

SPONSOR SPOTLIGHT

Mountain Circle Family Services—Submitted by Josie Litchfield

Mountain Circle Family Services, Inc. is a non-profit community based organization, committed to ensuring stability and life sustaining changes for foster and adoptive children. Since 1986, Mountain Circle (MC) has supported over 2,000 children and families in their journey to a healthier future. Our approach is simple: Offer the best possible training to foster families, provide 24/7 support by experienced social workers/mentors, and equip older foster youth with the skills they will need to be productive adults in the real world. We have offices in Susanville, Chico, and Greenville, CA (administrative headquarters) and in Reno, Nevada. Although MC is known primarily for foster care and adoption, we offer a number of unique programs that support our foster families and build leadership skills in older foster youth.

The Mountain Circle EAT HAPPY! Program: Delivers \$500 worth of healthy and delicious produce, meat, and dry goods to foster and adoptive families two times per month. Each Saturday, MC hosts a food packing party where clients meet at the Chico office and help to sort and deliver food to other participating families. Food for this program is paid for from independent fundraising and through a collaboration with the North State Food Bank. The value of EAT HAPPY! transcends a simple food delivery- working together, participants create and strengthen their relationships with MC Staff and support other foster/adoptive parents.

The Running with the Bears Marathon, Half Marathon, and 10K Race

The smallest Boston Qualifier in the U.S, and one of the few managed entirely by the charity it benefits. The Bears event provides a weekend-long opportunity for MC staff, volunteers, and foster families to practice an intense level of teamwork that translates to their everyday lives and work. Entering its fifth year, the race sold out four months in advance, with 500 runners flying in on August 14th from all over the world. “Logistically, this is a pretty tough race to put on” says Race Director Josie Litchfield, “there’s definitely a reason you don’t find Boston Qualifiers in small rural towns, but I think that’s what makes it so unique. We built the type of race that we’d want to run in ourselves; where our kids can also have a good time, where we can run alongside our dogs, and where there’s a great view at the finish line.” All proceeds from the weekend support the PowderQuest Program. Paramount to the success of this event is the continued support of local volunteers (who number nearly 100!), and Aid Station groups who are competing themselves to win \$3,000 for their own good causes.



Mountain Circle’s Inspiration House: A residential home in Susanville, CA for foster youth ages 16-21. Teens live side by side with an experienced house mentor and learn everyday life-skills such as grocery shopping and money management. In 2008, Mountain Circle created the ‘Nu-2-U’ Thrift Store and Job-Skills Training Center to provide Inspiration House residents with on-site vocational training. Our experience has shown that these types of collaborative programs are effective: 100% of the residents in the Inspiration House are employed or full-time students and some 67% remain so a year later – almost double the rate of more traditional foster care programs.



The PowderQuest Adventure Program: Outdoor leadership development for foster and adoptive youth. For teens who have faced unparalleled challenges and disadvantages, snow sports can provide a lifeline to a healthy form of play and healthy emotional development. Many of our youth have participated seven years in a row- becoming enthusiastic sports people and, more importantly, becoming mentors to Mountain Circle’s younger participants. A short video of this year’s trip can be seen here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=67X2BM1haew>

For more information contact Josie at 284-7007, or email jlitchfield@mountaincircle.org, or visit the websites: MountainCircle.Org and RunningwiththeBears.Org