



County of Los Angeles
DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES

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BRANDON T.
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Interim Director

June 17, 2022



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To Whom It May Concern,

I am honored to write this letter of support for the nonprofit organization, Hope in a Suitcase. As the name suggests, the organization has provided hope to numerous foster children. Children often enter the foster system with little to no clothing. This not only hinders the child but, places strain on the resource family. Although the Department makes efforts to acquire placement essentials, we are not always successful. Hope in a Suitcase has been invaluable in bridging this gap. As a Continuing Services, social worker, I have personally witnessed the positive impact of receiving new clothes. Since 2019, Hope in a Suitcase has provided new clothing, shoes, toiletries, toys and luggage for 41 children on my (ever changing) caseload. Receiving clothes from Hope in a Suitcase, has enhanced the self-esteem and boosted the confidence of nearly every child. Removing the worry about clothing allows caregivers the ability to focus on the emotional needs of the child.

Keeping children safe and clothed requires a communal effort. Hope in a Suitcase is a pivotal part of the community. During the initial stages of the Covid 19 pandemic, Hope in a Suitcase was the only agency readily available for social workers in South Los Angeles County. When all other places shut their doors, Hope in a Suitcase took the necessary precautions to remain available. During this time, the agency provided clothing, blankets, toiletries and toys for 16 children on my caseload. Since then, they have continued to be the only organization to provide new clothing and shoes.

Teens love the boutique at Hope in a Suitcase because they have the opportunity to shop for new clothing in a safe space. With so many other things being out of their control, picking out their own items gives them some control. The agency helps to provide normalcy at a time when everything else is different. In addition to providing items as needed, Hope in a Suitcase hosts clothing events, multiple times per year. Over the past three years, I have referred over 30 children to these events. The feedback from the youth (who have attended) has been overwhelmingly positive. The youth love the selection of clothes and shoes. The caregivers enjoy that the volunteers are kind, patient and helpful.

Hope in a Suitcase has changed the lives of countless foster children. The importance of giving a child a choice on the way that look is immeasurable. This simple act has the ability to set them up for future success. It is respectfully requested that funding continue so that the organization can continue their mission to meet the needs of foster children and teens.

Respectfully,

Marlene Halsey
Marlene Halsey

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"To Enrich Lives Through Effective and Caring Service"