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Our Mission: To provide safe homes, healing and healthy environments and encouraging youth empowerment.

The Heartbeat

The Official Newsletter of The Heart Matters Foster Family Agency

Around the Agency

Here we GROW again!

The Heart Matters has been quickly growing these last couple months and would like to introduce you to our new group of employees.

Kaitlyn Keefe – Corporate Relations

Katrina Jimenez – Mental Health

Chris Myers – Compliance

Tyiesha Coulson – Transitional Housing

Rachel Ramirez – Office Support

Tiana Gates – Social Work

Monique Bautista – Social Work

Ashely Cusack – Accounting

Kaitlyn Keefe



Katrina Jimenez



Chris Myers



Tyiesha Coulson



Rachel Ramirez



Tiana Gates



Monique Bautista



Ashely Cusack



Since joining the team, this wonderful group of people have assisted with helping our transitional aged youth, planned events, assisted with compliance activities, and helped our children in many other ways. We cannot be more grateful for them joining our family here at The Heart Matters Foster Family Agency.

Summer Fun in the Sun!



Our summer event was a wonderful time for all! Our amazing vendors helped put together an unforgettable day for our youth. This event included horseback rides, face painting, line dancing, a churro truck, snow cones, cornhole, a relay, and raffles with incredible prizes for all our families to win! We were so blessed to be able to see all your smiling faces again and thank everyone who helped come together to make this Summer Smash one to remember!

****Adoption Spotlight****

*Our hearts are full of joy as we proudly announce
our recently adopted children!!!*

*“A family isn’t made from blood; it’s made from love.”
-Unknown*



Kamryn Jean Guevara
Adopted by The Guevara Family

Agency Spotlight -The Heart Matters Transitional Housing Program

The Heart Matters was able to fulfill a long-time dream by launching our Transitional Housing Program. The main office is located in Suite 11 of the 21935 complex in Grand Terrace. Since its launch in June, this program has grown exponentially. We currently have 6 participants living in apartments located across the Inland Empire. The participants of this program are provided fully furnished apartments, assistance in furthering their education and careers, as well as independent living skills courses.

Our Transitional Housing Program assists current or former foster youth between the ages of 18 – 21 years old throughout their journey towards adulthood. If you need Transitional Assistance or have questions, please contact your agency social worker, or call our office for more information regarding the help that is available to you.



Employee Spotlight

We would like to CONGRATULATE and applaud our hard-working staff – Kyndle Crigler. She has gone above and beyond in every aspect. Kyndle has been out in the heat conducting Equine Therapy with our children, setting up group therapy paint and sips, helping move in young adults within our Transitional Housing Program, all while keeping up with the children on her foster care case load! She has truly been superwomen these past couple months.

Staff here enjoy her presence and energy. From the moment she arrives, Kyndle's joy and laughter can be heard throughout the halls at The Heart Matters. We are truly grateful to have Kyndle as part of The Heart Matters family.



Tips for Parents

5 of the best strategies to improve your child's nutrition and encourage smart eating habits:

1. Have regular family meals.
2. Serve a variety of healthy foods and snacks.
3. Be a role model by eating healthy yourself.
4. Avoid battles over food
5. Involve kids in the process.



Credit: Sharomka/SHUTTERSHOCK

“In the end, nothing is more important than the health and well-being of our children.”

Michelle Obama

How to Grow a Healthy Gut

4 Ways to help your child establish a healthy tummy.

1. Read Labels in the Dairy Case
Make sure yogurt has strains of “live active cultures” aka probiotics.
2. Pick Cold Pickles
Fermented foods also contain probiotics, but those which are not produced through fermentation or are pasteurized, kill the healthy bacteria.
3. Swap Cereal for Oatmeal
The friendly bacteria in your child's large intestine thrive on fermentable fiber (also known as prebiotic fiber), which can be found in unprocessed oats and barley.
4. Pack Cold Pasta for Lunch
When you boil and chill pasta, it increases the amount of resistant starch, a type of fiber that your body has difficulty digesting, so more of it makes its way to the good bacteria in your gut.

