



## ASIAN FOSTER FAMILY INITIATIVE



### **The issue: Filipino Children in the Los Angeles County Foster Care System**

In any given month, there are nearly 200 Filipino children in the Los Angeles County foster care system. **There are more Filipino children than any other Asian children in the system.** (Source: Department of Children and Family Services, Ethnicity Report, Average of April 2017 and November 2016)

It is too early to quantify the effects of the coronavirus pandemic on families or on the number of children going into the foster system, but child welfare professionals across the country are deeply concerned about widespread financial trouble, acute emotional stress, and domestic violence behind closed doors—factors that lead to children ending up in the foster system.

As much as possible, the LA County foster system places children in homes with families of the same background. Children tend to adjust exponentially better if they are placed with a family that looks like them, speaks their language, and eats their food.

Take \*David's story, for example. Three-year-old David grew up in a Korean immigrant family. David lost his entire family in a tragic accident. He was the only survivor. Child protective services could not find any relatives in the U.S. nor any available Korean resource (foster) family to take him in. So, David was placed in a non-Korean home that only spoke English. Not able to adjust to the cultural differences, David stopped eating and speaking. By the time he was moved to a third home, David lost his ability to speak his native language. His third foster mom learned to make Kimbap, which David ate for every meal for an entire month. After that, David has since much more easily adjusted and was eventually adopted.

**There is an acute need for Filipino resource (foster) homes.** With little Filipino homes available, Filipino children are placed in non-Filipino homes, making an already traumatic experience much more difficult for Filipino foster children.

### **The Asian Foster Family Initiative (AFFI)**

The Asian Foster Family Initiative (AFFI) recruits, trains, and supports individuals and families who are interested in becoming resource families to prepare them to foster and/or foster-to-adopt. AFFI seeks to increase the number of certified foster parents of Asian Pacific Islander descent, to ensure children who are put in the foster system are cared for as best as possible before they are reunited with their families or adopted.

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### Frequently Asked Questions

#### *What is a foster child?*

A foster child is one who has been taken into the custody of government protective services for experiencing neglect or abuse, and isn't currently safe staying with their birth family. Foster children are aged anywhere from days old up to 17 years of age.

#### *What is a resource (foster) family?*

A resource or foster family takes in a foster child to temporarily provide them a loving, safe, and nurturing home.

#### *How long does a foster child stay with a resource family?*

It can range from just the weekend, to a couple months or longer, depending on the child's situation and the Resource Family's wish. Typically, children stay temporarily until they can be reunified with their family. Some Resource Families also adopt foster children or become permanent legal guardians if the child cannot be reunified with their birth family.

#### *What is the process of becoming a resource parent?*

An individual can become a resource parent in as little as six months. They will attend orientation, Resource Family training, become CPR/First Aid certified, among other things. Throughout the process, they will be supported by AFFI.

#### *What about financial support?*

Foster children receive medical and dental coverage from LA County. Resource families will be given a stipend to provide for the child's needs.

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