

# GIVING BACK



## A CHILD'S WORLD

*Youth services organizations in Santa Barbara County*

Santa Barbara may be one of the most affluent cities in California, but that doesn't mean that it doesn't have its share of families—rich and poor—with problems that ultimately affect those with the least control over them: children.

## GIVING BACK

Of the approximately 105,000 children under the age of 18 in Santa Barbara County, about one-fifth of them live in poverty, according to the Kids Network's "Santa Barbara County 2006 Children's Scorecard." Fortunately, there are scores of local organizations working to improve the lives of children with hundreds of philanthropists and volunteers making charitable contributions to them. Here's a look at just a few of the many local nonprofits working on behalf of children's issues.

Based on the statistics mentioned above, the numbers of at-risk (i.e., vulnerable, particularly to abuse or delinquency) children in Santa Barbara are potentially high. Luckily, there are many organizations in town designed to aid such children. Founded in 1899, the **Family Service Agency of Santa Barbara** is the county's oldest nonsectarian human-service nonprofit agency. Today, it aims both to encourage people to help themselves through programs that prevent family breakdown and to intervene effectively when there are problems. Another veteran organization offering services to at-risk children and others is the **United Boys & Girls Clubs of Santa Barbara County**. Working with local children since 1945, it now has four clubhouses that offer day care, summer camps, and programs including sports, art, academics, and leadership development. Also serving

ties facilitate life lessons and connection with the natural world.

On the health and wellness front, **CALM** (Child Abuse Listening & Mediation), strives to prevent child abuse and offers professional treatment for families when abuse occurs. CALM works closely with the police, the district attorney, child protective services, and medical personnel to investigate alleged abuse in a supportive and child-friendly fashion. The **Teddy Bear Cancer Foundation** also works with families, endeavoring to ensure that children undergoing cancer treatment have the comfort of their parents' support during the recovery process. This organization provides financial aid for rent, mortgage and car payments, utilities, and other services, thereby allowing families to focus on their children. "[We] adapt to each family's distinct needs," says founder and executive director Nikki Katz. "We don't provide just one service—we do whatever is needed to help."

In terms of education, the **Children's Project** focuses on the needs of foster children and is developing an innovative boarding school and college preparatory academy specifically designed for foster children and kids with mental health or delinquency issues. "The moment the judge removes the child from a parent's care, we become the parents to that child," says founder and CEO Wendy

Read. "We, as the community, step into that role." One of the biggest obstacles for foster children is maintaining continuity in their schooling when their living situation is in turmoil, and the Children's

*"A man never stands as tall  
as when he kneels to help a child."*

—KNIGHTS OF PYTHAGORAS

both at-risk youth and the wider community, the **Police Activities League** offers classes in digital editing, hip-hop dance, martial arts, and basketball; operates a tutoring center; serves as advisor to the Youth Leadership Council, a teen youth group; and more.

The **Endowment for Youth Committee** provides educational, social, cultural, and recreational achievement programs for children, with an emphasis on assisting African American, Native American, and Latino kids. **Girls Inc.** offers an expansive array of girls-only programs that encourage participants to take risks, acquire skills, avoid gender stereotypes, gain confidence, become self-reliant, and practice leadership. Girls are also front and center for **Affirm**, which focuses on empowerment, education, and identity for teenagers in the juvenile correction system. Kids in trouble are the focus for **Noah's Anchorage**, operated by the **YMCA Youth & Family Services Branch**. The group oversees a crisis shelter, the only program in the county to offer year-round, 24-hour access to counseling, shelter, referrals, food, and clothing for runaway, homeless, and troubled kids ages 10 to 17. "We provide safe housing for youth that have no other options," explains director of shelter services Mark Watson. "The kids that come to us often come to us first, so we serve as their doorway into receiving other services." After-school, weekend, and summer programs through the **Wilderness Youth Project** employ nature-based mentoring, wherein outdoor activi-

ties facilitate life lessons and connection with the natural world. **Project** offers a solution to that particular educational challenge. **Computers for Families** provides students from low-income families with refurbished computers, computer training, and Internet access. And thanks to this innovative program, Santa Barbara will be among the first communities in the United States where every child, beginning in the fourth grade, has access to a home computer with Internet access. For 43 years, the **Scholarship Foundation of Santa Barbara** has helped local students pay for their higher education, giving out more than \$7 million in student aid for the last school year.

Emphasizing the arts is **Art Walk for Kids/Adults**, an outreach program that focuses on benefiting special needs, developmentally disabled, at-risk, and terminally ill youth and adults through its curriculum of art and vocational education. Its latest collaboration is with the **Patricia Henley Foundation**, which, through performing arts, empowers children who are affected by environmental and smoking-related issues. The **Family Therapy Institute of Santa Barbara's Academy of Healing Arts (AHA!)** emphasizes the development of character, imagination, emotional intelligence, and social conscience in teenagers and also offers instruction on goal setting, peer support, and how to serve their community. ■

For contact information, see page 140. For a more comprehensive list of nonprofit organizations that benefit children, visit the Family Service Agency of Santa Barbara referral service at [211sbcounty.org/](http://211sbcounty.org/).

