

Beyond Emancipation News

Pleasanton Eagle Scout Project Benefits B:E Clients

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Topher Mitchell delivers household supplies for youth aging out of foster care.

The Eagle rank is the highest rank attainable by a Boy Scout. One of the major requirements for becoming an Eagle Scout is the completion of an Eagle Project – a service effort of benefit to the community that is planned, developed, and led by the Scout.

B:E was happily surprised this January to be chosen as the beneficiary of Topher Mitchell's Eagle Project.

Topher has been involved in scouting since he was 12. He's a senior at Amador Valley High School and is headed to Brigham Young University next year. We sat down with Topher to learn more about him and his effort.

Q: Tell us about your project.

A: I collected household items and put together move-in kits for youth leaving foster care and moving into their own apartments. The kits included things like bath towels, blankets, sheets, dishes, drinking glasses, silverware, cooking utensils, and pots & pans. I also put a backpack and a \$50 gift card to Target in each one.

Q: What a great idea! How did you decide to help former foster youth?

A: When I was looking for a project, my mom would tell me new projects each day that I could do, and when I heard this one it stood out to me because I would be helping boys around my age and I know that I would really appreciate it if someone did this for me.

Q: Who contributed to the kits, and how did you get them involved?

A: I first sent out an email to all my relatives, old neighbors, and my mom's friends asking for donations. Then, ten of my friends volunteered a Saturday to come over to my house and help me make calls from a large list of people in my church and neighborhood asking if they would be willing to help. People donated money and items. The following Saturday we went around and picked up the donations that had been pledged. ... *continued p. 2*

Beyond Emancipation's mission is *to help Alameda County's former foster youth make successful transitions to adulthood and living independently.*

Thank You To Our Friends At Regeneration Church

Some might call it fate, others just luck. But when the Regeneration Church Children's Director and the wife of B:E's Executive Director Tony Thurmond met at a park, something wonderful happened.

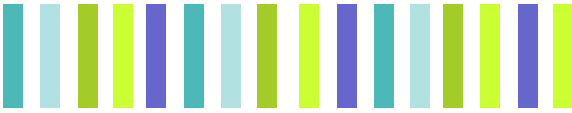
Regeneration calls itself as "a provincial little church," but they're modest. They have service projects spanning the globe, including a center for orphaned boys in Kenya. They were considering how to help more local folks when Grace Cooper and Kristin Thurmond started chatting while their kids played.

Grace recalls, "Our congregation wanted to make a

difference locally as well as internationally. B:E was just what we were looking for—an opportunity to help young people, in a real way, right in our back yard."

Wish fulfilled! Since that chance meeting, Regen has helped B:E in many ways. They've stocked our emergency pantry for hungry clients; donated holiday gifts and decorations for our housing program; offered meeting space for staff training; and provided emergency cash for a client. They've even helped with office work! Even though they tell us not to thank them so much, we can't help it. Regen, we appreciate everything you do for us. Thank you!





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Members of the Alameda County Youth Adult Partnership

Eagle Scout Topher Mitchell Contribution

...continued from p. 1

Q: How long did the project take? It must have been a lot of work.

A: It took about six weeks from beginning to end. Including my time and all the volunteers' time, we got around 110 service hours.

Q: What was the best part about this experience?

A: Being able to help boys that could be just like me, only who grew up in a foster home.

Topher's dedication and leadership resulted in 15 move-in kits as well as a cash donation to B:E. Thanks to him and those in his community who contributed, B:E can provide 15 former foster youth with the basic items anyone needs to move into their first apartments. We are grateful for his contribution!

How You Can Help

You don't have to donate entire move-in kits to help B:E's clients set up their first apartments. Even one or two critical items can make a big difference! We're always looking for contributions of the following useful household items (new or gently used, please):

- Sheet Sets
- Blankets
- Towels
- Dishes
- Silverware
- Drinking Glasses
- Toaster/Toaster Oven
- Microwave

To make a donation, contact Jennifer Moxley, Development Director, at jennifer@beyondemancipation.org or (510) 261-4102 x22. Thank you!

Youth Adult Partnership Is On A Roll!