Gall Crescl, Ph.D., R.D. “4 Ways to Grow a Healthy Gut.” Parents.com

How & Why to Get Children Moving Now

ESSENTIAL BENEFITS

Mental health

Physical activity has a small but significant effect on the mental health of children and adolescents ages 6 to 18, according to a review of 114 studies. On average, young people who exercise more have lower levels of depression, stress and psychological distress, and higher levels of positive self-image, life satisfaction and psychological well-being (Rodriguez-Ayllon, M., et. al., Sports Medicine, Vol. 49, No. 9, 2019). Exercise may also protect children's mental health over time: One study found that 6- to 8-year-olds who got more exercise had fewer symptoms of major depressive disorder two years later (Zahl, T., et. al., Pediatrics, Vol. 139, No. 2, 2017).

Behavior

Regular exercise can improve behavior, including those with behavioral health disorders like autism, attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder, anxiety, and depression. In a study of children with behavioral health disorders in kindergarten through 10th grade, those who participated in a cycling program for 30-40 minutes 2 days a week experienced significantly better self-regulation and fewer disciplinary time-outs (Bowling, A., et. al., Pediatrics, Vol. 139, No. 2, 2017).

Attention and academic performance

In the short term, children are better able to pay attention after they've been physically active, according to a review of research in children ages 6 to 12. And kids who are regularly active over the long term have better academic performance, on average (de Greeff, J.W., et. al. Journal of Science and Medicine in Sport, Vol. 21, No. 5, 2018).

Cognitive development

Exercise and physical fitness are linked to better thinking skills. An analysis of studies in children ages 7 to 12 found regular exercise was linked to a small but measurable improvement in executive function, the set of skills used for learning, solving problems and self-control (Jackson, W. Journal of Neurosurgical Anesthesiology, Vol. 28, No. 4, 2016). A review of research in children under age 5 also found preliminary evidence that physical activity may benefit cognitive development in early childhood (Carson, V., et. al., Journal of Science and Medicine in Sport, Vol. 19, No. 7, 2016).

HERE ARE SEVEN STRATEGIES TO GET YOU STARTED:

1. **Stay safe.** It's important to move safely, especially during this public health crisis. "Physical distancing continues to be important, and you should also consider the risk of accidental injury," Reynolds says. "Make sure you're watching children around streets and driveways and monitor them whenever climbing is involved."
2. **Walk the walk.** Kids are more likely to exercise when they see caregivers being active. "That doesn't mean you have to do the same activities as your child, but modeling physical activity is a really important motivator for kids and teens," says Reynolds. You'll likely find it helps you, too. "Instead of thinking of exercise as an extra thing you have to do, it can help to think of movement as one of the coping skills we can use to get through this time," she adds.
3. **Make it a family affair.** You'll all benefit--and probably get less push-back from kids---if you make exercise part of your family's routine. "When taking a daily walk together is just something we do as a family, it becomes non-negotiable," Santos says.
4. **Find the hook.** Figure out what activities your child is most likely to enjoy. If you have competitive teens, make it a challenge to see who takes the most steps in a day. If your child loves music, find some dance videos to wiggle to. Exercise should be fun, especially for kids.
5. **Consider rewards.** Rewards can motivate kids to move. Younger kids might be inspired by small daily prizes like stickers in exchange for active time. Older kids might benefit from working toward a weekly activity goal, with prizes like picking the film for movie night, or 30 minutes of extra screen time.
6. **Start slow.** If your family isn't used to exercising regularly, start with small goals. Instead of forcing your kids to do an hourlong exercise video, plan a few 10-minute breaks throughout the day to stretch or walk. As it becomes routine, you can increase the time and intensity.
7. **Forget perfect.** Any movement is better than none, so don't throw up your hands if your kids don't achieve the recommended 60 minutes a day. "We have to be realistic. This isn't normal times, and the last thing we want to do is put pressure on ourselves to be perfect," Santos says. "We know any physical activity is helpful, so just do your best."



*Carrie Mathews, MPA
Executive Director*

Dear Amazing Families,

While COVID-19 has changed our lives over the last year and a half, things have finally begun to seem more normal. We are proud to be out in the community again and return to hosting our annual events for our foster youth and families.

