Sunny Hills SERVICES℠
*Better and Brighter Futures*

This is Tiffany. She is a foster youth who is about to 'age out' of care.
*Her story continues on page three.*

## Mark your calendars

## 17th Annual Golf Tournament
benefiting Sunny Hills Services

**Monday June 20, 2011**
Meadow Club, Fairfax
415-457-3200 ext 115
events@sunnyhillsservices.org

**Reserve your foursome now!**

## wine women&shoes®

**Saturday**
**September 17, 2011**

**At an exclusive Ross estate**
**Be there! Be Fabulous!**

## Next Steps Collaborative

*- Josh Leonard*

Last year, in the wake of state budget cuts to the funding that provides housing and services for former foster youth ages 18-24, four non-profit agencies came together with hopes of figuring out how to mitigate the negative impact to some of the county's most vulnerable youth. The result was a collaborative that brings forth the resources and experience of each agency towards a jointly run program that, though offering fewer beds than prior to the funding cut, would more efficiently and effectively help youth exiting care realize their fullest potential.

BAYC, the East Bay Division of Sunny Hills Services, is a partner in the Next Steps Collaborative which provides housing and support services to 134 youth who have aged out of the child welfare system but are at risk of homelessness and, like many young adults, still need a host of supports as they transition to self-sufficiency. Many of the young people face additional challenges associated with mental health struggles and access to care and services. The role of BAYC is to provide clinical counseling and crisis services to program participants.

The Next Steps Collaborative is an innovative model that represents good fiscal and resource management in this time of serious fiscal constraints. Sunny Hills Services continues to seek out solutions and program models to leverage the very best use of public and private funding.

To learn more about Next Steps Collaborative and other Sunny Hills Services' transition age foster youth programs, contact Josh Leonard, Executive Director BAYC at 510-727- 9401.

To support BAYC Next Steps Collaborative visit www.baycyouth.org

## Bikes bring joy at Sonoma Kinship Family Center.

Grandma is a kinship caregiver raising her three grandchildren. She hasn't been able to drive for several years. Through a patchwork of public transportation and the support of good friends and her church, she cobbles together the increasingly complex transportation needs of the children.

Sunny Hills Services Sonoma Kinship Family Center serves kinship caregivers raising a relative's child or children. As a result of a generous grant from Westamerica Bank, Sunny Hills purchased bicycles and tricycles for several kinship families.

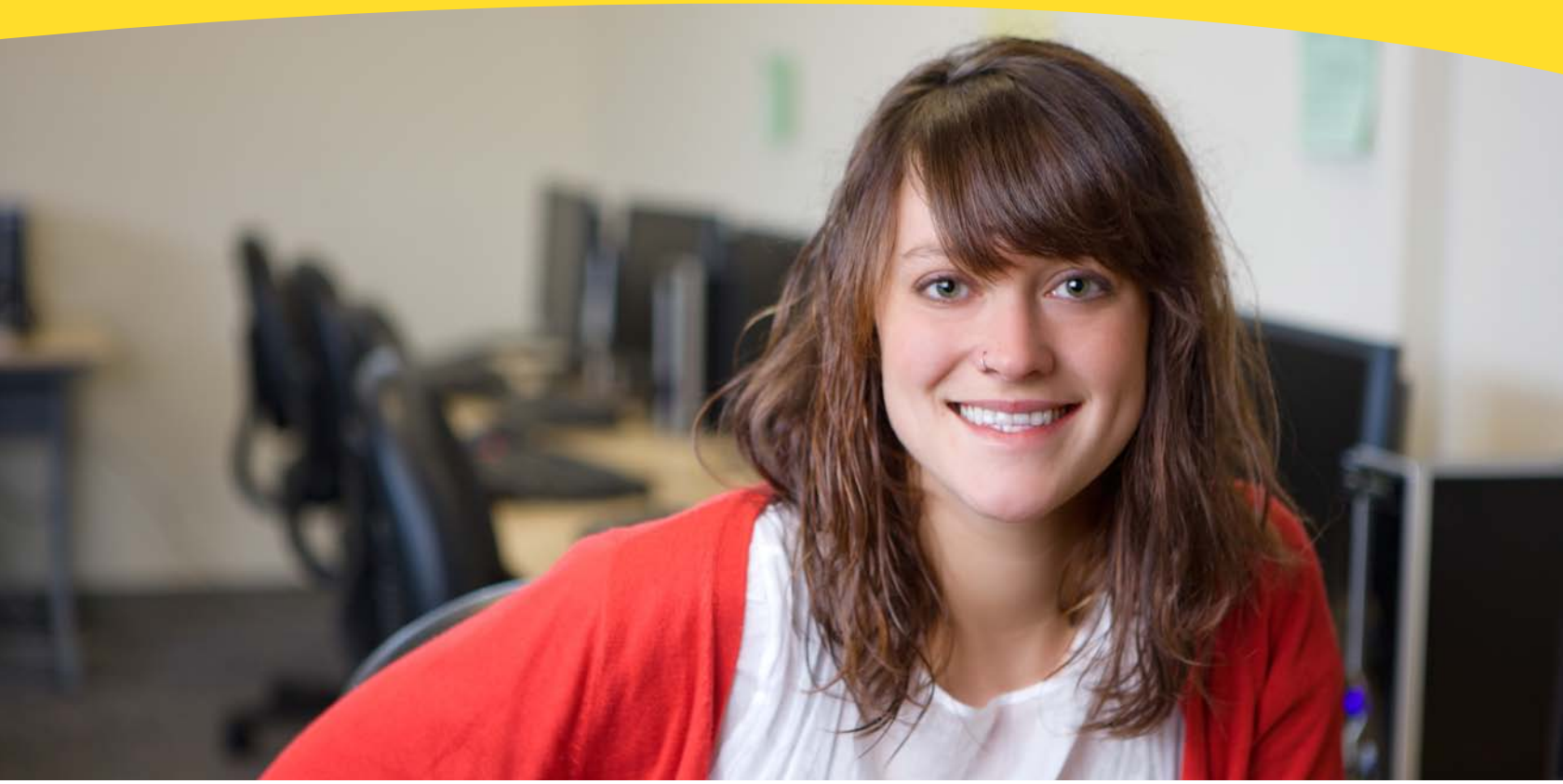
Grandma's oldest grandchild, James (name changed), traveled to school and afternoon basketball practice on his childhood bike which he long ago outgrew. In addition to the discomfort of riding a very small bike, James faced good-natured, but still embarrassing, teasing from classmates and friends. Not an easy situation for a 12 year old who has difficulty explaining why his mother and father are not in his life.

