



Family Matters

McKenna Pressley Reaches Peers as Human Trafficking Youth Ambassador



“Having a positive impact on other people is what matters most. Helping other people is going to help you in the long run.”

McKenna Pressley, an incoming senior at Redwood High School in Visalia, is determined to raise awareness about human trafficking and help survivors in her community. Her journey started last April, almost 8,000 miles away. She volunteered for three weeks at an orphanage in Thailand with children who had contracted HIV/AIDS as a result of sex trafficking.

Working with human trafficking survivors who were her own age was an eye-opener, and it inspired McKenna to learn more. Back home, she started researching human trafficking in the United States and was surprised to learn how often it happens, even here in Tulare County. McKenna reached out to Family Services' Freedom House about how she could get involved, and eventually agreed to become our first ever Human Trafficking Youth Ambassador.

“Sometimes it’s easier for youth to talk with other youth than with adults,” McKenna said. “I’m able to reach my peers, which is especially important because our age group is a big target for human trafficking.”

In her volunteer role, McKenna gives presentations to youth on human trafficking, including the warning signs, how to report suspicious activity, and resources for youth who might be at risk for being trafficked. This spring she organized a supply drive for Freedom House, collecting toiletries and hygiene supplies from students at Redwood. McKenna plans to expand her work in the upcoming school year by establishing a club for students who want to volunteer in human trafficking prevention and awareness efforts.

“McKenna is an example of how strong and important young people’s voices are,” said Family Services’ Program Manager Jennifer Boteelho. “Her passion for this work is what is going to change our culture and end human trafficking in the next generation.”

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Thank You! 10th Annual Guest Chef Series: An Evening on the Orient Express

Family Services held its 10th Annual Guest Chef Series on Saturday, June 9 at the International Agri-Center in Tulare. Returning Guest Chef David Vartanian of The Vintage Press helped pull off the fundraiser's delicious theme: An Evening on the Orient Express. The food, wine, and décor transported the 350 guests in attendance to an elegant vintage train ride, complete with four culinary stops in countries along the train's original European route. During Chef Vartanian's live cooking demonstration, guests sampled food and wine tastings inspired by Venice, Italy; Constantinople, Turkey; and Munich, Germany. Dinner was *Steak au Poivre*, a delicious last stop in Paris. While guests enjoyed the culinary tour across Europe, they also contributed to Family Services' work at home in Tulare County. The event raised more than \$100,000 in critical funding that will make it possible for Family Services to help more than 3,000 children and adults heal from violence and thrive in healthy relationships. Family Services was also proud to honor Carol Enns and the family of Nita Matthews, two women who were instrumental in founding Family Services 35 years ago. Thank you to each sponsor, donor, and volunteer who helped make the event such a success.



Photos by Cavale Creative



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Partnerships Enable Support for Goshen Families

Families are less likely to experience violence in the home when they are connected to a community and have access to robust support systems. Family Services' Goshen Family Center facilitates those connections in the community of Goshen. The Center operates year-round in a portable building on campus at Goshen Elementary School, but due to modernization projects at the school, it has temporarily re-located for the summer to **St. Thomas the Apostle Catholic Church**. Though school is out and the Center is in a temporary home, it is still providing its usual services: counseling and support groups, parenting classes, free office support, interpretation, food distribution, emergency assistance, and referrals to other services. The Center is also offering free summer enrichment programs for both adults and children, thanks to support from **Western Milling** and the **Ann B. Reimers Charitable Educational Foundation**. The programs include children's art classes from **Arts Visalia** and are taking place at **Self-Help Enterprises'** Goshen Village Apartments. They give adults and children an opportunity to build resiliency, make connections, learn, and have fun. The



Top: On June 21, adult program participants learned about healthy food choices thanks to a visit from Kaweah Delta's Community Outreach program, then took part in a Zumba exercise class.

Bottom: Children did fun movement and social-emotional skill building activities, made a craft, and ate a nutritious snack while their mothers took part in the adult summer program.



FAMILY SERVICES
SUPPORTING TULARE COUNTY

Our Mission

The mission of Family Services is to help children, adults, and families throughout Tulare County heal from violence and

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 RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

The mission of Family Services is to help children, adults, and families throughout Tulare County heal from violence and thrive in healthy relationships.

24-Hour Domestic Violence Hotline
 (559) 732-5941 or 1-(800) 448-2044

24-Hour Sexual Assault Hotline
 (559) 732-7273 or (559) 784-7273

Change a life. Donate today.
www.fstc.net

Family Services Celebrates 35 Years

In the early 1980s a group of community volunteers led by Carol Enns and Nita Matthews set out to help our Tulare County community realize that domestic violence is unacceptable, and that someone needed to do something about it. In 1983, they founded Family Services and opened Tulare County's first emergency domestic violence shelter. Thanks to this group's vision and dedication, Family Services has helped thousands of women and children to find safety, hope, and healing. You are invited to help write the next pages in Family Services' history. Join us as a volunteer, become a donor, attend an event, or visit our website to learn more about the issues. The work we do is hard, but it's rewarding. Join us!



Learn more about the visionaries who founded Family Services! Watch our anniversary video at

Purple Party Is Back Friday, October 5



Mark your calendar for Friday, October 5, as Family Services presents the 4th Annual Purple Party in honor of Domestic Violence Awareness Month. We are planning a fun evening at the Visalia Rawhide Hall of Fame Club for you to sport your favorite purple attire, celebrate survivors, bid on exciting silent auction items, and be part of Family Services' work to support survivors and end domestic violence in our community. Tickets are only \$30 and include food, a drink ticket, photo booth, and more. We hope to see you there! *Learn more and get tickets at www.fstc.net/purple.*