



Florence Crittenton Center

The Mission

For more than 100 years the Florence Crittenton Center has responded successfully to the changing needs of abused and neglected children by enabling them to

overcome their troubled pasts and preparing them for life as successful adults, loving parents and productive citizens. The Center accomplishes this mission by providing innovative residential care, foster family and child development services, therapeutic treatments, prevention strategies, educational opportunities and independent living skills for young women and men, with a special emphasis on the needs of teenage mothers and their infants.



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The Need

The United States has the highest rates of teen pregnancy in the western industrialized world, with four out of every ten teen girls becoming pregnant in their teen years. Fewer than one-third of teen mothers ever finish high school, which leaves them completely unprepared for the job market and more likely to raise their children in poverty. In fact, more than half of all single mothers on welfare were teenagers when they had their first child. Moreover, the children of teen mothers are twice as likely to be abused and neglected, do poorly in school and eventually drop out before finishing high school. As a consequence, teen pregnancy and the multitude of social problems that confront teen mothers and their children cost the United States a total of \$29 billion each year.

This year alone one out of every ten births in Los Angeles County (more than 15,000) will be to a teen mother, and the Florence Crittenton Center is one of only three residential treatment centers in the County capable of helping these teen mothers cope with the multiple challenges they must face if they are to succeed in life. All of the teens referred to the Center are wards of the juvenile court and come from distressed families suffering from poverty, substance abuse and mental illness. They struggle with serious developmental and emotional challenges as a result of early childhood trauma, neglect and drug abuse. In the absence of consistent, supportive parenting, most of our teenagers have been involved with gangs and struggle with low self-esteem and a sense of abandonment. Due to the transience and unpredictability of their early lives, they lag behind their peers academically and are at high risk of dropping out of school.



The infants and young children of our teen mothers face equally difficult challenges including impaired physical, mental, social and emotional development. In recent years we have observed an increase in babies who show failure to thrive, characterized by slow weight gain, listlessness and unresponsiveness to environmental stimuli. In addition, approximately 60

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percent of our older children, aged two through three (most of whom spent time in foster homes prior to being reunited with their mothers at the Florence Crittenton Center) suffer serious developmental delays, impoverished socialization and severe attachment disorders. Given the many years of experience the Center has had in caring for young children, it has learned that without specialized help, these children may remain significantly behind their more advantaged peers and, as time progresses, this gap is seldom closed.

The emotional and educational problems faced by these teen mothers are vast, and the level of assessment, treatment and remedial education they require is immense. The Florence Crittenton Center is one of the few facilities available to these teens that can provide them with the tools they need to cope with issues of low self-esteem, mental, physical and/or sexual abuse, as well as drug and alcohol abuse, and to become successful adults, loving parents and productive citizens.

THE CENTER'S MISSION IS TO HELP ABUSED AND NEGLECTED CHILDREN BUILD A BETTER FUTURE FOR THEMSELVES.

Organizational History and Capability

The Florence Crittenton Center is an established and respected non-profit organization with more than a 110-year history that reflects a distinguished record of serving teen-aged women and their infants. The Center's mission is to help abused and neglected children build a better future for themselves by enabling them to overcome their troubled pasts, and preparing them for life as successful adults, loving parents and productive citizens. This year the Center will serve more than 350 young women and men, teen mothers and their infants, along with at least 500 of their extended family members.



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Residential Care and Teen Mother/Child Development Programs

EACH DAY IS HIGHLY STRUCTURED WITH CLASSROOM INSTRUCTION, VOCATIONAL TRAINING, THERAPY SESSIONS AND ENRICHMENT ACTIVITIES. The Residential Care and Teen Mother/Child Development Programs at Florence Crittenton are the Center's oldest programs, and furnish therapeutic treatment and educational opportunities for 41 young women, half of whom are mothers of small children. The residents at our main facility in Lincoln Heights range in age from 12 to 18, and their children are newborns to three years of age. Because the teen mothers referred to Florence Crittenton Center come from highly dysfunctional families with severe emotional and mental health problems, histories of physical and sexual abuse, increased levels of substance abuse and obstructed academic achievement, counselors and teachers work together to create a supportive, nurturing environment for emotional and educational growth.