With that said, The Heart Matters does not discount the rise of the DELTA Variant and will continue to be diligent about providing our homes with supplies, guidance, and resources for managing this unprecedented time. We will continue to follow CDC Guidelines when providing any in-home care, as well as throughout our offices, to ensure everyone's safety.

Many of our youth have returned to in-person classes which has resulted in new concerns and precautions in the home and at school. Our amazing resource parents and staff have gone above and beyond to guarantee our children are prepared and successful throughout this next school year by providing clothing, shoes, back packs, and school supplies. Our mental health team has been diligently working with children and families to address any concerns or anxiety resulting from the return to school as well.

As we approach the holiday season, our staff will be working to assure a wonderful holiday season for our foster youth and families by requesting wish lists and sending out many reminders about all the wonderful things happening here at The Heart Matters. I do want to inform you that our donors may be a little different this year; therefore, we may have some new requests on the wish lists. We appreciate your feedback and input as the youth fill out their wish lists and look forward to working with each of you to make sure our youth have a wonderful holiday season.

We are extremely grateful to have resource parents who have stepped up during these critical times, focusing on the health of our families and going above and beyond. You have been constant in the lives of children. We are deeply appreciative and thankful for your devotion and commitment to the children you parent and welcome into your family. We see your contributions and effort and want to reassure you that we will get through this together.

Most Gratefully & Humbly
with Love,

Carrie
♡♡♡

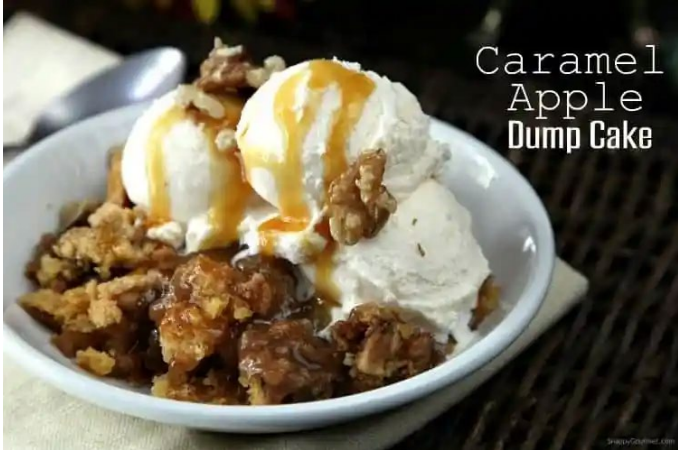
Recipe of the Month

Caramel Apple Dump Cake by Snappy Gourmet

Ingredients

- 6 cups apple peeled, cored, finely chopped (about 3 large apples)
- 1 cup caramel ice cream topping
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon
- 2 cups walnuts
- 15.25 ounces yellow cake mix (1 box, do not prepare)
- 1/2 cup melted unsalted butter (or more see notes)

Serves 12 - 16
Prep Time 10 minutes
Cooking Time 1 hour



Instructions

- Preheat oven to 350 degrees F. Spray a 13x9-inch baking dish with nonstick spray.
- Pour apples into a single layer into prepared pan. Drizzle caramel on top of apples. Sprinkle cinnamon on top then spoon walnuts on top in even layer.
- Sprinkle cake mix on top so that apple mixture is completely covered. Drizzle melted butter on top. (Add more butter if necessary to cover all dry spots, see notes at bottom.)
- Bake dump cake at 350 degrees F for 45-60 minutes or until golden brown. Serve warm or cold. Store in refrigerator.

Notes

You do not have to chop walnuts, but you can if you want. You can use more melted butter on top if the cake mix still appears dry (or you can mix the 1/2 cup butter and 1/2 cup of milk and pour on top). Make sure the apples are chopped into very small cubes so they can cook through.

Instead of caramel topping you could use butterscotch. Instead of walnuts you could use pecans or your favorite nut or omit entirely. Instead of cinnamon you could substitute apple pie spice.



“Sometimes the heart sees what is invisible to the eye.”

The Heart Matters Foster Family Agency
21935 Van Buren St, Suite A-1
Grand Terrace, CA 92313
909-906-1023

www.heartmattersffa.org
Lic.#366427925

