

Capitol drive collects essentials for young lives



Families with infants and toddlers who are served by the Fourth & Hope homeless shelter in Woodland will receive much-needed diapers, baby food and baby hygiene products thanks to First 5 Yolo and two state legislators — state Sen. Lois Wolk, D-Davis, and Assemblyman Bill Dodd, D-Napa.

First 5 Yolo has placed donation baskets in the Capitol offices of Wolk and Dodd and is asking Capitol staffers and visitors to donate items that will help Yolo County homeless families cope with the challenges of providing the most basic needs for their young children.

The supply campaign is called the HomeAid Essentials for Young Lives drive.

“It is so important for young children to have nourishing food and proper hygiene,” said First 5 Yolo Executive Director Julie Gallelo. “It is exciting to see so many California legislators and state Capitol staff participate in this effort to help parents struggling with homelessness to care for their young children.”

Families are the fastest growing segment of the homeless population. Donations will enable Fourth & Hope to use the money normally spent on essential items such as diapers and baby wipes on other programs to help their clients achieve self-sufficiency and to lead productive, independent lives.

Gallelo added, “The economic downturn of the past few years hit us hard in Yolo County. People might be surprised to know about some of the families who have been temporarily homeless and in need of a helping hand.”

The Essentials for Young Lives campaign is timed to occur when supplies are low at nonprofit organizations that provide services for homeless families. Most contributions are made in December, and by mid-year the need for assistance has often depleted available supplies.

Fourth & Hope works to empower men, women and families to make necessary lifestyle changes that enable them to exchange homelessness for a full and productive life. It provides meals, shelter, rehabilitation, job training and often a last chance for a real, sustainable life.

Speaking at a news conference at the Capitol on Monday afternoon, Yolo County resident Audrey McCurdy told how her family, including three children ranging in ages from 4 months to 7 years, had recently been homeless.

Through the help of the Fourth & Hope, they are now in the family transitional housing program and are receiving diapers, wipes and other items through the Essentials for Young Lives program.

“We want to thank everyone for this help. Donations made through the Essentials for Young Lives program is helping my family and many others like us to have basic items we need to take care of our children, said McCurdy. “This means so much to us.”