

Volunteer Center of United Way Monterey County



Photo: Keili Uldall

Rene Reyes, assistant coordinator for domestic violence at TRUCHA, a partnering agency of the Caminos Program, shown with intern Carlos Franco.

The Volunteer Center of Monterey County is now linked to the United Way of Monterey County, and people who are looking for volunteers or volunteering opportunities can go to www.volunteermontereycounty.org.

"Any nonprofit can [post a listing], whether it's a one time event or ongoing," says Silvina Candia, volunteer program director. "Individuals can search by their zip code for volunteer situations."

One program that the Center oversees is

known as Caminos, or Pathways. Youth expelled from school are placed in volunteer situations that help them gain community service hours and return to high school.

"Many kids keep volunteering even after they finish their hours," says youth coordinator Laura Tinajero. "They feel important. We give them responsibility and they crave that."

For more information, call 831/757-3206.

—Brett Wilbur



Waiting for a Family

Dominique is a sweet, wonderful girl who is full of energy. She loves music, going to the beach, and exploring new places. She is a delight to be around and needs a family who will enjoy helping her attain her dreams.

Children of all ages and backgrounds are waiting for a home. They need the same love, care, and safety your child counts on every day. For more information, please call Kinship Center at 831/455-9965.

Harmony at Home

It had become so bad that she was afraid to go to school, says a third grade girl about being bullied by another girl. The child was referred to Harmony at Home's Sticks and Stones program, which works with area schools to provide counseling to children exposed to violence or trauma. While the program was initially intended to help victims of domestic violence, it has grown to provide counseling to children coping with a variety of difficult experiences.

This fall, the organization expands services in local schools with a new Bully Prevention Program that will teach faculty how to respond to signs of bullying.

For more information, call 831/625-5160 or go to www.harmony-at-home.org

Kinship Center

Eight years ago, Glenda Booker, a single mother with one grown child, heard about an adoption of siblings that had fallen through. Booker took steps to become a foster mother to the two children. Since then, her family has added another member and the children have been legally adopted. Booker says adoption gives children a sense of stability and gives her "a sense of being."

The Kinship Center in Salinas provides foster and adoptive parents with the tools necessary to support families. The organization holds its first Annual Harvest Moon Festival Fundraiser on October 27. The event features a live auction, music, dancing, and offerings from local restaurants and wineries.

For more information, call 831/455-9965 or visit www.kinshipcenter.org

—Tessa Stuart