

## Roots and Wings county foster care program receives continued funding

By Kara Guzman Santa Cruz Sentinel Santa Cruz Sentinel

Posted:

SantaCruzSentinel.com

---

APTOS -- Children in foster care in Santa Cruz County will receive continued support toward finding permanent homes.

Roots and Wings, a foster family recruitment and support program funded by a five-year federal health and human services grant, announced Friday that the Santa Cruz County Human Services Department would assume funding responsibilities.

Five full-time staff salaries will be added to the county budget when the program's grant expires Sept. 30, said program manager Melissa Delgadillo at a luncheon for local child welfare leaders.

Since the program's start, the number of adoptions for county foster children has increased at least 11 percent each year, according to county Human Services Department annual reports.

Delgadillo said she attributes the consistent yearly increase to work groups with adoption workers and foster families that prioritized faster tracks toward permanent adoption.

Some foster parents are reluctant to release their children because the children are stable and doing well in school, said Delgadillo.

"Our job is to get these kids in homes," Delgadillo said.

The program also has focused on recruiting foster parents from Live Oak and Watsonville, areas from which most foster children come, according to Delgadillo.

"The trauma to the kids isn't just being removed from their parents, it's so much more," said Delgadillo, who said that keeping foster children in the same schools helps reduce the shock.

The program partnered with Live Oak Family Resource Center and Watsonville's La Manzana resource center to support foster families in these areas.

Foster families could go to program liaisons with their needs, such as clothing, school supplies or community connections, said Anastasia Torres-Gil, family resource specialist.

According to Torres-Gil, the county does not have enough foster homes for teenagers.

Roots and Wings holds informational meetings on foster parenting on the first Wednesday of each month, and Torres-Gil said that the program recruits foster parents from diverse backgrounds.

"We have people who are young, old, married, single, gay, renters and homeowners," Torres-Gil said. "A stable and loving home, that's what matters."

Follow Sentinel reporter Kara Guzman at [Twitter.com/Karambutan](https://twitter.com/Karambutan)

## If You Go

### Roots and Wings Orientation

WHAT: Foster parenting and adoption information

WHEN: 6-9 p.m. Oct. 2

WHERE: Live Oak Family Resource Center, 1740 17th Ave., Santa Cruz

INFORMATION: Call 831-345-2700, email [fostercare@fostercare4kids.com](mailto:fostercare@fostercare4kids.com) or visit [www.fostercare4kids.com](http://www.fostercare4kids.com)