Each day is highly structured with classroom instruction, vocational training, therapy sessions and enrichment activities such as art, dance, basketball and cooking. Parent education also plays an important role in the lives of these teen mothers, who must learn to balance academic work and personal growth with parental responsibilities. Therefore, an on-site child development center staffed by child care professionals works with these young mothers to instill in them the skills they need to become effective and loving parents. Program staff (many of whom have been with Crittenton for more than 20 years) combine highly descriptive videos, well baby care and child development classes with intensive individual and group therapy to ensure that all aspects of appropriate parenting are covered adequately. Instruction is highly individualized based on the needs of both mother and child, and parenting support is provided 24 hours a day.

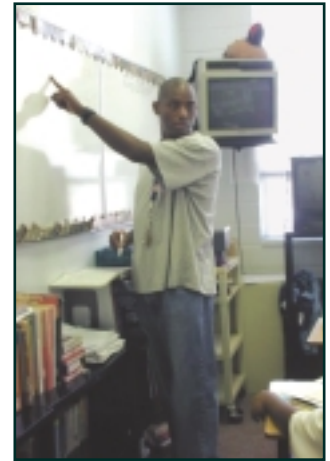
Crittenton High School

In addition, academic accomplishment is closely tied to social learning, and teens at the Florence Crittenton Center are expected to make up lost years of school as they acquire



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intellectual and vocational life skills. The Center's on-site high school, Crittenton High School, is operated in cooperation with the Los Angeles Unified School District and provides individually tailored educational programs for each student. During the past three years Crittenton High School's graduating classes have exceeded the Center's expectations by progressively graduating record numbers of students, many of whom have gone on to college. The Center's academic and clinical programs are made even stronger with added innovative support services based on the needs of our teens, including integrated case management, and targeted vocational and independent living skills training.



**CHILDREN PLACED WITH AN FFA FAMILY ARE VISITED
AT LEAST ONCE A WEEK BY AN FFA CASEWORKER,
AS OPPOSED TO ONCE A MONTH IN STATE LICENSED HOMES.**

Foster Family Agency



The Crittenton Center also has its own Foster Family Agency (FFA) that is licensed by the State to recruit, train, certify and monitor foster families that have the appropriate resources to sustain and nurture a child who has been removed by the County from their natural home because of abuse or neglect. The FFA screens and provides 30 hours of intensive training to certify and suitably prepare a family to help a traumatized child or teen recover from their past abusive experiences. Children placed with an FFA family are visited at least once a week by an FFA caseworker (as opposed to once a month in State licensed homes), to ensure that both the foster child and the caretaker family are receiving the resources they need to thrive and grow together as a family. Moreover, these families are furnished with ongoing training and support through periodic three-hour workshops (conducted five times a year) and/or the "Life Changers" Teen Mentoring Program, which provides a safe environment for open dialogue coupled with a curriculum utilizing Sean Covey's, *Seven Habits of Highly Effective Teens*, that enables both parents and teens to find successful solutions for important home and school issues and challenges.

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Aftercare-Emancipation Program

Finally, the Florence Crittenton Center offers an Aftercare-Emancipation Program that provides important vocational and independent living skills for young people



who have "aged-out" of the foster care system. Currently, more than 1,000 teens emancipate from the foster care system in Los Angeles County every year, many of whom are parents who must face the challenges of adulthood and parenthood on their own. These problems can be overwhelming, and more than 50 percent of these newly emancipated teens find themselves homeless within six months. The Crittenton Aftercare-Emancipation Program evolved in 1993 in response to this tremendous need and is a two-phase program that incorporates: counseling and workshops; job skills training and placement; education in independent living skills, pregnancy prevention and parenting; and assistance with housing, child care and other community resources.

CURRENTLY, MORE THAN 1,000 TEENS EMANCIPATE FROM THE FOSTER CARE SYSTEM IN LOS ANGELES COUNTY EVERY YEAR.

