

# REACH

Tulare  
County

*Resource Education Advocacy Crisis Intervention Hope*

*Aspiranet and Tulare County Post-Adoption Support*



Fall 2011

## REACH Pre & Post Adoption Services Program

Hello again from REACH Tulare County! You may have noticed some staff changes in recent months. While Marji Peterson, MFT Intern, and Shamra Tripp LCSW, continue to provide direct services and oversee our program, Mandi Lewis, MSW, and Susie Romero, BA, have joined our team. Mandi is co-facilitating support groups and working with children available for adoptive placement, and Susie is providing administrative support. Welcome Mandi and Susie!



### ADOPTION DAY

Celebrating a Family for Every Child

waiting for permanent, loving homes. For the past 12 years, usually on the Saturday before Thanksgiving, courts, judges, attorneys, adoption professionals, child welfare agencies and advocates have worked together to finalize thousands of adoptions on National Adoption Day, as well as recognize all adoptive families.

This year REACH is partnering with Tulare County Adoptions to celebrate National Adoption Day on November 1st, 6:30 to 8:30pm at Roller Towne in Visalia. Families who have adopted within the last year are invited to attend. A demonstration by a local roller derby group is planned, and pizza will be served between 6:30 and 7:30 PM. Also there will be a clown, face painting, family photos, raffle prizes and games for children and youth. Please contact your Tulare County Adoptions Social Worker or REACH if you have questions. If you are interested in helping plan or coordinate this event, please contact Marji Peterson or Mandi Lewis @ 559-741-7358.

**In This Issue:** One of the primary functions of the REACH program is linking families to adoption competent services. Since its inception in 2007, REACH has collaborated with many agencies and professionals to address the needs of local adoptive families and individuals. To that end we are listing family service agencies and resources in the fall 2011 newsletter. Additionally, we are including a list of low cost activities for your family to enjoy. If you are looking for an adoption service provider, don't hesitate to call REACH and ask for a referral. In the meantime, think about attending a support group, exploring our lending library, or scheduling an appointment for crisis or support counseling. Check our website at [REACHtularecounty.org](http://REACHtularecounty.org) for more about REACH.

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### Your REACH Tulare County Support Team

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# NEED HELP?

Is your adoptive child exhibiting any of the following behaviors?

- **Frequent running away**
- **Sexualized behavior**
- **Posttraumatic stress disorder**
- **Aggressive/assaultive behavior**
- **Oppositional/defiant behavior**
- **Self-injurious behavior**
- **One or more hospitalizations in a Mental Health facility**
- **Substance use disorder**
- **Fire starter**
- **Minor criminal behavior**
- **School behavior/ truancy problems**
- **Beyond control of parents and/or primary care adults**
- **Mild Developmental disorder not recognized by a Regional Center**

If so, we can help!

The REACH program can connect adoptive families to services that can help. Some of the services available to your family include Therapeutic Behavior Services (TBS) and Tulare County Wraparound.

TBS is an intensive one-to-one behavioral mental health service. The service is available to parents/caregivers of children/youth who experience serious emotional challenges. Tulare County Wraparound provides high-risk youth and their families an alternative to group home care.

Wraparound is a family-centered, strength-based, needs-driven philosophy promoting the reestablishment of at-risk youth and families into community support systems.

## Central Valley Regional Center

The Central Valley Regional Center is a private, nonprofit corporation funded by the state of California to provide services to persons with developmental disabilities.

Developmental disabilities, as defined in state law, include mental retardation, cerebral palsy, epilepsy, and autism, in addition to conditions similar to mental retardation or requiring similar treatment.

Regional Centers provide services to anyone who is suspected of having a developmental delay or disability, or anyone who is parenting a developmentally disabled child.

Referrals may be made by parents, doctors, teachers, relatives, friends, or individuals themselves. Parents or guardians of minors must give approval for the referral.

The Regional Center provides diagnosis, evaluation, and case management through its own staff. It also acts as a "coordinator" of services, which are available to the developmentally disabled from other agencies in the community. The Center does not provide all services. Many are purchased from specialists or agencies in the community.

Are you concerned about your child's development? Many adopted children with histories of maltreatment experience developmental delays. If your child: cannot walk without help by age 2, doesn't speak in short sentences by age 4, has poor body balance, has trouble playing with other children or other related problems, please contact REACH or a Central Valley Regional Center directly.

Fresno Office: 4615 N. Marty Ave. Fresno CA 93722 (559) 276-4300

Merced Office: 530 W. 16th St. Suite A, Merced CA 95340 (559) 738-2200

Visalia Office: 5441 W. Cypress, Visalia CA 93277 (209) 723-4245

[www.cvrc.org](http://www.cvrc.org)

## Child Abuse Prevention Council

The Tulare County Child Abuse Prevention Council (CAPC) is a private, not for profit community council whose primary purpose is to organize and oversee the community's efforts to prevent child abuse.