Beyond Emancipation is home to a unique project: the Alameda County Youth Adult Partnership (YAP). YAP was created as a way for the County to gain crucial input on foster and post-foster care services. It's a collaboration between Alameda County Social Services Agency, the County Independent Living Skills Program, Foster Youth Alliance, Behavioral Health Care Services Agency, and Beyond Emancipation.

YAP is led by a board comprised of current and former foster youth and adult stakeholders. YAP youth review proposed policy, provide feedback on existing services, and share their perspective on growing up in the system - all of which play a critical role in shaping the future of foster care services in Alameda County.

Longtime participant Eldridge "Junior" Tolefree says, "I joined YAP to share my experiences with the adults and give them another perspective on how the foster care system should be run."

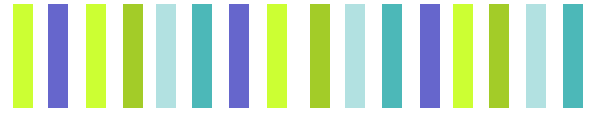
Opportunities abound for Junior and his YAP colleagues to do just that. Earlier this

year, youth met with lawmakers in Sacramento to speak on proposed legislation that would affect foster youth. In March, member Denise Gomes spoke to the local faith community about the need for more good foster and adoptive families. The group has also begun working with the Foster Youth Alliance on ways providers can better support the emancipation process for youth leaving care.

County ILSP Program Manager Randy Morris said, "I hope our YAP becomes a model where other counties and states want to visit and... share how we did it and the many things we've accomplished in making the system better for our youth."

Youth Engagement Coordinator Georgette Todd provides support to YAP. She commented, "Considering the multiple daily challenges emancipated youth face, their consistent involvement with YAP is a testament to how much desire they all have in reforming policies and practices that affect them and foster children in Alameda County." For more information on YAP, contact Georgette at (510) 261-4102 x18.





THANK YOU TO OUR 2007 SUPPORTERS!

Beyond Emancipation's work is only possible because of our generous donors. We'd like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who contributed to us in 2007. We are grateful for each and every one of you. Thank you!

(Donations received after December 31, 2007 will be acknowledged in our next newsletter.)

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
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
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Support B:E Online!

Now it's easier than ever to contribute to Beyond Emancipation! Here are two ways you can help B:E right from your computer:

 Search and shop on Goodsearch! Visit <http://www.goodsearch.com>. At the prompt: *Who do you Goodsearch for?* enter "Beyond Emancipation." Then enter your terms and hit "search." We'll get a penny for every search performed. You can also shop from your favorite stores with Goodsearch, and a portion of every purchase will be donated to B:E!

 Use your credit card to make a donation online! Point your browser to <https://co.clickandpledge.com/sp/d1/default.aspx?wid=18179> Visa, Mastercard and Discover are accepted.

THANK YOU!





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Visit us online at
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Executive Director's Corner

Welcome to Beyond Emancipation's first newsletter! I hope you've enjoyed reading about our current projects.

It's such a privilege to lead this organization. I get to go to work each day knowing that as a result of our efforts, lives will be changed. Whether it's as small as providing a snack to a youth who hasn't eaten that day, or as big as a place to live for up to two years, B:E's work makes a real difference for former foster youth.

While some folks believe that too many cooks spoil the soup, I've always held that the more people contributing to a project, the better the outcome will be. I'd like to invite you to help shape Beyond Emancipation's present—and future—by getting involved. Here are a few ways you can help:

Volunteer! There are many volunteer opportunities available. Whatever your skills and interests, we can find a place for you to use them.

Donate! B:E has been issued a generous challenge: a loyal B:E donor and Oakland native has agreed to match, 1:1, every dollar donated by individuals in 2008 up to \$50,000. It's a big goal, but we can reach it with your help!

Join us! Want to learn more about B:E? On April 27th, our friends Josh and Elaina Genser are opening their home for a B:E Open House. We hope to see you there!

For information on any of these opportunities or any of B:E's work, contact Jennifer Moxley at (510) 261-4102, x22.

With all good wishes,

Tony Thurmond
Executive Director

