

UC San Diego and Soroptimist International Launch November Foster Youth Donation Drive

UCSD Foster Youth Workgroup organizes collection for emancipated foster youth

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San Diego area teens who turn 18 and have to leave foster care will find help setting up their first home or college residence through donations collected by a UC San Diego staff group in partnership with Soroptimist International of La Jolla. The campus wide donation drive will be held Nov. 9-20, 2009.

The Foster Youth Workgroup at UC San Diego has joined with the local Soroptimist club to collect new household items, checks and gift card donations to support the "My First Home for the Holidays" campaign. The annual collection campaign is conducted by "Just in Time for Foster Youth," a San Diego non-profit that provides caring support, urgent guidance and crucial resources for foster youth at the most critical point in their transition to an independent, productive life.

The "Just in Time for Foster Youth" donation drive will have collection points at a dozen locations throughout the campus, including Revelle, Muir, Marshall, Warren, Roosevelt and Sixth college locations, Student Services Center, Torrey Pines North and South centers, School of Medicine-Office of Student Affairs and Admissions, University Extension Dean's Office and Rady School of Management.

Needed items range from pots, pans and small kitchen appliances to desk lamps, laundry baskets and bedding. Checks and gift card donations are also accepted through the UCSD Financial Office by calling 858 534-3802.

Ed Abeyta, University Extension, and Ann Klein, Financial Aid Office, co-chair the UC San Diego Foster Youth Work Group. Members include Shirley Balbin-Stacher, Paul DeWine, Timothy Borch, Clare Harrington, Rafael Hernandez, Susan Kelly, Janice Meliska, Antoinette Nagai, Windi Sasaki, Jed Schlueter, Kathy Self and Jessica St. Clair.

"Unlike most youth, for whom leaving home is a gradual process, foster teens must immediately begin to care for themselves when they turn 18 and leave the foster care system," Klein said. "Without some kind of support, a shocking number of these young adults-as many as 50 percent under the age of 21-end up on the street."

Abeyta added, "We know that our students, faculty and staff will respond generously to the drive even though we are all facing difficult economic times. We're hearing from campus colleagues and friends that they are joining together to donate an item. And we know each and every item will make a difference in the lives of these young adults."

The "My First Home for the Holidays" drive will continue with other community collections through Dec. 12, 2009. For additional information and collection locations, please go to www.JITFosterYouth.org.

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