CAPC promotes public awareness of abuse and neglect and available resources by:

- 1) Overseeing services provided by public, community based and private agencies to abused and neglected children
- 2) Providing a forum for interagency cooperation, detection, treatment and legal processing of child abuse cases
- 3) Encouraging and facilitating training of professionals in detection, treatment and prevention of child abuse and neglect
- 4) Providing recommendations to the Tulare County Board of Supervisors for funding for local child abuse programs
- 5) Providing training for mandated child abuse reporters.

If you would like to support the activities of the Tulare County Child Abuse Prevention Council, please contact Billie Shawl, Program Coordinator @ [billieshawl@sbcglobal.net](mailto:billieshawl@sbcglobal.net).

# TULARE REACH SUPPORT GROUPS & WORKSHOPS

*For Tulare County adults and children touched by adoption*

**All Tulare County REACH Support Groups are held at the following location from 6:30-8:00pm**

Visalia YMCA 211 West Tulare Ave. Visalia

## Parent Retreat Support Group

Enrich your parenting by learning from experts and other adoptive parents! Held every **2nd & 4th Tuesday**, child care provided, training hours available. RSVP with Marji Peterson, MFT-I at 559-741-7358.

The 2nd Tuesday of the month is driven by an adoption related topic. Suggestions for specific topics are welcome. The 4th Tuesday of the month provides an open forum for parents to share their experiences with other adoptive parents.

*Only one meeting in November and December due to the holidays*

**Oct. 11** - Mini Workshop: Common Post Adoption Issues

**Oct. 25** - Parent Retreat Open Discussion

**Nov. 8** - Mini Workshop: Is It Adoption or Something Else?

**Dec. 13** - Mini Workshop: Adoption Stories & Life Books

## Waiting/In The Making Family Mixer

This mixer, held every **3rd Tuesday of the month**, is designed for parents who are considering adoption, awaiting adoptive placement or have children recently placed in their home.

**October 18th**

**November 15th**

**December 20th**

## Adopted Teen Mixer Support Group

**Currently, dates are scheduled for 1st AND 3rd Wednesdays** in October only. November and December dates to be determined due to the holidays.

This group is designed for adopted high school youth and their siblings. For more information and a screening interview please call Marji Peterson, MFTI at 559-741-7358.

**October 5th & 19th**

Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri
		Teens Mixer		
Hanford Group	Parent Retreat			
Oakhurst Group	Waiting/ in Making Family Mixer	Teens Mixer		
Madera Group	Parent Retreat			

## Adopted "Tween" Mixer Support Group

REACH is launching an Adopted "Tween" Support Group in October for Middle School Students. Please contact Marji Peterson, MFTI at 559-741-7358 for registration information.

## COS Foster & Adoption Workshops

The College of Sequoias Foster & Kinship Care Program offers trainings of interest to foster and adoptive parents at no charge. Register with Linda Paredes at (559)737-4842 or lindap@cos.edu.

### **Topics in October, November and December include:**

Parenting Kids Adopted through Foster Care; Bouncing Back: From Risk to Resilience; Sensory Processing Disorders; Essentials of Discipline (at various ages); Cutting & Self-Destructive Behavior; Bouncing Back: From Risk to Resilience; Depression, Suicide and the Holidays; and Memory Books.

## Adoption Support Groups In Nearby Communities

Call Kathy Steele, LCSW @ 559- 222-4969 Ext. 2626 if you are interested in attending any of these groups.

Hanford – 2nd Monday of the Month 5:30 to 7:30 PM

Oakhurst – 3rd Monday of the Month 5:30 to 7:30 PM

Madera – 4th Monday of the Month 5:30 to 7:30 PM

## Poem For Aidan

-AMA November 10th, 2004

Born first in my imagination  
With paper and pen  
Application, classes, fingerprints, and then

The call came in  
The Baby's here at last  
Forbidden to meet him until legalities pass

Three days hence and more papers signed  
I picked up our Angel  
His looks are divine

A smart little baby  
Such a beautiful boy  
Bringing us endless moments of joy

As the journey continues  
We learn more each day  
Couldn't be any better  
Our Aidan's here to stay!