Sunny Hills Services presented James with an adult mountain bike and helmet. James smiled broadly. Grandma cried a little.

In a very small way the new bicycle will help James navigate his complicated life. But more substantially, Sunny Hills Services Sonoma Kinship Family Center will continue to be a part of his family's support system providing a wide range of individualized services including case management, counseling, assistance with the legal guardianship process and even respite care.

Sunny Hills serves more than 300 Sonoma County kinship families. If you would like to help a Kinship Center family, please contact Patricia at 707-569-0877 or pmorrow@sunnyhillsservices.org or visit www.sunnyhillsservices.org to make a donation today!

# Tiffany's Story



Tiffany (not her real name) is a foster child. She has been in and out of foster care since she was removed from her mother's home when she was 6 years old. Her mother is methamphetamine addicted and though her mother has tried many times to conquer the addiction, she has not succeeded. Four times Tiffany has been reunited with her mother only to be returned to foster care, each time to a new family or group home.

Tiffany has been abused in foster homes and in her mother's home. She has been beaten, abandoned, left hungry for days and put out on the street. She has every reason to give up – but she doesn't.

Remarkably, Tiffany has hopes and dreams and wants to succeed in life. She is adamant that she will never touch drugs. In spite of attending seven different schools due to foster placement moves, she is working toward high school graduation. She wants to go to college. Somehow, Tiffany's spirit still has a spark.

BAYC is the East Bay Division of Sunny Hills Services. BAYC accepted Tiffany into our supported housing program. Tiffany lives in a BAYC apartment with another foster teen who also is considered an unattractive match for family placement. Tiffany and her roommate are on the cusp of 'aging out' of foster care. They will soon be 18 years old and no longer eligible for foster care services. At BAYC we provide a host of services for them and other youth in the program. Our goal is to help program youth transition to independent living and to guide them to learning how to access services and manage day-to-day responsibilities to go forward successfully in life.

Through the program, Tiffany and other program youth access housing, mental health counseling, assistance with job training and placement, academic support services, life skills
training (such as cooking favorite meals and balancing a check book), and a good healthy dose of professional adult guidance and interaction. They work to become eligible to participate in the very scarce programs for ongoing support for 19-24 year old youth who were previously in foster care. They work on fulfilling their hopes and dreams.

Tiffany and the other young people at BAYC could use a helping hand. All of the programs that BAYC offers need additional funding.

If you would like to help, contact Josh Leonard, Executive Director BAYC at 510-727-9401 or josh@baycyouth.org.

**To learn more about BAYC programs or to make a donation online visit www.BAYCyouth.org**

## Calendar of Events

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **June 20** | Monday | 17th Annual Golf Tournament |
| **April 20** | Wednesday | BAYC Open House |
| **May 4** | Wednesday | Sonoma County Programs Open House |
| **Sept 17** | Saturday | Wine Women & Shoes |
| **Fall 2011** | | Sam's Sparkler – Sam's Anchor Café |

### Plan a Gift for Sunny Hills

Consider designating Sunny Hills Services as a 401k or 403b beneficiary. A few minutes on line or making a short phone call can improve the impact of our retirement savings through tax benefits and help create better and brighter futures for Sunny Hills children. You are invited to share abundantly!

### The Marin Valentine's Ball was a great success!

*Sunny Hills Services CEO Mary Denton with Board President Lydia Cameron and her husband Tony Cameron.*

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