BEING INVOLVED

## CHILDREN'S ORGANIZATIONS

*Continued from page 138*

- Academy of Healing Arts (AHA!)** 23 W. Mission St., Santa Barbara, 805-569-2272 ext. 108, ahasb.com.
- Affirm** 1524 State St., Santa Barbara, 805-962-9164, fundforsantabarbara.org.
- Art Walk for Kids/Adults** artwalkforkids.org.
- CALM (Child Abuse Listening & Mediation)** 1236 Chapala St., Santa Barbara, 805-965-2376, calm4kids.org.
- Children's Project** 3905 State St., Ste. 7512, Santa Barbara, 805-637-3790, childrensprojectsb.org.
- Computers for Families** 4400 Cathedral Oaks Rd., Santa Barbara, 805-964-4711, sbccf.org.
- Endowment for Youth Committee** 1136 E. Montecito St., Santa Barbara, 805-730-3347, eyc4kids.org.
- Family Service Agency of Santa Barbara** 123 W. Gutierrez St., Santa Barbara, 805-965-1001, fsacares.org.
- Girls Inc.** 402 E. Carrillo St., Ste. A, Santa Barbara, 805-963-4757, girlsincsb.org.
- Noah's Anchorage** 301 W. Figueroa St., Santa Barbara, 805-963-8775.
- Patricia Henley Foundation** 928 Carpinteria St., Ste. 5, Santa Barbara, 805-568-3600, patriciahenleyfoundation.org.
- Police Activities League** 222 E. Anapamu St., Ste. 21, Santa Barbara, 805-962-5560, santabarbarapal.com.
- Scholarship Foundation of Santa Barbara** 2253 Las Positas Rd., Santa Barbara, 805-687-6065, sbscholarship.org.
- Teddy Bear Cancer Foundation** 133 E. De la Guerra St., Ste. 163, Santa Barbara, 805-962-7466, teddybearcancerfoundation.org.
- United Boys & Girls Clubs of Santa Barbara County** 805-681-1315, uniteddbg.org.
- Wilderness Youth Project** 5386 Hollister Ave., Santa Barbara, 805-964-8096, wyp.org.

## VOLUNTEER

### GREAT OUTDOORS

The **Wilderness Youth Project** needs assistance with after-school programs—volunteers aid students with storytelling workshops, confidence-building activities, and conservation awareness. Founded in 1997, the organization inspires kids through experiences with the natural world. Volunteers must attend training sessions. *For more information, call 805-964-8096 or visit [wyp.org](http://wyp.org).*

### GIVE LIFE

The Santa Barbara County chapter of the **American Red Cross**—it has provided services and distributed health and safety materials to more than 50,000 school children, seniors, and community members this past year—is in need of volunteers for administrative positions, youth services, blood donation, and more. *For more information, call Lauren Ward at 805-687-1331 ext. 719 or visit [sbredcross.org](http://sbredcross.org).*

## SAVE THE DATE

**TUESDAY, AUGUST 21 AND TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 18**  
On the third Tuesday of every month, **Green Drinks** invites the community to meet for cocktails at a different local restaurant from 6 to 8 pm to discuss environmental issues—such as how to start an eco-friendly business—in order to expand Santa Barbara's understanding of green living. The August meeting takes place at SoHo Restaurant and Music Club; in September, the group is gathering at Paradise Cafe. *For more information, e-mail [santabarbara@greendrinks.org](mailto:santabarbara@greendrinks.org) or visit [greendrinks.org](http://greendrinks.org).*

**SATURDAY, AUGUST 25**  
This year's theme of the **Santa Barbara Zoo's** annual fund-raiser gala—the **Zoofari Ball XXII**—is "Pirates of the Channel Islands." From 5:30 to 10:30 pm, an elegant dinner, cocktails, live

music, and animals entertain pirate-garbed guests while silent and live auctions raise money to benefit the zoo. *Tickets: \$225 until August 11, \$250 thereafter. For more information, call Pieter van Meeuwen at 805-962-5339 ext. 18 or visit [brownpapertickets.com/event/9596](http://brownpapertickets.com/event/9596).*

**FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 14- SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 15**  
Help conserve the ocean for generations to come at the **4th Annual Santa Barbara Channel Swim**, a swimming and kayaking event (courses vary in length up to 26 miles) benefiting local environmental organizations. Not fond of cold water swims? Donate your time—help prepare for the swimmers' arrival or cheer them on from your own boat. *Registration: \$150. For more information, call Emilio Casanueva at 805-637-8331 or visit [oceansducks.org/santabarbara.html](http://oceansducks.org/santabarbara.html).*

-HAYLEY UNDERWOOD