# Tulare County Child/Family Serving Agencies Resource Guide

## After School Programs

Boys & Girls Clubs of Tulare  
www.bgclubtc.org  
559-625-4422

Cutler-Orosi Joint Unified  
School District  
559-528-6949

Grandma's House, Tulare  
559-687-0925

## Alcohol and Drug Programs

Central Valley Recovery  
Services  
559-733-6123

## Assault Prevention, Intervention & Treatment

Family Services of Tulare  
www.fstc.net  
559-741-7310

Rape Crisis  
www.fstc.net  
732-7273

Domestic Violence/Shelters  
www.fstc.net  
732-5941 or 685-9515



## Counseling/Mental Health for Children

Tulare Youth Services Bureau, Inc.  
www.tysb.org  
559-688-2043

Family Services of Tulare  
County  
www.fstc.net  
559-741-7310

Porterville Youth Services  
559-782-4165

Sequoia Youth Services  
559-594-4969

Visalia Youth Services  
559-627-1490

Dinuba Youth Services  
559-591-6880

Synchrony of Visalia, Inc.  
www.synchronyofvisalia.com  
559-622-1853

## Education

Foster & Kinship Care  
Education / Youth  
Empowerment  
559-737-4842

Tulare County Child Care  
Educational Program  
559-651-3026

Tulare County Office of  
Education Special Education  
559-730-2910, Ext. 5120

## Family Resource Centers

Cutler-Orosi Family  
Education Center  
559-528-1790

Visalia Parenting Network  
559-625-0384

Woodlake Family Resource  
Center  
559-564-5212

Earlimart Family Resource  
Center  
661-849-3505

Manuel Torrez Family  
Resource Center  
559-684-0581

## Mentoring

Big Brothers Big Sisters of  
Central California  
559-687-1108

Family Services of Tulare  
County  
www.fstc.net  
559-741-7310

## Resources/Food

Community Food Pantry  
661-849-2960

Food Link for Tulare County  
559-651-3663

## Respite Care

Parenting Network  
559-625-0384

## Transitional/Emergency Housing for Youth and Young Adults

Aspiranet  
www.aspiranet.org  
559-741-7358

CSET  
559-741-4651

## Adoption Friendly Websites

REACH staff and families frequent these websites for accurate and current adoption information.

**www.aap.org/fostercare** - This site is provided by the American Academy of Pediatrics, a nonprofit organization dedicated to achieving the optimal physical, mental, and social health of infants, children, adolescents, and young adults, with special emphasis on the improvement of health and well-being of children and teens in foster care.

**www.adoptionsupport.org** - This site is provided by The Center for Adoption Support and Education (C.A.S.E.). C.A.S.E., a private, non-profit adoptive family support center. Its programs focus on helping children from a variety of foster care and adoptive backgrounds to receive understanding and support which will enable them to grow into successful, productive adults.

**www.nacac.org** - This site is provided by the North American Council on Adoptable Children (NACAC). NACAC is a non-profit, broad-based coalition of volunteer adoptive parent support and citizen advocacy groups, caring individuals, and agencies committed to meeting the needs of waiting children in the United States and Canada.

**www.pactadopt.org** - This site is provided by Pact, a nonprofit organization that has developed a national reputation for excellence in serving all members of the adoption triad. Top priority is given to programs especially designed to support and inform adopted children and adults of color.

**www.childwelfare.gov/adoption** - This site is provided by the Child Welfare Information Gateway, which provides resources on all aspects of domestic and international adoption, with a focus on adoption from the U.S. foster care system.

**www.reachtularecounty.org** - This site is provided by REACH, a program designed to provide resources, education, advocacy, crisis intervention and support counseling, and hope to all persons touched by adoption in Tulare County.

## CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocates) of Tulare County

1146 No. Chinowth Street, Visalia  
559-625-3165 or 559-625-4007

CASA is a national association in the United States that supports, promotes and trains court-appointed advocates for abused or neglected children.

CASA's purpose is to provide children with safe and healthy environments in permanent homes. Currently there are more than 70,000 advocates serving in 1,018 state and local program offices nationwide.

CASA of Tulare County advocates speak for innocent children who are victims of abuse and neglect and voice their best interests in court. CASA is always looking for volunteers!



# Family Friendly Activities That *Won't* Break the Bank

By Mandi Lewis, MSW



## Bravo Lakes Botanical Gardens

200 E. Naranjo Blvd., Woodlake

Everyone both young and old will be touched by the simple pleasures of this beautiful site, which captures what the Central Valley is all about. You can take a stroll, jog, or simply sit and enjoy lush greens, stunning flowers, and juice-bursting fruits. This little piece of paradise symbolizes the love that Tulare County residents have for their home and natural resources. Development of the Gardens began in 2000 with a desire by Olga and Manuel Jimenez and the help of youth dubbed "Woodlake Pride".

## Farmer's Market

*Downtown Visalia on Thursday evenings  
Corner of Caldwell and Mooney in Visalia  
on Saturday mornings  
(559) 732-1478  
visaliafarmersmarket.com*

Come take advantage of what this fruitful valley has to offer. Choose from a wide selection of locally grown produce and handmade products. The Farmer's Market provides a great opportunity to teach children and youth the importance of healthy eating and sustainability, all the while supporting our local growers. Thursday evenings also offer live entertainment for addition family fun.