Phase I – WorkAbility: Shortly after admission to the Crittenton Center, every new resident (approximately 150) is enrolled in Phase One in order to introduce them to the essentials of adult life that many of us normally would take for granted. Residents are individually evaluated to determine their level of independent living skills, and then an educational plan is developed that offers these teens the learning experiences they need to become successful adults. Learning is conveyed through small group activities that cover topics such as: communication and anger management, personal hygiene and care of clothing, how to access medical and dental resources, how to obtain legal documentation, time management and fundamental goal-setting training. Phase One then focuses on vocational training and career planning and incorporates one-on-one counseling, hands-on vocational exercises and temperament/personality analysis to help each participant understand her strengths, innate talents and interests. This phase of the program also includes subsidized work experience, career exploration and job seeking and keeping skills.

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Phase II – Emancipation Support Program: This phase begins approximately six months prior to each resident’s emancipation and continues for 18 months thereafter. Upon emancipation, each of our Phase II participants, including boys emancipating from Crittenton’s Foster Family Agency, moves into her or his own apartment or transitional housing unit. During this time the Center’s staff provides counseling, support, referrals and encouragement via daily phone calls and visits, thereby enabling participants to focus on their needs and goals. In addition, the program provides monthly workshops, mandatory for all participants, covering subjects such as self-esteem, motivation, relationship issues, parenting skills, spousal abuse, landlord/tenant rights, sex education/pregnancy prevention, alcohol/substance abuse and conflict resolution. Program staff provides transportation for the participants to these events. Finally, the program furnishes all participants with monetary benefits for subsidizing rent, transportation, child care and education, totaling a maximum of \$8,800 in the one year after emancipation.

LAST YEAR, 22 OF 23 PARTICIPANTS WERE EMPLOYED IN EITHER FULL OR PART-TIME WORK, HALF WERE ATTENDING COLLEGE AND/OR VOCATIONAL SCHOOLS.

Crittenton’s Aftercare-Emancipation Program is an extremely effective program. Last year, 22 of 23 participants were employed in either full or part-time work, half were attending college and/or vocational schools, all had safe housing, and all parents were providing appropriate care for their young children. Using these life characteristics as criteria, a 3-year outcome study, funded by the Annenberg Foundation, revealed Crittenton’s Aftercare-Emancipation Program had at least a 95% success rate among the at-risk young people participating in the program. The same study showed that 100 percent of the participants continued to meet the criteria for success during the second year while in the Follow-Up Program. Given the tremendous need for this program, it could easily be opened up to two or three times as many participants if additional funding were available.



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Results and Benefits

**INDEED, THE
TEENS AND
TEEN MOTHERS
HERE AT
FLORENCE
CRITTENTON
CENTER
ARE BEATING
THE ODDS.**

Teen mothers are much more likely to come from poor or low-income families (83 percent) than are teens in general (38 percent), and the presence of an infant compounds the disadvantaged circumstances in which these young mothers live. Without support and guidance, these teen mothers and their children will fall further behind their peers in terms of education, income and the likelihood of a stable family life. The impact of this cycle of poverty on our community can not be underestimated. It is the overarching goal of the staff and programs at the Florence Crittenton Center to enable these young women to become loving parents and productive members of the community. By providing therapeutic and supportive care to at-risk teen mothers, and their babies, the Teen Mother and Child Development Program helps end the vicious cycle of poverty, abuse and neglect among our community's most fragile families.

In addition, many of the young women who are referred to the Center have lost an inordinate amount of time from their education. However, as the Vice-Principal of Crittenton High School, Ms. Lana Chow, points out:

"It's very common for us to have students who have literally missed two and three years of school, and are now getting A's and B's for the first time in their lives. One of my best students read at the 4th grade level when she came to us. After her baby was born, she realized what was at stake and she decided she was going to make it. She was so determined that her reading level climbed 4 grades in 6 months. But then, she's attending school every day, her baby is being cared for during the day and she's being tutored every other afternoon."



Indeed, the teens and teen mothers here at Florence Crittenton Center are beating the odds. **With one percent of the Non-public High School students within the Los Angeles Unified School District, we have had five percent of the graduates during the past four years.** This year the Center celebrated the graduation of 14 students from Crittenton High School, equaling the largest graduating class in our history. This accomplishment is attributable to our enhanced ability to provide the guidance, therapy, remedial education and parenting skills needed to help these children become self-sufficient adults, as well as to a flexible school program that continues to work with these students until graduation, even after they have been reunited with their families. Crittenton's Aftercare-Emancipation Program also has been extremely effective in helping our young people to successfully transition from the foster care system into the community as productive citizens and caring parents, helping them find appropriate housing, child care, vocational training, jobs and other educational opportunities.

