

Santa Barbara Independent

iFoster Event Connects Foster, Adoptive, Kinship Communities in Ventura County to Valuable Resources

10:00 AM | Saturday Sep 27, 2014

Research from the Children's Bureau has shown that relative and foster caregivers are not receiving services and resources that are available to them. These vital services help foster families and kinship families (grandparents or relatives raising other family member's children) close the gap between the costs of raising children and the needed services and programs they are eligible for such as educational support, health coverage, parenting help, child care and more. Often foster and kinship families are not aware of how to access to this support. iFoster, a nonprofit organization, comes into various communities and offers kinship and foster families an online portal to these needed services that can be educational and life-changing tools for vulnerable children and youth in their care.

On Saturday, Sept. 27 from 10 a.m.-noon at All Saints Episcopal Church in Oxnard, in partnership with Ventura County Human Services Agency (VCHSA), iFoster will host a Ventura County iFoster Resource Fair; partially supported by the United Ways of California kinship navigator project, and funded through Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Children's Bureau grant. Foster, adoptive and kinship caregivers (both formal and informal) in Ventura County will gain additional knowledge, support and connection to free and discounted services available to them through the launch of a new online, self-service resource portal called the iFoster Resource Portal, <http://www.ifoster.org/Registration.aspx>.

In addition, the Ventura County iFoster Resource Portal will eventually include local partners who will be offering support and resources to youth and caregivers with both local and national retail discounts. Ventura County businesses that offer this support will soon be identified as such, and receive special signage identifying them as support businesses for this program. The local business and support partners are being developed by VCHSA's division of Children and Family services and iFoster.

"Our goal is to help provide critical resources and support to foster and adoptive families in the community," said Barry L. Zimmerman Director of Human Services Agency of Ventura County. "With 1 in 11 children in the U.S. living in foster or kinship care, families don't always know where to turn for help financially or emotionally. We're excited to see the launch of the iFoster Resource Portal and to have it supported by a local Ventura County collaborative made up of iFoster, VCHSA and community partners. This ensures that more families will receive the assistance and support they need."

During the event from 10 a.m.-noon on Saturday, Sept. 27 at All Saints Episcopal Church, families will learn more about the resources in the portal and have an opportunity to register. Some of the

resources included are: free online tutoring and homework help through Live Homework Help, discounted driver's training through Driversed.com, low cost orthodontics through Smiles Change Lives, support groups, clothing, food, recreational activities and more. To register on iFoster, visit www.iFoster.org and complete the short registration process. Any questions, call 855-936-7837.

Event Info:

What: Ventura County's iFoster Kick-off Event & Resource Fair

When: Saturday, September 27 from 10 a.m.- noon

Where: All Saints Episcopal Church, 144 South C Street, Oxnard, Calif. 93030

Space is limited. To confirm your attendance, RSVP's are encouraged as soon as possible at 805-654-3220.

<http://www.independent.com/events/#/event/3298447?location=93101-santa-barbara§ions=all&date=today>