footsteps and his desire to serve communities that are marginalized and isolated, he decided to pursue a career in Social Work. Prior to graduating with his Master’s degree in Social Work at San Francisco State in 2003, he worked for the San Francisco Mayor’s office Gang Prevention Task Force, as a Park & Recreation Director in Marin City, and as a Latch Key Director at the former “Army Street Housing Development” in San Francisco.

As a Protective Service Worker, Jonathan has requested funds from the Foster Youth Fund on multiple occasions. There was a young man who was having difficulty adjusting to being away from his mother and living with a Resource Parent. He was acting out in school and in the foster home. Jonathan found out the young man had an interest in boxing. The Foster Youth Fund was able to pay for boxing lessons for the young man. In another example, there was a young man, who was living with his grandmother, and was also having some challenges being away from his parents. Jonathan found out that he wanted to play football. He was able to use the funds provided by the Foster Youth

Fund to pay for the young man’s fee for playing as well as his gear. Jonathan stated, “the kids were able to participate in an empowering activity that allowed them to feel good about themselves and in my opinion, contributed positively to their emotional and physical well-being.”

In closing, Jonathan wanted to thank everyone who has contributed to the Foster Youth Fund because he has witnessed how the funds have made a difference in the lives of youth in foster care.

## Mae Louise Mays Tournament

ONE OF THE MANY EVENTS affected by COVID-19 this year was the San Francisco Foster Youth Fund’s annual Mae Louise Softball Tournament.

This would have been the 31st Softball Tournament, initially scheduled for June 20th, postponed until August and eventually canceled until 2021. The tournament was greatly missed as Moscone field was empty, the players did not get to wear their team’s bright colored t-shirts supporting the SFFYF and worst of all, we were not able to raise funds for the most vulnerable children and youth of San Francisco.

The SFFYF did receive close to \$800.00 from a virtual challenge made by the Team Captain of the San Francisco Muni team, Drew Howard. The challenge was made to the other Team Captains to have their teams donate money to the SFFYF on June 20th, our scheduled game day. A warm thanks to Drew Howard for initiating the challenge and to the teams and players that donated to support ua. With much optimism, we hope to see all of our City teams back again next year for the tournament, hitting home runs all day long!



## Graduate Spotlight: Kenneth T.



**KENNETH'S SIGNATURE SMILE BEAMS** as he shares the news of his graduation from Cal State Los Angeles with his friends and family. Kenneth, a 4-year recipient of the San Francisco Foster Youth Fund Scholarship, attended CSULA while pursuing a BA in Pan-African studies. While on campus, Kenneth was active in the Black Student Union and volunteered with College Spring, a program that supports students to prepare for the SAT and ACT tests.

The road to college was not an easy one for Kenneth. Placed in foster care at birth, he was raised by his Aunt, who he lovingly calls "mommy". He was her only child, and it showed. She was his rock, his protector and his constant cheerleader. She was a strong advocate for Kenneth and a proponent of education. Shortly before leaving for his first semester of college, his mother unexpectedly passed away. Kenneth was grieving and when thinking about leaving for college in a few short weeks, he was filled with unanswered questions. "Who will cheer me on?", "who will I call?", "where will I go when school is closed?". Despite this immense loss, Kenneth did not hesitate to let everyone know he would still be attending college in a few short weeks because, "Mommy wouldn't have it any other way", and from there, he dedicated himself to obtaining his degree, not only for himself, but to honor his mother and make her proud.

Currently, Kenneth is volunteering with City Year, a leadership development program, in San Jose, California. He serves as a tutor, working with students from under-resourced schools in the area. He gives students the extra support they need to graduate, and become college and career ready.

He has also been exploring various Masters in Social Work programs, focusing on Child Welfare, as he is interested in supporting other foster youth in reaching their full potential. He anticipates returning to school in 2021.

When asked about how the SFFYF Scholarship helped him Kenneth said: "It took a lot of weight off my shoulders and helped with unforeseen expenses. It allowed me to be fully engaged with my academics, active on campus, and involved in student organizations. Without the scholarship, accomplishing this (obtaining his degree) would have been much harder."