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Major and Planned Giving Priorities

The following funds represent priority areas of need within the compendium of programs and services offered to the at-risk teens, teen mothers and small children served by the Florence Crittenton Center.

Annual Funds

Aftercare-Emancipation Program Fund

Annual Goal: \$150,000

Crittenton's Aftercare-Emancipation Program plays an essential role in enabling young people to successfully transition from the foster care system into lives as productive citizens. Every year more than 1,000 teens emancipate from Los Angeles County's foster care system, many of whom are parents who must face the challenges of adulthood on their own. These problems can be overwhelming, and more than 50 percent of these newly emancipated teens find themselves homeless within six months. Each year the Center's Aftercare Program provides 25 young people with critically needed support in the form of: counseling; referrals and assistance with acquiring housing, child care and other community resources; and education in independent living skills, job skills, pregnancy prevention and parenting. This program is funded entirely with private dollars, and given the tremendous need could easily be opened up to two or three times as many participants if additional funding were available. Consequently the purpose of this fund is to help sustain and expand the Aftercare program for these needy teens recently emancipated from the foster care system.

Career Development Fund

Annual Goal: \$30,000

Many of the young people entering Florence Crittenton Center's programs have interests and abilities with regard to developing a life-long career and yet because of their circumstances have received little guidance and no resources to explore those possibilities. This fund is dedicated to providing these young people with the resources they need to build their unique talents in areas such as: art, photography, fashion, writing, dance, singing, etc. This fund will help our young people to attend specialized classes, workshops and seminars, as well as enable them to visit experts who work in various fields and careers.

Child Development Center Fund

Annual Goal: \$200,000

The Center is reimbursed by the County for the care of infants and toddlers at a rate that assumes the teen mothers will care for their babies 24 hours a day, seven days a week. This assumption is very unrealistic as these mothers must attend school and complete their education. Teen mothers are much more likely to come from poor families (83 percent) than are teens in general (38 percent), and the presence of an infant compounds the problems these young mothers face. Finishing their high school education is critical to breaking the cycle of poverty for both mother and child. So, the Center furnishes on-site child care that includes: early childhood literacy, individual developmental assessments, and a staff of child care professionals who provide these young mothers with the parent education they need to become effective, loving parents. This on-site care costs the Center an additional \$1,200 per child per month, more than \$200,000 a year, which must be funded with private dollars. This fund will help the Center sustain and improve the crucial early childhood literacy, developmental assessments and parent education programs of its on-site child care center, giving 50 young children a year a better chance of success in school and life.

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Crittenton Athletics Development Fund

Annual Goal: \$20,000

Studies have shown that access to sports helps students excel in their academic studies. This fund will enable Crittenton High School and the Residential Programs to expand the athletics program and improve its equipment and ability to participate in team sports with other schools. This fund also will help support those young people who demonstrate an ability to excel as an athlete by providing access to further training.

Crittenton High School Curriculum & Program Development Fund

Annual Goal: \$100,000

The rapidly expanding information and knowledge base of our society places rigorous requirements on our schools to keep pace with appropriate curriculum development. Crittenton High School is no exception to this requirement. Therefore, in order to improve and expand the educational offerings at Crittenton High School, the Center has established this fund to supply faculty and students with the necessary curricula and program related tools needed to create an exciting and effective learning environment that advances the students' future academic and career opportunities in areas such as math, science, history, literature and the arts.

Crittenton Residential Program Resource and Development Fund

Annual Goal: \$100,000

Because the emotional and educational problems faced by our teens and teen mothers are vast, and the level of assessment, treatment and remedial education they require is immense, the Center continues to expand support programs such as: parent education, individual and group therapy, and vocational and independent living skills training to give these young people a chance at a successful future. In addition, these young people must gain an awareness of how to improve their lives, and the lives of their children, in the areas of physical health and nutrition. Many of these teens are living with health challenges such as diabetes, asthma, ADHD and other chronic illnesses, or are struggling with issues of substance abuse, and gang and domestic violence, and need to educate themselves in order to maintain a more balanced and safe lifestyle. This fund will enable the Center to supply its clinical staff with the necessary resources, training and program related tools required to maintain and improve the effectiveness of these important client-based support programs, as well as help our clients gain access to community resources, classes, medical equipment and other supportive therapeutic services.

