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Stronger Together: Stanford Youth Solutions and Sierra Forever Families Merger
A commitment to permanency and the empowerment of youth and families

SACRAMENTO, CA – It is with great excitement that Sierra Forever Families (SFF) and Stanford Youth Solutions (SYS) announce the merging of the two organizations. The Boards of Directors of both organizations have approved the merger of their operations, effective July 1, 2019.

SFF and SYS have complementary missions and operations and have an extensive history of collaborating to provide services and supports to youth and families. SFF and SYS are well-established nonprofit agencies that have proudly served the community for a combined total of over 150 years.

The merging of the organizations will result in the ability to provide the highest quality of comprehensive services and a greater continuum of care for youth and families who need specialized services that address mental health, juvenile justice, foster care and adoptions, post permanency, and family support services. “Collaboration and partnership is something our community has been looking for. We are excited to bring our partnership with Stanford Youth Solutions and with the community to a new level through this merger,” explains Bob Earl, current Sierra Forever Families board President. Craig Hettrich, current Stanford Youth Solutions board President also commented, “Together, we will be better able to leverage resources and provide the highest quality services to young people and their families.”

As a merged organization, nearly 4,500 youth and their families throughout Northern California, including Sacramento, Yolo, El Dorado, Placer, Nevada, and Napa counties will be served annually. Michelle Callejas, Director of Child, Family, and Adult Services Department of Sacramento County shared her support of the merger, “I can’t think of a better partnership. Sierra Forever Families’ skills and commitment to finding forever homes for foster children combined with Stanford Youth Solutions’ expertise in providing quality mental health services to children

and families. Together they will be even stronger, and children and families in our community will benefit greatly.”

Throughout the merger process, the needs of youth and families will remain the first priority. Both agencies will work with community partners to ensure a smooth transition, and will seek guidance and input from partners. Important decisions will be addressed in the 2019-2020 fiscal year, including a new name, identity, and brand with focus on retaining the legacy of both organizations. Leadership will unite, with the interim Executive Director of SFF, Dr. Lynn Thull, serving as the Chief Program Officer, and Dr. Laura Heintz, current Chief Executive Officer of SYS, serving as the Chief Executive Officer.

About Sierra Forever Families

Sierra Forever Families’ mission is to transform the lives of children in foster care by building and nurturing permanent families. SFF believes that while some children might need temporary care, no child should grow up in the foster care system. Every child needs and deserves the love, safety, and unconditional commitment of a forever family of their own. Founded in 1983, SFF has found permanent, loving families for more than 3,900 children in foster care, and has served thousands more and their families through its comprehensive array of pre and post-adoption programs, therapeutic support services, and Wonder mentoring program. SFF is dedicated to serving children facing one or more “barriers to adoption.” Barriers include requiring special medical care, being older, of an ethnic minority, or part of a set of siblings who should not be separated from one another. Learn more about SFF at www.sierraff.org.

About Stanford Youth Solutions

Stanford Youth Solutions’ mission is to inspire sustainable change for young people and their families and empower them to solve serious challenges together. Founded in 1900, Stanford Youth Solutions (*formerly Stanford Home for Children*) provides help and hope to 2,500 children and families annually throughout the Northern California region (including Sacramento, Yolo, El Dorado, and Napa counties). SYS is committed to serving youth in the community and ensuring that youth live in family homes that they can call their own. SYS specializes in providing individualized mental health services with a family-centered approach. The organization is determined to give every young person a chance at a healthy, productive, self-sufficient life, and to ensure that youth become stable and capable through a research-based and individualized approach to care. Learn more about SYS at www.youthsolutions.org.

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