## Scholarship Corner

**THE SF FOSTER YOUTH FUND SCHOLARSHIP**, distributes over 30 awards each semester to foster youth pursuing higher education. This scholarship goes directly to the youth to help offset the costly needs of being a student. Most youth in foster care have a desire to attend college, but compared to their counterparts not in care, they are less likely to reach this goal. With their focus on self-sustainability, and often lacking in a strong support network, they are motivated to join the workforce instead to ensure they can meet their needs. Our scholarship recipients are breaking barriers and defying the statistics of less than 10% of foster youth who attend college, obtain their degree. 90% of the SFFYF scholarship recipients are on track to graduate, in part due to the support of donors like yourselves. The students across the board report that this scholarship provides a weight off their shoulders, which allows them to fully concentrate on their studies and reach graduation.

This year, because of donors like yourself, we are honored to celebrate 5 recipient graduates with the Class of 2020.

- ◆ Kenneth T. | B.A. in Pan-African Studies | Cal State Los Angeles
- ◆ Hope H. | B.A. in Sociology | Biola University
- ◆ Angelica M. | B.A. in Latina/Latino Studies, minor Race & Resistance | SF State University
- ◆ Beyza C. | B.A. in Global Studies/Political Science | CSU Channel Island
- ◆ Nick T. | B.S. in Mechanical Engineering | Sacramento State University

Your generous donations continue to support students at: UC Berkeley, SF State, UC Merced, Claremont McKenna College, Sacramento State, University of Hawaii, CSU Channel Islands, Skyline College, UC Davis, UC Santa Cruz, San Diego State, San Jose State, City College of San Francisco, Biola University, Brigham Young, Lone Star College, Bellevue College, Cal State LA, Cal State Monterey, Napa Valley College, UC Santa Barbara.

## Combined Charities

The SFFYF has always relied on the generosity of the employees of the City and County of San Francisco. The annual City Employees Combined Charities Campaign allows employees and retirees the opportunity to donate either by payroll deduction or one-time check to their favorite causes. In 2019, 15.7% of the San Francisco Foster Youth Fund donations came through this campaign, amounting to over \$24,000, a significant portion of our total income.

The Combined Charities forms are distributed in October. You can support foster children by writing "San Francisco Foster Youth Fund" in the **America's Best Local Charities** section of the form. Our charity number is **L2408**. Please contact Eric Hoberg at (415) 557-5378 or [eric.hoberg@sfgov.org](mailto:eric.hoberg@sfgov.org) with questions. The Fund's Board, and the youth we support, are deeply grateful to city workers and retirees.



## SFFYF Face Coverings

The SFFYF now has face coverings with our logo on them available for purchase! They sell for \$15.00 each or 2 for \$25.00 and come in black and blue fabric colors. The face coverings are a one size fits all, so they may need a bit of adjusting depending on your face size.

To place an order, email Kelly Bunce ([kelly.bunce@sfgov.org](mailto:kelly.bunce@sfgov.org)) or Gloria Samayoa ([gloria.samayoa@sfgov.org](mailto:gloria.samayoa@sfgov.org)). You can pay on our website via a donation with a credit card or by cash, check or venmo to Kelly. Gloria has kindly volunteered to do free delivery in SF for all orders over \$50. This is a total win-win. Stay safe and support foster youth at the same time! Hurry and place your order before they are gone!



## The Foster Youth Fund Is on Facebook

Join our page on Facebook! Just type the Fund's name in the Facebook search box to find us. The more people that join and spread the word, the more support we can gather.

## Clean Out Your Garage, Help Foster Kids

The Fund has registered with the Community Thrift Store at 623 Valencia Street, San Francisco as a designated charity. Please donate and shop! Request that your sales benefit SFFYF.

## Visit the Fund's Website!

Want to know about the San Francisco Foster Youth Fund? Visit us at [sffosteryouthfund.org](http://sffosteryouthfund.org) for more photos, stories and information about our annual events. It also offers a secure and convenient way you can donate online anytime.

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(PLEASE DETACH AND RETURN)



## I Support San Francisco Foster Youth!

Yes, I will participate in the online auction, Please send me a link to the email/phone number provided below.  
(You can also visit our auction website on your own at [SFFosterYouthFund.ejoinme.org/2020](http://SFFosterYouthFund.ejoinme.org/2020))

No, I am unable to participate in the auction, but will help with a donation of \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

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Please mail your check and this form to:  
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