Foster Family Agency Program Training and Support Fund

Annual Goal: \$100,000

Crittenton's Foster Family Agency (FFA) is licensed by the State to recruit, train, certify and monitor foster families that have the appropriate resources to sustain and nurture a child who has been removed by the County from their natural home because of abuse or neglect. The FFA screens and provides 30 hours of intensive training to certify and suitably prepare a family to help a traumatized child or teen recover from their past abusive experiences. Children placed with an FFA family are visited at least once a week by an FFA caseworker (as opposed to once a month in State licensed homes), and these families are furnished with ongoing training and support through periodic three-hour workshops (conducted five times a year) and/or the "Life Changers" Teen Mentoring Program.

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Consequently, this fund is being established to help provide the funding resources necessary to improve and expand the training workshops, continuing education and support groups necessary to maintain our foster families' certification and ability to furnish troubled children and teens with the safe, nurturing environment they need to become healthy and successful adults.

Make-A-Wish Fund

Annual Goal: \$50,000

This fund will help meet the special, many times critical, needs that our clients face, particularly with regard to family, school or medical issues, which can result in further damage to these already traumatized young people if they are not met. Some examples of what this fund will help with include: specialized educational materials, transportation costs for urgent meetings with family members, clothes for a special job interview, tattoo removal, or plastic surgery to remove scars resulting from abuse or neglect.

Annual Total: \$850,000

Endowment Funds

Crittenton High School Technology & Library Resource Fund

Five Year Goal: \$1,000,000

Crittenton High School is a small non-public school that needs to keep pace with both the fast changing world of technology and the ever expanding information base that only up-to-date library resources and state-of-the-art technology can provide. This is particularly true if Crittenton High School is going to help its students gain the academic and technical skills they require to be successful, productive adults. Because technology and library resources become obsolete within two or three years, this fund is being established to ensure that adequate funds are available to maintain the latest technology and most current academic information in Crittenton High School's classrooms. This fund will guarantee that our students will continue to be trained on state-of-the-art equipment and acquire the relevant skills to assist them in securing an immediate job or aid them in their quest for an advanced degree.



Crittenton High School Science Laboratory Fund

Five Year Goal: \$1,000,000

Crittenton High School needs to support its science curricula, but currently has no science laboratory. Consequently, the purpose of this fund is to provide the seed monies necessary to start the planning process for developing this new addition to the school. Donations to this fund will help with developing renovation plans, determining equipment needs, and furnishing the initial spark for the future capital campaign for this project.

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Florence Crittenton Center Endowment Fund

Five Year Goal: \$5,000,000

The Center has a large physical plant to maintain, requiring capital improvements on a constant basis that reflect quality of life and periodic safety and licensing issues. Furniture, appliances, carpet, plumbing, electrical wiring, and office equipment all need to be maintained and/or replaced on a regular basis. The High School needs to build and properly maintain a science laboratory for its students. Also, the County's limited residential services available for teen mothers, as well as the inadequate transitional housing accessible to young people emancipating from the foster care system, present the Center with the very real challenge to expand its facilities, programs and services to this extremely vulnerable population. None of the above facility or program expansions are possible, or even probable, without the establishment of an endowment fund that can help maintain and/or upgrade the current physical plant. This fund will enable the Center to not only sustain its current facilities in proper condition, but will permit it to plan future program and facilities expansions more effectively.

Florence Crittenton Center Scholarship Funds

Five Year Goal: \$1,000,000

Endowed scholarship funds ensure that those graduates from Crittenton High School who can and should benefit from a higher education or professional career training can afford to attend college or vocational training. Such scholarship funds are extraordinarily important given that all of the young women attending Crittenton High School come from extremely disadvantaged backgrounds, and will make a significant difference in the lives of our students as they pursue their academic and career goals. Consequently, the establishment of these scholarships will be making an investment in our community's most precious resource, its young people.

Five Year Total: \$8,000,000



For more information, please contact either:

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