## Imagine U Interactive Children's Museum

700 E. Main St., Visalia  
(559) 733-5975  
imagineumuseum.org

Most of the Museum's activities and exhibits are designed for children Kindergarten to sixth grade. Their goal is to "create a multicultural learning center filled with hands-on scientific, culture, and artistic exhibits for the whole family." The Children's Museum offers a variety of events and exhibits that are educational and inexpensive. You and your little ones can experience Six Ways to Make Electricity, the Multilingual Market and more. These hands-on learning activities and are sure to boost bonding time for the whole family.

**And lastly, don't forget your local parks! You can jog, play catch, picnic, etc.**

***With school back in full swing and juggling soccer practice, parent-teacher conferences, homework, and everything in between, it's nice to take the family on a retreat, even if it's only a few hours on a weekend. With so many inexpensive family-friendly activities in Tulare County, there's no need to travel far. Here's a list of local things to do and places to go for family-bonding activities that don't bust your gasoline budget.***

## Enchanted Playhouse

307 E. Main, Visalia  
(559) 739-4600  
enchantedplayhouse.org

With a mission statement that promises to "enchant surprise, excite and amuse audiences, young and old" the Playhouse never fails to bring joy and laughter. It showcases different plays throughout the year thanks to wonderful volunteers. The Playhouse regularly auditions for upcoming plays; ages of actors vary by play. Whether you want to experience the joys of play watching or have your family lend their talents, the Enchanted Playhouse is sure to delight.

## Bravo Farms Cheese Factory

36055 Hwy 99, Traver  
1-868-898-MILK  
bravofarms.com

With the wooden store front, tattered wine barrels, and old-fashion tin signs, the entire family will be transported to simpler times. The Cheese Factory offers a café, cheese sampling, a shop to purchase nostalgic knick-knacks, and locally grown and manufactured foods. During certain times visitors are invited to witness cheese-making. The whole family will be charmed by this replica of an old western town.

## Arts Visalia

214 E. Oak Ave., Visalia  
(559) 739-0905  
artsvisalia.org

Come and see what local artists are creating or sign your child up for classes to create masterpieces of their own. Several different art classes are available for children, starting at age three, up to adults. Admission is free and classes are reasonably priced with scholarships offered for those who qualify.

## International Agri-Center

4450 S. Laspina St., Tulare  
heritagecomplex.com

Mostly known for their World Ag Expo and the California Antique Farm Equipment Show, this site also hosts events throughout the year. Go online to check out upcoming events. For example, free admission is available for the Ag Fest, which hosts many different games, activities, bounce houses, and pumpkin carving. They also feature a "Taste of Agriculture" with local chefs demonstrating healthy eating habits on the go. With so much going on, the Agri-Center offers activates children, teens, and parents will all enjoy.

## Central California Chinese Culture Center

500 S. Akers Street, Visalia  
(559) 625-4545

It's inspiring to see what a huge impact and contribution Chinese immigrants had on the growth of our golden state during the 19th Century. The Center displays their hardworking efforts and beautiful artistic contributions in a tranquil and educational setting. The Chinese Culture Center would best be appreciated by children in fourth grade and older.

## McDermont Field House

365 N. Sweetbriar Ave., Lindsay  
(559) 562-3326  
mcdermontfieldhouse.com

Laser tag, golfing, bounce houses, an aquatic center, skate park; you name it, they've got it. There are so many fun activities for families and individuals of all ages. Prices and times vary, so check their website, give them a call, or load up the family and swing by to discover all McDermont has to offer.

Aspiranet  
151 Canal Drive  
Turlock, CA 95380


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We're on the Web:  
[www.reachtularecounty.org](http://www.reachtularecounty.org)



ASPIRAnet  
Raising Hope. Empowering Community.



## Aspiranet and Tulare County Post-Adoption Support Services

**Resource:** We provide 1) telephone support & referral to local services 2) referral to local adoption related community trainings 3) linkage to local therapists with experience working with adoptive families 4) lending library and website access 5) quarterly newsletter which includes book reviews, and relevant adoption related information.

**Education:** Educational support groups and meetings are held twice a month and offer a variety of topics pertinent to adoption. In addition, access to the lending library and website offer many opportunities to learn more about adoption and the impact of adoption on all members of the triad (adoptive parents, adoptees and birth family).

**Advocacy:** We are here to help navigate common issues facing adoptive families. We assist adoptive parents with advocating for the assistance needed in working with educational, legislative and community partners to best meet their children's needs.

**Crisis Intervention/Case Management:** Participants are eligible to receive short-term therapeutic services, free of charge, by master's level social workers who are trained and experienced in adoption-related issues. Families are also eligible to receive in-home case management services as needed. Spanish translation services are provided.

**Hope:** We utilize our agency values of Respect, Integrity, Courage & Hope (RICH) to guide our work with adoptive families. Our goal is to promote safe, healthy and stable adoptive families through access to our services.