



Friends,

I start this message by addressing you as “friends,” even though I have never personally met many of you . I am sending this message to the friend in each of us. I want you to read this as if it were coming to you from your very dearest friend, the sweetheart you married, the soldier you would have given your life for, the college roommate who is dearer to you than your own sister. I want you to read this as if it is coming from that child in elementary school who cut their finger open and became your “blood brother.” I need you to read this letter as if it is coming to you from the one person you would do anything for, without question or hesitation.

For nearly two decades the foster care system has been underfunded by more than 30%. Agencies such as Trinity have had to solicit donations from, and rely upon, the generosity of corporations, organizations and individuals to simply provide the funding necessary to shelter and protect the children in our care. For more than four decades, we have done everything in our power to go beyond simply sheltering and protecting them, and have strained our resources to provide the types of programs and services that might actually help these children overcome the horrific incidents of abuse, neglect and abandonment that brought them to us, and afford them the possibility of a healthy, productive life. For more than forty years, we have done “whatever it takes” to **Be the Difference** in the lives of children who need it most. Quite frankly, we can do no more. The funding situation has already drained us to the extent that we have had to limit the number of children we can effectively serve. We cannot cut the quality of our services if we are to truly help or heal them, we can only make the difficult decision to help fewer and fewer. Last month alone, we had to reduce our capacity by 300 children – 300 children who will now be more likely to face homelessness, unemployment, substance abuse, academic failure, and (mental and physical) health issues.

Now, Governor Schwarzenegger is mandating deep cuts to education, health care and human services programs in an effort to help close the state’s budget gap. These cuts would have an immediate and devastating impact on California’s children and youth, especially those in foster care. In addition, many of the Governor’s proposed cuts would cause the state to lose substantial amounts of federal funding, further crippling our ability to care for these children.

Specifically, the Governor proposes to reduce funding for Child Welfare Services by \$70.6 million – a 10 percent cut to counties’ allocations – including \$26.8 million in rate cuts for those who provide direct care to foster children, and cuts to even the most basic and necessary expenditures for these children, such as clothing.

Without your help, more children will be turned away. Without your support, more children may be lost.

I am asking you, beseeching you, to **Be the Difference** today, at this moment, right now.

**Be the Difference** between what the government pays for the care of each child and what it actually costs to provide that care.

**Be the Difference** between foster care and fostering a child’s future.

**Be the Difference** between saving money and literally **SAVING LIVES**.

Foster children have no voice. They have no parent to protect them and certainly no government to whom they can turn. What they need is a friend, and they need you **now**.

**DONATE NOW**

Give what you can. Give what you would if your dearest friend’s life depended on it.

With deepest gratitude and a true sense of urgency,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Fr. Tom P. Avramis".

Fr. Tom P. Avramis,  
President and CEO

The logo for "Be the Difference". The words "Be" and "Difference" are in a large, elegant, red cursive font. The word "the" is in a smaller, simpler font and is positioned between "Be" and "Difference".

**Supporting Residential, Foster Care and Education Programs for Abused, Neglected and Abandoned Children**

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