



THANK YOU!

I remember as a child, always looking forward to summer. The last week of school was about exchanging phone numbers and making plans to get together with friends in the glorious 10 weeks of freedom that lay ahead. The countdown to summer was almost as filled with anticipation as the countdown to Christmas - all I could think about was unwrapping the gift of long days and warm nights filled with possibility.

I want to thank each and every one of the donors who responded to the Spring appeal letter. The letter detailed just how seriously the economic challenges at the State and Federal levels had affected children's services, how those same challenges at the individual level had caused a dramatic decrease in charitable donations, and just how desperate our own situation had become.

On April 1st, the Residential Foster Care programs began receiving a court-mandated increase in payments per child. This increase was a result of a decade-long battle to match the rate of payment to the actual cost of care. For more than ten years, foster care had been funded at 31% less than what it actually cost to provide the programs and services necessary to heal the abused, neglected and abandoned children in our care. Children's services programs were forced to seek other sources of income, or perish.

The Children's Foundation of America (formerly Trinity Children's Foundation) was established for this very reason—to be the difference between the funds the programs received and the cost of caring for children that society had forgotten. In the past two years, as our economy was ravaged, deep cuts in funding forced nearly half of all private foster care agencies to close their doors. Those that did not close, faced significant reductions in the services they could provide, and the number of children they could provide for. Our own Agencies took drastic measures to keep children in placement. We laid off staff, closed sites and consolidated programs. Each and every staff member, from child care worker to the CEO took a pay cut. We slashed expenses and increased our outreach, and still we were forced to reduce the number of children we could support.

Your response to plight of the children was overwhelming. The letters of support, the generosity of those who sent more than was comfortable for them, was multiplied exponentially by the love that accompanied each contribution.

Although we are not completely out of the woods (we have large debts to repay and although the increase has made a huge positive impact on our situation in residential treatment, our traditional foster care programs are still operating under a 10% budget cut from the State, and facing the prospect of further cuts as California's crisis continues), we are confident that we will survive. Thanks to you, and to the vendors and contractors who patiently hung in there with us and the employees who understand that the work we do is all-important, the Children's Foundation of America will continue to care for children for whom there is no other hope, and I am looking forward once again, to summer.

Cher Ofstedahl
Chief Administrative Officer
Children's Foundation of America