

Locals prepare to help Central Coast foster kids

In preparation for National Child Abuse Prevention Month in April, on Wednesday, March 29, Central Coast residents will participate in the official kickoff event for Family Care Network's third Annual Miracle Miles for Kids 10K walk/run. The Kickoff will be held at Fitness Works in Morro Bay located at 500 Quintana Rd., from 1:30-3:30 pm.

The event will feature a story and photo opportunity including the California Coast Guard, Morro Bay Fire Department, health club members, and local foster parent heroes making a difference in the lives of central coast foster youth by training for the 10K.

Community members will have the opportunity to talk with FCNI's executive director, FCNI staff and mentors, as well as foster parents who currently work with special needs kids and families. Though foster parenting is a long term commitment, anybody and everybody can help by training and running the race.

FCNI foster parent Maureen Barazza Nettles has cared for over 50 children during the past 17 years and has a proven record of making a positive difference in the lives she has touched. One of Maureen's

former foster children who is now a mother herself commented "I would not know how to raise my child if I had not lived in [Maureen's] home."

Statewide, 97,261 children were placed in foster care in 2003, due to parental abuse or neglect and at least 50 percent of children who have "aged out" of foster care end up either homeless or incarcerated. These facts indicate that FCNI's presence on the central coast is vital. FCNI serves over 1,200 children, youth and families annually through programs including juvenile delinquency prevention, family preservation, foster care, and independent living for older teens.

Miracle Miles for Kids, scheduled for April 29, is FCNI's largest fund-raiser of the year. The funds raised through MMFK directly support FCNI's continued support to those who so desperately need it. MMFK's 6.2 mile course runs along the water's edge from Morro Rock to the Cayucos Pier.

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Submitted by FCNI